



C O V E N A N T
T H E O L O G I C A L S E M I N A R Y

BS 6001 INTRO TO THE BIBLE
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COMPLETED WORK IS TO BE SUBMITTED IN A SINGLE PDF DOCUMENT

1. A cover page which includes:
 - a. Name of course, author and instructor's name with title
 - b. Student's name, degree working toward, and the date completed
 - c. Facilitator's complete title/name the seminary's name and location (Greenville, NC)
2. Separate page & heading for each new section, capitalized at top center of that page SUMMARY, PRECIS, PAPER
3. All papers are to be typed with .5" margins using font & size: Calibri 11 pt. Summaries and book reports are to be double-spaced
4. Grading will be percentage based on questions, outlines, grammar, and theological and philosophical thought and execution of writing forms.

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COURSE ASSIGNMENT: INTRO TO THE BIBLE

Textbooks

Summary: ***The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament* by Sandra L. Richter**

Does your knowledge of the Old Testament feel like a grab bag of people, books, events and ideas? How many times have you resolved to really understand the OT? To finally make sense of it? Perhaps you are suffering from what Sandra Richter calls the "dysfunctional closet syndrome." If so, she has a solution. Like a home-organizing expert, she comes in and helps you straighten up your cluttered closet. Gives you hangers for facts. A timeline to put them on. And handy containers for the clutter on the floor. Plus, she fills out your wardrobe of knowledge with exciting new facts and new perspectives. The whole thing is put in usable order--a history of God's redeeming grace. A story that runs from the Eden of the Garden to the garden of the New Jerusalem. This book will organize your understanding of the Old Testament and renew your enthusiasm for studying the Bible as a whole.

Summary: ***This is the Way* by Dr. Will Ryan**

Dr. Will Ryan invites readers to go on a journey considering a cultural understanding of the Bible and connecting many of the themes that have long held the church back from establishing an intimate knowledge of scripture that leads to a foundation of Godly living and pursuit of deeper spirituality. Readers will explore what walking with God looks like based on covenant principles applied to kingdom thinking. This is the Way takes a tough look at the current American Church and offers a better picture of set apart living based on the overall lens of scripture applied to the gospel, missional living, and philosophical questions of the scripture within our current cultural dynamics.

1. WATCH: watch each video and write a 1-page paper with personal reflections for each video.
 - Image Bearer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5A01F xvPVo>
 - Genesis 1:1-3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L72M9pCOVXk>
 - Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4U4GE-FFvNo>
 - Covenants: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhFR9zRfn_s
 - Connecting the New and Old Testament: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cv3zePNBJdA>
2. PRECIS: write a paper for both textbooks taking into account the perspectives of the videos applied to the books. Pages according to degree work per degree for book report requirement:
 - Master: 5
 - Doctorate: 8

Class Summary

In this class we will be looking at the narrative of the Bible. A lot of what we think the Bible is about is skewed through a western mindset that is divorced from the original culture of the Biblical authors and audience. The Bible was written for us, but it was not written to us. To properly understand it we need to look at it through the lenses of the original audience. When we do the hard work of understanding that, then we can glean from the scriptures to see what it means for us today.

A lot of Biblical interpretation ignores the Old Testament foundations that are essential to interpreting the New Testament. So, in this class we'll be looking specifically at these foundations as an intro to Biblical interpretations. We are asking you to set aside your preconceived notions that most of us in the west have inherited from the Reformation and get back to the original context of the authors. Try to set aside your western view of history as a science and science as the driving force behind scripture. We need to look at the narrative and what is the purpose of Eden and the image of God in the whole of the scripture from first to last page. Changing our reading lenses will help us become better disciples and get back to our original calling to be imagers and bear God's light to the whole world, living under his rulership.

Paper Example

The story of the Bible is an epic narrative about God's relationship with what he has made. God creates and gives order to the cosmos and desires to dwell with his creation. He established sacred space and assigns co-rulers in his spiritual and physical spheres to help his organize and order things under his reign. God places a garden in Eden as His Holy of Holies, His throne room. This space was where heaven and earth overlapped, where God's spiritual and physical family's dwell in his presence together and work together. He assigns Adam and Eve as the first priests in creation. We know this by the overlapping language in Genesis and Leviticus of the role of mankind and the role of the priest in the temple and by the fact that the temple was purposely make as a miniature replica of Eden.

In Eden a spiritual being tricks the humans to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, essentially this means to usurp God's authority and to rule by their own wisdom rather than God's wisdom. In doing this they choose idolatry in defining good and bad themselves and defining their vocation by their own terms. Sin, missing the mark, is not defined by moral perfection but as failing to represent God in the way he designed as his image in creation. This action on behalf of the humans brought consequences; the curse was not on the humans but on the ground. Creation was not subject to futility and death; God separates the humans from His presence in grace so that they would not life forever in this state of rebellion. Though they have lost access to the tree of life God has not abandoned His creation. He promises that one will come that will crush the powers of evil.

Outside of the garden humanity's violence and rebellion continues under the influence of the spiritual beings. God resets creation with the flood but humanity still rebels. God divides their languages and puts the tribes and people under his spiritual council members who also fail and lead the nations astray and into injustice. God has a plan to win back his creation and to get the Eden project back on track through Abraham. God calls Abraham, makes a covenant with him, promises to give him land, people, and blessing to the world through him. God gives him and Sarah a miracle child in their old age and his family eventually grows large and

ends up enslaved in Egypt. God then brings about a divine rescue from the oppressive powers of Egypt and their gods through the leadership of Moses. God makes a covenant with the nation of Israel, the family of Abraham, by giving them the Torah which will instruct them in God's ways and help make them a light to the nations to win them back.

Part of the promise to Abraham was that he'd be given a land. Israel rebelled, grumbled, and doubted God and his power, so the nation and that generation wandered in the desert for forty years before the promise would come to be fulfilled. In the land Israel kept going after the gods of the nations and falling into idolatry. Instead of being a light to the nations they were being influenced by the nations. Israel rejected the Lord and asked for a king to be like everyone else. The Lord granted this request and promised that through David's line a king would sit on the throne eternally. Israel eventually splits into two kingdoms, the northern and southern, and fell into idolatry and broke the covenant. The Lord sent prophets to both kingdoms to call them back to covenant faithfulness, but the people of God ran after other gods and broke the covenant. This led to the exile of both kingdoms into diaspora and deportations to Babylon. Exile was synonymous with death to an Israelite, being out the land and without the presence of God in their temple.

In exile Jeremiah predicted that it would be seventy years and then they would return. In a vision Daniel sees that this exile is really seventy sevens, four hundred and ninety years leading to the messiah. This would culminate in everlasting righteousness and the enthronement of the "son of man" and the destruction of the beasts that controlled the nations. Eventually Cyrus allows the Southern kingdom to return to the land and rebuild the temple. Not all returned to the land and the temple that we rebuilt was a lackluster temple compared to the one of Solomon.

When we get to the New Testament, we have Israel under the rule of Rome. The southern tribes still believe that they are in exile, the northern tribes have been scattered and have never returned to the land and through the southern tribes were in the land they were under foreign rule and the presence of the Lord had not returned to the temple in Jerusalem. This is where Jesus enters the scene as the son of man, fully God and

fully human. He came to show his people how to truly image God and be that partner that God created us to be in the garden of Eden. Jesus came to free us from sin, death, and the powers.

In his ministry we see Jesus bringing healing and teaching us how to live as God intended. He stood up to the powers behind the political structures of the day and this would result in his death. Jesus explains his death as a ransom, which is an echo of the exodus. It was not a price that was paid to God or the devil but in keeping with the exodus language this meant deliverance from oppressive powers by God's might right hand, there was no payment made. Jesus specifically chooses Passover time to communicate the results of his crucifixion. The Passover celebrated the deliverance of the children of Israel from the powers of Egypt and Jesus's death and resurrection speaks of the same thing. His death delivers us from sin, death, and the powers. When on the cross Jesus says "My God, why have you forsaken me" he is quoting Psalm 22 and speaking of God's victory through suffering.

Three days after his death Jesus rose from the grave defeating death and kicking off the new creation. When the women came to the tomb, they mistake Jesus as the gardener (in John), which is an echo of Jesus being the new Adam. What Adam and Israel had failed to do on behalf of humanity, Jesus has accomplished in his death and resurrection. Now we can live reflecting Jesus who showed us how to truly image God. Jesus then sends his disciples and followers out into the world to share his Gospel, that Jesus is the risen king who has conquered death and the kingdom of God is here. They are called to bring the scattered tribes and all of creation into the kingdom of God and be the people that God intended to have back in Eden. Jesus ascends to the throne with the father as the ruler who has defeated the gods over the nations and freed us to live in his kingdom. These powers are bound but not completely gone and they are manifested in the kingdoms and political powers of this world today.

The letters and epistles in the New Testament shed more light on the communities of the early church and the practice and religion of the apostles. They show us that we are the temple of the Spirit and together we are being built up to be a priesthood to this world as Adam was in the garden. We are also the Israel of

God, as Paul says it, and the one's who bear God's light to the nations so that all might see God and come to know him and follow him.

When we get to the book of Revelation, we see warnings of joining with the empire because we are called to be separate people and not partner with the kingdoms of this world. The warnings to the Christians are against joining in with the Roman empire and to the Jewish Christians, it warns them to not return to the ways of the temple system that is fading away and will be destroyed in 70 ad. At the end of this letter and the last page of the Bible we see a vision of heaven coming to earth and God setting all things right, his Kingdom covering all the earth and all nations coming into it. This imagery is depicted in the same way as the garden of Eden but instead of just garden images it is a city where God dwells with his people, and it covers all of creation. The Bible is a story that starts with Eden and ends with Eden and shows that God is faithful towards his covenant and loving towards his people.