

# OpenTheo

## The Bible and Politics Davenant Hall Course

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You can register for this course here: <https://davenanthall.com/product/bible-and-politics/>.

The words and teachings of the Bible are frequently deployed and appealed to in our political discourses. Yet such engagement with the Bible is typically superficial and merely rhetorical; while the Bible affords shallow prooftexts and resonant turns of phrase, it is seldom serving as a deep and guiding source of wisdom in our political thinking. In recent decades, after a long period of neglect, the importance of the Bible's influence in historic political reflection has received growing attention. In addition to considering such retrievals of the Bible's significance as a political text for historic thinkers, this course will seek to discover more of the Bible's enduring insight and generative potential for political reflection. We will investigate some of the variegated ways that the Bible encourages, serves, and directs our political reflection and consider how we can engage with its voice most responsibly and profitably.

### Transcript

I'm here today to tell you about my next Davenant Hall course. It's on the subject of the Bible and politics. Now, I've been hoping to teach a course on this subject for quite some time now.

I've been thinking and writing and reflecting on these issues over many years. Reflecting, for instance, upon the ways in which different parts and voices of Scripture can bring wisdom to bear upon political questions and issues that are still vexed for us today, both practical and theoretical. My experience has been, and perhaps yours too, that the Bible is very often appealed to and referred to in the context of our political discourses, yet often in a way that muffles its voice.

It's not able to speak with the full breadth of wisdom and insight that it has. We're often, perhaps, approaching it without the ears to hear. We're not able to hear the voice of political wisdom in the form of apocalyptic, or in the form of prophetic literature, or in the

form of biblical narrative, or wisdom, or psalm.

My hope is that this course will provide students with the means to read the Bible attentively and responsibly. To be able to bring its wisdom into fruitful conversation with political voices of our own day. And to speak into political questions, practical and theoretical, with a Scriptural knowledge and insight that can really be transformative.

In teaching this course, I'm also hoping that students will discover that the Bible is a political text in and of itself. It does not need to be made political. So much of the Bible is addressing political realities, the life of the nation of Israel, in the experience of national crisis and even disaster.

It's speaking to the lives of kings and the ways in which the experience of power and authority plays out in their spiritual lives. It's speaking to what it means to be faithful in a situation of political persecution and oppression. It speaks to issues of the nature of the kingdom of God and the ways in which the Lord will bring judgment to bear upon the kings and the rulers of the earth.

My hope also is we'll be able to go through the entirety of the biblical text, exploring it sequentially and seeing the ways that these voices, though different, hang together as a single testimony. Within this course, I'm also wanting to go through the work of Oliver O'Donovan. His book, *The Desire of the Nations*, is one that I found very helpful in my own political thinking about Scripture.

And I'm hoping that as we bring a text like this into conversation with the various voices of Scripture, we will find great insight in both and learn to bring this sort of conversation about within our situations. If you would like to join me, the course will be held from January onwards. It will be a course consisting of 20 hours of lectures and seminar and it will also probably involve office hours in which the discussion is held further.

The course is very reasonably priced. I'll leave the registration details below in the show notes. Thank you very much for listening and I hope to see some of you in January.

God bless.