



**EZRA/NEHEMIAH  
OTEN5315  
Israel Travel Course  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
January 4-13, 2018**

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**Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

**Core Value Focus**

The seminary has five core values.

- 1. Doctrinal Integrity:** Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity specifically by preparing students to grow in understanding and interpreting of the Bible.
- 2. Spiritual Vitality:** We are a worshipping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word. Spiritual Vitality is addressed by reminding students that a dynamic relationship with God is vital for effective ministry.
- 3. Mission Focus:** We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries. This course addresses Mission Focus by helping students understand the biblical foundations for fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments.
- 4. Characteristic Excellence:** What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Characteristic Excellence is addressed by preparing students to excel in their ability to interpret Scripture, which is foundational to effective ministry.
- 5. Servant Leadership:** We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us. Servant Leadership is modeled by classroom deportment.

The core value focus for the 2017-2018 academic year is **Servant Leadership**.

**Curriculum Competencies**

NOBTS faculty members realize that all ministers need to develop specific competencies if they are going to have an effective ministry. To increase the likelihood of NOBTS graduates having an effective ministry, the faculty developed a competency-based curriculum after identifying seven essential competencies necessary for effective ministry. All graduates are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in all of the following areas:

- 1. Biblical Exposition:** To interpret and communicate the Bible accurately.
- 2. Christian Theological Heritage:** To understand and interpret Christian theological

heritage and Baptist polity for the church.

3. **Disciple Making:** To stimulate church health through mobilizing the church for missions, evangelism, discipleship, and church growth.
4. **Interpersonal Skills:** To perform pastoral care effectively, with skills in communication and conflict management.
5. **Servant Leadership:** To serve churches effectively through team ministry.
6. **Spiritual and Character Formation:** To provide moral leadership by modeling and mentoring Christian character and devotion.
7. **Worship Leadership:** To facilitate worship effectively.

The curriculum competencies addressed in this seminar are **Biblical Exposition** and **Worship Leadership**.

### **Course Description**

A thorough study of selected texts, through verse-by-verse and paragraph-by-paragraph analysis, comparison of various English versions, consideration of pertinent historical and cultural issues, along with consultation of comprehensive commentaries. The course will emphasize proper methods for discovering the meaning of a text and applying it in teaching and preaching.

### **Course Purpose**

This course offers a practical study of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Using the components of sound biblical exegesis and exposition, the focus of the course is to prepare the participants for effective teaching and preaching.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, the student will have:

1. Gained an understanding of the critical historical/theological issues in Ezra/Nehemiah.
2. Completed an exegesis of a selected passage from the English text of Ezra/Nehemiah.
3. Developed a broad understanding of the text through exegetical and homiletical commentaries on Ezra/Nehemiah.
4. Learned to appreciate the value of Old Testament narrative for teaching and preaching.

### **Course Teaching Methodology**

The lectures by the professor will provide the basis for background and movement from subject to subject within the course. Assigned topics and Scripture passages will be designed to sharpen the student's knowledge and skills in important areas of study in Ezra/Nehemiah. Dialogue and discussion during the course will enhance the learning experience. Individual presentations and small group interaction also may be employed.

### **Textbooks**

Fensham, F.C. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1982.

Breneman, Mervin. *Ezra Nehemiah Ester*. Vol. 10 The New American Commentary. B&H, 1993.

### **Requirements**

#### **1. Book Reviews on Textbooks**

Each student will read the **textbooks** (Not required to read section on Esther in Breneman's Commentary) Students are expected to complete reading Fensham prior to the

trip. A written review on the book is due by **January 22, 2018**. The book by Breneman may be read on or after the trip to Israel, with a written review due by January 22, 2018. The book reviews should be 2-3 single-spaced pages and include the following elements:

- 1) Bibliographic Entry
- 2) Statement of the Author's Purpose
- 3) Summary of the Author's Approach (can be in the same paragraph as #2, Purpose)
- 4) Summary of the Contents (selected portions only, such as special insights into passages that drew the student's attention)
- 5) An Evaluation of the book, including consideration of the most suitable readership, the scope of the book (comprehensive? or lacking in major areas), the viewpoints presented (multiple viewpoints when pertinent, or only one), and your overall evaluation of the book.

The summaries should be general in nature, covering the broad topics and several specific texts or topics as examples of the author's approach. **(15% per review = 30% total)**

**2.** Each student will keep a **Travel Log (journal)** with notes on the sites, lectures, and personal impressions. This journal (or a copy) is to be submitted by **January 20th. (30%)**

**3.** Students are expected to **participate** and take notes in the class sessions and participate in the travel lectures and discussions. **(5%)**

**4.** Each student may make **presentations** of site information, with the presentation schedule to be communicated to the group by the professor during the trip and coordinated with Dr. Warren's class. The time frame for each presentation is about 5 minutes. **(10%)**

**5.** Each student will prepare a **Background Study** on a topic given below with topics requiring pre-approval by the professor. The student will select a topic of their choice in consultation with the professor and will write a Background Study on the topic. See the Background Study Guide for instructions on writing the paper. The grading of the paper will be based on the following considerations: Form/Style/Grammar = 10%; Bibliography = 15%; Organization of the paper = 10%; Logic Flow = 15%; Content (coverage of viewpoints, details, solid analysis of the historical background, etc.) = 50%.

**The Study Guides are due on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> and should be submitted via e-mail to the professor at [jparker@nobts.edu](mailto:jparker@nobts.edu) (25%)**

### **Background Study**

Each student will prepare a **Background Study** on a Critical Issue or Major Theme from the Books of Ezra/Nehemiah. The topics will be assigned by Dr. Parker on a "first come, first served" basis. Please select a first, second, and third choice from the following list of topics and email your choices to Dr.

Parker ([jparker@nobts.edu](mailto:jparker@nobts.edu)). A Background Study Guide is attached to the syllabus for your use. Follow the format for the Background Study that is given in the Study Guide. **The Background Study is due at the beginning of Spring Semester, January 22, 2018.**

### **Background Study Topics**

1. Cyrus, king of Persia
2. Persia (in the exilic and post-exilic period)
3. The Chronology of Ezra-Nehemiah
4. Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel
5. Darius, king of Persia
6. Ahasuerus (Xerxes)
7. Ezra and his genealogy
8. "Peoples of the land" in Ezra 9:1 (compare to Nehemiah 9:8)
9. The Jewish calendars (Religious and Secular)
10. Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah (Map(s) with explanations)
11. The Gates of Jerusalem in Nehemiah
12. Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)

**(See the Background Study Guide Below)**

### **COURSE EVALUATION:**

Class and Trip Participation	5%
Travel Log (Journal)	30%
Presentation	10%
Study Guide	25%
Book Reviews	30% (2 x 15% each )

### **CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

Book Reviews of Fensham and Breneman – Due January 22, 2018

Israel Trip- January 4, 2018 through January 13, 2018

- a. Reading of Breneman
- b. Student Presentations
- c. Special Lectures and Meetings
- d. Travel Journal compiled during the trip

Background Study – Due by February 10, 2018

### **Technical Assistance**

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the [Selfserve.nobts.edu](http://Selfserve.nobts.edu) site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. [BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu](mailto:BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System [NOBTS.Blackboard.com](http://NOBTS.Blackboard.com).
3. [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://www.NOBTS.edu/itc/) - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

### **Help for Writing Papers at "The Write Stuff"**

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

### **Plagiarism on Written Assignments**

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

## **BACKGROUND STUDY GUIDE**

### **Dr. Jim Parker**

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### **BACKGROUND STUDY REPORT**

Minimum two pages, maximum five pages, stapled, left corner—NO COVERS (plastic, binders, etc.). Use 1-inch margins, 12-point type, headed with the following information. Use in text citations for notes, such as (Ferguson, 560). Provide a bibliography at the end (not part of total page count). Most background studies have at least ten (10) resources *at a minimum*.

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**Name**  
**Ezra-Nehemiah**

**Background Study**  
**(Date Due)**

**Topic: (your topic here)**

**Text: (your text here)**

**1. General Historical Background**

[your discussion here]

**2. Immediate Background of Book**

[your discussion here]

**3. Social and Cultural Background**

[your discussion here]

**1. Research the historical background in general.**

*Technique:* Study the general world setting and historical developments that create the background for your text.

*Old Testament.* The background for the OT extends from at least 2000-1800 BC to 400 BC and possibly later. Consequently, students must become conversant with the broad sweep of OT history and the major segments of that history (e. g., Pre-exilic and Post-exilic; Pre-exilic obviously includes other divisions such as United Monarchy, and Divided Kingdoms. Within the second, the reigns of certain kings, etc.) The study will begin with the effort to identify which broad period provides the background for the book and text under consideration, since each of these different periods may have widely varying political, economic, social, and religious factors. Here you are gathering general information about your topic. Begin with general historical sources, such as Bright, Hallo and Simpson, etc.

Basically, for this step one should read the text asking historical questions. For example, if the text mentions Sennacherib, ask, Who is he? What power does he represent? When did he live? How is he connected to Israel's history? Or again, if the text mentions Sadducees, ask, Who are they? What do they do? Be curious: why are Sadducees never mentioned in the Old Testament? Thus, one might want to ask, Where do they come from? If they seem to have some type of power or to function politically, ask, Whom do they represent? What is their base of power?

**2. Research the immediate background of the book that contains your passage.**

*Technique:* Study the composition of the document containing the text in question, asking questions such as authorship, date, and audience.

*Old Testament.* Because of broad background, establishing a particular date and setting will involve varying considerations. For example, the books of Samuel provide within them clear information on original settings of events, as does Deuteronomy. However, students must also consider the context of the putting of the materials into final written form, and use of those materials in later settings. In the case of Deuteronomy, it is

now part of a larger whole (the Pentateuch) which apparently was put into final written form perhaps as late as the exilic/post-exilic period. As another example, the book of Psalms contains materials from several time periods apparently brought together as smaller collections at different times, then into one large collection at a later time. Use sources that help with this type of information, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, introductions, and comprehensive commentaries.

3. **Research the specific social and cultural features within the text that affect your passage.**

*Technique:* Study the specific social and cultural issues within the text in question that impact the original setting as determined in Step 2 above.

*Old Testament.* For example, in Genesis 9, how one views Noah's condition is related to what concepts of sex and sexuality are in view; in Psalm 15, the psalmist mentions loaning money at interest and that topic is related to conceptions current in the larger economic system; In Ecclesiastes, the author's views on his own life experience are partly reflective of the common view of afterlife in his day. So being aware of such matters, in many cases, will help one to understand the text more clearly. With these examples in mind, students should note that treatment might have to *begin* with topical study along broad historical lines. For this step one would use specialized resources, such as Matthews and de Vaux for OT.

## **Resources—Old Testament**

### *Primary Sources*

Archaeological Finds

Beyerlin, W. Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament.

Dead Sea Scrolls

LXX

Pritchard, J., ed. Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. 3rd. ed. \_\_\_\_\_ . ed. The Ancient Near East. Vols. 1 and 2.

### *Secondary Sources*

#### Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD), Encyclopedia Judaica, Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (IDB), International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Rev. ed. (ISBE), Mercer Dictionary of the Bible (MDB), New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis (NIDOTTE), Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (ZPEB)

#### Old Testament Introductions

Cate, Robert. An Introduction to the Old Testament.

Childs, Brevard. Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture.

Dillard and Longman. An Introduction to the Old Testament.

Eissfeldt, Otto. The Old Testament: An Introduction.

Harrison, R. K. Introduction to the Old Testament.

Hill and Walton. A Survey of the Old Testament.

LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush. Old Testament Survey. Rev. ed.

Biblical Backgrounds Books

Aharoni, Y. and M. Avi-Yonah. The Macmillan Bible Atlas. 3rd rev. ed.

Albertz, Rainer. A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period. Volumes 1 and 2.

Bright, John. A History of Israel. 3rd ed.

Hallo, W. and W. Simpson. The Ancient Near East: A History.

Hoerth, A., et. al., eds. Peoples of the Old Testament World.

Kitchen, K. Ancient Orient and Old Testament.

Matthews, Victor H. Manners and Customs in the Bible. Rev. ed.

Overholt, T. W. Cultural Anthropology and the Old Testament.

Roaf, M., and N. Postgate, eds. Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East.

Shanks, H., ed. Ancient Israel: A Short History from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple.

von Soden, W. Introduction to the Ancient World. The Background of the Ancient Orient.

de Vaux, R. Ancient Israel.

Comprehensive Commentaries

Consult Bibliographies in Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard and Fee & Stuart

Outline of Ezra - Nehemiah

<b>Ezra</b>	
Cyrus' Proclamation	1:1-11
Priests Removed	2:61-70
Altar and Sacrifices Restored	3:1-7
Restoration of the Temple	3:8-13
Adversaries Hinder the Work	4:1-24
The Temple Will Be Built	5:1-6:18
The Passover Observed	6:19-22
Ezra Comes to Jerusalem	7:1-10
The King's Decree	7:11-28
The People Who Go with Ezra	8:1-20
God's Protection	8:21-32

The Treasure Placed in the Temple	8:33-36
Mixed Marriages	9:1-4
Prayer of Confession	9:5-15
Reconciliation with God	10:1-17
<b>Nehemiah</b>	
Nehemiah's Grief for the Exiles	1:1-11
Answered Prayer	2:1-10
Nehemiah Inspects the Walls of Jerusalem	2:11-20
Builders of the Walls	3:1-32
The Work Is Ridiculed	4:1-8
Discouragement Overcome	4:9-23
Usury Abolished	5:1-13
Nehemiah Is an Example	5:14-19
The Plot of the Enemy	6:1-14
The Wall Is Finished	6:15-19
The Census of the First Returned Exiles	7:1-73
Ezra Reads the Law	8:1-8
"This Day is Holy"	8:9-12
Feast of Sukkot (Booths) Restored	8:13-18
The People Confess their Sin	9:1-37
The Resulting Covenant	9:38-10:39
Occupy the Holy City	11:1-19
Outside Jerusalem	11:20-36
Priests and Levites Who Returned	12:1-26
The Dedication of the Wall	12:27-30
Procedures for the Temple	12:31-47
Foreigners Excluded	13:1-3
Tobiah Expelled and the Temple Cleansed	13:4-9
Tithes Restored	13:10-14
Sabbath Restored	13:15-22
Mixed Marriages Forbidden	13:23-31

## **Selected Bibliography**

### **Introductions**

- Archer, Jr., Gleason A *Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Rev. ed. Moody, 1994.
- Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Baker, 1999.
- Birch, Bruce C., Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Abingdon, 2005.
- Broyles, Craig C. ed. *Interpreting the Old Testament. A Guide for Exegesis*. Baker, 2001.
- Childs, B.S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Fortress, 1979.
- Collins, John J. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Fortress, 2004.
- Dillard, Raymond and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Zondervan, 1994.
- Eissfeldt, O. *The Old Testament: An Introduction*. Trans. by P.R. Ackroyd. Harper and Row, 1965.
- Harrison, R. K. *An Old Testament Introduction*. Eerdmans, 1979.
- Hill, Andrew E. and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Zondervan, 2009.
- LaSor, W.S., D.A. Hubbard, and F.W. Bush. *Old Testament Survey*. Eerdmans, 1982.
- Soggin, J. Alberto. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. OTL. Westminster, 1989.

### **Commentaries**

#### **Ezra & Nehemiah**

- Allen, L. and T. Laniak. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. NIBC. Hendrickson-Paternoster, 2003.
- Blenkinsopp, J. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. OTL. Westminster, 1988.
- Breneman, Mervin. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. NAC. Broadman, 1993.
- Clines, D.J.A. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. NCB. Eerdmans, 1984.
- Fensham, F.C. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. NICOT. Eerdmans, 1982.

- Kidner, Derek. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. TOTC. IVP, 1979.
- Larsen, Knute and Kathy Dahlen. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. Holman OTC. B & H Publishing, 2005.
- Meyers, Jacob M. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Anchor Bible. Doubleday, 1965.
- Roberts, Mark D. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. The Preachers Commentary. Thomas Nelson, 2002.
- Throntveit, Mark A. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Interpretation. John Knox, 1992.
- Vos, Howard F. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*. BSC. Zondervan, 1987.
- Williamson, H.G.M. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. WBC. Word, 1985.
- Yamauchi, Edwin M. and Elaine Phillips. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. EBC. Rev. ed. Zondervan, 2017. (Originally pub. in *I Chronicles-Job*, 2010).

### **Ancient Near Eastern Histories**

- Briant, Pierre. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Eisenbrauns, 2002.
- Chavalas, Mark W., and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., eds. *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*. Baker, 2002.
- Gurney, O. R. *The Hittites*. Rev. ed. Penguin, 1990.
- Hallo, W.W., and W.K. Simpson. *The Ancient Near East: A History*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.
- Hoerth, Alfred, Gerald Mattingly and Edwin Yamauchi, eds. *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Baker, 1994.
- Kemp, Barry J. *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 1991.
- Oppenheim, A. Leon. *Ancient Mesopotamia*. University of Chicago, 1977.
- Van de Mieroop, Marc. *A History of the Ancient Near East: ca. 3000-323 BC*. Blackwell, 2004.
- Von Soden, Wolfram. *The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East*. Trans. by D.G. Schley. Eerdmans, 1993.
- Wiseman, D.J., ed. *Peoples of Old Testament Times*. Oxford, 1973.