Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

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Description

This is a course on the Hebrew Bible in English translation, what Christians call the Old Testament and Jews call the Tanakh. In line with UTS's interfaith focus, this course will pay attention to the diversity of Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions. Thus, in addition to its testimony to the coming of Christ, the Hebrew Bible can be a window into understanding Judaism. Since the Hebrew Bible was "scripture" for Jesus and the first Christians, and we give close attention to Christian understandings of the text.

We will study the Bible from multiple viewpoints, including historical, theological, and the history of interpretation. The passages selected for study cover almost every book in the Old Testament.

The course also provides an introduction to Biblical Studies and issues of hermeneutics. This is a controversial topic for many, as there are conflicting views of the Bible and how it should be properly construed. We will look at all viewpoints, from traditionalists who regard Scripture as inerrant truth to modern approaches that apply the methods of historical-critical study in order to arrive at a more "accurate" record of sacred history. To one who searches the scriptures, each perspective has something to offer.

Finally, this course will provide the student with an introduction to the discipline of exegesis. As an essential foundation for sermon preparation, facility in exegesis is an essential skill for ministry.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

- Be familiar with the books of the Hebrew Bible and their contents
- Understand the unifying theological themes of the Hebrew Bible as a Christian scripture (Old Testament) and as a Jewish Scripture (Tanakh)
- Recognize the role of interpretation in understanding and owning biblical truth
- Have gained a beginner's competence in exegetical method
- Understand the basic history of Israel as God's people and its struggles to meet God's expectation
- Be acquainted with the various historical-critical and contextual methods of biblical study, their benefits and limitations, and insights gained thereby into the thought and life-world of ancient Israel
- Be able to distinguish between critical and faith-centered approaches in works of biblical scholarship

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- Understand relationships between the Old Testament and the New Testament
- Relate the Bible to the witness of the contemporary church and personal faith

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Students are responsible to study the assigned texts from Scripture and the readings from one of the assigned textbooks before coming to class.

Evaluation will be based upon:

- Weekly quizzes and written assignments (60% of the grade). The two exegesis papers will count double in determining this portion of the grade.
- Final exam (25% of the grade). The exam will test for knowledge of the assigned passages from the Bible.
- Class attendance and participation (15% of the grade). Unexcused absence from more than three classes will count against the final grade, while outstanding class participation may improve the final grade.

Textbooks

1. *The Bible* (NRSV, NIV, KJV, NKJV or RSV) **Bring your Bible to every class.**
2. One of the following:
   - William Sanford La Sor, *Old Testament Survey,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). **ISBN:** 0802837883 $32.00, available used
   - Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament,* 4th ed. (Prentice-Hall, 1986). **ISBN:** 0139359257 $82.00, available used
3. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) **ISBN:** 0310246040 $10.00
4. Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009). **ISBN:** 0801046408 $12.00

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of "plagiarism" and a violation of the Seminary's academic integrity policy. Instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

The first instance of plagiarism in this course, the student must repeat the assignment. If the student plagiarizes again, the student will receive an "F" for the course.

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Weekly Lessons

Week 1: *The Book of Two Religions*

The Hebrew Bible as the Jewish Bible versus the Old Testament as part of the Christian Bible. Order of the books. Canonization and the authority of scripture. Masoretic Text, Septuagint and Vulgate. Apocrypha and "missing books."

Translations of the Bible

Comparison of modern translations of the Bible: Which version is best for you? Working with commentaries. Hermeneutical presuppositions behind commentaries and translations, including biblical inerrancy, divine inspiration and other issues.

Text Criticism

When the translations do not agree. Working with texts.

TEXTS: Isaiah 14:12-15, Job 31:33, Psalm 8:5, 1 John 4:19, 5:7-8; Genesis 49:10

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 585-618
- Anderson, pp. 1-15, 636-643
- Fee and Stuart, pp. 33-53
- Gorman, pp. 35-59
- Text criticism examples: SEE HANDOUT POSTED ON POPULI

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), pp. 15-46
- Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), pp. 34-46.
- Gerald Hammond, "English Translations of the Bible," in *Literary Guide to the Bible,* Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, (Cambridge: Harvard, 1987), pp. 647-666
- Ralph Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974).

Week 2: *Creation and Fall*

Creation in Genesis 1

Comparisons with modern science. Creation by the absolute God versus the Babylonian/Canaanite conflict myths, and their vestiges in the Bible. Creation by the Word—the *Logos* or Torah. Creation *ex nihilo*. The work of the Trinity in creation. The Image of God. The Sabbath.

TEXTS: Genesis 1:1-2:4. Isaiah 27:1; 40:12-31; 51:9-11. Psalms 24:2; 74:12-17; 93:3-4; 104:1-9. Proverbs 8:22-31. John 1:1-14.

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The Human Fall

Jewish and Christian understandings of Genesis 3. The Canaanite background to Genesis 3: the fertility cult. Gilgamesh and parallels with Genesis. Comparisons with Unificationism.

TEXTS: Genesis chapter 3, 4:1, 19:4-8. 2 Samuel 19:31-38. Numbers 25. Deuteronomy 23:17-18. Psalm 82. Proverbs 7:1-8:7; 9. Ezekiel 28:12-19. Song of Songs 2:3-7, 4:16, 7:6-9

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 18-24, 260 (photo)
- Anderson, 182-193, 454-459
- *Enuma Elish,* When on high..." the Babylonian Creation Myth, especially Tablets I, II, IV, V. SEE HANDOUT POSTED ON POPULI; also http://www.cresourcei.org/enumaelish.html
- *Gilgamesh,* Tablets I-II. SEE HANDOUT POSTED ON POPULI; also http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/ Also Stephen Mitchell, *Gilgamesh: A New English Version* (Free Press, 2004), pp. 71-85.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Andrew Wilson, "The Sexual Interpretation of the Human Fall," in Anthony Guerra, ed., *Unification Theology in Comparative Perspectives* (UTS, 1988) SEE HANDOUT POSTED ON POPULI

Quiz: Order of the books in the Bible.

Week 3: *Approaches to the Bible*

Traditional and critical approaches to studying the Bible. The Bible's authority as sacred scripture; its fallibility as a human document. Context of the conflict between science and religion.

Hermeneutics and the task of interpretation. Distinguishing the original context from contemporary theological application. Modern doctrine of inerrancy. The Bible as revelation/inspiration. *Principles of understanding and co-owning God's revealed word.*

Sources of the Pentateuch

Comparison of the two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2. JHWH: the name of God. Example of multiple sources: Exodus 24. How the two creation stories may be read together for greater understanding.

The Primeval History

The regression and decline of humanity. Cain and Abel, Lamech, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. Evidence for the historical Deluge. The Babylonian Flood story.

TEXTS: Genesis 2:4-25; chapters 4-11. Exodus 24. 1 Timothy 3:14-17. 2 Peter 1:21

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READINGS:

- Gorman, pp. 10-23
- La Sor, pp. 3-25
- Anderson, pp. 19-24
- Account of the Flood in *Atrahasis*. SEE HANDOUT POSTED ON POPULI; also in *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 11, http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Theodore Shimmyo, "Sun Myung Moon's Approach to the Bible," *Journal of Unification Studies 14* (2013): 1-8.
- Norman C. Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Fortress, 1971).

ASSIGNMENT: Identifying Multiple Literary Sources

Week 4: Genesis: The Patriarchs

Abraham. Abraham, his trials and his faith. Abraham the father of three great religions. The Blessing of Abraham. Paul's use of Abraham in the doctrine of justification by faith. Abraham's offering. The covenant of Circumcision. Comparison of the Covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses.

The Patriarchs' travels and Israel's claim to the Land. Shrine etiologies. Nuzi texts and a window on patriarchal customs.

Themes of the original epic:

(a) Pass on the lineage of blessing;
1) Abraham's blessing
2) Threat to the wife: Sarah and Pharaoh, Abimelech
3) Barren wife: Sarah, Rachel
4) Threat to the son: Ishmael, binding of Isaac
5) A wife for Isaac
6) Tamar

(b) The religion of the Patriarchs—Abraham's personal relationship with "the God of Abraham." Abraham's intercession with God for Sodom and Gomorrah – could Noah have pleaded like that?

(c) The Binding of Isaac and parallels with the Crucifixion

(d) The struggle for the birthright:
1) Isaac and Ishmael
2) Jacob and Esau
3) Jacob and Laban
4) Rachel and Leah
5) Joseph and Judah
6) Ephraim and Manasseh

TEXTS: Genesis chapters 12-48.

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 25-51.
- Anderson, pp. 156-77, 459-464.

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Week 5: *Moses and the Exodus from Egypt*

The Joseph story

Moses and the Exodus from Egypt

The life of Moses. The Burning Bush and the name of God. The Exodus from Egypt. Crossing the "Reed Sea."

The Sinai Covenant. Covenant Theology.

TEXTS: Exodus 1:1-6:9, 6:30-8:15, 10:21-19:25, 32:1-34:9,27-35. Leviticus 26. Numbers 6:24-26. Deuteronomy 6:4-9, ch. 27-28. Joshua 24.

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 52-79
- Anderson, pp. 48-94, 98-107, 147-149

***QUIZ:* Genesis**

Week 6: The Ten Commandments and the Mosaic Law

The meaning of the Ten Commandments and their significance through history.

The Law Codes of the Torah. Leviticus and the sacrificial system. Day of Atonement, Kosher laws, and laws of the Sabbath. Social and humanitarian laws. Jewish *halachah* and Torah as a way of holiness.

Christian understandings of Old Testament Law. Is the law an obstacle to faith? What Old Testament laws are binding on Christians, and by what criteria? What is the basis of New Testament ethics?

Implications of the Exodus for the Western view of Providence, of historical progress, of social revolution, and constitutional government.

TEXTS: Exodus 20:1-17; 21:1-24:18, 34:10-28. Leviticus 11, 16, 19-25. Deuteronomy 5:1-21, 23:19-24:22.

READINGS:

- Fee and Stuart, pp. 163-180
- La Sor, pp. 80-98
- Anderson, pp. 95-98, 107-109, 533-536
- *The Code of Hammurabi* (excerpts) SEE HANDOUT POSTED ON POPULI

SUGGESTED READING:

- Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

ASSIGNMENT: God's laws for Israel and their applicability for today.

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Week 7: *Introduction to Exegesis. Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History.*

Method and Art of exegesis

Approaches to exegesis: historical-critical, contextual, and theological. Writing an exegesis paper.

Exegetical method:

1. Select a passage
2. Survey how it is used in the Church
3. Determine the historical context
4. Look at form and structure, where it begins and ends
5. Detailed analysis of key verses and words in the text,
6. Meaning(s) of the whole passage
7. Theological reflection and application

Deuteronomy

The first great sermon. Teachings on wealth, humility, and grace. Moses the intercessor. The nature of God: grace, omnipotence. The conditional covenant and human responsibility to choose either life or death.

Joshua through Kings: The Deuteronomistic History

Joshua and the conquest of Canaan. Judges. Founding of the Israelite kingdom: struggle between Samuel and Saul, in the Bible and according to the Principle. The Samuel Compromise and the origins of prophecy. Jonathan: an Isaac figure? David and the struggle for Kingship. Death of Saul.

TEXTS: Deuteronomy chs. 6-11, 12, 17:14-20; 18:15-22, chs. 30-34. Joshua 1-8. Judges 1-2; 4-9; 11; 21:25. 1 Samuel 1-6, 8-31. 2 Samuel 1.

READINGS:

- Gorman, pp. 23-33, 247-275
- La Sor, pp. 111-179
- Anderson, pp. 131-147, 181-184, 189-220, 373-384
- Fee and Stuart, pp. 17-31, 74-106

SUGGESTED READING:

- Virkler, pp. 211-229

ASSIGNMENT: Exegesis of a passage from Deuteronomy (passage to be announced). In five pages, carefully delineate the meaning of the passage *according to the 7-step method described above*. Include bibliography of commentaries consulted.

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Week 8: *David, Solomon and the Prophets of the Northern Kingdom*

David, Solomon and the downfall of the United Kingdom

David's rise to power. David and Bathsheba. Nathan's Parable. Bathsheba according to the Principle. The latter days of David's reign: weakness and family turmoil. The Davidic Covenant. Solomon's wealth, power, and arrogance. The end of the United Kingdom.

Elijah, Elisha and the Former Prophets

A survey of the prophets. Social and political role of the prophet. Ahijah and the division of the kingdoms. Survey of the history of the Divided Kingdom.

Elijah's fight against Baalism. Elijah on Mt. Horeb. The power of the prophetic Word. Naboth's vineyard and the struggle for Israel's economic and legal traditions. The school of Elijah: its discipline and its miracles. Elisha, Gehazi. Jehu's rebellion—high point of prophetic political power.

TEXTS: 2 Samuel 2-24. 1 Kings 1:1-13:32; 16:23-22:40. 2 Kings 2:1-25; 5:1-7:20; 9:1-10:31.

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 179-209, 221-230
- Anderson, pp. 221-286

Week 9: *Amos, Hosea and Isaiah*

Amos and Hosea

How to read the prophetic books, using a commentary. Amos, prophet of doom. The Creator's universal law and the prophet's universal scope.

Hosea and the meaning of his marriage. The Marriage Covenant and God's broken family. God's longing heart.

Isaiah

Isaiah: his life and times. Isaiah 2: tension between hope for God's kingdom and the people's reality. Exegesis of Isaiah chapters 5-11: Parable of the vineyard; the woes; Isaiah's call; meeting with King Ahaz; the Immanuel prophecy; the messianic king. The hermeneutical issue: historical exegesis and interpretation by the Holy Spirit. Messianic prophecies.

TEXTS: Amos 1:1-2:16; 5:18-24; 6:1-7; 9:5-8. Hosea 1-4, 11:1-9. Isaiah ch. 1-2; 5:1-10:4; ch. 11.

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READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 243-269, 276-295, 688-694.
- Anderson, pp. 286-337
- Fee and Stuart, pp. 181-204

ASSIGNMENT: Messianic prophecies. For two passages *(to be announced),* distinguish between the *historical meaning* to the people of ancient Israel and the *messianic meaning* to Christians (and/or Jews). What is the difference between the hermeneutics that produce these two distinct meanings? 3-4 pages.

Week 10: *Prophets and National Crisis: Isaiah and Jeremiah*

Isaiah

Oracles at the siege of Jerusalem: Assyria as God's weapon of destruction. The salvation of Jerusalem and the oracle of the "valley of vision." Oracles against the nations: Egypt and God's call to trust and patience in matters of foreign policy. The conversion of Egypt and the international highway. Oracle against Babylon and the fall of Lucifer.

Jeremiah

Historical situation at the beginning of the 6th century B.C. God's wrath and the Babylonian exile. The Temple Sermon. Weeping over God's heart. Jeremiah's "confessions" and struggles. Sign acts. Confrontations in the king's court. True and false prophets. The new covenant.

Exegesis of the prophets: literary and syntactical issues. Typology and the fulfillment of prophecy.

TEXTS: Isaiah 10:5-34; ch. 14; 18-22; 28-31; 36-39. Jeremiah 1-3; 5:1-17; 6:13-21; 7:1-9:1; 10:1-10; 12:1-13; 15:10-16:9; 18:1-12; chs. 20; 23, 26-29; 31:31-33; 32:1-15; 36. 1 Kings 22.

READINGS:

- Anderson, pp. 341-55, 391-423
- La Sor, pp. 328-355

ASSIGNMENT: Exegesis paper on a prophetic text. Choose a passage from the prophets, 4-9 verses long. Give a *brief* account of the historical context. Explain on literary and syntactic grounds why you think this passage has integrity as a unit of prophecy. As with the Deuteronomy assignment, carefully delineate the meaning of the passage *verse by verse,* always relating the historical meaning in ancient Israel to our situation today. Include bibliography of sources consulted. 5-7 pages.

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Week 11: Prophets of the Exile: Ezekiel and Second Isaiah

Ezekiel

Ezekiel's vision. Individual justice. The prophet as Watchman. Valley of dry bones. Ezekiel's vision of Lucifer. New Jerusalem.

Second Isaiah

Second Isaiah: prophet of comfort. God's purpose in Cyrus as the "messiah." The Servant of the Lord and the Suffering Servant.

TEXTS: Isaiah 40:1-11; 42:1-9; 43:8-21; 44:24-45:25; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12. Ezekiel chs. 1-4; 8-11; 13:8-19; 16; 18; 20:25-26; 24; 28:11-19; 31; 33:1-22, 30-33; 34; 36:22-36; 37; 40; 47:1-12.

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 295-298, 301-312, 356-369
- Anderson, pp. 427-445, 467-502

Week 12: *Restoration and Reform*

Third Isaiah, Haggai and Zechariah (1-7)

Prophets of the restoration: Trito-Isaiah, Haggai and Zechariah: Their competing visions of community. Zechariah's vision of an ordered polity. Role of the priests and the place of foreigners. Levites vs. Zadokites (Ezekiel's students). Establishment of the Second Temple. Conversion of the Gentiles.

Jonah, Ruth, Malachi, Reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah

Universalism vs exclusivism. Jonah—a satire on narrow-minded prophets. Ruth: a gentile mother of Israel. Restoration hopes and disappointments. Malachi's indictment of the corrupt priesthood, intermarriage and lack of sincere tithing. Ezra's reforms. Promulgating the Law at the Water Gate.

TEXTS: Isaiah 56:1-8; 60:1-61:7; 63:15-19; 65; 66:1-3; 19:18-25. Jonah. Haggai. Zechariah 1-7. Malachi 1:1-3:12. Ezekiel 44:4-27; Ezra 1-7. Nehemiah 8-9. Ruth.

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 298-300, 381-389, 390-408, 414-422, 520-525, 550-565
- Anderson, pp. 502-506, 507-520, 521-539, 605-607

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Week 13: *The Psalms and Wisdom*

The Psalms

Psalms—the hymnal of Israel and the church. Genres of psalms and their use in worship. Memorable psalms for the Christian and Jewish hymnal. Davidic authorship.

TEXTS: Psalms 2, 19, 22-24, 29, 42, 46, 51, 72, 96, 100, 118, 121, 127, 133, 137.

READINGS:
- La Sor, 425-446
- Anderson, pp. 540-567
- Fee and Stuart, 205-223

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs

Wisdom literature; its setting and purposes in Israel. Proverbs. Ecclesiastes and his skepticism. The wisdom of old age. God's feminine voice in the Song of Songs.

TEXTS: Proverbs 1:7-9; 2:1-3:18; 5:15-23; 6:6-8:31; 10:12; 12:15-16; 13:24; 14:10,12-17,30-32; 15:1,16-17; 16:2-33; 18:24; 19:2,18,21; 21:2,14; 23:29-35; 25:11,21-22; 27:2,19; 28:13; 31:10-31. Ecclesiastes 1-3; 5:10-20; 8:10-9:12; 11:1-6; 12:1-12. Song of Songs.

READINGS:
- La Sor, pp. 447-470, 497-519
- Anderson, pp. 568-88
- Fee and Stuart, 225-248

ASSIGNMENT: Choose 4 proverbs from the Book of Proverbs and one passage from either Ecclesiastes or Song of Songs that have great meaning to you. Discuss what each one means, and especially what insight it gives to your life of faith. You may include personal testimony.

Week 14: *The Theodicy Problem*

The answers of Job and Habakkuk

Theodicy and the meaning of faith. Job: why do the innocent suffer? Habakkuk's patient faith.

TEXTS: Job 1-6, 9:1-11:6, 13:1-12; 15:1-6; 16:19-21; 19:25-27; chs. 38-42; Habakkuk.

Faith in God's final victory: Apocalyptic Eschatology

TEXTS: Isaiah 24-27, 66. Ezekiel 38-39. Zechariah 9-14. Joel 2:28-3:21. Malachi 3-4.

READINGS:
- La Sor, pp. 322-327, 375-380, 409-413, 418-421, 471-496
- Anderson, pp. 388-390, 522-24, 588-601, 618-622

SUGGESTED READING:
- Virkler, pp. 190-207.

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EXAM PREPARATION

Week 15: *Daniel and Enoch*

Daniel's visions of the Son of Man. Attempts to calculate the end-times. Messianic expectations at the time of Jesus. The Apocrypha. Intertestamental Literature:

Enoch, the Dead Sea Scrolls. Beliefs concerning Satan, the resurrection, the question of justice vs. mercy. Later Jewish views on the Messiah.

What were some of the Jewish messianic expectations at the time of Jesus? Which aspects of apocalyptic eschatology did Jesus approve of, and what aspects did he reject

TEXTS: Daniel *1-2, 6-8; 9:24-27.* 1 Enoch 6-11, 45-48. Tobit. Judith.

READINGS:

- La Sor, pp. 566-582
- Anderson, pp. 610-633

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Jacob Neusner, ed., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

Week 16: Final Exam

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Select Bibliography

General

Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longmann III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994). An Evangelical attempt to bridge liberal and conservative perspectives on the Bible; weak on history with emphasis on interpretation.

Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000). A conservative evangelical approach to the Old Testament and a textbook that some might choose as an alternative to either La Sor or Anderson.

Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999). A theological approach, utilizing latest (liberal) scholarship but lacking in any messianic focus.

Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977). A solid survey from a Fundamentalist standpoint, strong in Christian doctrine and Christology.

John Bright, *A History of Israel,* 3rd Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985). The standard history of Israel in OT times; relatively conservative in following the Bible's basic story.

Siegfried Herrmann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament Times*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981). German historiography is more skeptical of the Bible as source material and freer in positing a different underlying historical construct.

Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970). This Christian historian seeks to maintain the literal biblical chronology.

Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962, 1965). A classic theological treatment of the Old Testament by a giant of the 20th century.

Joseph Telushkin, *Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Morrow, 1999). A Jewish perspective, valuable especially for its discussion of laws in the Torah.

Special Topics

F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* (New York: Schocken, 1968). A classic discussion of the Fall in Jewish and Christian literature from the Bible through the Church Fathers.

James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. (Princeton University Press, 1969). An encyclopedic compendium of texts from

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Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, Mari, Assyria, Phoenicia and Canaan that give us a glimpse of Near Eastern cultures contemporary with Israel, as well as biblical parallels.

Michael David Coogan, *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978). Tells the foundation myths of Canaanite religion: the loves and wars of Baal, etc. as discovered from tablets at Ugarit.

Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (University of Chicago, 1945). A full text of Gilgamesh and other ancient accounts of the Flood.

Richard Elliott Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001). Combines traditional Jewish learning with modern scholarship to uncover the meaning of the Hebrew text; useful for Bible study from a Jewish perspective.

Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff, *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976). One of the first attempts to discern the J, E, P and D sources individually and study their distinct messages.

Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1964). The founder of form criticism investigates the oral traditions behind the sources.

Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). Insightful discussion of the lasting influence of the Exodus on Western political thought.

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994). This can be a useful tool for studying the OT and providential history.

Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). Contains groundbreaking studies on Israelite religion and especially in relation to its Canaanite environment by a leading OT scholar. Difficult reading but rewarding.

George E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973). Seminal scholarly essays on Israelite religion during the period of the wilderness wanderings and Judges. The essay on Baal Peor is relevant to the study of Canaanite fertility practices.

Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road* (New York: Ballantine, 1997). A popular study of women in the Bible whose stories involved seduction, rape, incest and violence, including Tamar, Dinah, Bathsheba, Jael, and Jephthah's daughter.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962). A Jewish classic explores the psychology and religious experience of the prophet as he is confronted with God's word.

Megan McKenna, *Prophets: Words of Fire* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001). The spirituality of the prophets and their quest for justice, words that call us to account even today.

Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990). Survey of the prophets centered on Christian doctrine.

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Bernhard W. Anderson and Steven Bishop, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2000). A very readable survey of the psalms that includes the Christian devotional perspective alongside the historical perspective.

Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965). Reconstructs the religious and social institutions of Israel, including the family and family law, economy, civil administration, the army, and the Temple.

Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to Wisdom Literature* (Intervarsity Press, 1985). A very readable introduction from a Christian viewpoint.

James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Westminster John Knox, 1998). A wide-ranging historical study of Israel's wisdom literature that brings in Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels.

Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975). On the nature and origin of apocalyptic and the context of social conflict in post-exilic Judaism.

Jacob Neusner, ed., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, 1987). Shows the diversity of messianic interpretation among Jews at the time of Christ.

Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (New York: Macmillan, 1955). A Jewish historian looks at Messianism in the Old Testament through the early rabbinic period.

R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch.* Most important extra-biblical text (included in Ethiopian Orthodox Bibles), it contains descriptions of the fall of the angels and the Son of Man.

James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* vol. 1.

For more on specific biblical books, consult the commentarial literature.