

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BOT 540 Studies in Poetical Books: Psalms, Lamentations, Song of Solomon

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Spring 2004

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exegetical and devotional study of the Psalms, Lamentations, and Song of Solomon, with an emphasis on understanding them as Hebrew poetry in their cultural and theological context so that the student will be able to properly principle and effectively apply these books to their lives as the Word of God and minister them to the church today.

OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Summarize important characteristics of these three books.
2. Recognize and deal with properly the important features of Hebrew poetry as they relate to interpreting these books.
3. Explain and apply the major themes and concepts expressed in these books, including messianic references.
4. Preach and minister legitimately and effectively the theological principles underlying any passage in these three books.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

The Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version. New York: American Bible Society, 1995.

Recommended:

Gaebelein, Frank E., ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 5, *Psalms – Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

COURSE OUTLINE

Thurs Jan 8 Introduction
Tues Jan 13 Textbook chaps 1-4, TURN IN summaries of assigned psalms from the 5 books
Thurs Jan 15 Chaps 5, 7 in Ryken and Longman, Complete Lit. Guide
Tues Jan 20 Psalm 1
Thurs Jan 22 2
Tues Jan 27 8

Thurs Jan 29 Day of Prayer
Tues Feb 3 Psalm 16
Thurs Feb 5 22 TURN IN Messianic understanding essay
Tues Feb 10 110
Thurs Feb 12 45
Tues Feb 17 TURN IN Diagram of project passage
Thurs Feb 19 Song of Solomon Reading assignment
Tues Feb 24
Thurs Feb 26 Psalm 51
March 1-5 Spring Break
Tues March 9 Psalm 69
Thurs March 11
Tues March 16
Thurs March 18 Lamentations Reading assignment
Tues March 23
Thurs March 25 Psalm 73
Tues March 30
Thurs April 1 Psalm 119
April 6-15 Various psalms and any student presentations and conclusion
Projects due Tues, April 13; Sermon series topics due Thurs, April 15
Final Exam Thurs, April 22, 10:15-12:45

METHODOLOGY

Lecture, discussion, readings, essays, and research writing project.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance is expected: maximum allowable absences is four class periods. Please talk to the professor about any absences.

1. Be prepared to discuss the passages assigned for each day including reading them in the CEV, checking other translations, and reading the required commentary on them.
2. For Tuesday, Jan 13, read chapters 1-4 in the textbook and write your summation of what your assigned psalms are about from each of the five books of the Psalms and, from this, comment on any differences in the five books, (to be assigned in the first class).

By Thursday, Jan 15, read on poetry and psalms in Ryken and Longman, A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible, Chapters 5 and 17, on reserve in the Library.

3. Turn in on Thursday, Feb. 5, a 3-4 page typed essay, double spaced, right margin NOT justified, on the prophetic/messianic understanding of Psalms 2, 16, and 22, by New Testament writers. This essay must explain general principles as well as deal with a few specific points from these three psalms which demonstrate your understanding of how

they can be related to Jesus. The reading for it must include Chapter 2 on Psalm 16 in Walter Kaiser's The Uses of the Old Testament in the New, and Chapter 5 by Moo on sensus plenior in Carson and Woodbridge, Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon, on reserve. The best scholarly, theological, commentaries on these three psalms should be consulted. The major issue is how did the Old Testament Psalmist understand what he or she wrote in the passages which the New Testament writers say speak of Christ? In what way or ways are these psalms passages prophetic? It may be that each was understood to relate in a different way, thus representing three different prophetic understandings.

4. Turn in on Tuesday, Feb. 17, a flow of thought analytical diagram of the passage chosen for the exegetically researched, application project described below. Recommended reading is Walter Kaiser, Toward An Exegetical Theology, chapters 4 and 8, on reserve. This is for feedback from the professor before proceeding with the exegesis.
5. For Thursday, Feb. 19, and the discussion of Song of Solomon, read the NIDOTTE article by Longman, 4:1236-1238, and the introduction to Carr's commentary, pp. 15-69.
6. For Thursday, March 18, and the discussion of Lamentations read the NIDOTTE article by Brown, 4:884-893.
7. Turn in or present on the date agreed upon, as described below, an exegetically researched application project on a passage of your choice from these three books, preferably a psalm. This is to be a careful, Biblical-theological study of a passage with strong application for God's people today. This must demonstrate good interpretive method including the following:
 - A. Understanding the language of the text(s) through comparing translations and doing some word studies, which include the use of (New) Englishman's Hebrew Concordance (coded to Strong's) and the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis.
 - B. Understanding the significance of the historical and cultural references in the passage (s) through background studies, including Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, and scholarly, exegetical commentaries.
 - C. Understanding the literary intent of the passage by outlining the flow of thought and studying the literary devices used by the writer.
 - D. Understanding the theology intended through analyzing the theological and thematic terms and ideas used in context of the book and the whole Old Testament, and determining the underlying principles intended as the message of the inspired writer. Here again the best commentaries should be consulted, as well as Old Testament theologies, including House, and any other related theological studies. Be sure to research journal articles and read at least one for "A" level work.

The choice of passage or theme will be approved through feedback on the diagram due Tuesday, Jan. 17. The passage should be at least 6 verses long.

There are three choices for method of presentation below. All three choices require a full bibliography of all sources consulted and articles in multi-author books must follow 11.26 in Turabian 6th ed. All three should have a strong practical relevance in the conclusions if not the whole presentation.

CHOICES FOR METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- 1) Present in class the highlights in 20 minutes of a detailed 2-3 page outline of the results of your study. The outline must be turned in by noon the day before the presentation for photocopying by the department and preview by the professor.
- 2) OR Present the above outline to the professor in his office, turned in the day before.
- 3) OR Turn in a 9-12 page paper OR a 5-7 page typed, researched exegetical sermon outline by Tuesday, April 13.

For a paper the style should conform to Turabian 6th ed. with your choice of citation method: footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references (see Turabian 6th ed. chap. 10). However, for a sermon outline few citations are expected. Most of those needed will be for explanations to the professor, not to the sermon audience. A list of all sources consulted is needed for proper evaluation of your research. I greatly prefer to see any signed articles from multi-author works, such as NIDOTTE and encyclopedias, listed by author and title of the article rather than the book, (see Turabian 11.26). Also, the outline need not be double spaced throughout, but do **NOT** justify the right margin. Provide a title page but no cover, just staple it.

For a sermon be sure to capsulize your thesis at the end of your introduction in a proposition and a transitional question about that proposition which is answered by the main points of the sermon. The points must come from the text though not necessarily in the same order. The main points must be sentences and the points parallel to one another.

I recommend the approach of Lloyd Perry in a Manual for Biblical Preaching, the Foundational Pattern, pp. 65-72, 82.

Detailed explanations of significant exegetical decisions behind the sermon need to be written out just as they will be referred to in the sermon. If certain reasons will not be discussed publicly to avoid unnecessary confusion, then they need to be put in some kind of note to the professor set off from the rest of the material. You need to demonstrate the thoroughness and soundness of your exegetical work to the professor if not always to the people. Be sure to include what the text meant to the OT readers/hearers as well as the principles you see that you want your people to apply to their lives today. You may include brief descriptions of the illustrations you plan to use.

Write a careful conclusion summarizing how you have established your proposition or answered your question and then suggesting specific applications for our lives today. Be

sure to end with something that will effectively impress the message on the hearers' hearts.

8. Turn in on Thursday, April 15, three topics for a series of 3 sermons from any 3 adjacent psalms that have some relationship to one another. These topics need to be specific enough to clearly summarize the message you would preach or teach.
9. Write an essay exam on Thursday, April 22, 10:15-12:45, synthesizing the principles taught in the course and gained from the readings, including the importance of understanding Hebrew poetry for understanding these books. What characteristics of Hebrew poetry must be kept in mind to properly understand the intent of the inspired writers? Use some specific illustrations from the psalms. Synthesize your own summary of this subject that you could use to teach people in our churches.

Late work will be penalized 1 point per day late using a 12 point scale (12 = A, 1 = F).

GRADING PROCEDURE

Reading Assignments and class participation	10%
Essay on Prophetic/Messianic understanding	16%
Plan for Sermon Series	4%
Exegetical Sermon Outline	45%
Concluding Essay Exam on Hebrew Poetry	25%

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SPECIFIC DATA

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