



The Bible ... *for Smarties*

HEBREW SCRIPTURES 2: The Prophets & The Writings

SYLLABUS

Spring 2026

Taught by
David Moseley, Ph.D.

Mondays ~ 6:00-8:00 p.m. PST
Taught Online via Zoom

Welcome to Hebrew Scriptures 2! This class continues to explore the discipline of academic Biblical Studies, building on the material covered in Hebrew Scriptures 1 – specifically, the literature of the Prophets and the Miscellaneous texts in the Hebrew Scriptures referred to as the “Writings.”

“Old Testament” or “Hebrew Bible”?

The preferred terminology today – even in Christian Biblical Studies – is “Hebrew Bible” or “Hebrew Scriptures” rather than “Old Testament.” These are the sacred texts of Judaism, however important they might be to Christians ... primarily *because* they were the sacred scriptures of Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew (and Paul, also a Jew). Referring to these texts as the “Old” Testament might suggest to Jews that they are out-dated compared to the “New” Christian Testament, or have been superseded. Also, as we will see, the language of “Old” and “New” Testaments imposes a “Christocentric” interpretive framework on the Hebrew Bible that is liable to corrupt or distort the original meaning of the texts. [In Judaism, the preferred term of art for their sacred writings is *Tanakh*, an acrostic made up from the three first letters of the three principal sections of the Hebrew Bible: (1) The *Torah* (“Teachings”); (2) the *Nevi'im* (“Prophets”, including History Books); and (3) the *Ketuvim* (Miscellaneous “Writings”) – hence, *TaNaKh*.]

The Mission of the Class is to Nurture Students towards a Nuanced, Critical Interpretation and Understanding of the Texts of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Bible is the most widely read and influential set of texts in human history, and is really a library of many books that chronicle the stories about God’s revelation in two volumes:

- I. The Story of God’s Covenantal Relationship with the Jews in the Hebrew Scriptures (the *Tanakh* or “Hebrew Bible”)
- II. The Life, Teachings, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Story of his Followers in the Early Church (the “Christian Scriptures”)

This class is the second part of a two-part course that forms an introductory survey of the many writings compiled into the Hebrew Scriptures. [There is a short prerequisite summer course on Hermeneutics (the Science of Biblical Interpretation); and *Hebrew Scriptures 1* included some introductory classes on the Historical and Theological Background to the study of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as detailed analysis of the Torah and the Deuteronomist History (Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, and I & II Kings) and the Chronicler (I & II Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah). These classes have all been recorded and are available for purchase.] The literature found in the Hebrew Scriptures was composed and edited over the course of more than a millennium. Students will be exposed to the literary genres, forms and motifs that comprise these writings. The texts will be placed in the historical, cultural, sociological and religious milieu of their audience. Students will learn a variety of techniques, which are helpful in the analysis of Biblical texts: these include analysis of form and structure, as well as genre, historical and redaction criticism. Students will be encouraged to put knowledge to use as they apply Biblical interpretation to theological construction and pastoral practice.

“B.C.” or “B.C.E.”?

When did “B.C.” and “A.D.” change to “B.C.E.” (Before the Common Era) and “C.E.” (Common Era), and why? Is this more unnecessary political correctness from the Academy? As with “Old Testament” and “New Testament,” the method of dating history according to the epochs of “Before Christ (B.C.)” and “Anno Domini” (A.D. – Latin for “In the year of our Lord”) imposes a Christocentric standard of time on historical eras...which was convenient for a period when Christianity was the religion of the dominant (European) colonial powers...but is more and more untenable in a diverse and multicultural world (in both the academy and among everyday folks) where the majority of the global population does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the be all-and-end-all of human history. Furthermore, the ancient monk responsible for this division of eras wasn’t that great at math, and it’s more likely than not that Jesus was born approximately 6-4 B.C.E. (just before the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.E.). Nevertheless, the Christian calendar – like the English language – has become the default standard of globalization — but to mitigate the religious and cultural dominance of one particular system of measuring time, the preferred, *more neutral* universal terminology used today is “B.C.E.” (Before the Common Era) and “C.E.” (Common Era).

Course Objectives

Students who have completed the Hebrew Scriptures classes will hopefully be able to:

- Distinguish between various Interpretative Methods used to Study, Examine, Analyze, Research, and Comprehend Biblical Texts
- Understand the Historical Context within which the Religious Texts of Ancient Israel were Created and Read / Heard
- Appreciate the various Literary Genres found in the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures, and Understand their Functions for Interpretation
- Be aware of the Social and Cultural Issues Relevant to the Formation of the Texts and their Ethical Implications
- Comprehend the Significance, Relevance, and ongoing Influence of the Hebrew Texts on Contemporary Life and Debates, both inside and outside of the Church

This class will be divided up into two Parts, as follows:

Part One: The Prophets

8 Weeks (January 12th & 26th, February 2nd, 9th & 23rd, March 2nd, 16th & 23rd)

Part 1 of the Class will continue with the study of the second of the tri-partite structure of the Hebrew Bible (*TaNaKh*) – the *Nevi'im*, or the “Prophets.” In Hebrew Scriptures 1 we studied what the Jews refer to as the “Former Prophets”, and what Christians refer to as the (Deuteronomist) History Books (*Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, and I & II Kings*). In Hebrew Scriptures 2, we will be studying what the Jews refer to as the “Latter Prophets” – namely, the three Major Prophets (*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel*); and the Minor Prophets, also known as the ‘*Book of the Twelve*’ in Judaism (*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*). The study of the Prophetic Literature is contextualized by the specific history of the Israelite monarchy after the so-called “Golden Age” of David and Solomon, following the vicissitudes of the Divided Kingdoms of Israel (Ten Northern Tribes) and Judah (Two Southern Tribes), from the latter part of the 10th Century B.C.E. through the catastrophes of the Assyrian Conquest of Israel (c. 722 B.C.E.) and the Babylonian Conquest of Judah (c. 597 - 589 / 588 B.C.E.), which included the destruction of Solomon’s Temple and Jerusalem, and the Exile in Babylon. The cycle of impiety, sinfulness and penitence of the Jews before, during and after the crises of invasion and conquest by foreign pagan empires frames the specific nature of the Prophetic Literature in terms of Literary Genre and the Thematic Subject-Matter of the Prophets. As always, we will be asking ourselves the essential questions raised by “Hermeneutics” – questions of Genre (*what sort of text is this?*), Issegesis (*what do we bring to the text?*) and Exegesis (*what do we take out of the text?*).

Part Two: The Writings

4 Weeks (April 13th & 20th, May 4th & 11th)

Part 2 of the Class will continue with the study of the third of the tri-partite structure of the Hebrew Scriptures (*TaNaKh*) – the *Ketuvim*, or the Miscellaneous “Writings” that complete the Hebrew Scriptures. The “Writings” contain a variety of Literary Genres within the sacred texts, composed mostly of Poetry (*Psalms*) and Wisdom Literature (*Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*). However, other Genres include Theodicy (*Job*) [a Profound Theological Text with Ancient Pedigree], Lamentation and Erotic Poetry,

Inspirational Proto-Feminist Texts (*Ruth and Esther*), and Apocalypse (*Daniel*). [The Theological Revision of Jewish History after the Exile (*I & II Chronicles* and *Ezra-Nehemiah*) were already covered in Hebrew Scriptures 1.]

Seminar Instructor

David Moseley, Ph.D. holds undergraduate and graduate Degrees in Law, Theology and Philosophy from Oxford University, and a Doctorate in Theology from Cambridge University. He is Director of Global Education and Teaches Religious Studies & Philosophy at The Bishop's Episcopal School, La Jolla, CA. Dr. Moseley taught Theology and Biblical Studies at the University of San Diego for 16 years; he was formerly Theologian-in-Residence at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in San Diego; and was a founding member of the Faculty of the San Diego Episcopal School for Ministry, teaching all four of their Biblical Studies classes (Hebrew Scriptures 1 & 2, Christian Scriptures 1 & 2) for five full cycles over the last decade. Dr. Moseley has Led Trips to the "Holy Land" (Israel, Palestine & Jordan), and regularly Teaches Adult Religious Education Classes in Episcopal Parishes throughout the County.

Materials and Class Format

Pre-Semester Reading for the class is *The Prophetic Imagination* (2nd Edition: Fortress, 2018 – 40th Anniversary Edition) by Walter Brueggemann.

Our main text for this class is the Bible, and we will be using the following translation and edition:

The New Oxford Annotated Study Bible - New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) with the Apocrypha (College Edition, 5th Ed.) edited by Donald Coggins (Oxford, 2018)

[The *New Oxford Annotated Bible* is about \$32 new in hardback on Amazon, and contains a wealth of useful introductory essays, maps, and annotations – and will be required for all my Bible classes. I strongly urge you to get the hardback edition as this will be a well-worn book over the next two years, and you should get a sturdy copy! The Brueggemann book is \$15 new on Amazon.]

Handouts and Outlines will be provided, as well as access to other Online Resources. Ultimately, what you get out of the class will depend on what you decide to put into it. You are strongly encouraged to complete assigned Readings before each class.

This Course uses a "Flipped Classroom" methodology – rather than the instructor always lecturing students in order to transmit content, students are expected to have absorbed primary content (Bible readings) through weekly reading, enabling secondary reflection and analysis to take place through guided classroom discussion in a Seminar-Style Setting.

All being well, additional classes on the Christian Scriptures will be offered in Fall 2026 and Spring 2026, which will cover Jesus of Nazareth and the Gospels (Christian

Scriptures 1 in Fall 2024); and the Book of Acts, the Pauline Literature, the General Epistles, and the Book of Revelation (Christian Scriptures 2 in Spring 2025).

Registering for the Class

The cost of the class is \$295 (for 12 x 2-hr online classes -- a total of 24 hours of class time). For those of you who have taken any "The Bible ... for *Smarties!*" classes before, the discounted cost of the class is \$250. [Scholarships are available upon inquiry.]

If you'd like to take the Hebrew Scriptures 1 class, you can either Venmo me the money (@David-Moseley-17), or pay using Zelle [my Zelle account is listed under my cell# (858) 414-8169 and/or my personal email address: djsmoseley@aim.com], or mail a check made out to "David Moseley" with "HS1 Class" in the Memo Line, depending on your preference:

Dr. David Moseley
P.O. Box 27031
San Diego
CA 92198

**Zoom Recordings of other "The Bible ... for *Smarties!*" classes are available for purchase, with access to all supporting materials (assignments and reading lists, outlines, slide shows, and other resources). Classes that are available on recordings include:

1. A Short Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics (Three 2-Hr Classes)
2. Hebrew Scriptures 1 (Twelve 2-Hr Classes) – Torah & Historical Books
3. Hebrew Scriptures 2 (Twelve 2-Hr Classes) – Prophets & The Writings
4. Christian Scriptures 1 (Twelve 2-Hr Classes) – The Christian Gospels
5. Christian Scriptures 2 (Twelve 2-Hr Classes) – Pauline Literature & All the Rest
6. The Parables of Jesus (Six 2-Hr Classes)

Please email me if you have any interest in purchasing access to these recordings.

And please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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Best Wishes for the Class!

Schedule

Part I: The Prophets

- 1.1 Introduction to the Prophets (January 12th)
- 1.2 The Early Prophets (January 26th)
- 1.3 The Northern Prophets: Hosea & Amos (February 2nd)
- 1.4 The Major Prophets 1: Isaiah (February 9th)
- 1.5 The Major Prophets 2: Jeremiah (February 23rd)
- 1.6 The Major Prophets 3: Ezekiel (March 2nd)
- 1.7 The Minor Prophets (March 16th)
- 1.8 The Apocalyptic Prophets (March 23rd)

Part II: The Writings

- 2.1 Introduction to the Writings & Job (April 13th)
- 2.2 The Psalms & Lamentations (April 20th)
- 2.3 Proverbs & Ecclesiastes (May 4th)
- 2.4 Ruth, Esther & The Song of Songs (May 11th)

PLEASE NOTE: *There will be NO classes on the following dates:*

- January 19th [Martin Luther King Day]
- February 16th [Presidents' Day]
- March 9th
- March 30th
- April 6th
- April 27th