

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OT/NT 523

Study Seminar In Israel and Jordan

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Dates of travel: January 4-17, 2024

Preparation Lecture : one Saturday Fall 2023 (9am-12pm, November 4 via zoom)

Debriefing Lecture: one Saturday Spring 2024 (TBD)

I. Course Description

In the tradition initiated by Dr. Robert Cooley and continued by Dr. Gary Pratico, GCTS study tours provide a distinctive and unique synthesis of archaeological expertise along with exegetical and theological context into the lands where the history of redemption finds its roots. An essential component of a study tour includes contextualized instruction on the archaeology of visited sites. This hands-on immersion exposes participants to the relevant settlement histories of the site, including the diagnostic material culture. On site discussions may include the significance of long-distance trade, tribal warfare, the pastoral-nomadic lifestyle, the emergence of urban centers, landscape and climate as well as other factors that contributed to understanding life in the southern Levant/Palestine during the biblical periods.

These rich historical foundations pave the way for in depth exegetical, biblical- theological, ethnographic and missional implications. By our presence in the lands of the Bible, we become an eyewitness of the stage upon which the God who Acts revealed Himself in Scripture. As a result, integration of history, theology and application (“living out” the Scripture) is a constant priority, which in some cases, may also include missional exposure into the contemporary situation in the Middle East.

In addition to GCTS students, the course is open for auditors, which include family of students, alumni, and friends of the seminary.

Important notice: the trip involves a certain degree of physicality, including long days and hiking to the different sites, which involves uneven terrain. In addition, we are traveling during the cold season, which should not be equated with our New England winters. Nevertheless, everyone should bring that “New England” winter layer (= a packable goose down jacket and waterproof shell). See the webpage for details: <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/global-education/courses/israel-jordan-2/>

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students (who take the course for credit) will be able to:

1. Identify archaeological phases related to the southern Levant (from Early Bronze Age II to Roman Period)
2. Identify key diagnostic features of the material culture related to biblical history
3. Identify key elements of the settlement history of each region in the southern Levant
4. Develop a sense of the placement and importance of the southern Levant within the context of the ancient Near East.
5. Develop critical skills to relate the material cultural data to the biblical data
6. Develop an appreciation for the geographical and historical context of Scripture
7. Develop critical skills to relate relevant historical and archaeological data to the contemporary context and the application of Scripture in our lives.

Course requirements (credit participants):

1. Attendance to pre- and post- trip lectures
2. Active participation in all events pertaining to our time in Israel and Jordan (this will include evening debriefing times)
3. Completion of at least 60% of all readings. Note: less than 60% of the reading will result in failing the course (**10%**)

4. Final Exam (60%)

- Identification questions (one or two sentence answers; e.g. what is a collar-rim storejar?
Answer: an Iron I diagnostic storage vessel that has been associated with the emergence of Israel in Canaan) (
- Geography (identify key sites and physical features of the southern Levant and the ancient Near East; e.g., where is Ur? Where is Megiddo?)
- Short essay questions (e.g., describe key features of 10th Century B.C. Israel)

Note: A comprehensive Review Sheet will be provided

5. Essay (about 10 pages 30%)

Example of a topic: “The Conquest of Canaan and the ethical question regarding destruction of the Canaanites.” Instructions will be given in class along with suggestions for other topics. The goal of the exercise is to develop the skills to integrate known data (both material-cultural and biblical) within a biblical-theological framework. Articulating the contemporary significance is a key element of the essay (interaction with a minimum of 5 refereed resources is required).

Another example for the essay is a “travelogue” that is grounded in your experience of the trip in Israel-Jordan and that integrates biblical materials and the course readings.

Required Readings:

- J. Currid and D. Barrett, *The ESV Bible Atlas* (2010)
Note: The *Carta Bible Atlas* (= the old McMillan Bible Atlas edited by Y. Aharoni) is an excellent resource and is highly recommended for purchase.
- A. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (2009) Entry-level textbook of OT history that interacts with archaeological data.
- J. McRay, *Archaeology and the New Testament* (2008) Same as Hoerth but for the NT
- A. Mazar, *Archaeology of the Lands of the Bible* (1990) A dated book but it remains the benchmark as an introduction to the technical field of biblical archaeology (credit participants only).

- *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* Excellent resource for participants with little background to biblical history and archaeology (credit and non-credit participants).
Note: entries in the ASB should be read as reference materials; if NIV ASB is not available, use *ESV Archaeology Study Bible*.

Read all the entries from the blog from our trip in 2015 before we go to Israel and Jordan http://pettersposts.blogspot.com/2014_06_01_archive.html (Required for both credit and non-credit participants)

- Select articles and website links may be added to this reading list.

Orientation Lecture Fall 2023 (date November 4, 2024) (required for both credit and non-credit participants) Discussion topics:

Introduction to the history and archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Introduction to the geography of the southern Levant

The interface of biblical text and archaeology: problems and prospects

Travel tips

Debriefing Lecture Spring 2024 (Date TBD) (required for credit participants only)

Discussion topics

Preparing for the final exam

Paper topics

Biblical-Theological reflections

Itinerary (subject to change) January 5 to 17, 2024

For description of these sites, consult http://pettersposts.blogspot.com/2014_06_01_archive.html

DAY 1-2 Travel from Boston to Tel Aviv, Israel.

DAY 3 Coastal plain and Jezreel Valley

Caesarea. Mt. Carmel. Valley of Jezreel. Megiddo. Mt. of Precipice lookout (Luke 4) for a view of Nazareth.

DAY 4 Northern Galilee

Hula Valley. Mt. Hermon. Hazor. Tel Dan archaeological park and Nature Reserve. Banias/Caesarea Philippi

DAY 5 Around the Sea of Galilee and Jordan Valley

Capernaum. Mount of Beatitudes (traditional site). **Magdala**

DAY 6 Central Transjordan

Transfer to **Amman, Jordan Jerash. Madaba**

DAY 7 Moab

Machaerus Fortress. Wadi Mujib/Arnon River

DAY 8 Petra

Nabatean Petra. Hikes.

DAY 9 Jan 18 Wadi Rum

Wadi Rum, one of the most beautiful desert regions of the eastern Mediterranean, made famous

by the exploits of Lawrence of Arabia. We will tour the area by jeep. **Edom. Gulf of Aqaba.** Border crossing back to Israel at **Eilat**

DAY 10 Southern Israel

Aravah Valley. Tel-Arad. Lachish (hike up to the Assyrian ramp). **Elah Valley**

First night in **Jerusalem**

DAY 11 Mount of Olives; City of David and Temple Mount

Mt. of Olives; Palm Sunday road; Garden of Gethsemane; City of David (including new excavations); **Wailing Wall; Ophel** digs (First Cent. AD Street); **Western Wall Tunnels** (an extraordinary underground network that reveals the foundations to Herod's temple complex).

DAY 12 Judean Wilderness and Dead Sea Descent to the **Dead Sea/Qumran. Ein Gedi** nature preserve. **Massada**

Ein Bokek (a float on the Dead Sea)

DAY 13 Herodion and Jerusalem

Herodion (site of King Herod's palace and burial place). **Bethlehem** (Church of the Nativity). **Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem**

DAY 14 Travel back to Boston