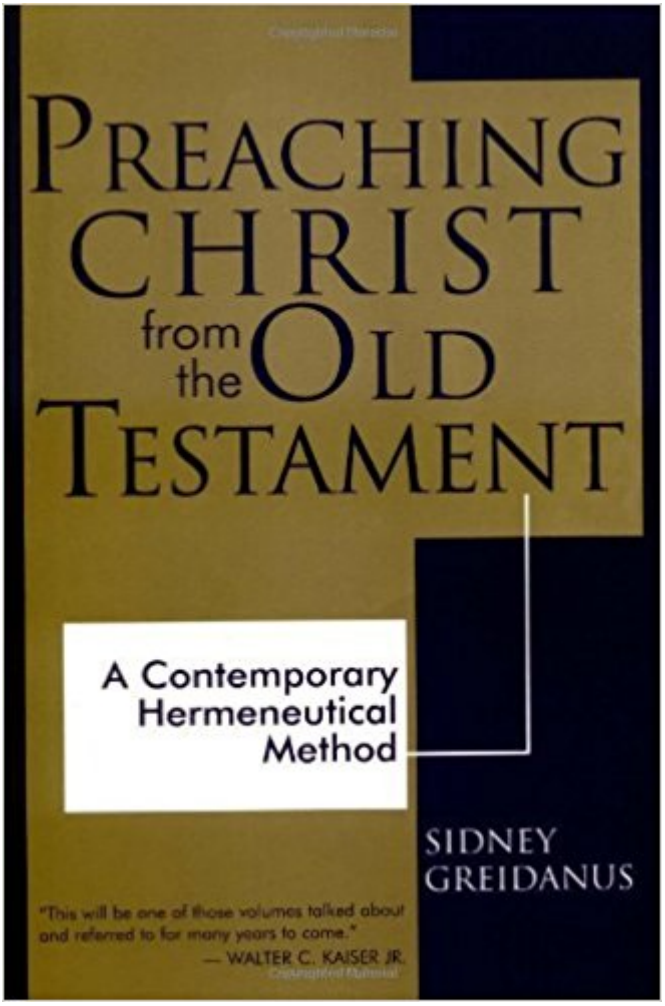
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Preaching Christ From The Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method



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Synopsis

Arguing for the need both to preach Christ in every sermon and to preach regularly from the Old Testament, Sidney Greidanus develops a christocentric method that will help preachers do both simultaneously. Greidanus challenges Old Testament scholars to broaden their focus and to understand the Old Testament not only in its own historical context but also in the context of the New Testament. Suggesting specific steps and providing concrete examples, this volume provides a practical guide for preaching Christ from the Old Testament.

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Customer Reviews

Children’s Sunday School classes are often filled with people and stories from the Old Testament, and yet in worship services this portion of God’s word is often neglected or marginalized. Wanting to proclaim the gospel, many preachers will stick with New Testament texts and forget that the Old Testament also testifies to Christ. From the law to the prophets to the wisdom literature, the grand subject of all of scripture is Jesus.Within his book, Sidney Greidanus challenges pastors to take up

the Old Testament and show their congregations Christ. He spends multiple chapters answering the question of how to accomplish this task with a sound hermeneutic. In his review of Christian history, he points out the shortcomings and strengths of those who preceeded this generation. By examining the New Testament he extracts principles for preaching Christ, and then develops a method that keeps the expositor faithful to the text.Where many books on this subject have fallen short, Greidanus succeeds. He writes in a scholarly and yet easy to read manner. The depth and breadth of the subject is covered in a clear outline, and the book is constantly centered in the authority of God's word. If you are seeking to grow in preaching Christ from all of the Bible, then this book is worth your time.

Greidanus, a professor emeritus (retired) of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, has written a comprehensive textbook on preaching Christ from the Old Testament from a Reformed perspective. When I say comprehensive, I mean that this book is an academic resource filled with insightful information; it's one of those books that you find yourself consulting throughout the lifetime of your preaching ministry. Greidanus begins by arguing for the need to preach Christ from the O.T. and from all of Scripture because of the nature of progressive revelation. The first 60 pages of this work provides a mini-biblical theology which includes the inter-textual relationship between the O.T. and N.T. He then pours out almost 100 pages of ink providing a history of preaching Christ from the O.T. He explains the different methods used by the Apostolic Fathers, all the way through to Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Spurgeon among others. What I appreciated was his critic of the abuse of allegorical and typological forms of preaching and he rightly argues for the combination of literary-historical interpretation of O.T. passages with canonical, redemptive-historical, and Christ-centered interpretation. He presents seven ways of preaching Christ from the O.T.: redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, New Testament references, and contrast. He then explains and demonstrates the hermeneutical process he calls the "Christo-centric method." What I appreciate most is that this book is laced with example after example of the right and wrong ways to preach various passages from the O.T.One example is the famous story of Abraham and Isaac from Genesis 22. Greidanus warns against the dangers of ignoring Genesis 22 as written for Israel and it's ramifications for Israel. The author warns against the dangers of biographical preaching which tends to look for attitudes and actions of the biblical characters and drawing contemporary applications based on these attitudes and actions, rather than focusing on the biblical author's intent of Israel. He warns against generalizing and universalizing the text, where God's testing of Abraham is applied to every Believer. God does not

test all of his saints the way Abraham was tested; God does not call us to lay down our Isaac's as an atonement, and God does not reward our obedience by rescuing us. These are not unbiblical points, but it's not the point of the text. God putting for his Son for us was not contingent on our obedience. And God did not reward our obedience by putting forth Christ. God put forth Christ, and as a result we are able to obey God by trusting in Christ. The story of Abraham and Isaac in Gen. 22 was originally written to Israel to: 1) Teach Israel that it lives only by the grace of the Lord's covenant 2) move Israel to gratitude for the Lord's grace in providing a substitute offering 3) encourage Israel to fully trust their faithful covenant Lord to provide redemptionThese three points can easily be applied through the New Covenant. There are many example such as this one throughout the text of this book.The only critique I have is that Gredianus seems to press the necessity of preaching Christ in every single sermon. This is evident in his critique of John Calvin's preaching.Gredianus writes: "According to John Leith, Calvin's purpose in preaching was to render transparent the text of Scripture itself. Although this goal is admirable in itself, from our perspective Calvin did not sufficiently focus on producing Christ-centered sermons in the context of the whole of Scripture."Calvin probably did not always focus on producing Christ-centered sermons, because the scriptural text does not always produce a Christ-centered sermon. Yes, all Scripture eventually points towards Christ, but on this point Calvin was right to focus more readily on the immediate context of Scripture rather than forcing every passage into the grid of redemptive history.Due to the text-book nature of this work, as well as it's length, I recommend this book as a resource for preachers.

Greidanus assumes that modern preachers are still being trained in classic liberalism in reading and interpreting the Bible. I think this is less so today, especially in the conservative seminaries. This volume should not be read in isolation, but with other conservative texts on the subject. The Kindle version has numerous places where there are flaws in the reproduction of the text, either by having dirty pages to copy from, or possibly from having dirt on the glass of the copier scanning the pages for Kindle. This is a mere distraction, and does not prevent using the text.

Operating on the Scriptural basis that Jesus is the Eternal Logos present before the Old Testament was ever written (John 1:1), yet is the incarnate Christ present after the Old Testament era (John 1:14), Greidanus presents a method for preaching Christ from the Old Testament text. Working with a "contemporary hermeneutical method," Greidanus explains how the Old Testament is indeed a Christian text and should therefore be used in Christian teaching and worship. Considering the Old

Testament more than a history book, the author points out that Christ is not only found in the New Testament, but that all that was written in the Old Testament points to Christ -- the person, work, and teaching of Christ.Greidanus takes a review of the history of the Christian homiletic and analyzes the kerygma of the Church in order to better explain how to preach Christ. With his presentation, he explains the benefits and disadvantages of various approaches to Christocentric preaching throughout the ages. Following the principles of the kerygmatic dialog found in Scripture, Greidanus instructs the reader how to read the Old Testament through Christocentric lenses.

If you desire to understand God's revelation of Himself deeper, read Preaching Christ From The Old Testament carefully. The bookis a minor volumne in hermeneutics but also, a major volumne in how the Old Testament is correctly used in preaching Christ. Christocentric preaching is produced when the Bible is viewed as one united book about God's Creation, man's fall, redemption through Christ,and the new created heavens and earth.

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