

Kingdom and Covenant in the New Testament

Study Guide

LESSON
ONE

WHY STUDY NEW
TESTAMENT THEOLOGY?



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STUDY GUIDE

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How to use this lesson and study guide

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Preparation** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule breaks** — Review the outline and the time codes to determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions in the outline.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Notes** — Use the Notes section to follow the lesson and to take additional notes. Many of the main ideas are already summarized in the notes, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Review Questions** — Questions on the basic content of the lesson. Answer review questions in the space provided. Review questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Application Questions** — Questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Outline

- I. Introduction (0:20)
- II. Inspiration and Authority (4:40)
 - A. Affirmations (5:30)
 - 1. Twelve Disciples (7:10)
 - 2. Apostles and Prophets (10:36)
 - 3. New Testament Books (12:30)
 - B. Clarifications (15:26)
 - 1. Inspiration (16:07)
 - 2. Authority (23:10)
- III. Continuities and Discontinuities (36:00)
 - A. Epochal (37:21)
 - 1. Continuities (37:20)
 - 2. Discontinuities (40:08)
 - B. Cultural (45:54)
 - 1. Continuities (46:38)
 - 2. Discontinuities (49:30)
 - C. Personal (55:28)
 - 1. Continuities (55:43)
 - 2. Discontinuities (57:58)
- IV. Conclusion (1:02:13)

Notes

I. Introduction

The apostle Paul made it clear that understanding Scripture is not always easy and requires hard labor (2 Timothy 2:15).

II. Inspiration and Authority

A. Affirmations

The apostle Paul referred to the inspiration and authority of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16.

Paul said that "all Scripture is God-breathed." (*theopneustos*)

1. Twelve Disciples

As Jesus began establishing a new remnant of God's people to fulfill God's purposes in Israel, he called out twelve disciples.

Jesus ordained his twelve disciples to teach the rest of his followers through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

Paul was not one of the original twelve disciples, but he was an authoritative apostle and met the requirements established for the twelve (Acts 1:21-22).

Paul was a witness to the resurrection of Jesus and approved as such by the original apostles in Jerusalem.

2. Apostles and Prophets

All Christ's apostles and prophets were the recipients of God's special revelation (Ephesians 3:4-5).

God established the church of Christ on the authoritative teachings of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20-21).

3. New Testament Books

The apostle Paul considered the New Testament books equal to the Old Testament Scriptures (1 Timothy 5:18).

The apostle Peter treated the New Testament writings as having the same inspiration and authority as the Old Testament (2 Peter 3:15-16).

The Bible affirms the New Testament as God's inspired and authoritative word for his church.

B. Clarifications

1. Inspiration

Points of view regarding the inspiration of the New Testament:

- Romantic inspiration: The Holy Spirit inspired biblical writers in the same way secular poets or musicians might be moved to write.

- Mechanical inspiration: The Holy Spirit essentially dictated the Bible, and human writers passively recorded what he said.

- Organic inspiration: the Holy Spirit used the personalities, experiences, outlooks, and intentions of human authors as he guided their writing.

Peter acknowledged that God's Spirit inspired Paul's letters, but he also indicated that this inspiration was organic (2 Peter 3:15-16).

We must put forth the effort required to learn about the human authors and their intentions.

Organic inspiration forces us to explore the theology of the New Testament on at least three levels:

- Explicit assertions: this is the text itself and it can teach us a great deal about New Testament theology.

- Theological presuppositions: we have to study the authors' backgrounds and theological beliefs.
- Implicit purposes: the implications the authors expected their audiences to infer from their text

2. Authority

The New Testament was written for us, but not directly to us.

New Testament theology has full, but indirect authority over the lives of Christ's followers today.

We must consider the context and original purpose of a passage in order to assess how we are to observe and submit to its authority.

III. Continuities and Discontinuities

A. Epochal

An epoch of biblical history is a period of time established by divine revelation that distinguishes it from other periods of time.

The new covenant epoch began with the first advent of Christ and will continue until his return.

1. Continuities

Connections between our day and the days of the New Testament:

- We serve the same God.
- We live after Christ's death made the final atonement for sin.
- We live in the age when God's Spirit is poured out.
- We have the same mission of making disciples of all nations.

2. Discontinuities

Paul made a distinction between the church's foundation and the church throughout history (Ephesians 2:20).

Discontinuities between our day and the days of the New Testament:

- Authenticating miracles: we no longer look for miracles as a way of discerning the authority of new church leaders.
- Direct appeals: since Jesus' apostles and prophets don't live among us, we have to lean on our study of the New Testament.
- Theological emphases: these emphases were particularly important for the foundational period of the church.

B. Cultural

Culture refers to the patterns of human communities that develop shared concepts, behaviors and emotions.

1. Continuities

Every human culture exists in the same world (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Beneath superficial differences, we find many similar features of culture between our times and New Testament times.

2. Discontinuities

Many of the cultural outlooks in our day and in New Testament times are vastly different.

Discontinuities between our day and the days of the New Testament:

- The New Testament was written in Greek.
- First century literary conventions and the influence of the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament used by New Testament authors.
- Ignorance of the political, economic and broader social practices.

C. **Personal**

1. **Continuities**

All human beings in New Testament times and today are the same kinds of people (Romans 9:2-4).

Personal continuities often make it easy for us to grasp what New Testament authors, audiences and characters experienced.

2. **Discontinuities**

The New Testament often addresses people that are so different from today that we struggle to draw the proper connections.

People in New Testament times had to embrace New Testament theology in ways that were appropriate for their day.

IV. **Conclusion**

3. List and describe the epochal continuities and discontinuities that exist between our day and New Testament times.

4. Why is it helpful to consider the impact of cultural continuities and discontinuities between ourselves and the New Testament's original audience?

5. What are the personal continuities and discontinuities between our day and New Testament times?

Application Questions

1. In 2 Timothy 2:15, the apostle Paul indicated that understanding the Scriptures requires hard work. How do you stay motivated in your endeavors to understand New Testament theology?
2. How can the New Testament be authoritative for you when it was not written directly to you? Why are you convinced that the Scriptures are applicable to you?
3. God chose to produce the words of Scripture through organic inspiration. How is this view helpful to us in affirming that the Scriptures are true and reliable?
4. What are some specific ways you can help and encourage others to study the background of the New Testament?
5. When you interpret and apply the New Testament, what methods can you use to overcome the cultural discontinuities between our day and New Testament times?
6. New Testament authors often expected their audiences to infer their implicit purposes. What steps can you take to discover the implications of New Testament texts for your circumstances?
7. List and explain some specific epochal, cultural, and personal continuities between New Testament times and today. Do these continuities help you feel connected to the Christians who lived in the New Testament age? Explain your answer.
8. How do you defend your commitment to the relevance of the Bible even though there are the discontinuities between our day and the New Testament age?
9. How is being aware of the continuities and discontinuities between today and the New Testament age helpful for evangelism? Give an example of how you might use these continuities and discontinuities to evangelize.
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?