

Reformed Theological Seminary

Intro. Biblical Theology

ON6200 (2 Credit Hours)

Spring 2026

Thursday 1-3 pm

Dr. Chris S. Stevens

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TA: Tucker Alexander

**1. Course Objectives:**

To orient students to the major themes, content, and scholarship of the Biblical Theology.

Know (Head):

- Major themes and thinkers in Biblical Theology
- Major Scholarship historically and general awareness of current challenges.
- Distinctives of the methods and trends in BT.

Be (Heart):

- Understanding the significance of the individual NT accounts for theology (BT & ST), daily life, and ecclesiastical form and function.
- Become a critical inquirer of both Scripture's presentation and scholarships approach to BT.

Do (Hands):

- Learn to use multiple tools to delve deeply into the biblical text.
- Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of secondary literature and that there is no replacement for thoughtful personal interaction with the ancient literature in and outside of the Bible.
- Begin notes for later preaching, teaching, and further studies.

**2. Course Description from the RTS Catalogue (p. 78)**

While investigating the Bible from a biblical-theological perspective, this course will explore the history and themes of biblical theology as part of the woven fabric of the biblical canon.

## Required Material

- English Bible with cross references (CSB, ESV, NAS, etc.)
- Hand edition of the Greek New Testament (NA28, UBS4, etc., with apparatus)
- Means for taking notes, which is strongly recommended not to be electronic.

## Recommended Materials

- Bible Software (Accordance, Logos, etc. There are many free resources available too.)

## Assignments:

### 1) Required Reading:

- 1) Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009.
- 2) Articles and chapters will be provided in pdf during the class.
- 3) Personal choice of a BT monograph at least 250 pgs. long.<sup>1</sup> Will be used for paper BT-1 (see below).
- 4) Lexical to BT:
  - a) M. Mitchell, “Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us”: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,’ *JBL* 117.2 (1998): 299-320.
  - b) Porter, Stanley E. and Chris S. Stevens. “Doubting Bdag on Doubt: A Lexical Examination of διωκτίων and Its Theological Ramifications.” *FN* XXVII (2014): 83-110.
- 5) Stevens, Chris S. “John’s Portrayal of Jesus as the Divine-Adamic Priest and What It Means for the Temple Cleansing in John 2:13-25.” Pages 169-85 in *Johannine Christology*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Vol. 3 of *JOST*. Leiden: Brill, 2020. (given in class)

### 2) Papers (3x)

Advice: Use your seminary assignments to prepare for lifelong service to the King. I warn that no one in your church wants to hear a 17-part lecture on why Bultmann’s form criticism failed—and frankly, neither do I.

Instead, use your assignments to build skills, deepen knowledge, and lay foundations for future labors. For example, choose key figures for your short papers who can also feature in your major papers (friend or foe). Then use those same figures in future NT classes. By the end of seminary, you will have a strong grasp of ten major NT scholars. If planned well, your papers might grow into a thesis, the background for a sermon series, or the foundation of a Sunday School curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> See examples in class but RTS has a number in series: LNTS, NSBT, etc.

## 2a) Biblical Theology Short (2x)

BT-1) 1000 Words excluding fn. 15%

Write a critical interaction between the reading of Gabler, Stendhal, and Vos. You are learning how to academically research and give a presentation.

Papers will be discussed in class.

BT-2) 1500 Words excluding fn. 25 %

Pick a BT monograph of least 250 pgs.<sup>2</sup> Pick a BT monograph on a topic you like. You will then write a 1000-word critical interaction. In roughly 300 words, summarize the book by presenting the main thesis, method of argument, and evidence. The second half will be a critical analysis that a) assesses the explanatory power of the book, b) evaluates the evidence, c) and presents additional evidence that supports or contradicts the main thesis.

Papers will be presented in class for a 5% grade.

## 2b) Biblical Theology Major (1x)

BT-3) 2000 Words excluding fn. 25%

A 2000-word biblical theology paper. Besides the features requisite in a quality paper (clear thesis, logical argumentation, appropriate conclusion, etc.), it should include some comment on the following features where/when applicable: textual criticism, lexical analysis, syntactical discussion, structural analysis, location within book, biblical theological significance, covenantal insights and ramifications, and etc. (remember the layers of **cotext, context, and canon**).

The paper will be 3000 words *excluding* footnotes and bibliography. It should demonstrate interaction with the biblical text and secondary literature: journal articles, commentaries, monographs, biblical theologies, systematics, etc. While I do not want a summary of other author's opinions, the goal is not to be groundbreaking or novel. You are not measured by finding something new or novel. The assignment aims to practice engaging with the biblical text and using tools for productive learning and articulation. I want to see you learn and grow in thinking as Christian scholars. One or two exceptional papers per semester will be selected for praise and reward.

Format: **Text Body:** left justified, Font Times New Roman (or Brill, Helvetica Neue), 12 pt., 1-inch margins, indent ½ inch, and double-spaced. **Footnotes:** left justified, 10 pt., first line ½ inch indent. Pagination is on the top right. I am dyslexic, so I am sympathetic to typos, spelling errors, and grammatical abominations. However, you are in a master's program, so labor well in proofreading and make the paper easier for me to read, or such errors will lower your grade.

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<sup>2</sup> See examples in class but RTS has a number in series: LNTS, NSBT, etc.

If you have something outside of these suggestions, meet me with a written, prepared thesis and three points to prove your thesis.

**Paper Topic Examples:**

Abraham as Archetype of Covenant Participant  
 Theodicy in one of the OT books (Jeremiah??, Psalms)  
 Bloody Sacrifices  
 Wisdom Literature and Human Suffering  
 Christology in John vs. Paul?  
 Kingdom of God in Parables  
 Job and Divine Sovereignty  
 Suffering and Restoration in Job  
 Superiority of Christ's Priesthood in Hebrews  
 Hebrews Use and Development of OT Prophecies  
 NT View of Apostasy and Warning Passages in Hebrews  
 Johannine Christology (many, many topics)  
 Revelations Use of Apocalyptic Symbolism from Second Temple Literature  
 Revelation's Adaptive use of Lamb and Throne Imagery  
 New Heaven and New Earth Expectations Fulfilled in Revelation

**Paper Policy:**

The style and form of papers should be conducted according to the school policy. Footnotes and bibliography are SBL Style (5<sup>th</sup>), use inclusive and appropriate language, and be consistent: *behaviour* or behavior. The style and tone of papers should conform to theological journals (see for instance *JBL*, *JETS*, *JTS*).

**Grading Policy:**

All assignments must receive a passing grade to pass the class. There is no mathematical passing without a valid attempt at every assignment. The grading scale for this course is the seminary's grading scale on *RTS Catalog*, pg.48. Also, the professor reserves the right to grade papers, final exams, and other assignments on a comparative scale. In exams and papers, students are not required to agree with the professor or RTS. They are measured by their merit, method, and execution.

**Grades:**

1)	BT-1	15%
2)	BT-2	20% + 10% presentation
3)	BT-3	30%

4) Class & Reading 25%

**Due Dates:**

1) BT-1	March
2) BT-2	April
3) BT-3	May 7

**Late Assignments:**

Late assignments lose one letter grade per day, excluding Sundays. A 'day' is any time after the beginning of class. So, if you are going to be one hour late, you might as well use the rest of the day to ensure everything is perfect. Must be either time-stamped at the front desk or prior to 11 pm on Canvas.

**Attendance:**

This class will operate in a seminar manner; therefore, you cannot pass without classroom participation. Additionally, I pray you would consider the actual value of class. All absences will be handled according to school policies. Two tardies (arriving after the beginning of class) constitute an hour of absence. Students missing more than two sessions (for any reason) may either submit an additional, compensatory assignment [determined by the instructor] or choose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

**Class Participation:**

Class participation requires: preparation, reading of assignments, active listening, and discussion in class. Classroom disrespect will not be tolerated, including verbal interaction, and all devices must be used solely for classroom purposes. Any student doing other activities will be dismissed and counted absent.

**Plagiarism:** In accordance with school policy, any cheating (quiz, paper, exam, etc.) will be submitted to the Academic Dean for resolution. Furthermore, the use and abuse of AI tools are explained in the Artificial Intelligence Policies for Use in Coursework. If there is evidence of widespread abuses, the Professor reserves the right to change how assignments are handled.



### Course Objectives Related to M.Div. Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Biblical Theology (ON6200)

Professor: Chris Stevens

Campus: Jackson

Date: Spring 2026

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Strong	Course basic exegetical principles for interpreting Scripture
Scripture	Strong	See course title and description
Reformed Theology	Moderate	Reformed distinctives on Scripture and its interpretation are carefully considered
Sanctification	Moderate	Scripture is the primary means of grace, its study ought to be an act of love toward God
Desire for Worldview	Minimal	Focused on interpreting Word of God rightly

<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Minimal	Though we hope the professors and students exemplify this spirit
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Must understand what the text means to preach it rightly
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	Course is relevant to worship but is not centered on worship, as such
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Using Scripture rightly is central to good shepherding
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Though alternative approaches to Scripture will be considered and application of original meaning to contemporary contexts

## Additional Bibliography

### Key Works:

Johann Gabler, 1787 inaugural address, "On the Proper Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objectives of Each."

- Stuckenbruck, Loren T. "Johann Philipp Gabler and the Delineation of Biblical Theology." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52.2 (1999): 139–57.

Stendahl, Krister. "Biblical Theology, Contemporary." Pages 418–32 in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by George Arthur Buttrick. New York: Abingdon, 1962.

Stendahl, Krister. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." Pages 78–96 in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

- Barclay, John M. G. "Paul, the Gift, and the Introspective Conscience: The Spirit of Stendahl Reconsidered." *Harvard Theological Review* 92, no. 4 (1999): 481–503.
- Martyn, J. Louis. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West: Revisited." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 51, no. 1–2 (1997): 3–20.
- Ollenburger, Ben. "What Krister Stendahl 'Meant'—a Normative Critique of 'Descriptive Biblical Theology.'" *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 8.1 (1986): 61–98.

Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament*. Finland: Banner of Truth and Trust, 1948.

### Series:

- IVP New Studies in Biblical Theology  
<https://www.ivpress.com/new-studies-in-biblical-theology?srsltid=AfmBOop1n44q2zFqhUQZYJwRFpEsip3ctDMM2oygKEU58oNuyaGeq1rX>
- Bloomsbury Library of New Testament Studies  
<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/series/the-library-of-new-testament-studies/>

### General Introduction:

Boda, Mark. "Biblical Theology and Old Testament Interpretation." Pages 122–53 in *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address*. Edited by Craig G. Bartholomew and David J.H. Beldman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

Carson, Donald A. "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology." Pages 89–104 in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, Donald A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworthy. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Collins, John J. "Is a Critical Biblical Theology Possible?" Pages 1–17 in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*. Edited by W. H. Propp, B. Halpern, and David Noel Freedman. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Hasel, Gerhard F. "The Relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology." *TrinJ* 5 (1984): 113–27.

Hasel, Gerhard F. "The Nature of Biblical Theology: Recent Trends and Issues." Andrews University Studies 32.2 (1994): 203–15.

Helmer, Christine. "Biblical Theology: Bridge over Many Waters." CBR 3.2 (2005): 169–96.

Ollenburger, Ben. "Biblical Theology: Situating the Discipline." in Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson. Edited by J. T. Butler, E. W. Conrad, and Ben Ollenburger. Vol. 37 of JSOT. Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1985.

Rosner, Brian S. "Biblical Theology." In *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, 3–11. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

#### Assorted Papers & Books:

Beale, G. K. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*. Nottingham: IVP, 2008.

Beale, G. K. *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Childs, Brevard. *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.

Clowney, Edmund P. *Preaching and Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2012.

Harmon, Matthew S. *Rebels and Exiles: A Biblical Theology of Sin and Restoration*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2020.

Kline, Meredith G. *The Structure of Biblical Authority*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.

Moo, Douglas J. and Jonathan A. Moo. *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World, Biblical Theology for Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.

Schnabel, Eckhard J. *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023.

Schnelle, Udo. *Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

Watson, Francis. *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Vos, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," 1894, as his inaugural address as professor of biblical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Warfield, Benjamin B. *Biblical and Theological Studies*. Edited by Samuel G. Craig. Philadelphia: P&R, 1968.