

Preaching the Bible Evangelistically

Biblical preaching is not simply a matter of building up the church by instructing believers. It is a ministry of proclaiming what God has done in Christ. The Gospel should be at the centre of all true preaching. Yet the idea of preaching evangelistically can be daunting. How should we approach preaching the Bible to mixed audiences? How should we seek to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a culture that rejects any notion of Scriptural authority? In this session we will be given instruction and example which we will process in our learning community.

Stefan Gustavsson is a member of the European Leadership Forum Steering Committee. He is the director for Apologia – Centre for Christian Apologetics and makes his home in Stockholm. He was the founding General Secretary for the Swedish Evangelical Alliance. Stefan travels widely with apologetic teaching and training and is often involved in university evangelism and public debates. He is the author of several books on Christian apologetics and the Christian mind. Stefan is married to Ingrid and they have three grown children.

I. Introduction: Basic Convictions

There is connection and coherence between general and special revelation, between our common reality and the content of the Bible.

The Bible, though ancient in its origin and literary forms, speaks truth and is relevant for human life in the 21st century – existentially but also intellectually.

The renowned Egyptologist Henri Frankfort, reflecting back upon hundreds of pages of his colleagues' summaries of intellectualism in Egypt, Israel, and Mesopotamia, said: "[Israel was] without peer in the power and scope of their critical intellectualism."¹

N.T. Wright suggests "that the apostle is not just one of the most prominent biblical authors, but that he is one of the greatest thinkers of all time. Period."²

And at the Centre of all of Scripture is the divine Word, *logos*, who *gives light to everyone*, John 1:1, 9

II. Context

Church-setting or University-setting? Emphasis on working through the text or emphasis working through the content of the text?

¹ Henri Frankfort, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 234.

² <https://relevantmagazine.com/issues/issue-92/rethinking-paul/> See also N T Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (HarperOne 2018)

III. Exodus 3:1-15: An Example

A. Introduction: “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”

1. Why Bother About Ontology?
2. Ontology in Ancient Greece and Today

B. Moses and the Alternative Ontology: I AM – JHWH

1. Emphasis on Identity: Moses’s identity, v 11, and God’s Identity, v 13-15

C. God’s Description of Himself: Four Characteristics

1. A Personal God
2. A God Involved in History
3. A God of Liberation
4. A Holy God

A radically different, and mind-blowingly richer, ontology!

IV. Conclusion:

Why Wasn’t the Bush Destroyed by the Fire? Why Wasn’t Moses Destroyed Before God?

Who Was Talking to Moses in the Burning Bush: God (v 4)? The Angel of the Lord (v 2)?

“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” Jesus in John 8:58