



**NIPAWIN BIBLE COLLEGE**  
**BT423 THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL**  
**INDEPENDENT STUDY**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2017**

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Credit hours: 3

## RATIONALE

“The prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible...contain[s] the very word of the eternal God, the message of which transcends time and space.... Their words can provide us with insight into God’s character and challenge us to love him more and to serve him with greater devotion.” (Chisholm, *Handbook on the Prophets*, 2002)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce the prophetic movement in the Old Testament. The role and message of the prophet will be considered. The prophetic books, both major and minor, will be surveyed in their historical context as well as their contemporary application in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Upon successful completion of this course the student will have:
- Gained an increased knowledge of the historical context of each of the prophetic books, Isaiah through Malachi;
  - Acquired greater insight into the theme(s), purpose(s) and issue(s) within these books so as to understand more significantly Israel’s central role in the outworking of God’s redemptive program for all peoples, in all places and all time;
  - A heightened appreciation for Israel’s prophets and all those who bear the burden of being God’s spokesperson in our own day;
  - Developed the ability to consciously apply the truths of these books to their life in practical ways on a daily basis;
  - Resolved to return regularly to a study and meditation of these books for spiritual refreshing, encouragement, guidance and strength both personally as well as in teaching and preaching.

## TEXTBOOKS

The Bible (KJV, ESV, NLT, RSV, NIV, NASB)

Chisholm, Robert B. *Handbook on the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

## REQUIREMENTS

All written assignments are to be word-processed on a computer in accordance with the prescribed requirements in the *NBC Student Handbook*. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, spelling and the student's ability to follow instructions. Due dates to be determined in consultation with the course advisor. ***Please note:*** *Resident students must arrange to meet with the course advisor weekly to give updates on their reading, and discuss any issues arising from the course work.*

1. **Textbook Reading (20%):** Read, in its entirety, the primary course text: Chisholm, *Handbook on the Prophets*, 2002.

Having done so, the student will prepare a 4 page critique of the textbook in which you assess its value as a resource in understanding the prophets and their message in the Old Testament Scriptures. Students are expected to exercise a good measure of Christian **and** academic charity and respect when disagreeing with scholars. Do not consult outside sources. A title page is required. An excellent critique will include the following components:

- Provide the basic bibliographic data (in proper form) along with the total number of pages you have read.
- Your first paragraph should identify the author and give their credentials for writing the book. This need not be extensive.
- Then, state (in one good sentence) the subject of the book as well as the intended audience.
- *Briefly* (but adequately) summarize the book in terms of its content.
- Evaluate the clarity and the organization of the book. As you think about this, ask yourself: Has the author provided new or deeper insights into the subject under consideration? Has the author achieved his intended purpose? Has he satisfied my curiosity about the subject? Does the author effectively and logically develop his arguments? Does he use his sources well? Is the work balanced and comprehensive? Have my presuppositions about the current place and relevancy of biblical prophecy been challenged or affirmed? How has this material informed my worldview? Does the book's contents provoke me to think in terms of personal application? And do I recommend this book as a serious resource on this subject? Where you are able, give brief examples from the book to illustrate your conclusions. Clearly the majority of your effort will be centred on the evaluation, not the summary.

2. **Bible Reading (20%):** In addition to the textbook, you are required to read the biblical text from Isaiah through Malachi. It is highly recommended that you do this in conjunction with the textbook reading so that you are familiar with the biblical material that Chisholm is addressing. On the agreed upon day, you will be asked to indicate what percentage of the biblical text you have completed reading.

3. **Research Paper (40%):** This assignment is a scholarly work in which you are required to research data, interpret it and fit it into a coherent and extended discussion. Therefore, your paper is not simply a report of an event or the retelling of someone else's work; rather, it is a critical work in which you will present a clear thesis (an interpretive truth claim) and then use your sources to support your claims. It is important that your thesis deals with some interpretive dispute; avoid simply restating a position that is overwhelmingly agreed upon.

Choosing one (1) of the topics listed below, write a 20 page paper and support it with a minimum of 15 sources. In this regard you will want to pay close attention to the bibliography provided, broader library resources not specifically listed and the Galaxie journal link. Once the topic has been chosen, your instructor can assist you in choosing the best resources from the library collection. Avoid consulting random web sites. All sources must be documented using footnotes and a bibliography. Students desiring to write a paper on a topic that is not listed below must receive prior approval from the course advisor. Topics include:

- Spiritual adultery in Hosea or Malachi
- The theme of social justice in Amos
- The theme of the Messiah in Isaiah or Micah
- The Temple in Ezekiel 40-48
- The day of the LORD in Joel or Zephaniah
- The motif of election in Isaiah or Jeremiah
- The nature of God (as presented in *one* of the major prophets)
- The judgment of God as depicted in Nahum
- The ministry of intercessory prayer as seen in Daniel 9 or Habakkuk
- The Gentile hope in Isaiah
- The theme of the exodus in Isaiah
- The motif of creation in Isaiah
- The theme of shalom in Isaiah
- Biblical ethics (as presented in *one* of the major prophets)
- The theme of atonement in Isaiah
- The apocalypse in Daniel
- God's repentance in Jonah
- The use of "Thus says the LORD" in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or Amos
- The theological theme of Christ in any one of the prophetic books.

4. **Choose one (1) of the following (20%).**

A. Prepare a Sermon in which you choose a biblical text from any of the prophetic writings, exegete that text, develop a homiletical outline that accurately reflects the concerns/issues raised *by the text* and then craft a manuscript (approx. 7 pages) that you could potentially take into the pulpit with you and confidently present to the congregation. Details to be aware of:

- Your exegesis should include word studies, grammatical issues, pertinent historical data, any rhetorical devices used by the prophet, theological concerns raised in the text, didactic emphases, cultural/social nuances affecting the prophetic message and other scriptural texts that speak to the same issue/concern.
- Your homiletical outline must show a clear and logical thought progression that builds toward a climax.
- And your manuscript must include an introduction, main body of the message and a conclusion that calls for a timely response from the listeners.

You must submit (i) your exegetical notes, (ii) your homiletical outline and (iii) your full manuscript. Your aim is to prepare a sermon that would take 20-30 minutes to actually preach.

B. Prepare an Adult Lesson (time frame should be 1 hour) suitable for either Sunday school or college that focuses on *one* of the topics listed below.

- What is prophecy?
- Prophets/prophecy in the broader Ancient Near East
- Roles/functions of Hebrew prophets
- Prophetic authority
- True/false prophecy
- Interpreting prophecy
- The New Testament use of Old Testament prophecy
- The place of Old Testament prophecy today

Your lesson must include: a clear outline of the lesson; questions for discussion; an appendix with pertinent graphics for either power point, or handouts.

**These assignments represent approx. 35 pages of written work and 470 pages of textbook reading. Further reading is required from Scripture and research.**

#### EXTENSION/LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

For an explanation of these important policies please refer to the *NBC Student Handbook*.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY [Regular commentaries, or specific theological works which will prove helpful are not cited]

Alexander, T. Desmond et al eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Anderson, Bernhard W., Steven Bishop and Judith H. Newman. *Understanding the Old Testament*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2007.

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Block, Daniel I. "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of *rwh* in the Book of Ezekiel." *JETS* 32 (March 1989): 73-83.

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Boring, M. Eugene. "Early Christian Prophecy." In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

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- Hullinger, Jerry M. "The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48." *Bib Sac* 152 (Jan.-Mar. 1995): 279-289.
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- Matthews, Victor H. and Don C. Benjamin. *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250-587 BCE*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993.
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- More, Thomas S. "The Lucan Great Commission and the Isaianic Servant." *Bib Sac* 154 (Jan.-Mar. 1997): 47-60.
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Students are encouraged to further consult the excellent bibliography that is provided in the textbook beginning on page 483.