

Advanced Exegesis of Psalms

ADVANCED EXEGESIS OF PSALMS Spring semester 2017

Instructor: Johanna W.H.Bos

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will build on basic exegetical skills to gain insight into the collection of prayers in the Hebrew book *Tehillim*, Psalms. The emphasis in the course will be on the psalms as a book of prayers and a liturgical resource. While we will survey the broad outline of psalms scholarship historically, and acquaint ourselves with scholarly approaches to the psalms and their poetry, we will at the same time directly engage with the texts on a personal and community level. How did these prayers work in their original setting and how can they work for us today?

METHOD

We will meet twice a week for instruction, translating practice and psalm analysis. Hebrew language difficulties may be revisited as needed. Lectures will be posted on CAMS to serve as required reading. Students are expected to find commentary resources and language aids as they are available in the library at LPTS.

OBJECTIVES

On the level of information, we should become familiar with some of the history of Psalms research, as well as traditional and contemporary analyses of Hebrew poetry. More important, the engagement with this key-book of the Hebrew Bible should bring us to a new appreciation and heightened awareness of the power of poetic speech/prayer and song in the setting of personal piety as well as communal worship. The range of faith-experiences and theological concepts present in the Psalms and their articulation in psalm poetry should become familiar to us. Our study of the Psalms should enable us to begin using psalms in liturgical settings as well as private devotion.

These objectives will find expression in the designing and execution of a Psalms Festival to be held in the Caldwell Chapel of the Seminary on Wednesday May 3, 2017.

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REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend class and to be prepared for discussion. The instructor should be notified ahead of time of absences in case of illness or emergencies.

There will be regular written assignments to be presented in class and each student will make a presentation of approximately 20 minutes on a psalm of her or his choice to illustrate actual or possible liturgical use of the psalm. See Schedule for details.

The of the class is to produce a Psalms festival on the campus to be presented on Wednesday May 3, 2017. Each student is to take part in the design and the execution of this service. Theme and outline of the service are to be ready the week following Research and Study.

For further details see Schedule

LANGUAGE POLICY

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy (but see note).¹ When referring to God in your own writing you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for more information, see:

<http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from

¹ The exception to this convention is the citation of the naming of God in the Hebrew Bible. See CAMS posting "Writing on the Water." Because in our Seminary we avoid the full spelling of the Tetragrammaton, when citing secondary resources that use the full spelling we cite as follows: Y.H.W.H

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online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

RESOURCES

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967/77).
Elliger, K. and Rudolph, W., eds.,

The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (Leiden, Boston, Cologne: Brill, 2001)

OR

Clines, David J.A. ed. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009)

English Bibles: The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003)

The Jewish Study Bible. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds. (Oxford University Press, 2004.)

Brueggemann, Walter. *Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit*. Wipf and Stock, second Edition, 2007.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, Revised Second Edition, 2007.

Zenger, Erich. *A God of Vengeance?* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.

Berlin, Adele. *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Second Edition, 2007.