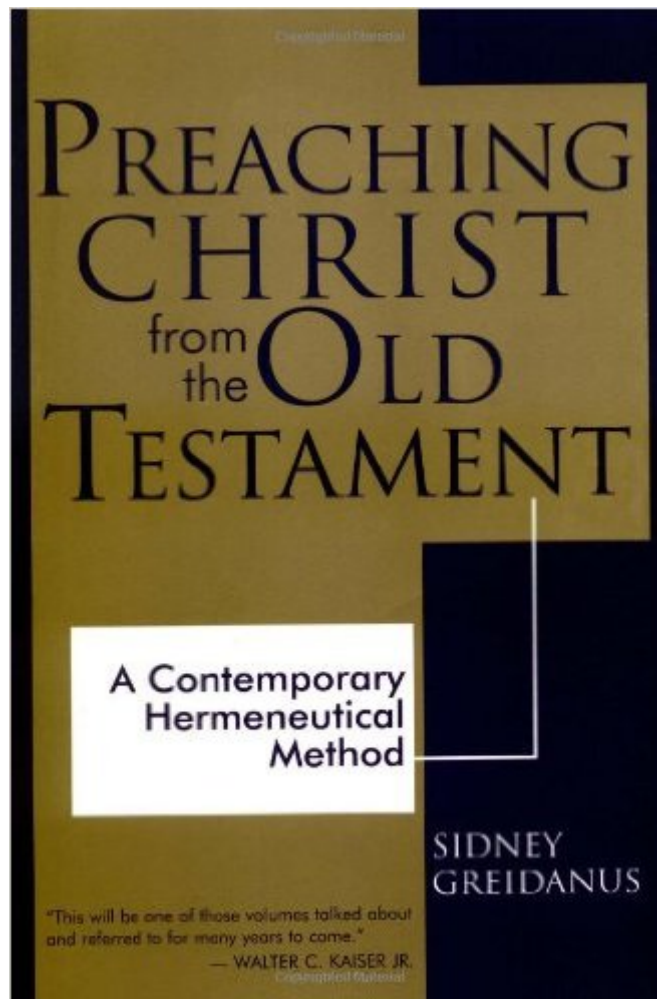


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Preaching Christ From The Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method



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

Greidanus tackles a crucial topic in this book and handles it quite well. He notes that the Biblical (and particularly OT) illiteracy prevalent in the Christian church at large is in a large part due to the paucity of preaching from the Old Testament. Yet pastors often struggle to know how to preach from OT texts, and when they do they often fall into numerous pitfalls. Greidanus does an excellent job of critiquing numerous pitfalls that the preacher might encounter in preaching the OT, especially those that would insufficiently address the text itself (i.e. using the text as a 'pretext' to skip to some other idea) or the more deadly error of ignoring the centrality of Christ in the sermon. Along with St. Paul, Greidanus exhorts the reader to be constant in preaching Christ crucified, and that generically 'God-centered' preaching is not enough. The task of the preacher is to specifically show how the fulness of God's self-revelation and salvation is found in Christ Jesus. So in order to prepare the preacher for this great task, Greidanus provides an excellent review of major preachers/theologians

in the history of the church, to see how they preached Christ from the Old Testament. As the author comes from a Calvinist background, I think he misrepresented Luther slightly, but overall he gave a fair and balanced critique of the preachers. He did critique Calvin's 'theocentric' method of preaching as insufficient. After his examination of historical preachers, Greidanus sets out at length to show positive methods for preaching Christ from the OT while remaining faithful to the text. He provides several sound approaches and shows step-wise how to apply each method. He offers samples on both easy and harder texts for preaching Christ in the OT.

Preachers face a wide range of homiletical choices, and many disagree about what counts for "good preaching." In light of first-century options, the Apostle Paul stood with this plain conviction: "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:23). Likewise, Greidanus' burden is crystal-clear: "In preaching any part of Scripture, one must understand its message in the light of that center, Jesus Christ" (p. 227). Greidanus, professor of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, blends hermeneutics and homiletics to help pastors work out their commitment to Christ-centered preaching. First, he demonstrates the necessity of preaching Christ and preaching from the Old Testament (chs. 1-2). He then surveys the instructive but rather checkered history of christological interpretation as expressed in preaching from apostolic to modern times (chs. 3-4). The theoretical foundation of the book which follows is a well-illustrated treatment of seven biblical ways in which the testaments are united in Christ (chs. 5-6). These are the ways of redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, New Testament references, and contrast. He concludes by laying out a 10-step process for the construction of Christ-centered sermons and invites the student into his study (so to speak) to work through the process with six separate messages (chs. 7-8). Given the challenges of interpreting the Old Testament christologically and the temptations to engage in man-centered preaching, pastors desperately need encouragement and help to address the Church and world today with genuine Christ-centered, biblical preaching.

Dr. Sidney Greidanus serves as professor of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is a prolific author, most notably the author of *The Modern Preacher* and *The Ancient Text*. Greidanus' aim in this volume is:... to provide seminary students and preachers with a responsible, contemporary method for preaching Christ from the Old Testament. A secondary, but no less important, aim is to challenge 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 (xii). He argues that this book is "not merely for the general category of God-centered preaching but for the more specific category of explicitly Christ-centered preaching" (37). Summary Chapter One, entitled "Preaching Christ and Preaching the Old Testament." Greidanus outlines the necessity of preaching Christ and well as the rationale for Christian churches to preach from the Old Testament. Greidanus outlines how the Old Testament brings forth redemptive history leading to Christ as well as shedding light on the New Testament itself. "Every Christian church today needs to hear the Old Testament for its function of teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, as well as for the hope it brings and the instruction it offers for 'salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim 3:15)" (26). Chapter Two, entitled "The Necessity of Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," Greidanus laments the profusion of human centered preaching from our pulpits, especially in relation to the Old Testament.

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