
Who Is the Goliath in Your Life? Preaching OT Narrative
from a Historical-Grammatical Perspective

Goal:

Preaching Old Testament narrative texts is often neglected by the church. The reasons for this neglect are complex and complicated. Part of the problem, of course, is the church's difficulty in seeing the application of OT narrative texts that appear to be so strange and esoteric. Indeed, how do such passages as the leprosy laws and the food laws apply to the church of Jesus Christ? How do pastors make such teachings meaningful and relevant to their congregations? Another aspect of the problem is that for almost two hundred years OT scholarship has focused on issues of criticism, that is, questions of dating and authorship. Skepticism regarding the reliability and authority of the OT dominate the field of study. As Ralph Davis has pointed out, these scholars have "managed to make Old Testament studies mostly boring, lifeless, and dull." In addition, many pastors seem to center their preaching ministry in the NT in which they feel they are really getting at the heart of the Christian message. In this way, OT narrative is almost shunned and put to the side as not as relevant as the NT. One famous pastor has even claimed that we ought to "unhitch ourselves from the Old Testament"! Finally, one of the greatest parts of the problem is the reality that many pastors simply do not know how to preach the OT. Often there is simply moralizing (e.g., who is the Goliath in your life?) or spring-boarding (using the text to jump into some theological point that can be generally applied). Thus, in the church today there seems to be a general malaise or stupor when it comes to preaching the OT narrative texts.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Apostle Paul makes the following statement: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." Paul, of course, is here speaking of the OT scriptures, and he sees the vital and crucial part that they are to play in the life of the Christian and the church. We need to take this to heart. The OT is part of God's holy, inerrant, authoritative word. In this course, we will focus on the means and methods of preaching OT narrative texts. OT historical narrative can be most challenging and difficult to interpret and to preach, but it can also provide wonderful, in-depth teaching and theology when appropriately understood.

Requirements:

1. The student is required to read the following books. A reading report is due to me by April 28, 2023 regarding how much reading the student has done of the assigned materials (10% of final grade).

a. D. Ralph Davis, *The Word Became Flesh: How To Preach From Old Testament Narratives* (Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2012). (Please have this book read prior to the class meetings.)

b. S. Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

c. S. Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). (Please have this book read prior to the class meetings.)

d. D. Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

e. Read the books of Genesis through Esther in their entirety.

2. The student is required to prepare a four sermon sequential preaching series out of the narrative texts of the OT. These full manuscript sermons are due to the professor on April 28, 2023. The sermons must demonstrate that the student has grasped the various aspects of the course, in particular, the methodology of the ten commandments of preaching that will be taught in the course (60% of final grade).

3. The student will preach in class on an assigned text. The process and requirements of this project will be discussed during the first class period (30% of final grade).

Course Outline:

1. Monday, January 16

Syllabus

Introduction to Preaching OT Narrative Texts

Ten Commandments of Preaching

Common Preaching Errors

From Interpretation to Sermon Outline

Commandments of Preaching 1.1 to 4.1

2. Tuesday, January 17

Commandments of Preaching 4.2 to 5.2

3. Wednesday, January 18

Commandments 5.3 to 5.6

4. Thursday, January 19

Commandments 6.1 to 10.1

Difficult Passages

Student Sermons

5. Friday, January 20

Student Sermons