

BIBLICAL INTRODUCTION

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To survey the historical, religious, and literary backgrounds of the Bible and its times by introducing
 - a. the relevant history and literature of contemporaneous cultures, from Sumer to Rome;
 - b. the importance of the geo-topographical situation of the promised land; and
 - c. the contributions of archaeology in confirming the biblical record.
2. To review the historical development of the biblical canon, including
 - a. Theories of and criteria for canonicity, and
 - b. Omission from the canon of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings.
3. To survey the essence, history, and competing models of higher criticism with a critique of critical approaches to the Bible.
4. To introduce the usefulness and guiding principles of textual criticism, with a survey of the preservation of the biblical text through centuries in various manuscript traditions and translations.

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. The student will gain a grasp of the geography of the current Near East that shaped Bible history, as well as a sampling of what has been and still could be dug out of the earth of this region.
2. The student will broaden his Christian apologetic by growing in his understanding of
 - a. the distinctiveness of the Bible among ancient literatures,
 - b. why speculative higher criticism is out of touch with recent discoveries of treaty documents from realm of the Bible, and
 - c. reasons behind the careful preservation of the Scriptures through the ages.
3. The student will find a new appreciation for the accuracy and reliability of the text of a majority of our modern Bible versions.

TEXTS

- 1) Frank E. Gabelein, ed. *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Introductory Articles*, Vol. 1
 - 2) Gleason Archer. *Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Part I
 - 3) Everett Harrison. *Introduction to the New Testament*, Parts I-IV
 - 4) **Recommended:** Paul Wright. *Holman QuickSource Bible Atlas*
- All readings must be completed by May 6.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Weekly Reading and Reporting. Following the assigned reading schedule below, one student will produce a two page (minimum) outline of the reading(s) for the day. The outline will be reproduced for the rest of the class for discussion. The following week, the class will begin with a quiz over the previous week's reading.
- 2) A five page paper due by the last class. Possible topics are:
 - Compare/contrast Near eastern accounts with the biblical account of the creation or of the flood
 - Compare/contrast Hammurabi's Law Code with that of Moses
 - Develop some of the methods of archaeology; or summarize a listing of some of its major contributions
 - Define and Critique a higher critical method
 - Develop reasons why the apocrypha is sub-canonical
 - Develop the importance of textual criticism
 - The impact of the Bible on cultures through the ages OR the importance of having the Bible in an understandable language
 - Your choice...

GRADING

Readings = 25% Outlines = 15 % Quizzes = 30% Paper = 15% Final = 10% Attendance = 5%

Biblical Introduction
Course Schedule
Spring 2020

1/29	Introduction; Geography of Palestine. <i>EBC</i> :83-102 by Houston	Lensch
2/5	OT Archaeological Highlights. <i>EBC</i> I:309-338 by Wiseman Reference Archer I, chpt 13	
2/12	NT Archaeological Highlights. <i>EBC</i> I:645-672 by Yamauchi	
2/19	Contemporary OT cultures. <i>EBC</i> I:339-358 by Livingston	
2/26	Between the Testaments. <i>EBC</i> :179-196 by Hoehner	
3/4	Background of NT times. <i>EBC</i> :483-500 by Rupprecht Reference Harrison, parts I and II	
3/11	Historical/Literary Criticism of OT. <i>EBC</i> : 232-252 by Harrison Reference Archer, part I, chpts. 6-12	
3/18	Historical/Literary Criticism of NT. <i>EBC</i> :437-458 by Guthrie	
3/25	SPRING RECESS	
4/1	Canon of the OT. <i>EBC</i> :385-394 by Fisher Reference Archer, Introduction 1 & 2 and part I, chpt 5, and Bruce, chap. 1 of <i>The Canon of Scripture</i>	
4/8	Canon of the NT. <i>EBC</i> :631-644 by Walls Reference Harrison, part IV, and Bruce, chaps. 21-23 of <i>The Canon of Scripture</i>	
4/15	Intro to Text Criticism of the OT. <i>EBC</i> :211-230 by Waltke Reference Archer, part I, chpts. 3 and 4	
4/22	Intro to Text Criticism of the NT. <i>EBC</i> :419-438 by Fee Reference Harrison, part III	
4/29	No Class: Presbytery Meeting	
5/6	Bible Transmission and Translation. <i>EBC</i> :39-60 by Bruce Term Paper due	
5/13	Proctored Final Exam over study questions and quizzes	