

**American Baptist Churches of New York State  
Lay Study Program**

**OLD TESTAMENT**

**STUDENT GUIDE**

Curriculum Committee  
of the  
ABC/NYS Lay Study Team

March 2002

## **Course Description**

The Old Testament course is constructed with a duality of organization. The readings from the Holy Scripture and whatever textbook the instructor selects will more or less follow the traditional method of Old Testament study. The lecture and discussion parts of the actual class sessions will be based on a more topical approach.

## **Course Goals**

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." (II Timothy 3: 16 & 17.) The entire document that God has inspired for our use contains both the New and the Old Testaments. Too often many Christians have failed to truly read and study the teachings that God has given us through the various authors of the Old Testament. To fully understand the New Testament and the life and teachings of our incarnate Lord's brief stay on earth, one must know of the relationship that God has established with the Jewish people and of his desire to enter into fellowship with them. Both covenants form a unified work that seeks to detail God's desires for how we should live our lives in love and obedience to his Holy name.

The Old Testament Course is offered so that a student by the completion of the course will:

1. Have a basic understanding of the various groupings and types of literature that are found in the Old Testament.
2. Have a basic understanding of God's creation of this world.
3. Have a basic understanding of the early history of the Jewish people and the great persons who were involved in this history.
4. To understand what the Old Testament points to as far as the initial coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
5. To understand what the scriptures tell us about Christ's second coming and the end of world revelations.
6. To be able to relate specific Old Testament writings with the later writings of the New Testament.
7. To understand more about the way God dealt with chosen people and whether God is still dealing with his people in similar ways in this, the "Church age."

In addition to gaining the knowledge and understanding mentioned above for the student's edification and spiritual growth, the student should be able to use this material where appropriate in carrying out his/her personal ministry as a member of God's Christian Church.

## **General Texts & Other Materials**

**Encountering the Old Testament** by Bill Arnold and Bryan Beyer

Hard cover, available from amazon.com for \$34.99 plus shipping. June 1999, 512 pages.

**Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament**

By William Sanford LaSor, David Hubbard and Frederic Bush

Hard cover, available from amazon.com for \$32.20 plus shipping. September 1996, 877 pages.

### **An Introduction to the Old Testament** by Tremper Longman

Hard cover, available from amazon.com for \$19.59 plus shipping. November 1994, 480 pages. This has been used as a seminary text in the past. It scored five or five stars from the Amazon readers. It is quite scholarly and spends some time on the "true" authorship of the Old Testament material. Many recommend this book very highly.

### **SCRIPTURES**

The use of any standard Bible is recommended. Among such recommended scriptures are: The King James Version (KJV), The New International Version (NIV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New Living Translation (NLT), 21<sup>st</sup> Century King James, NIV formatted, or the Amplified (AMP).

### **NIV Audio Bible on CD- Dramatized Edition**

This is available from Christianbook.com for \$69.99. This is a very reasonably priced 64 CD collection of the entire NIV Bible.

### **STUDY TOOLS**

These web sites are available on the Internet.

Bible Gateway: <http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible>

Bible Study Tools: <http://crosswalk.com>

Blue Letter Bible: <http://www.blueletterbible.org>

Multiple search engines such as: [http:// www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)

### **The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament**

by J.H. Walton, V.H. Matthews and M. Chavalos

Available from amazon.com for \$20.99 plus shipping. Hardcover, 800 pages, November 2000

### **The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary** by David A. Dorsey

Available from amazon.com for \$24.49 plus shipping. Hardcover, 352 pages, November 1999

### **The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order:** by F. Lagard Smith

Available from amazon.com for \$27.99 plus shipping. Hardcover, 1728 pages, August 1999

The authors of this course are: Dr. Joseph O. Perry and Rev. William Harrel from the Curriculum Committee of the ABC/NYS Lay Study Team.

The part of the overall format for this course is adapted from "The Great Courses Series" from a model by Professor Amy Jill-Levine from the Vanderbilt University School of Divinity. Professor Levine teaches The Old Testament Course as part of the program of The Teaching Company "The Great Courses" series. The Teaching Company's address is 4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151-1232. Many of the discussion questions are from question in the "Encountering the Old Testament" text by Bill Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer. Baker Books a Division of Baker Book House Company, 1998.

## **LESSON SCHEDULE, OBJECTIVES, ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVITIES**

### **Student Requirements and Assessment**

The students are expected to read the material as assigned. Each student will complete as scheduled one project from the list of projects included in the session-by-session schedule. The instructor's assessment of the student's work in the class will consist of his/her evaluation of the student's oral presentation and the quality and degree of the student's participation in the class discussions. An instructor may also choose to use "take home" quizzes. The final grade will be either pass or not pass.

### **Session One**

#### **Premise**

The beginning of our study of the Old Testament should logically begin with the beginning of creation. God, who was ever present, decided to create the earth and the heavens. In order to keep him company he decided to create man. This story of the fall of Adam and Eve is an event that has tremendous consequences on all of our lives.

#### **Specific Goals for the First Session**

The students will have knowledge and understanding of the basic purposes and construction of the scriptures and the Old Testament in particular. They will have specific knowledge and understanding of the accounts of the creation as told in the Book of Genesis. They will know and understand the significance of the temptation by the serpent in the Garden of Eden and its importance to our lives. (During the discussion questions in each session the instructor can ascertain the student's knowledge, understanding and articulation skills by drawing out individual student participation in the discussions.)

#### **Assignments for First Session**

The student should read the accounts of the creation in Genesis 1 to 3 and also complete the reading assignment as given by the instructor prior to the first class.

#### **Student Project Possibilities**

The student could develop a brief paper (about four pages, double-spaced or oral presentation of approximately four minutes in length) on one of the following topics:

1. Adam, 2. Eve, 3. Satan (serpent)

It is expected that in these papers or presentations that the student will research beyond the Scriptures and their class text(s).

## ***Session Two***

### **Premise**

The murder of Abel (as well as the original sin of Adam and Eve) began a period of disobedience to God. God's wrath is manifest in the flood and the dispersion of his people. God chose Abram (Abraham) with his wife Sarai to be the patriarch of a new people. A race that will love and obey him for all times. He entered into a covenant with Abraham to indicate his promises to and his requirements for this people.

### **Specific Goals for the Second Session**

The student will have knowledge and understanding of the importance of the murder of Abel, the evil behavior of much of the world's population, the great flood, the dispersion after the Tower of Babel and God's calling of Abraham and his promises to Abraham and his offspring.

### **Assignment for Second Session**

Prior to the class please read Genesis 4 to 23 and also the material in the recommended text that is assigned by the instructor.

### **Suggested Student projects**

1. Cain, 2. Noah, 3. Melchizedek, 4. Abraham, 5. Sarah, 6. Hagar and Ishmael

## ***Session Three***

### **Premise**

The lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph had great significance in the growth of the Jewish people and their relationship with God.

### **Specific Goals for the Third Session**

The student will have knowledge and understanding of the importance of the roles of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph in the development of God's relationship with the Jewish people.

### **Assignment for Third Session**

Prior to the third session the students are to have read Genesis 24 to 51 and the other reading material assigned by the instructor.

### **Suggested Student Projects**

1. Isaac, 2. Jacob, 3. Rachel, 4. Joseph

## ***Session Four***

### **Premise**

The Jewish people lived in Egypt for many years. The conditions that they lived under varied considerably depending on which Pharaoh was in charge of the nation. The book of Exodus tells of God's desire that his people would leave Egypt and travel to a land that he had prepared for them. This would be a land flowing with milk and honey.

### **Specific Goals for the Fourth Session**

The student should have knowledge and understanding of the conditions the Jewish people lived in during their time in Egypt. They should also know of the life and leadership of the prophet Moses and how God called him to bring his people out of Egyptian bondage and into the promised land. Through their journey, the student will learn of the many problems that the Jewish people experienced during this journey and how at times their relationship and obedience to God was sorely tested. The student should be able to relate the relationships between God and the Jewish nation to our current relationships to God.

### **Assignment for Fourth Session**

Prior to the fourth session, the student should read the book of Exodus and whatever reading assignment the instructor will indicate.

### **Suggested Student Projects**

1. Moses, 2. Jethro (Reuel), 3. Aaron, 4. Miriam, 5. Ramesses II

## ***Session Five***

### **Premise**

The God of Israel through the prophet Moses has entered into a covenant with the Jewish people. In this session's study we learn of the various laws and instructions that he imposed upon the people in order for them to properly exist together and under his fellowship. These regulations point to how important God considered the relationship between himself and his people. We also learn of the death of Moses and the appointment of Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land.

### **Specific Goals for the Fifth Session**

The student will have knowledge and understanding about the reason for God's regulations and requirements that he imposed on his people in the Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The student also should specifically know of the covenant document that forms much of Deuteronomy and of the chiasmic structure of Moses' speeches. The student will also know and understand the principles for God's conquest of the existing people in the land of Canaan.

## **Assignment for Fifth Session**

Read the Books of Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua and other readings as are assigned by the instructor.

## **Suggested Student Projects**

1. Hittite Suzerainty Treaties & Covenant in Deuteronomy, 2. Retribution Theology, 3. Joshua

## **Session Six**

### **Premise**

The sixth session deals with the History of Israel as told in Judges, Ruth and First and Second Samuel. In addition to learning of the various historical developments during this time we are introduced to people who will serve as ancestors for our Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to Ruth we meet Samson, Deborah, Hannah, the prophet Samuel, Saul and begin to learn of David.

### **Specific Goals for the Sixth Session**

The student will know and understand what the title of judge meant in this section of the Old Testament. They will also know of the major judges and why they became important. The student will also know the reasons for Israel's failure to complete the conquest. The student will know of Ruth, her place in the lineage of Christ, the role of kinsman-redeemer and of the lessons in filial love that were shown by Ruth. The student will also know of the people's clamor for a king and God's reaction by his appointment of Saul to become the first mortal King of Israel.

## **Assignment for Sixth Session**

Students should read the books of Judges, Ruth and I Samuel and other readings assigned by the instructor prior to this class.

## **Suggested Student Projects**

1. Samson, 2. Deborah, 3. Ruth, 4. Naomi, 5. Boaz, 6. Samuel, 7. Saul.

## **Session Seven**

### **Premise**

The reigns of King David and King Solomon mark the high points of the earthly Kingdom of Israel. Their lives, actions and relationship with God were among the most important items in our study of the history of the Jewish race. There are many items that could be developed into pastoral sermons included in our study of these men.

### **Specific Goals for the Seventh Session**

The student will have knowledge and understanding of the lives, the development of the Kingdom of Israel, theological significance and the relationships with God of King David and his son King Solomon.

### **Assignment for Seventh Session**

The student should read II Samuel, I Kings 1 to 11, I Chronicles 10-29, and II Chronicles 1-10 plus any other readings that are assigned by the instructor.

### **Suggested Student Projects**

1. Solomon, 2. David, 3. Nathan, 4. Bathsheba, 5. Absalom, 6. Jonathan.

## ***Session Eight***

### **Premise**

There were many prophets who became God's representatives to the people of Israel and Judah. Among the most important of these prophets were Elijah, Elisha and later Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. They tried to keep the peoples' eyes turned to God and their hearts in obedience to him during the various reigns of diverse kings during the times of the era of the two kingdoms. But the people for the most part didn't listen to those prophets and God found it necessary to punish the kingdoms of Israel and later Judah.

### **Specific Goals for the Eighth Session**

The student will have knowledge and understanding of the reason for the splitting of the Jewish people into northern and southern kingdoms. The student will have knowledge and understanding of the various kings who served during this period and of how the people were disobedient to the will of God. The students will know and understand how God used different prophets to warn the people of the consequences of their sinful acts.

The students will also know of how God used other peoples, most importantly the Assyrians and the Babylonians, to punish the people of Israel and Judah.

### **Assignment for Eighth Session**

The student will read I Kings 12 to 22, II Kings, II Chronicles 11-35, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations and whatever other readings the instructor assigns.

### **Suggested Action Projects**

1. Ahab, 2. Elijah, 3. Elisha, 4. Isaiah, 5. Jeremiah, 6. Johoiachin.



## **Session Nine**

### **Premise**

Both Israel and Judah were eventually conquered by other nations. Many prophets warned that this would happen if the people were not obedient to God. Our study for this session begins with these prophets. We will then learn of the events of the "Captivity" by the account of the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel. We will then delve into the return of the remnant to Jerusalem and the building of the city wall and temple. We will conclude by learning of the new relationship that has been established between God and his people at this time.

### **Specific Goals for the Ninth Session**

The students should know and understand the various messages that God had for his people as revealed by the prophets. They should also know of the historical events of the conquests of Israel and Judah and of the lives the people affected by this exile. The students will know of the return of the remnant and the difficulties involved in rebuilding Jerusalem. The student will also have knowledge and understanding of the relationship between God and his people (the Theocracy) of this time.

### **Assignment for Ninth Session**

The student should read Ezra, Nehemiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Esther prior to the class. The student should do any other readings that are assigned by the instructor.

### **Suggested Student Projects**

1. Ezekiel, 2. Daniel, 3. Esther, 4. The Messianic Prophecies in Zechariah, 5. Nebuchadnezzar.

## **Session Ten**

### **Premise**

Our last session takes us out of the time continuum and deals with the topic of Old Testament books of wisdom, poetic literature and possibly the account of life during the period from the end of the Old Testament account to that of the New Testament. (Intertestamental period)

### **Specific Goals for the Tenth Session**

The student should know and understand the wide chronology of the Psalms, some key authors and the types of literary forms employed in the writings of these poems. They should also be firmly grounded as to the various usages and subject matter that the Psalms deal with. The student should also know and understand the messages that God has for us in the Books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. If time permits and the instructor wishes a brief survey of the Intertestamental period and the Apocrypha can be done.

### **Assignment for Tenth Session**

The student should read the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs (Solomon) and any other readings the instructor may assign before this class session. The reading of sections of the Apocrypha is optional unless assigned by the instructor.

### **Suggested Student Projects**

1. To construct a modern "Psalm-like Poem" and analyze its structure.
2. To do a structural analysis of any three psalms
3. To report on the Book of Wisdom or The Book of Sirach from the Apocrypha
4. To read and outline the Books of Maccabees I & II from the Apocrypha