

The Historical Writings

Spring Semester 2017

Course Goals

My primary goal for this course is to deepen your understanding of and appreciation for the Historical Books of the Old Testament, in order that you could learn profound lessons for not only your own spiritual formation, but also for your ministry and mission.

Assessments and Method of Evaluation

Assignment or Assessment	Percent of Grade	Estimated Time in Hours
1. Attendance, Participation	10	10
2. Required Reading	20	20
3. Blog Post	15	5
4. Spiritual Reflection	15	10
5. Exegetical Paper	20	20
6. Teaching Series	20	15
Totals	100%	80 hours

Required Texts & Materials

Leuchter, Mark A. and Lamb, David T., [*The Historical Writings: Introducing Israel's Historical Literature*](#) (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016). = **THW**

Arnold, Bill T. and Williamson, H. G. M., [*Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*](#) (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005). = **DOTHB**

Matthews, Victor H. and Benjamin, Don C. [*Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*](#) (3rd edition, New York: Paulist Press, 2006). = **OTP**

Recommended Texts, Articles, Commentaries & Other Materials

Alter, Robert, *Ancient Israel: The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton, 2013).

Anderson, A. A., *2 Samuel* (Word) (Dallas: Word, 1989).

Baden, Joel, [*The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero*](#) (New York: HarperCollins, 2013).

Baker, David W. and Bill T. Arnold, editors, [*The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).

Baldwin, Joyce G., *1 & 2 Samuel* (Tyndale) (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

Cogan, Mordechai, *I Kings* (Anchor) (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

Cogan, Mordechai and Tadmor, Hayim, *II Kings* (Anchor) (New York: Doubleday, 1988).

DeVries, Simon J., *1 Kings* (Word) (Waco: Word, 1985).

Firth, David G., *1 & 2 Samuel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

Goldingay, John, *Men Behaving Badly* (Glasgow: Paternoster Press, 2000).

Gordon, Robert P. *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1986).

Halpern, Baruch, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

- Hobbs, T. R., *2 Kings* (Word) (Waco: Word, 1985).
- Jones, G. H., *1 and 2 Kings* (New Century), volumes 1, 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984)
- Klein, Ralph W., *1 Samuel* (Waco: Word, 1983).
- Lamb, David T., “The Eternal Curse: Seven Deuteronomistic Judgment Oracles against the House of David” in *For and Against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel*, edited by A. G. Auld and E. Eynikel (Leuven: Peeters, 2010): 315-326.
- Lamb, David T., *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist and Racist* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011).
- Lamb, David T., “‘I Will Strike You Down and Cut off your Head’ (1 Samuel 17:46): ‘Trash Talking, Derogatory Rhetoric, and Psychological Warfare in Ancient Israel’ in *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by Frank Ames, Brad Kelle & Jacob Wright (Atlanta: SBL, 2014): 111-130.
- Lamb, David T., “The Non-Eternal Dynastic Promises of Jehu of Israel and Esarhaddon of Assyria” *Vetus Testamentum*, 60/3 (2010): 337-344.
- Lamb, David T., “‘A Prophet Instead of You’: Elijah, Elisha and Prophetic Succession” in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings from the Oxford Old Testament Seminary*, edited by John Day (New York: T&T Clark, 2010): 172-187.
- Lamb, David T., *Prostitutes and Polygamists: A Look at Love, Old Testament Style* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).
- Lamb, David T., *Righteous Jehu and his Evil Heirs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- McCarter, P. Kyle, *I Samuel, II Samuel* (Anchor) (New York: Doubleday, 1980, 1984).
- McKenzie, Stephen, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Satterthwaite, P. E. and McConville, J. G. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Historical Books* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).
- Vannoy, J. Robert, *1-2 Samuel* (Cornerstone) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009).
- Wiseman, D. J., *1 and 2 Kings* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993).
- Wray Beal, Lissa M. *1 & 2 Kings* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

Course Procedures & Course Requirements

- 1) **Class attendance & participation.** Attend class and participate in discussions as a class and in small groups.
- 2) **Reading.** Read the books of Joshua, Judges, 1, 2 Samuel, 1, 2 Kings, Ezra-Nehemiah, and 1, 2 Chronicles and the required sections from the textbooks (**THW, OTP, DOTHB**). For each class you will read the relevant biblical book, chapter in *THW* (*The Historical Writings*), and article in *DOTHB* (*Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*). The Course Schedule (see below) provides details of what pages to read and their deadlines. I realize that it is difficult to remember details after reading large portions of Scripture, but this type of approach to the biblical text is essential to broaden our understanding of God’s purpose and mission.
 - a) For the **DOTHB** readings, you’ll have two types of reading
 - i) Six **required** articles: 1) Joshua, Book of, 2) Judges, Book of, 3) Samuel, Books of, 4) Kings, Books of, 5) Ezra and Nehemiah, Books of, 6) Chronicles, Books of.
 - ii) Six **additional** articles. Select articles of interest to you, but particularly ones relevant to your exegetical paper. Include them in your bibliography, and list them in your Reading Chart.

3) Blog post

- a) **Write a blog post** about a passage from the Historical Books (400-500 words by **class #2**). For examples, check out a Old Testament blog (e.g., DavidTLamb.com), particularly under Judges.
 - i) Select an OT passage (I'd suggest a controversial text).
 - ii) Study the passage, and then write up your observations, interpretations and applications in a word processing program (e.g., MS Word).
 - iii) Conclude your post with an open-ended question that flows from your discussion.
 - iv) Cut and paste your posts into the course website online forum.
- b) **Comment on three blog posts** of your classmates (100-150 words by **class #3**).
 - i) Respond to their question with your thoughts, ideas and a question of your own.
- c) **Posting directions:** 1) Go to Moodle/Blackboard/course website and follow directions.

4) Narrative Reflection. Write a creative reflection (700-800 words) from the perspective of one of the characters in the Historical Books about the spiritual impact of a specific textual incident.

- a) Pick a character that is NOT your own gender and select an event from that person's life that you find personally intriguing. Focus on a minor character, not a major one (not Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, Ezra, Nehemiah). If you are stuck, here are some suggestions: Eli, Hannah, Eliab, Jonathan, Michal, Abigail, the witch of Endor, Bathsheba, Absalom, Amnon, Tamar, the wise woman of Abel, the queen of Sheba, Ahijah, Jeroboam I, Ahab, the widow of Zarephath, Jezebel, Elijah, Elisha, Naaman's wife's Israelite servant girl, Jehu, Athaliah, Jehosheba, Hoshea, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jehoiachin, Huldah.
- b) Put yourself "in their shoes". Reflect on what the incident would have been like for them. How has the incident affected them? If you were that person what would you have thought or felt?
- c) Include a very brief introduction (1 sentence) explaining:
 - i) who you are,
 - ii) what text your incident comes from.
- d) Write as that person. The first person perspective of your reflection comes from their possible responses to the incident.
- e) Don't change the story, but feel free to fill in some gaps to flush out the narrative.
- f) What was their attitude toward God? How has it changed because of what happened? This is the heart of the assignment, so your reflection should focus on your character's relationship with God.
- g) **Turn in** your paper in hard copy **by class #4**.
- h) Here's a brief example (yours will be longer). I am the messenger who presented the message about the Philistine defeat to Eli (1 Sam. 4:12-18).
 - i) I wanted to die. I had never run that fast or that far in my life (about 20 miles, think Marathon). After an hour of running, my side was aching, my feet were bloody, my throat was parched and my knees were buckling. I just wanted to quit. But as bad as I felt, the news I was delivering made it much worse. I had to get back and tell the people of Shiloh and particularly Eli about how we were crushed by the Philistines, how Eli's sons were killed and, worst of all, how they captured the ark.
 - ii) The ark. For us to have lost to the Philistines at first was a shock and we questioned why YHWH allowed that to happen, but then we figured it out. We just needed the ark. That would do it. We'd destroy them. YHWH would fight for us, just like he did in Egypt. When the ark

came into camp and we celebrated. We may have lost yesterday, but we'll win tomorrow. The Philistines were terrified. Even they knew we couldn't lose with the ark on our side. We went out to face the Philistines confident. There was no way we could lose when YHWH was with us.

- iii) But then we lost! It was a rout. Toward the end, we fled and they took the ark with them. No one could believe it, not even the Philistines. It didn't make any sense.
- iv) YHWH, why did you let that happen? You defeated Egypt, the most powerful empire on earth, but you couldn't protect us against the Philistines? Did you forget about us? Where were you? You certainly weren't in the ark. I won't ever be able to trust you again. YHWH, why did you desert us when we needed you so desperately? I thought we were your people and you promised always to fight for us. Now we don't even have the ark anymore. Are you going to fight for the Philistines now?
- v) Eli is going to die when he hears about the ark.

5) **Exegetical paper.** For this paper (1700-2000 words) choose a passage from the Historical Books. This assignment will help you gain important exegetical skills that will prove invaluable whenever you teach from the Bible.

a) **Writing suggestions:**

- i) **Make** an outline and follow it. For a paper of this length, an outline with 6-10 main points should suffice. Each main point could become a paragraph. Include your outline at the beginning of your paper.
- ii) **Use** topic sentences for your paragraphs. The first sentence typically explains the main point of the paragraph and then the following sentences of the paragraph support the topic sentence.
- iii) **Avoid** "I think", "I feel", "I believe", but rather state what you think without qualifiers. Compare: In my opinion I think it is best to avoid "I think", "I feel", "I believe", since I believe you should state what you think without qualifiers.
- iv) **Limit** yourself to one exclamation point and one usage of the word "very" per essay! For some of you, this will be very painful, but in this case, pain is very good!
- v) **Don't** use contractions (e.g., isn't, can't, I'd, don't, I'll), but within parenthetical comments I'll allow you to use e.g. (= for example) and i.e. (= that is).

b) **Guidelines for an exegetical paper:**

- i) **Start** by explaining what the passage is and why it is significant.
- ii) **Analyze** the structure of the passage. How does it fit together? How does it flow?
- iii) **Discuss** key words in your text. For Hebrew, do not use quote marks but simply either Hebrew font (דָּס , זָ ,) or transliterated Roman letters with italics (*hesed*).
- iv) **Explain** how the passage fits into the larger context of the sections before and after as well as the entire book.
- v) **Focus** on the text. Note repeated words/themes, significant observations and questions that arise from your study of the text. Observe narrative or poetic forms. Frequently refer to the passage and always cite specific references.
- vi) **Draw** out what you think the main point of the passage is. Allude to this point in the title of your paper (do not title your paper, "Exegetical Paper on X passage").
- vii) **Tell** the reader where you are going. It is often helpful in your introduction to explain your plan or outline. This does not need to be boring or formulaic, but it will clarify the flow and direction of your paper. Here is an example (from *Righteous Jehu*):

- (1) Before looking specifically at violence within Jehu's narrative (2.5.1.3), a brief discussion of relevant texts from the ANE (2.5.1.1) and elsewhere in the DH (2.5.1.2) will show that, while shedding innocent blood is condemned, bloodshed in judicial and military contexts is viewed positively, particularly when divinely sanctioned. Hosea's condemnation of Jehu's bloodshed will then be examined (2.5.1.4), followed by an analysis of the views of two scholars (Olyan and White) on Jehu's ascension (2.5.1.5).
- viii) **Utilize** 4-5 commentaries and one journal article in a critical manner (study Bibles do not count). Include your opinion and evaluate the views of scholars, showing why you agree or disagree. Although a statement like "I think Mays is correct..." is evaluative, it can be improved: "Mays' theory of X is compelling (or "attractive", "valid", "persuasive") **because** of Y and Z". Give reasons to support your argument.
- ix) **Use** *at least 2* commentaries that focus exclusively upon the book you have chosen (i.e., that are **not** 1-volume OT or entire Bible commentaries) and were written in the last 30-40 years (i.e., **not** Calvin, Clarke or Henry). You can use these resources, but you need to use others as well, which will involve a trip to the library. Good commentary series to use: Word, Tyndale/IVP, NICOT, Interpretation, Anchor, OT Library.
- x) **Avoid** including long quotations from secondary literature. Simply summarize scholarly views briefly.
- xi) **Argue** for your perspective on the main point of the passage is. Make a compelling case and **support** it with evidence. Whenever you refer to the text, give a reference. Don't just say, "Scholars think..."; state which scholars think that way and give reasons.
- xii) **Conclude** with an application based on the message of the text. Make it culturally relevant and missional.
- xiii) **Include** a bibliography at the end of your paper on a separate page listing all the sources that were used sorted by last name of author.
- 6) **Teaching series.** Arrange a series of 4 teaching sessions from the Historical Books. For each session focus on a different text. I recommend making one of your 4 passages the text upon which you wrote your exegetical paper. This assignment will bring together all of what we have discussed in this course into a series that you can use in your ministries.
- a) In your **introduction** (less than a page):
- i) State passages you have selected and why.
 - ii) Explain the context (sermon, Bible study, seeker-friendly discussion, children's Sunday school class, family devotion, etc.).
 - iii) Describe the audience.
 - iv) Discuss how the series fits together. What is the progression? How have you organized it?
- b) For each of the **4 sessions** (a page or less per session, detailed outlines are acceptable):
- i) State the passage and the main point (don't include the passage in your notes, since that would take up most of the page). Limit the text to a reasonable size (5-25 verses).
 - ii) Explain how you will emphasize the main point.
 - (1) What questions will you use? For discussions, avoid Yes/No questions (Do you ever speak to God like Moses did?). Use open-ended questions (How comfortable would you feel speaking to God like Moses did?) Give some possible answers, perhaps in *italics*.
 - (2) What sub-points you will make?
 - (3) What stories you will tell?
 - iii) How will you use creativity (media, visual aids, music, etc.) to help get your point across?

- iv) What missional applications will you make? Address questions along the following lines:
- (1) How does this passage speak to (affirm or confront) your cultural context?
 - (2) How are you encouraging your audience to reach out and be involved in ministry based on this text?
 - (3) What types of people might be particularly encouraged by this text?
 - (4) How does the session challenge people's perceptions of God?
 - (5) What concrete steps would you exhort people to take?

Course Schedule with Topic, Assignments, Submission Method, & Due Dates

#	Topic	Assignment to be finished	Reading to be finished
1	<i>Introduction to the Historical Writings</i>		
2	<i>Joshua</i>	3a. Blog post	Joshua (in Bible, THW, DOTHB) OTP 165-203
3	<i>Judges</i>	3b. Three blog responses	Judges (in Bible, THW, DOTHB) DOTHB additional
4	<i>1 Samuel</i>		1 Samuel (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
5	<i>2 Samuel</i>	4. Narrative Reflection	2 Samuel (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
6	<i>1 Kings</i>		1 Kings (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
7	<i>2 Kings</i>		2 Kings (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
8	<i>Ezra</i>	5. Exegetical paper	Ezra (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
9	<i>Nehemiah</i>		Nehemiah (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
10	<i>1 Chronicles</i>		1 Chronicles (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
11	<i>2 Chronicles</i>	6. Teaching series	2 Chronicles (in Bible, THW, DOTHB)
12	<i>Conclusion</i>		

Academic Policies and Student Responsibility

Please note that students are fully responsible to know and follow all seminary rules, regulations, and deadlines published in the catalog and student handbook, and all requirements concerning their degree programs.