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IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM ON SALVATION HISTORY
AT GRACELIFE CHURCH, CALGARY, ALBERTA

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Chad William Graham
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IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM ON SALVATION HISTORY
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Chad William Graham

Read and Approved by:

John David Trentham (Faculty Supervisor)

Kevin Jones (Committee Member)

Date _____

I dedicate this project to my wife Karmyn and our Church family. A better support in this endeavor could not be envisioned.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
PREFACE.....	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Goals.....	1
Ministry Context.....	2
Rationale.....	4
Definitions and Delimitations.....	6
Research Methodology.....	6
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR TRAINING LEADERS USING SALVATION HISTORY.....	9
Redemptive Liturgy.....	12
The Redemptive Savior.....	18
Apostolic Reconciliation.....	23
Apostolic Faithfulness.....	28
The Apostolic Tradition.....	31
Conclusion.....	34
3. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR TRAINING LEADERS WITH SALVATION HISTORY.....	35
Salvation History as Church Foundation.....	35
Salvation History as Ministry Framework.....	41

Chapter	Page
Salvation History in Ministry: Best Practices	45
Conclusion	55
4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	57
Background.....	57
Recruitment and Preparation.....	58
Curriculum Overview and Description	62
The Course Structure and Method	63
The Course Sessions	64
Conclusion	88
5. PROJECT REVIEW.....	89
Introduction	90
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose	91
Evaluation of the Project’s Goals.....	93
Strengths of the Project	94
Weaknesses of the Project.....	98
What I Would Do Differently	100
Theological Reflections	103
Personal Reflections.....	107
Conclusion	109
Appendix	
1. SALVATION HISTORY SURVEY	111
2. CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC.....	112
3. T-TEST RAW DATA	113
4. COURSE PARTICPANT HANDOUT NOTES	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	167

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Response to survey questions on salvation and church participation.....	67
2. Evaluators' scores for session 1.....	75
3. Evaluators' scores for session 2.....	78
4. Evaluators' scores for session 3.....	79
5. Evaluators' scores for session 5.....	82
6. Evaluators' scores for session 6.....	83
7. Evaluators' scores for session 7.....	85
8. Evaluators' scores for session 9.....	87
9. Evaluators' scores for session 11.....	88
10. Evaluators' scores for session 12.....	90
11. Evaluators' scores for session 14.....	92
12. Evaluators' scores for session 16.....	94

PREFACE

As a pastoral labor of love, this D.Min. project has been a joy to pursue. Yet, it would be difficult to envision a more challenging time to complete this work with regards to both my personal/family and ministry life. Through every challenge the Lord blessed the leadership discipleship program (LDP), which served such a key part of this project.

I was immensely privileged, as I worked through this exercise, to have as a resource the unique fellowship of my brother, Wyatt Graham, who at the time of this writing was nearing the end of his PhD studies in biblical theology. He was a frequent stimulus, a regular sounding board, and when necessary, provided some stress relief.

My wife, Karmyn, has supported me completely from the very beginning. She has consistently done whatever she was able to do to encourage me and allow me the time to work on this project. She lent her hand to the task of reviewing and commenting on many pages of academic submissions, as well as frequently helping me think through my teaching curriculum for the application side of the work.

Each of my professors contributed beneficially, and I am thankful for each one. Dr. Trentham, in particular, as my project supervisor has been an invaluable advisor and supporter, and his tutelage has been deeply appreciated. I hope this project will serve to the praise of God's glory in the church and in Christ Jesus.

Chad Graham
Edmonton, Alberta
December 2016

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a curriculum on salvation history for new and prospective lay leaders at GraceLife Church, Calgary, Alberta.

Goals

The first goal of this project was to evaluate the current knowledge of salvation history in six emerging leaders. To measure this goal, I used the survey found in appendix 1 to assess the knowledge of these six participants regarding canonical salvation history. This goal was deemed successful when the survey was completed and I had the opportunity to evaluate the group's knowledge of salvation history.

The second goal of this project was to develop a 16-session curriculum. This curriculum was part of a larger course of discipleship and designed to fill the need of applying the historical and redemptive context of salvation history in Scripture to every day ministry practice. This goal's success was measured by an expert panel, whom I selected from current church leaders with both a knowledge of biblical theology and who understood the contextual needs and philosophy of ministry within GraceLife Church. I provided this group with a rubric (see appendix 2) to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and applicability of the content. The goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of the evaluation criteria exceeded the sufficient level on the rubric.

The third goal of this project was to raise the knowledge of salvation history in these six participants by implementing my curriculum. This goal was measured by a post-

course administering of the pre-course survey, which was used to measure a change in knowledge regarding the content and development of salvation history through progressive revelation, and its application for ministry. This goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores.

Ministry Context

Given that Paul considers churches as embassies for Christ in the world (2 Cor 5:20), then local churches must see themselves as ambassadorial missions. Ambassadors should have a reasonable knowledge of the mission they are on and of the message they are sent to deliver. GraceLife sees itself as representing Christ as it is being planted in a new urban district of the sprawling, and successful, but post-Christian metropolis of Calgary, Alberta. In this urban district, GraceLife was the first gospel witness amidst a new population currently in the process of expanding toward 45,000 residents.

The majority of the current members (and regular attenders) with their families, who are tasked with reaching this community, joined the church as new believers, or were recruited through evangelism and outreach. As these new believers have joined the church, they have brought great joy, vigor, and enthusiasm to our mission. There are many advantages for the mission of the church as new converts out of the un-churched community engage the skeptical of the un-churched community, but there are disadvantages as well. Our early membership was not, generally speaking, composed of mature believers with a track record of effective evangelism and discipleship.

Further, as other new believers or seekers came in from an un-churched background in increasing numbers, we began to face a growing group of un-disciplined church goers, who were struggling to understand and begin to walk in the faith into which they were being called. Biblical convictions and worldviews do not yet fully inform the

thinking of newer believers, and so they tend both to struggle more in their faith and to need advice and crises interventions more frequently.

The gospel changes everything, but if it does so through the transforming work of the Spirit in applying the word of Christ (Rom 12:2 and Heb 4:12-13), then a means of instructing in the content of that word is essential for the growth and health of the church and the success of its mission among the lost. To move in this direction, I set two key ministry goals. The first goal was to stimulate and perpetuate a culture of discipleship amongst the membership of the church. In this culture, believers encourage others while being encouraged in their faith. The project has helped to move this goal forward, but this culture does not yet fully exist in our present ministry.

Having planted as a solo leader, I have had the privilege of setting the direction of the new church over the past few years. There has been some previous success in creating a culture of discipleship, where gospel growth is happening. This primarily occurred as young believers met regularly with me, first as individuals and then in small groups. The majority of the church was composed early of people in their 20's and 30's who were either completing education, or starting new and demanding careers in Calgary's fast paced environment. In the past year, this age demographic has started to shift as economic realities have resulted in layoffs and forced relocations. This necessitated creativity and flexibility on my part to find ways both to connect with people, and to stay connected with them in order to pursue discipleship. However, as our numbers increased, this method began to overtax what a single leader could provide. While discipling continued, it began requiring five nights a week of small group meetings, and smatterings of one on one meetings. At the same time, the regular rhythms of ministry increased as crises and hospital visits and administrative tasks grew in frequency and complexity. At this stage I began seeking new ways to perpetuate the growing discipleship culture, using the individuals who had shown faithfulness, knowledge, and gifting in their time spent in these early meetings with me.

This new direction led to the second general ministry goal. The church needed to move from a planter-centered ministry to a ministry being led by strong lay leaders who come along side the ongoing work of their pastor. God gives gifts to his people (1 Cor 12:4ff.), so that they can accomplish his purposes, for the common good of his church. Leaders, are themselves gifts to the church (Ephesians 4:11), whose gifting enables them to organize and equip the gifted whole. The church's job is to discover and recognize the gifts God has given to her. Toward this end a small group of young leaders had begun to be trained in various ministry positions in an ad hoc way. While this was effective with a few individuals, the church was still largely waiting to see how she could make this transition.

Rationale

If a local church can be seen as a mission of the church, which is an embassy of Christ in this world, then his body, his people, or his priesthood within the local church must be equipped to understand the mission and message to which they bear witness. Christ's mission may be said to be the accomplishment of redemption. The message given to the church is the ministry of reconciliation, inviting the world to experience the salvation accomplished by that redemption.

Christ's mission of redemption is a call to the very discipleship culture that each member of our church, and each participant in the church needs to embrace. It might be better to say that the discipleship culture we seek is the culture demanded by the redemptive mission of Christ. The saving acts of God, accomplished in salvation history, are accompanied with changed perspectives. As people come to understand what God has done, and done specifically for and in them, it evokes a response and results in real change.

Salvation history (the gospel's content) is, according to the apostle Paul, an active force or a power "at work" within believers (1 Thess 2:13, cf. Rom 1:16), teaching

them to “walk in a manner worthy of God” (v. 12). Whatever other techniques, tools and practices may be helpful in creating and sustaining a culture of discipleship and preparing men and women to be lay leaders in the church, salvation history fills an essential and irreplaceable need at the heart of any program.

A course of salvation history was, and continues to be, a critical need in the context of GraceLife church. This course takes potential and new leaders through the development of God’s plan of redemption throughout the various stages of progressive revelation.¹ The Bible presents salvation history not by means of propositions hinting at a story, but as a story. The drama of redemption reveals and leads to the propositions of salvation. The repentance and faith responses these stories elicit, or provoke in their contexts help reshape the worldview, or the story of the student of salvation history.

With the saving acts of God and their consequences filling the minds and hearts of growing leaders in the context of a program of discipleship, they become grounded in a biblical worldview. Leaders then begin to share the wisdom of the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16) as they face the challenges of life and godliness both personally and in the mission and ministry of the church, which they participate in. Naturally more is needed to apprentice leaders in church ministry than merely a study in God’s salvation history. Much more is being done through a more comprehensive Leadership Discipleship Program (LDP), which includes this course as a component, but the theology of ministry and the practices of ministry must flow out of the convictions, realizations, and worldview that salvation history forms. It is the necessary foundation for this LDP. For example, one sees how the salvation history of 2 Timothy 3:14–15 leads to the ministry leadership commission found in 3:16–4:2.

¹ See Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 5–8.

Definitions and Delimitations

The following terms will be defined as follows:

Salvation history. Salvation history asserts “that the Bible contains a perceptible historical timeline that reaches from creation to new creation.”²

Biblical theology. In relation to salvation history, biblical theology looks at “the whole story of the Bible . . . interpreting particular parts of the story in light of the whole.”³

This project of teaching salvation history was delimited by its participant pool. Participation were delimited to individuals beginning or seeking to begin leadership in the church, and who were seen to be developing the character, convictions and competence called for in biblical leadership (see Acts 6:3). Those already serving or asking to serve in developing leadership roles. Those held in high esteem in the congregation for personal spiritual maturity and for their advice. Those who self-identified as interested were also considered.

An analysis of the curriculum was completed previous to its implementation and the measurements of its effectiveness were tied to the start and end of the course timeline. Assessment, via the program participants, occurred during the first and last sessions respectively.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project included a preliminary survey, a curriculum analysis measured by means of a rubric and a repeated pre- and post-course survey of the participants in the program. Three goals were set to determine the effectiveness, or success of this project. The first goal looked to evaluate the current

²Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 58.

³James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology: A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), loc. 95, Kindle.

knowledge of salvation history in a select group of new leaders, who had begun serving, or expressed a desire to serve more regularly in ministry leadership. A survey (see appendix 1) was distributed to these participants, who identified themselves by a personal 4-digit code of their own choosing. In order to be a candidate for this survey, the participant had to be a current member who was presently seeking to serve or lead in ministry at GraceLife and who would agree to participate in our LDP program. All agreed to participate in the 16 sessions of our course of salvation history. It was anticipated that this group would contain at least 6 members, whose knowledge baseline would be established by this preliminary survey. The non-threatening assessment of current knowledge survey consisted of 26 questions spread through 3 sections. Section 1 focused on five questions establishing the background knowledge that would inform the main questions and be an aid toward curriculum development. Part 2 consisted of fifteen questions assessing the candidates' basic knowledge of our subject (salvation history) according to their responses on a six-point Lickert scale. The final subsection of the questionnaire looked for knowledge of specific salvation history themes measured, once again, on a Lickert scale (see appendix 1).

The second goal of this project was to develop a 16-session curriculum surveying the historical and redemptive context of salvation history as presented in Scripture. The curriculum was to be structured to teach the message of the Bible to those who had little background in its content. An expert panel, consisting of ministry leaders who were versed in both salvation history and in a position to understand the context and needs of ministry in GraceLife Church was organized to review the curriculum. This panel used a provided rubric to evaluate the program under eight categories of assessment. The panel was asked to evaluate the relevance of the session to the focus of salvation history, as well as its general biblical faithfulness, and theological soundness. In addition, the rubric sought feedback on the clarity of each session's thesis and the consistency of the sessions material with that thesis. General questions also looked at the

applicability of every lesson toward the larger goal of ministry leadership training and whether the material was adequately covered and clearly presented. When this panel reported back over 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above. As a result, this second goal was considered successful.

The third goal specified a change in knowledge, with regard to salvation history, which would be sought through the implementation of the curriculum reviewed under goal 2. Participants who complete the course (ongoing at the time of the style review submission) were given an identical survey to the one they completed earlier (discussed above under goal 1). A t-test for dependent samples was used to demonstrate a positive significant difference between the pre-course and post-course scores. A t-test for dependent samples “involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores.”⁴ These two tests measured the same people under two different conditions—pre- and post-instruction—and, therefore, a t-test of dependent samples was the appropriate test statistic.⁵ The third goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive significant difference between the pre-series and post-series scores.

⁴Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 191.

⁵Ibid., 189.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR TRAINING LEADERS USING SALVATION HISTORY

How should leaders lead? That the church should have leaders is essential. Christ chose the twelve to lead, following his example “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). The apostles in turn sent others to carry on their work: “I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order . . . as I directed you” (Titus 1:5). The pattern was to continue generationally, with experienced leaders entrusting their charge “to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). To what end should church leaders lead? Jesus was sent on a very specific commission. At his trial Pilate asked Jesus, “So, you are king?” Jesus replied, “For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). The truth, to which Jesus bears witness is not just his title, of course, but the full reality of the Kingdom of God, under God’s forever king, which Jesus proclaimed from the very beginning of his ministry (Mark 1:14–15).

It was for this mission the Lord commissioned the Twelve as leaders, upon whom he would build his church (Matt 16:18–19, with 18:18, and Eph 2:20). On this same mission, the apostles, through their writings, commissioned the church (Matt 28:19–20). The biblical church is “the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). This reality provides a fundamental context for leadership in the church. Leaders are fundamentally tasked to minister the message and implications of salvation history in the lives of those they lead. While it is usually assumed that a pastor will have a suitable level of biblical and theological training, lay leaders lack some of the vital training, which according to the texts surveyed above, would be critical to their faithfully carrying out their ministry.

The foundation of the biblical gospel is Christ as God’s eternal covenant King who redeemed his people and his kingdom, and birthed and formed the church (Luke 22:37, Acts 17:2). The first leaders of the church were prepared and equipped to accomplish His Great Commission through Old Testament types and promises, along with the apostolic teaching about the Christ and his Kingdom and how he fulfilled the prophetic foreshadowing (Luke 24:4–49, Acts 1:3–8).¹ This logo-centric pattern followed from the hermeneutical structure, which is today known as redemptive (or salvation) history.² The pattern emerged early as a redemptive–ecclesiastic pattern, which establishes leaders, and provides their moral authority through redemptive example, and not merely pragmatic credentials (1 Tim 3:1–7). Paul urges ministry to be carried on through this redemptive example, instructing the Corinthians, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1).

The early church recognized and developed the implications of this apostolic redemptive–ecclesiastic ministry model. Irenaeus’ *Defense of Apostolic Preaching* is a very early biblical theology.³ Due to its importance, Eusebius included it as one of the key ecclesiastical writings of the early church.⁴ In it he explains “the rule of faith,” or the

¹Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2012), 74–75.

²In this project, redemptive history is seen as a development of biblical theology that attempts to emulate the eclectic grammatical–historical literary method that the New Testament writers seem to apply to the Old Testament. This keeps in mind what Carson and Beale note is the “astonishing variety of ways in which the various NT authors make reference to the OT.” Gregory Beale and D.A. Carson *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), xxvi.

³J. Armitage Robinson, in his introduction to this edition of this patristic work, notes the significance of Irenaeus’ perspective: “No theologian has arisen since St. Paul and St. John who had grasped so much of the purpose of God for His word.” J. Armitage Robinson, *The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* (London: SPCK, 1920), loc. 79, Kindle.

⁴Eusebius, “Ecclesiastical History,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 244–45.

way the apostle's taught the early church to understand and preach the Scriptures. Describing his book as "a manual of essentials," for believers,⁵ he proceeds by summarizing the "rule of faith."⁶ The work then draws from the Scriptures the hermeneutical implications of the rule of faith for understanding the message of redemption revealed from Adam to Christ through divine promises and covenants. Gregory of Nyssa continued this task of providing "a manual of essentials." He would write "a system" for the "instruction of" presiding ministers in the churches.⁷

These examples demonstrate that the early church envisioned its leaders as ministers of "the mystery of godliness" (a reference to Paul's summation of salvation history in 1 Tim 3:16). These types of manuals were regularly developed because of the conviction that the knowledge of this mystery must be a church leader's foundational and essential training.⁸ The early church developed its convictions from immediate contact with the apostles and through scriptural contemplation.

Believers must receive this redemptive–ecclesiastic ministry emphasis elucidated by the fathers from the Scripture. Pragmatic training is certainly helpful, and no doubt generally necessary. However, Scripture itself is structured to present salvation history as a transforming redemptive–ecclesiastic message, which is radically essential, and alone forms the foundational content of ministry leadership training.

My method in demonstrating this thesis is to take select passages from the Old and New Testaments that relate directly to spiritual leadership among God's people and consider their leadership relevance, their role in the historical and literary structure of

⁵Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*, loc. 1104, Kindle.

⁶Ibid., locs. 1158–78.

⁷Gregory, "The Great Catechism," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, vol. 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 469–509.

⁸Ibid., 473.

their Scriptural epoch, their role in salvation history, and finally their application to leadership training in the local church setting.

Redemptive Liturgy

It is hardly controversial to note that the structure of Scripture is covenantal.⁹ The Latin word *testamentum* translates “covenant” and is brought into English for the great divisions of modern Bibles: Old Testament and New Testament. From the earliest times Christians have identified the significant role of Covenant as a key theme of Scripture.¹⁰ By means of covenant God ultimately saved his people and now redeems the world from the curse of sin. Salvation history is primarily concerned with studying how God saves through his redemptive covenants. Deuteronomy 26:1–11 contains the practical instructions given by God through Moses, for the Levitical liturgy to be used in receiving the worship of tithes (or, Firstfruits). In other words, this is instruction for how to do ministry, under the Old Covenant. But this passage can only be understood in the larger context of God’s redemptive covenants, and is rich in salvation history:

When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.’ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. And you shall make response before the Lord your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. And he brought us into this place and gave us this

⁹Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), loc. 115, Kindle.

¹⁰Paul R. Williamson. *Sealed with a Covenant: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 19.

land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Lord, have given me.’ And you shall set it down before the Lord your God and worship before the Lord your God. And you shall rejoice in all the good that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

Firstfruits in the Historical and the Literary Structure of Deuteronomy

Called by von Rad a little historical creed, Deuteronomy 26:1–11 was seen by that important scholar as the foundation of the Torah. Cody explains that by using the categories of higher criticism, von Rod saw in this passage the source of the “Yahwist’s shaping of the Hexateuch, and that the Hexateuch, consequently, is the literary expansion of traditions expressed in the ‘little historical creed.’”¹¹ While his textual reconstruction has not been universally accepted, von Rad’s observations regarding the centrality of this text have been generally well received.¹² This “little creed” reflects the heart of the theology of the Torah as it forms the foundational narrative for the covenantal structure of the Mosaic economy. As such, it forms the foundation for the ministry of the Old Covenant priesthood.

Christians have too often misunderstood the Old Testament Scriptures. Even the title of the book of Deuteronomy represents a misunderstanding of the book according to Earl Kalland: “The name Deuteronomy results from a mistranslation of Deuteronomy 17:18 in the LXX and the Vulgate. For the Hebrew ‘a copy of this law,’ the LXX and the Vulgate have terms meaning ‘the second law,’ or ‘a repetition of this

¹¹Aelred Cody, “‘Little Historical Creed’ or ‘Little Historical Anamnesis,’” *The Catholic Catholic Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 2006): 1–10.

¹²See Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 333.

law.’”¹³ Amongst the early Christians, for whom the LXX and the Vulgate were the only accessible Scriptures, Deuteronomy was known only in translation, and its theology was characterized through a mistranslation. Yet this book and its message were at the very heart of what Jesus and the apostles conceived of when they spoke of “the Scriptures” (Matt 22:29, Luke 24:44, Acts 28:23, 2 Tim 3:16).

Many scholars now see Deuteronomy as following the pattern of second millennium suzerainty treaty documents. Klein, for example, notes common elements, which include a preamble, a historical review, a prologue, stipulations, curses and blessings, and the ever critical succession agreements.¹⁴ Merrill argues that the stipulations of the covenant begin in chapter 12 and conclude here in Deuteronomy 26.¹⁵ The passage recorded in Deuteronomy 26:1–15 then, brings this section of covenant stipulations to an end by giving laws of covenant celebration and confirmation. This stipulation ensured that an annual affirmation of homage was to be provided by God’s people to him, and with “all such ritual, there must be both act and word,” demonstrating a covenant renewal with the Great King.¹⁶

In Deuteronomy 26:1–11 the symbolic offering of firstfruits was given to establish a connection between the God of Nature and the Redeemer and King of Israel: “This shift of the focus of a religious ceremony from exclusive attention to the role of

¹³Earl S. Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 3.

¹⁴Meredith G. Klein, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012). Michael Horton helpfully elaborates Klein’s proposal more recently in *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 17–26.

¹⁵Klein, *Treaty of the Great King*, 39.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 332.

God in nature to an emphasis on His role in history is one of the most important and original features of the Bible.”¹⁷

Thus this covenant renewal ceremony identifies the God of the Bible in his universal majesty as both Creator and Redeemer. However, for the present purpose it is critical to note the participants in this ceremony. Moses is, of course, the speaker as he delivers this instruction from God with much of the instruction explains what the Levitical priests were to do. Additionally, it is very important to note that the declarations required of the people of Israel in this text form “the only addresses to God whose wording is prescribed in the Torah for the laity to recite, except for 21:7–9.”¹⁸

Firstfruits in the Structure of Salvation History

Firstfruits play a very significant role in salvation history. Merrill points out that this particular special offering of firstfruits

was clearly . . . in the relationship between the Lord and Israel, an obligation spelled out in the initial covenant revelation at Sinai (Exod 23:14–17; 34:22–24; Lev 23:4–44; Num 28:16–29:38), and elaborated already in Deuteronomy in anticipation of life in the land (Deut 16:1–17). The purpose of the reiteration here was to connect one of the festivals—that of Firstfruits (Heb. *sēbū’ôt*)—with a ceremony of covenant renewal.¹⁹

The covenant God made at Sinai was going to be fulfilled, and when it was the people were to be directed to remember what God had promised. This recitation of covenant promise and fulfillment was a recitation of salvation history up until the present

¹⁷Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 238.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁹Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 331; and W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 116.

moment. Each time the people brought their firstfruits hereafter, they were to remember God's promise to them in the past, and so be reminded that he will continue to be faithful in the future.²⁰

Israel was to annually celebrate the Exodus, in what was known as the "Feast of Weeks," or "Tabernacles," or "Pentecost," occurring seven weeks after the Passover. A highlight of this feast was the offering of Firstfruits, the significance of which becomes clearer in the New Testament period. Peter's sermon in Acts 2, debuted the New Covenant promise to Jerusalem through the proclamation of the risen Lord occurred during this festival. Apart from the positive side effect of gathering the largest number of Jews possible (some estimate in the millions), what Peter preached could be understood only in terms of this covenant renewal festival.

At Sinai, Moses, and the "elders of Israel" went up onto the Mountain to worship God (Exod 24:1). The audio and visual display of thunder from heaven and fire on the mountain (19:16) characterized a theophany, or appearance of God. The people assembled at the foot of the mountain to hear miraculous divine speech (19:17). They were overwhelmed and frightened and marveled (20:18). At the New Covenant's unveiling on Pentecost (Acts 2), a thunderous wind from heaven descended on Jerusalem (2:2), accompanied by visible fire (2:3). Twelve apostles (including Matthias) represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and when they emerged, just as was patterned when Moses and the elders came down from the mountain, the people gathered to them (2:6). They were "amazed and astonished" (2:7).

²⁰ Kalland, 155

Firstfruits in Salvation History and Leadership Training

Knowledge of and competence in salvation history was essential for ministry under the Old Covenant. Here the role of the priest is explicitly to aid the worshipper in a recitation of salvation history.²¹ However, as the New Testament reveals, the extensive series of duties in the sacrificial and worship system were all, in fact, enacted dramas of salvation history. What they did was “a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things” (Heb 8:5). Jesus is “the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). The continual reminder of salvation history through the festival of firstfruits (along with the regular adjacent ministry) and the discussion and teaching that must have surrounded it, kept the events and associations of the first covenant fresh in the minds of the people. Because of this reminder of the first covenant, the people could be expected to recognize the establishment of the new covenant when it came. This knowledge of the salvation history of Sinai, would be essential for God’s people to understand the salvation history implications of Pentecost. Therefore, God required the worship of “firstfruits” to be accompanied by a recitation of salvation history.

The most important thing for the priests of Israel to be taught, was the correct summary and meaning of this recitation, so that they could teach it to the people, hear their recitation, and accept their worship on God’s behalf.²² For new covenant people, this same kind of covenant renewal and understanding is still just as essential. Jesus, after all is called the “firstfruits” of God’s promise to us in the new covenant (1 Cor 15:20). The Levites of Israel were the stewards of the message of salvation history under the Old

²¹ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 331.

²² Dumbrell, 116f.

Covenant. Those given the gifts of teaching and serving amongst the priesthood of believers (1 Pet 2:9) serve as the stewards of the message of salvation history under the new covenant (1 Pet 1:10–12; 1 Cor 4:1–2). As in the time of the Exodus, so now, “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word [or, specific message] of Christ” (Rom 10:17).²³ Faith, as these passages explain, comes by the miracle of regeneration which results from (and grows by) the message of salvation history. Salvation is not accomplished *merely* through true knowledge (Jas 2:19), but it is not found *apart* from such (John 8:32–36). Knowledge of and competence in salvation history is therefore essential for new covenant ministry, and thus should serve as a foundation for ministry discipleship training.

The Redemptive Savior

Paul was well versed in biblical salvation history (Acts 22:3). It was the foundation by which he oriented so many practical ministry applications. In Colossians 1, for example, Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the central figure of God’s redemptive plan in order to orient the role of minister in Christ’s church.

The Book of Colossians in Historical and Literary Setting

The book of Colossians “has had an impact on Christian theology and practice out of proportion to its size,”²⁴ and “could fairly be described as the most intriguing of the Pauline letters.”²⁵ Colossians follows the conventions of a first century epistolary

²³Author’s suggested translation Gk. ῥήματος Χριστοῦ.

²⁴Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 25.

²⁵James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1996), 19.

document. Written from prison (4:3, 10, 18), it is frequently referred to as one of Paul's *prison epistles*.²⁶ As with the apostle's other writings, Colossians is an occasional letter, with the contextualized theological and topical implications that entails. Moo argues, "The purpose of the letter, then, is to provide the resources that the Colossian Christians need to fend off some kind of false teaching to which they are exposed."²⁷ The key theological "theme throughout Colossians is the centrality and supremacy of Jesus."²⁸ Colossians 1:15–22 supports my proposal that salvation history forms the core of biblical ministry leadership training by showing that Christ's role as the head of his church, is granted and understood only by virtue of his fulfilment of God's redemptive historical drama.

The Redemptive Savior in the Structure of Salvation History

Key to placing this passage in salvation history is the passage immediately preceding the present section, where the Lord Jesus "has already been called "the Son of the Father's love," and the King of God's kingdom (v. 13).²⁹ Keeping Romans 10:17 in mind, note that the message about Jesus, the Christ, is the message that saves. This saving message is about the Jesus who is both "Lord" and "savior" (Rom 10:9–10). For Paul, the assertion that Christ is Lord is a declaring that he is the heir of David, and pre-incarnate

²⁶This paper assumes Pauline authorship of Colossians. Dunn notes that the authorship of Colossians is one of the more hotly contested in modern NT scholarship: "Colossians, of course, claims to have been written by the apostle Paul (1:1)," and the internal evidence overwhelmingly supports this claim. See Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 35ff.; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 28ff.; Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 170.

²⁷Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 47.

²⁸Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 505.

²⁹R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 46.

second member of the Trinity, the true “Son of God” (Rom 1:1–6). So a “Confession of Jesus as Lord meant that one belonged to him and submitted to him.”³⁰

There are two aspects of this confession. First it is a claim of deity, and second it is a counter claim to the Roman emperor’s lordship over the world. The word “Lord” is “used over 6,000 times in the Septuagint for the name of God [so Cranfield] and is used frequently among the Gentiles for a deity or for the Emperor [worshipped as “god”]).³¹ The gospel is the message of Christ as Lord and the Savior that sanctifies. It is the only message of the “living and abiding word of God,” and is “the message of the Lord that was preached to you” (1 Pet 2:22–2:3).³²

The message of Jesus as Lord is the culmination of all the promises and pictures of redemption found under the Old Covenant. The Israelite believer was called to identify with the redemptive history of the Exodus, in which he was brought into the Kingdom of God, under the Kingship of God himself (1 Sam 8:7). This was the foundation of Israelitish identity and worship. Richard Clifford has argued that the Exodus event became the major organizing principle of redemptive history throughout the Bible, occurring in three cycles, “*Exodus I is the thirteenth-century B.C.E. foundational event. Exodus II is its sixth-century renewal. Exodus III is the first-century C.E. climactic renewal of Israel by Jesus.*”³³ He argues that Exodus 15, along with a

³⁰Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Cambridge: Apollos, 2012), 410.

³¹Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 385. Morris explains, “Deissmann points out that the word was used very frequently of Nero, the Emperor at the time: ‘the statistics are quite striking; everywhere, down to the remotest village, the officials called Nero *Kurios*’ (LAE, p. 353). A little later this title became a religious test, as when the officials tried to get Polycarp to say ‘Lord Caesar’ and to offer sacrifice, both of which he steadfastly refused to do (Martyrdom of Polycarp 8:2) and which led to his execution” (ibid.).

³²The phrase “the message of the Lord” translates, ῥῆμα κυρίου.

³³Richard J. Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible: The Case for ‘Figural’ Reading,” *Theological Studies* 63, no. 2 (June 2002): 345.

number of the Psalms ties the greater Exodus theme back into Creation, so that “The Exodus can thus be rendered either in the language of ‘history’ [or] the language of ‘creation.’”³⁴ The church, in the New Testament era is specifically and regularly described along an Exodus–Israel pattern (1 Pet 1:1, Gal 6:16). Jesus is pictured as “the Prophet” (John 6:14), who is the new Moses (Heb 3). The Lord’s prophetic and mosaic roles are joined in Colossians with the role of messianic king over God’s kingdom. Paul expands this exodus-mosaic-kingly role in his thanksgiving for the church meeting in Colossae: “He [the Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13–14).

In his redemption, the beloved Son has redeemed us from the authority of darkness (this idea of authority is derived from the phrase the ESV renders, “domain of darkness”). The word translated “domain” is contrasted with “kingdom” in the second half of the verse. The Father, having redeemed believers through his beloved Son, transfers them “to [his] kingdom” in what Dunn calls, “a strong measure of realized eschatology.”³⁵ There is, in other words, a new authority and a new world order. Just as Israel’s exodus brought them out of the domain of Egypt and transferred them into the Kingdom of Israel, so now, in Christ, believers are citizens of a new and glorious kingdom, whose reality is wrapped up wholly in Christ:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of

³⁴Ibid., 349.

³⁵Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 77.

flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Col 1:15-23)

Although the ESV translation starts a new paragraph in verse 15, the logic of Paul's thought began back in verse 13. In the passage quoted above, the apostle explains to the Colossians God's deliverance of them through his Son. God had once delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt and again from exile in Babylon. Now, in this last age, he delivers believers "from the domain of darkness," of which domain, Egypt and Babylon were types and shadows. God has transferred his people into "the kingdom" by whose King we have "forgiveness of sins." The ESV's "He," which begins verse 15, translates the relative pronoun (ὃς lit. "who" or "whom,")³⁶ continuing to describe the very same king and savior spoken of in those preceding verses.

The kingship of Christ, as the one who created all "dominions, or rulers, or authorities" (v. 16), extends especially over his "body, the church" over which he is the "head" (1:17–18). He is given headship over the church to the end, "that in everything he might have preeminence" (1:19). This is really essential. Christ is the sole head of the church. And he wills to rule it not through administrators, bureaucrats, or businessmen, but "ministers of the gospel" who lead the church by virtue of being messengers of salvation history.

This description of Jesus, found in verses 15–23, is an important recapitulation of redemptive history. "The gospel," presented here, is the good news of restoration reaching from Creation to new Creation, and centered on the person of the Lord Jesus as creator, prophet, and king who saves. It is this gospel "of which . . . Paul, became a minister" (1:23).

³⁶The same relative pronoun functions as the subject of v. 14 in the GNT. Both refer to the "beloved Son."

The Kingship of Christ in Salvation History and Leadership Training

Knowledge of and competency in salvation history is required for ministry, as ministers of Jesus, in his church. The character of the Pauline ministry is instructive. He is a minister not of a church (or group of churches), not of a program, or ministry. He is a minister of “the gospel.” Paul qualifies his ministry to Timothy as a ministry “entrusted” with the gospel (1 Tim 1:11). He was “appointed a preacher and . . . a teacher” of the gospel as well as having his special apostleship (1 Tim 2:7). Timothy received this same gospel ministry commission “when the council of elders laid their hands on [him]” (1 Tim 4:14). He is therefore to “guard that which has been entrusted” to him (6:20), and to “fulfill [his] ministry” (2 Tim 4:5), devoting himself to “teaching” the Scripture (1 Tim 4:13) and preaching “the message” (2 Tim 4:2). There is a personal connection with the history of the church for me here. My “Certificate of Ordination” in the Evangelical Free Church of Canada reads that I am certified by my denomination as “well qualified for the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ . . . according to the Scriptures and the rules and regulations of [our denomination, and consequently] appointed and ordained by means of prayer and the laying on of hands . . . to be a minister of the gospel.”³⁷ What made Paul, and Timothy, and ostensibly me qualified for “gospel ministry” is that we understand and are competent in “the message” of salvation history.

Apostolic Reconciliation

Ephesians 2 shows how Christ, as the central agent of salvation history, delegated his mission and authority to the apostles. This shifts the focus of salvation history forward, into the new covenant age, and consequently further orients the whole ministry of the new covenant age.

³⁷Ordination certificate, Evangelical Free Church of Canada, May 24, 2009.

Reconciliation and Apostolic Basis in Historical and Literary Setting

The opening line of this letter requires a significant decision to be made. It is well known that the best manuscripts available to us do not include the words, “in Ephesus,” which are found in most later copies of the letter’s greeting.³⁸ The recent consensus seems to hold that while Ephesus was the central, first, or perhaps most important region to receive and preserve this correspondence, it was likely meant to be an encyclical, or general letter. This view asserts that the letter “appears to have been written for churches in this province, perhaps in and around Ephesus, or on the road to Colossae.”³⁹ It was likely composed and sent along with the letter addressed to that City and discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

Biblical theology inquires gain a significant boost from the literary and theological advantages of an encyclical letter. Freed from the constraints of focusing on the answer to an occasional inquiry, the epistle is able to focus on an intentional general thesis.⁴⁰ O’Brien explains, “Cosmic reconciliation and unity in Christ are the central message of Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians⁴¹” Others argue that the exalted theme is the nature and purpose of the church—the one, holy, catholic and apostolic body founded by Christ—and, according to the section under special consideration here, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.⁴² It seems that there is no true conflict here, as

³⁸Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1994), 532. This edition is a companion volume to the United Bible Societies’ *Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1994).

³⁹Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 49.

⁴⁰Of all the letters in the Pauline corpus, Ephesians is the one that appears to be the most general and least situational. No particular problem is addressed in the epistle, nor does it have the same sense of urgency or response to a crisis as do Paul’s other letters. *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 58.

⁴²R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 335.

the “cosmic reconciliation” envisioned in the epistle, occurs in the context of the church. One must now consider the place of this theme in the Structure of salvation history. Ephesians 2:19–20 supports the proposal that salvation history ought to form the basis of leadership training, because it makes clear that Christ delegated his rule to the apostles, by entrusting them with the message of reconciliation found in God’s redemptive plan.

Reconciliation and Apostolic Basis in the Structure of Salvation History

Ephesians 2:19 addresses Gentile believers with these words “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” The words “strangers” (ξένος), “aliens” (Πάρα + οἶκος), and “fellow citizens” (Σὺμ + πολίτης) are significant terms reflecting critical realities the Greco–Roman world. Greek life was centered on the city–state, or *polis* (Πόλις). Belonging to the *polis* was everything. The three categories given in Ephesians 2:19 could be pictured as categories of concentric circles with the citizens, πολίτης, at the center.⁴³ Citizens had certain rights to legal protections, and certain responsibilities for the defense and well-being of the *polis*. They belonged, and they had a sense purpose, ethics and values tied to the *polis*. Citizenship was limited, desired and very difficult to come by if you were not born into its privileges.

Citizens were at the center, and the next circle out from them was that composed of the *πάροικοι*, resident aliens, entitled to legally live within the *Polis*, and granted certain limited rights and protections. These were always subject to repeal, and were not equal to the rights of citizens. For example, a *πάροικος* was not able to stand up for himself in court, but was required to find a citizen to defend him in a legal suit. Furthest out were the *ζένοι*, visitors from foreign parts. Unless they were official

⁴³The following descriptions of citizenship relationships in ancient Greek city–states are drawn from Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States, Ca. 700–338 B.C.* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 19–25.

delegates from a city with reciprocal rights, or merchants and trades with whom the city had a vested interest in keeping good accounts with *ζένοι* had no recognitions granted them, and little to no legal protection.⁴⁴

In adopting this language into his general argument, Paul posits that the Israelites, beginning with Abraham, belonged “to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Heb 11:10). The god-fearer, a Gentile worshipper of God, but not a full member of the Jewish people (Acts 13:16), might fit in that second circle, while the whole rest of the world were *ζένοι*. Paul has been emphasizing this reality in passages such as Ephesians 2:12, where he writes to the Gentiles, “You were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

Now a tremendous and dramatic turn of events is described. Those hopeless Gentile *ζένοι* have now become *συμπολίται* (a compound of the words “together” and “citizens”) with the children of Abraham: “The centerpiece of this comprehensive reconciliation, and the fundamental theological undergirding of the whole letter, is to be found in vv. 14–18, where believers come near to God and to one another (Gentiles and Jews) through the saving death of the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴⁵

Through the saving death of the Lord Jesus, Gentiles are now “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” And this new political merger required a new constitution, established “on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Eph 2:20).

All the *πολίται* belonging to a Greek *Polis*, were expected to participate in the life and functioning of the city, to know its laws, and volunteer for its offices and stand in

⁴⁴ Sealey, 22.

⁴⁵ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 182.

its defense.⁴⁶ And this leads into the necessity of understanding salvation history's reconciliation purposes in the church for leadership training.

Reconciliation and Apostolic Basis in Salvation History and Leadership Training

Knowledge of and competency in salvation history is required for citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven to understand what citizenship means, what their privileges and responsibilities are. Consequently, it is essential for leaders that they are trained in these topics and in the practical outworking of the fact that “our citizenship is in Heaven” (Phil 3:20). Citizenship is both personal and communal.⁴⁷

Church leadership is not *merely* about running programs, or helping people to reach their individual potential and solve life's problems (through these are often part of the functional practices and/or results of a healthy ministry and personal life of faith). Fundamentally, church leadership is concerned with guiding people into an appreciation and fulfillment of the personal and corporate responsibilities and benefits of celestial citizenship. For this reason, the apostles were commissioned to found a *Polis*. They were to ensure its citizens were “being joined together” so that the people would be “built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” Both “being joined together” and “being built together” translate Greek forms frequently called divine passives.⁴⁸ Being the work of God, these results are not something that leaders create, but rather something that God does, as part of salvation history. Leadership needs to understand this and leaders

⁴⁶Thomas R. Martin, *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 61.

⁴⁷Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 468.

⁴⁸O'Brien argues that these are “divine passives,” indicating that God is the builder. Συναρμολογουμένη (present *passive* participle, nominative feminine singular), and συνοικοδομεῖσθε (present *passive* indicative, second person plural). See O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 213.

need to understand their role as the means God often uses to accomplish his redemptive plan.

Apostolic Faithfulness

Church leadership finds its meaning, purpose and authority in its faithfulness to the apostolic mission (the very same one delegated to them by Christ). Hebrews 13 shows that faithfulness to that pattern constitutes the ground of ministry in the church age.

Apostolic Faithfulness in Historical and Literary Setting

The book of Hebrews may be the record of a first century sermon. This is the majority view of scholarship,⁴⁹ though not without dissent.⁵⁰ The minority view holds that the book is an epistle, yet those who hold epistolary view still note “its author displays skill in both written and (indirectly) oral communication.”⁵¹ The author of Hebrews refers to the manuscript as a “word of exhortation” (Heb 13:22). This is the same expression used in Acts 13:15. In the latter it refers to a message preached in a synagogue service. One concludes then that it is best to view the book of Hebrews as sermonic in content and form, whether this was a literary device, or an oral reality. This sermonic style reminds one that this material is immensely practical.⁵²

This practical material deals, in particular, with the temptation to fall away

⁴⁹“It is now generally recognized that Hebrews is a written sermon.” David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 25.

⁵⁰Marie E. Isaacs, *Reading Hebrews and James: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 3.

⁵¹Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 62.

⁵²Allen, *Hebrews*, 82.

encouraged by social pressure and potential persecution.⁵³ The particular social pressure came from the Jewish religious system, which provided fellowship and community and rootedness in the synagogue structure and temple *cultus*. Further, as the Jews had a privileged legal position in the Empire, there was an indemnity against persecution dangled before the eyes of these early believers.⁵⁴ Leadership is shown in the passage we are considering to be the key to upholding the faith of the wavering and therefore the success of the church. Moreover, these leaders are to be marked by their faithfulness to the apostolic teaching on salvation history. Hebrews 13:7–17 support the proposal that salvation history forms the basis of biblical leadership training by revealing that the very mark of faithful leadership in the church is faithfulness to the apostolic articulation of salvation history.

Apostolic Faithfulness in the Structure of Salvation History

The book of Hebrews very obviously presents the superiority of Christ over and above the various high points of the Old Covenant. It emphasizes discontinuity, noting that “in speaking of a new covenant” the prophetic promise “makes the first obsolete” (Heb 8:13). More dramatically, it shows that the Old Covenant was a reflection in shadows, of a pre-existing heavenly reality (Heb 8:5). O’Brien shows that this “the contrast is ‘not simply between an earthly copy and a heavenly archetype but between a historical situation in the past and one that has succeeded it *in time*.’”⁵⁵ In other words, the heavenly reality was first, and the earthy was second. It followed as its shadow, and was thus intentionally changing and transitory with “only limited validity because it must

⁵³Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 13.

⁵⁴R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), 14.

⁵⁵O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 291.

ultimately pass away.”⁵⁶

For this reason, the author of Hebrews is able to emphasize the consistency of the Messiah, the Heavenly one, who is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 13:8). In this context the recipients are urged to avoid “strange teachings” particularly related to ceremonial food regulations, recognizing that we have the true “alter” and all the privileges that entails (vv. 9–10). They are urged, therefore not to worry about bearing the reproach they may bear for following Christ (vv. 11–13), and reminded that the city whose approbation matters is the heavenly one (v. 14). This is another call to remember citizenship and its responsibilities and benefits. Finally, the readers are urged to offer the sacrifices that truly please God, the realities to which the shadows presumably pointed (vv. 15–16).

On either end of this careful exhortation is a call for the church to look to its leadership. In verse 7 the call is to “remember” those leaders who “spoke [past tense] the word of God” to them: “The designation is highly significant, and probably points to the *initial* proclamation of the word of God to the listeners.”⁵⁷ It is in light of the initial apostolic teaching regarding salvation history, or “word of God” expressed in this letter (see 2:12; 4:2,12; and 6:1), that the believers were to deal with the current crises they faced. And in particular this crisis was to be faced under the direction of current leaders who applied salvation history to the present situation.

Apostolic Faithfulness in Salvation History and Leadership Training

Knowledge of and competency in salvation history is required for faithfulness to the apostolic message, which defines ministry leadership, as seen in this passage. The

⁵⁶Ibid., 290.

⁵⁷O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 516.

word for “leaders” in both verses 7 and 17 is the word ἡγεμών.⁵⁸ While used relatively frequently in the New Testament, it is not the common Christian word for church leaders. Instead it appears to be the catchall word used in the rabbinical literature for the leaders of Israel and generally used as the designation for the synagogue leadership, of which the elders were a part.⁵⁹ Its usages may point to the fact that Christians assumed this heritage, or better that this heritage was a shadow of the pre-existing reality which Christians continue to enjoy, even with the passing of the shadow of synagogue and Jewish kingdom leadership.

In continuity with the leaders in verse 7, and because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever,” leaders ought to be trained in faithfulness to the apostolic redemptive message of salvation history, which encourages and strengthens the church to face its various challenges and pressures.

The Apostolic Tradition

The apostolic “tradition” is the application of redemptive history to ministry as seen in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians.

The Salvation History Tradition in Historical and Literary Setting

The book of 2 Thessalonians is an epistle, written by the apostle Paul to the church, which was in Thessalonica, whose members were ἐν . . . Χριστῷ (1:1). They were incorporated into Christ, because “in the righteous judgment of God” they were “considered worthy of the kingdom of God” (1:5), having become “imitators” of the

⁵⁸Used in participle form in 13:7 and 17, ἡγούμενοι means “to be in a supervisory capacity, lead, guide”; it is used of men in any leading position. William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 433.

⁵⁹O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 515.

apostles and “of the Lord” in receiving “the word,” or message of salvation history in the face of persecution (1 Thess 1:6). Paul calls on these Thessalonians to “stand firm” in “the tradition” (2 Thess 2:13–15):

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

This passage supports the thesis that salvation history is critical for biblical leadership training by showing that the moral imperatives given by the apostle Paul, as a representative church leader, were rooted in his preaching the message of salvation history.

The Salvation History Tradition in the Structure of Salvation History

The book of 2 Thessalonians marks a critical turning point in applying salvation history to church leadership training. Deuteronomy 26 established a pattern in Old Testament liturgy, or the worship and work of the people in applying salvation history through the ceremony of firstfruits. Paul’s instruction to the Colossians showed the Christocentric nature of the church’s and thus of its leadership’s task. Christ is the capstone of salvation history, and he is the reality to which the theology of first fruits pointed. Ephesians calls him the cornerstone of the church, which is built upon it and the ministry of the apostles and prophets. This foundation was the foundation of a city, whose citizenship responsibilities and privileges are rooted in the message of the reconciliation of man with God, and of man with man through the gospel, which is the proclamation of salvation history. Our interaction with Hebrews 13 showed that faithfulness in ministry today is linked to that foundation.

The second letter to the Thessalonians addresses the church more generally, and calls its members to root themselves in the salvation history tradition. Believers are

themselves called the “firstfruits” of God’s completion of salvation history in Christ. As the Old Testament worshipper brought his first fruits as a reminder of what God had done in the Exodus, so Paul, as a minister of the gospel, presents his converts to God as first fruits reminding him of what God had done (and is doing) in and through Christ: “to this” participation in salvation history, Paul writes in 2:14, “he called you.”

Believers, as participants in salvation history, must “stand firm.” This exhortation, “calls on the readers to adopt a correct understanding of Paul’s teaching regarding the coming of Christ.”⁶⁰ The Greek word translated “tradition” is παράδοσις, (a compound of two words (παρά, + δίδωμι), which has been defined as “the content of instruction that has been handed down.”⁶¹ Elsewhere the apostle praises believers for standing firm and holding to the redemptive–ecclesial pattern urged here: “Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor 11:2).

Tradition in Salvation History and Leadership Training

Knowledge of and competency in salvation history is required for leaders to lead in obeying this task of holding to the redemptive–ecclesial tradition. Paul’s instructions were to be heeded by the Thessalonians, because they were rooted in salvation history. This salvation history was then known as “the traditions taught,” which resulted in salvation. This salvation message was the moral authority by which the leader can call the flock to “stand fast.”⁶²

⁶⁰“Paul moves from reassuring his readers regarding their salvation to an exhortation concerning how they should live their Christian lives in relation to the apostolic tradition that they have received. ἄρα οὖν (“so then”) at the beginning of v. 15 shows that Paul is drawing an inference from what precedes. The content of v. 15 points to the inference being the real point of Paul’s argument in chap. 2 It calls on the readers to adopt a correct understanding of Paul’s teaching regarding the coming of Christ.” Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 268.

⁶¹Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, 763.

⁶²Wanamaker, 268–269.

Conclusion

Scriptures addressing church leadership point toward the reality that salvation history alone forms the necessary and essential foundation for leadership training in the Christian church. Taken as a whole, Scripture, which is built along a redemptive historical literary and theological structure constantly points to this conclusion. The early church fathers viewed the scriptural call for leadership training this way. Looking at the development of select leadership passages within the historical and literary structure of the Scripture's salvation history and their application of that history to ministry further informs the church to take this position. While both Scripture and experience affirm that practical and pragmatic training is highly valuable, the study and application of salvation history is the foundational need for ministry leadership training.

CHAPTER 3
THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRACTICAL
RESOURCES FOR TRAINING LEADERS WITH
SALVATION HISTORY

In this chapter I consider how the foundation of the church plants its roots in the plan of God for cosmic and human redemption. Rooted in this plan, the church exercises its mission by participating in salvation history, the framework for Christian mission. Leaders who embrace ecclesial participation in salvation history must learn its framework. My thesis states that salvation history forms the foundation and framework for ministry best practices and provides redemptive resources for training leaders.

I will demonstrate my thesis by first describing the nature of historical-redemptive biblical theology by surveying summaries of redemptive history narrowing the focus to the church's place in this story. After demonstrating the foundational nature of redemptive history to one's understanding of the church, I will explore how ministry should be built on a framework rooted in salvation history. Then, once this historical-redemptive framework is in place, I will survey a select group of exemplar resources building particular ministries off this framework.

Salvation History as Church Foundation

Biblical theology as a distinct theological discipline is of relatively recent origin and requires clarification in the minds of many pastors and theologians.¹ I will present a working definition and practical justification for understanding salvation history as the heart of biblical theology for the foundation of the church and her present ministry.

¹Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," *Westminster Seminary Journal* 38, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 281-99.

Biblical theology could perhaps be described as the systematic study of scripture most related to doctrinal exposition in preaching and teaching.² It takes a biblical text in light of its own terms³ seeking to exegete the text of Scripture within the process of the divine activity of self-revelation.⁴ While exact definitions vary, the essence of this discipline is most clearly seen in its relationship to systematic theology.

Systematic theology has been described as “any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today’ about any given topic.”⁵ Hodge concludes that this is distinct from biblical theology, in that biblical theology expounds the “facts of Scripture” while systematic theology concerns itself with the relating a whole series of these facts to one another and vindicating and harmonizing them.⁶ Thus while systematic theology has concerned itself with the whole collection of biblical revelation, biblical theology concerns itself more closely with the text and its self-defined context.⁷

This perspective opens up the importance of biblical theology to both the academic and pastoral task. Faithful preaching means preaching what one pastor-scholar defines as “the message of the Scriptures” which requires answering the question, “What is the message of the Scriptures?”⁸ Biblical theology is necessary for accurate exegesis.

²Charles C. Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Dubuque, IA: Emmaus College Press, 2005), 9.

³James M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 45.

⁴Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 5.

⁵Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1994), 21.

⁶Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 1:2.

⁷Every text has its *sitz im leben* or its setting and matrix, which must be understood if the final form of a given passage is to be properly understood. See Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 18.

⁸D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 61.

Psalm 51:11 provides a demonstrable test case. Here the psalmist pleads with YHWH, “Take not your Holy Spirit from me” (ESV). systematic theology might conclude that the indwelling presence of the Spirit is permanent in the believer.⁹ This conclusion leads the exegete to a conundrum. Did David not understand the role of the Spirit correctly?¹⁰ Did the Spirit have a different role in the context of this expression? Are the conclusions of the systematizers wrong?

Biblical theology can explore these types of questions by researching the setting of the Psalm in the progressive revelation of salvation history. It does so by looking in particular at the revealed relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writer of this Psalm. What was the relations of the Spirit of God to the Old Covenant believer¹¹ and in particular to the theocratic kingship¹² (see 1 Sam 16:13–14). Was the role and work of the Spirit different under the Old Covenant, as perhaps is suggested by Jesus instruction to the disciples in passages like John 7:39 and 14:17.¹³

Biblical theology is a distinct field of study concerned with exegesis informed by the process of progressive revelation and the life setting of a given text. It has

⁹Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2005), 669-70.

¹⁰Commentators are divided in their understanding of the reliability of the Psalter’s superscriptions as they relate to author and circumstance. Craig Broyles argues that the titles are likely anachronisms added by the editor of Psalms to give it a liturgical setting relating to David’s well known life and circumstances. See Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 26-31, 226. Others, including C. Hassell Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids; Baker, 2001), argue that the superscriptions give every indication of being authentic (25). This appears to be an area in which biblical theology can speak through its concern for the life setting, the “process of self-revelation” and not just “the finished product.” See Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 5.

¹¹Willem VanGemeran, *Psalms* in vol. 5 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 382.

¹²Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, England: Tyndale Press, 1973), 192.

¹³James M. Hamilton, “Old Covenant Believers and the Indwelling Spirit: A Survey of the Spectrum of Opinion,” *Trinity Journal* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 37-54.

immediately obvious value to the exegete, when properly understood as the study of a biblical text's self-defined context. It becomes the necessary and practical foundation for effective doctrinal exegesis and preaching, and therefore has significant value to the ministry leadership context.

Salvation History as Biblical Theology

Biblical theology can define “a range of approaches to biblical study.”¹⁴ For the purposes of this project, I defined biblical theology as “a distinct field of study concerned with exegesis informed by the process of progressive revelation and the life setting of a given text.” To describe what constitutes revelation requires yet further definition.

As a pioneer for modern day evangelical engagement in biblical theology, Vos clarifies that the “revelation” spoken of as the subject matter of biblical theology is “revelation as a divine activity.” It is “the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.” It is important, Vos notes, to differentiate between general, or natural revelation, and special revelation. General revelation is that revelation that that springs from nature itself, both within and without Man, as a created being living within Creation. As a creature, man has always needed divine self-disclosure to explain his place in Creation, and to explain Creation itself. This is special revelation, or a “supernatural self-disclosure” of God. Since the fall, however, Vos explains, there is a need for a revelation that deals specifically with sin. This revelation goes beyond “the correction and renewal of the faculty of perception” with regard to Creation, and deals with “an altogether new world of truth, that relating to the redemption of man.”¹⁵

¹⁴Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 39.

¹⁵Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 5-20.

Hamilton, surveying the history of the discipline from the time of Vos, builds upon this early study by defining biblical theology as that study “concerned with what the Bible meant for the purpose of understanding what the Bible means.”¹⁶ He reaches the conclusion that the center of biblical theology is “the glory of God in salvation through judgment.”¹⁷ Goldsworthy views the process of progressive revelation found in Scripture as the redemptive-historical progression of “the kingdom of God” in bringing God’s people, into God’s place, under God’s rule.¹⁸ Space prohibits a comprehensive survey of views here, but together Vos, Hamilton and Goldsworthy show that while they may describe their work somewhat differently, their definitions of biblical theology demonstrate “the commonly held evangelical position . . . that biblical history is salvation history.”¹⁹

Returning to my definition that biblical theology is “exegesis informed by the process of progressive revelation and the life setting of a given text” compels me to adopt a salvation history center to my study of Scripture. For the purposes of this project, I use salvation history as short hand for that central line of biblical theology that shares a consensus among evangelical scholars.

The Church in Salvation History

Noting that salvation history is the process of God’s progressive-redemptive self-revelation of his glory in salvation has great implications for the church. For the church is a part of his process of salvific revelation. Even more, the New Testament describes the church as a central plank in God’s plan. Ephesians 3 describes God’s work

¹⁶Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 41-45.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁸Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 56-75.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 57.

through the church as a work done “according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord” (3:11). The apostle also calls for God to be glorified “in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations” (3:21). The church is uniquely related to Christ as her “head” (Col 1:18), and she as his “bride” (Rev 21:9). The church is a constituent part of the Christ’s kingdom (Col 1:13), and she is built according to his plan (Eph 2:20-22).

In God’s plan of redemption, there have been a number of stages, or redemptive epochs. But the church age is called “these last days” (Heb 1:2), “the time of reformation” (9:10) or “the dispensation of the fullness of time” (Eph 1:10, my translation). It is in the church that God plans at last to take “the mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed” (Col 1:26) “so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Eph 3:10). It is through this church that God is wrapping up his plans “to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth, or in heaven” in Christ (Col 1:18-20).

The church participates in this mission, not by her own strength, nor by her own ideas, but by making “the word of God fully known” (Col 1:25), “to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things” (Eph 3:9). In Jesus’ commission, the church was called to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19), and to be “witnesses” (Acts 1:8) to his kingdom and glory in salvation (Luke 24:46-48. For “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14).

The church, then, constitutes both a progressive-redemptive revelation of God in salvation history and a functions as a witness to its climax in Jesus Christ. As Culver puts it, “The church is the paramount instrument through which our Lord accomplishes

His designed work in the present world.”²⁰ The church’s ministry should therefore be framed according to her self–identity and purpose.

Salvation History as Ministry Framework

Scripture affirms the importance of practical skills for ministry leadership. For example, in Acts 6 a serious administrative issue regarding the church’s benevolent ministry to abandoned widows had the potential to tear the early church apart. An administrative, not a spiritual solution was needed. The right people had to be found for this work, and they were those who were “of good repute, full of the holy Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3). As John Polhill comments, “They were to be known for their ‘wisdom,’ probably referring to the kind of practical know-how necessary for the proper management of the charitable funds.”²¹ An elder in the church, is to be one both with the skill to “to teach” (1 Tim 3:2) and the proven ability “to manage his own household well” (3:4).

It must be noted that these “practical skills” ring as an accompanying note to the main point. In Scripture, “Wisdom involves both knowledge and the ability to make use of knowledge.”²² So, wisdom’s practical outworking flows from knowledge, and that knowledge is based on a right knowledge of God, which is “the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7). The reason a church leader was to be “able to teach” was so that he could fulfill his mission to “hold firmly to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9). Just as wisdom is based on a true knowledge of God, so an ability to teach

²⁰Culver, *Systematic Theology*, 909.

²¹John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 181.

²²R. P. Nettelhorst, “Wisdom,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

was only of value when the one teaching was using that ability to instruct in “the trustworthy word as taught.”

Further, the term Paul uses for an elder’s management over the home “demands an effective exercise of authority bolstered by a character of integrity and sensitive compassion.”²³ Even more, the rationale the apostle gives in verse 5, that he will know how “to care for God’s church,” shows “that the experience the leader gained in the home would develop sensitive compassion (“take care of”) for his role in the church.”²⁴ Rather than managerial skills, Paul is showing that in the church “caring leadership is essential.”²⁵

What follows does not detract from this summary. Rather, what is argued is that before skills can be considered, there is a more fundamental level of training necessary for ministry leadership. The foundational qualification for the administrative leaders in the book of Acts, was that they be men “full of the Spirit.” The predominant qualifications for elders concern their character, spirituality, and biblical knowledge. Even those “skill sets” labeled as “apt to” reflect an expectation of prior spiritual knowledge and attitude qualifications. The overarching characteristic of church leaders is not their skill sets, but rather that the leaders be respected within and without the believing community as those “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:2, 7). This quality must be noteworthy enough that they are easy to be picked “out from among” the church (Acts 6:3). In one author’s summary, the qualifications for leadership flow from directly out of this irreproachability: “Following this overarching characteristic, the specifics for a bishop

²³Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 112.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1992), 162.

are now delineated. The items focus on two areas: (1) personal self-discipline and maturity, and (2) ability to relate well to others and to teach and care for them.”²⁶

Personal maturation and an ability to relate to, teach and care for others, is essentially the call to be disciplined and to disciple others. While some skills will need to be developed, this process is primarily one of spiritual maturation. In their extremely helpful book, *The Trellis and the Vine*, Marshall and Payne argue for a series of “ministry mind-shifts” away from program structuring and maintenance and “towards *growing people who are disciple-making disciples of Christ*.”²⁷ The way they describe this shift is through the agricultural analogy given in their title. Gardeners can make beautiful trellises with which to populate their garden space, but they will not thereby have a garden. To have a garden one must plant and develop flora! Trellises may aid the growth process of vines for a while, and then may outlive their usefulness and be removed or replaced. The key to gardening is the plant, not the support structure.

This analogy leads to the following philosophy of ministry: “The goal of Christian ministry is quite simple, and in a sense measurable: are we making and nurturing genuine disciples of Christ?”²⁸ The tendency of the church is said to be toward “institutionalism and secularization” which the mandate for the church is “disciple-making.”²⁹ Thus the framework, or trellis that best supports leadership training in the church, is the framework that leads to “making and nurturing genuine disciples.”

²⁶Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 156.

²⁷Tony Payne and Colin Marshall, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 17.

²⁸Ibid., 14.

²⁹Ibid.

Michael Lawrence asserts, “If you are a pastor or are involved in ministry, you should be a theologian.”³⁰ This is so, he argues, because to do practical ministry well, you must first do theology well. For Lawrence this means being thoroughly biblical in both thinking and practice, which he calls “really useful theology.”³¹

Michael Horton captures the essence of what Lawrence is proposing, when he suggests that assuming “knowing doctrine and practical Christian living are competing interests” establishes a dichotomy with “disastrous consequences in the life of the church and its witness in the world.”³² He reminds his reader that God reveals himself, his will, his plans and his desires for us primarily through story. This observation leads Horton to a fourfold theological reflection on Scripture. The drama of “the greatest story ever told” leads to doctrine, “the grammar of faith.” In turn doctrine leads to doxology, or praise and worship. Through this journey of drama, to doctrine, to doxology, “our minds transformed by God’s word” become such “grateful captives of praise to God” that believers are “reshaped in Christ’s image as new characters in his drama.” In other words, drama, doctrine and doxology lead to discipleship.³³

Ministry leaders who want to further the growth of their disciples must first be thoroughly immersed in the drama of salvation history. Then, as biblical theologians, they must apply that salvation history to doctrine leading to doxology and ultimately maturation in discipleship. Programs seeking to move on to Horton’s fourth step, bypassing the previous three, ultimately prove unsatisfying, even if they appear very grand.

³⁰Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 15.

³¹*Ibid.*, 15.

³²Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrim’s on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2011), 14.

³³*Ibid.*, 14-24.

Lawrence tries to show that a leader's whole ecclesiology and practice will be shaped by his theology, whether conscious or not.³⁴ The goal of a salvation history trained leader is to ask, "What does biblical theology have to say about your approach to" blank ministry, or "about the way you teach" or how "will it impact your plans for renovating or expanding your building?"³⁵ He concludes, "I think it's fair to say that everything in the life and ministry of the local church is affected by a proper use of biblical theology Biblical theology is theology at work in the ministry of your church."³⁶

Salvation History in Ministry: Best Practices

If biblical theology is theology at work in the ministry of my church, what does this look like functionally as a best practices for leadership training? Several examples point down the right path. First, Colin Marshall's University student's leadership training program invites the reader to consider leadership training not as a particular methodology for ministry, but a set of values, beliefs, and passions drawn from salvation history. Second, Robert Cheong's *Life Together* program for training small group leaders demonstrated how gospel care (applied salvation history) can be used by leaders to care for the spiritual-relational needs of the membership. Third, Michael Lawrence shows how salvation history functions as a guide for ministry, which can and should be learned and applied by all leaders. Finally, the Christian Counsellors Education Foundation demonstrates how the salvation history framework forms the narrative by which human

³⁴Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 16.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 212-13.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 199, 213.

problems are solved and true human thriving is established.

Colin Marshall: Leadership Training

In *Passing the Baton* Colin Marshall explains the ministry training apprenticeship model which was called the Ministry Training Strategy (MTS) developed in the late 70's on the campus of the University of New South Wales. The MTS program is the closest practical process to what is being proposed in this current project. The training it teaches is a “gospel-based strategy” that was developed to engage young men and women in a two-year apprenticeship for ministry. At its heart is what Marshall calls, “Apprenticeship in Word ministry.” This apprenticeship seeks to build the apprentice in “Christian character, Christian conviction and competence in Christian ministry.”³⁷

How does an apprenticeship in the Word develop a well-rounded ministry leader? For Marshall, the MTS works from a core principle that while practical “tools and tips can be taken up and discarded as needed [theological] truth . . . can't.”³⁸ In fact, he notes, “Strategic planning for gospel ministry is not even listed as a spiritual gift.”³⁹ Like Marshall and Payne in *Trellis and the Vine*, the MTS goal is maturing disciples, but here with the specific leadership focus of “seeing more workers trained for God's harvest field.”⁴⁰

There is serious and sobering risk in a trellis and vine style gospel-focused approach. The Bible is clear that “increased suffering and possibly death” will follow when the results of gospel oriented training are put into practice.⁴¹ How does one move

³⁷Colin Marshall, *Passing the Baton: A Handbook for Ministry Apprenticeship* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2007), 11-16.

³⁸Ibid., 18.

³⁹Ibid., 20.

⁴⁰Ibid., 21.

⁴¹Ibid., 22.

people from immaturity to the maturity that faces this warning and endures? Pragmatic teaching programs will not prepare people to face them. Instead, Marshall explains that it has always been God's plan that "through the teaching of the Word, God's church grows and people are brought into his kingdom."⁴² In other words teaching the Word, equals the growth necessary to face the Christian life generally, and Christian leadership specifically.

This growth is not necessarily growth that can be immediately measured, however. Rather "the glory of the Word ministry may only be revealed in eternity."⁴³ Again, pragmatic training cannot cope with this kind of perspective. In contrast, through training leaders in the ministry of the Word, the aim of MTS is not just to pass on a particular methodology for ministry, but a set of values, beliefs and passions.

This sort of training should not be reserved for some elite group. For Marshall, "Everyone who knows and loves the Lord Jesus, and cares about his people and his kingdom, should consider undertaking an apprenticeship in Word ministry."⁴⁴ He goes on to give two qualifications. There ought to be some level of ability to teach and to lead. People might not have great gifts of teaching, or great gifts of leadership, as the world might view them, but they must have some ability to communicate the biblical qualifications of "Christlikeness of character and a commitment to godly living."⁴⁵

For those with this character and commitment, who have some ability to teach, MTS proposes that their progression of apprenticeship from foundational training in Christian conviction, through growth in Christian character be rounded out by Competence in doing the work of Ministry. These points are developed by the eight MTS

⁴²Marshall, *Passing the Baton*, 23.

⁴³Ibid., 22.

⁴⁴Ibid., 32.

⁴⁵Ibid., 33.

learning strands, which correspond to each category. In developing Christian conviction, MTS focuses on Bible study and thinking theologically. Marshall's conclusion is really another way of saying that there is to be a focus on biblical theology. Regarding Christian character there are the learning strands of prayer and godliness along with relationships in ministry. There are rooted in the response of the ministry leader to salvation history.

Finally, focusing on competence, MTS organizes its training around four categories. First, evangelism and world mission, which of course expresses the church's unique role in the salvation history that God is tasking here for. Secondly, there is a focus on teaching the Bible, which requires a firm grasp of its overall message of salvation history. The last two categories focus on training others in ministry and leadership, or becoming the disciple maker with others. Since this repeats the pattern, it is replete with the need to have "a set of values, beliefs and passions" rooted in the eternal plan of salvation history rather than on the malleable methodologies then current.⁴⁶

Robert Cheong: Gospel Care

Another program whose aims and much of its practice closely aligns with the current project is the *Gospel Care* ministry and training done at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky.⁴⁷ Robert Cheong serves as the pastor of Global Care at this large, multi-campus ministry. The church first approached Cheong, a trained biblical counselor, to set up a biblical counseling center to serve its growing membership's spiritual-relational needs. Cheong thought carefully about the situation and proposed an alternative to a counseling center. He argued that the church should have a discipleship process that included equipping ministry leaders through gospel care (applied salvation

⁴⁶Marshall, *Passing the Baton*, 56-61.

⁴⁷The following summary is derived from *Life Together: Gospel Care Equipping Resources* (Louisville: Sojourn Community Church, 2015). I conducted an interview via telephone with Robert Cheong, June 23, 2015.

history) to care for the spiritual-relational needs of the membership.

This gospel care occurs in two categories. First, there is community care, which occurs primarily in small groups. Small group leaders are prepared and equipped to lead their group in shepherding one another through specific training in applying the Biblical narrative to an individual's relational, functional or faith struggles. Second, the church has pastoral care, which picks up where challenges prove too difficult to be handled exclusively in community care. Even here, however, community care remains the emphasis. A person under pastoral care is usually required to be a participant in a community group and community groups (or individual partners from a community group setting) will walk with them through their pastoral care journey.

This task sounds challenging to expect lay leaders to take on, but they are well trained and prepared. The basic purpose of the training and the care group model that it inculcates is to fulfill the one another commands of Scripture. The training for community care is now called *Life Together*, and formerly *Gospel Basics*. Both titles reflect the content and focus of the training, which is built around an understanding of human flourishing and failure rooted in the first three chapters of Genesis, in which man, created in God's image falls.

This fundamental biblical theology forms the core of the content of the gospel care training at Sojourn. Cheong explains that five basic human struggles are rooted in Genesis chapter three: fantasy, shame, fear, anger (or bitterness), and sorrow.

The first of these, *fantasy*, asks the question, "What would life look like apart from God?" In the Garden, Adam and Eve faced this question in connection to the forbidden fruit. Today there are many variations on fantasy, whether sexual fantasy (lust), ambition, or a broad range of places where humans have found themselves dreaming of doing things their ways instead of God's. Part of this fantasy, is denial of, or suppressing the truth.

Second, *shame* entered the human context, as Adam and Eve sinned, they realized their guilt and were suddenly aware of their nakedness, or their vulnerability. Filled with shame they rushed both to cover themselves, and to actually hide themselves from exposure. Guilt and shame are intermixed with many of the interpersonal and personal and spiritual problems that humans experience today, when they fail to flourish.

Third, fear entered the human experience. In Genesis three, one sees that the first parents fled from God's presence. They experienced basically the opposite of God intended for his creation, when reverent fear of God turned into terror of the Holy. Fear manifests itself in many ways today, and regularly impairs human flourishing.

The final two elements are anger and sorrow. Anger has many forms. It is expressed as bitterness and blame in Genesis 3 as Adam blames both his wife and his God, and the woman in turn blames the serpent rather than humbly repenting. The experience of sorrow has been the most horrific and far reaching of all human struggles. God had warned, "In the day you eat of it, you shall surely die." Death in Scripture is not loss of existence, but separation from God, the source of life. And in the last chapters of Genesis, God's warning comes true, but not in the sense of ceasing to exist. Rather, humans begin to experience life as a kind of experience of death. This is seen in loneliness, marital struggles, cutting, and so many other sorrows.

In *Life Together*, the participants are informed that "every struggle we experience now stems from these classic struggles extending from the fall." What would happen, they are asked, if community groups were able to help everyone in the church understand this reality? The hoped for answer, is that people would seek to find healing and rest in the gospel, which is the good news of Jesus victory in overcoming the fall and its impediments on human flourishing.

Michael Lawrence: Elders

After earning his PhD at Cambridge, Michael Lawrence served as associate pastor at Capitol Hill Baptist Church alongside Mark Dever. He now serves as Senior Pastor of Hinson Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*.⁴⁸

For Lawrence, biblical theology is primarily an exposition of salvation history. It is not surprise then, that the author trains his own ministry leaders using salvation history as the base. As he explains in the book and clarified during a telephone interview, one of the main responsibilities of a senior pastor is to train current elders and prepare new and potential elders. In his book Lawrence explains the importance and practical relevance of Biblical Theology for church leadership succinctly. It is when “you’ll need to make concrete decisions and practical proposals” that the salvation history absorbed during a study of “biblical theology really pays off.”⁴⁹ He clarifies that it is really at the biblical theology level that most practical ministry discussions are resolved. Having a specific and shared biblical theology is essential for unity because it controls how you approach and interpret a text. Your biblical theology is really a hermeneutic, which allows you to move the discussion beyond preference.

While a biblical theology doesn’t provide a method or a program for a particular ministry, as most practical tools will do, it does something better: “It gives you vision—theological vision . . . for ministry today.” It does this by not only presenting “the story of the Bible, but it [also] places your story in the context of God’s story” moving the Bible from being a story about ancient history to one of future history. Lawrence concludes by quoting Richard Lints to the effect that by knowing and shaping ministry

⁴⁸The following summary is derived from Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*. I conducted an interview via telephone with Michael Lawrence, November 8, 2015.

⁴⁹Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 215.

leaders through salvation history, they come to find that “the Scriptures are . . . the primary interpreters of the modern era.”⁵⁰

A church leadership that has a shared biblical theology will be equipped and prepared to deal with the inevitable multi-faceted challenges of shepherding they will face. Many people will be intimidated about approaching the pastor first, and will go to a lay elder and either ask a hard question, or challenge him. He need to be equipped so that he is not taken aback by proof texting, or so that he doesn't proof text back when challenged. A church's position on baptism, liturgical dance and many other things must be decided, not on the exegesis of this, or that passage, but rather by one's biblical theology.

As Lawrence explains, this is something he always models in discussions with the leaders, and members of his church. There is a rotation of topics covered in their Sunday school classes. Every few years, they have a 13-week series on biblical theology. He also constantly gives away books such as Goldsworthy's *Gospel and Kingdom*, Vaughn Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, and his own *Guidebook*. One of the key things he does with new elders is read through Goldsworthy's book together over a number of months and have slow, deliberate, practical discussions related to it.

In Lawrence's view, inculcating a church with biblical theology is the number one priority of the pastorate. It solves so many problems before they arise. To re-organize the small group ministry leadership when he arrived, Lawrence took a group of leaders, and made them into a small group he led. He then showed them how to do inductive bible study with a biblical theology emphasis over the course of a full year. At the end of the

⁵⁰Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, quoting Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomena to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 312.

year, they went off and led new small group and he started with another group. A key aspect was moving back and forth between Old and New Testament as often as possible.

“I think it’s fair to say,” Lawrence writes, “that everything in the life and ministry of the local church is affected by a proper use of biblical theology.”⁵¹ For this reason it has always been a priority for him, in every aspect of his leadership training ministry.

CCEF: Biblical Counseling

The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF) is a parachurch organization promoting the use of biblical theology to help people change: “Our mission is to restore Christ to counseling and counseling to the church by thinking biblically about the issues of living.”⁵² Specifically, CCEF notes that “God teaches us to see the world the way he sees it, and to see all things as they exist in relationship to him.” Further, “Because the working of God in human life unfolds historically, we are committed to the narrative perspective provided by redemptive-historical theology, the story line that frames our understanding.”⁵³

One of CCEF’s ministries is publishing teaching resources that promote their mission, under the series title *Resources for Changing Lives*. Ted Tripp has written one of the key volumes in this series. Speaking of the ministry of the church Tripp notes “God’s plan is that through the faithful ministry of every part, the whole body will grow to full maturity in Christ.”⁵⁴ Tripp speaks as a biblical theologian when he clarifies, “Scripture

⁵¹Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 199.

⁵²“About,” CCEF, accessed November 23, 2015, <http://www.ccef.org/about>.

⁵³“CCEF’s Theological Foundations,” CCEF, accessed November 23, 2015, <http://www.ccef.org/about/core-beliefs>.

⁵⁴Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), xi.

looks at human beings from three angles: Creation, Fall, and Redemption.” He then proposes “This sweeping perspective provides the foundation we need for personal ministry. When we start with the Bible’s big picture and learn to see with biblical eyes, we will be equipped to be part of God’s ongoing work of transformation.”⁵⁵ This transformation, he explains, “the bible calls *redemption*.”⁵⁶

One of Tripp’s colleagues, Ed Welch, has shown that some of the most common problems facing people today have to do with what the Bible calls idolatry, or “being controlled . . . by what, or who you need.” For many this idolatry is the “fear of man.”⁵⁷ This leads to life disorders often labeled as codependency, or the more mundane, falling for peer pressure. These conditions can be crippling. To escape this fear or man, one has to understand and grow in the fear of the Lord. So, “the first task in escaping the snare of the fear of man is to know that *God* is awesome and glorious, not other people.”⁵⁸

Tripp covering a wider array of issues, covers the same ground, saying, “People struggling with life in a fallen world often want explanations when what they really need is imagination.”⁵⁹ He goes on to explain that as “sinners, we have a natural bent to turn away from the Creator to serve the Creation.” We have “an inclination to replace the King with a thing.” To escape this, we need to replace our fallen story, with

⁵⁵Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 39.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷Ed Welch, *When People are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997), 14.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁹Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 7.

the story of Scripture, “of God’s plan to rescue hopeless and helpless humanity” transporting them “to a kingdom where Jesus is central and true hope is alive.”⁶⁰

Welch shows that hope is to be found, even in the grip of painful addictions, through the power of the gospel. Welch shows that the answer for those who face the hopeless cycle of sickness, recovery, and relapse is to view their struggle in biblical theological terms. Their struggle is not an illness, or a mental disorder, but rather a worship disorder, to be seen through the lenses of sin, salvation, and sanctification.⁶¹

The CCEF perspective can be summed up in just one sentence. The key to real change is take biblical thinking and then “apply it to life.”⁶² This is biblical theology at its simplest. The most important training for someone engaged in the life changing discipleship practice of biblical counseling must be salvation history.

Conclusion

Salvation history forms the foundation and framework for any ministry related to the mission of the church and provides the redemptive resources necessary for training leaders in the work of that mission. The practice of training leaders through salvation history is demonstrated to be foundational from each of these examples of using biblical theology for ministry leadership training. Counselling, shepherding, small group care, and emerging leadership examples show that ministry training rooted in clear gospel knowledge applied in light of the biblical qualifications for leaders will focus priority on the gospel as it shapes their character, knowledge of God, and discipleship experience and abilities. A salvation history centered leadership training focus is fitting given the

⁶⁰Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 8-9.

⁶¹Ed Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave—Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 45-63.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 4.

mission of the church and its role as both a constitute part and witness to redemptive history.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

My project occurred over 16 sessions and developed and implemented a curriculum on salvation history, as part of the Leadership Discipling Program (LDP) for new and prospective lay leaders at GraceLife Church. The overall process involved organizing these 16 sessions to progressively develop the great story of redemptive history from a biblical theological perspective. This story was then applied in ways calculated to lead to the growth of both the new leader's faith and competence in ministry leadership.

Background

The larger Leadership Discipleship Program (LDP) was intended to be a holistic personal discipleship process.¹ LDP participants were asked to commit to participate in ministry, not to attend classes, or merely complete assignments. They were to view the program elements as part of developing their ministry responsibilities. Each participant was invited by the elders into the process because they were already beginning or expressed desire to serve in ministry leadership positions for both new and growing ministries. The LDP is GraceLife Church's practical expression of faithfulness to the call of God on the church to mentor and train the next generation of leaders for the church (2 Tim 2:2).

¹ Designed in house by the author this program was an attempt to support a formalized practice of discipleship. For a two-year period, prospective leaders would be taken under care, and prayed for regularly, assigned a mentor in their chosen field of ministry (where possible). At the foundation was this course in salvation history. After these two years they were recruited into mentoring creating a cyclical discipleship process (accomplishing one of my goals in planting the church).

Each participant was paired with a ministry mentor either in the area they were serving/seeking to serve, or with myself, or another elder if that wasn't workable. They were then asked to participate in an intensive training program stretching through a two-year period of practical mentoring and ministry leadership discipleship. A foundational aspect of this program was to be the course in salvation history. This was to be followed up in a further stage, by readings in Systematic and Historical Theology, and Practical, or Applied Theology related to their particular field of ministry. Because of the integrated nature of the program, it is difficult to isolate this one aspect, this salvation history course, without losing the overall effect and flavor of the LDP. It should therefore be kept in mind that the following description of the salvation history component of the LDP was and is foundational, but not complete for holistic leadership training. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explain the recruitment process, overview the preparation and delivery of the content of the curriculum, and break down each of the 16 sessions, explaining what was covered, and how it was covered.

Recruitment and Preparation

Often it is asserted that leaders are born and not made. But a counterargument is always ready at hand. It is my opinion that the answer is of the both/and variety. Jesus “appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). As Jesus appointed representatives they were given “the secrets of the kingdom” (4:9). The Gospels regularly note Jesus private tutoring of the twelve (e.g., Mark 4:10, 34). Jesus no doubt had perfect reasons for choosing those whom he did. Hints are found in passages regarding the character of Nathaniel, “an Israelite in whom there is no guile” (John 1:47). However, the rest of the New Testament is very clear that leaders are to be chosen for their spirituality, character and soundness in the faith. An urgent need for leadership arose in the first few months of the existence of the Jerusalem church. Seven men were chosen by the apostles, “men of

good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3). While the pastorals encourage churches to consider those who are “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:7). This overarching qualification phrase seems to be explained and expanded in both 1 Timothy and Titus into a series of qualifications that can be summarized as meaning the men in question were to be both examples of living out the Christian faith and capable of showing others how to live in this same way by explaining “the teaching that accords with godliness” (1 Tim 6:3).

As a result, the elders considered a number of individuals who were involved, or becoming involved in ministry (or asking to start ministries), and who met the general pattern of spiritual, character and wisdom qualifications spoken of in Scripture. In this case ten participants would be identified and agree to enter into the LDP, including participating in this foundational course in salvation history. This identification included referrals from members, expressions of interest from individuals, and observations from the elders. The identified candidates were then interviewed fairly informally. The LDP was explained to them, and they were asked about their ministry desires and their interest in participating.

A final and important consideration with regard to recruitment involved a basic knowledge pre-test “Salvation History Survey” (see appendix 1). This survey was based on the format of the DMin office supplied sample Lickert test. After surveying a number of projects to develop an aesthetic sense for how the survey might look, I thought about what I would want to test. Three things came to mind. Who the participants were, how they perceived the Bible’s message, and if they had any biblical theology backgrounding. Part 1 of this test, then, was designed to give me specific information on the backgrounds and current state of knowledge of our participants, which would help me shape my course. These questions asked participants how long they had regarded themselves as believers, whether they had any formal bible or theology training and what level of

activity they have previously experienced in a church. Because the course is an overview of God’s saving work in the lives of his people applied into the context of church ministries through applied theology the previous knowledge level was an important barometer for judging the level of entry into the material I would teach.

For all but one participant, the group would be classified as composed of newer believers. That lone participant had been a believer for several decades. The following Tables show the key results for all ten participants.

Table 1. Response to survey questions on salvation and church participation

	≤ 3 years	≤ 5 years	≥ 20 years
Salvation Experience	6	3	1
Church Participation	5	5	

One key to note is that church experience and salvation experience were not perfectly overlapping. The participant who had the longest salvation experience had only spent three years in actively involved in a local church (serving, giving, considering themselves to belong). However, the main conclusion was that the group did not grow up within a Christian subculture and worldview. Those closer to the five-year mark in church participation had more of the lingo and doctrinal background than those in the 2 to 3-year range, but all were relatively young in the faith. I also asked about formal Bible training resulting in a degree, or at least a major in Bible. Only 2 participants met this criterion.

The next section of the pre-test survey (part 2) was an awareness survey. I asked questions aimed at judging their awareness of the category of salvation history, such as “I frequently hear my pastor referring to, or preaching elements of salvation

history in sermons.” This type of question was not an objective test of pulpit frequency on the topic, but as their pastor I wanted to know what they had picked up on in the sermons I had been preaching. The results of these types of questions were mixed, but showed they had a general sense that they were hearing elements of salvation history on Sunday. Other questions focused on their personal bible reading habits, gaging their use of the Old Testament and their understanding of its relationship to the New Testament.

The third section was an assessment of the actual current knowledge of salvation history in the group. They were to look at whether the participants had ever read or been exposed to the leading ideas and key current writers in salvation history. This area showed the majority of participants had little to no concept of the terms and the writers involved in popular biblical theology, and had some confusion over the difference between systematic and biblical theologies.

This assessment would be repeated after the final session, in order to measure for statistical change. But at this point, the survey became a resource helping to formulate the class, as a class for relatively new believers with little church experience and little to no knowledge of the subject. Based on this I selected the companion books and focused my instructional periods in ways I suspected would most greatly benefit the surveyed group.

At the same time that recruitment of participants was proceeding a panel was asked to review the content of the curriculum (as discussed in both chapters 1 and 5, see appendix 2). This panel consisted of church leaders both inside and outside of the congregation. All had been involved with our church at one time or another as members, or as staff. But at the time of the panel, two were in other ministry locations, while one was an active staff member at our church. Being active church leaders with seminary training in all cases (including one PhD candidate whose field was biblical theology) these individuals were ideal reviewers to look at the relevance and effectiveness of the

curriculum for application in the local church. They were given session notes as I developed them and their feedback helped form the final state of the sessions. Because I had personal and ministry relationships with each of these leaders, and as each was familiar with our church, I was able to rely on their strong knowledge of what I wanted to accomplish in the lessons, and they were able to give both formal and informal feedback as I prepared and as they completed the requested assessment of the curriculum. The results of this recruitment and preparation led to the following curriculum of salvation history.

Curriculum Overview and Description

Salvation history is the story of the redemptive–historical unfolding of God’s self–revelation told through this overarching theme of the Scripture. As highlighted in the previous chapter, salvation history fundamentally encompasses the relatively simple scheme of promise and fulfillment regarding the restoration of created, but fallen humanity against the backdrop of God’s self–glorification in salvation through judgment.²

To begin to think in these terms, the student of salvation history must first accept the basic principles of thinking biblically. A couple of books were consequently selected to stimulate a recognition of the poles in perspectives found between the naturalistic and therapeutic assumptions of modern society regarding the world and humanity (which our participants were raised in), over and against God’s view of his creation and his creatures. Readings from these books were selected for succeeding sessions, as will be explained below. The books selected were chosen for their claims to be direct biblical worldviews, not necessarily for a complete endorsement of their

² This picturesque phrase owes its origins to one of my professors Jim Hamilton, whose book, *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway 2010) is a book length commentary on its meaning.

positions. These readings were from Ken Ham's *The Lie: Evolution (Revised and Expanded)* and Ed Welch's *When People are Big and God is Small*.³ The participants were asked to pre-read and then to think about, assess, and discuss the contents of the readings from these books over the first three sessions.⁴

Added to this reading and split up through the next 11 sessions was the salvation history text *The Gospel and the Kingdom*, providing a hermeneutical framework and *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, providing a salvation history foundation for ministry leadership generally.⁵ These readings were designed to shape the biblical thinking, life of worship, and leadership perspective of the LDP participants.

Along with these readings, there was an expectation that participants conclude their study by first learning the contents of and then teaching a multi-media course called *The Bible Overview*.⁶ This is the capstone project of the course. I lead the participants through this presentation as a group during our last three sessions, and then they team teach it in various different settings (ladies group, Sunday school, small group, etc.) as their final project.

While all these complimentary materials were very important, the core curriculum was focused around the content of the Scriptures themselves, covering an

³Ken Ham, *The Lie: Evolution*, rev. and exp. (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012); Ed Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997).

⁴The participants were told that these books were fairly radical. They were neither required to agree or disagree with the content and conclusions of the books. Their reading was instead to focus more on their personal response to the author's arguments, and their assessment of the basis of those arguments. Finally, they were to think about how different these author's approach to the subjects of creation and the therapeutic model of self were from the prevailing views of our post-Christian culture.

⁵Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Gospel and the Kingdom* (Exeter, England: Paternoster, 2002); Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

⁶Matthew Brain et al., *The Bible Overview: How to Understand the Bible as a Whole in 3 Simple Presentations* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2001).

introduction and survey of the Bible chronologically, over the 16 sessions. An indispensable resource in preparing this section was *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible*.⁷ The chronological period's which Wilmington called, "Basic Stages in the Book of Ages," were not intended to comply with any particular theological system, but rather to group together Scriptures into sections that shared a common historical and therefore redemptive historical setting. This breakdown allowed the curriculum to show more clearly the redemptive–historical actions of God's self–revelation throughout the biblical record of salvation history.

The Course Structure and Method

I led each section through a mixture of lecture, seminar discussion, and Socratic dialogue. The lectures covered key introductions to the various stages of biblical revelation with the key salvation and theological developments revealed in each as a basic guide for the assigned readings in that stage. These introductions usually took an hour. The following session would begin with participants sharing their observations from the texts read and discussions led to outstanding communal learning and sharing. After a period of open discussion, I used Socratic method to guide the discussion with the intention of measuring and modelling how the participants could learn to think through their readings at a deeper level.⁸

The Course Sessions

It must be noted very clearly that these sessions were not comprehensive, but stayed to their very limited intentions of conveying the central motif of their respective

⁷Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1984).

⁸“Socratic questioning is disciplined questioning that . . . is *systematic, disciplined, and deep*, and usually focuses on foundational concepts, principles, theories, issues, or problems.” Paul, Richard and Linda Elder, *The Thinker's Guide to the Art of Socratic Questioning Based on Critical Concepts & Tools* (Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2006), loc. 67, Kindle.

redemptive epochs in God's glorious work in salvation. This salvation history was taught in relation to the biblical text's own historic stages over 16 individual sessions. Details of these sessions will be discussed in the outline below. Each session from 2–16 followed a general pattern, and lasted approximately 3 hours. The first session was a little different from those that followed as it was an introductory lesson. Each session began with a 20-minute devotional and prayer time led by a participant after the first session where I provided exemplars. These devotionals came first from one of the texts in the redemptive epoch just studied, and second had to touch on the main idea of the salvation history act of this period (which we had outlined in the previous session). We then spent about 45 minutes reviewing the readings and insights the participants wanted to share in a guided discussion of the session's Scripture section (i.e., Patriarch Stage etc.). After a short break, I spent 45 minutes introducing the succeeding Scriptural section, to be discussed at the next session. Participants were encouraged to read key passages, and if possible the entire stage between sessions. Again we took a short break. We then spent 50 minutes looking at the practical readings, usually by means of a guided discussion. I led the first session for any given book as an example, and then participants guided succeeding discussions.

Of further importance was the context of this course within the LDP. Each participant was chosen based on their passion to learn and lead. Each was screened and during this screening interview it was explained to them that this was not a pick up course for personal enjoyment, but rather a part of their commitment to ministry. They were expected to attend, with the same care and consistency they would bring to ministry leadership in the coming years. As a result, attendance was very consistent. Of ten participants 9 attended each and all of each session. One missed a full session due to illness. Because we ran in two meetings, on the occasion where there was a conflict with the regular meeting time, those affected were allowed to attend the alternate parallel

session (this only occurred on a couple of incidences). The sixteen sessions are broken down as follows.

Session 1: Introduction, Creation Stage, and *The Lie*

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

30–minute Overview of the Bible

30–minute Introduction to ‘How to read a Stage’ with focus on Genesis 1–11

30–minute Introduction to Patriarch Stage

50 Min Session, ‘How to Read a Book’ Intro to the Practical Readings through a discussion of Ken Ham’s *The Lie*.

Devotion and Prayer. In this session, we began with a short devotion from John 5:39, which reads, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.” I showed the context briefly. Jesus is confronting those who refused his testimony that he was the promised Messiah sent from God. His main contention is that the topic of the Scriptures, which these opponents so valued was a testimony to his person and work. An important consideration to note, was that Jesus was referring to what we call the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus claims that there is a link between the message of the Old Testament and his incarnate messianic work. And we discussed that this is a principle that we can readily apply, and ought to apply in our reading of Scripture.

First there are Old Testament witnesses to the person and work of Christ, which Jesus expects people to notice. We should therefore read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Second, those witnesses find their subject in the New Testament, in the apostolic testimony to the person and work of Christ. We should therefore expect to find that this link enlightens our understanding of both Testaments. In the Old We should look to the New and in the New we should look to the Old for confirmations and fulfilments. And ultimately this was to be the basis of the course ahead of us.

We then prayed for one another that God would use our participation in the

Leadership Discipleship Program to grow us in our faith and equip us to better serve him in the areas he was calling us to lead.

Overview of the Bible. In this segment we discussed the nature of the Bible as God's word. This word we explained had one message about God's kingdom and his Messiah King. This message was articulated in two main divisions, Old and New Testaments. They described the message as promises made (kingdom through covenant promise) and then promises kept (kingdom in eschatological fulfillment) respectively. We looked at the various ways this message has been explicated in Scriptural covenants and dispensations.

The main focus was on an explanation of our chronological method and how it would relate to the major covenants and dispensations of Scripture, with a focus on discovering the redemptive acts of God in each period of biblical history. These thirteen stages were adopted from the twelve proposed in *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible*, and included the Creation, Patriarchal, Exodus, Conquest, United Kingdom, Chaotic Kingdom, Captivity, Return, Gospel, Early Church, Pauline A (early Pauline), Pauline B (later Pauline), and Johannine (which was sub-divided into two sessions covering the General Epistles and then the book of Revelation) stages.

Introduction to how to read a stage. This section focused on a guided discussion of Genesis 1–11, the Creation stage, as a template for each succeeding stage discussion. We worked through it looking for certain patterns, which could then be used in those future discussions. I demonstrated how a study Bible could yield basic information such as the author and date, major issues, and a big picture overview. I then explained that, taking these into account, participants should pay special attention to the following: (1) What is the main redemptive message of the whole section; (2) Who are the main characters (with a focus on God and key individuals); and (3) What is the main

action? The most important question was to discern “What covenant(s) is/are related in the section?” Participants were to ask (1) To whom are they/is it related; (2) What is/are the element(s) and promise(s) of the covenant(s); (3) How do the characters relate to the covenant(s); (4) How do the events relate to the covenant(s); and (5) How and where does the New Testament keep its/their promise(s) or, if in the New Testament, how does the Old explain and root it/them?

The Noahic covenant was used as a template, followed by a discussion of the possibility of a Creation covenant (Gen 1–2) and Redemption covenant (Gen 3).

Introduction to patriarch stage. In this section, I discussed the included sections of Genesis 12–50 and the book of Job. We considered issues of authorship and dating. This overview was followed by a discussion of the big issues, including genre, historical, theological, and literary challenges. A brief overview was then attempted showing the sweep of the narrative and the key persons, events and covenants. However, pedagogically, these topics were addressed in an introductory way that was purposefully vague and so served as a kind of map to be explored and flushed out by participants before the second session.

“How to Read a Book”: Ken Ham’s *The Lie*. In this final segment we looked at reading techniques. I focused on how a reader can identify the thesis of a work, by a carefully reading of the first and last chapters and the opening paragraph/section of each chapter. We then had a round table discussion how *The Lie* impact each participants thinking. The key was not whether we agreed with Ham’s conclusions, but whether we understood his point about presuppositions and starting points when reading a text. We used this to discuss how we wanted to read the Bible according to its own theme, and not import external ideas as much as possible.

Curriculum review. Reference can be made to appendix 2 for the specific questions of the rubric. Since all the measures of the rubric were rated sufficient or higher, the basic goal had been satisfied. Whenever a reviewer(s) marked a “sufficient” I reviewed their comments and the related area of the material. For the purpose of this analysis I blend my reviewers together, as their individual identities are not relevant. Most of my reviewers agreed in their reviews and in those places where they disagreed, I weighed their disagreement as a key help in assessment (e.g., 2 exemplary, 1 sufficient, was weighted lighter than 1 exemplary, 2 sufficient scores).

In the case of sessions 1, each of the criteria marked by a “sufficient” rating represented the views of a single reviewer. My other reviewers, in contrast, agreed in giving these sections a rating of “exemplary.” The two significant critiques passed on by these reviewers, however, were assessed. Since a dispensational author had been quoted a number of times in the description of the salvation history the evaluator’s note marked “a,” revealed an overemphasis on this system of biblical theology. I substituted some of the quotations for more neutral ones and introduced a few paired quotes intentionally showing areas of agreement on our main theme from the various schools of theology. Regarding the comment (labeled “b” in Table 2) I also made a general effort to provide quick summaries in the notes for each section going forward.

Table 2. Evaluators’ scores for session 1

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	3	13
Key Comments	a. Over-emphasis on dispensations, which may overshadow the main point: intro to Bible as a salvation- historical document. b. No explicit statement of the meaning and purpose of Genesis 1-11. They can be found within the materials, but a succinct header helps illuminate the meaning in the material			

Session 2: Patriarchs Stage, and *When People Are Big (part 1)*

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Patriarch Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Exodus Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Ed Welch *When People Are Big and God is Small*.

During this second session things developed according to the general pattern discussed in the introduction.

Devotion and prayer. This session was led by a participant, who volunteered during the previous session and was told to select a passage from this stage’s readings. She chose Genesis 45:4–8. This was to look like a standard 10-minute or so devotion, that could be used on some occasion with their ministry team. They were instructed to demonstrate four elements. (1) a careful, accurate understanding of the text in context, (2) an understanding of the texts place in the story of redemption, (3) show a connection to its fulfillment/resolution in the NT, and (4) apply it to the group in the current context.

After listening, the group was asked to report on what they heard in each of those categories. I then added some constructive feedback for future devotions and we spent some time praying the applications of the text to be fulfilled in each other’s lives and in the lives of the members of our church.

Patriarch stage: Review and discussion. Here participants shared their collective insights into the texts they had read from the patriarch stage, following the guidelines discussed on day one under the ‘Introduction to How to Read a Stage.’ A group outlining exercise was attempted using a whiteboard. This was followed by a

guided discussion where special attention was focused on the Abrahamic covenant through directed questions. Finally, I gave a presentation (and handout) on the Abrahamic covenant and its implications for the redemptive historical narrative of salvation history in Scripture.

Introduction to the Exodus stage. Referring to the books of Exodus–Deuteronomy, these books were shown to be part of a continuous narrative from Genesis. A short discussion about the issue of authorship and the implications of the various views (including a digression into Jesus view of the historicity and overall Mosaic authorship) was made first. Again, as with the patriarch stage, a sweeping overview was conducted with some general pointers toward the ongoing relevance of God’s promises to Abraham, and a noting of some of the key texts speaking of the Mosaic covenant. Participants were asked to focus their reading on Exodus 1–24, Leviticus 1–5, Numbers 2–25 and the first 6 and the final chapters (27–34) of Deuteronomy.

Ed Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*. The first five chapters of the book were discussed, with participants sharing their thoughts on the main thesis of the book, the main point of these first five chapters, and a brief breakdown of what they found most convicting in their own lives. This was followed with a discussion of how the biblical theology in the book could be applied in their specific ministry contexts.

Curriculum review. The evaluations of this chapter were strong. The key comment for this section (marked “a” in table 3) reflected a section of my notes where I made a side point noting that the Creator had sufficiently gifted his people to do what he required, leading to a discussion of how spiritual gifts are given to the church today, so she can accomplish her mission. The critique was valid, as this was treated as an aside. I was able to make a small correction to tie this in.

Table 3. Evaluators' scores for session 2

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	2	14
Key Comments	a. It could have been nice to tie spiritual gifts to the biblical-theological topic of creation for the sake of continuity.			

**Session 3: Exodus Stage, and
When People Are Big (part 2)**

- 20-minute Devotion and Prayer
- 45-minute discussion of the Exodus Stage
- 10-minute break
- 45-minute Introduction to the Conquest Stage
- 10-minute break
- 50-minute book discussion Ed Welch *When People Are Big and God is Small*.

Devotion and prayer. This session was led by another participant and followed the same pattern as above. Deuteronomy 4:7–10

Exodus stage: Review and discussion. Again this stage referred to the books of Exodus–Deuteronomy. Guided discussion followed on the themes introduced in session one under the ‘Introduction to How to Read a Stage.’ We concluded that the Pentateuch’s main interest is God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, His deliverance of their descendants from Egypt, and their obligation to keep the laws of God given to them in the Sinai wilderness. I then gave a couple of presentations. First on the great typology of the Passover lamb, and second on the Mosaic covenant. We looked briefly at whether the covenant at Moab (Deut 29) was a separate covenant, or a reissuing of the Mosaic covenant. We saw how the covenant with Israel at Sinai was derived from and rooted in the covenant God made with Abraham. We also noted how critical the narrative of the Exodus stage was to understanding the meaning of the law, given to

Israel. It was given to a redeemed people to manage their relationship with God their king, not as the means by which they entered his good graces.

Introduction to the conquest stage. Referring to Joshua. Again author and date, big issues and big picture overview was covered, with a special emphasis on a map discussing the distribution of the land. Participants were asked to read the whole book and think through the issues outlined in session one ‘How to read a Stage.’

Ed Welch’s *When People Are Big and God Is Small*. The final eight chapters were discussed, this time led by a participant, with input from me. It followed the same pattern as the previous week, but really drilled down on concrete ways we could all apply the message to our own Christian growth, and ministry effectiveness.

Curriculum review. The comment marked “a)” expressed an important critique, but reflected a slight misunderstanding. The sections dealing with Genesis and Job here were a simple summary of themes leading to the exodus, not a review of the chronology considered in the previous session. I felt that the curriculum, still meriting a “sufficient” mark by the assessor in this area was sufficient.

Table 4. Evaluators’ scores for session 3

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	2	14
Key Comments	a. The big picture segments on Genesis and Job could have included a more chronological explanation, as that appears to be closer to your explanation of the Bible from session 1.			

Session 4: Conquest Stage, and Gospel and Kingdom (Intro.–chap 3)

20–minute Devotion and Prayer
45–minute discussion Conquest Stage
10–minute break
45–minute Introduction to the Judges Stage
10–minute break
50–minute book discussion Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom*.

Devotion and prayer. This session was led by another participant and followed the same pattern as above. The participant chose Joshua 21:43–45.

Conquest stage: Review and discussion. Here particular attention was given to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as they related to the land.

Introduction to the Judges stage. Referring to the books of Judges and Ruth. Participants were asked to bring a written outline of either book to the next meeting.

Graeme Goldsworthy’s *Gospel and Kingdom* (Intro–chap 3). This session began some of the most significant discussion and focus of the course. I led the discussion for this session. We discussed, with the book, the discipline of Hermeneutics, and how one’s approach to Scripture affects one’s reading of every text.

Curriculum review. All reviewers agreed in rating this lesson as “exemplary” in meeting its goals.

Session 5: Judges Stage, and *Gospel and Kingdom* (chaps. 4–5)

20–minute Devotion and Prayer
45–minute discussion Patriarch Stage
10–minute break
45–minute Introduction to the Exodus Stage
10–minute break
50–minute book discussion Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom*.

Devotion and prayer. This session was led by another participant and followed the same pattern as above.

Judges stage: Review and discussion. Here we focused on the outlines drafted by the participants and discussed similarities and differences, and I led a discussion of more helpful ways to understand the division of a book, or section of Scripture.

Introduction to the United Kingdom stage. Referring to 1 Samuel 8–2 Samuel; I Kings 1–11; I Chronicles–2 Chronicles 9; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; and Song. For this large section of Scripture, Participants were encouraged to focus on 2 Samuel; Psalms 1, 2, 8, 89, 90, 119; and Proverbs 1, 2, 31. In the overview the Davidic covenant passages were pointed out.

Graeme Goldsworthy’s *Gospel and Kingdom* (chap 6–Conclusion). Focus on the ongoing hermeneutical developments of (1) biblical theology and redemptive history, and (2) the covenants and the Kingdom of God. Goldsworthy overviewed the redemptive epochs (dispensations of the kingdom of God) in Scripture through a salvation history lens. Discussion ensued about how important these were for interpreting a given text of Scripture.

Curriculum review. Several reviewers agreed that “The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis” only merited a “sufficient” evaluation. With the significant amount of biblical material, and chronology covered by these readings it was extraordinarily difficult to keep a tight and consistent theme running through the lesson. Being aware of the critique helped me as I taught to engage the class with questions of the links and relevance of the sections discussed to the broader salvation history themes. The evaluator’s comment (marked “a” in table 5) addresses a particular assertion made in a quotation from a commentary included in the introduction to the book of Joshua. I included a note that this was the view of the commentator, which I found interesting. I asked the group in their readings following the introduction to see if they could spoke any

connections between the two books (Joshua and Ephesians) and if they noted any to share them during the next session.

Table 5. Evaluators' scores for session 5

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	2	14
Key Comments	a. Overall good. But it would be nice to hear why, for example, Joshua is called the Ephesians of the OT.			

Session 6: United Kingdom Stage and *Gospel and Kingdom* (chap 6–conc.).

- 20–minute Devotion and Prayer
- 45–minute discussion United Kingdom Stage
- 10–minute break
- 45–minute Introduction to the Chaotic Kingdom Stage
- 10–minute break
- 50–minute book discussion Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom*.

This session followed the pattern expressed above. Noteworthy distinctions include the following.

Introduction to the chaotic kingdom stage. The chaotic Kingdom stage looked at 1 Kings 12–2 Kings; 2 Chronicles 10–36; Obadiah; Jonah; Amos; Hosea; Micah; Isaiah; Naham; Zephaniah; Habakkuk; Jeremiah; Lamentations. Discussion focused on where each prophet fit into the narrative of Israel's collapsing Kingdom. Participants were encouraged to focus on 2 Chronicles 36; Amos; and Jeremiah as readings that would be focused on during the next session.

Graeme Goldsworthy's *Gospel and Kingdom* (Appendix A exercises). This section focused on a workshop approach to the interpretive implications and applications

rooted in Goldsworthy’s biblical theological approach to Scripture. Much discussion centered around how this helped clarify the passages we had read already in the chronological stages of Scripture.

Curriculum review. One reviewer suggested that “points of practical application” merited a mark of “sufficient,” while the rest marked this as “exemplary.” I tried to be very intentional at tying in whatever the biblical material discussed first into salvation history, and then flowing from this into our own place in that history. We would then batter around ideas with regard to how these links might impact our ministry in the church. In this instance I was satisfied with my current notes, which looked at the ways in which the church might relate to the Kingdom of Israel.

Table 6. Evaluators’ scores for session 6

	<i>1 (insufficient)</i>	<i>2 (requires attention)</i>	<i>3 (sufficient)</i>	<i>4 (exemplary)</i>
Total	0	0	1	15
Key Comments	a. n/a			

Session 7: Chaotic Kingdom Stage and *Gospel and Kingdom*

- 20–minute Devotion and Prayer
- 45–minute Review: Interactive Assessment of Participant Comprehension.
- 10–minute break
- 45–minute discussion of Chaotic Kingdom Stage
- 10–minute break
- 50–minute *Gospel and Kingdom* (Appendix C discussion).

Interactive assessment of participant comprehension. This review worked with break out groups (2–3 participants) looking over some prepared questions. Questions included: “An unbeliever asks you, what is the Bible really about? How would you present a brief overview of its message?” and “Your small group gets into a discussion about David and Goliath, asking ‘How should we apply this story to our lives?’ what would you answer them?” After group discussion, each group presented their conclusions on one of the questions to the full group.

Curriculum Review. In this session, a significant amount of time was devoted to discussion of the nature of the Kingdom of God as a salvation history concept. One reviewer marked “The material is theologically sound” as meriting only a “sufficient” (incidentally, the only instance when there was not full agreement on the theological strength of the project). As I view accuracy in theology very highly, I took this comment under careful consideration. There is disagreement between various schools of theology on the Church’s role within the broad pattern of salvation history, and in particular on the relationship between the church and Israel.

In my analysis, I note that I had placed the church within the universal (or catholic) kingdom of God. That is, those within the church, were within the kingdom. Because the question of specific identity “co-extensiveness” was raised, I revised my notes to raise the question of this relationship without drawing a hard and fast conclusion. This fitted with my overall goal of sticking to the salvation history development, rather than developing a specific biblical theology.

Table 7. Evaluators' scores for session 7

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	1	15
Key Comments	a. Why call it the “Catholic Kingdom” when referring to New Covenant church (54)? It seems like an odd way to describe the kingdom, unless (perhaps) one believes the universal church is co-extensive with the kingdom.			

Session 8: Intro to CT, NCT and DT, and *Biblical Theology* (Intro.–chap 2)

- 20–minute Devotion and Prayer
- 45–minute Intro to CT, NCT & DT
- 10–minute break
- 45–minute Introduction to the Captivity Stage
- 10–minute break
- 50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (Intro.–chap 2).

Introduction to CT, NCT, and DT. The major hermeneutical interpretive systems in evangelicalism today were discussed and a handout provided. An effort was made to give a positive presentation in the words of a proponent of Covenant Theology (Charles Hodge), Dispensational Theology (Charles Ryrie), and its close cousin Progressive Dispensational Theology was briefly noted. New Covenant Theology was then discussed (D. A. Carson). An attempt was made to show how these systems developed post Reformation, as a means of ensuring the authoritative message of Scripture could be assessable to all.

Introduction to the captivity stage. The captivity stage includes the books of Daniel and Ezekiel.

Michael Lawrence’s *Biblical Theology*. This excellent resource picks up

where Goldsworthy left off. Lawrence moves away from the foundations of redemptive historical biblical theology and applies it to the general and specific ministries of the local church.

Curriculum review. The reviewers agreed that no improvements were necessary in this lesson.

**Session 9: Captivity Stage and
Biblical Theology (chaps 3–5)**

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Captivity Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Return Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

No significant deviation from the pattern occurs in this lesson. the Return stage includes Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Curriculum Review. One commentator suggested that the criterion, “The lesson contains points of practical application” merited only a “sufficient” rating. This same reviewer commented (see “a” in table 8) that “the Return Stage” might have a stronger application to the church, which is in many ways the “return of God’s kingdom on earth,” regarding the prophetic concern with “social justice.” I added some questions to the material asking our participants to consider this question.

Table 8. Evaluators' Scores for Session 9

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	1	15
Key Comments	a. "As the church is the return of God's kingdom on earth, a significant amount of application might be made of the social justice concerns of the prophets."			

**Session 10: Return Stage and
Biblical Theology (chaps 6–7)**

20-minute Devotion and Prayer
 45-minute discussion Return Stage
 10-minute break
 45-minute Introduction to the Gospel Stage
 10-minute break
 50-minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Introduction to the Gospel stage. A significant transition into the New Testament is treated in this session. The third question in the devotion, in the remaining sessions will no longer be “3) show a connection to its fulfillment/resolution in the NT,” but rather, “3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT.” This also affects the questions participants ask of the text in their seeking to answer “what covenant(s) is/are related in the section?” This Stage includes the four Gospels.

Curriculum review. No critical suggestions or comments were reported for this section.

**Session 11: Gospel Stage, and
Biblical Theology (chaps 8–10)**

20-minute Devotion and Prayer
 45-minute discussion Gospel Stage

10–minute break
 45–minute Introduction to the Early Church Stage
 10–minute break
 50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Introduction to the early church stage. Under this overview a brief discussion is given about the nature and origin of the New Testament church, as it existed in the book of Acts. Additionally, we covered a special aside on the gift of Tongues in the book of Acts. This stage includes the book of Acts and the Epistle of James.

Curriculum review. In this lesson two reviewers noted that “the lesson is clearly presented” merited only a “sufficient” rating. This was the only time any reviewer mentioned this rating. I wasn’t clear on what was so different, so I followed up with them, and basically they agreed that it was not “poorly” presented, but rather that I address a significant number of different issues and topics relating to the massive changes in inaugurating the church age. To mitigate this, I explained to the class that this was the case and tried to keep repeating the main points of the lesson, as they related to the questions of the start of the church age, the possible change in the role of the Holy Spirit and the ethnic shift in the church from Israel to the nations.

Table 9. Evaluators’ scores for session 11

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	1	15
Key Comments	a. n/a			

Session 12: Early Church Stage and *Biblical Theology* (chaps 8–10)

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Early Church Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Pauline Stage A

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*

Introduction to the early Pauline stage. This stage is a period of Revelation and church growth in which the apostle Paul is the absolute dominant figure. His work and his writings are so substantial, we explain, that he is often called the second founder of Christianity after Jesus. The stage includes 1, 2 Thessalonians; Galatians; 1, 2 Corinthians; and Romans. A key part of this introduction was looking together at Luther’s 1552 *Preface to Romans*.⁹

Curriculum review. In this instance a reading had been done in class of Luther’s introduction to the book of Romans. This was meant to be a flexible session, with people discussing their thoughts about Luther. The “sufficient” rating was in the area of application, and seemed linked to the question of how Luther was being used. Because I had a clear vision of what I wanted to do with Luther (to show an example of the Reformers biblical theology) I was content to leave this lesson intact.

⁹Martin Luther, *The Works of Martin Luther*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Mulenberg Press, 1932), 447–62.

Table 10. Evaluators' scores for session 12

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	1	15
Key Comments	a. Looking at Luther's introduction was a really fascinating look into the biblical theology of the Reformer. It was unclear however, how it would be applied?			

Session 13: Pauline Stage A and Biblical Theology (chaps 11–12)

20-minute Devotion and Prayer
 45-minute discussion Early Pauline Stage
 10-minute break
 45-minute Introduction to the Later Pauline Stage
 10-minute break
 50-minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Introduction to the Later Pauline Stage. This stage included Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; Philemon; Titus; 1, 2 Timothy. It was one of my favorite sessions, as the major transition of the church throughout the book of Acts was integrated into the backgrounds and major themes of these letters. An introduction to Paul (largely based on the work of F. F. Bruce) was also undertaken.

Curriculum review. Several positive comments related to the introduction to Paul and his view of salvation history were made by reviewers here. But as they were no criticisms involved, I did not see the need to make any revision to the curriculum in light of them.

Session 14: Pauline Stage B and Bible Overview (Part 1)

20-minute Devotion and Prayer
 45-minute discussion Later Pauline Stage

10–minute break
45–minute Introduction to the Johannine Stage
10–minute break
50–minute Introduction to *The Bible Overview*

Introduction to the Johannine stage. John is the dominant figure during this period of revelation and development in the early church. Although the general epistles include Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, they are dominated by John’s 1, 2, 3 Epistles and Revelation. We also note that his gospel was written at this time (but since it treats of the gospel stage its content was discussed in context of that period.) We reserved introduction of Revelation, because of its interest level and significant challenges for the final session.

Introduction to *The Bible Overview*. This multimedia overview of the Bible presents the main message of the Bible through the lens of salvation history: “God appoints Jesus Christ as the saving ruler of God’s Kingdom.”¹⁰ The authors of this resource note: “Because in its essence TBO is very simple, its presentation can be adapted to suit a wide range of people.”¹¹ Downloadable power point presentations, and PDF handouts for learners are available. It is an ideal resource, because it encapsulates in outline form all that has been studied in our course to date. Further, it can be used in almost any setting and is designed to be adapted by the presenter (with hints and recommendations provided in the leader’s manual). In these last three sessions, I take the class through the three presentations, familiarizing them with the content and showing them tips for teaching in various settings. They are then given copies of the leader’s manual and broken into partners and asked to think about where they will teach it at the end of the course.

¹⁰Brain et al., *The Bible Overview*, 9.

¹¹Ibid., 7.

Curriculum Review. One reviewer rated the criterion “The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis” as only meriting a “satisfactory” rating, with the encouragement to more strongly clarify John’s place of dominance in this stage of Christianity. This was an excellent comment and after having a conversation with the reviewer to get a larger sense of his thoughts, I restructured the lesson to include a bit of a historical overview of John himself, and a specific section on John’s take on salvation history as reflected in his works and their direct importance to his time and place in church history.

Table 11. Evaluators’ scores for session 14

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	1	15
Key Comments	a. Clarify the meaning of the Johannine stage, so that the lesson shows a stronger link to the main thesis that he is dominant at this point.			

Session 15: Johannine Stage and *Bible Overview* (Part 2)

- 20–minute Devotion and Prayer
- 45–minute discussion Johannine Stage
- 10–minute break
- 45–minute Introduction to the Later Johannine–Revelation Stage
- 10–minute break
- 50–minute Teaching *The Bible Overview*.

Curriculum review. No improvements were suggested.

Session 16: Later Johannine–Revelation and *Bible Overview* (Part 3)

20–minute Devotion and Prayer
45–minute discussion Later Johannine–Revelation Stage
10–minute break
45–minute Interactive Assessment of Participant Comprehension.
10–minute break
50–minute book Teaching *The Bible Overview*.

Later Johannine: Revelation stage. In this special final session, I take the participants through a special presentation “The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ: Uncovering Revelation.” This covers the long history of the convoluted interpretations and difficulties associated with the book, looks at the main current schools of interpretation, and then a brief outline of how I think we ought to approach the book from a salvation history perspective.

Curriculum Review. The comment marked as, “a,” came with a “sufficient” rating for the criterion “The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.” It is a just critique, but in the context of the course I had to make a decision. I decided that salvation history themes were so substantial in the book of Revelation, perhaps more so than can be found in any other book, that a thorough treatment was simply not possible. I therefore made a decision to focus on introduction and explaining the concepts of *how* Revelation uses salvation history, showing many of the themes that terminate in the book, as the Bible’s redemptive story comes full circle and then steps forward into God’s perfect plan.

Marked as “b” (in Table 12) was a great comment, which I responded to by integrating this suggestion into my treatment on teaching *The Bible Overview* course. I explained that the course outline served as a set of pathway markers to keep participants on the path of solid salvation history footing as they studied scripture. If their findings did not fit the TBO outline, then they should be very cautious about their conclusions. Participants affirmed that they really appreciated this discussion.

Table 12. Evaluators' scores for session 16

	1 (insufficient)	2 (requires attention)	3 (sufficient)	4 (exemplary)
Total	0	0	2	14
Key Comments	<p>a. Unbalanced: feels like the treatment of Revelation starts strong, but then becomes a little shallow at the end.</p> <p>b. The lessons all included practical applications, however an improvement here would have been to include the process of application, i.e., some kind of guard rails to applying both smaller and larger sections of text as participants leave the course.</p>			

Interactive assessment of participant comprehension. I began with an internal review of specific elements that had been covered in the second half of the course. See session seven above for a survey of the kinds of things reviewed. At this time, I also had the participants complete the survey with which they started the course (found in appendix 1). This survey became the bases for the T-test for dependent samples statistical analysis. Because the answers were not true and false answers, I was not looking for answer regurgitation, but actual, and statistically significant movement in their broader understanding of salvation history.

Before ever doing the mathematical analysis it was obvious that the class participants had significantly better understanding of the concepts in section two and section three of the survey. They were able to identify that their pastor was indeed incorporating salvation history, they were more confident in their ability to relate the Old Testament to the New Testament and they were more “confident that the central message of the Bible can be known.” They also demonstrated change in the salvation history specific knowledge points called on in section three, identifying the key themes and key

authors in this section much more easily. The T-test formula takes mean scores from the Lickert scale survey (appendix 1) and measures for variance rather than for correctness. The size of the pool and the significance of the variance also show whether the change could have occurred by chance. In this case the mean variable shifted from 86.3 on the first test to 99.7 on the second. The challenge here was in anticipating the result, but not being sure what the formula would produce. Excel did not, however, disappoint and the formula concluded with a result that represented a non-accidental statistically significant change in the increase of their salvation history knowledge ($t(9) = 3.781, p < .004$).¹² This was sufficient to reinforce the observations I had already made.

Conclusion

This salvation history course was taught over 16 sessions with the Scripture's writings clustered and introduced chronologically. This was done in an attempt to isolate the major epochs of God's redemptive work in history. Each discussion aimed at being very practical through group discussions, which focused on application to life and ministry (as well as comprehension). It also produced a group of trained leaders teaching the rest of the church a course in salvation history, *The Bible Overview* course, which was my course in miniature.¹³ Participants added their own insights and experience as they crafted their teaching notes through the final few sessions of our course. While the long term impact is not yet fully in evidence, early indications are very positive that this will have a very real and permanent domino effect on the congregation.

¹² See appendix 3.

¹³ *Vide Supra*, Malcolm Brain et al., *The Bible Overview*.

CHAPTER 5
PROJECT REVIEW

Introduction

In his *Retractions*, Augustine wrote, “With a kind of judicial severity, I am reviewing my works . . . and as it were, with a pen and sensor, I am indicating what dissatisfies me.”¹ The saint who would write an autobiography under the title of *Confessions*, appears to have lived his life with somewhat of an introspective streak. Perhaps it is this kind of deeper contemplation of self, along with his theological perspicuity, which explains the enduring relevance of Augustine’s practical theology and impact many centuries after his death. Augustine argues that self-examination, in the tradition of the *Confessions* and *Retractions*, comports with the apostolic injunction of 1 Corinthians 11:31: “If we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.”² The exercise required of this chapter carries forward an Augustinian spirit of clarity and self-reflection. While it is certainly healthy to seek to improve oneself by an examination of weakness and faults, it is also important to zero in on what works well. Positives can re-employed and expanded for further benefit. So, unlike Augustine’s self-review, this section will consider more than simply that which dissatisfies. It will also review and analyze what does satisfy, and find ways to improve on the course developed in the project so that it might be re-developed for greater future benefit.

¹Augustine of Hippo, *The Fathers of the Church: St. Augustine, the Retractions*, trans. M. Inez Bogan (Chicago: Catholic University Press, 1968), 3.

²Ibid.

First, I evaluate the project's general purpose and assess whether or not its stated goals were met. Does it satisfy its *raison d'être*? I also include a consideration of both the project's strengths and weaknesses. The focus in this second session is one which will allow some adjusting of the program, wherever possible, to capitalize on the strengths and minimize weaknesses. I then offer a brief theological reflection. This theological section considers what the course reveals, or exposes about God, his word and the church. Finally, I survey my own personal reflections on how the process of completing this project influenced and impacted me.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a curriculum on salvation history for new and prospective lay leaders at GraceLife Church, Calgary, Alberta. Chapter one discussed the setting in which this purpose was formed. The need was rooted in the compositional make up of GraceLife church. The church formed and grew primarily with young, or new believers, who had a desire to figure out how to live as believers, what is their role in the church, and what does it mean to reach out into an unchurched community. One of the challenges of having new believers compose the core of the church is that many of our key members had little to no church experience. Certainly they had never read completely through the Bible. In the first few centuries of Christianity, this was the norm, and in the early church new believers, without a background in Christianity, were similarly instructed in the basic message of the bible. Early Christian leaders repeated and eventually codified what was later called "the rule of faith."³ The Christian life, a person's place in the church, and their witness to the ancient Roman world were all shaped by this measure of orthodoxy. Now, as then, the need

³Eberhard Arnold, *The Early Christians in Their Own Words* (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing, 1997), 133.

remains to equip newer and less experienced believers with the foundation they need in order to grow in their faith and serve in their churches and reach their community.

In our church, this need was well served by the salvation history course. Developed from a biblical theological perspective, this course covered the central story in such a way that it could form a rule of faith for our participants to root their growth in the faith, place in the church and witness to the community. The course served as one key component of our intentional effort to equip men and women in various areas of church leadership. This program known as the leadership discipleship program (LDP) sought to mentor and equip these new ministry leadership participants. The LDP as a whole is part of the way in which, as a church, we seek to follow the example (and mandate) given by Paul to Timothy: “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Participants in the LPD have grown in their understanding of the faith and in the confidence to use the knowledge and resources provided to begin using their gifts in the church, while evangelizing and discipling their contacts. They have taken up leadership in small groups, women’s ministry, music and children’s ministry. Those who successfully completed the salvation history course specifically (and the LDP program generally), have universally reported appreciation for the experience. They demonstrate growth in grace. It has inspired several people to pursue formal education in biblical studies and discuss the possibility of going to seminary. One participant is, at the time of this writing, leading her unbelieving neighbor through an evangelistic Bible study. Having been perhaps one of our most effective ministry projects to date, I must conclude that the project has absolutely served and fulfilled its purpose in equipping the members of the church to grow in their faith, understand their place in the church, and to make us both corporately and individually a gospel beacon in our community.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The various goals of this project were assessed in several different ways. Each measure however, proved to meet, or exceed expectations. The first goal was to find a minimum of six participants and to assess their knowledge of salvation history. This was exceeded as ten participants were identified as potential leadership discipleship program (LDP) candidates, and entered the program.⁴ These ten participants would be organized into two separate class groups for the salvation history course. Both sessions were assessed using a survey measuring the current state of their knowledge of salvation history before participating in the program (see appendix one). It provided an effective foundation for adapting the salvation history course to cover, as much as possible, each participant's learning needs on the path to their spiritual growth, understand their role in the church and witness to the world. The response exceeding the recruitment targets and reviewing their current knowledge satisfied this goal.

The second goal regarded the creation of the curriculum for the course focused on salvation history as it is presented in Scripture and applied to practical ministry. The course aimed at directing the participants' growth in faith, establishing the context of their role in the church, and providing them with the message to be witnessed to in the community. This curriculum was assessed by means of an expert panel using a provided rubric (see appendix two). The panel consisted of three members. Two members are (or were) elders from our church.⁵ One of them holds an MDiv and the other a BTh with an MA in Biblical Counseling. Both theologically-trained elders had been serving in our church for several years, and were involved in small groups, regular mentoring, and counseling of church members. Our third member is a subject matter expert, as a biblical

⁴In fact, beyond the timing and scope of the project study there are also now an additional 5, making a total of 15 participants.

⁵Since this review was completed, one of these elders has been transferred by his employment to another community.

theology majoring PhD student. He also holds an MDiv, and also completed one ThM using biblical theology, and a second ThM in patristic studies. He is currently writing his dissertation working on a biblical theological study from the psalms. He has pastoral experience, which includes time in our congregation giving him a working knowledge of our setting. The panel's input and assessments were all very valuable and substantial. In the main each panel member was very positive in their views of the curriculum. The project's component sessions and parts were all evaluated as being sufficient or exemplary by the reviewers. Thus, this second goal was both accomplished and exceeded expectations.

The third goal of this project was to raise the knowledge of salvation history in its participants by leading them through the curriculum as part of their participation in the LDP. During the course many opportunities for interaction in engaging discussion with participants demonstrated that they were indeed growing in their knowledge of salvation history. They were able to see where they needed to grow in their faith, and understood much more about their roles in the church. They also demonstrated an understanding of the message to which we bear witness. This subjective observation was confirmed by the more objective test, which measured this goal. Repeating the original survey of participant's knowledge of salvation history at the end of the course allowed me to formally assess a demonstrable and positive change between each administration of the survey by means of t-test for dependent samples. This evaluation of the teaching of salvation history to the select group of median participants showed a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their salvation history knowledge ($t(9) = 3.781, p < .004$).

Strengths of the Project

The strengths of this project include the contextual rootedness in the salvation history of God's greater plan in which ministry takes place, the increased knowledge of

Scripture's structure which it provides, and the affirmation of the supremacy of Scripture over the church and her ministries which the course demonstrates. Strengths also include the outcome of this course in the context of our church, which included observable changes in the congregation's focus, service style and saw evangelistic growth for our church body.

Whenever I have been asked to take on a task, project, or employment position, I want to know more than my specific task list. I want to know what the objective is to which my tasking leads. This informs and guides the way in which I carry out my assignments. The fundamental strength of this project was to root and ground the very idea of church leadership into the warp and woof of God's plan for ministry revealed in the Scriptures. When Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18), he was not so much concerned with structures and budgets, but with drafting a people of God "built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). The very nature of the terms in this passage are salvation historical. The holy priesthood concept is rooted in an understanding of God's appointment of Adam to be a priest in his garden-temple (the "tend and keep" of Genesis 2:15, is seen to be a priestly task in Numbers 3:7-8, 8:26, 18:5-6). It is also informed by the call of God on the people of Israel to become a nation of priests (Exod 19:6). To offer up spiritual sacrifices requires an understanding of the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant and what it intended to do, and how spiritual sacrifices might both build on and differ from these in light of the offering up of Christ as the final Old Covenant sacrifice (Heb 10:14). Leadership within this kind of framework must be very different than that found in social clubs, employment systems, and even in comparison with Old Covenant structures. Knowing the plan of salvation history gives church leaders a goal to which they are working and a correct sense of purpose and direction.

Second, knowledge of Scripture is an absolute minimum necessity to any leadership in the church. What Scripture teaches (sound doctrine) is necessary. I wrote a philosophical statement for a church in which I previously served. In part it explains:

We believe that the primary need of the 21st century church is sound doctrine – we believe the Bible clearly teaches that sound doctrine is a prerequisite and absolutely necessary for the proclamation of the gospel unto salvation (Rom 6:17), to equip the body of Christ for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17), and for individual sanctification (2 Tim 2:7). And whereas it is the chief duty of Christ’s ministers to proclaim sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:1-5), and so unify the body of Christ in maturity (Eph 4:11-16)—it is therefore absolutely urgent to grapple seriously with the Scripture (2 Tim 2:15), coordinate theological tradition (2 Tim 2:2; Heb 13:7), and formulate truth to confront and inform the present age and the current generation of the body of Christ.

I continue to affirm what I wrote, but the statement does not address what is intended by Paul’s phrase “sound doctrine,” which forms the background of the statement.

Scripturally, doctrine (Gk. διδασκαλία), a word defined as simply “that which is taught,”⁶ summarizes teaching that agrees with what Paul calls “the sound (or healthy) words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness” (1 Tim 6:3, 2 Tim 1:15). In another place, Paul makes clear that “the words of our Lord” are the gospel (1 Thess 1:8). The gospel is the good news of God, promised in the prophets, concerning his Son, through whom grace is given through faith, and peace is achieved between God and believing humanity (Rom 1:1-6). This good news, or gospel, which forms sound doctrine is, put simply, salvation history.

One might summarize the philosophy of ministry above as follows, “We believe that the primary need of the twenty-first century church is salvation history . . . sound words which agree with the message of the gospel and result in godliness.” It is

⁶William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 240.

this sound teaching that the course in salvation history offers, thus providing the church with its essential foundation for a philosophy and practice of ministry.

Third, relating again to Matthew 16:18, it is critical to be reminded that the church is Christ's church. Scripture not only provides the framework of the big picture and the necessary content for ministry leadership, it also works as an authority. Everything we do in ministry is controlled by Scripture. We submit to Christ's lordship when we submit to his word. "Heaven and earth will pass away" Jesus reminds us, "but my words will not pass away" (Matt 24:35). The words of Scripture, for evangelicals, represent our final authority for all matter of faith and conduct, of which ministry is a component.

With regard to the impact on the church, three additional points can be made. As participants grew more confident in thinking through the gospel and a fuller and more articulate Christian worldview, they began to apply it in their lifestyle, leading to more effective ministries of various kinds. As members saw the change, they asked to be involved in upcoming LDP intake opportunities. Participants led services, children's ministries, small groups and women's events. They started new outreach initiatives, grew personally. This led to a greater awareness and focus on our missional context. People were not at church *only* for their own spiritual good, but also as part of a greater mission. Second, the very structures of the church were impacted. One participant became heavily involved in service leading and brainstormed with me ways that our service could be structured to inculcate a salvation history way of thinking in the minds of all worshipers. I empowered him (under my supervision) to experiment with differing ideas following the course and after six different models were tried (and congregational feedback heard) we adopted the best of the practices into our new forms of service. Finally, the strength was seen in participants sharing their faith more directly and several new believers were added to our congregation during the course and in the months which followed.

Weaknesses of the Project

In moving leadership training forward in our church it has been helpful to have recognized strengths and noted the success of meeting the goals for this course in salvation history. It is equally as important to assess its weaknesses. In fresh sessions of this course, noted strengths can be reemphasized, while weaknesses might be addressed. The weaknesses of the project consist first in its nature as a constituent part of a larger project, the nature of developing the distinction between knowledge and wisdom and the heavy expectation of participant self-motivation.

First, as more of a caveat than a weakness, the intention and role of the salvation history course must be kept in mind. It is critical to remember that this project (while isolated for purposes of this report and program) was never intended to stand alone. As part of the larger Leadership Discipleship Program (LDP), the salvation history course serves as the biblical-theological foundation, which is then utilized in all other areas of that larger enterprise. In the LDP, practical application, systematic theology and mentoring are the critical components. If the salvation history class were split off on its own, it would still be a valuable program, but it would not produce well-rounded leaders.

Second, there is a tendency in a content heavy course such as the salvation history course presented here to devolve into a focus on facts and knowledge. Leaders cannot be made by knowledge alone. Head and heart must be united. The ability to teach presupposes knowledge, but it is well known that the qualification for elders and deacons in the pastoral epistles primarily consists not of knowledge qualifications, but of character and spiritual qualifications.

On several instances, this weakness was revealed. Participants generally showed that they had mastered the outline of the course's teaching, but did not always demonstrate the ability to apply that outline to their lives, or to practical ministry. I found this disparity illustrated in the periodic reviews I conducted where I asked both content and application questions about key aspects of salvation history discussed previously.

Participants were generally able to answer the content questions satisfactorily. However, when asked a question about a problem in the nursery volunteer recruitment (a very practical and often pressing matter), participants had trouble demonstrating the ability to bridge the idea of salvation history into a problem with the nursery ministry. I assumed at first that the cumulative effect of the course's future sessions would begin to iron this weakness out.

I was not wholly wrong. As time progressed, there was improvement, especially as I led the group through example scenarios throughout the course, but there was never enough growth to allow the majority of participants to engage in fully independent analysis. Thus, it was obviously not a participant problem, but a course problem. The beginning of a solution to this weakness was found in drawing out these links within the content portions of the course and addressing them regularly in an ad hoc way as we progressed. However, as will be discussed below, I have begun to put into place a plan to structure the course slightly differently in this area of application to address this weakness further.

A third weakness of the program regarded expectations. As people who were already, or desired to be, part of leadership ministry in the church there was the expectation for significant self-motivation in the participants. A tremendous amount of biblical and related reading is assigned and the success of the course requires that this reading is largely kept up. While there are good reasons for this approach, the course tends toward having a fire hydrant effect, rather than a fountain effect. It gives people the big picture, and through exposure, it provides an awareness of where they could go to find answers, rather than providing all the answers. Self-motivated participants read with relish the required portions, and made connections within the Scripture text and the readings. Those who struggled and fell behind found the cumulative effect of being

behind in everything discouraging. The readings did not yield great insights for them, and they felt like they could not take in all the information, so why bother.

This weakness was and is mitigated somewhat by the recognition that the course does not intend to give a comprehensive knowledge of all of Scripture, but rather to show the core salvation history developed throughout biblical history. It was conscientiously designed to be comprehensible and manageable by the newest believer. This was shown not to be wholly accurate in the comments received after the first few sessions. However, as the course progresses these challenges became less prominent. Over the teaching sessions and in one on one mentoring, this difficulty was also relieved methodologically, by small adjustments. However, we had several people ask to repeat the course in a second session, in order to get a better handle on what they felt they had missed. They have all, however, reported a much greater sense of understanding and accomplishment upon completing (by the time of this writing) a second session of the course.

What I Would Do Differently

Relating to the weaknesses discussed above, I have already begun to incorporate differences in the program. I will briefly review those early changes and then consider more significant structural changes I would make. These include both revising the expectations of participant participation and attempting to make the curriculum more neutral in a few key places.

One weakness of particular concern was the challenge that participants found in bridging the gap between knowledge and wisdom, or fact and application. In many ways this challenge is to be expected, and so I want the curriculum to more closely address this concern. One-on-one mentoring opportunities, books that applied biblical theology to their ministry field, and discussions we had were able to effectively move this development forward. With that issue in mind I would (and am) revising the core course

curriculum to make more constant reference to ways I have applied the principles of salvation history in various ministry settings. I would also incorporate more formally scheduled time for opportunities to discuss application using the successful Socratic dialogue method, which I adapted in an ad hoc way with this session. Drawing out the reasoning through this form of discussion was an effective way of directing people through the thought process of application. Because it came from the group, rather than solely from my experience, it also introduced many kinds of ministry practices into the discussion. With time set aside to regularly use this approach, and by giving more concrete personal illustrations, that the weakness should be sufficiently addressed. These small adjustments will not have a significant change to the structure of the program.

In some ways, however, I would like to make structural changes to the salvation history course. In organizing the class, I made sure that the participants understood that it was essential to complete the assigned readings and to be prepared to participate in the group discussions. This requirement was (and is) absolutely necessary. However, the current plan offers no process of remediation. Several participants were intimidated and simply dropped out, when I believe something effective could have been worked out. On the other hand, a few people stayed with the program, but did not complete the assignments and thus hampered not only their own learning process, but occasionally also hamstrung the group discussions. We dealt with this problem on an occasional basis, with my revising my presentation to cover more material and discuss less. However, for those participants who did make the effort, this issue was no doubt frustrating. I would like to find a better way to work with those who were overwhelmed and those who did not take their commitment seriously enough. One way this matter will improve in future courses is by ensuring that the assigned ministry mentors (who one hopes have already completed the LDP) are engaged in encouraging their assigned participants.

Another technique that I tried and would like to incorporate in a more systematic way is to emphasize key readings and establish a tier in the reading and application assignments. In the session dealing with the divided kingdom period, for example, we had a heavy reading schedule. I therefore encouraged the participants to focus on the book of Amos (northern) and Jeremiah (southern) prophets of the exile, while skimming the other readings. This approach proved to be somewhat effective. In future editions I would like to tier most sections in this way. Related to this emphasis is a streamlining of all the elements of the course, so that devotional, scriptural epoch and readings are all seen to flow in a single, graspable point. This was the intention from the start, but could be more clearly presented. It might be suggested that a simpler outline could produce a similar effect and be less challenging. In my present opinion (based on the ongoing success of the program) I would counter that clarifying the present content is superior to jettisoning any one of the proven elements.

One further thing that I would do differently is the way I present my own theological biases. My intention in the course is to teach the Bible's salvation history story line. Theology is important, and we have a section of the LDP that focuses on this discipline. Some of the major systematized biblical theologies are discussed in the course, including dispensational, covenant, and new covenant perspectives. In this section the aim was not to bias the participants' reading of the text toward a systematization. However, one of my curriculum reviewers noticed a tendency toward one theological system recurring. Again, this slant is somewhat natural and the two disciplines will always interact to a certain extent, so I did not see things the same way as the reviewer. However, upon teaching the course, I am convinced the reviewer was correct, and I am making more effort to present system neutral summaries of the various controversial issues in my next revision.

Theological Reflections

The comprehensive scope of the biblical survey accomplished in this project demanded that I filter and present the message of the entire Bible with a laser sharp focus on its redemptive-historical message. This aim in itself is a theological enterprise. Hamilton explains, “For the believing community, the goal of biblical theology is simply to learn [the] practice of interpretation from the biblical authors so that we can interpret the Bible and life in this world the way they did.”⁷ For Christians, as followers of Christ, the Lord Jesus is natural and logical starting point for interpreting the Scriptures. The reader of Jesus’ biographers is struck by the Lord’s frequent expressions of surprise that those around him lack an understanding of what he is doing in light of their access to the Old Testament Scriptures. He often criticizes those who misunderstand him with the words, “have you never read,” or the like (Matt 12:3; Mark 2:25; Mark 12:10, 26). Those who doubt Jesus are condemned for not clearly seeing Jesus and his ministry in the Scriptures, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39–40). This project provided an opportunity to greatly appreciate the implications of the centrality of the redemptive-historical message in Scripture and therefore led me to sharpen my focus on God, his Word and his church.

At the heart of this biblical message is the presentation of God the Father, not only as Creator, but also as the Redeemer of his rebellious and fallen Creation. Salvation is a Triune work initiated by the Father and accomplished by his Son and applied by the Holy Spirit. Jude Describes the Father as “God, our Savior” who redeems us “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Jude 1:25). Christians, by nature, affirm that “Salvation belongs to the LORD” (Jonah 2:9), but, I was particularly struck with the refreshing relentlessness

⁷James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: IL: Crossway, 2010), 42.

of God's purpose and his glorious long-term perspective on the work of redemption. God is not a reluctant redeemer, nor does he give a half-hearted or knee-jerk response to sin. He is instead a loving and conscientious Savior. In Genesis 3 God both promises fallen humanity ultimate rescue (3:15) and also provides them temporary respite (3:21). In the next generation, God is back at work calling Cain back from his sin (4:6, 7). He grants his grace to Noah and his family (6:8) when humanity is once again at the peak of sinful rebellion (6:5-7). This latter work is a significant development as God (re)established his creational covenant relationship with humanity through Noah (9:11). With this baseline reestablished, God focuses on paving the way for global redemption through his calling of, and covenant with Abraham (12:1-3). This is the God of Israel, and the God who fulfilled his predetermined plan to save humanity (Acts 2:23) by sending his own Son "to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Seeing God, throughout Scripture, as the ultimate protagonist of the Bible's redemptive story leads the reader to the only right understanding of Him. He is not a cosmic killjoy, or distant principle, but rather the God who acts directly on the Creation and Creatures he loves (1 John 4:8). This knowledge leads to a rich, fulfilling, and real mutual relationship. Such a relationship with a worthy Creator and Redeemer encourages the believer to freely worship. Worship brings him or her into a deeper discipleship, or life of faith and godliness. This sort of worshipful discipleship, in turn, leads the believer to be transformed into the image of the Savior (2 Cor 3:18), and having had the opportunity to work through Scripture with this lens, as the leader, I have been drawn into an ever deeper and more rewarding knowledge of God.

A redemptive-historical understanding of the message of Scripture also has a profound impact on one's understanding of the church. The church owes its very existence to this mission of God. Hence, she is "the church of the living God" (1 Tim 3:15). The church is the assembly of the redeemed (Heb 12:22-24). The result of people's

being saved is that the church is called into existence is because of God's relentless pursuit of humanity's salvation for his glory (Eph 1:3–14). Both my ministry and mission as a pastor, and the ministry and mission of the local and universal church, is an ambassadorial ministry and mission. God has chosen to pursue his appeal for the world to be reconciled to him through this ambassadorial mission (2 Cor 5:20). This truth means that as the church does its work corporately and individually through evangelism fulfilling the Great Commission program the redeemed participate in the mission of God. Because in God's redemptive-historical plan "all authority" is restored to Jesus "in heaven and on earth," disciples are called to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:18–20).

One of the Lord's strongest statements connecting his redemptive work with the message of Scripture was directed toward his disciples. For three years he had instructed them in his mission as the fulfillment of the redemptive-historical plan of salvation revealed through the Old Testament. Shortly after his resurrection, Jesus came in disguise to several disciples walking from Jerusalem along the road to Emmaus. These disciples shared with their disguised Lord their discouragement and confusion over his death. "We had hoped," they confided, "that he would be the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:23). At this Jesus exclaims, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (Luke 24:15). Then "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (24:27). The disciples later described this instruction saying that their hearts burned within them when Jesus "opened . . . the Scriptures" to them (24:32).

The thrill the disciples felt as the Scriptures came alive for them is repeatable for everyone who reads the Scriptures in the way Jesus demonstrated. Moses, all the prophets, and the memoirs of the apostles (the New Testament Scriptures) become much clearer and more engaging when one understands that they reveal the histories in which

God reveals himself as Redeemer through the records of the covenants between him and his people (e.g., Exod 19-20); the accounts of the person and work of the God–man Christ Jesus; and the apostolic establishment and constitution for the extension and operation of the church of the living God (Eph 2:20). Each epoch recorded in a given section of Scripture develops the one story of God and his plan of redemption. These developments relay various historical salvific events, usually focused on covenants such as the seminal promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), in which later scriptural acts of expansion with regard to redemption are rooted. The exodus was rooted in the promises of the Abrahamic covenant (Exod 2:24), as is the person and work of Jesus as the Christ of promise (Luke 1:54–55; 72–73). This connection between the covenant with Abraham and later redemptive movements is celebrated in the Psalms.

As the liturgy of prayer and worship for God’s people the psalms are heart and mind shaping poems. Psalm 105 reminds the worshipper that God “remembers his covenant forever . . . the covenant that he made with Abraham” (105:8, 9), and so having “remembered his holy promises and Abraham his servant . . . he brought his people out” of Egypt (vv. 42, 43). Further direct connections are seen as the rest of the Scriptures are considered. Each of these various redemptive-historical links, which reach back all the way to Genesis 3:15 and are later given their central expression as developments of the promise to Abraham, establish the meaning of the surrounding narratives of Scripture. These redemptive-historical covenantal epochs, once understood as revealing Christ, move the message of Scripture forward with richer and deeper meanings. It becomes clear what Paul meant when he explained to the Galatians that our Salvation as believers is a direct application of “the promises . . . made to Abraham” by means of “a covenant previously ratified by God” which can never be “annulled” (Gal 3:16, 17). As a result, believers “in Christ” (3:26) are today, covenantally speaking, “Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (3:29).

God, the church, and the Scriptures are thus made more clear and more alive when they are understood in relation to the course in redemptive history, which forms the foundation of the leadership discipleship program at GraceLife. In my working through this course, I have grown and been given a new appreciation for my own salvation and for my calling in ministry, which I elaborate below.

Personal Reflections

Speaking now from a wholly personal perspective, I have experienced immense benefit, both in my ministry and in my own spiritual walk as I have completed this project. It was certainly a challenge for me to think through the salvation history storyline in Scripture and to draw it out of the diverse texts found between Genesis to Revelation in ways that were both relevant and insightful, but also simple enough to speak to those coming from every different level of previous knowledge. In finding ways to summarize the message of Scripture faithfully, but succinctly and accurately, while above all simply, I grew in my own knowledge of God, his word, and his ways. I was also forced to think through the ways I conduct my own ministry and how I live my life.

Thinking first about the impact of this project on my ministry, I have a few observations. One of the most interesting parts of this impact on my ministry has been in the personal relationships it has fostered. Christian fellowship is rooted in our shared experience of adopted sonship (1 John 1:3 and 5:1). Spending quality time with people in positive ways, and not merely counseling them during a crisis, really helped me to build enduring friendships with a larger number of people in the church. This relationship growth has a personal component to be sure, but what is more interesting is how it has impacted my ministry. Those who have spent this time with me know me, and I know them in a more complex and personal way. We have gained a stronger trust and respect for one another. Because of this bond of fellowship, there have been less friction and fewer misunderstandings; and generally it has been easier to conduct church business. We

still have disagreements in the church. However, when conflicting positions arise, they become arguments between friends.

I have also rethought some of the general ministry activities I lead in the church. Service planning has been significantly impacted. The significance of salvation history in Scripture should have an impact on what is presented to the congregation generally. We began, for example, to incorporate the Songs of Salvation from the gospel of Luke (1:36b–55; 68–79; 2:29–32), and other similar Scriptures as corporate readings. We have talked about our philosophy of song choice with the music ministry and have gained a consensus that our songs, hymns, and spiritual songs should focus more clearly on the great events of God’s redemptive plan.

My preaching ministry has also been reshaped. I have made the traditional expository ministry practice of *lectio continua* a staple of my preaching, working through scriptural books from beginning to end. I continue to do so in order to ensure that the preaching ministry will be able to proclaim “the whole council of God” (Acts 20:27). However, I have begun intentionally to intersperse mini-series, or single messages, which focus on redemptive history themes at natural breaks in my expositional series. Often these come as natural developments from a text in the regular expositional plan. In one example, while preaching through Romans, we came through chapter 11. This chapter concluded a unit of three chapters addressing the place of Israel in the church age. Before continuing in Romans 12, I took a break and preached through a short series in the book of Exodus, showing God’s redemption, purpose, and plan for Israel. That book reveals many things about God and about his desire for his people which can be applied in our present circumstances. I have also preached on the key texts, which I presented in chapter 3 of this project, and did a three-week series on marriage and family with a redemptive historical foundation and focus.

Perhaps more importantly, the discipline of working through the whole Bible several times over, and focusing on its major developments has sharpened my own understanding of Scripture immeasurably and, more importantly, my understanding of the author of Scripture and of his ways. My faith has been significantly strengthened and encouraged. There is a fundamental difference between knowledge that extends as far as the head, and knowledge that reaches the heart. Salvation is by grace through faith alone, but that faith is never alone. Ephesians 2:8–9 emphasize the gracious nature of the faith, but verse ten concludes the discussion of grace: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). Good works are a part of the redemptive-historical plan of God. The redeemed walk in them, as part of his plan.

Love is the motivation for good works. Jesus said, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching” (John 14:23), but this love is rooted in, and drawn from his love of us, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). God’s plan of redemption is the motivation of love. The more I have studied his redemptive work, the better I have understood and the more I have experienced his love. As a consequence, I have loved him better. Out of the overflow of that love have found my joy, my motivation for obedience, and my actual obedience to grow.

Conclusion

The curriculum in salvation history focused on in this project’s purpose was part of a larger strategy to utilize biblical theology as the key tool with which to equip our congregation’s new and prospective leaders in understanding how to grow in their own faith, where they fit in the church, and how they can lead the congregation in being a witness to the community around us. The goals, designed to serve this purpose, were meant to measure the effectiveness of a salvation history course in helping the

participants move toward the ultimate purpose of ministry equipment. These measures demonstrated that by growing in their knowledge of the way God works and how that knowledge might be applied to the ministries and life of the church, participants were more fully equipped for service in ministry leadership. This salvation history project, which was completed (and now through new sessions is ongoing), has (re)formed a refreshing core of members for the life and ministry of our church.

APPENDIX 1

SALVATION HISTORY SURVEY

The following is a sample survey, created for this project, that included a disclaimer and the six point Lickert scale that should be used with such instruments. This and other surveys are available in the sample proposals at www.sbts.edu/dmin/resources.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of Biblical Theology by each participant. Chad Graham is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

Part 1

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?
 A. Yes
 B. No

2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?
 A. Yes
 B. No

3. Have you taken formal bible classes through an academic institution?
 A. Yes
 B. No

4. Do you have a degree, or major in theology or Bible?
 A. Yes
 B. No

5. How long have you been actively involved in a local Church?
 A. 0-2 years
 B. 3-6 years
 C. 7-10 years
 D. 11+ years

Part 2

Directions: Answer the following questions. Give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 6. I can confidently define biblical theology and salvation history. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. I frequently hear my pastor referring to, or preaching elements of salvation history in sermons. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. I am confident that the central message of the Bible can be known. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. I know how to get from what the Bible <i>meant</i> to what it <i>means</i> . | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. I grow spiritually by doing devotions in the Old Testament. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. I spend about equal time studying the Old Testament as the New Testaments. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. I can demonstrate to others how the Old Testament speaks of Jesus. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. I believe that reading the narratives (stories) of the Bible help me grow as a Christian. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. I understand what the Bible teaches about the mission of the Church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 15. I understand what the Bible teaches about my role in God's Kingdom. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Part 3

Directions: Answer the following questions. Give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 16. The Reformers created Biblical Theology. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. There can be many ways to do Biblical Theology. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. The Reformers were the first to study salvation history. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. Systematic Theology is a kind of Biblical Theology. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. Biblical Theology attempts to let the Bible speak <i>on its own terms</i> . | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 21. Finding the central theme of the Bible is an example of biblical theology. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. Salvation history makes frequent use of the allegorical method to find Christ in the Old Testament. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. Salvation history finds ways to spiritualize Old Testament passages to make them about Christian living. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. Salvation history uses typology to understand Old Testament passages. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. Wayne Grudem is a well-known Biblical Theology writer. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. Graeme Goldsworthy is a well-known Biblical Theology writer. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Personal Identification Number:

APPENDIX 2

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following is a sample rubric created for this project that will be employed in measuring the curriculum of the course in salvation history. A copy of this and other sample rubrics are available in the sample proposals at www.sbts.edu/dmin/resources.

Salvation history Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Session 1 Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The session is clearly relevant to the issue of salvation history.					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on Salvation history.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.					

APPENDIX 3
T-TEST RAW DATA

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	86.3	99.7
Variance	154.011111	85.122222
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0.49578786	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-3.7810287	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00217107	
t Critical one-tail	1.83311293	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00434214	
t Critical two-tail	2.26215716	

APPENDIX 4
COURSE PARTICIPANT HANDOUT NOTES

This appendix is a slightly edited version of the notes given to participants in the Salvation history course.

LDP Salvation History Course

Instructor Pastor Chad Graham

Phone REMOVED

E-mail REMOVED

Description:

The Leadership Discipleship Program (LDP) is Grace Church's practical expression of faithfulness to the call of God on the church to mentor and train the next generation of leaders for the church (2 Tim. 2:2). This course is a part of that process seeking to nurture *functional leaders* equipped to serve effectively as small group leaders, Sunday school teachers, deacons and Elders.

Goals:

To partner with members becoming functional leaders to help them grow in character, convictions and competence in gospel (salvation history) driven ministry.

To grow in your understanding of the main gospel (salvation history) storyline of the Bible in such a way that you can identify where any given command, story, or example from the Bible fits into the big picture.

To understand how the gospel (salvation history) relates to the practical aspects of local church ministry

Expectations:

- 1) Meet the general qualifications of spiritual ministry workers in the church, (1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3).
- 2) Commit to attending the mandatory course workshop sessions, which will run for 16 sessions. One (1) excused absence and (1) attendance at the other group's course timeslot may be taken in consultation with the instructor. Starting on time is critical, please make every effort to be ready.
- 3) Complete study assignments between sessions (even in event of a session absence).

- 4) Purchase the required resources (Scholarship available in case of financial need).
- 5) Participate in an approved ministry in leadership, discipleship, or teaching in the Grace Church Context.

Required resources:

You will require one of the following study Bibles:

- John MacArthur *The MacArthur Study Bible* (ESV or NAS) or R.C. Sproul ed. *The Reformation Study Bible* (2015 edition, ESV)

You will also need to read the following book *before* coming to the first scheduled session:

- Ken Ham *The Lie: Evolution: Revised and Expanded*. ISBN: 0890516863

You will need to read Part 1 of the following book for the second session:

- Ed Welch *When People are Big and God is Small*. ISBN: 0875526004

The Textbooks we will work through together during the course are:

- Welch (Part 2).
- Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom* (In *The Goldsworthy Trilogy*.) ISBN: 1842270362
- Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry*. ISBN: 1433515083

Course Schedule:

Week	Topic	Required Textbook Reading
INTRO MTG	Intro to the Bible	Course Syllabus (emailed to you).
1	Creation (Gen 1-11)	None. Discussion of <i>The Lie</i> .
2	Patriarch (Gen 12-50, Job)	None. Discussion of <i>Welch, WPB & GS (Part 1)</i> .
3	Exodus (Ex, Lev., Nu., Deut.)	<i>Welch, WPB & GS (Part 2)</i> .
4	Conquest (Joshua)	Goldsworthy, <i>G&K</i> (Intro–Chap 3).
5	Judges (Jdg., Ru., 1 Sa. 1-7)	Goldsworthy, <i>G&K</i> (Chaps 4–5).
6	UK (1 Sa. 8-21, 2 Sa., 1 Ki. 1-11, 1 Chr., 2 Chr. 1-9, Ps., Pr., Ecc., Song)	Goldsworthy, <i>G&K</i> (Chaps 6–Conc).
7	Chaotic Kingdom (1 Ki. 12-22, 2 Ki., 2 Chr. 10-36, Oba., Jon., Amo., Hos., Mi., Isa., Nah., Zep., Hab., Jer., Lam.)	Goldsworthy, <i>G&K</i> (Appendix C exercises).
8	Bible Test 1 + CT, NCT & DT	Lawrence <i>Biblical Theology</i> (Intro–chap 2).

Week	Topic	Required Textbook Reading
9	Captivity (Dan., Eze.)	Lawrence <i>Biblical Theology</i> (chaps 3–5).
10	Return (Ezr., Neh., Est., Hag., Zec., Mal)	Lawrence <i>Biblical Theology</i> (chaps 6–7).
11	Gospel (Mat., Mar., Luk., Joh.)	Lawrence <i>Biblical Theology</i> (chaps 8–10)a.
12	Early Church (Acts)	Lawrence <i>Biblical Theology</i> (chaps 8–10)b.
13	Epistle A. (1, II Thes., Gal., I, II Cor. Rom.)	Lawrence <i>Biblical Theology</i> (chaps 11–12).
14	Epistle B. (Eph., Phi., Col., Phmn., Tit., I, II Tim.)	<i>The Bible Overview</i> (Part 1)
15	Epistle C. (Heb., Jms. I, II Pet., I,II,III Jn, Jud.)	<i>The Bible Overview</i> (Part 2)
16	Revelation	<i>The Bible Overview</i> (Part 3)

INTRO SESSION

The LDP Salvation History course will begin in six weeks. The purpose of this session is to give a brief overview of the expectations of the course, complete the pre-course biblical theology knowledge survey, to provide a short introduction to its core curriculum—the Bible itself, and to go over the pre-course assignments.

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, the participants will have a good idea of what they are signing up for. Participants will also understand the purpose of the various assigned readings, with a special focus on the pre-course readings and their intended purpose.

Session One Workshop Outline

- 15 min A) Overview of LDP expectations and pre-course survey (9-9:15)
- 30 min B) Overview of the Bible INTRO (9:15-9:45)

30 min C) Overview of Direction/Philosophy of Ministry at Grace and how it relates to LDP (9:45-10:15)

15 min D) Overview of Assignments for our first meeting (10:15-10:30).

A) Overview of LDP expectations

See Pages One (1) and Two (2).

B) Baseline Exam - Biblical Theology

C) Overview of the Bible INTRO

The Bible is God's Word (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:21 & 2:5).

-Co-Authored by Divine/Human confluence (Matthew 1:22).

-Every Word is God's (1 Thes 2:13), and yet every word is humanly conditioned (2 Peter 3:15-16).

The One Message -Jesus

The Two Main Divisions –Old and New Testaments

-Promises Made (Old Testament)

-Promises Kept (New Testament)

The Bible's Structure –Covenants and Dispensations (biblical, not theological)

-Biblical Covenants

-Biblical Dispensations

-Theological Covenants

-Dispensational Theology

Our Bible Study Method –Chronological (tied to great Redemptive Epochs)

A. Author and Date B. Big Issues C. Big Picture Overview:

1) *The Main message of the whole section (or of individual books in the section).*

2) *Who are the main characters?*

3) *What is the main action?*

4) *Outline?* (Example of the previous stage, from H.L. Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide*

to the Bible p. 1):

I. The *Creation* of all things (Gen. 1-2)

II. The *Corruption* of all things (Gen. 3-5)

III. The *Condemnation* of all things (Gen. 6-9)

IV. The *Confusion* of all things (Gen. 10-11)

D. What Covenant(s) is/are related in this passage:

- 1) *To whom are they/ is it related?*
- 2) *What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?*
- 3) *How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?*
- 4) *How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?*
- 5) *How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?*

D) Overview of Direction/Philosophy of Ministry at Grace and how it relates to LDP

- 1) *Mentoring, not Academic.*
- 2) *Seminar and workshop not Lecture.*
- 3) *Active Expectation, not Passive Assumption.*
- 4) *A Ministry of, not just Ministry to.*

E) Overview of Assignments for First meeting.

- 1) Read Ken Ham's *The Lie*, be prepared to discuss its controversial and counter-consensus thinking. It's not about whether you agree with Ham, the purpose is to ask, "on what basis does the author base his convictions?" and then be prepared to discuss its contents and implications for ministry and evangelism. Also read the first part of Welch's *When People are Big*, another counter-cultural book. How do these books sit with us in light of our culture's assumptions about the origin of the world and the nature of human problems?
- 2) *Read Genesis 1-11 (Read in one sitting, minimum 3 times, take notes, write Chapter headings, notice covenants (if there are any), think about how this points to Christ).*
- 3) *Read your Study Bible intro to Genesis.*
- 4) *Review the Bible Intro Handouts from this session.*
- 5) *Think, Pray and Write Notes about how you like/desire to serve God (toward discovering/honing gifts).*

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011)

Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, revised and expanded, 2007)

Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, reprint 2009)

Craig A. Blaising & Darrell L. Bock *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000)

Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible, An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (IVP Academic, 2002).

ESV Study Bible “Introduction to the Bible”

Schofield Reference Bible “Introduction to the Bible”

Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Moody, 2007).

Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (IVP Academic, 2012).

T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Baker Academic, 2012).

John H Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Zondervan, 2001).

Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (IVP, 1972).

Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Crossway, 2010).

SESSION 1 – The Creation Epoch

In this section the first chronological stage of biblical revelation, the Creation Epoch, will be discussed, and the second stage, The Patriarchal Epoch, will be introduced. Ken Ham’s book will be discussed in the context of leaning, “How to read a book?”

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Share their initial observations of Genesis 1-11 (what should you observe when reading the Bible?)
- Learn “how to read an epochal stage” in the pattern provided for this course.
- Have an introductory understanding of the contents of the Patriarchal epoch stage.

- Learn “how to read a book” with a discussion of Ken Ham’s *The Lie* (a very controversial book!).

Session One Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

30–minute Overview of the Bible

30–minute Introduction to ‘How to read a Stage’ with focus on Genesis 1–11

30–minute Introduction to Patriarch Stage

50 Min Session, ‘How to Read a Book’ Intro to the Practical Readings through a discussion of Ken Ham’s *The Lie*.

Devotion

Genesis – “The Cardinal Doctrine of Creation” (Instructor demonstration devotional). Each devotion will last about 10 minutes, followed by a learning review for the benefit of all. The Devotion must demonstrate four key elements, which participants will attempt to discern:

1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Discussion of the elements. First, from the group, what evidence did you hear in the devotion that shows you a careful, accurate exegesis of the passage lies behind this devotion? Etc.

Overview of the Bible’s Message

OT - Promises Made

NT - Promises Kept

What is a Biblical Covenant?

How to Read a Stage (Epoch), with focus on Genesis 1–11

The Salvation history of these chapters are discernable in the key patterns of:

Creation (Genesis 1–2)

Fall (Genesis 3)

Corruption (Genesis 4-6:7; 6:11–13)

Restructuring (Genesis 6:8–10; 6:14–11)

What covenant, or covenants, if any can be discerned in these chapters?

The Creation Covenant (or Edenic Covenant/ or Creation mandate)?

The Covenant of Redemption?

The Noahic Covenant (a reissue of the creation mandate)?

Introduction to the Patriarch Stage (Genesis 12-50 & Job)

What do Job and Genesis 12–50 have in common?

Introductory Issues to these passages (As you read, see if you answer the following questions?):

A) Author and Date

B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation

C) The Big Picture:

- a. What is the main message of Genesis 12–50?
- b. What is the main message of the Book of Job?
- c. Who are the main characters?
- d. What is the main Action?
- e. Outline?

D) What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

This is the most important thing you can grasp in order to understand any passage of Scripture. The Bible is written to reveal God's covenant redemption of humanity. The New Testament is the revelation of the New Covenant. Salvation is by means of covenant headship (Romans 5:6-21). So as we read Genesis 12-50 (and Job), let's spend some time here:

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

How to Read a Book (Ken Ham's *The Lie* discussed).

Thinking about How people form worldviews.

What were your initial reactions to this book?

Why would we read a book like this?

Demonstration of how to quickly discern the main point of a book (and of a chapter of a book).

Discuss the merit of Ken Ham's main points, referring to your own observations of Genesis 1–11 and anything you might have heard in the past.

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mortimer J Adler & Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* (Touchstone, revised 1972).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Moody, 2007).

Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (IVP Academic, 2012).

T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Baker Academic, 2012).

John H Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Zondervan, 2001).

SESSION 2 – The Patriarchs' Epoch

In this second chronological stage of biblical revelation, the Patriarchs of Genesis (including Abraham and his progeny) share a world and theological worldview with Job. This epoch, will be discussed, and the third stage, The Exodus Epoch, will be introduced.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Share their initial observations of Genesis 12–50 & Job.
- Learn about the key elements and central importance of the Abrahamic Covenant.

- Discuss the problem of suffering in Job.
- Have an introductory understanding of the contents of the Exodus epoch stage.
- Self-reflect on the main points of Welch’s book and their application to our assumptions about ourselves.

Session Two Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion of the Patriarch’s Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Exodus Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Ed Welch *When People Are Big and God is Small*.

Devotion and Prayer

First participant led devotion on _____, by _____ . Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Patriarch Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- f. To whom are they/ is it related?
- g. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- h. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- i. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- j. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

The Sufferings of Job.

Some reasons suggested within the text of Job include:

1. That Satan might be silenced (1:9-11; 2:4, 5).
2. That Job might see God (42:5).
3. That Job might see himself (40:4; 42:6).
4. That Job's friends might learn not to judge (42:7).
5. That Job might learn to pray for, rather than to lash out against his critics (42:10).
6. To demonstrate that all God's plans for his own eventually have happy endings (42:10).

KEY LESSON: One must trust in the Sovereign God even as the believer's faith is tested and proved through suffering (1 Peter 1:6-7) and as through that suffering we come to discover, as did Job, confirmation that, "the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (James 5:11).

The Abrahamic Covenant (See handout).

Introduction to the Exodus Stage. Read Exodus 1–24, Leviticus 1–5, Numbers 2–25 and the first 6 and the final chapters (27–34) of Deuteronomy (minimum, feel free to read the whole of these books!).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Exodus?
 - b. What is the main message of Leviticus?
 - c. What is the main message of Numbers?
 - d. What is the main message of Deuteronomy?
 - e. Who are the main characters?
 - f. What is the main Action?
 - g. Outline?

The Big People We Fear

Discuss Welch Chapters 1-5 *When People are Big and God is Small*.

What are the main points in these chapter?

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

O Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (P&R Publishing, 1987).

Paul R Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath* (IVP, 2007).

Alva J McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (BMH Books, 1968).

John H Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Zondarvan, 2001).

John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Zondervan 2nd ed ,1995)

Chad Graham, “*Berith Abraham: God’s Covenant with Abraham*” (Bible Study Handbook, 2011, revised 2015).

SESSION 3 – The Exodus Epoch

In this section these very important chronological stage of salvation history, the Exodus Epoch, will be discussed, and the fourth stage, the conquest Epoch, will be introduced. Discussion of Welch’s book will conclude with interaction on how the book might help us in encouraging one another through life’s challenges.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Share their initial observations of the required Exodus readings (Exodus 1–24, Leviticus 1–5, Numbers 2–25, and the first 6 and final chapters, 27–34, of Deuteronomy).

- Consider the major significance of the Passover in the biblical story of redemption.
- Learn about the key elements of the sacrificial system and Israel's priesthood.
- Discuss the importance of Balaam's prophecies in the development of salvation history.
- Have an introductory understanding of the contents of the conquest epoch stage.
- Discuss ways Welch's book might be applied in encouraging one another in the church.

Session Three Workshop Outline

20-minute Devotion and Prayer

45-minute discussion of the Exodus Stage

10-minute break

45-minute Introduction to the Conquest Stage

10-minute break

50-minute book discussion Ed Welch *When People Are Big and God is Small*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Exodus Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- To whom are they/ is it related?
- What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

Introduction to the Conquest Stage. Read the book of Joshua.

- Author and Date
- Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation

- C) The Big Picture:
- a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

The Big People We Fear

Discuss Welch Chapters 6–13 *When People are Big and God is Small*.

What are the main points in these chapter?

How can we apply each of these points in our church family (encouraging one another)?

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

John J Davis, *Moses and the God's of Egypt* (BMH Books 2nd ed, 1998).

John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Zondervan 2nd ed, 1995).

SESSION 4 – The Conquest Epoch

In this section the Conquest stage of salvation history will be discussed, with a special overview on the problem of genocide, and how we should view this stage today. Then the fifth stage, the Judges stage, will be introduced. Graeme Goldsworthy's key textbook will be introduced along with the accompanying practical exercises we will do each session from now on.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Look at how the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants are critical to understanding the conquest.
- Consider the major apologetics problem of the genocide of the Canaanites.
- Learn about one method of biblical theology, the salvation history approach.
- Discuss the land of Israel in relation to God's covenants.
- Have an introductory understanding of the contents of the Judges epoch stage.
- Discuss their initial response to Goldsworthy's book, as it relates to their experiences.

Session Four Workshop Outline

20-minute Devotion and Prayer

45-minute discussion Conquest Stage

10-minute break

45-minute Introduction to the Judges Stage

10-minute break

50-minute book discussion Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Conquest Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

The Issue of Genocide in Joshua

It is very important to realize how the Conquest fits into the big picture of God's redemptive plans. Theologically, the book of Joshua is framed around the promise of God to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, the people of Israel (Genesis 12:7). This one particular aspect of the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has dominated the contents of Genesis through Deuteronomy. Joshua testifies to God's faithfulness to this promise by recounting the successful entry of Israel into the land (2:1-5:12). Now we need to review the history of the dispossessed inhabitants (5:13-12:24; note Genesis 15:13-16).

Covenant Fulfillment (Re, the land) in Joshua

The last sentence of chapter 21 sums up the importance of this theological theme (21:45). Joshua's last words in chapter 23 add to this (23:14).

Thus God's faithfulness is complete, however, much of the promise is still, at this point, unrealized (13:1, 23:5). Further, we note that the enjoyment of the blessings of God (not the promise itself, but the enjoyment of its benefits by an individual, or generation) was/is always contingent on obedience (23:12-16). NOTE FOR COVENANT SECTION (Deuteronomy 29 and the covenant at Moab).

Introduction to the Judges Stage. Read the books of Judges (Minimum chapters 1–3 & 19–21), Ruth and 1 Sam 1-7.

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom* (Intro–chap 3).

What is the discipline of Hermeneutics?

How should one approach the Scripture?

Some basic reading strategies...

Reading your Bible

Traditionally, there have been three steps noted for the understanding of any piece of literature, from a newspaper, to Shakespeare, to the Bible. They are: one (1), observation; two (2), interpretation; and three (3), application. Every piece of literature or writing has purpose. The writer desires the reader to apply that purpose. Some literature aims to inform, some to make apology for a particular viewpoint, others urge the reader to act in a certain way (Vote for someone perhaps), or to change (health ads). The Bible has a spiritual goal and purpose.

Today I want to focus on “Observation”.

- 1) First, we need to understand the words we are reading.
- 2) Second, as we read, it is critical to understand the main point of each paragraph or section.
- 3) Third, and this is one of the most fulfilling steps, placing the passage you are reading into its function within the rest of the Scripture.
- 4) Fourth, you want to read the Scripture as actually listening to God speaking to his people (and to you?).

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington’s Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

John J Davis & John C Whitcomb, *Israel: From Conquest to Exile* (Baker, 1989).

Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words* (Christian Focus, 2006).

SESSION 5 – The Judges Epoch

In this section the Judges unique stage in salvation history will be considered, with a consideration of how God's people are sustained through ages of moral relativism and cycles of spiritual compromise. The book of Ruth will receive special attention as we look at the concepts of Redemption, the Kinsman-Redeemer, and the Providence of God during the Judges stage. Then we will continue in Goldsworthy key textbook will be introduced along with the accompanying practical exercises we will do each session from now on.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Share their observations of the Judges stage.
- Learn to think about moral relativism, and how the Bible addresses it.
- Discuss the key concepts of Redemption and the Kingsman Redeemer.
- Look at the controversy of Ruth's inclusion in the Canon and consider why it should belong in our Bibles.
- Discuss their initial response to Goldsworthy's book, as it relates to their experiences.

Session Five Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Patriarch Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Exodus Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Judges Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

Redemption and the Kingsman Redeemer in Ruth

God's Providence in the Age of the Judges

Introduction to the United Kingdom Stage. Scriptures from this stage include 1 Samuel 8–2 Samuel; I Kings 1–11; I Chronicles–2 Chronicles 9; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; and Song.

(Required reading we will review next week: 2 Samuel; Psalms 1, 2, 8, 89, 90, 119; and Proverbs 1, 2, 31).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom* (Chap 6–Conclusion).

(1) biblical theology and redemptive history

(2) the covenants and the Kingdom of God.

Major Concepts in Biblical interpretation...

Reading your Bible Review Observation (Exegesis) and Interpretation (Shaped by our Hermeneutics) of 1 Peter 1:3-12

Exegesis is drawing from the elements of the text its meaning.

Hermeneutics is the philosophy of language and meaning. Hermeneutics answers the questions accompanying issues of culture, genre, literary structures and form, along with the presuppositions you hold about the nature of language, truth and reality.

Interpretation is the application of your hermeneutic to the observations of exegesis to come to conclusion about the message of the text.

Application is applying the implications of a Biblical text into the life situation of the modern reader.

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

John J Davis & John C Whitcomb, *Israel: From Conquest to Exile* (Baker, 1989).

Dale Ralph Davis, *Judges: Such a Great Salvation* (Christian Focus, reprint 2006).

Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Christian Focus, 2008).

Daniel I Block, *Judges, Ruth: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture in The New American Commentary* (Holman Reference, 1999).

SESSION 6 – The United Kingdom Epoch

In this section the seeming success of God's plan of redemption in the United Kingdom stage of salvation history will be reviewed. David's "Son" is born – could he be the hoped for Messiah? Special attention will be given to the Davidic Covenant and the structure of the Book of Psalms. We will continue in Goldsworthy by discussing our notes on the exercises from his appendix. will be introduced along with the accompanying practical exercises we will do each session from now on.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Look at how the Creation, Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants underlay this period of redemptive history.
- Discuss the rise of the Davidic Kingdom.
- Learn the key details of the Davidic covenant.
- Discuss the promise, but ultimate failure of Solomon and what this means in Messianic prophecy.
- Have an introductory understanding of the contents of the chaotic epoch stage.
- Discuss the completed exercises of Goldsworthy's appendix.

Session Six Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion of the Exodus Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Conquest Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Ed Welch *When People Are Big and God is Small*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

United Kingdom Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- f. To whom are they/ is it related?
- g. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- h. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- i. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- j. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

The Davidic Covenant (see handout).

Introduction to the Chaotic Kingdom Stage. Scriptures from this stage include 1 Kings 12–2 Kings; 2 Chronicles 10–36; Obadiah; Jonah; Amos; Hosea; Micah; Isaiah; Naham; Zephaniah; Habakkuk; Jeremiah; Lamentations. (Required reading we will review next week: 2 Chronicles 36; Amos; and Jeremiah).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom* (Appendix A Exercises).

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

O Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (P&R Publishing, 1987).

Alva J McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (BMH Books, 1968).

John J Davis & John C Whitcomb, *Israel: From Conquest to Exile* (Baker, 1989).

Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity* (Christian Focus, 2008).

Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly* (Christian Focus, 2007).

NT Wright, *The Case for the Psalms* (Harper One, 2013).

CS Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (Harcourt, reprint 1985).

C Hassell Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms* (Baker Academic, 2004).

Chad W Graham, “Davidic Covenant Handout” (Bible Study Handbook, 2016).

SESSION 7 – The Chaotic Kingdom Epoch

We begin this session with a review. Participants will gather in group of 2 or 3 people. Each group will discuss the assigned questions, and then share their answers when the group reassembles. The Chaotic Kingdom readings will then be discussed with a special emphasis on the end of the kingdom of Israel, and the role of the miraculous in this period. Finally, we conclude our study of Goldsworthy with the Appendix C exercises.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the storyline of the Bible and place key figures (from the passages already discovered) into that storyline.
- Discuss the collapse and fall of Israel and Judah in the plan of God.
- Learn the basic purpose of miracles in certain eras of the biblical narrative.
- Complete the Goldsworthy appendix C questions and shared insights.

Session Seven Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

30–minute Review: Interactive Assessment of Participant Comprehension.

10–minute break

60–minute discussion of Chaotic Kingdom Stage

10–minute break

50–minute *Gospel and Kingdom* (Appendix C discussion).

Interactive Assessment of Participant Comprehension

Q1: “An unbeliever asks you, what is the Bible really about? How would present a brief overview of its message?”

Q2: “Your small group gets into a discussion about David and Goliath, asking ‘How should we apply this story to our lives?’ what would you answer them?”

Chaotic Kingdom Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

We find a deeply divided Israel in this books, beyond even the division of the government into North and South. There is a growing distinction between what later writers will call the “remnant” of God’s faithful and the antagonistic. As an illustration note that we find one king (Josiah) discovering God’s Word in the Temple and another king (Jehoiakim) attempting to destroy it in the fire (2 Ki. 22 ; Jer. 36).

As Hamilton puts it, “Through the crushing judgement [from the division of the kingdom through to] the exile, all that Israel is tempted to trust is pulverized, and a remnant is thereby saved to praise the God who keeps his promises” (*God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgement*, 143).

N v. S (survey 1 kings 14-16, with final emphasis on rise of Ahab

Survey of the Elijah/Elisha Narrative (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 13)

The role of the miraculous in the Biblical narrative

Fall of Israel 2 Kings 17 (esp. 17:7-18).

Fall of Judah 2 Kings 24-25 (2 Kings 20:12-19, With Isaiah 39).

Prophetic Example to North – Amos

Prophetic Example to South - Jeremiah

Graeme Goldsworthy *Gospel and Kingdom* (Appendix C Exercises).

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

John J Davis & John C Whitcomb, *Israel: From Conquest to Exile* (Baker, 1989).

Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury* (Christian Focus, 2005).

C Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Moody, Updated ed 2008).

D Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (IVP, 2007).

John FA Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge, 1996).

RK Harrison, *Jeremiah & Lamentations* (IVP, 2009).

TJ Betts, *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (Christian Focus, 2011).

SESSION 8 – Intro to CT, NCT and DT

In this session we take all the lessons we have learned and begin to put them into a bigger picture.

We review the main solutions in today's evangelical world, the Covenant, Dispensational, and

New Covenant Theologies. After this we introduce the Captivity stage, and what this means for the kingdom of God. Then we begin our discussion of our new textbook, *Biblical Theology*.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Grasp the basics of the main big picture biblical theologies.
- Learn the backgrounds to the Captivity stage documents.
- Discuss the key concepts of Redemption and the Kingsman Redeemer.
- Look at the controversy of Ruth's inclusion in the Canon and consider why it should belong in our Bibles.
- Discuss initial response to Lawrence's book, as it relates to their readings and thinking so far.

Session Eight Workshop Outline

20-minute Devotion and Prayer

45-minute Intro to CT, NCT & DT

10-minute break

45-minute Introduction to the Captivity Stage

10-minute break

50-minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (Intro–chap 2).

Introduction to CT, NCT, and DT.

(See handout, "Hermeneutics and Biblical Theologies")

Introduction to the Captivity Stage. Scriptures from this stage include Daniel and Ezekiel (Req'd reading in this recommended order: Ezekiel 1–4; 10–11; Daniel 1–4; Ezekiel 33–48; Daniel 9–12).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?

- b. Who are the main characters?
- c. What is the main Action?
- d. Outline?

Michael Lawrence Biblical Theology (Intro– chap 1).

Introductory Thoughts

Grammatical-Historical Exegesis (chap 1).

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

Michael Vlach, *Dispensationalism Essential Beliefs and Common Myths* (Theological Studies Press, 2010).

Vern S Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (P&R Publications, 2nd ed 1993).

RC Sproul, *The Promises of God* (David C Cook, 2013).

Paul R Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath* (IVP, 2007).

Peter J Gentry & Stephen J Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Crossway, 2012).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

NT Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (SPCK, 1996).

Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Crossway, 2010).

J Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come" A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Zondervan, 1965).

Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, revised and expanded, 2007)

Chad W Graham “Hermeneutics and Biblical Theologies” (Bible Study Handbook, 2013).

SESSION 9 – The Captivity Epoch

In this session a major turning point in God’s plan is set up. The great themes of the Glory of God in Ezekiel, and the prophetic vision of Daniel are explored. After this we introduce the return stage, and ask, will this era fulfill the visions of the captivity prophets? Then we discuss a series of biblical reading tools in our textbook *Biblical Theology*.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of reading Ezekiel and Daniel.
- Consider the major theme of God’s glory in Ezekiel as it relates to God’s big picture plan of redemption.
- Discuss the concept of the Temple in biblical theology.
- Learn the remaining tools of Biblical Theology in the Lawrence readings.

Session Nine Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Captivity Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Return Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Captivity Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- k. To whom are they/ is it related?
- l. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- m. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- n. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- o. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

KEY THEMATIC ISSUES - EZEKIEL

The Glory of God

Departs - Ezekiel 10

Wars Against - Ezekiel 3

Returns - Ezekiel 43

The Temple in Ezekiel's Vision and the New Testament (Notes by Dr. Gary Yates Liberty University)

The primary message of Ezekiel's Vision.

The New Testament development of Ezekiel's Vision.

Jesus as the new Temple.

Believers as the "temple of God".

Zion and the intermediate (millennial) kingdom?

Ezekiel's Vision and the New Jerusalem.

KEY THEMATIC ISSUES - DANIEL

Daniel was written to encourage the exiled Jews by revealing God's program for them, both during and after the time of Gentile power in the world. Prominent above every other theme in the book is God's sovereign control over the affairs of all rulers and nations, and their final replacement with the true King. The key verses are 2:20–22, 44 (cf. 2:28, 37; 4:34–35; 6:25–27). A second theme woven into the fabric of Daniel is the display of God's sovereign power through miracles. Daniel's era is one of six in the Bible with a major focus on miracles by which God accomplished his purposes.

Introduction to the Return Stage. Scriptures from this stage include Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. (Required reading we will review next week: Ezra 1–3; Nehemiah 8–10; Malachi).

- D) Author and Date
- E) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- F) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (chaps 2–3).

Biblical Theology Tools Con't:

1. *Covenants, Epochs, and Canon (chap 2).*
2. *Prophecy, Typology, and Continuity (chap 3).*

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

C Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Moody, Updated ed 2008).

Dr. Gary Yates, "Class Notes OBST 635 Jeremiah and Ezekiel" (Liberty University, 2007).

SESSION 10 – The Return Epoch

In this session the history and the prophecy of the return are considered. The revival under Ezra is looked at and the Gospel Stage is introduced. Then we continue to discuss the series of biblical reading tools in our textbook *Biblical Theology*.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Consider the major salvation history theme(s) of the prophetic promise of this period.
- Discuss the general concept of temple the second Temple period.
- Learn the remaining tools of Biblical Theology in the Lawrence readings.

Session Ten Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Return Stage

10–minute break

45-minute Introduction to the Gospel Stage

10-minute break

50-minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) connecting it to its fulfillment/resolution in the New Testament, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Return Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- p. To whom are they/ is it related?
- q. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- r. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- s. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- t. How and where do we see the New Testament keep it/them?

The Historical framework: Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther

Ezra 1:1 (Jer. 24:1-7, 25:11-13 and Daniel 9:1-2)

What Covenantal Considerations have an impact on Ezra and Nehemiah?

The Key is in Nehemiah 8-10

How do the prophetic books of this era flush out this covenantal theme, and do they propose a further development?).

Read Haggai 1:1-11- Build the Temple Ezra 6:13-22 and Hagg. 2:3-5 - with Ezra 3:12.

Hagg. 2:6-9, Zechariah 6:9-15 with Ezekiel 40-43 pointing to a future temple and the Branch

Daniel 9:20-27 and Eze. 37:24-28 pointing to the future with Zech 8:18-23, and 12:9-10, w/13:1 and 14:4 and 8-9 and 14:20-21

Malachi

Mal 1:6-10 end of the old order

2:4-9 unlike Neh 8 the priests are not explaining the world, end of the old priesthood

3:1 The New Order introduced

3:2 and 5 the danger of the new order

3:6-7 w/ 16-18 the hope of salvation for Israel jer 31:31-34ff

The Final word of the Old Testament prophets and God's last prophecy to Israel, Malachi chapter 4. How does this set up the New Testament?

Introduction to the Gospel Stage. Scriptures from this stage include Matthew, Mark, Luke [and somewhat John]. (Required reading pick one of the first three gospels).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (chaps 4–5).

The tools of

1. Biblical & Systematic Theology (4)
2. Systematic Theology (5)

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Crossway, 2006).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

NT Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (SPCK, 1996).

Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* (B&H Academic, 2010).

SESSION 11 – The Gospel Epoch

Jesus changes everything. We explore what this means, then look at some of the important questions surrounding the four books known as the Gospels. The early church stage is then introduced. Lastly we continue to discuss the series of biblical reading tools in our textbook *Biblical Theology*.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Consider the major salvation history change that occurs with the Gospel.
- Discuss the synoptic problem and the relation of John to the other gospels.
- Learn the remaining tools of Biblical Theology in the Lawrence readings.

Session Eleven Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Gospel Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Early Church Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Gospel Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see:
 - i. Old Testament originate it/them?
 - ii. the New Testament keep it/them?

How Jesus changes everything

Mark 1

Matthew 1–3; 5–7; 12–13; 24–25; 26::26–30; 28

The *Salvation Songs* of Luke 1–2

The Synoptic Problem (How do Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate to one another)?

The Problem Defined

The Arguments for and against Markan Priority

John's Dating and Authenticity

The Johannine Community Hypothesis

Pauline Theology/Gnostic Theology/Advanced Theology Issues

Introduction to the Early Church Stage. Scriptures from this stage includes Acts & James.

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (chaps 6–8).

Biblical Theology of

- 1. Creation (6)
- 2. Fall (7)
- 3. Love (8)

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

Walter A Elwell & Robert Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed 2013).

NT Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (SPCK, 1996).

_____, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (SPCK, 1997).

_____, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (SPCK, 2003).

Andreas J Kostenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary and Theological Perspectives* (Baker Academic, 2002).

RT France *The Gospel of Matthew* in NICNT (Eerdmans, 2007).

Robert L Thomas & Stanley N Gundry, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (Harper One, 1986).

John MacArthur, *One Perfect Life: The Complete Story of the Lord Jesus* (Thomas Nelson, 2013).

_____, *The Gospel According to Jesus: What is Authentic Faith?* (Zondervan, revised 2008).

Chad W Graham, “The Kingdom of God” (Bible Study Handbook, 2012, revised 2014)

SESSION 12 – The Early Church Epoch

In this session something called “the church” is born. The great themes of salvation history in the book of Acts are explored. We also consider the meaning and purpose of the gift of tongues in the history of God’s work of redemption? Then we discuss the themes of sacrifice and promise in our textbook *Biblical Theology*.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Consider the major change in redemptive history and God’s plan of Salvation in Acts.
- Learn about the role of tongues in salvation history.
- Learn the session’s tools of Biblical Theology in the Lawrence readings.

Session Twelve Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Early Church Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Early Pauline Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Early Church Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- f. To whom are they/ is it related?
- g. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- h. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- i. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- j. How and where do we see:
 - iii. Old Testament originate it/them?
 - iv. the New Testament keep it/them?

The Setting of the Age:

Acts 1, *the Accession and Commission of the Lord*

Acts 2, and 9:31 *the Holy Spirit and the Spiritual Unity, and Peace*

Acts 11:19-12:5 *The Jewish Persecution of the Church* (AD 44)

The Great Debate (?) *James and Paul and Justification*

James (AD 44-49)

Acts 15, *The Jerusalem Council* (AD 49)

Is Galatians (AD 49-50) *in conflict with James?*

The Gift of Tongues

The Origin of Tongues in the Book of Acts (Acts 2)

- A. v1-4 The day of Power and *Glossa* “tongues/languages”
- B. v. 5-11 The Renewal of All things and the *Dialekto* “unique forms of speech/ dialects”.
- C. v 12&14-16, 22-24, 38-42 Why *Glossa* and *Dialekto*?

The abuse of the gift of tongues and correction (1 Corinthians 12-14).

- A. Intro to the purpose of the section (v. 1-11) NB v. 7.
- B. The Doctrine of Subsequence 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Ephesians 5:18
- C. The particular problem in Corinth (12:31-14:1)

The Modern tongues phenomenon

Introduction to the Early Pauline Stage. Scriptures from this stage include I, II Thessalonians; Galatians; I, II Corinthians; and Romans (Req’d I Thessalonians; Galatians 3 & Romans).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (chaps 9–10).

Biblical Theology of

1. *Sacrifice*
2. *Promise*

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

Walter A Elwell & Robert Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed 2013).

Darrell L Bock, *Acts* in BECNT (Baker Academic, 2007).

Martin Luther, *The Works of Martin Luther*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Mulenberg Press, 1932).

SESSION 13 – The Early Pauline Epoch

Some call Paul the second founder of Christianity. There can be no doubt his influence is felt. In this session we look at some major Pauline themes. We also wrap up our discussion of our textbook *Biblical Theology*.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Consider Paul's major contribution to Salvation history.
- Learn about the role of eschatological thinking in salvation history.
- Learn the session's tools of Biblical Theology in the Lawrence readings.

Session Thirteen Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Early Pauline Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Later Pauline Stage

10–minute break

50–minute book discussion Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Early Pauline Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see Old Testament originate it/them?

Luther's 1552 *Preface to Romans* (Handout).

Detailed Study of Galatians 3 (How Does Paul portray Salvation History here?)

Eschatology and 1 Thessalonians (How Does Paul's hope fit into the Big Picture of Salvation History we have learned so far?)

Introduction to the Later Pauline Stage. Scriptures from this stage include Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; Philemon; Titus; I, II Timothy (Req'd reading: Ephesians; Phmn; Titus.

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

Michael Lawrence *Biblical Theology* (chaps 11–12 & Epilogue).

Biblical Theology in

1. *Preaching and Teaching*
2. *The Local Church*

Epilogue and Concluding Discussion

Primary Materials and Resources

Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible* (Tyndale House, revised, 2011).

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

Walter A Elwell & Robert Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed 2013).

FF Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Eerdmans, 2000).

NT Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God: Parts 1 & 2* (SPCK, 2013)

Martin Luther & John Dillenberger, “Preface to the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans, 1522” in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (Anchor Press, 1958).

SESSION 14 – The Later Pauline Epoch

How do we figure out the history behind Paul’s post Acts letters? What is going on in the early church? What is God’s plan moving forward? We discuss these kinds of questions as we consider the later Pauline stage. We also introduce *The Bible Overview* course, a teaching tool for you to use, which summarizes the salvation history we have studied throughout our course.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Understand the Apostolic Legacy.
- Learn how we reconstruct early church history after the close of the Acts narrative.
- Learn the basic structure of *The Bible Overview* course.

Session Fourteen Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Later Pauline Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Johannine Stage

10–minute break

50–minute Introduction to *The Bible Overview*

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Later Pauline Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the Old Testament originate it/them?

The Post Acts Era

We are required to mine each of the letters for hints of their context.

What Was Paul Doing?

Did Paul make it to Spain?

The Apostolic Legacy:

SCRIPTURE

THEOLOGY (see Handout "Truths that Save and Doctrines that Damn")

MISSION The Timothy Model (The Biblical Mandate):

• **Preach and Evangelize** Boldly command and teach the truth of God's word (1 Ti. 4:12), through preaching to exhort, rebuke and reprove with great patience and instruction (2 Ti. 4:1, 2), understanding that Scripture is the basis and content of all legitimate ministry (2 Ti. 3:16-17). Do the work of an evangelist (2 Ti. 4:5), constantly praying for the lost and teaching the leaders of the church to do the same (1 Ti. 2:1-8).

• **Teach and Disciple** *Teach and preach principles of true godliness, to create discerning people (1 Ti. 5:24-6:6). Portray the best model I can in my conduct and character (1 Ti. 4:12), passing on apostolic truth in order to reproduce myself in faithful disciples (2 Ti. 2:2).*

• **Prepare Leaders** *Carefully select spiritual leaders for the church on the basis of their giftedness, godliness, and virtue (1 Ti. 3:1-13). Using great care and seeing they are both mature and proven (1 Ti. 5:22).*

Introduction to the Johannine Stage. Scriptures from this stage include John; I, II, III John; Jude & Revelation (Req'd reading John 1–3; 20–21; I, II, III John; Jude; Revelation 1–5; 20–22).

- A) Author and Date
- B) Big Issues of Theology/History/Interpretation
- C) The Big Picture:
 - a. What is the main message of Joshua?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. What is the main Action?
 - d. Outline?

The Bible Overview Course.

Overview of the Course and its core concepts.

Primary Materials and Resources

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

Walter A Elwell & Robert Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed 2013).

FF Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Eerdmans, 2000).

NT Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God: Parts 1 & 2* (SPCK, 2013)

Martin Luther & John Dillenberger, “A Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to Galatians, 1531 (Selections)” in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (Anchor Press, 1958).

SESSION 15 – The Johannine Epoch

The church is beginning to transition from the apostolic era of leadership into what will characterize the next two thousand years. John, the last Apostle sets the course for the church as it moves forward. We also discuss practical strategies for teaching *The Bible Overview* in various areas of the Church.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Consider the portrait of an apostate in Jude.
- Understand John’s role in church history and contribution to salvation history.
- Learn how to teach *The Bible Overview* course.

Session One Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Johannine Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Introduction to the Later Johannine–Revelation Stage

10–minute break

50–minute Teaching *the Bible Overview*

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Early Johannine Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the Old Testament originate it/them?

We will leave Revelation for next session and look at the remaining literature of this period.

Jude

The main lesson Jude provides is in giving the reader, **a portrait of an apostate.**

Inspiration and sources: verses 9 and 14, where Jude quotes from the *pseudopigraphal* works *The Assumption of Moses* and *1 Enoch*. (see Paul in Acts 17:28 & Titus 1:12).

Johannine Dominance

John is one of the most exciting and dynamic people in all of history. Look at the gospel of John:

Look at the respect with which Jesus must have viewed Him: John 19:25b-27

Look how he identifies himself: John 20:2

Look how he tells stories: John 20:3-8 (He must have been quite a character!)

John and his Brother James, “the sons of Zebedee” were given a nickname by Jesus: (Read Mk 3:17).

For some 25 years (ca. AD 70-95) he was the last remaining living Apostle.

The Bible Overview Course.

Part 2

Primary Materials and Resources

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

Walter A Elwell & Robert Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed 2013).

John Stott, *The Letters of John* (IVP Academic, reprint 2009).

Colin G Kruse, *The Letters of John* in PNTC (Eerdmans 2000).

SESSION 16 – The Later Johannine-Revelation Epoch

In this final session we study the message of the book of Revelation. Then we do a final review of what we have learned and measure the change in our knowledge of the subject by repeating the salvation history survey we completed before entering the course. We finish by studying and

discussing the COMA method of Bible interpretation that accompanies *The Bible Overview* course.

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss their personal experience of the required readings.
- Understand the Basic message of the Book of Revelation.
- Demonstrate a change in their knowledge of salvation history during the course by an interactive review and survey.
- Learn *The Bible Overview Course's* COMA method of biblical interpretation

Session One Workshop Outline

20–minute Devotion and Prayer

45–minute discussion Later Johannine–Revelation Stage

10–minute break

45–minute Interactive Assessment of Participant Comprehension.

10–minute break

50–minute book Teaching *The Bible Overview*.

Devotion and Prayer

Participant led devotion on _____, by _____.

Remember to observe for the following as you listen to the devotion: 1) Careful, accurate exegesis of the passage in context, 2) understanding its place in the story of redemption, 3) show the rootedness of this teaching, or the promise behind this fulfillment in the OT, and then 4) applying it to the group.

Devotional review and discussion.

Pray for one another and for our church ministries in light of this devotion.

Later Johannine Stage: Review and Discussion.

Discussion: What covenant(s) is/are related in this passage?

- a. To whom are they/ is it related?
- b. What is/are the elements and promise(s) of the covenant(s)?
- c. How do the Characters in the passage relate to the covenant(s)?
- d. How do the events relate to the covenant(s)?
- e. How and where do we see the Old Testament originate it/them?

Intro to the Revelation of Jesus Christ (See handout).

Interactive Assessment of Participant Comprehension.

Open Exercise: Reconstructing an Outline of the Bible's Message from Memory

Repeat of Initial Salvation History Survey

The Bible Overview Course.

COMA method of biblical interpretation

Primary Materials and Resources

Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Crossway, 2005).

James M Hamilton Jr, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2010).

GK Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Baker, 2012).

Walter A Elwell & Robert Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed 2013).

GK Beale, *The Book of Revelation* in NIGNT (Eerdmans, reprint 2013).

Robert L Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody, 1992).

Robert L Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody, 1995).

Robert H Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Eerdmans, revised 1997).

Chad W Graham, “The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ: Uncovering Revelation” (Bible Study Handbook, 2014, revised 2016).

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ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM ON SALVATION HISTORY AT GRACELIFE CHURCH, CALGARY, ALBERTA

Chad William Graham, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John David Trentham

Leadership develops in descending order from character to conviction, from convictions to competency, from competency to confidence. This project develops a model and curriculum for training leaders to develop according to this template by understanding and embracing salvation history. Convinced that the record of God's work of redemption begun in Genesis continues to the present day, Church leaders should grow from character through confidence by learning their role in this narrative. Chapter 1 looks at the context of the leadership discipleship program at GraceLife Church of Calgary. Chapter 2 considers biblical examples of rooting ministry practice in salvation history and urges current ministry practitioners to share this same model. Chapter 3 lays a foundation for ministry rooted in salvation history through a key discussion of the New Testament and early church ecclesial perspectives. Upon this foundation, a theoretical framework is established demonstrating how salvation history functionally prepares one for practical ministry. The chapter concludes by looking at several active ministries following such a model as exemplars. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the project's details, then discusses and analyzes its effectiveness.

VITA

Chad William Graham

EDUCATION

A.A., Taylor University, Upland, Indiana, 1999
B.C.S., Taylor University, Upland, Indiana, 2000
M.Div., Briarcrest Theological Seminary, Caronport, Canada, 2004
M.A., Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, 2007
S.T.M., Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, 2013
J.D., University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, 2019

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

English Teacher, Sisa Academy, Sanbon, Korea, 2005-06
Instructor in Biblical Theology, OEFC Equip U, Okotoks, Alberta, 2007
Assistant Instructor in Greek, Conversational Koine Institute, 2014
Instructor in Bible, Systematic and Practical Theology, Grace Leadership
Discipleship Program, Calgary, Alberta 2010-16

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastoral Assistant, Riverbend Baptist Church, Edmonton, Alberta, 2003-05
Adult Education Pastor, Okotoks Evangelical Free Church, Okotoks, Alberta,
2007
Pastor, GraceLife Church of Calgary, Alberta, 2008-16

ORGANIZATION

The Evangelical Theological Society
Canadian Bar Association