



BIBB9401 BIBLICAL BACKGROUNDS IN INTERPRETATION

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
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SEMINARY MISSION STATEMENT

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar is designed to address the hermeneutic principles and resources for integrating biblical background materials in interpreting the Old and New Testaments. Resources from archaeology, historical geography, social and cultural settings, Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman literature, and others will be explored. Current issues and discoveries in the field of archaeology which supplement and illuminate the study of the Bible are examined.

STUDENT OUTCOMES: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The student will comprehend the roles of historical, archaeological, socio-cultural, and literary background materials in the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The student will value the necessity of bridging the temporal and cultural gaps between contemporary society and the biblical period.
3. The student will read extensively in the primary literature of the Ancient Near East and Greco-Roman worlds.
4. The student will apply his or her knowledge and comprehension of the background of the Bible including: archaeology, historical geography, religion, manners and customs, historical and social setting, and the literature of the ancient world to the process of interpreting and communicating the Bible accurately.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

BenTor, Amnon and R. Greenberg. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*
Charlesworth, James, ed. *Jesus and Archaeology*. Eerdmans, 2006.
Kenneth Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Eerdmans, 2003.

Hess, Richard. S. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*.
Hoerth, Alfred. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker
Academic, 2009.
John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing
the Conceptual World of the Old Testament* Baker Academic, 2006.
Jeffers, James. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the
Background of Early Christianity*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999.
Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of
Solomon's Temple Until the Muslim Conquest*.
Mazar, Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000 - 586 BCE*.
Anchor Bible, 1992.
Dever, William G. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know
It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*.

SOCIAL SETTINGS: NT

DeSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New
Testament Culture*.
Rohrbaugh, Richard. *The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Matrix:
The Bible in Mediterranean Context)*
Barrett, Charles, K. *New Testament Background: Selected Documents: Revised
and Expanded Edition*. Harper One, 1995.
Green, Joel and Lee Martin McDonald, *The World of the New Testament:
Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. Baker Academic, 2017.
Finney, Mark T. *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World: 1 Corinthians in its
Greco-Roman Social Setting* (The Library of New Testament Studies).

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Book and Journal Article Review Guidelines

Each Student will compile an Annotated Bibliography of 50 journal articles and 25 quality internet sites for the study of biblical backgrounds and the study of the Old and New Testaments and share them with the class on the DropBox site I will create for the class..

Each student will complete 6 book reviews, one in each of the first three meetings (8/17, 8/31, 9/14) and in meetings 5-7 (10/12, 10/26, 11/9).

Book Reviews will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Grammar and Style: spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian
1. Summary: A fair, concise presentation of the book's / journal article's content
2. Evaluation: A balanced, critical assessment of the book's / journal article's strengths and weaknesses
3. Research Insight: Awareness of the book's / journal article's interpretive significance and place in the Prophetic literature

Each of the four areas will count as 25% of the grade for the book reviews.

Preliminary Paper

Each student will write an analytical and informed opinion paper concerning their view(s) on the roles and relationship between Biblical Backgrounds (Archaeology, ANE history, Cosmology, ANE Conceptual World, Semitic Languages, etc) and the interpretation of the Bible. The student should examine the various philosophical and hermeneutical issues and roles that these materials play in this process. The paper should be 3-5 pages in length, double-spaced. These will be discussed in the first seminar session.

Research Papers

For the research paper assignments, the student is to write two research papers on student selected topics of critical issues in the study of biblical backgrounds and the study of the Old and New Testaments (one OT related, one NT related, and/or one related to the Interbiblical Period). The research papers are to be about 25 pages in length, thoroughly covering the selected topic. The paper must be written according to the rubric below and posted in the *Group Everybody* File Exchange on Blackboard **no later than four days before the class session** in which it is presented. Papers will be presented, evaluated, and defended at the class session as indicated on the Seminar Schedule.

A response to the paper is to be presented to the writer of the paper in writing and to the class orally by another student who will be assigned. Like the paper, the response will be defended in class. Papers and responses may be chosen by sending in two choices to the professor before the first class session. Assignments will be made to cover all the papers.

Papers will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Grammar and Style: Spelling; sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian; use of quotations (use them sparingly to clarify your analysis and interpretation).
2. Clarity and Coherence: Organization; logical development; overall sense of the paper.
3. Research: Bibliography; type and variety of sources (primary, secondary monographs, journal articles, etc.); [Most bibliographic entries should be accompanied by footnote citations].
4. Interpretive awareness and insight: Factual accuracy; awareness of context and connection to other material (i.e., continuity/discontinuity; cause/effect; relationships/comparisons; sensitivity to context; awareness of persons, movements, or forces, historical and otherwise).
5. Analysis and Evaluation: Going beyond the mere reporting of facts to include explanation, interpretation, analysis of material; evaluation of the material at hand; demonstration that you have done a thorough critique of the material that you have researched.

COURSE EVALUATION

Preliminary Paper	5%
Class Participation	10%
Annotated Bibliographies	10%
Book Reviews	25%
Research Papers	50% (25% ea)

Seminar Schedule

Tues 300-730p 8/17, 8/31, 9/14, 9/28, 10/12, 10/26, 11/9, 11/30

Aug 17 Meeting One Archaeology & Interpretive Methodology
Discussion of Preliminary Papers - Biblical Backgrounds and Biblical Studies

Book Reviews –

Dever, William G. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel.*

Kitchens, Kenneth. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament.*

Thomas Thompson. *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth Of Israel*

Israel Finkelstein, Amihai Mazar, Brian Schmidt. *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel.*

Aug 31 Meeting Two Archaeology and the Old Testament

BenTor, Amnon & R. Greenberg. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*

Hoffmeier, James. *The Archaeology of the Bible.*

Mazar, Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 BCE*

N. Silberman and D. Small. *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present.*

Israel Finkelstein. *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of the Northern Kingdom.*

Sept 14 Meeting Three ANE Archaeology and the Old Testament

Book Reviews on Babylon, Assyria, Egypt

Donald B. Redford *Egypt, Canaan, & Israel in Ancient Times*

Currid, John D. *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament.*

Sept 28 Meeting Four

Research Papers - Archaeology & Biblical Backgrounds in the Interpretation of the Old Testament

Oct 12 Meeting Five ANE & Greco-Roman Religions

Book Reviews

William G. Dever. *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*

Richard Hess. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*.
Thorkild Jacobsen. *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*. Revised ed.
Gerald Klingbeil. *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible*.

Gregorio Del Olmo. *Canaanite Religion: According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*

Dennis Pardee. *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*. Writings from the Ancient World.

Luke Timothy Johnson. *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*.

Hans Yosef Klauk. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*.

Oct 26 Meeting 6 Social Settings & Biblical Studies

Book Reviews

Barrett, CK *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*

DeSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity*

Horsley, Richard A. *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis*.

Levy, Thomas, ed. *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*.

Bailey, Kenneth. *Jesus Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*.

Malina, Bruce. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. 3rd edition, Revised & Expanded.

Rohrbaugh, Richard. *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*.

Tidball, Derek. *The Social Context of the New Testament: A Sociological Analysis*. *Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives*.

Rohrbaugh, Richard. *The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean Context)*

Nov 9 Meeting Seven Greco-Roman Archaeology and the New Testament

Book Reviews

Jeffers, James. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity*.

McRay, John. *Archaeology and the New Testament*

Reed, Jonathan. *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*

Snodgrass, Anthony. *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline*.

Snodgrass, Anthony. *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece*.

Nov 30 Meeting Eight

Research Papers Archaeology and New Testament Interpretation

December 8 Annotated Bibliographies Due
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

ISRAELITE HISTORY

- Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press (4th Edition), 1981.
- Kitchens, Kenneth. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews: Complete and Unabridged*. CreateSpace, 2013.
- Niswonger, Richard. *New Testament History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long, Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003 (ISBN 0-664-22090-8).

ARCHAEOLOGY

- BenTor, Amnon and R. Greenberg. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Dever, William G. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Hoerth, Alfred. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Hoffmeier, James. *The Archaeology of the Bible*. London: Lion UK, 2008.
- Jeffers, James. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999.
- Levy, Thomas, ed. *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*. New York: Facts on File, 1995.
- Maeir, A.M. and P. de Miroschedji, eds. *"I Will Speak The Riddle of Ancient Times": Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*. 2 vols. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Mazar, Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 BCE*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- McRay, John. *Archaeology and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Na'aman, Nadav. *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction*. Collected Essays, Volume 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- _____. *Canaan in the Second Millennium B.C.E.*. Collected Essays, volume 2. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- Reed, Jonathan. *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*. Trinity Press, 2002.
- Stern, Ephraim. *Archaeology and the Land of the Bible, II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 BC)*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS SETTINGS

- Adkins, Lesley, & Roy Adkins. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Greece*. New York: Oxford, 1998.
- _____. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome*. New York: Oxford, 1998.
- Albertz, Rainer. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy. Trans. John Bowden. OTL. Louisville: WJK, 1994.
- Bailey, Kenneth. *Jesus Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.
- _____. *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.
- DeSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.
- Dever, William G. *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

- Dewrell, Heath D. *Child Sacrifice in Ancient Israel*. Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017.
- Esler, Philip, ed.. *Modeling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the NT & Its Context*. NY: Routledge, 1995.
- _____. *Sex, Wives, and Warriors: Reading Biblical Narrative With Its Ancient Audience*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Hess, Richard. S. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Johnson, William, & Holt Parker. *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece & Rome*.
- King, Philip and Lawrence Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- Lawrence, Louis & Mario Aguilar. *Anthropology & Biblical Studies: Avenues of Approach*. Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2005.
- Malina, Bruce. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Miller, P.D., Hanson, P.D., and S.D. McBride. *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009.
- Morris, Ian. *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity*. Key Themes in Ancient History. Cambridge: University Press, 1992.
- Olyan, Saul, ed. *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect*. SBL Resources for Biblical Study. Atlanta: SBL, 2012.
- Pilch, John. *A Cultural Handbook to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Pilch, John & Bruce Malina. *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.
- Porter, Anne and Glenn M. Schwarz, eds. *Sacred Killing: The Archaeology of Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012.
- Richards, E. Randall, and Brandon O'Brien. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012.
- Rohrbaugh, Richard, ed. *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Skarsaune, Oskar, and Reidar Hvalvik, eds. *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Stegemann, W., Bruce Malina, & Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002.

OTHER

- Kitchens, Kenneth. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Klingbell, Gerald. *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible*. BBR Supp 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Miller, Robert, II. *Chieftains of the Highland Canaan: A History of Israel in the 12th and 11th Centuries B.C.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Vanderkam, James and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance For Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2004.

REFERENCE VOLUMES

- Arnold, Clinton. Editor. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002
- Hallo, William and Lawson Younger. *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions,*

Monumental Inscriptions and Archival Documents from the Biblical World. 3 vols. Leiden: EJ Brill, 2003.

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East, 5 vols. Oxford Univ. Press, 1997.

Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.

Walton, John. Editor. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

General Historical Works

Beyerlin, Walter. *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.

Finegan, Jack. *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East*. Reprint. NY: Dorset Press, 1986 (Westview Press, 1979).

Hallo, W. and Simpson, W. *The Ancient Near East: A History*. NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971.

Kramer, Samuel Noah, ed. *Mythologies of the Ancient World*. Garden City: Doubleday / Anchor, 1961.

Lloyd, Seton. *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: From the Old Stone Age to the Persian Conquest*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.

Moscatti, Sabatino. *The Face of the Ancient Orient: A Panorama of Near Eastern Civilization in Pre-Classical Times*. Garden City: Doubleday/Anchor, 1962.

Pritchard, James. ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. (ANET) Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955.

Ringgren, Helmer. *Religions of the Ancient Near East*. Trans. by John Sturdy. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973.

Saggs, H. W. F. *Civilization Before Greece and Rome*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989.

Wilke, Claus. *Early Ancient Near Eastern Law: A History of Its Beginnings*. The Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

Wiseman, D. J., ed. *Peoples of Old Testament Times*. Oxford: University Press, 1973.

Philistines

Bierling, Neal. *Giving Goliath His Due: New Archaeological Light on the Philistines*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

Dothan, Trude. *The Philistines and Their Material Culture*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1967.

Dothan, Trude & Moshe. *People of the Sea: The Search for the Philistines*. New York: Macmillan, 1992.

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Israel Exploration Society. *The Philistines and the Other Sea Peoples*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Post Press, 1970.

Macalister, R. A. S. *The Philistines, Their History and Civilization*. London: Humphrey Milford, 1974.

Ebla

Gordon, Cyrus; Rendsburg, Gary; Winter, Nathan; eds. *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language*. 4 Vols. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987, 1990, 1992, 2002.

- Matthiae, Paolo. *Ebla: An Empire Rediscovered*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1981.
- Matthiae, Paolo, and Nicolo Marchetti, eds. *Ebla and Its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013.
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Egypt

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- Budge, E. A. Wallis. *Egyptian Magic*. NY: Dover Press, 1971 (Rep. from 1901).
- Currid, John D. *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.
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- Hobson, Christine. *The World of the Pharaohs: A Complete Guide to Ancient Egypt*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1987.
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- Ruffle, John. *The Egyptians: An Introduction to Egyptian Archaeology*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Ward, William A. *Egypt and the East Mediterranean World, 2200-1900 BC*. Beirut: American University, 1971.
- White, J. E. M. *Ancient Egypt*. New York: Crowell, 1953.
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Hittites

- Bittel, Kurt. *Hattusha: The Capital of the Hittites*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
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- Guernsey, O. R. *The Hittites*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1952.
- Macqueen, James G. *The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975.

Moab, Edom, Ammon, Midian

- Bartlett, John R. *Edom and the Edomites*. JSOT Supplement Series #77. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.
- Bennett, W. H. *The Moabite Stone*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911.
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Persia

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Arab

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Aram

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Babylon

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Canaanites and Ugarit

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- Coogan, Michael, and Mark Smith, eds. *Stories from Ancient Canaan*. 2nd ed. Louisville: WJK, 2012.
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Assyria

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Emar

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