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OT 520 Foundations for Old Testament Study

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OT 520 FOUNDATIONS FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY
June 2000—A Three Hour Course    Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

Course Aspirations and Place in the Curriculum

Aspirations: OT 520 seeks to equip students for ministry by providing selected tools fundamental to responsible interpretation of the OT. The course neither offers a comprehensive approach, nor emphasizes direct textual study, but enhances both by developing a framework within which competent interpretation can take place. Students explore contemporary approaches to the literary character, historical and cultural setting, composition, authorship, and literary unity of these books, their various literary types, settings, and functions, and how these affect Christian reading of the OT. Students who realize these aspirations will be able to:

1. Show how a close reading of the OT itself provides the stimulus and basis for OT studies;

2. Illustrate how a knowledge of Hebrew and the OT’s literary character enhance OT study;

3. Identify briefly, in writing,
   a. the basic events, persons, dates, and cultural periods of OT history, background
   b. the basic methods of OT study and selected results of the applications of those methods

4. Employ specific knowledge of the historical and cultural setting of selected OT books, traditions, and personages to illuminate passages of scripture;

5. Apply to selected texts of scripture a grasp of the background, concepts, and procedures and major claims of selected types of OT study: These include archaeology, Textual criticism, Source criticism, Form criticism, Redaction criticism, Selected contemporary literary approaches.

6. Identify, clarify, and strengthen essential convictions regarding biblical theology and authority;

7. Discover study as a means of spiritual growth. This involves seeing our work as:
   a. “Studying (spoudaζzw=“hurry, hasten, be eager, take pains, make every effort) to show yourself approved unto God, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining (ojrqotomeζw=“cut a path in a straight direction, cut a road across country, guide along the right path”) the word of truth;” (2 Tim. 2:15)
   b. Exploring practically how to love God with all our mind (dianoiα) (Matt. 22:37));

8. Embrace and seek to exemplify certain integrative aspirations distinctive of ATS, including:
   a. The implications of our commitment to the Bible as “the foundation, controlling center and formative concern of the entire curriculum (Catalogue, p. 15).”
   b. The centrality in ATS’ history, identity, and destiny of the doctrine and experience of Entire Sanctification, despite its scant mention in our curricular philosophy.
   c. The lost art of expository preaching as the norm and standard for pulpit ministry;
   d. In opening prayers and openness to God’s grace, seeking renewal in learning by the revival spirit which birthed this institution. Far from obstructing the full use of critical reason, revival should rather energize and focus it!

The instructor prays this course fosters theological, intellectual, and spiritual renewal at ATS.
Means of Realizing Course Aspirations

READING in the literature of OT studies from many perspectives, from “mainstream” (i.e. non-conservative) OT criticism as well as evangelical scholars. Some readings are difficult and not always obviously relevant to, say, sermon preparation or youth ministry. Reading is a self-contained component of the course, to be completed on time regardless of the lecture pace.

Basic Textbook:
This text is a traditional OT introduction written by two evangelical scholars. An “introduction” to the OT is not a guide to the uninformed, but is a summary of current scholarly opinion about the authorship, date, origins, and composition of each OT book and the essential issues and problems involved in their interpretation. This book is to be read through the term and completed by the end of term.

Supplementary Required Texts:
Two additional textbooks are required for this course:

This book introduces the student to the essential issues involved in biblical interpretation and the methods employed with specific types of material. Students may omit sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament.

In the lectures, we will take a rapid overview, in chronological order, of the world of the OT. This book complements that overview by covering the world of the OT from the perspective of social settings and institutions instead of merely moving chronologically. The two presentations complement and reinforce one another.


LECTURES Most class sessions are lecture with accompanying interaction. Instead of directly expounding readings, lecture often presents analyses of issues supplementary material. From time to time, a class hour will be devoted to an interactive, cooperative learning experience.

Three Individual Essay Projects will be assigned, each of which will be 6-8 pages, typed, double-spaced, with 1” margins. These papers will be take-home practicum exams in which students will work with a passage of scripture or problem of biblical interpretation in the light of specific issues focused in class. Students may consult class notes and textbooks, but no other sources, for writing these essays. Essays are to be the student’s own work and students are asked not to consult, give, or receive any advice in conjunction with these essays. The essay topic will be given two weeks before it is due. Each essay counts for 25% of the students grade, with the remaining 25% coming from the professor’s evaluation on online assignments.
Tests: a mid term and final test based mainly on lecture will be given. Each will be an "identification" type of test in which the student will be given 25 terms or concepts from the course, from which 20 will be chosen for a brief written identification of about 35 words will be given. The Final Test is comprehensive, but specific questions asked on the midterm will not appear on the final. A review sheet is included at the end of this syllabus so students should, from the start, be taking notes and collecting material for the test. Do not rely primarily on the review sheet. Each test is one hour.

The list of "factoids" provided in this syllabus is very representative, though not completely exhaustive. Also, some material might be omitted due to time constraints, and these omissions will be announced in class. Students should develop brief, but complete identifications of each item, and in the case of combination items, each single element in the combination. Because this list is provided in advance, students are expected to approach the tests "ready to write" and the 60 minutes allotted for the exam should be adequate time. No computers may be used in the tests.

Why 35 words? Good question! This is about the size explanation needed to respond to the typical question one might be asked by a lay person regarding biblical history, and it is also about the size explanation appropriate for inclusion in a sermon. A concise, complete identification will address the classic questions of Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? It will provide the hearer with a helpful and informative block of information.

Due Dates
June 13: Essay 1
June 16: Midterm Test
June 21: Essay 2
June 29: Essay 3
June 30: Final Test

Essays and online participation are assigned a letter grade, which is then translated into a numerical grade for averaging according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Equivalents for Papers:</th>
<th>Approximate Final Grade Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A  100</td>
<td>A     95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-  94</td>
<td>A-    90-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+  89</td>
<td>B+    87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B  86</td>
<td>B     84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-  83</td>
<td>B-    80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+  79</td>
<td>C+    77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C  76</td>
<td>C     74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-  73</td>
<td>C-    70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+  69</td>
<td>D+    67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D  66</td>
<td>D     64-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-  63</td>
<td>D-    60-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F  59</td>
<td>F     0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Calculation: The final grade will be comprised of the average of the 3 essays and 2 tests. All five count equally. The final grade will then be reduced proportionally to the amount of reading the student has not completed. Note: the only deadline regarding reading is that all reading be
completed by June 30. The outline below, however, indicates the ranges of reading suggested for each topic unit of the course.
Sequence of General Lecture Topics and Due Dates for Reading Reports

I. DIVINE REVELATION IN HUMAN LITERATURE: THE BASICS OF OT STUDY

A. Theological Roots of OT Stud
B. Linguistic and Literary Factors in OT Study
C. A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation

Reading: For this block, you should read: *IBI* pp 1-214; *AIOT*, 1-36; *SWAI* “Introduction”

II. SEVEN HISTORICAL TAPESTRIES FOR READING THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Pallette of the Historian: Archeology and Biblical Study
A. Tapestry 1: A Long Time Ago, In A Civilization Far, Far, Away
B. Tapestry 2: Prince of Egypt?
C. Tapestry 3: The Godfather?
D. Tapestry 4: The Blues Brothers: Who’s On A Mission from God?
E. Tapestry 5: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence
F. Tapestry 6: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile
G. Tapestry 7: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration

Reading: For this block, complete *SWAI*; Read *AIOT* 37-234

III. FIVE CRITICAL VIEWPOINTS FOR FOCUSING THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. View 1: Textual Criticism: A Text in the Making
B. View 2: Source Criticism: Discovering the Diversity of the Pentateuch
C. View 3: Form Criticism: The Life Behind the Literature
D. View 4: Redaction Criticism: Out of Diversity, Unity
E. View 5: Literary Criticism: The Rhetoric of Divine Rule

Reading: For this block, finish *IBI* and *AIOT*. 
"FACTOIDs" FOR TEST PREPARATION

Reasons for regarding the OT as essential Christian scripture
Negative and positive aspects/definitions of "criticism"
Human aspects of the OT and their importance for interpretation
Specific distinctives between Gen. 1 & 2 (brief statement of each)
Illustrate standard narrative introductory pattern in ANE literature
Technical terminology in Genesis 1
Gen 1 & 2's treatment of male and female
Basic difference between names Yahweh and Elohim
stratigraphic (or area) excavation
Contrast Relative and Absolute Dating
synchronisms in archeological study
What 'material culture’ can reveal
Artifact typology in archaeology
Radiocarbon dating—basic principles, problems, validity
Dendrochronological Calibration of C14 dates
Factors limiting archaeology's effectiveness
What archaeology can/cannot do
Achievements of the Stone Ages
Eras and dates embraced by the "golden age” of ANE culture
Essential skeleton of ANE history in the "golden age”
Contrasting approaches to government in Mesopotamia & Egypt
Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Hammurapi
Old Kingdom Egypt
First Intermediate Period in Egypt
Stages in the history of writing
Enuma Elish, Gilgamesh Epic
Lawcodes from the Ancient Near East
Significance of the "golden age” for understanding the OT
Second Intermediate Period /Hyksos(Egypt)
New Kingdom (Egypt)
Menepeta Inscription
Ugaritic Texts
Amarna Texts
Apiru/Habiru
Dates for Exodus—considerations and problems for each
Sinai Theology
Period of Judges (1200-1040) (Date spans and 4 primary features)
United Kingdom (ca. 1040-921) (Date spans and 4 primary features)
Saul, David, Solomon
Elements of transformation to monarchy
Divided Kingdom (921-721) (Date spans and four primary features)
Contrast between "Israel” and "Judah”
Gezer Calendar
Moabite Stone
Neo-Assyrian Empire: dates, character, impact on OT Israel
Syro-Ephraimitic War
Deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib
Factors leading to "zion” theology
Core elements of "zion” theology
Setting (s) explicit or implicit in the various sections of the book of Isaiah
Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions
Setting of Amos and/or Hosea’s ministry
Judean State Period (721-587) (Date spans and 4 primary features)
Setting of Zephaniah, Nahum, Habbakuk
Arad ostraca
Josiah’s Reform
Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, Zedekiah
Neo-Babylonian Empire: dates, character, impact on OT Israel
Lachish Letters
Babylonian Exile/deportations (597, 587)
Ways in which the exile was a crisis for Israel’s faith
Various settings for the life and ministry of Jeremiah
Jermiah’s response to the exile
Setting for the ministry of Ezekiel
The Deuteronomists
The Priestly School
Features distinguishing Isaiah 40-55 from Isaiah 1-39
Stages of the Restoration: key personalities, dates, basic characteristics
Completion of the second temple (516)
Features making Isaiah 56-66 distinctive
The definitions and differences between “lower” criticism and “higher” criticism
Text criticism: summarize basic assumption and concern
Basic general rules for preferring particular readings among variants
Haplography, Dittography, Gloss, conflation
Massoretic Text, LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch, Origen's Hexapla, Jerome and the Vulgate
Dead Sea Scrolls: Basic background and types of material found, impact on OT textual studies
Features of the text seen as signs of literary sources
literary, historical, and redactional aspects of source criticism
J,E,D,P: major distinguishing characteristics of each
General reasons for post-mosaic dating of pentateuchal material
Anachronisms: define and illustrate
Reasons for critical late-dating Deuteronomy
Josiah’s reform and the book of Deuteronomy
Arguments for dating P last
Wellhausen’s Documentary Hypothesis: how and when the documents came together
Conservative Critique of Presuppositions of Documentary Hypothesis
pictographic, syllabic, alphabetic writing
Legal absurdities $ Omissions with Wellhausen’s theory
Improbabilities implicit in Wellhausen’s Theory
Examples of empirical validation/invalidation of points made on both sides of JEDP debate
Essential elements of the concept of “genre” or “form”
*Sitz im Leben*, etiology, transmission history, accretion
Contrast “redaction” in source criticism & in form criticism
Essential “steps” in form-criticism
phenomenological approach to defining myth
meta-divine; theogony, theomachy, cosmogony
Superficial similarities /differences between Enuma Elish and Gen1
Elements of the worldview implicit in Enuma Elish and Genesis 1

Saga, legend, epic, history—form, setting, function, redaction
Apodictic vs. Casuistic law: form, setting, function, redaction
Features of OT’s development leading to redaction criticism
Basic tasks of redaction criticism
Briefly explain narrative criticism, rhetorical criticism, structuralism
Rhetorical criticism: origins, emphases
General steps in rhetorical criticism
Possible criticisms of rhetorical criticism
The origins of contemporary “Literary criticism” of the Bible
Specific emphases of literary criticism
Problems a theological reader might have with literary criticism