



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

Fall 2012

OLD TESTAMENT SEMINAR
HUMANITY AND HOLINESS: SIN, SACRIFICE, AND ATONEMENT
OLDT 0738

MONDAYS 1:00 PM – 3:50 PM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. JOHN KESSLER
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Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 3:45; Tuesday 10:00 -12:00 Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00;
I am usually available at these hours, but not always. If I have no appointments booked, I may not be in my office during these hours. Appointments may be arranged at other hours if need be. To book an appointment, please leave me your preferred day and time, and a possible second choice, and I will confirm with you. Please contact me via e-mail: jkessler@tyndale.ca. If e-mail is unavailable, please call 416-226-6620, ext. 6724.
If I am in my office, and the door is open, please feel free to check with me to see if I am available.

General questions about the course can be addressed to my research assistant Chris Tam at christam@rogers.com.

To access your course material, please go to <http://mytyndale.ca>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Biblical scholars of all persuasions agree that within the OT there are numerous texts focusing upon the divine-human relationship which share a common vocabulary and outlook. These texts stress the holiness of God, the need for priestly mediation in approaching God, and the observance of a variety of ethical and ritual regulations. These "priestly" texts are found primarily in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, parts of Joshua and Genesis, and in Ezekiel. This year's OT seminar will focus on selected key themes and issues in the OT priestly texts concerning the meaning and significance of sacrifice, sin, forgiveness, atonement, ritual purity, and the Day of Atonement. The course will also explore the relationship between these issues and Christian theology. The course will involve weekly preparation including extensive, close analysis of the biblical text, and study of specific Hebrew terms.

Prerequisites: Interpreting and Applying the Biblical Text (BIBL 0501); Old Testament Theology and History (OLDT 0511); Hebrew Grammar I and II (OLDT 0611 and 612). Open to ThM students.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Identify the foundational vocabulary in Priestly Theology for sin, atonement, repentance, and forgiveness.
2. List the various sacrifices in Priestly Theology and describe their functions.
3. Define and describe the concept of sin in Priestly Theology and compare and contrast it with the concept of "impurity."
4. Explain and discuss the difference of opinion between those who make a distinction between "ritual impurity" and "moral impurity" and those who reject such a distinction.
5. Explain and discuss the leading theories related to the *hattat* sacrifice and the purification of the people, and the sacred objects and spaces.
6. Discuss the hypothesis of J. Milgrom and S. Balentine regarding repentance and unforgivable sin, versus that of J. Klawans, T. Frymer-Kensky, and M. Boda.
7. Discuss the various theories concerning the meaning of the *karet* (being cut off from one's people).
8. Compare and contrast the theories of R. Gane and J. Milgrom regarding the Day of Atonement: who and what is cleansed? Why is there a "second" ceremony of atonement for sins already dealt with through "regular" daily sacrifices?
9. Define the concept of forgiveness as expressed in Priestly Theology.

10. Discuss the theory proposed by J. Sklar that atonement and forgiveness involves the acceptance of a lesser penalty (“mitigated punishment”) than the crime deserves.
11. Express a Christian understanding of Priestly Theology’s perspective on sin, atonement, repentance, and forgiveness.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Gane, Roy. *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005.

Gorman, Frank H. *Divine Presence and Community: A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus*, International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Edinburgh: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Handsel Press, 1997.

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Major Paper (40 %)**. The student will prepare a major research paper (23-25 pgs, with a minimum of 25 references) on a selected text or theme in Priestly Theology. The topic or theme will be chosen in consultation with the professor.

2. **Discussion Groups (30%)**. Students will meet for 5 discussion groups based on selected readings in the required texts, and specific articles. Additional directions for discussion groups, texts to be read, and questions will be supplied. The goal of these discussion groups is to pursue selected issues and topics in greater detail.

3. **Class Seminar Presentations and Participation (30%)**. This course will follow a seminar format. As such, students will be expected to lead a portion of the class discussion 4-5 times during the semester. Mark will be based upon clarity and comprehensiveness of presentation, and the use handouts and visuals. Weekly readings will be assigned for each class. Students will check off whether or not the readings have been done on a list circulated in class.

Grading Standards:

1. For General Class Participation:

Students will be graded on the following areas:

- Completion of weekly readings and biblical research
- Demonstration of comprehension and critical analysis of readings
- Participation in class discussion

2. For Leading of Class Discussion

Students will be graded on the following areas:

- Comprehension of the material to be presented
- Skill in presentation of the material
- Skill in leading of discussion
- Use of Handouts and Visuals

NOTE: There will be no class on Monday Oct 8 (Thanksgiving).

Suggested research areas for major paper. The precise topic and methodology must be discussed with the professor before writing.

Why did the Tabernacle and its equipment need to be cleansed? What defiled it and when? What differences exist between the cleansing of the outer and inner altars, and the inner shrine?

Was the Day of Atonement unique in the ANE or did other cultures have purification rites for their Temples and shrines? Compare and contrast the Israelite theology of the Day of Atonement with those of its neighbours.

According to the Priestly legislation purificatory offerings were required for normal life events that were not in any way sinful (touching a corpse, scale disease, menstruation and ejaculation etc.) Why? Survey the various answer given, and discuss them, stating your own preference. Discuss the NT's approach to this idea.

Priestly legislation commanded that sacrifices be offered on a daily and weekly basis, as well as by individuals who had sinned or become unclean, as well as on the Day of Atonement. Forgiveness was declared to those who offered appropriate sacrifice at the time of their offerings (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 19:22; Num 14:19–20; 15:25–26, 28; 30:5, 8, 12) Why then was their need for a separate Day of Atonement? What did the Day of Atonement accomplish relative to the regular sacrifices? Survey the various answer given, and discuss them, stating your own preference.

Discuss the various approaches to the Israelite dietary laws. Was their purpose essentially hygienic, or did they reflect broader underlying theological ideals? Survey the various answer given, and discuss them, stating your own preference. Discuss the NT's approach to these issues.

In Leviticus and Numbers the sacrifices and sacrificial rituals are given in a wilderness setting, with the tribes of Israel camped in a square-shaped arrangement around the Tabernacle. Why is this setting chosen for the Priestly legislation when for most of Israel's historical experience many people lived at great distances from the central Tabernacle?

This setting is often taken either as an indication that these laws reflect religious ideals rather than actual regulations to be strictly enacted, or as a post-exilic contextualization of ancient material for the situation of Early Persian Yehud. Which approach is most likely?

Lev 17 specifies that the slaughter of animals for food must take place “before Yahweh” that is at a sacred site and with the oversight of priestly personnel. Deut 12:15-16, by contrast specifies that animal slaughter may be performed anywhere, so long as the blood is poured out on the ground. Scholars have long discussed the relationship between these two texts, and the reason for the difference between them. Summarize the various arguments and present your own opinion. In this connection discuss whether the Priestly legislation presupposes legitimate local sanctuaries.

Biblical scholars frequently find different points of emphasis between Lev 1-16, and parts of Numbers and Exodus (called the Priestly School), on one hand, and Lev 17-26 and parts of Numbers (called the Holiness Code), on the other. Is the distinction legitimate? What are the distinctive elements of each? To what questions does each respond?

A significant debate has arisen between Jacob Milgrom and John Gammie over the role of the regularly offered sacrifices and the Day of Atonement. Milgrom and others assert that these sacrifices cleansed the Tabernacle equipment but not the offerers (whose sins are cleansed on the Day of Atonement), while Gammie (and others) affirm that the offerers are cleansed, but not the Tabernacle (it is cleansed on the Day of Atonement). Evaluate their arguments and present your own conclusion.

Biblical scholars often contrast the Priestly legislation with that of Deuteronomy. Discuss the characteristics of the Priestly School (primarily Lev 1-16), the Holiness Code (primarily Lev 17-26), and Deuteronomistic legislation. Discuss the temporal relationship between these texts. What are the similarities and distinctions between them?

Discuss the issue of forgiveness in Exod 32-34 and Deut. Where, when and how does forgiveness occur? What is involved in it? Why is there so little emphasis on repentance in these texts?

Discuss the issue of forgiveness in Lev-Num. Where, when and how does forgiveness occur? What is involved in it? How does this fit into the general theology of repentance in the OT? Why are certain sacrifices to be accompanied by confession, and others not? What is the significance of repentance in Gen-Num for the NT?

Discuss the issue of forgivable versus unforgivable sin, as described in Num 30:28-30. What distinguishes one class of sin from the other? Describe the nature of each. Balentine and Milgrom have argued that unforgivable sins can be forgiven under circumstances, while Klawans and others have argued that they cannot. Discuss this issue, with special attention to repentance, confession, and the Day of Atonement. Outside of Priestly Theology, do we

see this bifurcation of sins into two categories? How does the repentance and confession of sin in Lev 26, and the “returning to Yahweh” in Deut 4 and 30 related to this issue?

One of the most debated and intriguing aspects of the Day of Atonement ritual involves the two goats. One is sacrificed, the other is sent “to Azazel” in the wilderness bearing the sins and impurities of the people. Why is there a two-goat ritual? Who or what is Azazel? Survey the various answers given, and discuss them, stating your own preference. How does one’s choice in this affect one’s understanding of the sacrifice of Christ?

In his Leviticus commentary S. Balentine states that commentators such as G. Wenham, while correct in their discussion of the differences between the Priestly ritual of the OT and the NT teaching, have failed to see the on the ongoing significance of Priestly laws for Christians. Is he right? Why? What relevance can the study of these laws have for Christians today?

Does the Hebrew root *kpr* commonly translated “to make atonement” carry the idea of the payment of a ransom as proposed by J. Sklar? Or is some other alternative proposal a better explanation? Survey the various answers given, and discuss them, stating your own preference. Discuss the relationship between your choice and the NT concept of propitiation/expiation (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:5; 1 John 2:2; 4:10), ransom (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18), and redemption (Luke 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; 11:35).

Respond to the assertion that “Priestly Theology is preoccupied with ritual and neglects moral matters.” Is this an accurate characterization?

Other areas of interest within the OT Priestly/Holiness legislation:

The sexual ethics of Lev 18

Debt, Slavery and the Year of Jubilee

The symbolism of the number “7”

Paper: Research Methodology, Format and Style

Papers may be done in either SBL or APA/MLA formats, but the chosen format must be used consistently. For details on the use of the SBL format see the *SBL Handbook of Style*. Ed. P.H. Alexander, et. al. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999 (available on the mytyndale.ca course page). All sources used must be cited. Plagiarism will be dealt with according to the Tyndale Student Handbook. Students are strongly encouraged to use the library for the preparation of this assignment, especially the reference and periodical collections. *Any one of the suggested topics can be completed at a B+/A- level using only materials which NEVER leave the library.* Such materials include periodicals, encyclopedias and Bible Dictionaries and reference copies of commentaries. These

never leave the library. Similarly a massive amount of material is available on line in downloadable PDF files via the library's e-resources (especially EBSCO HOST/ATLA and JSTOR). THERE IS A GIGANTIC DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE LIBRARY'S E RESOURCES AND THE INTERNET IN GENERAL. REMEMBER— ONLY QUOTE QUALIFIED EXPERTS IN THE SUBJECT YOU ARE STUDYING. Be sure to use scholarly reputable sources. These are usually found in peer-reviewed series and journals (e.g. *Vetus Testamentum* and *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*) or edited commentary series (e.g. *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*; the *Anchor Bible*.)

Additional Suggestions:

- a) Use the commentaries, Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias in the Reference Section of the library.
- b) Use the Library's E-Resources (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/>), especially Journal Search (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources/ejournals>) via EBSCOHost>ATLA or JSTOR; and the reference volumes available via the Gale Virtual Reference Library (access via <http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources> and select "G", the once in the Gale site, choose "Religion."). This gives you access to several excellent Encyclopedias including the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.
- c) For bibliographies for your subject see the Oxford Bibliographies Online (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources?title=o>) available via the e resources portlet on the library website (choose "o"). These excellent bibliographies will give you an orientation to the subject, and a place to start. Similarly check out the Oxford Biblical Studies Online portlet (just above the Oxford Bibliographies Online portlet).
- d) Before you start, read an overview of your subject in a major Bible Dictionary or Encyclopaedia, such as the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, the *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* or the *New International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, or the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*
- e) Begin early, and take time to *think and pray about your work*.
- f) Make sure that you have consulted *at least* 15 sources, and that these sources are listed in *proper bibliographic form* at the end of your paper.
- g) Make sure your pages are numbered.
- h) Ask a friend to proofread your work before handing it in.
- i) NEVER cite the editor of an encyclopedia or dictionary article as the author of the article. Example: D. N. Freedman is the editor of the *Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)*, but not the author of its individual entries (articles). ALWAYS cite the name of the author of the article, e.g. A. R. Millard, "Abraham" *ABD* 1:35-40.

C. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests

and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar>.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT, AND REQUIRED (to be revised before the beginning of the course)

Class sessions will consist of an introduction and comments by the professor, the presentation of selected articles by students, and the discussion of key biblical texts, prepared by all students in advance.

To be Read for Week 1:

Gorman, Frank H. *Divine Presence and Community : A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus*, International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich, p. XX

Gorman, Frank H., Jr. "Priestly Rituals of Founding : Time, Space, and Status." In *History and Interpretation*, 47-64. Sheffield, Eng: JSOT Pr, 1993.

Week 1. Introductory Matters

- 1.1 Situating our Discussion: What do we mean by "Priestly Literature"
- 1.2 Characteristic Themes and Vocabulary in Priestly Literature
- 1.3. Traditional Distinctions within Priestly Literature
- 1.4 Survey of Key Issues in Priestly Literature
- 1.5 Unity and Diversity in the Priestly Literature
- 1.6. Lev 16: A Paradigm of Priestly Theology.

To be Read for Week 2:

Anderson, G. "Sacrifices and Offerings" ABD

Week 2. Foundational Concepts I: Sacrifice

- 2.1 What is sacrifice? Anthropological and Sociological Theories
- 2.2 The Various OT Sacrifices and their Significance
See survey article "Sacrifices and Offerings" ABD by G. Anderson.
- 2.3 Critical Debate: The *hattat*: sin offering or purgation offering?

- 2.4 The *olah* (whole burnt offering): expiation or consecration?
- 2.5 The Sacrifices and the Tabernacle: where and when?

Week 3. The Israelite Calendar and the Purity Laws

- 3.1 Textual References to the Major Israelite Feasts
- 3.2 Summary of the Meaning and Function of the Various Feasts
- 3.3 Purity and Impurity: Basic Definitions.
- 3.4 The debate: Can impurity be divided into two kinds—i.e. “moral impurity” and “ritual impurity”

Discussion Group 1

Week 4. Sin and Forgiveness. Introduction

- 4.1 What is Sin? Basic Vocabulary
- 4.2 States of the Human Person: Clean and unclean, pure and impure. The spectrum of purity and impurity.
- 4.2 The Knowledge of Sin: the meaning of “*asham*” (and becomes guilty)

Week 5. “Atonement”

- 5.1 The meaning of “kipper” (to make atonement for): debates and theories. See survey in Hartley, *Leviticus*,
- 5.2 Theories of Atonement, See survey in Sklar,
- 5.3 Laying hands on the sacrificial animals. One-handed and two-handed rituals: their meaning and significance.

Discussion Group 2

Week 6. Sin and its Remedy

- 6.1 Forgivable versus Unforgivable Sin (Numb 15:28-30), Introduction.
- 6.2 Forgivable Sins: The meaning of “*bishgagah*” Lev 4:2, 22, 27; 5:15, 18; 22:14; Num 15:24–29; 35:11, 15; Josh 20:3, 9; Eccl 5:6; 10:5: unintentional sins or sins of weakness?
- 6.3 Remedies for Forgivable Sin
- 6.4 The role of confession (*Hiphil* of *yadah*)

Week 7. Unforgivable Sin

- 7.1 Unforgivable Sin. Definition and examples.
- 7.2 The “*karet*” (“cut of from his/her people”) and its meaning.
- 7.3 Unforgivable Sin. Consequences
- 7.4 Are Unforgivable Sins Completely Unforgivable: Forgiveness Outside Priestly Theology?

Discussion Group 3

Week 8. Day of Atonement Part 1

- 8.1 Purgation Rites in the ANE
- 8.3 The Effect of the Sins and Uncleaness of the People on the Sanctuary

- 8.2 Purification of Lepers and the Consecration of the High Priest
- 8.3 Historical Origins and Development
- 8.4 Details of the Ritual
- 8.5 The Two Goats, and the “two handed” rite.
- 8.6 The goat “for Azazel”
- 8.7 The “Scapegoat”

Week 9. Day of Atonement Part 2

- 9.1 The Effect of the Day of Atonement
- 9.2 The Day of Atonement and the Regular Daily Sacrifices
- 9.3 Why a Two-Stage Ritual of Forgiveness
- 9.3 The Day of Atonement: Forgives Forgivable or Unforgivable Sins?

Week 10. Sin and Repentance. Day of Atonement

- 9.1 Repentance in the OT (general).
 - 9. 2 Repentance, Exile, and Penitential Prayer
 - 9.3 Self-Denial on the Day of Atonement: Vocabulary and Meaning
- Discussion Groups 4 and 5*

Week 11. Christian Reflections on Priestly Theology 1

Sin and Forgiveness in Priestly Theology as NT background for NT theology of sacrifice, atonement, and redemption.

Week 12. Christian Reflection on Priestly Theology 2

Romans and Hebrews as Reflections on Priestly Theology

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Part One.

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