

Old Testament History, OT 230

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Covenant Theological Seminary

Course Information

I. Course Description

A survey and analysis of the historical books of the Old Testament in the light of ancient Near Eastern history and historiography.

II. Course Objectives

- Outline the content of the “historical books” of the Old Testament (specifically: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah (and to a minor extent, 1-2 Chronicles))
- Investigate their messages and the means by which these are conveyed
- Explore the significance(s) of these important books for our own time.
- Identify and describe the important hermeneutical issues (hermeneutics = principles of interpretation) involved in biblical historiography (history writing).
- Competently read OT historical narratives, for three purposes:
 1. Information: about Israel’s past experience with God and the way in which this prepares for the coming of Christ,
 2. Application: of the lessons of these narratives to one’s own life,
 3. Inspiration: to commit oneself to life-long study of the whole counsel of God.
- Guide others in their understanding of the OT historical books.

III. Texts

These books can be purchased from most Christian booksellers, or you can order them online from the Covenant Seminary bookstore by visiting www.covenantseminary.edu or by calling the bookstore at 314-434-0110 (toll-free 877-213-3353).

English Bible

Howard, David M., Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Chicago: Moody, 1993.
Long, V. Philips. *The Art of Biblical History*. “Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation v.5.” Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Matthews, Victor H. and Benjamin, Don C. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*. New York: Paulist, 1991 or 1997.

IV. Class Calendar

Lecture 1: Syllabus and Introduction

Lecture 2: Why Study OT History? (I)

Lecture 3: Why Study OT History? (II)

Lecture 4: How to interpret the “Historical Books” (I) (Howard, ch.1: “Introduction to Historical Narrative,” pp.23-58)

Lecture 5: How to interpret the “Historical Books” (II) (Genesis 12: 1-3 (focus), Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*, sec. “The Story So Far,” pp. 9-26.(Supplemental reading)

Lecture 6: How to interpret the “Historical Books” (III)

Lecture 7: Setting the Stage: Israel’s Early History (I) (Joshua 1:5-9 Joshua 10:21)

- Lecture 8: Setting the Stage: Israel's Early History (II) & Joshua: God's Conquest (I) (Howard, ch.2: "Joshua," pp. 59-98; Matthews and Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels*, pp. 77-81 (pp. 91-93, 137-140 in the 1997 edition of the book))
- Lecture 9: Joshua: God's Conquest (II)
- Lecture 10: Joshua: God's Conquest (III) (Judges; Judges 16:4)
- Lecture 11: Joshua: God's Conquest (IV) (Howard, ch.3: "Judges," pp. 99-123)
- Lecture 12: Judges: Israel's Compromise (I) (Matthews and Benjamin, pp. 85-105 (pp. 66-75, 145-146, 323-330 in the 1997 edition of the book))
- Lecture 13: Judges: Israel's Compromise (II) (Meredith Kline, "The Intrusion and the Decalogue," in the *Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 154-171. (Supplement Reading))
- Lecture 14: Debating Points: Holy War (John Bimson, "The origins of Israel in Canaan: an examination of recent theories." *Themelios* 15 (1989): 4-15. (Supplemental Reading))
- Lecture 15: The Emergence of Israel in Canaan (John Bimson, "Merenptah's Israel and Recent Theories of Israelite Origins." *JSOT* 49 (1991): 3-29. (Supplemental Reading))
- Lecture 16: The Rise and Fall of King Saul (I) (1 Samuel 1-15; 1 Samuel 2:29-30; 1 Samuel 10:7-8)
- Lecture 17: The Rise and Fall of King Saul (II) (Howard, ch.5: "1 & 2 Samuel," pp. 141-167)
- Lecture 18: The Rise and Fall of King Saul (III)
- Lecture 19: The Rise and Fall of King Saul (IV) (1 Samuel 16-31; 1 Samuel 13:13-14)
- Lecture 20: The Rise and Fall of King Saul (V) (Matthews and Benjamin, pp. 109-110 (pp. 318-322 of the 1997 edition))
- Lecture 21: 1 Samuel 16 - 2 Samuel 10: David's Rise and Saul's Demise (I) (1 Samuel 16:13-14)
- Lecture 22: 1 Samuel 16 - 2 Samuel 10: David's Rise and Saul's Demise (II) (1 Samuel 28: 1-2)
- Lecture 23: 1 Samuel 16 - 2 Samuel 10: David's Rise and Saul's Demise (III) (2 Samuel 1-24)
- Lecture 24: 1 Samuel 16 - 2 Samuel 10: David's Rise and Saul's Demise (IV)
- Lecture 25: 2 Samuel 11-24: David's Sin and Its Consequences
- Lecture 26: Discussion of *The Art of Biblical History* (I) (Long, *ABH*, chs. 1-6)
- Lecture 27: Discussion of *The Art of Biblical History* (II)
- Lecture 28: 1-2 Kings: Solomon and His Wisdom (I)
- Lecture 29: 1-2 Kings: Solomon and His Wisdom (II) (1 Kings 1-22; 1 Kings 2:12, 46)
- Lecture 30: 1-2 Kings: Solomon and His Wisdom (III) (Howard, ch. 6: "1 & 2 Kings," pp. 169-204)
- Lecture 31: 1-2 Kings: Solomon and His Wisdom (IV) & 1 & 2 Kings: The Kingdom Divided (I)
- Lecture 32: 1 & 2 Kings: The Kingdom Divided (II) (2 Kings 1-25; Howard, ch. 7 "Historical and Cultural Context for 1 & 2 Kings," pp. 205-229)
- Lecture 33: Elijah (Matthews and Benjamin, pp. 112-143 (pp. 157-159, 162-190 of the 1997 edition))
- Lecture 34: The Synoptic Histories of the Old Testament: An Overview (I)
- Lecture 35: The Synoptic Histories of the Old Testament: An Overview (II) (Ezra, Nehemiah)
- Lecture 36: Ezra – Nehemiah (Howard, ch. 9: "Ezra- Nehemiah," pp. 273-313; Matthews and Benjamin, pp. 147-150 (pp. 193-195 of the 1997 edition))

V. About the Professor

V. Phillips Long, Former Professor of Old Testament. B.A., Wheaton College; M.Div., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of Cambridge (England).

Professor Long joined the Covenant Theological Seminary faculty in 1986 after serving for four years as lecturer in Biblical Languages and Old Testament Exegesis at the Freie Theologische Akademie in Germany. This teaching experience together with additional graduate studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, give him a breadth here. Dr. Long has worked on the Old Testament translations for The New Living Bible and Tyndale's New Dynamic

Translation project. A specialist in languages and history, Dr. Long is also known for his special memory techniques and classroom wit as he makes these subjects surprisingly personal. He is the author of the well-received *The Art of Biblical History* and other books and articles.