



OT Survey - Syllabus



Course Description:

An overview of the Old Testament, highlighting its organization, overall themes, historical context, and major events, as well as key ideas, events, people, and message of each Biblical book.

Course Objectives (Cognitive):

Upon completion of this course, each student should be able to:

- Articulate the 'Big-Picture' history of the Old Testament People of God and the overall message of the Old Testament.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of the Old Testament Scriptures and their relevance to life and ministry.
- Place the Major OT people, events and books in a general chronology.
- Explain the main message(s), organization, theme(s), and/or character(s) of every OT book.
- Articulate how the Old Testament prepares for the climactic revelation of Jesus Christ.

Course Goals (Mindset):

Upon completion of this course, each student should have opportunity to:

- Use the OT as a means to grow in worship, devotion, and Christian character
- Use the foundation from this survey as the basis for continued fruitful study in the Old Testament.
- Demonstrate a growing esteem of Jesus and His Holy Word.

Course Design:

This course is divided into seven modules which build upon each other in a systematic progression, as shown in the chart below.

1. Introductory Material: Overview of the Old Testament

2. The Pentateuch: Genesis - Deuteronomy

3. Historical Books: Joshua - Esther

4. Poetic Books: Job - Song of Songs

5. Major Prophets: Isaiah - Daniel

6. Minor Prophets: Hosea - Malachi

7. Toward the NT: Connecting the Old Testament to Jesus

Course Resources:

Primary Textbook-

Holy Bible in a literal [formal equivalent] or dynamic equivalent [functional equivalent] translation (no paraphrase).

Secondary/Supplemental Textbook-

Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer, Encountering the Old Testament – 3rd or 4th Ed., Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2013, 2024.

Video Lectures-

This course contains a number of lectures on video. These can all be found on the course website.

Course Documents-

This course contains a number of instructional and supplementary documents. These fall in four categories: 1) There are detailed instructions for the activities of each module. 2) There are study guides, blank lecture notes and supplementary information. 3) There are overview documents summarizing the entire Old Testament. And 4) There are two-page summaries for each Old Testament Book.

Reviews and Assessments-

There are review and assessment materials for each module on the course website.

Course Activities:

This course is divided into seven separate modules, by the natural divisions of the material. There are three basic groups of student activities for each module: intake activities, interaction activities, and application activities.

1. Intake of course information-

The intake activities are designed for the student to gain access to and receive relevant information about the course topics. Because of the nature of the Old Testament as revelation from God, it is important that the student start with a listening posture, to receive from the faith delivered once and for all to the saints. There is certainly a time for the student to contribute their insights (in the next two types of activities), but it is important to start with receiving the information.

2. Interaction with course information-

The interaction activities are designed for the student to thoughtfully process and mull over the information until they thoroughly understand it and have it committed to memory. The student will rehearse the information in a variety of ways and assess how well they have understood and retained the course content.

3. Application of course information-

The application activities are designed for the student to solidify their understanding by working through the ways that the course information connects with their own life and ministry in current society. The process of learning is not complete until the information is put into practice.

Detailed instructions for each activity are included in each module.

Course Bibliography

- Baylis, Albert H., From Creation to the Cross, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1996.
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- Bruce, F. F., New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1968
- Dever, Mark, The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made, Wheaton, Crossway, 2010.
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- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2003 [1981, 1993].
- _____, How to Read the Bible Book by Book, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2002
- France, R. T., Jesus and the Old Testament, Vancouver, Regent College Publishing, 1998.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme, According to Plan, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1991.
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- _____, “Gospel and Kingdom” in The Goldsworthy Trilogy, Milton Keynes, Paternoster, 2008.
- Grudem, Wayne, C. John Collins, and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds., Understanding the Big Picture of the Bible, Wheaton, Crossway, 2012.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Toward an Old Testament Theology, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1978.
- Lasor, William Sanford, David Allan Hubbard and Frederic William Bush, Old Testament Survey, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1982.
- Longman, Tremper III, Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions, Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 1999.
- _____, Introducing the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2012
- Martens, Elmer A., God’s Design, N. Richland Hills TX, Bibal Press, 1998.
- Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long and Tremper Longman III, A Biblical History of Israel, Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2003
- Robertson, O. Palmer, The Christ of the Covenants, Phillipsburg NJ, P&R, 1980.
- Schultz, Samuel J., The Old Testament Speaks, San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1990.
- Van Gemeren, Willem A. ed., A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1999.
- Vang, Preben, Telling God’s Story, Grand Rapids, Broadman & Holman, 2006.
- Waltke, Bruce K., An Old Testament Theology, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2007.
- Yancey, Phillip, The Bible Jesus Read, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2002.

Web Resources

- Concise OT Survey - <http://bible.org/series/concise-old-testament-survey>
- OT Gateway - <http://www.otgateway.com/>
- Bible History Online - <http://www.bible-history.com/>
- Old Testament Survey - <http://www.gotquestions.org/Old-Testament-Survey.html>
- Why Study the OT? - <http://www.gotquestions.org/old-testament.html>
- Story of the Bible - <http://www.bible-history.com/old-testament/>
- Basic OT Overview - <http://www.scriptureman.com/bibsur1.html>
- Holy Land Photos - <http://www.holylandphotos.org/>

Helpful Information

- Please realize that, at best, this course can only be an introduction to the OT. It is hoped that this course will give you a foundation upon which to launch a lifetime of study, devotion, teaching and preaching from these books. Be encouraged to continue in the Old Testament even after the course.
- Finally, do not lose God in the process of education. Take time to interact with Jesus about every part of your life. Specifically, invite the Lord to teach and lead you in the course material. These books were written out of lives of prayer, worship, devotion and wisdom’s wrestling with life and the Mighty Acts of God. It would be a tragedy and violation of the books if you treated this course as only an intellectual exercise. I also hope that you learn to rely on Him for the strength to learn and grow and fulfill all of the expectations placed on you. “Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God.” Phillips Brooks.

Course Presuppositions:

The motivation for teaching a course on an overview of the Old Testament is rooted in our presuppositions and the implications of those presuppositions regarding the nature and function of God's Holy Word, the Bible. These introductory words will serve to articulate our core values concerning the Scripture and provide a framework for the task being learned and practiced.

Our presuppositions regarding the Scriptures cover the nature of the Bible, core values regarding the interpretation of the Bible, and the implication of the above for the church. In terms of the nature of Scripture we affirm the following:

- We affirm that “the Bible is a supernatural book, God’s written revelation to his people given through prepared and selected spokespersons by the process of inspiration.” ¹
- We affirm that the Bible is God’s infallible, inerrant Word and is authoritatively true and is effectual in accomplishing its purpose.
- We affirm that “the Bible manifests unparalleled spiritual worth and a capacity to change lives. The Bible has the unique power to affect the reader spiritually.” ²
- We affirm that the Bible is characterized by both unity and diversity. It is diverse in that it represents a variety of human authors, different languages, different cultures, and a variety of literary genre that comes to us over a vast span of time. It is unified in that the Bible possesses an inherent unity because ultimately it has one divine author. ³
- We affirm “that the Bible is understandable; it is an accessible book. It presents a clear message to anyone willing to read it, and that is why people throughout history have understood its teachings.” ⁴
- As spiritual descendants of the Great Reformation “we accept the 66 books of the canon as the entirety of God’s scriptural record to his people.” ⁵

In terms of interpreting the Scripture we affirm the following:

- We affirm that truth and meaning are to be found in the text. We deny that truth and meaning are dependent upon the reader or the interpreter. Meaning is not to be imposed on the text, rather, the reader or interpreter will gain understanding by submitting to the authority of the Bible, applying sound interpretive technique, and heeding the presence of the Holy Spirit who brings understanding through illumination.

¹ Klein, Dr. William W. and Blomberg, Dr. Craig L. and Hubbard, Jr., Dr. Robert L. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing, 1993. (88)

² Ibid (91)

³ Ibid (91-92)

⁴ Ibid (92)

⁵ Ibid (92)

- We affirm that a text contains only one meaning (the meaning intended to be communicated by the divine and human authors), however, in some cases there may be many appropriate applications of a text to life.
- We affirm that proper interpretation must take into account issues of continuity and discontinuity in the relationship between the Testaments. This means that we recognize a promise/fulfilment motif with Jesus Christ being the ultimate fulfilment of God's redemptive plan.

These affirmations regarding the Scripture and its interpretation form the basis on which to place the content which will be learned in this course of study. It is of utmost importance that Biblical reading, summary, and application be performed with these core values in mind.

It is not enough, however, to merely learn the content of the Bible without thinking of applying truth to the lives of God's people. In light of this we affirm the following in regards to God's church:

- We affirm that the church is in constant need of reformation.
- We affirm that sound theology based on biblical exegesis is one of the primary means God uses to bring reformation about.
- We affirm that the ideal for the Christian is a synthesis of intellectual excellence and a relational, passionate faith. Whenever reformation has occurred, the Church has been able to achieve something of this synthesis. This synthesis is accomplished through bringing all of life under the authority of God's Word, which is the goal of exegesis.
- We affirm that the health of the church depends on its use of the Scriptures. The authority of the Scriptures must be believed and practiced in every aspect of the life of the church. The Bible should be seen and used as the primary, functional, and sufficient authority for all that the church does. The mission of the church as salt and light is gauged in part by its use and treatment of the Scriptures.

The presuppositions articulated in this prologue provide you, the student, with a frame of reference that reveals our positions on important matters regarding the nature and function of the Word of God. We have not attempted to defend our positions in this prologue. We have merely put them forward and we are committed to conducting ourselves in such a way that we will be faithful to these core values.

See the [Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy](#), and the [Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics](#) for further information and documentation of these presuppositions.