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BS 501 Introduction to Biblical Studies I

David Loren Thompson

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Area of Biblical Studies

BS501 3 hours
INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES--1

David L. Thompson
Fall 2004

I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The two-course sequence of BS 501-502 comprises three interrelated sections:
(1) an introduction to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, the discipline of hermeneutics, and a contextual, text-centered approach to biblical interpretation;
(2) an introduction to the Old Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and
(3) an introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specializations represented among the course participants. In order to achieve credit for either course, the full, two-course sequence must be completed successfully. Required of all M.A. except for those in Biblical Studies. BS 501 focuses on the Old Testament.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. The student will trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of canonicity, especially the canon and canonicity of the Old Testament, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments.

The student will become conversant, in at least a basic and rudimentary way, the historical background of the Bible, including the historical setting of the biblical story, and especially the story of the Old Testament, and the critical historical issues surrounding the production of the various Old Testament books, and will demonstrate the ability to make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the biblical text.

- B. The student will be conversant with the major issues in hermeneutics (i.e., will be able to identify these issues, articulate the main contemporary positions surrounding these issues, and present in a reasonable and informed fashion his/her own perspective regarding these issues), and will demonstrate the ability to make use of these hermeneutical insights in the actual interpretation and application of the Old Testament text. Among these hermeneutical issues will be the role of the cultural placement of the reader in the process of interpretation and application and the importance of exposure to multicultural perspectives for understanding of the text.
- C. The student will demonstrate, in at least a basic and rudimentary way, the ability to observe, interpret, and apply the Old Testament text, and to show the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text

for the tasks of his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will (a) identify the macrostructure of a biblical book (including the structural development of the book in terms of its units and sub-nits, and major structural dynamics within the book) and will show the significance of these insights for the interpretation of the Old Testament text; (b) engage in a "close reading" of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation; (c) employ various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation for the interpretation of the Old Testament text; (d) move from interpretation of the Old Testament passage to specific and creative application to contemporary Christian life, including the exemplifying of principles that must be kept in mind in the use of the Old Testament for Christian application.

- D. The student will show how the teachings of individual passages within the Old Testament contribute to the flow of biblical revelation in the large, and will trace, in at least a general way, the development of major biblical themes and motifs throughout the whole of Scripture so as to articulate a biblical theology of these major themes and motifs.
- E. The student will demonstrate rudimentary ability to integrate the study of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, to his/her vocation.

Course Emphases. Three major streams of instruction converge to form the BS501X experience: (1) critical introduction to the study of the Old Testament and its historical, cultural environment; (2) hermeneutics (i.e., the study of human communication, in this case through ancient written documents); and (3) inductive biblical studies which amount to applied hermeneutics, emphasizing skill and craft development in the careful reading and redemptive use of the Old Testament. The first two we will approach through assigned reading and discussion. The last we will engage through our own direct work with the Old Testament text.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS

A. Required Texts

Bauer, David R. An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry. Hendrickson, 2003.

Drane, John Introducing the Old Testament. Completely revised and updated. Fortress Press, 2001. Abbreviated IOT in the syllabus.

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993. Introduces 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. (= IBI in syllabus) There is a new, enlarged and revised edition just published. Uncertainty about its availability for the class led us to stick with the previous edition for this fall's class.

Revised Standard Version of the Bible or New American Standard Bible or some other contemporary, formal (vs. dynamic) equivalence translation with minimal editorial clutter in the layout. NRSV and NIV are also fine.

Thompson, David L. Bible Study That Works. Revised edition. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1994. Gives a brief, non-technical overview of approach to "inductive biblical studies" commended by the class. (= BSTW)

- B. Required Access to Reference Materials: You will from time to time need to use one of the following multi-volume Bible encyclopedia sets. No substitutes are permitted. You do not have to own these, but they are a worthy addition to your library. Often one or the other is available in public libraries. The Asbury Bookstore can facilitate purchase should you wish to do so, as well as other dealers in theological books.

The Anchor Bible Dictionary. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes.

Also available on CD-ROM for Windows or PowerPC Macs running a Wintel emulation program.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988. 4 Volumes.

In addition to these, a very fine supplementary resource is the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols; ed. W. Van Gemeren, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

- C. Acknowledgements. I want to acknowledge here my debt to Dr. Lawson G. Stone, my colleague and friend in the area of Biblical Studies here at Asbury Seminary, for permission to use his OT Tapestries and selected other materials. Dr. Stone is professor of Old Testament. He and I collaborated in teaching the first sections of BS501 offered on campus some time ago. At that time, I found his "tapestries" an invaluable outline of a thoughtful, evangelical critical approach to matters germane to study of the Old Testament. With his permission I am using his tapestries yet again this fall. Thanks also to Dr. Sandra Richter, also an Old Testament colleague here at Asbury, for permission to reproduce and use her excellent chart on OT Chronology. Thanks also to Dr. Joseph Dongell for use of his excellent work on literary structure.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Attendance. Attendance is very important in this particular class in order to achieve the integration desired. A "no-fault" attendance policy applies which does not distinguish "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Class participation is the point. Students can earn up to thirty points for attendance. Every absence counts five points against that total. The five

points can be retrieved by completing a make-up assignment. It is the student's responsibility to make sure his or her name is recorded on the attendance sheet, and also to initiate make-up process for any absence whose points they wish to retrieve. The make-up will normally involve a 500 word critical interaction with some part of the week's readings.

- B. Readings. The class requires reading of all texts and materials as assigned. Examinations will provide accountability for all readings except the initial assignment of Bible Study That Works. In this case students will write a 600 word critical interaction with BSTW, listing and elaborating (1) three important learnings from gained from the reading, and (2) three important hermeneutical and/or theological questions raised by the book. Due to be posted 9/13.
- C. Examinations. Six exams will provide accountability for the readings (including Tapestries). The exams will cover the readings week by week, with the exception of the last exam, which will cover the readings for both week 13 and week 14. The exam in week 7 will also cover Dr. Sandra Richter's chronological chart. Consult the course calendar. Students can earn up to twenty points each or a total of 120 points on these exams.
- D. Inductive Bible studies. We will use six lessons as a laboratory for hands-on practice of inductive Bible study. We will devote weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14 to these studies, which will be integrated with the readings and class discussion being carried on as well. See the course calendar. You will find directions for doing these lessons in the weekly assignment folder. The lessons will be worth thirty points each, contributing a possible total of 180 points to the semester grade.

V. ON-LINE LEARNING SPACE

On-line Resources. As soon as possible in the first week a course icon for BS501 will appear on your FirstClass desktop in the ATS email system. This will serve several purposes for the class as a whole, so you should check it often.

- All course materials will be posted here in the Course Center for download, printing, or other use.
- Announcements and other time/assignment specific information will be posted here.
- You will post some assignments here, especially the opening interaction with BSTW.
- The six exams will be posted here.
- Conference space. The icon will include a Conference Center for discussion of topics and issues relevant to the class readings, lectures and related materials.

VI. GRADE COMPONENTS AND GRADING INFORMATION

A. Grade Components and Calculation

- Bible Study That Works interaction, 20 points
- Six examinations, twenty points each, total 120 points.
- Six Bible study lessons, thirty points each, total 180 points.
- Attendance. Thirty points.
- Total possible points for the semester, 350.

GRADE & PERCENTAGE		POINTS
A	95-100 %	332 - 350
A-	90-94 %	315 - 331
B+	87-89 %	304 - 314
B	84-86 %	294 – 303
B-	80-83 %	280 – 293
C+	77-79 %	269 – 279
C	74-76 %	259 – 268
C-	70-73 %	245 – 258
D+	67-69 %	234 – 244
D	64-66 %	224 – 233
D-	60-63 %	210 – 223
F	0-59 %	0 - 200

- B. Late Work. Late work may be accepted for credit but will not be graded, except in cases of emergency or by special arrangement with the professor.
- C. Grade Values. Grades in the class follow the assessments published in the seminary ATS Catalog, p. 28, e.g., A = “Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.”

VII. COURSE CALENDAR

- A. Course Schedule Overview. The following chart will give you an overview of the flow of the course, which materials to read, the weeks exams will be given and those devoted to inductive biblical studies. The “Weekly Assignment” folder will give you week by week guidance for your work.

WEEK	DATE	CLASS PROCESS
1	9/07-13	<u>Bible Study That Works</u> (128) [128] What Make of OT? (ppt) Why OT Criticism? (ppt) <i>By midnight Saturday, the 18th, post your BSTW reaction piece in mail box area in the course icon.</i>
2	9/14-20	IOT, 1. Introducing the OT, 11-35 (25) IOT, 9. The Living God, 228-251 (24) IOT, 10. God and the World, 253-276, (24) KBH, 8. Genres of the OT, Narrative, 259-274 (15) KBH 10. Using the Bible Today (Theology), 382-390 (9) [98] <i>Tapestry 1. Long Time Ago in a Civilization Far, Far Away.</i> <i>The gold age of ANE culture; the world of the OT EXAM</i>
3	9/21-27	IBS #1. GENESIS 2:4-4:26 Survey
4	9/28-10/4	IOT, 2. The Founding of the Nation, 36-61 (26) IOT, 3. A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey, 62-86 (25) KBH, 1. Need for Hermeneutics, 3-20 (18) KBH, 2. History of Interpretation, 21-52 (32) KBH, 3. Canon and Translations, 53-68 (14) KBH, 8. Genres of the OT, 274-291 (18) [133] <i>Tapestry 2. Prince of Egypt? Moses and the Covenant Nation.</i> <i>Birth of the nation; Egyptian bondage; Exodus-Sinai-Wilderness, Settlement in Canaan. EXAM</i>
5	10/05-11	IBS #2. PSALM 78 Survey
6	10/12-18	IOT, 4. A King Like Other Nations, 87-119 (33) IOT, 11. Living as God's People, 277-305 (28) KBH, 4. The Interpreter, 81-116 (36) KBH, 5. Goal of Interpretation, 117-154, (38) [135] <i>Tapestry 3. Godfather? The House of David and Israelite Imperial Aspirations. Iron I 11200-921 BC EXAM</i>
7	10/19-25	IOT, 5. The Two Kingdoms, 120-146 (27) IOT, 12. Worshipping God, 12. 306-330 (25) IOT, 13. From Hebrew Bible to OT, 338-362 (25) KBH, Appendix: Modern Approaches, 427-458 (32) [109] <i>Tapestry 4. The Blues Brothers. Who's on a Mission from God? Conflict in the Covenant.</i> <i>The Divided Kingdom Period, 921-721 B.C. EXAM</i>
8	10/26-11/01	IBS #3. AMOS BOOK SURVEY
9	11/02-08	IOT, 6. Judah and Jerusalem, 147-172 (26) KBH, 6. General Rules of Herm.—Prose, 155-214 (60) KBH, 8. Genres of the OT, 292-311 (20) [106]

		<i>Tapestry 5. A New Hope!</i> <i>The Judean State Period, 721-587 BC</i> EXAM
10	11/09-15	<i>IBS #4. PSALM 89</i>
11	11/16-29	IOT, 7. Dashed Hopes and New Horizons, 173-206 (34) KBH, 7. General Rules of Herm—Poetry, 215-258, (44) KBH, 8, Genres of the OT, 311-322 (12) [92] <i>Tapestry 6. The Empire Strikes Back</i> <i>Singing Yahweh's Son n a Strange Land.</i> <i>597-521 BC. The Babylonian Exile</i> EXAM
11/22 - 26 FALL READING BREAK		
12	11/30-12/06	IOT, 8. The Challenge of a New Age, 207-227 (21) <i>Tapestry 7. The Return of the Judean</i> <i>The "Crisis" of the Restoration, 539-300 BC</i> <i>IBS #5. AMOS 9:7-15 INTERPRETATION</i>
13	12/07-13	KBH, 10. Using the bible Today, 377-400 (24) KBH, 11. Application, 401-426. (26) [50] EXAM for wks 12-13
14	12/16	<i>IBS #6. AMOS 9:7-15 Evaluation-Application</i>
		Due: Thursday, December 16, 8:00 a.m. Bring to 8:00 a.m. session and plan to stay for 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. final session processing this work. All work due Friday, December 17, 5:00 p.m. Semester ends.