

He Gave Us Prophets

Student Syllabus

ACADEMIC
PACKET

RESOURCES FOR GROUPS
USING THE ACADEMIC PACKETS



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ABOUT THIRD MILLENNIUM MINISTRIES

Founded in 1997, Third Millennium Ministries is a non-profit Evangelical Christian ministry dedicated to providing:

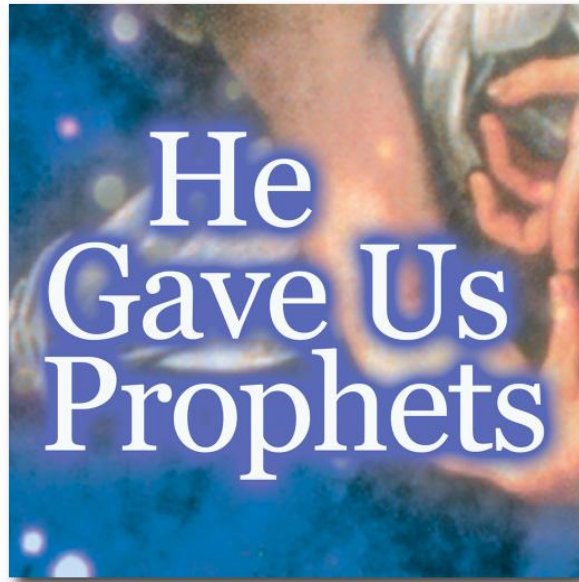
Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.

Our goal is to offer free Christian education to hundreds of thousands of pastors and Christian leaders around the world who lack sufficient training for ministry. We are meeting this goal by producing and globally distributing an unparalleled multimedia seminary curriculum in English, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish. Our curriculum is also being translated into more than a dozen other languages through our partner ministries. The curriculum consists of graphic-driven videos, printed instruction, and internet resources. It is designed to be used by schools, groups, and individuals, both online and in learning communities.

Over the years, we have developed a highly cost-effective method of producing award-winning multimedia lessons of the finest content and quality. Our writers and editors are theologically-trained educators, our translators are theologically-astute native speakers of their target languages, and our lessons contain the insights of hundreds of respected seminary professors and pastors from around the world. In addition, our graphic designers, illustrators, and producers adhere to the highest production standards using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques.

In order to accomplish our distribution goals, Third Millennium has forged strategic partnerships with churches, seminaries, Bible schools, missionaries, Christian broadcasters and satellite television providers, and other organizations. These relationships have already resulted in the distribution of countless video lessons to indigenous leaders, pastors, and seminary students. Our websites also serve as avenues of distribution and provide additional materials to supplement our lessons, including materials on how to start your own learning community.

Third Millennium Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) corporation. We depend on the generous, tax-deductible contributions of churches, foundations, businesses, and individuals. For more information about our ministry, and to learn how you can get involved, please visit www.thirdmill.org.



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Christians are intrigued by biblical predictions but at a loss when it comes to understanding them. Feeling overwhelmed by their complicated history and literature, we often disregard them altogether, but when we understand the prophets' motivations and methods, we are better equipped to discover the significance of their words for today. To that end, this course dispels common misunderstandings about the prophets, provides guidelines for interpreting prophecy, and gives the student confidence to begin studying prophetic literature. This course is based on the lecture series, *He Gave Us Prophets*, produced by Third Millennium Ministries and presented by Dr. Richard L. Pratt, Jr.

DR. RICHARD L. PRATT, JR.

Dr. Pratt is the president and founder of Third Millennium Ministries. He received his M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary and his Th.D. in Old Testament Studies from Harvard University. He formerly chaired the Old Testament department at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. Then he transitioned in 2006 from his teaching role at RTS to work full time with Third Millennium Ministries. Among his published books are: *Every Thought Captive*, *Pray With Your Eyes Open*, *He Gave Us Stories*, and *Designed For Dignity*.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS

In this course, we would like to accomplish the following:

1. The student will gain greater interest and greater confidence in the study and interpretation of the prophetic books of the Old Testament.
2. The student will understand the key elements of the historical background and purpose of the Old Testament prophets, and develop skills in the proper interpretation of prophetic literature of the Old Testament.
3. The student will apply the teachings of the course to make changes in his own life.

OBJECTIVES

When you have done the following, it will show that the goals are met:

1. Obtain satisfactory grades on the tests, identifying the common causes of confusion in the study of prophecy, the proper guidelines for interpreting prophetic literature, and key information about the historical background and purpose of the Old Testament prophets.
2. The student will answer the application questions in the study guides, expressing his attitudes about the prophetic books and showing how he is applying the teachings of the course to his own life.

THE FACILITATOR

This course is designed to be studied in a group with a facilitator, supervisor, or mentor. If you do not have a facilitator, you may wish to speak with your pastor or some spiritual leader in your church. The facilitator should read the "General Guidelines for Facilitators."

OTHER MATERIALS

Besides this syllabus, there are other resources you will need for this course. They should be available in the same place, or same folder, where you found this file. If not, talk to your facilitator.

CREDIT

Third Millennium does not offer credit for their courses. However, the materials are offered freely to any institution that would like to use them. If the student would like to seek credit for the course, he needs to find an institution that will supervise his studies and give him credit. He should consult with them to see about their requirements and expectations.

THEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

- Lesson 1. Essential Hermeneutical Perspectives
- Lesson 2. A Prophet's Job
- Lesson 3. People of the Covenant
- Lesson 4. Dynamics of the Covenant
- Lesson 5. Historical Analysis of Prophecy
- Lesson 6. Literary Analysis of the Prophets

Lesson 7. The Purpose of Predictions
Lesson 8. Unfolding Eschatology

GENERAL EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Notice that the video lessons of this course are slightly different from other Third Millennium video series in the way they are divided. Instead of having video lessons that have several sections, it has eight shorter lessons, without section divisions. This means that instead of watching several sections of one lesson for each test, the student will watch two lessons for each test.

The guidelines for assignments below are meant to be suggestions. Each group or academic institution may customize the course according to the needs of their students. For example, some may prefer to require the additional reading, while others may not. The same applies to the optional written project. Furthermore, some may prefer to meet once a week, while others prefer to meet more often or less often. Some groups may prefer to restructure the assignments to fit a regular pattern of classes, possibly a period of eight weeks, for example.

Don't worry about the details now, since they will be given to you as you go through the assignments of each session, but in order for you to know what to plan for, the suggested assignments can be summarized as follows:

The Lectures

1. Watch the video lectures (or listen to the audio, or read the text version).
2. Complete the study guides for each lesson. This includes writing notes on the lesson while using the outline provided, answering the review questions, and answering the application questions.
3. Take the tests on each pair of lessons. These will be administered in the classes. (For credit, they must be graded by the authorities of the academic institution where the student is seeking credit.)

Optional Additional Reading

Read the additional reading. This may be done in two different ways, according to the agreement you have with the facilitator or academic institution. Option 1: Read the selected additional reading provided for this course, and take the test on it. Option 2: Read at least 300 pages of additional reading that you select from the list of "Recommended Extra Reading." In this case, you should turn in a written report on each book or article, using the "Form for reading reports." (For credit, these reports must be turned in for evaluation.)

Optional Written Project

Write an 8-10 page project, following the instructions found below. (For credit, this must be turned in for evaluation.)

GRADES

We recommend calculating the final grade as follows, depending on the option selected:

a) Without the additional reading or written project:

Each test is 25%.

b) Including the additional reading, but without the written project:

Each test is 20% (total: 80%).
The additional reading is 20%.

c) Including the written project, but without the additional reading:

Each test is 20% (total: 80%).
The written project is 20%.

d) Including both the additional reading and the written project:

Each test is 15% (total: 60%).
The additional reading is 20%.
The written project is 20%.

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS FOR EACH SESSION

These plans are only suggestions. Your facilitator may decide to modify them, as he talks things over with the group.

INITIAL PLANNING MEETING

The first meeting is a brief orientation for the course. There is no homework before the first meeting. The student will receive the materials he needs and talk over plans for the course.

NOTE: If the group is studying a series of courses, we recommend that you take advantage of the last session of each course to make arrangements for the following course, thus avoiding unnecessary extra meetings.

LESSONS 1 and 2

VIDEO LESSON 1

1. Watch the first lesson (or listen to the audio or read the text version) in the video series from *Third Millennium*, "He Gave Us Prophets" by Dr. Richard L. Pratt, Jr. The first lesson of this series is called "Essential Hermeneutical Perspectives." (The video time is from the beginning to 35 minutes and 40 seconds, 00-35:40.)

Remember: You may also download the audio files for listening to the lecture, or you may also read the text version.

2. Use Study Guide 1 to help learn the contents of the first lesson. Use the outline to take notes, answer the review questions, and answer the application questions.

VIDEO LESSON 2

1. Repeat this procedure for video Lesson 2, "A Prophet's Job" (Video: 00-31:55), using Study Guide 2.

2. Review both lessons, in preparation for the test.

NOTE: If you are going to do the additional reading, we recommend that you begin to do part of it now, to avoid reading a lot at the end of the course. See the assignments below.

LESSONS 3 and 4

VIDEO LESSON 3

1. Watch the third video lesson of the series, called "People of the Covenant" (00-41:50).
2. Use Study Guide 3 to help learn the contents of the lesson. Use the outline to take notes, answer the review questions, and answer the application questions.

VIDEO LESSON 4

1. Repeat this procedure for video Lesson 4, "Dynamics of the Covenant" (00-40:44), using Study Guide 4.
2. Review both lessons, in preparation for the test.

LESSONS 5 and 6

VIDEO LESSON 5

1. Study the fifth lesson of the video series, called "Historical Analysis of Prophecy" (00-43:38).
 2. Use Study Guide 5 to help learn the contents of the lesson.
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VIDEO LESSON 6

1. Repeat this procedure for video Lesson 6, "Literary Analysis of the Prophets" (00-1:07:50), using Study Guide 6.
2. Review both lessons, in preparation for the test.

LESSONS 7 and 8

VIDEO LESSON 7

1. Study the seventh lesson of the video series, called "The Purpose of Predictions" (00-46:35).
 2. Use Study Guide 7 to help learn the contents of the lesson.
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VIDEO LESSON 8

1. Repeat this procedure for video Lesson 8, "Unfolding Eschatology" (00-45:09), using Study Guide 8.
2. Review both lessons, in preparation for the test.

ADDITIONAL READING

Option 1:

1. Read *Old Testament Prophecy*, by Frank Knight Sanders, using the study guide to help find the most important points.
2. Take the test in the next class on this reading.

Note: Some groups may prefer to require only portions of the reading.

Option 2:

1. Read at least 300 pages of additional reading, selecting from the list of "Recommended Extra Reading."
2. Fill out a separate written report on each book or article, using the "Form for Reading Reports."
3. Prepare to share what you are learning from your reading and *turn in your written reports*.

OPTIONAL WRITTEN PROJECT

Some groups may require a written project. If so, we recommend a project of 8-10 pages, using the following guidelines:

1. Choose a short passage (from two to eight verses) from one of the prophetic books studied in this course (Isaiah to Malachi, except Lamentations), in order to write an analysis (exegesis) of the passage. Find a passage that you have a hard time understanding, or that raises questions. This way you will learn more from your study.
2. Read the passage in several different translations, and write down key questions that you have regarding the proper interpretation of the passage. For example: What words do you not understand? What phrases seem perplexing? Is there something that seems to contradict some other passage of the Bible? Is there something that seems to go against your understanding of theology?
3. Investigate the historical background and context of the passage. For this, you may need to find Introductions or commentaries. See the list of "Recommended Extra Reading." If you have electronic software, such as Logos, Bibleworks, E-Sword, or Bible Gateway, you can use it for this research.
4. Research key words in the passage. Look them up in a dictionary. Look them up in a concordance to see how the rest of the Bible uses them. Focus especially on writings of the same author. If you know Hebrew, look up the words in a dictionary of biblical Hebrew. Use electronic software for this also.
5. Review the immediate context of the passage to see if anything helps understand your verses.
6. Consider the overall historical context of your passage. How does this fit into the history of the Old Testament? How does it fit into the general plan of redemption?
7. Look up cross references to see parallel passages or passages that deal with similar subjects.
8. Read commentaries to evaluate the opinions of these authors. See the list of recommended extra reading for suggestions.
9. Make sure you keep good notes on your research. If you are quoting from some source, or even taking ideas without quoting exactly, you must write down the author, name of book, place of publishing, publishing company, year of publishing, and the page or pages where you got your ideas or your quotes.
10. Write a rough draft of the project.
 - a. Be very careful to follow the "Guidelines for Writing an Essay."
 - b. Make an outline and begin writing. Make sure you include an introduction that stirs interest in the study.
 - c. Explain the questions that you are especially researching. In the main body, you should include possible answers to your questions that others offer, then give your own conclusions. Back up your opinions with biblical evidence and linguistic resources.
 - d. Try to discover the message of the passage for the believers who would read it at the time it was written, and try to apply the same message to people today. What practical importance does it have?
 - e. Take into account how the passage relates to Christ and the plan of salvation.
 - f. Include a conclusion, summarizing your answers.

11. Make sure to add footnotes where you have used ideas from another source, and a bibliography at the end.

12. Edit the final version of your project. Read and re-read it until it flows clearly and is easy to understand. Correct any spelling errors or grammatical errors. Make sure you have documented the sources properly with footnotes and a bibliography. Make sure you have an introduction and a conclusion. Again, make sure you follow the "Guidelines for Writing and Essay."

13. Be prepared to turn in your project, and be prepared to share what you have been learning about the passage.