

The Theological Themes of the New Testament

God's loving rule: God rules and cares for his creation. He is working out his plan through both the good and evil choices of his creatures. His rule has "invaded" the present evil age through Jesus' first coming and will be fully established at his return.

- Mt. 13 and the Kingdom of God; Acts 2:23, 4:27,28; Acts 14 and 17; Mt. 28:19; Romans 8:28; Eph. 1:9-11; Revelation

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ: The central theme of the New Testament is the person and saving work of Jesus Christ and how we can appropriate the benefits of salvation by grace through faith apart from Law.

- The person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:15-20, 2:9; Phil. 2:6-11; Hebrews 1:1-2:18)
 - Deity
 - Humanity
 - Sinless Humanity
- The work of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:21-31; 1 Cor. 15:1-9; Col. 2:10-15; Hebrews 5-10; 1 Jn. 3:8;)
 - His substitutionary death that satisfied the wrath of God
 - His resurrection that insured the validity of the Christ's sacrifice and secured the benefits of his work
- Appropriating the benefits of salvation by grace through faith apart from Law
 - Justification gives us acceptance from God and freedom from the penalty of sin (Romans 5:1-11).
 - Sanctification (spiritual growth) opens the possibility of freedom from the power of sin through:
 - The New Identity in Christ (Rom. 5:12-6:21; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Ephesians 1:3-14; Col. 3:1-4)
 - Release from the Law (Romans 7; 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Gal. 5:18)
 - The Indwelling Holy Spirit, His power to serve (Rom. 7:6; 8:1-16; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 5:18, 6:18)

The Already, not Yet Tension (Romans 8:18-24): We are living "between the times," *already* experiencing the power of the kingdom of God, but *not yet* delivered fully from sin's power and presence as we will be when Jesus returns and establishes his kingdom.

Ethics centered on Love: Love is the highest ethic in the New Testament.

- John 13:34,35; 1 Cor. 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 John 4:19-20).

Ethics based on grace: All of the commands in the New Testament, including the command to love one another are based on what God has done, is doing or will do (recall this emphasis in Intro to the Bible and in Christian Growth). Look for this pattern and see that for every command, God has supplied the WHY and HOW to the WHAT.

- Matt. 22:37-40; Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13; Ephesians 4:17-32; Col. 3:1-17; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 John 4:7-21.

The Body of Christ (the church) and its Mission: Those who have received Christ have not only been united with him, but also with other believers. The New Testament sees the church as a people, not a building or an institution. God has given his people the privileged purpose of reaching the lost around them. The impulse to withdraw and protect must be resisted.

- Mt. 5:13-16; 28:18-20; Jn. 13:34, 35; 17:20-23; Acts 1:8; Romans 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:1-16; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Peter 4:7-11; 5:1-7

Spiritual Warfare: God's enemy, Satan, is constantly trying to derail Christians from their purpose through persecution, opposition, division, temptation, accusation, and deception. But God has provided us with the weapons we need to not only to defend ourselves, but also to "storm the gates of hell" and free its prisoners.

- Matt. 4:1-11; 16:18; Jn. 12:32; Acts 5:3; Rom. 16:20; Ephesians 4:27, 6:10-18; 1 Thes. 2:18; 2 Thes. 3:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:26; 1 Peter 5:8,9; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 3:8; 4:4; 5:19; Rev. 12:9-11

The Return of Jesus Christ, Final Judgment, and Future Hope: As we struggle with sin and the devil, the New Testament directs us to the eternal perspective: that Jesus will return and bring an end to suffering and sin. He will reward us for our service for him and have unhindered fellowship with us forever. Readers of the New Testament are reminded frequently of the reality of hell – eternal separation from God – the fate of those who reject the gift of God.

- Romans 8:18-39; 1 Cor. 15:14-58; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20,21; I Thess.1:10; 2:19,20; 3:13; 4:13-5:11; 1 Peter 1:4-7, 13; 2 Peter 3:1-16)