



Nipawin Bible College
BT115 Pentateuch
Mr. David J. Smith
FALL 2018
3 Credit Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Pentateuch, also referred to as the *Torah*, is an ancient collection of instructions that headline the sacred Scriptures for both Judaism and Christianity. They have arrested our imaginations; and they have challenged our understanding of God and His dealings with humanity. They are cherished texts. They are frequently difficult texts. Indeed, these five books were the writings most read, most studied and most quoted by the New Testament writers, as well as those who opposed Christ. The apostle Paul argued that the Pentateuch explained the human problem of sin and pointed to its remedy in Messiah. In addition, Jesus claimed that Moses had written about Him (Lk 24: 44). Thus, the Pentateuch was (and remains) crucial for explaining the meaning of God, religion, life, death, hope and every aspect of the human phenomenon. (Briggs & Lohr, *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch*) This course is a survey of those texts, Genesis through Deuteronomy, with a focus on the birth of the nation of Israel and the covenant relationship between God and His people.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Bible (a respected translation is required, not a paraphrase). We desire as literal a rendering of the biblical text as possible. Please bring this to class.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*.
Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003. [pp. xi-197]

THE BIG QUESTION

In what way do these ancient texts inform and assist us, twenty-first century disciples of Jesus Christ, to better live the life that God calls us to live?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

With successful completion of this course students should:

1. Grasp the overall account of God's involvement in human affairs beginning in Eden and extending through to Israel's encampment on the borders of Canaan;

2. Understand and appreciate the roots of Judaism as the religion and culture that birthed Christianity;
3. Demonstrate the relevance of these ancient texts to contemporary issues and concerns by living the life the Pentateuch calls Christians to live;
4. Argue for the importance of these books in relation to the entire canon of Scripture;
5. Critique various issues presented in the Pentateuch, such as Creation, Sin, Redemption and Holiness, with increased confidence and skill.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Bible Reading (25%)

For this assignment you are required to read all five (5) books of the Pentateuch in their entirety. The completed reading will be due at the beginning of class (8:30 AM). Your reading is best done thoughtfully and carefully. This can be enhanced with each book being read in one sitting.

Due Date: Thurs. Oct. 25.

2. Textbook Reading (20%)

Each student is expected to read the course text, *A Guide to the Pentateuch*, by Wenham in its entirety (pp. xi–197). Having done so, in 3 full pages identify and discuss components of the text that you found particularly helpful/insightful as well as problematic/troublesome. Be aware that your analysis is not concerned with the author's style, or whether you found it a "difficult read". Rather, you are being asked to recognize, pinpoint and comment on significant details in content. This may focus on, for example, cultural issues, theological concerns, linguistic difficulties, historical matters, or hermeneutical problems. Students are expected to exercise a good measure of Christian **and** academic charity and respect when disagreeing with scholars. How to proceed?

- Begin by providing the basic bibliographic data (in proper format) as well as the total number of pages (not percentage) you have read.
- Next, identify and discuss 3 helpful/insightful aspects of Wenham's work.
- Then, identify and discuss 3 problematic/troublesome aspects of Wenham's work.
- Include a proper title page.

Due Date: Thurs. Nov. 1.

3. Midterm Exam (20%)

The midterm exam will be based on the material pertaining to the book of Genesis. It will come primarily from the lecture material covered in class, but may also be drawn from the course textbook. The exam will be given once the class material from Genesis has been completed. Be advised, a missed exam will not be rescheduled.

Date: Wed. Nov. 14

4. Short Research Paper (15%)

For this assignment students are required to choose one (1) of the topics listed below, research pertinent data, interpret it and fit into a coherent discussion. In addition to the Bible, this 4-page essay will be supported by 3 other relevant sources. Those sources will be documented in footnotes and a bibliography. In addition, a proper title page is expected. Without question, Wikipedia is unacceptable as a legitimate resource. Your link to "Galaxie" may be helpful.

Topics for your consideration:

- Argue for either a local, or universal flood;
- Present a case for, or against, a literal 6 day, 24 hour creation;
- Compare and contrast the persons of Moses and Jesus.
- In what ways does the person of Joseph pre-figure Christian character?

Date Due: Fri. Nov. 30.

5. Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be based on the material pertaining to the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Like the midterm, the exam will concern itself with the material covered primarily in the class lectures, but could also be taken from the course textbook. Again, be aware that a missed exam will not be rescheduled.

Date: Wed. Dec. 19.

All written assignments are to be word-processed on a computer in accordance with the prescribed requirements in the *NBC Student Handbook*. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, spelling and the student's ability to follow instructions. Optima or Times New Roman (preferred) font is required. Pagination is a must. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments will be due **no later than 5:00 PM** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Refer to the *NBC Student Handbook 2018-2019*

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Refer to the *NBC Student Handbook 2018-2019*

In addition, be aware that classroom etiquette involves the responsible use of technology. Therefore, electronics (laptops, tablets, cell phones etc.) are not to be used to play games, web browse, email, or text messages during class time. Since technology can be used to enhance learning, discretion is left to the individual faculty whether they allow devices in the classroom. If such devices become a distraction the student may be marked absent from class and/or no longer permitted to bring their device to class.

One further important word. If you are hindered in any way because of a learning disability please speak with the course instructor as soon as possible. It is their

desire to develop strategies that accommodate your need and make your learning experience as rewarding as possible.

Course Reading: Approx. 200 pages of textbook reading.

Course Writing: Approx. 7 pages.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Briggs, Richard S. and Joel N. Lohr eds. *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Bright, John. *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.
- Dempster, Stephen G. *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*. Downers Grove, Leicester: IVP, Apollos, 2003.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Pentateuch*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005.
- Martens, Elmer A. *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981.
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption: A Survey of the History of Salvation in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955.
- Wood, Leon J. *A Survey of Israel's History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986.