GRACE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

The knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness

ST305: ECCLESIOLOGY & ESCHATOLOGY

2027

When: Thursdays 7-9pm. **Starts:** 4 March, 2027

Where: Online (if you are in Auckland, you can attend in person, please discuss with me)

Lecturer: Geoff Macpherson, BA, MDiv., GradCertDiv

1. BIBLICAL CASE

- **John 17:3** *And this is eternal life, that they may know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
- **1 Peter 2:18** *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*
- **Ephesians 1: 22-23** *H*e (Jesus) subjected all *things* under his feet and gave him *as* head over all *things* to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all *things* in every *way*.
- **Matthew 24:14** *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

2. GRADUATE IDEALS. *At GTC we believe that the ideal graduate is someone who, because of Christlikeness and kingdom focus, by hard work, a commitment to a lifetime of learning, becomes mighty in the Scriptures, and commits themselves to serving the church and evangelising the world.*

3. COURSE DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE

3.1. **Description.** Sourced from the Bible, shaped by tradition, structured by logic, and informed by our experience, this course introduces the student to the theology of what the Bible has to say about the church and the events of the future. In the first half of the course, we will seek to answer questions about the nature, purpose, organisation, and marks of the church. In the second half we seek answers to common questions about death, immortality, the return of Christ, the nature of heaven and hell, and the meaning of 'the millennium.'

This course follows the theological discipline of Systematic Theology to find the answers to these questions. Systematic Theology formulates answers to theological questions by using the whole of the Bible. It attempts to discover what the whole Bible has to say on certain topics, how those topics interrelate, and then arranges them 'systematically'.

The technical terms for the topics in this study are ***ecclesiology*** *(about the church)* ***and eschatology*** *(about the end times).*

3.2. **Purpose.** Why study systematic theology? The main reason for a student to study systematic theology is to strengthen your knowledge, convictions, attitudes, and behaviour, so that you can serve the Church of Jesus Christ with her mission to have Him worshipped as Lord by everyone on earth. In pastoral ministry, most questions we face are about topics or issues rather than about biblical passages. Systematics helps answer those questions.

To quote James Packer: *"Theology helps the preacher as the coach helps the tennis player…. As the coach is the embodiment of decades of experience in playing tennis, so theology is the embodiment of centuries of study, debate and interpretative interaction as the church has sought to understand the Scriptures. One can play tennis after a fashion without ever having been coached, and one can preach from the Bible after a fashion without ever having encountered serious theology in a serious way. But, just as one is likely to play better with coaching, so one is likely to preach better—more perceptively, more searchingly, more fruitfully—when helped by theology; and so, the preacher who is theologically competent will, other things being equal, be more use to the church."* (J.I. Packer, "The Preacher as Theologian," p. 316)[1]

4. COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

4.1. General Objectives. This course is designed to give you a deeper understanding of what the Bible teaches about ***the church*** *and the* ***events of the end times.*** The goal is to expand your knowledge and increase your capacity to worship. A greater capacity to worship will help you draw others to marvel at the glory of God. Greater knowledge will inform your skills in ministry. Pray that rather than simply becoming a 'know-all' or expert, you would rather be someone who's heart (attitudes) and life (behaviour) is being conformed into what God desires.

4.2. Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should demonstrate growth in the following areas:

[1] Note, I recently tried to relocate this quotation, but cannot verify its source.

*4.2.1. A clearer **understanding** of the nature and role of the church. You will also have a better understanding of those events that relate to our future as believers.*

*4.2.2. With humility, a greater confidence to **define and defend** the biblical church and also to **present** a clear view of eschatological ideas. The student should be able to **teach** others the truth, **correct** unbiblical ideas, all the while willingly **serving** God's people.*

*4.2.3. **Understand** how these truths challenge our own cultural assumptions and multicultural worldviews.*

*4.2.4. See how this helps us to be missionaries in our cultural **context** that longs for authentic community and wonders what the future will look like.*

4.3. My learning goal is: _____...

5. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Credit students should read through this outline and ask any questions about things that you are unclear on. If any of the tasks are not suitable for your optimal learning, you are welcome to discuss an alternative that is acceptable to the tutor.

Activity	**% grade**
Class attendance	5%
Readings completed	5%
Class Presentation	20%
Assignment	35%
Examination	35%
Total	**100%**

5.1. Classes: Attend and participate in the classes. We learn when we are present and engaged with the material. We learn better when we think through what is being presented and discuss it with others. Come to class with questions and ideas. Online students to arrange with the tutor the best way for them to participate in the class and get the most from their experience. **5% of your final grade is attendance.**

5.2. Reading: Credit students are required to read through the assigned readings. The goal is **800 pages** of text. **5% of your final grade is your completed readings.**

5.3. Class presentations (20%): *Prepare an introductory overview of an allocated doctrine to present to the class of no more than two-A4 pages. Using the outline provided, prepare a summary of the doctrine in a class handout. You will have about 10 minutes (depending on the number of students) to introduce and explain the doctrine using the summary (do not just read the summary notes). The class will ask you questions based on the notes and presentation for about 10 minutes.*

5.4. Assignments: Credit students are required to complete a research paper. The most significant learning occurs when we are required to research a topic and then repackage it in our own words. Assignments are not merely a way of testing your knowledge, but also your understanding of the topic. The GTC library has valuable resources for this. **35% of your final grade will come from your assignment.**

Research and write **2,500-3,00 words** on a topic to be announced.

5.5. Examination: An examination is an opportunity for you to review everything that you have learned and attempt to recall it in your own words. If you are concerned about reading and writing in a limited time, or English is your second language, please talk to your tutor about how we can assist you. **35% of your final grade will come from your examination results.**

6. Learning Resources

6.1. Required Reading: (We recommend purchasing these books for your own library)

Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Crossway, 2019)

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* Vol.4, Part 2, 'The Spirit Creates New Community'

Darrell Bock. et. al. *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* (Zondervan, 1999)

Author	Title	Publisher
Allison, Greg	*50 Core Truths of the Christian Faith*	Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2018
*Bavinck, Herman	*Reformed Dogmatics: Vol.4*	Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2008
Berkouwer, G.C.	*Studies in Dogmatics: The Church; The Sacraments, and The Return of Christ*	Michigan: Eerdmans, 1973
*Bock, et.al.	*Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*	Michigan: Zondervan, 1999
Calvin, John	*Institutes of Christian Religion, The* (Henry Beveridge revised translation)	Massachusetts: Hendriksen Publishers, 2008
Clowney, Edmund	*The Church*	Illinois: IVP, 1995
Davie, M. ed.	*The New Dictionary of Theology, 2nd Ed.*	Illinois: IVP, 1988, 2016
Ferguson, S. ed	*The New Dictionary of Theology*	Illinois: IVP, 1988, 2008
Frame, John M	*Salvation Belongs to the Lord*	New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2006
Frame, John M	*Systematic Theology: an introduction to Christian belief*	New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2013
Grudem, Wayne	*Systematic Theology, 2nd Ed.*	Leicester: IVP, 2021
Hodge, Charles	*Systematic Theology, vol.3*	Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981
Höhne, David	*The Last Things*	Illinois: IVP, 2019
Horton, Michael	*Covenant and Eschatology*	Louisville: Westminster/JK, 2002
Horton, Michael	*The Christian faith: a systematic theology for pilgrims on the way*	Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011
*Letham, Robert	*Systematic Theology*	Illinois: Crossway, 2019
Migliore, Daniel	*Faith Seeking Understanding*	Michigan: Eerdmans, 2014
Murray, John	*Collected Writings: Systematic Theology. Vol.2*	Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977
Packer, James	*Concise Theology*	
Vos, Geerhardus	*Reformed Dogmatics, Vol.4 Soteriology*	Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015

**I will scan any articles or chapters that are required readings from individual books and put them in the Microsoft Teams Readings folder. I will also upload other readings that I think may be useful into 'Additional Readings'.*

Remember, Google Scholar gives the careful searcher access to the contents of a surprising number of books both old and new.

7. RESEARCH RESOURCES RESEARCH RESOURCES

7.1. Accessing required readings.

7.1.1. GTC library 75 Rogers Road, Manurewa. If you are a student, then you automatically receive library membership and can borrow books from our library for 1-month. Priority is given to credit students. You are welcome to come and use the library at any time between 9am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

We are willing to post out books to students. There will be a postage charge.

7.1.2. Christ College Library: Our friends at Christ College are happy to allow GTC students to be members of their library. While you cannot access their books without a trip to Sydney, for AU$55 per year, you can purchase access to their online database of journals and e-books. This is highly recommended for any credit student. Their librarians have also curated a large list of free online research resources.

To join the Christ College electronic library, email: library@christcollege.edu.au

7.1.3. Purchasing books. Books purchasing in NZ is often expensive and books can take a long time to arrive. Try your local bookstore, Christian bookstore, or online. We also recommend:

Reformers Bookshop (reformers.com.au) in Australia offers students a discount on books. Please use the discount code: **BCD26N**

Grace Books (gracebooks.co.nz) are a NZ Christian bookshop which carries a good stock of books.

7.1.4. Logos Software Library. **Logos Bible Software** is more than simply a Bible search tool. It is also an electronic library where you can purchase many of the books that you need. Once you purchase books, even if you choose to use the free software version, you still own the books. You can now subscribe to a library package at a monthly rate and receive a number of resources. It is worth noting Logos also has a student discount scheme and GTC is registered with Logos.

7.2. Free Bible Software.

TheWord. www.theword.net

Bible Hub www.biblehub.com

STEP Bible www.stepbible.org

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

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Others:

Fees, MS Teams, and Library access: Secretary@gtc.ac.nz

(Note: Please ensure that you have paid your invoice. If you need help, contact us as soon as possible.)