



Grace Communion Seminary

BI512 – The Prophets

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Timothy D. Finlay, Ph.D.

Course Description

This course studies the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Canon, the Former and Latter Prophets in order to grasp the foundation and formation of the kingdom of God. We will seek to apprehend the establishment and development of the monarchy with ancient Israel as moved by the renewal of the biblical covenant relationship that we are taught by the prophets.

To do well in this course, we expect you to put in about 12 hours each week.

Required Reading

Bible. The Former and Latter Prophets, assigned Psalms and Proverbs. (Now would be a good time to read them again afresh.)

Gowan, Donald E. *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, John Knox, 1998. ISBN: 978-0664256890. For about \$17*.

Kaiser, Walter. *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998. ISBN: 978-0805431223. Out of print. Very good used copies available for about \$7*.

Monson, J. *Regions on the Run*. Rice Lake, WI: Biblical Backgrounds, Inc., 1998. ISBN: 978-1892960177. For about \$20*. Also available for about \$20 from http://www.bibback.com/historical_land.html

Please obtain these books before the class begins. *Costs estimated in April 2019. To find the lowest online price, use <http://www.bookfinder.com/>

Recommended Reading

Bright, John, *The Kingdom of God*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980. 978-0687209088. (Still a good historical account, but its concept of biblical history is often questioned today.)

Childs, Brevard S., *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflections on the Christian Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993. 978-0800626754. (Seeking to go beyond the historical-critical dead ends. Pages 624-657 are especially relevant to this course.)

Gray, John, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God*. Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1999. 978-0567086563. Out of print. pp. 1-157, 182-273 (Ponderous but helpful.)

Ladd, George, *The Gospel of the Kingdom or The Presence of the Future*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959 and 1996, respectively. 978-0802812803 and 978-0802815316. (Ladd was proud of this development of this understanding of the kingdom and the King.)

Student Learning Outcomes for BI512

1. To learn crucial dates and critique scholarly theories concerning Israel's history during the periods of Joshua, Judges, and the kings, and the fall of the people first to the Assyrian Empire and then to Babylonians.
2. To evaluate the theology of the various latter or writing prophets, especially in relationship to pivotal events in Israel's history.
3. To analyze the structure of each of the books of the former and latter prophets.
4. To learn the geography of ancient Israel.
5. To evaluate the nature of apocalyptic ideas in relation to messianic hope and the development of the eschatology in history and prophetic vision with Israel in her BCR with the Lord God that the Great I-AM is.
6. To analyze the relationship between the testimony of the former and latter prophets and the person of the messianic King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Course Requirements

1. Each week, responses to the units of study as they are presented in the course schedule. Due by the end of Thursday of each week. These are very important – totaling to 30% of the grade!

2. Comment on at least one other student's forum posting, to contribute to a discussion of the content. Due by the end of each Sunday. 10% of the grade.
3. An analytical outline (about 1 page single-spaced) of the assigned books of the Bible. In total, they are 20 percent of your grade. **There should be one page for each of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and two pages total for all the minor prophets.**
4. An exam on the geography of ancient Israel 5%.
5. An exam on the history of ancient Israel 10%.
6. A 5-8 page paper on some aspect of the theology of one or more of the latter prophets, as long as it is cleared by the professor as a suitable topic. This paper must involve research, include a bibliography, and conform to standards set by scholarly customs. 25%

Assignment 4 is due on Monday, June 10.

Assignment 5 is due on Monday, June 24.

Assignment 6 is due on Monday, July 29.

There will be no final exam.

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting for BI512

Assignment	Hours *	Percentage of grade
Reading the syllabus and lectures	16	
Reading discussions and making responses	8	10
Reading the textbooks	50	0
Analytical outlines	20	20
Responses to the units of study	20	30
Geography and History Exams	8	15
Writing the exegetical-theological essay	34	25
Total – about 12 hours each week	156	100

* This is an estimate for the “average” student. A student who reads quickly may be slow in writing papers, and vice versa. Some students will complete the course requirements in less time, and some will take more time.

Tentative Schedule

“The concern to understand and to appropriate the biblical theme of the kingdom of God has been a continual one throughout the history of the Christian church. ...The challenge for Biblical Theology still remains at least to point a way by which the bridge between critical biblical scholarship and dogmatic theology can be built. No area of research lends itself more to that enterprise than that of the kingdom of God. Accordingly, the contribution which follows is offered as a first modest step forward toward that goal.” B.S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, pp. 624, 629.

The Units of study are subject to adjustment to fit various course formats, and although the final schedule is always subject to modification, an approximate schedule is given below:

Unit 1: Introduction to the Course

Unit 2: Joshua and Judges

Unit 3: 1 and 2 Samuel

Unit 4: 1 and 2 Kings

Unit 5: Isaiah

Unit 6: Jeremiah

Unit 7: Ezekiel, Daniel and discussion of Apocalyptic material

Unit 8: The 12 “Minor” Prophets

We have thus conceived of 8 study units to administer during the course. The student must submit a response to these 8 units in the form of 8 short essays (only one page!), indicating his or her understanding of the form and content of the unit's material. These responses have priority over all other assignments and no one can pass the course without completing them within the course schedule. You must petition the professor in order to hand in late work.