

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BOTI 530 OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

AN AGTS VIDEO COURSE

Taught by: Roger D. Cotton, Th.D.

Distance Learning Course

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the content and background of the Old Testament, including the critical issues in the discipline of Old Testament Introduction, to enable the student to pursue further study of the Old Testament at a graduate level.

OBJECTIVES

Upon the successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Construct a brief historical framework of the ancient Near East including succession of empires in relation to the Old Testament.
2. Outline the history of Israel including its prehistory in Genesis 1-11.
3. Define the cultural background concepts and practices that are significant for understanding major Old Testament teachings.
4. Explain the major historical, critical, and interpretative issues involved with the books of the Old Testament.
5. Summarize the message of each book of the Old Testament, in relation to Israel's context.
6. Distinguish the main features and principles of each genre of the Old Testament literature that must be understood for valid interpretation of the author's intended meaning.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Cotton, Roger D., ed. *BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction Handouts*. Springfield, MO.: By the Editor and AGTS, Fall 2005. (**Available on Resource CD**)

Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*. Fully Revised and Expanded 3rd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006.

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Williams, William C. ed. *They Spoke From God: A Survey of the Old Testament*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press/Gospel Publishing House, 2003.

Choose and read one of the following:

Walton, John H. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

Hoerth, Alfred J., Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, eds. *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 1994.

King, Philip J. and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville:Westminster John Knox, 2001.

BASIC OUTLINE

1. Authority, inspiration, reliability, canon, and the text of the Old Testament.
2. Overview of exegetical approaches to the text.
3. Geography and historical framework of the ancient Near East.
4. The Pentateuch and literary, cultural parallels.
5. The Writings and ANE religion.
6. The Former Prophets (O.T. History).
7. The Latter Prophets.

METHODOLOGY

Video lectures, online discussion forums, reading, exams, and analytical writing assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The student is expected to view all class sessions. A question will be asked on the final exam as to how much of the video sessions were viewed.
2. Readings:
 - a. the textbooks are to be read by the end of the course.
 - b. the book of charts and the set of handouts are to be read as needed for the lesson assignments and toward the final exam.
3. The student will participate in **online forum discussion** questions listed below during the term in response to lecture material and issues raised in the course. The discussion will focus on an aspect of the session presentations that allows the student to further their understanding by interaction with their colleagues. Your response should completely address the question posed, using good grammar, spelling, punctuation, and organization. Each response should be **at least 200 words in length**.
 Also, respond to at least 1 (one) of the other student responses online. Your responses should be an evaluation of the respondents' thoroughness, line of argument, reasoning, biblical support, and insights. These responses should be **at least 100 words in length**. It should *not* focus on spelling, grammar, or descend to an argument about opinions.
 - a. You will be provided access to the discussion forum by the Continuing Education Office when you are officially registered for the course.
 - b. To receive credit for this assignment, contact your AGTS professor of record (see ISP release form) when you have completed this assignment.

- 1) [any time after lesson 2] How do you relate to the professor's view of the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament?
- 2) [after lesson (11)] How would you explain the relationship of the Genesis creation account to scientists' views of origins.
- 3) [after lesson 21] Explain your view of God-commanded killing in the Old Testament.

4. ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR

Lesson	Textbook Chapters	Assignment numbers are from assignment list below and are to be turned in and readings completed on the day of that lesson
SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS BEFORE WATCHING THE CORRESPONDING LESSONS		
1	No assignments due	
2		First online responses
3	Chapters 1, 2	Assignments: 1) ABC (read Gen 6-9, summarize)
		2) (read article)
		3) AB (Gen 6:1-4 diagram)
4	No assignments due	
5		4) (word study)
6	No assignments due	
7	3	5) AB (read from Gligamesh)
		6) (read about JEDP)
8	No assignments due	
9		7) (response to article)
10	No assignments due	
11		Second online responses
12	4, 5	Kitchen article on Patriarchal Age
13	No assignments due	
14	6	Archer on the Date of the Exodus
		Handouts on Covenant
15	No assignments due	
16	7	
17	No assignments due	
18	8	
19		Topics List due
20	12	Chosen background textbook finished and narrative of background insights

21		Final online responses
22	9-18	Horton and Motyer handouts on the unity of Isaiah
		Harrison on the Book of Daniel
		Final Exam

ASSIGNMENT LIST

Series of assignments (listed above, right column) to experience basic exegetical steps and tools for Old Testament study as well as scholarly issues, using Genesis 6-9 as an example for further study of the rest of the Old Testament.

1A) READ Gen. 6-9 in NIV and CEV.

1B) TURN IN your summary list of the progression of topics in Gen. 6-9, giving chapter and verse references for your summaries (see 1 Chron. 10 handout)

1C) TURN IN your summary in a sentence or two of the theological point of Gen. 6-9--why was it written? (put on same page as 1B)

2) READ the article in the Handouts book, "Method in Pentateuchal Source Criticism" by G.J. Wenham from Vetus Testamentum 41, 1 (1991): 84-109. This is a first reading to note, for your own study, any questions you need to answer about the Genesis text, and scholarly jargon or references you do not understand that are important to understanding the article. You are to write a response before Lesson 9 (see #7 below).

3A) TURN IN your flow of thought diagram (see instructions handout) of Gen. 6:1-4.

3B) TURN IN your summary of the theological point of Gen. 6:1-4, in the context of Genesis, in a sentence or two. Also, LIST the questions on specific points that need to be answered in order to understand the details of what the passage is referring to. Finally, LIST where else the Hebrew word "Nephilim" 6:4 NIV is used in the O.T.

4) TURN IN a 1-2 page word study on the Hebrew word for "repented" (KJV) ("grieved", NIV) in Gen. 6:6, (see instructions handout). The main two tools are a Hebrew-English Concordance (either using NIV or KJV) and NIDOTTE. (See Resource CD)

5A) READ the excerpts from Gilgamesh and Atrahasis in Old Testament Parallels by Matthews and Benjamin. Watch for the similarities and the differences in relation to Gen. 6-9.

5B) TURN IN, your list of similarities and differences between Gen. 6-9 and the ANE flood accounts of Gilgamesh and Atrahasis after reading: Wenham's commentary on Gen. 1-15 in WORD Biblical Commentary Series, pp. xlvii-1, 159-166; Kitchen, The Bible In Its World, pp. 27-30; and Walton's chart p. 81 (See Resource CD). The grading of the list will focus on additions to and improvements on Walton's chart. Also, WRITE your summary in a half page or so of how you believe the parallel ANE literature relates to Gen. 6-9—did either copy from the other?—including your view of the divine inspiration of Gen. 6-9 in relation to other flood

accounts. Give a brief statement of what you see as significant about the differences between the two accounts.

6) READ about the JEDP Theory of Pentateuchal authorship in: our textbook, the “Pentateuch” article (the section on JEDP) in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) (1980s), Wenham’s commentary on Gen. 1-15, pp. xxv-xlii, before doing #7 (Resource CD).

7) TURN IN a list of the arguments discussed in the article by Wenham (see 2) above) and a 3-4 page response analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments in the article for and against the theory that various sources were patched together to produce Gen. 6-9. Be sure to include the literary evidence from the ANE context. Also give your conclusion on the overall quality and results of Wenham’s article. Did he accomplish his purpose for writing the article? What have you learned about scholarship in OT studies? What is a healthy perspective on all this? (note: this is 14% of the course grade)

Note: If you do any readings beyond those required be sure to list them at the end of the appropriate assignment. Otherwise, no bibliographies are needed for the assignments.

5. Additional Major Required Readings (See Resource CD)

- 1) Kitchen, Kenneth A. “The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?” *Biblical Archeology Review* 21 (March/April 1995): 48-57, 88-95. Read before Lesson 12.
- 2) Archer Gleason L. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Rev. ed. 1994. on “The Date of the Exodus,” pp. 239-52. Read before Lesson 14.
- 3) R.K. Harrison on “The Book of Daniel” in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 1105-1134. (read for main points and key insights) Read before Lesson 22.
- 4) Background Reading—Choose one of the following (listed under textbooks above):
Walton, John H. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
OR
Hoerth, Alfred J., Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, eds. *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 1994.
OR
King, Philip J. and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville:Westminster John Knox, 2001.

TURN IN, **before Lesson 20**, a 3-4 page narrative of the helpful insights you gained for your understanding of the Old Testament from any of this background reading.

6. TURN IN, **before Lesson 22**, a LIST of nine substantial, relevant, topics that are important for preaching, teaching, or counseling Christians today and that are clearly presented in particular sections (consisting of at least 7 verses) of Old Testament books.

Three topics must be from history books, three from poetry and wisdom books, and three from prophets with at least one major and one minor prophet, (none from Pentateuch). You must not use a book more than once. Under history, choose one from Josh.-2 Kings, one from the rest, and another from either group. Be sure to give the book and passage where each topic is dealt with. (example: Numbers 11—Principles for leadership of God’s people by the Holy Spirit.)

7. Comprehension Final Exam **to be taken after watching all lessons and submitting all projects**. Also, TURN IN your signed accountability sheet for the readings.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Reading of the textbooks and articles, 12%
 Online Discussion Forums 06%
 Progression of topics in Gen. 6-9 01%
 Flow of thought diagram 03%
 Word study 05%
 Comparison to ANE flood accounts 04%
 Response to Wenham article 14%
 Relevant topics from OT books 05%
 Reading of 300 pages on background and
 Narrative of background insights 20%
 Final Exam 30%

AGTS Grading Scale

Publishable = A+
 100% - 94% = A
 93% - 90% = A-
 89% - 87% = B+
 86% - 84% = B
 83% - 80% = B-
 79% - 77% = C+
 76% - 74% = C
 73% - 70% = C-
 69% - 67% = D+
 66% - 64% = D
 63% - 60% = D-

DUE DATES

All assignments are to be postmarked no later than 15 weeks after course registration (**All projects must be received by your AGTS Professor of Record by your due date**)

NOTE: A \$30.00 fee will be charged to the student's account for every grade change even if the instructor has approved an extension for completing the work. Any exception to the policy will be made by the registrar.

Submit all assignments to: AGTS Professor of Record (See Course Release Form)
 1435 N. Glenstone Avenue
 Springfield, MO 65802

FORMAT OF SUBMITTED WRITTEN WORK

All assignments are to be typewritten, double-spaced, represent quality graduate level work, and follow the *Turabian* style manual, 6th edition.

All assignments must include a title page that includes your name, address, phone and email, course number, title, and assignment title.

Your writing should demonstrate good, formal, clear writing style (see Strunk and White or *Getting the Words Right*). The format should follow Turabian 6th edition. If you need to cite a source you may choose which one of the three citation methods in Turabian you prefer to use: foot notes, end notes, or parenthetical. The length may exceed the limit by a page or so. Put the following information at the top of the first page or on a title page: Name, assignment, course, AGTS professor of record's name, date. Do not put anything but the page numbers at the top of the other pages. **Assignments are due before watching the corresponding lesson** (see above for late work). **DO NOT WATCH THE CORRESPONDING LESSON** if you have not submitted the assignment.

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SPECIFIC DATA

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