

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 12, Methods of Preaching Historical Narratives Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 12, Methods of Preaching Historical Narratives, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Vannoy's lecture addresses the challenge of preaching from historical narratives in the Bible. He critiques the allegorical method as reading *into* scripture rather than drawing meaning from it. Vannoy contrasts exemplaristic preaching, which focuses on moral examples, with redemptive-historical preaching, which emphasizes the role of events in God's plan of salvation. **He cautions against a purely anthropocentric exemplaristic approach that overlooks God's central role in redemptive history.** He suggests a multi-dimensional approach, incorporating both exemplaristic insights within the broader context of God's redemptive work, underscoring the importance of history as the foundation for Christian doctrine and faith.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created based on Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 12 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).



Vannoy_ExtoExileK_
Session 12.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 12, Methods of Preaching Historical Narratives

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Robert Vannoy's lecture on preaching historical narratives:

Briefing Document: Preaching Historical Narratives

Source: Excerpts from "Vannoy_Kings_Lecture12.pdf" (Dr. Robert Vannoy, Kings, Lecture 12, © 2012)

Main Theme: This lecture focuses on effective methods for preaching from historical narratives in the Bible, arguing against purely allegorical or exemplaristic approaches and advocating for a redemptive-historical perspective. It emphasizes the importance of understanding how historical narratives contribute to the overarching narrative of God's redemptive plan.

Key Ideas and Arguments:

1. **Beyond Retelling the Story:** Dr. Vannoy asserts that sermons based on historical narratives should do more than simply retell the story. The goal is to convey God's message embedded in the text, avoiding the imposition of personal ideas or theories. "I think we would all agree that if we take a historical narrative text for a sermon, we really ought to do more than simply retell the story in the sermon."
2. **Challenges of Preaching Historical Texts:** Preaching historical texts is considered more difficult than preaching didactic texts because of the temporal and cultural distance between the biblical context and our own. The message requires contextualization and translation to be relevant to contemporary audiences.
3. **Critique of the Allegorical Method:** The allegorical method, common before the Reformation, is criticized for spiritualizing stories to the point where historical facts become unimportant. An example is given from Genesis 24, where Isaac is allegorically interpreted as Christ, Rebekah as the church, and Abraham's servant as the preacher. Vannoy deems this approach unacceptable because it reads *into* Scripture (eisegesis) rather than *out of* Scripture (exegesis). "Now, I think that kind of approach really has little to do with exegesis of Scripture, that is, reading out of Scripture what God has placed in it for us to understand and to benefit from. It really is what's called "eisogesis," reading into Scripture these things."

4. **Exemplaristic Preaching (Illustrative Preaching):** This method uses historical narratives to provide examples of how we should or should not live. Old Testament figures are presented as models of behavior to emulate or avoid. Genesis 24 is again used as an example, with Abraham's concern for Isaac's marriage partner being seen as an example for parents today. However, Vannoy raises concerns about the subjectivity and anthropocentric nature of this approach.
5. **Problems with Exemplaristic Preaching:** Vannoy identifies key issues with purely exemplaristic preaching:
 - **Subjectivity and Arbitrariness:** It's difficult to determine which aspects of a story should be taken as examples and whether those examples should be followed positively or negatively. "There is something subjective and arbitrary in it. What I mean by that is the question that the interpreter faces if you're going to use that method is: What's to be taken as an example for us and what is not?"
 - **Anthropocentric vs. Theocentric:** It tends to be man-centered rather than God-centered, focusing on dos and don'ts and easily becoming legalistic and moralistic. It can obscure God's work of revelation and redemption. "It's man-centered instead of theocentric. That type of preaching tends to be anthropocentric. Man is the center of focus and in the place of preaching Christ it becomes easy to preach dos and don'ts."
1. **Redemptive-Historical Preaching:** This method emphasizes the place of biblical events in the history of God's revelation and redemption. It focuses on God's actions in history and how He works out His purposes through individuals. Biblical history points forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. In Genesis 24, a redemptive-historical approach would focus on how God is fulfilling his promise to Abraham and Isaac. "Redemptive historical preaching is preaching in which the primary emphasis falls on the place that the events recorded in the Bible have in the history of God's revelation and redemption."
2. **Importance of Historical Faith:** Christian faith is rooted in history, in what God has done. History serves as a basis for faith rather than solely as a guide for conduct.
3. **Integrating Exemplaristic and Redemptive-Historical Approaches:** Vannoy argues that these two approaches are not necessarily contradictory. Examples can be drawn from biblical narratives, but they should be understood within their redemptive-historical context. The questions of why, how, and in what sense something is an example can only be answered by placing the narrative in its

redemptive-historical context. "I think we clearly do receive examples in the Bible, but the point is we shouldn't separate or isolate the examples we draw from a given historical narrative. We shouldn't isolate that from the redemptive historical context in which it is given to us."

4. **Historical Narratives as Real History:** The historical sections of the Bible tell us about things that actually happened. They should be handled as real history and not as parables. History is foundational to doctrine, providing the basis for it, not merely illustrating it.
5. **Critique of S.R. Driver's Commentary:** Vannoy critiques S.R. Driver's commentary on Genesis, where Driver downplays the historical value of the patriarchal narratives and focuses on their moral and spiritual lessons. Vannoy argues that this approach loses sight of the events' role in redemptive history. "There's S. R. Driver who really feels that the patriarchal narratives are of little historical value. He doesn't think the events described there really happened. But he says they're of value to us in the types of character; they're examples of moral failure."
6. **Prevalence of Exemplaristic Preaching:** Vannoy notes that most preaching on Old Testament narratives tends to be illustrative/exemplaristic, often neglecting the larger perspective of redemptive history. "I would say when you come to hearing preaching on narrative texts, particularly Old Testament narrative texts, probably 95 percent of the time it's going to be an illustrative/exemplaristic thing, and this larger perspective of movement of redemptive history is hardly even touched on."
7. **Illustrating Doctrine with Historical Texts:** A doctrinal text can be illustrated with a narrative text. However, when choosing a narrative text for a sermon, it must be taken in its integrity and specific place in the history of redemption, contributing to the progress and movement of that history.

In Conclusion:

Vannoy advocates for a redemptive-historical approach to preaching historical narratives, emphasizing the importance of understanding their place within God's overarching plan of redemption. While acknowledging the value of drawing examples from these narratives, he cautions against isolating those examples from their historical and theological context, arguing that a proper understanding of redemptive history provides the necessary framework for interpreting and applying these texts.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 12, Methods of Preaching Historical Narratives

Preaching Historical Narratives: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the primary concern when preaching from a historical narrative according to Vannoy?
2. Describe the allegorical method of interpreting historical narratives and explain why Vannoy finds it unacceptable.
3. Explain the core concept of exemplaristic preaching.
4. What are two objections Vannoy raises against exemplaristic preaching?
5. Define redemptive-historical preaching and how it differs from exemplaristic preaching.
6. Why is history foundational to doctrine?
7. Summarize S.R. Driver's view on the patriarchal narratives in Genesis.
8. How did Peter and Paul preach in the Book of Acts, and why is this significant?
9. According to Vannoy, can the exemplaristic and redemptive-historical approaches be used in combination? Explain.
10. What is often missing from the majority of sermons based on Old Testament narrative texts?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary concern when preaching from a historical narrative is to convey the message God has placed in the text, ensuring the text doesn't become a pretext for personal ideas but rather proclaims God's word. This involves bridging the historical and cultural gap between the biblical context and the modern audience.
2. The allegorical method spiritualizes historical narratives, diminishing the importance of the historical facts themselves. Vannoy finds it unacceptable because it involves "eisegesis" (reading into the text) rather than "exegesis"

(reading out of the text), obscuring the original message God intended to convey through the narrative.

3. Exemplaristic preaching uses biblical stories as examples of how people should or should not act. It seeks to derive practical lessons and moral guidance by highlighting the positive and negative behaviors of biblical figures as models for contemporary living.
4. Two objections Vannoy raises against exemplaristic preaching are its subjective and arbitrary nature and its tendency to be anthropocentric rather than theocentric. The subjectivity arises in deciding what aspects of a story serve as examples and whether they are positive or negative, while the anthropocentric nature shifts focus from God's actions to human behavior, potentially leading to legalistic sermonizing.
5. Redemptive-historical preaching emphasizes the place of events in the Bible within the history of God's revelation and redemption. Unlike exemplaristic preaching, which focuses on moral examples, redemptive-historical preaching highlights God's work in history and how events point to the coming of Jesus Christ.
6. History is foundational to doctrine because the doctrines of faith, such as justification and atonement, rest on historical events like the work of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection. Without the historical basis, the doctrines would lack substance and validity.
7. S.R. Driver believed that the patriarchal narratives in Genesis had little historical value. He focused on the moral and spiritual lessons that could be deduced from the characters, regardless of whether the events actually occurred.
8. Peter and Paul, as seen in the Book of Acts, frequently recited and retold the history of the Old Testament period in their sermons. This is significant because it demonstrates redemptive-historical preaching, highlighting God's work in calling Abraham, raising up David, and fulfilling the promise of the Messiah.
9. Vannoy believes the exemplaristic and redemptive-historical approaches can be used in combination. He argues that while the Bible contains examples, these examples should not be isolated from the redemptive-historical context in which they are given, providing a more complete and theocentric understanding.
10. According to Vannoy, the larger perspective of the movement of redemptive history is often missing from sermons based on Old Testament narrative texts.

This results in an over-reliance on illustrative/exemplaristic approaches, which may neglect the deeper significance of the narratives within God's overall plan of redemption.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both the allegorical and exemplaristic methods of preaching historical narratives.
2. Explain how a redemptive-historical approach to preaching might transform the interpretation and application of a specific Old Testament narrative (choose a specific example, such as the story of David and Goliath, Ruth, or Jonah).
3. Vannoy argues that biblical history is more important as a basis for faith than as a guide for conduct. Argue for or against this claim, supporting your position with examples from Scripture.
4. Compare and contrast the preaching styles of Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts with a contemporary preaching style that emphasizes moral lessons from historical narratives. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of each approach?
5. Explore the challenges in applying a redemptive-historical approach to preaching, especially with narratives that seem difficult to connect to the broader themes of revelation and redemption.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Allegorical Method:** A method of interpreting Scripture that seeks to find a hidden or symbolic meaning beyond the literal interpretation.
- **Anthropocentric:** Focused on humanity; human-centered, rather than God-centered.
- **Didactic Text:** A passage of scripture primarily intended to teach or instruct.
- **Eisegesis:** Reading *into* a text one's own presuppositions and ideas, rather than allowing the text to speak for itself.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a text.
- **Exemplaristic Preaching:** A preaching approach that emphasizes the moral examples found in biblical narratives, using them as models for contemporary behavior.
- **Redemptive-Historical Preaching:** A preaching approach that emphasizes the place of events in the Bible within the history of God's revelation and redemption, highlighting God's work in history and its culmination in Christ.
- **Theocentric:** Focused on God; God-centered.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 12, Methods of Preaching Historical Narratives, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About Preaching Historical Narratives

1. Why is preaching from historical narratives more challenging than preaching from other types of texts?

Historical narratives present a unique challenge because they involve people, situations, and cultural contexts that are far removed from our own. Bridging this historical gap and making the ancient text relevant to contemporary audiences requires careful consideration. It's not enough to simply retell the story; we must translate its message into a context that resonates with our current lives.

2. What is the allegorical method of interpreting historical narratives, and why is it considered problematic?

The allegorical method interprets the details of a historical narrative as symbols representing deeper spiritual truths. For instance, in Genesis 24, Isaac might be seen as Christ, Rebekah as the church, and Abraham's servant as the preacher. The problem with this approach is that it often disregards the historical facts of the story, prioritizing symbolic meanings over the text's original message. It can easily lead to "eisegesis," or reading into Scripture personal interpretations rather than extracting meaning from the text itself, diminishing the importance of the narrative as a real event.

3. What is exemplaristic preaching, and what are its potential drawbacks?

Exemplaristic preaching uses historical narratives to provide examples of how we should or should not behave. It focuses on the actions of biblical figures, presenting them as models to emulate or avoid. A drawback of this approach is its subjectivity; deciding which aspects of a character's actions to take as an example can be arbitrary. It can also become anthropocentric (man-centered), focusing on dos and don'ts rather than theocentric (God-centered), potentially leading to legalistic or moralistic sermonizing. God's role in redemptive history may be overlooked.

4. What is redemptive-historical preaching, and what does it emphasize?

Redemptive-historical preaching emphasizes the place of biblical events within the broader history of God's revelation and redemption. It focuses on how God works through individuals and events to fulfill his purposes, culminating in Jesus Christ. It sees biblical history as a history of redemption, with God's acts being visible in the history of humanity. The goal is to learn about God's promises and actions in history, recognizing that this history is the basis for our faith.

5. How does a redemptive-historical approach differ from an exemplaristic approach when interpreting a passage like Genesis 24?

While an exemplaristic approach might focus on lessons about finding a spouse (e.g., praying for guidance), a redemptive-historical approach to Genesis 24 would emphasize God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promise to Abraham and Isaac that they would be ancestors of a great people through whom all nations would be blessed. God is seen as the one bringing about the marriage, using the faith and obedience of those involved to accomplish his purpose. The focus shifts from the individual actions of Abraham, the servant, or Rebekah to God's overarching plan.

6. Is it possible to combine exemplaristic and redemptive-historical approaches to preaching historical narratives?

The source suggests that exemplaristic and redemptive-historical approaches are not mutually exclusive. While we can draw examples from biblical narratives, it's crucial to consider them within their redemptive-historical context. Isolating examples risks detaching the narrative from its place and function in the overall movement of redemptive history, which has its focal point in Christ. Understanding why, how, and in what sense a narrative is an example requires placing it in its redemptive-historical context.

7. What is the relationship between the historical and doctrinal sections of Scripture, and why is this important for preaching historical narratives?

History is foundational to doctrine. Doctrines like justification and atonement are rooted in the historical events of Christ's death and resurrection. If historical sections are treated as merely illustrative, their actual occurrence becomes less important. But genuine biblical faith is rooted in history. Preaching should demonstrate how God was at work in a revelatory and redemptive way in the events of the Bible.

8. Why is it important to preach historical narratives with a redemptive-historical perspective?

Preaching with a redemptive-historical perspective ensures that the narrative's significance within the larger scope of God's redemptive plan is not overlooked. While illustrative or exemplaristic significance may be present, it's crucial to recognize how the narrative contributes to the progress and movement of redemptive history. Neglecting this dimension diminishes the reason for the narrative's inclusion in Scripture and fails to connect it to the central message of God's work in Christ.