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DEVELOPING STUDENT MINISTRY INTERNS AT
APPLEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IN
WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO

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DEVELOPING STUDENT MINISTRY INTERNS AT
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PREFACE

This project was completed in large part because of the encouragement of many. First, I would like to thank a faithful friend and mentor, Dr. Calvin Wittman. I am grateful for his love, encouragement, and investment in my life. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Michael Pohlman, my faculty supervisor, for his guidance and encouragement throughout the whole process. Last, I would like to thank my loving, supportive family, who has been my biggest fans.

Derek Jones

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Applewood Baptist Church student ministry desires to make disciples by creating a culture that points people toward the way of Christ, which is the way of the cross. Making disciples consists of training people to use their gifts in order to build the church. The Bible teaches that each individual has gifts like prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, generosity, leadership, zeal, and mercy (Rom 12:6-8). Some of these gifts are easier to develop than others. The gifts of teaching and preaching are some of the more difficult gifts in which to train because it includes a vast amount of instructing in areas such as communication, biblical theology, exegesis, and the like. Often, limited equipping occurs in the local church regarding preaching because of the amount of time needed to train leaders to accurately handle the Scriptures.

This lack of training has led to many beginner preachers having to figure out how to preach and handle God's Word on their own. These beginning preachers lack confidence in exegesis, leading them to focus on preaching from the easier genres, such as the Epistles or Gospels. They almost always avoid the more difficult genres, especially Old Testament historical narratives. This avoidance of preaching Old Testament historical narratives leads to increased biblical illiteracy within a community, and the church suffers immensely because the people are not hearing the full counsel of God's Word communicated. The Bible is the complete, inerrant, and infallible word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17), and any ministry should have leaders who can preach texts from all types of genres.

Old Testament narrative passages are foundational to understanding the New Testament,¹ and all of the books are necessary to accurately understand God's plans of redemption through the work of Christ. Michael Lawrence states,

Biblical theology is about reading the bible, not as if sixty-six separate books, but a single book with a single plot-God's glory displayed through the Jesus Christ. Biblical theology is therefore about discovering the unity of the Bible in the midst of its diversity. It's about understanding what we might call the bible's metanarrative.²

Applewood Baptist Church student ministry implemented a training program to equip its student ministry interns with the tools necessary to faithfully handle this genre of biblical writing.

Context

Applewood Baptist Church (ABC) in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, began as a mission of Truett Memorial Baptist Church April 10, 1960, and on September 11, 1960, was constituted as Applewood Baptist Church (ABC). In its fifty-five-year history, ABC has gone through a variety of seasons within its student ministry. The student ministry has experienced periods of strong and poor leadership as well as times of growth and decline. Historically, ABC's student ministry has not allowed anyone, including its ministry interns, to preach from the pulpit unless they had a traditional degree from an accredited seminary. The pulpit was only for those who have been trained in exegesis and was never used as a tool to develop their young interns. However, recently the youth ministry has experienced rapid growth and increased gatherings, resulting in the need to empower the interns to preach and teach on a regular basis. In the haste to staff the youth ministry, insufficient attention has been given to equip the interns in the needed homiletical and exegetical

¹See Luke 24:13-35; Heb 11; Rom 15:4; 1 Pet 1:10; 2 Cor 3:14. These passages reveal Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament redemptive promise.

²Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 30.

skills.

One of the biggest areas of weakness reveals itself when the interns are asked to preach from the Old Testament narrative passages. These passages seem to be avoided at all costs because of the interns' lack of training when dealing with this genre. All of the interns have grown up in churches that rarely taught the Old Testament. Because of this, they possess a limited understanding of how God has revealed Himself to His people throughout history and how the Old Testament points forward to the life and mission of Jesus Christ. It is imperative to teach the interns to discern the intended purposes from the stories and, when forced to preach from this genre, not to turn the intended meaning into a moralistic exhortation to become like the biblical characters instead of seeing God's redemptive historical plan. In order to avoid moralistic teaching, our desire is to expand the interns' knowledge on the different biblical covenants and the redemptive-historical context that should be the background for all of the historical narratives in order to find their ultimate meanings.³

Another weakness has been the lack of discipleship that has taken place within the church's student ministry. The primary focus of large group gatherings and evangelism has left limited time for investment in the interns. Most of them have been involved in ABC's student ministry for a while and have not had anyone mentor them personally. They have not had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the Bible, the Old Testament, or preaching on a consistent, weekly basis. Thus, the interns have been thrown into ministry environments without proper training, and many have burned out because of a lack of affirmation or encouragement. The above-mentioned circumstances have pointed out a great need in having someone invest in the lives of the interns, providing platforms for

³Sidney Greidanus states, "Clearly, one of the dangers of reading the New Testament without its Old Testament background is a serious misunderstanding of the teaching of the New Testament." Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 30.

them to use their gifts, as well as offering appropriate feedback regarding their strengths and weaknesses.

Rationale

Paul commanded Timothy to teach faithful men what he had heard from Paul so that those men would teach others (2 Tim 2:2). The primary source Paul used to teach Timothy was the Old Testament, and all believers have the same commission. ABC's student ministry desires to be faithful to this biblical imperative and to teach the interns how to preach Old Testament historical narratives. In the past, there was an expectation that leaders within ABC should be able to preach, however, preaching now seems to be a specialty. The local church rarely offers any type of training or feedback regarding educating young men how to preach and exposit God's Word. The next generation of preachers are starving for training in regard to the different genres of Scripture and how to create and structure sermons.

Paul charges Timothy to "preach the Word," to "be ready in season and out of season," and to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching" (2 Tim 4:2). Within the church, the pulpit is one of the primary avenues to shape the culture of the community and glorify Jesus; however, many times churches lack the necessary instruction to develop lay leaders of the church as to how to exegete and preach God's Word. This lack of necessary instruction leads to numerous troubling consequences. One is that the opportunity to teach and preach is rarely delegated and is often restricted to only those who are seen to have had the calling and opportunity to receive training outside of the church. When the pulpit is not used as a tool for discipleship, many people never have the opportunity to develop their specific gifts to preach and teach. An additional unfavorable outcome is that when the pulpit is available for a lay person to preach, the Old Testament is often neglected because of the hermeneutical intimidation, and leaders must begin training young preachers how to preach this genre. Also, when the interns are

forced to preach from a historical narrative, there is almost always a lack of accuracy toward the intended meaning of that text. The lay preacher often preaches the narrative as a moralist call to become like the character in the narrative and less about a covenantal God who is redeeming the world through His Son Jesus Christ. For example, the narrative found in Samuel 17 was preached as a call to become like David and defeat the enemies in without mentioning anything about Christ as our Savior, who defeated our enemies. ABC's youth ministry desires to fight the current trend that permits the next generation of leaders to simply figure out how to preach on their own, which leads to a lack of preaching from Old Testament historical narratives because of their biblical illiteracy. ABC has a biblical command to raise up the next generation with the ability to preach the full counsel of God from the pulpit with passion and confidence, and its desire is to be found faithful.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop the student ministry interns at Applewood Baptist Church in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, to faithfully preach Old Testament historical narratives.⁴

Goals

Four goals were established to determine the completion of the project. The first goal pertains to identifying the interns' current understanding regarding course material. The second and third goals pertain to creating curriculum and educating the interns in the genre of historical narrative. The fourth goal relates to the practical exercise of preaching sermons based on historical narratives.

1. The first goal was to identify the interns' current understanding of the Old Testament narrative genre and the redemptive-historical approach to interpret them.

⁴The interns had already been taught some of the basics of biblical preaching, such as the steps of exegesis, outlining, communication, application, etc. This training was the basis for teaching other genres.

2. The second goal was to develop a six-week, twelve hour class focused on training the interns in sermon development based on historical narrative texts.
3. The third goal was to equip the interns to preach historical narrative texts by having them attend every class and read all assigned books.
4. The fourth goal was to deploy the interns to preach one of their sermons to the senior high youth group with the possibility of having them preach to the main congregation.

The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to identify the interns' current understanding of the Old Testament narrative genre and the redemptive-historical approach to interpret them. The pre-class questionnaire was designed to assess each intern's level of theological understanding and confidence in preaching of the Old Testament historical narrative genre and the redemptive historical hermeneutics. The questionnaire included demographic, qualitative, and quantitative questions.

The second goal was to develop a six-week program focused on training the interns in sermon development based on historical narrative texts. The program consisted of creating twelve hours of curriculum focused on biblical theology, Old Testament historical narrative genre, redemptive-historical hermeneutic, homiletics, and application. This goal was measured by an expert panel, consisting of three senior pastors from the Denver area, who utilized a rubric⁵ to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. This goal was successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

⁵See appendix 2.

The third goal was to equip the interns to preach historical narrative texts. Each intern agreed to the personal cost and commitment inventory.⁶ Each intern was required to participate in six two-hour sessions that focused on teaching an overview of biblical theology and the historical narrative genre. The interns were required to read two books, bring completed sections of their manuscripts to each session, and actively participate in each session's discussion. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-survey⁷ that measured the intern's level of knowledge, confidence, and motivation to preach historical narratives. This goal was successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post survey scores. Additionally, this goal was successfully met when each intern submitted salient points for all the reading and attends all six of the sessions required. Also, this goal was successfully met when each intern submitted a completed sermon manuscript of an Old Testament historical narrative text.

The fourth goal was to deploy each intern to preach a sermon to the senior high youth group. This goal was measured by a rubric⁸ to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the sermons completed by the interns. This goal was successfully met when all interns had preached and been evaluated.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms are used in the ministry project:

Biblical theology. Lawrence explains that “biblical theology tries to systematically understand what the bible teaches in the context of the Bible’s own

⁶See appendix 3. All the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

⁷See appendix 1.

⁸See appendix 5.

progressively revealed and developing storyline of redemption.”⁹ God’s revelation is rooted in history and biblical theology is the pursuit of uncovering the big picture of redemption through examining the theological content of the Old and New Testaments. Hamilton refers to biblical theology as “the interpretive perspective of assumption and presupposition, association, and identifications, truths, and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and events that take place in it.”¹⁰

Kingdom of God. The kingdom of God may be succinctly defined as “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule and blessing.”¹¹ This work relies on the understanding of kingdom. Goldsworthy defines kingdom:

There is a king who rules, a people who are ruled, and a sphere where this rule is recognized as taking place. Put in another way, the Kingdom of God involves God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule. This basic idea is woven throughout the whole of Scripture.¹²

Redemptive/historical hermeneutics. Redemptive/historical hermeneutics is defined as the exegetical approach that Old Testament narratives are not primarily to be moral examples, but revelations pointing to Jesus Christ.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the participants were interns at ABC who were actively serving within the youth program. Second, this project was limited to twenty weeks, which included curriculum development, pre-assessment, course instruction, preaching, and post assessment. Last, the interns preached their

⁹Lawrence, *Biblical Theology*, 26. See also Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); James M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

¹⁰James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 15.

¹¹Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1981), 47.

¹²*Ibid.*

sermons only to the senior high youth group.

Conclusion

Scripture commands believers to equip future generations with the ability to preach the full counsel of God's Word (2 Tim 2:2). ABC's student ministry desires to be faithful to this biblical imperative and to teach interns how to preach Old Testament historical narratives. There is a tremendous need for training future leaders with this genre because of the pattern of avoidance and inaccurate exegesis that is often experienced with future leaders. Chapters 2 and 3 will provide the biblical and theological basis for developing this project.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR
PROPERLY EXEGETING AND PREACHING
OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL
NARRATIVES

In order to properly exegete and preach Old Testament historical narratives, a preacher must employ a redemptive-historical hermeneutic and have a strong understanding of the storyline through the Old and New Testament centering on the kingdom of God. An exegesis of 1 Samuel 17 demonstrates the application of the redemptive-historical approach as an exemplar.

Redemptive Historical Hermeneutics

Redemptive/historical hermeneutic is the exegetical approach that Old Testament narratives are not primarily to be moral examples, but are revelations pointing to Jesus Christ. Bryan Chapell describes the redemptive/historical approach:

Jesus said that all the Scriptures were about Him, and what he verbally stated on the road to Emmaus, he visually demonstrated on the mount of transfiguration. When the archetypal representative of the Old Testament law and prophets, Moses, and Elijah, appear with Jesus near the culmination of his earthly ministry (Math. 17) they testify that all preceding Scripture directs the believer's gaze to this one. Thus, the circle of Scripture closes about Jesus. Prophets, apostles, and the Savior all testify that all the Scripture ultimately focus on the Redeemer.¹

Hermeneutics has always been popular and is derived from the Greek word meaning “to interpret.” Grant Osborne explains that traditionally it is

science which delineates principles or methods for interpreting an individual author's meaning. However, this is being challenged and the tendency in many

¹Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 272.

circles today is to restrict the term to an elucidation of a text's present meaning rather than of its original context.²

Hermeneutics provides a logical, orderly classification of the laws of interpretation consisting of disciplines such as linguistics or literary criticism. Hermeneutics requires imagination and the ability to apply specific laws toward the passages of Scripture and is a spiritual act, depending on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Every preacher must depend upon God for the intended meaning, because without illumination, the meaning will never be understood (1 Cor 2:14).

Revelation is a function of redemption. For this reason, revelation comes in a historically progressive fashion. The accomplishment of redemption is not a divine work that breaks into history only as a single point; rather, it consists in the long history of God's covenantal activity, which begins in the Garden of Eden and consummates in the totality of the work of Christ from His incarnation to His second coming. Accordingly, the pattern of God's redemptive deeds sets the pattern by which he reveals himself verbally. Geerhardus Vos explains, "Revelation is historically progressive because redemption is historically progressive and epochal in its realization. The history of revelation is an essential strand within the history of redemption as a whole. Again, revelation is redemptive-historical."³

The Bible is not an end to itself and individual texts cannot exist apart from the redemptive-historical covenantal matrix out of which it comes and with which it is concerned. Vos continues, "Formal predications of Scripture such as necessity, sufficiency, clarity, authority must always be carefully controlled by the redemptive focus and subject matter of Scripture."⁴

²Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1991), 2.

³Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed 1980), xvii.

⁴Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, xvii.

There are many hermeneutical approaches regarding Old Testament narratives; however, any approach that does not center on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is lifeless. Lutheran homiletician Johann Michael Rue contends, “It is necessary that the sermon be Christocentric, have no one and nothing else for its center and content than Christ Jesus.”⁵ Any sermon that does not pivot to the gospel of Jesus Christ is no sermon at all, and does not provide the life-saving remedy to the hearers. Proper interpretation of any part of the Bible requires relating it to the person and work of Jesus. This was recognized in Article III of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics: “We affirm that the Person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire bible.”⁶ Preaching must be Christ centered because God has commanded His children to preach Christ crucified. There is no other name in which a person can be saved. In Colossians 1:28, Paul says, “We proclaim Him [Christ], admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”⁷ Between his resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand, the Lord Jesus taught the original apostles that the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms all predicted the Messiah’s suffering, rejection, death, resurrection, outpouring of the Spirit, and worldwide reign through the servants of his Word.⁸ Sidney Greidanus writes,

The unity of redemptive history implies the Christocentric nature of every historical text. Redemptive history is the history of Christ. He stands at its center, but no less at its beginning and end... Scripture discloses the theme, the scopus of its historiography right at the beginning. Gen 3:15 places all subsequent events in the light of the tremendous battle between Christ coming into the world and Satan the

⁵Johann Michael Reu, *Homiletics: A Manual of the Theory and Practice of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 57.

⁶Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 882.

⁷All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

⁸Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 14.

ruler of this world, and it places all events in the light of the complete victory which the Seed of the woman shall attain. In view of this, it is imperative that not one single person be isolated from this history and set apart from this great battle. The place of both opponents and 'co-workers' can only be determined Christologically. Only in so far as they received their place and task in the development of this history do they appear in the historiography of Scripture. From this point the facts are selected and recorded.⁹

Repeating throughout His ministry, Jesus tells the people that the Old Testament is about Him. To the crowds who saw Him heal the lame man, Jesus says, "You search the Scriptures (Old Testament) because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me: and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life" (John 5:39-40). He also says, "If you believe Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me" (John 5:46).

A redemptive-historical Christological approach to the text would desire faithfulness to the author's original intent while leading to the climax of God's revelation in the person, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ. The preacher's first responsibility is to understand the passage in its own historical-cultural context. John Bright explains, "All biblical preaching must begin with grammatico-historical exegesis of the text, with all that that entails. Whatever message it may legitimately have for hearers today must grow out of, and remain true to, its original meaning."¹⁰ It is the preacher's primary responsibility to find the original intent of any passage. Preachers cannot fall into the trap of preaching opinions or using Scripture to support their own ideas and thoughts. According to Kaiser, "there is only one sense or meaning to be taken away from every passage if the interpreter is true to his mission and the sole object of the expositor is to explain as clearly as possible what the writer meant when he wrote the text under examination."¹¹ The content

⁹Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Toronto: Wedge, 1970), 135.

¹⁰John Bright, *Jeremiah*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 188-210.

¹¹Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 45.

of the message has already been given, and discovering it is the preacher's primary job. The only way to find this meaning is to be diligent in the process of exposition. The meaning of a passage is discovered through a historical, grammatical, and theological study of a passage in its context. The process of unfolding the content involves a tremendous amount of time and study and the preacher being disciplined as he properly unfolds the meaning of the text to his hearers. Carson states,

The interpreter, who approaches the text . . . already brings along a certain amount of cultural, linguistic, and ethical baggage. Even the questions the interpreter asks of the text reflect the limitations imposed by the baggage; they will in some measure shape the kind of responses that can come back from the text and the interpreters understand of them.¹²

It is essential for the preacher to limit the amount of bias he brings when searching for the meaning—a lot is at stake and all are capable of preaching heresy. Bright writes, “Once the plain meaning has been abandoned, control over interpretation is gone and Scripture may mean anything the spirit may see in it.”¹³ Proper exposition does not discover Christ by placing Jesus into the text, but by discerning the place and role of the text in God's redemptive plan.

When dealing with the Old Testament specifically, preachers must understand the text in the context of the whole Bible and God's redemptive history. Redemptive-historical preaching recognizes that Adam's, Abraham's, and Israel's entire experience was designed from the beginning to foreshadow the end, and ancient believers experienced true, but limited, foretastes of sweet grace because in the fullness of the times, Jesus, the beloved Son, would not only keep the covenant but would fulfill it as He bore the curse

¹²D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 126.

¹³John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1967), 91. See also Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 26, who write, “The only proper control for hermeneutics is to be found in the original intent of the biblical text. . . . In contrast to . . . [pure] subjectivity, we insist that the original meaning of the text—as much as it is in our power to discern it is the objective point of control.”

on their behalf.¹⁴ This context of redemptive history must provide continuity between the Old Testament text and work of Jesus Christ. Christopher Wright maintains, “We may legitimately see in the event, or in the record of it, additional levels of significance in the light of the end of the storyline in the light of Christ.”¹⁵ These additional levels of significance can reveal at least a double meaning in many texts. In affirmation of this truth, Spurgeon writes,

Don't you know, young man, that from every town and every village and every hamlet in England, wherever it may be there is a road to London? For from every text of Scripture there is a road to Christ. And my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, now, what is the road to Christ? I have never found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I do find one, I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it.¹⁶

The preacher's concern should be to see all of Scripture, the laws, prophecies, and visions, in the light of Christ. However, the preacher should avoid at all costs the temptation to artificially read Christ back in to the Old Testament text or to place Him directly into the text when the original authors did not.

One of the most compelling reasons preachers should interpret and preach Christ from all the Scriptures is because Jesus did and instructed His Apostles to do likewise. Jesus and His disciples interpreted the Hebrew Bible in light of the person and work of the Messiah King, which was and is the central meaning and continues to have a specific evangelist purpose. The New Testament's essential purpose is clearly seen in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth: “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was

¹⁴Johnson, *Him We Proclaim*, 17.

¹⁵Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament: Rediscovering the Roots of Our Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1992), 28.

¹⁶Charles Spurgeon, “Christ Precious to Believers,” March, 13, 1859, accessed August 20, 2016, <http://spurgeon.org/sermon/0242.htm>.

buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3-4). It is also stated in Acts 4:10-12:

Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

There are numerous examples of the New Testament perspective of the Old Testament. In Luke 1:32-33, the angel promises Mary that the Lord God will give Jesus the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of David forever. Also, Peter and Paul reveal that Jesus was the fulfillment of what was promised to David and Abraham (Acts 2:30-31; Acts 13: 16-33; Gal 3:15-29). Another example is found in Hebrews 1:1-2, when the author states, “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”

Many people view the Old Testament as non relevant because it existed before Christianity. However, the Old Testament was the Bible of Jesus Christ himself, Paul, and the apostles, and the Scriptures reveal that “all Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, are inspired by God and is useful for teach, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). Preachers must not approach the two Testaments as being disconnected or unequal, but instead strive to see the continuity between them regarding the history of redemption. Greidanus explains,

The Old and the New are both parts of Christian bible; both reveal the same covenant-making God; both reveal the gospel of God’s grace; both show God reaching out to his disobedient children with the promise, “I will be your God, and you will be my people, both reveal God’s acts of redemption.”¹⁷

¹⁷Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 47.

These acts of redemption reach their culmination in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews proclaims, “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days has had spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things through whom also He made the world” (1:1-2). In Romans 16:25-27, Paul states,

To Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made know to all the nations.”

Christ is the ‘mystery’ revealed and whom God has spoken and provides the link between the Old Testament and New. The Old Testament therefore must be interpreted not only in its own context but also in the context of Christ and the New Testament.

Although the Bible contains a great variety of material, written by many human authors over a long period of time, it holds together as a unity. The apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is God-Breathed” (2 Tim 3:16), and even though he was talking about the Old Testament, New Testament writers made similar claims (1 Cor 14:37; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 3:16). God used different authors at different times in history to represent the personalities and eras that produced them. However, by His Spirit, God ensured that everything written was exactly what he wanted them to write. Vaughn Roberts explains, “Just as the Lord Jesus was fully human and divine, so the Bible is both a human and divine book where He is the Ultimate author.”¹⁸ Jesus Christ is that subject and the salvation God offers through Him is what binds it all together. Both Testaments are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ as He says in John 5:39, “These are the Scriptures that testify about me.” The whole Bible points to Him: the Old Testament points forward and to the promises of His coming, and the New Testament proclaims Him to be the one who fulfills all of the promises. The fact that the Bible is one unified book should influence

¹⁸Vaughn Roberts, *God's Big Picture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 17.

how one reads it. Like any novel, each sentence is meant to be understood in light of the whole story. The Bible does not contain isolated texts meant to be read outside of their original context and without the main story of redemption. Preachers must avoid the temptation to read the Bible as if it was a collection of independent books that can each be read without reference to each other. Almost every book in the New Testament makes direct quotation or allusions to the Old Testament. Biblical theology is a discipline based upon the recognition of both the unity and distinction in the Bible. Lawrence writes that biblical theology is theology that tries to “systematically understand what the Bible teaches in the context of the Bible’s own progressively revealed and developing storyline of redemption.”¹⁹ The phrase biblical theology is referred to as “the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.”²⁰ Common themes bind the whole Bible together and are broad enough allowing each part to make its own distinction. One of those themes is the kingdom of God. Graeme Goldsworthy defines the kingdom of God succinctly as “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule and blessing.”²¹ This project relies on Goldsworthy’s understanding of kingdom:

There is a king who rules, a people who are ruled, and a sphere where this rule is recognized as taking place. Put in another way, the Kingdom of God involves God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule. This basic idea is woven throughout the whole of Scripture.²²

¹⁹Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 26. See also Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); James Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

²⁰Hamilton states, “The interpretive perspective is the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations, and identifications, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and the events that take place in it.” James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 15.

²¹Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1981), 47.

²²*Ibid.*

This theme is present in Israel's faith from the earliest of times onward, and is found, in one way or another, in virtually every part of the Old Testament. John Bright writes, "For both have to do with the kingdom of God and the same God speaks in both."²³ The gospel of Mark begins with Jesus coming into Galilee and proclaiming that "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel (1:14-15). Mark seems to portray that the burden of Jesus's ministry was to announce that the kingdom of God is at hand and that was a primary concern. Bright explains,

Everywhere the Kingdom of God is on his lips, and it is always a matter of desperate importance. What is it like? It is like a sower who goes forth to sow; it is like a costly pearl; it is like a mustard seed. How does one enter? One sells all that he has and gives to the poor; once become as a little child. Is it a matter of importance? Indeed it is! It would be better to mutilate yourself and enter maimed than not to get in at all. So paramount, in fact, was the notion of the Kingdom of God in the mind of Jesus that one can scarcely grasp his meaning at all without some understanding of it.²⁴

The Jews had been waiting for the Redeemer who would establish the kingdom of God victoriously.

This theme runs from creation to consummation. Greidanus states,

Genesis relates that God, in the beginning, created a kingdom (realm) and populated it with creatures who were able to acknowledge him as King. It also relates, however, that these people rebelled against God the king and allied themselves with Satan. But God determined to reestablish his kingdom on earth; he broke the alliance between Satan and his people (Gen 3:15) and bound his people to himself in a covenant in which he promised redemption and required his people to obey the covenant stipulation or laws of the Kingdom. Hence all subsequent Old Testament history can be seen as the history of the coming kingdom of God.²⁵

In God's perfect time Christ came, proclaimed this kingdom, and performed signs and wonders, which confirmed the kingdom's arrival. Then, with His death and resurrection, He defeated death and Satan and promised to come again to usher in the perfect kingdom.

²³John Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (New York: Abingdon, 1956), 11.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 98.

Vaughn Roberts expounds on the theme of the kingdom of God and breaks the Bible down into eight epochs in God's unfolding plan to restore His kingdom. In the following sections I interact with some of his epochs presented and provide an overview of this theme throughout the Scriptures.

The Original Kingdom

The first epoch is the original kingdom and is found in the Garden of Eden (Gen 1-2) where God created the kingdom of God to be. Adam and Eve are living under God's rule and are enjoying His blessing. God is the author of creation and creates male and female. He blesses them, gives them dominion over all the earth, and calls creation good (Gen 1:27-31) God is the rightful king over everything He has made and the proper response is to worship and glorify Him. Roberts states, "We see in the Garden of Eden a pattern of the kingdom of God. God's people, live in God's place, the Garden of Eden, under God's rule; as a result they enjoy God's blessing."²⁶ God desires for mankind to be obedient and submit to His rule.

The Broken Kingdom

The second epoch is the broken kingdom and reveals the sad story of how the perfect creation was corrupted. The serpent, who the New Testament identifies as Satan (Rev 12:9; 20:2), shows up on scene and begins distorting God's word. His deception was successful, and the woman saw the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and took some and ate it (Gen 3:1-8). This was the first act of deliberate disobedience and the consequences of this action are monumental. The perfect relationships that God created were now spoiled and harmony between human beings and creation ended. Adam and Eve are no longer God's people and He banishes them from Eden. Instead of being

²⁶Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 33.

obedient and experiencing God's blessing, they are cursed and experience His judgment for the first time. God banished Adam and Eve from the garden and prevented them from returning to the tree of life. They are spiritually dead and cut off from the presence of God because of their sin. But God, being gracious and loving, is determined to restore his people, to his place, under his rule.

The Promised Kingdom

God calls on Abraham and makes an unconditional promise to him that through his descendants God would reestablish His kingdom. God tells Abraham to leave his father's house and go to a land that God prepared for him. God promises Abraham that He will bless him and make his name great (Gen 12:1-3). Roberts states, "The covenant with Abraham is a promise of the kingdom of God: God's people (Abraham descendants) in God's place (the promise land) under God's rule and therefore enjoying his blessing."²⁷ God desires to bring back the scattered people and to bless them again. God's promises to Abraham represent the gospel, which dominates the rest of the Bible. John Stott writes, "It may truly be said without exaggeration that not only the rest of the Old Testament but the whole of the New Testament are an outworking of these promises of God."²⁸ Abraham is commanded to leave his hometown and go to the land God prepared for him.

The Prophesied Kingdom

After the death of King Solomon, Israel experience civil war within and split into north and south. Because of their sin and disobedience, both kingdoms were eventually conquered by foreign enemies. During this time God spoke to his people through prophets. God used prophets to expose the people's sin and announce judgment

²⁷Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 55.

²⁸John R. W. Stott, *Understanding the Bible*, rev. ed. (London: Scripture Union, 1984), 51.

against their disobedience. Roberts writes, “We must not think of the prophets as only predicting what God would do through Christ in the future. They first spoke to their own day; they were ‘forthtellers,’ not just ‘foretellers,’ and their main message was on of judgment.”²⁹ An example of this is when Amos tells the Israelites that God will not revoke His punishment because they have turned their back on Him and rejected the law of the Lord (Amos 2:4-5). The prophets pointed forward to a time when God would send His king, the Messiah, to fulfill His promises and will lay upon Christ the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:5-6). The Messiah would take upon himself the punishment for sin and exile from God so that the people may be forgiven, providing hope for a new temple, new creation, new covenant, and great blessing.

The Present Kingdom

Four hundred years had passed and the present kingdom was ushered in with the arrival of Christ, the king: “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Graeme Goldsworthy states, “For the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament is not ‘literal’ but ‘Christological.’ That is to say that coming of Christ transforms all the kingdom terms of the Old Testament into gospel reality.”³⁰ Jesus is the true temple and ushers in the new covenant built upon faith in him. The “last days” are the time between his first and second coming. The kingdom of God is both “now” and “not yet.” Because of Christ, the kingdom is now available for everyone to enter it. It is a time where people have a chance to hear the gospel and repent before it is too late. Jesus tells His disciples to give their lives to preach the gospel to the nations.

²⁹Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 96.

³⁰Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 91.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit with the purpose of helping the disciples spread the good news of Christ throughout the world. God's people are now the new Israel, the church, consisting of those who trust in Christ. God's temple is now a holy people instead of a building and Christ has set His children free from the bondage of sin, so they can live under his rule and experience His blessing.

The Perfected Kingdom

One day Jesus will return again and separate his enemies from his children. His enemies will be sent to hell and his children will experience a new creation. Jesus will return and complete God's eternal plan of salvation and the new world. Revelation 21:1-2 states, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The promises of the kingdom will be completely fulfilled at the end of time. Roberts writes, "They will be united together in God's place, the new creation and new Jerusalem, which is the new temple. And they will all submit to God's rule and therefore know his perfect blessing."³¹

There is strong biblical support for a unified storyline through the Old and New Testaments centering on the kingdom of God. First Samuel 17 is examined next by using a redemptive-historical hermeneutic and by interacting with the unifying storyline.

The Example of First Samuel 17

Richard Lints suggests that every text has three interpretive horizons. The first horizon is the textual and is the immediate context of the book or passage. The second horizon is epochal and is the context of the period of revelation in which the book falls.

³¹Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 159.

The last horizon is canonical and is the context of the entirety of revelation.³² I refer to these horizons while examining Samuel chapter 17 because understanding each horizon is crucial to exegete the passage properly.³³

Textual Horizon

First and 2 Samuel are part of the section of the Hebrew Bible known as the Former Prophets. This section, which includes the books from Joshua to 2 Kings, present a theological narrative of the history of Israel from the time of Israel's entrance into Palestine under Joshua through its departure from the land in the time of Zedekiah. The overarching purpose is to affirm and explain the teachings of the Torah. The book of 1 Samuel tells the story from the beginning of the kingship to the declining years of David's reign. The story centers on three key people: Samuel, Saul, and David. Samuel was the last of the judges and the prophet who anoints the first two kings. Saul was Israel's first king whose heart wandered away from the Lord. Lastly, David was Israel's most important king who God chose because of Saul's disobedience. Chapters 1 through 7 focus on the birth, call, and early career of Samuel (1:1-4), the loss and return of the covenant (4:1-7:1), and a great victory over the Philistines (7:2-14). Within part 2, the stories of Samuel and Saul overlap (1 Sam 8-15). The two major themes are Yahweh's affirmations of and warning about the monarchy (1 Sam 8-12) and the beginning of Saul's reign and Yahweh's rejection of him as king (1 Sam 13-15). Part 3 transitions to Saul and David's overlapping stories. The story is told from the beginning of the

³²Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 293.

³³This intuition lies behind Vos's conviction that biblical theology must regulate exegesis. This is not to say that a given passage should not be analyzed in terms of its genre and literary setting, but rather that part of the meaning of the text lies in its connection with the rest of the biblical material and hence that part of the interpretive horizon of any individual text is the entirety of the biblical text. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 14-18.

anointing of David to replace Saul as king (16:1-13), Saul's jealousy of David leading to his constant pursuit of him in order to kill him, and eventually the death of Saul.

Robert Bergen states, "The author of 1 and 2 Samuel is unknown. Jewish tradition associates Samuel, Gad, and Nathan with writing the book, however the development of the original canonical form of the book was relatively complex."³⁴ The exact date of the writing is unknown, but it must have been post-divided kingdom since there are distinct references to "Judah" and "Israel" as separate entities, and because the statement "to the kings of Judah to this day" (speaking of Ziklag belonging to Judah) in 1 Samuel 27:6 indicates that the writing must have been post-Solomonic rule. Some say Samuel was written by the same author who wrote 1 and 2 Kings during the Babylonian Captivity; however, the writing style differs enough for that not to be a possibility, and therefore it was likely penned prior to the exile but during the era of the divided kingdom.³⁵

First Samuel 17 is part of a larger portion of text that depicts the rise of David and why he became the legitimate successor to Saul. The political and spiritual condition of Israel at the time of Samuel's birth was exceedingly grave. The Philistines were still menacing the existence of the nation despite Samson's heroics, and the priesthood had become so corrupt that the Shiloh tabernacle had become nothing more than a brothel (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25) Such times required strong leadership, both political and religious, for the continuation of Israel as the covenant people of the Lord was at stake. Hannah, Samuel's mother, provided a voice for such hope in her magnificent prayer of thanks for the birth of her son and provided one of the most moving messianic promises in the Bible.³⁶ Hannah clearly anticipated the rise of a mighty king who would be the Lord's

³⁴Robert Bergen, *1 and 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 18. Several intermediary steps took place over a considerable period of time leading up to the production of the final form of the book.

³⁵Ibid, 19-21

³⁶First Sam 2:8-10 says, "He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash

and who would rule on His behalf. As young Samuel grew up and matured as an apprentice priest under Eli, he gradually came to understand that his life and ministry were not to be confined to the tabernacle and its responsibilities. Rather, he obeyed the call to lead God's people as a theocratic administration as the first in a line of prophets (1 Sam 3:19-21). Samuel successfully challenged the people to forsake their idolatry to serve the Lord only. He also interceded for them, offering up both sacrifices and prayers on their behalf. Samuel's greatest challenge was the issue of kingship as the people came to him demanding he appoint a king to lead them "the same as all the other nations have (1 Sam 8:5). This was a clear rejection of the Lord as King and, because of their persistence, the demand was granted. Saul was chosen as king and his rule was one of inadequacy and disobedience. Saul is known for two major failings. The first failing was when Saul offered a sacrifice at Gilgad, ignoring Samuel's instruction for him to await the prophet's arrival. Second was Saul's refusal to carry out fully the command by the Lord against the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:1-35). Saul's disobedience cost him his kingdom and fellowship with the Lord by means of Samuel. God commanded Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, and to declare publicly that the Lord had chosen David to be the leader of his people. Samuel anointed David with oil and at that moment God's Spirit departed from Saul and came upon David from that time forward. Saul did not want to turn over leadership and spent a great deal of energy and effort trying to kill David. God put David through many trials and tests and he was chased from cave to cave trying to avoid Saul's army. Saul's madness eventually drove David away, and David joined the Philistines as a sort of rogue mercenary.

heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."

The final day came for the Philistines to engage in battle against the Israelites. David told the king of the Philistines that he would go into battle with him, but the king's generals would not permit that to happen. In this brutal conflict, both Jonathan and Saul were slain on mount Gilboa.

Epochal Horizon

God created a kingdom in which He is the king. He created human beings for relationship with Him and to be His representatives. Adam and Eve rebelled against Him, which led to sin and death and them being kicked out of the garden. However, God promised to defeat the serpent through the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). God came to Abram and promised to make him into a great nation and that he would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. It was through Abraham that God made plain his utter commitment that the seed of the woman would run through his family and the covenant blessing would come to the world. Judges ends at the location of Shiloh with a description of moral and spiritual chaos within the Israelite community. Samuel begins with a man and his two wives making their annual pilgrimage to celebrate one of the feasts (1 Sam 1:1-5). Hannah, one of the wives, offers a desperate prayer for God to end the curse of her not being able to have a child (1 Sam 1:9-11). God hears her prayers and a child is given, whom Hannah dedicates to the sanctuary and she sings a thanksgiving song, which looks to the future for the overthrow of tyrannical dominion that will be replaced by a just king, a Messiah. This Messiah will bring justice beyond Israel to the ends of the earth (1 Sam 2:10). Samuel also ends with a desperate prayer, from King David, crying out to God to save a city from the consequences of his sin (2 Sam 24). Like Hannah, God hears David's prayer and he purchases the future site of the temple and altar that averts the judgment of God. David represents a king who will give Israel rest in the land and lead the people to obey God's commands and represent Him again. David understands that

God will magnify his salvation to his king and extend covenant loyalty to his Messiah to David and his seed forever (2 Sam 22:51).

Canonical Horizon

In 1 Samuel 17 is a threat to the kingdom of God. God's people, in His place, under His rule, are being threatened by the Philistine army, led by Goliath, a man over seven feet tall. Goliath steps out of the Philistine camp and challenged Israel, wanting to take God's people into slavery, inhabit their place, and exchange God's rule for their own. He challenges Israel to "representative fighting," where each side would choose one champion to fight for the people. Whoever won would win for the whole country. The winning side would rule the other group and take their land. A lot at stake here. Saul fails as the king the people needed and they were looking to him for leadership to fight and win but he fails to trust in the provision of God and sits on the sidelines. In this story it looks as if God's kingdom will fall. However, in comes a young man from Bethlehem who was anointed king and had the Spirit of God upon him. David trusts in the Lord's provision, not the protection of men, and God led David and the Israelites to victory over the Philistines.

Through progressive revelation, preachers can now see that the story of David and Goliath foreshadowed another battle that would take place on a mountain called Golgotha. The enemy of God, Satan himself, tempts Jesus, but fails. Brady Martin writes,

The battle continues not to a valley of death but to a mountain called Golgotha, the place of the Skull. Another boy from Bethlehem decides to go to battle against the ultimate threats to God's kingdom: sin, death, and hell. Jesus goes into battle just like David as a king representing his people. He takes the place of God's people.³⁷

The sin of the world was transferred to Him on the cross and his righteousness was transferred to anyone who confesses Jesus to be Lord. Jesus is the substitute King who

³⁷Brady Martin, "Fix Your Eyes on the Victory of the King," July 12, 2016, accessed September 14, 2016, <http://fbc-canyon.org/fix-your-eyes-upon-the-victory-of-the-king/on.org>.

fought and won the battle for God's people. When the full wrath of God was poured out upon Christ, he breathed his last breath, he died, and he was put into the tomb. It looked as if the kingdom of God was done for. But on the third day, the ground began to shake, no power in the universe could keep him in the ground, and death itself could not hold him there. He came out of the tomb and now lives forevermore. Jesus' resurrection is the equivalent of him walking over to Goliath, cutting off his head, and taking the head of the enemies of God.

Graeme Goldsworthy states,

The important point to notes is the link between the saving acts of God through David and the saving acts of God through Christ. In terms of our interpretative principles, we see David's victory as a salvation event in that the existence of the people of God in the promise land was at stake. The gospel interprets this event by showing it as prefiguring the true saving event of Christ. But David's experience also puts the saving event into a historical situation which helps us to appreciate the New Testament terminology concerning the gospel events.³⁸

Conclusion

When looking at the narrative of David and Goliath, a preacher must desire to discover the meaning of the narrative within the context of the whole of redemptive history. Douglas Stuart writes,

Every individual Old Testament narrative is at least a part of the greater narrative of Israel's history in the world, which in turn is a part of ultimate narrative of God's creation and His redemption of it. This ultimate narrative goes beyond the Old Testament through the New Testament. You will not fully do justice to any individual narrative without recognizing its part within the other two.³⁹

The narrative is an important part of Israel's history at the young shepherd David had secretly been chosen by God to be king (1 Sam 16), and David, a young boy with a sling and a stone, kills the Philistine giant Goliath, delivering Israel and securing its safety into the Promised Land. David does not rely on his own strength, weapons, or skill, but says,

³⁸Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 107.

³⁹Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible*, 108-9.

I come to you in the name of the Lord of host, the God of the armies of Israel . . . so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's. (1 Sam 17:45-47)

When preaching the story of David and Goliath, the preacher must look at the text through the redemptive historical framework and decide how the texts fits into the history of original creation, human sin, the history of Israel, God's covenant nation, and the culmination of redemption in Christ. Greidanus states,

The essence of this story, therefore, is more than Israel's king defeating the enemy; the essence is that the Lord himself defeats the enemy of his people. This theme locates this passage on the highway of God's kingdom history, which leads straight to Jesus victory over Satan. This history of enmity began right after the fall into sin when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between you offspring, and hers; he wills strike your head, and you will strike his heel"(Gen 3:15). The battle between David and Goliath is more than a personal conflict, and it is more than Israel's king defeating a powerful enemy—it is a small chapter in the battle between the seed of the woman and seed of the serpent; a battle which reaches its climax in Jesus victory of Satan.⁴⁰

Approaching the text with a redemptive-historical progression allows for accuracy within the historical horizon, understanding within the epochal setting of Scripture, and contemporary application through the canonical horizon finding its focus in Christ. This approach allows the kingdom of God to expand through the presentation of the work and person of Jesus Christ within every sermon.

⁴⁰Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 239.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL
ISSUES FOR PROPERLY EXEGETING AND
PREACHING OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

The single most common type of literature in the Bible is narrative because it makes up over 40 percent of the Old Testament. Historical narratives are stories revealing God’s interaction with His creation overtime and each contribute to the main story of redemption through His son Jesus Christ. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart write,

Bible narrative tells us about things that happened. Their purpose is to show God at work in His creation and among His people. The narratives glorify him, help us to understand and appreciate Him and give us a picture of His providence and protection. At the same time, they also provide illustration of many others lessons important to our lives.¹

There are many different approaches to preaching Old Testament narratives; however, one of the most faithful ways to properly prepare, outline, preach, and apply the intended message of Old Testament historical narratives is to employ a redemptive-historical hermeneutic. This hermeneutic will help the preacher avoid common misconceptions and fallacies, provide a structure of the sermon in order to be more effective, and help determine the original intent that allows for accurate application.

Common Misconceptions and Fallacies

Both Testaments are largely written in story form, and narrative genre is the main type of biblical revelation. Walt Kaiser explains, “The long narrative corpus of both Testaments forms the heart of the story and message of the bible which makes

¹Gordon Fee and Doug Stewart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 94.

understanding narratives essential for all interpreters of the Bible.”² The main genre of the Old Testament is historical narrative, and they are rich with meaning and instruction for the church. When communicated effectively, Old Testament narratives have a unique ability to stick into the minds of the hearers for a lifetime, often because they come in the form of a story. However, historical narratives are often misunderstood because the authors rarely state the point of the story leading to a cluster of different interpretations and application points from the same narratives and the big picture of redemption is usually neglected. Correct interpretation and the presentation of the author’s intended points must be the main conviction for all preachers, and common misconceptions and fallacies should be recognized and avoided.

One primary reason for many of the misconceptions and fallacies experienced when preaching texts in this genre is due to the preacher’s lack of knowledge regarding the biblical storyline and limited understanding of God’s redemptive history. In order to preach Old Testament narratives accurately, a preacher must not only understand God’s big picture, but also understand how each individual story fits into it. Understanding where the text fits into the biblical storyline would be considered the theological context when dealing with each narrative, and this process in exegesis is often ignored. There seems to be such a high priority on the historical/grammatical side of exegesis, desiring to understand the original authors’ intended meaning; however, preachers must not forget that each text has two authors. The Divine author knows the whole story and has a plan and purpose for each narrative, which points toward redemption through Christ. Preachers must not approach historical narratives as isolated stories that exist independent of each other. Instead, they must spend time figuring out the theological setting that reveals why God placed the story there at that specific time. One question must be asked when dealing

²Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Cracking Old Testament Codes* (Nashville: B & H, 1995), 69.

with an Old Testament narrative: What is God's aim within the narrative and how does it relate to the person/work/teaching of Jesus?

Fee and Stewart build on this idea by presenting three levels of each story that must be understood within every narrative, in order to preach them accurately. They are summarized as follows. The macro level sees the whole universal plan of God worked out through His creation and is built around biblical theology and includes an understanding of how the individual story fits into the plots of creation, fall of humanity, power of sin, need for redemption, and Christ's incarnation and sacrifice. The *current level* requires an understanding of the history and God's dealing with Israel. How does the current story fit into the plots of the call of Abraham, establishment of an Abrahamic lineage through the patriarchs, enslaving of Israel in Egypt, God's deliverance from bondage and conquest of the promised land of Canaan, Israel's frequent sins and increasing disloyalty, God's patient protection and pleading with them, ultimate destruction of northern Israel and Judah, and finally, the restoration of Israel after the exile. The micro level understands the story in its current historical/grammatical context with its specific individual story, plot, and set of characters.³ Each of these levels requires study, and preachers must understand how each narrative text fits all the levels in order to have a full understanding of the intended meaning and purpose. The common pattern experienced within many pulpits today is that preachers rush through their exegesis and only study the story on a micro level, neglecting to discover how the text fits into the other levels. By neglecting the other levels, the preacher's sermons will be filled common misconceptions and fallacies, such as characterizations, bad allegorical/typological interpretations, and preaching moralistic sermons. These misconceptions and fallacies must be avoided at all costs because they can easily become the foundation for false gospels and are extremely dangerous to hearers when trying to build people up in their affections toward Christ.

³Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 74.

Characterization

A popular mistake when preaching Old Testament narratives is to simply challenge the hearers to imitate the characters in the Bible passage. This approach is called characterization and is very destructive because characterization reduces narratives to simple stories about people who lived in Old Testament times. This way of persuading hearers to imitate the life of certain characters has gone back as far as the Greeks and is still found in many pulpits today. Sidney Greidanus writes, “Many preachers deal with the great figures of the Bible in a manner thoroughly Greek, holding them up as timeless exemplars and practitioners of eternally valid moral principals.”⁴ Characterization seems to be the easiest way for preachers to try and make the text relevant in their current culture. Faris Whitesell states, “The life experiences of Bible people illustrate certain timeless and universal truths which preachers can apply to life today.”⁵ Preachers seem to gravitate toward characterization because there are countless examples of people who modeled godly or godless living, and urging the listeners to be like them seems fruitful. Graeme Goldsworthy writes, “A particular character, for example, Nehemiah, may be chosen as a means of teaching principles of leadership or some other quality. Yet, this approach often involves the preacher making some very big assumptions about the character.”⁶ This approach is risky because determining if the behaviors or actions of the character should be modeled is subjective, especially when Old Testament characters operated under different guidelines and rules than the current church does today. Greidanus states,

These sermons are often referred to as “be like messages” and the focus is on becoming like the biblical character or some aspect of the personality in their own strength. This type of biographical preaching, urging hearers to be like Moses,

⁴Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principals in Preaching Historical Texts* (Toronto: Wedge, 1970), 17.

⁵Faris D. Whitesell, *Preaching on Bible Characters* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955), 15.

⁶Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching from the Old Testament Historical Narrative Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 141.

Gideon, David, Daniel, or Peter in the face of some trial, temptation, or challenge, neglects Christ and loses all redeeming power.⁷

There are many problems with this approach. One problem is the fact that any forward movement of history or progressive revelation is ignored completely. Characterization erases the need for historical, literary, or theological context because the only things that matter are the actions and attitudes of the characters. This approach assumes that the intended meaning of every narrative is moral behavior because of how certain characters are elevated or demonized for the benefit of the hearers. God is somewhat ignored and His plan of redemption loses its primary significance. The emphasis of the Bible becomes anthropocentric instead of theocentric, which will always lead people to hell because man will end up loving himself more. John Goldingay explains,

The major function of the OT story is to relate how God has acted, despite the acts of men as much as through them. To concentrate on merely a human deed, then, is often to miss the point of it. Indeed, it is not merely to misuse it; it is to bring a message that is its opposite.⁸

Focusing primarily on the characters is a dead end, and even though it is an easy way to encourage and exhort listeners, one must come to understand that God should always remain the focus of interpretation. Martin Noth states,

A legitimate representation cannot use the individual human figures of biblical history as its subjects, either as ethical models which they in fact never are, or as exemplary heroes of faith since in the biblical narratives they are never presented, or as representatives of true humanity whose experiences are to be imitated.⁹

Preachers must remember that the original plan and purpose of God was the kingdom brought through the suffering and death of his Son. Understanding God's provision in the entire historical process is crucial when determining original intent of the

⁷Sydney Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 162.

⁸John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1981), 39.

⁹Martin Noth, "The Representation of the Old Testament in Proclamation," in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann, trans. James Luther Mays (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1962), 86.

specific narrative. A common example of bad characterization is found within 2 Samuel 17. Many preachers exhort their listeners to be like David, to have the great faith and courage of David in their personal lives in order to defeat the enemies of life. These enemies can include doubt, discouragement, financial difficulties, relational issue, marital conflict, etc. Preachers urge hearers to walk by faith, charge these enemies, and allow God to give them the victory. This interpretation is not only bad, but offers no hope for the hearers by ignoring the redemptive historical storyline so evident within this narrative.

Allegorizing/Typology

Another common misconception and fallacy that must be avoided is making bad allegorical/typological interpretations. Many reject the redemptive-historical hermeneutic because of past abuses with allegory and typology interpretations. The abuses are real and should be avoided. Allegorical interpretation has been one of the oldest ways preachers have used to bridge the historical-cultural gap. Bernard Ramm writes, “This method of interpretation arose among the pagan Greeks, was copied by the Alexandrian Jews, was next adopted by the Christian church and largely dominated exegesis until the reformation.”¹⁰ This approach bypasses the literal meaning of the text and tries to discover another meaning beyond the text. Allegorical interpretation fails to be faithful to the original meaning in its historical context and seeks to provide a false meaning to the hearer by interpreting everything as symbolic. Old Testament narratives are often preyed upon by preachers who practice this approach because of the many details within each story that can be interpretive. The preacher usually tries to persuade the hearers that they are bringing a new meaning to the text, one that the original inspired human author did not even understand when writing. An example of bad allegory is when Augustine states,

¹⁰Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretations: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 24-25.

“The door (in the side of the ark) surely represents the wound made when the side of the crucified was pierced with the spear. This is the way of entrance for those who come to him”¹¹ This type of interpretation opens up a can of worms where the preacher can get any message they would like from the text and totally disregard the intended message of the original author. Another bad example of allegory is when Origen wrote about the account of the battle for Jericho (Josh 6). Arthur Wainwright explains,

[Origen] maintained that Joshua stood for Jesus, and the city of Jericho represented the world. The seven priests who carried trumpets around the city represented Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Jude, and Peter. Rahab, the harlot, stood for the Church, which is made up of sinners; and the scarlet cord that she displayed to deliver herself and her household was the blood of Christ.¹²

This approach requires a great deal of creativity but seems to disregard the Bible as true literature and has led to a lot of confusion within the church. Hearers begin to question if they have the ability to read, interpret, and understand the Bible, which in time weakens the church. Preachers have to recognize that narratives are not supposed to answer all the questions and are meant to be limited in scope. They exist to be read as parts of a bigger story that God has revealed throughout all of Scripture. Fee and Stewart explains,

Reading into stories is what happens when people identify supernatural events in the biblical narratives as the result of such things as the intervention of unidentified flying objects, or time machines from centuries future to our own, or supposed ancient secret scientific discoveries since lost human knowledge.¹³

One the other hand, typology tries to interpret the text literally and then sees an analogy between the literal reference and what comes about in Christ. A type sees the connection between the Old Testament and New Testament. The redemptive-historical approach historically has found types of Christ in OT texts, even where NT writers had not indicated. Even though typology is a main aspect of the redemptive-historical

¹¹Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 10.

¹²Arthur Wainwright, *Beyond Biblical Criticism: Encountering Jesus in Scripture* (London: SPK, 1982), 87.

¹³Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 76.

approach, preachers must be careful to avoid bad typological associations and always seek wisdom from New Testament writers on their specific uses.

An example of a typological fallacy is found in 2 Kings 5. Some preachers have determined that Naaman was a type of Christ because he had to go to Israel and wash in the Jordan because of his leprosy. Naaman continues going to kings for healing, but God sends his healing (salvation) through a weak and marginal servant girl who was victimized by his military, and only avoids disaster when his own servants reason with him to listen to Elisha. Because salvation comes through weakness and the powerless, typological associations could be determined and preached where listeners could receive Christ with repentance and faith. Even though there are some definite similarities between Naaman's story and God's plan of redemption through Christ, preachers must be careful with typology. There may be more effective ways to pivot to the gospel than labeling everything a 'type' of Christ, especially when the associations are somewhat of a stretch. Greidanus provides another bad example of typology referencing the narrative of Joseph. Joseph's obedience in looking for his brothers is a prophetic type of Christ's obedience; his sale to the Ishmaelites prefigures Christ being sold by Judas; his good fortune in Egypt is in its deepest sense God's blessing of Jesus who is led to Egypt; his imprisonment and subsequent crowning show the humiliation and crowning of Christ to save his people.¹⁴ Preachers must be careful and should rely heavily on New Testament authors for the specific typological interpretations. Any other use should be preceded with caution.

Moralizing

Preachers are commanded to preach Christ in order to admonish and see the listeners mature spiritually (Col 1:28). Every sermon should aim to provide practical

¹⁴Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 78.

instruction for godly living, and many times these instructions focus on specific ways of living that will bring God glory. However, the danger occurs when preachers highlight specific morals without putting each text into the overall message of redemptive history, because then listeners will automatically hear the message through a pure moralistic grid. Eugene Peterson states,

Somewhere along the way, most of us pick up bad habits of extracting from the Bible what we pretentiously call “spiritual principles,” or “moral guidelines,” or “theological truths,” and then corseting ourselves in them in order to force a godly shape on our lives. That’s a mighty uncomfortable way to go about improving our condition. And that’s not the gospel way.¹⁵

The hazard with this approach is that it creates a culture where hearers believe they are good enough to pull themselves together and the goal of their spirituality is to try harder. Moralistic preaching is common when dealing with historical narratives, especially when the storyline of redemption is not realized or considered. Moralizing narratives changes the meaning of the text by focusing on the hearers and not on God. For example, many preachers teach the story of Abraham and Isaac and exhort the hearers to simply have faith like Abraham and trust God with their most prized possessions. Preachers press the listeners to obey like Abraham because that is what good followers of God do. They read each narrative in order to find the common moralistic principle to share with the people, but that approach logically does not make sense because it never deals with the root of pride. This type of exegesis is more concerned with finding something to share with the people instead of being disciplined to determine God’s purpose and desire within each story. Preachers cannot assume that every story written is recorded because God desires a moral principle to be applied and lived out within His people. God’s desire has always been to conform His children into the image of Christ through surrendering to the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in the Bible does God call His children to become better by their own

¹⁵Eugene Peterson, *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 4.

strength. The fallacy in this approach is that the narratives were written to show the progress of God's history of redemption, not to provide moralistic exhortation with which to challenge people. Moralistic sermons fail to help hearers grow in holiness when the focus is just on the behavior, apart for the work of Christ. Preachers must make a clear distinction in their sermons between mere moral exhortation and gospel motivation for obedience when preaching from every Old Testament narrative text.

Old Testament Narrative Genre Should Influence the Structure of the Sermon

There are numerous ways to structure a sermon when dealing with Old Testament narrative texts; however, the original narrative form must be considered. There is an increased awareness that the literary form (genre) of a text should influence the structure of the sermon. Writers choose the specific form in each text that would reinforce the intended meaning. Understanding this relationship is crucial when trying to uncover the meaning of any text. Thomas Long explains, "The preacher's task is not to replicate the text but to regenerate the impact of some portion of the text and to conclude that there is an increasing awareness among homileticians that literary form should affect sermon form."¹⁶ In order to properly prepare for teaching or preaching on historical narratives, it is necessary to understand how narratives are put together and how they work. Having a strong acumen regarding the form of narrative will contribute greatly to the preacher's ability to preach the story faithfully. John Holberts writes, "The best expression of a narrative sermon is a narrative."¹⁷ Literary criticism has supported the conviction that there is an integral relationship between textual form and sermon form and different genres should be structured differently. Thomas long presents five helpful steps to address

¹⁶Thomas Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 33.

¹⁷John C. Holbert, *Preaching Old Testament: Proclamation and Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 47.

when dealing with historical narratives: (1) identify that the text is a historical narrative. (2) understand the specific rhetorical functions of the narrative, (3) determine what literary devices were used to achieve its rhetorical effect, (4) determine how the text embodies the characters and dynamics described in questions 1-3, (5) how may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting.¹⁸ These steps help preachers understand what is taking place within the narrative and how the story fits into its canonical and historical setting, especially because each narrative consists of a connected chain of events that leads to a practical conclusion. A narrative sermon should be structured more like a plot than an outline because the text itself is structured that way. Henry Davis states, “The distinguishing feature of the narrative sermon is that the idea is embodied in a structure of events and person, rather than in a structure of verbal generalizations.”¹⁹ The central elements in the total package of literary devices used in historical narratives include scene, plot, point of view, characterization, setting, dialogue, and structure.²⁰ Any preacher dealing with Old Testament narratives must have a basic understanding of these literary devices

The Scene

The scene is the most important unit in the construction of the narrative and represents something that took place at a specific time. Kaiser writes, “In this regard, the scene acts much as the paragraph does in regular prose writing, usually supplying one main idea for each scene.”²¹ Understanding the scene is crucial and is a difficult task because scenes may change quickly. Greidanus states,

¹⁸Long, *Preaching in the Literary Forms*, 24.

¹⁹Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958), 157.

²⁰Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament. A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 64.

²¹*Ibid.*

New scenes are usually identified by a change in time or place and are followed by a new flow of thoughts. Each scene is usually made up of two or more characters, and when dealing with historical narratives, God is often one of the two characters, which is often implied by the point of view taken by the narrator.²²

Often times, God is forgotten as one of the authors because the other characters are playing significant roles. The distinguishing feature of this form is that the idea is embodied in a structure of events and persons, rather than in a structure of verbal generalizations. The narrative form allows for a great variety of options regarding sermon construction and allows the preacher different possibilities to present the main idea.

Davis states,

These possibilities include telling the story first in its original setting and then retelling it in modern form, or first setting a problem with a contemporary story and following it with the biblical story as a solution as long as the main idea of the biblical story remains the foundation for the sermon.²³

This flexibility allow for creativity and flexibility when a preacher is preaching verse-by-verse through a large book of narrative genre. Lowry has described the paradigm shift from classical homiletics to narrative homiletics under three major heading. Eugene

Lowry writes,

First is a shift in sermon shape. This shift is a move from deduction to induction, from an authoritarian relationship to a democratic relationship. The second major shift is the change in content. This is a shift in emphasis and moves from discursive thought toward aesthetic content, however, will include both. The third goal has shifted from theme toward an event and the goal ought to be evocation of the experience of the Word.²⁴

Plot

The plot gives movement to the story because every narrative must have a beginning, middle, and end.²⁵ It is always moving toward the climax and resolution of the

²²Greidanus, *Modern Preacher*, 187.

²³Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 157.

²⁴Eugene L. Lowry. *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Louisville: John Knox, 2001), 87.

²⁵Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching*, 66.

story and acts as the cause and effect between the sequences of events. Lowry explains, “Some plots carry a complex format, but most biblical plots employ a single plot forming a classical pyramid pattern.”²⁶ The plot induces a feeling of suspense by setting up and fulfilling expectations within the heart of the hearers. Shimon Bar-Efrat provides an example is Genesis 22: “Where the story begins with God’s quiet request for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This action crests with the near-sacrifice of Isaac and then settles back down as the boy and his father descend Mount Moriah.”²⁷ Jeffery Arthurs provides an example of the classical pyramid pattern as he explains the process from disequilibrium to resolution in five stages:²⁸

Background Some time later God tested Abraham. Not, even this statement begins to create disequilibrium: God tests his friends?

Conflict Take your son. . . . Sacrifice Him. The disequilibrium smacks us with force.

Rising Action: The journey to Moriah, Isaac carrying the wood, Isaac questioning his father (“Where is the lamb?”), Abraham building the alter, binding Isaac, preparing for sacrifice

Climax: The angel stops Abraham

Resolution: Abraham passes the test, God provides a ram for sacrifice, and God restates his covenant with Abraham.

Preachers must spend time analyzing the plot in order to find the boundaries of the periscope. Often times the plot will be larger sections of scriptures in order to include the different categories of the plot. The key structure of the sermon should move the listeners from disequilibrium to resolution, either by focusing on application within each stage of the plot or at the very end.

²⁶Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot*, 87.

²⁷Shimon Bar-Efrat, “Some Observation on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative,” *Vetus Testamentum* 30 (1980): 165.

²⁸Jeffery Arthurs, quoted in Scott Gibson, *Preaching the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker 2006), 77.

Point of View

Point of view refers to the perspective from which the story is told and is highlighted by the narrator expressing the specific viewpoints in which the story is being told. Determining the point of view is crucial in determining the subject and main idea of the passage. Kaiser explains, “Thus the point of view supplies the lens through which the reader, interpreter, and expositor may relate to the acts or events of each scene.”²⁹

Determining the point of view is often misunderstood because many different points of view can be presented in any given narrative. The preacher must identify the viewpoint of the original author, who was inspired and has expressed the thoughts within the story, while not forgetting that God is the ultimate author.

Character

The substance of a narrative can usually be determined by the story’s use of characters and their specific actions and words. Characterization may be detected mainly through the actions and dialogues of the narrative’s participants. Bar-Efrat explains, “Conversation in biblical narrative is never precise and naturalistic imitation of real life conversation. They are highly concentrated and stylized, are devoid of idle chatter, and all the details they contain are carefully calculated to fulfill a clear function.”³⁰ One must be especially observant when considering dialogue in this regard because it is the chief way narrative sets forth its character. The central character of the Bible is God and in every narrative God is present explicitly or by implication. If a preacher focuses primarily on the characters of the biblical narratives, without understanding God’s role in the story, it divorces the characters of the Bible from God’s redemptive plan. By divorcing the two, the preacher will always lead to a misrepresentation of the meaning of the narrative instead of proper exegesis, and the sermon will ultimately lose the power to save the hearers.

²⁹Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching*, 67.

³⁰Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 148.

Setting

The setting is the specific space/time in which the plot and characters are operating. Setting is important to exegesis and leads to a proper understanding of where the story takes place. Old Testament narrators are selective with details of setting, and every word is purposeful. Setting has the ability to spark the reader's imagination and allows for association. Gibson writes,

Although written by scores of people over thousands of years, it remains a cohesive, self-reflective constellation of meaning. Parts allude to other parts, and authors count on readers to catch the allusions, understanding individual narrative in light of the metanarrative of redemptive history.³¹

The preacher must avoid the temptation of decontextualizing, which Fee and Stewart explain as

ignoring the full historical and literary contexts, and often the individual narrative, people concentrate on small units only and thus miss interpretational clues. If you take things out of context enough, you can make almost any part of Scripture say anything you want it to.³²

Once preachers understand the parts of a story and come up with the main idea, they can begin to shape the sermon. David C. Deuel argues, "If a preacher's goal is to be expositional, what is more expositional than preaching the text in its storyline form."³³

Two approaches to structuring a sermon are extremely effective when approaching narrative; both are influenced by the original form of the story.

Inductive-deductive approach. This structure is when the first part of the sermon is used to tell the story and the second part focuses on developing the main ideas of the sermon. The development takes the form of validation and progresses in its initial movement in inductive fashion, coming to a statement of the central idea in the second or

³¹Gibson, *Preaching the Old Testament Narrative*, 84.

³²Fee and Stewart, *How to Read the Bible*, 76.

³³David Deuel, *Expository Preaching from the Old Testament Narrative: Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, ed. John MacArthur, Jr. (Dallas: Word, 1992), 275.

third main point. Once the central idea is given, the sermon then proceeds deductively to explaining, proving, and applying the central idea.³⁴

The semi-inductive approach. This structure is when the main idea has multiple complements and the main idea emerges in sections. The main idea is presented in the introduction and three parts of the complement emerge throughout the sermon as the storyline takes place.

Determining the Original Intent Will Allow for Accurate Application

There has been a lot of confusion regarding if application is necessary and if applying the text should be considered the work of the preacher or Holy Spirit. However, those who argue that application is the work of the Holy Spirit might be implying that the Holy Spirit does not enjoy working through human instruments. Dale Davis writes, “God has given his word for our instruction and obedience, for our endurance and encouragement; therefore any interpretation that stops short of appropriation is illegitimate.”³⁵ God has called people to respond to His Word and personal application is the goal of any texts meaning. Kuruvilla states,

Therefore, it is not enough to elucidate the theology of a text; it is also incumbent upon the preacher to delineate, in each sermon, the intersection of that theology with the faith and practice of God’s people- how exactly pericopal theology shapes and changes lives of hearers and how exactly it out to be applied.³⁶

Once the preacher has determined what the passage meant in biblical times, he must relate the passage to the experience of the hearers. Old Testament historical narratives are one of the most difficult genres in which to find application points, because the points are not as obvious. When preparing sermons, preachers often run into the most

³⁴Dennis Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice of Sermon Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 125.

³⁵Dale Ralph Davis, *The Word Became Fresh* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2006), 94.

³⁶Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text* (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 136.

trouble when applying Old Testament narratives. Applying the text, by avoiding many misconceptions and fallacies, is the most difficult and confusing process of exegesis when dealing with historical narratives because it is hard to feel confident extracting legitimate applications from the story. Finding application points should not be rushed. The meaning of the text can be easily missed and false teaching occurs often in this section of the sermon. Haddon Robinson states, “More heresy is preached in application than in Bible exegesis.”³⁷ God has given Old Testament historical narratives in order to apply the inspired truths to people’s lives and address many of the daily challenges that they face (2 Tim 3:16). One of the greatest difficulty preachers face is an acute sense of the historical distance between Old Testament stories and their current culture.

Many preachers are comfortable preaching from the Gospels, Epistles, Psalms, etc., because the original writers seem to lay out the application points for the preacher. Other genres seem more relatable to culture and are not as intimidating or foreign. However, preachers must not avoid Old Testament narratives and should work laboriously through these texts. These texts are rich in biblical truths and inspired by God, with the purpose of building up the lives of contemporary hearers. Finding application points entails building a bridge between the original meaning of the text and the modern listener’s heart. Richard Pratt writes, “Every attempt to bring out the relevance of a text must be based solidly on the observation of what the writer intended to convey to his original audience, otherwise a text can mean anything we want it to mean.”³⁸ Haddon Robinson reminds preachers that “the purpose of Bible stories is not to say ‘you must, you should’ but to give insight into how men and women relate to the eternal God and how God relates to them.”³⁹ Application of Old Testament narratives should be built upon

³⁷Haddon Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” *Leadership Journal* 18 (Fall 1997): 21.

³⁸Richard L. Pratt, *He Gave Us Stories. The Bible Student’s Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narrative* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1990), 312.

³⁹Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” 27.

the vision of God and depravity, which leads to God-centered application. Application must build its foundation on the finished work of Christ and rely upon that as the catalyst for growth and holy character within the hearer's lives. God's Word should change the hearts of the hearers and preachers must refrain from simplistic moral exhortation when dealing with application. For example, when preaching about David and Goliath, a healthy foundation on which to build application points would be to see how David is foreshadowing the work of the Christ and how the Israelites cannot go against Goliath in their own power and might—they need a substitute. When David goes in on their behalf, as a boy trusting in God's power and protection, he goes as a sacrificial lamb. God uses his weakness to destroy the giant. David becomes the champion and his victory inspired courage and is imputed to Israel as if they fought the battle themselves.

This foundation allows the preacher to understand each level of the text and make moral exhortations that are rooted in Christ. For example, preachers can now exhort the hearers to be courageous and walk by faith because Christ has already defeated the greatest enemies, Satan and death. This redemptive application leads to moral obedience with a peace that is rooted in Christ and not self-performance. Tim Keller presents a foundational outline for the basic moral reasoning and argument that lie at the heart of application, which is extremely helpful. First, the preacher presents the main idea of the text, challenging the hearers of what they must do. Next, the preacher should present the reasons why the hearers cannot accomplish the biblical command on their own and that they will never become righteous by trying harder. Third, the preacher should present how Jesus has fulfilled the biblical command perfectly and wholly for the hearers. Lastly, share how Christ empowers the hearers and provides the power to live fruitfully through Him.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Tim Keller, "Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World" (classroom lecture notes, Reformed Theological Seminary, January 2002).

By approaching application with a redemptive historical hermeneutic, the preacher's sermons will be missional because there will be a connection to the gospel within the delivery. This connection allows the work of salvation to occur and gives non-believers a chance to repent and accept Christ as their Savior, which should be priority in every sermon dealing with Old Testament narratives. Often, Old Testament historical narratives are preached without any mention of Christ, and many preachers are satisfied with a theocentric interpretation. The main argument for this approach is that sharing the gospel every week with their congregations will become boring or stale. This thought is extremely dangerous because it does not consider non-believers and guests visiting the church who need to trust in Christ. It also assumes that the preacher has to pivot to the gospel through the text, the same way every week, which is not accurate.

Conclusion

Preachers who apply a redemptive historical hermeneutic when dealing with Old Testament historical narratives will be able to properly prepare, outline, preach, and apply the intended message of the story. This hermeneutic will protect the preacher from common misconceptions and fallacies, help provide a structure to the sermon that is faithful to the original form, and deliver application points with a foundation built upon the work of Christ, which will be able to effectively save the lost and build up the saints.

CHAPTER 4

THE METHODOLOGY OF PROJECT

This chapter focuses on the methodology used for training youth interns at Applewood Baptist Church to preach Old Testament Historical narratives with a redemptive-historical hermeneutic. The elements of this project consisted of a pre/post-course questionnaire, twelve hours of class time focused on biblical theology, the Old Testament historical narrative genre, redemptive-historical hermeneutic, allegory/typology homiletics, application, and the deployment of each intern to preach a sermon to the senior high youth group.

The project aimed to accomplish four goals: (1) identify the interns' current understanding about Old Testament Narrative genre and the redemptive-historical approach to interpret them; (2) develop twelve hours of curriculum, which met a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion measured by the expert panel; (3) teach the curriculum by having all seven interns attend the six classes and read the assigned books; and (4) have each intern preach a sermon from an Old Testament narrative genre to the senior high students while their peers evaluated.

Project Schedule

The ministry project began on June 1, 2017, and was completed on September 24, 2017. A timeline for the elements of the research project consisted of the following:

1. April 1—Began sharing the vision and commitment required with the interns
2. June 15—Expert panel reviewed and evaluated seminar curriculum, recommending appropriate revisions.
3. June 25—First class. Administered pre-class questionnaire. Signed commitment forms.

4. August 6—First sermon was preached to senior high youth group
5. September 24—Project ended. Last sermon was preached. Administered post-class questionnaire. Received salient points and sermon evaluation forms. Administered class evaluation test.

The total duration of the research project was eighteen weeks.

The Interns

The seven interns consisted of current leaders within the youth ministry at Applewood Baptist Church. They varied in age, life stage, and experience, and all have been preaching regularly within the junior high, senior high, and college ministries at Applewood. Some of the interns are paid while others volunteer their time, and all focus specifically on preaching. I made the class optional, but highly encouraged all of the leaders to attend. The age demographic of the interns included (1) two participants ages 20-30, (2) three participants ages 30-40, and (3) two participants ages 50-60. Each of the interns was emailed at the beginning of May explaining the work, reading, and time expectations associated with the project. The email included the personal cost and commitments inventory, which participated had to complete and bring to the first class.

Expert Panel Review

The expert panel consisted of three local pastors who each has over ten years of pastoral ministry. They all shared a strong gifting in preaching and a resilient conviction for a gospel-centered approach to Old Testament narratives. Their task was to evaluate the curriculum to ensure it was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable. The survey focused on four specific categories. The first was to make sure the content was hermeneutically sound and all Scripture references were properly interpreted. Second was scope, which made sure the classes covered Old Testament narrative genre and redemptive historical hermeneutic sufficiently. Third was methodology and evaluation of the different uses of learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, sermon reviews, and homework. The last criterion was the practicality of the curriculum to assure that it

provided opportunities for the interns to work with the material and put the knowledge to use. The panel measured the effectiveness of the project and judged whether the concentration was on truly equipping the interns to preach historical narratives accurately.

Pre-Seminar Questionnaire

The pre-seminar questionnaire was handed out at the beginning of the first class. The questionnaire began with eleven demographic questions and was followed by a thirty-question survey with the answers measured by a six-point Likert scale (see appendix 1). The questionnaire was designed to assess each member's present level of theological understanding and confidence in preaching of the Old Testament Historical Narrative genre.

Section 1 of the questionnaire focused on (1) age; (2) years they have professed Jesus as Savior; (3) how long they have been a member of a Bible teaching church; (4) how many hours a week they spend in personal study and prayer; (5) if they practice the discipline of memorizing Scripture; (6) if they could define specific terms such as exegesis, redemptive historical hermeneutic, and kingdom of God; and (7) if they have had any formal training in exposition or homiletics.

Section 2 of the questionnaire focused more specifically on convictions and confidence in preaching Old Testament historical narratives with a redemptive-historical hermeneutic. For example, question 19, "I believe Jesus Christ can be found in any Old Testament historical narrative," was intended to measure how Christocentric their current approach was and if they have a strong understanding of the biblical storyline of redemption. Other questions, like 40, "I feel comfortable outlining a sermon for an Old Testament narrative text," revealed how confident they were at preparing and outlining a sermon in this genre.

Pre-Class Assigned Reading

I wanted for the interns to read two books and turn in salient points, which would reinforce the material presented in class. The first book focused on biblical theology because so many preachers cannot interpret Old Testament narratives with a redemptive historical hermeneutic because they have a limited understanding of the biblical storyline of redemption and cannot see the parallels within the narratives.

I chose Michael Lawrence's *Biblical Theology* because it was assigned to me during my doctoral program and had a huge influence on my understanding of the Bible.¹ Lawrence does a thorough job presenting the redemptive storyline of the Bible, and the book was easy to read and comprehend. The book is strong on theology but is user friendly, and I knew the interns would be able to follow his approach.

The second book focused specifically on the redemptive-historical approach and had some practical examples of exegesis. I have read many preaching books, and one of the strongest books on this hermeneutical approach is Bryan Chapell's *Christ Centered Preaching*.² This book does an effective job providing basic instructions of exegesis in the first section and then transitions to a Christ-centered hermeneutic. Chapell's emphasis on the fallen condition focus provides an easy transition to begin preaching redemptively, even with the most difficult Old Testament narratives. Also, his focus on application being God-centered is helpful when trying to avoid moralist, human-centered application that is so common with narrative preaching.

The Six-Week Training Process

The class time consisted of six two-hour gatherings that focused on biblical

¹Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010)

²Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994).

theology, the Old Testament Narrative genre, redemptive-historical hermeneutic, allegory/ typology, homiletics, and application. I purposely tried to hold the classes roughly two weeks apart in order to giving the interns time to process the material and read the assigned books. Also, this time allowed them to work on their sermon and finish assignments from class. Before we started to meet, I provided them with the different times available to meet and had them respond with what options would work for their schedule. I chose the six dates that everyone could attend and sent a confirmation email with all the dates for the class. We met in a classroom at Applewood Baptist Church on Saturday mornings from 7 to 9 a.m. and Sundays from 3 to 5 p.m.

Class 1

The first class focused on the biblical theology and we examined the redemptive storyline within both the Old and New Testaments. I started with this subject because most beginning preachers do not understand how Old Testament narratives reveal Christ because of a limited understanding of how the Bible fits together. We began with creation and focused on Genesis 1:31 and Titus 4:4-5, revealing that God is the creator and sustainer of everything and all proper exegesis must be rooted in Him because He has ultimate authority. God spoke everything into existence and pronounced His creation as “good.” Christ Bruno states, “When He had finished creating everything, God looked at creation and saw that it was very good and pronounced the verdict. The entire universe came to be because He spoke, and He was the only one qualified to evaluate his creative work.”³ God’s kingdom was in perfect harmony with its king.

Next, we highlighted human beings and discussed how we are created in His image. We read Genesis 1:27-30, and the class learned about man reflecting the nature of God in a way that nothing else does. Vaughn Roberts states,

³Christ Bruno, *The Whole Story of the Bible in 16 Verses* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 18.

This is true of all people: male and female, black or white, young and old, born and unborn, able bodied and disabled, whether mentally or physically, all human beings have great dignity and have been set by him above the rest of the created order with responsibility for it.⁴

God commanded human beings to fill the earth and have dominion over the animals.

Next I talked about the fall and how redemption was promised after (Gen 2:16-17, 3:6-7, 3:21-24). The Bible does not provide many details about the tree or fruit; however, God made a covenant with Adam and Eve and commanded them not to eat from it. God desired trust and obedience from his creation and the serpent entered and deceived Adam and Eve. Satan promised them wisdom like God and they fell into temptation and disobeyed, breaking the Covenant. Because of their disobedience, sin and death entered into creation. Some of the consequences of sin would be pain in childbirth, relational conflict, toil in work, expulsion from the garden, and separation from God. There would be hatred between the seed of the women and the serpent, and eventually the seed of the woman crushed the serpents head. Adam and Eve hid from God because they were ashamed of their nakedness, but God provided clothes, which would be one of the first pictures of redemption found in Genesis. Next, I taught about Abraham and how God called Abraham to be the agent who brought the saving blessing to the world through making him into a great nation (Gen 11-17). Abraham was an idolater and nothing made him special outside of God's grace. God chose Abraham to be the father of many nations by providing him with land, people, and His blessing. God's blessing was worldwide in scope and God promised Abraham that He would dwell with him and his offspring would become His people. Next, I explained from the Davidic kingdom to the prophecies of the suffering servant, promised resurrection, and new creation found in the Old Testament (Isa 53:1-6; Isa 49:5; Ezek 37:3-13; Jer 31:31-33; Isa 65:17-25). As the last Old Testaments

⁴Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 31.

prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi completed their ministries, and the people of God could look back through the ages and see how God had slowly revealed his plan for the promised seed to reverse the effect of the curse. John the Baptist came on scene to prepare the way for Christ and the kingdom of God. Jesus entered and fulfilled his ministry of reconciliation by going to the cross and taking upon himself the punishment for sin. Jesus spent three days in the tomb and rose again. He defeated death, which confirmed His message that the kingdom of God was at hand. Now, anyone can become justified by accepting Christ as Savior because He is the propitiation of our sins. The last topic was glorification and that one day Jesus is going to return, and those who have trusted in Him will be able to spend eternity with God because of the redeeming plan God had since the beginning in Genesis 3.

Class 2

The second class focused on the different genres within the Bible, specifically Old Testament narrative. The Bible is a mix of many genres, and understanding each genre is crucial for proper exegesis and for the preacher to be able to understand the original message of the text. Fee and Stuart argue,

In order to communicate His word to all human conditions, God chose to use almost every available kind of communication: narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, laws of all kinds, poetry, proverbs, prophetic oracles, riddle, drama, biographical sketches, parables, letters, sermons, and apocalypses. To interpret properly the “then and there” of the biblical texts, one must not only know some general rules that apply to all the words of the Bible, but one also needs to learn the special rules that apply to each of these literary genres.⁵

I then did a brief overview of five of the major genres: poetry, wisdom, prophecy, epistles, apocalyptic. The first genre was poetry, which makes up a large portion of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Poetry uses different literary devices such as parallelisms,

⁵Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 27.

which is when the author pairs two parallel elements. I read Psalm 2 as an example and discussed the importance of preaching pericopes together that use this literary device. Next I focused on the wisdom genre and how this genre comes in numerous forms like stories, parables, confessions, etc. When preaching from wisdom texts, context is extremely important and most focus on application. The third genre was prophecy and these writing came from people who were spokesmen for God. They received a message from God and then communicated the message to the intended people. These messages sometimes came from dreams and visions and functioned mainly to call Israel to repent and return to God. The message was usually predicting judgment if Israel did not listen and turn back to worshipping God. Next was epistles, which were written as letters and are logical, straightforward books of the Bible. They were written to specific audiences and occasions, which is important to discover when doing exegesis. The final genre was apocalyptic and this is most foreign to many readers because it does not really exist in today. The apocalyptists looks exclusively forward to the time when God will bring a violent, radical end to history—an end that would mean the triumph of good and the final judgment of evil. Fee and Stuart state, “Apocalyptic genre is usually presented in the form of visions and dreams, and its language is cryptic and symbolic.”⁶

The rest of class was devoted to the Old Testament narrative genre and how these historical stories make up the most common type of literature in the Bible. These stories of the past are intended to give meaning and direction for people in the present day and they all contribute to the main story of God’s plan of redeeming the world through His Son Jesus Christ. They usually consist of three parts: characters, plots, and plots resolution. Narratives are not allegories or stories filled with hidden meanings that only special people can discern, and they are not there just to teach moral lessons. Preachers

⁶Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible*, 260.

must be aware of some major cautions when preaching this genre. One of the cautions is decontextualizing, which is ignoring the full historical and literary contexts by focusing on small units and missing the interpretational clues. Another caution is individualizing the narrative by reading it in a way that all the parts of the story apply to modern day people. An example is preaching the story of Balaam's donkey as a way to remind modern people not to talk so much.

Class 3

The third class focused on different themes throughout the Bible that could be used to pivot to the gospel when preaching Old Testament narratives. Bryan Chapel states,

Many Old Testament passages make no explicit reference to Christ substitutionary, penal death and bodily resurrection and New Testament texts abound that commend moral behaviors with no mention of the cross, the resurrection, the Holy Spirit, or God's enabling grace. However, no text is in isolation from the other texts or from the overarching biblical message, therefore the preacher must determine the correct theological interpretation and how a text's ideas function in the wider biblical message.⁷

Given the time restraint, I focused on some of the major themes that appear in many of the Old Testament narratives providing some examples of ways to pivot to the gospel while staying faithful to proper exegesis.

The first theme was "king and kingdom." God's kingdom is defined as God's people in God's place under God's rule. There was freedom in the beginning but it was lost when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Therefore, the search for a true king began and most of Israel's success and failures point to the true king, Jesus Christ, who will bring God's people back to their king and restore the kingdom. The next theme was "grace and law" within Covenants. God is a covenantal God, and throughout Scripture God enters into covenants with His people. God's love and holiness are the foundation of each

⁷Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 275.

covenant and there is a tension between conditional obedience and unconditional grace. This tension is ultimately resolved when Christ went to the cross and purchased the redemption of God's people. The third theme was the constant conflict between God and idols. God made it clear that He is a jealous God and that his people should not worship any other God's besides Him. Scripture reveals a strong history of God's people turning their hearts from devotion toward God to idols. These idols are dead and have no power. Christ came to reveal once again that there is one true God who brings lasting fulfillment to the hearts of those who trust in him, freeing people from the desire to find hope in anything else. The next theme was the idea of the tabernacle and temple finding their fulfillment in Christ. Old Testament history revolves around the tabernacle and temple foreshadowing Christ and His tabernacling within his people. God's people are now the place where God dwells and His presences is only available through faith in Jesus Christ. The fifth theme was the understanding of marriage and faithfulness within the covenants. God's relationship with His people resembles the relationship between a husband and wife. God's love is unconditional and Jesus is the true bridegroom who sacrificially loves His spouse the church. He wins her love and presents her to himself as his radiant, spotless bride (Ezek 16; Hosea; John 1; Eph 5). The next theme was the typology of many of the different characters within Old Testament narrative and how they foreshadow the life and work of Christ. For example,

1. Jesus is true and better Adam (1 Cor 15).
2. Jesus is true Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood that cries out for acquittal, not condemnation (Heb12:24).
3. Jesus is true Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the familiar and go out into the void (Gen 12).
4. Jesus is true Joseph who at the right hand of the king forgave those who betrayed and sold him and used his new power to save them (Gen 37).
5. Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant (Heb 3).

The last theme was taken from Bryan Chapell's *Christ Centered Preaching* and is the

theme of fallen condition focus. The fall condition focus is “the mutual condition that contemporary believers share with those to or about when the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy him.”⁸ The theme of the fallen man is revealed within every narrative and the remedy for this condition is found in Jesus Christ. This theme is one of the strongest to understand regarding the redemptive historical hermeneutics and is helpful when considering how to preach Christ from Old Testament narratives. After I taught each of the themes, I separated the participants into groups, and they worked through examples such as Genesis 13:1-18 and Genesis 22. Each group had to find the best theme to pivot to Christ and present it to the class. Last, the class watched sermon clips from Chapell and evaluated his pivoting to Christ throughout his preaching of Old Testament narratives.

Class 4

The fourth class was directed at understanding the definition of redemptive historical hermeneutics and why this approach is so effective at preaching Christ from Old Testament narratives. Every preacher must understand the text in the context of the whole Bible and God’s redemptive history. This context of redemptive history provides continuity between the Old Testament text and work of Jesus Christ. I focused on the approach from Richard Lints’ *The Fabric of Theology* to show how exegesis should naturally support a redemptive approach especially through the theological horizon of every narrative.⁹ I emphasized the importance of understanding the textual horizon, covenantal horizon including creation, promise, law, kingship, peace mediated through Christ, and the canonical (theological) horizon leading where the text fits in the redemptive storyline. Then, the participants broke into groups, looked at 1 Samuel 17,

⁸Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching*, 268.

⁹Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1993).

and presented each of the horizon related to the text.

Class 5

The fifth class focused entirely on allegory and typology. The redemptive-historical hermeneutic has a bad reputation by many because of past unbiblical allegory and typological connections. Even though the Bible uses allegory and typology, preachers must be careful with these approaches and allow the Bible to present the borders. Allegorical interpretations evade the literal meaning of the narratives and present a special revelation given by God to the preacher for the congregation. This approach is dangerous and usually leads to a total misunderstanding of the text. I challenged the interns to be careful with the temptation to connect the text to Christ in a superficial way by simply trying to find a likeness between the two. For example, when preaching the story of Rahab found in Joshua 2:17-18, avoiding making the gospel connection by relating the similarities between the scarlet thread in the window and the blood of Christ, urging the listeners to take refuge in the blood. Making the gospel connection by allegory can easily become sloppy and completely miss the original meaning and intent of the author. Instead, the interns should rely on the New Testament writer's use of allegory when dealing with Old Testament narratives for the gospel connection. For example, Exodus 17:6 says, "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." Paul references the rock as being Christ in 1 Corinthians 10:4: "And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ." Another example is Paul's use of Ephesians 5 to interpret Genesis 2:24.

In Ephesians 5: 21-22, Paul states, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." When preaching from Genesis

2:24, the preacher should make a strong gospel connection using the understanding of marriage as an allegorical picture of Christ's relationship to the church because that was clearly Paul's interpretation and seems to be the most effective way to pivot the gospel.

Typology on the other hand desires to interpret the text literally and sees an analogy between the literal reference and work of Christ. The Bible uses this approach a lot; however, many have made typological associations that were not biblically supported. Preachers must be careful with typology and often times there are more effective ways to pivot to the gospel than labeling everything a "type" of Christ. Types should always be rooted in history and should point forward to the life and work of Christ. In class, we looked at a couple examples of biblical typology. One of the narratives was the story of Jonah and how the New Testament approaches this narrative as a foreshadowing of Christ work on many levels. Jesus states in Matthew 12:40, "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jesus references Jonah being in the belly as foreshadowing his death and resurrection. When preaching the story of Jonah, the gospel connection is found within the whole narrative as gospel themes such as preaching redemption, self-sacrifice, judgment, resurrection, and repentance are present throughout. Another narrative we looked at was Numbers 21:7-9:

So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live." And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

This passage points to Christ, and he explains the passage in John 3:14-15 as all believers today can be healed of the sickness of sin by looking to His death on the cross and believing by faith, similarly to how the Israelites looked at the snake and were healed. Using typology as the gospel connection is an effective approach because it allows the

preacher to connect the similarities between persons, events, and patterns seen throughout the biblical storyline to the redemptive work of Christ.

Class 6

The last class was broken into two parts. Part 1 focused on the application of preaching Old Testament narratives and part 2 was used for taking the exit surveys to determine the effectiveness of the project. Applying Old Testament narratives can be difficult and there is a lot of confusion regarding if applying the text should be part of the exegesis process, especially because most false teaching is found in this section of the sermon. However, the Holy Spirit enjoys working through human instruments and preachers must relate the truth of the narratives to the hearts and lives of the listeners. Bryan Chapell states, “Application fulfills the obligations of exposition because it is the present, personal consequence of scriptural truth. Without application, a preacher has no reason to preach, because truth without actual or potential application fulfills no redemptive purpose.”¹⁰ Application of Old Testament narratives must be built upon a theology of the cross and character of God. Two traps to application must be avoided when dealing with Old Testament narratives. The first trap is moralism, which stresses truth over grace and preaches obedience as a way to be saved. Old Testament narratives can easily be preached as moral rules to obey outside of the redeeming work of Christ. This approach is common with messages that exhort the listeners to “become like” the main characters in the stories or simply “do these things and avoid these.” An example is preaching the story of David and Goliath as a call to be like David and have courage to face the giants in the listeners’ lives. Some common moralistic application points preached from this narrative are that God desires good Christians to step out in faith, believe that God can defeat your enemies, God is greater than one’s fears, have courage when others are scared, and God

¹⁰Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching*, 210.

wants his children to by humble and trust in him. These approaches subtly focus on the moral efforts of the listeners instead of celebrating the work and freedom in Christ. A redemptive approach to application with this narrative would be to focus on the character of God and how He has sent a champion (Jesus) to defeat the enemies which gives believers a confidence in His protection, victory over death/sin, courage to live for His glory, etc. The other trap is relativism, which stresses grace over truth, emphasizes a universal acceptance of everyone, and suggests that truth is relative. Love simply overlooks all offenses and everyone is on his or her own path to enlightenment. This approach is becoming more common within the post-modern culture and is often found within the inductive/narrative approach to preaching, which minimizes the preacher's authority to apply the text. Instead, the preacher simply shares the story and allows the congregation to apply the text to their lives without any sort of exhortation and biblical truth is often neglected. Another example of both traps would be if a preacher is dealing with a narrative that has to do with discouragement or depression—the moralistic approach to application would be to simply repent because one is breaking the rules and not being a good Christian. The relativist approach simply says that one just needs to love and accept himself and nothing is wrong or allow the listeners to come to their own interpretation. The redemptive historical approach to application would address the root issue that something in one's lives has become more important than Christ and that person needs to seek Christ for forgiveness and healing. Lastly, I explained how application points should focus on the character of God and encourage the listeners to fall in love with Him is not only safer regarding teaching true doctrine but also more effective in people loving and obeying His commands.

Post-Class Questionnaire/Class Evaluation Administered

The post-class questionnaire was exactly the same as the pre-class questionnaire (see appendix 3) and was taken during our last class together. The questionnaire was

designed to assess each member's level of theological understanding and confidence in preaching of the Old Testament Historical Narrative genre after the project. The desired results from the post-class questionnaire targeted a positive measurable change toward a more redemptive-historical approach to preaching Old Testament narratives. Also, I had each intern evaluate the class using an evaluation rubric to gauge the effectiveness of the methodology used within the project.¹¹ The interns evaluated understandability, methodology, and applicability. I also had each answer questions regarding how the training has been helpful, what areas where they most challenged, and how their understanding of the Old Testament narratives has changed.

Live Preaching and Evaluations

The last goal for this project was for each intern to preach a sermon from a historical narrative text to the senior high youth group and for the other interns who participated in the project evaluate them. Evaluations were based on form I created (see appendix 5). I encouraged each of the interns to attend all sermons; however, I knew that some would not be able to commit because of the amount of time required. Therefore, I recorded each sermon and posted them to a YouTube channel for them to access and evaluate. The interns could login and watch their peer sermons at their convenience. They would turn in their evaluations and I would make copies and deliver them to the preacher for feedback. The evaluations focused on the introductions, content, structure, application, conclusion, speaker, and gospel presentation and pivot.

Conclusion

Overall, the ministry project "Training the Youth Interns to Preach Old Testament Narratives with a Redemptive-Historical Hermeneutic" blessed the interns at

¹¹See appendix 5.

Applewood Baptist church and strengthened the youth ministry. While I discuss areas for improvement in the curriculum and presentation in chapter 5, the feedback given by the interns suggests the ministry project successfully educated and equipped them to preach Old Testament narratives in a way that glorifies Christ and equips the church.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT ANALYSIS

This final chapter analyzes, evaluates, and reflects on the project of training the youth interns at Applewood Baptist Church to preach Old Testament narratives with a redemptive historical hermeneutic. The chapter begins with an analysis and assessment of the research data, purpose, and goals of the project. Next, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project occurs as well as the theological and personal reflections regarding the impact of the project. The chapter concludes with observations regarding the fruitfulness of the project and a desire to disciple lay people who have been given the gift of preaching.

Evaluation of Research Data

I chose to use both qualitative and quantitative statements to measure the effectiveness of the project and the amount of change that occurred among the interns trained. The qualitative questions focused on specific definitions of unique terms associated with the project. For example, behind the question, “Briefly define the kingdom of God” lay my desire to see a baseline of interns’ understanding of the important concepts regarding biblical theology and hermeneutics. The qualitative questions were measured through an evaluation consisting of thirty questions with the answers measured by a six-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed to assess each member’s present level of theological understanding and confidence in preaching texts within the Old Testament Historical Narrative genre. Each response could be graded from “1” for “strongly disagree” to “6” for “strongly agree,” with a 3 indicating “disagree somewhat.” Participants took the evaluation at the beginning of the first class and again at the end of the project.

Though change can sometimes be difficult to measure, I am pleased with the positive results that occurred as an outcome of the project. The teaching of doctrine to the select group of median adults made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their doctrinal knowledge. I ran a *t*-test with a value of 7.79, and, based off the *t*-test parameters, the *p* value was less than 0.05, resulting in the statistical significance of the test. The data suggests that after the project the variance was almost cut in half while the average increased as well. Thus, these data reveal that there was an increase in knowledge and awareness regarding the interns' confidence and understanding of Old Testament narrative genre as well as their ability to approach the genre with a redemptive historical hermeneutic. Also, the qualitative data revealed a greater ability to define key terms, and I received positive feedback that the project was extremely beneficial to the interns. For instance, one intern wrote on the class evaluation,

I see more of Christ, more clearly, in more narratives than before, and this class helped erase some of my concerns regarding typology by balancing gospel purpose of the narratives against the temptation to insert Jesus in every part and verse. I have a better framework for understanding Old Testament passages, and I now can see more clearly the theological context of every passage, which is crucial part of exegesis.

I saw another significant increase regarding the statement "I believe Jesus Christ can be found in any Old Testament historical narrative," when the men averaged a 4.5 in response before the seminar began, with a standard deviation of .96. After our time together, the men's response changed from being agree to strong agreement. Their post-project responses averaged 6 with a deviation of 0. The increase in average reveals more of a confidence with a majority of the interns' ability to understand the main idea in Old Testament narrative mainly because of the increase in biblical theology and the time spent focusing on the redemptive storyline of the Bible. Every intern indicated they strongly agreed, resulting in a 0 standard deviation.

Another statement in the evaluation where a substantial positive shift was seen was the following: "I am comfortable preaching the story of David and Goliath with a

redemptive historical hermeneutic.” The initial survey revealed a general insecurity about the intern’s comfort level preaching the narrative of David and Goliath redemptively. The interns average response was 4.83 before the project and standard deviation was 1.06. After the project, however, the average response resulted in 5.83 with a standard deviation of .37. I contribute the positive increase in the interns’ response to the time spent in class going over this text. We spent time looking at the textual, epochal, and canonical horizons as well as the common traps of moralistic and characterization common preached. The interns were challenged and taught to see the main storylines within 1 Samuel, as well as how to see Christ within the narratives. They were given practical application and experience regarding the way to determine the gospel connection; they have seen the importance of preaching the Old Testament narratives in a manner that honors God and is valuable to the church.

The third questionnaire statement, which shows evidence of change in the interns’ attitudes and capacities, was the following: “I am confident in my ability to preach any Old Testament historical narrative accurately.” While this question focused on a subjective element, an increase in agreement does convey a change in the intern’s confidence in preaching narrative accurately with proper exegesis. Prior to the project, the interns averaged 3.83 with a deviation of 1.06, revealing their doubt in their ability with interpreting this genre. After the six classes, the men’s average response shifted to 5.16 and the standard deviation decreased to .897. The interns’ responses reveal that our time together equipped them in a positive way to approach, exegete, and preach Old Testament narratives with greater understanding and confidence. This positive result brings great joy to my heart because the Old Testament narrative are rich with application and gospel connections that are important for the church to hear. Knowing that the interns are more confident with this genre will reveal itself by them preaching from the genre more often, which, in turn, will lead to a greater depth and grasp of God’s Word within our youth ministry.

Another area that showed positive growth was with the statement “I feel comfortable relating all narratives in the Old Testament to the work of Christ.” The pre-project average was 4.5 with a standard deviation of 1.1. This exposed that the participants did not have a strong conviction regarding pivoting each narrative to the gospel. After the classes, the average response to this question increased to 5.66 with a standard deviation of .74. This can be directly attributed to the class time we spent discussing the aim and goal of preaching, especially the class on the redemptive historical hermeneutic. Also, the two books assigned reinforced their understanding of homiletics and as the interns’ knowledge of biblical theology grew, so did their ability to see Christ within the Old Testament. Their initial response revealed a desire to approach the text in light of Christ but after the classes they grew in their confidence seeing the different ways to pivot to the gospel. I am happy with the positive increase, and many of the interns have approached me with recommendations for more ways they can grow, which is encouraging.

Evaluation of Project Goals

This project sought to accomplish four goals: (1) identify the interns’ current understanding of the Old Testament narrative genre and the redemptive-historical approach to interpret them; (2) develop twelve hours of curriculum, which met a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion measured by the expert panel; (3) teach the curriculum by having all seven interns attend every class and read all assigned books; and (4) have each intern preach a sermon from an Old Testament narrative genre to the senior high students.

I was able to accomplish the first goal by enrolling all seven interns at Applewood Baptist Church in the project and measuring their understanding of the Old Testament narrative genre and the redemptive-historical approach to interpreting them by having them complete a pre- and post- project questionnaire (appendix 1), which provided a clear measurement of movement throughout the duration of the project. The

data suggest positive change toward a redemptive-historical hermeneutic for interpreting Old Testament narratives. This assessment was confirmed by a decrease in the average standard deviation and a positive increase in the average answers after the project was completed.

I accomplished the second goal of the project by developing twelve hours of curriculum focused on biblical theology, Old Testament narrative genre, redemptive-historical hermeneutic, allegory/typology, homiletics, and application. Once created, the curriculum was sent to an expert panel consisting of three pastors, two local and one in San Francisco, each of whom has over ten years of pastoral ministry. Each pastor reviewed the curriculum and appraised it based on the evaluation rubric provided (appendix 2). The curriculum was reviewed to make sure it was hermeneutically sound, its Scripture references properly interpreted the narrative genre and the redemptive historical approach sufficiently covered, and its methodology effective. On top of that, it was crucial to make sure that I used different learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, sermon reviews, and homework throughout the project. I scored 97 percent, which was over the 90 percent needed to move forward with the class. One of the pastors stated,

In going through the notes for these classes, I was not only well-informed, but also newly inspired as a student and teacher of God's Word. The curriculum revived in me both a new appreciation for God's Word and His plan of redemption for mankind. It cultivated a motivation to "be diligent to present myself to God as a workman who is not ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." The concepts shared effectively equip the next generation of preachers who will not only teach to inform, but also to transform lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. I really appreciated the emphasis on Jesus Christ as central, with all paths pointing to Him and the Gospel, which is the power of God for salvation."

There was some concern regarding the amount of material that needed to be covered and the limited amount of time. Also, one pastor thought the class would be stronger if I spent more time helping the interns prepare and outline sermons.

The third goal of the project was completed by teaching six two-hour classes entitled “Interpreting Old Testament Narratives with a redemptive-historical hermeneutic” and by collecting the salient points for the two books assigned at the last class. Overall, the classes were highly advantageous and productive in covering the material at an introductory level. All seven interns attended each class, as we agreed on all six of the dates in advance, so they had plenty of time to read books and turn in salient points. One seminar participant stated, “I have learned to preach the Old Testament in a whole new way.”

The fourth goal was accomplished by having the interns prepare and preach a sermon to the senior high youth group. The interns had to choose a text from an Old Testament narrative by the third class and turn in their manuscript by the last class. I looked over each manuscript and gave some critique, especially regarding the gospel connection. Then we planned a seven-week series in the senior high youth group called “The Gospel in the Old Testament” and each intern signed up for the week that was most convenient for them. I also prepared a sermon evaluation worksheet (appendix 5), which had to be evaluated and turned in for each sermon by other interns. The sermons were posted online, thus allowing participants to watch and evaluate at their convenience if they were not able to attend youth group on a particular Sunday night. This part of the project was extremely rewarding because I was able to see some of the interns preach from the Old Testament for the first time. Equally, the youth group was encouraged by seeing the gospel for the first time in some of the narratives that they have been familiarized with.

Strengths of the Project

Overall, the project was a huge success. I was extremely pleased with the interns, their desire to learn and be challenged, the amount of time they committed to the project’s success, our class time, and the preaching that took place in our youth group.

My desire with this project was to disciple and pour into the men in our church that God has entrusted to our care and who have been gifted to preach God's Word. God has blessed Applewood Baptist Church with a group of interns who are faithful, teachable, and have a strong desire to grow in their understanding of the Word and ability to proclaim the truth. Unfortunately, Applewood Baptist church has rarely had any type of organized homiletics training to develop interns, so this project was a huge step in the right direction. This project equipped men to handle the Word of God with greater care, specifically regarding historical narratives, which make up a large percentage of the Bible. These men were encouraged to learn about a genre that was foreign to many of them, and I am excited to see their ministries expand because of their confidence and familiarity with the concept of seeing Christ in the Old Testament. Now, several of the interns have been preaching Old Testament narratives by choice, which has been fulfilling to watch.

One of the main strengths of the project was simply being faithful to the great commission and being able to invest and train up seven men within the church. The Bible has clearly communicated the necessity to raise up men in Christ and to create a culture within the church of discipleship and theological training. This project allowed for these men to be invested in and has already produced incredible fruit within the church family and student ministries. The class allowed us to spend over fourteen hours on understanding the Old Testament narrative genre and providing basic tools to interpret and preach from them. Each of the interns completed all the classes, books, and assignments and desired more training. Many of the interns had never preached from an Old Testament narrative text before this project because of a lack of understanding on how to deal with narratives and preach them accurately with confidence. This genre makes up a significant amount of the Bible, so to see it come alive to them was rewarding. Also, the class impressed upon the interns the reality of how little they know and reinforced the need for continuing education and discipline in their studies. Each of the interns has spent a significant amount

of time preaching to the youth, and this class created a humility that there is a lot more to the Bible and there is always more to know.

Another strength of the project was having participants read the assigned books. I was nervous to insist on the reading because I was not sure if they would complete the books or if it was asking too much of them. I have recommended books in the past, but they did not respond well and never read them. However, so much of their avoidance with the Old Testament narratives was fueled by a lack of biblical theology and understanding of the main redemptive storyline. Having the interns turn in salient points made a difference, because it provided some accountability that the reading was being completed. I allotted time every class to go over the books, and I was humbled by the excitement and enlightenment that took place through the reading. The Bible was starting to come alive, and the Holy Spirit was allowing each of them to see the big picture within the Old Testament. The books also granted the interns a chance to come to class with a foundation of what we were talking about, which made the class time more beneficial.

One more strength of the project was the live preaching and having the interns evaluate one another. Knowing ahead of time that they were going to be preaching to the Senior High youth group and getting evaluated by the other interns, each intern was motivated to really invest in the project. They wanted to do an outstanding job and honor the Lord with their work. Each intern preached at the end of the project, which allowed for an immediate feedback, encouragement, closure, and a special time of celebrating their accomplishment. Also, the evaluation proved to be necessary for crucial feedback and encouragement, and it was great to see how many of the interns were in attendance to support each other. This project provided an atmosphere for the group of interns to become closer and have a tighter core of friendship within our youth ministry. In addition, the senior high students benefitted greatly from hearing the Word preached from people who are serving in the church whom that they do not know that well. Having different people preach for seven weeks and use their gifts to build the ministry was incredible. The

sermon series was a huge hit, and the students were excited each week to come and hear the Old Testament preached redemptively.

Weaknesses of the Project

One of the weaknesses of the project was the limited time available with the interns. The topic of redemptive-historical hermeneutics regarding Old Testament narratives is one of great capacity, and trying to narrow it down to twelve hours of curriculum to address it was quite challenging. The interns are members of the church body who are serving in significant capacities, and their schedules are already full with the demands of ministry, work, and family. I knew that meeting for six two-hour classes, reading two books, and preaching and evaluating sermons was the maximum that I felt I could expect from these men. However, many of them have communicated to me the importance of training and their desire to continue to have classes and read books. Their responses to the time commitment surprised me and I realized that hands-on training is something that they would prioritize and not allow to become a burden. Having completed the project, I wish I would have pushed for three more meetings and allowed them to get more time preaching to each other and getting more feedback on their sermons. This would have allowed for more practical use of the information and allowed them the opportunity to process and grow together. Our time was so short that I felt rushed each class to get through the assigned curriculum and had to steer away from a lot of conversations and questions. The topics we tried to address were new to most of the interns and I wished we had more time to practically convert the information to sermon outlines. This change would have equipped them more effectively regarding sermon preparation, outlining, and preaching. One of the main complaints from the interns was the lack of time allotted to practically working on outlining sermons and getting feedback immediately, but time was so limited we were not able.

Another weakness of this project was the amount of information that is necessary to communicate regarding hermeneutics and this approach to Old Testament narratives. Trying to develop six two-hour classes that would do justice to biblical theology and the redemptive historical approach was difficult. Most of the classes were overwhelming, and it was challenging to narrow down each class to a specific topic and to teach it at an appropriate level. For example, trying to teach biblical typology and allegory in one, two-hour class was challenging, especially because of the vast amount of biblical references and practical abuses that we could not cover in one two-hour class. I felt a constant pressure to continue through the curriculum and did not want to resume a topic the previous week because of the amount of information that we had to cover in the next class. Each of the topic discussions could have taken the whole six weeks; therefore, most of the time we were teaching at an introduction level and could not adequately provide all the biblical support. Also, because most of the interns were not familiar with biblical theology or this hermeneutical approach, there were a lot of questions during class, which I had to skip over because I knew we did not have sufficient time to address them. In the future I would offer three separate six-week classes: biblical theology, redemptive-historical hermeneutics, sermon outlining, and delivery.

One more weakness was the low level of knowledge regarding theological terms and definitions. The class was extremely diverse in background and biblical knowledge, however most of the interns were not familiar with many of the terms and definitions being used throughout the class. I assumed that many of them already were familiar with specific terms and that assumption made some of the classes less productive because they could not understand some of the language being used. For instance, many did not know the difference between biblical and systematic theology. This made it hard for them to follow the class at times, and some of the key concepts were missed from the beginning. The right way to do it, perhaps, would have been to create a list with some of the key terms regarding theology, homiletics, and Old Testament narratives and send out the list

of defined terms and definitions with the assigned readings and have participants learn them before the class. These definitions would have allowed for a smoother time in class and a greater level of comprehension.

Finally, the ministry project contained the pre- and post- seminar questionnaires, but only seven people participated in the project, so I had a small sample size of data to analyze in order to gauge the success of the project. I would like to teach the class again and open the class up to any of the teachers to attend, which would allow for greater discipleship and more data to analyze to evaluate growth in those attending. Also, I asked both qualitative and quantitative questions, which gave me a basic understanding of the interns' knowledge regarding the project; however, its scope was limited in analysis and interpretation. The project would have been stronger had I simply done more quantitative questions because they would have provided a more accurate picture of the value of the project.

Theological Reflections

I have always had a strong desire to preach Old Testament narratives redemptively but have never had the time or availability to further study the redemptive historical hermeneutic. As I interacted with Greidanus, Goldsworthy, Chapell, Lawrence, and others, my conviction for preaching Christ from Old Testament narratives became stronger while I grew in my understanding of biblical theology and discovered the purpose for preaching. During my studies and writing chapters 2 and 3, my eyes were opened to the importance of seeing the theological setting of every text and the big picture behind every narrative. In addition, I was humbled with the command to make disciples of men, especially the ones who have been gifted and called to preach the Word (Matt 28). In our church we have been blessed with some incredible interns who love God and have a desire to proclaim His Word; however, they can only do so from a lay ministry position. Throughout this project, I have been challenged theologically to allow the pulpit to be

used for discipleship, with discernment, for the equipping of saints and building up the body (2 Tim 2:2). These men have been entrusted to our church, and I have been called to teach them how to preach. My conviction that people need an opportunity and a setting to learn, put into practice what they learn, and receive positive feedback from peers who love them has become strengthened through this project. One of the primary benefits of this project was the time spent looking at different texts within the Old and New Testaments and the way they support the thesis that all Scripture points to the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Each class was saturated with textual examples reinforcing the argument for a redemptive historical hermeneutic. The Bible is not an end to itself, and individual texts rely on others for proper interpretation and understanding (Matt 17). Our first couple of classes together, which focused on biblical theology, were crucial for the rest of the project. I discovered that understanding a text's "theological context" is usually passed when dealing with Old Testament narratives because of the lack of understanding that the person and work of Jesus Christ is the central focus of the entire Bible. I personally grew in my exegesis and desire to be faithful to the author's original intent while leading to the climax of God's revelation in the person, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ. I have already begun to see the fruit from this project in the lives of the interns and our youth ministry. Many of them have always avoided the Old Testament, but I have witnessed the Bible become more alive in their hearts and have seen great confidence in their preaching ministries (2 Tim 3:16). Their view of God has grown because they are now able to see how God has been connecting the dots from the very beginning and providing redemptive hope for creation, especially within the Old Testament narrative genre.

Personal Reflections

My involvement in the ministry project and the Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been the best educational experience I

have had; it has changed my life in numerous ways. Through this project I gained much wisdom regarding expository preaching and ways to approach Old Testament narratives in a manner that is redemptive. Looking back at sermons before this program, I have noticed that I approached exegesis of the narratives in a moralist/human-centered way. I would often exhort the listeners to become more like the characters in the stories without providing any pivot to Christ or the gospel. This project has opened my eyes to the necessity to present and highlight the remedy for sin and hope of the gospel in every sermon. In addition, through the reading of the books and seminars, I have been equipped practically to organize, prepare, and deliver sermons that faithfully exegete the text and through the biblical storyline give prominence to Christ. I now can preach Old Testament narratives boldly and evangelistically, which I could not do prior to this program.

Another way this project impacted me was through encouraging the desire to raise up lay preachers that are being trained, challenged, and encouraged. There is an obvious lack of discipleship in regard to homiletics in the local church and many people have been gifted in preaching but are not using their gifts. The pulpit is sometimes over-protected, and my heart's desire is to disciple men who may not be able to go to seminary, handle the Word, or equip the body. The youth program has been tremendously blessed by the fact that they have seven different people preaching regularly, and the fruit has been incredible. The students get excited each week to hear the Word preached with zealously, variety, and plurality. Also, the interns have been meeting with some students who desire to preach, and have been training and pouring into them. I am deeply passionate to plant churches and raising up men who are on fire for God's people and the Word, and an ability to teach is crucial for the development of healthy churches.

This ministry project provided a context to use my gifts in teaching and curriculum development in ways I have not practiced in almost fifteen years of full-time ministry. I realized that I could be successful at developing curriculum for a preaching class, from beginning to end, and I received a great deal of positive feedback, which was

hugely encouraging. I would like to continue to work on the curriculum for this class, expand and improve, and, hopefully continue teaching the class to different men who have been gifted to teach and preach God's Word. I have already been contacted by the president of FCA in Colorado, asking if I would teach the class to his state staff, which is exciting. I have been praying for God to help me create something that would bear much fruit in the local church, and, hopefully that will be the result of this project.

I am immensely grateful for the friendships I have made with my cohorts, and my time on campus has been pleasantly refreshing. The classes proved to be challenging and rewarding at the same time, and the time together with my peers was highly educational. I have been blessed with many gospel-centered relationships that have already encouraged my soul and helped my personal walk with Christ. This program has created a discipline in my life that I have always desired but was never able to realize. Because of the amount of work required, I have been forced to become disciplined when it came to my time and schedule. With a wife and three little ones at home, free time was scarce, so I had to prioritize almost every free moment, which in over three years has created a discipline in my life that I do not wish to lose. I have been able to write, read, and produce on a consistent basis and hope to continue to do the same in the future.

Conclusion

As I complete my Doctor of Ministry requirements, my desire is to maintain the growth in my understanding of preaching and hermeneutics while creating a program to develop and train the interns at Applewood Baptist Church. This process has humbled me while the program exceeded my expectations. There is a strong need for the local church to help train men to teach and preach, especially regarding the Old Testament narrative genre. The health of the church depends on many factors, including hearing preaching from the Old Testament regularly and seeing members using their gift for the building up of the body. I have personally matured in my handling of these narratives

with an aim at the gospel being presented, and I have no doubt that the interns and our youth group have benefited greatly. The discipleship of men is a lifetime work, so, hopefully this project was a first step to a full ministry of teaching men how to glorify Christ in preaching, particularly through the Old Testament narratives.

APPENDIX 1

BASICS OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL NARRATIVE EXEGESIS ASSESSMENT

The following instrument is the Basics of Old Testament Historical Narrative Exegesis Assessment. Some demographic questions are followed by a thirty-question survey with a six point Likert scale. The instrument's purpose is to assess each members' present level of theological understanding and confidence in understanding of the Old Testament Historical Narrative Genre.

BASICS OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL
NARRATIVE EXEGESIS ASSESSMENT

Agreement to Participate

This research is being conducted by Derek Jones for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are providing informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Because ministry is relational, we prefer that you include your name below, rather than completing the survey anonymously. If you prefer to be anonymous, however, please use the last four digits of your social security number or phone number for future reference.

Date: _____

Name (or 4 digit code): _____

Age _____

General Questions:

1. How many years have you professed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? _____
2. How many years have you been a member in a Bible-believing church? _____
3. How many hours a week do you read your Bible for personal study or devotions?

4. Is memorizing Scripture a present practice of yours?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Do you have a daily discipline of praying with and for other people?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Briefly define exegesis:

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer. Some questions may ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

- SD = strongly disagree
- D = disagree
- DS = disagree somewhat
- AS = agree somewhat
- A = agree
- SA = strongly agree

1. The Bible commands Christians to preach both Old and New Testaments	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. I have been a part of churches that have preached Old Testament historical narratives.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. I am confident in my ability to preach any Old Testament historical narrative accurately.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. I am confident in my ability to clearly define a central idea from any Old Testament narrative text.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. I understand the Holy Spirit's role in preparing a sermon.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I believe that prayer is crucial to understanding the intended meaning of any Old Testament historical narrative.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. I believe Old Testament historical narratives address many current cultural issues.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. I believe Jesus Christ can be found in any Old Testament historical narrative.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. I can clearly articulate the kingdom of God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. I understand the redemptive-historical hermeneutic approach	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. I believe that Old Testament narratives have a larger meaning than a moralist approach for people to be like the characters.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

12. I believe Old Testament narrative texts are more difficult to preach than others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. I believe reading academic writings regarding homiletics would improve my understanding of how to approach Old Testament historical narratives.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. I am able to explain the immediate impact Adam and Eve's sin has had on creation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. I am able to explain how a person can receive God's blessing through faith in Jesus Christ instead of experiencing the judgment.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. I understand covenantalism.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. I am confident in applying the text to my audience.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. Sin is the ultimate source of people's problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. A preacher should be able to provide hope in every sermon.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. I am comfortable preaching the story of David and Goliath with a redemptive historical hermeneutic.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. I believe that all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. I believe that youth programs need to hear Old Testament narratives preached regularly.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. I believe that God desires for us become like the characters in Old Testament historical narratives.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. I believe that the Old Testament books are relevant to New Testament believers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. I feel comfortable relating the Old Testament to the New Testament theology.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

26. I feel comfortable connecting the story of David and Goliath to Jesus and Satan.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. I feel comfortable relating all narratives in the Old Testament to the work of Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. I feel comfortable researching historical background when preaching an Old Testament historical narrative.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. I feel comfortable outlining a sermon for an Old Testament narrative text.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. I have always desired to learn more about Old Testament historical narratives.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 2

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL NARRATIVE
EXEGESIS ASSESSMENT CURRICULUM
EVALUATION

The following evaluation was sent to an expert panel of four senior pastors within the Denver Metro Area. This panel evaluated the course material to ensure it is biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

OT Historical Narrative Curriculum Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The content of the curriculum is hermeneutically sound. All Scripture is properly interpreted, explained, and applied.					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.					
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers the topic of Old Testament exegesis.					
The curriculum adequately covers different types of Old Testament Historical Narratives					
Methodology					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses preaching methodology.					
The curriculum makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, sermon review, and homework.					
Practicality					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice preaching OT Historical Narratives.					
At the end of the course, participants will be able to preach OT historical narrative faithfully.					

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

APPENDIX 3

APPLICATION PACKET FOR TRAINING

The following packet describes the personal costs and commitments associated with participation in the ABC student ministry Old Testament narrative preaching training.

Your Personal Cost and Commitment Inventory

Jesus taught us to “count the cost” (Luke 16:25-35) to determine if we have what it takes to complete the commitments we are about to make. ABC student ministry Old Testament narrative preaching training involves a cost on your part (though it promises many benefits). Please prayerfully weight these costs.

Training Time Commitment

1. In-Class Training Time

ABC student ministry Old Testament narrative preaching training is fourteen weeks long. We will meet for six sessions of class time and eight weeks for preaching/evaluation (fourteen weeks total). Consistent attendance is vital, so it will be necessary for you to be in attendance 100% of the times that we meet.

2. Out-of-Class Training Time

You can expect to commit to the following time outside of class:

- Four hours per week reading/responding to homework questions.
- One hour per month meeting with your mentor.

Financial Commitment: There is no cost for participation in this training. All meals, book, and resources will be provided.

Your Personal Commitment Form

As you ponder whether you can commit to this training, we would ask you to evaluate yourself carefully, prayerfully, and honestly. We would also encourage you to gain feedback from others who know you. If you are married, please have your spouse help you weigh the costs and benefits.

1. Sign and date this Personal Commitment Form.

2. Arrange a personal meeting with Pastor Derek by contacting him at

djones@applewoodbapsist.com

My Commitment to Old Testament Narrative Preaching Training.

I have carefully read all the information. Having weighed the benefits and costs, I am willing to commit myself to fulfilling all my commitments. Therefore, I would ask you to prayerfully consider me for selection as a trainee.

(Signature)

(Date)

APPENDIX 4

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE COURSE EVALUATION

The following post-course evaluation was completed by all participants who completed the course. They evaluated whether the course is biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

How many sessions did you attend (maximum = 14): _____

OT Historical Narrative Course Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Understandability					
The content of the course is biblically and theologically sound.					
The course is presented at a level appropriate for most participants.					
Methodology					
The course sufficiently addresses OT historical narrative.					
The course makes use of various learning approaches such as lectures, sermon evaluations and homework.					
Applicability					
The course includes opportunities to practice preaching applications.					
The course addresses issues that participants experience when preaching from Old Testament historical narratives.					
At the end of the course, participants will have the confidence to preach Old Testament historical narratives					
Participants have a strategic plan for preaching Old Testament historical narrative in their personal ministry.					

How has this training proved helpful to you?

What area of your personal life has been most challenged? What changes have you seen as a result?

How has your view of Old Testament historical narratives changed from the start of the course.

APPENDIX 5

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL NARRATIVE SERMON EVALUATION

The following evaluation was used to assess the interns' sermon presentations to the Senior High youth group. Each intern used this evaluation to assess peers' sermon presentations.

SERMON EVALUATION

Preacher: _____

Sermon title: _____

Sermon text: _____

Introduction:

Overall: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1. Did the introduction properly introduce the text?

A.) Did it grab your attention?

B.) Did it tell you what the message was going to be about.

C.) Was it appropriate amount of time.

Content:

Overall 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What was the sermon about? Did it have a clearly defined central idea and was it readily identified?

A.) Was the context of the original recipient understood?

B.) Was a bridge connected from the ancient text to modern listeners?

C.) Did it tell the story in a communicative way?

Application:

Overall 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Was it applicable to where people live today? Did it expose the imminent relevance of the text in an applicable way?

A.) Who was the primary audience?

B.) After hearing this sermon, what did you feel the text was telling you to do or not to do? Be specific.

Conclusion:

Overall 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Was there a clear conclusion? Did it reinforce the big idea of the sermon?

A.) Did the conclusion expose you to things which were new to you?

B.) Would you 'like' this on Facebook and share with others?

Biblical Content:

Overall 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Did the preacher place the text within the overall meta-narrative of Scripture?

A.) Was the biblical/historical background provided?

B.) Did he place the text in the historical redemptive context of Scripture?

C.) Was the text related to Christ?

D.) If you were preaching this sermon, what would you have done or not done?

Speaker:

Overall 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Was the speaker engaging?

A.) Was there good eye contact throughout the sermon?

B.) Did the speaker have credibility?

C.) Did you feel the passion behind what he was saying?

D.) Did the use technical language make it difficult to understand?

E.) What one piece of advice would you give the preacher?

APPENDIX 6

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR PRE/POST
BASICS OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL
NARRATIVE EXEGESIS ASSESSMENT

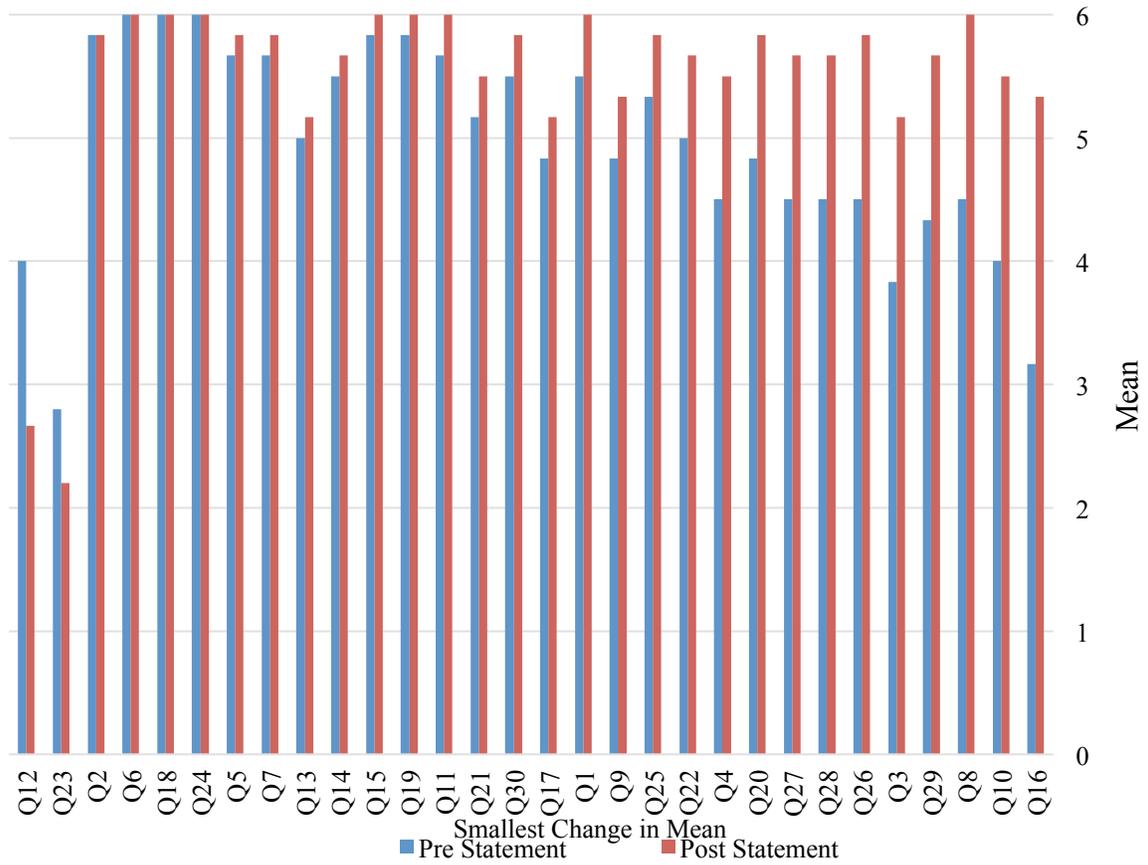


Figure A1. Mean for quantitative statements

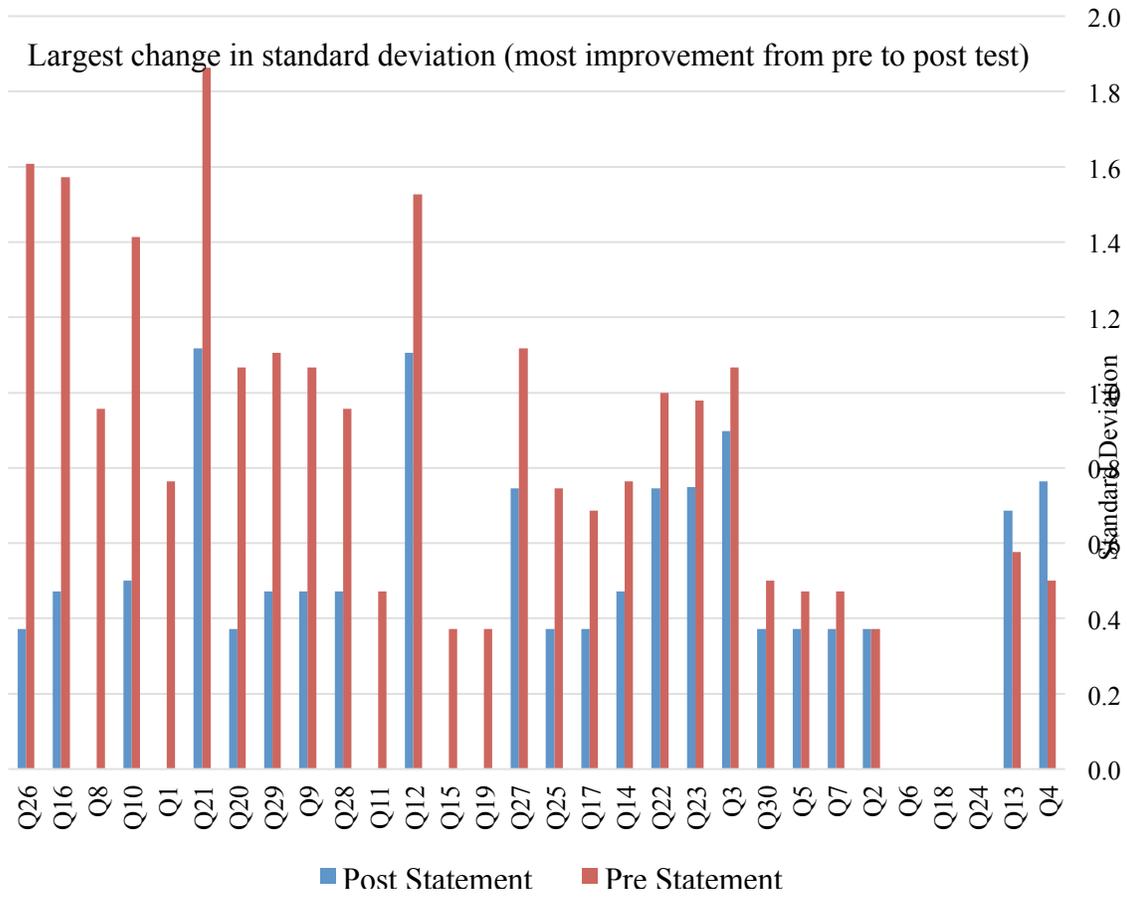


Figure A2. Standard Deviation for pre/post statements

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING STUDENT MINISTRY INTERNS AT APPLEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IN WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
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This project encompasses the development of student ministry interns at Applewood Baptist Church in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, to faithfully preach Old Testament historical narratives.

Chapter 1 presents the purpose of the project as well as the three goals of the project. It also describes the history and context of the student ministry of Applewood Baptist church and the rationale behind the project.

Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological justification for a preacher to employ a redemptive-historical hermeneutic in order to properly exegete and preach Old Testament historical narratives.

Chapter 3 addresses the theoretical/practical/historical issues related to employing a redemptive-historical hermeneutic toward Old Testament historical narratives.

Chapter 4 includes the curriculum and implementation of the project.

Chapter 5 provides an evaluation of the project, its effectiveness, its strengths, and its weaknesses.

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Youth Pastor, Mountain Range Baptist Church, Fort Collins, Colorado, 2002-2005

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