



TYNDALE
University College

**RLGS 4483: BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL THEMES—
THE OLD TESTAMENT AS CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE
Winter 2009; Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:25–4:40; Room 2082**

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Class cancellations due to inclement weather or illness will be announced/posted here.

Mailboxes — Every student is responsible for information communicated through the student mailboxes (a mailbox directory is posted beside the mailboxes). I will return assignments here.

MyTyndale.ca — I will send notices to your official email addresses. Please check regularly.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Biblical Theological Themes: Each course in this series examines a selected biblical theological theme such as the theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, the kingdom of God, Pauline theology, Johannine theology or the biblical view of disadvantaged people. Prerequisites: RLGS 1013 and RLGS 1023 plus RLGS 2013 or RLGS 3603 and 6 additional credit hours in Religious Studies. A biblical language is highly recommended. Offered occasionally.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Although the status of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture has been axiomatic almost from the birth of Christianity, understanding its abiding theological significance has been something with which the Church has wrestled since Marcion, who was excommunicated for his view that the Christ of the NT was incompatible with the Jewish God of the OT (ca. 144 CE), and indeed, since the Apostle Paul, who wrote of Christ as the “end of the Law” (Rom 10:4), and of the bypassing of Jewish Torah (Moses / Sinai understood as death) via Abraham (Rom 4; Gal 4). What is the witness of the Old Testament in the Church, and on what terms can it be heard?

In addition to a recent Christian attempt to address this problem, we will consider two basic doubts about the very possibility of a solution: one Jewish, and one historical-critical.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).
2. John J. Collins, *Encounters with Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).
3. Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993).

IV. SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

None specified. Please see the instructor for guidance on readings in a given area, consult items in the bibliography below, or peruse the bibliographies in the required textbooks.

V. COURSE EVALUATION:

1. Each Monday class will commence with a **reading quiz**. These are designed to ensure that you have read the assigned material carefully. Quizzes may not be made up in the case of absence, though in special cases they may be taken in advance.
2. You are required to submit **two discussion questions weekly**, on Wednesdays, with only a few exceptions (explained in later points). These should be typed, and should have your name and mailbox number at the top. Aim to raise questions for clarification that others are likely to share, or points of contention that are likely to spark healthy debate. (You could try for one of each.) Focus on some combination of:
 - a. the reading (note that my quiz questions will *not* model discussion questions),
 - b. the lecture,
 - c. or something else that falls under the week's theme question.Your questions will help facilitate Wednesday discussions. Again, draw attention to something about which you are unclear, or about which you are less than fully satisfied. For the sake of precision, cite page numbers whenever relevant.
3. With a partner, you are to make a **30 minute presentation** on one of the set themes. I will demo one of these in the second week. Evaluation will be based on:
 - a. the handout you create (incl. bibliography of 5–10 items *beyond* the assigned reading; at least some of these should be taken from the footnotes and bibliographies in Childs, Collins and Levenson—partly this is an exercise in drilling down into the three main arguments under consideration),
 - b. the quality of the presentation (accuracy, robust engagement of question),
 - c. the balance struck between presenters (partners will not necessarily receive the same mark; make sure to evince the contributions of both parties),
 - d. how substantively you handle questions from the class after your 30 min. presentation (I will try to help after a while, but you can expect 5–10 more min. on your own).
 - i. The class can draw on their prepared questions (see item 2).
 - ii. Naturally, presenters are exempted from writing questions.

- Creativity is most welcome, and you are encouraged to use the resources available to you. AV options include: CD, DVD, VCR, PowerPoint (save 2007 as 2003 and test!).
4. Twice in the semester, in weeks 4 and 10, we will hold a special **seminar** on specific biblical texts (Gen 22 and Ex 32–34, respectively). These sessions will displace both the presentations and the discussion questions. In preparation you will need to consult at least one good commentary on each text under investigation, and to write up a brief (one page, or 500 word) summary of the interpretation found (again, please type and include your name and mailbox). In theory, then, our seminars will be informed by a dozen different expert viewpoints. If desired, some can read the original Hebrew.
 5. Finally, the class will culminate in a **written thesis** of 10–15 pages (approximately 5,000–7,500 words). This must be engage in the *process* of writing: I will collect a 500 word proposal in week 6, and we will workshop a rough draft in week 12.

6. The semester's work will be weighted as follows, though the instructor reserves the right to adjust the balance as necessary:

Weekly Reading Quizzes	20%
Weekly Discussion Questions	10%
Presentation with a Partner	20%
Two Commentary Write-ups	10%
Thesis, with Proposal and Draft	40%

Students are responsible to keep a backup print copy of all assignments.

On writing: Good writing, like good reading, is a skill that must be honed in the practice. It takes work. It also involves revision: the *reworking* of first and second attempts. Alan Jacobs underscores the difference between *editing*—tidying up around the house—and *revising*—the remodeling of your house. There are a number of excellent resources available to help you with this task, and I strongly urge you to use them. One is Tyndale's Writing Centre. Others are freely available online. Jacobs, for instance, lists a number of questions to which you should have good answers. I augment them here:

- Do you have a thesis? What is it?
- Do your sub-theses support it? Do you explain how?
- Are your paragraphs well-organized?
- Are they healthy (supported, well-illustrated) and not anemic?
- Do you know what a comma splice is and how to avoid it?
- Is your writing clear and vivid?

For more, see Prof. Jacobs' page, here: http://ayjay.jottit.com/on_revising

Or go here: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/bedfordresearcher/links/writingprocess.asp#revising>

Also excellent, and currently being updated: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Remember, Tyndale offers free tutoring: <http://www.tyndale.ca/universitycollege/writingcentre>

VI. FURTHER BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Major Recent Studies and Attempts

1. Mark Elliott, *The Reality of Biblical Theology* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).
2. Rolf Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Deo, 2005).
3. Charles Scobie, *The Ways of Our God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
4. James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).
5. Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).
6. C. Dohmen & T. Söding, eds., *Eine Bibel—zwei Testamente: Positionen Biblischer Theologie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995).
7. Also note the *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* (JBTh) from 1986 [23 issues to date].

B. Classic 20th Century Studies and Attempts

1. Ben Ollenburger et al, eds., *The Flowering of OT Theology: A Reader in Twentieth Century OT Theology, 1930–1990* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992).
2. Gerhard Hasel, *OT Theology: Basic Issues* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

3. H. G. Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in 20th Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) and *Problems of OT Theology in 20th Century* (Fortress, 1985).
4. Walther Zimmerli, *OT Theology in Outline* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978 [1975]).
5. Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970).
6. H.-J. Kraus, *Die Biblische Theologie: Ihre Geschichte und Problematik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1970).
7. Gerhard von Rad, *OT Theology* (New York: Harper, 1962–65 [1958–60]).
8. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961–67 [1933]).

VII. COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

Week	Monday	Wednesday
1	1/12 <u>What are we talking about?</u> Readings: Levenson, Ch 1	1/14 Quiz; Questions Due
2	1/19 <u>What is Biblical Theology?</u> Readings: Childs, pp 1–51	1/21 Demo Presentation; Questions Due
3	1/26 <u>Who wants it [BT]? Who does not?</u> Readings: Collins, Chs 1–3; Levenson, Ch 2	1/28 Presentation A; Questions Due
4	2/2 <u>Test Case: The Akedah (Gen 22)</u> Readings: Collins, Ch 4; Childs, pp 325–336; Levenson, TBA?	2/4 Seminar I: Genesis 22
5	2/9 <u>Does “canon” link Jews & Christians?</u> Readings: Levenson, Ch 3; Childs, pp 53–94	2/11 Presentation B; Questions Due
6	2/16 FAMILY DAY <u>Paper Proposal</u>	2/18 ** Discuss Proposal w/ Dr. Driver **
7	2/23 READING WEEK <u>Research</u>	2/25 READING WEEK
8	3/2 <u>What place has history?</u> Readings: Levenson, Chs 4–5; Childs, pp 196–207	3/4 Presentation C; Questions Due
9	3/9 <u>Who is God?</u> Readings: Collins, Ch 7; Childs, pp 351–383	3/11 Presentation D; Questions Due
10	3/16 <u>Test Case: Self-revelation in Ex 32–34</u> Readings: Collins, Chs 5–6; Levenson, Ch 6; Childs, pp 130–142	3/18 Seminar II: Exodus 32–34
11	3/23 <u>Does the OT witness to Christ?</u> Readings: Collins, Chs 14–15; Childs, pp 452–484	3/25 Presentation E; Questions Due
12	3/30 ** Writing Workshops **	4/1 ** Writing Workshops **
13	4/6 <u>What’s so “special” about wisdom?</u> Readings: Collins, Chs 8–10; Childs, pp 187–190, 717–727	4/8 Presentation F; Questions Due
14	4/13 <u>Law/Gospel, Old/New: The abiding OT?</u> Readings: Childs, pp 532–594	4/15 Questions Due; Thesis Due
15	N/A READING DAYS (20–21 April): The final exam period will be held during exam week, 22–29 April 2009 (incl. Sat.), as scheduled by the Registrar. You do not need to attend because your one and only term paper is due on the last day of class.	