

AUGUST 2007

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLE EXEGESIS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

“This examination shall assess the candidate’s ability to find and state the meaning of an assigned passage of Scripture, demonstrating working knowledge of the original language of the text and ability to understand its historical situation.

“The candidate shall have access to any or all of the following:

Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools, including those which presuppose knowledge of the biblical languages. Using these, he or she will be asked to state the meaning of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church.” [G-14.0310d(1)]

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 **JULY 27, 2007.** The specific passages will be announced, and the exam questions distributed on **SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2007.** The completed examination is due on **THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007 at 9:00 AM.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Song of Solomon 1 OR John 11:17-44

Your proctor will inform you of the specific passages on **AUGUST 25, 2007.**

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 a.m., August 30, 2007.**

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. You are not required to provide a translation of your own for the entire passage under examination. However, you will be expected to demonstrate **a working knowledge of Hebrew or Greek** for the satisfactory completion of this exam. 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.

AUGUST 2007

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Page 2 of 6

Specific Instructions continued:

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.
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 the principal meaning of the passage. *Limit your statement to 100 words.*

Section III: Application

On the basis of your understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, 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 AUGUST 2007**

Page 3 of 6

Song of Solomon 1

OR

John 11:17-44

Song of Solomon 1

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study Song of Solomon 1 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 Hebrew text of Song of Solomon 1:4, or supply the modern translation of this verse that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues.
2. Comment specifically on the differences in these three modern translations of Song of Solomon 1:7b. Discuss the pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Which translation do you think is most accurate and why?

A: for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flocks of your companions? (New Revised Standard Version)

B: Let me not be as one who strays beside the flocks of your fellows. (Tanakh)

C: That I may no more wander like a vagabond beside the flocks of your companions. (New Jerusalem Bible)

B. Literary Issues

1. Describe the poetic structure of Song of Solomon 1:9-17, paying particular attention to literary subunits and conventions of Hebrew poetry. What insights into the meaning of the text are gained from this poetic analysis?
2. Given the ambiguity of the Hebrew particle וְ, the third word of Song of Solomon 1:5 (וְנִיִּים) can mean either “and beautiful” or “but beautiful.” With reference to its context in the chapter, explain how you would translate the phrase אֲנִי וְנִיִּים הֵן . What point is the female voice making, and how does this inform your understanding of the passage as a whole?
3. Some commentators have noted that interpretive approaches to the Song of Solomon begin with one of four literary assumptions about the text: that it is an allegory, an anthology of love poetry, an extended drama, or a cultic liturgy. Identify and discuss the approach that is most helpful in your interpretation of this passage.

C. Principal Contents and Theology

1. Discuss the concept of physical beauty portrayed in Song of Solomon 1. How does that understanding compare with the understandings of physical beauty in 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and Proverbs 31:10-31?
2. What portrait of love does Song of Solomon 1 offer, and what does this suggest about our relationship with God and each other?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. Karl Barth (*Church Dogmatics* 3.1, p. 313) described the Song of Solomon as an extended commentary on Genesis 2:25: “And the man and wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.” Do you agree or disagree? Give specific examples from Song of Solomon 1 to support your position.
2. Song of Solomon was the subject of more medieval commentaries than any other biblical book. David Carr observes that the shift in the 19th century from allegorical to literal interpretation has led to a “functional decanonization” of the Song of Solomon (*Canonization and Decanonization*, eds. A. van der Kooj and K. van der Toorn, p. 185). As the sexual nature of the Song of Solomon has received more emphasis, the church preaches and teaches the book less frequently. Informed by your study of Song of Solomon 1, discuss how the church might reclaim the Song of Solomon for teaching and preaching in the church today.
3. Athalya Brenner claims that certain poems in the Song of Solomon “are so essentially feminine that a male could hardly imitate their tone and texture successfully” (*A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, ed. A. Brenner, p. 90-91). Do you agree or disagree? What about the Song of Solomon, and chapter 1 in particular, supports your position, and what difference does that make for your interpretation of this passage?

Section II: Exegetical Focus

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

Section III: Application

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

AUGUST 2007

OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS

Page 5 of 6

John 11:17-44

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study John 11:17-44 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 John 11:24-26, 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 text critical issue regarding the inclusion or exclusion of καὶ ἡ ζωὴ found in verse 25.
2. Translate the Greek text of John 11:38-39, or supply the modern translation of this verse that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify this translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the differences in the following translations:
 - A: Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. (New King James Version)
 - B: Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. (New International Version)
 - C: Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. (New Revised Standard Version)

B. Literary Issues

1. Is John 11:17-44 a complete and coherent literary unit? What literary evidence supports your answer? What is the significance of the placement of this passage in the larger context of the gospel for interpretation of John 11:17-44?
2. Identify the key characters in this story. Discuss how John's narrative describes each of them, the function they play within the narrative, and the way these characters move the story to a dramatic ending.

C. Principal Contents and Theology

1. How does Jesus' expression of emotion in John 11:33-40 inform your understanding of the meaning of the passage?
2. How does your understanding of the use of *πιστεύω* in the Gospel of John inform your understanding of John 11:25-26?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. An issue in the modern interpretation of the Fourth Gospel is the relationship between "realized" and "future" eschatology. In light of this debate, discuss the statements about resurrection made by Jesus and Martha, respectively, in John 11:23-27. The 1993 *Book of Common Worship* suggests this passage for use within the Service of Witness to the Resurrection. Based on your discussion, make a case for or against using this passage in such a service.
2. In John 11:21-22, Martha greets Jesus with what seem to be words of disappointment and complaint. In conversation with Psalm 130, which is paired with this text in the lectionary, discuss how the tradition of lament psalms might inform your understanding of Martha's interaction with Jesus.

Section II: Exegetical Focus

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

Section III: Application

On the basis of your understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, 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 2008

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLE EXEGESIS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

“This examination shall assess the candidate’s ability to find and state the meaning of an assigned passage of Scripture, demonstrating working knowledge of the original language of the text and ability to understand its historical situation.

“The candidate shall have access to any or all of the following:

Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools, including those which presuppose knowledge of the biblical languages. Using these, he or she will be asked to state the meaning of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church.” [G-14.0310d(1)]

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 27, 2007.** The specific passages will be announced, and the exam questions distributed on **SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2008.** The completed examination is due on **THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2008, at 9:00 AM.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

2 Samuel 1:17-27 OR Revelation 13:1-10

Your proctor will inform you of the specific passages on **JANUARY 26, 2008.**

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 AM, JANUARY 31, 2008.**

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. Please double-space your answers to Sections I and II.
2. You are not required to provide a translation of your own for the entire passage under examination. However, you will be expected to demonstrate **a working knowledge of Hebrew or Greek** for the satisfactory completion of this exam. 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.

JANUARY 2008

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Page 2 of 6

Specific Instructions continued:

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.
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 the principal meaning of the passage.

Limit your statement to 100 words.

Section III: Application

On the basis of your understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, 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 2008**

Page 3 of 6

2 Samuel 1:17-27

OR

Revelation 13:1-10

2 Samuel 1:17-27

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study 2 Samuel 1:17-27 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 Hebrew text of 2 Samuel 1:17-18, 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, as well as the two text critical notes.
2. Translate the Hebrew text of 2 Samuel 1:19-20, 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.
3. Translate the Hebrew text of 2 Samuel 1:21b:

כִּי שֵׁם נִגְעַל מִן גְּבוּרִים מִן שָׂאוּל בְּלִי מָשִׁיחַ בַּשָּׁמֶן:

Justify your translation by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the similarities and differences between your translation and the translations cited below:

- A: the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. (King James Version)
- B: the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more. (New Revised Standard Version)
- C: the shield of Saul – no longer rubbed with oil. (New International Version)

B. Literary Issues

1. The narrator introduces this poem as a **קִינָה**. Describe and discuss this genre as it appears in the Old Testament. How does this inform your understanding of the assigned passage?

2. Describe and discuss the poetic structure of 2 Samuel 1:19-27. What insights about the passage are gained by this poetic analysis?
3. Describe how the character of David is developed in the books of Samuel. What in particular does 2 Samuel 1:17-27 contribute to this development? How does the broader view of David's character inform your understanding of David's actions and words in 2 Samuel 1:17-27?

C. Principal Contents and Theology

1. What does this passage reveal about David as a leader during a time of communal grief? What insights do you gain about the pastoral, theological, and political dimensions of David's leadership?
2. As readers, we know that the "spirit of God departed from Saul" in 1 Samuel 16:14. How do you make sense of the tension between God's rejection of Saul and David's expression of profound grief?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. How might this passage provide a paradigm for the church during times of public grief? With specific reference to the passage, suggest and discuss key elements of such a role.
2. Many scholars argue that the Samuel narratives were compiled in their final form in the context of the exile. Discuss how this passage may have been significant for the exilic community?

Section II: Exegetical Focus

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

Section III: Application

On the basis of your understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, develop an annotated sermon outline or lesson plan for this passage. Include a brief description of the context in which this sermon or lesson plan would be used. *Limit your outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

JANUARY 2008

OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS

Page 5 of 6

Revelation 13:1-10

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study Revelation 13:1-10 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 Revelation 13:7-8, or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the placement of the phrase

ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου in the following translations:

- A: All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (New King James Version)
 - B: and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered. (New Revised Standard Version)
2. Translate the Greek text of Revelation 13:9-10, or supply the modern translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the differences between the following translations:
 - A: Such is the faithful endurance of the holy ones. (New American Bible)
 - B: Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints. (New Revised Standard Version)

B. Literary Issues

1. Identify at least three of the various genres reflected in Revelation 13:1-10. Discuss how the genres inform your understanding of the passage.
2. The book of Revelation gets part of its structure from four sequences of seven: letters, seals, trumpets, and plagues. Within these sequences, where is Revelation 13:1-10 located and how does this analysis of the book's structure contribute to the interpretation of the assigned passage?

C. Principal Contents and Theology

1. Discuss the theological significance of the sea in the book of Revelation. How does this discussion further the understanding of the sea and the emergence of the beast from the sea in Revelation 13:1-10?
2. Revelation 13:5 states that authority was given to the beast for a specified period of time. Who gives this authority to the beast and what are the theological implications of this action?
- 2 Compare and contrast references to worship in Revelation 13:1-10 with those in Revelation 7:9-17. What conclusions would you draw from this comparison about the nature of authentic and false worship? How does this contribute to the interpretation of Revelation 13:1-10?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. Compare and contrast Revelation 13:1-10 with the vision in Daniel 7:1-9. What does this suggest about how the author of the book of Revelation uses the earlier tradition in his contemporary context?
2. The book of Revelation is read in widely different ways. Some see it as purely symbolic of the timeless struggle between good and evil. Some see it as an account of discrete historical events written in advance. There are many other approaches. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these two approaches to this book along with one other approach of your choice for interpreting the book of Revelation. Which of the three (3) approaches do you find most helpful for teachers and preachers in the contemporary church setting?

Section II: Exegetical Focus

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

Section III: Application

On the basis of your understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, develop an annotated 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.*

AUGUST 2008

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 the 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 **JULY 25, 2008.** The specific passages will be announced, and the exam questions distributed, on **SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2008.** The completed examination is due on **THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 2008.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Zechariah OR Matthew

Your proctor will inform you of the specific passages on **AUGUST 23, 2008.**

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 AM, AUGUST 28, 2008.**

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.

AUGUST 2008

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 AUGUST 2008**

Page 3 of 6

Zechariah 9:9-13

OR

Matthew 20:1-16

Zechariah 9:9-13

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study Zechariah 9:9-13 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 Zechariah 9:9 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues in the verse. Explain the basis for the different

renderings of צִדִּיק וְנוֹעַ הוּא

-“triumphant and victorious is he” (New Revised Standard Version)

-“just and having salvation is he” (King James Version)

-“he is legitimate and victorious” (The NET Bible)

2. Translate the Hebrew text of Zechariah 9:10 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues in the verse. Include in your discussion the following issues:

- a. Explain the NRSV translation, “He will cut off,” given that most other translations read, “I will cut off.”

- b. Explain why some English translations render the Hebrew phrase

וְדַבֵּר שָׁלוֹם as “speak peace” while others translate it as “command peace.”

3. Translate the Hebrew text of Zechariah 9:12 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation by discussing pertinent grammatical and syntactical issues in the verse. Which use of the construct form in

אֲסִירֵי הַתְּקוּוֹה informs your interpretation of the verse and why?

B. Literary Issues

1. What literary roles do verses 9-13 play within the flow of Zechariah 9? Identify who addresses the people in verses 9-13 (e.g., the prophet, the king, God). Is there one speaker or more than one? If more than one, who is speaking in which specific verses? Support your identification(s) with citations from chapter 9.
2. Discuss the special significance of the verb שׁוּב in prophetic literature. What were its literal and figurative meanings. Which of those meanings is most likely being called upon in verse 12, and why do you conclude that? How does the choice between a literal and figurative meaning inform the interpretation of the passage?

C. Principal Contents and Theology

1. What is the effect of the covenant on God's action here in Zechariah 9:9-13? Support your answer from the specific language in verse 11. How does this inform your understanding of the passage?
2. In almost every phrase of verses 9-13 it is possible to discern echoes of other prophetic passages, the psalms, or the sacred narrative traditions of ancient Israel. What are the theological implications of understanding the nature of prophecy given the connections between the language of verses 9-13 and the language of these earlier traditions? What might this understanding of prophecy's relation with other earlier traditions suggest for later readers who encounter Zechariah's oracles as canonical scripture?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. Discuss the identity and historical context of the prophet responsible for the "oracle" (נְבִיא) of which Zechariah 9:9-13 is a part. What are the implications of this historical context for understanding the prophet's conception of the identity and scope of the reign of the coming king in 9:10?
2. Discuss the appropriation of Zechariah 9:9 on Matthew 21:1-11. How does this evangelist see Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as a "fulfillment" of this portion of the prophetic "oracle" in Zechariah 9-11? Could this be a case of an historical event interpreted in light of a prophetic tradition or a story created out of a prophetic text? What difference would that make to the modern church's understanding of Zechariah?

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.*

AUGUST 2008

OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS

Page 5 of 6

Matthew 20:1-16

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study Matthew 20:1-16 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 Greek text of Matthew 20:2-4 or supply the modern translation that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical, syntactical, and/or translation issues.
2. Translate the Greek text of Matthew 20:14-15 or supply the modern translation that you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent grammatical, syntactical, and/or translation issues, including the text critical note at the beginning of verse 15.

B. Literary Issues

1. Describe and discuss the structure of the assigned passage. What clues, if any, does the structure provide for understanding the message of the text?
2. Some commentators see a connection between Matthew 19:27-30 and 20:1-16. Would you agree? If so, explain why, and how you understand the relationship between Matthew 20:1-16 and what precedes it (Matthew 19:27-30). If not, explain why not, and explain what relationship you find between Matthew 20:1-16 and its immediate literary context.

C. Principal Contents and Theology

1. Matthew 20:1-16 ends with the comment "So the last will be first, and the first will be last" (v. 16). Discuss the thematic relationship between this comment and the parable in vv. 1-15.
2. Identify and discuss any clues in the passage that would suggest a connection between the landowner's actions toward the workers and God's actions toward us. Note significant connections with language or themes elsewhere in Matthew or the rest of the Bible. What picture of God emerges from this parable?

3. David E. Garland (*Reading Matthew*, p. 206) writes about Matthew 20:1-16:

“Matthew is a Gospel that emphasizes the doing of righteousness; but this parable shows that Matthew also understands the scandalous nature of God’s grace.”

Describe and discuss the interplay between righteousness and grace in this parable, and what the parable contributes to these themes in Matthew’s Gospel as a whole.

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. Describe briefly the socio-historical setting in which you think Matthew’s Gospel was written. Discuss how Matthew 20:1-16 might have addressed the situation of the church in that context.
2. Identify and briefly discuss three ways in the history of interpretation that this parable has been applied to the life of individual Christians or the Christian community. Based on your study of the passage, which of these approaches do you find most faithful to the parable, and why?

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

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 the 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.

JANUARY 2009

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 Tribble 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 Tribble. How does your engagement with Tribble 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 $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ in Pauline literature. What do you think the passage means when it talks about $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$? What is the relation between $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ 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.*

AUGUST 2009

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 the 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 **JULY 31, 2009.** The specific passages will be announced, and the exam questions distributed, on **SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 2009.** The completed examination is due on **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009, at 9:00 a.m.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Psalm 100

OR

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Your proctor will inform you of the specific passages on **AUGUST 29, 2009.**

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 a.m., SEPTEMBER 3, 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.

AUGUST 2009

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Page 2 of 7

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 understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, 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.*

AUGUST 2009

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

Page 3 of 7

Psalm 100

OR

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Psalm 100

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study Psalm 100 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. Discuss the differences (identified by underline) in the following English translations of Psalm 100:3. Explain how each translation choice is, or is not, based on the Hebrew text, discussing pertinent Hebrew grammar, syntax, translation nuances, and/or variant readings. Based on that discussion, and consistent with any conclusions you may have drawn, translate the Hebrew text of Psalm 100:3, or supply the modern translation of this verse that you think is most accurate and intelligible.

“Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” (*New Revised Standard Version*)

“Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” (*New American Standard Version*)

“Be sure that Yahweh is God, he made us, we belong to him, his people, the flock of his sheepfold.” (*New Jerusalem Bible*)

“Acknowledge that the LORD is God; He made us, and we are His, His people, the flock He tends.” (*Tanakh*)

2. Discuss the differences (identified by underline) in the following English translations of Psalm 100:5. Explain how each translation choice is, or is not, based on the Hebrew text, discussing pertinent Hebrew grammar, syntax, and/or translation nuances. Based on that discussion, and consistent with any conclusions you may have drawn, translate the Hebrew text of Psalm 100:5, or supply the modern translation of this verse that you think is most accurate and intelligible.

“For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” (*New Revised Standard Version*)

“good indeed is the LORD, Whose love endures forever, whose faithfulness lasts through every age.” (*New American Bible*)

B. Literary Issues

1. The genre or form of Psalm 100 is a “hymn” (or “hymn of praise”). Describe and discuss the structure of Psalm 100 in relation to the typical elements and structure of the “hymn” form. In particular, explain how the imperative verbs and the **וְ** clause in verse 5 function in terms of this genre or form.
2. Some scholars have made a connection between Psalm 100 and the so-called “Enthronement Psalms” (Psalms 93, 95-99). Discuss what these “Enthronement Psalms” have in common, and what relationship you perceive between these psalms and Psalm 100. What insights are gained from this comparison for the interpretation of Psalm 100?
3. Discuss how knowledge of Hebrew poetic parallel structures helps one to understand the relationship between the three clauses in verse 5.

C. Principal Content and Theology

1. Discuss the theological affirmations that Psalm 100 makes about God, the people of God, and “all the earth.”
2. Psalm 100:3 uses the metaphor of “sheep” to describe the people of God, implying that God is their shepherd. Discuss one example each from the Old and the New Testament where “shepherd” is used as an image/metaphor for God. What is the significance of understanding God as “shepherd” for the interpretation of Psalm 100?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. What clues do you find in Psalm 100 that point to how it might have been used in Israel’s worship? Describe and discuss what picture of Psalm 100’s liturgical use might be constructed from these clues.

2. Psalm 100 has enjoyed a long history of paraphrase in the hymnody of the Christian church. The following hymn is based on Psalm 100. Describe and discuss how it interprets the psalm. Does it follow a particular translation option? Does it go beyond the psalm itself in its theological emphases? Based on this discussion, would you conclude that the hymn faithfully reflects the psalm itself, and why?

“All People That on Earth Do Dwell” (Ascribed to William Kethe, 1561; alt.)

- 1) All people that on earth do dwell, Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell, Come ye before Him and rejoice.
- 2) Know that the Lord is God indeed; Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed, And for His sheep He doth us take.
- 3) O enter then His gates with praise, Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless His name always, For it is seemly so to do.
- 4) For why? the Lord our God is good, His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood, And shall from age to age endure.

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.*

AUGUST 2009

OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS

Page 6 of 7

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study 2 Peter 3:8-15a 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 Greek text of 2 Peter 3:10 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation by discussing pertinent Greek grammar, syntax, translation nuances, and/or variant readings. Explain the basis for the different translations of the segment below in the cited versions:

“everything that is done on it will be disclosed” (*New Revised Standard Version*)

“its works will be burned up” (*New American Standard Bible*)

Why do you prefer one of these translations over the other, or why have you chosen another translation? What difference does the translation of this segment of the verse make to your understanding of the passage?

2. Translate the Greek text of 2 Peter 3:11 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify the translation by discussing pertinent Greek grammar, syntax, translation nuances, and/or variant readings. The verb **λυομένῳ** is conjugated/inflected using the future form. To what time period (past, present, or future) does the verb refer within this context? What nuance is conveyed by the choice of this tense form to refer to actions in that particular time period?

B. Literary Issues

1. Discuss the simile in verse 10 that describes the coming of the “day of the Lord” as being “like a thief.” What are some points of comparison between that “day” and a “thief,” and what are some aspects of contrast? Who specifically is the “Lord” whose “day” is coming according to this verse, and on what do you base your identification?
2. According to the standard Greek lexicons, the noun **στοιχείᾱ** that appears in verse 10 can refer to three different things. What are these three uses of that Greek noun? Based on an analysis of the other vocabulary in this passage, which of these three uses do you think is most probable here?

C. Principal Content and Theology

1. In verses 11-12, the author directs the readers to lead “lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God.” Discuss the author’s suggestion that the manner of Christians’ lives affects the timing of “the day of God.”
2. At several points in this passage there are references to the destruction of the current created order and the coming of “new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home” (see verse 13). Discuss the implications of this passage’s anticipation of a coming “new earth” for considering Christians’ responsibilities as stewards of the current earth.
3. Discuss the tension in this passage between divine wrath and judgment implicit in the fiery destruction of this world, on the one hand, and divine grace and redemption expressed in God’s patience in providing opportunity for salvation, on the other. How does this passage contribute to your understanding of the relationship between God’s justice and mercy?

D. History of Composition

1. By the end of the first century, the “delay of the Parousia” had become a critical issue in many Christian communities. What two reasons are suggested within this passage for why Jesus had not yet returned to bring the current age to a close? How do you think modern Christians should regard those reasons now that the “delay” has lasted not just a century but two millennia?
2. Many modern commentators have suggested that both 2 Peter and Jude are dependent upon an earlier Jewish apocalyptic text. What specific features of 2 Peter 3:8-15a might be used to argue in favor of that proposal? What features might be used to argue against it? Would direct literary dependence on a non-canonical Jewish source change the way this passage is understood and applied by the modern church? Why or why not?

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 2010

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 the 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 22, 2009**. The specific passages will be announced, and the exam questions distributed, on **SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2010**. The completed examination is due on **THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010, at 9:00 a.m.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

1 Kings 17:17–24

OR

Mark 8:27–9:1

Your proctor will inform you of the specific passages on **JANUARY 23, 2010**.

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 a.m., JANUARY 28, 2010**.

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 understanding of the principal meaning of the passage as indicated in your exegetical focus statement, 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.*

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Page 3 of 6

1 Kings 17:17–24

OR

Mark 8:27–9:1

1 Kings 17:17–24

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study 1 Kings 17:17–24 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 1 Kings 17:18 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. Comment specifically on the similarities and differences between your translation and the translations cited below.

“So she said to Elijah, ‘Why have you done this to me, O man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?’” (*New American Bible*)

“She then said to Elijah, ‘What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!’” (*New Revised Standard Version*)

2. Translate the Hebrew text of 1 Kings 17:21–22 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. Comment on the fact that the LXX reads ἐνεφύσησεν where the Masoretic Text has **וַיִּתְמַדֵּר**.

3. Translate the Hebrew text of 1 Kings 17:24 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. Comment specifically on the similarities and differences between your translation and the translations cited below.

“Now I know that you are a prophet and that the LORD really does speak through you.” (*NET Bible*)

“Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.” (*New Revised Standard Version*)

“Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD is truly in your mouth.” (*Tanakh*)

B. Literary Issues

1. 1 Kings 17:17–24 stands between Elijah’s pronouncement of the drought as a judgment and the ending of the drought following the contest on Mount Carmel. How does the plot development within this passage relate to the unfolding of the plot in that broader literary context? How does the wider context of 1 Kings 17–18 inform the interpretation of 1 Kings 17:24?
2. Does the characterization of the woman change between her first statement to Elijah and her last? Support your answer by details of the text and knowledge of the conventions of Hebrew narrative.

C. Principal Content and Theology

1. Discuss the uses of the verb **נָבֵא** and the noun **נָבִיא** in 1 Kings 17 as a whole and the theological implications of the occurrence in 1 Kings 17:24.
2. Describe and discuss the theology contained in the widow’s statement to Elijah in 1 Kings 17:18 and in Elijah’s question to God in 1 Kings 17:20. Articulate a response to this theology from a Reformed theological perspective.

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. Luke 7:11–17 tells the story of Jesus and a widow whose son has died. In that story the crowd comes to the conclusion that Jesus is a prophet. How does 1 Kings 17:17–24 help one to understand the role of a prophet?
2. Malachi 4:5 states that God will send “the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes” (*New Revised Standard Version*). This expectation is present in the synoptic gospels (e.g., Matthew 11:13–14; Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17). What details in 1 Kings 17:17–24 contribute to this understanding of Elijah’s role as the herald of the arrival of the messianic age?

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

Page 5 of 6

Mark 8:27–9:1

Section I: Exegetical Study and Responses to Exegetical Questions

Study Mark 8:27–9:1 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 Greek text of Mark 8:31 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify your translation by discussing grammar and syntax in the verse. In light of the Greek text, comment specifically on the differences between the following translations.

“suffer many things” (*New International Version*)

“undergo great suffering” (*New Revised Standard Version*)

2. Translate the Greek text of Mark 8:33 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify your translation by discussing grammar and syntax in the verse. Specifically discuss the verb ἐπιτιμάω as it appears in verse 33 and compare its use here with the other two times it appears in the assigned passage.
3. Translate the Greek text of Mark 8:34 or supply the modern English translation you think is most accurate and intelligible. Justify your translation by discussing grammar and syntax in the passage. Comment specifically on the two imperatives.

B. Literary Issues

1. Briefly describe the structure of the Gospel of Mark. What is the significance of the placement of this passage in the larger context of the gospel for interpretation of Mark 8:27–9:1?
2. In verse 30 Jesus mandates secrecy; in verse 32 he speaks openly. Discuss the seeming contradiction in these two verses. What is to be kept secret, and what does Jesus discuss openly? How do these two actions contribute to your understanding of the passage?

C. Principal Content and Theology

1. Compare and contrast the use of the phrase “Son of Man” in Mark 2:10 with its use in 8:38. How does the use of “Son of Man” in that earlier verse inform your understanding of what Jesus is saying in the assigned passage?
2. Jesus first issues a call to discipleship in Mark 1:17. What has been added to that call in 8:27–9:1? How do these calls contribute to what it means to follow Jesus according to the Gospel of Mark?

D. History of Composition and Interpretation

1. Briefly discuss the concept of the “messianic secret” as a feature of Mark’s gospel. What does this concept contribute to your understanding of Mark 8:27–9:1?
2. In Mark 9:1, Jesus tells the disciples, “there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power” (New Revised Standard Version). Discuss at least two interpretations of the relationship between the disciples’ deaths and the coming of the kingdom of God with power. Which contributes more to your own interpretation of this passage and why?

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.*

AUGUST 2010

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 the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description approved by 2008 General Assembly.)

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Amos 5:16-20

OR

Luke 1:46-55

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 AM, SEPTEMBER 2, 2010.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must do your own work, without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.
2. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc., and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.
3. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.
4. You must 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.
5. Include a bibliography of consulted works.
6. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will evaluate the exam as a unit and not in parts.

AUGUST 2010

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Page 2 of 7

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. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas.

1. *Language of the Text:* word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community.
2. *Historical Situation:* the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God’s people has come.
3. *Scriptural and Theological Context:* the passage’s relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church.

A total of **four** responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a *600-word limit per response*. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. *Focus Statement:* Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. *Supporting the Interpretation:* Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline or lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

AUGUST 2010

EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLE EXEGESIS

Page 3 of 7

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

You may write your answers in ink in your own handwriting, type them, or use a computer. Do not use a pencil to write your responses; **papers written in pencil will be returned without being evaluated.** If you handwrite your examination, do not skip lines in the examination book. You may make corrections, deletions, or additions without rewriting or erasing. Identify every answer by the number and letter assigned to it (e.g., III. B). **Illegible papers shall be returned without being evaluated.**

You are encouraged to use a computer. You may bring your own equipment or, at some exam sites, you may use equipment provided by the proctor. You must confirm with the proctor in advance of the testing date what equipment (power strips, computers, printers, etc.) is available at the testing site.

If you use a computer:

- A printed copy of the exam must be turned in before you leave the test site. Not turning in a printed copy will result in failure. You are strongly urged to make sure that all the necessary equipment and software are properly working and coordinated.
- Number the pages.
- Include your candidate number on each page of the exam, **but not your name.**
- Print responses using double spacing and 12-point font size.
- When finished, staple the printed copy to the first few pages of the exam book.

Syntax or grammar will not be evaluated. However, the evaluation of papers may be affected if they cannot be understood because of poor syntax or grammar.

Maintaining the candidate's anonymity is of fundamental importance to assure fair evaluation of examination papers. Failure to comply with any of the following instructions will result in the paper being found as unsatisfactory:

- **Do not include your name**
- **Do not include the name of your congregation or presbytery**
- **Do not identify the seminary you attend or have attended**
- **Do not identify professors with whom you have studied**
- **Do not indicate whether you have taken this or other senior ordination exams before**

OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS
PASSAGES FOR AUGUST 2010

Page 4 of 7

Amos 5:16-20

OR

Luke 1:46-55

Amos 5:16-20

Ministry Context:

You are leading a midweek adult Bible study on Amos, and at the same time preaching through the book of Amos. This coming week, the focus of your teaching and preaching is Amos 5:16-20. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your outline for this sermon.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Amos 5:16-20, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each response to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text*

First Required Response

In comparing translations of Amos 5:18, you notice a difference in the following three translations:

Why do you want the day of the LORD? (*New Revised Standard Version*)

What will this day of the LORD mean for you? (*New American Bible*)

For what good is the day of the LORD to you? (*New King James Version*)

Explain the basis for these different translations of לַמָּוֶת-יְהוָה לָכֶם. How would you translate this phrase and why?

Second Required Response

As you were identifying segments for your series on Amos, you asked yourself if 5:16-20 forms a coherent unit of text. Explain how 5:16-20 does or does not form a coherent unit. Support your conclusion by discussing pertinent Hebrew grammar, syntax, and/or vocabulary in this passage, and its placement within Amos.

2. *Historical Situation*

Third Required Response

What is the historical context of Amos's prophetic ministry? What aspects of Amos's message and of Israel's situation might have led to conversation about "the day of the LORD" (יְהוָה יום)? What insights do you gain from this context for the interpretation of Amos 5:16-20?

3. Scriptural and Theological Context

Fourth Required Response – CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A. In Amos 5:17 God declares to the people of Israel, “I will pass through the midst of you” (NRSV). The same Hebrew construction, **ב** followed by **עבר**, occurs in Exodus 12:12. How does the Exodus tradition relate to Amos’s prophetic message? How does that tradition inform your understanding of what God plans to do in Amos 5:16-20?

OR

B. Your study drew your attention to the language of mourning and wailing in Amos 5:16-17. Identify and discuss similar imagery elsewhere in the book of Amos. What is the function of this imagery for Amos’s prophetic message? What is the significance of this imagery in Amos 5:16-17?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

1. ***Focus Statement:*** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation:*** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.*

**OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN BIBLE EXEGESIS
PASSAGES FOR AUGUST 2010**

Page 6 of 7

Luke 1:46-55

Ministry Context:

You are preparing a sermon for the fourth Sunday of Advent. The community you minister in was once a thriving town, but lately the economy has been difficult. The session has been discussing how your congregation might respond to the increasing needs of the poor. What message will you deliver this Sunday in light of the session discussion and your community's changing needs? This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your outline for this sermon.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Luke 1:46-55, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text*

First Required Response

In your study of the text you note that all of the verbs in verses 51-53 are in the same tense. How does the author's choice of this tense influence your interpretation of the passage? What might the tense of these verbs say about God?

Second Required Response

Within the literary structure of the first two chapters of Luke there are four songs: the Song of Mary (1:46-55), the Song of Zechariah (1:68-79), the Song of the Angels (2:14) and the Song of Simeon (2:29-32). How do these songs relate to one another in terms of their literary aspects and function(s)? How does your understanding of that relationship influence your interpretation of the Song of Mary?

2. *Historical Situation*

Third Required Response

Luke 1:46-55 proclaims a vision of social reversal. Discuss what you know from your study about the early Christian community for whom this Gospel was written. Informed by your study do you think the readers would have identified with Mary as one who is exalted or with the rich whose positions of privilege are being threatened? How would that identification have affected the ways they would have understood this song? How do modern tendencies to identify with the rich or the poor affect the way the song is understood today?

3. Scriptural and Theological Context

Fourth Required Response – CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A. One of the basic issues in New Testament theology is the tension between the “already” and the “not yet,” between what God has already done in the world and what has not yet been realized in the fullness of God’s reign. In light of that tension, is this passage a song of praise to God for help granted or a prophecy of salvific hope for the future? Discuss and support your answer with reference to other passages in the Gospel of Luke.

OR

B. The Gospel of Luke is known to use Old Testament models. Compare and contrast the Song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 with the Song of Mary in Luke 1:46-55. How does this affect your understanding of Mary’s song?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.*

JANUARY 2011
EXAMINATION IN OPEN BOOK BIBLE EXEGESIS

Dear *Candidate*:

There is a contradiction in the instructions for the Exegesis examination on the Deuteronomy passage: While the opening “Ministry Context” states that the examination response should present a “Bible Study,” the instructions for “Section III: Application” call for the paper to “present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context).”

Those choosing to write on the Deuteronomy passage should present a BIBLE STUDY as specified in the “Ministry Context” at the beginning of the examination.

JANUARY 2011

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 the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description approved by 2008 General Assembly.)

1. **TECHNOLOGY.** Computers must be used to write this examination. Double space your answers to Sections I and II, using a 12-point font throughout. Section III may be single-spaced. When finished, staple the printed copy to the inside of the exam folder. Handwritten examinations will be returned without being evaluated.
2. **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Include your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.
3. **FORM.** Examinations that cannot be understood because of poor grammar/syntax will be returned ungraded.
4. **HONESTY.** You must do your own work, without giving aid to or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 OR 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 AM, FEBRUARY 3, 2011.** The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc., and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.
2. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.
3. You must 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.
4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.

Specific Instructions continued:

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 your anonymity and to ensure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned ungraded:
 - your name
 - the educational institution or congregation where you study or worship
 - the names of professors with whom you have studied, except in citations of their published works in references or your bibliography
 - mention of your 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. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas.

1. *Language of the Text:* word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community.
2. *Historical Situation:* the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God's people has come.
3. *Scriptural and Theological Context:* the passage's relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church.

A total of **four** responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a *600-word limit per response*. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. *Focus Statement:* Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. *Supporting the Interpretation:* Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline or lesson plan (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

OR

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Ministry Context:

You are working with the Worship Committee to come up with new ways to integrate stewardship emphases into worship. You are planning a retreat to work with them on this topic. During this retreat you will be presenting a Bible study on Deuteronomy 26:1-11. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your lesson plan for this Bible study.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Deuteronomy 26:1-11, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text*

First Required Response

In comparing translations of Deuteronomy 26:5 you notice that the *New Revised Standard Version* and most English versions translate the word נָאָץ as “wandering,” but the *New King James Version* reads “perishing.” In addition to “wandering” and “perishing,” identify one other option for translating נָאָץ in this verse. What are the implications of each of these three translations for understanding Deuteronomy 26:5? Which translation would you choose and why?

2. *Historical Situation*

Second Required Response

Some scholars propose that the text of Deuteronomy has been strongly shaped by the experience of the exile. How would the liturgical confession in verses 5-10 be heard in the context of exile from the land?

3. Scriptural and Theological Context

Third Required Response – CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A. After the priest is presented with the first fruits, the worshiper, “the Levites and the aliens ... shall celebrate” (Deuteronomy 26:11). Within Deuteronomy, who are the Levites and the aliens? Why must they be included in the celebration?

OR

B. The idea of the “first fruits” is not unique to Deuteronomy 26:1-11. It occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g., Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 23:9-21). Discuss the significance of the Old Testament concept of first fruits as an offering to God. How might the concept of the first fruits offering enrich the Christian community today?

Fourth Required Response

In the speech quoted in verses 5-10 you notice a shift in pronouns from “he” to “we” to “I.” What is the significance of this shift both for those addressed within Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and for later readers?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

1. ***Focus Statement:*** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation:*** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.*

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13**Ministry Context:**

You are serving as pastor at a church where you and the Worship Committee have a strong commitment to using the Scripture lessons assigned in the Revised Common Lectionary. You are planning your sermons for the fall stewardship campaign. In reviewing the passages for the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, you find that 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 touches on themes of work, reliance upon the community for support, and financial support for those engaged in ministry to the church. You choose to preach on that text. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your outline for this sermon.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

In comparing translations of the passage you notice that some translators use terms like “idleness” in verses 7 and 11 (*New Revised Standard Version*) where others use terms like “undisciplined” (*New American Standard Bible*) and “disorderly” (*New King James Version*). Discuss the related Greek words ἀτακτέω and ἀτάκτως. How were they used in ancient Greek literature? How does the specific content of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 influence the translation choice? What translation of these terms do you find most helpful in communicating your understanding of the passage, and why?

2. *Historical Situation***Second Required Response**

2 Thessalonians was written in response to abuses from a group within the church who enthusiastically promoted the imminent return of Jesus, even to the extent of believing “the day of the Lord is already here” (2 Thessalonians 2:2). Some commentators on this passage have argued that those described as having stopped working were motivated by such belief. Discuss the arguments for and against this identification of the “idle” people in this passage. Which argument do you find more convincing, and why?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context***Third Required Response**

This passage reasserts an apostolic command: “Anyone unwilling to work should not eat” (verse 10). The command is further supported by the principle that everyone is “to do their work quietly and to earn their own living” (verse 12). How do you understand the relationship between these commands and the responsibility elsewhere in Scripture to care for the poor and disadvantaged in society (e.g., James 1:27)? Support your understanding

with reference to the overall context of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 and/or the specific wording of the command in verse 10.

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A. In commissioning the Twelve, Jesus said both that those who have received God's blessings should "give without payment" and that those who do the work of the gospel should be supported by the community because "laborers deserve their food" (Matthew 10:8b-10). Similarly Paul both claimed the "right" to be financially supported for his ministry and yet "boasts" that he made "the gospel free of charge" (1 Corinthians 9:8-18). Compare and contrast 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 with these other statements by Jesus and Paul. What insights do you draw from this comparison regarding the model of support for Christian ministry presented here in 2 Thessalonians? How would you respond to the apostles' example as a model for the church today?

OR

B. The recipients of this letter are reminded that they "ought to imitate" (δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι, 3:7; see also verse 9) the example of the apostles. This theme of "imitation" is a recurring one in the Thessalonian letters and elsewhere in the Pauline letters. Compare and contrast the use of "imitation" here in 2 Thessalonians 3:7 and 9 with its use in 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and 2:14. How do you understand the command here in 2 Thessalonians 3 in light of those passages and Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ"?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.*

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 the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description was approved by the 2008 General Assembly.)

1. **TECHNOLOGY.** Computers must be used to write this examination. Double-space your answers to Sections I and II; use a 12-point font throughout. Section III may be single-spaced. When finished, staple the printed copy to the inside of the exam folder. Handwritten examinations will not be evaluated.
2. **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Include your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.
3. **FORM.** Examinations that cannot be understood because of poor grammar or syntax will be returned unevaluated.
4. **HONESTY.** You must do your own work without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Proverbs 3:1–8 OR John 3:16–21

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 AM, SEPTEMBER 1, 2011**. The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc. and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.
2. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.
3. You must 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.
4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.

Specific Instructions continued:

5. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will evaluate the exam as a unit and not in parts.
6. In order to maintain your anonymity and to ensure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned unevaluated:
 - your name
 - the educational institution or congregation where you study or worship
 - the names of professors with whom you have studied, except in citations of their published works in references or your bibliography
 - mention of your having taken the exam previously.

REQUIRED PARTS OF A SATISFACTORY EXAMINATION

The following sections are required parts of a satisfactory examination. If any of these sections is incomplete the entire examination will be evaluated as unsatisfactory. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas:

1. *Language of the Text*: word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community
2. *Historical Situation*: the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God's people has come
3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*: the passage's relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church

A total of **four** (4) responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a *600-word limit per response*. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement***: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation***: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation with a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline or lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

Proverbs 3:1–8 OR John 3:16–23

PROVERBS 3:1–8**Ministry Context:**

You are officiating at the wedding of a young couple in your congregation. They have requested that you preach on Proverbs 3:1–8. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your sermon outline.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Proverbs 3:1–8, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each question to 600 words.*

1. Language of the Text**First Required Response**

In comparing translations of Proverbs 3:2, you notice a difference in the following four versions:

For they will bestow on you length of days, Years of life and well-being. (*Tanakh*)

... for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. (*New International Version*)

For length of days and years of life and peace will they add to thee. (*JPS Holy Scriptures, 1917*)

... for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you. (*New Revised Standard Version*)

Discuss the differences in the translation of _____. Which translation do you find most appropriate for this passage? Why?

Second Required Response

The *Book of Common Worship* includes Proverbs 3:3–8 among the passages suggested for use in a service of Christian marriage. The engaged couple have asked you to preach on Proverbs 3:1–8. From your study of the book of Proverbs and chapter 3 in particular, determine the proper boundaries of this passage. Support your decision on the basis of the biblical text.

2. Historical Situation**Third Required Response**

Proverbs 1:1 attributes what follows to “Solomon son of David, king of Israel” (*New Revised Standard Version*). Therefore, one might say that, within the Bible at least, the narratives of Solomon in 1 Kings provide a historical context for the Book of Proverbs, including Proverbs 3:1–8. In 1 Kings 3:1–14, Solomon prays to God for wisdom and receives God’s answer to his prayer. How might 1 Kings 3:1–14 inform your understanding and interpretation of Proverbs 3:1–8?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

- A. As you read Proverbs 3:3, the words “bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart” (*New Revised Standard Version*) remind you of Deuteronomy 6:4–9. In addition, you discover that similar language also appears in Proverbs 6:21 and 7:3. Compare Deuteronomy 6:4–9 with Proverbs 3:3, 6:20–21, and 7:1–3. How are these verses similar or different? How does this comparison inform your understanding of Proverbs 3:1–8?

OR

- B. Proverbs chapters 1–9 form a large unit within the book of Proverbs, with the theme of _____ and the interpretation of this passage?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement:*** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation:*** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.*

JOHN 3:16–21**Ministry Context:**

You are the preacher at a youth conference and are given John 3:16–21 as the text for the closing worship service. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your sermon outline.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying John 3:16–21, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

As you study John 3:16–21, you notice that forms of κρίσις or κρίνω are translated differently, such as *condemn*, *judgment*, and *verdict*. Discuss both Greek words as they appear in this passage and the nuances of meaning in the Greek that permit the different English renderings of the words.

Second Required Response

As you read through the Gospel of John and study this passage, you notice key concepts that pervade the Gospel. One of them is the verb πιστεύω. You also realize that the noun πίσις never occurs. What are the implications of John's use of only the verb for your understanding of John 3:16–21?

2. *Historical Situation***Third Required Response**

There have been various reconstructions posited for the Johannine community; describe one. To what experience of this community might John 3:18 be referring? How do your findings about this experience affect your interpretation of the assigned passage?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context***Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B**

A. What is the relationship between John 3:1–15 and John 3:16–21? How might this larger context aid your understanding of John 3:16–21?

OR

B. What theology of salvation do you discern in John 3:16–21? Support your answer with specific references from within the passage.

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.*

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 the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description approved by 2008 General Assembly.)

1. **TECHNOLOGY.** Computers must be used to write this examination. Double-space your answers to Sections I and II; use a 12-point font throughout. Section III may be single-spaced. When finished, staple the printed copy to the inside of the exam folder. Handwritten examinations will not be evaluated.
2. **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Include your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.
3. **FORM.** Examinations that cannot be understood because of poor grammar or syntax will be returned unevaluated.
4. **HONESTY.** You must do your own work, without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Genesis 11:1–9 OR 1 Timothy 5:17–22

Your examination is due to your proctor at **9:00 AM, FEBRUARY 2, 2012**. The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc., and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.
2. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.
3. You must 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.
4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.

Specific Instructions continued:

5. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will evaluate the exam as a unit and not in parts.
6. In order to maintain your anonymity and to ensure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned unevaluated:
 - your name
 - the educational institution or congregation where you study or worship
 - the names of professors with whom you have studied, except in citations of their published works in references or your bibliography
 - mention of your having taken the exam previously.

REQUIRED PARTS OF A SATISFACTORY EXAMINATION

The following sections are required parts of a satisfactory examination. If any of these sections is incomplete the entire examination will be evaluated as unsatisfactory. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas:

1. *Language of the Text*: word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community
2. *Historical Situation*: the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God's people has come
3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*: the passage's relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church

A total of **four** (4) responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a *600-word limit per response*. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement***: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation***: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline or lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your sermon outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.*

Genesis 11:1–9 OR 1 Timothy 5:17–22**GENESIS 11:1–9****Ministry Context:**

You are the pastor of an urban church with a diverse congregation. With the approach of Pentecost, Year C, you want to explore the way in which the Pentecost story in Acts 2 seems to reverse the story told in Genesis 11:1–9. Realizing that you do not have the time in a Pentecost sermon to do justice to the Old Testament reading, you propose a weekly Bible study of Genesis chapters 1–11 and plan for the lesson on Genesis 11:1–9 to come in the week preceding Pentecost. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your lesson plan for this Bible study.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Genesis 11:1–9, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

Theodore Hiebert has suggested this translation of God’s speech in verse 6:

There is now one people and they all have one language. This is what they have begun to do and now all that they plan to do will be possible for them. (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, 126, no. 1, 2007, p. 45)

Compare Hiebert’s translation with the *New American Bible* and the *Tanakh* translations.

If now, while they are one people, all speaking the same language, they have started to do this, nothing will later stop them from doing whatever they presume to do. (*New American Bible*)

If, as one people with one language for all, this is how they have begun to act, then nothing that they may propose to do will be out of their reach. (*Tanakh*)

Which translation, one of these three or your own translation, do you think is most faithful to the original Hebrew? Justify your choice by discussing the grammar and syntax of the verse.

2. *Historical Situation***Second Required Response**

The first eleven chapters of Genesis are often referred to as “Primeval History.” Briefly describe at least three characteristics of this primeval history. How do these characteristics inform your interpretation of Genesis 11:1–9?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*

Third Required Response

The Revised Common Lectionary pairs Genesis 11:1–9 with Acts 2:1–21 for Pentecost, Year C. How does looking at Genesis 11:1–9 in connection with Acts 2:1–21 affect your understanding of the Genesis passage? Describe what you learn about Genesis 11:1–9 from comparing and contrasting the two texts.

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

- A. In Genesis 1:28 God commands humankind to “fill the earth” (*New Revised Standard Version*). How does this command inform your understanding of God’s statement in Genesis 11:8–9?

OR

- B. There are genealogies in Genesis 10 and 11 preceding and following Genesis 11:1–9. What is the function of Genesis 11:1–9 in the context of Genesis 10 and 11? How does its placement within the genealogies affect the understanding of Genesis 11:1–9?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement***: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation***: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your lesson plan to 2 pages.*

1 Timothy 5:17–22**Ministry Context:**

As pastor of a church, you have been asked by the session to help plan a retreat for elders and deacons on the topic of church leadership. The session would like to know what biblical teachings there are on church leadership, especially after some elders and deacons noted that Presbyterian churches have elders but no priests or bishops, as some other churches have. Others have asked what leadership roles are actually “biblical” and what we know about church leaders in the Bible. In response you prepare a lesson plan on 1 Timothy 5:17–22. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your lesson plan for this Bible study.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying 1 Timothy 5:17–22, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer to each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

In preparing for the retreat, you come across the following translations of 1 Timothy 5:17a:

Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honour (*Douay-Rheims Bible*)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor (*New Revised Standard Version*)

Elders who provide effective leadership must be counted worthy of double honor (*New English Translation*)

Discuss at least two translation possibilities for *πρεσβύτερος* in the wider Pauline corpus. Include in your discussion how *πρεσβύτερος* is related to *ἐπίσκοπος* (e.g., Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5–7) and how *πρεσβύτερος* could be translated in 1 Timothy 5:1. How would you translate *πρεσβύτερος* in the context of 1 Timothy 5:17–22, and why?

2. *Historical Situation*

Second Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A. How would the word *πρεσβύτεροι* have been understood in the Greco-Roman context of the passage? How would the instructions concerning them have been understood in that context? How does this historical context affect your interpretation of 1 Timothy 5:17–22? Given this historical context, discuss ways this passage might guide the church today.

OR

B. Discuss what 1 Timothy reveals about the Christian community assumed by the text. How do your findings affect your understanding of what is said about the *πρεσβύτεροι* in 1 Timothy 5:17–22 (e.g., what is expected of them, how they have been behaving, how they should be viewed or treated)?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*

Third Required Response

Identify the sources of the quotations used in verse 18. Discuss the canonical issues related to the quotations used in 1 Timothy 5:17–22. Include in the discussion the canonical or theological significance of understanding both 18a and 18b as “scripture.”

Fourth Required Response

Identify and discuss the instructions in 1 Timothy 5:19–22 with regard to the *πρεσβύτεροι*. What theological issues are involved in verses 19–22? How are these instructions regarding the *πρεσβύτεροι* relevant for other church members, i.e., those who are not *πρεσβύτεροι*? How do instructions given elsewhere in 1 Timothy shed light on your interpretation of 5:19–22?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your lesson plan to 2 pages.*

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 the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description approved by 2008 General Assembly.)

1. **TECHNOLOGY.** Computers must be used to write this examination. Double-space your answers to Sections I and II; use a 12-point font throughout. Section III may be single-spaced. When finished, staple the printed copy to the inside of the exam folder. Handwritten examinations will not be evaluated.
2. **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Include your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.
3. **FORM.** Examinations that cannot be understood because of poor grammar or syntax will be returned unevaluated.
4. **HONESTY.** You must do your own work, without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Ezekiel 34:11–16 OR Matthew 3:13–17

Your examination is due to your proctor at **12:00 PM, AUGUST 30, 2012**. The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc., and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.
2. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.
3. You must 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.
4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.
5. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will evaluate the exam as a unit and not in parts.

Specific Instructions continued:

6. In order to maintain your anonymity and to ensure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned unevaluated:
- your name
 - the educational institution or congregation where you study or worship
 - the names of professors with whom you have studied, except in citations of their published works in references or your bibliography
 - mention of your having taken the exam previously.

REQUIRED PARTS OF A SATISFACTORY EXAMINATION

The following sections are required parts of a satisfactory examination. If any of these sections is incomplete the entire examination will be evaluated as unsatisfactory. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas:

1. *Language of the Text*: word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community
2. *Historical Situation*: the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God's people has come
3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*: the passage's relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church

A total of **four** (4) responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a *600-word limit per response*. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement***: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation***: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Provide either a lesson plan, or an outline or summary description of the major themes of a sermon (as specified in the Ministry Context description). Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Ezekiel 34:11–16 OR Matthew 3:13–17**Ezekiel 34:11–16****Ministry Context:**

You are serving an immigrant fellowship congregation of about 125 members in an agricultural community. Many of its members are refugees of war and social unrest and they have settled in the United States. At the last presbytery meeting, the presbytery approved that the fellowship be fully recognized as a congregation of the presbytery, and you have chosen to preach on Ezekiel 34:11–16 at the service celebrating the new status of the fellowship congregation. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will provide an outline or summary description of the major themes for your sermon.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Ezekiel 34:11–16, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

Translate Ezekiel 34:16 or supply the translation that you think most faithfully represents the Hebrew text. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent textual, grammatical, and syntactical issues. Comment specifically on the verb שָׁמַד and the alternative reading שָׁמַר.

Why might one be a textual variant of the other, and what are the implications for translation and interpretation for the choice of one over the other?

2. *Historical Situation***Second Required Response**

The image of God as shepherd in Ezekiel 34:11–16 follows on the heels of the condemnation of the “shepherds of Israel” in verses 1–10. Scholars disagree about the identity of these “shepherds of Israel.” Provide at least two options for the identity of these shepherds and describe the historical events that would have led to God's condemnation of the shepherds in each of these cases. Choose the option that you find most plausible, and discuss how your choice informs your understanding of Ezekiel 34:11–16.

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context***Third Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B**

- A. Walther Zimmerli argues that Jeremiah 23:1–8 is “unmistakably the model for Ezekiel 34.” (Zimmerli 214). Compare Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23:1–8, giving at least three examples of how Ezekiel uses and modifies the prophecy of Jeremiah. Discuss how Jeremiah 23:1–8 affects your interpretation of Ezekiel 34:11–16.

OR

- B. The image of God as shepherd is a recurring one in the Old Testament, occurring not only in Psalm 23, but in other places as well. Identify at least one other passage in the Old Testament that is neither in Ezekiel nor in the Psalms in which this image occurs, and then discuss the characteristics of this shepherd-God which are developed in Ezekiel 34:11–16, Psalm 23, and the passage(s) you have chosen.

Fourth Required Response

Ezekiel 34:11–16 is one of several passages in the Old Testament that envisions an ingathering of God's dispersed people. Identify at least two other passages in the Old Testament in which the promise of divine ingathering occurs, and discuss the similarities and differences between these visions of divine ingathering and the one in Ezekiel 34:11–16.

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement:*** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation:*** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Provide an outline or summary description of the major themes for your sermon that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Matthew 3:13–17**Ministry Context:**

You are a pastor teaching an adult church school class that has voted to spend Lent studying Christology in the Gospels. As a part of the series, Matthew 3:13–17 has been chosen as a text to prompt reflection on how the beginning of Jesus’ ministry is portrayed in the Gospels and what that might mean for the church’s thinking about Christology. The class has been enriched and perplexed by the different ways the Gospels present the story of Jesus, as a result of which you have been asked continually about the differences that occur among them. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will provide a lesson plan for the church school class.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Matthew 3:13–17, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

The heavenly voice in Matthew says, “οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα” (3:17). You notice in a commentary that “σὺ εἶ” is as a variant of “οὗτός ἐστιν.” Discuss the significance of this variant reading. How does the difference in the Greek clauses illuminate the Christology implied in Matthew’s narrative of Jesus’ baptism?

Second Required Response

Translate Matthew 3:16, or supply the translation that you think most faithfully represents the Greek text. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent textual, grammatical, and syntactical issues. Pay particular attention to the bracketed definite articles before πνεῦμα and θεοῦ. Discuss the significance of these textual variants. How does your translation inform your reading of Matthew 3:13–17?

2. *Historical Situation***Third Required Response**

The canonical Gospels are generally understood as works by particular authors for particular believing communities and concerns. What does Matthew 3:13–17 indicate about the community addressed by Matthew? How does John’s hesitation to baptize Jesus illuminate characteristics particular to Matthew’s community, and how might those characteristics inform your reading of this text?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

- A. As part of your study, you discover the importance of δικαιοσύνη in Matthew. Describe the semantic range of δικαιοσύνη in passages other than Matthew 3:13-17. Informed by your study, how do you understand the use of δικαιοσύνη in Matthew 3:15? How does this inform your theological understanding of Matthew 3:13–17?

OR

- B. Some members of the church school class have already asked you to teach about the fact that the parallel passages in Mark 1:9–11 and Luke 3:21–22 do not contain the conversation between John and Jesus in Matthew 3:14–15. Compare the Christologies evident in the three synoptic baptismal narratives. What does Matthew 3:13–17 indicate about the Christology in the Gospel of Matthew?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Provide a lesson plan that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

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 the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description approved by 2008 General Assembly.)

1. **TECHNOLOGY.** Computers must be used to write this examination. Double-space your answers to Sections I and II; use a 12-point font throughout. Section III may be single-spaced. When finished, staple the printed copy to the inside of the exam folder. Handwritten examinations will not be evaluated.
2. **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Include your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.
3. **FORM.** Examinations that cannot be understood because of poor grammar or syntax will be returned unevaluated.
4. **HONESTY.** You must do your own work, without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Joshua 24:14–28 OR Romans 11:13–24

Your examination is due to your proctor at **12:00 PM, JANUARY 31, 2013**. The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc., and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.
2. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.
3. You must 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.
4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.
5. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will evaluate the exam as a unit and not in parts.

Specific Instructions continued:

6. In order to maintain your anonymity and to ensure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned unevaluated:
- your name
 - the educational institution or congregation where you study or worship
 - the names of professors with whom you have studied, except in citations of their published works in references or your bibliography
 - mention of your having taken the exam previously.

REQUIRED PARTS OF A SATISFACTORY EXAMINATION

The following sections are required parts of a satisfactory examination. If any of these sections is incomplete the entire examination will be evaluated as unsatisfactory. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas:

1. *Language of the Text*: word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community
2. *Historical Situation*: the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God's people has come
3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*: the passage's relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church

A total of **four** (4) responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a *600-word limit per response*. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement***: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation***: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Provide either a lesson plan, or an outline or summary description of the major themes of a sermon (as specified in the Ministry Context description). Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Joshua 24:14–28 OR Romans 11:13–24

Joshua 24:14–28**Ministry Context:**

You have been preparing several adults for baptism. After the date has been set for their profession of faith and their baptism, you decide to preach on Joshua 24:14–28. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will provide an outline or summary description of the major themes for your sermon.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Joshua 24:14–28, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response**

Translate the Hebrew text of Joshua 24:15 or supply the translation that you think most faithfully represents the Hebrew text. Justify the translation you have chosen, discussing grammar and syntax. Comment specifically on אֶת־יְהוָה לַעֲבֹד בְּעֵינֵיכֶם לְעַבְדָּהּ.

2. *Historical Situation***Second Required Response**

Identify and describe three similarities or differences in the telling of Israel's history in Joshua 24:1–13 and the history as told in the Pentateuch. How does the rendering of history in Joshua 24:1–13 affect Joshua's call to covenant relationship with God in Joshua 24:14–28?

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context***Third Required Response**

Discuss the theology expressed in Joshua 24:19–20. Compare and contrast it with at least one other Old Testament description of God, e.g., Exodus 34:6–7. Respond to the theology of Joshua 24:19–20 from a Reformed perspective.

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A. In Joshua 24:15 Joshua challenges the people to make a choice between the God of Israel and other gods. Discuss the choice the people are asked to make. How is the worship of other gods treated in the book of Joshua? What could be the consequences of the people's choice in Joshua 24:14–28 for Joshua, for the people, and for God?

OR

B. Identify and discuss one passage in the Pentateuch where God makes covenant with God's people. How is the covenant in Joshua 24 similar to or different from the other covenant you have identified? How do your discoveries help you understand Joshua 24:14–28?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Provide an outline or summary description of the major themes for your sermon that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Romans 11:13–24**Ministry Context:**

You are a minister in a community where there recently have been incidents of anti-Semitic graffiti painted around the town. A local, ecumenical group of Christian ministers has decided to engage the community in a series of theological and ethical discussions relating to Jewish-Christian relations. As part of these discussions, you agree to give some seminars on the Reformed perspective on interfaith relationships starting with a Bible study on Romans 11:13–24. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will provide your lesson plan for this study.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying Romans 11:13–24, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. *Limit your answer for each question to 600 words.*

1. *Language of the Text***First Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B**

- A. You notice that in the Greek of Romans 11:15 there are no verbs. In the NRSV, the translators supply verbs in two different tenses: “For if their rejection *is* the reconciliation of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead!” (emphasis added). Discuss the choices that the translators of the NRSV make. What other tenses might be chosen to translate this passage? Which tenses would you choose, and what difference does this make in your interpretation of the passage?

OR

- B. Romans 11:14 is the conditional statement “εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ σώσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν.” Describe the two different kinds of conditional clauses that are possible in the translation of 11:14. What difference does your choice of conditional clause make in your interpretation of the passage?

2. *Historical Situation***Second Required Response**

Scholars have proposed various reasons for the animosity between Jews and Gentiles recorded in Romans 11:13–24. Discuss at least two such proposals that draw from the history of Jews in Rome under the emperors Claudius and Nero. Choose one proposal that you think is most likely and discuss how it informs your reading of Romans 11:13–24.

3. *Scriptural and Theological Context*

Third Required Response

You notice the metaphor of the root and the branches in Romans 11 with its repetition of κατὰ φύσιν and παρὰ φύσιν. Describe Paul's use of φύσις in Romans 1, Romans 11 and at least one other place in the undisputed Pauline letters. Compare these usages and discuss how they affect your understanding of Paul's use of the metaphor of the olive tree in Romans 11?

Fourth Required Response

In Romans 11:13-24, Paul outlines a perspective that Gentile converts to Christianity should adopt toward Jews who are not converts. Summarize this perspective. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has often considered the relationship between Christians and Jews. In 1987, the General Assembly adopted a statement that said, in part:

We affirm that Jews and Christians are partners in waiting. Christians see in Christ the redemption not fully visible in the world, and Jews await the messianic redemption. Christians and Jews together await the final manifestation of God's promise of the peaceable kingdom. ("A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews," 199th General Assembly, 1987)

How does this statement affect your understanding of the assigned passage?

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. ***Focus Statement:*** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*
2. ***Supporting the Interpretation:*** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Provide a lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your lesson plan to 600 words.*

Presbyterian Church (USA) Standard Ordination Exam
Open Book Bible Exegesis
August 2013

Old Testament: Genesis 22:1-19

Ministry Context

You are the teaching elder in a 100-member congregation that includes life-long Presbyterians, members who have joined the Presbyterian church from other denominations, and people new to the Christian faith. One of these new Christians comes to your study and says, “I have a friend who says that somewhere in the Bible God asks a man to kill his son to show that he is faithful to God. Is this true?” As part of your response to this question, you decide to offer a Bible study lesson on Genesis 22:1–19. In the final section of this examination, you will provide your lesson plan for this study. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination.

Section I

First Required Response

In your study of Genesis 22, you see that most contemporary English versions of the Bible translate רָאָה as “provide.” From your study of Hebrew, you remember that רָאָה is usually translated “see.” Discuss the grammatical, linguistic, and contextual evidence that supports each of these two translations. Explain why you would choose one of these, and state how your choice affects your interpretation of Genesis 22:1–19. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Second Required Response

The assigned passage draws attention to the practices of child sacrifice among Israelites and other cultures around the ancient Mediterranean. Discuss at least two references (biblical or extra-biblical) to child sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean. Include as one of these 2 Kings 3:26–27. Explain how this discussion informs your interpretation of Genesis 22:1–19 in which God asks Abraham to sacrifice his only son. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Third Required Response

In light of the statement in Genesis 22:1, “God tested (נִסָּה) Abraham,” discuss the assigned passage as it relates to God’s testing of individuals and the people of God. Include at least two Old Testament texts outside the book of Genesis in your answer. Explain how your answer informs your interpretation of Genesis 22:1–19. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A.

Genesis 22:15–18 seems to suggest a conditional covenant between God and Abraham: “Because you have done this, and not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you” Discuss conditional and unconditional covenant language between God and Abraham by comparing Genesis 22:15–18 with examples from Genesis chapters 12, 15, and 18. Explain how this informs your interpretation of the assigned passage. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR PROCEED TO NEXT PAGE FOR OPTION B --

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

B.

The Christian tradition has emphasized the faithfulness of Abraham based on Genesis 22:1–19. Compare and contrast the portrayal of Abraham and Isaac in Hebrews 11:8–19 and James 2:21 with that of Genesis 22:1–19. Explain how Genesis 22:1–19 enriches your understanding of these New Testament passages as they address issues of faithfulness and obedience. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR RETURN TO PREVIOUS PAGE FOR OPTION A --

Section II

1. Focus Statement:

Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*

2. Supporting the Interpretation:

Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III

Application

Provide a lesson plan that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Works Consulted

In the text box below, please provide a bibliographical listing of all research materials consulted during the preparation of your exam responses.

New Testament: Mark 6:1-6a

Ministry Context

An adult Bible study group of the congregation you serve as pastor has decided to spend six months studying the Gospel According to Mark. Some of the members become perplexed by theological difficulties raised as they read critical commentaries on Mark. Desiring some guidance, the group invites you to lead them in studying Mark 6:1–6a by presenting your interpretation of the text. In the final section of this examination, you will provide an outline or summary description for your two-hour presentation. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination.

Section I

First Required Response

As part of your study, you find the following in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV):

“... many who heard him were astounded.” (6:2b)

“And he was amazed at their unbelief.” (6:6a)

Explain how the words “astounded” and “amazed” shape your understanding of Mark 6:1–6a. Discuss how other uses of ἐκπλήσσω and θαυμάζω in Mark inform your interpretation of Mark 6:1–6a. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Second Required Response

Translate Mark 6:3c: καὶ ἐσκανδαλίζοντο ἐν αὐτῷ. Discuss and justify your translation of ἐσκανδαλίζοντο. How does this use of σκανδαλίζω compare to other ways it is used in Mark? Explain how your understanding of σκανδαλίζω in verse 3 informs your reading of Mark 6:1–6a. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Third Required Response

Discuss the meaning of Mark 6:3a (“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” [NRSV]) in its historical context. Include in your answer the connotations or implications of referring to Jesus as (1) the carpenter and (2) the son of Mary. Include also a discussion of the textual variant [τοῦ τέκτονος υἱός] as well as the parallel passage in Matthew 13:55. Explain how your findings inform your understanding of Mark 6:1–6a. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A.

Consider the immediate context of the aphorism in Mark 6:4. How do verses 5–6a inform your understanding of the meaning of verse 4? How does ἀπιστία in verse 6a inform your understanding of the relationship between δύναμις and ἀπιστία in Mark 6:1–6a? What are the implications for Christology in Mark, especially when compared with Matthew 13:58? *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR PROCEED TO NEXT PAGE FOR OPTION B --

Fourth Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

B.

Discuss the theme of faith in Mark 6:1–6a in the light of Mark 5:21–43, the preceding passage. Explain how this discussion affects your understanding of faith in Mark 6:1–6a. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR RETURN TO PREVIOUS PAGE FOR OPTION A --

Section II

1. Focus Statement:

Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*

2. Supporting the Interpretation:

Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III

Application

Provide an outline or summary description of your presentation that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Works Consulted

In the text box below, please provide a bibliographical listing of all research materials consulted during the preparation of your exam responses.

Exegesis
January 2014

Old Testament

Ministry Context

You have just become the interim pastor for a small congregation that sees itself in a slow decline in membership, finances, and energy. Their pastor has just left after 10 years of ministry, and many of them feel abandoned. The people are downcast and see little joy in their worship. They come because that is what they have done all their lives. Their passion for mission is fading along with their hope. The lectionary suggests Isaiah 40:1–11 for the second Sunday in Advent, and you hear the words as a call to renewed energy for worship and hope for a new day. In the final section of this examination, you will provide an outline or summary description of the major themes for your sermon. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination.

Section I

First Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A.

Provide an analysis of the forms of the verbs נָחַם, קָרָא, and דָּבַר in Isaiah 40:1–2. In light of your analysis, discuss to whom the voice is speaking and for whom the message is intended. How do these verses serve as a prologue to the rest of Isaiah chapter 40? Explain how your responses to these questions influence your understanding of Isaiah 40:1–11. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR PROCEED TO NEXT PAGE FOR OPTION B --

First Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

B.

Isaiah 40:6 has been translated:

A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” (NRSV)

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? (KJV)

The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? (ASV)

Discuss the differences in these translations, including a consideration of the Masoretic text and its variants. Choose one of these translations or provide your own translation. Justify the translation you have chosen by discussing pertinent textual, grammatical, and syntactical issues. Explain how your discussion affects your understanding of Isaiah 40:1–11. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR RETURN TO PREVIOUS PAGE FOR OPTION A --

Second Required Response

Most scholars argue that Isaiah 40:1–11 reflects the cultural and historical context of its time in regard to the people’s experience of the Babylonian exile. Discuss the ways in which Isaiah

chapter 40 responds to the situation of exile. Explain how your discussion of the context affects your interpretation of Isaiah 40:1–11. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Third Required Response

Discuss the relationship between punishment and comfort that come from God in: (1) Isaiah 40:2, (2) the assigned text as a whole, and (3) at least two Old Testament texts outside of Isaiah. Explain how your theological reflection on the texts you have chosen affects your interpretation of Isaiah 40:1–11. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Fourth Required Response

Discuss the role of the herald (מבשרת) in Isaiah 40:9 as it relates to the call for consolation of the people in Isaiah 40:1–11. Include in your response a consideration of Isaiah 40:6–8 and 10–11. Explain how this discussion influences your use of Isaiah 40:1–11 as part of the Advent cycle of preaching. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Exegesis
January 2014

New Testament
Ministry Context

You are the new pastor of a downtown congregation of 100 members. Most of the congregation members no longer live in the neighborhood. The population of the congregation's neighborhood has grown significantly. At the same time, this neighborhood has been hit hard by the recent economic downturn. People from the neighborhood have visited the congregation, but have not stayed, reporting a sense of not feeling welcomed. As part of a congregation-wide process of discernment about its mission and future, you have chosen to lead a Bible study on James 2:1–26. In the final section of this examination, you will present your lesson plan for this study. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination.

Section I

First Required Response

As you read James 2:25, you notice in the text-critical notes that some early manuscripts of the letter of James contain alternative readings to the word ἀγγέλους. Identify two of these possible alternative readings. Discuss the effect each one has, if any, on the meaning of James 2:25. Discuss the criteria of text-criticism that led to the choice of ἀγγέλους as the best reading. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Second Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

A.

There is a significant scholarly debate on the dating of the book of James. Briefly outline two of the arguments about the dating of James. Include in your discussion the significance in this debate of the use of συναγωγή rather than ἐκκλησία in James 2:2. Informed by your work, choose the argument you find most persuasive and explain your choice. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR PROCEED TO NEXT PAGE FOR OPTION B --

Second Required Response — CHOOSE ONE: A or B

B.

Bruce Malina and other social-scientific critics argue for the importance of the honor/shame dialectic in the understanding of the New Testament world. Describe briefly the role of honor and shame in James 2, paying special attention to James 2:1–9. Explain how your assessment affects your interpretation of James 2:1–26. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

-- OR RETURN TO PREVIOUS PAGE FOR OPTION A --

Third Required Response

Compare and contrast James's use of δικαιώω with Paul's use of the same verb in Romans. Explain whether or not you find a fundamental disagreement between James and Paul on the use

of δικαίω. How does this affect your interpretation of James 2:1–26? *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Fourth Required Response

James 2:5–6 refers to οἱ πλούσιοι. Consider the use of πλούσιος in the letter of James. What does this use of πλούσιος suggest about James's ethics concerning wealth and poverty? Explain how this affects your reading of James 2:1–26. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Exegesis, Summer 2014

Ministry Context: John 1:1-18

An adult church school class in the congregation you serve as pastor is planning to devote six weeks to study the Nicene Creed. Members of the class are particularly interested in learning about the second section of the creed (Nicene Creed, 1.2) because they noticed how different it is from that of the more familiar Apostles' Creed. They have requested that you address this portion of the Nicene Creed, especially regarding the divinity of Christ. You have decided in discussions with them that you would prepare a lesson on John 1:1–18 as part of their plans for broader Christological discussions. In the final section of this examination, you will provide an outline or summary description of your lesson. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination.

Section I, First Required Response

Discuss two different ways of translating θεός in the clause καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος in John 1:1 and how each would affect the understanding of ὁ λόγος in the context of John 1:1–18. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section I, Second Required Response

In reading commentaries as part of your study, you find that there is a question of whether ὁ γέγονεν concludes or begins a sentence. Explain how each possibility affects the translation of John 1:3–4. Discuss how these possibilities shape your interpretation of John 1:1–18. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section I, Third Required Response

John 1:1–18 has been called the “hymn to the λόγος.” Discuss the concept of λόγος in both Stoic philosophy and Second Temple Wisdom tradition. How does this historical background inform your understanding of John 1:1–18? *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section I, Fourth Required Response

In response to the church class members' request, you focus on the first half of the Christological section of the Nicene Creed:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit

and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. (Nicene Creed, 1.2)

Explain how John 1:1–18 informs the Christology in this passage of the Nicene Creed. Identify at least two (2) Christological issues in John 1:1–18 that are reflected in the Nicene Creed. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Application

Provide an outline or summary description of your lesson that addresses the required ministry context.

Bible Exegesis

Fall 2014

Ministry Context: Psalm 139

A member of the congregation you serve has come to you with a concern about her 85-year-old father who lives in another state. He is a life-long church member who is contemplating his mortality. He is consumed with thoughts about an act of dishonesty he committed earlier in his life. He admitted his wrongdoing to the involved parties. However, he has not prayed about it and is continually troubled about God's view of him in light of his behavior. He has committed many passages of the Bible to memory, including Psalm 139, the content of which leaves him feeling uneasy and worried. You realize that several members in the congregation may have similar concerns. You prepare a sermon on Psalm 139 to address these concerns. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination.

Section I: 1. Language of the Text

The following are some English translations of Psalm 139:14a:

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (New Revised Standard Version)

I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. (Revised Standard Version)

In light of the Hebrew text, discuss the differences between these translations. Choose or provide a translation you find most faithful to the Hebrew text, paying close attention to your understanding of the word נִפְלְאוֹתֵי. Justify your choice and explain how it affects your understanding of Psalm 139. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section I: 2. Language of the Text

In reviewing commentaries, you notice that verses 19-24 are not included in the lectionary reading for Year C, the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Compare and contrast these verses to the rest of Psalm 139. Include in your response a discussion of the genres that may apply to this psalm. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section I: 3. Historical Situation

Discuss the phrase, "in your book were written all the days that were formed for me," in verse 16b. Identify and discuss at least one (1) reference to such a "book" in other literature from the eastern Mediterranean in the first millennium BCE. Compare the use of such a heavenly book and its significance for Israelite and non-Israelite cultures. How might a wider understanding of a heavenly book influence your interpretation of the assigned passage? *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section I: 4. Scriptural and Theological Context

Discuss the understanding of awareness of self and the presence of God in Isaiah 6. Compare and contrast this with the awareness of self and the presence of God in Psalm 139. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. Focus Statement:

Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*

2. Supporting the Interpretation:

Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III:

Application

Provide an outline, or a summary description of the major themes, for your sermon that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Works Consulted

In the text box below, please provide a bibliographical listing of all research materials consulted during the preparation of your exam responses.

Bible Exegesis, Winter 2015

Ministry Context: Philemon

The congregation you serve as pastor has an active book group that is reading *Dwelling Place*, by Erskine Clarke, in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the United States Civil War. In a previous meeting, the group came across the following statement: “The most famous of the biblical slaves was Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon” (Clarke 2005, 138). Upon discussion, many members of the group realized that they had never heard of either Onesimus or Philemon. They ask you to come to their next meeting and lead a two-hour study of Paul’s letter to Philemon. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present an outline or summary of the plan for your Bible study.

Section I

1. Language of the Text

First Required Response

The Letter to Philemon is addressed, in part, Φιλήμονι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ ἡμῶν. Describe the possible grammatical relationships between the adjectives ἀγαπητός and συνεργός in verse 1. Explain how your understanding of the grammatical relationship affects your translation of the verse. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

2. Language of the Text

Second Required Response

In Philemon 20, you read: ναὶ ἀδελφέ, ἐγὼ σου ὀναίμην ἐν κυρίῳ. You notice that the verb ὀναίμην is in the optative mood. Describe the different uses of the optative mood. Explain which use of the optative mood occurs in Philemon 20 and how this affects your understanding of Philemon 1-25. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

3. Historical Situation

Third Required Response

Describe slavery in the Roman Empire during the time of Paul as a possible socio-historical context for Philemon. Explain how this description informs your understanding of Paul’s letter to Philemon. *Limit your answer to 600 words.*

4. Scriptural and Theological Context

Fourth Required Response

In *Dwelling Place*, Erskine Clarke relates that Presbyterian missionary Charles Colcock Jones preached from Paul's letter to Philemon to "a large congregation of slaves." Jones preached against the "character of Runaways" and the "folly, the impropriety, the impolicy of their course" (138). According to Clarke, Jones was surprised that his interpretation was resisted by the slaves.

The Scots Confession argues that biblical interpretation should be consonant with the principal points of our faith, the "plain text of Scripture," and the "rule of love" (Scots Confession, 3.18). Using these Reformed principles for biblical interpretation, demonstrate from Philemon how one might interpret this letter in a way that does not condemn those who seek to escape from slavery.

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. Focus Statement:

Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. *Limit your statement to 50 words.*

2. Supporting the Interpretation:

Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

Section III:

Application

Provide an outline or summary plan for your Bible study that addresses the required ministry context. Your work must be based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and be consistent with your focus statement. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Works Consulted

In the text box below, please provide a bibliographical listing of all research materials consulted during the preparation of your exam responses.