The Formation of God’s Covenant People
(Genesis – Deuteronomy)
Guide: Dr. Tim Laniak

Dates and Times:
Classes will be held at the Gordon-Conwell Seminary campus, 14542 Choate Circle, Charlotte, NC, 28273 on Tuesday evenings (6:45-8:45) from September 29 through December 1, 2015 (with the exception of November 24). This course is Part 1 of a 3-part sequence that will tour the entire Old Testament. The second course on the Historical and Poetic books will be held in the winter term 1/5/16 - 3/8/16. The third course on the Prophetic and Restoration books will be held in the spring term 3/15/16 - 5/10/16. Participants may register for some or all of the courses; there are no prerequisites. However, it is strongly recommended that they engage in the whole journey through the Old Testament and then continue through the New Testament the following year.

Registration:
Registration for courses is required. Please visit our web site or contact Woody Breen at hbreen@gcts.edu or 704-527-9909, for more information. Participants will sign up either as participants (those who sit in the class for personal enrichment only) or as credit students (those who turn in weekly assignments and may receive credit toward a seminary certificate). Participants are required to participate in break-out groups for a ½ hour either before or after class each evening. These sessions are led by Gordon-Conwell graduates.

Online option:
For groups or individuals who want to access BibleJourney online, please contact Doug Price for details (dprice1@gordonconwell.edu or (855) 211-2474.

Certification:
Credit students who meet all of the requirements for the complete 6-course sequence in Old and New Testaments are eligible to receive a Certificate in Biblical Literacy. This certificate will exempt those interested in any masters or other certificate program at the seminary from OT and NT Survey courses.

Note: The cost of the 6-course sequence is about the cost of one graduate level course. Therefore, students completing the Certificate in Biblical Literacy will have taken two courses for the price of one.

BibleJourney also offers two courses to supplement the training of Bible teachers. Interpreting the Bible equips students with practical skills for interpreting every genre of
the Bible. Teaching the Transforming Word equips students with the tools to be effective Bible teachers. Watch the BibleJourney website for these offerings for which there are separate certificates.

Program Objectives:
1. To provide participants with a comprehensive grasp of the main figures, events, and themes in the Old Testament, their relationship to the New Testament, and their ongoing significance for our lives.
2. To enlighten participants with background information and resources that clarify God’s revelation in its original setting.
3. To equip participants to interpret the Bible correctly by introducing appropriate tools and methods.
4. To raise up competent teachers who can communicate biblical truth effectively.

Format:
Classroom sessions will include presentations on each book of the Bible, featuring “in the text” summaries, “behind the text” background, and “in front of the text” interpretation and implications. Ideally, the assigned readings for each week should be done before class.

Text books:
1. The Bible (The NIV Archaeology Study Bible or the new NIV Study Bible)
2. The Story of Israel (Pate, Duvall, et al; InterVarsity Press, 2004)

Note: These textbooks will be used throughout the BibleJourney course sequence.

Assignments:
1. Weekly 1-2 page assignments will be expected of those who take the class for credit. Assignments (provided in the syllabus below) will be submitted to the teaching assistant and discussed during the weeknight sessions.
2. Participants will also complete a reading log for the assigned texts.
3. For each of the five books of the Pentateuch, you will need to answer five “Guiding Questions” (see course outline for details and due dates). You will begin this exercise with Assignment #1.
4. A final test will be taken at the end of the course.

**Plan on 5-10 hours each week for reading and assignments.**
Grading Scale

Weekly Assignments (5 points each)  40
Guiding Questions (4 points each)  20
Reading Log  20
Final Test  20

Attendance and Missed Classes:
Credit students will need to be in attendance during all classes. Alternative assignments will be given to those who miss a class.

Discounts and Refunds:
Gordon-Conwell has significantly reduced the tuition for these courses to make them affordable to our community. We assume that churches will further subsidize this outreach for their members if hardship exists. Full refunds will be provided only through the second week of the course for any reason.
Course Outline

1. (9/29) The World of the Bible

Topics: Geography, History, Archaeology, “Theology from the ground up”

Readings for next week: Genesis 1-11; The Story of Israel, 11-28
   Participants: Genesis 1-4, 6-9

2. (10/6) Covenant Relationship Initiated (Genesis 1-11)

Biblical Topics: Creation, God’s image, sin, judgment, and the plan of redemption
Background: Ancient Near Eastern accounts of creation and flood, temple building, and image making
Contemporary Issues: Evolution, ecology, and living in a “fallen” world

Assignment 1 Due
Readings for next week: Genesis 12-50; Youngblood chp 4; The Story of Israel, 29-38
   Participants: Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22, 25, 27, 37, 50

3. (10/13) Covenant Family Established (Genesis 12-50)

Biblical Topics: God’s promises and the patriarchal stories
Background: Geography; Covenant “cutting” and patriarchal culture
Contemporary Issues: God’s mission to the world, living by faith

Assignment 2 Due
Readings for next week: Exodus 1-19; Youngblood chp 3; The Story of Israel, 38-42
   Participants: Exodus 1-4, 12-17

4. (10/20) Covenant People Rescued (Exodus 1-19)

Biblical Topics: Exodus, Passover, and God as Father, Shepherd, Warrior, and Husband
Background: The plagues and the gods of Egypt
Contemporary Issues: Hardened hearts, Passover and the Last/Lord’s Supper

Assignment 3 and Guiding Questions on Genesis Due
Readings for next week: Exodus 20-40; Youngblood chp 5
   Participants: Exodus 19-24

Biblical Topics: Israel’s covenant and God’s tent among his people
Background: Suzerainty treaties and mobile shrines
Contemporary Issues: God’s presence on earth

Readings for next week: Leviticus 1-16; Youngblood chp 7
Participants: Leviticus 1-7
Assignment 4 Due

6. (11/3) National Covenant Explained – Part 2 (Leviticus 1-16)

Biblical Topics: “Torah,” priests, sacrifices, and offerings
Background: Pagan notions of sacrifice, magic, and the gods; Law “codes” in the near East
Contemporary Issues: “Holy” living, sacrifice, and the “priesthood of all believers”

Assignment 5 and Guiding Question on Exodus Due
Readings for next week: Leviticus 17-27; Youngblood chp 8
Participants: Leviticus 17-25

7. (11/10) National Covenant Explained – Part 3 (Leviticus 17-27)

Biblical Topics: Sabbath, pilgrimage festivals and Jubilee
Background: Seasons, gods, and Israel’s calendar
Contemporary Issues: “Christian Sabbath,” “Holy days” and sacraments/ordinances

Assignment 6
Readings for next week: Numbers (complete); Youngblood chp 9
Participants: Numbers 9-14

8. (11/17) Early Covenant Failures (Numbers)

Biblical Topics: Human failure and divine faithfulness on the journey from Sinai to the Jordan River
Background: Geography of the sojourn and God’s mobile militia
Contemporary Issues: God’s wrath and patience: Lost and second chances

Assignment 7 and Guiding Questions on Leviticus Due
Readings for next class: Deuteronomy; Youngblood chp 1; The Story of Israel, 42-49
Participants: Deuteronomy 1-10, 27-31

11/24 – No class
9. (12/1) Covenant Renewal (Deuteronomy)

Biblical Topics: Recounting God’s faithfulness; Life in the covenant community; The Deuteronomy “hinge”

Background: Treaties revisited; Nature of Torah

Contemporary Issues: “Other gods” and punishment, discipline, and logical consequences; Balancing the past and the future: Telling stories and renewing promises; a “prophet like Moses”

Assignment 8 and Guiding Questions on Numbers Due

Dec. 8 Guiding Questions on the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) Due

Dec. 15 Final Test (25-35 question multiple choice) taken with a proctor due

Suggested Summaries of the Whole Bible


______. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan, 2014).

Kaminski, Carol. *CASKET EMPTY: God’s Plan of Redemption through History* (CaketEmpty Media, 2012)

Richter, Sandra L. *The Epic of Eden* (InterVarsity, 2008).


Williams, Michael D. *Far As the Curse is Found* (P&R Publishing, 2005).

Focus: “In, Behind and In Front of the Text”

Objective: To begin to appreciate the main themes and interrelatedness of the Bible, the relevance of its ancient Near Eastern context, and the contemporary implications of each of its parts.

Assignment 1: Begin taking notes on each of the following questions as you read the Bible and do your assignments. You will discuss these questions in your break-out groups as you finish each book. The final assignment of this course is to write an essay on each question, synthesizing what you have learned from the whole Torah.

Note: you will not be able to answer the fourth question until you have heard the lecture and done the assignment next week.

1. What has this book revealed about God? Include metaphors, characteristics and the mission of God as it unfolds

2. What has this book revealed about God’s people, their relationship with God and each other, and their role and mission in the world? Include metaphors, mission, ethics, worship, “living by faith,” etc.


4. How would you describe the uniqueness of this book in its ancient Near Eastern literary and cultural context? Take into account the genres of Scripture and comparisons with extra-biblical parallels. Consider the divine and human dimensions of God’s Word. (This essay will take some time over the three Old Testament courses to fully understand.)

5. In what ways has God spoken to you in your journey through this book?
Focus: “Behind the Text”

Objective: To notice similarities and differences between biblical and other ancient creation texts and to consider the particular ways in which the Bible is unique.

Assignment 2: On the chart below, compare and contrast the biblical account of creation in Genesis 1 & 2 with the Mesopotamian creation account, Enuma Elish (found at http://www.cresourcei.org/enumaelish.html).

To pursue further study on Ancient Near Eastern creation and flood texts, see:


**** Texts can also be found on the web:
  http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html
  http://jewishchristianlit.com//Resources/Texts/aneMyths.html
  http://www.etana.org/abzu/
  http://www.otgateway.com/ancientneareast.htm
  http://www.etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/
  http://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/index.htm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features to Compare/Contrast</th>
<th>Genesis 1 and 2</th>
<th>Enuma Elish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the pre-creation condition?</td>
<td>Genesis 1:2</td>
<td>Tablet 1 – Lines 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many gods are involved in the work of creation and who are they?</td>
<td>Genesis 1:1; 2:4</td>
<td>Tablets IV, V, VI</td>
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<tr>
<td>From what did the heavens and earth emerge?</td>
<td>Genesis 1:1; 2:4</td>
<td>Tablet IV – Lines 128-146</td>
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<td>How does the god(s) create?</td>
<td>1) Genesis 1:3,5,6,8,9, 10,11,14,20,24, 26,29 2) Genesis 1:1,7,16,17,21,25,26 2:4,7,8,9,,18,19,21,22</td>
<td>Tablets II-IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of what was humanity created?</td>
<td>Genesis 2:7</td>
<td>Tablet VI – Lines 1-33</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the relationship of humanity to the god(s), as well as to the rest of creation?</td>
<td>Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15</td>
<td>Tablet VI – Lines – 5-8; 35-36</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the post-creation condition?</td>
<td>Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31; 2:1</td>
<td>Tablets VI and VII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus: “In the Text”
Objective: To notice repetition and variation in biblical promises and to synthesize the results.

**Assignment 3:** In the chart below, mark each promise, as given to the patriarch by God, by writing in all references where that promise is found. Then, in the last column, indicate whether the three covenants with each of the patriarchs are conditional or unconditional.

a.) For Abraham, see Genesis 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24.
b.) For Isaac, see Genesis 17, 26.
c.) For Jacob, see Genesis 28, 31, 32, 35, 46, 48.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patriarch</th>
<th>Blessing from God</th>
<th>Seed/Descendants/Nation(s)</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>King(s)</th>
<th>Blessing to/Victory Over all Nations</th>
<th>Conditional/Unconditional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abraham</td>
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<td>Isaac</td>
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<td>Jacob</td>
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From your work on the chart above, restate the basic patriarchal promise in your own words.
Focus: “In the Text”
Objective: To appreciate how various genres correlate by comparing biblical accounts of the same event found in narrative and poetry.

Assignment 4: Compare/contrast the two accounts of Israel’s deliverance at the Sea of Reeds in Exodus 14 and 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare/Contrast</th>
<th>Exodus 14</th>
<th>Exodus 15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literary Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Prose or Poetry)</td>
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<td>Instrument of Judgment</td>
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<td>(Divine and/or human)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction/Response of Israel</td>
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<td>Nations Affected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Message/Theme</td>
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<tr>
<td>(in your own words)</td>
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<tr>
<td>God’s Reign/Rule</td>
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<tr>
<td>(past, present, and/or future)</td>
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<tr>
<td>God’s Attributes/Character Emphasized</td>
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Focus: “Behind the Text”
Objective: To “think geographically” by using the tool of a Bible atlas.

Assignment 5: Using the attached map, locate and write in the following: Egypt, Sinai, Canaan, the traditional route of the Exodus, Mara, Elim, Mt. Sinai (Jebel Musa), Kadesh Barnea, the wilderness of Paran, the Plains of Moab, and Mt. Nebo.

Please use the map provided. (Submitted work consisting of internet maps with routes and sites already marked will not be accepted.)

Recommended Bible Atlases


Name: Due Date: 11/10

Focus: “In Front of the Text”
Objective: To develop biblical affection for God’s “Law.”

Assignment 6: Read Psalm 119 and be careful to note how the psalmist highlights the value, purpose, and human sentiment regarding the law(s). After reading the text, write a 1 to 2 page essay that describes your feelings about God’s Law.
Focus: “In Front of the Text”

Objective: To move across “the principalizing bridge”* from the biblical world to ours with a central biblical concept: holiness. (This is especially challenging when so many holiness laws are culturally removed from our experience.)

*The “principalizing bridge” is a phrase that will be explained in your break-out group. It is used for the full interpretive method described in Grasping God’s Word (a text we use in Interpreting the Bible).

Assignment 7: Now that you have been introduced to the concept of holiness in ancient Israel, write a brief, one page essay on what a holy life in 21st century America would look like, including personal habits and corporate practices. Base your recommendations on what you have read in Leviticus, citing specific texts in your essay.
Focus: “Behind the Text”
Objective: To understand the relative importance of authorship and historical setting for biblical books.

Assignment 8: In a brief, one page essay, list the primary reasons or rationale for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. In addition, explain how the content of the whole Pentateuch reflects a Mosaic perspective.
Focus: “In, Behind and In Front of the Text”
Objective: To synthesize your learning about the Guiding Questions

Assignment 9: Organize your thoughts around each guiding question and turn in a 2 page essay on each one.

1. What has this book revealed about God? Include metaphors, characteristics and the mission of God as it unfolds

2. What has this book revealed about God’s people, their relationship with God and each other, and their role and mission in the world? Include metaphors, mission, ethics, worship, “living by faith,” etc.


4. How would you describe the uniqueness of the Bible in its ancient Near Eastern literary and cultural context? Take into account the genres of Scripture and comparisons with extra-biblical parallels. Consider the divine and human dimensions of God’s Word. (This essay will take some time over the three Old Testament courses to fully understand.)

5. In what ways has God spoken to you in your journey through the Old Testament?

Note: Final test is due on December 15 (see TA for details)