



Nipawin Bible College
Course: BT113 – God and the Bible
Dr. Joel Houston
Fall 2018
3 Credit Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Systematic Theology often has the reputation of being, at best, dry and boring, and at worst, confusing and liable to the charge of “putting God in a box.” Too often, however, those that would denigrate the study of the truth about the person, nature and work of God often find themselves with an ill-defined idea of whom it is they claim to worship.

Systematic theology then, is simply the act of paying close and careful attention to the revelation of God and organizing His revealed truth into an orderly set of beliefs (to maximize coherence and memorability).

BT113 – “God and the Bible” is the study of Scripture (Bibliology) and God Himself (the subject of Theology proper). Students will become familiar with distinct notions of Evangelical Theology including an emphasis on doctrines such as inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, as well as the classically Reformed conception of the sovereignty and supremacy of God.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Holy Bible (A translation of your choosing).

DeYoung, Kevin. *Taking God at His Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016). **144 Pages.**

Horton, Michael. *Pilgrim Theology: Core Doctrines for Christian Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012). **148 Pages.**

Packer, James. *Knowing God* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973, repr., 1993). **262 Pages.**

THE BIG QUESTION

How does a right understanding of the person and revelation of God affect me in my day to day experience of following Jesus Christ?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Students will be able to explain how and why it is important to study and appreciate theology, both from an academic and practical (discipleship based) standpoint.
- 2) Students will be confident of the trustworthiness, inspiration, and authority of God's Holy Scriptures.
- 3) Students will understand the historic teaching on the doctrine of God (theology proper) and will be able to enumerate the classic understanding of His attributes (both communicable and incommunicable).
- 4) Students will be able to identify some core misunderstandings about the nature of God (heresies), and will have a grasp of the way in which errors may be soundly dealt with in both church and personal life.
- 5) Students will have a clearer understanding of God, and will grow in their love and affection for him.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Video & Response – 10%

- Students will go to <http://vimeo.com/22301158> and watch this brief video. After watching respond in a **2 page paper**. Identify five key points Harris makes about “Why Theology Matters” and briefly explain each one. Then reflect on your own assumptions, apprehensions and perhaps misconceptions about theology as an area of study. Finally, respond to these two questions: ‘How do theology and discipleship interact?’ and ‘Why is theology necessary for discipleship?’

Response Due: October 15th, 2018

Book Précis – 15%

Book completion – 5%

- Students are required to read **both** DeYoung *Taking God at His Word* and Packer, *Knowing God*. Upon completing the works, students will write a **3-4** page summary, or précis of **one** of the books: either DeYoung **or** Packer. Instructions for writing a précis accompany this syllabus in Appendix **B**. It is important to note that you are not so much required to give your *opinion* of the work as you are to demonstrate your *comprehension* of it. Students will submit *only* their paper (the book is not required for evaluation), along with the **signed declaration** found in Appendix **A** that they have completed reading the alternate text, in its entirety, for this class. No partial marks will be awarded for incomplete reading of the text.

Book Précis and Reading Due: November 28th, 2018.

Text Reading – 10%

- Read and interact with select portions of Michael Horton's *Pilgrim Theology*. The relevant chapters for BT113 are: the Introduction (*Why Study Theology?*), 1-4, 7, and 9 (inclusive). Your interaction with the Horton will include underlining and/or highlighting the text along with written comments in the margins (or sticky notes if you so not like writing in books). **Your interaction with *Pilgrim Theology* is vital:** because the in-class lectures, discussions and exams are based on Horton's text, it is axiomatic that the better you understand the text content, the more successful you will be in class. Your book will be evaluated as evidence of your careful reading.

Book Completion Date: December 4th, 2018

Research Paper - 20%

- Select a topic from the list below (appears just before the selected bibliography). The paper is to be **8-10 pages** in length and a minimum of five sources and eight footnotes are required.

Research Guidance - A good place to research such information is in modern theological journals (Galaxie Theological Journals), be sure, however, that you get information from good sources. Note that dictionaries and the Bible do not count as sources.

There are a lot of authors out there who just want to be heard so it is a good idea to read through a couple authors on one topic. Though this seems like a lot of work, the better you research the better you will understand the topic and the better your paper will be, resulting in a better mark. *It is worth the time.*

Research Paper Due: December 11th, 2018

Exams:

Course Midterm Exam – 15%

- **Wednesday, November 13th, 2018, 8:30am.**

Course Final Exam – 25%

- **Wednesday, December 18th, 2018, 8:30am.**

All written assignments are to be typed in accordance with the NBC Study Guide for papers. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, and spelling. Assignments will be due **no later than 5:00 pm** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook 2018/2019

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook 2018/2019

Reading: 554pp

Writing: 15pp

Paper Topic Options: these are general questions to get you thinking in the right direction.

Proof of Existence ‘Can I know God without reading the Bible?’

Can God be proven without referencing Scripture? Outline the ‘rational arguments for the existence of God’ (Cosmological, Teleological, Ontological and Moral). Each argument should be thoroughly explained using illustrations where appropriate. Be sure to highlight historical supporters of the arguments as well as the typical criticism of each argument. Include an overall assessment of the limitations and value of the arguments.

Open Theism ‘Does God know the future or not?’

Open theism is the idea that God does not fully know the future because humans have not yet made the choices that will affect it. Outline the features of open theism and then discuss the supporters and opponents of the doctrine. Be sure to note the implications of open theism upon the omniscience of God. Is open theism an enlightening new paradigm, or merely an extreme form of Arminianism, or heresy?

The Trinity ‘Isn’t the Trinity just Christians worshipping three gods?’

What is meant by the term Trinity of God? What Scriptural evidence is there to support the belief that God is a Triune Being? What are the terms that have been used? What are the implications of accepting and rejecting the idea that God is a Triune Being? Are there any accusations made by other groups because of this doctrine?

Providence and Prayer ‘If God is sovereign, does prayer actually affect anything?’

Briefly outline the doctrine of God’s providence. What are the significant differences between the doctrine of providence from a Calvinist perspective and an Arminian perspective? How should the doctrine of God’s providence affect a Christian view of prayer?

Jesus as the only way ‘Aren’t all religions just different ways to the same God?’

Discuss what the Bible has to say about Jesus Christ as He relates to God’s provision of salvation for a lost world. Consider not only the direct statements of Scripture and what they mean (e.g., Jn 14:6) but also the less direct (but relevant) teachings of the Bible as it has bearing on this matter. Discuss the inclusivist and pluralist positions. How might the person of Christ (i.e., who He is by nature) and the work He was sent to accomplish relate to the issue? What implications follow if the position that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father (i.e., an exclusivist position) is rejected? What areas of Christian faith and practice would be affected?

Holy Spirit as a Person ‘How could a spirit actually be a person?’

What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is a person? What Biblical evidence is there to support the belief that the Holy Spirit is a person? What are the implications of accepting and rejecting the idea that the Holy Spirit is a person? Are there groups who reject the Holy Spirit as a person, and if so why do they reject the idea?

Translation Issues **'Don't all of these different translations just show that Christians can't agree on anything?'**

Some claim that the King James Version is the most accurate and reliable English translation of the Bible. Since the 1950s, the English Scriptures have gone through many changes and several versions have been introduced. Are the new English translations better than the Authorized Version? Are these translations as accurate as or more accurate than the KJV? Has the proliferation of English translations helped to clarify the gospel or created more confusion? Discuss today's newer English translations and whether they are of value for today.

Inerrancy and Infallibility **'How can you trust a book that is so old and full of mistakes?'**

Most evangelicals claim to believe in the Scriptures which are inerrant. However, theologians differ on what is meant by this term. What is meant by the term 'Biblical inerrancy'? What is the difference between 'inerrancy' and 'infallibility' and what are the implications of the different terms? Can you trust that the Bible you read is the Word of God?

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* There may be other relevant books and articles available to you that are not listed on the syllabus. This is a starting point.

Appendix A: Statement of Reading Completion

Please Select One Box:

I have read:

J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word*

In its entirety and for this class (BT113, “God and the Bible”, Fall 2018).

Alternatively,

I did not complete the required reading for this course (BT113, “God and the Bible”, Fall 2018).

Printed Name: _____

Signed Name: _____