

Kingdom and Covenant in the New Testament

Lesson Guide

LESSON
ONE

WHY STUDY NEW
TESTAMENT THEOLOGY?



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CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE	3
NOTES.....	4
I. INTRODUCTION (0:20)	4
II. INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY (4:40)	4
A. Affirmations (5:30)	4
1. Twelve Disciples (7:10)	4
2. Apostles and Prophets (10:36)	5
3. New Testament Books (12:30)	6
B. Clarifications (15:26)	6
1. Inspiration (16:07)	6
2. Authority (23:10)	8
III. CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES (36:00)	9
A. Epochal (37:21)	9
1. Continuities (37:20)	9
2. Discontinuities (40:08)	10
B. Cultural (45:54)	10
1. Continuities (46:38)	11
2. Discontinuities (49:30)	11
C. Personal (55:28)	12
1. Continuities (55:43)	12
2. Discontinuities (57:58)	12
IV. CONCLUSION (1:02:13)	12
REVIEW QUESTIONS	13
APPLICATION QUESTIONS	16
GLOSSARY.....	17

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, 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.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **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**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are 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.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

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 (4:40)

A. Affirmations (5:30)

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 (7:10)

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 (10:36)

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 (12:30)

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 (15:26)

1. Inspiration (16:07)

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 (23:10)

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 (36:00)

A. Epochal (37:21)

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 (37:20)

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 spreading everything Jesus taught to the ends of the earth.

2. **Discontinuities (40:08)**

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 (45:54)**

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

1. Continuities (46:38)

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 (49:30)

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 (55:28)**1. Continuities (55:43)**

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 (57:58)

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 (1:02:13)

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?

Glossary

apostle – A messenger, agent or ambassador sent on a mission; special New Testament office held by someone who had been taught by Jesus, had seen the risen Lord, and had been chosen for the office by the Lord himself

authority – The power to influence, command and enforce standards of behavior and practice

cultural continuities – Similarities between one culture and another, even across time and geography

cultural discontinuities – Differences between one culture and another, including in language, literary conventions, and political, economic and social practices

culture – The patterns of human communities that develop out of shared concepts, behaviors and emotions

disciple – A student, apprentice or follower of a great teacher or leader

epoch – A distinct period of time in history; in theology, a period of time established by divine revelation that distinguishes it from other periods of time

epochal continuities – Connections between one period of time in history and another

epochal discontinuities – Differences between one period of time in history and another

Greek – Original language of the New Testament; also used in the third or second century B.C. to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew

immutable – Term meaning "unchanging"; used to express the unchanging nature of God's character and perfections

inspiration – Theological term that refers to the way the Holy Spirit moved human beings to write God's revelation as Scripture and superintended their work in a way that made their writings infallible

Judas – One of Jesus' special group of twelve disciples; betrayed Jesus to the chief priests and elders for 30 pieces of silver

mechanical Inspiration – View of inspiration that asserts that the Holy Spirit essentially dictated the Bible, and human writers passively recorded what he said

organic Inspiration – View of inspiration that asserts that the Holy Spirit used the personalities, experiences, outlooks, and intentions of human authors as he authoritatively and infallibly guided their writing

prophet – God's emissary who proclaims and applies God's word, especially to warn of judgment against sin and to encourage loyal service to God that leads to blessings

romantic Inspiration – View of inspiration that asserts that the Holy Spirit inspired biblical authors to write but did not superintend their writings

Samaritans – People of Samaria whose pagan ancestors had intermarried with Israelites living in the northern kingdom; practiced a syncretistic form of the Jewish religion; considered by the Jews to be unclean and despicable

theology – Any matter that refers directly to God or that describes subjects in relation to God