

DOMINICAN INSTITUTE IBADAN, THEOLOGY THREE FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION 2020/2021 ACADEMIC SESSION

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COURSE: THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (TH311) EXAM

QUESTION ONE “THE NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY” IS THE TITLE OF SOME ACADEMIC SYLLABI (COURSE). DOES IT EXIST?

The answer to the question of whether New Testament Theology exist is “yes” just that its existence is a problematic enigma among the scholars. New Testament Theology, sometimes called “the theology of the New Testament” is a product of the 19th century division of biblical theology into Old Testament and New Testament sections. It arose out of Protestantism’s aim to demonstrate that their theology corresponded to the content of the Bible according to (The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 6, pp. 473).

It is not evident of one theology in New Testament theology (even though the name suggests). Even though we may not find evident of one theology we can find some common elements that is a can of transversals theology: e.g. the kingdom of God in Synoptic gospels. Luke and acts can have a common elements. Johannes theology too can give a common theology Pauline theology too. The quest bothers on whether there can be harmony among all the books of the New Testament. While we can have theology of each book can we have a synthesis of all? Yes it is possible but which kind of synthesis? This will be a hand of constitution or unity of books of the New Testament. We also have to recognize the diversity: this is by respecting the text (a book of New Testament) we don’t have force a book into harmony with others.

Unity and Diversity: The unity of the two testaments has always been a problem for Christian theology, and biblical theology has tried to resolve it in ways that do justice to modern critical study. But within NT Theology it is the diversity of these explicitly Christian witnesses which raises questions about how Scripture should be read.

The question of “if there could be a unified theology called ‘the theology of the new testament’”, has given birth to controversial opinions among the new testament scholars and biblical scholars such as Wendel Sun. However, in as much as the students of New Testament Theology may appreciate the different options or opinions of the scholars, it makes it difficult for those outside the discipline, and even scholarly insiders, to stay current with research.¹ Since ‘theology’ implies a relationship to religious faith; New Testament Theology is an orientation to the canon as a source and norm of Christian doctrine. Hence, NT theology can’t be reduced to Christology since theology itself is about God encompassing the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. It is not Christocentric everywhere in the NT. Books of Acts is about the missionary work of the apostles by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless. New Testament Theology exists

QUESTION TWO (B)

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Major questions about Jesus and his relationship with God, his Sonship and the relationship of his nature with the Father were left unanswered by Jesus and the apostolic Church. As Christianity continues to spread to different parts of the world, this unresolved questions emerged and Christians were required to give answer to these questions. The whole Gospel is a history of the Eternal Word dwelling in human nature among men.² The three Synoptists set forth the humanity of Christ in its obedience to the law, in its power over nature, and in its tenderness for the weak and afflicted

The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke have been called” Synoptic gospels” because they share several elements in common (stories, themes, a certain order , etc.) for this reason, the question

¹Cf Wendel Sun, ”Unity and/or/in Diversity? A Survey of Recent New Testament Theologies” JAET Vol. 19 No. 2 (September 2015): 5-21, p.1.

² Dominic Crossan, *The Gospel of Eternal Life* (London:The Bruce Pub.,1967), p.14.

that concerns us here is: is it possible to extract any features that are more or less common to them concerning the identity of Christ.

Matthew presents Jesus - first and foremost the messianic king, the Son of the royal house of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The opening verse of Matthew's distinctive genealogy indicates the significance of Jesus as that He is not only Messiah but the 'Son of David' designated in verse 6 'David the King'. At the time of his birth his mother was betrothed to Joseph who was himself a direct descendent of David (v. 16) and is addressed as 'son of David' (v.20). Jesus, 'who is called Christ' is therefore legally a scion of the ancient royal house of Israel, a 'Man born to be King'. This note of David's son-ship is sounded with some frequency in the Gospel. It is used by blind men on two occasions (9:17, 20:30), but by the woman of Canaan (25:22), the crowds as Jesus entered Jerusalem (21:9), and the children in the Temple (21:15). That Jesus was born into a royal inheritance is further emphasized by the request of the astrologers (the Magi), on their arrival from the East, for information about the whereabouts of the child who was born to be "King of the Jews" (2:2).

Mark's Christology can be termed - a SPIRIT Christology. The Spirit of God rests on Jesus - (echos of O.T. Isaiah 11:2 and 61:1). The power of God reveals itself through Jesus. But the full revelation is achieved only in the suffering Jesus.

So parables like the 'Wicked Tenants' and the 'Rejected Building Stone' of Mark 12 reveal the 'secret' in its fullness. The one whom God has chosen and endowed for the redemption of the world is the very one whom the world will reject. Any yet even in rejection the 'beloved Son'⁴ remains vindicated by God. The rejected stone becomes the corner or foundation stone of the edifice of redemption.

LUKE: Christology of Luke does not differ radically from that of the Synoptic tradition. It is a Resurrection Christology. Luke tends to associate the high titles of Christ with the Resurrection.

The same can be said of the title Savior (2:11) which appears rather late in other NT writings. Furthermore there are elements of the —Spirit Christology. For example, Jesus is united to the Holy Spirit 3:16, 4:14, 4:18, 10:21, 11:13, give the Holy Spirit 7:11 only give good things), 12:12 - The Holy Spirit will teach you. Luke is presenting narrative whose meaning is 'universal' and 'comprehensive' - not particular and partial. The meaning of history is salvation history - the presence and triumph of God in history. Salvation is not disembodied but concrete and particular. The history of salvation is the key to the meaning of God in history in Luke. Luke uses 'salvation' and its cognates 13 times in Luke-Acts. The word does not appear at all in Matthew or Mark and it is used only once in John. He uses the verb 'to save' more frequently than any other writer. Moreover, salvation is not particular - limited to a community or individuals. Christ is the universal saviour: 2:14, 2:31, 3:6, 3:28, 10:29 (Samaritan only in Luke), 7:1 (centurion), and 17:11 (10 lepers only the Samaritan returned). And salvation is not limited to the time of Jesus. Salvation continues beyond the ascension but continues on in the life of the church.