
REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DISTANCE EDUCATION



ISAIAH - MALACHI
DR. RICHARD P. BELCHER, JR.



Course Overview

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Course Description:

OOT516 Isaiah - Malachi, 3 hours
Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:
Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

An expository study of the message of the prophets which looks at their meaning in the context of OT history, which is foundational for understanding their message for God's people today. Issues surrounding the interpretation of prophecy, the unfolding of revelation in relationship to the Messiah, and the significance of the prophets for ministry are emphasized.

Course Objectives:

- To set the prophets in their historical setting in order to better understand the message of the prophets.
- To be able to summarize the message of each prophetic book.
- To become familiar with some of the issues related to the interpretation of prophecy.
- To see how the prophets lay the groundwork for the coming of the Messiah.

Required Textbooks:

Belcher, Richard P., Jr. *Prophet, Priest, and King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible and Our Roles Today*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2016.

Sandy, D. Brent and Ronald Giese, Jr. *Cracking Old Testament Codes*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995.

Van Pelt, Miles V. and J. Ligon Duncan, et. al. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

VanGemenen, Willem A. *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.

Walton, John. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

Additional Required Reading

Richard Pratt, “Historical Contingencies and Biblical Predictions,” *The Way of Wisdom* (eds. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Sonderlund; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 180-203 (available for download within the Learning Management System (LMS)).

The Prophetic books of the Old Testament, *Isaiah* through *Malachi*.

Online Student Handbook:

The [Online Student Handbook](#) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

Summary of Requirements:

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the three (3) [Exams](#)
5. Submit [Research Paper](#)
6. Submit [Prophetic Profiles](#)
7. Submit [Reading Report](#)
8. Submit [Mentor Report/Course Application Paper](#)

Meet the Professor

Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:



Dr. Richard P. Belcher is the Professor of Old Testament and Academic Dean of RTS Charlotte. He is an ordained minister in the PCA and pastored an urban nondenominational church in Rochester, NY for ten years before pursuing the Ph. D. This pastoral experience in an unusual and challenging setting gives him great insight into the practical, modern issues that will be faced by future pastors studying with him at RTS. He graduated from Covenant College and received his M. Div from Covenant Seminary. He also received an S.T.M. from Concordia Theological Seminary, and his Ph. D. is from Westminster Theological Seminary. He has served as stated supply for numerous churches in the area since coming to RTS Charlotte in 1995.

Publications by Dr. Belcher:

The Messiah and the Psalms. Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2006.

Genesis: The Beginning of God's Plan of Salvation: Christian Focus, 2012.

Prophet, Priest, and King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible and Our Roles Today: P&R, 2016.

Job: The Mystery of Suffering and God's Sovereignty: Christian Focus, 2017.

Ecclesiastes: A Mentor Commentary. Christian Focus, 2017.

"Thanksgiving, Psalms of" in *The Dictionary of Old Testament: Wisdom, Writings, and Poetry.* Edited by T. Longman and P. Enns; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2008.

"Suffering" in *The Dictionary of Old Testament: Wisdom, Writings, and Poetry.* Edited by T. Longman and P. Enns; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2008.

"The King, the Law, and Righteousness in the Psalms" in *The Law is not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant.* Philipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 2008.

Grades

Forum Discussion (15%):

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
 - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
 - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
 - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
 - A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examinations (45%):

There are three exams in Isaiah to Malachi. They follow a similar format and are not cumulative. No helps are allowed, including Bibles. Exam 1 will cover material through Lesson 6, Exam 2 through Lesson 15, and Exam 3 through Lesson 22. The student must give the outlines of prophetic books, which are provided in the handout titled "Outline of Prophetic Books and Key Dates." Memorize the outlines and produce them exactly as they are given to you.

There are also identification questions, which consist of terms, names, or concepts that have been discussed in class. These questions will be multiple choice on all exams. There is also a short essay question and a long essay question, which are based on the Lesson Questions at the end of the lesson.

The third exam also has a section on key dates. The key dates are found in the handout titled "Outline of Prophetic Books and Key Dates." There will be five key dates on the final exam. You should think in terms of the event that took place and the significance of that event.

All exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (20%):

The student will submit a research paper that focuses on a particular passage from the prophets. The paper can be centered on one passage or it can look at a major theme in one of the books studied in this course. See section titled “[Research Paper Instructions](#)” in this syllabus.

Prophetic Profiles (10%):

A Prophetic Profile must be turned in on each prophetic book except for Obadiah and Joel. The Profile will be based on your assigned reading in IPW and Scripture and will follow a Prophetic Profile guideline. **Please note** that students should NOT copy/paste from outside sources for the Prophetic Profiles. You should use your own wording when presenting the information in each profile. See handout titled “Prophetic Profiles Guidelines.”

Reading Report (5%):

Read the assigned reading from your textbooks plus the Biblical books of Isaiah through Malachi. To receive full credit, the student must read all of the required readings listed at the beginning of each lesson.

Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

Assignments:

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information:

Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education
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Charlotte, NC 28226
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1-855-854-6920
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Web site: www.rts.edu/distance

Lessons

Lesson One
Introduction
Divination

Lesson Two
Proclamation

Lesson Three
Interpretation

Lesson Four
Amos

Lesson Five
Hosea

Lesson Six
Jonah

Lesson Seven
Isaiah chapters 1-6

Lesson Eight
Isaiah chapters 7-39

Lesson Nine
Isaiah chapters 40-66

Lesson Ten
Zephaniah

Lesson Eleven
Nahum

Lesson Twelve
Habakkuk

Lesson Thirteen
Jeremiah

Lesson Fourteen
Obadiah

Lesson Fifteen
Joel

Lesson Sixteen
Ezekiel chapters 1-32

Lesson Seventeen
Ezekiel chapters 33-48

Lesson Eighteen
Daniel chapters 1-6

Lesson Nineteen
Daniel chapters 7-12

Lesson Twenty
Haggai

Lesson Twenty-one
Zechariah

Lesson Twenty-two
Malachi

Research Paper Instructions

The paper can be centered on one passage or it can look at a major theme in one of the books studied in this course. If the paper focuses on a theme in a book, it is important to see how that theme relates to the rest of the canon (OT and NT). If the paper focuses on one passage, the following questions should be kept in mind:

- A. How does the passage fit into the rest of the book?
- B. What is the major theme of the passage?
- C. How is the theme developed (an outline of the passage is helpful here)?
- D. Are there any significant literary, historical, or theological questions?
- E. Are there any major problems in the passage?
- F. Is the passage using prior revelation in any way?
- G. What is the message of the passage to the original reading audience?
- H. Is the passage used in a significant way in later Biblical history (either OT or NT)?
- I. What is the message of the passage for today?

The paper could revolve around a particular literary, historical, or theological issue in the passage or a particular problem encountered in the text. The paper should reflect a developed argument centered around a theme or an issue in the passage.

The following are criteria that will be used to evaluate the paper:

- a. Cogency of argument - is there a thesis statement, how well does the argument hang together, and how well are pertinent and fundamental points brought out?
 - b. Discussions of historical context, genre, and redemptive history (where these are appropriate, but do not go overboard); just give the reader enough information to understand your paper. Some issues, like authorship, can be omitted or issues and bibliography related to authorship can be given in footnotes.
 - c. The use of sources: this is a research paper so avoid study Bibles as a source; read as many commentaries as you can, including conservative commentaries, those from a critical perspective, and at least one older commentary, such as Calvin, Geneva series, etc. At least one journal article must be cited. Research is important and can be included in footnotes. Think of at least 8 sources.
 - d. Do not make a Scripture reference as a footnote, but put it in parenthesis in the paper.
 - e. The paper should be 10-15 pages, double-spaced, pages numbered, and with one inch margins on all sides.
- *Do not leave extra space between paragraphs

Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Isaiah Through Malachi

Professor: Richard Belcher, Jr.

Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<i>In order to measure the success of the curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the outcomes.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Moderate	Articulation of essential biblical, theological, and historical information is covered, but mostly written, not oral
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	The original meaning of the Prophets is covered with an emphasis on research in a paper and substantial time spent on meaning for today
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	A few theological issues are covered (openness view of God, prophecy and historical contingency, eschatology views, covenant)
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Learning about the character of God in the prophets aids this
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	None	Implicit not explicit
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	None	
Teach	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	We talk about how to preach and teach the prophets
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	None	
MAR Specific SLO	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	None	