SYLLABUS

Heb 621: INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW EXEGESIS
B.M.A. Theological Seminary  Fall Semester 2007
Professor--Dr. Greg W. Parsons

I. Course Description
The student is introduced to the basic tools and methods of Hebrew exegesis (including word studies) with application of these methods to readings in the Pentateuch, Psalms, and/or Latter Prophets. An attempt is made to correlate (or "bridge the gap" between) exegesis and the teaching and preaching of the Word.

II. Course Objectives
1) To review inductively the basic principles of Hebrew grammar and syntax.

2) To begin to learn the basic steps for doing Hebrew exegesis (including textual criticism, lexical, grammatical, syntactical and theological analyses) by applying them both to Hebrew narrative (in Exodus, Deuteronomy and Jonah) and to Hebrew poetry (in the Psalms).

3) To discover the value of word studies for Hebrew exegesis, theological interpretation and even for sermonic illustrations.

4) To become familiar with the historical and literary contexts of Exod. 20-21 & Deut. 4-5 (legal literature), Jonah 1-3 (prophetic literature) and of selected Psalms to help unlock the meaning of these various texts.

5) To begin to apply the results of exegetical studies to teaching and preaching the Word.

III. Textbooks
A. Required textbooks
Besides the Hebrew Bible (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia) and the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon (A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament) which the student is expected to have from the first-year class, there are six (6) basic textbooks. The first two are indispensable exegetical tools: (1) Bruce Einspahr, Index to Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon; (2) Ronald Williams, Hebrew Syntax. Also there are three valuable manuals for acquiring the skills for doing Hebrew exegesis: (3) Douglas

1 This syllabus is tentative & may be changed. [Syllabus date: 7-25-2007]

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B. Other helpful tools


IV. Requirements for Grading

1. Exam
   The only exam will emphasize translation and parsing and will count 30% of the total grade (see class schedule below).

2. Word studies
   A mini-word study on מָלָכָה and its precise meaning in Jonah 3:9, 10 (or מַלָכָה in Deut. 4:1, 45) is due Sept 24 [about 3 to 5 single-spaced pages] and will comprise 6% of the grade. The major word study on either מָלָכָה—translated "kill" in the KJV of Exodus 20:13—or מָלָכָה in Deut. 4:24 & 5:9 is due on Oct. 15 (about 6 to 12 single-spaced pages) and will count about 12%.

3. Exegetical paper and oral report
   Each student must write one exegetical paper [35% of the grade] on an assigned Psalm to demonstrate his own exegetical abilities. The student is urged not to consult commentaries for this paper. An automatic "F" will accrue to any student who depends on commentaries for this paper. Furthermore the student ought not to use an English translation until after thoroughly grappling with the Hebrew text on his own. However the use of any exegetical tool (as well as journal articles if used judiciously) is permitted. You must document the usage of journal articles, general resources, or any other tools. A grade penalty will occur for failure to document borrowed ideas. The student will find it

3Be sure to document completely any reference to source materials including any minimal consultation of commentaries or the Internet (only as the very last step--after doing your own work).
advantageous to begin to work on this Psalm a little at a time as
the principles for exegesis are explained in this course.

The original paper (normally 15 to 25 pages) must be turned
in by the beginning of the last class session. A possible oral
report of about 30 to 45 minutes (as well as interaction with
other student papers) counts an additional 1%. Photocopies of the
paper should be provided for each classmate for the oral
presentation and an additional copy for the teacher’s file. After
being graded, one copy will be returned to the student.

4. Weekly assignments
The composite daily grade will count about 16% of the
total grade. From time to time, the professor may ask for the
assignment (and/or the Heb. translation and parsing of the
assigned passage) to be turned in for inspection. This will be
used as a barometer to gauge the effort and daily diligence of the
student. Reports on required reading assignments and/or other
exegetical tasks (including what portions the student translated
from the assigned Hebrew text) must be recorded and turned in
weekly on standardized reading slips obtainable from the seminary
office. The combination of reading slips and other daily work
handed in will comprise about 13% of the grade. The other 3% will
be divided equally (1% each) between class attendance, the
synthesis of Psalm 1 and the synthesis of Psalm 23. The use of
English translations and commentaries is discouraged on these
weekly exercises until after the student has tried to grapple with
them firsthand.

V. Class Schedule (for Fall 2007)

Aug. 27 Brief review of course syllabus and mechanical parsing
system. Study of Jonah 1:1-6 with inductive review of
parsing and grammar. Assignment: translate Hebrew text
with optional help of Chisholm’s workbook [=WB]—-read
11-13, 17-21, 233-235 and study/work pp. 23-39; read
Stuart, ix-xx, 1-72, 104-06; 131-34; Kaiser, pp. 7-23,
32-34, 37-51; Williams, pp. 27-33 (#133-77); Chisholm
EE, 7-13, 78-112; and Scott, [3rd ed.] pp. 1-17. Also
read Allen P. Ross, Creation and Blessing, 37-49.

Sept. 3 NO CLASS. LABOR DAY.

10 Study of Jonah 1:7--2:1. Assignment: translate Hebrew
text with optional help of workbook [=WB]—study/work,
40-55; read Stuart, pp. 21-22, 56-57, 135-44; Kaiser,
pp. 105-21, 128-129, 131-47; Ross, Biblical Hebrew
Handbook (1981 printing), pp. 558-65; and Ross,
Creation and Blessing, appendices 2 & 4--pp. 724-28,
Lecture: word study techniques.
Assignment: translate Hebrew text with optional help of Chisholm 
WB, 56, 66, 69-79. Read Williams, pp. 6-7 (#1-11), 33-39 (#178-
222), pp. 96-99 (#570-582) and Chisholm EE, pp. 57-78, 113-17, 
119-142.

Sept. 24  Mini-word study due on מְנַהֲג in Jonah 3:9, 10 (or 
<ְנַ) in Deut. 4:1, 45). Study of Deut. 4:15-19. Word 
study guidelines for מְנַהֲג and בְּדִכְלָה. Brief lecture?: 
Ancient Near Eastern Legal Literature and Law Codes.
Assignment: translate Hebrew text.

translate Hebrew text. Read Williams, pp. 44-54 (#238-
314), 57-59 (#328-353, 66-70 (#394-428); Stuart, pp. 9-
16,73-78, 102-123 and James B. Pritchard, Ancient Near 
Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament, pp. 159-98; 
523-26. Begin word study of מְנַהֲג or בְּדִכְלָה.

text. Read Williams, pp. 41-42 (#227-34). Continue 
word study.

Oct. 15  Major word study due on מְנַהֲג in Deut. 5:17 [Exod. 
20:13] (or בְּדִכְלָה in Deut. 4:24, 5:9). Possible "catch-
up" day on translation. Possible brief introduction to 
term paper expectations (see handout).

22 Introduction to the Psalms. Study of Psalm 121. Brief 
introduction to textual criticism & use of textual 
apparatus. Assignment: translate Hebrew text; read 
Greg W. Parsons, "Guidelines for Understanding and 
Proclaiming the Psalms," Bibliotheca Sacra 147 (April-
June, 1990):169-87. Also Stuart, review pp.13-16 & read 
pp. 17-19, 123-130 & then read Stuart pp. 5-7, 34-39, 
89-102; Kaiser, pp. 211-27; Scott, [3rd. ed.] pp. 25-36 
and Bruce K. Waltke, "The Textual Criticism of the Old 
Testament," pp. 211-28 in Frank Gaebelein, ed., The 
Expositor's Bible Commentary: vol. 1) and/or Waltke-
Also read Chisholm EE, pp. 19-29, 142-47, 169-186.

Oct. 29 Study of Psalm 126. Assignment: translate Hebrew text 
121-25; Scott, [3rd. ed.] review pp. 1-17 & read 18-24 & 
scan pp. 37-87]; also read Ross, Creation and Blessing, 
pp. 42-44, 46-47. Lecture: figures of speech; summary 
statements (synthesis) of Bible passages.
Nov.  5 Study of Psalms 1 and 2. Assignment: translate Hebrew text and do assigned material including figures of speech; be prepared to turn in the synthesis of Psalm 1 (including the preliminary steps toward the finished product as well as an exegetical outline). Read Stuart, pp. 49-50, 144-158 plus review 17-19; Kaiser, pp. 87-104, 170-73.
   Lecture: Introduction to Hebrew syntax and exegetical questions. Term paper expectations explained or reviewed.


19 FINAL EXAM (primarily new translation & parsing skills plus ability to explain textual apparatus). Good idea to practice these skills on Psalm for exegetical paper.


Dec.  3 Study of Psalms 8, 15, 127, 111 & 128 [or perhaps some other psalm(s)] in class with students presenting an oral report and summary of the message and exegetical findings, etc. [Be sure to bring your Hebrew Bibles and exegetical tools so as to be able to follow and interact with other students' presentations.]