

ECCLESIOLOGY AND SACRAMENTS

For various reasons the doctrines of the Church and the Gospel Sacraments have often been relegated to an incidental place in evangelical theology. Often their positive importance has been diminished.

Yet both in Scripture and in the history of the people of God the role of the church and the signs of the gospel have been central elements in Christian faith and thought. Against the background of biblical teaching, we will briefly explore what that significance is.

In our study of Ecclesiology we will focus attention on certain aspects of the biblical material which forms the groundwork of the doctrine, with a view to understanding how the perspectives on the church given to us in redemptive historical revelation impact both our theology and praxis in the area of ecclesiology.

In relation to the Sacraments our goal is to gain both a clear biblical-theological understanding of their significance and also a sense of their importance in the life of both the individual believer and the gospel community. To complement the class work reading in the appended texts should be completed.

Course Requirements

In addition to the instruction given in the lectures, a number of works on the church are listed as core reading, in addition to the variety of other works listed and materials that may be mentioned in class. The course will be graded on the basis of:

- (i) **Paper:** A research paper, no more than 15 pages should be submitted by the date set in the Seminary Calendar. This may be on any topic related to the syllabus. It should show evidence of thoughtful and relevant choice of topic, clear understanding of the biblical and theological issues involved, careful research and an ability to analyze and critique as well as trace the lines of a positive biblical doctrine in the specific area of ecclesiology chosen for research. Special attention should be paid to clarity and accuracy in writing. **Due February 13, 2023.**
- (ii) **Examination:** An examination will be held at the end of the course. **Due January 26, 2023.**
- (ii) **Reading:** A list of specific texts to be read and a variety of more general readings on the church and sacraments from varying theological perspectives is appended.

Lectures: The class lectures will begin with an extensive discussion of the place of the Church in the teaching of Jesus and then develop a more systematic biblical-theological formulation of the nature of the church, leading to a discussion of its organization, its ministry and then to consideration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. A fuller outline of the lectures will be posted prior to the class meetings.

Readings:

Ecclesiology

- H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4. pp. 273-460
J. Calvin: *Institutes*, Book IV, chapters 1-13
E.P. Clowney: *The Church*

In addition, the following works from a massive range of material will provide a variety of perspectives on the church (some also touching on the doctrine of the sacraments):

- Gregg R Allison: *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*
R.J. Banks: *Paul's Idea of Community*
D. Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church*
J. Bannerman: *The Church of Christ*
G.C. Berkouwer: *The Church*
G. Bray: *The Church: A Theological and Historical Account*
D.A. Carson (ed): *The Church in the Bible and the World*
J.N.D. Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines*
H. Kung: *The Church*
R.B. Kuiper: *The Glorious Body of Christ*
G. McGregor: *Corpus Christi*
J. Moltmann: *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*
E.S. Morgan: *Visible Saints*
J. Owen: *True Nature of a Gospel Church (Works, 16: 2-208)*
G. Vos: *The Kingdom of God and the Church*

Sacraments:

- H. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 461-588
G.C. Berkouwer: *The Sacraments*, 90-187;
John Calvin: *Institutes* Book IV, chapters 14-19

In addition, the following brief selection of works (again from a massive range of material) will provide differing perspectives on baptism and the Supper:

- R. Bruce: *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*
Paul K Jewett: *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace* (Credobaptist)
I.H. Marshall: *Last Supper, Lord's Supper.*
J. Murray: *Christian Baptism* (Paedobaptist)