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OT 612 Psalms

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THIS IS A ROUGH DRAFT. THE GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS WILL REMAIN THE SAME. DIFFERENT PSALMS MAY BE USED IN THIS CLASS. TEXTS ARE CORRECT AND AVAILABLE AT COKESBURY. PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE ABOUT THE COURSE. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU THIS Spring!

OT (IBS) 612 PSALMS
Asbury Theological Seminary – Virtual Campus

Spring 2003

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Additionally, I check e-mail at minimum once per day (including weekends in most cases).

"Apply the whole of the text to yourself; apply the whole of yourself to the text." – Bengel

I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of the Psalter as a whole and a detailed, inductive study of examples of each of the major Psalm types, with special attention given to the interpretation of Hebrew poetic literature. The OT community's theology and worship are studied as they are reflected in the Psalter. This course seeks intentionally to incorporate the grammatical analysis of the Hebrew language into the overall inductive process.

PER CATALOG GUIDELINES, THIS COURSE WILL REQUIRE A WEEKLY TIME COMMITMENT OF 7.5-9.0 HOURS OF WORK PER WEEK. PLAN YOUR SCHEDULES ACCORDINGLY.

Part of this course involves learning to work within time constraints. You could easily spend hundreds of hours on any of the assignments for this class, but in reality, for many of you, the time limits in this class will approximate the time available during "normal" weeks for sermon and teaching preparation.

Work diligently this semester to master the totality of this method and its application in the time available and you will have a rich resource to draw on for the rest of your ministry. Those whom you teach will be blessed!!!

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

* Significant portions of this syllabus reflect the influences of my IBS teachers at ATS (Profs. David Thompson and David Bauer) as well as their mentor in the method Robert A. Traina who taught IBS (then English Bible) at ATS from 1966-88. I am grateful and thankful for the role that the IBS department has played in my development as a person, teacher, and interpreter of Scripture.

- A. Methodology.** By the end of the course the student should be able evidentially and contextually to:
1. Interpret books-as-wholes and any of their parts in light of the whole;
 2. Interpret poetic materials,
 3. Evaluate and apply passages thus interpreted;
 4. Correlate the theology of the passages studied to the teaching of other biblical materials, thus moving toward a biblical theology.
- B. Content.** The student shall be able to:
1. Think through the contents of each book of the Psalter studied in the course without recourse to the printed text, identifying major passages and delineating major themes;
 2. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Psalter;
 3. Use a general knowledge of the historical and religious background of the Psalter in the interpretation of these books.
- C. Attitude.** The student should desire and intend to:
1. Apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
 2. Make the Psalter the object of life-long study;
 3. Use the Psalter as a resource for preaching, teaching and living.

III. CLASS RESOURCES

- A. Required Texts**
1. RSV, NRSV, NIV, or some other non-paraphrased version of the Bible. The best Bible for IBS is one that contains only the text without paragraph headings, study notes, etc. I found it profitable to buy a completely unmarked "pew" bible to use exclusively for IBS.
 2. Bible Study That Works. Revised edition. Evangel Press, 1994. David L. Thompson .
 3. William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Word, 1993)
 4. James Luther Mays. Psalms. Interpretation. Louisville: WJK, 1994.
 5. J. Clinton McCann and James C. Howell. *Preaching the Psalms* (Abingdon, 2002)
- B. On-line Class Resources**
- A First Class account is recommended for this class. Within First Class you will find:
- OT612 (IBS) Psalter Class Folder. Here, off campus questions and discussion may take place.
 - Course materials. Copies of all printed course materials are also here. View by left clicking on OT (IBS) 612 folder and opening the Course Center Icon.

I have not placed any additional commentaries on reserve. Most are available in the Reference section (see below for best commentaries). I have done this for the sake of easy access. If I find that these volumes are being checked out and thus unavailable for in-house use, I will place all of them on reserve.

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES

A. Inductive Studies of the Psalms

The essential core of this class is your direct, individual study of assigned portions of the Psalter. To maximize your acquisition of the IBS methodology schedule your preparation time so that your assignments are done on-time.

Your assignments will consist *primarily* of your work, not the work of other commentators. Commentaries are to be consulted only after your own interpretive work has been completed and then clear documentation must be made of these sources. As you know, IBS is not about collecting the remarks of other sources. It is about gaining confidence through the application of a tested methodology to interpret the message of Scripture on your own. Believe me when I say that the IBS methodology will be one of the key assets that you acquire here at Asbury. It will serve you for the rest of your ministry.

B. Format.

1. Please place the following items on upper right-hand corner:
 - a. Student's name (please print, large "font")
 - b. Lesson numeral and page number (IV-1, IV-2)
 - c. Date due/Hours Worked, in that order (e.g., Sept. 21/4000 hours)

On succeeding pages you need only put your last name and the lesson-page enumeration. Staple or paper-clip every multi-sheet work submitted

C. Evaluation and Feedback

1. Lessons. All lessons are due to be submitted, complete at class time as assigned. Selected lessons will be graded for written feedback.
2. Classroom instruction and interaction. Once the review of method is complete. The majority of class time will be spent studying the texts under consideration.

D. Grade Components.

- 1) Completion of Lessons (95%). Students are permitted to *skip* any one lesson *except for the final three*. Students choosing this option are not eligible for the grade increase noted below.
- 2) Brief 3-4 page (max) reflection on McCann and Howell's *Preaching the Psalms*. **Due May th** 5%. Students, who do a good job, will receive full credit. The goal of this reading assignment is the facilitation of a substantive discussion of the move from text to sermon.

Students who attend every class session *and* submit all written work on time will receive a one grade level increase (B+ → A-).

Except in cases of emergency or by previous arrangement with the instructor, work submitted after the due date will be penalized one letter grade (A to A-) for *each* day that the assignment is late.

Grades on all inductive studies will be based on the grading rubric available for downloading in the course folder.

Assignments may be turned in either handwritten (provided it is *legible*) or typed. If you type your work, I would encourage electronic submission via the internet. This has a couple of advantages: 1) my comments are *typed*, 2) you receive your assignment back via the internet moments after I grade it. All hard copies of papers will be returned via your SPO.

Statement of Grades (from Catalog):

Regarding the assignment of grades, let each one remember that the Seminary defines an "A" as "Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives." Grades in the B range are commendable and demonstrate graduate level achievement.

Incompletes (from Catalog)

A grade of "incomplete" will be given only in the case of an "unforeseeable emergency." This does not include church work or problems in other courses at ATS.

F. Course Requirements

1. Completion and submission of assignments and lessons in writing as assigned.
2. Responsible *prompt* handling of difficulty with class content or requirements, of late work, of absences or other matters related to participation in the class.

VI. INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE PSALMS

****NINE HOURS IS THE MAXIMUM THAT IS EXPECTED TO BE SPENT ON EACH LESSON****

The following schedule will be adjusted before the beginning of the term. These are the lessons used in previous semesters of this course and should be viewed as representative of the types of assignments for this class.

Suggestions:

1. *Read through an entire assignment before beginning it.*
2. *Recall that items numbered separately are often interrelated and best considered together and done in light of each other.*

MODULE 2 (%)

LESSON I.SYLLABUS & FOUNDATIONS

1. Read through the syllabus, establishing the base of our mutual accountability for acquaintance with its contents.

2. Reflect on your prior exegetical and Inductive Biblical Studies educational experience and the readings below. **Critique** your previous work in IBS-I. What are your strengths and weaknesses? **List** the most important questions you have about methodical Bible study and about your own study of Scripture in light of this experience, especially your most recent Inductive Biblical Studies instruction, and come prepared to discuss these questions and to submit your list for review. Include your self-evaluation in the reflection paper discussed below.
3. Read Bible Study That Works, revised edition and write a one full page, typed, single spaced critical interaction with the work **or** if you have already read BSTW read 100 pages of Methodical Bible Study and complete the reflection paper.
4. Read the three articles in the on-line reserve.

LESSON II. SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS

If possible, work on this lesson with your assigned study group on-line. This is not a group project as each individual is responsible for the entire assignment. However, within your group, you may consult, critique, and share ideas. This is not required but will provide you an opportunity to dialogue with colleagues outside of class as you review method in these early lessons.

1. Title the chapters/segments. Be creative. The purpose of this is so that you can easily bring to mind the content of the book without recourse to the text. Discern the general nature of the work also (BSTW 27-31; MBS 53-59).
2. Locate and title the **main units and sub-units** in the book and identify a **the major structural relationships** operative between these and in the book as a whole (BSTW, 32-43; MBS 38-66). Briefly describe the specific materials involved in each structure. Give references. Remember: a major structural relationship will control the bulk of the material in the book or at minimum be operative between two main units.
3. Ask a brief, coherent set of **interpretive questions** regarding each major structural relationship observed and record them with each major set of structural observations (BSTW, 44-49).
4. On the basis of your structural observations, identify the **strategic areas** which provide insight into the book as a whole. This will in most cases involve an entire psalm or psalms. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance. List one strategic area for each major structural relationship observed. Note that there may be possible overlap.
5. Identify **literary forms** of book-level significance.
6. Observe the **atmosphere** of the book.
7. Note data bearing on such **critical questions** as author, place, date of writing, history of composition, recipients, etc. **Approach these questions inductively** from the book itself, not from introductory remarks in your study Bible or from other secondary sources. You will have plenty of time to consult these sources during the course of further study.
8. Note other **major impressions and questions** relating to the book as a whole.

9. You may find it helpful to present your major findings (content, structure, strategic passages, etc.) on a book chart. You may need a legal size sheet for books of this size.
10. Read the discussion of the book in B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) and William S. Lasor, et al. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

LESSON III – INTERPRETATION OF PSALMS 1-2

1. Survey Pss. 1-2
 - a. Locate and title the **main units and sub-units** within this section.
 - b. Identify a **few, major structural relationships** operative in the unit as a whole. Briefly describe the specific materials involved in each structure. Always give references. Cf. BSTW, 32-43; MBS. 36-67.
 - c. Identify the set of structural observations you regard as most important to an understanding of this unit. Focusing on these observations, pose a coherent set of **interpretive questions** regarding the observations and the structure itself (See Handout and/or BSTW, 44-49). Use the content of the passage to make your questions as specific and pertinent to this assignment as possible.
 - d. Based on your structural observations, identify the **strategic areas** which provide insight into the unit as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of its relationship to your structural observations. It may be helpful also to state these with each major law. In other words, identify one strategic passage for each structural relationship.
 - e. Identify **literary forms or genres** in the section as you are able.
 - f. Describe the **atmosphere** of the unit.
 - g. Note data relevant to compositional history, probable first readers, etc.
2. Analysis.
 - a. Select the structural relationship that shows the most promise for understanding the passage as a whole and bring forth a set of interpretive questions.
 - b. By analysis of the unit and careful, inferential reflection on your analyses, answer these questions as thoroughly as your time will allow. Answering the definitive question, “What is involved in...?” is often an excellent way to focus the initial stages of analysis. Select the determinants that appear most important for answering each question.
 - 1) Record observations and inferences, separating them clearly using either the two-column format or some other indicator.
 - 2) Number observations and give Bible references. Go beyond mere quotation of the text. Probe, analyze, describe, label, say something about what is in the text.
 - 3) Avoid non-significant rehearsal of grammar and go beyond even significant grammatical analysis to other matters.

- c. Possible focus. You may find it helpful to begin your analysis process by focus on the strategic passage related to the structural insights (i.e., focus on a *detailed analysis* of a strategic passage) you are going to pursue, moving from this passage then (as time allows) to selected features of the unit as a whole which are involved. *Those who have completed OT501 are encouraged to make use of the original language in the process of detailed analysis.* I will model this in class.
- d. If it is necessary to move beyond immediate-context definition of key terms, consult published word studies (See VI.D) or do your own strictly limited (i.e., usage within the Psalter) inquiry of a word's use.
- e. Save time for reflection on rational and implicational questions related to the matters you have studied.
- f. After you have done your own analysis, consult a respected interpreter of your passage (see below for discussion about commentary use). Interact critically with this resource, integrating the results into the answers to your interpretive questions.
- g. Synthesis
 - a) In a sentence or two, state the subject of this text? If this was the only portion of Scripture that you had, what would you know.
 - b) Lay out in a brief outline, how this subject is developed.
Remember: in the preceding work, you are aiming at a significant, integrated interpretation of a significant feature of the unit as a whole, not a collection of disconnected answers to "little" questions.

LESSON IV. PSALMS 146-150

If possible, continue your on-line group work on this lesson. Remember the suggestions at the beginning of the lessons. Use lesson III as a basic model in terms of format.

LESSON V PSALM 19

Apply Lesson III as the basic model.

LESSON VI PSALM 73

Apply Lesson III as the basic model with the following additions:

3. Evaluation – Select a truth or related truths from your synthesis.
 - a) Are there clues in the context of the Psalm or the Psalter as a whole about the truth's specificity?
 - b) How do other OT texts construe the issue under consideration?
 - c) How does the NT construe the issue under consideration?
 - d) Reformulate the truth in light of your canonical analysis in terms of its contemporary applicability.
4. Application and Proclamation
 - a) On the basis of your evaluation, explore specific ways in which this passage can be applied to yourself and/or other contemporary persons.

- b) Develop a proclamation/teaching outline that describes the theological teaching derived from the text (see your synthesis) along with the contemporary application derived from the process of Evaluation/Application.

LESSON VII PSALM 77

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

LESSON VIII PSALM 78

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

LESSON IX PSALM 139

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

LESSON X PSALM 32

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

LESSON XI PSALM 118

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

LESSON XII PSALM 22

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

LESSON XIII PSALM 137

Apply Lesson VI as the basic model.

VII. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

HERE IS A BIBLIOGRAPHY THAT CAN GET YOU STARTED DOWN THE ROAD OF ADDITIONAL STUDY OF THE PSALTER.

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Use of Secondary Sources in Inductive Bible Study

- 1) Interpretation of Scripture must never take place in isolation. We as believers in Jesus Christ are part of a community of faith with a tradition of biblical interpretation that began in the production of the Old Testament and continues to this day. It is crucial for us to be aware of the Church's use and understanding of the text(s) which we are interpreting. This is not to say that interpretation merely repeats the insights of an earlier day. Rather, the interpretive process reviews, revises, critiques, and is informed by the history of interpretation.
- 2) Secondary sources are not to be consulted *until* you have completed your own work. Exceptions to this will be discussed in class or clearly specified in the syllabus.
- 3) Secondary sources must be used *critically*. Don't simply cite or quote without providing your own evaluation of the work.
- 4) At minimum, you are expected to dialogue with two substantial modern commentary on the text at hand. If in doubt as to the substance of a resource, consult Bauer's *Biblical Resources for Ministry*. If *BRM* does not cite the work in question, ask me or consult another commentary. The following commentary series are recommended for primary consideration: WBC, NICOT, Interpretation, Anchor, OTL, and NIB. Additionally, as time allows, students are encouraged to consult exegetical articles in scholarly journals. See also Joel Green's posted review of commentaries on the library counter.

This is not to disparage the work of earlier generations or of popular materials, but represents a commitment to excellence and a desire to bring the best resources into play and we prepare to proclaim/teach God's word. As a seminary trained servant, you can digest the "meatiest" works, glean the fullest insights, and then "translate" the for God's people under your care.

- 5) When using resources to provide historical background to a text (Histories of Israel, Bible Dictionaries, etc.), make sure that the information is up-to-date.¹ Use reference tools that are contemporary (1970-present). Our understanding of the biblical world continues to grow. We owe it to those whom we will teach/preach to provide correct data.

¹ BibleWorks 4.0 includes *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. *Easton's* is dated and should not be trusted to provide reliable background information.