



## **Dominican Institute, Samonda, Ibadan**

*In affiliation with the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (PUST), Angelicum, Rome*

**Course:** DI/TH 311 Theology of the New Testament

**Lecturer:** Rev. Fr. Gilbert Munana, O.P.

**Name:** Símore João António, CMF

**Mat. no.** DI/852

**Date:** 04.02.2021

### **EXAM OF NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY**

**Instruction:** answer question ONE (mandatory) and any other question from question TWO (A, B, C, D, E, and F.)

**Question ONE: "The New Testament Theology" is the title of some academic syllabi (courses). Does it exist?**

In order for us to understand this question we should first go back and understand what New Testament is and what its task is. Thus, New Testament Theology is a subset of Biblical Theology inaugurated formally by J. P Gabler. It was distinguished as independent from Dogmatic Theology on account of its historical character. For Dan O. Via, New Testament Theology is both historical (description of text in the first century context) and hermeneutical (interpretation of text for the contemporary context) (Cf. Dan O Via's *What is New Testament Theology*). However, , J. J. Van Oosterzee in his book: *The Theology of the New Testament*, defines Theology of the New Testament as that part of theological science, in which the teachings of the New Testament concerning God and divine things are comprehensively and systematically exhibited. That is, Theology of the New Testament treats of the ideas respecting God and divine Things recorded in the New Testament. It investigates, in other words, the doctrines of the New Testament. New Testament itself demonstrates that the Father, Son, and Spirit are foundational and central to New Testament theology. That is, the

subject matter of New Testament theology is that; it must be ‘God-focused,’ ‘Christ-centered’ and ‘Spirit-saturated.’

As a course we study New Testament Theology in order to understand its entire message, while paying attention to its integral parts. In other words, to understand the New Testament writings as both in part and as a whole. Hence, as a course that exist we study New Testament Theology in a thematic approach which helps us to understand better the coherence and unity of the New Testament Theology. It is important to note also that the subject matter of the New Testament theology is God himself. God works out his saving plan so that he would be magnified in Christ and his name would be honoured. He is glorified in in the salvation of his people.

In summary New Testament Theology is a theological course that exists. It is a historical discipline for the purpose of meaning and formation that connects the world of the New Testament with that of our present day.

### **Question TWO B: Christology of the Synoptic Gospels**

The Synoptic Gospels are the first three Gospels of the New Testament. They present a similar narrative of the life and death of Jesus Christ, thus since 1780s those first three books of the New Testament have been called the Synoptic Gospels because they are so similar in structure, content, and wording that they can easily be set side by side to provide a synoptic comparison of their content. Hence in this question I will attempt to explain the question of Christology of the Synoptic Gospels based on the material and personal notes learned from the course New Testament Theology 2020/2021 academic season.

The Christology of the Synoptic Gospels is a complex question which should be dwelt from the point of view of each evangelist. Thus, in answering this question we shall look in to Matthew, Mark and Luke, separately in other for us to have a broad overview of how each author define the question about Christ identity; *Who do you say I am?*

**The Christology of Matthew:** is known as *didascal Christology* that is a Christology that is based on the ministry and content of the teaching of the earthly Jesus. This Christology is found in the narrative. Matthew does not understand Jesus as a person from the past history; rather he wants to demonstrate the total identity between the earthly Jesus and the Risen One. Thus for him, Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of Israel. (cf. Mt.10, 5-6; 15, 24). Thus, Jesus bears the Christological titles borrowed from the Old Testament (*Son of David, Messiah, and Son of Man*). This Jesus Messiah is redefined as the living presence of God in the midst of his people, and more broadly in the midst of the world (Christology of *Emmanuel*).

**The Christology of Mark:** in the beginning of his Gospel Mark presents Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God (cf. Mk. 1: 1-2). By revealing the messianism of Jesus, Mark confirms that Jesus authority comes from God and being the Son of God it is legitimate for him to be the king of his father's kingdom. In his narrative Jesus is recognised as the Son of God twice. The first time at baptism (Mk. 1:11) and the second time at the transfiguration (Mk. 9:7). Thus, the transfiguration represents the perfect summary of Mark's Christology which is marked with the presence of Moses, Elijah and the voice that comes from heaven. Another important point in Mark's Christology is that he presents Jesus as prophet, teacher, healer and critic (cf. Mk 1:40-45; Mk 6:30-44; Mk 5:35-43). It is also important to note that Mark's Christology is understood by some exegetes (theologians) as a *Christology of the cross*, category which for them becomes the key to understanding the identity of Jesus and the whole message of the gospel.

**The Christology of Luke:** for Luke, Jesus is a man of compassion, generous in gestures of healing (cf. Lk. 7:11-17; Lk. 22:51). Hence, he also acknowledges that Jesus is the promised Messiah whom God sends to his people Israel to save them (cf. Lk. 2:30-32).

In summary the evangelists were able to answer the question who Christ is in their narratives. Thus, they made important contributions that remain till today the foundation of our faith.