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# BT 605 Old Testament Theology

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## BT 605 OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Spring/Passover 2008—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 Bernard Anderson;

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

Sailhammer, John. H., *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995. Reviews the history and achievements of OT Theology with a thematic and methodological concern that goes beyond a mere bibliographic survey.

Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology: A Proposal*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. A brief analysis of the current problems of OT and biblical theology combined with a fresh argument for a canonical approach.

B. W. Anderson. *Contours of Old Testament Theology*. Fortress. Both an introduction to, and a fresh presentation of, the essentials of OT Theology.

Von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *The Glory of the Lord—A Theological Aesthetics: Vol. VI, Theology: The Old Covenant*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991, orig. Germ. 1967. This is a hard book! Von Balthasar is a theologian and this book is part of a 7-volume theological work that makes *glory* the organizing concept and which sets out a theological analysis of *beauty*. The climax of the work is an analysis of the OT (vol 6) and the NT (vol 7)

*Additional Required readings will be posted on my private website:*

<http://web.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), the thematic-theological issues (Childs, Anderson) and the detailed exegetical-theological concerns (Selected). 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 an online form. 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 listening to an audio recording of the missed class presentation. Normally classes are recorded and MP3 files posted either on the course center or on an external site.

**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 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!*

**COURSE CONFERENCE:** I will be making use of the Virtual Classroom environment to distribute materials for this class. 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 access to the Virtual Classroom environment. The VC will also include a discussion area where you may post questions, discuss, or ask administrative questions.

**Crucial Due Dates**

*First Essay* Assignment Posted: Tuesday March 11, *Due:* Tuesday March 25

*For this Essay you will need to have completed:*

Sailhammer; Childs; Anderson, 1-36.

*Supplemental Reading* through I-F (see outline below)

*Second Essay* Assignment Posted: Thursday May 1; *Due:* Tues Thursday May 15

*Final Reading Report Due:* Thursday May 15

*All Assigned Reading* (including any not completed at Mid-term)

### 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)  
Luther's *Preface to the Old Testament* (lutherpreface2OT.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

## Proposed Course Calender

Date	Day	Topic	Assignments
6-Sep	W	Organiziation	
8-Sep	F	Early Church and the OT	
13-Sep	W	Early Church and the OT	
15-Sep	F	Early Church and the OT	
20-Sep	W	Medieval Interpretation	
22-Sep	F	Medieval Interpretation	
27-Sep	W	Medieval Interpretation	
29-Sep	F	OT Interpretation in the Reformation	
4-Oct	W	OT Interpretation in the Reformation	
6-Oct	F	Bibiical Theology Movement	Essay 1 Posted
11-Oct	W	Bibiical Theology Movement	
13-Oct	F	Moving Forward	
18-Oct	W	Moving Forward	
20-Oct	F	Theology of Creation Accts	Mid Term Rdg Report
25-Oct	W	Theology of Creation Accts	Essay 1 Due
27-Oct	F	Theology of Creation Accts	
1-Nov	W	Israel's Ancestral Traditions	
3-Nov	F	Israel's Ancestral Traditions	
8-Nov	W	Mosaic Torah	
10-Nov	F	Mosaic Torah	
15-Nov	W	Mosaic Torah	
17-Nov	F	OT Law	Essay 2 Posted
22-Nov	W	Rdg Week	
24-Nov	F	Rdg Week	
29-Nov	W	OT Law	
1-Dec	F	Prophecy	
6-Dec	W	Prophecy	
8-Dec	F	Prophecy	Final Reading Report
12-Dec		No Class	Essay 2 Due