

Time and the Word: Conceptualizing the meaning of Scriptural Figuration

WYT- 5153HS

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Description: This course seeks to understand the basis upon which the Bible can be read “figuratively”, within the context of an understanding of historical and temporal reality. The course makes use of exegesis (Exile, Genesis, various sermons), history of interpretation (both Christian and Jewish), philosophy of time, and the history of the philosophy of time as relevant to Christian theology and exegesis. The main text, however, will be Ephraim Radner’s forthcoming *Time and the Word: The Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures* (Eerdmans, 2016). The goal of the course is to outline a working framework for understanding how traditional figural referents in the Bible can be intellectually sustained in Christian reading of Scripture.

Format: Seminar discussion, involving all students.

Requirements: Reading, attendance at every class, presentation in class (30%) , discussion participation, (30%); final paper (40% of the grade)

Paper: a research paper of approximately 25 pages on a topic related to the course, agreed upon with the instructor; due by August 15, 2016.

Limitations: The course is limited to 12 persons; no auditors.

Outcome Goals:

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS: Research and writing on a particular topic of history of interpretation, making use of a detailed aspect of historical and hermeneutic scholarship.

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES: Significant joining of Scriptural hermeneutics and theology in a disciplined and creative fashion, on the particular topic of the relationship of historical reality and divine Scriptural referents. Students of Theology and of Biblical Studies both will benefit.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION: The course examines traditional Christian exegetical claims about figural referents, and thereby deepens an understanding of the divine reach of the Scriptural text.

Class schedule

This is a week-long intensive. It is important that reading be done at a level of comprehension that permits several hours of informed discussion with instructor and peers.

Readings will be made available to those registered for the course 3 weeks before the first class. All readings will be available online or as pdf's.

Day 1: *Time and the Word* (TW): Intro, chapter 1 (Exile) and chapter 2 (History of Figural reading) (pt. 1)

Other readings: Basil, Augustine, Origen

Day 2: TW, Chapter 2 (History of Figural Reading)– pt. 2

Other readings: Neusner and Kugel, Dickson, Jowett

Day 3: TW: Chapters 3 (Time As Use) and 4 (Creative Omnipotence)

Other Readings: Smith & Oaklander, Dolnikowski (Intro), Ohly, Levy, Smalley

Day 4: TW: Chapters 5 (Divine Synechdoche), 6 (Juxtapositional Reading), and 7 (Trinity)

Other Readings: Ramm, Rahner, Yeago

Day 5: TW: Chapter 8 (Figural Preaching) and Appendix (Sermons)

Bibliography

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Kugel, James, *Traditions of the Bible*, c. 2 [on Genesis] (Harvard, 1998)

Levy, Ian Christopher, "John Wyclife's Neoplatonic View of the Scripture in its Christological Context", in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, II, 2003.

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Rahner, Karl, "Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology", In Herbert Vorgrimler (ed), *Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology* (Baltimore, MD: Helicon, 1964)

Ramm, Bernard, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1970), Ch. 4, "Doctrinal Use of the Bible"

Smalley, Beryl, "The Bible and Eternity: John Wyclif's Dilemma", in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 27 (1964)

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Yeago, David, "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis", in *Sewanee Theological Review* 45:4 (Sept., 2002)