

Alliance Theological Seminary
OT 504.NA Hebrew Bible in the Eastern Mediterranean World
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Hebrew Bible in the Eastern Mediterranean World Midterm Examination

Part One: Define all of the following.

1. **Case /casuistic law:** *A subcategory of the Hebrew law, casuistic law involves a conditional statement such as “if ... then,” referencing a specific hypothetical legal situation. For example, “If a man is found sleeping with another man’s wife; [then] both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel” (Deut. 22:22). (Walton, A Survey of the Old Testament, 3rd Edition)*

2. **Apodictic law:** *Apodictic law or direct affirmative and negative commands setting the bounds of appropriate behavior in Hebrew society. For example, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exod. 20:3) or “Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you” (Exod. 20:12).*

1. **Code of Hammurabi:** *Pre-dating Moses by more than 300 years, Hammurabi and his successors were highly successful both militarily and legally. The Code of Hammurabi, as best we know contains more than 280 legal decisions highly respected by legal minds even to this day. The best copy of the “Code” was found on a basalt or diorite stele: a 4 1/5-foot-high pillar with inscriptions and a relief of Hammurabi on the pinnacle. There is lively debate on its influence on Mosaic law.*

2. **Suzerainty-vassal treaty:** *One good source I found is from Russ Meek, of Ohio Theological Institute. “Two basic types of covenants existed in the ancient Near East: the parity treaty (between equal parties) and the suzerain/vassal treaty (between a greater and a lesser party). In suzerain/vassal treaties, the greater party (i.e., the suzerain) provided benefits such as military protection and land grants to the lesser party (i.e., the vassal). In response, the vassal owed the suzerain financial tribute and “consummate loyalty.” Consequently, vassals could have only one suzerain, for to take another “lord” or “father” would be tantamount to treason.” Two key sources he used are: George Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, “Covenant,” ABD 1:1178; and*

Sandra Richter, *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

3. **Holiness Code:** *Originates from Leviticus, Chapters 17–26, and potentially passages in other books of the Pentateuch, especially Numbers and Exodus. In addition to the instructions given, these sections use the Hebrew word for holy: Kadesh.*

4. **Historiography:** *The WHY and through WHAT LENS history is written. Is it written to teach ? To record accurate history? To record idealized or partial history? Walton and Hill say it insightfully, “Studies have suggested that the historiography of the ancient Near East was rarely intended to present an objective view of what actually happened. More often, propaganda was clothed in historical attire with the purpose of benefiting those in power.” (Hill and Walton, Chap 10)*

5. **Documentary Hypothesis:** A thesis that the composition of the Pentateuch divides Exodus into three major sources: the J (or Yahwist), the E (or Elohist), and the P (or Priestly) documents. Chapters 1–34 are regarded a “splicing” of J and E and P, while chapters 35–40 are considered Priestly material (P). Traditional source analysis attributes the final “weaving” of the literary sources in Exodus into a complete text or book to unknown priestly authors-editors of the exilic or postexilic period (ca. 600–400 BC)

6. **Deuteronomistic/Deuteronomistic History:** Earlier in the twentieth century, the books of Joshua–Kings were analyzed using similar methods to analyze the Pentateuch by identifying identical sources, including but not limited to the Deuteronomist sources. Scholars of that period also denied the presence of the Pentateuchal sources in the early historical books. They posited instead that Joshua-Kings were made up of small, originally independent literary units woven together by an editor or series of editors. The theory presented by Martin Noth maintained that Deuteronomy–2 Kings was a unified work written substantially during the exilic period. Noth called this “the Deuteronomistic History” because he believed it was designed to show how the theology of Deuteronomy was reflected in the history of Israel historical books.

7. **Kathleen Kenyon:** an archaeologist considered an expert in interpreting and explaining the ruins of Jericho among other areas. She theorized that Jericho was destroyed in the middle of the Bronze period (1550-1200 BC), finding no firm evidence of an Israelite invasion. Current scholars are debating this. Longman & Dillard (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*) address the issue of archeology being an imprecise and highly interpretive “science: “Today’s archaeology too often becomes tomorrow’s footnote about earlier mistaken efforts.” (Longman & Dillard, p.125).

- 8. Jericho:** This place and history has great significance. The place itself is located northwest of the Dead Sea. Joshua 6 tells of his conquest of this old city with allegedly impenetrable walls and strong warriors to defend it. Yet, Joshua and his army conquered this city in a marvelously unconventional manner. The story of Joshua is a story of faith in God's deliverance and power, in obedience, in creativity, and in the fact that there are no man-made walls that can withstand the will of our Father in Heaven.
- 9. Iron Age:** About 1200-586 BCE, it represents the third epoch in history coming after the Stone Age, then Bronze Age with Iron Age being the third and most recent. So named because of the invention of ferrous-based metal used for tool, implement, weapon and vessel making.
- 10. Judge:** Also aligned with the time period of the Iron Age, the period of the Judges, or judges themselves, appeared to be military leaders before their role transitioned to judges in the way we think of them: discerning justice and settling legal cases.
- 11. Hittites:** *The Hittite empire, in the second Millennium BC was a rival to the Egyptian empire for control of Syro-Palestine. There were highly militaristic, hiring themselves out as mercenaries and exporting military resources throughout the area. Walton and Hill have an interesting fact about the Hittites—that "The Hittite treaty form by which Hittite kings subjugated conquered foes became an important literary contribution to the ancient world." (p.36) The Hittites are so often enemies of Israel and one of the subjects of God's wrath, that I mindlessly ascribe no sophistication and worthy attributes to them!*
- 12. Concubine:** *Victor Matthews (Studying the Ancient Israelites, Baker, 2007) wrote a succinct and helpful definition of feminist criticism: "The task of the feminist critic is to identify and trace the forces in society that suppress a woman's ability to be a full participant." (p.120) This is helpful to understand how the term "concubine" is defined, placed in context, and used in the scriptures. Throughout my life of reading and attempting to understand scripture, I always assumed I knew what a concubine was: a culturally endorsed prostitute. But Matthews and Benjamin (p. 14) define the term this way: "The words "prostitute," "mistress," or "concubine" in English translations of the Bible do not always refer to a woman who lives with and has intercourse with a man to whom she is not legally married or to a woman who engages in promiscuous sexual intercourse for pay. In Hebrew, the terms are not always degrading, but often simply distinguish secondary wives from the primary wife who is the mother of the household (1 Kgs 11:1-8)."*

13. **Pentateuch:** *The first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. In Greek, it means “five scrolls” and according to Hill and Walton (p. 56) was popularized by the Hellenized Jews of Alexandria in the first century, A.D. The Hebrew-speaking Jewish community traditionally refers to these five books as the “Torah” (“instruction in holiness”). Some also call it the Book of the Law, emphasizing the covenant stipulations as its defining feature; and the Law of Moses, emphasizing the human mediator as its defining feature. (Hill and Walton, p.56)*

16. **Hebron:** *Twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem along a route – the Ridge Route – which links the cities in the hill country. David began his reign as king in Hebron (2 Sam. 2:11). Hebron was an important commercial and military area. (Hill & Walton, p.47).*

17. **Jael:** *The wife (or one of the wives) of Barak, she hosted Sisera in her tent on what might have been a dangerous visit from a defeated military commander. While there were likely soldiers in the area to protect the families and animals, Sisera approached in secret. Jael reacts to the threat. Matthews and Benjamin (Social World of Ancient Israel, Hendrickson, 1993), who compare Deborah and Jael favorably write that “Both risk their own lives to save their households. When Barak fails to defend Israel against Hazor, Deborah acts. When Heber fails to defend his household, Jael acts. Jael is not a host, but like Deborah she is a hero who delivers her household from slavery.” (p. 91) Judges 4:9 – “the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Jael protects her household with strength, savvy, and determination. She kills Sisera with a tent peg through his head. The famous William Congreve quote (The Mourning Bride, 1697) comes to mind: Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned.”*

18. **Tobit:** *One of the books in a collection of non-Biblical canonical writings called the Deutero-Canon, affirmed by the Roman Catholic church in the 1870 Vatican Council. The Roman Catholic church uses these writings for some religious doctrine, including concepts of Purgatory, merit for good works, and praying for the dead.*

19. **Herem:** *“Total destruction” is the meaning of this Hebrew term. It seemed to often be associated with those people and places involved in idol worship. The book of Joshua in particular contains several instances of the “total destruction” Joshua was told to exact upon those places.*

20. **Tamar:** *David’s son Absalom’s sister. There is a publication titled the “Jewish Women’s Archive (<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/tamar-2>) which has an interesting and very dramatic summary of Tamar’s violation and her family’s involvement. “Tamar,*

daughter of King David, is first introduced as the beautiful sister of Absalom (1 Samuel 13:1), the third son born to the king in Hebron; their mother Maacah was David's third wife, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur (2 Samuel 3:3, 1 Chronicles 3:2). Triangulated between powerful men, Tamar is raped by her half-brother, Amnon, while her father, the king, inadvertently facilitates his daughter's violation (2 Samuel 13:1-22). Absalom, her full-brother, silences her and later avenges her rape (13:23-38). Though she remains muted and desolate in her brother's household for the rest of her life, never to marry or bear children, Tamar is the only woman whose voice is heard aloud in protest to rape in the Hebrew Bible." Wow! That last sentence – "...the only woman whose voice is heard aloud in protest to rape in the Hebrew Bible!"

Essay Questions: Answer all of the following in 100 words.

1. List and explain the conceptual differences that define the worldview of the Ancient Near East.

This is a delightfully tough question. I couldn't remember – so I checked and re-checked again (especially Walton, who alludes to the matter in terms of "rivers of culture." But the answer was discovered (again) in your notes!

- A) An ancient, not a modern world. The sciences (social, hard, other) did not shape how the ancients viewed the world.
- B) An eastern, not a western world. The sociology—how we interact and view one another and ourselves is very different, east to west.
- C) A changeless, not a changing world. We view the world as ever-changing. The ancients did not.
- D) An agricultural, not an industrial world. Agrarian "filters" on life and living close to nature versus industrial/organized approach and in many cases, not even touching nature on a daily basis.
- E) A limited, not a renewable world.
- F) A communal, not an individual world.
- G) A world where aging, not youth – is a blessing.
- H) A world of stories, not history.
- I) A world of established pervasive religions.
- J) A world of honor and shame.
- K) A world where color is viewed differently.

2. List the books and the major themes of the Pentateuch. Provide biblical passages that support each theme.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy - the first five books although some scholars argue it was written as one. The themes, at a very high level and according to D.J.A. Clines (1976) correspond to the Pentateuch being written in two major sections:

3. Genesis 1-11. The origins of the earth and humankind, the intrusion of sin, and the revelation of the character of God who both judges sin but deals mercifully with mankind (Noah and his family).
4. Genesis 12 – Deut 34. How Israel (through Abraham) became the covenant people of Yahweh and God's instrument for revealing himself and restoring the broken and corrupted relationship between the Creator and his creation.

The unifying theological theme of the Pentateuch is Yahweh's covenant promise to Abram in Genesis 12:3. God did for us (called us, redeemed us, drew us to himself) when we were unable to reconcile ourselves to God.

3. Outline and list the major themes of the book of Judges

This is from Andrew Hill and John Walton in "A Survey of the Old Testament, 3rd Ed."

I. Background: Failure to Drive Out the Canaanites (1:1–2:5)

II. Introduction: Cycle of Apostasy (2:6–3:6)

III. Cycles: "The Israelites Did Evil in the Eyes of the Lord"

A. Othniel (3:7–11)

B. Ehud (3:12–31)

C. Deborah (4–5)

D. Gideon (6–8)

1. Abimelech (9)

2. Tola and Jair (10:1–5)

E. Jephthah (10:6–12:7)

1. Ibzan (12:8–10)

2. Elon (12:11–12)

Abdon (12:13–15)

F. Samson (13–16)

IV. Tribal Depravity: "Everyone Did as He Saw Fit"

A. Danites (17–18)

B. Benjaminites (19–21)

Major Themes:

The Nature of Charismatic Leadership

Spirit of the Lord

Israel's Apostasy

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4. List the major views of the Conquest. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of each view.

These views are summarized from Longman and Dillard:

- 1) *Total rejection (of the literal historical account)*. The exodus and conquest are a literary and theological creation unsupported by known historical events and archeology. This view has some merit based on known facts.
- 2) *An immigration model*. The conquered areas were peacefully infiltrated over time and the "conquest" was a literary application to previous historical events. This view has limited evidence to support it.
- 3) *A peasant revolt model*. A series of uprisings took over the conquered areas. This model is mostly supported by sociological analysis. It is considered unlikely and an unrealistic "reach."
- 4) *A collapse model*. Proposed by archeologist W. Dever, the large coastal cities showed signs of collapse at the end of the Bronze Age, and small settlements with some better agricultural "technologies" sprung-up in the hill countries. This theory seems to have some support from scholars but deviates significantly from the scriptural accounting.
- 5) *A cyclic view*. Another archeologist, Israel Finkelstein is a proponent of the view that it was a natural cycle for nomadic people (like the Israelites) to settle in appropriate areas—in this case, the hill country.
- 6) *The Conquest Model or "Blitzkrieg" Model*. The more literal view of the book of Joshua involving total destruction.

All of these views are to some degree speculative, and some highly so based on the account in Joshua, but they have also stimulated much research into the history, writing, and authorship of Joshua.

Part Three: Choose the correct answer.

1. Which of the following apply to an examination of the world of the ancient near east:
- a. () The world of the Bible is an ancient and not a modern world
 - b. () The world of the Bible is an eastern and not western world.

- c. The world of the Bible is a changeless and not a changing world.
- d. The world of the Bible is a communal, not an individual world.
- e. None of the above
- f. All of the above.

2. Hospitality and its connected social rules for hosts and strangers were an important of the ancient near east.

(X) True: False

1. Hospitality neutralized the threat which stranger posed by temporarily adopting them into the community.

(X) True: False

4. The following are models for the interpretation for the conquest of Canaan:

- a. peasant revolt of conquest
- b. immigration model of conquest
- c. Blitzkrieg model of conquest
- d. none of the above
- e. All of the above

5. Herem is the term used in the book of Joshua for the total destruction of a captured city.

(X) True: False

6. The Documentary Hypothesis asserts that the Pentateuch is comprised of the following sources:

- a. J source
- b. E source
- c. D Source
- d. P source
- e. JE source
- f. All of the above
- g. Answers a, b, c and d

7. Deuteronomy 28 consists of curses and blessings for obedience and disobedience to the covenant.

(X) True: False

8. One can find an example of case or casuistic law in the Ten Commandments.

(X) True: False

9. One can find an example of apodictic law in the Ten Commandments.

(X) True: False

10. The structure of the book of Deuteronomy contains the components of the suzerainty-vassal treaty.
(X) True: () False
11. Archaeologists have discovered that the earliest Israelite settlements consisted of small hamlets with 50 to 300 people dwelling on an acre or two.
12. The first commandment given to humankind is found in the 10 Commandments.
() True: (X) False
13. The first commandment given to humankind is Genesis 1:27 and 28 (be fruitful and multiply).
14. Hebron, as David's original power base, plays an important role in the actions of Abram – for there God showed him the land he was being given; Israel, ultimately moving their "power base" to Jerusalem; Abraham – in burying Sarah there and then himself; Caleb – having been given this land by Joshua; and even Absalom, who used it as a refuge.
15. The natural environment in which the early Israelite families established their farmsteads was far less friendly than the popular imagination supposes.
(X) True: () False
16. In most villages herding and farming involved only the men.
() True: (X) False
17. One important roles of the mother that was not gender specific was her responsibility as the of the household.
18. The mother was the following in ancient Israel:
a. () Child-bearer
b. () Teacher
c. () Mediator
d. () Priest
e. () All of the above
f. () None of the above
g. (X) a, b, and c
19. Throughout Syria-Palestine there are only two seasons, wet and dry.
(X) True: () False
20. Any serious threat to the land or pollution of a village could set the protocol for the commissioning of a priest or prophet in motion, since these were the only positions involved in health concerns of any kind. (I added the last part.)