



WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

VIRTUAL CAMPUS

SCHOOL OF RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Mission: Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

RLGN 1301 VC03 Old Testament History

TERM AND DATES

Fall 2017 Aug 21-Nov 4, 2017

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr.

Professor of Religion and Philosophy

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Instant Messaging available through Blackboard IM (download through Tools section)

OFFICE LOCATION AND HOURS

Flores Bible Building office suite

Mon 3:00-5:00; Tues 2:00-4:00; Wed 2:30-4:00; Thurs 9:00-11:00 CST/CDT (phone and instant messaging)

*Other times available by email and/or appointment; **Cell phone for emergencies***

CLASS MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Asynchronous interaction with specific deadlines; Virtual Campus Blackboard website

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

An introductory survey of the historical literature with special attention to the institutions, religion, and national life of the Hebrew people.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COURSE NUMBERS

None.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

1. ***The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, IL: Zondervan, 2016.**
 - A. Book and ISBN available at WBU bookstore: <http://bookstore.wbu.edu/virtualcampus>
 - B. **NOTE:** Due to unique features of *The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* assigned in readings, other translations and other study Bibles are **NOT ACCEPTABLE** substitutes for class preparation. Use of a different text may impact performance in class.
 - C. **NOTE:** If you use the e-book version, pagination will not be the same as what is listed in Blackboard for the physical text. You will have to use the table of contents at front of text and/or list of articles at back of text to find assigned readings.

2. **INTERNET EQUIPPED COMPUTER**
 - A. Must conform to minimum recommended settings identified by Virtual Campus: http://www.wbu.edu/academics/online_programs/works/tech.htm
 - B. Should use compatible browser and have correct settings as recommended by Blackboard: http://www.wbu.edu/academics/online_programs/works/tech.htm
 - C. Must utilize WBU student email account for official university communications

3. **WBU BLACKBOARD COURSE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**
 - A. Blackboard website URL: <https://wbu.blackboard.com>
 - B. Login username: WBU student id (9 digit number, usually 3-5 zeros at beginning)
 - C. Login password: first three letters of first name + first three letters of last name (unless you have used Blackboard previously and have changed your password)
 - D. Technical support: 24/7 via phone, chat, ticket requests; see links on Blackboard login page

OPTIONAL MATERIALS

1. **Blackboard Mobile App**

Bb Student by Blackboard—Apple App Store or Google Play

2. **Internet or App for Audio-Mobile NIV texts**

While textbook is required for additional readings, students may also access/download one of the following web-based or app-based texts of the NIV for assisting with the reading of the assigned Bible passages (apps in iTunes App Store or Google Play)

 - A. NIV Live app – dramatized reading; well produced; read along text available with audio; Genesis downloads for free; \$19.99 for access to entire Bible (or \$49.99 for multiple platforms/devices)
 - B. Bible Gateway app and <http://biblegateway.com>– free NIV audio and text within the app; 3 options available—dramatized and two readers
 - C. Other options exist for websites and apps, but remember these only provide the NIV text and not the additional reading assignments from the *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*

COURSE OUTCOME COMPETENCIES

Students will –

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical, religious, and social context of the Old Testament world.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of some of the critical methods used in Old Testament studies.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic content of the Old Testament and its main teachings (theological content).
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the canonical process producing a more complete understanding of the Old Testament.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the university catalog:
<http://catalog.wbu.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=80#Class Attendance - Online>
2. Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.
3. Student "attendance" in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus.
4. Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.
5. Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 3 or more weeks of an 11 week term, may receive an F for that course.
6. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.
7. When a student reaches a number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will submit a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress to the student's WBU student email account and to appropriate university personnel.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

1. *Blackboard Scavenger Hunt*. The hunt is designed to help familiarize you with the essential features of Blackboard. **Complete by Wednesday of Week 1 (3rd day of class). 1 point will be deducted each day for late submissions.**

2. *Assigned Readings.* Weekly reading assignments are listed in the schedule. These should be completed toward the beginning of the week as much as possible to ensure time to complete other assignments which depend on the readings.
3. *Reading Quizzes.* The weekly classes primarily consist of video lectures over the assigned readings. The lectures, however, assume a general familiarity with the weekly reading assignments. To ensure that you are prepared for the lectures, you will take a reading quiz to assess your *general* understanding of these materials. Tests should be completed toward the beginning of each week, with a **Friday deadline**. Remaining assignments, such as the video lectures, will not be accessible until after the completion of the quizzes.
4. *Video Lectures.* Students will watch video lectures each week after completing the reading quiz. Students should take notes as if they were in a face to face class in order to prepare for the examinations. Handouts are provided to assist with note-taking, but students should not solely rely on the handouts for information relevant to the exams.
5. *Discussion Boards.* Students are expected to respond to weekly topics assigned by the instructor in a thoughtful, academic manner. Each thread (usually 3) in the discussion board must be addressed for full credit in the assignment. These questions are reflective in nature, without a “correct” answer. They are intended to encourage thought about the readings and lectures as well as to facilitate dialogue on these topics. **Sunday deadline for initial responses to instructor’s threads (questions).**

Students should also engage in **robust discussions** with their classmates about posts on discussion boards. This is a minimal expectation of two substantive responses to classmates’ posts per week. These interactions are due by **Sunday of the week following** the initial posts. All discussion posts should strive to build community and enhance the learning process.

Note: Because the university classroom is a place designed for the free exchange of ideas, we will frequently encounter the opinions of others which may seem novel and, occasionally, outlandish. We should show respect for one another in all circumstances. Part of the learning experience will be the opportunity to hear other opinions and/or interpretations of the assigned readings. Therefore, we should show respect for one another by exhibiting patience and courtesy. Persistent belligerence of another’s views will **lower** your **class participation grade**.

6. *Examinations.* Three exams will be given, one per completed unit of study. (There is no comprehensive final.) Questions will be multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short answer/fill in the blank. The exams will **primarily** cover material from the lectures along with some questions from assigned readings. All class lectures, however, presuppose knowledge of the assigned reading as background for understanding the lectures. Exams will be difficult if students do not study and prepare for them.

Note 1: The first two exams will be “two hours” of the “four hours” of weekly “class.” There will be a set of assignments after the exam those weeks. The final week will only have exam 3 as its assignment (and finishing week 10 discussion).

Note 2: The second and third exams will be **proctored** (monitored). The first exam is not to give the student an idea of the exam expectations. Each exam is 1/3 of the exam portion of the grade. The student is responsible to secure an approved proctor: http://www.wbu.edu/academics/online_programs/proctor/proctorrequest.htm. (WBU testing sites do not require Virtual Campus approval.) **Online remote proctoring is an option** if time or location hinders other approved testing venues.

Practice Quizzes: Exams are hard if you do not take good notes and have strong study skills. Each week, however, practice questions will be posted on Blackboard for the upcoming exam. These questions are *related to actual questions* that will be on the exam. (The content is the same, although the question itself may appear in a different form on the exam.) **Practice quizzes are not graded. They are only for personal preparation for exams.** (The quizzes are visible in the grade center and may show a “grade” after you take them, but these grades are visible only so you can see your answers and level of success on the practice quiz.) The practice quizzes are provided to prepare students for the exams, like a personal tutor. **Students who utilize practice quizzes on a weekly basis see significant improvement in exam scores!** If students do not know the answer to a practice question, they have the benefit to “fast-forward” a lecture to the precise section to re-listen and correct their notes for exam preparation. (Face to face students do not have this opportunity, so please utilize it.)

7. *Community Development (extra credit)*. It is important in this class to create a learning community to encourage active learning and enhance the online experience. As stated above, students should engage in **robust discussions** with their classmates about posts on discussion boards. If a student’s grade is on the border between two grades, overall interaction with classmates and instructor will be evaluated. In addition to responding to classmates’ posts on weekly assigned discussion topics, there is a weekly thread entitled “anything else?” where students can ask questions about issues in the reading they didn’t find addressed in the lectures or topics they would like to discuss about the readings/lectures. There are also a number of non-point discussion boards (prayer requests, study halls for quizzes) intended to encourage community. Other means to develop community that will be considered for borderline grades are the content posted to students’ wiki page, whether the student created an avatar and completed other scavenger hunt assignments, and utilized the practice quizzes.

GRADING CRITERIA

1. University Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	below 60

2. Procedure Used for Computation of Final Grade

a. Blackboard Scavenger Hunt	5%
b. Weekly Reading Quizzes:	25%
c. Weekly Discussion Boards:	25%
d. Major Exams:	45%
e. Practice Quizzes:	0%

Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All reading assignments should be completed **PRIOR** to other assignments for the week.

Abbreviations are located on p. xv of *The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*. **Please read in order assigned.**

Session	Discussion Topics	Required Reading
Week 1 (cont on next page)	Course Introduction; History of the OT Text; The Concept of Revelation	<p>DUE: Blackboard Scavenger Hunt (Wed) Complete before other assignments</p> <p><i>Quick Start Guide</i> (iii-iv); <i>Author Introduction to the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible</i> (viii-xi); <i>Preface</i> (xvi-xviii); <i>Major Background Issues from the Ancient Near East</i> (xxxix-xli); <i>The Books of the Apocrypha</i> (2128-29); "Canon" (1585), "Old Testament" (1588), "New Testament" (1588) , "Septuagint" (1590-91), "Genre" (1587), "Dead Sea Scrolls" (1585), "Papyri" (1588)</p> <p>Be familiar with these features and what they are used for: <i>Table of Contents</i> (v-vii); <i>About the Authors</i> (xiii-xiv); <i>Abbreviations</i> (xv); <i>Hebrew to English Translation Chart</i> (xix-xxvii); <i>Ancient Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (xxviii-xxx); <i>Old Testament Chronology</i> (xxxi-xxxv); <i>Tables of Weights and Measures</i> (2272); <i>Index to Articles in Canonical Order</i> (2273-78); <i>Index to Articles in Alphabetic Order</i> (2279-84); <i>Concordance</i> (2285-339); <i>Index to Maps</i> (2340-42); <i>Maps</i> (2343-58)</p>

	Intro. to the Pentateuch; Primeval History	<i>Introduction to the Torah (2); Intro to Genesis (3) ; The Historical Setting of Genesis (26-28); Ge 1:1-2:3; rûah [spirit] (xxii); t̄ob/ra' [good/evil] (xxi); rāqîa' [vault] (xxv); Ge 2:4-3:24; šela' [rib] (xxi); The Serpent (12); 'ārûm [crafty] (xx); 'rr/qll [curse] (xxi); 'iṣṣābôn [pains] (xxi); Ge 4-9; The Flood (20-21); Ge 10-11; Cosmic History and Mythology (32)</i>
Week 2	Patriarchs: Abraham & Isaac	<i>Patriarchal Religion (34); The Covenant (35); Ge 12-15; 'mn [believe] (xxvi); šedeq [righteous] (xxiv); Major Covenants in the Old Testament (23); Ge 16:1-19:38; 21:1-25:18</i>
	Patriarchs: Jacob/Israel & Joseph	<i>Ge 25:19-34; 27-35; Magic (326); Ge 37-45; 47-48; 50</i>
Week 3	The Exodus from Egypt and Covenant at Sinai	<i>Intro to Exodus (104-5); Historicity of the Exodus (116-17); The Timing of the Exodus (118-19); Ex 1:1-4:17; God's Name (112-13); Ex 4:18-12:42; The Passover (129); The Red Sea (132-33); Ex 13:17-14:31; 15:19-16:35; 18-20; qādōš [holy] (xix); t̄orâ [law] (xxvii); Ancient Laws, Scripture and Modern Issues (147); Ex 32:1-33:6; The Golden Calf (167); Ex 33:7-34:35; 35:30-37:9; 40:17-38; The Tabernacle (158-59); Tabernacle Furnishings (160); 'ôhēl mō'ed/miškān [tent of meeting/tabernacle] (xxii)</i>
	Wilderness Wanderings and Preparation for Canaan	<i>Intro to Leviticus (180-81); Ancient Law Codes and Leviticus (183-84); t̄amē'/t̄āhôr [unclean/clean] (xxvii); Unclean Food (197); Disease Transmission in the Ancient World (205); Sanctioned Relationships in the Ancient Near East (210-11); Penalties for Sexual Offenses in Biblical and Mesopotamian Law (216-17); Major Social Concerns in the Covenant (329); Lev 16; 25; Festivals (220); Old Testament Festivals and Other Sacred Days (222-23); Intro to Numbers (231-32); Nu 9:15-23; 13-14; 20:1-13; 21:4-9; Intro to Deuteronomy (291-92); The Canaanites (294); Dt 6:1-9:6; Divine Warfare (365); ḥerem [devoted (to destruction)] (xxiv); Dt 17:14-20:20; 29:1-31:8; 34; The Death of Moses and the Authorship of Deuteronomy (356)</i>
Week 4	The Conquest of Canaan	<i>Introduction to the Narrative Literature (358); Intro to Joshua (359); Jos 1:1-10:15; The Sun Stands Still and the Moon Stops (378-80); Jos 10:16-13:8; 23-24</i>
	The Period of the Judges	<i>Intro to Judges (402-3); šopēt [judge] (xxv); Ancient Near Eastern Worship (317-18); Jdg 1-8; 10:6-12:7; Nazirites (242-43); Jdg 13-16; 21:25; Intro to Ruth (448); Ru 1-4; gō'el [redeemer] (xxvii)</i>
Week 5 (cont)	Exam 1 (not proctored)	Introduction through the Conquest of Canaan (1a-4a)

	Transition to Monarchy: Samuel, Saul, and David	<i>Intro to 1-2 Samuel</i> (459-60); 1Sa 1-10; 13; 15; 28:3-25; 31; 16-20; 24; 26:1-28:2; 29-30 ; Prophet (xxvii); Priest (xxvii); King (xxvii)
Week 6	Age of Glory: David and Solomon	2Sa 1:1-2:11; 4-7; 11-15; 18:1-19:15 ; <i>Intro to 1-2 Kings</i> (556-57); 1Ki 1-8 ; <i>Temples and Sacred Space</i> (724-25); <i>Architecture of the Temple</i> (572-73); <i>Temple Furnishings</i> (571); 1Ki 9-11
	Divided Kingdoms: Israel and Judah	<i>The Geographic Setting of Kings</i> (588); <i>The Challenging Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah</i> (596); 1Ki 12-16 ; <i>Baal</i> (600-1); <i>Prophets</i> (1486-87); 1Ki 17-19; 20:35-22:40 ; <i>Divine Council</i> (615); 2Ki 1:1-2:18; 3:10-5:27; 9-11
Week 7	Israel in the 8 th Century	2Ki 14:23-29 ; <i>Introduction to the Oracles of the Prophets</i> (1102); <i>Intro to Amos</i> (1478); <i>Amos's Judgments Against Foreign Nations</i> (1480); "For Three . . . Even for Four" (1481); Am 1-2 ; <i>Economic Changes and Social Classes in Eighth-Century BC Israel</i> (1484-85); Am 3-5 ; <i>mišpaṭ</i> [justice] (xxiv); Am 7-8; 9:11-15 ; <i>Intro to Hosea</i> (1454-55); <i>The Baal in Hosea</i> (1458-59); Hos 1-4; 6 ; <i>ḥesed</i> [unfailing love] (xix); 'ḥb/śn' [love/hate] (xxv); Hos 9:7-8; 10:11-11:11; 14 ; 2Ki 15:8-31; 17 ; <i>Exile of the Northern Kingdom</i> (653)
	Judah in the 8 th Century	2Ki 16:1-16 ; <i>Extispicy</i> (650); 2Ki 16:17-20 ; <i>Intro to Isaiah</i> (1103); <i>The Historical Background of Isaiah</i> (1106-8); Isa 1-2; 5 ; <i>Dating Methods</i> (1122); Isa 6:1-7:17 ; <i>Israel and Aram Destroyed</i> (1127); 'almâ [virgin] (xx); Isa 7:18-9:7 ; <i>Names in the Old Testament Period</i> (1132); Isa 11-12; 14:3-23; 26; 30; 35 ; <i>Intro to Micah</i> (1513-14); Mic 1:1-7; 2:6-4:5; 5-6 ; 2Ki 18:1-8 ; <i>Hezekiah's Tunnel</i> (663); 2Ki 18:9-20:21
Week 8	Judah in the 7 th Century	2Ki 21 ; <i>Intro to Zephaniah</i> (1542); Zep 1:1-2:3; 3:7-18 ; 2Ki 22 ; <i>Books and Literacy</i> (666); 2Ki 23:1-30 ; <i>Intro to Jeremiah</i> (1220); <i>Historical Setting of Jeremiah</i> (1222-24); Jer 1; 3:1-4:4; 5; 7:1-15; 11:18-23; 13 ; <i>Symbolic Action Report</i> (1247); <i>Intro to Nahum</i> (1527-28); Na 2 ; <i>Intro to Habakkuk</i> (1535-36); Hab 1-3 ; 2Ki 23:31-24:17 ; Jer 23-24; 26; 28-29; 35 ; <i>The Rekabite Family</i> (1285); Jer 36 ; 2Ki 24:18-25:30 ; Jer 18-21; 31:15-32:44; 38
	Exilic Literature and Prophets	Jer 39:11-40:10; 41:1-3; 41:11-42:16; 43:1-7; 44:1-6 , 15-18; Ps 137 ; <i>Imprecations and Incantations</i> (937); <i>Intro to Lamentations</i> (1319-20); La 1; 3-4 ; <i>Acrostic Psalms</i> (993); <i>Intro to Ezekiel</i> (1332); <i>Aramaic</i> (1335); Eze 1-6; 10-11; 16; 18; 20:1-44; 24:15-22; 28:11-19 ; <i>Is Ezekiel 28:11-19 Talking About Satan?</i> (1377); Eze 33:21-33; 36:22-32; 37 ; <i>Ezekiel's Temple</i> (1399); Eze 43:1-12; 47:1-12 ; <i>Prophecies of Consolation and Hope</i> (1185); 'ebed [servant] (xxvi); Isa 40:1-41:4; 42:1-9; 44:24-45:13; 49:1-7; 50; 52:13-53:12 ; <i>Substitutionary Rites</i> (1202); Isa 55; 61; 65:17-66:24

Week 9	Exam 2 (proctored)	The Judges through the Fall of the Monarchy (4b-8a)
	Restoration; Emergence of Judaism; Postexilic Worship	<i>Intro to Ezra and Nehemiah</i> (762); Ezr 1; 3-6 ; <i>Zerubbabel's Temple</i> (767); <i>The Historical Setting of Zechariah</i> (1555); <i>Intro to Haggai</i> (1548); Hag 1-2 ; <i>Intro to Zechariah</i> (1552-53); Zec 1:1-17; 3:1-4:14 ; <i>šaṭān</i> [adversary] (xxiii), <i>māšīaḥ</i> [anointed] (xxiv); Zec 6:9-7:14; 9:9-17; 11:4-17; 14 ; "Aramaic" (1584), "Diaspora" (1585), "Scribes" (1590), "Synagogues" (1591); Ezr 7; 8:15-10:17 ; <i>Mixed Marriages</i> (775); Ne 1-2; 4:1-7:3; 8-9; 10:28-39; 12:27-13:31 ; <i>Intro to 1 and 2 Chronicles</i> (676-77); <i>Introduction to Wisdom and Hymnic Literature</i> (816); <i>Intro to Psalms</i> (877-79); <i>Psalms Titles</i> (881); Pss 1-2 ; <i>Enthronement in the Ancient Near East</i> (925); Pss 12; 22-23; 44 ; <i>Community Laments in the Ancient Near East</i> (919-20); Pss 66; 121 ; <i>Pilgrim Psalms</i> (1003); Pss 136; 148 ; <i>Old Testament Sacrifices</i> (188); <i>Sin and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East</i> (932-33)
Week 10	The End of Prophecy; Persian and Greek Periods	<i>Intro to Obadiah</i> (1498-99); Ob 1-21 ; <i>Intro to Joel</i> (1471); Joel 1-3 ; <i>Intro to Jonah</i> (1503-04); Jnh 1 ; <i>Fantastic Creatures Sent from God</i> (1508); Jnh 2-4 ; <i>Intro to Malachi</i> (1570-71); Mal 1-4 ; <i>Intro to Esther</i> (799-801); Est 1-10 ; <i>Intro to Daniel</i> (1413-14); <i>Stories About Courtiers</i> (1416); Da 1-6 ; <i>Apocalyptic Literature</i> (1554); Da 7-8 ; <i>Dreams and Dream Reports</i> (1437); <i>Greek History</i> (1440-41); <i>Ptolemies and Seleucids</i> (1446)
	Hebrew Wisdom Literature	<i>Intro to Song of Songs</i> (1088); SS 1-8 ; <i>Intro to Proverbs</i> (1022); <i>Sages in the Ancient Near East</i> (1024); <i>yr'</i> [fear] (xxiii); <i>ḥōkmâ</i> [wisdom] (xxiv); Pr 1-3 ; <i>What Is Wisdom?</i> (1040); Pr 8-9 ; <i>What Does It Mean for a Proverb to Be True?</i> (1025-26); <i>What Is a Proverb?</i> (1027-28); Pr 15-16; 26; 31:10-31 ; <i>Intro to Ecclesiastes</i> (1073); <i>Fictional Royal Biography</i> (1075); <i>hebel</i> [meaningless] (xx); Ecc 1-3; 12 ; <i>Intro to Job</i> (817); <i>Chronological Context of the Character Job</i> (818); Job 1-2 ; <i>Satan</i> (820); <i>Retribution Principle</i> (823, 1 st paragraph only); Job 3-5; 18-19; 29-33; 36; 38-39 ; <i>Identification of Behemoth and Leviathan</i> (871-72); Job 40-42
Week 11	Exam 3 (proctored)	The Exile through the Wisdom Literature (8b-10b)

OBSERVATION AND INVITATION

This is an academic class which will explore the historical background and literary features of the Old Testament. *The Christian belief about the Bible, however, is that it is intended to speak God's word to the reader about her or his own life circumstances.* Therefore, if you ever have **questions** about how the Bible readings apply to your own life **or wish to talk** about your personal, spiritual life in a format other than the classroom, I would be happy to visit with you by email, instant messaging, or phone.

CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT

It is the instructor's belief that the Bible is written *exactly* the way God intended for it to be written. Further, the instructor holds to the Baptist view of religious liberty for all—including his students. (In case you were not aware, the Baptists of Virginia played a significant role in the establishment of religious freedom in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.)

The liberty I contend for, is more than toleration. The very idea of toleration, is despicable; it supposes that some have a pre-eminence above the rest, to grant indulgence; whereas, all should be equally free, Jews, Turks [i.e., Muslims], Pagans and Christians. Test oaths and established creeds should be avoided as the worst of evils.

—Virginia Baptist and First Amendment advocate John Leland;
quoted in *Baptist Ways* by Bill Leonard [2003], pp. 130-31)