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BT 605 Old Testament Theology

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OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY BT 605

COURSE SYLLABUS - Spring, 1999

Instructor: J. N. Oswalt

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- A. Explain the nature and significance of Old Testament theology as a component of Biblical theology.
- B. Identify the primary issues to be addressed in constructing an Old Testament theology
- C. Identify and explain the most important features of the Old Testament understanding of God.
- D. Explain both the significance and the limitations of the concept of covenant as the central focus of Old Testament theology.
- E. Identify and explain the most significant theological concepts which emerge from the account of God's involvement with his people in the historical experience narrated in the Old Testament.
- F. Identify and explain the specific theological concepts to be found in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets, the Psalms, the Wisdom Literature, and the Prophets.

II. PLAN FOR ACHIEVING THE COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. **Class instruction:**

Since this is an introductory level course, instruction will be primarily via lecture. Attendance in all class sessions is required. Absences for emergencies are permitted with the understanding that the instructor will be informed of these before or after the event. Up to three absences for other reasons are permitted. Students will be asked to report all absences on the mid-term and final examinations.

B. **Reading:**

Students are required to read the three books specified below. These books are: Child, B.S., *Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context*, Minneapolis, 1985. Hasel, Gerhard, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4th ed., Grand Rapids, 1993 [all]. Martens, E.A., *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids, 1982.

Wright, Christopher J. H., *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, Downers Grove, IL: 1992.

This reading is designed to be complementary to the class lectures. Although the books will be referred to in the lectures regularly, there will be no systematic discussion of them. Students are expected to synthesize reading and lecture material on their own. However, additional discussion sessions may be scheduled if there is sufficient interest. The second book should be completed not later than the end of the fourth week of the course. The other three books should be completed by the last day of class. The reading should be done regularly and systematically across the duration of the course. If approximately 100 pages are read each week, the requirement can be met without undue strain. Students who have the time and the inclination are urged to do additional reading. If more than 200 additional pages is read and reported on the form available in the bookstore, this will be counted as a plus factor in the reading grade (see below).

C. Writing:

One week before the end of the course (May 7) each student shall hand in a critical reflection paper of between 7 and 9 pages (inclusive of any notes and bibliography) on one of the following topics:

- 1) The Problem of a "Center" in Old Testament Theology
- 2) The Relation between the Old Testament and the New
- 3) Old Testament Theology and the Problem of History

This paper is not designed to be a research paper as such, although additional research on these topics will undoubtedly be necessary in reaching an informed and well-reasoned opinion. Rather, the purpose is to prompt each student to think through one of these topics for him or herself and to reach a defensible position on the topic.

D. Evaluation:

1. There will be two examinations. The first will be given on April 6 and will focus upon terms, definitions, and basic concepts. The second will be a take-home examination to be completed during the week of final examinations. This examination will focus upon the relating of concepts to one another and the ability to synthesize them.

2. The course grade will be arrived at in the following manner:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----------|
| a. | Completion of required reading - | 1/10 |
| b. | Paper - | 3/10 |
| c. | Examinations - | I: 3/10 |
| | | II: 3/10 |

III. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS

Feb. 9 – 26 **The Nature of Old Testament Theology**

- A. History of the Discipline
- B. Issues and Problems
- C. Method

Mar. 2 – Apr. 16 **Overall Themes**

- A. God
 - 1. Transcendence
 - 2. Sovereignty
 - 3. Creation
 - 4. Holiness
 - 5. Hesed
- B. God and Humans - Covenant
 - 1. The Nature of the Problem
 - 2. How Covenant Addresses the Problem
 - 3. How Covenant Shapes OT Thought Law
 - 4. Limitations in the Concept
- C. God and History - The Kingdom of God
 - 1. The People of God - Election
 - 2. The Purpose of God - Promise
 - 3. The Providence of God - Prophecy
 - 4. The Plan of God - Messiah

Apr. 20 – May 15 **Sections**

- A. Pentateuch and Former Prophets
- B. Psalms
- C. Wisdom
- D. Prophets

IV. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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