



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: CTH724

COURSE TITLE: NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Course Guide

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Course Code | CTH724 |
| Course Title | New Testament Theology |
| Course Developer/Writer | Dr. Abraham Mbachirin Nasarawa State University Keffi |
| Course Editor | Dr. A. O. Dairo Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye |
| Course Coordinator | Dr. Jacob A. Owolabi National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos |
| Programme Leader | Dr. Olubiyi Adeniyi Adewale National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos |



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

National Open University of Nigeria
Headquarters
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way
Victoria Island
Lagos

Abuja Annex
5, Dar es Salaam Street
Off Aminu Kano Crescent
Wuse II, Abuja
Nigeria

e-mail: centralinfo@nou.edu.ng

URL: www.nou.edu.ng

National Open University of Nigeria 2009

Printed 2009

ISBN: -----

All Rights Reserved

Printed by -----

For

National Open University of Nigeria

Content

Page

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| What you will learn in this Course | 4 |
| Course Aims | 4-5 |
| Course Objectives | 5-6 |
| Working through this Course | 6 |
| Course Materials | 6 |
| Study Units | 6-7 |
| Set Textbooks | 7-8 |
| Assignment File | 8 |
| Presentation Schedule | 8 |
| Assessment | 8 |
| Tutor-Marked Assignments | 8 |
| Final Examination and Grading | 9 |
| Course Marking Scheme | 9 |
| Course Overview | 10 |
| How to get the Best from this Course | 11-12 |
| Tutors and Tutorials | 12 |
| Summary | 13 |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This course is CTH 724-New Testament Theology. It is a two hour

credit course offered in the first year, second semester to the students of the Post-Graduated Diploma in Theology. This course has fifteen study units. You are not required to take other courses before you study for this course. The course has been developed with appropriate local examples suitable for the Nigerian audience.

The course guide is for distance learners enrolled in the Post Graduated Diploma in theology of the National Open University of Nigeria. This guide is one of the several resources tools available to you to help you successfully complete this course and ultimately your programme.

This study guide provide you with very useful information about the entire course, such as the aims and objectives, course material and structure, available services to support your learning, information on assignment and examination, you will also be guided on how to plan your time for study; the amount of time you should spend on each study unit and your tutor-marked assignments.

Go through this course study guide carefully. Before you begin the study of this course, complete the feedback form at the end. You must return the feedback to your tutorial facilitator along with your first assignment. It is my hope that this study guide will answer most of your questions. I advise you to contact your study centre if you have further questions.

2.0 COURSE AIMS

This course aims at helping you gain more knowledge of the New Testament and the activities and problems of the early Christian Church under the divine leadership of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The course will guide you to see the coherent nature of the New Testament materials and the unity that existed between the three persons of the Trinity in their plan to save humanity. The analysis of the issues involved will enable you to evaluate and probably suggest solutions to the present problems of the contemporary Church and society. The approach adopted in this course acknowledges the importance of biblical context and content and it is hoped that this approach will help you avoid over spiritualization of the Bible message and treating Bible passages out of context.

The aims of this course will be achieved by:

- Introducing you to the meaning, nature, and the relationship of New Testament Theology to other fields of theology.
- Exposing you to critically look at the development of New Testament Theology with the aim to avoid the mistakes of the past.

- Leading you to analyze the different approaches and methods of studying New Testament theology various scholars have adopted.
- Leading you to see the unity and inter-connection of the biblical message and themes and their over all goal which is the salvation of humanity.
- Exposing you to the historical, social, cultural, political, and religious environment in which New Testament emerged and the influences of these on New Testament Theology.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aims enumerated above, this course has the following overall objectives. This course is designed in such a way that each unit has specific objectives which you will find at the beginning of each unit. Before you start each unit read them carefully and study the unit with these objectives in mind. After you have completed each unit go back to the objectives again to make sure you have achieved the objectives of that unit.

Below are the overall objectives of the course. If you meet these objectives then you have achieved the over all aims of this course.

When you have successfully completed this course you should be able to:

.

- Define and explain the structure and subject matter of New Testament Theology.
- Analyze the different approaches and methods to the study of New Testament Theology.
- Trace the history and development of New Testament Theology
- Identify the influences of the Jewish and Hellenistic practices and literature on the New Testament.
- Identify the contributions of pagan religions to New Testament Theology.
- Explain how critical studies have helped the study of New Testament and also the negative effects of these criticisms on the doctrine and message of the Bible.
- Identify the major themes of the New Testament and show their connections.
- Give account of the root of the problem of man and the solution to it.
- Compare the problems of the New Testament Christian community to that of the church today.

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

To successfully complete this course, you must read all the study units

and the other materials provided by the National Open University of Nigeria. There are self-assessment exercise for each section of the unit and tutor-marked assignments at the end of each unit. Make sure you do all your home work and submit them when required. These are very important for your course assessment. There is also going to be a final examination at the end of the course.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File
5. Presentation

Study Units

This course has three modules and fourteen study units as can be seen below:

Module 1: The Discipline of Theology and New Testament Theology

- Unit 1: Introductory Materials to New Testament Theology.
- Unit 2: Development of New Testament Theology
- Unit 3: The Nature of New Testament Theology
- Unit 4: Jewish Background to the New Testament Theology.
- Unit 5: Hellenistic Background of New Testament

Module 2: The Kingdom of God in New Testament Theology

- Unit 1: John the Baptist and the kingdom of God
- Unit 2: The Meaning and Presence of the Kingdom of God
- Unit 3: The Activities of the God of the Kingdom
- Unit 4: The Mystery and Ethics of the Kingdom of God

Module 3: The Major Themes of New Testament: God, Christ, Man, Christian Life and Pauline Theology

- Unit 1: The Doctrine of God in New Testament Theology
- Unit 2: Christology of New Testament Theology
- Unit 3: The World and Man in New Testament Theology
- Unit 4: The Place of the Holy Spirit in New Testament Theology
- Unit 5: The Theology of Paul Representative of the Apostles.

References and Further Readings

- Aland, Kurt and Aland, Barbara. (1989). *An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Beardslee, William, A. (1970), *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Boers, Hendrikus. (1979). *What is New Testament Theology?* Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey. (ed). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Volume 1-4. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Bruce, E. F (1977). *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids; William Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Elwell, Walter. A. (1984). *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Ferguson, Everett. (1987). *Backgrounds to study Christianity*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Greenlee, Harold J. (1964). *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Hasel, Gerhard. (1993). *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Ladd George, Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Ladd George, Eldon. (). *The New Testament and Criticism*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing.
- Martin, Ralph P. (1975). *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students*. Volume 1 and 2. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- Meyer, F. B. (1983). *Paul: A Servant of Jesus Christ*. Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade.
- Migliore, Daniel. (1991). *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Pub. Co.
- Ridderbos, Herman. (1962). *The Coming of the Kingdom*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.
- Tenney, Merrill. C. (1972). *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Stott, John. (1978). *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.
- Via, Dan O. (2002). *What is New Testament Theology?* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press.
- Walton John H (1989). *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A survey of Parallels between Biblical Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

Assignment File

One of the components of this course is the Assignment File which will be mailed to you later from the office of the National Open University of Nigeria. The file contains assignment that you must submit to your tutor for marking. These assignments will be marked and recorded. The marks you obtain from these assignments will count towards your final grade. The entire course has more than thirty assignments. These assignments cover every unit.

Assessment

This course has two aspects of assessment. The first one is the Tutor-Marked Assignment while the second is a written examination. These assessments are based on the information, knowledge, and experience you gathered during the course which you should apply when attempting these assessments. All of these must be submitted to your tutor in accordance with the deadline stated in your Assignment File. All of these will be 30% of your total course marks. At the end of the course there will be a two hour final examination.

Tutor –Marked Assignment (TMAs)

There are fifteen tutor-marked assignments for this course. You must do all and submit them to your tutor. At the end of the course the best (that

is, the highest three) will be counted. Each assignment is worth 10 marks when the three assignments are put together then the tutor-marked assignment will be 30% of your total course marks.

SUMMARY OF THE UNITS

As you will see above, this course has fifteen units.

Module 1 introduces you to the field of theology in general and New Testament Theology including its Development, Nature and Background Studies.

Module 2 deals with the specific theme of the kingdom of God, John the Baptists’ understanding of the kingdom, Christ explanation, the mystery and ethics of the kingdom.

Module 3 looks at other major theme such as God, Christ the Holy Spirit man and the world and examines their connections and their relationships to the salvation of humanity.

Each study unit consists of one week’s work and should take you about three hours to complete it. It included specific objectives, guidance for study, reading materials, self assessment exercises, and tutor – marked assignments. All these are to assist you achieve the stated learning objectives of the individual study units of the course.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to cover 15 weeks. You are expected to complete the assignment for the unit at the end of every week and submit to your tutorial facilitator. See the table below for the study plan.

| UNIT | TITLE OF THE STUDY UNIT | WEEKS ACTIVITY | ASSIGNMENT |
|----------------|---|----------------|-------------------|
| | COURSE GUIDE | 1 | Course Guide Form |
| Module1 | <i>The discipline of Theology & New Testament Theology</i> | | |
| 1 | Introductory Material for NTT | 2 | Assignment |
| 2 | Development of New Testament Theology | 3 | Assignment |
| 3 | The Nature of New Testament | 4 | Assignment |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|----|-----------------------|
| 4 | Jewish Background of New Testament | 5 | Assignment |
| 5 | Hellenistic Background of New Testament | 6 | T M A to be submitted |
| Module 2 | <i>The Kingdom of God</i> | | |
| 1 | John the Baptist and the Kingdom of God | 7 | Assignment |
| 2 | The Meaning and the Presence of the Kingdom of God | 8 | Assignment |
| 3 | The Activities of the God of the Kingdom | 9 | Assignment |
| 4 | They Mystery and Ethics of the Kingdom of God | 10 | TMA to be submitted |
| Module 3 | <i>The Theology of God, Christ, Holy Spirit and Paul and man</i> | | |
| 1 | The Doctrine of the God in the New Testament | 11 | Assignment |
| 2 | Christology in the New Testament | 12 | Assignment |
| 3 | The World and Man in the New Testament | 13 | Assignment |
| 4 | The Place of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament | 14 | Assignment |
| 5 | The Theology of Paul: The Representative of the Apostles | 15 | TMA to be submitted |
| | Revision | 16 | |
| | Examination | 17 | |
| | Total | 17 | |

SUMMARY OF THE COURSE

This course is developed to help you gain deeper knowledge of the New Testament under selected topics. In the course of your study you will be exposed to the activities and problems of the early Christian community under the divine leadership of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit. You will also see the relationship of New Testament theology with other branches of theology as well as the relationship of the New Testament with the Old Testament, Jewish and Hellenistic practices and culture,

and even to pagan religions that robbed shoulders with the New Testament people. The materials of this course cover the definition, nature, structure, development, and contribution of critical studies to New Testament theology. The course will attempt to motivate you to evaluate the current religious, political, social, and cultural problems and challenges in the light of what is narrated in this course.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Course Code | CTH724 |
| Course Title | New Testament Theology |
| Course Developer/Writer | Dr. Abraham Mbachirin Nasarawa State University Keffi |
| Course Editor | Dr. A. O. Dairo Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye |
| Course Coordinator | Dr. Jacob A. Owolabi National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos |
| Programme Leader | Dr. Olubiyi Adeniyi Adewale National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos |



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

National Open University of Nigeria
Headquarters
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way
Victoria Island
Lagos

Abuja Annex
5, Dar es Salaam Street
Off Aminu Kano Crescent
Wuse II, Abuja
Nigeria

e-mail: centralinfo@nou.edu.ng

URL: www.nou.edu.ng

National Open University of Nigeria 2009

Printed 2009

ISBN: -----

All Rights Reserved

Printed by -----

For
National Open University of Nigeria

CONTENTS

PAGES

Module 1: The Discipline of Theology and New Testament Theology

- Unit 1: Introductory Materials to New Testament Theology.
- Unit 2: Development of New Testament Theology
- Unit 3: The Nature of New Testament Theology
- Unit 4: Jewish Background to the New Testament Theology.
- Unit 5: Hellenistic Background of New Testament

Module 2: The Kingdom of God in New Testament Theology

- Unit 1: John the Baptist and the kingdom of God
- Unit 2: The Meaning and Presence of the Kingdom of God
- Unit 3: The Activities of the God of the Kingdom
- Unit 4: The Mystery and Ethics of the Kingdom of God

Module 3: The Major Themes of New Testament: God, Christ, Man, Christian Life and Pauline Theology

- Unit 1: The Doctrine of God in New Testament Theology
- Unit 2: Christology of New Testament Theology
- Unit 3: The World and Man in New Testament Theology
- Unit 4: The Place of the Holy Spirit in New Testament Theology
- Unit 5: The Theology of Paul Representative of the Apostles.

MODULE 1: THE DISCIPLINE OF THEOLOGY AND NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

- Unit 1: Introductory Materials to New Testament Theology.
- Unit 2: Development of New Testament Theology
- Unit 3: The Nature of New Testament Theology
- Unit 4: Jewish Background to the New Testament Theology.
- Unit 5: Hellenistic Background of New Testament

INTRODUCTION

In this first module, I shall introduce you to the course and its title. The Module contains very important information on the general discipline of theology and New Testament Theology as an independent course. I shall attempt to define and describe theology and New Testament and explain how they relate to one another. This module will cover the development of the New Testament theology through the history of the Christian church, its nature as well as the Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds to the New Testament. The aim is to give you a solid foundation that will help you understand the specific themes that will be treated in this course.

The main textbooks will be *A Theology of the New Testament* by George Ladd, *New Testament Theology* by Donald Guthrie; *Backgrounds to Early Christianity* by Everett Ferguson, and *What is New Testament Theology?* By Dan O. Via. These books can be found in any of the Theological library near you or book store, or online. If you are near Jos you can buy at African Christian Textbooks (ACTS) Bookshop at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru in Jos.

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL INTO NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Branches of Theology
 - 3.1.1 Systematic Theology
 - 3.1.2 Historical Theology
 - 3.1.3 Philosophical Theology
 - 3.1.4 Practical Theology
 - 3.1.5 Biblical Theology
 - 3.2 Definition of New Testament Theology
 - 3.3 Nature and Structure of New Testament Theology
 - 3.4 Approaches to New Testament Theology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Theology is discipline that is very wide and covers many areas of study. No one can specialize in all areas of theology. Thus we talk of a Biblical theologian, Professor of Historical, Philosophical, Systematic theology. New Testament is related to the other branches of theology but particularly more to Biblical Theology. New Testament Theology deals with only one part of the Bible. It employs similar instruments with Biblical Theology. New Testament is based on the New Testament. One fact of the Christian life is that the Bible is prone to different interpretations. This openness to different interpretations is responsible for proliferation of churches. Equally, any study based on the Bible is subject to different structures and approaches. Thus, this unit exposes you to the differences among scholars on the subject of New Testament theology. You will see this again in unit 2. As you go through this you will know which views are wrong and which ones are correct.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- State the different branches of theology
- State the task of theology
- Describe the connection between New Testament and Biblical

Theology

- Define New Testament Theology
- Explain the nature and structure of New Testament Theology
- Show the right and wrong approaches to the New Testament Theology
- The relationship between New Testament and Old Testament Theology

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Branches of Theology

The word theology comes from two Greek words, *Theos* meaning – God and *logos* meaning word or study. Put together, it means the study of God. The object of theology is therefore the Triune God but also his creation, including especially human beings and their relation. That is how man relates to God and the creation. Sometimes people think that it is impossible to study God because God is greater and more mysterious than anything in the universe, and God is not like an object that can be researched in the laboratory. This notwithstanding, we can know enough about God to study about him. It is important that in our study of God we should always be aware that what we know is smaller than what we do not know. The fact that God is not just the one we study but the one we worship puts a different tone in our project of theology.

The task of theology generally is:

- To provide a clear and comprehensive description of the Christian Faith.
- To translate Christian faith into terms that is intelligible to the wider culture.
- To provide a reality of God and Christ.
- To investigate the origin and the original content of the Christian faith and of the doctrine of the Church, or the changes they underwent in the course of history, and to determine the truth which is contained in that tradition.

We study God from different angles and it is because of this that we have different branches of theology.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

What does the study of God involve?

3.1.1 Systematic Theology

Before the Reformation, all of theology was studied under Dogmatic theology. Systematic theology is close to what was called Dogmatic theology but also different in the sense that systematic theology is a more specialized field. This branch of theology is also called doctrinal or constructive theology. The subject ventures a faithful, coherent, timely and a responsible articulation to the Christian faith. It states the meaning of the Bible for the present using theological and philosophical knowledge. It involves a continuous interpretation and practices in the light of the teaching and life of Christ. The base of systematic theology is God's self-revelation as it is found in the Bible. The Systematic theologian develops his doctrines directly from the Bible.

Self Assessment Exercise 2

The definition, I have provided is a technical one. Check from English Dictionary and World Book Encyclopedia and write the definition of systematic theology and dogmatic in your note book. Note the difference between the two.

3.1.2 Historical Theology

Historical theology traces the many ways and circumstances in which Christian faith and practices have come to expression in different times and places. It establishes the reality that theology has developed through the centuries of the history of the Christian Church. It is concerned with what theologians held and taught concerning a particular subject throughout the history of the church. It may choose to deal with the theology of a given period or particular theologians or a school of theological thought with respect to key areas of doctrine. It may also take another dimension and examine the development of a particular doctrine throughout the life of the church.

The significant value of historical theology is that it makes us more self-conscious and self-critical of our teachings. Also we can learn to do theology by studying how others in the past have done. Historical theology also provides us with the tools that help us evaluate a particular idea or subject. Courses in Church History are under the branch of theology.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

We have talked about church history in this section. Use only dictionary or book you like and explain what church history is. Is church history different from historical theology?

3.1.3 Philosophical Theology

According to David Migliore, this is an area of theology that “employs the resources of Philosophical inquiry to examine the meaning and truth of the Christian faith in the light of reason and experience” (9). Philosophical theology helps us to defend and establish the truth of a given theology and scrutinize its concepts and arguments.

Related Philosophical theology is Moral Theology. Most seminaries have them in one department; others however, associate it with Systematic theology. Roman Catholics and Protestants differ slightly on the technical meaning of Moral Theology. However, Moral Theology is commonly called Christian Ethics. It simply means to live as a Christian, to a responsible moral agent and is about moral actions. It deals with issues such as moral discernment, the definition of good and evil, right and wrong, and sin and virtue. Under moral theology, one studies specific issues such as abortion, justice, sexuality, swearing and oath taking, homosexuality, euthanasia etc. Moral theology helps the church and its individual members respond to the challenge of the secular world.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

1. Philosophy and theology are related so familiarize your self with philosophy by defining it using two or more dictionaries.
2. List at least any six philosophers that you know.

3.1.4 Practical Theology

As the name implies, practical theology deals with the practical aspects of the ministry of the church which are helpful in building and strengthening the life of the church and Christians in general. It looks at and analyses the present needs of the church and its members the present needs of the church members in the light of the Bible message. Its aim is to bring or lead people to the comfort and peace of God in their joy and sufferings. Practical theology is concerned with things like preaching, education, counseling, caring for the poor, visiting the sick, the dying and the bereaved. This is highly a specialized area operated by specialized persons or professionals. For example, the person involved in Church education receives training in theology and Christian Education or Educational Ministries. The person counseling need training in Counseling and Psychology, person working with the aged and the poor needs training in Social Work

Self Assessment Exercise 5

- 1) Write down the ways in which your church takes care of the poor, sick dying and the bereaved.
- 2) There are so many widows in Nigeria today because of Aids and wars, suggest three ways that your church should take care of the widows.
- 3) According to the discussion above, what are the other areas that a person working in a Church setting needs to study?

3.1.5 Biblical Theology

Biblical Theology is the expounding of the theology found in the Bible taking into consideration its own historical settings, terms, categories, and thought forms. It is a descriptive discipline in that it studies the messages of the Bible in their historical setting. The intension of Biblical theology is to make known what God has done and how that affects human existence.

Biblical theology is based on God's self-revelation and the redemption plan for man. In summary, Biblical theology is the historical and theological science that studies the revelation of God within the pages of the Old and New Testaments. Biblical theology is divided into Old and New Testament Theology which is our concern in this course.

Self Assessment Exercise 6

- 1) In trying to explain what Biblical theology is about, we used the word descriptive. What is the meaning of this word in relation to our Biblical studies?
- 2) One of the sentences above talks about what God has done and how that affects human existence. List only six things that you think God has done for us.
- 3) Look at the explanation of the branches of theology again. Which of them does not make any reference to the Bible?

3.2 Definition of New Testament Theology

New Testament is a branch of Biblical theology that studies the twenty seven books of the New Testament or the New Covenant as called by others. Specifically, New Testament theology traces or studies various themes through different authors or books of the New Testament and then amalgamates those individual motifs into a single comprehensive whole. It may also deal with the theology of the different authors separately.

The aim of this discipline is to set forth the theological thoughts of the

New Testament writings and unfold the history of the early Christian religion. In New Testament theology, the biblical content and the significance of Jesus' mission are central. The theology and interpretation of the New Testament must centre upon the historical Christ. It is through Christ that God made himself known. In this context, New Testament explores the meaning or the message of the passage for its own day and not so much on the application for modern needs. New Testament theology is therefore, both descriptive and historical. In summary, New Testament theology is the history of the early Christian religion and theology, and it deals with what was taught, believed, hoped for and striven at.

Self Assessment Exercise 7

- 1) We have said above that the New Testament is also called the "New Covenant" in your note book, write two definitions of a covenant that you find.
- 2) Write down in your note book four things that Apostle taught, four things they believed, two things they hoped and two things they strived at.

3.3 Nature and Structure of New Testament Theology

New Testament theology is not easily noticed on the pages of New Testament Bible, yet it is based on the New Testament Bible, on the life and work of Jesus Christ. Through research one can derive New Testament theology from the New Testament. There is a single theology of the New Testament and it is based on the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and their place in the redemption plan of God for humanity. These form the foundation and basis of New Testament. The apostles built on these themes and expounded them. New Testament can be found in the genealogy of Jesus which shows that he did not come directly from heaven but through human being. Gentiles and woman occupy a prominent position in the genealogy and testify to the universality of salvation.

In essence, the whole of the New Testament is theology, each book or passage in the New Testament has a divine purpose, guidance and protection. The New Testament and New Testament theology cannot be separated. According to Stephen Neill, "separating New Testament theology from the New Testament is like separating the soul from the body."

The New Testament which is the source material for the study of New Testament theology is divided into many narrative accounts. The synoptic gospels form the first unit. This unit has Matthew, Mark and

Luke. These three evangelists present similar narrative accounts on the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The second one which is close to the synoptic is the gospel of John. The Apostle John presents extended speeches of the revelation of Christ mission to the world. The next unit deals with the extension of the church into the gentile world. It covers the story of the early church in Jerusalem and the surrounding villages as well as Paul's missionary Journeys in the gentile world. This is found in Acts of the Apostles. The fourth unit is made up of the letters of Paul, Peter, James and John. This section deals with pastoral concerns and doctrinal issues. The last is the book of Revelation. This is written in figurative language and it deals with the catastrophic events of the history of the end of the world. John wrote to encourage the faithful to stand steadfast in difficult times.

Self Assessment Exercise 8

1. Read the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-16 and make a list of the women included in this genealogy.
2. Take and familiarize yourself with the different sections or narrative accounts of the New Testament. In your note book, write the sections and the books that fall under each.

3.4 Approaches to New Testament Theology

It has already been established that New Testament theology is about what God has done in Jesus Christ who was a historical figure and walked on the streets and roads of Palestine. The study of New Testament theology is thereby a historical project. As a historical project it uses historical and linguistic tools to understand the message of the New Testament. The intent is to study the content as well as the context of the New Testament stories. New Testament theology describes the original historical meaning of the concepts, events and the message. This helps to achieve the aim of New Testament theology which is to make sense of the New Testament message.

In the field of biblical studies, scholars have adopted different approaches to the study of New Testament theology. Rudolf Bultmann, for example, believes that it is only the theologies of John and Paul that are important and this is what should be studied as New Testament theology. Werner Kummel on the other hand gives preference to Paul. He reiterates that there is a single theology of the New Testament and it is the theology of Paul. Christ is important only because he did the preliminary work which Paul used.

New Testament theology does not exist in isolation. It is part of God's total revelation to humanity. The revelation of God is progressive. It is

the unfolding of God's plan of man's salvation which becomes explicitly clear through the coming of Christ. This started in the Old Testament and has its climax in the New Testament. For this reason, references and an understanding of the Old Testament is necessary for the study of New Testament theology.

New Testament theology also makes references to Jews and Greek literature that were written before, during and after the New Testament. These are useful for the study of New Testament theology because they influenced the concepts, stories, culture and practices found in the New Testament or shade light on what happened in the New Testament.

However, these writings must not be considered as part of New Testament or word of God because their purpose not redemptive history as the biblical books. They do not reveal a holy history.

Self Assessment Exercise 9

- 1) What is the difference between content and context of the New Testament?
- 2) You have come across the word "God's Revelation" many times in this discussion. Check any theological dictionary or textbook and define the term and also note the two aspects of God's revelation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Theology is the study of God. The object of theology is the Triune God and his creation, including especially human being and who they relate to God and the entire creation. God is not like an object that can be researched in the laboratory. In our study of God we must confess that God is greater and more mysterious than anything in the universe. What we know about him, is what he has revealed to us. This is to say our knowledge of God is limited. God has revealed himself through general and special revelation. General revelation is the self disclosure of God through nature, history and human conscience while special revelation is the man infestation of God through miraculous events, divine speeches and of course his son Jesus Christ. The source of this is the Bible. All the branches of theology seek to provide a clear and comprehensive redemption of the Christian faith in terms that one intelligible to the wide culture and to present the reality of God and Christ.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit I have discussed five branches of theology these include;

1. Systematic theology – as known as doctrine

2. Historical Theology – Study of the history of the Christian faith
3. Philosophical Theology – The use of philosophical tools to understand the Christian faith.
4. Practical Theology – Deals with issues like preaching, education, counseling taking care of the poor and the sick.
5. Biblical Theology – Studies the books of the Old and New Testament and what they say about God and Christ. New Testament Theology is a child of Biblical Theology.

It should be noted that we have not treated everything that goes by the name theology here. We have other things like Natural Theology, Process Theology, Liberation Theology, Black Theology, Feminist Theology and many others. I have also provided the definition of New Testament Theology and made it clear that New Testament Theology is based on the New Testament materials and as such there is only one single Theology of the New Testament.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. Discuss the nature and structure of New Testament Theology
2. What is the relationship between Biblical and the New Testament Theology. In answering the question explain both Biblical and New Testament Theology.
3. What is the difference between Systematic and Historical Theology?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Boers, Hendrikus. (1979). *What is New Testament Theology?* Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Elwell, Walter. A. (1984), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapid: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Migliore, Daniel. (1991). *Faith Seeking Understanding; An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Via, Dan O. (2002). *What is New Testament Theology?* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press.

UNIT 2 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Middle Ages and the Reformation Era
 - 3.2 The Post – Reformation
 - 3.3 Biblical criticism and New Testament Theology
 - 3.3.1 Textual Criticism
 - 3.3.2 Linguistic Criticism
 - 3.3.3 Form Criticism
 - 3.3.4 Historical Criticism
 - 3.3.5 Literary Criticism
 - 3.4 Methods to the Study of New Testament Theology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor – marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit we said that New Testament came out of Biblical theology and in discussing systematic theology we mentioned that before the reformation all theology was one. This presupposes that theology general and New Testament too have undergone some development. Development is a normal process for such things. The ages of scholarship in the history of the church were the Middle Ages and the Reformation era. In the Middle Ages, education was wholly in the hands of the Church and the Church prescribed what was studied.

After the Reformation there was more freedom for intellectual pursuit. This gave way for more different views of the Bible. The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the use of scientific method to study the Bible. Some of these methods display negative attitudes to the study of the Bible, while others display positive attitudes. Within this period, others sought to find the best method to study the New Testament. Looking at what happened within this time, many questions come to mind like; is the freedom of scholarship and intellectual pursuit bad? How far should people be exposed to the materials that have the tendency of leading someone to a wrong view? This warns us that we should be cautious of what we read. One of the things you learn from this unit is the respect for tradition. I think it is important that we should respect our Church tradition.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit that you should be able to:

- Trace the development of New Testament theology from the Middle Ages through the Reformation Era.
- State the relationship between Biblical Criticism and New Testament Theology.
- Identify the differences between the various branches of biblical criticism.
- List the pros and cons of each method of the study of New Testament Theology.
- Identify the best method for the study of New Testament Theology

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Middle Ages and the Reformation Era

Beginning from the period after the apostolic Era throughout the middle ages the church was mostly concerned with dogmatic theology at the detriment of other branches of theology. Dogmatic theology was founded on the Bible and church tradition. Biblical theology was only used as it informed dogmatic theology. It can be concluded that at that time the church had little or no interest in Biblical theology; the church attached greater importance to Tradition than Biblical evidence. No freedom of interpretation was allowed to the individual scholars and the discipline of exegesis was non-existent. No one was allowed to challenge the teachings of the church.

Biblical theology and consequently New Testament theology have their beginnings in the Reformation Era when the reformers began to challenge the unbiblical character of dogmatic theology. The core tenet of the reformers was *Sola Scriptura*- the Scripture alone. They made the Bible the sole authority of life and death. They insisted that theology must be based on the Bible alone. This spirit of the reformers led to the study of the languages of the Bible and the role of history in Biblical Theology. The reformers also instituted the literal method of biblical interpretation which led to the beginning of a truly biblical theology. Emphasis was on the historical grammatical method. The study of Greek, Hebrew and the writings of the Church Fathers were given preeminence. No distinction was made between Old and New Testament theology, however, the reformers emphasized the validity of all parts of the Bible and the authority of the Bible over that of the church.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. What do we mean by the Middle Ages in the History of the Church?
Check in theological dictionaries or theological books to find out the years allocated to this period.
2. Define the term Reformation.
3. Exegesis is a technical term in the study of New Testament.
Familiarize yourself with the term by defining it.

3.2 The Post-Reformation

In the period after the Reformation protestant theologians used the Bible as a mere proof- texts to support the various doctrines of the church. They paid more attention to the contents and less to the context which in this case is the historical background in which Christian theology developed. The Enlightenment movement or the rise of Rationalism had great impact on the development of Biblical theology. Elwell reports that “the beginning of biblical theology came after the Enlightenment within German pietism. The mind replaced faith as a controlling factor, and the historical-critical method is developed” (Elwell 1984:768). Rationalism challenged superstition and viewed the Bible from an objective point. Through the influence of J.P Gabler (1789) biblical theology was severed from dogmatic theology. This led the church to pay more attention to New Testament theology. Another scholar by name William Wrede (1897) made a thorough going attempt and insisted that theology must be studied in its historical context.

A diversion to the correct way of studying New Testament theology was led by Rudolf Bultmann. He is usually called that father of liberation. Bultmann said that the historical Jesus is significantly different from the one portrayed in the Gospel. Historically, Jesus was only a Jewish prophet who preached the imminent end of the world and warned people concerning the impending judgment. Jesus never taught that he was the messiah or son of God. However, he possessed an overwhelming reality of God and was conscious that he was the bearer of God’s word in the end times. Consequently, Bultmann concluded that the Jesus we find in the gospel did not exist in history; he is only a mythological construction of the early church. Therefore, he embarked on removing the myth from Jesus and says Jesus has no theology. The only theology he finds in the New Testament is that of Paul. The process of removing myth is called demythologization. This involves the elimination of miracle and supernatural element in the Bible because these are not compatible with laws fixed by nature to govern the universe.

Bultmann taught that the Biblical worldview and discussion of

supernatural activities belongs to the pre-scientific age which is unacceptable to the modern scientific mind. Bultmann insisted that the pre-existence of Christ, his deity, the virgin birth, his sinlessness, atonement, resurrection, ascension, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and his power, the Trinity and original sin must be discarded as myths. When this is done then Christ becomes only an ordinary man like any one of us.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. It is important that you know a few New Testament theologians. Check on the internet and in textbooks and list at least 10 New Testament theologians.
2. Bultmann thinks that the Bible and science are in disagreement and miracles cannot happen. What can you say to show that his view is not right?
- 3 In your study of this material so far, can you mention one or two theologians that you think do not have a true biblical theology?

3.3 Biblical Criticism and New Testament Theology

The Greek word from which criticism comes from is *krisis*. The word simply means “a judgment” Biblical criticism means making intelligent judgment about historical, literary, textual, and philosophical questions that one faces when studying the Bible. In fact, Theology arises from the freedom and responsibility of the Christian community to inquiry about its faith in God. This means that theology is not a mere repetition of traditional doctrines but a persistent search for the truth to which they point and which they only partially and brokenly express.

Anselm defines theology as “*Fides quaerens intellectum*”. i.e. ‘faith seeking understanding.’ We know we are saved by the grace of God through faith and we seek to know what this means. Christian faith asks questions about God, ourselves and the world. But we seek provisional answers. True faith keeps on seeking and asking. We are not fideism – no inquiry but simply believing. Theology therefore that grows out of the Christian faith incites reflection, inquiry and pursuit of the truth not yet possessed, or partially possessed. Theology should not aim at asking questions like how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, or questions that seek to make clever distinctions and win debates, or make elegant arguments, we must desist from detached, insensitive and overly intellectualized theology. Our theology should be a theology that transform hearts, leads us to unqualified acceptance of what the Bible teaches and uncompromising trust in the Holy Spirit. This does not mean we are to be *bibliolatry*, rather we have to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Questions and reflections of the theologians

should not replace trust in God but act as critical ingredients that help to distinguish faith from mere illusion or pious evasion. On the whole; theology without praxis is empty, praxis without theory is also blind.

In this sense a sound theology of the New Testament must involve Biblical criticism. According to F.F Bruce, criticism is a term that refers to “a number of techniques employed in the study of written documents in order to establish as far as possible their original text, the literary categories to which they are assigned, their sources, purpose, and so forth.” (Bromiley 1979: 817 Vol.1). These techniques are helpful in the study of the Bible.

It must be noted also that Biblical Criticism has also displayed negative attitudes to the study of the Bible, especially to the doctrine and history of the Bible. Extreme position destroys the trustworthiness of the historical records. The implication of this is that one must be careful with the application of the techniques of Bible criticism.

The Bible is the word of God communicated to us through human words. The negative side of Biblical criticism does not realize this. It insists that the Bible must only be viewed as words of men and not the word of God. Biblical criticism is not to criticize the word of God but to understand it better. One thing to note about biblical criticism is that it started as a reaction to non-critical and supernaturalistic attitude to the study of the Bible. George Ladd said, “The Bible can be rightly understood only by those who accept its basic message, and this requires the response of faith as well as a historical scientific methodology”. (*The New Testament Criticism* 51). Biblical criticism embraces many critical disciplines that will be considered briefly here.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) In what ways have people criticized the Bible? List as many as you can remember.
- 2) You have come across the word science or scientific many times by now, does the Bible have anything to do with science? Think about this carefully before you will answer.

3.3.1 Textual Criticism

Textual criticism is also called lower criticism. This critical discipline seeks to determine the original wording of the New Testament, what the authors really meant their original words and original form. Basically, it is an effort to recover the original text.

It is helpful in producing sound explanation of the Bible passages.

Biblical explanation is technically known as exegesis. Biblical theology is based on sound exegesis and a sound exegesis is based on a reliable text. In essence textual criticism helps to establish or arrive at an accurate text. This is real and true biblical theology.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

Summarize the advantages of Textual Criticism.

3.3.2 Linguistic criticism

Linguistic criticism seeks to understand the meaning of words in their original language. In the case of New Testament theology, the study and understanding of Greek is very important. The New Testament was written in Greek. It was a Greek that was different from the contemporary Greek used at that time. It was a colloquial, common Greek known as *Koine*. It has its own distinct vocabulary, syntax, style, form of words and idioms. Because of its distinctive nature, some scholars call it “the language of the Holy Ghost”.

A critical study of the New Testament using these scientific tools shed more light and enlightened our understanding on the meaning of the word of God and the nature of the New Testament language.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

1. What are the benefits of using the language that you know best?
2. Familiarize yourself with the distinctive nature of the *Koine* Greek.

3.3.3 Form Criticism

Form criticism assumes that the material, especially the stories in the gospels; the life, death, resurrection, parables other teachings were first passed on orally before they were written. Form criticism therefore studies the various literary forms which the oral tradition assumed as it was passed from mouth to mouth. It helps to determine the oral pre-history of written document or source and classify the materials according to various forms or categories of narrations or discourse.

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

In our country many so called “illiterates” know the Bible. What methods do they employ to keep the Bible stories in their hearts or teach their children? Is this similar with what happened in the past?

3.3.4 Historical Criticism

This is the aspect of biblical studies that is usually misleading and when wrongly used leads to a destruction of the truthfulness of the word of God. Historical criticism tests the historical worth of the documents which set forth the religion of the Bible. The objective here is to discover the religious life operative at the time the New Testament was written. It gives insight into the essence of religion and the essence of historical facts.

It is important to understand that the word of God was given to men through historical events, personages and processes. This very fact demands a historical criticism. Historical criticism helps one familiarize with the historical context such as the cultural, social and religious environments. While engaging in historical criticism one must understand that history include divine intervention. God has created the world and the world is still under his control. He has created the world with the possibility of miracles. Miracles are not accidents. They are part of his eternal decrees. Real history must not be against miracles.

3.3.5 Literary Criticism

This is also known as higher criticism. It is the studying of the authorship, state or mode of the writer, place of writing, the recipients, style, sources, integrity and the purpose of the Bible passages. All of these contribute greatly to the understanding of the Bible and the development of a sound New Testament Theology.

3.4 Methods of New Testament Theology

Scholars are not in agreement with the method of studying New Testament theology. Scholars take different approaches to achieve their goals. It should be noted that each method has its weakness and strength. We shall consider a few of these methods:

3.4.1 The Synthetic Method

Scholars using this method trace basic theological themes through the records of the Bible in order to know their development throughout the Biblical period. The strength of this method is that it preserves the unity of the Bible. The weakness is that one can force an artificial pattern upon the NT materials.

Self Assessment Exercise 7

Make a list of five themes or topics that you think are outstanding in the

New Testament.

3.4.2 The Analytical Method

Here scholars study the theology of individual sections of the Bible and notes the unique presentation of each section. By sections, we are referring to blocks like the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Pastoral Epistles, Captivity Epistles, etc. The strength here is that the meaning or theological understanding of individual authors of the Bible is made known. The weakness of this method is that there is radical diversity and no cohesion.

Self Assessment Exercise 8

- 1) Which of the letters of Paul are called Pastoral Epistles?
- 2) Another name for Captivity Epistle is Prison Epistles.
List those letters that fall under this block.

3.4.3 Historical Method

This method studies the development of religious ideas in the life of the people of God. Its strength is to show that there is a community of believers behind the Bible while its weakness is that it is subject to artificial reconstruction by the scholar.

Self Assessment Exercise 9

What is the main community of believers behind the New Testament?

3.4.4 Christological Method

Under this method, Christ is made the centre or hermeneutical key of the Old and New Testaments. The value of this method is the recognition of the true and key figures of the Bible. The problem is the tendency to spiritualize passages and force interpretations which are foreign to them. For instance, one may fall into the danger of seeing too many types of Christ in the Old or New Testament.

Self Assessment Exercise 10

List at least five types of Christ in the Old Testament.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The effort of this unit was to trace the development of New Testament Theology. We have established that in the past. The church had more

interest in the study of dogmas and little attention was given to Biblical theology. It was during the Reformation that the Church gave much attention to Biblical studies. In the Middle Ages the Bible suffered some level of neglect. Church tradition was the main source of dogmatic theology. This Bible was only used to support dogmatic theology.

The reformers, on the other hand, emphasized the sole authority of the Bible and insisted it was the only rule for life and faith. The reformation gave birth to the freedom and responsibilities of the church community to inquire about its faith in God. Through this, the church ventured into a critical study of the word of God to understand the word of God better. Critical study of the Bible led to the study of Biblical languages including their forms and styles, and the history of the events in the Bible.

5.0 SUMMARY

New Testament theology has a long history behind it. As we saw in the last unit, it came out of Biblical theology. Biblical theology started in the reformation and continued after the reformation. In the post-reformation era, scholars adopted different approaches to understand the theology of the New Testament. One outstanding scholar that we discussed is Rudolf Bultmann. Bultmann believed and taught that the New Testament contained a lot of myths which must be discarded. His project is called demythologization of Bible.

The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the appearance of Biblical criticism. This discipline helps in the understanding of the New Testament, but also contributed negatively by undermining the trustworthiness of biblical history and doctrine. Biblical criticism is a discipline that covers, textual, linguistic, form, historical, and literary criticism.

Part of the development of New Testament Theology was to find a suitable method. A number of methods were devised, however, in this unit we dealt only with the synthetic, analytical, historical and Christological methods.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. Rudolf Bultmann is one of the Liberal scholars who present a wrong understanding of New Testament Theology. Discuss his demythologization theory and his view of the New Testament stories generally.
2. Discuss any three methods of the study of New Testament Theology and state their strength and weakness.

3. Explain what Biblical Criticism attempts to do and list with little explanation the branches of biblical criticism you have studied.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Beardslee, William, A. (1970). *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Bromiley, Geoffrey. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Volume 1. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Greenlee, Harold J. (1964) *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*; Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Hasel, Gerhard. (1993) *New Testament Theology; Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Ladd George, Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans publishing Company.

Ladd George, Eldon. (1967). *The New Testament and Criticism*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

UNIT 3: THE NATURE OF NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Basis of the Unity of New Testament Theology
 - 3.1.1 The Key Figure
 - 3.1.2 The Mission of Christ
 - 3.1.3 The Community Idea
 - 3.1.4 Future Hope and Fulfillment Motif
 - 3.1.5 The Holy Spirit
 - 3.2 Kerygma as the Basis for New Testament Theology
 - 3.2.1 Kerygma as Testimony of Old Testament
 - 3.2.2 The Context of Kerygma
 - 3.2.3 Kerygma as a Link
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You will recall that in the last two units we alluded to the fact that there are good and bad ways of approaching New Testament Theology and each of the method suggested has its pros and cons. You will also recall that some theologians have suggested that there are many theologies of the New Testament. This unit makes a contrary conclusion. It will show the basis of the unity of New Testament Theology and Kerygma as the basis of New Testament theology. There are two important issues here, the person of Jesus Christ and his message which include the life, ministry, death resurrection, and ascension into heaven. These are responsible for the unity of New Testament Theology.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Identify the one who is the central figure of New Testament Theology.
- Account for how the mission of Christ has contributed to the unity of New Testament Theology.
- Defining Kerygma
- Shows the link that Kerygma has provided between the Old

Testament, the Gospels and the apostles.

3.1 Basic Unity of New Testament Theology

The New Testament is written by different authors, to different audience with different messages and there are also many themes in New Testament Theology yet it is generally accepted that the New Testament is a unit. New Testament theologians recognize the divergent testimonies of the New Testament books, but they have always identified the unifying principles or elements within the diversity of the New Testament books. Some of the unifying principles or elements to be considered include:

3.1.1 The Key Figure

The key to the unity of the New Testament Theology is the centrality of Christ. He is the main binding force throughout the New Testament. No part of the New Testament is intelligible or reasonable apart from Christ. Every part of the New Testament portrays him. The New Testament portrays different aspects and nature of Christ such as his divinity, humanity, Messiahship, Sonship, and Lordship. All these show his completeness and sovereignty. He is also the centre of God's dealing with man. That is why he has the divine and human natures. The divine and human natures of Christ are very important in New Testament theology. It is through these natures that Christ represents and identifies with God and man. Below are some of the characteristics of his divine and human natures.

Divine Characteristics

1. Possesses Divine Attributes
 - * He is eternal, John 1:1; 8:58, 17:5.
 - * Omniscient, John 16:30; 21:17
 - * Omnipotent, John 5:19
2. Possesses Divine Offices
 - * Creator, John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:15, 16
 - * Sustainer, Col. 1:17
3. Possesses Divine Prerogatives
 - * Forgives sins – Matt. 9:2, Luke 7:47
 - * He executes Judgment – John 5:22
4. Possesses Divine Names
 - * I am – John 8:58
 - * Alpha and Omega – Rev. 22:13

- * Immanuel – Matt. 1:22
- * Son of Man – Matt. 9:6; 12:8
- * Son of God – John 10:36
- * Lord – Matt. 7:21, Luke 1:43
- * God - John 1:1; 2 Pet. 1; John 10:30, 17:5

Human Characteristics

1. Had a human birth – born of a virgin, Matt. 1:18-11; Luke 1:30-38
2. Had human development - grew and become strong, Luke 2:50-52
3. Had essential elements of human Nature; Body, Matt. 26:12; John 2:21. Reason and will – Matt. 26:38; Mark 2:8
4. Had sinless infirmities of human nature; became weary John 4:6; hungry Matt. 2:21; thirsty John 19:28; tempted Matt. 4; Heb 2:18
5. Was called man – John 1:30; 4:9; 10:38

The New Testament presents him as the centre of activities in the Old Testament as well. John said that Christ existed from the beginning. The testimony of the New Testament is that the world was created through him. Christ testified that before Abraham was, he was. He was also working through the Old Testament prophets and all of the Old Testament looked forward to his coming.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) What are the characteristics of Christ divine and human natures?
- 2) Explain the term sovereignty of God.

3.1.2 The Mission of Christ

The importance of the New Testament is that it tells us the relevance and importance of Christ salvation. The mission of Christ was to break the power of the devil, to destroy sin, and enable man to come back to God. God in Christ reconciled the world to himself. This reconciliatory work is related to us in various ways throughout the New Testament. Christ's work of redemption is the focus of every writer of the Bible. This is what is called the doctrine of atonement. Atonement means the making of amends; making up for error or deficiency. Christ making up for the sins of the world by his death on the cross. This is the reason why Christ came or became man. It brings to us the assurance of our salvation.

Through his death, Christ substituted for sinners, he took our place, he borne the penalty of our sins (John 3:36; 6:5; 15:13; Eph. 1:3; Heb. 2:9).

He has brought reconciliation between man and God. Through his death, God's attitudes towards man have changed from hostility to friendship and sonship (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:10-20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20-22). He fulfilled the law on our behalf (Acts 15:10; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-22, 31; 4:5, 11, 13-16, 23 – 24, Gal. 3:8).

His death brought victory for us over death and destroyed all powers (John 12:31; 16:11; Eph. 2:13-14), and reconciliation between God and man, Jews and Gentiles (Col. 3:11), and brought universal peace (Cor. 15:27-28).

Christ death is capable of saving everyone. He is the propitiation and saviour of the whole world. The gospel is sincerely presented to all people and the love of God is toward the whole world. 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 2:2, Isaiah 53:6; John 1:29, Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8; 17:30. Even though His death is capable of saving all, not all are saved by it. It has affect only on who accept. Only these people will enjoy the benefit of his death. The atonement provides salvation only for his people, for his sheep, his friends, the Church, and the bride, that is, those that his Father has given him (Matt. 1:21; John 10:15, Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

What are the things that are in the way of our good relationship with God?

3.1.3 The Idea of Community

This has its root in the Old Testament where the people of God formed a community of God's people guided by rules and regulations. Christ came to establish a community of believers who have a deep fear of God in them. This new community is bond together by the blood of Christ just like the old community was bond by law. This new community strives to avoid the mistakes of the old community that spoilt their relationship with God. The community of believers is the Body Christ. This is a body of unity knitted solidly by faith and action. The Bible does not present this body loosely. The implication is that the church should protect this unity and avoid any thing that would create disunity among believers.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

Mention four or five things that you think are responsible for disunity among the community of God's people.

3.1.4 Future Hope and Fulfillment Motif

The New Testament is forward looking from Christ first coming. The picture is that of looking back to the cross but forward to the second coming. This hope of the second coming alerts and inspires us to have firm faith in Christ. The second coming occupies an important position in the teaching of Jesus and the preaching of the apostles. It is the most widely taught doctrine in the New Testament. Almost every book of the New Testament has something to say about it. There are many parables that Christ used to teach or explain the nature of his second coming. This include parable of the Tenants (Mark 12: 1-12); the Ten Virgins (Matt 25: 1-13); the Separation of the Goats and Sheep (Matt 26: 31-46); the Rich Fool (12:13-21); the Faithful and Wise Manager (Luke 12:35-48); and the Shrewd Manager Luke 16: 1-15). Christ said his coming will be unexpected. He will come like a thief. Therefore, he warned his disciples to watch and be alert. The second coming has two faces; reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. Ones place in the second coming will depend on his or her present life. The nature of expectation of the second coming among Christians differs but nevertheless forms unity. The future hope holds key to the present in the New Testament. The present need of the Christian is demanded and controlled by the future.

In a similar way, the coming of Christ which was predicted in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament. As the New fulfilled the Old so will the second coming fulfill our present yearnings. The cross of Christ unites the present with the past and the future.

Self-Assessment Exercise 8

Read Luke 12:33-48 and describe the nature of Christ's second coming and mention what is expected of believers.

3.1.5 The Holy Spirit

New Testament Theology is bonded together by the Holy Spirit. Every thing is done by and through the Holy Spirit. He was at work in Christ and in believers. The Holy Spirit gives reality to the coming of Christ, interprets the reality of Christ saving work to us, sanctifies us, and applies the accompanied work of Christ to us in such a way that we are made one with Christ in his death and resurrection. The unity of the Christian community is made possible only through the Holy Spirit.

Self-Assessment Exercise 9

We are going to talk much about the Holy Spirit in this course. For now find a theological dictionary and write in your notebook what you find about the Holy Spirit

3.2 Kerygma as the Base for New Testament Theology

The term Kerygma comes from a Greek word which means to preach or proclaim the gospel. It means the content of Christian preaching as well as the act of preaching the word. Different theologians have different views about Kerygma. Rudolf Bultmann teaches that Kerygma is the act of removing the myth from the gospel. To him, the Christian message as contained in the NT has false or fake stories that need to be removed. According to him, it was the church that created the Kerygma and made Jesus the messiah. C.H Dodd on the other hand teaches that Kerygma is the real word of God.

The question that will be answered now is how Kerygma forms the base of New Testament Theology.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

What is the content of Christian preaching?

3.2.1 Kerygma as Testimony of the Old Testament

Kerygma is a means of witnessing the fulfillment of the Old Testament. In his inauguration speech, Christ said the prophesized messiah has come. The Apostles also proclaimed that the messiah that the prophets had prophesized has come, worked, died, was buried, resurrected, and has ascended into heaven according to the scriptures. Therefore what the Old Testament prophesized about him has been fulfilled.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Do you recall the Old Testament prophets that prophesized about Christ? Mention only two.

3.2.2 The Content of the Kerygma

This has to do with the total message of the apostles. They proclaimed that Jesus, the messiah, came from the seed of David. He was the servant of the Lord whom Isaiah spoke about (Isa. 53:1-12), he is the son of God, Lord of Lords, and king of kings. His suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven were in accordance with the

scriptures. They proclaimed that he has ascended into heaven but will come back again to judge the living and the dead.

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

Read Isaiah 53:1-12 and write down in summary form the things Christ suffered for the sake of humanity.

3.2.3 Kerygma as a Link

Through Kerygma which is about the life and ministry of Christ, the apostle linked the Gospels and the Epistles. The apostles proclaimed that they preach nothing but Christ and that their message hanged on the resurrection of Christ. Thus the life of Christ served as a link to the teachings of the Apostles.

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

- 1) We have mentioned the word apostles many times in our discussion now. Find out the meaning of this word in any dictionary of your choice.
- 2) In your note, write the names of apostles you know.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In the last unit, it was established that there is a single theology of the New Testament. This unit finds the basis of the unity of New Testament Theology. Our Lord Jesus Christ is at centre of the whole Bible not just the New Testament. In the beginning, Christ was involved in the creation, and at the fall of man, he was promised to be the saviour of humanity. Many Old Testament prophets predicated his coming and that was fulfilled in the New Testament. Christ is the link between Old and New Testament.

The goal of New Testament theology is to present the reality of Christ, make known his mission and his message of salvation. The whole of the New Testament is about Christ and no part of it is intelligible without him.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we look at the basis of the unity of New Testament Theology and we saw that the key to the unity of the New Testament theology is the centrality of Christ. The New Testament is about the life and ministry of Christ, his mission to bring salvation to humanity, his ministry to establish a community of believers, and it looks forward to

the second coming of Christ.

The Holy Spirit binds New Testament theology together. We also saw that Kerygma, which is the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, is the base of New Testament Theology. Kerygma testifies that the Old Testament is fulfilled with the coming and work of Christ. The content of Kerygma has to do with the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is what the apostles also preached and taught.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. There are five things that form the basis of the unity of New Testament Theology. Choose any three and discuss them in details.
2. What is Kerygma and its content?

7.0 References/ Further Readings

Bromiley, Geoffery. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon (1984). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company

UNIT 4: OLD TESTAMENT AND JEWISH BACKGROUND TO NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Old Testament Background
 - 3.2 The Apocalyptic Literature
 - 3.3 The Qumran community
 - 3.4 The Apocrypha Books
 - 3.5 Rabbinic Studies
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 3 we discussed the unity of New Testament Theology. We closed by saying that Kerygma testifies to the Old Testament and through that the link between the Old and New Testament is established. This unit takes you deeper into the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament belongs to the Jewish people. They did not only have the Old Testament in their tradition, they also had other religious literature that had spiritual teachings for the people. All these form the foundation and background to the New Testament. Christianity is traceable to the Jewish tradition and this Jewish background witnesses to the fact that Christianity is not a new religion. In this unit and the next you will be exposed to extra biblical materials. The materials of these units show you that God can use whatever and whosoever he wishes to build and expand his kingdom. A warning that needs to be taken serious is that these other Jewish literature must not be considered to having equal authority with the Bible. It is important to note that Protestants and Roman Catholics do not agree on the authority of the Apocrypha books. While the Roman Catholics accept them as part of the sacred word of God, the Protestants reject them on the ground that they were not quoted by the New Testament writers or the Apostolic Fathers. In any case, these books have made positive contributions.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Account for the relationship between the Old and New Testament.
- Identify the contributions of the Jewish literature to the coming of Christ.
- List the terms and concepts in the New Testament that were taken from or influenced by Jewish literature.
- Know the Apocrypha books by heart.

3.1 The Old Testament Background

There is a close relationship that exists between the Old and New Testaments. In fact, the New Testament completes the Old Testament as if the last part of the Old Testament should read, “To be continued.” There are many Old Testament prophecies that are fulfilled in the New Testament. For these reasons it can be said that “the New Testament was in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.” It can also be said, “The New is hidden in the Old, but the Old is exposed in the New.” In the Old Testament Christ was active but not known by name. In the New he is known as someone who was alive and active in the Old Testament. Other relationship between the Old Testament and New Testament include:

Quotations

There are many Old Testament quotations that are found throughout the New Testament. Many of the promises made in the Old are fulfilled in the New. The New Testament used the Old Testament as Scripture. Christ and the Apostle based much of their exegesis on the Old Testament which was their Bible at that time.

The Use of Old Testament Concepts

The New Testament takes many concepts from the Old, developed and gave them new interpretation. Some of these concepts are the Son of the Man, *logos*, righteousness, Yahweh, and love.

The Son of Man in the Old Testaments sometimes refers to a man not identified. In the New Testament the Son of Man refers to Christ and it is a title of honour. The *logos* theology of John is another Old Testament concept. Many theologians trace this to wisdom in Genesis and Proverbs other than from the Gnostic and Qumran community. In the Old Testament righteousness was an outward act base on keeping the law of God. In the New Testament it is an inward act, personal relationship with God, and something that manifest itself in practical living.

The Old Testament religion is ever present in the New Testament. The belief in one God was developed by Moses and continued to the end of the New Testament. God is never called by his sacred name “*Yahweh*” but Lord, *Adonai*. Another important tradition is the claim to be a chosen race. In the New Testament, Israel still held to the claim that they are the chosen people. They had a strong conviction that as children of Abraham, they had better privileges than any other race. The pride of being sons of Abraham gave them the confidence that they will never be rejected. In the new dispensation, the Jews strongly held to their hope and conviction. This idea was combated in the New Testament (Luke 3:8; John 8:38-39, Rom. 2:28-29; 9:7-8). The New Testament taught that Children of Abraham are people who have faith like Abraham whether they are Jews or not. Paul as a Jew looked forward to the time that Israel will be brought back into the fold. At present, Israel is only experiencing God’s temporary and partial exclusion (Rom. 11).

Associated with this is the high regard for the land of Israel and Jerusalem. It was very difficult for the apostles to leave their nation to the mission in the gentiles’ world. Christ often talked about Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a symbol of God’s people. Christian disputes were referred to Jerusalem, and the apostles had to report their progress and problems back to Jerusalem.

The Jewish law was alive and active in the New Testament. In the same way, the interpreters of the law, the Scribes and the Pharisees, occupied a prominent position in the New Testament. Before he gave a new interpretation to the law, Christ said, he came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it and that not an iota will be dropped from the law. Paul and other apostles differ in their interpretation of the law. James insisted that all the law must be kept (James 2:10). On the whole, the New Testament considered the law as having an eternal validity, the greatest gift of God to his people; it is both grace and a duty, a privilege and not a burden.

Sacrifices are still offered in the New Testament. Christ took the place of Old Testament sacrifices and he is the climax of the New Testament.

Self Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) Scholars have agreed that in Old Testament Christ was known as the “Angel of the Lord” using a Bible Concordance and list the passages that mention the Angel of the Lord.
- 2) Page through the New Testament and show where the New Testament has quoted the Old Testament.
- 3) Summarize the Old Testament Concepts that are found in the

New Testament.

3.2 The Apocalyptic Literature

During the inter-testament period (period between the Old and New Testament), many writings were introduced to prepare the minds of the people for the coming messiah. One group of such writings was the apocalyptic literature. The word apocalypse “means revelation or unveiling and normally refers to the kind of writing that gives a revelation of hidden knowledge, particularly of God’s control over when and how history ends” (Ferguson 377). It concerns world history especially as it affects God’s people. This kind of literature flourishes especially in times of trial. It is written to help people meet the issues confronting them. To Israel, it was written to assure them that Israel was still God’s chosen people and God was still just and merciful. The aim of the writer was to strengthen faith and instill hope. Walter Elwell defines apocalypse as “a book containing real or alleged revelation of heavenly secrets of the events which will attend the end of the world and the inauguration of the kingdom of God” (1984: 62).

An example of an apocalyptic literature is the book of Revelation. Other features of apocalyptic are found in Mark 13; 1Thess 4-5 and 1Peter 4:7ff.

These things served as a link between the prophetic period and the New Testament Era. Because of this, these books enjoyed much recognition. Like the prophetic writings, the apocalyptic literature provided valuable inspiration to the people in their understanding and preparation for Christ, such a preparation can be seen in their teaching about the Son of Man and eschatology. These books are called pseudonymous –i.e., the author used false names to gain recognition.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

In the Inter-Testamental period, the word of God was not heard for a long time. Check on the internet and in theological books and write down the exact number of years that no body heard the word of God.

3.3 The Qumran Community

Qumran is a place by the shores of red sea. Certain members of Judaism lived here about 100 years before Christ came, and continued living there a number of years after the Christ event. These were pious and religious people. They collected books and built their library. They had priests and elders who made up the council for administration. The group practiced strict discipline based on the Laws of Moses. To

become a member of the group, one had to undergo purification. Purification by immersion was a constant practice. For this reason they built pools. They had a strong practice of taking oaths and swearing. Jesus talked about oath taking and swearing too.

The group lived under the influence that the end was at hand. They interpreted the prophets as referring to their time. They looked forward to the coming of a prophet and a messiah. The whole group lived awaiting God's action in the world. One other concept that is found in the New Testament is the "sons of light and sons of darkness." The Qumran made a distinction between the sons of light and sons of darkness. The Qumran was a very religious community. Much time was spent reading the Bible and the Law. They gathered in tens to read the Bible in turns, and prayed day and night. The teachers of righteousness who were believed to have received true knowledge from God and the correct understanding of the Bible would interpret for them. The Qumran Community was a benevolent society. They had special programmes to take care of the poor and orphans, and other groups rejected by the society. They also had various feasts. One of them that has some connections with the New Testament is the feast of the blessed wine and bread. It was close to the Lord's Supper and was for redemption and salvation.

Many of the New Testament books are said to have been influenced by the Qumran community. An access to the Qumran community has made scholars date the gospel of John earlier than it was thought. Some scholars even think John was a member of this community. Some features of the Qumran piety can be noticed in the New Testament especially among the Pharisees. In the Qumran community as well as in the New Testament, the Pharisees and the teachers of righteousness occupied a highly honoured position.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) The practice to withdraw and live in isolation like Qumran community is known as asceticism. Read any dictionary or book to find out what ascetic living involves.
- 2) Read the following passages and record the practice of the Pharisees. This will give you insight into the life of the Qumran community.
Matt. 23:13-32, Luke 11:39-54, Luke 18:9-14.
- 3) Identify the social activities of the Qumran Community.

3.4 The Apocrypha Books

The Greek word *apokrypha* refers to hidden things. There are thirteen of them and in the early Church they were called "outside books."

These are books that are not included in the Protestant Bible and not recognized as the word of God. The Roman Catholics, however, have recognized them as Deutero-canonical books. These books were written before the New Testament but are not quoted by the New Testament writers. Protestants insist that they were not inspired. For if there were, the New Testament writers would have quoted them. Their importance is that through their wisdom and poetic writings they prepared the mind of the people for the coming of Christ. Apart from that they have historical accuracy and valuable moral teachings. Some of the apocrypha include: 1&2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Addition to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Addition to Daniel, Prayer of Manasseh, 1&2 Maccabees, 1&2 Enoch, and Jubilees.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

- 1) Identify the importance of the Old Testament Apocrypha.
- 2) Define the word Apocrypha using an English Dictionary.

3.5 Rabbinic Studies

After the close of the Old Testament Bible or canon, oral tradition developed among the Jews. They believed that this was a true exposition of the written law. The Jews trace oral traditions back to the authority of Moses. It was a general belief that they were inspired along with the written law God gave to Moses. In this regard, they were believed to have the same binding authority upon the people just as the written law. There were a group of people called Rabbi who claimed that they were given special wisdom and authority to interpret oral tradition to the people. During this time the rabbinic schools and influence grew very strong among the Jews. They prepared and produced people who were very zealous in studying the word of God. One of such person was the apostle Paul. They also produced a group called the zealots. The zealots were a powerful political group at the time of Christ. Other liberal scholars believe that Christ was a member of this group. The Rabbinic schools were in search for truth in one of them, Paul found the truth in the free grace through Christ.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Rabbinic comes from the word Rabbi. Who did the Jews call Rabbi in the New Testament?

4.0 CONCLUSION

New Testament theology is based on the New Testament and the New Testament does not exist in isolation. The New Testament is infinitely

connected to the Old Testament. The content of the New Testament testified to this itself there were also Jewish literature and religious communities that have some connection with New Testament. These shed light on the events and content of the New Testament. Before God does anything, he prepares the mind of the people for it, warn them and disclose it to them in many ways. Today we are talking about the second coming of Christ God is equally preparing, warning and disclosing it to humanity in many ways.

5.0 SUMMARY

The study of the Testament background and the Palestinian Jewish literature and community was to help you see the connection between the old and New Testament and the contributions of other Jewish literature to the New Testament Theology. Many of the concepts in the New Testament are taken from these. Apart from this, the Apocalyptic literature and the Apocrypha books prepared the minds of the people for Christ. The Qumran helps us understand the piety in the New Testament and Rabbinic studies help to understand Paul's background.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. What happens between the old and New Testament that it can be said, the old forms the background to New Testament?
2. Explain what we mean by rabbinic studies and the relations of these to the New Testament Theology.
3. Who were members of the Qumran Community and how has that Community influenced the New Testament?

7.0 References/Further Readings

Aland, Kurt and Aland, Barbara. (1989). *An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

Ferguson, Everett. (1987). *Backgrounds to Study Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Williams Eerdmans Publishing Company.

.Martin, Ralph P. (1975). *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students*. Vol. 1: Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

.Tenney, Merrill. C. (1972). *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing company.

Walton John H. (1989). *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels between Biblical Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

UNIT 5: HELLENISTIC BACKGROUND TO NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Work of Philo
 - 3.2 Gnosticism
 - 3.3 Social and Cultural Practices
 - 3.4 The Gods and their Worship: The Greek and Roman Religions
 - 3.5 The Contributions of Mystery Religions.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is a continuation of the background to the New Testament. In this unit we will concentrate on the Hellenistic context. Here I will lead you to the study of non-Christian religious and the secular culture. The religious situation outside the New Testament was that of contextualization and syncretism. You will see that, Philo, a Jewish scholar, combined Greek and Jewish ideas and contextualized them to the Old Testament Bible. Gnosticism also combined Christian thoughts with Greek Philosophy. In this unit, you will see the apostles making use of the things that were well known to the people to convey spiritual truth. John Calvin calls this, the “Principle of Accommodation”. This simply means that in communicating his message to us, God came down to our level of understanding. The usage of these cultural activities supports the dynamic method of biblical inspiration.

The message of unit 4 and unit 5 is that positively or negatively, we are influenced by our world and its activities. We are influenced by the religious, social and cultural environment around us. This has a lot of implications for our youth and Christian living. How much should we copy from other cultures? We now live in the age of information technology. What should we take from the pagan religions? Are the pagan religions completely bad?

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Identify the influence of Philo on the New Testament.
- Identify the positive and negative influences of Gnosticism.
- List the ideas and words of the New Testament authors took from Greek and Roman cultural and social activities.
- List the contributions of the mystery religions.

3.1 The Work of Philo

Philo was an Alexandrian Jew who lived between 20BC and 40AD. Alexandria was an intellectual centre in Egypt. Philo received thorough Greek education and also had good background in Jewish religion – member of Jewish aristocracy. He loved intellectual pursuits. He was a Biblical commentator, an apologist for Judaism and philosopher. He wrote the history of God's people, and exposition of the law. He employed the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation. He upheld that the outward form of the law should be observed but gave a philosophical interpretation of the meaning of the ceremonies.

Philo exercised considerable influence on New Testament studies. He combined Greek ideals with those of the Jews and contextualized them to the OT. He made the Hellenists understand that those ideas were OT. He demonstrated his ideas through wide spread and fantastic allegories. Scholars say that the influence of Philo helped John the Apostle develop his logos theology. Philo on the other hand, got his *logos* ideas from a Greek intellectual, Heraclitus. Heraclitus was the first to use the term logos in 500BC in his explanation about the nature of God. Philo taught that the *logos* was the mind or reason of God. *Logos* was an aspect of God himself. He speculated that God will change into a man.

Philo also had influence on the theology of the book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews speaks of the earthly things as being pictures of the heavenly realities. Philo himself accepted and used the platonic dualistic theory that the true world lies behind the apparent world.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) What is the meaning of the word allegory?
- 2) Who is the author of the Book of Hebrews? Do we know the person or not?
- 3) Summarize the influence of Philo on the New Testament.

3.2 Gnosticism

Scholars are still debating when and from what source Gnosticism arose. However, it is generally accepted that its beginning predates Christianity. Gnosticism combined pagans and the Jewish thought and

later even Christian's thoughts. Gnosticism was a popular movement and had influence on the early Christian thought. The followers of this movement claimed certain wisdom, superior knowledge taught the inferiority of material world and practice asceticism. This has roots in the Greek dualism. It was believed that the material world was evil, inferior, and was the creation of an inferior God. It has no exalted position for the body. The spiritual world on the other hand was good, superior and belonged to the good God revealed by Christ. Following this, man was classified into two classes; the spiritual and the carnal. Only the spiritual will be saved. The spiritual have secret knowledge. The carnal people are the pagans. Salvation is only for the soul of spirit. The kingdom is God's pleasure. The spiritual man has to be alienated from the world together with his mind. This is called "Transcendentalism".

Their practice and teaching about self denial was accepted by New Testament believers as the right way of living. Paul might also have some Gnostic influence. This can be seen in his persistent call for self denial, his teaching about perishable and imperishable, and mortal and immortal bodies. Another concept in the New Testament that has Gnostics implication is the "fullness of God", which is called in Greek *pleroma*. Paul proclaimed that in Christ, we experience the fullness of God.

The New Testament is also seen combating false teachings that bear similarities to Gnosticism. Colossians, Pastoral Epistles and John's works opposed the serving of angels as mediator's, secret teaching, the claim of superior knowledge, spiritual gifts, denial of the doctrines of creation, incarnation, and resurrection. They are also called those who left the faith.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) There are some religious groups in Nigeria today who combine ideas from different religions like Gnosticism one of them is the Grail Movement or Message. Do you know of any other?
- 2) Use your Concordance and find out where the New Testament teaches self denial and where words like perishable and imperishable mortal and immortal are mentioned.

3.3 Social and Cultural Practices

The New Testament emerged from the Greek and Roman world. These societies were full of cultural and social activities. The Greek and Romans placed high premium on sports. There were many theatres and amphitheatres where people communed to watch various sports and the

displaying of human intelligence in various spheres of life. Athletic contest accompanied Greek religious festivals. Most religious festivals were accompanied or ended with contests.

This world had different classes of people. There were free citizens or slaves, citizens and non-citizens, Greek and Jews, masters and slaves, the rich and the poor, men and women, etc. The New Testament also speaks of some of these cultural activities like running, boxing, building, and dressing. The different social classes apply frequently in the New Testament. The New Testament attempts to close the gaps between the various social classes and accord each person a sense of dignity. It is therefore believed that these are found in the New Testament because of the influence from the Hellenistic and Roman societies.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) In what ways have your culture affected your denominational practices?
- 2) Are the musical instruments used in your denomination different from the ones used by your society for non-religious activities and ceremonies? List the instruments that are similar.
- 3) What are the major classes of people in your denomination?

3.4 The Greeks and Roman Religions

The Greeks and the Romans were very religious. They worshipped living and non-living things. There was a god for everything and it is said that no one knew the number of gods the Greeks and the Roman had. In Acts 17:16-23), Paul made mention of this. The Athenians had idols everywhere. The Romans and the Greeks had higher and lower deities, private, individual and national gods. They, however, had no religious satisfaction in their worship. They did not find the fellowship they wanted from these deities. They tried state religions and emperor worship, but these also failed.

Later, they turned to mystery religions that promised personal faith and could bring immediate contact between man and his god. These mystery religions were mostly from the East. The outstanding ones were:

- 1) The cult of Cybele, the Great Mother, she came from Asia
- 2) The cult of Osiris and Isis, these were Mother and Father gods from Egypt
- 3) The cult of Mithraism came from Persia

Each of these originated from different places but all of them had a number of characteristics that were alike.

- 1) Each was based or centred on a god who had died and was brought back to life by people.
- 2) Each had rituals of symbols of sacred dramatic signs which must be practiced among members.
- 3) Each maintained a brotherhood in which all classes of people were considered equals.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

- 1) What was the religion of your people before the advent of Christian?
- 2) Does that religion share anything in common with Christian? If yes, mention such things.

3.5 The Contributions of Mystery Religions

Mystery Religions made valuable contributions to the people of the day and influenced some of the concepts and practices found in the New Testament. Some of these are:

- 1) The New Testament was influenced by the idea of equality and brotherhood. Members of the cults practiced brotherly love and equality. Masters, slaves, women, men, the rich and the poor were all alike and met on equal footing.
- 2) Desire for religious experience was one of the features of the cults. Members were in close spiritual communication with the deity. In the process of worship they felt as if they were in the world of spiritual reality.
- 3) These cults provided personal satisfaction to members. The mystery religions promised personal immortality. Members were made so believe that if they are faithful they will never die but live in happiness forever.

The New Testament used many of these ideas. Paul preaches equality of believers and proclaimed that there is no slave or master, men or women, and Greek or Jew but all are one in Christ. The ideas of immortality and union of Christ with his followers occupy an important position in the New Testament. The New Testament teaches that Christian will not die but only sleep in the Lord. Christ advised his disciples not to be afraid of those who can only kill the body but have no power to kill the soul or the spirit.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

- 1) Is there anything you would like Christian to adopt from the religion of your people?

- 2) What are the things that make people follow one religion and not the other?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The New Testament world was surrounded by the Greeks and Roman World. These have profound influence on the New Testament. Just as we also today, there were people like Philo who contextualized the Bible. The Christian community adopted many ideas from Gnosticism, the most popular religion at that time and gave them new meanings. To help the people at that time understand God's word, the Bible writers employed social and cultural practices of the Greeks and Romans to illustrate their points. Before the coming of Christianity in the Greek and Roman world the people were not irreligious. Such is the feature of every group of people. The people of the New Testament brought many of the ideas they got from these religions into their new faith. This is not to say that Christianity is compatible with these religions. They took only what was in agreement with the revelation of God. They strongly opposed the things from these religions that were contrary to Christianity. Christianity can make use of the social and cultural activities of the secular world as long as they do not undermine or destroy the message of salvation.

5.0 SUMMARY

Human beings usually learn by beginning from the known before moving to the unknown. Christ also employed this method in his teaching about spiritual things. This unit concentrated on the Hellenistic background to the New Testament Theology. The unit helps you to understand the root of some New Testament practice and concepts. We can summary these contributions as follows:

- * Philo – Help in the understanding of the book of Hebrews.
- * Gnosticism – Taught self denial, movement from inferior to superior state, and influenced the teaching on experiencing the fullness of God.
- * Social and Cultural – Shed light on roots and words like boxing, running, building and on the different social classes in the Bible.

The Greek and Roman gods, which were part of the mystery religions, teach us about equality, desire for religious experience, and union of believers with the deity and other fellow humans.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. What is the connection between Gnosticism and the New

- Testament?
2. What is the nature and characteristics of the Greeks and Roman gods?
 3. Mystery religions existed before and around the time of the New Testament. Discuss the ideas that the New Testament writers took place from the religions.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Ferguson, Everett. (1987). *Backgrounds to Study Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Williams Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Martin, Ralph P (1975). *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students* Volume One: Gospels. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Tenney, Merrill. C. (1972). *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

MODULE 2: THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Unit 1: John the Baptist and the Kingdom of God

Unit 2: The Meaning and Presence of the kingdom of God

Unit 3: The Activities of the God of the Kingdom

Unit 4: The Mystery and Ethics of the kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION

In this module and the one following you will be introduced to the specific themes of New Testament. We shall begin with the Kingdom of God. This seems to be the central theme of the New Testament. Christ came to establish the Kingdom and promised to give the keys of the kingdom to his disciples (Matt. 18: 18-19). The mission of Christ and his apostles consist of bringing the Kingdom to people. Christ told his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom.

This module presents the kingdom of God as a way of God working out his plan of salvation. To have a deeper understanding of the kingdom, this module will introduce you to John the Baptist. He was the first to announce the coming of the kingdom. I will also highlight some of the activities of God in the kingdom, and will end with the nature and ethics of the kingdom of God.

Consult the textbooks given after every unit; I have already directed you as to where you can get these texts. You should also use Bible Dictionary, Bible Encyclopedia and internet.

UNIT 1: JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1.1 The Person of John the Baptist
 - 3.1.2 The Birth of John the Baptist
 - 3.1.3 John's Prophetic Work
 - 3.1.4 John's Baptism
 - 3.1.5 Theological Meaning of John's Baptism
 - 3.1.6 The Sources of John's Baptism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Module 1 was on the preliminary work. The last units made reference to the Old Testament, other Jewish literature and the Greek and Roman culture and religions. This unit begins with the kingdom of God and John the Baptist. The kingdom of God and John the Baptist link the next materials with the Old Testament. The kingdom of God has its root in the Old Testament and John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. One important lesson you will learn from this unit has to do with the type and character of the people God uses. The parents of John were dedicated, humble and God fearing. John wore simple clothes, lived on simple food and had no mansion. God spoke to him when people were least expecting him to speak and after a long period of silence. John introduced a baptism but was not something radically new. It was based on the religious practice they knew but he gave it a new meaning. God uses people who have the insight to see the wrongs of a system and speak against them.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you are expected to:

- Discuss the character of John and his parents.
- Discover the things that played the prophets role during the 400 years of silence.
- Compare John with other Old Testament prophets.
- Give account of the Theological meaning of John's baptism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Birth of John the Baptist

We read about the birth of John the Baptist in Luke 1:5-25. His parents Zachariah and Elizabeth were aged people who fully dedicated themselves to the service of God. Zachariah was high priest, a prestigious religious position. He was the main representative of the people before God. After the miracle that made him dumb for nine months, John was born. When he was born, his father uttered prophetic words about him. These words were about his name and work. The name John, means “the Beloved of God.” The name connotes the theology of hope for the hopeless aged parents and the entire nation of Israel. It is a name with much history behind it. Politically, Israel had suffered in the hands of various kings and now she was under the yoke of the Romans. She was looking for someone to deliver her from the burden of the Romans. Spiritually, the word of God was not heard for 400 years. Israel had lost faith and thought that God has forgotten her.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) Read Luke 1:5-25: Why are the parents of John called dedicated people?
- 2) According to the above passage what was the work of the high priest?

3.1.2 The Time of John the Baptist

John the Baptist came at a time when God was far removed from the Jews. There was a long period of silence for four hundred years. During these years there was no prophetic revelation and everyone was afraid of what may happen. There were two things that played prophetic roles at that time. These were scribal religion and apocalyptic writings.

- 1) Scribal Religions. The scribes at that time interpreted the will of God strictly in terms of obedience to the written law of God. They communicated and inculcated this idea to the people of God. They helped to give the law a respected position.
- 2) Apocalyptic writings. The Apocalyptic writings raised the hope of the people about their future salvation through their writings. As noted earlier, they were not part of the holy history and had false names.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) In the time of John, the scribes had the responsibility of interpreting the law to the people. In the church today, who has the responsibility of interpreting the word of God to God's people?
- 2) What do you think the Church should do to raise the hope of the people to prepare them for the second coming of Christ?

3.1.3 John's Prophetic Work

John the Baptist came like any other normal prophet from the desert and wilderness. The coming from the desert signified that he was called by God. His appearance was sudden to his parents and the people generally. He came with the message of the nearness of the kingdom of God. This was an eschatological message of deliverance and hope. It was also a prophetic message. John appeared with the word of God just like other prophets.

John's aim was to alert the people that God was about to take the long awaited and expected action. The time has come when God will manifest his kingly power and fulfill the promise about the messiah. People were then to repent and accept baptism as a way of preparing them to embrace the kingdom.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) What are the things that show that one is called by God to do his work?
- 2) Make a summary of what a prophet was expected to do.

3.2 John's Baptism

The baptism of John is said to be of water. Water signifies purification and becoming a new person. Baptism is derived from the Greek word *baptisma*. It denotes the action of washing and plunging in water. John probably employed the immersion mode since it is said he was baptizing in the river. Baptism with water has two sides. Water destroys and gives life. In the same way baptism destroys the old nature and gives new life. The baptism of John carried with it the call to change the way of living and religious commitment. It was a call to come closer to God and to embrace what he is about to do. For John, the kingdom was soon coming and his baptism was to initiate people into that kingdom.

Many theologians teach that the flood (1Pet 3:9-20), the crossing of the Red Sea (1Cor. 10: 1-2), and circumcision (Col.2: 11-12) were types of

baptism in the Old Testament. In the flood, God destroyed the old evil race to start a new righteous one. By crossing of the Red Sea, Israel left and moved to another land. They left the worship of Egyptian idols and were given new laws, and new religion. Circumcision signifies taking off the old skin- flesh and putting on the new- spiritual.

John also introduced another baptism. It was the baptism of fire and spirit which will be administrated by Christ. Baptism by fire signified an announcement of an imminent judgment that will consume the wicked. The concept of this baptism had an element of purging and refining the righteous with fire. Baptism of the spirit means the indwelling of the spirit who is the invisible and enabling power of God. The prophets as echoed this kind of baptism (Isa. 11: 1-2; 61:1-3; Joel 2: 28-29; Ezek. 36: 26-27). John's announcement of the new baptism was also prophetic. He was saying with the coming of Christ, the Spirit will be made available to believers. In deed, Christ gave the spirit to his followers. Baptism of the Spirit also implies spiritual worship. Among the Jews, repentance meant turning to the law in obedience to the expressed will of God. The baptism of John rejected this type of repentance and called for a moral and righteous turning to God in faith.

3.3 Theological Meaning of John's Baptism

The main purpose of John's baptism was to bring the Jews back to the right relationship with their God. Over the years, they went astray and broken the covenant regulations. John's baptism preached repentance and correct understanding of the followings:

- a) **The Covenant:** Right from the time of Abraham, Israel entered into a covenant relationship with God. The covenant required them to obey God's laws. For some time, the Jews were able to keep the covenant. At the time John came, they had long broken the covenant through disobedience and unfaithfulness. Through this baptism John was calling them to restore their good relationship with God.
- b) **The Shedding of Foreign Religions:** In the law God gave through Moses, he barred the worship of other gods. It was for this reason that he also forbade the marriage of foreign wives. He also told them that God must be approached only in holiness. Anytime they were coming before him, they had to purify themselves. As the kingdom of God was near, John called on the Israelites to purify and themselves purged themselves of foreign gods, cross-cultural marriages and other borrowed practices in order to be accepted by God.
- c) **Wrong conception of Salvation:** The Jews believed that they would gain salvation into the kingdom of God because they were

children of Abraham. John's call was to prepare them to know that only through Christ would they gain a place in the kingdom of God. This does not change the requirement for salvation. Abraham also was saved through faith. In the same vein, only those who embrace the kingdom by faith will be allowed entrance into the kingdom.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

- 1) List the models of baptismal practices in our Churches today know to you.
- 2) List all the things you know that God does not want his people to do.
- 3) List the things that baptism with fire and spirit signify.

3.4 The Source of John's Baptism

Baptism was not a new or strange thing in the days of John. There were a number of practices that had similarities with John's baptism. Some of these are:

- 1) **The Qumran Community:** This group of Jews practiced some rites of purification among themselves. It is believed that they initiated members through washing. The act of separating themselves from the people also signified purification.
- 2) **Proselytes:** It was the practice in those days that all gentiles who become Jews by faith had to purify themselves through cleansing. They underwent a ritual bath and circumcision.
- 3) **Old Testament Priestly Purification:** Old Testament priest were required to wash themselves with water in preparation for their ministry (Isa. 1:16-18; 52:15 Ezek. 36:25. Washing was a sign of cleansing for all Israel (Lev. 11:25).

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Read the following passages and describe how the Jews purified themselves.

Isaiah 1:16-18; 52:15, Ezek. 36:36; Lev. 11:25.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The last of the Old Testament Prophets, John can be called the forerunner of Christ. He came to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. He did this through his preaching about the coming kingdom of God and his baptism. John built his message and baptism on the old foundation. He did not introduce something radically different. The

people had wrong conception of what God wanted of them and his plan for them. Probably because of the long silence which lasted for four hundred years. John came to correct them and announce that God was going to intervene soon. This will happen through the coming of Christ. John, as his name implied, announced that there was hope for Israel for she was still loved by God.

5.0 SUMMARY

The coming of Christ into this world was so important because with his coming the kingdom of God will be established among men. For this reason, God employed many ways to prepare people for it. We have already mentioned some of the ways. In this unit God used John. John was the first person to announce the coming of the kingdom. His birth was miraculous at the time that there was no revelation of God. He came like any other prophet to alert the people that God was soon to take action. He preached and administered the baptism of repentance. According to him only those who truly repent will receive the kingdom of God.

6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment

1. Account for the life and ministry of John the Baptist
2. Discuss the theological meaning of the baptism of John the Baptist.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Bromiley, Geoffrey. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Volume.2. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Coy.

Herman, Ridderbos. (1975). *The Coming of the Kingdom*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapid: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

UNIT 2: THE MEANING AND THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Meaning of the Kingdom of God
 - 3.2 The Need of the Kingdom of God
 - 3.2.1 Eschatological Dualism
 - 3.2.2 Spiritual World
 - 3.3 The Signs of the Presence of the Kingdom of God
 - 3.3.1 Casting out of Demons
 - 3.3.2 The Fall of Satan
 - 3.3.3 The Performance of Miracle
 - 3.3.4 The Preaching of the Gospel
 - 3.3.5 The Bestowal of Forgiveness of Sin
 - 3.4 The Kingdom and the Church
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, John the Baptist announced the imminent coming of the kingdom of God. Now I move you to the meaning of the kingdom. I am going to provide you with the definition of the kingdom of God, and other terms the New Testament has used for the kingdom of God. This unit will also lead you to discover the place where God is establishing his kingdom and the nature of that place. The kingdom of God comes to destroy the evil forces that torment humanity. You will also be exposed to the teaching of the New Testament on the signs of the presence of the Kingdom and the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom. As you study this unit, make sure you think of the similarities that exist between the world at that time and the world today. Is the kingdom still active in our world today? In other words, do you still see the signs of the kingdom? These are the things I want you to have in mind as you walk through this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Define the kingdom of God

- List the signs of the presence of the kingdom of God.
- Judge whether the kingdom of God is still present in our time.
- Discuss the nature of this world.
- Identify the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom

3.1 The Meaning of the Kingdom of God

The term kingdom is rendered in Greek *basileia* which means kingship, royal rule or power. The term refers to a territory ruled by a *besileius* the king. Anthony Hoekma defines the kingdom of God as “the reign of God dynamically active in human history through Jesus Christ, the purpose of which is the redemption of his people from sin and demonic powers, and the final establishment of the new heavens and new earth”. He further describes it as, “the inauguration of the great drama of history and the ushering in of the New Age.” Similarly, George Ladd defines the kingdom of God as “God’s breaking into the humanity to establish his reign and advance his purpose.”

There is no argument about the fact that the central message of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ was the Kingdom of God. Christ went about preaching the gospel of God saying “the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk 1:14-15). Matthew says he went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Mt. 4:23) while Luke quotes a prophecy from Isaiah about the coming of the kingdom (Luke 4:21). The kingdom of God constituted the gospel of Jesus. It is a kingdom with no geographical territory, no earthly government, no human king and its citizens are those who respond to the message of Christ.

In the Old Testament the word kingdom of God is not directly mentioned but the word kingdom is mentioned and the idea of the kingdom of God is very clear. The Old Testament speaks of the kingship of God. It recognizes his rulership and authority. He is king of Israel (Exod. 15:18; Num. 23:21; Deut. 33:5) and king of all the earth (2King 19:15; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 46:18). He is king of kings and he leads and directs them. While the Old Testament recognized his kingship as present reality, the Old Testament also prophesized that God will become king over his people in future. God is king and will become king. This will happen in a messianic person. The Old Testament sometimes speaks of the government of the messiah (Isa. 9:6-7). The Hebrew for kingdom is *Malkuth*. It carries the idea of reign, rule or dominion. The Psalmist says “They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations (Ps. 145:11, 13). It means God’s rule or sovereignty. The Lord has established his throne in the heaven, his kingdom rules over all. (Ps. 103:19).

There is a hope for the kingdom in the Jewish apocalyptic literature too. The people had hoped that when God establishes his kingdom in the age to come suffering and evil will end. The Qumran Community also shared a similar hope for the kingdom. They believed in the Age to Come angels will join them in the battle against the sons of darkness and give them victory over all worldly people. The Rabbinic literatures have a more developed view of the kingdom. They used the term kingdom of heaven. For them, the kingdom was God's exercise at his sovereignty through his law. The law is God's rule.

Another group that had hope in the kingdom, was the radical, revolutionary movement known as the zealots. They are mentioned in Acts 5:36, 37 and 21:38. This group was not prepared to wait quietly for the coming of the kingdom. They wished to bring it with the sword.

In summary, throughout Judaism, there was an expectation of the kingdom of God. Most of the times it was an expectation to defeat the enemies of Israel and restore her under God's rule alone. The kingdom comes at the end of the age the unbelievers will go to hell and the believers will inherit the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven or of Christ. All these are just linguistic variations of the same idea. The kingdom deals with God activity in this world and salvation of humanity is the main goal of salvation. The aim of the kingdom is to provide salvation. The object of the divine rule is the redemption of man and to deliver him from the powers of evil. This is clearly stated in 1Cor. 15:23-28. Christ's reign means the destruction of evil forces, and the last of which is death. In the New Testament other kingdoms stand against the kingdom of God. However, such kingdoms will be conquered. The message of the book of Revelation is that even though such kingdoms may seem to be tormenting the people of the kingdom of God for a while, they will never be successful. Such kingdoms are under the power of Satan. 2 Cor. 4:4 calls Satan the god of this world and he exercises his rule by holding men in darkness. It does not mean the two kingdoms have equal powers. God is by far more powerful than Satan. Satan is his creation and under his control.

John announced that the kingdom will constitute salvation and judgment. This we saw in the explanation of John's baptism. For John the kingdom was single but complex. Jesus separated the present kingdom from the future kingdom. The kingdom can be best described as the "yet and not yet" it has come but not yet in its full state.

The present kingdom has come into history. It has come in the person and ministry of Christ and its signs are seen now. Its rule was

experienced in the ministry of Christ, his disciples and the early Church. Christ said, the exorcism demons and healing of various sicknesses and infirmities testify to the presence of the kingdom. Christ has already defeated Satan and he is waiting for his final overthrow.

The future kingdom will come at the end of the Age. Christ said, this will happen when the Son of Man comes in his glory and sits on the throne of judgment to punish the wicked and reward the righteous (Mt. 25:31-46). When that future kingdom comes, the old order will pass away and there will be rebirth and transformation of the material order. The future kingdom goes by different names; the New Heaven and New Earth, the New Jerusalem, and Paradise. Many things will happen before this kingdom comes.

Some of these things mentioned in the New Testament include, the preaching of the gospel to all the nations, the conversion of Israel, the great apostasy and the great tribulation, the revelation of Antichrist, and the appearance of signs and wonders (Matt. 24: 135).

Self Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) Using any dictionary of your choice or the internet, provide two other definitions of the kingdom of God.
- 2) What words or concepts appear both in the definitions by Anthony Hoekma and George Ladd?
- 3) How was the kingdom understood in the Jewish tradition?

3.2 The Need of the Kingdom of God

Following George Ladd we shall discuss this topic under eschatological dualism and the spirit world.

3.2.1 Eschatological Dualism

The need for the kingdom has its roots in the goodwill of God to serve his people. For centuries, the Old Testament prophets looked forward to the day when the promised salvation would be realized. This salvation would include God's visitation and purging the world of sin, and the establishment of his perfect reign on earth. The forward look gave birth to two eschatological ages, i.e. the present age and the age to come. In the present age, the kingdom, the righteous and the wicked exist together in the kingdom. The age to come is exclusively for the righteous and their God. In that age there will be no sin, evil and death (Mt. 12:32, Mk. 10:30, Gal. 1:4).

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) In a few parables Christ conveyed the idea that the present kingdom is made up of the righteous and wicked. Read Matt. 13:24-30 and 47-53 and write down the different names Christ used for the righteous and the wicked.
- 2) According to Revelation 20:14; 21:4-8, what would become of death, sin and suffering in the second coming?

3.2.2 The Spiritual World

The spiritual world is made up of Satan and demons that fight against the establishment of the kingdom of God. The kingdom was inaugurated to bring salvation to man. New Testament Theology presents Satan as a powerful force that stands opposed to the establishment of the kingdom. He demonstrated this at the temptation of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12 gives detail of the battle in the story of the Woman and the Dragon.” According to Revelation, the battle started when Christ was born. Satan performs negative functions against God’s people. The need of the kingdom is to attack, disarm and destroy the diabolic forces. The need is also to equip God’s children so that the devil will no longer snatch God’s words from them (Mk. 4:15; Rev. 3:11). In Ephesians 6: 10 -18, Christians are urged to put on the full armor of God in order to stand against Satan.

There are also evil supernatural spirits which inflict physical ills like dumbness, blindness, epilepsy, madness on people (Matt. 9:32; 12:25-28; 17:14-18) the demons knew that the inauguration of God’s kingdom is their doom (Mk. 3:11; 5:6-10). It is in fear of their destruction that they fought against his coming and the establishment of his kingdom.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) Read Ephesians 6:12 and identify other things that constitute the spiritual world.
- 2) Read the following passages Luke 13:16; Matt. 13:38 and identify the negative functions of Satan against the kingdom of God.
- 3) Should we attribute any bad thing that happens to us to Satan? What does John 9:1-3 say?

3.3 The Signs of the Presence of the Kingdom of God

The New Testament presents a number of things that testify that the kingdom has come and is in the midst of God’s people. Some of these are:

3.3.1 Casting out of Demons

The casting out of demons demonstrated Christ's victory over the forces of evil. It also demonstrates that where Christ's presence extends, there is no other power besides. Wherever, the kingdom of God is found Christ is in total control. Jesus said in Matt. 12:28 that he is casting out demons by the spirit of God to show that the signs of the presence of the kingdom of God have come upon his people. In the same passage, Christ said, "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house" (Matt 12:29).

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

Is the power of casting demons given only to Christians? What do you say after reading Acts 19:13-16?

3.3.2 The Fall of Satan

One day Christ sent 70 of his disciples to evangelize the villages. When they returned and gave their reports that the demons submitted to them in Christ's name. Christ responded by saying, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." He continued that he has given them "authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemies" (Luke 10:18-19, Matt. 12:29; Rev. 20:2). This saying means that the victory of Christ over Satan has actually taken place in history in the mission of Christ. The victory is not just what will come at the end of ages. Right now the power of God's kingdom has entered human history through the ministry of Christ.

The victory over Satan, though decisive is not yet final. Final victory will come at the second coming. What has happened now is the binding and restriction of Satan (Mk. 8:33; Rev. 20:2).

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

- 1) Do we know the exact time in history that Satan fell from heaven? Suggest when you think this happened.
- 2) From what we have said so far, what are the things that show you that the final victory over Satan has not come?

3.3.3 The Performance of Miracles

The NT witnesses that Christ and his disciples performed miracles. This was another sign of the presence of the kingdom of God. Christ himself

said as a reply to John's messengers, "Go and tell John the blind receive their sight, the lame walk" (Matt. 11:4-5) Lazarus was raised from the dead to express that in the kingdom of God, death is swallowed up in victory (John 11:14-44; 1Cor. 15:44, 45).

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

- 1) Do you remember other people that were raised from the death in the New Testament? Can you name them?
- 2) What was the first miracle of Jesus Christ?

3.3.4 The Preaching of the Gospel

Another sign is the preaching of the good news of salvation in Christ. This is the highest good that Jesus bestowed. The salvation of Christ was mediated through the preaching of the word (Lk. 10:20). Through preaching even the poor hear the good news (Matt. 11:15). Preaching is warfare against Satan and it exposes Christ truth and dismembers the forces of Satan. The preaching of the apostles was accompanied by miracles.

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

What are the different ways that the church employs to preach the Good News of Salvation to the world?

3.3.5 The Bestowal of Forgiveness of Sin

Both prophet Isaiah and Joel predicated that when Christ comes, people will receive the blessing of the forgiveness of sins (Isa. 33:34; Joel 2:28-32). When Christ came, He preached and bestowed forgiveness upon people. The healing of a paralytic was a clear sign that Jesus has power to forgive sins. The presence of the kingdom of God was not a new teaching, but a new activity of God in the person of Christ.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Page through the New Testament, using your concordance, identify those places that Christ forgave people their sins.

3.4 The Kingdom and the Church

According to Matthew 16:17-20, the disciples also have a role to play in the kingdom of God. They are given the keys to open or close the kingdom for people. Scholars understand the keys to mean the preaching

of the gospel and church discipline. Through the preaching of the gospel, people are brought into the kingdom and through church discipline people are excluded from the Church. The disciples who are given the keys here are representative of the Church. Here we see that there is a relationship between the Church and the kingdom of God. The Church and the kingdom are related but not the same. While the kingdom is the rulership, reign and action of God towards man's salvation, the church is the realm of God, people under his rule. The relationship between the Church and the kingdom helps us to understand the kingdom more. The kingdom and the Church relate and differ in the following ways:

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

According to the discussion above, what was the key given to the apostles and what is the work of the key?

3: 4:1 The Church is not the Kingdom

In the New Testament the Church and the kingdom are not the same. The Church is communion of believers who are to enter into the kingdom as well as preach the kingdom. The disciples are not the kingdom; they only preach the kingdom (Acts 8:12, 19:8; 20:25). Many passages in the New Testament state the inseparable relationship between the Church and the kingdom but do not equate them (Matt 13: 38-43; 16:18-19). The kingdom is the invisible sphere of God's rule while the church is the visible, empirical body of God's people. The church cannot produce the kingdom but only the people of the kingdom.

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

Summarize the key differences between the Church and the kingdom

3: 4:2 The Kingdom Creates the Church

The mission of Christ was to challenge men to response to the gospel and enter into fellowship with him. When the kingdom came, it was offered to Israel as a nation in fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic hope. When Israel rejected the offer of salvation, God was constituted another group as sons of the kingdom. The Church was born as a result of the coming of the kingdom into the world. The parable of drawing a net is illustrative of the relationship between the church and the kingdom. The kingdom catches men of mixed fellowship. This makes the church not the ideal people of the kingdom yet because it includes those who are not sons of the kingdom. One who is qualified to enter the church may not be qualified to enter the kingdom.

Self-Assessment Exercise 8

List the ways in which the kingdom creates the Church.

3.4.1 The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom

By this we mean, the church proclaims the reality of God in the past and future. The example of this is the commission of the apostles in Mathew 10 and the mission of the seventy in Luke 10 as well as the ministry of the apostles in the book of Acts. The number ten and seventy in Mathew 10 and Luke 10 respectively, are significant as to who is to receive the kingdom. The twelve Apostles are representative of the whole Israel. The Gospel is to be preached to the whole Israel. In the Jewish tradition, there were seventy nations in the world and the Torah was first given in seventy languages to men. Consequently, the sending of the seventy was symbolic of the mission to the whole world. There are many other sayings and parables that teach that the kingdom is also for the gentiles (Mk 12:1-9). In his address to the Jews, Christ said, “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it” (Matt 21:43). In another discourse, Christ proclaimed “I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their place at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 8:11).

The gentiles will hear the gospel through the preaching of the gospel. Christ Himself indicated that his gospel will be preached to all the nations (Mk10:13). Christ entrusted this task to his disciples in the great commission and he instructed his disciples that when they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit they should witness him to the end of the earth (Matt28:18 – 20; Act1:8). The Church witnesses to the kingdom by preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Self-Assessment Exercise 9

What does the Church use to witness to the kingdom of God?

3.4.4 The Church is the Instrument of the Kingdom

The church is the instrument of the kingdom in the sense that the works of the kingdom are performed through the church. This was the case with the disciples as well as the Christ himself. As they went about preaching, Christ gave them the power to heal and cast out demons. Both in the gospels and in Acts, the preaching ministry of the apostles was accompanied with signs and wonders. The report of the seventy shows that they acknowledged that they were just instruments of God.

When Christ was addressing the disciples, he told them that gates of Hades shall never prevail against the church (Matt 16:18). This means that the Church will be able to stand against the satanic forces and those that are brought into the kingdom through the work of the church will not be swallowed up by the satanic forces. As the instrument of the kingdom, the church has the power to deliver men from the bondage of sin, sickness and death.

Self-Assessment Exercise 10

According to the discussion in this section, what happened when the apostles went about preaching?

3:4:5 The Church is the Custodian of the Kingdom.

In the Jewish tradition Israel was the custodian of the kingdom. They believed that the kingdom on earth began with Abraham and continued in Israel through the law. For them, the rule of God can only be experienced and exercised through the law. It logically follows that since Israel is the custodian of the law, she is also the custodian of the kingdom. It was for this reason that gentiles who wanted to be included in the kingdom had to proselytize and keep the laws of Moses.

In the days of Jesus, the nation of Israel rejected the kingdom and Christ gave the keys to his disciples who became the custodians of the kingdom. As the custodians of the kingdom, they have its keys and the power to bind and lose. They have the privilege to bring people in and keep people out of the kingdom of God. A similar story; is told of the Pharisees and Scribes, “woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites; you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter go in” (Matt 23:13). This reinforces the fact that the church has the privilege of bringing people in the kingdom and keeping them out.

In the New Testament we see the church exercising this authority or right in many ways. When Christ sent his disciples, He asked them to leave the villages that do not accept them to judgment. But villages that accept them will have peace sealed on them. The parable of the sheep and the goats is another good example (Matt 25:31 – 46). In Acts, Peter excluded Ananians and his wife Sapphria (Acts 5:1-11), and Paul excluded Elymas (Acts 13:6 – 12).

Self-Assessment Exercise 11

What made Israel the custodian of the Kingdom and what makes the Church the custodian of the kingdom?

4.0 CONCLUSION

We have attempted here to define the kingdom of God as the reign of God over history. The definition conveys the idea of the sovereignty of God. The kingdom is to be understood in the light of God's plan to save mankind and destroy the things that oppose this plan. The Kingdom is the means by which God fights the evil forces to make room for the redemption plan of God. Anytime we see the gospel or God's will prevailing we can say that the kingdom is at work. The goal of the definition and the signs of the presence of the kingdom are to enable you see the reality of the kingdom. This understanding of the kingdom gives us peace and comfort that God is in charge and has to plan to destroy all forms of evil that torment us.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to the definition of the kingdom of God and how you can dedicate yourself to the kingdom of God in this world. The kingdom is here and now but has not come in its final state. We need the kingdom because of the nature of this world. This world is dominated by sin and evil forces that torment man. As we saw in the last unit, the kingdom is inaugurated at the coming of Christ. When Christ came he swung into action to combat evil forces. The New Testament has shown that Christ is successful in his mission. He has won victory over the evil forces.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) Discuss any two of the signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God.
- 2) There are two things which you studied under the need of the Kingdom of God. Discuss the spiritual world including its attack on the progress of the Kingdom
- 3) Compare the Old Testament understanding of the Kingdom of God with that of the New Testament.

7.0 References/further Readings

Guthrie, Donald (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.

Herman, Ridderbos (1975). *The Coming of the Kingdom*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

UNIT 3: UNDERSTANDING THE GOD OF THE KINGDOM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Seeking God
 - 3.2 The Inviting God
 - 3.3 The Fatherly God
 - 3.4 The Judging God
 - 3.5 The God of Gifts
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Remember that in unit 2 we saw that this world is hostile to the Kingdom of God and consequently, to God's people. We saw that the purpose of the kingdom is to destroy these evil forces that torment humanity. This suggests God's loving plan to save man. This unit continues with God's loving plan and activities towards man. You will be exposed to these activities under the nature of the God of the kingdom. God is the one who takes the initiative for our salvation. That is why he is called the seeking, inviting, fatherly and judging God. God's judgment is a loving act. His judgment is meant to correct and bring the sinner back on the right path while others are also deterred. I will give a lot of examples to show the loving activities of God in the New Testament. Such example can also be found in the Old Testament. This is to show that the very nature of God is to provide salvation for man.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- List the parables that express God's nature of seeking.
- State what God seeks people to do.
- Explain the parable of the Great Banquet in relation to the inviting God.
- Identify the gifts that accompany the great gift of the kingdom

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 A Seeking God

In the beginning God created man to enjoy everlasting fellowship with him. However, man lost this privilege, salvation and enjoyment in the Garden of Eden when he disobeyed God's command and opted for Satan's advice. Despite this, our good God took the initiative to restore us back to Himself. The New Testament presents God as active and caring. He came active in Jesus Christ to seek and save the lost sheep (Mk. 2:13-15). A good example of God seeking out sinners is set in Luke 15 in three parables of the lost ones- the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son.

Christ also discussed this nature of God by comparing the practice of the day with his ministry. In the Jewish culture, it was the sick that looked for the doctor. Searching out sinners who have gone astray and desire no forgiveness or salvation is the divine purpose of God. The seeking started in the Garden of Eden when man disobeyed and hid away from his presence.

On the other hand the disciples are to seek the kingdom too. This means submission to the will of God. To seek the kingdom means to seek God's righteousness (Matt 6:33). The kingdom goes together with righteousness.

In the Old Testament as well as among the Pharisees righteousness was a human activity. It was obtained through keeping of the law and doing acts of mercy. In the New Testament it is God's demands as well as God's gift. Christ said it was demanded of his followers to exhibit a righteousness that surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees. Righteousness is one of the requirements for entering the present kingdom and the eschatological one (Matt 5:27). An attainment of such righteousness cannot be done through human effort. It can only be acquired as a gift.

This requires humility on human part. The ethical teaching here is that man must renounce his pride, self-claims and self-efforts and to cultivate the willingness to become like a child who depends on his parents for everything. As long as one considers himself capable of acquiring righteousness, he will not see the need to come to the kingdom for it. An example of this is found in the story of the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Luke 18:1-14). Unlike the Pharisee, the tax-collector cast himself entirely on God and was declared righteous by God and went home justified. He had no righteousness to present, so God gave him the righteousness he needed. Earlier in the beatitudes, Christ stated that God

will satisfy those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt 5:6). This gift of righteousness is what Paul calls justification by faith alone.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) Read the parables of the lost coin, lost sheep and lost son and identify similarities in them (Luke 15)
- 2) What can the church use in seeking the lost sheep?

3.2 An Inviting God

It is the nature of the God of the kingdom to seek and also invite. Jesus shows this nature of God inviting people for salvation in the parable of the banquet feast. Here guests of all categories were invited to enjoy the feast. (Matt. 22:1ff; Luke 14:1bff). Against this background we can understand the frequent table fellowships between Christ and his followers. These were symbolic of God's offer and summon to the blessing of the Kingdom of God. These frequent table fellowships show that God is never tired of inviting

Among the Jews, table fellowship represented an intimate relationship between the parties involved and they played important roles in the ministry of Jesus. To invite sinners to the great banquet of the kingdom of God is precisely Christ's mission. The invitation is the gracious offer of salvation to sinners. God does not show partiality in the invitation. Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism. But accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34-35).

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) In the parable of the banquet feast, the first group of people invited refused to come (Matt. 22:3) who are those people who refused to come?
- 2) What will finally happen to those who refuse to honour the invitation to receive salvation? (Matt. 22:13).

3.3 The Fatherly God

The nature of God is to seek and invite sinners to submit themselves to his reign so that he might be their father. Matthew teaches that at the second coming of Christ, the righteous will enter into the kingdom of their father (Matt. 13:43). In Luke 12:32, Christ told his disciples that God has already given them the kingdom. The kingdom of God is the greatest joy of the children of God. One enters the kingdom by submitting to the will of God. God feeds, cares, and protects them as a

father does to his children.

The Bible tells us that God is a father to all, but his fatherly relationship to Christians is so special and different from the one he has with non-believers. Christians enjoy an ultimate relationship with God to the extent that they call him Abba. To them God's love is real, special and unlimited.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) When the righteous enter into the kingdom of the father at the second coming of Christ, what will they be doing? Clue, Revelation 19:5.
- 2) Mention what Christians have or is given to Christians that is not given to unbelievers.

3.4 The Judging God

While it is the nature of God is to seek invite and care for the sinners who come to him in faith, he remains the God of retributive judgment. God judges those who reject his gracious offer of salvation. His love for sinners does not stop him from judging and condemning them. The fact that God seeks, invite and love throws man into a predicament. Those who refuse to respond to the seeking, invitation and love face condemnation.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

What will God use as the bases of his judgment? Rev. 20:11-15

3.5 The God of Gifts

The God of the kingdom is the God of gifts. After seeking and bringing people into the Kingdom, he gives them various gifts to enable them stay and enjoy the kingdom. It is important to remember that the kingdom itself is a gift of God to humanity. Man cannot work to bring the kingdom. The kingdom comes with many other gifts and blessings and they include:

3:5:1 The kingdom as a Present Realm of Blessing

The New Testament speaks of the kingdom as a present reality. In many passages, Jesus spoke against preventing or hindering someone to enter the kingdom. He pronounced woe against the Scribes and the Pharisees saying "you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would go in" (Mt. 23:13). In Luke

11:52 he says “woe to you lawyers! You have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourself; and you have hindered those who were entering.” On another occasion, while he was addressing the religious leaders he said “The tax-collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you” Mt.21:31). It was possible for someone to go to the kingdom at the time of Christ’s ministry on earth and enjoy the blessing of the kingdom. In answering the messengers of John the Baptist, Christ pointed to those who were already enjoying the blessing of the kingdom. “The blind receives sight, the good news is preached to the poor” (Mt.11:5). In the same passage, Christ said, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (Mt. 11:12). People were taking hold of heaven at the time of Christ. The kingdom comes with force breaking into this world and believers are given the power to receive it. The devil has taken strong grip of the world and of men. Men have to force themselves out of his grip. In other words, those who enter the kingdom must take a radical stand against the old self. Christ gave an illustration of the radical reaction when he said “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off...And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off...And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell” (Mark 9:43-48). The kingdom is the dynamic rule of God and the present realm of blessings. Those who enter receive the good news and its accompanying blessing.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

List the blessing that people who accepted the kingdom at the time of Christ received.

3:5:2 The Kingdom as a Present Gift

Here we are dealing with the content of the blessing of the kingdom. The kingdom comes with all its blessings and those who receive it receive all its blessings. The New Testament is clear that the righteous will inherit the kingdom freely. In Matthew 25; 34, the king will say “come, you who are blessed by the father; take your inheritance; the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world”. In many other passages Christ said those who enter the kingdom will inherit eternal life. The rich young man who came to Christ knew this (Mk. 10:17-30). In this passage the kingdom of God and eternal life are used interchangeably as synonymous.

The blessing and the gifts of the kingdom begin in this present age. It is in the preliminary form but it starts here and now. The New Testament teaches that the riches of the kingdom must be possessed now (Mt.

13:44-46); the blessing sought now and here (Mt. 6:36); and be received as children receive a gift (Mk. 10:15; Lk. 18:16-17).

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

What is the relationship between eternal life and the Kingdom of God?

3: 5:3 The Kingdom as a Gift of Salvation

The greatest gift of the kingdom is the gift of salvation. The New Testament uses the word salvation to refer to both a present and future possession.

In the New Testament salvation is primarily a future eschatological gift. In the conversation with the rich young man, Christ used salvation, eternal life and entrance into the kingdom as synonyms (Mk. 10:17-30). This future salvation is described as entering into eternal life, and into the joy of the father (Mk. 9:43; Mt. 25:21, 23). This salvation means deliverance from mortality and enjoyment of a perfect and everlasting fellowship with God.

Eschatological salvation means redemption of the body- i.e. the perishable inheriting the imperishable, mortal inheriting the immortality (1Cor. 15:53-54), and restoration of perfect union between God and man. Salvation is described also in negative terms. To be lost is not to be saved. Those who are lost are under destruction, cast into darkness, or fire of Gehenna, lose their lives and perish (Mt. 7:13; Luke 9:24-27; Mk. 9:42-48).

Christ is sent to the lost sheep of Israel (Mt. 10:6; 15:14). This implies a present salvation but also anticipates an eschatological one. When Christ entered the house of Zacchaeus, he declared, "Today salvation has come to this house...For the son of man came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:9-10). Christ also told people that they were saved by their faith (Luke 17:50).

Salvation in the NT includes physical deliverance as well. Those who received healing from various problems were said to be saved (Lk. 17:14-25).

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

Summarize the two aspects of salvation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In the last unit, we discussed God's action against the evil forces that oppose the establishment of the kingdom and torment humanity. In Christ, God disarmed and destroyed these forces and established his kingdom. This unit has led you to see God's activities towards man. The coming and establishment of the kingdom is for good of man. God wants man to enjoy the kingdom and so God takes many steps and employs different ways of bringing and keeping man in the kingdom. This unit indirectly leads you to understand the nature of man. Man is resistant to the will of God. Strongly, God's love for sinners does not stop them from disobeying him.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we discussed the nature of God who brought and established his kingdom. He is a loving God and through his love, he goes on extra mile to provide redemption. The aspect of God's nature we discussed includes.

1. Seeking – God takes the initiative to restore us back to fellowship with him.
2. Inviting – This is done through the preaching of the gospel
3. Fatherly – This includes God's care, protection and providential love.
4. Judging – This is the justice of God. His judgment is also a way of inviting sinners.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) What has God done to be called a seeking God?
- 2) Discuss the fatherly nature of God.
- 3) Attempt to summarize the things that people who accept the kingdom receive.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon (1974) *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapid: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

UNIT 4: THE MYSTERY AND ETHICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Meaning of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God
 - 3.2 Parables Exemplifying the Mystery
 - 3.2.1 The Parables of the Sower
 - 3.2.2 The Tares or the Weeds
 - 3.2.3 The Mustard Seed
 - 3.2.4 Hidden Treasure and Fine Pearl
 - 3.2.5 The Yeast
 - 3.3 The Ethics of the kingdom
 - 3.4 Ethics Issues Treated
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is most appropriate to be the last to deal with the kingdom of God. We have discussed extensively in the other three units but this unit is telling you that you know very little about the Kingdom of God. We know only the things that God has revealed to us. For this reason, the kingdom of God is a mystery. I will give you the correct meaning of the word mystery. We will also discuss some parables to explain what the mystery of the kingdom means. The parables include that of the Sower, Tares or Weeds, the Mustard Seed, Hidden Treasure and Dragnet. The study of the kingdom of God will not be in complete, if we do not look at the ethics of the kingdom of God. Here you will come across the teachings that apply to Christians and non-Christians. These teachings are helpful in the maintenance of order, harmony and peace in any society. We live in this world and we should care about it.

How can we do that? We should fight all kinds of injustices and evil in our world. As you read through this unit, think of the way you can personally help fight the injustices, corruption and other ills of the Nigerian society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain what we mean by the Kingdom of God.
- List the parables that exemplify the mystery of the Kingdom of God.
- Identify the attitudes of scholars to the ethical teaching of Jesus Christ.
- List the most prominent ethical issues discussed by Christ.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God

The word mystery as used here does not mean something strange or unusual. It means something difficult to understand. In reference to the kingdom, it means we can only understand what God makes known to us (Matt. 13:11). The kingdom of God is a mystery because God himself is mysterious. This means that both God and his kingdom cannot be fully understood by man. Christ said, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those who are outside, everything is in parables, so that they may see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand” (Mk. 4:11-12). We always hear things about the kingdom of God that we do not fully understand because the kingdom remains a mystery of the father.

The mystery of God refers to secrets, thoughts, plans, and dispensation of God which are hidden from human understanding, but revealed to those for whom they are intended. The establishment of the kingdom of God among his people is part of unveiling of the mystery of God. God unveils his mystery gradually. The prophets of the Old Testament prophesized about the kingdom and looked forward to its final stage. The gospel told about it in parables. Next we shall look at these parables.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) Can you think of other things that we do not fully understand how they happen and even why God brought them into existence or allow them to happen?
- 2) Use any English dictionary and define the word mystery.

3.2 Parables Exemplifying the Mystery of the Kingdom of God

As the kingdom of God stands at the heart of the good news, Christ told many parables that convey the idea of the mystery of the kingdom of God. Below we shall discuss some of these parables.

3.2.1 The Parable of the Sower

This can also be called the parable of the four types of soil. The Jews believed that the messiah was going to come. However, they were expecting a dramatic and powerful kingdom of God that will be visible to everyone. In contrast to the expectation of a powerful reign, Christ told them the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1-23). In this parable Christ said that the kingdom has come and it may be accepted or rejected. Its seed are being sown on every land. The kingdom is working quietly and secretly among men. It does force itself upon any one, but must be received willingly. It bears much fruits in those that receive it.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) In this parable, how many types of soils do you find?
- 2) Who are the people represented by the various seeds?
- 3) Am I doing a bad thing if I force my child to go to church or to do something good? What is your opinion?

3.2.2 The Tares or Weeds

The message of this parable is that the kingdom of God grows amidst problems. The mercy of God allows both the good and evil weeds to grow together. In the same way, the kingdom has come and is present in the world but it does not disrupt the world. The sons of the kingdom have received God's reign and entered into its blessings, yet they continue to live in the age, intermingled with the wicked in a mixed society. Only in the eschatological coming of the kingdom will the righteous be separated from the wicked. The kingdom that is present but hidden in the world will be manifested in glory. The wicked will be gathered for destruction but the righteous will shine like the sun in the eschatological kingdom (Matt. 13:41).

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) Using the idea of this parable that God allows good and bad things to move together, show the example of such thing in our world today.
- 2) If it is God's design that good and evil should exist together, should we still fight to stamp out evil? What is your opinion?

3.2.3 The Mustard Seed

The Jews conceived that when the kingdom comes, it will be like a big gigantic tree and all the nations will find shelter under it. It was very difficult for them to accept the kingdom without such an encompassing

manifestation of God's rule. In response to their understanding and expectation of the kingdom of God, Christ told them that the kingdom is like the smallest thing. However, it will grow tremendously wide and large and encompass all things. This is the mystery of the kingdom.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

When do you think the kingdom will grow and encompass all things?

3.2.3 The Hidden Treasure and Pearl

This parable is dealing with the importance of the kingdom of God. It is the value that is beyond anything else we have and experience here on earth. Because of the value of the kingdom, men should seek to possess it at all cost and those who possess it must do everything possible to keep it. The treasure worth of the kingdom of God is incomparable.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

In the two short parables here, the persons involved were asked to sell other things to buy the field or fine pearl. In respect with finding the kingdom of God, what do we have to put aside in order to get it?

3.2.4 The Yeast

This parable describes the way the kingdom of God expands and grows. The aim of the kingdom of God is to penetrate the whole society. The presence and impact of the kingdom of God is to be seriously felt by the whole society. As yeast gives a new flavour and shape to bread, in the same way the kingdom will have impact on the society. The presence of God in the world may not be noticed now but one day God will rule visibly over the whole world. This parable also has the implication of the victory of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of evil. The idea is that the kingdom will conquer the world by gradually permeating and transforming it. The conquering of the world will be completed at Christ second coming when death and all ills will be no more.

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

- 1) What can you do to transform this world?
- 2) In your own opinion, if the world gets really bad, should the church or Christians use force to change things in the society? Why or why not?

3.3 The Ethics of the kingdom of God

The ethics of the kingdom is highly an important topic in New Testament theology. The ethics of the kingdom constitute a large part of the general subject of ethics. Much of Christ's teachings fall under ethics of the kingdom and these are much more remembered. Jewish and liberal scholars who condemn the miracles and other teachings of Christ do recognize the ethics of his kingdom. They find it very difficult to reject Christ ethical principles. A well known Jewish liberal scholar, Rubenstein, who refused to accept the history of the life of Christ, expressed appreciation for the ethical teachings of Christ.

The ethical teachings of Christ are carefully outlined in the sermons on the mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Matthew has treated ethical issues such as murder, adultery, divorce, oath taking or swearing, forgiveness, and love. Matthew introduces the ethical teachings with the Beatitudes which express some spiritual demands in one's relationship with God. Some of the ethical teachings like salt and light of the world enlighten us on the immediate context of the ethical teaching. The target of these ethical teachings is the whole world. The disciples are to prepare to function in the whole world. Christ nicely presented his ethical teaching in thesis and antithesis.

| Thesis | | Antithesis |
|--|---|--|
| 1) Do not murder avoid them | - | Anger and insult kill, |
| 2) Do not commit adultery lustfully | - | Do not look at a woman |
| 3) In case of divorce, give a certificate | - | Do not divorce at all. |
| 4) Do not swear falsely and keep your vows Maintain total truth | | Do not swear at all. |
| 5) Eye for eye, tooth for tooth your other your enemy | | -Do not revenge. Turn check to |
| 6) Love your neighbour and hate your enemies | | Love your enemies and pray for those persecuting you |

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

Why are the ethical teachings of Christ so important?

3.4 Ethical Issues Treated

We shall briefly look at some of the ethical issues that Christ treated that are also important for us today.

3.4.1 Divorce

Divorce was a problem then as it is today. Because of sin it is not easy to maintain any relationship. Sin has brought hostility between God and humans and between human beings themselves. In talking about divorce Christ is dealing with the issue of relationship. Marriage is a life-long bond between a husband and wife (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5).

During the ministry of Jesus Christ, people were using the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses permitted divorce on the ground of unchastity on the part of the wife (Deut. 24:1). Public document was given her known as "Certificate of Divorce." Divorce was not a private affairs, but public. This certificate granted the woman the right to remarry without civil or religious section. Both in the Old and New Testament adultery carried death penalty by stoning for the woman (Deut. 22; 13:21). A man was allowed to divorce his wife but the wife could not divorce her husband.

In the days of Jesus, there was confusion on the ground of divorce and what constituted unchastity. There were two popular schools of thought among the Jews over this issue. The school of thought led by Rabbi Shammai believed that the only ground for divorce was adultery, while the other led by Rabbi Hillel taught that things like poor cooking are enough reason for divorce.

Jesus as a Rabbi was also confronted with the question of the ground for divorce. In his comment, Jesus gave an expanded view on divorce. He spoke on the ground of divorce, the reason for the permission of divorce, the meaning of adultery, cause of divorce and the aftermath of divorce.

In Matthew 5:23 and 19:9. Christ allows divorce on the ground of adultery. Here, he is following the Old Testament tradition. This is recorded only by Matthew who is addressing the Jews. In Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 Christ makes no provision for divorce. This seems to be Jesus' position on divorce. He is replying the Pharisees who considered adultery as the legitimate ground for divorce. Christ contended that Moses allowed divorce because of the hardness of heart. For Christ, divorce is contrary to God's plan for marriage. When one divorces, he violates the sacred oneness created by God.

Following this, Christ explained that the real meaning of adultery is not just sexual intercourse but lustful look which makes many people guilty of the sin of adultery. He taught that divorce leads more people into the sin of adultery. By avoiding one problem you created another. Marrying

a divorced woman is adulterous. Divorce is a threat to good family living and social order.

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

- i) What is Jesus position on divorce in Matthew? Which tradition is he following?
- ii) What are the problems that divorce bring for the family and society at large?

3.4.2 Adultery

Adultery is associated with divorce. It also has a background in the laws of Moses. The Ten commandment explicitly forbids adultery (Exd. 20:14). Further, a couple caught in adultery was to be killed by stoning (Deut. 22:22). All along adultery was considered a willful sexual intercourse with another person's wife or husband. In Matthew Christ expanded the meaning of adultery. Adultery includes marrying a divorced wife and divorce is one of the causes of adultery (Mt. 5:32). Secondly, a lustful look at a woman is adultery (Mt. 5:28). Here, it is man that commits the sin of adultery. It may die at that level of lust or be manifested into a physical sexual contact.

The second reference to adultery is when the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-15). Christ used the occasion to teach that all people are guilty of one sin or the other and adultery is not worst sin. All sins are equally bad and desire the same punishment. Christ condemned her accusers for self-righteousness. The woman was forgiven but warned not to sin again.

Self-Assessment Exercise 8

Summarize the things that Christ said constitute the sin of adultery

3.4.3 Murder

Murder simply means the unlawful killing of one partner by another with premeditated malice. It is not clear the way murder was a problem in the days of Jesus. The only clue we have is the practice of the Jews to lay false accusation on someone and then kill the person themselves or hand the person over to the Romans as was the case with Jesus. This was murder.

Jesus addresses murder together with other ethical issues. He deepened the Old Testament understanding of murder. In the Old Testament killing of another person was prohibited by law. Christ pointed to the

rich young man that it was one of the laws to be kept (Mt. 19:18). The ground of this law is in Gen. 1:26-27 while the Bible teaches that man is created by God in his image and likeness. Man is God's property and part of God. Murder is an attack on God and his creation. Murder therefore is a serious crime.

Christ discussed murder in Matthew 5:2-26. In the Old Testament murder attracted punishment. Most of the times the "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth" law was applied. Christ interpretation is that murder includes anger and hatred against someone. It also includes all sorts of abuses and any form of envy. Murder is any act of hostility, disharmony, abuse, hatred, anger and lack of healthy living. Murder is also something that begins from the heart. In this case, it has a spiritual dimension as well as a physical one. It is a sin that originates in human thoughts and through constant meditation. This sin attracts punishment now, on earth as well as eternal punishment. In the Old Testament; the authority had the right to punish murders. The antitheses of murder are kindness, meekness, harmony and faithfulness.

In another discourse (John 8:42-47), Christ called the devil a murderer, father of lies and of all those who reject the truth of Christ. Telling lies is one of the characters exhibited by a murderer. Just like any other sin, murder is associated with many other sins.

Self-Assessment Exercise 9

1. Compare the Old Testament understanding of murder with that of Christ.
2. Why is the sin of murder such a grave sin?

3.4.5 Swearing and Oath Taking

These two concepts are closely related if not one and the same thing. Christ used the two of them in one discourse (Mt. 5:33-37). He used them to mean one and the same thing. Christ took his audience back to the Old Testament where the tradition permitted taking oaths and keeping them.

An oath is a solemn statement or claim used to validate a promise. It was done in the presence of God and others who are to serve as witnesses. Oaths were accompanied by protective cures to make sure the oaths were kept. An oath was an assurance of sincerity and commitment. Oaths were taken for various reasons but usually the name of God was invoked to prove its sincerity.

Oath was a legal act. In Matthew 26: 63-64, the High Priest representing the Sanhedrin charges Christ under oath to give his statement. Christ prohibited swearing or oath taking all together. One reason is that Christians have to speak the truth all the times. They should not be guided by oath but by God who is their father. Secondly, a vow is binding on Christian whether it is accomplished by an oath or not. The character of a Christian is to always speak the truth.

Christ argues that the question of the formula of swearing or oath taking is irrelevant as the oath itself. The issue of formula came in because the Pharisees made a distinction between swearing by God and other things. They used this as an excuse not to keep oaths and gave less weight to such oaths.

The lesson in this discourse is about truth. Truth is the way of life of a Christian. Any society that forsakes truth will fail. A society will flourish when people say what they mean and mean what they say. Honest men need not be compelled before telling the truth. It is clear that Christ is not forbidding taking oath when required by external lawful constituted authority.

Self-Assessment Exercise 10

Why did Christ forbid oath taking?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The goal of this unit was to lead you to the knowledge and responsibility in the kingdom. We need to know the kingdom in order to know how to live in it. God, in his goodness has made known to us what we need to know about the kingdom. The purpose of the kingdom is to provide salvation for man. The kingdom is a place to live continuously knowing that we are not yet in the final state of it and that presently evil co-exist with righteousness. God in his goodness and love has not hidden to us our responsibility towards him and others. Worshipping and obeying God is important but our attitudes towards others are equally important in his sight. We must do the two at the same time with equal zeal and commitment.

5.0 SUMMARY

Our discussion centres on the fact that it is difficult to fully understand the nature, working and life of the kingdom. The God of the kingdom is a mystery and so his kingdom. Christ used the following parables to explain the nature, working and life of the kingdom. We can divide the parables into two categories.

Those dealing with life and nature of the kingdom:

1. Tares or weeds- soil and righteous co-exist.
2. The Hidden Treasures and Fine pearls. The kingdom is a precious thing and a place of enjoyment.

Those dealing with how the kingdom works:

1. The parable of the Sower – The kingdom is working in every land and its message will reach everywhere.
2. Mustard Seed – The kingdom had a small beginning but will grow to encompass the world.
3. The Yeast – the kingdom will permeate and finally transform the whole world.

The ethical teaching of Christ compliments the life and nature of the kingdom showing us how to live in the kingdom.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) What do you understand by the mystery of the kingdom of God?
- 2) Jesus Christ told many Parables to explain the kingdom of God. Discuss the parable of the Tares and Weeds and the Yeast.
- 3) Discuss any two ethical issues we treated in the unit.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: W. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Ridderbos, Herman. (1975). *The Coming of the Kingdom*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

Scott, John (1978). *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

MODULE 3: THE THEOLOGY OF GOD, CHRIST, HOLY SPIRIT MAN AND PAUL

- Unit 1: The Doctrine of God in the New Testament
- Unit 2: Christology in the New Testament
- Unit 3: The world and man in the New Testament
- Unit 4: The place of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament
- Unit 5: The Theology of Paul, The representative of the Apostles.

INTRODUCTION

This module takes up other major themes in New Testament. You will notice that we have adopted the synthetic method in our study of New Testament Theology. Here in this module we will employ the analytical method only on the last point we are going to follow redemptive order in treating the content of this module. The plan of salvation begins with God, Christ was sent to carry out the plan and he came into this world to work with man. His ministry was successful because of the empowering of the Holy Spirit. When he returned to heaven he sent the spirit to work with his disciples to continue the plan of redemption. Paul is treated here as a representative of the apostles and one who fulfilled the great commission. The module wants you to see that whatever God is doing in history it is for the salvation of man. It confirms the saying that “God works everything for the good of them that love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28)

Here too read, A Theology of the New Testament by George Ladd, Paul. A servant of Jesus Christ by F.B. Meyer, Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set free by F.F. Bruce and other text assigned after every unit.

UNIT 1: GOD IN NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 God as Creator
 - 3.2 The Providence of God
 - 3.3 Theological Titles of God
 - 3.3.1 The Spirit
 - 3.3.2 Saviour
 - 3.3.3 Most High (El-Elyon)
 - 3.3.4 Alpha and Omega
 - 3.4 The Attributes of God
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Module 2 was about the kingdom of God. In Unit 3 of that module we looked at the nature of the God of the kingdom, we concentrated our efforts on his activities towards man in order to bring and keep him in his kingdom. In this unit, I will move to a more detailed discussion of God, not just his activities but also his being and nature. I will discuss God's work of creation, providence, his titles and activities. This is to help you know who God is. You will agree that you know someone by what he does. In our culture titles usually reveal the character of people. Most of the chieftaincy titles are given to publicize the culture or work of an individual. Names and titles also have something to do with relationships. Through the name and title of God you will see God relationship to the world and how we are to relate to him.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Discuss the doctrine of creation in the New Testament
- Explain what how God takes care of the creation.
- Be familiar with the central ideas of each of the titles of God.
- Explain we mean by attributes of God.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 God as Creator

The NT clearly teaches that God is the creator of the world and he is distinct and not co-eternal with the creation. Some New Testament scholars like G. Wingren insist that creation must be the starting point in approaching Biblical theology. It is extremely important to begin New Testament Theology with creation theology. In the New Testament all things were created by God through Christ (Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9). The theology of creation leads to redemption. What God is doing in the New Testament is redemption, the creation of which man is at the centre. Christ came to reveal the glory that God had even before the foundation of the world (John 17:5, 24).

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

The Bible says God has created all things but there is one thing that the Bible seems to also tell us that it was not created by God. What do you think a good God will not create?

3.2 The Providence of God

The God who created the earth has not and we left it alone to natural laws. The term providence refers both to God's care and to his rule over the entire universe. God sustain his creation. Christ, in his teaching lay special emphasis on God's activity in caring for the creation. God comes, feeds, protects and controls everyone of his creation, animals and plants are included. God takes interest in the details of human life (Matt. 6:26; 10:29, 30). He does not only know what happens, he controls and plays an active role in the world history. The New Testament is very clear that God extends special providential care to those who have accepted Christ as their saviour (Rom. 8:26). This providential care has implication for ecological concerns. God's interest in caring for the world should lead to our interest in taking care of the creation too. Providence well understood is referring to the sovereignty of God. This doctrine of God's sovereignty is a great comfort to Christians, especially in times of distress. It is because Paul believed that God was sovereign that he could write: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

The Bible says God has created all things but there is one thing that the Bible seems to also tell us that it was not created by God. What do you

think a good God will not create?

3.3 Theological Titles of God

The New Testament does not take the pain to argue so much for God existence. It assumes that God exists. The closest passage is Hebrew 11:5. “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” In Romans 1:8-23, Paul argues that the existence of God is not a problem to the Gentiles or Jews because “God has made himself known to all people.” He says, “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen” (Romans 1: 18-20).

The existence of God is the most important question of human existence. It affects the whole tone of human life, whether man is regarded as the Supreme Being in the universe or whether it is believed that man has a superior being that he must love, obey and worship. The New Testament teaches that human beings must go beyond just accepting the existence of God. It teaches that such a belief does not make one different from the demons. What we need is faith in God (James 2:18-19). The New Testament and in fact the whole of the Bible speaks of God in human terms. God is associated with natural and cultural activities such as he is light (1John 1:5, Mt. 4:16, fire Heb. 12:19), a mother, father, shepherd, (Luke 15), potter (Rom. 9:21), architect, builder (Heb. 11:10) etc.

The New Testament calls God by different titles. These titles represent the nature and activities of God. The most prominent ones are:

3.3.1 The Spirit

In his teaching on worship, Christ declared that “God is Spirit” (John 4:28). What the NT does not disclose to us is the nature of God’s spirituality. To say God is Spirit means we cannot define God in material categories. God is not matter, he is found every where, he is indivisible and unique. It is this Spirit that was breathed in man to give him life. Part of us is spirit John 1:8; 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15-16. The spiritual nature of God makes the doctrine of the Holy Spirit intelligible. Since Christ discussed God’s spiritual under worship, Christians are to give more attention to spiritual matters and less to outward religious activities.

This brings to mind God's infinity. As a Spirit, God is free from all limitations. There are no limitations to his divine being or attributes. He is unlike anything we experience. Infinity of God can be thought of in many ways.

Space – We cannot limit God to a particular space. He is omnipresent. The question of whereness and location is not applicable to God. God can be found everywhere. The implication is that God should be worshipped every where.

Time – Time does not apply to God. He was before time began. We cannot ask how old he is, for he was, he is and he will be (Jude 25). God is timeless, he does not grow or develop – there are no variations in him. This is not to say that God does not know what is happening with us now. God is conscious of what is happening now, what happened in the past and what is going to happen. We should also know that to God, one (1) day is like 1000 years.

Knowledge and Wisdom – His knowledge is immeasurable (Matt. 10:29-30). Everything is completely transparent before God, he knows every truth, he has access to all information (Rom. 11:33).

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

The Bible has also talked about other spiritual beings, mention as many as you can.

3.3.2 Saviour

The New Testament uses this title to apply to Christ more but it also uses it with reference to God. It has its background in the Old Testament where God's dominant activity was saving his people. In the New Testament, the main occurrences of the title are found in the pastoral letters (1Tim. 2:3; Titus 2:10-13; 3:4). Other passages in the New Testament see God as saving sinners and the world through Christ. A prominent Biblical scholar once said that the whole of Christian theology centres on the theme of God saving his people.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

Read the passages above again and note who God is saving and why.

3.3.3 The Most High (El-Elyon)

This title of God expresses his supreme dignity and superiority over all things. It is one of the most ancient names of God in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament it was used even by demons. This tells us how popular the name was. Theologically this title refers to the transcendence nature of God. God is not part of the creation, he is far removed from its form, yet he is in control of human and world activities.

Self Assessment Exercise 5

Transcendence is one of the terms that describes God's relationship to his creation. Other views that describe God's relationship to his creation are Pantheism and Deism. Define these terms to be familiar with how people think about God.

3.3.4 Alfa and Omega

This name implies that God is the sovereign Lord of all times and ages. The first and last Greek letters are used for the ever present God to make useful points to readers. This name means God is forever in control and in charge. The name is an asses once to Christians who pass through periods of trial and difficulties that God is in control of all circumstance. God is in control of span of the world history. There are no blank periods in the theological understanding of God. Christians are to capitalize on this theology and seek to be conscious of God's presence in all of their activities.

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

Think of other names of God that convey the idea that God is the God of all time and ages.

3.4 The Attributes of God

The attributes of God tell us what God is like in the New Testament. Attributes of God are qualities that constitute what he is. There are characteristics of his nature; his permanent qualities, objective characteristics, and part of his very nature, his being and essence. Basing on the attributes the Westminster Catechism, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth". Attributes throw light on the many facets of the character of God.

The New Testament presents God in the following ideas:

- 1) The wisdom of God
- 2) The glory of God
- 3) The Holiness of God
- 4) The love and grace of God
- 5) The goodness of God

- 6) The uniqueness of God
- 7) The unity of God

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

We have not mentioned all the attributes of God such as God of love. Mention others that we have not mentioned.

It will be important to discuss a few attributes of God that appear prominent in the New Testament.

Love

God is love means God is eternally sharing and giving himself. God exercised love even before the creation. The persons in the Trinity love themselves (John 14:31; Matt. 3:17). Love is seen in other attributes such as benevolence, grace, mercy and persistence. In benevolence God takes care of his people's ultimate welfare (John 3:16); God cares and provides for his people. The love of God includes his grace and mercy. In Grace, he deals with people not basing on their merits or worthiness. Grace is dependent on his goodness and generosity. He requires nothing from us (Eph 1:5-8; 2:7-9; Titus 2:11; 3:3). God's mercy is his tenderhearted, caring compassion. It is the pitying concern of God (Matt. 9:35-36; Mark 6:34). God's love is persistence, his patience is without limit. Look at the lives of the Israelites (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Pet. 3:20).

Self-Assessment Exercise 8

What are the other aspects of God's love?

Holiness

The word Holy means to be separated. God is absolutely distinct from all his creatures and is exalted above them in infinite majesty. In virtue of his holiness he has no communion with sin. This, he also demonstrates in his moral creatures. We are also called upon to be holy, to be separated, to cut off, or to withdraw from common ordinary use. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 17. Scholars think that this is the best description of holiness in the Bible.

Self-Assessment Exercise 9

2 Corinthian 6:14-17 is very important for the understanding of Holiness. Read it carefully and outline what a holy person is expected to do.

Immutability

This means that God is devoid of change. He is changeless in his being, perfection, purpose and promises. His words, knowledge and plans, moral principles remain forever the same. Improvement and deterioration are not found in God (Heb. 1:11, 12; Jam. 1:17). This should not make God an actionless God (immobility). God has entered into a relationship with human beings. Their actions sometime changes what is around but his being remains the same. It does not also mean that what we do here does not affect God or he does not feel it. God grieves when we sin, he is really affected by what we do. Immutability does not mean God will not correct his people. It is comforting for Christians to know that God is going to remain faithful to his promises and his steadfast love endures forever.

Self-Assessment Exercise 10

In what ways do our actions affect God?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The study of God is called theology proper. It is about God and his relation to the created world especially crown of creation, man. All of God's activities have man at the centre. His titles, names and attributes can be explained in relations to nature of man and Gods desire of what man is expected to attain. On the New Testament manifested himself in Christ and also works through Christ. Christ himself taught he is God, sent by God and is working for him according to his directives. The aim of disclosing the very nature of God to humanity is to help man to know how to approach God. God is unlike anything we know and experience in this world. He is to be approached differently according to his nature. This doctrine is opposed to deism – which states that God created but has withdrawn from it. The world only operates by the laws of nature.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit exposes you to the activities of God in this world generally. The unit first establishes that God is the creator of the universe and thus his own it, every thing in it as the Psalms testify. The earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof. The good God also takes care of everything he has created but he has special care for believers.

This God who has created the world and takes care of it, is a spiritual being who saves his people from sins. He has power over all things and he is fully in control. This unit closes with the attributes of God which

reveal the characteristics of his nature.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) Under the Theological titles of God, discuss Alpha and Omega and Saviour
- 2) After explaining the term attribute, discuss any two attributes of God.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapid: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Erickson, Millard. (1983). *Christian Theology*. Fifth Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House

UNIT 2: CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Christ the Messiah
 - 3.2 Christ the Son of David
 - 3.3 Christ the Servant of God
 - 3.4 Christ the Son of man
 - 3.5 Christ as Lord
 - 3.6 Christ as an Atoning Sacrifice
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You saw in the last unit that in the New Testament God was working in Jesus Christ. The creation was through him. God comes through Christ and has made himself known through Christ who is the very image of God. This logically leads us to a more detailed study of Christ. We have said before that Christ is the key figure of the New Testament and that no part of it is intelligible without him. I will follow the same pattern we adopted in the last unit. I will lead you to study Christ through his titles and names or offices. The advantage is that these titles or names connect Christ with the Old Testament, the entire redemptive history gives an accounts of his birth, ministry, atonement and his relationship with God and man. It will not be difficult to see these in the content of the unit.

The New Testament calls Christ by many names and titles. Some of these include: Jesus (Mt. 1:21), Immanuel (Mt. 1:23), the Son of God (Lk. 1:35), the Son of Man (Mt. 8:20), the Man of the Messiah or Christ (Jn. 1:41), and the Lord (Acts 2:36). Others are: servant, mediator, prophet, priest and king, and in some Bible versions these are printed as names, with an initial capital letter.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to;

- Discuss the messiahship of Christ.
- Explain why Christ is called Son of David.
- Compare the Old Testament usage of the servant of God with that of Christ.

- List the meanings of the name ‘Son of Man.’
- Explain the various ways that the title Lord apply to Christ.
- The importance of the death of Christ

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Christ the Messiah

The Christological title of the messiah must be understood against its Old Testament background. Messiah is from the Hebrew word *Mashach* which means to anoint. The one anointed was called the messiah. In the Old Testament kings and priests were anointed with oil, that oil symbolized the spirit of God. Anointed represented the transfer of the spirit to the consecrated person.

Christ is the New Testament translation of the Hebrew messiah. Like the kings and priests. Jesus was also anointed and this took place during his baptism. In the New Testament, Christ is presented as the fulfillment of the long anointed hope to deliver Israel (Luke 2:29-32). Other Jews had a different understanding and expectation of the messiahship of Christ. They were expecting Christ to be a political leader to lead Israel against hostile nations. The New Testament understanding is that he is the one through whom God would break through into human history for the salvation of his people.

Against the Jewish understanding, the New Testament teaches that the messiahship of Christ comprise of his ministry to demon possessed, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, making the lame walk, and taking care of the less privileged and his atoning work on the cross. Jesus himself used Old Testament passages to show that he has come to fulfill the messianic role (Luke 4:18-19).

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Compare the Jewish understanding of the role of the messiah with that of the New Testament.
2. In Luke 4:18-19 what are the things that the messiah was expected to do?

3.2 Christ the Son of David

The idea of Christ as the son of David is taken from 2Sam. 7:16. Here God promised that the throne of David will be established forever. This promise is basic to the prophetic predictions regarding the messianic kingdom. It explains how the messianic hope of a restored kingdom was seen to be a fulfillment of the divine promise to David. The prophets

looked for a descendant of David, for it is with David that God made the promise.

During the Inter-testamental period, two messiahs were postulated. One was that of a Davidic figure while the second of priestly figure from Aaron. Though this period was predominantly priestly, the Davidic Messiah was too strong to be dropped. This again explains while the evidence for the popular use of the term son of David comes mainly in Matthew. It is generally accepted that the coming messiah was believed to be closely connected with David in contemporary Judaism in the time of Jesus and the development of the Christian church.

The other gospels and Paul also spend considerable time discussing Christ as the son of David.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) Use your concordance and record down the places in the gospel of Luke, John and Letter of Paul where the “Son of David” appears.
- 2) In the Old Testament who was the most popular son of God?

3.3 Christ the Servant of God

The term, servant of God is never used by Jesus or the writers of the gospels to apply to him but is understood that it applied to Christ. The writers of the Epistle chose to use the word servant more. The term mostly used in the Old Testament has five different uses.

- (1) It refers to a humble self-description of the righteous in the presence of God
- (2) Servants of God in the plural refers to the righteous
- (3) Servant of God in singular is a description of Israel
- (4) It was a title of someone who especially distinguished himself as an instrument to be used by God
- (5) The Servant of God refers to the messiah

The last reference is found only in the form “my servant” and with God as the speaker. Isaiah has many songs that bear the title, “the servant songs”. These are found in Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4:13-53:12. There has been much debate over the servant in their songs which refer to an individual or represent Israel collectively. Both aspects of the servant have contributed to the New Testament application of the passages to Jesus Christ.

The servant as an individual is more applicable to Christ. Christ was

endowed with the spirit of God to restore a universal mission to declare his judgment among nations. To achieve his mission, Christ experienced vicarious suffering. The suffering servant clearly plays an important role in our understanding of the work of Christ.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) Which of the five use of the servant of God in the Old Testament apply to Christ?
- 2) Read of the “Servant songs” of Isaiah 42:1-9 and write in your notebook, the call of the servant and his responsibilities.

3.4 Christ the Son of Man

The gospel used this name for Jesus more than any other. It occurs over 30 times in Matthew, 15 in Mark, 25 in John. Jesus used it for himself. It is only once that another person called him by this name (John 12:34). The name occurs only three other times in the rest of the New Testament (Act 7:5; Rev. 1:13; 14:14).

The name has some Old Testament background as well. It appears 90 times in the book of Ezekiel where the prophet applies it to himself to designate his prophetic mission. It also appears in Ps. 8:4 and 80:17. The name is also used in Daniel 8:17 with a similar prophetic understanding.

Scholars have suggested that Jesus might have borrowed the term from Ezekiel and Daniel to express his consciousness of belonging to the same prophetic line. In the vision of Daniel 7 especially verse 13, the name has an apocalyptic and messianic over some. The vision is in line with Jesus says in Matt. 24:30; 26:64 about his second coming.

It has been suggested that Jesus used this title for three reasons.

- 1) To express consciousness of being the messiah
- 2) To conceal and reveal his messianic secret
- 3) To identify himself with man as mankind’s representative

In summary, the name son of man means:

- 1) The one who has authority. Christ has authority to forgive sin and to be Lord of the Sabbath
- 2) It is a glorification theme of Christ
- 3) It refers to the humiliation of the early life of Christ
- 4) It carries the suffering and death motif
- 5) It serves as an expression of mankind’s salvation

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

- 1) Read Daniel 7:13-14 and compare his understanding with Matthew 24:29, 31; 26:62-66.
- 2) What are the two things you find in Daniel that convince you that the passage is referring to Christ?
- 3) Look at Number 4 of the summary of the meanings of the name son of man again. What would you consider to be aspect of the humiliation of Christ?

3.5 Christ as Lord

The name Lord is from the Greek word *Kurios*. It is used in different ways with reference to Christ. It was a hounourable title and a confessional name (Rom. 10:9). In the early Church one had to confess Jesus as Lord before he was baptized. The name reveals his divine nature. The title Lord denotes a position of authority. His Lordship is demonstrated in his resurrection, exaltation, and his position at the right hand of God where he reigns over all creation. In Matthew 28:18-20, he declared that all authority is given to him, and in Philippians 2:9-11, Paul testifies that God has exalted, given him a name that is above every other name, and that at his name every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord.

The name Lord is more frequently used as a polite title, just as the English title sir or milord. In this case its equivalent in Hebrews is Rabbi-teacher or master (Mt. 18:26; 15:27; Lk. 7:6; 13:19; 9:57; 10:1, 39, 41). Other times the title is to accord honour to Christ or a respectful address to acknowledge his dignity (Lk. 5:8; Mt. 7:21 Mk. 2:28; 11:3; 12:37). In other instances, the name is used to recognize the authority of Jesus, especially over spiritual matters (Mt. 21:3, 21, 42).

In many passages the name Lord points to the title Adonai, which the Jew used of God instead of the divine name, *Yahweh*. In the following passages Jesus is called "Lord" to show he was divine, to express ownership, authority, and to show that he was the real Son of God (John 20:28); Acts 2:36; 1Cor. 12:3).

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Outline how the name Lord apply to Christ

3.6 Christ as an Atoning Sacrifice

Our discussion of Christ will be incomplete with the treatment of the atonement. In the gospels we find Jesus' statements and teachings about

his death and its purpose. Concerning other matters, Jesus spoke in parable or talked about them as he was responding to issues raised by his opponents. In the case of his death, he spoke directly and initiated the discussion himself. However, we see this more in the later part of his ministry not so much in the early part.

Jesus had a very clear sense of his mission. He knew he was sent by the father and knew what he was sent to do. In John 6:38 he declares “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me”. In another passage he pointed to what he came to do. “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world, might be saved through him” (John 3:17). This work of saving humanity or redemption was accomplished on the cross and is known as atonement. The New Testament lay much emphasis on the fact that Christ is sent. This is to show that Christ death was a voluntarily act, not imposed on him.

It is also very clear that Jesus knew that the Old Testament prophesy of Isaiah 53 was referring to him and will be fulfilled in his life and death. In his discourses, he frequently, made mention of his death and suffering. He said, he will suffer many things, be rejected by his people, persecuted by the religious authorities, be taken from them, lay down his life for his friends, and be crucified (Mark 8:31; Mt. 9:15; 11:12). His references to his suffering and death make it clear that Christ knew this was the primary purpose of his coming.

Jesus saw his death as a ransom. He said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28). Christ did not state to whom the ransom was to be paid or who was holding his people captive. In another passage, Christ saw in death as a substitute. He said “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The high priest Caiaphas made prophetic utterance that it would be better for one man to die for the whole race (John 11:49; 18:14).

Jesus also looked at his death as a sacrifice in the manner of Old Testament sacrifices. A large part of the book of Hebrews is devoted to an explanation of Christ’s priestly role (Heb. 4:14-5:10; 7:1-10:18). Here the author explains that Christ was a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (5:1ff.), an order superior to the Levitical priesthood (7:1-28). The author then goes on to compare the old and new covenants, showing that the new covenant was greatly superior to the old in that it’s ceremonies had a permanent effect (8:1ff.). In the sacrifice of his own precious body, Christ “offered for all time one sacrifice for sins.” (Heb. 10:12). The author concludes that Christ continues to mediate for his people at the right hand of God, and that all believers may approach

God's throne in confidence, knowing that their sins are covered by the blood of Christ.

As our High Priest, Christ sacrificed himself to atone for the sins of his people. He was "the lamb of God" and "our Passover", who came as the fulfilment of the atonement sacrifices commanded in O.T. (Is. 53:6; Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7, cf. Mk. 10:45; Rom. 3:24-25; Col. 2:17; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Jn. 1:7). From the book of Hebrews we learn that the O.T. sacrifices in themselves had no effect. They served the people as a reminder of their sins, and in this way they pointed them to their need for Christ (Heb. 10:1-4).

The teaching that Christ died on behalf of his people is known as the doctrine of *vicarious atonement*. It is one of the most central beliefs of the Christian faith. Christ came as our *vicar*, our substitute, to die the death that we deserved to die (Is. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24). He paid the penalty for our sin, and removed God's curse from us (Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2).

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

Compared the Old Testament sacrifices with that of Christ.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Unit two gives special attention to Christ. We just saw that in the New Testament God works through him. It is important that you study him independently. You will observe that in the New Testament the nature and work of Christ is revealed in his titles and names. An understanding of these names gives you a deeper understanding of what he came to do. These titles and names connect Christ with the Old Testament and the whole progressive redemptive plan of God in the history of man. They also show you that Christ has authority and the empowerment to do what he came to do. Christ divine and human natures come up clear in these names and titles.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we looked at what can be called titles or names of Christ. Each one has some particular facts about Christ. The Most prominent ones that can be seen in each name include Old Testament background or connection, how that applies to Christ and his work under that title. We shall follow this pattern to summarize this unit.

| OLD TESTAMENT | HOW IT APPLIES TO CHRIST | |
|--|--|--|
| Messiah: Kings & priest were anointed with oil | Christ was anointed at his baptism with the Holy Spirit. | Work of Christ under the office of spiritual leader of Israel to deliver them from demonic forces. |
| Son of David: Promised made to King David. | Born from the lineage of David. | Head of the Church |
| Servant of God: The righteous Israel, a special instrument of God, and who suffers for the work of God | Christ was righteous, had special function to play and as a suffering servant. | His ministry and death on the cross. |
| Son of Man: Used in Ezekiel and Daniel as one belonging to the prophet's live. | Son of a woman and had human experience, was also called prophet | Came about humanity and addressed human problems. |
| Lord: Name used for Yahweh | He was God and had same authority like God. | Forgave Sins |

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. What is the New Testament teaching about Christ as the Messiah?
2. The servant of God is one of the titles of Christ in the New Testament. Beginning with Old Testament usage, show how the title also applies to Christ
3. Discuss the benefits of Christ' sacrifice for Christians.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapid: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Youngblood, Ronald. (1995). *Nelson New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

UNIT 3: MAN AND THE WORLD IN NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Created World
 - 3.2 Man in Himself
 - 3.3 Man in Relation to God
 - 3.3.1 Terms for Sin the in Gospels
 - 3.3.2 The Concepts of Sin in Johanine Writings
 - 3.3.3 Pauline Concepts of Sin
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/further Readings

1.0 Introduction

If you are vigilant, you will notice that we are progressing logically in this study and module. We said that God created the world through Christ. After discussing God, we talked about Christ. Now it is appropriate to talk about God's creation. We can not talk about creation without man. Man is the crown of creation and his mandate is to have dominion over the earth. In the same way we cannot talk about man without reference to sin. The discussion about sin helps us to understand man's original state, his present condition, his attitudes to others and the rest of the creation, and explains the state of affairs in this world, the mission of Christ and of course, reminds us of the need to establish the kingdom. As you walk your way through this unit, think and reflect over the Nigerian situation. What is the root of the sin of corruption, injustice, robbery, bribery, election malpractices in Nigeria? What is the best way of fighting these sins? What does this reveal about the spiritual state of the Christians in Nigeria?

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you are expected to:

- Identify the different spiritual agencies that exist in this world.
- Trace the human journey from creation to his present state and find out the root of human problems.
- Explain man's standing with God after the fall.
- List the different terms used in the New Testament by different

authors for sin.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Created World

We have already established that the world is created by God and he is in total control of the world. However, this world is under the influence of evil to such an extent that the world itself can be used by mankind to create enmity with God. The created world seen in the New Testament is full of spiritual agencies. They are servants of God and their main task is to communicate the message of God to man. The New Testament story is incomplete without them. They were part of significant events in the New Testament and the story of salvation. They played a major role in the birth of John and Jesus and in the resurrection of Christ. Revelation tells us that they have roles to play in the activities of the church presently and when Christ returns.

The world is also made up of spiritual forces of an adverse kind. The mission of Christ must be understood against this background. Demonology pervades the New Testament literature and the activities of the demonic world is seen as hostile and opposed to the propagation of the gospel. Demonic forces held man captive in many ways. The mission of Christ was to overthrow them and indeed he did.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) Mention the name of one good angel in the New Testament that you know and one thing he was sent to do.
- 2) Compare the role of the good angel with that of the bad ones

3.2 Man in Himself

The New Testament has not defined man and has not given us the psychological make up of man. However, we can get the New Testament view of man by deducing from the wide range of materials presented on the subject. Man is represented as being in communication with God (spiritual) or not being in communication with God (carnal).

The New Testament view of man has to do with man's present state. Man was created in the image and likeness of God to be a true reflection of God. Through man's disobedience in the garden this was lost. However, in Christ man is able to be a true reflection of God again. The New Testament teaches clearly that man is made in the image of God (Cor.11: 7). In 1 Cor. 11:7 image and glory are used, in Col. 3:10 only

image is used and James 3:9 uses likeness. From the above, image and likeness are used interchangeably and synonymously. Theologians say that the understanding of the image of God should not be restricted to an exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis. Example Col. 3:10 mentions knowledge as an image of God. It is also very clear that Christ is called the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Throughout history, theologians have identified the image of God in man as original righteousness, true knowledge, and holiness. These come from the statement that man was very good (see Eph. 4:24).

This is what God's salvation plan seeks to do. In the New Testament one finds the relations between sexes stated in clear terms especially by Paul and Jewish tradition. Jesus gives a more respectable position for woman while Paul supports male domination. In traditional Judaism women and children are not even counted. The New Testament upholds differences in sex roles. The New Testament presents Jesus alone as an ideal or perfect man. He alone perfectly fulfilled the divine intention for manhood. Other human beings are asked to emulate his life.

Man generally has infinite value before God. He has superiority over the animal world and has various responsibilities to God, to the society and the creation. Anthropologically, man has a soul, spirit, flesh, body, heart, mind, conscience, and there is an inner man. Sometimes man is viewed as consisting of the soul or spirit and body (dichotomy) and also as having body, soul and spirit (trichotomy). Jesus in his teaching seems to mention only the body and the soul – Mat. 6:20, 25, Paul on the other hand makes a lot of references to man's essential nature and make-up. In his vocabulary we find "flesh" (Sarx) 91 times; which is used in a physical and ethic sense; Spirit (pneuma) 146 times to denote the God – ward aspect of man's nature; Body (soma) 89 times. Most often to designate the human organism but sometimes the carnal aspect of man's nature; Soul (psyche) 11 times, carry the idea of the vital principle of life. Paul sometimes contrast flesh and spirit; body and soul, and yet other times employs the body, soul and spirit - 1Thess. 5:23. Other writers like John seems to talk only about flesh and spirit in their arguments with those who said Christ only came in the spirit (Docetists).

There are basically three views on the constitutional nature of man:

1. Trichotomy – the trichotomist argue that man is made up of three constituents. The body, soul and spirit.
 - a. The physical body is not different from that of animals and plants.
 - b. The soul is the psychological element, the basis of reason, of emotion, of social interrelatedness etc.

- c. The spirit is the religious element, this enables the human to perceive spiritual maker and respond to spiritual stimuli, seat of spiritual qualities.

Their reference text is 1 Thess. 5:23, others are Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:14; 3:1-4 (KJV).

2. Dichotomy – the dichotomists teach that man is composed of two elements, a material aspect, the body, and the immaterial one, soul or spirit. From Gen. 2:7, God breathed into man one principle – a living soul. They find many passages in which the soul and spirit are used interchangeably (Gen. 41:8; Ps. 42:6; Matt. 20:28; 27:50; John 12:27; 13:21; Heb. 12:23 and Rev. 6:9).

In other passages body and soul are spoken of as constituting the whole person (Matt. 10:28; 1Cor. 5:3; 3John 2). Death is described as giving up the soul (Gen. 35:18; 1Kings 17:21; Acts 15:26) and as well as giving up the spirit (Ps. 31:5; Luke 23:46; Matt. 27:50; James 2:27). There is also a support from the Hebrew parallelism (Luke 1:46, 47). Lastly, consciousness testifies that there are two elements in man's being. We can distinguish a material part and an immaterial part, but the consciousness no one can distinguish between soul and spirit.

3. Monism- This is the view of materialistic. They say the idea to divide man into body, soul or spirit is a primitive one. That man is not to be thought of as in any sense composed of parts or separate entities, but rather as a radical unity. They say the Bible views man as a whole, self, body, soul, spirit are only synonymous. Even when people die they are viewed as whole. They give the example of Abraham, the Rich Man and Lazarus. In that parable these people are not souls but full persons.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) We have described two types of men; the spiritual and the carnal. Who do you understand to be the spiritual people and who one the carnal people?
- 2) According to the discussion above who and what will restore man to his original state?

- 3) The New Testament talks about man in dichotomy terms as well as in trichotomy terms. Which of these do you think best represents your understanding of the constitutional nature
- 4) From this notes what makes man so special?

3.3 Man in Relation to God

The general situation of man as can be seen in the New Testament in relation to God is that of rebellion against God. Man, from the beginning disobeyed the law of God. This disobedience brought him under the bondage of sin, from which, he cannot escape through his efforts. Sin has placed man in a position of ignorance of God and of false estimate of himself.

Sin is not compatible with the righteous God. The New Testament is clear that sin is under condemnation and punishment. Sin and its consequences are behind New Testament teaching on salvation and the mission of Christ. The New Testament presents sin with many facets and these facts account for the different interpretation and representation of the work of Christ.

The work of sin

- 1) Sin enslaves us
- 2) Sin brings falsehood
- 3) Sin brings disobedience
- 4) Sin is deviation from the will of God

The work of Christ

- Christ delivers us
- Christ presents truth
- Christ shows the ways of obedience
- Christ is the way, the truth and life. He sets the perfect example of righteousness for us.

The New Testament accounts tell us very clearly that sin is not from God – that God hates sin, he is holy, anything sinful does not come in his presence, he tempts no one (Jam. 1:13; Luke 5:8). Christ contended that sinful acts have their origin in a corrupt heart of man (Matt. 7:21).

The question of the origin of sin is a major one in the New Testament. The answer to the question seems to come from James 1:12-15 and the definition of sin. The Jews definition of sin is, going beyond the line, crossing the line, doing something in excess. God has drawn a line that we must not cross when we cross the line it becomes sin. In the garden, God drew a line between trees that should be eaten and those that should not be eaten. Man sinned when he crossed that line. What made man to cross the line is desire. James says “desire gives birth to sin.” For him it is desire that is responsible for our sins. God has created man with desire. Desire in itself is not bad. Paul advises that we should control the use of our desire (Rom. 13:14). We can say that God did not mean

bad for creating man with a desire. Can we imagine a human being without a desire? In this life, when we desire things and obtain them legitimately, there is nothing bad. Sin therefore comes from the very nature of man – the misuse of that nature. This explains why God holds us guilty for sin, and why we cannot accuse God as the author of sin, except we accuse him of wrongly creating man with a desire. Sin is therefore the choosing of the person who commits its.

For further understanding of sin, we shall look at the different terms used for sin in the New Testament.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) Genesis 3: 16-19 records the consequences of sin. Read the passage and list them in your note book.
- 2) Here we have a list of things that sin has done to us. The list is not exhaustive, write down four more things that you think sin has done to humanity.

3.3.1 Terms for Sin in the Gospels

The gospel teaches that sin is trespass and lawlessness. In the Greek, trespass means to commit a fault or to fall away. It means to commit a fault against others and God. It is used for the rejection of the gospel demands. Lawlessness on the other hand literally means absence of the law or non-observance of it. It carries the connotation of revolt against God and his laws.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

This section identifies two persons that we sin against. Mention them.

3.3.2 The Concepts of Sin in Johnnie Literature

The apostle John talks about sin in his gospel and letters using different concepts. For him, sin is alienation and separation from God, it is unbelief, ignorance, everlasting, or second death, lawlessness, and sin have a universal character. For John, there are many things that show our sinful nature and these include; the love of the world, walking in darkness, and lack of brotherly love (1 John 1:5-8; 2:11). John teaches that everyone is a sinner but the Christian character is not to continue in sin (1 John 1:8). Sinner are from the devil; “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of Man appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. No one born of God will continue to sin” (1 John 3:8-9).

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Which of these concepts would you not normally consider as sin?

3.3.3 Pauline Concepts of Sin

Paul looks at sin as a debt owed to God, a deviation from the right path, lawlessness, and a task-master. Sin includes both external acts and internal attitudes. Paul sees sin as a personal power which holds humanity in its grasps. Paul has an encompassing view of sin. Sin has affected all human beings as well as all of the creations (Rom.3:23; 8:22-24). In Romans 5:15-21, Paul argues that our sinful nature has come from Adam. He teaches that the sin of Adam is imputed on us, his posterity. This does not mean that we committed his sins, or we were agents of his act, but that in virtue of the union between us and him, his sin is a judicial ground of our condemnation. This is possible because Adam was the **FEDERAL HEAD OR REPRESENTATIVE** of the human race. Adam was both our natural and federal head. Adam was standing for the whole of humanity. In God's sight man had become both guilty and polluted (Rom. 5:18-19).

Self-Assessment Exercise

Go through the different terms used for sin in the Gospels, by John and Paul and identify the concepts that all of them employed for sin.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Man is made to live in a web of relationship. It is very important to look man from this angle. Man by his creation and nature is related to God, other humans and the universe. Looking at man this way helps us to know his original state, his present and future conditions. From the beginning man had a harmonious relationship with God, fellow humans and the creation. Sins destroyed this relationship and brought hostility in human existence. Sin distorted the original nature of man and placed man under various curses and punishment from which he cannot save himself. Sin and its consequences are behind the New Testament teaching on salvation and the mission of Christ. The goal of this unit is for you to see the problem that sin which goes by various names has brought into human existence.

Man is in the midst of evil and good angels. The evil angels led him into state of disobedience and sin and continue to hold him captive in many ways. The good angels are servants of God and they live for human benefit. Even though, man lost his true reflection of God, he is still of

infinite value in God's sight. Christ came to restore the original righteousness lost. With the coming of Christ, sin still constitutes human problem. The New Testament gives us the details of the work of sin and also gives us hope that for those who accept Christ, sin has no power over them because Christ has conquered it.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit teaches you more details about man. Man is part of the created order and his home is the universe. Man is in the midst of evil and good angels. The evil angels led man into the state of disobedience and sin continues to hold him captive in many ways. The good angels are servants of God and they exist for the benefit of man. Even though man lost his true reflection of God, he is still of infinite value in God's sight. The purpose of the coming of Christ was to restore man to his original position and state. Though, the coming of Christ has completely destroyed the power of sin, yet sin continues to torment humanity. The New Testament gives us the details of the work of sin but also gives us hope that those who accept Christ, sin has no power over them because Christ has conquered it.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) What is the New Testament presentation of man in himself?
- 2) What is the general conception of sin in the New Testament? In your answer make mention of terms used for sin found in the gospels, in John and in Pauline Literature.

7.0 References /Further Readings

Elwell, Walter. A. (1984). *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Youngblood, Ronald. (1995). *Nelson New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers

UNIT 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Person of the Holy Spirit
 - 3.2 The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Birth and Early life of Christ
 - 3.3 The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Ministry of Jesus
 - 3.4 The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Ministry of the Apostles
 - 3.5 Functions of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.
 - 3.5.1 Christian Regeneration
 - 3.5.2 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - 3.5.3 Christian Worship
 - 3.5.4 Sanctification
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In units 2 and 3, I discussed Christ and man. The mission of Christ is to save man from his sinful nature. We just saw that man cannot save himself nor will he be able to keep his salvation or do the spiritual things required of him by himself. The New Testament presents the Holy Spirit at work both in Christ and in man. This unit will lead you to the study of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the birth, life and ministry of Christ. We will logically move to his role in ministry of the apostles who took the mantle from Christ and to the Christians in general. A deep understanding of the role and functions of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Christian today is very important. We live in the age of the Holy Spirit and secondly, there is so much emphasis among many Christians on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It also looks like there is disagreement and confusion among Christians today on the role and functions of the Holy Spirit. My presentations in this unit will help you solve some of your problems.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Outline the role of the Holy Spirit in the birth and early life of

- Christ.
 - Enumerate the ways that Christ made use of the Holy Spirit in his ministry.
 - Show the differences in the life and ministry of the apostles before and after they received the Holy Spirit.
 - Identify the role of the Holy Spirit and that of humanity in regeneration and sanctification
- v) Find out what gifts of the Holy Spirit are more important.

3.1 The Person of the Holy Spirit

History tells us that the person of the Holy Spirit received little attention in the past. Greater emphasis on the person and works of the Holy Spirit started with the Pentecostal movement. The Pentecostal movement did influence the wider Christian community to re-examine the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person, a “he” (Jn. 16:14) and not an “it” as some people think. As a person the Holy Spirit can be grieved, sinned against, blasphemed, lied to, tested and resisted (Eph. 4:30; Mt. 12:31-32; Acts 5:3; 7:51). The Spirit’s own activities are also those which can only be done by a person. These include searching, teaching, comforting, convincing, speaking, sending, etc. (Lk. 12:12; Jn. 15:26; 16:8; Acts 8:29; 10:19-20). New Testament also speaks of the Holy Spirit as divine and God himself (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 12:4-6). As God he has all the divine attributes, such as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and eternal (Lk. 1:35; Jn. 14:26; Heb. 9:14). The Spirit is one with God, so that words of God spoken in the O.T. are identified as words of the Spirit (Acts 28:25-27; Heb. 3:7-9; 10:15-17). The Holy Spirit is therefore the third person of the Trinity (Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

In the New Testament there are many references to the role of the Spirit in bringing God’s word. The prophets were moved by the Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21), who revealed the coming of the Messiah to them (1 Pet. 1:11). The message of the prophets was “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). In the same way the New Testament authors were guided by the Holy Spirit in their writings (1 Cor. 2:10). We call this work of the Spirit, inspiration. The same Spirit also helps those who read God’s Word. This work of the Spirit is also called illumination (1 Cor. 2:10-13; cf. Jn. 16:14).

3.2 The Holy Spirit in the Birth and Early Life of Christ

The Holy Spirit, one of the persons of the trinity, played an active and significant role in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Bible records that the conception of Christ was through the Holy Spirit. The implication of

this is that the whole mission of Christ including the incarnation was directed by the Holy Spirit. The prophecies concerning the work of Christ were to be executed by the Holy Spirit. At the presentation ceremony of Jesus, Simon, filled and moved by the Holy Spirit foretold the extent of the mission of Christ. It was the Holy Spirit that gave him the revelation. Before Christ started his ministry, John the Baptist predicted that Christ will work with the Holy Spirit. Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. This implies imminent catastrophe on the unbelievers, purging of sin and the inauguration of the kingdom of righteousness.

Another significant role that the Holy Spirit played in the life of Jesus was at his baptism. At his baptism, the Holy Spirit publicly announced that Christ was the awaited messiah who will perform his mission in the power of the Holy Spirit. One of the most important happenings in the early life of Christ was the temptation. The temptation moment was as important as baptism. It was one of the main stages in the life of Christ. This stage was organized and directed by the Holy Spirit. Christ was empowered by the Holy Spirit to go through the temptations.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) From what you have studied in the previous lessons, what does the coming of the Holy Spirit on Christ during his baptism signifies?
- 2) Look again at the above presentation about the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit a person or just a power? Give one or two reasons for the position you have taken.

3.3 The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Public Ministry of Christ

The New Testament is very clear that the Holy Spirit is the agent behind Christ exorcism and public ministry. At the beginning of his public ministry Christ announced that the spirit was upon him to enable him carry out his ministry (Luke 4:18). In a different context, Matthew quotes Isaiah to show that long ago, God promised to endow Christ with the Holy Spirit for a successful ministry (Matt. 12:18-21). The power that Jesus had over evil spirits was given by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28). It is important to note that Jesus was constantly filled with the Holy Spirit throughout his ministry. The Holy Spirit played the role of a reinforcer. He was aware of the importance of the Holy Spirit and said the only unforgivable sin was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) I have used the word Exorcism many times in this write up. Check the dictionary and write down its meaning.
- 2) In this section you can find two ways in which Christ came to be endowed with the Spirit. Read very carefully and write down the two ways.

3.4 The Holy Spirit in the Ministry of the Apostles

The role of the Holy Spirit has been to endow people to perform special functions. The Apostles had a special ministry to spread the gospel to the end of the earth. This task was made possible through the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

Before Christ left, He promised that the Holy Spirit will be given to the disciples (Luke 11:13; John 14:15-18; 15:26; 16:5-15). The Spirit will take the place of Christ. Christ calls him another counselor, comforter, Spirit of truth to guide the disciples into truth, and he has the function to convict men of sin.

The roles of counseling and comforting presuppose that the disciples will face persecution in their ministry. The Holy Spirit will not only give them what to say in such circumstances, he will also give them the strength and the comfort they need to go through trial times.

Christ contended that the disciples will not be able to do anything without the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Christ advised them to wait and receive the Holy Spirit before embarking on the mission entrusted to them (Acts 1:8). In the book of Acts, we see that the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform miracles and gave them various gifts and the boldness needed for their ministry.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) Christ made many promises to his disciples that he will give them the Holy Spirit. At what occasion was the Holy Spirit given to them?
- 2) The Holy Spirit was to enable the apostles perform miracles. Page through the book of Acts and record the miracles performed by the apostles.

3.5 Functions of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Life

Just as the disciples were unable to do anything without the Holy Spirit, a Christian can do nothing without him. The fact is that the Christian life

begins and ends with the enabling of the Holy Spirit. In reality the functions of the Holy Spirit in Christians' life are inexhaustible; however, we will discuss only a few of them here:

3.5.1 Regeneration

The Christian life begins by hearing the gospel; however, the gospel makes no sense to the Christian if the Holy Spirit does not work in his or her heart. The Holy Spirit causes us to hear the message and turn to God in faith and become new creatures. The act of becoming new creatures is known as regeneration.

Regeneration is totally the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who gives new birth which Christ said can only be achieved through faith (John 3: 5-8). Regeneration, the term for being born again, is another term that is used in more than one way. In a wider sense it is sometimes used to refer to everything involved in becoming a Christian, including conversion and sanctification. It is clear that regeneration understood in this way is not just the work of the Holy Spirit, but also the work of man. The Bible tends to use the word in a stricter sense, using it only for the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:13; Acts 16:14; Rom. 9:16; Phil. 2:13). This stricter sense of the term regeneration is also suggested by the picture of childbirth, which suggests that regeneration is something that happens to a person rather than something he does, the same as the birth of a baby. It is something that happens to a baby, and not something the baby does.

Regeneration is an instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit, which affects the whole man. It affects the mind, the will, and the emotions (1 Cor. 2:14, 15; Col. 3:10; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:5; Heb. 13:21). Through regeneration man is made alive to God, so that once again he is able to do deeds pleasing to God (Eph. 2:1, 10). Regeneration is therefore the first thing that has to happen. Only a regenerated person can turn from his sin to God in faith. Jesus puts it this way, only a regenerated person can enter the Kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3).

People are born again through the Word of God (Jas 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). While God calls people through the word that is preached (Lk. 8:11), regeneration must not be seen as a human response to God's Word. James 1:18 makes it clear that it is not man's response, but God's will that brings about regeneration. We must therefore interpret the role of God's word in much the same way that God's word was active in creation. God commanded, and it came to be (Jn. 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:6).

Some Christians like to ask when you are born again. Since regeneration is a mysterious work of the Holy Spirit, it is not always easy to identify

the moment of the new birth (Jn. 3:8). Many Christians cannot remember their regeneration any more than they can remember their birth. They have known God as their Father for as long as they can remember. Others only came to know God as their Father at the times of their conversion. But from this we cannot conclude this was also the time they were born again. Often new converts will tell you that God has long been working in their lives. It is not important to know when you were born again; rather it is important to know that you are born again. You can know you that are born again if you are converted.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

- 1) When one is regenerated, we use the term “born again” because regeneration is compared to birth. Why do we also use the term new creatures for one who is regenerated?
- 2) When the phrase “without measure” is used, what do we mean?

3.5.2 The Gifts of the Spirit

The work of the apostles was accompanied with various gifts to authenticate and give support to their message. Their gifts were from the Holy Spirit. The gifts enable them perform special services and they were also to equip the saints. Paul gave instructions on how some of these gifts should be used. It is clear from what Paul says concerning the gifts that there is tendency to misuse these gifts.

The spiritual gifts are listed in the following passages:

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Roman 12:6-8 | 1Cor. 12:4-11 | Eph.4:11 | 1Pet 4: 11 |
| Prophecy | - Wisdom | - | Apostles |
| Speaking | | | |
| Service | - Knowledge | - | Prophets Service |
| Teaching | - Faith | - | Evangelists |
| Exhortation | - Healing | - | Pastors |
| Encouragement | - Working of miracles- | | Teachers |
| Giving Aid | - Prophecy | | |
| Leadership | - Distinguishing Spirit | | |
| Acts of Mercy | - Speaking in Various Tongues | | |
| | - Interpretation of tongues | | |

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

- 1) One of the gifts that is more pronounced in the church today is the gift of speaking in tongues. This gift was given in Acts 2:4 and we see also in 1Cor. 14:1-5. What is the difference between the tongue in Acts and the one in Corinthians?

- 2) Mention two most important functions of the gifts to the church.
- 3). One of the gifts appears in almost all of these passages. What is the gift and should we consider it the most important gift?
- 4) Which of these would you not normally consider as a gift of the Holy Spirit?

3.5.3 The Holy Spirit and Worship

Worship is an essential aspect of the Christian life. Through worship, the Christian is able to approach God and glorify Him. Christ commanded that our worship should be in Spirit and in truth. This means, Christians are to allow the Spirit to lead them into true worship. Through him our worship is acceptable in the sight of God.

Apart from this, the Holy Spirit gives inspiration and illumination to believers (Mark 12:36; 2 Tim 3: 16; 1 pet 1: 21) The Holy Spirit helps us understand the message that is preached. The Holy Spirit plays an intercessory role in our worship (Rom 8: 26).

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

Worship includes many things. List some of the things that are included in worship. You are free to use your church tradition.

3.5.4 Sanctification

One of the main functions of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life is sanctification (2Thes 2: 13; 1Cor 6: 11; Romans 15: 16). This is what Christ meant when He said that the Spirit will convict men of their sins (Jn. 16:18). Sanctification is a process of removing sin from the Christian. It means to make holy, hallow, to consecrate or dedicate. It is a continuous process in the life of a Christian. Sanctification is about the spiritual growth of a Christian. Christians need the fertilizing activity and guidance of the Holy Spirit to grow to maturity and to attain full development.

Unlike regeneration, Christians have a role to play in sanctification. This is what Paul meant when he said “work out your salvation” (Phil. 2:12).

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

How is sanctification different from regeneration?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit appears prominently and plays an important role in the

New Testament. I would like you to understand the Holy Spirit as the initiator and engineering force behind what happens in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit is another person of the Trinity and therefore God himself. It is because of this that he is able to play these important roles. You have seen here that all the three persons of the Trinity are together involved in the plan of salvation for humanity. Christ came to save man. He was in this mission together with the Father who sent him and the Holy Spirit who was enabling him. The Holy Spirit is also at work in man to enable him receive salvation. Without him salvation for humanity cannot be accomplished. This all sum up to the fact that all three members of the Trinity have to be involved for salvation to be accomplished.

5.0 SUMMARY

The New Testament has much to tell about the work of the Holy Spirit but does not make much effort trying to define him. He played an active role in the life and ministry of Christ from conception, to baptism, temptation and also all aspects of his ministry. When Christ was going back to heaven, he commissioned the apostles to continue with the work. Just as he was unable to do anything without the Holy Spirit; the apostles will also not be able. He therefore gave them the spirit in full measure. The Holy Spirit worked in the apostles to carry on the ministry and he also worked in the hearts of the people who heard them. In sum, Christian witness and living are wholly dependable on the Holy Spirit. After Christ ascended into heaven, we entered into the age of the Holy Spirit. That is to say that he is the one on duty now.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) Comment on this statement “the Holy Spirit was wholly responsible for the public Ministry of the Apostles”.
- 2) Enumerate any two of the functions of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Elwell, Walter. A. (1984). *Evangelical Dictionary of Technology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

UNIT 5: THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 Brief History of Paul
 - 3.2 Paul's Characteristics
 - 3.2.1 His Sense of Divine Vocation
 - 3.2.2 His Authority
 - 3.2.3 His Love for his Converts
 - 3.2.4 His Language and Style
 - 3.3 Sources of Pauline Theology
 - 3.4 Some Themes in Paul's Theology
 - 3.4.1 God
 - 3.4.2 Christ
 - 3.4.3 Salvation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I feel it will be appropriate to conclude this study with Paul. Christ chose his apostles to continue the establishment of his kingdom among the Jews and to the Gentiles. Paul did more than any of the apostles and I consider him a representative of the apostles. He wrote, taught, and evangelized more than any of the apostles. The study of Paul has many similarities with the course generally. Paul's background and influence is similar to the background and influence the Jewish and Hellenistic cultures have on the New Testament. Paul brings the Old and New Testament, the Jewish and Christian, Jewish and Gentiles together in lovely manner. This recalls the idea of unity and continuity we discussed in module one. This unit will expose you to the problems of the early Christian community. You will see these problematic issues and how Paul addressed them. Go through this unit and compare the church at the time of Paul with the Church today.

2.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Give a brief history of Paul.
- Discuss Paul's approach to his Ministry.
- Explain why Paul is also called an apostle.

- Discuss how Paul treated his converts and the problems in the Church during his ministry.
- Identify the source of Paul's Theology.

3.1 Brief History of Paul

Paul was born a Roman citizen in Tarsus and he grew up there. Tarsus was a Greek speaking city. This accounts for Paul's knowledge of Greek language. His father was of the tribe of Benjamin and his mother was probably a Roman. They brought him up as a Pharisee. Paul was given Hebrew education as a rabbi by a profound teacher, Gamaliel, who was teacher of teachers.

His Hebrew name was Saul, while Paul was his Roman name. As a devout Pharisee, Paul was a strong persecutor of the Christians. He approved and witnessed the death of Stephen and probably many other followers of Christ. He was on one of such dangerous trips when he was suddenly converted to Christianity on the way to Damascus.

Paul withdrew to Arabia for 3 years (Gal. 1:17) after which he returned to Jerusalem. As a missionary he traveled from Antioch to many parts of Asia and Europe. He undertook three missionary Journeys between 45-57AD.

Paul underwent much suffering for his work. He suffered fortune, imprisonment and even death under Emperor Nero. Paul wrote thirteen epistles which cover a wide range of issues some of them will be in this unit.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- 1) When Paul became a Christian he went to live in Arabia for 3 years. Does this remind you of the story of someone else in the New Testament? Who was the person? Where was the person taken to?
- 2) Find the meanings of the names of Paul and Saul.

3.2 Paul's Characteristics

Paul was committed and dedicated to his work. Obviously, there were a number of things that were responsible for this commitment and dedication.

3.2.1 His Sense of Divine Vocation

Paul had a strong sense of his call to be a missionary. His call began

with his conversion. He knew his call and was commissioned as minister of the gospel by Jesus Christ himself (1Cor. 9:16). At the time of his call, he was told that the ministry ahead will not be easy. As he persecuted other Christians, so will he be persecuted. His work was guided by this, as such, he endured imprisonments, beatings, storming, shipwrecks, hunger, nakedness, and abuses.

The mission of Paul was made clear to him. He was to be an apostle to the gentiles. Mission to the gentiles had its roots in Jerusalem. Paul in his mission to the gentiles did not leave out the Jews his base and source of authority. He had a heart for the Jews. He took care of their problems and designed that they be saved.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- 1) Christianity came out of the Jews religion called Judaism. From what you have studied so far and previous knowledge what does Christianity have in common with Judaism? List five things.
- 2) From the notes in this section, summarize the things that guided Paul in his work.

3.2.2 Authority

Paul was respected and honoured among the Jews and the Gentiles. He assumed control and importance. He commanded fearlessly so much that the Corinthians and Galatians felt it. His authority was based on God's authority. Paul claimed to be an apostle, one discretely commissioned by God. His sense of authority is not a private possession but conferred on him by Christ.

Normally, the word apostle applied to the twelve. Paul was not among them but he is called an apostle because he met the qualifications of being an apostle.

An apostle was directly commissioned by Christ, witnesses the life and resurrection of Christ, was conscious of being inspired by the Holy Spirit, and had power to perform miracles.

Paul had these qualifications and his authority was based on this fact that he was an apostle. Others in his day doubted his apostleship but he took time to prove it.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

- 1) If Paul too is an apostle, how many apostles do we have? Try to name them if you can.

- 2) One of the qualifications of an apostles was one directly commissioned by Christ when was Paul also commissioned by Christ?

3.2.3 His Love for His Converts

Paul's sincere love for his converts is seen in his letters. He was concerned about their welfare, prayed feverently for them, visited them, sought to know their problems and attempted to offer solution. In the case of Onesimus, Paul pleaded with his master on his behalf. In love, Paul commanded, rebuked and exhorted his converts. Even those that were hostile to him, like the Corinthians, he showed much love to them. Paul's greatest literary work on love is written to the Corinthians (1Cor. 13).

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

- 1) Philemon is Paul's shortest letter. What was the stakes of Onesimus and who was his master?
- 2) Get familiar with 1Cor. 13. In your note book list the qualities of love that Paul mentioned in this chapter.

3.2.4 His Language and Style

Paul had a policy of trying to be at the level of the people. He adopted this in order that he might reach all people, know them and address their problems. He knew Greek and Hebrew well as well as both Jewish and Greek cultures.

Peter writes that Paul's language was not easy to understand (2Pet. 3:16). Scholars agree that Paul's language was not governed by Greek culture but by the needs of his readers. In his writings he used the language that he felt was appropriate for the occasion, argument and the readers. His letters are a mixture of vernacular and the common *koine* Greek. In most of his writings, Paul dealt with difficult doctrinal and ethical issues. This contributes in making his language and style sometimes difficult.

Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Go through this section again and list the things that led Paul to use difficult language.

3.3 Source of Paul's Theology

Paul's theology must be seen against his religious, culture and doctrinal background. Paul lived in an environment that combined Jews religion, Greek civilization and the political and administrative genius of the Romans.

In several texts Paul reflected on his Jewish background (Phil. 3:5; 2Cor. 11:22; Gal. 1:14). Paul received much training in Judaism and was quite knowledgeable in that tradition. He was able to engage his opponents successful. He also used Judaism as a bridge to his theology. As we noted earlier, Paul was in Tarsus, an intellectual and civilization centre. In his letters we see much of Greek influence. He quotes Greek poets (Acts 17:28; 1Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12). He used Greek and Roman ideas and social activities such as running, boxing, wrestling, etc, to illustrate and helps his readers understand him. Paul's education also helped him to attack and combat other philosophies (usually called false teachings) of the day.

Paul himself insisted that he was simply passing on the tradition he had received about Christ's death, burial and resurrection (1Cor. 15:3-3). He does not specify his source but obviously it was from the other apostles.

In Gal. 1:11-12, Paul argues that he received his inspiration not from men but "through the revelations of Christ." Here, he is referring to his experience on the road to Damascus. By these two statements, Paul is not contradicting himself. He is simply saying that his Damascus experience has radically changed his previous understanding and position.

Generally, Paul builds his theology on the gospels and the Old Testament. He is in agreement with the Biblical tradition.

Self-Assessment Exercise 6

1. We have talked about Paul's cultural and educational background in this unit. What was his cultural background and who was his teacher?
2. According to this section, what are the sources of Paul's Theology?

3.4 Some Themes in Paul's Theology

It is difficult for scholars to agree on the major themes in the theology of Paul. However, there are issues that appear in the discussion of most

scholars. They may use different headings or use different approaches but the content is usually the same.

3.4.1 God

Paul's theology can be called the theology of God. He speaks more about God than Christ. Paul mentions God 153 times and Christ 65 times in the Book of Romans only. The foundation of his theology is in God. Paul believes in the one God who created the world. There is strong emphasis on the unity of God in his thought. The oneness of God is the basis of his teaching on equality of Jews and Gentiles. (Rom. 1:36; 10:12; Gal. 3:28). This one God is the God of Jews and Gentiles. He is not bound to any geographical area but extends his saving love to all men equally. (1Tim. 2:3-5) Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was built on this understanding and belief.

God as a creator brought everything into existence. Paul built on this creative power of God and did his ministry with confidence that God will still transform human beings and make them new creatures.

This God is a God of history. To Paul, history under God is purposely, developing toward a goal and along the path God has predetermined. For this reason Paul accepted the Old Testament argued that Christianity was not a new religion nor the coming of Christ has introduced something different into the purpose of God for Israel. He argues that the coming of Christ has only opened wide doors for the Gentiles and God's purpose and words to Israel still stand.

The oneness of God helped Paul to maintain a balance between the Old and New Testament, Israel and the church, and Jews and Gentiles.

Self-Assessment Exercise 7

- 1) Summary who God is, in the theology of Paul.
- 2) What is the theological term for the oneness of God?

3.4.2 Christ

While God the father formed the foundation of Paul's theology, Christ was the very life of Paul. It was not Paul, but Christ lived in him and to live is Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21). Paul's one goal was to gain Christ at all cost (Phil. 3:7-9), to be his slave and to die for him (Acts 21:13), and to imitate him.

Paul understood Christ as the last Adam. Christ's death is his turning point between the two ages. Through his death, he has reserved the path

of humanity. He is the head of the new humanity and is leading them on a straight path. This was already predicated by the prophets (Isa. 40:3-5).

A radical difference between Paul and the Jews is his understanding that Jesus is the messiah with Paul, Christ became more pronounced. His writings are full of “Jesus Christ,” and “our Lord Jesus Christ”. (Note: we said earlier that Christ is the Greek word for messiah). Paul frequently speaks of Jesus as Lord and son of God. The heart of Paul’s proclamation is the worship of Christ (2Cor. 4:5). He is the authority of the believers and church. Paul compared the relationship of husband and wife to that of Christ and the church. Paul likes the title son of God because, his mission was to bring people to assume the status of the sons of God.

For Paul, every aspect of Christ life was important. His mission revolved around preaching Christ and Christ alone. He sees the death and resurrection of Christ as highly important and he used that to illustrate Christian living.

Self-Assessment Exercise 8

In Roman 6:1-7 Paul used the death and resurrection of Christ to illustrate the Christian life. According to him, death and resurrection stand for what aspect of Christian living?

3.4.3 Salvation

For Paul, salvation of humanity is the main purpose of Christ coming. It is also the goal of his mission to Jews and Gentiles. He developed the theology of salvation more profoundly in Romans and Galatians. Paul teaches that man needs salvation because of sin. All men are of guilty of sin. Sin is missing the mark, disobedience, lawlessness and man’s wrongdoing. Sin has devastating effects on man. It has made corrupt and guilty, and so liable to punishment that can not be averted.

Our loving God has provided an instrument of salvation and that is the gospel. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, God exercises his saving power and revelation. The gospel is the good news of Christ and his mission into the world to save sinners.

Paul teaches that the method of salvation is justification. Justification occupies an important position in the theology of Paul. It is a judicial term where by God declares a sinner righteous. A sinner is given the status, he does not merit. Justification is based on the work of Christ on the cross. The righteousness he acquires is transferred to us. The biblical

words used to express justification means to declare someone “not guilty”. The word justification therefore has the opposite meaning to the word condemnation (Rom. 8:33-34). To be justified is to be declared righteous (Jn. 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 4:6-7; 2 Cor. 5:19). For sinners to be declared righteous does not mean that God is ignoring their sins, but it means that they are given the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 3:20-28; 4:5-7; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:11 and 5:4).

Since “to justify” means “to declare righteous” it is clearly an act of God who judges us. It does not involve any co-operation from the sinner. Justification is a legal act of God whereby he declares the sinner righteous on the basis of the righteousness of Christ. Justification happens instantly, and covers all of the believer’s past, present and future sins (Rom. 8:1; 32-34; also Heb. 10:14, where the word “sanctification” stands for the covering of sin by Christ’s blood, and therefore must be understood in the sense of “justification”).

While justification is the method, faith is the means. Paul teaches that faith in Christ is the only means of securing Christ’s righteousness (Rom. 3:25). Faith unites us with Christ so that there is a mutual transference of our sins to him and his righteousness to us. Through faith, the believer is regarded as one with Christ. He has suffered and died in Christ and was risen with him. He paid the penalty of sin in Christ and made perfect there by receiving Christ’s righteousness which makes him right with God.

What the believer need from this point is sanctification. He needs constant renewal so that he will be made holy, pure and clean. The word sanctification literally means “a setting apart.” Sometimes the word is used in the New Testament to mean almost the same as justification (e.g. in 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:14). But usually the word refers to the work of the Holy Spirit by which he leads and strengthens the Christian to lead a holy life. Unlike justification, which takes place in an instant, sanctification is something that takes place throughout the whole of the Christian’s life of faith. Sanctification also differs from justification in that it requires the active co-operation of man (2 Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:5-14; 1 Pet. 1:22), who is encouraged to holiness by God’s Spirit (Jn. 17:17; 1 Thess. 5:23). Sanctification also means bearing fruit of the Spirit and doing good works (Col. 1:10).

Self-Assessment Exercise 9

Summarize Paul’s teaching on salvation under headings – what is the instrument?

- Method?
- Means?
- Need

4.0 CONCLUSION

Christ gave the apostle the commission to evangelize the whole world. He also gave them the Holy Spirit to enable them to do it. Many apostles worked tirelessly to accomplish the mission; however, Paul did much more than the others. Besides the New Testament has more record about his work and he wrote more than any other. Paul typifies and represents the other apostles. Paul is a unique apostle in many ways. He was not among the initial twelve but commissioned to join them. What you see happening here shows the unique ways of God. This last person worked more and had more term. This is one of his good will and infinite wisdom which not one can question and no one fully understands.

5.0 SUMMARY

The last unit exposes you to some details of Paul's life and teachings. Paul's cultural, religious and social backgrounds are helpful to understand Paul's letters. This also was of tremendous advantage to this ministry. Paul was fortunate to have both Greek and Jewish backgrounds. This was not an accident by the plan of God who had chosen Paul long before he was born, there were a number of things which served as motivations and empowerments to Paul. Some of them include: his strong sense of his divine call, his apostleship and his love for the work and converts. Paul took the spiritual and physical needs of his converts seriously. Paul teaching must be understood from this background. He addressed practical issues.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- 1) Did Paul's background have any effect or influence on his work?
- 2) Discuss the doctrine of God in the Theology of Paul.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Bruce, F.F. (1977). *Paul: The Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Guthrie, Donald. (1981). *New Testament Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

Ladd, George Eldon. (1974). *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Meyer, F.B. (1983). *Paul: A Servant of Jesus Christ*. Fort Washington:
Christian Literature Crusade.