

Winter 2023 Theology Exam

Section I: Reformed Confessional Heritage

You are the associate pastor at Second Presbyterian Church and lead a study session for elders. The class discusses the theme of power and the idea of corruption in *The Book of Confessions*:

Corey:	There's a lot in the Bible accusing the rich of misusing their wealth, and that concern is reflected in some of the confessions, too. The abuse of wealth is a straightforward definition of corruption, don't you think?
Seiha:	Corruption is not necessarily the misuse of wealth, but of any kind of power. What does God expect of people when they have some power in society?
Brayan:	Aren't we all corrupt, whether we have power or not? Isn't corruption just another way of talking about sin?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: (Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **power and corruption**. In the essay, identify and discuss at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) from each of three (3) different documents in *The Book of Confessions*.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond directly to Corey, Seiha, and Brayan.

Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine

You are the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church. During a young adult class someone mentions being blessed by God. This begins a lively discussion about what people mean by "God's blessing."

Mac:	Sometimes I think when people talk about blessing, they are simply describing good luck.
Pepper:	Blessings may not always be positive. Suffering can be a form of blessing.
Finn:	Suffering as a blessing? I thought blessings were a sign of God's favor.

You decide that it is time for a sermon on blessing.

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **divine blessing**. In the essay, use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology (sources before 1900), modern theology (sources since 1900).
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, prepare an annotated outline for a topical sermon on ways people may experience God's blessing. For the purpose of this exam, an annotated outline is an outline with explanatory notes.

Section III: Application to Ministry

You are pastor of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. After walking around the local neighborhood with members of the outreach and evangelism committee, the following discussion ensues:

Martha: There is so much sin in our community! A lot of people are going to hell if they don't repent!

Ana: Many folks are already living in the hell of loneliness and despair. They don't need judgment. They need the good news that God is with them.

Edwin: I've always wondered if hell even exists. How is the idea of hell compatible with belief in a loving God?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **hell**. In the essay, use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology (sources before 1900), modern theology (sources since 1900).
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond directly to Martha, Ana, and Edwin.