

Syllabus

Telling the Old Testament Story of God

Virginia District Training Center

Location of the Course: Front Royal Church of the Nazarene, 1107 Monroe Ave., Front Royal, VA 22630

Course Dates: October 26; November 9, 23, 2019

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Rationale

Narrative

This module serves as a foundational module for further biblical studies. It constitutes an introduction to the Old Testament. Consequently, no other modules are necessarily prerequisite for this module. This module, however, should be considered as a prerequisite to other modules which focus on further studies in any portion of the Old Testament.

This module addresses ministerial competencies as outlined in the ability statements listed below. The importance of studying this module's topic is grounded in one's view of Scripture. The Nazarene Articles of Faith describe the Holy Scriptures as inspired and as "inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation" (Manual, Church of the Nazarene, 2005). Accordingly, an understanding of the history and literature of the Old Testament is critical to the faith and practice of ministers in the church. This survey will equip the student for more detailed study in any section of the Old Testament, through introductory acquaintance with the overall events, characters, themes, and historical context of the Old Testament. In addition, this module will serve to introduce the student to important background information for the study of the New Testament.

The knowledge and skills gained from this module should inform and contribute to the teaching, preaching, and counseling practices of the ministry. This contribution is especially concerned with informing such ministerial practices with sound biblical understanding.

Program Outcomes

The following ability statements, central to this module, identify the ministerial competencies that the student should achieve upon the completion of the module.

- Ability to identify the main story line of the OT with the events and characters involved. • Ability to identify the books of the OT by genre.
- Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the OT in its historical context.

Intended Learning Outcomes

The following are competencies for ministry as required by the Ordination Course of Study that the student will achieve by completing this course. Below each competency are listed specific abilities for

the course, which correspond with each particular competency. It must be recognized that the listed abilities below each competency do not necessarily comprehend the entire range of the competency addressed in the lessons.

Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament. • List four major themes that run through the Pentateuch. • Describe the significance of the literary patterns and thematic emphases that appear in Genesis 1 and 2. • Identify the unique features that distinguish Genesis 1 and 2. • Trace the theme of the “promise of land and descendants” through the patriarchal narrative. • Appreciate the significance of God’s “re-introduction” of Himself to the people of Israel in the wilderness. • Describe the difference between a “king like the nations” and God’s desire regarding the character of kingship for Israel. • Recognize the way in which the books of Samuel and Kings reflect the themes of Deuteronomy. • Understand the unique ways in which the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel word their messages of hope in response to the exilic conditions. CN2 Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre • Recognize the different content and divisions between the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant canons of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament. • Identify the main characteristic of biblical Hebrew poetry and its various forms. • Recognize the various forms of Wisdom Literature. CN3 Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament. • Outline the major contents of the Pentateuch. • Comprehend the purpose and style of the Book of Deuteronomy. • Distinguish the unique features of the Books of Joshua and Judges. • Understand the pattern of judgment for and against the various kings of the divided monarchy, within 1 and 2 Kings. • Describe the major themes reflected in the eighth-century prophets. • List and describe various types of psalms. • Understand the historical context and purpose of Wisdom Literature. CN4 Ability to identify the main characters of the Old Testament and their role in the story. • Identify the factors that led to the “tragic” downfall of Saul’s kingship in God’s eyes. • Recognize the difference between Saul’s response to his sin and David’s response to sin in his life. • List the accomplishments described in the Bible that portray the grandeur of Solomon’s kingdom. • Identify the characteristic marks of a prophet of God.

• Recognize how the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah contribute to the new focus of the postexilic community (re: law and purity). CN5 Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament. • Comprehend an introductory exposure to historical criticism as it has been applied to the Old Testament. • Understand the geographical divisions of Palestine. • Recognize the background of the Ancient Near East (peoples and places). • Appreciate significant archaeological discoveries pertaining to the Ancient Near East. • Identify the contribution of Ancient Near Eastern archaeological finds to the understanding of the Old Testament. • Discuss the similarities and differences between the “primeval history” in the Pentateuch and comparative texts from the Ancient Near East. • Recognize the connection between the biblical narrative in the Pentateuch and the history of the Ancient Near East. • Describe the dramatic impact of the Babylonian exile (living conditions in exile and back in Palestine, the resultant “Jewish Diaspora,” etc.). • Explain Judah’s shift in focus from political concerns to more individual religious concerns in the wake of the exile, and under Persian dominance. CN6 Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the Old Testament. • Identify traditional dates attached to major periods of Old Testament history and significant events. • List major themes that are reflected throughout the Old Testament. CN7 Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament. • Identify various ways in which God communicates to humanity. • Recognize the unique importance of God’s revelation through Scripture. • Express the significance of “inspiration” as it is applied to the Bible. • Understand how the first two covenants in the Pentateuch reflect God’s desire to reach and bless all humanity. • Identify the purpose and intended messages derived from the account of the plagues in Egypt. • Explain how the laws of God (including the organization of the Ten Commandments) can be summed up in the directive to love God and love neighbor. • Recognize the

ongoing theme of blessing all humanity, within the third covenant in the Pentateuch (Sinai). • Identify the lessons portrayed in the “Ebenezer” account, early in 1 Samuel, in regard to Israel’s relationship with God. • Understand the significance of the Davidic Covenant and its messianic implications. • Describe the implications for messianic expectations, of the images of the “Son of Man” in Daniel, and the “Suffering Servant” in Isaiah. • Appreciate how God embraces humanity in all its frailty while empowering humans to right living. • Describe ways in which Old Testament themes are brought to fulfillment in the New Testament. CN16 Ability to identify the steps of historical, literary, and theological analysis used in exegesis

Recommended Textbook

Varughese, Alex, ed. Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2003.

Course Requirements

1. Class attendance, attention, and participation are important for each student. Students are responsible for all assignments and in-class work even for sessions where they are absent. If more than one session is missed, the instructor will require additional assignments. If three or more lessons are missed, the student will be required to repeat the entire module at a later date.

2. The lesson homework assignments are designed to prepare the students for each upcoming lesson. Since the original directive for this module requires that it be “textbook independent,” the homework assignments serve to acquaint the student with key biblical material for the upcoming lesson, as well as involve the student in critical interaction with that material.

Student sharing from the product of their homework assignments has been integrated into the structure of each lesson. All assignments should be typed or written out and brought to class the session in which they are due.

3. Journal. Each student will keep a journal or notebook to be written in after each class session. In this journal, the student will make personal reflections of what he or she is coming to believe about the Old Testament and its applicability to today’s culture and church.

Journaling is the integrating element that helps you draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each lesson, whether the lesson concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the “Be” component of “Be, Know, and Do” is present in every module in which you participate. Further explanation of the journaling process is provided at the end of the syllabus.

Meeting Schedule

This module contains 13 lessons designed for sessions of approximately two hours each, making a total of 26 full hours of class time. Enter the session dates and times in the chart.

Lesson Date Time

October 26, 2019 8 am- 5pm

- 1: Introduction to Old Testament Studies
- 2: Literary, Historical, and Geographic Divisions of the Old Testament
- 3: Peoples, Places, and Archaeological Discoveries.
- 4: Introduction to the Pentateuch

November 9, 2019 8 am – 5pm

- 5: Primeval History and the Patriarchs/Matriarchs
- 6: The Exodus Event and Covenant at Mt. Sinai
- 7: Entering the Promised Land and a Call for Monarchy
- 8: Period of the United Monarchy in Ancient Israel

November 23, 2019 8am-9pm

- 9: Divided Monarchy and Eighth-Century BC Prophets
- 10: The Period of the Exile
- 11: The Postexilic Period
- 12: Poetic and Wisdom Literature
- 13: Synthesis: With a View to New Testament Fulfillment

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module you will be required to listen to lectures, read books and articles, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head through your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work faithfully to spend daily time in your journal. Many people confess this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an 'ah-ha' that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, and aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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