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OT 711 Exegetical Studies in the Historical Books

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**OT(HB) 711 Exegetical Studies in the Historical Books
The Book of Judges and the Deuteronomistic Historian**

Spring 2003—A Three Hour Course Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

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This course aspires to equip the student with a working knowledge of biblical Hebrew with the skills needed for theological exegesis of the OT, specifically, the book of Judges. The ultimate goal is competent biblical study within a larger theological method. The course emphasizes the craft of textual analysis, but always against the backdrop of an interpretative approach embracing the history of interpretation, modern critical methods, theological formulation, and reflection upon contemporary questions. This course on the book of Judges also seeks to place exegesis in the framework of use of the Bible in the ministry of preaching and teaching in the church..

Specific objectives: In the process of completing the course, students will:

- 1) Place a particular passage in the context of the entire book of Judges;
- 2) Translate passages from the book of Judges accurately and forcibly, using standard grammatical and lexical tools;
- 3) Evaluate the textual condition of a passage in the book of Judges by assessing the notes in the BHS apparatus;
- 4) Evaluate selected issues in interpretation, specifically philology, contextual relations, literary form, and historical setting. This entails:
 - a) Practice with lexica and concordance;
 - b) Analysis of structure, form, and aesthetics using concepts of grammar and syntax;
 - c) Preparation of a word, phrase, or formula study;
 - d) Review of impact of critical methods and models;
 - e) Evaluation of the relative weight and influence of the diverse types of reading on developing a normative teaching and preaching perspective of the passage;
- 5) Profit from excellence in biblical exposition regardless of the theological bias or historical setting of the source, in particular, appreciating the contribution of so-called "pre-critical" interpreters;
- 6) Read through the entire book of Judges several times in translation, keeping a log of impressions, ideas, thoughts, devotional insights, questions, etc..

The **means by which these objectives will be reached** include the following:

Student preparation of assigned texts is essential. We will work mainly on a close reading of the assigned passages. Close reading includes, but is not limited to the following:

Solid Translation, with all words accurately analyzed
Textual apparatus and it's implications for interpretation
Syntactical features identified and assessed
Key words or phrases identified (maybe even check a reference lexicon)

The appropriate sections of the two commentaries assigned should be read.

Some days will be given over to instructor presentations covering specific aspects of exegetical method

Failure to prepare faithfully for class, attend conscientiously, and participate meaningfully will lead to grade reduction of up to 2 degrees (e.g. A- to B) depending on the severity of the deficit.

A **word/formula study study paper** of no more than 2000 words will be prepared by the student, taking a word or phrase that appears significantly in the book of Judges. The word or formula will be assigned by the instructor.

In addition to assigned readings in both commentaries, students should read **the commentary by Daniel Block** in its entirety. This will be reported to the instructor. Failure to complete this assignment will reduce the final grade by 1 degree (e.g. B+ to B).

For **extra credit** students may read **Brensinger's commentary** in its entirety. Note that passages relevant to the assigned texts must be read. Completion of the entire commentary will *increase* the final grade one degree. (e.g. B+ to A-).

Additional reading can also provide **extra credit**. This cannot be reading done for any other class, nor can it be reading done prior to OT 711, nor anything the student has read before. Written notes of reading can be submitted along with a statement of what was read, and for each 400 pages of additional reading, the final grade can be increased by a degree. No more than 800 pages may be submitted for this extra credit.

An **analysis and review of scholarship** on one of the major persons units, events, or interpretative issues in the book of 1500-2000 words will be submitted. This paper will present what the outstanding problems and issues surrounding some important part or person of the book of Judges, with as complete a review as possible of scholarly research. The purpose of the paper is for

the student to become immersed in the scholarship surrounding the text, and to review it with the student's own study and conclusions in mind. The paper does not have to break new ground, nor is the student expected to adjudicate among competing views or resolve controversies. The purpose is simply to describe the scholarly work that has been done on the topic chosen. A good start on the relevant bibliography will be found at the end of this syllabus.

Note: Due to unavoidable conflicts resulting from students choosing the same topic, it is hoped that students will not do papers on the same subject. Students should confirm their selection with the professor before Reading Week, and topics will be accepted on a first-come/first-served basis.

Reviews of scholarship will be presented in class during the last third of the semester. We will try to process 2 per class session. Each student will have a maximum of 25 minutes to present, and no more than 10 additional minutes for discussion, or a total of 35 minutes for the complete presentation. I will schedule presentations to take us serially through the book of Judges in the most logical manner possible.

An **exegesis paper** of no more than 3000 words on a passage in Judges not covered in class. The passage should be about 4-6 verses and may be selected by the student. The paper should present:

1. The major **textual** difficulties of the passage
2. An analysis of the passage's **syntactic** structure, style, and narrative flow
3. An analysis of the passage's main **grammatical and lexical** features
4. An analysis of the passage's **form, setting, and background**, to the extent these are discernable
5. A discussion of the **distinctive theological themes** expressed in the passage, seen in the framework of the book, the former prophets, the theological traditions of the OT, and potential points of contact with the NT
6. Reference throughout to the **appropriate secondary literature**.

Note that secondary literature should be largely standard, refereed scholarly works and not popular books, study Bibles, web-sites, etc. Likewise, use of obsolete reference tools should be avoided. Special care should be taken when using resources included in computer programs. These are typically obsolete and in the public domain, and are of limited usefulness for their scholarship. Excessive use (i.e. more than about 20%) of non-scholarly or obsolete sources will cause a reduction of the grade.

7. A discussion of the **devotional and experiential** dimension of the passage's meaning, including reference to appropriate commentary literature

8. A sketch of a **sermon** to be preached from the passage
9. A carefully worked out **translation** that captures as fully as possible all the facets of meaning that your exegesis has uncovered.

Note this is *not an outline of your order of presentation*, but rather a list of issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the course of your research. The paper should conform to standard research paper form and style, with appropriate footnotes and bibliography. At no point may a student present work done for a previous class, or work for which the major portion was completed for a previous class. Work is to be completed specifically for this course, and is to be the student's own work.

Note: **Written work** must be completed according to a standard form and style. This is formal academic writing and your care, style, and approach should reflect this. Written work may be submitted in hard-copy or as a Microsoft Word document attached to an e-mail.

A log of the student's 3 readings of the book of Judges in translation will be kept, and will be submitted 3 times in the semester for inspection. Students are required to read the book of Judges in translation, and keep in written, dated form, a log or journal of impressions, questions, insights, ideas, prayers, etc. that come to mind. As long as the journal or log clearly indicates the book have been read, it may assume any format the student wishes. Note, there is no "right or wrong" on this assignment! Students may use any translation they wish. Students do not have to write notes on every single passage, but hopefully the reading will stimulate many thoughts and ideas. If students wish, a different English translation may be read each time.

The main requirement is that this be done regularly, and with a degree of devotional sensitivity and openness. The log will be collected on the dates below:

October 5, 2000: First Reading
November 3, 2000: Second Reading
December 7, 2000: Third Reading

Logs will be graded A, B, or C (unless not submitted, in which case, a zero is recorded). I presume your log receives an A unless it is clearly sketchy, un-engaged, hasty, or sloppy. Similarly, it is expected that reading will occur evenly through the term. Logs that were completed all at once or largely near the deadline will likely be graded lower. The log need not be beautiful or especially neat as long as I can read it. *Electronic submission of logs is not permitted.*

The grade will be calculated as follows:
Word/Formula Study 25%
Review of Scholarship 30%

Exegesis Paper 35%

Log 10%

Other Grade Adjustments as noted above then apply to the final grade

Schedule of Assignments

To be announced

Course Materials

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia is the standard critical text for this course.

Hebrew Lexicons:

Köhler-Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brill: Multiple Volumes through late 1990's, also on CDROM)

Holladay, W. L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*. Employs K-B and HALAT, but abridges the articles.

Brown-Driver-Briggs is now obsolete and is not acceptable for submitted written work. HALOT is now the standard reference lexicon for biblical Hebrew. Use it.

Hebrew Grammars:

E. Kautzsch, A. E. Cowley, rev. and ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd ed., 1910. For years the standard, and still useful, but now supplanted by

Paul Jouon *A Grammar Of Biblical Hebrew*, T. Muraoka trans. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico. 1996. 2 Volumes.

For Hebrew Syntax:

- Ronald Williams, *An Outline of Hebrew Syntax* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2nd ed. 1976). Though commonly used, this syntax is extremely inadequate.

- A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 3rd ed. 1901). Not to be scorned, though old.

- Waltke, Bruce K. and O'Connor, M. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990. This is preferred.

Concordances:

A. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*. The new standard work has practically neutralized the usefulness of older works.

It is also eclipsed now by software based concordances, but students will find it useful periodically to work with a printed concordance. Texts involve more than statistics!

G. Wigram, *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*. Gives contexts in English; useful for those whose Hebrew is rusty!

Software: Your preference. I use *Accordance* for the Macintosh, or *Bibleworks* for Windows.

General References

The Anchor Bible Encyclopedia. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD-ROM

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988. 4 Volumes. *NOTE: the ISBE that is found in Bibleworks is NOT the current edition and is not appropriate for use in this class.*

New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, 5 vols; ed. W. Van Gemeren, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. Also CD-ROM versions available.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Note: these materials reflect a range of scholarly viewpoint and competence. Some titles are not directly about "Judges" but are relevant to larger issues of interpretation that impinge on the reading of Judges.

Asterisked (*) Sources reflect the professor's personal favorites (for a variety of reasons, not all of which are entirely healthy!) or especially noteworthy contributions

Scholarly Commentaries

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*Moore, George F. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895, 1976.

O'Connor, M. P. "Judges" *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Prentice Hall, 1990: 132-144.

Soggin, J. Alberto. *Judges: A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.

Semi-Scholarly (But Competent) Commentaries

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*Bush, George. *Notes, Critical and Practical. on the Book of Judges. Designed as a General Help to Biblical Reading and Instruction*. New York: Saxton, Pierce, 1844.

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Cundall, Arthur E. and Morris, Leon. *Judges & Ruth: An Introduction & Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1968.

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Books On Judges

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