1-1-1999

BS 750 Ezekiel

David Loren Thompson

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Department of Inductive Biblical Studies

OT(ibs) 750, EZEKIEL, 3 hrs credit
Prerequisite: NT(ibs)525 or 530 and OT501 or equivalent.
Elective. Does not meet second IBS requirement

David L. Thompson

I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the book of Ezekiel as a whole and its most significant parts, with special attention to the historical and theological context of the prophet and the work. Building on the first Inductive Biblical Studies course, emphasis is placed on hermeneutical principles bearing on the interpretation of prophetic literature as illustrated specifically by this book and its treatment within the biblical tradition. Attention is also given to the place of Ezekiel in the thought of John Wesley.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Methodology. By the end of the course the student should be able evidentially and contextually to:
   1. Interpret books-as-wholes and their parts in light of the whole;
   2. Evaluate and apply passages thus interpreted.
   3. Correlate by articulating the major claims of each biblical book studied as both distinct from and related to those of other biblical books, thus moving toward a biblical theology.
   4. Describe the essential methodological aspects of Inductive Biblical Study.

B. Content. The student shall be able to:
   1. Trace the development of the contents of the book of Ezekiel without recourse to the printed text, identifying major passages and delineating major themes;
   2. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Book of Ezekiel;
   3. Use a general knowledge of the historical and religious background of the Book of Ezekiel in its interpretation.

C. Attitude. The student should commit themselves to:
   1. Apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
   2. Make the Book of Ezekiel the object of life-long study;
   3. Use the Book of Ezekiel as a resource for preaching, teaching and living.

III. TEXT AND READINGS

A. Required Texts and Materials
   1. Revised Standard Version of the Bible, or some other contemporary, standard (non-paraphrasing) version such as The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, New American Standard Bible, with minimal editorial clutter in the layout.
B. **Recommended Resources (Purchase not required for this course)**

The following commentary series are enthusiastically recommended for use in this course and for acquisition for the personal library of serious students of Scripture. While there are both superior and less stellar volumes in these series, they are on the whole very useful and should be consulted for work in this course.

- Anchor Bible (Doubleday)
- Interpretation (John Knox)
- New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans)
- Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (InterVarsity)
- Word Biblical Commentary (Word)

For more specific bibliography see Bauer's *Biblical Resources*.

C. **History: Collateral Reading and Self-Exam Chart**


2. **Self-Exam based on reading in C.1.**

   Using the Appendix, "History of Israel," as a study guide, and studying Thompson's article in ZPED or the equivalent readings, the student shall gain sufficient mastery of the historical setting of the minor prophets to: 1) date each of the prophets by correlation with their major biblical and extra-biblical contemporaries, and 2) place them in the flow of major events of their world. Give special attention to the 750 - 400 B.C. period.

   **To express this competence the student shall**

   1) make a rough-draft, historical chart which includes these major persons and events and
   2) invest a least one-half hour in explaining this chart and the history it presents to another person or conferring intentionally with another person (perhaps a colleague from this class) about the chart.

   Report the person and the date and time of the above presentation, and submit with your chart and Thompson reading report no later than Thursday, March 4. The report will not be accepted without record of the required processing (#2 above).

**Exception to III.C History Collateral and Self-exam!!**

If a) you have already earned credit in a course in the History of Israel, or b) you have already done an assignment like this for a previous IBS course, or c) from whatever experiences the majority of the items in Appendix VI are known to you so that you could, without further study, make a chart of the sort required in III.C above:

1. Invest a minimum of 3 hours reading in a recent, significant text on the History of Israel (e.g., those by John Bright, J. M. Miller & J. H. Hayes) or a work like R. K. Harrison's Old Testament Times.

2. Report that reading March 4, instead of the history self-exam, with a one page, typed, single-spaced summary of the main items of interest to you in the reading.
D. **Extra-credit Research and Bibliographic Review**

Students wishing to earn extra credit should request an extra credit assignment sheet from the instructor. It outlines an approximately 15 hour investment whereby a semester grade can be raised one level (e.g., A- to A). Due by May 20, 5:00 p.m.

IV. **COURSE PROCEDURES**

A. **Inductive Studies of Ezekiel.**

The most important part of the course will be the student’s own, independent, direct studies of Ezekiel, due at class time and on the dates assigned.

A word about “independent.” It is understood that these lessons are primarily to be notes of the student’s own direct study of the Bible, with reference to secondary sources only as is appropriate--to minimally interpretive works during the course of study and to more interpretive works only after considerable interpretive study of one's own. Then the student will be expected to give evidence of critical interaction with interpretive sources used. When secondary sources are used, clear documentation will appear. This is sufficiently important from methodological and instructional, not to mention moral perspectives that unacknowledged appropriation of significant information and ideas from interpretive or introductory resources will be considered plagiarism. **Plagiarism** will certainly lead to a grade of zero for the lesson involved and may constitute grounds for failure in the course.

Students from cultures where extensive, undocumented use of secondary sources is acceptable should give particular notice to this aspect of North American scholarly expectations for which they will be held accountable.

Independent here excludes reference to any previous student’s work in the course and to lecture notes from any previous semester of OT(IBS)750. It is assumed that these notes and all work submitted for this course is the student’s own work, done specifically for OT(IBS)750, and not previously submitted as part of any other course’s requirements. Exceptions to these procedures, when group study is suggested, will be clearly announced or noted in the syllabus.

**Group consultation.** In early stages of the course where group consultation is encouraged, students should still aim to participate in these consultations as independent contributors. Group participants will not simply reproduce and submit each other's work as their own.

B. **Format & Submission of Papers.**

To facilitate handling by my office and also by SPO personnel:

1. Lessons will be submitted in a **manilla envelope (minimum 9 x 12”)**. The following information will appear in the **front, upper right corner:**
   - SPO number (main info needed by SPO)
   - Student’s name (please print, large “font”)
   - Lessons contained

   *The placement and order of this information are important for SPO handling. Do not center your name and SPO down in the middle of the envelop.*

2. **Each lesson** in the envelop should also contain on the **front page, upper right corner:**
   - Student’s SPO and name
   - Lesson numeral and page number (IV-1, IV-2)
   - Date due/Date completed--in that order--(e.g., March 2/February 27)

   On succeeding pages you need only put your last name and the lesson-page enumeration. Staple or paper-clip every multi-sheet work submitted.

3. To aid the grading process, please **write/print on one side** only of paper.
4. Lesson packets will be submitted four times during the semester:
   - March 2: I - IV, 20%
   - March 23: V - VIII, 20%
   - April 27: IX - XV, 30%
   - May 18: XVI - XIX, 30%

C. Evaluation and Feedback
1. Lessons. All lessons are due to be completed at class time as assigned, even though they are
   handed in with others later. Selected lessons will be graded and the whole packet returned in
   timely fashion with written feedback.
2. Classroom instruction and interaction. The student’s main source of information for self-
   evaluation will be the class sessions.
3. Peer consultation will also be a valuable part of class interaction and feedback.

D. Grade Components. (See Seminarian: The Catalogue Edition for grade values.)
1. Lessons. The grades given on lessons will be computed as noted above.
2. Late work. Work submitted late may be accepted for credit but will not be given a letter
   grade.
3. Class attendance and completion of lessons. See "course requirements" below.

E. Criteria for Excellence (See also Appendix I for specifics.)
3. Originality. Take a fresh approach to the material, using your own words and finding new ways
   of expressing biblical truth.
4. Depth. Probe beneath the surface of the text to find those truths which are not self-evident as
   well as those that are.
5. Organization. Systematize your findings so as to correlate similar ones and so as to indicate
   logical progression, relative importance and the intended interrelation of your ideas.
6. Relative Thoroughness. Be as complete as possible within the time limits.
7. Clarity. Try to express your thoughts in an unambiguous way.

F. Course Requirements
1. Completion and submission of assignments and lessons in writing as assigned. At least
   70% of the lessons must be completed to earn credit in the course.
2. Punctual attendance at all classes for the entire class. Three absences without penalty
   are allowed. Every absence beyond that will cancel credit for a lesson, unless provisions
   are made for make up work.
3. Responsible handling of difficulty with class content or requirements, of late work, of
   absences or other matters related to participation in the class.
V. INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

A. Preview of Lesson options included in these studies

1. **“Standard”** survey, interpretive analysis, synthesis lessons, often including evaluation and some application.

2. **Detailed interpretive studies.** Every standard lesson should include considerable detailed interpretive work. In addition to this, in as many as two lessons students may elect to devote almost the entire preparation time to detailed exegesis of a verse or paragraph. In such a case the student would move much more rapidly through survey of the unit to focus on the verse or paragraph selected, concentrating on grammatical-lexical and other study of the passage. Lessons selected for such detailed exegetical study should be clearly marked as such on the front page, upper right corner to enable adequate evaluation.

   *Lessons II, VIII, XIV, XV, XVIII and XIX may not be approached this way.*

3. **Special Research Project.** For any two lessons (except II and XIX), students may elect to substitute research on a particular topic related to the book of Ezekiel and its interpretation or to prophetic literature in general. The 15-18 hours normally spent on doing two lessons would be devoted instead to the research and write up. In lieu of the regular lessons, students will turn in their research notes, bibliography of works consulted, a brief report of findings, and a time log for the project. At the top of the cover sheet, the lessons for which the research is substituted should be clearly noted.

B. Suggestions:

1. Read through an entire assignment before beginning it.
2. Recall that items numbered separately are often interrelated and best considered together and done in light of each other.
3. Remember these are lessons, not exhaustive interpretations. The required seven and a half to nine hours\(^1\) on most lessons will allow significant methodological and interpretive learning, but will leave much work to be done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group One</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lessons I - IV</td>
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**LESSON I. FOUNDATIONS & SYLLABUS**

1. Read through the syllabus for our next class, establishing the base of your accountability for acquaintance with its contents. Give particular attention to parts I - IV and the Appendixes. Due February 11 (R).

2. If you have not read *Bible Study That Works*, do so now. Write a one full page, single spaced, typed critical interaction to the book. Do not include in method reading of collateral report. If you have already read this work, read a section of equivalent length from one of the entries in VI.A (or some other hermeneutical reading you may wish to select in consultation with the professor) and write the critical interaction. Due February 11 (R).

3. Begin the collateral reading and self-exam on historical background as outlined in III.B&C. Due March 4 (R).

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\(^1\) Institutional policy indicates students in ATS masters level courses should expect to invest from 2.5 - 3.0 hours in preparation for every hour spent in class.
LESSON II. SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL Due February 23 (T)

1. Identify the specific materials of the book, giving a brief title to each chapter/segment. Discern the general nature of the work also (BSTW 32-36; MBS 53-59).

2. Locate the main units in the book and identify the major structural relationships operative between these and in the book as a whole (BSTW 36-43; MBS 38-66; App. I:5-9.). Briefly describe the specific materials involved in each structure, so that the meaning of what you have observed structurally is clear. Give references.

Regarding nos. 1 & 2. Beware that on a book this size, time constrains will not permit detailed notes or secure demarcation of subunits beneath the level of major divisions and perhaps sections of the book. You can be accurate. But major matters must concern you on this preliminary overview.

3. Ask a brief, coherent set of interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed (Appendix III) and record them after each major set of structural observations.

4. On the basis of your structural observations, identify the strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance. It may be helpful also to state these with each law (App. I:13).

5. Identify literary forms of book-level significance.

6. Observe the atmosphere of the book.

7. Note data bearing on such critical questions as author, place, date of writing, history and process of composition, target community, etc. Approach these questions inductively from the book itself, not from introductory remarks in your study Bible or from other secondary sources. You will have plenty of time to consult these sources during the course of further study.

8. Note other major impressions and questions relating to the book as a whole.

LESSON III. EZEKIEL 1-3 In Class Work

On this and other section level lessons, you may wish to draw the literary boundaries differently. These are often contested judgments. Feel free to "redraw" the boundaries as you think the evidence warrants. Make clear the bases of your decisions.

1. Survey Analysis. Devote no more than half of your time to the survey.
   a. Discern and title the main units and sub-units of this section.
   b. Identify the main structural relationships operative in the unit as a whole. Briefly describe the specific materials involved in each structure, so that the meaning of what you have observed structurally is clear. Always give references. Cf. BSTW, 36-43; MBS, 36-67. See App. I:5-9.
   In this process the main emphases and logical movement of this unit should have become clear. If they are not yet clear to you by observation of structure, identify them now by simply looking for "emphasis and movement" and attend in class to the way structural observation describes these matters more precisely.
   c. Identify the set of structural observations you regard as most important to an understanding of this unit or most interesting to you. Focusing on these observations, pose a coherent set of interpretive questions regarding the observations and the structure itself (See App. I:10-12; Appendix III.)
   d. Based on your structural observations, identify the strategic areas which provide insight into the unit as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of its relationship to your structural observations. It may be helpful also to state these with each major law (App. I:13).
   e. Identify literary forms or genres in the section.
   f. Describe the atmosphere of the unit.

Recall suggestions 1 and 2 before the lessons.
2. Interpretive Analysis. Devote at least half your time to analysis

Interpretive Analysis, Phase I: Your Own Inductive-Independent Research (primary and minimally interpretive sources only: biblical text, lexicons, concordances, grammars, ancient texts/artifacts themselves).

   a. Bring forward the questions you posed above. Usually focus first on your definitional question(s) and on the “what is involved in” questions as an excellent way to focus the initial stages of analysis.
   b. Answer these questions as thoroughly as your time will allow. Begin by analysis of selected materials in the unit itself, with careful, inferential reasoning from your analytical observations. Include both general and detailed observation in this process.
   c. Preliminary definition of key terms. Definitions only form biblical language lexicons to establish probable range of reference, usually w/o inference. Seek addition definitional information right in Ezekiel context.

Review the suggestions of Appendix I:3, and 16-41. They are proven roads to insight.

   d. Possible focus. You may find it helpful to begin your analysis process by focus on the strategic passage related to the structural insights you are going to pursue, moving from this passage then to selected features of the unit as a whole which are involved.
   e. If it is necessary to move beyond immediate-context definition of key terms, consult published word studies (See VI.D) or do your own strictly limited inquiry (See App. II:6a-b).
   g. Summarize your findings.

Interpretive Analysis, Phase II: Consultative-Secondary Source Research (commentaries, word study volumes, encyclopedias, dictionaries, journal articles, theologies, etc.). Only after your own, primary source research-interpretation.

   a. Other interpreters. Consult critically respected interpreters of your passage and other resources treating aspects of the passage, such as social and historical context. Attend carefully to the guidance in App. I:38-41.
   b. Further analysis. If at all possible, having benefitted from consultation of these resources, return to the text for further analysis of your own or further reflection on your previous work.
   c. Save time for reflection on rational and and implicational questions related to the matters you have studied.
   d. Summarize your interpretive findings.

Remember: in the preceding work, you are aiming at a significant, integrated interpretation of the unit as a whole or some major feature of it, not a collection of disconnected answers to "little" or miscellaneous questions.

As time allows, move to other related questions and to other significant structural observations and address them also as outlined above

3. Synthetic Analysis (Not a summary of your interpretive work).
   Select only one of these three approaches to synthesis for any given lesson.

   a. Content Interpreted. Summarize the essential content of the unit, recasting it into fresh wording, making important implicit matters explicit, clarifying ambiguities, drawing out important assumptions and implications.
   b. Context. Reflect on how the unit fits into the division and/or book.
   c. Purpose. To whom is this unit addressed--with what problems, misunderstandings, weaknesses, etc. in mind?

LESSON IV. EZEKIEL 4-7

Due March 2 (T)

1. Apply Lesson III to this section.
2. If possible, include study of the theme of "knowing" in this section, and continue it through other sections, where relevent.
### Group Two  20%

**Lessons V - VIII**

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<th>Lesson</th>
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<td>V.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 8-11</td>
<td>March 09 (T)</td>
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1. Apply Lesson III to this section, but see #2.
2. Devote the majority of your interpretive analysis time for special focus on chapter 8. Analyze this segment, determining as thoroughly as you are able from the materials and reflection on them the theological context and realities in Judah at the end of the kingdom period. Reflect on the significance of this information at this point in the book. As you have time compare Zephaniah 1 and Jeremiah 44 with chapter 8.
3. What significance do you see in your findings for the twentieth century church?

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<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 12-15</td>
<td>March 16 (T)</td>
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1. Apply Lesson III to this section.
2. Include an analysis of the view of prophecy and prophetic office presented in this section. After your work, you may want to read chapters 11 and 12 (pp. 122-144) of Brevard Childs’ *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* as a catalyst for further reflection.

OR

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<td>VII.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 16-19</td>
<td>March 16 (T)</td>
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1. Apply Lesson III to this section, reserving major attention to chapter 18 for the next lesson.
2. Study the use of allegory in this section and in preceding chapters.

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<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 18</td>
<td>March 23 (T)</td>
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1. Apply Lesson III to this segment, using notes from survey of chs. 16-19 to jump start your survey and then moving expeditiously to analysis. Analyze the segment and draw inferences from your analyses which will lead to an understanding of the unit’s main tenets and the theological assumptions which undergird the teaching here. Compare carefully with chapter 33 and also with 3.16-21.
2. Reflect on the significance of this chapter for Wesleyan theology and/or study John Wesley’s use of the chapter (check his Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament or a Scriptural index to his writings).
3. Summarize the teaching of chapter 18. Then evaluate it. Remember to go beyond simple citation of related Scriptures to draw evaluative inferences from your data.

### Group Three  30%

**Lessons IX - XV**

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<th>Lesson</th>
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<td>IX.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 20-24</td>
<td>March 30 (T)</td>
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1. Apply Lesson III to this section.
2. Study the significance of 24:27 (with 3:24-27) for the textuality (vs. orality) of the prophet’s ministry and the implications for the Book of Ezekiel.

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<td>X.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 25-28</td>
<td>April 13 (T)</td>
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1. Survey this section.
2. Study the issue of “fulfillment” of prophecy with regard to 26:1-14 and 29:17-20.
3. What implications from your study do you see for the twentieth century Church.

OR
LESSON XI.  EZEKIEL 29-32  Due April 13 (T)

1. Apply Lesson III to this section.
2. If possible, focus attention on chapter 32. Study it and other related OT passages to increase your understanding of the views of life after death found here and elsewhere in the OT. Evaluation?
3. What is the significance of the “oracles against the nations” and their placement at this point in the book?

LESSON XII.  EZEKIEL 33-37  Due April 20 (T)

1. Apply Lesson III to this section, reserving extended attention to chapter 36:16-38 for the next lesson.
2. Continue your study of “know” in Ezekiel.

OR

LESSON XIII.  EZEKIEL 38-39  Due April 20 (T)

1. Apply Lesson III to this section.
2. Critically survey a range of contemporary interpretation of Gog and Magog.
3. Continue your study of “knowledge of Yahweh.”

LESSON XIV.  EZEKIEL 36  Due April 27 (T)

1. Building on your (and/or the class’s) survey of chapters 33-36, study chapter 36, particularly 36:16-38, in such a way as to answer survey questions relating to this segment.
2. Again study Wesley’s use of concepts in this unit and reflect on their significance for contemporary theology.

OR Lesson XV (next page)

LESSON XV.  EZEKIEL 37  Due April 27 (T)

1. Building on your (and/or the class’s) survey of chapters 33-36, study chapter 37 in such a way as to answer survey questions relating to this segment.
2. Study the Messianic Hope in Ezekiel, including the teachings of this chapter. Summarize.
3. Evaluate this hope and apply.

Group Four 30 %
Lessons XVI - XIX

LESSON XVI.  EZEKIEL 40-48  Due May 4 (T)

Apply Lesson III to this section. Try to discern the main concerns of the author and the apparent intent of the vision. Reserve extensive focus on chapters 47-48 for a later lesson, while including them in the survey of this division.

OR

LESSON XVII.  EZEKIEL 40-48  Due May 4 (T)

1. Compare and contrast this unit’s portrayal of the restored temple and the role of the Levites there with the cultic/priestly information in Exodus 25-40, Leviticus 8-10, Deuteronomy 10, 12, 18, 33, and Judges 17-19, drawing inferences then regarding the possible purposes of Ezekiel.
3. Summarize your findings. Evaluate and Apply.

LESSON XVIII.  EZEKIEL 47-48  Due May 11 (T)

1. Building on your (and the class’s) survey of chapters 40-48, study chapters 47-48 in such a way as to answer survey questions relating to this section.
2. What, in context, is the significance of 47:1-12. Study possible relationships of Revelation 22:1-5 to these paragraphs.
3. In light of your study, answer your survey questions regarding these chapters as a climax to the entire book.

LESSON XIX. EZEKIEL SYNTHESIS Due May 18 (T) 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

1. Under the topic, “Yahweh Is There,” synthesize your present work on Ezekiel by studying the themes of the presence of God, the glory of God, and the Spirit of God in Ezekiel. Don’t just restate class discussion or previous notes. Make a fresh approach to the material, building on your previous work.

2. Summarize your findings. Evaluate and apply.

VI. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY
See section H below for extended bibliographies

A. METHODOLOGY & HERMENEUTICS (Including popular presentationsP)
**Blair, Edward P. The Bible and You. Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953.

B. THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL


** Indicates a classic in the field of Inductive Bible Study.
C. PROPHETIC LITERATURE


**D. APPROACHES TO PROPHECY**


For prophetic literature in general, see *Biblical Resources for Ministry* (Bibliography G below).

**E. INDIVIDUAL BOOKS**

For individual books, see *Biblical Resources for Ministry* (Bibliography G below).

**F. WORD STUDY RESOURCES**

Concordances and Indexes


†Brown, Francis. *The New Brown - Driver - Briggs - Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Hendrikson, 1979. [This work is keyed to Strong's concordance.]


† Particularly helpful for students without competence in biblical languages
Wordbooks and other Resources


G. OLD TESTAMENT and BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

H. BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES