



Grace Communion Seminary

TH502: Nature of Humans and Salvation

Short Syllabus

Professor: Russell Duke

Phone: (626) 650-2308

Please contact me through the course website by clicking on “message my professor” in the right-hand column. <https://www.gcs.edu/enrol/index.php?id=16>

GCS mission statement:

Grace Communion Seminary is committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

Course description:

This course studies the nature of human beings, of evil, and the inherent effects of sin. The work of Christ in salvation history is central. Issues of predestination and the order of salvation are studied.

To do well in this course, we expect you to put in about 12 hours each week.

Required texts:

Johnson, Alan F., and Robert E. Webber. *What Christians Believe: An Overview of Theology and Its Biblical and Historical Development*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993. ISBN 0310367212. Cost: “like new” copies may be available for under \$10.

St. Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. Trans. A Religious of C.S.M.V. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1993.

Torrance, Thomas F. *When Christ Comes, and Comes Again*. Eugene, OR. Wipf and Stock Publishers. 1957.

*Cost estimate, Dec. 2015. To find the lowest online price, use bookfinder.com.

Recommended texts:

Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. Either the 1996 or 2007 edition; ISBN 978-1434811240. Cost: about \$10*; can download it free at Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/athanasius/incarnation.html>. An audiobook is available free at archive.org/details/AthanasiusIncarnation. Audio is NOT a format suitable for study and writing a book review. However, it can be a helpful supplement to your reading.

Gurentzki, Stanley, et al. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1999.

Torrance, Thomas F. *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*. Ed. by Robert T. Walker. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic. 2008.

Torrance, Thomas F. *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*. Edited by Robert T. Walker. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic. 2009. ISBN: 0830824588. Cost: about \$25.*

Student learning outcomes: GCS SLO 2: Reason from a sound theological basis as new covenant Christians centered in Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

Students will:

1. Develop and express an understanding of Christ's worldview through inductive study of his teaching as it informs our theology.
2. Develop and express an understanding of the Christian worldview of the early church in matters of theology on the nature of humanity and sin, the work of Christ, and salvation.
3. Express theological understanding about God's plan of salvation through Jesus in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Course requirements:

1. Participate in students forum (50 points)
2. Review of Athanasius: *On the Incarnation* (due by Monday midnight Pacific time – that is, when the third class is posted) (100 points)
3. Reflections of a chapter in *When Christ Comes and Comes Again* (due on a week to be assigned) (as part of forum discussion) (50 points)
4. Sermon/Paper A: What is humanity? (due on Monday the fifth week) (100 points)
5. Review of Torrance *When Christ Comes and Comes Again* (100 points)
6. Sermon/Paper B: What is the work of Christ? (due on Monday the eighth week) (100 points)
7. Sermon/Paper C: What is salvation? (due the twelfth week) (100 points)

Expectations for Sermon/Papers

Each of three sermon/papers is to be limited to 5-7 pages long (font Times New Roman 12, double-spaced, one-inch margins) with biblical references and scholarly sources.

You may choose to develop a sermon, a Bible study, or a formal paper for each or all of the assignments for this course. Please include a bibliography of the sources used in each assignment. Whichever form you use to fulfill the assignment, be sure to include the following elements:

1. A title, which may include a stimulating question or statement, but that has a subhead that identifies the issue you will address.
2. An interesting and challenging introduction that sets up the issue you will be addressing.
3. A thesis statement that states the issue in one sentence. It either informs the audience/reader of the issues at stake, or establishes your position on the subject.
4. An inductive study of a biblical passage that is most relevant to your subject. Expound its immediate context, the context of the culture of its day, and application for today's Christian.

5. Make at least two references in the sermon/paper to noted church leaders who have been instrumental in debates on this issue. These may be woven into the discussion at whatever point you feel best.
6. Address scriptures, if any do exist, that may seem to be in opposition to your main point.
7. At the end, in conclusion, express application of the message to Christians in today's culture.

These papers will be posted on the site for the professor and not shared with other students.