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BT 605 Old Testament Theology

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BT 605 OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Spring 2006—A Three Hour Course Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

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Appointments are Also Available

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Course Aspirations and Place in the Curriculum

General Course Objective: OT 605 seeks to equip students for ministry by initiating them into the application of the discipline of biblical theology to the OT. The course explores the issues raised when we employ the fruits of exegetical and historical biblical study in shaping an understanding of the witness and core values of the OT seen *as scripture*, that is, as the critical norm and rule for Christian faith.

Three realities inform and shape our exploration of OT Theology. The first is that the OT and its theological perspectives originate from times, places far removed from any modern setting. In addition, its linguistic expression, literary genres, religious practices, and main ideas express the values of a culture distinct from our own. Thus the *element of historical study* of the OT strives for more than antiquarian illumination, but seeks to learn how we listen to God's word spoken in a language and accent not our own, from faces not the colors of our faces, and addressing cultural, political, and spiritual issues that diverge significantly from our own.

Second, this cultural distance does not stop with the OT. The earliest interpreters of the OT, who established its canonical shape and position in the Christian Bible came from Egypt, North Africa, Babylon, Syria, Turkey, and Asia Minor. Ignoring these voices forfeits formative insights into the OT's voice in the church. Therefore class will not be limited to the modern era, but will situate OT theology in *the history of interpretation*, the flow of the church's quest to read the OT normatively, meaning that we will listen to voices from throughout the church's history.

Third, the reality of ministry shapes our approach. As we explore selected methods, insights, and examples of various attempts to read the OT normatively, we will risk a theological interpretation of select sections of the OT. Such a task must always be oriented to the question of how the OT provides norms and standards for Christian believing, worshiping, and living.

Specific Objectives: We will pursue the general objectives of the course by pursuing these specific objectives, which will shape the day-to-day conduct of the class. Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

1. Describe and assess the essential stages and developments through history of the theological interpretation of the Old Testament, making concrete reference to specific interpreters, and their exegetical efforts;
2. Describe and assess the *contemporary discipline* of OT Theology in terms of the original settings of the OT material, the history of its interpretation, and the problem of contemporary, normative use;
3. Set the methods and problems of OT theology in context by reference to selected contemporary and sometimes controversial voices, Brevard Childs and Hans Urs Von Balthasar;

4. Identify in the OT itself crucial thematic *motifs* or core values unfolding through the OT in its present, canonical form, that seem to form the basic network of theological teaching in the OT;
5. Work with specific OT texts to demonstrate how knowledge of the discipline of OT Theology, combined with an awareness of the overarching themes of OT theology, illuminate the OT.
6. Indicate how the themes of OT theology engaged in class facilitate the ministry of preaching, teaching, and worship leadership in the church.

Means of Realizing Course Aspirations

READING

Greer, Rowan and J. Kugel. *Early Biblical Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

Miller, P. D. *The Religion of Ancient Israel*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2000. No discussion of the OT theology is adequate without a serious analysis of the actual religious life of ancient Israel. This book is the best current summary of that field.

Childs, Brevard S. *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. A survey of the theology of the OT that proceeds by topics rather than historically or in canonical order.

Rendtorff, Rolf. *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2005. The most recent work in OT theology by a major player in the discipline.

Additional Required readings will be posted on my private website:

<http://homepage.mac.com/lawsonstone1>

Go to the "Public Folder" pane to the "BT605Materials" link.

Recommended: Bauer, David. *Biblical Resources for Ministry* Contains excellent listings of other volumes dealing with the OT theology.

READING: This is a reading-intensive course. You will read a LOT in this class! Reading exposes students to the discipline's history and problems, to the history of theological interpretation (Greer/Kugel and selected articles) and to modern statements of the field addressing the historical dimension of the OT faith in Israelite religion (Miller), the thematic-theological issues (Childs) and the detailed exegetical-theological concerns (Rendtorff). While readings are correlated to specific topics, it is recognized that students will not always be able to read the exact assignments for each day. What is **required**, though is a midterm and a final reading report in which you will *indicate your completion of reading assigned to that date* using a form I will provide for you. Each report is worth 50 points, for a total of 100 reading points—the same number of points given for papers.

LECTURES are a vital component of the course. Instead of directly expounding readings, lecture will present an attempt at a synthetic overview of the core values of OT theology.

Attendance Policy: Occasional absences are an inevitable part of academic life, but attendance is vital. Attendance will be taken via a daily sign-in sheet. The professor assumes students will exercise the highest diligence and integrity in recording attendance.

Student attendance will account for 25 points toward the total points earned. Thus if you miss 6 sessions, 19 points are recorded for attendance *All absences count, and up to 4 may be made up*, therefore no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" will be observed.

Up to 4 absences can be made up by contacting the instructor for a reasonable, brief written assignment to be completed by the student. Request for make-up work must be made by the student either ahead of time, or within a week of the absence occurred. The make up work must be submitted within a week of the professor giving the student the make-up assignment. Completion of the make-up work will remove the absence. Typically, make-up work involves listening to an audio recording of the missed class presentation.

Two Essays 5-6 pages (typed/printed, double-spaced, 1” margins) will be assigned. These papers are take-home assignments, details of which will be posted on the Intranet Course Center 2 weeks prior to the due date. They are to be the students’ *own individual study, thought, organization, and wording completed without assistance from others*. Use of materials other than texts and class notes is not required and will, in fact, detract from the student’s own analysis. Work done for other classes or by other students is dishonest and will result in a failing grade and institutional disciplinary action.

These papers will involve direct study of biblical texts and/or significant examples of OT theological interpretation, with a view to implementing insights gained from lecture and reading. Rubrics for evaluation of the essays will be included with each assignment.

Grade Calculation: Attendance and reading scores are entered as raw point values.

Attendance -----	25 Points
Mid Term Reading Report -----	50 Points
Final Reading Report -----	50 Points
Essay One -----	50 Points
Essay Two -----	50 Points

Total Points: ----- 225 Points

Letter grades will be assigned by the following table:

A	216	-	225
A-	205	-	215
B+	196	-	204
B	189	-	195
B-	182	-	188
C+	173	-	181
C	167	-	172
C-	160	-	166
D+	151	-	159
D	144	-	150
D-	140	-	143
F	0	-	139

Office Hours: I try to keep my door "open" almost all the time. You are welcome any time the door is open to consider that an invitation to talk. I love to talk OT theology and consider it a privilege to have you in my office. You may also call, or e-mail me with a question or to make an appointment. *As a courtesy, I ask you not to "snag" me right before class. My middle-aged brain is working hard at that moment just to be ready for class!*

I am also experimenting with internet chat and Instant Messaging. If you have a Mac running iChat and an iSight cam, I'd love to try a face-to-face video conference with you especially if I'm at home (firewall issues on campus!). My AIM screen name is (surprise!) "Lawson Stone" and on .Mac it's "lawsonstone1". Add me to your "buddy list" and when you see me available, give it a try for fun.

COURSE CONFERENCE: By the second week of class, you will find on your ATS e-mail First-Class desktop an icon for BT 605. This Course Conference is vital to your work. All supplemental readings, essay assignments, and other materials will be placed here *and not distributed in paper copy*. Students are responsible to make sure they have the Course Conference icon on their First Class desktop. The conference will also include a discussion area where you may post questions, issues you'd like to have others talk about, or administrative questions.

Crucial Due Dates

First Essay Assignment Posted: March 8, Due: March 22

For this Essay you will need to have completed the Supplemental Reading through IIA (see outline below)

Mid-Term Reading Report Due: March 22 Includes:

*Kugel and Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation (All)* Childs, 1-27 Miller, xv-45*

Supplemental Required Reading Through IIA (see outline below)

Reading report will be on the essay cover page

Second Essay Assignment Posted: May 3 Due: May 17, 3 PM (Final Exam Period)

Final Reading Report Due: May 17, 3 PM (Final Exam Period)

Miller, Childs, Rendtorff (all)

All Supplemental Required Reading

Reading Report will be on the essay cover page

Lecture Themes and Emphases

The outline below is my sketch of how an OT Theology could be presented if we had unlimited time(!) We will try to cover at least through "II E" in class lecture.

I. OT THEOLOGY AS AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ENDEAVOR

- A. THE Fundamental Question of OT Theology
- B. The Formative Christianity and the *Rule of Faith*
Kugel and Greer *Early Biblical Interpretation*
Origen, *First Principles* (firstpri.pdf)
Origen on the *Song of Songs* (origen.pdf)
Tertullian's "prescription" against Heresies (tertullian.pdf)
Irenaeus, from *Against Heresies* and *On the Apostolic Preaching* (irenaeus.pdf)
Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on the Psalms: Prologue* (diodore.pdf)
Vincent of Lérins, the Vincentian Canon (vincent.pdf)
Augustine *de Scripturis* (homily on the binding of Isaac)
Athanasius' Letter on the Psalms
- C. Medieval Exegesis and The Crisis in Figural Interpretation
Bernard of Clairvaux on *Song of Songs* (bernard.pdf)
Aquinas, *Senses...*(taquinas.pdf)
Nicholas of Lyra on the *Song of Songs* (lyra.pdf)
- D. From Reformation to *Religionsgeschichte*
Luther on *Song of Songs* (luther.pdf)
Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2:10-11 (calvin.pdf)
Gabler, "Oration: on the Proper Distinction..." (gabler.pdf)
W. Robertson Smith, "The Bible and the Theology of the Reformation" (robsmith.pdf)
Theophile Meek, "Canticles and the Tammuz Cult" (songmeek.pdf)
- E. Biblical Theology: Flowering and Floundering
Barth, "The Strange New World Within the Bible" (barth.pdf)
Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT, Chapter 1-2* (eichrodt1.pdf, eichrodt2.pdf)
Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Chapters A-B* (VonRad.pdf)
Barth on the *Song of Songs*, (songbarth.pdf)
- F. The Craft of Old Testament Theology: Core Values and Marks of Excellence
Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation" (sontag.pdf)
Trible, "Loves Lyrics Redeemed" (songtribe.pdf)

II. OT THEOLOGY AS THE UNFOLDING, ACCUMULATING THEMATIC EMPHASES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (NOT ALL WILL BE COVERED)

- A. A Whole New Worldview: Primeval History, Primal Vision
Augustine, *Confessions, Book 12*
Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* on the 7 days (aqnsdays.pdf)
James Barr, "The Meaning of Mythology..." (Myth.pdf)
"BARA" in *NIDOTTE* (bara-NID.pdf)
- B. The Loving Care of Yahweh: The Faith of Israel's Ancestors
"The Scar of Odysseus" E. Auerbach, *Mimesis* (scar.pdf)
- C. The Name of Yahweh: The Heart of the Mosaic Faith
Wright, "What Great Nation Hath a God like the LORD" (greatnation.pdf)

Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart" (hardening.pdf)

D. The Acts of Yahweh: God Does What He Says, and Says What He Does

E. The Will of Yahweh: Law as Proclamation and Instruction

Barnabas on OT dietary laws (barnabas.pdf)

Novatian, "On Jewish Foods" (novatian.pdf)

Aquinas *Summa theologica* on law (aqnslaw.pdf)

Calvin on "the use of this life" and the law (calvinlif.pdf, calvinlaw.pdf)

Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus" *Purity and Danger*

(From this point, only selected topics will be treated as time is available, *per* below)

- F. The Worship of Yahweh: From Ritual to Reality
- G. The Love Of Yahweh: The Portable Torah
- H. The Gift of Yahweh: Holy War and Holy Love in the Holy Land
- I. The People of Yahweh: We Have Met the Enemy, and They Is Us!
- J. The Anointed of Yahweh: King And Zion
- K. The Word of Yahweh: The Emergence and Essence of Prophecy
- L. The Judgment of Yahweh: Proclamation of Judgment, Judgment as Proclamation
- M. The Promise of Yahweh: Never Again and Not Yet
- N. The Wisdom of Yahweh: Waiting on God