

Hebrew Exegesis of Ecclesiastes, 9153  
 Instructor: R. V. McCabe, Th.D.  
 Course Outline

Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary  
 Fall Semester  
 2009

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An exegetical analysis of the book of Ecclesiastes in its historical and cultural milieu. While examining the introductory issues, the primary objective of this course is to use an exegetical approach to trace the development of the message of Ecclesiastes.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

With this exegetical approach to the book of Ecclesiastes, the student should

1. become acquainted with the key introductory issues in this book;
2. be prepared to read at sight the assigned sections from Ecclesiastes;
3. gain proficiency in translating Hebrew poetic literature;
4. become conversant with some of the exegetical and theological issues in Ecclesiastes;
5. acquire an appreciation for the content in this book;
6. become more precise at identifying grammatical and syntactical forms;
7. become more familiar with the important tools for doing Hebrew exegesis; and
8. gain greater precision in doing independent research.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. **Tests:** There will be two major tests. The mid-term will cover the introductory material up through 5:16 (English, 5:17) and the final exam will cover 5:17 (Eng., 5:18) through the remainder of the material. The mid-term will be given on **October 22** and the final on **December 17—30% of grade.**

Tests must be taken at the time the exam is formally scheduled, unless a student has an excusable absence. If a student has an excusable absence, he must take the exam no later than 4:00 P.M. on the day he returns to seminary. After this 4:00 P.M. deadline on the day he returns to class, a late penalty of 10% per day begins accruing for each day that he goes beyond the 4:00 P.M. deadline. This penalty will be subtracted from the student's earned grade for the exam. If a student does not have an excusable absence, he will receive a 10% penalty for not having an excusable absence. He must take the exam no later than 4:00 P.M. on the exam's scheduled day to avoid any daily late penalties. If he takes the exam after 4:00 P.M. on the exam's scheduled day, his daily late penalties begin accruing after 4:00 P.M. of that same day. For example, if a student misses a scheduled exam with an unexcused absence and if he takes it before the 4:00 P.M. deadline on the same day of the exam, he will lose 10% as a penalty for not having a legitimate excuse. However, if the student takes the exam after 4:00 P.M. on the same day, but no later than 4:00 P.M. on the following day, he will lose 20% from his earned grade. He loses 10% for not having a legitimate excuse and 10% as a daily late penalty for not having taken the exam by 4:00 P.M. on the next day.

In addition, tardies are unacceptable when a test has been scheduled. A tardy may result in a 10% penalty for the exam.

2. **Daily Quizzes:** Each student will take a daily quiz. For the assigned quiz, each student will give the professor at the beginning of class the translation assignment for that day. The translation will be evaluated for completeness. This translation will comprise 30% of his

quiz grade for that day. Based upon the following schedule, each M.Div. and Th.M. student will translate and parse a portion from his assigned material. This will make up 70% of his quiz grade for that day. When the quizzes are completed, the translation will be returned to each student. The same rules about absences and lateness that applied to the test will be followed for making up quizzes. However, there is one exception to my policies about absences and lateness. Each student is given one grace day where he will be permitted to take the quiz one day later with no necessary excuses required and no penalties attached—**20% of grade.**

The following is the schedule for the quizzes:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Complete Translation</b>	<b>Th.M.</b>	<b>M.Div.</b>
Aug 27	Introduction		
Sep 3	1:1–18	1:1–18	1:1–12
10	2:1–17	2:1–17	2:1–11
17	2:18–3:15	2:18–3:15	2:18–3:9
24	3:16–4:12	3:16–4:12	3:16–4:6
Oct 1	4:13–5:17	4:13–5:16	4:13–5:9
8	5:18–6:12	5:17–6:12	5:18–6:6
15	<b>No Class: MACP</b>		
22	<b>Mid-term Exam</b>		
29	7:1–18	7:1–18	7:1–14
Nov 5	7:19–8:9	7:19–8:9	7:19–8:1
12	8:10–17; 9:1–10	8:10–17; 9:1–10	8:10–17=
19	9:11–10:11	9:11–10:11	9:11–10:4
26	<b>No Class: Thanksgiving Vacation</b>		
Dec 3	10:12–11:8	10:12–11:8	10:12–20
10	11:9–12:14	11:9–12:14	11:9–12:8
17	<b>Final Exam</b>		

3. **Critical Book Review:** Each ThM student will write a five to ten page critique of Bartholomew's *Ecclesiastes* and each MDiv student a three to six page critique of Ogden's *Qoheleth*. Book reviews that go beyond the maximum allowed pages will be penalized. The critique is due on **Thursday, November 19**. The same rules about absences and lateness that applied to the test will be followed for the term paper—**20% of grade.**

Here are some guidelines for writing a book critique.

- a. A critique, in its most basic form, is an examination of the content of a specific chapter, article, or book and an evaluation of the effectiveness of this material so that the reviewer's audience can make an objective assessment of the source's value (for details on this type of critique, a good starting point is a decent high school or college grammar book that includes a section on writing book reviews should be consulted). Items that this critique should include are these:
- 1) an identification of the type and subject of this chapter;
  - 2) a description of the author's background in order to provide relevant information concerning the author's presuppositions undergirding his work (background information may be drawn from areas such as specific, *yet pertinent*, vocational information, memberships in societies, accessible lectures, articles, reviews, books [if drawn from internet, which should be checked, include internet addresses]);
  - 3) a condensation of the author's thesis into one or two sentences;
  - 4) an accurate presentation of the author's view with the most significant argument(s) to support his case;
  - 5) an objective evaluation of the author's conclusion(s) and the argumentation used to support this (such as inconsistencies in author's logic, logical inconsistencies with scientific data, prejudicial use of sources, etc.);
  - 6) an identification of the theological perspective of the author and a critical interaction with this perspective;
  - 7) a reflection of being conversant with any other germane literature dealing with the subject addressed in the article (yes, footnotes must be used); and
  - 8) a brief, concluding assessment of the book and a statement about the audience to whom this chapter is applicable; the assessment should be either a commendation or denunciation of the book, or, as is true in most cases, an assessment somewhere between these two extremes; with this assessment, the most significant reason for the assessment should be explained.
- b. In order to reduce some of the ambiguity associated with a critical review, the following five critiques illustrate the type of work that I desire.

DeYoung, Donald B. Review of *Christianity and the Age of the Earth*, by Davis A. Young. *Grace Theological Journal* 4 (Fall 1983): 297–301.

Gaffin, Richard B., Jr. Review of *A New Paradigm in Theology*, by Gordon J. Spykman. *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (Fall 1994): 379–90.

Jones, Brian. Review of *Darwin's Black Box*, by Michael J. Behe. *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (Fall 2000): 125–34.

Schreiner, Thomas R. Review of *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*, by Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo. *Trinity Journal* 17 (Spring 1996): 115–24.

Southwell, Andrew. Review of *The History of the Christ*, by Adolf Schlatter. *Trinity Journal* 20 (Spring 1999): 91–95.

4. **Term paper:** Each ThM student is required to write a 15 to 20-page term paper and MDiv student an 8 to 15-page paper. This will be on a passage from the book of Ecclesiastes that contains an issue, and should be made up of approximately 5 to 10 verses. The paper must

be in conformity with the “Style Manual for Papers and Theses” (2nd ed., Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002) and will be penalized if it goes beyond the maximum number of allowed pages. This paper is due on **Thursday, December 3**. The same rules about absences and lateness that applied to the test will be followed for the term paper—**20% of grade**.

Example of How the Term Papers Are Graded:

Content and argument	80%
Form & Mechanics	10%
Bibliography	+10%
Overall percentile grade	100%

5. **Reading Assignment:** Each ThM student is to read 1000 pages and MDiv student 800 pages from the required and recommended items in the bibliography as well as sources used for term paper and critical book review. Each student who has completed the reading requirements according to the schedule will receive a 98% for this portion of his grade. If the student does not complete the assignment on schedule, he will have 1% subtracted from his 100% for every 25 pages that he is short of the total pages required. The student must turn in his reading report on **Thursday, December 17—5% of grade**.
  
6. **Translation Notebook:** Each student is required to keep a notebook of his accurate and readable translation for the book of Ecclesiastes. His translation notebook should also contain notes on significant problems and must reflect interaction with the required commentaries along with reference to Glenn and two other exegetical commentaries that provide solutions for the problems. Since there are currently many parsing and grammatical aids available, it is not necessary to provide information about parsing the more difficult forms. This type of notebook can be a valuable aid when one does future work on Ecclesiastes. Each student who has a well-organized notebook will receive a 100% for this portion of his grade. The same rules about absences and lateness that applied to tests will be followed for this assignment. This is due no later than 4:00 PM on **Thursday, December 17—5% of grade**.

**CLASS ABSENCES:**

The policy for absenteeism at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary is as follows. A student is allowed one week of unexcused absences and three weeks of excused absences. The maximum number of absences is four weeks for a class. Anyone who is absent from class beyond this will receive an “F” for that course, except by vote of the faculty in extenuating circumstances.

When a student has consumed his one week of permissible unexcused absences for a given course, his final grade will be penalized by 1% per hour of class that he has gone beyond this limit and extending until he has missed four full weeks of class. After this, he will receive an “F” for the course.

An excused absence is one where the student’s absence is beyond his control. In order to have his absence excused, the student must submit to the course instructor a written explanation for his absence. Based upon this the instructor will then determine whether or not the absence should be excused.

Three periods of tardiness will be counted as one absence. This means that three tardies count as one unexcused absence. If a student has only two tardies in a two-hour class, he will suffer no penalty. However, three tardies count as one unexcused absence. But again there is no penalty for one unexcused absence in a two-hour class. Ultimately, the student could be tardy five times in a two-hour class before incurring any penalty, which would only come on the sixth tardy as a result of now having two unexcused absences—the second unexcused absence resulting in a grade reduction.

#### **TEXTBOOK:**

1. Bartholomew, Craig. *Ecclesiastes*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
2. Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1976.
3. McCabe, Robert V. "Hebrew Exegesis of Ecclesiastes." Unpublished syllabus, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009.
4. Ogden, Graham S. *Qoheleth*. 2nd ed. Readings: A New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007.

#### **GRADING SYSTEM:**

96–100	A	86–87	B-	76–77	D+
94–95	A-	84–85	C+	72–75	D
92–93	B+	80–83	C	70–71	D-
88–91	B	78–79	C-	69 & below	F



