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# Systematic Theology III

Lectures by  
Douglas F. Kelly, Ph.D.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Virtual Campus

# RTS Distance Education

The Virtual Campus of Reformed Theological Seminary offers students the convenience of home study with the quality of on-campus instruction. This course is based on classroom lectures using the GUIDE approach to learning.

Each lesson contains the following:

- G**etting Started      To prepare adequately for each lesson, a reading assignment and audio lecture are listed.
- U**nderstanding      To maximize student learning, the purposes and objectives for the lesson are given.
- I**nvestigating      To integrate readings, audio lectures, and outline, students are encouraged to notate information in a manner that will prove beneficial for study and examination. The study guide allows space for note-taking to expand the outline.
- D**eveloping      To further develop the concepts presented, suggested readings and applications are offered.
- E**valuating      To help students summarize and synthesize the material covered, study questions are provided.

## COURSE SYLLABUS

Systematic Theology III, OST522 3 hours

Dr. Douglas F. Kelly

Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

### *Professor*

Dr. Douglas Kelly is a scholar marked by profound piety as exemplified in volumes such as *If God Already Knows, Why Pray?* and *Preachers with Power: Four Stalkwarts of the South*. His firm grasp of multiple languages and his theological competence are capably demonstrated in translating such works as Sermons by John Calvin on II Samuel. He is serving with David Wright of the University of Edinburgh as a general editor for a revision of Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries. In addition, he is co-editor for a twenty volume dogmatics series, for which he is writing a volume on the Trinity. He has written *Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1 - 2.4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms* and *Carolina Scots: An Historical and Genealogical Study of Over 100 Years of Emigration*, and is currently writing a systematic theology.

### *Course Description*

The purpose of this course is to study the topics of: Christology, Christ and His Work; Soteriology, the area of sin and salvation; and Eschatology, the end times. This is the continuation of the courses Systematic Theology I and II.

Of special concern are the sub-topics of: the doctrine of the covenant; the covenant concept in biblical context; the doctrine of the atonement; effectual calling, justification, and adoption; the doctrine of sanctification; Christian liberty; the nature of faith; the work and doctrine of the Holy Spirit; Christ's return and future judgement.

### STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE:

Lectures and readings will deal with three major topics:

#### 1. CHRISTOLOGY

We study the person and work of Christ based on exegesis of Scripture with reference to relevant historical church councils and confessions.

#### 2. SOTERIOLOGY

We study the application of Christ's work of redemption, the order of salvation and its benefits. We shall survey the exegetical basis and theological implications of:

- Union with Christ
- Calling
- Regeneration
- Conversion
- Faith
- Justification
- Adoption
- Sanctification
- Perseverance

#### 3. ESCHATOLOGY

We study the exegetical basis and theological implications of the doctrine of Last Things, including:

- Death
- The intermediate state
- The return of Christ
- The resurrection
- The final judgment

*Required Textbooks*

-The Bible

-Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1996.

-Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1975.

-Murray, John. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm .B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1992.

-DeMar, Gary. *Last Days Madness*. Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1999

-*The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1979.

All required books are available through the RTS Online Bookstore at <[www.rts.edu/bookstore](http://www.rts.edu/bookstore)>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS  
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*Online Student Handbook*

The Online Student Handbook has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the online Virtual campus experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual. You will find it located at the RTS/Virtual website (<http://virtual.rts.edu>) under the Student Services tab.

*Summary of Requirements*

- \* Follow the Study Guide provided.
- \* Listen to all Recorded Lectures.
- \* Complete all Readings.
- \* Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and Professor)
- \* Take the Mid Term Exam
- \* Take the Final Exam.
- \* Write a Course Paper
- \* Submit Mentor Report/Course Application Paper

*Research Paper (35%)*

See page vii for a description and requirements of the research paper.

*Forum Discussions (10%)*

The student is to participate in forum discussions in the online tutorial. 10% total (5% Student to Student, 5% Student to Professor, with minimum of 5 posts each, including the Introduction and 4 Topical Question responses.

*Examinations (Mid Term 25%, Final 25%)*

There are two examinations for this course. The mid term examination will cover all the lectures and readings from Lessons 1-8. The final examination will cover all the lectures and readings from Lessons 7-17.

All exams are to be requested online via the links in the Virtual Classroom during week 6 for the Midterm and week 12 for the Final. All exams are proctored. Upon completion, please upload your exam in the Virtual Classroom.

*Mentor Report / Course Application Paper (5%)*

Each MA Distance student is required to have his or her mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student's grade. For students who are not registered in the MA program, you are required to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

### *Assignments*

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall in the Virtual Classroom, using the upload links provided. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time. No late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

### *Contact Information*

Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual  
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Charlotte, NC 28226  
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1-800-227-2013  
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Web site: <http://www.rtsvirtual.org>

RESEARCH PAPER  
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*Assignment*

Choose one topic from among the following topic options. Write an 12-15 page paper, utilizing the theological categories presented in this course. Demonstrate how Scripture bears upon your subject. Significant interaction with course lectures, notes, and reading is encouraged insofar as they relate to your topic. In addition, the use of sources external to course materials is required. It is encouraged that the student limit his or her interaction with external materials to 2-3 major sources.

Write a strong, specific, and interesting thesis, presenting it clearly in the first few paragraphs. Support your thesis in the body. Summarize the findings of your paper and make a few comments about its implications for modern life, and a conclusion section. Reference the Online Student Handbook for stylistic concerns. You will find the Course Paper tutorial, as well as the Turabian and StyleEase templates, found on the Virtual Classroom landing page, to be very helpful.

*Paper Topics*

1. *The Person of Christ in biblical perspective*: One of the most promising developments in New Testament studies is the “Early High Christology” movement. Major players in this movement include Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado. Engage this movement, or one of its proponents, discussing both its potential contributions and shortcomings for developing a biblical understanding of the Person of Christ.

*Potential resources include:*

- Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*
- Larry Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*
- Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*
- Carey C. Newman and James R. Davila, *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism*

2. *The doctrine of justification*: In recent years, certain Protestant scholars and pastors have challenged the traditional Protestant doctrine of justification, suggesting that the Reformers misunderstood Paul’s teaching on this topic. Engage one of these contemporary critics (e.g., N. T. Wright, James D. G. Dunn, a proponent of the “Federal Vision”) and respond to their criticisms in light of biblical exegesis and the Reformed confessions.

*Potential resources include:*

- N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*
- N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision*
- John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*
- Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics*
- Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspective on Paul*

(Note: You may also wish to consult OPC and PCA committee reports on this topic)

3. *The nature of hell*: Contemporary evangelicals continue to debate both the possibility and nature of eternal punishment. Debated questions include: Who goes to hell, if anyone? How does our understanding of hell relate to our understanding of God's love and of Christ's atoning work? What is the nature of hell? Does hell involve eternal conscious punishment? Or does hell simply annihilate unbelievers?

*Potential resources include:*

- Gregory MacDonald (= Robin Parry), *The Evangelical Universalist*
- Edward William Fudge and Robert A. Peterson, *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue*
- Robert A. Peterson, *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment*

COURSE OUTLINE  
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*Lesson One*

Old Testament Preparation for the Incarnation and The Names of Christ

*Lesson Two*

Important Passages on the Incarnation

*Lesson Three*

The Hypostatic Union

*Lesson Four*

The Patristic Doctrine of Christ

*Lesson Five*

The Reformed Doctrine of Christ

*Lesson Six*

The States of Christ

*Lesson Seven*

Union With Christ

*Lesson Eight*

Calling

*Lesson Nine*

Regeneration Part One

*Lesson Ten*

Regeneration Part Two

*Lesson Eleven*

Conversion

*Lesson Twelve*

Faith

*Lesson Thirteen*

Justification

*Lesson Fourteen*

Sanctification

*Lesson Fifteen*  
Adoption

*Lesson Sixteen*  
Perseverance of the Saints

*Lesson Seventeen*  
Eschatology