

BRITE—BLUE RIDGE INSTITUTE FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ST502 Covenant Theology

Place: Rivermont Presbyterian Church, 2424 Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24503

Time: Each Monday at 6:30pm to 8:30pm from 30 August 2021 to 6 December 2021

Zoom participation in the class is also an option for students outside Lynchburg. Email the professor for a Zoom link into the classroom!

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Cell service can be irregular in our location, so it is best to text or email first to arrange a call.

Course Description

This course will help you read your Bible better! It is a study of Covenant Theology from exegetical, theological and historical perspectives. Covenant theology is the Bible's way of explaining and deepening our understanding of (1) the atonement; (2) our assurance; (3) the sacraments; (4) the continuity of redemptive history; and (5) dynamic of God's sovereignty and Christian responsibility/piety. The doctrine of the covenants is thus important for both Reformed systematic and biblical theology (the study of special revelation from the standpoint of redemptive history).

The course will survey the successive biblical covenants from a redemptive historical perspective as well as examine the bi-covenantal structure of creation and redemption. Consideration will be given to issues such as the relation of the Old and New Testaments, the significance of the covenants for the doctrine of the atonement, for understanding sacramental theology, the implications of Covenant Theology for Reformed hermeneutics and more. Emphasis will be placed on the role of the Biblical doctrine of the covenants for preaching, pastoral ministry, and the Christian life.

Course Objectives

This course will assist the student in mastering an outline of the covenantal structure of redemptive history and to help him/her begin to grasp the manifold implications of the Biblical doctrine of the covenants (for soteriology and especially the atonement, sacraments, evangelism, family life, ecclesiology, and more). The course will also aim to equip the student with a working knowledge of the history of Covenant Theology and some of the more important objections to Covenant Theology from its theological critics.

Course Resources

Required Texts:

- Michael G. Brown & Zach Keele, *Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored* (2nd edition)
ISBN 978-1-935369-14-1
 [Available at Amazon on Kindle & in softback at reformedfellowship.net]
- O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* [Available at Amazon & other outlets]
- Rowland Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant* (2019)
ISBN-13: 978-0648539902
 [Available at Amazon]
- Westminster Standards [Available free at <http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html>]
 Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 7
 Westminster Larger Catechism, Questions 20-22 & 30-36
 Westminster Shorter Catechism, Questions 12, 16 & 20

Supplied Syllabus Articles:

- Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 281-319, 371-409
- Donald Macleod, *Covenant Theology* in *DSCH&T*, 214-218
- Donald Macleod, *Covenant* in *Banner of Truth [BoT]* 141:22-28
- Donald Macleod, *Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?* in *BoT* 125:21-28
- Donald Macleod, *The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace* in *BoT* 64:16-22
- Donald Macleod, *Qualifications for Communion* in *BoT* 65:14-20
- Donald Macleod, *The Real Presence* in *BoT* 66:13-16

❖ All these articles supplied by the professor

Challenge Text for Zealous Over-Achievers:

Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* [Available at Amazon & other fine outlets]

Approximately 1200 pages of reading are set for this course, as follows: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* [300]; Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* [336]; Rowland Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and The Creation Covenant* [202]; Syllabus Articles: Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* [76]; Donald Macleod, *Covenant Theology* [4]; Donald Macleod, *Covenant: 2* [7]; Donald Macleod, *Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?* [8]; Donald Macleod, *The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace* [7]; Donald Macleod, *Qualifications for Communion* [7]; Donald Macleod, *The Real Presence* [4]; *Westminster Confession of Faith* 7: Of God's Covenant with Man [1]; *Larger Catechism* Questions 20-22,30-36 [1]; *Shorter Catechism* Questions 12,16,& 20 [1].

Course Assignments

1. **Reading and Course Portfolio (20%)** Each student will build a course portfolio to reflect his studies in the course as well as provide the basis for future study or teaching opportunities. Please see the directions below for completing this assignment.
2. **Doctrinal Précés (20%)** Each student must complete four, one-page précis of 4 assigned topics: *Covenant Theology (Definition, Description, Distinctives, and History)*; *Covenant of Redemption*; *Covenant of Works*; and *Covenant of Grace*.
3. **Term Paper (20%)** Each student must prepare a 6 page research term paper on a topic in Covenant Theology agreed with the professor.
4. **Final Examination (40%)** The Exam will cover reading and lecture material from the whole of the course. Further details will be given.

Instructions for Course Portfolio

The portfolio assignment is designed to reward students for their labors in engaging in the classroom and in assigned reading, and to provide them with a study guide for the final exam—as well as a permanent reference resource for studying and teaching Covenant Theology in the future.

1. Classnotes Assignment:

Inclusion of the student's classnotes in the course notebook will enable the instructor to gauge the quality of classroom listening, comprehension, and notetaking.

2. Reading Notes Assignment:

Please include your notes taken (*typed or neatly scripted*) on reading of Heppe and Macleod.

3. Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) Outline Assignment:

This project calls for the student to develop a concise, typed, outline of the *assigned* chapter of the *WCF* (chapter 7).

4. Ward Synopsis

The student will produce a two-page synopsis of Rowland Ward's *God and Adam*. The synopsis should be in outline form or in abbreviated narrative, should aim to enumerate the key points in each section, and should be as compact and lucid as possible. The goal of the synopsis is for the student to accurately reproduce the flow of the book's argument and its main thrust and points. The synopsis should begin with a paragraph-length statement of the book's thesis and conclusion. Then, an outline of the assigned contents should follow. The student may also want to create a list of the best quotes, and points of weakness or disagreement.

5. Doctrinal Précis

As assigned above

6. Term Paper

As assigned above

7. Portfolio Format

The Course Portfolio is to be submitted as a pdf file, complete with bookmarks for easy location of each set of the above materials.

Course Outline

Introduction to Covenant Theology

What is the Bible?

What is Theology?

What is Covenant Theology?

What is a Covenant? Why study it?

Covenant Theology (History and Objections)

Donald Macleod, *Covenant Theology*.

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 3-63.

WCF 7; *WLC* Questions 20-22, 30-36; and *WSC* Questions 12,16 & 20.

Covenant of Works (or Creation)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 67-87.

Donald Macleod, *Covenant & Federal Theology- Oppressive Legalism?*

Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 281-319.

Rowland Ward, *God and Adam*

Covenant of Grace (Adam)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 91-107.

Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* [371-409]

Covenant of Grace (Noah)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 109-125.

Covenant of Grace (Abraham)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 127-146.

Covenant of Grace (Abraham)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 147-166.

Donald Macleod, *The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace* (all),

Qualifications for Communion (all), and *The Real Presence* (all).

Covenant of Grace (Moses)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 167-199.

Dispensationalism

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 201-227.

Covenant of Grace (David)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 229-269.

Covenant of Grace (Jeremiah-New)

O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 271-300.

Covenant of Grace (New)

Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 3-182.

Covenant of Grace (New)

Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 185-342.

Academic Recourses Available on BRITE Website

On the BRITE website (www.brite-va.org) you will find the Academic Resources Webpage (<https://www.brite-va.org/academic-resources/>). There you will find an ever-expanding treasure trove of resources to aid you in our studies, research, and writing during your time at BRITE. While not every class may demand the same level of research and writing rigor, you're likely to find something on that webpage each semester that will benefit you. Check back often to that webpage. The items there are curated by the BRITE faculty in order to be of assistance to you: guidelines as to how you should format your formal academic papers, examples of well-written course papers to guide your own work, Open Access (free) journal article databases to aid you in your academic writing and research, and even a growing catalogue of instructional YouTube videos which will be of assistance to you. We also have access to a variety of theological journals online via Galaxie Journals which may be of interest to you in your writing and research. Please ask the professor for information on how to log on to this e-journal portal.