Introduction to New Testament Theology

Recommended Reading:

I. What is “biblical theology”?

A. Def: “Theology”
   1. θεός (theos) = “God” + λόγος (logos) = message, knowledge
   2. Theology refers to “knowledge of the person and the creative and redeeming acts of God, of man seen in light of the knowledge of God, and of human destiny or salvation”
      a. Narrow sense (theology proper) = the nature and acts of God
      b. Wider sense: all that God wants us to know about his plan for the world and humanity (person and work of Christ, the Church, salvation, Christian living, last things, etc.)

B. We can look at “biblical theology” in several ways
   1. The teachings of the Bible as a whole – “the theology of the Bible”; stresses the unity of the Bible
   2. The teachings of a particular book or author (e.g. Pauline theology); stresses diversity in various parts of the Bible.
   3. The Biblical theology movement (1945 to the 1960s) – very popular to study biblical theology in liberal and neo-orthodox circles as a reaction against the sterile, philosophical, critical theology common in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

II. Why is it important to study biblical theology?

A. Although many Christians have negative feelings about theology (intellectual, irrelevant to life, “boring”), theology is the heart of the Christian faith: what we believe about God and His will for our lives.

B. The better our knowledge of theology, the better we can know God and the better we can do His will.

C. Biblical theology should form the basis of good systematic theology. Without good biblical theology, we have no authority rooted in divine revelation for our beliefs as a Christian community

D. Theology shapes our worldview and values.

III. Characteristics of biblical theology

A. It is descriptive
   1. The goal is to describe what various parts of the Bible teach about God, humanity, redemption, ethics and eternal destiny.
   2. Biblical theology should not be shaped by any theological system.

B. It is an historical discipline
   1. Each biblical author is allowed to speak for himself to express his own distinctive perspectives on a theme, without trying to harmonize it with other parts of the Bible.
   2. The biblical theology of particular biblical book or author may be incomplete.
   3. Since biblical theology is descriptive it must leave some questions unresolved (e.g. How Jesus can be both God and human? How does the atonement work? The nature of the Trinity)
C. It does not try to use the Bible to support a preexisting belief system
   1. Biblical theology is the inductive study of the teachings of the Bible, not a deductive study that starts with beliefs that you want to prove.
   2. It allows each biblical author to speak for himself and to stress the truths he wants to stress.
   3. This frees us from forcing the Bible into a mold.
   4. But this does not mean that any student of the Bible can be truly objective
      a. Initially it was claimed that by freeing biblical theology from dogmatic theology true objectivity would be achieved.
      b. But this objectivity proved to be an illusion for it simply substituted anti-supernatural presuppositions for Christian presuppositions (e.g. “Quest for the historic Jesus”)
      c. Ladd argues that only a researcher who starts with a presupposition that God exists and has revealed himself in supernatural events will be able to write the theology of the Bible as it was believed by the original authors.

D. It seeks to set forth the teachings of the Bible in its own thought categories and forms.
   1. To some extent any theology forces a structure that is not inherent in the various literary genres.
   2. Some categories come from systematic theology (God, salvation, atonement, eschatology).
   3. Within each category, we want as much as possible to work with the author’s own thought categories and ways of expression so we do not force the Bible into a mold that distorts its teachings.
      a. The term “trinity” forces a systematic theology category of the biblical data about the nature of God. But we can describe what a book says about the deity of the Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit.
      b. John uses sacrificial language and imagery to describe the death of Jesus, rooted in the OT sacrificial system. But he does not explain how the sacrifice works or use the term “atonement”.

E. It describes the theology of the Bible as it now exists in its canonical form.
   1. Does not look behind the books for the beliefs of the Christian community that may not be expressed in the book.
   2. In the past, some scholars have made the mistake of turning biblical theology into a study of the religion of Israel or the early Church (history of religion school)
   3. Good biblical theology works with the Bible in its canonical form (Brevard Childs, canonical criticism)

F. Good biblical theology is built on good exegesis of the Bible.

G. Accurate biblical theology is not only descriptive but also normative
   1. Since the Bible is God’s revelation to humanity, when we properly understand the theology of the Bible we understand God’s message for humanity.
   2. This becomes the basis for forming a systematic or dogmatic theology – a set of beliefs that are normative for the Christian Church.
   3. This is a faith presupposition for those who share the presuppositions of the biblical authors.
      a. It is not shared by all biblical scholars, especially many practitioners of higher criticism.
      b. For the evangelical Christian, the closer our theology is to the theology of the Bible and the less speculative we are, the more our theology is rooted in divine authority.

IV. The relationship between exegesis, biblical theology and systematic theology

A. Biblical theology is founded on exegesis
   1. It requires careful exegesis of each passage in its own historical context. Other passages must not read into a particular passage.
   2. If passages are misunderstood or read out of context, then the biblical theology based on this exegesis will be erroneous.
   3. Like exegesis, biblical theology should not try to fill in the gaps or extend beyond what the biblical authors say.
B. Systematic theology is founded on biblical theology

1. Systematic theology integrates biblical theology for various biblical authors to create a holistic system.

2. Systematic has a different goal than biblical theology:
   a. Biblical theology: understand the theology of particular biblical authors in distinction from others.
   b. Systematic theology: an integrated theology of the entire Bible to establish normative doctrine.

3. Systematic theology has a different structure than biblical theology:
   b. Systematic theology: organized primarily thematically and integrates the teachings of all biblical authors.

4. Systematic theology goes beyond biblical theology
   a. Systematic theology reorganizes biblical teachings and structures them in a logical format.
      (1) Biblical theology is arranged in historical order according to individual books and authors.
      (2) Although Biblical theology has structure, is more descriptive of each author’s view.
   b. It asks questions the Bible does not ask: philosophical and theological questions necessary to create a structured order (e.g. the interrelationship between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility; how the atonement of Christ pays for sins)
   c. It fills in gaps in biblical theology
      (1) E.g. many aspects of our common schemes of end times events are speculative solutions.
      (2) E.g. supralapsarianism vs. infralapsarianism: 2 approaches to logically understand how God’s election works in a Calvinistic system
   d. It extrapolates implications from the teachings of the Bible (e.g. the teaching of Gen 1-2 that God delegated to humanity dominion over the earth and Eden has implications for ecological ethics).

5. To the extent that systematic theology creates categories and fills in the gaps in biblical theology, it is less normative and authoritative.
   a. Biblical theology also depends on exegesis (which may be good or bad) and can be colored by presuppositions, which may restrict the ability of an interpreter to see what the Bible is saying.
   b. This is why all authority rests in the Bible itself and no individual’s or group’s interpretation.

C. Scobie suggests an “intermediate Biblical theology” is the bridge between biblical theology and systematic theology. This is an integrative biblical theology that looks for common themes in all biblical authors. (Scobie, “Challenge”, 37f; “Structure”, 164; The Ways of Our God)

D. Contemporary application of the Bible’s teachings should be based on correct biblical theology and systematic theology.
   1. Application is the contemporary significance of the teachings of the Bible, applied to the needs of a particular culture and an individual’s personal life.
   2. Our applications will be correct only if we correctly understand the Bible and develop correct Christian theology.
   3. Correct exegesis and good theology do not guarantee valid applications, but if your understanding of the Bible is incorrect, you will most certainly misapply its teachings.

E. The further you move up the chart away from exegesis of Scripture, the less normative the teachings are.
   1. The true basis for authority of doctrine is the Bible itself.
   2. Accurate exegesis of individual passages is most normative because it is rooted directly in Scripture.
      a. There are still potential errors due to unexamined or unwarranted presuppositions, poor exegetical methodology, inadequate understanding of the ancient world, etc.
      b. This is why the interpretive community of scholars is constantly self-correcting so together we better understand God’s revelation in Scripture.
   3. Biblical theology is highly normative as long as it is descriptive of the results of exegesis and does not “fill in the gaps” or speculate on earlier sources or the beliefs of a Christian community.
   4. Systematic/dogmatic theology adds an element of speculation as it fills in the gaps and arrangements materials and as it seeks to understand and relate complex biblical teachings.
      a. This reduces its authority as it moves further from biblical revelation.
b. It seeks to express the teachings of the Bible in new ways that are culturally relevant.
c. Thus there are changes in theology as it is expressed in new cultural terms and as more is understood and new solutions to complex problems are proposed.
d. The irony of “dogmatic theology” is that it expresses normative Christian belief, but has less certitude than biblical theology.

5. Application or significance is always bound to a particular culture and time.
a. Application relates what the Bible says and the implications of sound theology to the needs of a particular culture (e.g. methods of evangelism, expressions of worship and liturgy, solutions to current ethical dilemmas, etc.)
b. This is least normative, since God may guide each individual or Christian community to apply the teachings the Bible in different ways, all of which are still rooted in correct biblical interpretation.

6. We should have humility as we discuss theology with others.
a. Some things are logically necessary to complete the systematic package, but may have little biblical support.
b. When something is said often enough people tend to assume its validity without question.
c. We get into trouble when we make any systematic theology (a human creation) the measure of truth rather than the teachings of the Bible. Any system of theology is subject to revision in light of new insight from Scripture (c.f. Luther: sola scriptura)
d. We may agree that the Bible is true, but differ on some details of theology due to the difficulty of integrating biblical teachings and filling in the gaps to unite all the teachings of the Bible.
e. God cannot be fully understood by any finite human and God’s truth is very complex.

V. Major ways of structuring biblical theology

A. Systematic approach
1. Structures biblical theology according to the subject divisions of systematic or dogmatic theology
2. Biblical theology developed out of the practice of Lutheran orthodoxy of compiling collections of proof-texts to demonstrate the basis of Protestant doctrine (called dicta probantia or dicta classica)
   a. Melanchthon (1521): organized under 24 subjects
   b. Many in 17th-18th centuries
   c. Not common in 19th and early 20th century, but resurgence in last half of 20th century, particular among conservatives (e.g. Millar Burrows, 1946)
3. Advantages:
   a. Ease of transition to systematic theology.
   b. Logical, natural outline following basic questions asked by people of any age.
4. Disadvantages
   a. May impose categories which are alien to biblical thought (perhaps derived from Platonic conceptual thinking and Aristotelian logic)
   b. Can miss important biblical themes which do not fit these categories (e.g. OT Land theology)

B. Historical approach
1. Rise of historical-critical approach to the Bible in 18th and 19th centuries led to the widespread adoption of the historical method.
   a. The Bible was not viewed as a textbook of theology but a history book
   b. Resulted in division into Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) theology as separate disciplines
2. Each author or source is examined separately for different theologies
   a. In Pentateuch, source criticism led to looking for theology not of Moses but the 4 supposed sources behind the books.
   b. In NT, not only look at separate theologies of each Synoptic gospel but also sources, such as Q.
   c. Many higher critics doubt if can even reconstruct the theology of Jesus. Bultmann does not deal with the theology of Jesus at all. “The message of Jesus” is a “presupposition” of New Testament (NT) theology.
   d. Less extreme look at separate theologies of various parts of Bible (e.g. Ladd)
3. Advantage: Shows the diversity of Scripture and development of biblical thought
4. Disadvantage: More difficult to shift to systematic theology
C. **Thematic approach**

1. Structures the treatment around the themes that arise from the biblical material itself, rather than being imposed upon on the basis of a dogmatic system
2. Relatively modern approach
3. Two approaches
   a. **Single integrating theme**: Biblical theology is built around a single integrating theme or “center”
      2. Covenant (Reformed, e.g. Eichrodt, Payne; started with Johannes Cocceius, 1603-1669)
      3. Salvation history or history of redemption (e.g. von Rad, O. Cullmann; Goppelt; Ladd)
   b. **Multi-thematic**: Biblical theology is woven together with a small cluster of themes
      1. Scobie: Four major integrating themes for whole OT and NT: God’s order, God’s Servant, God’s people, God’s way)
4. Advantages:
   a. Attempts to draw the themes from the major ideas stressed in the Bible
   b. Potentially does not force an alien structure or language onto the Bible, unlike the systematic approach
5. Disadvantage: The “center” or unifying theme sometimes seems artificial and not large enough to encompass many major ideas. The wide range of proposed centers suggest that there is no one idea big enough to encompass the thought of the whole NT. The multi-thematic approach is more promising.

D. **Hybrid** approaches

1. Donald Guthrie: Basic structure is systematic, with subsections treating each biblical author separately
2. Hahne:
   a. Major structure should be historical: The goal of biblical theology is to distinguish the views of each biblical author or section from the others.
   b. Within the treatment for each author, the material could be grouped by broad systematic categories (God, humanity, salvation, eschatology, etc.). This provides logical groupings for the major issues and simplifies the eventual movement to systematic theology.
   c. Within each major category the themes stressed by the author would be explored, preferably in the language and thought categories of the author, rather than in artificial systematic categories.
   d. A multi-thematic approach also has great promise, provided we clearly distinguish the views of individual biblical authors.

VI. The question of a “center” in NT theology

A. Center = unifying principle or starting point for biblical thought from which other major biblical concepts logically develop.
1. The center provides unity through the diverse expressions of God’s truth in various books of Scripture
2. There is a constant quest to find the unifying center for various authors (e.g. Paul) and the whole NT.
3. It is especially common for adherents of the thematic approach to argue for one central theme.
4. This quest is a reaction against extreme history of religions approaches that saw nothing but diversity.

B. The quest for a center is motivated to show the unity of Scripture.

C. Many proposals have been made for center of NT thought over the past 2 centuries (a few examples):
1. Christ or the Christ event: person and work of Christ (Reicke, Lohse); Cross (Luz); Resurrection (Kunneth)
2. Justification by faith (Lutheran circles, Käsemann). Works better for Paul (esp. Romans and Galatians) than for whole NT.
3. Reconciliation (Stuhlmacher)
4. Salvation or redemption (Ewald, Hirsch)
5. Kingdom of God or rule of God (Goldsworthy, 1981–for whole Bible)
6. Salvation history or history of redemption (very common since 19th century developed with von Hoffmann and the Erlangen school; e.g. von Rad, O. Cullmann; Goppelt; Ladd)
7. New life (Hans Klien)
8. There has been no consensus and the quest still continues

D. A multidimensional approach is better than a single center

1. No one theme is large enough to encompass the complexity of NT thought, let alone the whole Bible
   a. No one theme is a sufficient starting point to derive all other NT theology
   b. “Center” implies that other doctrines follow logically or flow from this concept. One reason why there are so many views of the center is that no one starting point can account for all of an author's thoughts, let alone the entire Bible
   c. Since it is so difficult to find a center or organizing principle of the NT, it raises the question “is a center intended?” It might be possible to find a center for a single author (e.g. Paul), although it is a misdirected effort. It is less likely to find a single unifying theme for the entire NT.
   d. Why do we assume that God's thoughts are simple that they can be integrated under one motif?

2. There are many major streams of thought running throughout Scripture. It is better to speak of unifying threads or a cluster of integrating motifs than to speak of a single center.

3. Broadly defined, the Bible speaks of the sin and redemption of humanity, which God created to experience fullness of life in relationship with Him.
   a. The Bible begins with the creation of humanity in the image of God so he could experience fullness of life in a relationship with his creator
   b. The fall broke this connection to God and brought death. Much of the OT illustrates the corruption of humanity and the damage sin has on the entire created order
   c. But the OT holds out the promise of blessing and life, both for those of God’s chosen people who keep the covenant and through a coming ideal figure who would bring all humanity into life and blessing with God.
   d. Ethics has to do with the life in its fullest sense – true life involves righteous obedience to the will of God.
   e. The NT unveils the fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption as the promised Christ came to die for the sins of humanity.
   f. The NT ethical injunctions work out this fullness of life
   g. The NT promises the final reversal of the damage of the fall so all creation is restored to perfection and redeemed humanity enjoys eternal life in relationship with his creator.

4. This overall biblical message ties together a collection of interrelated motifs:
   a. God's creative work and sovereignty over history; the fact that we were created to worship and relate to God; the plan of God to bring fullness of life to humanity (even the devil said if you eat of this fruit you live forever for); sin which blocks the achievement of this goal of life for all humanity; the giving of the Law as a pattern for life in relationship with God; God’s work through Christ to bring redemption; etc.
   b. These tightly interconnected themes are constantly intertwined throughout the Bible.

5. Scobie structures this in an appealing way: Four major integrating themes for whole OT and NT (Scobie, Structure, 179-194):
   a. God’s order: God’s rule, God as creator, sustainer and redeemer, salvation history, god’s rule in nature and history
      (1) OT proclaims God is ruler of history
      (2) OT promises a new order in which creation is renewed
      (3) NT proclaims the fulfillment of this promise: new order has dawned in Christ
      (4) NT promises a final consummation with new heaven and earth
   b. God’s Servant: person and work of Christ
      (1) OT proclaims God acts and makes himself known through chosen servants. These categories point forward typologically to Christ (e.g. Moses, prophets, priests, kings, wise men, Son of Man in Daniel)
      (2) OT promises a coming new servant, true mediator between God and his people
(3) NT proclaims fulfillment of the promise in Christ who exceeds all expectations and comes incognito and faces suffering and death.
(4) NT promises at the consummation Christ will come in power and glory
c. God’s people: Israel and the Church
(1) OT proclaims God chose a particular people to be the servant people of the Lord
(2) OT promises a time when God’s people will be renewed, resurrected and reconstituted to overcome their failings and limitations
(3) NT proclaims the Church as the new people of God, with continuity to Israel and open to all humankind
(4) NT promises the perfection of the people of God in the final consummation.
d. God’s way: ethics, life
(1) OT proclaims God’s way to Israel in the Law; Israel’s repeated failure and disobedience
(2) OT promises a new quality of life in the new age
(3) NT proclaims the fulfillment of this new way of life in Jesus
(4) NT promises the fulness of life and eternal life in the final consummation
e. The biggest flaw with Schobie’s scheme is it does not bring sin and redemption to the forefront quite as much as it could.

VII. Unity and diversity in biblical theology

A. The task of biblical theology is to describe the unity and diversity in the theology of each biblical author.

B. Unity
1. The quest for a center or cluster of integrating themes is the search for that which unifies the many parts of the Bible.
2. The Bible was written over 2000 years by 40 different authors in many cultures and 3 languages, yet it has a common outlook and an unprecedented amount of consistency.
   a. An encyclopedia written over a dozen years in one language by people of one culture has many diverse opinions.
   b. This is evidence of the inspiration of the Bible: The divine author supervised the process and outcome so God reveals his will and truth to humanity through this amazing book.
3. The highly descriptive historical approach to biblical theology often misses this unity (e.g. 19th century history of religions and many modern liberals see the Bible as a human book with many opinions).

C. Diversity
1. The Bible is also full of rich diversity.
2. Conservative Christians tend to be so concerned to stress the unity of the Bible that they miss this diversity in Scripture. In the worst examples, they flatten the Bible out so much that all parts says the same thing and much of the power, richness and complexity of the Bible is obscured.
3. This is one of the reasons biblical theology is called a descriptive discipline
   a. The task is to describe the theology of the various authors. We must not read Paul’s concepts into John’s gospel.
   b. Each biblical author has his own themes, unique ways of expression, particular interests and emphases, vocabulary, metaphors. Biblical scholarship recognizes and appreciates this diversity.
      (1) John stresses the divine Sonship of Jesus more strongly than other Gospels, yet ironically also emphasizes his humanity.
      (2) Matthew and Paul have very different interests in the Law and focus on different aspects of its function. Matthew is very interested in how the Law points to Christ and is fulfilled by him. Paul is very emphatic that obedience to the Law cannot save a person.
4. Part of this diversity if due to the progress of revelation
   a. God did not reveal all his truth at one time (e.g. doctrine of the resurrection is late in the OT)
   b. Salvation history (heilsgeschichte) approaches are very helpful in understanding the progress of revelation.
c. Aspects of revealed truth from later parts of the Bible should not be read into earlier parts.  
   (1) “Let us create man in our image” (Gen 1:26) allows for the Trinity in light of later revelation, but it does not teach it. The OT is very strong on the unity of God. It is only in the NT that we learn about the multiple persons in the one Godhead.

d. God also dealt with people differently at different times in salvation history. E.g. food laws:  
   (1) After the flood: OK to eat anything  
   (2) Mosaic Law: certain foods forbidden  
   (3) NT: OK to eat anything  
      (a) Jesus: what goes into a person does not defile him  
      (b) Paul: We have freedom in Christ, but exercise your freedom in a way that does not cause another Christian to stumble into sin

5. Diversity does not necessarily mean contradiction  
   a. Many liberal biblical theologians stress the diversity in a way that is irreconcilable.  
      (1) 19th C. Tubingen school influenced much of NT scholarship to this day  
         (a) An irreconcilable conflict between Paul on one hand and Peter and James on the other.  
         (b) James represents the more legalistic, Jewish wing of Christianity and Paul represents the libertinic approach (free from the Law) that appealed to the Gentile Christians  
      (2) There is little or no effort to see if the different emphases can be reconciled
   b. In fact the diverse views in the various books of the Bible are complementary, like the many facets of a diamond (blind men and elephant story).  
      (1) Since God’s truth is very complex, each author contributes different insights which need to be integrated into a full biblical and systematic theology.  
      (2) Sometimes, the authors use different language or metaphors to describe the same concept.  
      (3) We should appreciate the diversity in Scripture and how different authors complement one another.
   c. All biblical teachings are equally true, but each may have a different emphasis or aspect.

VIII. How to study the biblical theology of a book or author

A. Studying the biblical theology of a book of the Bible
   1. Read the whole book several times to get the feel of the book and the author’s world view.
   2. Create an overview of the book to get the big picture.  
      a. What is the major theme?  
      b. Create a book overview chart or outline to see the structure of ideas.  
      c. Reconstruct the historical setting of the book.  
         (1) Look for evidence from the details in the book.  
         (2) Read introduction of exegetical commentaries to learn the historical setting.  
      d. List the recurrent themes.
   3. For each major theme, gather the relevant passages:  
      a. Reread the book, looking for relevant passages on the major themes.  
      b. Make a list of key words and phrases that relate to your topic.  
         (1) Include synonyms, related words and cognate words (noun, verb and adjectives). For example, to study Christians as “children of God”, key words include “child”, children”, “father”, adoption”, born”, “birth”, “inheritance”, “heir”, etc.  
         (2) Determine the Greek or Hebrew words that are translated by these English words, by using a concordance or Bible dictionary.
      c. Use a concordance or Bible software to find passages with these key words.  
         (1) You must find all occurrences of the word regardless of how it is translated.  
            (a) The same Greek or Hebrew word may be translated by many English words (e.g. dikaios can be translated “just”, “right” and “righteous”)  
            (b) Greek and Hebrew words have many forms (spellings) depending on the grammatical function and context. For example, to find references to “justify”, you must look in all verb tenses (“justified”, “justifying”, “will justify”, “justifies”, etc. Nouns can have varied forms depending on whether they are singular or plural, possessive, etc.)
(2) Use a Greek/Hebrew concordance (e.g. Englishman’s Greek Concordance) or an advanced Bible program (Logos, Gramcord, Bible Works) to search for the “lemma” (dictionary form) of a word, so you can find all occurrences of the word, regardless of the form. You can also search on the Strong’s number, but this is not as accurate.

(3) If you use an English concordance (Strong’s, Young’s, NASB), look in the back of the concordance to find all the ways the Greek/Hebrew word is translated and look up all these concordance entries.

d. Research a topical Bible or gather passages from biblical theologies and systematic theologies.

4. Do the exegesis of each individual passage.
   a. Do not treat verses in isolation. Read the context of the verse (at least a paragraph).
   b. Study key or difficult concepts in lexicons, word study books and Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias.
   c. Interpret in light of grammar, word meanings, context, author’s teachings elsewhere, the literary type (poetry, parable, proverb, narrative, letter, etc.), and the cultural and historical background.
   d. Summarize the major teachings of the passage.

5. Compare your findings to secondary sources:
   a. Only consult commentaries after you have done your own careful inductive study.
   b. Look at works on biblical theology, journal articles, Bible encyclopedia articles, etc.
   c. Evaluate these sources critically in light of your own inductive study. Interact with the views of the commentators rather than use them as an authority to prove a point.
   d. Revise your thinking as necessary or list arguments to refute the views of the secondary sources.

6. Organize and group the concepts learned from your exegesis. Consider making a chart of key teachings with supporting passages.

B. Studying the biblical theology of an author
   1. Repeat this process on each book by the author
   2. Integrate the findings of all books by this author
      a. Look for unity:
         (1) What are the common themes?
         (2) What seems to be the big idea or center for this author? Is there one integrating theme or a cluster of integrating motifs?
      b. Look for diversity:
         (1) What emphases are different
         (2) Are the differences due to different historical needs?
         (3) Are the differences merely differences of expression
         (4) Are the actual changes in viewpoint in the author’s thinking (development of thought)?
         (5) Are there actual contradictions or can the differences be reconciled?
      c. What important areas does this author not discuss?
         (1) Are there gaps and assumptions that are reasonable to assume given the author’s conclusions?
         (2) Are these areas that are dealt with by other biblical authors?
   3. Compare your findings to major works of biblical theology and other secondary sources.

C. Comparing and contrasting the theology of biblical authors.
   1. What are major elements of agreement and unity between the authors?
   2. What are the elements of diversity?
      a. How are the same or similar concepts expressed in different language?
      b. Are the differences substantive or only a different way of expressing the idea?
   3. Are there difficulties harmonizing the diverse views?
      a. Propose a resolution to integrate the views.
      b. Sometimes this must be set aside until you do further study.