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ST 650 Tutorial in Systematic Theology: Christology

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Introduction
Welcome to our summer of 2008 class! Let me take a moment to introduce myself to you and to say something about the course. I am Senior Lecturer in Systematic Theology at London School of Theology and spent a sabbatical in 2006 as International Visiting Scholar at Asbury, Wilmore. I have a passion for getting into the hows? and the whys? of what we believe rather than staying at the what? level. I also believe real theology impacts the heart as well as the mind, that it should be engaging and practical. As such, then, not only will you experience Christology with a Scottish accent but you will also get the opportunity to go beyond mere knowing the facts to handling the mechanics of why we believe what we believe about Jesus Christ.
Course Description

This module seeks to introduce you to the exciting and central doctrine of Christology. In order to make it accessible in this short module, we shall look at the person of Jesus Christ through his relation both to God and to humans. We shall do so in four parts. Firstly, we shall look at how the New Testament evidences very clear responses to both aspects of Jesus’ human and divine identity. Secondly, we shall look at how this data has been developed within the exceptionally creative period of Christological thinking – the Patristic era. Thirdly, we shall look at classic, modern descriptions of Jesus. Finally, we shall look at elements of contemporary American Christologies before ending on a personal note – your Christology. I have tried to use only directly relevant books and have included journal articles that can be accessed through Asbury library.

Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, you should be able to:

* Identify the key elements of New Testament Christology;
* Demonstrate a critical awareness of how early, Patristic Christology developed;
* Articulate understanding of Christologies deemed inadequate by the Church Fathers;
* Appreciate the modern Christologies of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth;
  * Critique contemporary, contemporary North American Christologies;
  * Reflect self-critically on your own Christology

Texts and Reading Assignments

Main Texts:

Note that you can access this dictionary (as well as any articles from The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels) in electronic form through Prolepsis, available in the list in Asbury Scholar at http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/ The Dictionaries are in the Logos Library. However, Prolepsis is rather slow and allows only two concurrent users, so you may have to “take turns” to access it. That said, of course, these dictionaries should be standard ‘first-buys’ for all theological students, so some of you may already have your own copies.

For Part Ia:
In this section we are introduced to how the New Testament writers understood Jesus' relation both individually and corporately to human beings. We begin by looking at Jesus and his relation to human beings. Read in the following order:

"Christology" in Dictionary of Paul and his Letters, (IVP) pp101-115
"Adam" in Dictionary of Paul and his Letters, (IVP) pp15-20
"Image of God" in Dictionary of Paul and his Letters, (IVP) pp426-431

Then we turn to look at Jesus' relation to the wider created order:

"Wisdom" in Dictionary of Paul and his Letters, (IVP) pp967-973,
Eds. DF Ford & G Stanton, Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom, SCM Press (2003), pp116-138

For Part Ib
In this section we look at the New Testament grounds for believing that Jesus has a unique relation to God, that he is indeed God. We look first at Jesus' relation to the Spirit and see what that tells us about Jesus' relation to God:


Then we look at what the theological and christological significance that Jesus is the object of cultic worship and adoration:

LW Hurtado, Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity,
Eerdmans (2003)
For briefer introductions you may wish to refer to:

For Part II:
In this section we move out of the New Testament presentations into how the early Church Fathers engaged with what they received. We shall do so by engaging with the heterodox responses which the Church Fathers deemed inadequate and what they arrived at instead:

Either
Arius:
J Pelikan, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600), University of Chicago Press (1971), pp172-225
Colin Gunton,,“And in One Lord Jesus Christ...Begotten not Made”, Pro Ecclesia, 2001, vol.X, pp261-274
or
Apollinarius or Nestorius:
J Pelikan, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600), University of Chicago Press (1971), pp226-277

For Part III:
In this section we engage with the two major christologies of the modern era, that of Friedrich Schleiermacher in the 19th century and that of Karl Barth in the 20th century.

Schleiermacher:
FDE Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, T&T Clark, (1986), Sections 92-105,
Barth:
(Ed.) J Webster, The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth, Cambridge, 2000 (Read ch.2
(pp17-36), ch.3 (pp37-56), ch.5 (pp72-91) as introduction to the main chapter, ch.8
(pp127-142)).

For Part IV:
In this section we look at contemporary American christologies - including your own!

V-M Kärkkäinen, Christology – A Global Introduction, Baker (2003), pp170-178,
222-44, 287-290

Submission Requirements
Please submit all papers to two different locations. Firstly, to the ST650 "To Office" icon, located inside the "ST650" icon on your First Class desktop. Simply click on the “To Office” icon and attach your paper to the email window that opens. All submissions are to use the same format: ST650nameassignment. So, for example, if I were submitting my first response paper, I would submit it as “ST650mcfarlane1” and “final” for the final paper. All submissions are to be in Times New Roman 12-pt. font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Please observe these format requirements closely. Secondly, send an email attachment (as a back-up) to my working email at graham.mcfarlane@lst.ac.uk

Requirements

A. Regular ATTENDANCE and active participation in class sessions.

B. FOUR 500-word (2 pages double-spaced typed) response papers (mark of out 10 points per response)

1. The first will be based on your reading for the first day of class, and will be due on Monday, at the start of the first day of class. In your response please answer the following question: What did I learn about Jesus’ relation to either humans or creation?

2. The second response paper will be based on your reading of Turner’s article,

3. The third response paper will be based on your reading for either Arius or Apollinarius or Nestorius. See Course Schedule below for reading lists. In your response please answer the following question: What was the problem with your chosen theologian’s response and what was the Church Father’s response? Come prepared to give your answers in class. This response is due on Wednesday, first thing.

4. The fourth response paper will be based on your reading of Schleiermacher & Barth in Kärkkäinen and is due on Thursday, first thing. In your response please answer the following question: To whose theology are you more attracted – Schleiermacher’s or Barth’s – and why?

C. One 1000-word (4 page doublespaced typed) response paper. (Mark out of 20 points) This paper will be based on your reading of Kärkkäinen (pp.170-178, 212-244) and McLaren’s *The Secret Message of Jesus*. It is due on Friday, first thing. In your response I would like you to read Kärkkäinen as background to what is going on in The U.S. theological scene. We shall engage with this material in the seminar itself. The assessment however will take the form of a book review of McLaren’s book. In your response to this material please answer the following questions:

a. What is the argument of the book?

b. What are its strengths and weaknesses?

c. What did you learn from it (a personal conclusion)?

D. A take-home essay to be distributed on the first day of class and returned to me via FirstClass on the Friday of the following week. (Mark out of 40 points)

**Course Requirements**

On questions of style, especially with regard to paper organization and references, see Carol Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses* (11th ed.; New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

Students should submit written materials on time. Late submissions will receive no
written comments. Assignments that are more than one week late will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

Grade Range: Work for ST650 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

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<td>95-100</td>
<td>Unusually high quality, exceptional work</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>Far above average, fine work</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Above average for graduate work for specific assignment</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>Slightly below average for graduate work</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work</td>
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<td>Meets requirements, but serious gaps</td>
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