OT 617 The Book of Judges

Lawson G. Stone

Follow this and additional works at: http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation

http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/2696
Course description
This course explores the major exegetical issues in the Book of Judges and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to several of the book’s salient passages. The primary concern in any exegetical work rests in the attempt to see beyond the limited perspectives of our particular cultural heritages and experience the text of the OT as a witness from a time, place, culture and ethnic location far removed from our own. Once we have learned to receive God's word across a cultural and ethnic divide, we become better able to communicate our witness to God's word across the cultural divides of our times. So our attention to language, textual matters, style, syntax, literary genres, social settings, etc. is only partly antiquarian. They open up to us how God's word speaks through cultural and ethnic horizons very different from our own. In a world in which ministry must necessarily deal with cultural and ethnic differences, learning to negotiate such differences as an integral part of hearing God's word makes exegesis an effective preparation for living and serving in a diverse world.

The events recorded in the book of Judges occurred and were recalled, recorded, and collected in the midst of historic changes in the life, politics, and culture of ancient Israel. The tribalism that divided the Hebrew People, the oppressions that threatened them, the provincialism that prevented them from responding effectively to their crises, and the recurrent apostasy that diluted their identity and drained their strength all emerge clearly in the book of Judges. Likewise, the various literary genres in the book and the signs of the use and re-use of the materials as the book took shape point to a struggle to receive God's word and reshape it for another generation, place, and circumstance. The tensions and conflicts of tribe, race, empire, culture, and faith that mark the book of Judges recur in contemporary life. Thus time spent with the book of Judges provides a meaningful encounter with problems and possibilities of contemporary ministry. The Spirit of God clearly found rich material for shaping this portion of the inspired scriptures.

The objectives below, as they note matters such as language, text, historical and cultural setting, etc. should be understood as the specific steps necessary toward the fulfillment of this encounter.

Course objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Present an analysis of the main features and interpretive questions of the major segments of the in the book of Judges using the English text;
2. Gain sufficient grammatical and vocabulary knowledge to use the Hebrew text of Judges to test, confirm and refine English-based analysis of the text,
3. Assess the state of preservation of shorter passages of Judges employing the BHS text and apparatus and basic text-critical methodology,
4. Gain sufficient grammatical and vocabulary knowledge to employ the evidence of grammar, sentence structure, and prose and poetic form, to interpret brief passages of the Hebrew text,

5. Present the significance—etymology, cognate information, range of usage, variation in meanings, implicit imagery—of the key terms in a brief passage by using basic original language word-study tools and techniques,

6. Identify the function of a brief passage of Judges in the framework of its immediate context, its function in the literary flow of the book and in the section of the canon within which it appears,

7. Situate the thematic emphases of specific passages of Judges in the context of the Old Testament’s unfolding message and in the context of the Bible as a whole,

8. Demonstrate the impact of representative exegetical methods on the study of Judges, employing relevant scholarly literature, and situating one’s own interpretation in the ongoing discussion of biblical interpretation,

9. Illustrate the contribution of exegetical study of the Hebrew text to biblical exposition, instruction, theological reflection, and spiritual formation in order to construct an appropriation of the passage that is integrative and coherent.

Course procedures and requirements

The professor's class presentations will model direct study of Judges, relying primarily on exegetical skills introduced in OT 501, the first IBS course, and OT 520. After an overview of the issues of interpreting the book as a whole, class presentations will move consecutively through the book of Judges, employing basic exegetical techniques and resources to present a distinctive theological reading of the entire book. Grammatical and linguistic details of selected passages will be highlighted to illustrate the passages' contribution to the message of the whole.

Reading: Students will be expected to prepare for class by reading the anticipated biblical material in English and the appropriate section of the assigned commentary. Additional readings on each passage might be assigned from time to time, including at least two additional readings of Judges itself in English (3 complete readings of the book in 3 different translations). Completion of all assigned reading constitutes 60 points of the total of 365 points making up the grade. Note the reading schedule below is fixed, regardless of the pace of lecture.

Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Attendance will be taken and counts for 25 of the total 365 points making up the grade. The professor uses a "no fault" attendance policy. There are no "excused" or "unexcused" absences. All absences count for the total attendance score, and any absence can be made up by completing a reasonable assignment negotiated with the professor. Normally this will involved listening to a recording of the class presentation or reading a short assignment and writing a brief reaction (1 page).

Vocabulary Quizes will be given weekly based on the first list in Van Pelt/Pratico. Vocabulary quizzes count for 60 points of the total 365. Each weekly quiz will include 3 "old" words from previous weeks and 7 chosen from the words assigned per the course schedule. Since students already have a basic vocabulary from OT 500, most of these words will be familiar. Students will learn every word in the Hebrew Bible occurring more 70 or more times.
Four exegetical papers will be written on assigned texts from Judges utilizing the skills acquired in OT 501 and the augmentation of those skills provided in class sessions. The first three papers are to be single-spaced, typed, and no more than 2000 words in length. Use of secondary sources will be strictly regulated in these papers since the student will be encouraged to rely on his or her own reading of the text. For format, style, abbreviations, etc. papers are to follow the Society of Biblical Literature Style Manual available in the bookstore. Excerpts of the most pertinent sections will be made available online in the course center.

First Paper: English translations, required course textbooks. Kohler-Baumgartner's Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon to the OT (not BDB), any standard Hebrew grammar(s), Bible search/analysis software (but not additional modules such as Bible commentary). The paper should focus on the textual apparatus, basic clause structure, and the assigned word/phrase. 1750 words.


Third Paper: All resources noted above, but also: at least 5 additional sources of an interpretive nature, such as commentaries or articles in scholarly journals. Commentaries must make substantive use of the original languages and may not be devotional/homiletical in nature. This is more than merely tossing in a quotation or a footnote, but should be a significant engagement with other interpreters. 2250 words.

The Fourth paper demonstrates the student's capacity to do full exegesis. Personal study is to be integrated with substantive use of secondary sources, and substantive theological reflection should derive from the analysis of the text. The paper should address substantively how the text informs and shapes ministry. Resources to be consulted include materials allowed for the third paper, plus any other interpretation that is responsible, including homiletical or devotional interpretation. By responsible is meant: (a) Primary: based on the original languages (b) Evidential: giving reasons for the interpretations offered and assessing multiple possibilities; (c) Critical: does not resolve interpretive issues merely by citing to doctrinal/ideological views.

Papers 1-3 are due no later than 5 PM on the due date. E-Submitters note the following:
*the only approved formats are MSWord or PDF
*files are to be saved correctly and attached to the email, not pasted into the body of the message
*DO put your NAME and SPO number inside the paper
*NAME your file by this convention: <lastname><initial><PaperNumber>.<extension> So if I were submitting the second paper, the MS Word file would be named STONEL2.doc

Unless announced otherwise, the final paper is due no later than 3 PM on May 19. The final examination session, as of this writing, is Wednesday, May 19, 3:00-5:00PM. There will be a final presentation in that session. This session counts 2 points for attendance. Reading Reports will also be collected.

Students are strongly cautioned about secondary sources. If they are used, they must be cited appropriately. Failure to cite sources upon which one has depended is plagiarism.
Papers will be graded on a rubric system similar to the one below. Each paper will have a rubric fitted to the particular paper's demands. Max 4 or 5 points, depending on the weight of the paper for the final grade.

1. A presentation of **the state of the text** as represented in the BHS apparatus, with suggestions, where appropriate, for emendation.
   0 - no discussion
   1-2 minimal discussion, at least a "translation" of what the apparatus says
   3-4 some consideration of the impact of the data on interpretation
   4-5 considered judgments about the state of the text and its implications

2. A brief analysis of the **context** of the unit
   0 none, or minimal, assessment of the context
   1-2 mechanical notation of preceding and following material
   3-4 recognition of structural and thematic flow of the unit "through" the passage
   4-5 Concrete and articulate awareness of the unit's function in the overall context

3. An analysis of the **clause and/or poetical structure** of the unit based on the analysis of phrases and clauses and standard rhetorical and structural principles (recurrences, causation, climax, etc.). How is the chosen passage a unit?
   0 none or minimal work with syntactical or stylistic features
   1-2 analysis is incomplete, inaccurate or inconsistent
   3-4 Clause subordination/consecution noted, parallelisms, etc.
   4-5 strong analysis of how the unit fits together logically and aesthetically

4. Observation of the import of **morphology/grammar** at the word/phrase level (derived stems, construct phrases, verb tenses, etc.)
   0 little or no work. Mainly cut/paste from Bibleworks or other (do NOT do this!!)
   1-2 most terms parsed accurately, but not consistently
   3-4 significance of word identifications accurately noted
   4-5 each word/phrase appropriately analyzed for its contribution to the whole

5. Identification of **words** worthy of further study, with such study where appropriate.
   0 little or no attention to key terms
   1-2 a few key terms identified, but without significant study devoted to them
   3-4 sporadic elaboration on words based on lexicon entries
   4-5 solid, complete lexical work (careful reading of the HALOT/NIDOTTE entries) on several or most words; or extensive work on just one or two. Excellence is choosing wisely!

6. Identification of the pertinent historical and cultural issues in the text. In the 3rd and 4th papers this will also include integration of appropriate secondary sources
   0 little or no treatment
   1-2 sketchy, incomplete, mechanical, superficial
   3-4 generally well studied, but not fully integrated
   4-5 Pertinent information from good sources, appropriately integrated
7. Identification of the **theological issues** posed in the text
   0 little or no treatment
   1-2 mechanical or superficial observations, only a concluding peroration
   3-4 appropriate identification of theological themes
   4-5 insightful identification of themes distinctive to this passage in its context

8. An accurate personal **translation** using the best insights gained from study.
   0 no translation
   1-2 translation mechanical, derivative, sprinkled through the paper
   3-4 serious effort at incorporating the exegesis into a distinctive translation
   4-5 exegetical work leads to a well-formed and compelling, personal translation

9. Excellent **writing**: organization, clarity, sound reasoning, mechanics. This embraces a variety of concerns, of which the following are a sample:
   * punctuality-1 point is reduced for each day late, no maximum
   * proper form and style. Use the *SBL Handbook*. Note: give the correct names and standard abbreviations for the various text traditions. E.g. There is no LXE (Bibleworks) in scholarship, it's "Brenton's Septuagint"
   * Do not just paste a lot of *Bibleworks* data into a document. Avoid all abbreviations and "codes" unique to a software package. *SBL Handbook* and Murphy have the correct terms and abbreviations. Use them.
   * Do not just dump a bunch of notes into a document!
   * Avoid direct quotation of secondary sources like the plague. It's so…high school…
   * This is not an IBS lesson, it is a coherent paper with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The body in turn should flow in a reasonable argument or discussion.
   * Grammar, spelling, appropriate style (informal but serious, not cute, chatty, etc)
   * you are expected to know your software, to know how to use your printer to produce quality output, or to use the institution's free computing resources to produce clear, clean, correctly formatted copy.
   * E-Submitters: Do NOT use returns to create page divisions. Do NOT create headers/footers by just crowding into the margins. Use your program's pagination and header/footer features. Do NOT use spaces and tabs to center/indent. use the program's indentation features. Otherwise, when I open your paper it will look whacked. Not good. Papers that look whacked, get whacked.
   * E-submitters: take care about your Hebrew font. I have the *Bibleworks* fonts (available free from the ATS Intranet), the SBL font *(Hebrew Regular)* Oaksoft's *Yehudith*, and Linguist Software's *Hebraica* collection. Obviously if you print your paper out, it doesn't matter what font you use! *If I can't read the Hebrew, I can't grade the paper! Take Care!*

10. Creativity and Freshness—clearly engaged with the text, engaging in its presentation.
    0 the paper was the worst writing I've read in a long time, almost worth saving for that reason
    1-2 mechanical, error-ridden, a bit pedantic
    3-4 Generally sound writing, few errors, appropriate style, moments of insight (this is pretty much the default grade unless you convince me up or down)
    4-5 Compelling insights, well-written, excellent word-choice, wow!
This scale will be adapted to accommodate different assignment weightings, be it 0-3, 0-4, or 0-5. These 10 features should not form the outline of the paper. Students should find engaging ways of structuring papers, integrating these rubrics appropriately. See online files for examples.

The Fourth paper should demonstrate the student's full capacity to do exegesis within the limits of the paper's format. Personal study is to be integrated with substantive use of (though not slavish reliance on) secondary sources, and substantive theological reflection should derive from the analysis of the text. The paper should also include a sermon outline or lesson plan incorporating the specific learning presented in the paper. These papers should be double-spaced and no more than 2200 words in length. Papers 1-3 are due no later than 5 PM on the due date at the professor's office or via attached MS Word file sent by e-mail, time/date stamped no later than 5 PM of the due-date. The final paper is due at the final exam session the week of May 17-21. and will be graded by the same rubrics used for papers 1-3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Study Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1:</td>
<td>Judges 2:11-13</td>
<td>&quot;Did evil in Yahweh's eyes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2:</td>
<td>Judges 3:9-11</td>
<td>&quot;the spirit of Yahweh...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3:</td>
<td>Judges 10:10-16</td>
<td>&quot;cried to Yahweh&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 4:</td>
<td>Judges 14:1-4</td>
<td>NASB: &quot;. . . she looks good to me...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Grade will be based on a total points system:

| Attendance: | 25  |
| Required Reading | 60 |
| Vocabulary Quizes | 60 |
| Paper 1 | 50  |
| Paper 2 | 50  |
| Paper 3 | 50  |
| Paper 4 | 60  |
| Total | 365 |

Final Grades will be assigned on a 365 Point Basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>345 to 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>328 to 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>317 to 327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>306 to 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>292 to 305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>281 to 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>270 to 280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>255 to 269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>244 to 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>233 to 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>219 to 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 to 218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Materials

**Required General Exegetical Tools.**
A Hebrew-based Concordance or Biblical Software with full Hebrew root and grammar based search capability (For Wintel: *Bibleworks*, *Logos*; for Macintosh *Accordance*). The latter is sufficient reason to go out and buy a Mac!)

**Required Material Directly Related to the Book of Judges**
Professor-Prepared Materials available for download from the Course Center

**Use of the Following Will be Required Throughout the Course**
1. General Reference Tools (Consult these first among secondary sources)
   *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD-ROM for all the major biblical research software packages.

2. Lexical and Grammatical Resources
   Köhler-Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brill: Multiple Volumes through late 1990’s, also on CDROM)

3. Septuagint Tools
   Found in software usually as LXE (*Bibleworks*) or LXX-B (*Accordance*)

**Recommended**
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
<th>Fridays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 11, 13,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organization and Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 18, 20</td>
<td>Judges 1:1-2:5</td>
<td>Quiz 1 VP 1-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25, 27</td>
<td>Judges 2:6-3:6</td>
<td>Quiz 2 VP 46-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 3, 5</td>
<td>Judges 3:7-11</td>
<td>Quiz 3 VP 91-135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 10, 12</td>
<td>Judges 3:12-31</td>
<td>Quiz 4 VP 136-180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 17, 19</td>
<td>Judges 4</td>
<td>Quiz 5 VP 181-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 24, 26</td>
<td>Judges 5</td>
<td>Quiz 6 VP 226-270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 31, Apr 2</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Paper 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 7, 9</td>
<td>Judges 6:1-8:32</td>
<td>Quiz 7 VP 271-315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 14, 16</td>
<td>Judges 833:-10:5</td>
<td>Quiz 8 VP 316-360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21, 23</td>
<td>Judges 10:6-12:15</td>
<td>Quiz 9 VP 361-405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 28, 30</td>
<td>Judges 13-16</td>
<td>Quiz 10 VP 406-450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5, 7</td>
<td>Judges 17-18</td>
<td>Quiz 11 VP 451-495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12, 14</td>
<td>Judges 19-21</td>
<td>Quiz 12 VP 496-506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19, 3-5 PM</td>
<td>Final Class Presentation</td>
<td>Paper 4 Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MID TERM READING REPORT DUE IN CLASS APRIL 8

Name _____________________________________________

Total Reading Points (Max. 15) _____________

This report covers all readings assigned up to and including March 26, 2004
Judges: 1 complete reading
Block: Introduction and commentary on 1:1-5:31

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE to calculate your points:

30: 100%
28: 95%
26: 90%
24: 85%
22: 80%
20: 75%
18: 70%
16: 65%
14: 60%
12: 55%
10: 50%
8: 45%
6: 40%
4: 35%
2: 30%
FINAL READING REPORT DUE IN CLASS MAY 14

Name ______________________________________________________________

Total Reading Points (Max. 15) __________

This report covers all readings assigned up to and including May 14, 2004
3 Complete readings of Judges in different versions
   All of Block

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE to calculate your points:

  30: 100%
  28: 95%
  26: 90%
  24: 85%
  22: 80%
  20: 75%
  18: 70%
  16: 65%
  14: 60%
  12: 55%
  10: 50%
   8: 45%
   6: 40%
   4: 35%
   2: 30%
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Note: these materials reflect a range of scholarly viewpoint and competence. Some titles are not directly about "Judges" but are relevant to larger issues of interpretation that impinge on the reading of Judges.

Asterisked (*) Sources reflect the professor's personal favorites (for a variety of reasons, not all of which are entirely healthy!) or especially noteworthy contributions

Scholarly Commentaries

Semi-Scholarly (But Competent) Commentaries
Hamlin, E. John, Judges: At Risk in the Promised Land (International Theological Commentary) Eerdmans 1990
Books On Judges


Books On Related Issues in Interpreting Judges


*Steiner, George. Grammars of Creation.
"Nevertheless, there is, I think, in the climate of spirit at the end of the twentieth century, a core-tiredness. The inward chronometry, the contracts with time which so largely determine our consciousness, point to late afternoon in ways that are ontological - this is to say, of the essence, of the fabric of being. We are, or feel ourselves to be, latecomers. The dishes are being cleared. 'Time, ladies and gents, time.' Such apprehension is the more compelling because it runs counter to the fact that, in the developed economies, individual life spans and expectancies are increasing. Yet the shadows lengthen. We seem to bend earthward and towards night as do plants."
*Steiner, George. Review of Literarary Guide to the Bible, by Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, The New Yorker January 11,

Articles and Chapters (See also books noted above)

Judges 1:1-3:6
Gurewicz, S. B. "The Bearing of Judges i-ii 5 on the Authorship of he Book of Judges."
Australian Biblical Review 7 (1959) 3740.

**Ehud**

**Deborah-Barak**


**Gideon**


**Abimelek**


**Minor Judges**


**Jephthah**

Note: A great deal of provocative and insightful work on this story has been done by feminist interpreters. Consult the "Books" sections above..


**Samson**


**Judg 17-18**


Spina, Frank A. "The Dan Story Historically Reconsidered." *JSOT* 1 (1977) 60-71;

**Judg 19-21**

"The End of the Book of Judges." In *Proc, 9th World Congress of Jewish Studs,* a; R Giveon; M Anbar, Et Al, 73-80, 1986.


Block D.I., "Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature; A Study in Judges 19," *WTS,* 52 (1990), 325-341.


**Structure and Theme of the Whole**


Talmon, Shemaryahu. "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel." Immanuel 5 1975) 27-36.


The Hero in Oral Tradition and Literature, Ancient and Modern


Chadwick, H. Munro. The Heroic Age 2nd Ed .Cambridge, University Press, 1926


Lord, A. The Singer of Tales. Cambridge, Mass., 1960

Lord, A. The Singer Resumes the Tale. Ithaca, 1995


Morris, Ian and Barry Powell, eds A New Companion to Homer... Leiden, 1996


Segal, Robert A.: In Quest of the Hero


Segal, Robert A.: In Quest of the Hero


Method Issues


Hess, Richard S. "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Higher Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: The Case of 4Qjudg." In Scrolls and the Scriptures, Sheffield: Sheffield Univ Pr, 1997, 122-128


Historical Issues


