

INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: GOD, BIBLE, HOLY SPIRIT

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SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In his classic book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer explains, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God himself, and the portentous fact about any man is not what he may at a given time say or do but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.” This course offers an opportunity to broaden and deepen our understanding of the God whom we love and worship.

To this end, we will explore Christian teaching regarding the nature and attributes of God, the persons of the Trinity, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, and the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We will better understand how one God has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We will gain greater confidence in Scripture as the inspired, truthful, authoritative, sufficient and powerful Word of God. We will discover how the Holy Spirit enables us to grow in conformity to the image of Christ and empowers God’s people to bear witness about Christ to the ends of the earth. We will examine these doctrines as they are taught in Scripture and confessed by the church so that we may better live to the glory of the triune God. (2 IBS credits—Theology and Apologetics)

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will learn foundational truths regarding the major doctrinal areas of revelation, theology proper, bibliology, and pneumatology.
2. Students will develop a greater appreciation for the study of theology explicitly based on Scripture as they engage in critical thinking about theological issues.
3. Students will understand better some aspects of the CCC *Statement of Faith* (Intro, 1, 9, 10, 11).
4. Students will gain a deeper confidence in and appreciation for Scripture as the inspired, truthful (inerrant), authoritative, sufficient, necessary, clear, and powerful Word of God.
5. Students will grow in wonder, thankfulness, faith, obedience, devotion, and love in their relationship with the triune God.
6. Students will seek for greater conformity to the image of Jesus Christ through the resources of the Holy Spirit and become more dependent on his work in their ministries.

REQUIRED TEXT

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

For helpful summaries of the doctrines covered in this course, see the *ESV Study Bible*, “Biblical Doctrine: An Overview”

Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011). Written as a companion to Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*, this book covers all the same topics and helps you understand what Christians throughout the history of the church have believed about these doctrines.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading (20%)

Students will read chapters 1-14, 30, 39 in Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*. Reading should be done thoroughly and thoughtfully, with a sincere attempt to learn all one can from this reading. You will report your reading at the end of the class.

2. Discussion Forums (30%)

At the end of each module you will post a thoughtful response to a theological question related to material covered in the lecture and/or reading for that session. You will also comment on two other posts from classmates.

3. Theology project (50%)

You will write a paper in which you present Scriptural teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The goal is to be as comprehensive as you can be, exposing the richness of the Bible’s own teaching on the Holy Spirit. In order to write this paper, you will need to take the following steps:

a) *Choose*: Pick one of the following options:

- the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of Luke
- the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of Acts
- the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of 1 Corinthians
- the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of Galatians

- b) *Explore*: Read through the whole book noting every reference to the Holy Spirit. For each reference to the Holy Spirit, record your observations. Here are some questions you might try to answer: What do you learn from this passage about the person of the Holy Spirit (deity, personality)? What do you learn about the work the Holy Spirit (in the life of Christ, the church, unbelievers, believers)? Does the passage say anything about the how the Holy Spirit relates to the Father and/or Son? You may find it helpful to see what commentators say about your passage (e.g., ESV Study Bible notes). You might also consult at the Scripture index in Grudem's *Systematic Theology* to see if he discusses any of the key passages in your book.
- c) *Synthesize*: What stands out to you regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit in this book? Do you see any recurring themes? What patterns do you observe about the working of the Holy Spirit? Are certain aspects of salvation associated with Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit relate to other divine persons? Consider how best to organize these teachings into a systematic and coherent whole.
- d) *Write*: Drawing your work together, write a paper (7-8 pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font) summarizing what you learned. To the best of your ability, present all that your book says about the Holy Spirit. Endeavor to be faithful to the intended meanings of each individual teaching in its context, while displaying how they these contribute to a holistic understanding of this doctrine. Remember that this is not a verse by verse commentary but a carefully crafted synthesis of the doctrinal teaching of your book on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. You will need to think about how best to structure your presentation. In the last page of your paper, address the following questions for personal application: What was the most helpful thing you learned about the Holy Spirit from your study? What implications does your study have for Christian growth? What implications does this have for ministry?

COURSE CALENDAR

- Module 1 Introduction to course and *Doctrine of Revelation*
Read Grudem ch. 1
- Module 2 *Doctrine of God (Incommunicable Attributes)*
Read Grudem chs. 9, 10 & 13
- Module 3 *Doctrine of God (Communicable Attributes)*
Read Grudem ch. 11
- Module 4 *Doctrine of God (Communicable Attributes / God as Trinity)*
Read Grudem ch. 12
- Module 5 *Doctrine of God (Doctrine of the Trinity)*
Read Grudem ch. 14
- Module 6 *Doctrine of Scripture (Canon and Inspiration)*
Read Grudem chs. 2, 4 & 7
- Module 7 *Doctrine of Scripture (Inerrancy, Sufficiency, Necessity and Authority)*
Read Grudem chs. 3 & 6
- Module 8 *Doctrine of Scripture (Personhood and Deity)*
Read Grudem chs. 5 & 8
- Module 9 *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Holy Spirit in the New Covenant)*
Read Grudem ch. 30
- Module 10 *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Work of the Spirit in the Christian Life)*
Read Grudem ch. 39; Theology Project/Paper due; Course Reading Report due

GRADING SCALE

94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
84-89	B
82-83	B-
80-81	C+
74-79	C
72-73	C-
0-71	No credit

*You will need a grade of 72 or better to pass the course and obtain the required IBS credit.