

## EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLE EXEGESIS

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This examination shall assess the candidate's ability to interpret an assigned passage of Scripture by demonstrating attention to the original language of the text, an understanding of the text's historical context, and an ability to relate the text effectively to the contemporary life of the church in world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools.

1. **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Write your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.
2. **TECHNOLOGY.** Computers may be used to produce this examination. If so, double space your answers to Sections I and II, using a 12 point font throughout. When finished staple the printed copy to the first few pages of the exam book. Examinations may also be handwritten in ink. Exams written in pencil will not be graded.
3. **FORM.** Examinations that cannot be understood because of illegibility or poor grammar/syntax will be returned ungraded.
4. **HONESTY.** Candidates are expected to do their own work, without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.
5. **IMPORTANT DATES.** The books from which the passages are drawn will be announced on DECEMBER 23, 2008. The specific passages will be announced, and the exam questions distributed, on SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2009. The completed examination is due on THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2009. The time of submission will be strictly observed.

### ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Genesis OR Ephesians

Your proctor will inform you of the specific passages on JANUARY 24, 2009.

Your examination is due to your proctor at 9:00 AM, JANUARY 29, 2009.

### SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 To assist the readers of your examination in understanding your intentions, number or letter your answers in a manner consistent with the examination questions.
- 2 In choosing which questions on the examination to answer and in formulating your answers to any and all questions, remember that your readers will be looking for your demonstration of facility with the original language of the text.
- 3 You are expected to provide original answers to the exam questions. When using written material from other sources, you must identify the author, title, and page number. You must also identify electronic sources, either software or on-line. You may use parenthetical citations within the text of your answers, endnotes, or footnotes.

## EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Page 2 of 6

*Specific Instructions continued:*

4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.
5. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will grade the exam as a unit and not in parts.
6. In order to maintain the anonymity of the writer so as to insure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned ungraded:
  - the name of the person writing the exam
  - the educational institution or congregation where the writer studies or worships
  - the names of professors with whom the writer has studied, except as they may appropriately appear in citations or bibliography
  - references to having taken the exam previously.

### **REQUIRED PARTS OF A SATISFACTORY EXAMINATION**

The following sections are required parts of a satisfactory examination. Failure to complete any of these sections will result in the failure of the examination as a whole. Specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

#### **Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions**

After studying the passage, answer any **six (6)** of the following questions. At least one question from each category (A, B, C and, D) must be answered for the examination to pass.

- A. The Language of the Text
  - text-critical issues, translation, grammar, syntax, and word use
- B. Literary Issues
  - the passage's boundaries, structure and composition, literary context, and genre
- C. Principal Contents and Theology
  - principal motifs, themes, and ideas developed in the passage
- D. History of Composition and Interpretation
  - the passage's historical/sociological setting, redaction history and its subsequent
  - interpretation by communities of faith

To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by letter and number. *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

#### **Section II: Exegetical Focus**

On the basis of your exegetical work, state what you consider to be a faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 100 words.*

#### **Section III: Application**

On the basis of your exegetical focus statement in Section II, develop a sermon outline or lesson plan for this passage. Include a brief description of the context in which this sermon or lesson would be used.

*Limit your outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

**OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS  
PASSAGES FOR JANUARY 2009**

Page 3 of 6

Genesis 16:1-16

OR

Ephesians 4:17-32

**Genesis 16:1-16**

**Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions**

Study Genesis 16:1-16 using appropriate resources (which you should list in your bibliography). Give careful attention to the form and content of the assigned text and to its literary and historical settings. On the basis of your study, answer any **six (6)** of the following questions, being sure that you have chosen at least one question from each of the four categories (A, B, C, and D). *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

**A. The Language of the Text**

1. Translate the Hebrew text of Genesis 16:1-2 or supply the modern translation that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues.
2. Translate the Hebrew text of Genesis 16:13 or supply the modern translation that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Include in your discussion the basis for the difference between the following two translations of 13b:

“by which she meant, ‘Have I not gone on seeing after He saw me!’” (Tanakh)

“for she said, ‘Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?’”  
(New Revised Standard Version)

**B. Literary Issues**

1. Describe the structure of Genesis 16, focusing on the characters and their interactions. How does this help you understand the passage?
2. What is the significance of chapter 16 in the wider narrative context of Genesis? What is the relationship between this chapter and chapters 15 and 17? What are the implications of this wider context for the promise made to Hagar in verse 10?

**C. Principal Content and Theology**

1. What does the text reveal about God’s plans and promises and God’s response to human activities?

2. What is the function of the messenger of God in Genesis? How does this help you understand the messenger in this passage?

**D. History of Composition and Interpretation**

1. In Galatians 4 Paul offers an allegorical reading of Genesis 16 in which he identifies Hagar and Sarai as symbolically representing two covenants. Discuss how two other interpreters identify Sarai and Hagar in their interpretation of Genesis 16. Which of these three interpretations of their identities most influences your understanding of the passage, and why?

2. In *Texts of Terror*, Phyllis Trible has written,

[Hagar] experiences exodus without liberation, revelation without salvation, wilderness without covenant, wanderings without land, promise without fulfillment, and unmerited exile without return. ... All we who are heirs of Sarah and Abraham, by flesh and spirit, must answer for the terror in Hagar's story. To neglect the theological challenge she presents is to falsify faith. (p. 28)

Respond to Trible. How does your engagement with Trible affect your understanding of Genesis 16?

**Section II: Exegetical Focus**

On the basis of your exegetical work, state what you consider to be a faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 100 words.*

**Section III: Application**

On the basis of your exegetical focus statement in Section II, develop a sermon outline or lesson plan for this passage. Include a brief description of the context in which this sermon or lesson would be used. *Limit your outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

JANUARY 2009

OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS

Page 5 of 6

Ephesians 4:17-32

**Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions**

Study Ephesians 4:17-32 using appropriate resources (which you should list in your bibliography). Give careful attention to the form and contents of the assigned text and to its literary and historical settings. On the basis of your study, answer any six (6) of the following questions, being sure that you have chosen at least one question from each of the four categories (A, B, C, and D). *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

**A. The Language of the Text**

1. Translate the Greek text of Ephesians 4:25-27, or supply the modern translation of these verses that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the difference between the following translations:

“So then putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors” (New Revised Standard Version)

“Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor” (New International Version)

2. Translate the Greek text of Ephesians 4:31-32, or supply the modern translation of these verses that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the difference between the following translations.

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you” (New American Standard Bible)

“Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander” (New Revised Standard Version)

**B. Literary Issues**

1. Is Ephesians 4:17-32 a complete and coherent literary unit? What evidence supports your answer? How does this passage function within the letter as a whole and how does this help you in your interpretation of the passage?

2. What is the rhetorical shape of the passage? How does the rhetorical shape inform your understanding of the passage?

### C. Principal Content and Theology

1. Identify and discuss the images in Ephesians 4:17-32 that are important to baptismal theology. How do the meanings of these baptismal images inform your understanding of the passage as a whole?
2. Though there is a debate about whether Paul wrote Ephesians, it is clear that the book is influenced by Pauline theology. Discuss the use of  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\delta\zeta$  in Pauline literature. What do you think the passage means when it talks about  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\delta\zeta$ ? What is the relation between  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\delta\zeta$  and one's conduct?

### D. History of Composition

1. Many interpreters acknowledge close connections between the language and themes of Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3. Discuss the similarities and differences between these two chapters, noting how a comparison of the two brings the distinctive perspective of Ephesians 4 into clearer view.
2. Commentator Ralph Martin (*Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon*, Interpretation Commentaries, p. 56) argues that this passage is not so much about vices and virtues as it is about two ways of life: "what the New Testament gives is not directions but direction." Respond to Martin's assertion based on your study of Ephesians 4:17-32.

### Section II: Exegetical Focus

On the basis of your exegetical work, state what you consider to be a faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 100 words.*

### Section III: Application

On the basis of your exegetical focus statement in Section II, develop a sermon outline or lesson plan for this passage. Include a brief description of the context in which this sermon or lesson would be used. *Limit your outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*