

# WHAT DOES THEOLOGY DO, ACTUALLY?

PART II

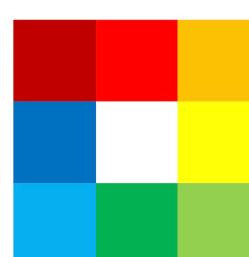
EXEGETING EXEGESIS

09.-10. JULY 2021

Central to the purposes of the What Does Theology Do, Actually? series is to observe, document, and describe the functions of theological knowledge production and communication as experienced, cultivated, and institutionalized around the world today. WDTD seeks not to do theology but to observe what theology does. The forms of theological communication vary widely by cultural and academic-institutional context. By comparing approaches to the same theological disciplines across these diverse contexts, WDTD aims to contribute to a contemporary theory of transcultural trends in contemporary theology.

The field of "Exegesis" has long been characterized by a broad disciplinary diversity, but also ambiguity, combining biblical studies, historical-critical exegesis, early Jewish studies, early Christian studies, Ancient Near Eastern studies, Greco-Roman and classical studies in various ways. This is to say nothing of the more recent development of contextual and engaged exegesis as reflected in feminist, liberation, postcolonial and queer Biblical exegesis. How and why scholars study the Bible varies, not only across confessional or cultural contexts, but across institutional-academic contexts. WDTD2 will not seek to resolve this ambiguity but will approach it diagonally: Experts in research on the Bible at early and advanced career stages, and from diverse socio-cultural and institutional contexts will discuss fundamental questions about the interrelations of context, institutions, and knowledge production in the fields of Exegesis.

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# SPEAKERS

Ratheesh Appuchamy (IN)  
Anja Block (DE)  
Prof. Dr. Sotirios Despotis (GR)  
Dr. Moritz Gräper (DE)  
Mirjam Jekel (DE)  
Prof. Dr. David Joy (IN)  
Prof. Dr. Amy-Jill Levine (US)  
Prof. Dr. Jonathan Lo (HK)  
Søren Lorenzen (DK)

Dr. Dogara Manomi (NG)  
Prof. Dr. Hindy Najman (GB)  
Prof. Dr. Ivana Noble (CZ)  
Sharon Padilla (MX)  
Dr. Andrea Pichlmeier (DE)  
Prof. Dr. Jeremy Punt (ZA)  
Tahina Rahandrifenosoa (MG)  
Prof. Dr. Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger (AT)  
Dr. Michael Wandusim (GH)

**KEYNOTE:** PROF. DR. ATHALYA BRENNER (NL/IL)

The symposium will be held as a **digital event** and hosted by the  
**University of Bonn.**

**Friday, July 9th, 09:00 - 17:40**

**Saturday, July 10th, 09:00 - 17:00**

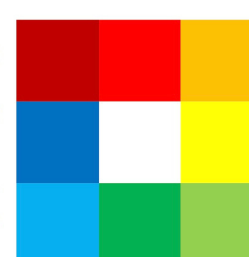
With questions or for more information, contact  
Dr. Matthew Ryan Robinson, Dr. Drew Davis and Dr. Daniel Lanzinger at:  
**[wtdt@uni-bonn.de](mailto:wtdt@uni-bonn.de)**

*Registration is free but required.*

To register, scan QR Code or visit our homepage at  
**<http://whatdoestheologydo.uni-bonn.de/>**



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# TIMELINE

## Friday, 09.07.

- 09:00-09:30** Welcome and Introduction.
- 09:30-10:30** **Panel 1.** Bible between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society: Reports from the Centers of Christianity Globally.
- 10:30-11:00** Coffee Break
- 11:00-12:00** **Keynote.** Comparing and Combining Methods of Exegesis.
- 12:00-13:00** Lunch Break
- 13:00-14:00** **Panel 2a.** Bible between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society: A Question of Method.
- 14:05-15:05** **Panel 2b.** Bible between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society: A Question of Method.
- 15:05-15:35** Coffee Break
- 15:35-16:35** **Panel 3a.** Academy: Parsing the Study of Bible by Institutional Context.
- 16:40-17:40** **Panel 3b.** Academy: Parsing the Study of Bible by Institutional Context.

## Saturday, 10.07.

- 09:00-10:00** **Panel 4a.** Possible Futures: What will Bible Do between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society?
- 10:05-11:05** **Panel 4b.** Possible Futures: What will Bible Do between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society?
- 11:05-11:30** Coffee Break
- 11:30-12:30** **Panel 5a.** Religious Communities: On the Confessional Construction of the Bible(s).
- 12:35-13:35** **Panel 5b.** Religious Communities: On the Confessional Construction of the Bible(s).
- 13:35-14:30** Lunch Break
- 14:30-15:30** **Panel 6a.** Society: Scientific Transfer and Exegetical Knowledge for Whom and for What?
- 15:35-16:35** **Panel 6b.** Society: Scientific Transfer and Exegetical Knowledge for Whom and for What
- 16:35-17:00** Closing Thoughts

# PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

## **Panel 1. Bible between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society: Reports from the Centers of Christianity Globally**

An ecumenical panel of early career scholars from four different regional-cultural centers of Christianity will open the symposium with short provocations addressing the questions: Why do we study the Bible academically? How does this help us? What challenges, tensions, or problems does academic study of the Bible create ecclesiologically, socially, or academically in our situation?

Speakers: Ratheesh Appuchamy, Anja Block, Tahina Rahandrifenosoa

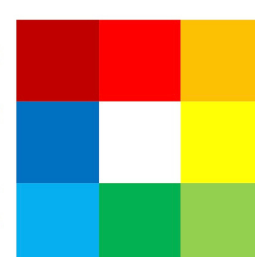
## **KEYNOTE: Comparing and Combining Methods of Exegesis** Athalya Brenner

## **Panel 2. Bible between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society: A Question of Method**

It is a truism to say that there is a wide range of methods in exegesis: The “classical” canon of historical-critical methods is nowadays flanked by many engaged approaches such as feminist, post-colonial, queer or ecological hermeneutics. The overall impression, however, is that these approaches rather coexist than really cooperate. This panel aims at a meta-reflection on this phenomenon, including consideration of the reasons for this situation and what can we do about it. Questions to be addressed include: To what extent are methods culturally bound and/or products of specific socio-historical developments? What is the status of contextual and post-colonial interpretations within the field of exegesis, and what exactly can we learn from them? How can we make use of new trends in neighboring disciplines, such as Digital Humanities? In what ways are or could method be combined?

Speakers: Jeremy Punt, Dogara Manomi, Hindy Najman

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### **Panel 3. Academy: Parsing the Study of Bible by Institutional Context**

Scholarly exegesis of the Bible takes place in a variety of systemic and institutional contexts, each of which operate on the basis of presuppositions that can fundamentally impact the way the Bible is handled. This panel seeks to make these implicit, often impervious backgrounds explicit in order to understand the conditions in which exegesis is undertaken in various academic systems around the world. More concretely the panel brings together presenters from various global perspectives who can speak about their own contexts by reflecting on questions such as: In what sorts of institutions is exegesis practiced and taught? How do these institutions relate to other academic institutions or disciplines? And finally, in what concrete ways have exegetical debates or exegetical questions been influenced by this contextualization?

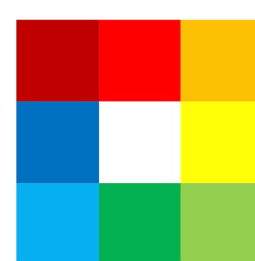
Speakers: David Joy, Amy-Jill Levine

### **Panel 4. Possible Futures: What will Bible Do between Academy, Religious Communities, and Society?**

The final panel of the symposium will feature a series of future-oriented papers written by outstanding current doctoral students, younger scholars with their fingers on the pulse of the beating heart of exegesis of the Bible, scholars with diagnostic insight into the vitality of academic research on, with, and in Bible. The panel is devoted to two basic questions: Why do scholars continue to conduct research on the Bible today, and why will scholars read the Bible in the future? Within this framing, more specific questions will include: Are scholars who conduct research on the Bible interested in the Bible in and of itself, or are they interested in the Bible because of how the Bible refers to or reflects on other issues? This panel strongly encourages bold, vector-charting proposals that are constructively (self-)critical of past approaches, insightful of present cultural and institutional conditionalities of Biblical research, and that approach possible futures of exegesis in creative, norm-bending ways.

Speakers: Sharon Padilla, Mirjam Jekel, Michael Wandusim, Søren Lorenzen

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## **Panel 5. Religious Communities: On the Confessional Construction of the Bible(s)**

Exegesis deals with the Bible. But what exactly is a Bible how does our concept of “Bible” impact our way of reading and interpreting it? It seems obvious that this question depends on the denominational background, beginning with the fact that there is no consensus on the exact extent of the OT canon between Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians. This may lead to the question of how “Jewish”, “Catholic”, “Protestant”, “Orthodox” or “Pentecostal” exegesis might be described. On the other hand, it might be worth asking to what extent these respective approaches to “Bible” also depend on cultural backgrounds: If we ask how, when, by whom, and with what intentions the Bible is read, the answers might differ significantly from country to country.

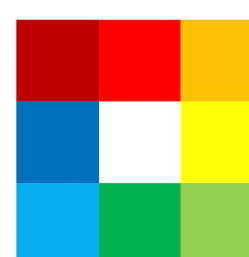
Speakers: Sotirios Despotis , Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, Ivana Noble

## **Panel 6. Society: Scientific Transfer and Exegetical Knowledge for Whom and for What?**

The communication of academic results to the public faces a number of challenges, especially when it comes to religious themes. Biblical exegesis in particular may encounter various receptions in church and society, whether it is given pride of place in doing theology (à la classical Protestant understanding of the sola scriptura principle), whether its historical claims are received as harmful to faith, whether its relevance is completely doubted, or whether the Bible and its interpretation is put to political use. In this panel we want to ask how academic exegesis is situated vis-a-vis religious community and society in different scientific and cultural settings and how it communicates to these different publics. This topic can be approached from a variety of angles, whether in terms of inner-theological discourses themselves; in terms of teaching methods; or in terms of communication of exegetical knowledge to society at large.

Speakers: Moritz Gräper, Jonathan Lo, Andrea Pichlmeier

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