

Class Objectives – After this class you will be able to:

- Define the “two working goals” for NT Theology.
- Discuss the presuppositions conveyed by the “two working goals” for NT Theology.
- Identify some dangers and benefits of doing NT Theology.
- Recognize selected names and methods in contemporary NT scholarship.

Key Terms:

- Exegesis / Eisegesis
- F. C. Baur
- Rudolf Bultmann
- Adolf Schlatter
- Donald Guthrie
- George Eldon Ladd
- Nicholas Thomas "Tom" Wright
- Canon

History and Methodology of New Testament Theology (cont.)

I. Task of NT Theology (cont.):

A. Two working goals

1. To inductively synthesize the major theological themes in each NT author within their historical backdrop.
2. To further appreciate the organic unity of NT Theology in the midst of the diversity of its expression.

B. Presuppositions

1. The superintending work of the Holy Spirit does not obviate individual human expression in the writing of inspired and inerrant documents.

2. Each author makes a distinct theological contribution.

3. Each author's contribution must be viewed in its historical context

4. There is a unity to NT Theology

C. Dangers

1. can over-theologize choices made by NT authors
2. can overemphasize distinctions and ignore commonalities
3. can overemphasize commonalities and ignore distinctions
4. can become a mere historical enterprise without application for the Church today

D. Benefits

1. new insight for NT teaching
2. new material for systematic theology
3. can better read the work of the author

II. Method of NT Theology:

A. Diversity of Methods

1. F. C. Baur (Tübingen school) — coordinate NT evidence with Hegelian philosophy

2. R. Bultmann — disassociate the work of the apostles from the historical reality of Jesus, then demythologize the apostolic claims.

3. A. Schlatter (Erlangen school) — associate the work of the apostles with historical reality of Jesus, yet still begin with Jesus and witness development in the apostolic tradition

4. D. Guthrie — systematize the theology of the NT, but allow each corpus to speak for itself within that synthesis
5. G. E. Ladd — allow each corpus to speak for itself and synthesize within that corpus
6. N. T. Wright — show the overall coherence of the work of Jesus and the teachings of Paul against the backdrop of 1st c. Judaism

B. Toward a Working Methodology

1. Understand that the task is interpretive
2. Affirm that the task is inductive
3. Keep in mind the task
4. Acknowledge that the early church believed itself to be following Jesus

III. Introduction to Canon:

A. Why bother?

B. Five contemporary views

1. Naïve Conservatism
2. Historically Informed Conservatism
3. Catholic/Orthodox
4. Pure Historicism (w/acceptance of canon)
5. Antagonistic Historicism

IV. Questions for Consideration:

1. How is doing NT Theology possible in our contemporary context?
2. How would you characterize your view of the Christian canon?