

Class 1: Introduction to Biblical Theology

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[0 : 00] Welcome. So I'll try and be punctual, so let me open this up in a word of prayer. Thank you for coming to this intro to biblical theology.

So let's pray. Our Father in heaven, great are your works, O Lord, studied by all who delight in you. We pray, Lord, as we study your works, your word, that we would increasingly delight in you. We know that we can do nothing apart from you, nothing of spiritual value.

So we pray the Spirit would open up our eyes. Lord, open our minds to understand your word as Jesus did for his disciples. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, good morning. Everyone loves a story. A great story has suspense, high-stakes drama, danger, and unexpected, shocking plot twists.

[1 : 10] Storytellers from J.K. Rowling to Tolkien, from William Shakespeare to George Lucas, have captured our imaginations. And these great stories contain memorable characters, don't they?

Characters like Gandalf, Atticus Finch, Forrest Gump, to Rocky Balboa. Great stories carry us into different worlds.

And stories can help us to see our own world with new eyes. Charles Dickens once noted that the greatest short story ever written was the short story, *The Prodigal Son*.

Our Lord Jesus was a master storyteller, wasn't he? We're familiar with that story of *The Prodigal Son*. The lost, wayward, younger brother who runs off, recklessly spending everything he has until he finds himself fighting with the pigs to eat the slop in the pig pen.

And the elder brother, outwardly moral, but inwardly distant from the father. And who can forget the father in that story? Who runs.

[2 : 20] He runs when his younger son comes home. He threw his arms around him and joyfully embraced him, even when his son was still filthy from eating with the pigs.

And we remember the coldness of the elder brother in that story when he sees his father show grace to the younger brother. And that's a window of a spiritual reality where we learn that God is extravagantly generous.

He's gracious. And he joyfully embraces the repentant sinner that comes home. I wonder if you've ever seen yourself in that story of *The Prodigal Son*. A good story, a well-told story, can help us to see our own world with new eyes.

A story can capture our imaginations. And, you know, it isn't surprising that the Lord Jesus was a master storyteller. Because God, from the beginning, has been weaving an incredible, glorious story in history recorded for us in the books of the Bible.

The Bible tells us the best non-fiction story ever written. It's telling us one majestic story. So this brings us to the topic of this Sunday School series in Biblical Theology.

[3 : 34] So let's begin with the question, What exactly is biblical theology? Is it all theology that's biblical? Not quite.

Although I hope that will be true of our theology. Biblical theology is actually a technical term. It's the discipline of understanding how the wonderfully diverse parts of the Bible, 66 books in total, fit together into one grand story centered on Christ.

So I'll say that again. It's the discipline of understanding how the wonderfully diverse parts of the Bible, 66 books in total, fit together into one grand story centered on Christ.

So perhaps the best way to explain biblical theology is to contrast it with systematic theology. So when we hear the word theology, we're typically thinking about systematic theology.

You know, the Bible isn't neatly organized into question and answer format, right? One of the great challenges for any student of the scripture is that when we quickly realize that the scriptures don't explain their coherent set of beliefs one topic at a time.

[4 : 53] Instead, the Bible is a collection of 66 books written in many different genres over the span of 1500 years by some 40 authors addressing multiple topics in various ways in different circumstances.

So getting your arms around even one topic is incredibly difficult. Enter systematic theology.

Systematic theology is a topical approach to understanding the Bible.

So a systematician typically will take one topic. He'll gather all the verses, find every reference in the Bible on that one topic, synthesize those verses, and he'll typically come up with a succinct answer to that topical question.

So for some examples of systematic theology. The first question in the Westminster Catechism.

What is the chief end of man? Answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Or the first question in the Heidelberg Catechism. What is your only comfort in life and death? I'm going to read the whole thing because it's just so wonderful. Answer. That I am not my own, but belong body and soul in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

[6 : 06] He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head.

Indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Or what does the Bible say about angels? What does the Bible say about capital punishment? So that's systematic theology. That's not what this class is about. Although systematic theology is an important discipline for any Christian to study and understand.

So I tend to think that this discipline provides necessary guardrails for us. It's helpful to know what all the scriptures say about a given topic when we're in the weeds of trying to understand a specific verse.

So if you're walking through the streets of New York City, it's helpful to have a map or a Google Earth view on your phone. So you don't get lost in the city. You take a wrong turn and end somewhere that you don't want to end up.

[7 : 15] And likewise, systematic theology guards our doctrine when reading the Bible. So I want to say systematic theology complements biblical theology and vice versa.

So in contrast, we have here the discipline of biblical theology. It's a way of reading the Bible. A hermeneutic. It's tracing that grand story with all its twists and its turns centered on Christ.

So the Bible presents a drama of God's love for us. And it's learning to trace that narrative that has a glorious beginning in creation. A crisis. Namely, the presence of sin.

And the holiness of God. And God's original intention for the world. And a resolution of that crisis through our Lord Jesus Christ. The hero of the story.

And a restoration back to glory better than the way it was before. With some unexpected plot twists along the way. So biblical theology ultimately will help us get us out of our false stories. And into the real story of the world.

[8 : 17] We learn to live our lives within the story of the scripture. By learning biblical theology. So in addition to tracing the story.

Biblical theology is concerned with getting into the biblical author's mind. Seeing the events through the author's eyes. As he describes the world and the events that are unfolding.

Let's talk about some examples of biblical theology. I should mention there are many different subsets within biblical theology. But in every case. You are careful to pay attention to the nuances within the Bible.

And putting in the larger context of the biblical storyline. So for example. A biblical theologian may ask the question. What are the particular set of theological emphases within the book of Exodus?

Or how does Isaiah contribute to our understanding of God as a savior in the Bible? Or what does the book of Hebrews contribute to the canon? Or look at Paul's writings.

[9 : 20] And how does he differ from the apostle John. And how he describes the kingdom of God. So you are careful to look at words and arguments. In their literary historical context. Yet another discipline.

Is asking how a certain theme works itself out through the scriptures. So let's do a small exercise in biblical theology. For example. What does the Bible say about the temple?

In the Bible. The temple is described as a place. Where God would dwell with his people. God's presence. The Shekinah glory. That cloud of glory. Initially came to reside in a tabernacle. Remember that mobile tent in Exodus. And later in the temple at Jerusalem. But the temple wasn't a physical structure only. God carefully instructed Israel on how to build the temple. And through that design. We learn that the temple retold a story. Of how God originally dwelt with his people. In the Garden of Eden.

[10:21] So the temple wasn't just a building. But it was a symbol. And that symbol pointed to God's desire to once again dwell with his people. As the Bible progresses.

As the story unfolds. God's presence departs from the temple. Right? And the temple was destroyed. Because of the people's rebellion. And the holy God cannot dwell with a sinful people. And even when the people rebuilt the temple in Ezra and Nehemiah. God did not dwell there. And the Bible is asking the question. Would God once again dwell with his people?

We learn the temple is a shadow of a reality that will come later in the Bible. In the opening book of John. We read this about Jesus. And the word became flesh.

And dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only son from the father. Full of grace and truth. So Jesus dwelt among us.

[11:21] Literally means Jesus tabernacled among us. So Jesus is described as the tabernacle. Where God became human. Jesus is the ultimate reality to which the temple always pointed to.

And Jesus claimed throughout the gospels. That he was the new temple. Right? Jesus said tear down this temple. And in three days I will build it again. Referring to himself. And after the resurrection.

The apostles say Christians are many temples. Since we are indwelt by the spirit. Paul in 1 Corinthians 3 would say. Do you not know that you are God's temple? And that God's spirit dwells in you? In the last verses of the Bible.

John writes about his vision of the new heavens and the new earth. After Jesus returns in Revelation 21 and 22. And John sees a majestic depiction of Jerusalem.

But something is missing there. There's no temple. And why would there be? Jesus is right there with his people. Right? What was lost in the beginning was now restored.

[12:18] God is dwelling with his people once again. Just like in the Garden of Eden. So this is a brief biblical theology of the temple. It traces the story of the temple through the scriptures.

And you can see how it might be helpful to understand how a theme plays itself out. A profitable exercise that D.A. Carson gives his incoming students. In his intro to biblical theology class.

At a Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Is going through the last two chapters of the Bible.

Revelation 21 and 22. And listing all the themes and images. That John is taking from the first two chapters of the Bible.

Genesis 1 and 2. And there are dozens and dozens of themes. That find their climax. In those last two chapters of the Bible. So in this class. We'll spend five weeks.

Five weeks. And we'll walk through some of the big stories in the Bible together. So today we'll discuss how to do biblical theology. So it's different from what we'll do in the remaining four weeks.

[13:15] So today may feel a little more abstract. Or theoretical. As we walk through the principles of biblical theology. But I want us to get on the same page. As we start tracing some of the big storylines through the scripture.

Next week, Lord willing. We'll discuss the storyline of God's kingdom through the covenants. Then creation and new creation. And then Nick Pizzensi will walk us through the storyline of God's people or the church.

And then the theme of sacrifice. Okay. So let's start with the question. Why should we read the Bible this way as a story centered on Christ? Why should we do it? So if you turn to Luke 24.

Luke 24. Verse 26. You may recall one of the first things Jesus did after the resurrection. Was give his disciples a course on biblical theology.

On the road to Emmaus. Now a disclaimer. I guarantee you. That this class will not be as good as Jesus' class was on the road to Emmaus. So we'll have to ask them. The disciples what that was like in heaven.

[14:20] But if you look at verse 26. In chapter 24. Jesus said this. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets. He interpreted to them in all the scriptures. The things concerning himself. Jesus here is teaching his disciples on how to interpret the scriptures properly.

How to trace the story that is centered on Christ. And look down at verse 44 in that same chapter. Jesus said to them. These are my words. That I spoke to you. While I was still with you.

That everything written about me in the law of Moses. And the prophets and the Psalms. Must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And said to them.

Thus it is written. That the Christ should suffer. And on the third day rise from the dead. And that repentance. For the forgiveness of sins. Should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.

[15:20] Beginning from Jerusalem. So what books of the Bible is he referring to in verse 44 that must be fulfilled? That's the entire Old Testament. The law of Moses, prophets, and Psalms.

That's the entire Old Testament must be fulfilled. And verse 45 is striking, isn't it? It says Jesus opened their minds. To understand what the Old Testament actually teaches.

So friends, without faith, you can read the Old Testament and not see Jesus anywhere. The disciples are learning to read the Bible supernaturally. Jesus is opening their minds.

To understand the scriptures. So the entirety of the Old Testament can be summed up in verse 46.

The Christ should suffer. And on the third day rise from the dead.

And the repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem. So here's one illustration of how to think about this. What's that stunning piece of news we learn at the end of the second Star Wars movie?

[16:20] Stunning. My apologies if you haven't seen the movie. And I'm going to spoil it for you. But that stunning piece of news is that Darth Vader is Luke Skywalker's father.

It's shocking. And there's some great YouTube videos of parents videoing their children learning that for the first time. They're just shocked. So the news that Darth Vader is Luke's father shapes how you watch the rest of the movies, doesn't it?

How did Anakin become Darth Vader? What's going to happen between him and Luke and their conflict? That shapes how you watch the movies. And likewise, the coming of Jesus, the cross and resurrection shapes how you read the Bible.

Elsewhere, think about how Jesus chides the Jews in John 5 for not recognizing that the scriptures are all about him. In John 5, Jesus told the Pharisees, You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

It is they that bear witness about me. Our authority in saying that the Old Testament bears witness about Jesus comes from the fact that Jesus himself understood this to be true.

[17:25] Christ's attitude toward the Old Testament should shape our attitude as his disciples. And as you read the New Testament, you quickly realize the apostles saw this very same thing. The Old Testament bore witness about Jesus in light of the cross and resurrection.

Graham Goldsworthy, a biblical scholar from Australia, estimated that the New Testament has at least 1,600 direct quotations from the Old Testament and several thousand more allusions.

Or put another way, there are only 12 chapters in the entire New Testament that don't directly reference the Old Testament. So the more we study the New Testament, the more we realize the apostles share the conviction that Jesus had.

When the apostles are expounding a topic, all of them are building off the foundation of the Old Testament, what it started. So if you look at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul will use the word word and gospel interchangeably.

He says, Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

[18:30] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. So Paul had the same conviction that Jesus had.

The gospel, the good news of what Christ has done, is what the scriptures testify about. And if you're not familiar with the story of this good news, I'm glad to share with you, friends. It's a joyous proclamation that there is only one God.

And this God is holy, and he made us in his image. And as image bearers, he created us to love him and to love each other. But we've sinned against this good God, haven't we?

Our own conscience bears witness that this is true. Because of this sin, we all rightly deserve God's wrath and condemnation. And God's wrath isn't just personal, terrible, certain, horrifying. It's also completely right. God is not some crooked judge that can be bribed or who can just sweep our sin under the rug. No, Psalm 7 verse 11 tells us that God is a righteous judge who feels indignation every day.

[19 : 36] Because God is consistently opposed to evil with every fiber in his being. And there's nowhere for us to hide from this God who knows and sees all.

But the joyous news is this. That while we were dead in our sin, in his great love, the Father sent his son Jesus, fully God and fully man, to rescue his people.

Jesus lived a perfect life, never sinning. And willingly went to a cross to take on the wrath of God as a substitute in our place. And God poured out his wrath on Jesus that we deserved.

And on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing that his sacrifice was acceptable to the Father. And that every last drop of God's wrath had been exhausted. And God now commands everyone everywhere to turn from their sins and trust in Christ alone.

And we are born again to a new life. We become new creations. Isn't that glorious? We are brought into the church as a new people of God, adopted as sons and daughters.

[20 : 40] And one day, his redeemed people will joyously dwell with Christ forever. And that's the glorious good news of the gospel. And this is the story that every book from Genesis to Revelation testifies to. As Jesus said, the Christ should suffer in a third day rise from the dead.

And repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations. Now, some people would have a major objection to reading the Bible this way.

Some will focus on the text as individual documents and divorce them from the rest of the storyline of Scripture. So, if you've ever read some of the historical critical method scholars, they will do just this.

If you've taken a Bible class in a university, maybe in your undergrad years, you may have done this. Some of these critical scholars don't care what's in the canon. They pull a text apart and claim it was written by multiple sources, written at different times for different purposes, with no coherent story unifying them all.

Now, I'm not saying there's no place for the historical critical method. I'm not saying that at all. I mean, certain books in the Bible were certainly written by multiple people at different times, such as Proverbs and Psalms. Nonetheless, there are some in this field who would deny the Bible as telling one single coherent story.

[21 : 51] So, in doing biblical theology, reading the Bible the way the apostles read the Bible, we must make certain assumptions about the Bible. So, I'm going to put our cards on the table here.

And there are at least four assumptions you have to have about the Bible to do biblical theology.

And the first assumption is this. There is one author. There is one author.

There are 66 books of the Bible, but ultimately, there is only one author. There is one primary author, that is God himself, who speaks through his spirit, working and speaking to people from beginning to end.

But, biblical theology recognizes there are unique circumstances and unique personalities of these authors coming together to form part of this organic unity. So, it is both true that there are multiple authors and one author at the same time.

The Bible really is the manifold wisdom of God. Second, it is progressive revelation. It is progressive revelation. What does this mean?

[22 : 52] The Bible is special revelation about himself and his plans to his people. But God has not done this all at once. Right? He has done this progressively or in different stages.

So, imagine a light dimmer in a room. It begins dimly, but then the light gets brighter as you keep turning the knob. And this is similar to how the Bible works. We know more about God now than the days of the Old Testament.

And the opening lines of Hebrews makes this very point. It says, It says, So, Jesus tells us more about the nature of God than the entire Old Testament combined.

Jesus is the exact image of God's nature. Jesus said, If you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

Now, Jesus isn't the Father himself. But he has the exact imprint of his nature. Right?

We can better see God now than the saints in the Old Testament did. That's progressive revelation.

Or another example of progressive revelation is look at Job's statement in Job chapter 9, verse 33,

a well-known verse.

[24 : 09] Job said this, For God is not a man as I am that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no mediator between us who might lay his hands on us both. If you think about it, it seems like Job is denying there's a mediator between us and God, who can bring us before God to plead our cause.

We want to tell him, actually, Job, there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, as 1 Timothy 2.15 says. Jesus is our one mediator, mediating for us at the cross by taking on God's wrath for us, but also laying a sympathetic hand on us in our suffering, because Jesus himself suffered.

That's what Job really wanted, but he didn't know that. There are hints about this in the Old Testament, but it doesn't become clear until Jesus comes. So we need to keep progressive revelation in mind as we read the Bible.

Third assumption, although there is a unity of a single story, so recognizing the diversity of biblical text, we realize the Bible, the books of the Bible were written for different reasons, with different authors, using different terminology.

So some examples of some of that in the Bible. The Gospel of John, that we just preached through here at Trinity, was written to help us to know and believe in Jesus as the Christ.

[25 : 25] John tells us that. While the book of Hebrews is emphasizing not falling away by looking over our shoulders and going back into our former manner of life. It seems like the audience of Hebrews were dealing with a lot of guilt.

If you recall, the author keeps exhorting them to draw near in confidence, with full assurance since Christ cleanses us from a guilty conscience. In contrast, the book of Exodus proclaims a God that saves his people.

Exodus describes a God who is utterly holy, powerful to save, perfectly faithful, unrelenting in justice, and abounding in compassion. God tells the people in Exodus, you cannot see my face and live.

And even in that statement, Exodus wants to bring us face to face with this God in the text. An unrivaled, majestic God who saves his people and shatters his enemies. And the book of Leviticus, let's talk about the book of Leviticus, is teaching us that we are sinful and God is holy.

And how are we to relate to God in light of that reality? The book of Leviticus is located at the center of the Pentateuch. The very center of the first five books of the Bible. And if you look at Leviticus in its literary context, it's written in a very specific pattern called a chiasm.

[26 : 45] Like opening a Russian egg, a chiasm means to point the reader to the very center where both sides meet. And at the very center of Leviticus, which is the center of the entire Pentateuch, God institutes the Day of Atonement.

Yom Kippur for Israel. So this is the day where the appointed high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to sprinkle blood over the mercy seat.

And as Hebrews tells us, the fact that this had to be repeated every single year signals to us that it wasn't a final solution to sin. A greater sacrifice would need to come. So at the center of the Pentateuch, God is teaching his people that a greater sacrifice would need to be made to solve the problem of sin.

Two more. Colossians tells us that Christ is not just prominent, he is preeminent in the church, in our walk as Christians, in our growth. And Jude was written to combat false teaching in the church. So we could list more examples, but you get the point, right? There's a diversity and a unity at the same time within the books of the Bible. Another thing about this idea of diversity, the diversity of biblical texts also means the authors use different terminology.

[28 : 05] So, in other words, they may use the same words, but in different ways. In biblical theology, we'll let each part of Scripture speak with their own voice. And we'll work to see how those voices fit into the overall choir of the message of Scripture.

For example, Paul will use the term called differently than Jesus did. When Paul uses the term called, that means you are saved.

What theologians will call the effectual call. So Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 says this, So if you are called, the message of Christ crucified, the gospel, is the power of God.

If you are not called, then the gospel is foolishness and a stumbling block. Or think about Romans 8.28. Paul says this, Compare that to Jesus' use of the term called.

For many are called, but few are chosen. Matthew 22. So theologians will call that the general call. So Paul is using a word with a very technical meaning, differently than the general call in the book of Matthew.

[29 : 23] So biblical theology lets different parts of Scripture speak with their own voice. And lastly, there are different genres of Scripture. And like I said, God did not give us a systematic theology.

Instead, the Scriptures contain historical narratives, apocalyptic literature, prophecy, poetry, wisdom literature, epistles, parables. So you don't read a poem or a comic strip the same way you read a biography of George Washington.

Likewise, you don't read the Song of Solomon the same way you read Paul's letter to the Romans. Right? We understand that. And each genre really deserves its own Sunday school class. But our takeaway here is that the Bible is incredibly diverse and must be read on its own terms.

But each part testifies to one primary glorious end, Christ and Him crucified. So these are some things we must make when doing biblical theology. There is one author, progressive revelation, a unity and diversity of biblical texts, and centered on Christ.

So let's talk about how to do biblical theology. How to do biblical theology. What tools do we need to do this? Well, the first tool, the first tool is exegesis or exposition.

[30 : 32] You may have heard of that word, exegesis or exposition. Biblical theology prizes literary and historical context. That means the reader must be careful interpreting each text by analyzing what the human and what the divine author intended to communicate.

So in some ways, the emphasis in exposition is what the human author intended to communicate to its audience. So this is called the grammatical historical method. And so reading a text without the grammatical historical method is like listening to a baseball game without understanding the rules of baseball.

You know, it makes little sense to how the game is unfolding if you don't understand the rules of baseball. And likewise, we need the grammatical historical method to understand how the Bible is speaking to its audience. One classic example of how not to read the Bible is that you should not do this.

Imagine a person who never read the Bible before flipped to Matthew 27, verse 5. Matthew said of Judas, the man who had betrayed Jesus for money, that he, that is Judas, threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed and went and hanged himself.

Then imagine this person turned to Luke 10 where Jesus said, go and do likewise. So, Judas. We would never read the Bible like that, right? Are we to conclude that Jesus wants us to throw down our money and hang ourselves?

[31 : 52] Of course not. That's ridiculous. We understand when interpreting the Bible, context is key. As D.A. Carson once said, a text without a context is a pretext to a proof text.

So we don't want to be pulling out verses out of context to try and prove something in the Bible. We want to read each verse in its proper context. So to do this, we ask ourselves questions.

Like, how are these sentences connected? What does this paragraph mean? What's the general flow of the argument to this point? Is the author using a specific word with a technical meaning that I should be aware of?

And behind the text are a number of additional questions about the historical context. Is there a cultural context that we should be aware of? So the beliefs of the Pharisees or Sadducees within the Second Temple Judaism.

Are there issues of history or geography that shed light on the meaning? The dealings between the Jews and Samaritans in the parable of the Good Samaritan. What literary genre is this?

[32 : 49] So the first and most important step in biblical theology is exposition. The second tool is examining a text within the storyline of the scripture.

And this examines a text in view of the entire plot of the Bible. So our God is the Lord of history, right? And God sent forth his Son at a specific defined point in history.

And 1 Peter 1.10 says this. It says, So this means the Spirit was moving the prophets to proclaim messages of future grace through the suffering of this Messiah, this Christ who would come.

And the prophets and even the angels, as 1 Peter says, long to see what we see. The prophets long to see how God would fulfill these promises of future grace through the sufferings and glories of this Messiah.

So we can view a text in light of the overall plot that finds its climax in Christ. So of course we can't expect to do this unless we understand the way the Old Testament functions as a part of the Bible. [34 : 06] So we have to understand the sweep of Old Testament history. So the timeline in the handout in the back there, I found to be a helpful illustration of a Google Earth view of Old Testament history.

So if you look at that, it talks about the narratives, the major events, and just like a little chart that kind of shows the history of Israel from like a macro perspective. I thought it was helpful. So that's the storyline tool when reading the Bible. The third tool after the plot is looking at promises or prophecies.

So Mark Dever once said the entire Old Testament can be summed up in two words, promises made. And the New Testament can be summed up as promises kept. So God made that first gospel promise of a Savior that will crush the serpent in the opening chapters of Genesis. Or think about the promise God gave to Abraham to provide an offspring that would bless the entire world. So to orient ourselves in the storyline of the Scriptures, when we see a promise that's made, we want to ask ourselves, how does God keep that promise?

[35 : 12] And you know, some promises we are still waiting for God to keep. And believing in those promises requires faith from us as Christians. And faith comes by hearing and trusting in God's promises. So just like our spiritual ancestors in the Old Testament, we're living by faith.

Right? Trusting that God keeps his promises. So that's the third tool, promises. Fourth, fourth is, no, that's the third.

The third tool, the second tool is promises. The third tool is types. Types. So this might, this is probably where biblical theology may have seen this before.

It's quite unique. So a third tool is types. The biblical term for this, for types, is shadows. So understanding typology is important because if we don't understand this, then we won't understand the New Testament's interpretation of the Old.

So consider what the writer of Hebrews says. Hebrews 10, verse 1. For instance, the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities.

[36 : 20] It can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. So the author of Hebrews is saying the sacrifices in Leviticus was only a shadow or type.

The real sacrifice is Christ. So in biblical theology, the type is often called the shadow. The anti-type is the fulfillment. So in other words, this shadow, this type, was just a symbolic pointing ahead to the reality, the real thing, the anti-type.

So this is platonic language. If you're familiar with the Plato's cave story, the person sees a shadow on the cave wall, but when he leaves the cave, he then sees the reality.

And the author of Hebrews is drawing upon this idea. The shadows are found in the Old Covenant. The real thing, the reality, is what we have in the New Covenant. That's really what the entire book of Hebrews is about.

The angels, the law, the priests, the sacrifices, the temple, the covenant, the psalms, all point toward the reality of Christ. So Hebrews is arguing to Jews who are tempted to go back into Judaism, when you have the reality, why would you go back to the shadow in the cave?

[37 : 32] Like, don't go back into the cave when you have the reality here in Christ. So the authors of the New Testament are presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of the types or shadows in the Old Testament.

So how do we recognize typology or shadows when reading the Old Testament? There are two basic principles for typology. First is historical correspondence.

That is repetition of words, phrases, themes, and images. So historical correspondence. Second is escalation. Escalation. Where these images are intensifying as the Bible progresses.

So in thinking about these principles of historical correspondence and escalation, if God's revelation is centered on the person of Jesus Christ, and our God is the Lord of history, then we would expect signposts within the Old Testament that point us to Jesus and the cross.

They point us ahead. And we should expect these signposts, these repetitions, to continue and intensify as redemptive history drew near to the time of Jesus' coming, the escalation.

[38 : 40] So in the purpose of God, he provides us preparatory shadows, the real saving events in the Old Testament. So having said that, typology is dangerous ground.

It is dangerous ground. You can begin to see things everywhere. We don't want to be playing a game of Twister while reading the Bible. I don't know if you guys ever played Twister when you were younger. So we don't want to do that when we're reading the Bible.

So for instance, imagine someone is reading the account of David's defeat of Goliath. David took five smooth stones to fight Goliath.

The interpreter of these five stones says, in order to defeat your Goliath, Christian, you need the five smooth stones of faith, hope, love, strength, and maybe an emergency fund in case things go wrong.

No, says the Calvinist, the five smooth stones are the five points of Calvinism, obviously. Someone else says, no, no, no, no. The five stones are the five sides of the Pentagon, and we need a strong national defense to defeat America's Goliath.

[39 : 39] It's like, you see the problem there, right? It seems pretty arbitrary, doesn't it? The person who's interpreting the five smooth stones is just inventing meaning out of thin air, like making it say whatever he wants it to say.

So in modern lingo, some will say this person is sliding into allegory, which is longer discussion coming up ahead, which is shorthand to say there's no textual warrant for that interpretation. So as you might know, allegories are just stories that have a deeper spiritual meaning behind them. So think of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress or Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia.

Those are allegories. Should we read the Bible like that? Is there a spiritual meaning behind the text? And so this conversation of allegories is a hard topic to talk about, and there is a few reasons for this.

Typology versus allegory. First, there's a stigma attached to allegories nowadays. So even saying the word draws suspicion from people. People mean different things when they say allegory.

[40 : 42] Some may be referencing typology or parables. Others might be referencing something else entirely. So you can have two people kind of talking past each other when they talk about the appropriateness of allegories in the Bible.

Second, this is a debate about the use of allegory that goes back thousands of years. So men like Origen, Augustine, Athanasius employed lots of allegory in their writing, the type that people today would criticize.

So two examples. First, Algorisks interpreted the scarlet cord that Rahab was told to hold, to hang from her window in Joshua as the blood of Christ flowing down Calvary.

Or another is Augustine interpreting the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this way, allegorically, the man going down and attacked was Adam. The Good Samaritan is Jesus. The priest that passes by and refuses to help is the law.

The inn is a church where two denarii are paid, the promise of this life and the life to come. And the innkeeper is Paul. And so many theologians would say that these men are not interpreting the natural meaning of the passages.

[41 : 49] Did the authors intend that meaning? I would say this is probably the majority view and conservative biblical scholars would say this. However, however, I want to defend these men.

I think it would be unfair to say the early church just invented meaning out of nowhere without rhyme or reason. So I think these men would argue they weren't departing from the author's intent, but were being loyal to the principle that Christ was to be found in every passage.

So if we could ask Augustine, if we was here, like, brother, do you actually think Jesus meant for us to understand that Paul is the innkeeper in the parable of the Good Samaritan? Did he mean that?

I think he would probably say no. No. But it's a good illustration to help people understand certain spiritual realities. So, namely, the supremacy of Christ and salvation as the Good Samaritan, but also the importance of the church as the man was brought to be cared for there.

And, in fact, when you read someone like John Calvin, who frequently derides the use of allegories, while frequently actually allegorizing himself to illustrate something, and Spurgeon does the very same thing.

[43 : 00] So I want to say that there, I think both sides agree that there is abuse of allegory, like the Five Stones example. Where there doesn't seem to be any spiritual value or reason to how they're interpreting the text.

And I think allegories can be very useful in interpreting things for people. So, having said that, 2 Timothy reminds us that Christians need to rightly handle the word of truth.

So we need to proceed with caution. Be very careful if you're tempted to allegorize something in the Bible. Maybe consult some commentaries. See if there's... That's been... That's been said before. So how do we accurately point out that shadow, that type of the Old Testament, without twisting the meaning? The safest ground to establishing a type is rooted in the biblical text itself.

So in the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as the second Adam, Abraham's seed, the new Israel, David's greater son, the Exodus, the Lamb, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Good Shepherd, the rock struck by Moses, and so on.

[44 : 09] So if we're reading the Old Testament, we are in safe ground by seeing that Christ is the fulfillment of these texts in the Old Testament. However, I would argue more typologies exist than what's explicitly quoted in the New Testament because the New Testament doesn't quote every single Old Testament passage.

So in these cases, typology must be based on actual historical correspondence by recognizing repetitions of words, phrases, themes, and images, and to establish a typology, you search for the inner biblical connections that are there.

So you're kind of seeing how they're paralleling each other. So we have to avoid arbitrary connections in order to read the Scripture on its own terms. So this leads us to the last tool. The last tool is continuity and discontinuity. It's exciting stuff. Continuity and discontinuity. The last tool, continuity and discontinuity, this refers to how the Old and New Testament relate to one another.

So if you see a lot of discontinuity between the Old and New Testament, then you tend toward dispensationalism in your interpretation of the Bible. Dispensationalism sees different plans based on the time period by which God related to his people.

[45 : 21] On the other hand, if you see a lot of continuity, this is called covenant theology. So the Westminster Catechism is a classic example of covenant theology. If you Google Dallas Theological Seminary doctrinal statement, that's the classic restatement of dispensationalist theology.

So where people often find themselves on this spectrum comes up in discussions of how Israel in the Old Covenant relates to the Church in the New Covenant. Dispensationalists, in essence, believe that God's program for Israel and the Church are entirely different.

There's complete discontinuity between the age of the Church and the nation of Israel. So biblical history is thus divided into different periods, or in other words, there are different dispensations. So you see a lot of discontinuity within that view.

In contrast, classic covenant theology sees a tremendous amount of continuity between the Old and New Testament. So covenant theologians see the fulfillment of the promises to Israel and the person and work of Christ.

And the Church is the organic unfolding of God's purpose for Israel. The Church doesn't replace Israel, but it's the fulfillment of God's original purpose for Israel.

[46 : 31] So covenant theology is associated with Reformed theology. So you see a lot of continuity within that view. These are frameworks to interpret the Bible. So it's not a black and white category, it's a spectrum of views.

So Presbyterians are classic covenant theologians. And they would see continuity between the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision given to Abraham and the New Testament practice of baptism.

Presbyterians baptize infants. And they see it as a similar practice of circumcising infants in the Old Testament. They're using the biblical tool of continuity in that discussion. Baptists, on the other hand, are somewhere in the middle.

Baptists wanted to say, yes, continuity, but also discontinuity. After all, the New Covenant is better than the Old One. Jeremiah says this of the New Covenant. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers.

See, there's the discontinuity, not like the covenant. So no longer shall I teach one another or say to each other, know the Lord, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. So in the Old Testament, unregenerate people could be circumcised, where in the New Testament, Baptists would say only regenerate people are called to be baptized.

[47 : 47] So when discussing baptism, we're all bringing to the table continuity and discontinuity and how we understand the New Testament and Old Testament relating to each other. So those

are the tools that we're going to need as we walk through the storylines of Scripture.

So this is, that ends our intro class. It's more theoretical today, but for the rest of the classes, we're just going to dive right into the biblical storylines from Genesis to Revelation. So let me end in a word of prayer and then we can just, any time for questions.

Father in heaven, I thank you for time to be able to discuss your word. Lord, I pray that we would come to a deeper insight into your Scriptures, that we might exalt Jesus more, that we might find Christ exalted in the Old Testament as Jesus taught his disciples.

And thank you for this time together. In Jesus' name, amen. So any questions? It's 9.50, plenty of time if anybody has some questions.

I have a question. Thank you for that presentation. And I have a question about, probably yes, about allegory. Yeah. Your view on it.

[49 : 08] So you mentioned that the biblical narrative is kind of, you need to take it from the perspective of God. Like there's a single author. Even though there's multiple human authors, there's a single author.

Yeah. And then you also mentioned the historical grammatical method of evaluating a writing based on its historical context.

So how do you, that does seem like a tension in the sense that I can imagine situations where the original author, the original human author, didn't perhaps fully understand the art of the narrative that God is reading.

Are there examples of that? Yeah. Yeah. No, that's a good question. I tend to think that of those as canonical reading, like that term canonical reading.

So in Genesis 1, we see that God created the heavens and the earth and the spirits hovering over the waters. And God says, let us make man in our image.

[50 : 13] Now, did Moses understand that the Trinity was at work in creation? I doubt it. But when John 1, he says, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

I think John is clearly meditating on Genesis 1. And I would say that it's more like a progressive revelation. Even the authors or writers didn't understand fully what they were writing.

But as the revelation becomes clearer, as the light becomes brighter, then we see, oh yeah, what he wrote there, there's a deeper meaning there. So I think if we read the Old, it's learning how to read the Old Testament, especially in light of God's full revelation.

So I would not say, I don't think the Old Testament authors knew all the implications of what they were writing. Same with David. I mean, he's talking about the Messiah that's coming.

I don't think he knew that was Jesus, and that Jesus was the God-man that would come and die for sinners. But yeah, there is a tension there, though. I mean, the use of allegory, if we're going to, depending on how we define it, there are going to be situations where it could be a good illustration that the author didn't intend to present to the audience.

[51 : 36] And so Spurgeon does something similar where he says that in the arc, there's one window in the arc where Noah looked out into the seas, and Spurgeon says, well, this is like a window because there's only one faith in which we can see our Lord Jesus, and we have to look out through the one window of the one Savior.

And I'm like, that's a good example of the nature of faith. Did Noah, did the authors mean that when they wrote that? I don't know, but I think he was illustrating something for his ears.

So, yeah, Spurgeon is much more, competent at exposition than I am. So I know there are faithful men that have used allegory to their hearer's benefit.

A dumb person would often caution us about reading the New Testament back into the earth. Like, you don't just take Genesis 1's we and go, there's the Trinity! You go, there's the Genesis 1's we, and then it's drawn out and you start reading the theme of the plurality of God.

There's the counsel of God and Job, until you see, finally, so one of the emcees of biblical mythology is we don't just take the we and go, oh, there's the Trinity!

[52 : 53] Stick that, plug that into my Trinity module of my systematic theology! We go, okay, God has a certain kind of plurality about it. And we trace the thread and see how it develops.

What's this theme look like? in the end, we start to see, ah, here's what has been being gotten at. Here's where that shoots for in the end.

Yeah. That's a great example. Yeah. And that's why I mentioned the, it's, biblical theologians, you have to take it in its historical context. We can read the New Testament back and the Old Testament all over the place, but it might not be something that, it could be a proof testing, proof texting, where the authors really didn't mean that, it's not really part of the text, so we have to be careful.

But see how it would, it would complement systematic theology because when you're, when you're a systematician, you go back into Genesis 3 or Genesis 2, let us make man in our own image. They're going to put that in their Trinity topical question, but they also need to be a biblical theologian and ask themselves, okay, what does this mean in the context?

And... It doesn't kind of circulate between the systematic theology and biblical theology or your biblical theology. Those threads start to inform the systematic theology. You've got your doctrine and they start to inform the reading of the whole narrative.

[54 : 17] Yeah. Yeah. Okay, so then does it, lend greater clarity to some of those threads if you read the Bible the way it's written or if you read the Bible chronologically?

Hmm. It's a good question. Or doesn't it matter? I'm thinking of where would be...

I think chronologically... Here's what's coming to mind. I haven't thought about this before. The biblical theologian must be aware of the chronology and also the literary structure of the book. So it is very important, I think, chronology-wise when you're interpreting text. You know, for example, I mean, I wish we could get into this, but New Testament authors do take a lot of emphasis on what came first and what came second.

So I'm thinking of, I think it's Galatians, where it says, like, Abraham was accounted as righteous because of his faith and then circumcision was given. So that chronology is very important because now we know he wasn't accounted righteous based on the law.

[55 : 42] and I think that is the apostles used in terms of chronology. I don't know, I don't know, depending on, like, Leviticus comes after Exodus, like, is there meaning there?

I'm not sure. I'm not sure. One of the places you could say this also is in the Psalms where we have Psalms from many different time periods, but there's also a structure to the Psalms as a whole.

Yeah. So if you were to try and, like, take each Psalms to get where it goes chronologically, I think that would mess up your reading with the Psalms. But you also want to be aware of where it fits chronologically. So I'm going to go with my question, validity.

Yeah. Yeah. So maybe just an awareness that there's a canonical order and there's a chronological order and both are there for important reasons that we should be aware of.

Yes. Yeah. Yes. You know, the chronology and I think the canonical reading as well. Yeah, exactly. The chart I gave you of the timeline there, it's helpful to know exactly what's being, like, what culture and worldview is the prophet engaging in?

[56 : 57] Because if, because we'll get into this later, but Isaiah is going to draw on a lot of themes from the Exodus and the second Exodus. that's like a prophesying to the new creation.

So they're, they're using images that the people would have understood what that meant. And I think that has to do with chronology and also canonical reading. The ordering is also shaped by our understanding of the theology.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yes. I'm still puzzling over the criticism of allegories in a sense where it seems like the criticism is that people are taking, extrapolating too far from the verses and not that it's in terms of allegory itself.

That is, you can take other verses and extrapolating is it. That makes sense to me like, yeah, it depends on, more out of it than it's really there. But then it's nothing to do with the way that you're getting more out of it.

And allegory is slippery because if we're just extrapolating, then that could just be like application. Some people mean different things by allegories.

[58 : 19] I think the suspicion for allegory is, comes from the Reformation because when the Reformers laid down the principle of solo scriptura or the perspicuity of Scripture, what they meant was Scripture is clear, but it's also self-interpreted.

And what the Catholic Church did before then was they would allegorically interpret the Bible and they would say our interpretation is correct because of the infallible teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

And so Calvin wanted to say, no, no, I mean, we're, like the Scriptures interpret themselves. We don't need a class of priests that can interpret for us. And that was really where allegory became very suspicious, I think, to the Reformers.

But, and that's kind of an abusive allegory. Like some of the interpretations were pretty far-fetched. They didn't have to do with like the Trinity or like salvation or like Christ or the cross.

It was, you know, the nature of, you know, the Archbishop of Canterbury or something like that. You know, it was like that's the allegorical reading of the Old Testament based on like the Bishop of Rome or something like that.

[59 : 34] Well, I guess what you're saying is like there are many cases where allegories are intended. Like, maybe the number five is a bit of a stretch. The number of 12 has some more faces. So you want to locate these things.

It's the thread thing again. It's, is there actually a thread or are you just like plucking a point out and going boop? Yeah. Boop. Boop. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So number, numerology is, is important in biblical studies.

So number seven is very important. So if we understand seven to be like the perfect completeness of something, then I think the authors intended to communicate that. Now, if we, if there's six and then we just say, well, there's six, I don't know.

Six is the perfect number. God worked for six days. This is what we do, like, right? Yeah. Because you add up its divisors and you get this. Yeah. You multiply them and it's the same number.

Yeah. So it's part of the number. But to your, to your point though, I think there is, and in the final analysis, there will be different, differing opinions based on what this would have meant to the reader at the time.

[60 : 43] So you can have scholars disagree and be like, this really meant that in that, in that culture. This meant that. I mean, so there are disagreements about what was originally intended to, be communicated.

So it's not a, it's, it's not an easy, it's not an easy thing. I mean, there are, there are scholars for a reason. They're kind of talking about this, writing about it. So yeah.

Did you think you were going to talk more about allegory in future classes or did, I couldn't get what you, I guess what you said, you mentioned there's more common I don't know if that was for this class or what that was. For this class, but I've, I can come back to allegory if that would be helpful to people.

Okay. Okay. Yeah. I'm just going to wait, I guess it's more a point. I guess it's more about that allegory also, like, some people use allegory to dismiss the literal interpretation or to replace it or whatever.

but you can also use it to just supplement it. You can be a both-in. Oh yeah, it does mean a rock was there that water came out to give, you know, migration to the Israelites, but it's also Christ and move on and that sometimes takes the edge off of people's use of that allegory because they're like, well, I'm not denying that's a little thing.

[62 : 05] Mm-hmm. Yeah, I think if we're clear on what we're, if we're going to allegorize, I think it's always helpful to be clear about what we mean.

Like, if we're saying the author intended this allegory and it's the secret hidden meaning that I'm telling you right now and you guys should listen to my interpretation, that's problematic. but if we're saying, hey, this is, yeah, this is a good illustration maybe of what Christ did for his people, I think that's very helpful.

I mean, warranted. I mean, I think the early patristic era of church fathers would have, I mean, they, as you know, like very allegory heavy because they wanted to preach Christ in every scripture.

So, there's, it's a fascinating, it's a fascinating conversation. I really have just learned about allegory in the past few months and it's, it's so interesting. I also think that the problem with like, we're trying to evaluate what's a good allegory or what's a bad allegory.

But in some ways that conversation is the same about what's a good interpretation and what's a bad interpretation. Maybe in scripture and when you start asking those questions they're great questions but eventually you just keep probing and it, you know, you start, you gotta, you start losing your handholds and it's like, well, what does this mean that it's, like we took history for example, you know, or culture.

[63 : 26] Like, well, what, once God might think something is cultural and relevant and another might disagree and, you know, I think we have, when you get to those squishy gray areas that you

just, you point the clearer bits of scripture and you trust in the Holy Spirit and you trust in the Holy Spirit and you trust in the Holy Spirit and you guide it.

Yeah. And I, it is, there is a problem that where people take only the story and they just dismiss the actual individual text.

So, you'll have people that will talk about this belief in Second Temple Judaism and this was all, it was all about, it was all about this belief and they just kind of dismiss the exposition part and they go right into the storyline and I don't think that's helpful and it's helpful to realize that not everyone had the same belief in Second Temple Judaism.

You had the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Essenes, you know, they weren't a uniform, homogeneous group. So, you do have biblical theologians I think that are kind of, you know, like, they're putting too much emphasis on the storyline.

So, it is... Let's talk a little bit about how you tell what continues and what is. Where the breaks are between, like, old and new covenant or do you want to do that when you talk about covenants?

[64 : 46] Yeah, so interesting. I, to answer that I have to kind of show my colors and... Right. So, I am a, I'm a covenant theologian.

I, I, I, I grew with covenant theology. Having said that, I know a lot of godly dispensationalists, like, John MacArthur is one of them. Like, so, he is much smarter than I am and he is much godlier than I am but he's dispensationalist.

But I would, I tend to agree with covenant theology. And, I would say the, every, every covenant has condition, has unconditional aspects to it and then conditional aspects to it.

Every single covenant does. And when you read the New Testament, they're picking up on some of the unconditional language and they're saying that continues through into the new covenant.

So, the Abrahamic covenant, like the blessed, the offspring that will bring blessings to the world, that's clearly Christ, right? But there also are discontinuity within there because we're not, Christians, we're not going to inherit a land in Israel.

[65 : 55] We're going to inherit an entire universe. So, I think you have to read the New Testament with the Old Testament in mind and seeing how, like the prism, like what's, what's continuous, what's discontinuous.

Having said that, I mean, dispensationalists disagree with me. So, I'm happy to, I'm not going to die on that hill. So, we all love, I mean, both sides love Christ and they, they believe in the gospel and the word.

So, this is like one of those like secondary issues that people have, like baptism, simply baptize infants and baptists don't. Well, I can, we can still affirm that there are, you know, these are secondary issues, not primary.

Well, that's, that's something on the, that tension between the covenant and dispensational, like that example of baptism. What, what trips me up sometimes, and maybe we'll talk about this later, is like, I know that the nature of salvation in the Bible is consistent, but it's, there's weird passages in Jude about Jesus going down and preaching to the spirits in prison and Lewis interprets that one way and you've got it alvarized in, in Narnia and stuff and, and I have friends who believe, yeah, oh yeah, Sheol, yeah, that was a place but it's not anymore.

You know, like, and I'm like, but I thought salvation was by faith in Christ even before they knew who Christ was in Hebrews talks about Moses seeing the benefit of Christ as better than the benefit of the riches of Egypt and I'm like, uh, how do we talk about this?

[67 : 33] How do we look at this? So, I have no problem saying that the faith of Abraham could be applied to a future grace that came by the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ but what, like, where did his spirit go?

That's, that's the secondary issue but it's sort of kind of informed back to how we look at the primary issue of salvation like, okay, so, what does that mean for each of us when we say, how do we put our faith in the proper place?

And so, I don't know, it's just, that, that's a, that's a big one for me that, biblical theology and maybe a closer study would be helpful.

Yeah, I'm going to write that down, that's, that's helpful. I agree, I mean, so covenant theology, there's, there's this all encompassing covenant of grace that theologians will talk about and that, they said the covenant of grace means that from beginnings and people are saved by faith alone and Christ alone by grace alone to the glory of God alone.

Like, from Adam all the way into the last saint who's going to die before Christ returns. Dispensationalists, they will not, dispensationalists do not say, I don't want to, they don't say that you're saved by works and then you're saved by grace.

[68 : 53] You're always saved by faith. I mean, they would, they would affirm that. But there are, like, what do they say, what are they putting their faith in? That's the, what dispensationalists will say. Well, they clearly didn't have Christ in the Old Testament.

Covenant theology said, well, there's shadows of Christ, the offering to the Lamb that they could, Christ is going to do something, God's going to do something in the future to solve for sin.

But yeah, this is a, I'm going to write that down, so I hopefully come back to that. Okay, so I think, sounds like they're getting out, so thank you all and I look forward to...

applause and I look forward... effects ...

here are a full question.