

#314 Theology 4: The Church and Eschatology
Western Reformed Seminary
John A. Battle, Th.D.
Spring 2018

COURSE INFORMATION

Course description

This course is designed to cover the important doctrines dealing with the church—its character, make-up, officers, duties, and sacraments—and with the last days, including what is called personal eschatology (what happens at death and beyond) and general eschatology (what will transpire at the end of this age). On many of these doctrines all orthodox Christians agree, while with others there is widespread controversy. The class will seek to distinguish not only the biblical position in each area of doctrine, but also the degree of certainty and primacy the Scriptures give to each doctrine.

Course objectives

By successfully completing this course you will have accomplished the following:

1. You will have read two classic theologies on the doctrines of the church and eschatology, along with other more specialized works.
2. You will have studied carefully the Westminster Confession of Faith's discussion of these topics.
3. You will have thoroughly studied and made a presentation explaining and refuting an important heresy or false teaching of your choice in this area of theology.
4. You will know the basic competing evangelical theologies regarding the church and Israel, the sacraments, and the events of the last days.
5. You will be able to answer detailed questions regarding the church and eschatology, providing biblical support for your understanding of these issues.

Course outcomes

Successful completion of this course will enable you to do the following:

1. Teach or preach on the theological topics covered in the class.
2. Defend the basic biblical doctrines of the church, its nature and government, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the intermediate state, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment, and the eternal state.

3. Develop discernment to distinguish basic doctrines from details of interpretation about which orthodox and Reformed Christians may differ.
4. Develop a tolerant and loving attitude toward other Bible believers who may differ in denominational distinctives regarding the church, the sacraments, and eschatology.
5. Successfully pass a presbytery's written and oral examinations in this area of theology for ordination to the gospel ministry.
6. Have a solid platform for a lifetime of fruitful study in theology.

Examinations

There will be two exams during the semester. These exams will cover the lecture material, and will be selected from the study questions provided.

Reading assignments

Assignment #1

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 3, ch. 25; Book 4, ch. 1-19

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Part 3, ch. 20

A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, ch. 25-31

Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*

John Murray, *Christian Baptism*

Assignment #2

C. Hodge, Part 4, ch. 1-4

A. A. Hodge, ch. 32-33

James Oliver Buswell, Jr., *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Part 4, ch. 1, 4-7

Robert G. Clouse, ed., *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*

Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo, Richard R. Reiter, *Three Views on the Rapture*

Special Presentation

Each student will make a class presentation by taking a faulty position regarding one of the doctrines concerning the church, the sacraments, or eschatology which is presented by some group or writer, accurately presenting that view and its main support, then providing a refutation of that view, and offering a clear definition and support for the corresponding correct view. Please furnish a copy of your outline to each member of the class. This presentation should take about 30 minutes.

Grading

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| Required reading | 35% |
| Special Presentation | 15% |
| Midterm exam | 25% |
| Final exam | 25% |

Class schedule

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| Jan. | 24 | Introduction to the Course |
| | 31 | |
| Feb. | 7 | |
| | 14 | |
| | 21 | |
| | 28 | |
| Mar. | 7 | Reading Assignment #1 due |
| | 14 | Midterm Examination |
| | 21 | |
| | 28 | (Spring Recess; no class) |
| Apr. | 4 | |
| | 11 | Special Presentations begin |
| | 18 | (G.W. Presbytery – no class) |
| | 25 | |
| May | 2 | Reading Assignment #2 due |
| | 9 | Final Examination |