

Wycliffe College

The Toronto School of Theology
The University of Toronto

WYP 3305/6305: PREACHING THE OLD TESTAMENT

Professor: The Rev. Dr. J. Glen Taylor, Room 218, Wycliffe College. Phone:
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Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Time: Thursdays 11:10 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Course Textbooks:

Required:

Elizabeth Achtemeier, Preaching from the Old Testament. Louisville:
Westminster/John Knox, 1989.

Bob Fyall, Preaching Old Testament Narrative. Cambridge, UK: Grovebooks,
1997.

A Study Bible with extensive notes and/or a one-volume commentary on the Bible
(Harper's, van Hoozer, DTIB, etc.)

Required also for AD Students:

Rein Bos, We Have Heard that God is with You: Preaching the Old Testament.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Recommended:

Elizabeth Achtemeier, Preaching Hard Texts of the Old Testament. Louisville:
Westminster/John Knox, 1994.

Rein Bos, We Have Heard that God is with You: Preaching the Old Testament.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Sidney Greidanus, Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary
Hermeneutical Method. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Course Description:

A practical, interactive introduction to the particularities of Christian preaching from the Old Testament. Special emphasis will be placed on biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, and preaching with sensitivity to the varied forms of OT literature—narrative, saga, law, prophetic oracles, wisdom material, etc. Students will

exegete passages, prepare sermons (preaching twice), learn new skills and ideas and interact with the sermons of others, both peers and role models.

Goals for the Course:

A goal of the course, in general, is to help students build upon and enhance their God-given gifts for, and their call to, preaching God's Word. More specifically, it is to enhance the students' understanding of Old Testament literature, and to increase their skill at, and confidence in, preaching from the Old Testament, including "difficult" passages.

A specific skill-set goal will be for the student to demonstrate a high level of proficiency at the following:

- a) Method of exegesis that includes inductive Bible study
- b) Sound hermeneutical approach to interpretation and application
- c) Demonstrated ability to make a point "stick" in the minds of the hearers and to "go deep" with it in terms of its significance
- d) Demonstrated ability to reflect theologically on an OT text and relate it appropriately to the NT
- e) Familiarity with, and appreciation for, key resources (commentaries, etc.)

How Goal Attainment Will Be Measured

The component of understanding Old Testament literature will be measured through the graded evaluation of exegetical assignments. The component of increased skill at preaching will be measured by the performance of students to their preaching experience, including their second sermon as compared to the first. The general goal will be addressed through instruction and feedback from professor and peers alike. Proficiency at the skill-set will be measured by results obtained from quizzes, assignments and sermons.

Course Requirements for BD Students

1. Weekly assignments, including quizzes on readings	30%
2. Class attendance & engagement	20%
3. Step-by-step from exegesis-to sermon	20%
4. Sample sermon segment that demonstrates c) above	10%
5. Short essay that shows a thorough understanding of Fyall's approach and of your ability to apply his approach to another biblical book	20%

Course Requirements for AD Students

In addition to 1, 2 and 3 above:

4. Replicate Fyall in relation to another biblical book for the class. Answer: Is Fyall's approach out of step with the New Homiletic (as understood by any well-know practitioner you choose) and if so how/why? And if so, which should be adjusted (and how, and why) Fyall or the New Homiletic? (Three pages d.s.)
5. Read carefully and write a critical review essay on Bos, *We Have Heard That God is with You: Preaching the Old Testament*.

Prerequisites

One introductory course on preaching and one introductory course in Old Testament.

Enrollment

Enrollment is limited to 20 students.

Course evaluation

At the end of the course students are expected to complete a course evaluation. The evaluation is done online and instructions will be contained in an e-mail message that will be sent out by the Wycliffe College registrar.

College policy on assignment extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under exceptional circumstances, with the written permission of the instructor, students may be granted an extension (SDF = "standing deferred") beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed-upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be arranged before the completion of the term in which the course is taken; at a point no later than the last day of exam week, students need either to have submitted all required work for the course or to have made a formal request for an extension. The extension request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar's office. One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Academic integrity

All TST students are subject to U of T's "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters." Copies of the code are available at www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm. Please take special note of the section on plagiarism. For a helpful set of guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism, see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>. This is part of a more general—and equally

helpful—website that provides advice on academic writing (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>).

Learning outcomes

Wycliffe College has developed detailed statements of “learning outcomes” for the MDiv and MTS programs. They are available on the College website. “Learning outcomes” have to do in part with the level of knowledge and skill that will be characteristic of a typical graduate of the program. In accordance with this overall statement, instructors are required to develop a statement of learning outcomes for each course. These outcomes will provide one of the benchmarks for evaluation and grading.

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be demonstrated through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe’s statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
• will have been introduced to the particularities of Christian preaching from the Old Testament;	course as a whole; lecture 1; weekly assignment 1	MTS: MDiv:
• will have become aware of the importance of approaching the varied forms of OT literature differently;	course as a whole, lectures 3, 6, 8, 10, 11; weekly assignment 2	MTS: MDiv:
• will have learned how to exegete biblical passages (including inductive Bible study) and take a sound hermeneutical approach to interpretation and application;	course as a whole; weekly assignments 1 and 2; project (exegesis and sermon)	MTS: MDiv:
• will have acquired new skills and ideas for preaching;	course as a whole; lecture 2, project	MTS: MDiv:
• will be able to reflect theologically on OT texts and related them appropriately to the NT;	course as a whole; sermon project	MTS: MDiv:
• will have increased their skill at,	course as a whole; homiletical	MTS:

and confidence in, preaching from the Old Testament, including “difficult” passages;	reflection at the end of some lectures	MDiv:
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Tentative List of Topics to Be Covered

Most weeks, we will examine a single passage in class and, following the instructor’s method, move from exegesis to a sermon. By applying the same approach to a different text each week, the instructor’s method should become second nature for the student, who in many cases shall similarly be expected weekly to turn a biblical text into a sermon.

Week 1: Jan 5 Introduction to class and methodology

Hour 1: Introductory Matters, including obstacles to preaching the OT and a better and worse way to preach the fall of Jericho (from Gibson, pp. 59-61).

Hour 2: Genesis 13: How do we know we shouldn’t preach that Abram was irresponsible in offering Lot the promised land?

Homework in preparation for (i.e. due at start of class) next week (Jan. 14):

BD/AD1) submit 25 factual observations on Genesis 11:1-9

2) get ready for a short-answer quiz based on your reading of Achtemeier, “Why the OT is Necessary for the Church” and of Jeffrey Arthurs, “Preaching the Old Testament Narratives,” pp. 73–85 in Scott M. Gibson, ed. *Preaching the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006)

3) After studying Gen 11:1-9, state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached? (What you state need not be your “final answer”, but should nonetheless be demonstrable from the text itself.)

SEGMENT 1: NARRATIVE TEXTS OF THE OT

Week 2: Jan 12: **Genesis 11:1-9**

We will look at Genesis 11:1-9 in detail and in the second hour, we will listen to a sermon on Genesis 11:1–9 by David Short.

Homework:

BD: 1) Submit 25 factual observations on Genesis 22:1-19

2) After studying Gen 22:1–19, state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached? (Your answer need not be final, but should be justifiable from the text itself.)

3) Get ready for a short-answer quiz on your reading of Steve Mathewson, “The Greatest Thing You Can Do for Your Kids (Genesis 22,” pp. 161-75 in Steven Mathewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*.

AD required/BD optional:

- 1) Come to class ready to give the gist of S. D. Walters, “Wood, Sand, and Stars,” TJT 1 (1988):
- 2) In six or seven sentences state your pros and cons of Matthews’ sermon.

Week 3: Jan 19: **Genesis 22: 1-19**

Homework for beginning of class on Jan 28

After studying Gen 32:1-32; 33:1–11, state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached? (Your answer need not be final, but should be justifiable from the text itself.)

Prepare for a quiz based on my lecture notes: “Issues in Pentateuchal Interpretation Today.”

Week 4: Jan 26: **Genesis 32**

Homework for beginning of class on Feb 2

After studying Exodus 3, state and defend (500 words max) what aspects of the character of God does the text want you to highlight?

Only after completing the preceding, read Rein Bos, *We Have Heard*, pp. 319-24.

Week 5: Feb 2: **Exodus 3**

Homework for beginning of class on Feb 9th.

Prepare for a quiz based on your reading of Achtemeier, *Preaching the Old Testament*, chapter on preaching OT law (ca. pp. 99-108) and on my lecture notes on Leviticus 14. After studying **Leviticus 13:47-59 and 14:33-57**, state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached?

AD required/BD optional:

Read Karl Barth on Leviticus 14-16.

LEGAL TEXTS

Week 6: Feb 9. **Leviticus 14:33–57**

We will discuss how to do an exegesis of this passage, and suggest how best to preach it.

Homework for beginning of class on Feb. 16th. Read Achtemeier’s chapter on Preaching the Psalms. Read Mark Futado, “Confidence in a Cup: Psalms 16, 23” chapter 16 in Andrew J. Schmutzer and David Howard, eds. *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*

Week 7: Feb 16: **Psalms 16, 22 and 23**

We will discuss the readings assigned for today and do an exegesis and suggested sermon on Psalm 22.

Reading Week: February 20-24

Homework for beginning of class on Feb 23

Submit your best 25 observations on Psalm 73 and state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached? Only after doing this, read the sermon on Psalm 73 by James C. Howell, pp. 81-85, of Clinton McCann, Jr., and James C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Abingdon, 2001)

POETRY

Week 8: February 23: **Psalm 73**

Homework for beginning of class on March 2nd

Submit your best 25 observations on Psalm 113 and state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached?

Week 9: March 2: **Psalm 113**

Homework for beginning of class on March 9th

Prepare for a quiz based on my lecture notes on Isaiah.

Submit your best 25 observations on Isaiah 61 and state and defend (500 words max) how you think the text (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached?

Read Achtemeier's chapter on Preaching the Prophets.

AD required/BD optional:

John Sailhamer, "Preaching the Prophets," pp. 115-35 in Gibson, ed. *Preaching the OT*.

PROPHETS

Week 10: March 9: **Isaiah 61**

Homework for beginning of class on March 16th

Submit your best 25 observations on and state and defend (500 words max) how you think Zechariah 5 (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached?

Week 11: March 16: **Zechariah 5 and Zechariah**

Homework for beginning of class on March 23rd

Submit your best 25 observations on and state and defend (500 words max) how you think Zechariah 5 (including in its context) wants to be interpreted/preached?

Week 12: March 23: **The Book of Malachi**

Week 13: March 30: Wrap Up

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON PREACHING THE OT

Websites:

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www.cyberword.com/preach/guide/htm
www.congregationalresources.org
www.greatpreaching.org
www.anglicanonline.org/resources/preaching
www.anglicanhistory.org
www.pewtopulpit.com

Sermons:

www.sermonlinks.com
www.sermonindex.net
www.abideinchrist.com/messages
www.expositor.com
www.sermonaudio.com
Sermons by Augustine: www.newadvent.org/fathers

Sermons on the internet, by women (from sermonindex.net)

N.B. The number after each name indicates the number of sermons available.

Anne Dutton (80), Anna R. Atwater (1), Anne Audland Camm (1), Anne Bradstreet (1), Amy Carmichael (1) Beverly (gender?) Carradine (9), Mrs. Charles E. Cowman including "Whatever the Cost" on Gen. 22:16-18 and on Gen 32. (376). Margaret Fell (7), Loraine Boettner (1), Mary Warburton Booth (1), Nancy Leigh DeMoss (6), Jill Briscoe (12), Sarah Cheevers (1), Melody Green (2), Anne Ortlund (44), Hannah More (1), Mother Julian of Norwich (1), Sarah Foulkes Moore (1), Ruth Pitman (1), Hannah Whitall Smith (19), Virginia Schurman (1), Elizabeth Stirredge (1), Mary Wilder Tileston (365).

See also the list of sermons both in print and on the internet in Bos, pp. 374–77.

General Works on Old Testament Preaching

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_____. *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973.

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BISHOP BILL HOCKIN'S METHOD OF PREPARING A SHORT
HOMILY
(ADAPTED BY PROF. GLEN TAYLOR, WYCLIFFE COLLEGE)

STAGE ONE: *PREPARATION*

1. Read the text four or five times over a period of days, prayerfully letting the story sink into the imagination. Ask and answer fifteen simple questions¹ that you systematically pose about the text's features.
2. Do your best to plug the passage into *its context* by reading what precedes and follows the story, and by reading an introduction to the book in a good Study Bible (look especially for any comments on the message or purpose of the book).²
3. Identify the conflict in the text between the human circumstance and the divine desire.

¹ Suggested questions include structural ones—"what is emphasized (whether through repetition or space given), compared or contrasted, surprisingly omitted or seemingly extraneous (and why?); as well as thematic—what role does this passage play in the overall argument of the larger block of which it is a part? What message is *the text* trying to emit (as opposed to what message *I* want to extract from it)?

² Each biblical book was written in response to a pastoral/theological issue of some sort. To find it, read the "Purpose/Occasion" section in the Introduction to a commentary. Often the commentator will say more about this purpose under the various subheadings of his outline of each major section of the biblical book.

- a. Identify in the text the human longing for something better.
- b. Identify in the text the Divine will and provision for something better.
- 4. Identify in the text who benefits from God's provision and why.
- 5. Identify the "nerve" -- that central theme that is applicable to the lives of your congregation and in touch with the context and purpose of the book
- 6. Find the hope of the text by exploiting the gap or differences between "the human longing" and "the Divine desire."

STAGE TWO: GATHERING RESOURCES

- 1. Refer to at least one reputable Bible commentary³ to make sure that you have the interpretation right and are not in conflict with established views. Read the text in different versions, one of which could be a paraphrase of the text (e.g. The New Living Bible or The Message)
- 2. Explore the two sides of the conflict in the text. Write down in your own words both ideas.

N.B. Make sure the conflict isn't cutesy and artificial by asking the following. . .
-Is my idea in harmony with *how the text wants to be heard*? In other words, does my preaching idea fit with the context of the biblical passage and with the biblical author's purpose for writing the book? (Imagine the author of the biblical book in your congregation either nodding his head to your idea -- "this is what I meant!" -- or shaking it in surprise or bewilderment -- "I never intended a cute, 'clever' message like that!")

- 3. Use your own life or *the experiences of others* to flesh out the story of the text to find contemporary examples of the conflict inherent in the text.

Think of one or two main points of good news arising out of the text or one or two things that we have to do as faithful believers and as people who want to claim God's redemptive alternative.

STAGE THREE: STRUCTURING THE SERMON

- 1. Choose a biblical text that best describes the message.
E.g. "So Lot pitched his tent near Sodom . . ." (Gen. 13:12).
- 2. Name the theme or purpose of the sermon, i.e. "my message is about. . ."
- 3. Share an illustration, personal experience or story that states the theme or conflict (human need) in non-religious terms.

³ As a general rule, a reputable commentary will be produced by one of the following publishers within the last 30 years: Baker, Eerdmans, Michael Glazier, Augsburg/Fortress, Jewish Publication Society, InterVarsity, Westminster/John Knox, Hendrickson, Continuum, Doubleday, T & T Clarke, Word, Zondervan.

4. Retell the story of the text in your own words highlighting the theme and what Jesus says or does about it — to bring the “Divine Desire” to the situation.

5. Draw out two or three points that people can take home that will bring hope to their lives.

-frame each point with restatement (i.e. at beginning and end) so people can follow

-restate + two or three different illustrations of pieces of support + restate

6. Conclude the sermon intentionally, even if only to state the main point once more sharply and differently

Other ways: summary, story that brings it all together, story that ties in to start of sermon