

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS AND PERSONAL INTERACTION JOURNAL

The mission of Urbana Theological Seminary is to *offer graduate theological education which prepares people for Christian ministry and leadership, equipping them to love, know, and serve God*. The pursuit of knowledge about the Old Testament should not only increase our factual knowledge, but should also draw us closer to the One who speaks through these texts as his word. The accomplishment of this is notoriously difficult to measure in a class, but in order to provide some accountability and structure for this aspect of the course I will ask the following. The basic assignment is to read the Old Testament and complete a personal interaction journal. Note the following.

1. Read through the entire Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

A vital component of the reading done in this course is in the primary text which we will examine, the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. Read the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament as we move along through the course. If you have never read the OT before, this will be tremendously useful!

With the Final Exam you will be asked to report how much of the OT you read during the semester (for credit, worth 5 course points). It will also ask how much of the OT you had read before this semester began (not for a grade, rather for my own data about people reading the OT).

2. Write a personal journal as you read.

a. Complete a personal interaction journal throughout the semester.

As you read through the Old Testament, keep a personal journal of your own reflections on the text and what you are personally learning from reading it. Take some time each week to prayerfully reflect on what you have been reading in the Old Testament and its significance or meaning. You may choose to focus on the whole section of Scripture that you are reading that week, or on a particular passage that impressed you or spoke to you.

- How is God speaking to you through the text? What do you think he is saying to you/teaching you? How are these passages important for us today?
- How is God working in your heart and life through reading his word?
- What difference should what you are reading and learning make in the way you live your life? What did you readily embrace in the text or struggle with?
- What changes in attitudes are you seeing or desiring?
- How have you grown closer to God? Grown to know him better?
- What did God show you about himself, his ways, and his relationships with people as you read and meditated?

Jot down what comes to mind. Journal entries may be handwritten and are to be done on a weekly basis. The equivalent of one 8.5"x11" page of journal a week will be adequate. You will not be graded on the content of what you write (you must try and it must be coherent), but on completing the assignment. What you write will be kept confidential. You may make entries more often if desired. These entries should be the fruit of reflecting on the contents of what you have been reading in the past week. Turn in the Journal with your Final Exam. The personal interaction journal is due on the date of the final.

Or

2. Write a personal journal as you read.

b. Complete a musical personal interaction journal throughout the semester.

Purchase the CD album of music by Michael Card, entitled The Ancient Faith (Card's retelling of major OT theological themes and incidents set to music). Listen to the whole album early in the semester. Then as you read through the Old Testament, listen again to the songs which particularly relate to the sections you have been reading that week. Keep a personal journal with your reflections on how the music that pertains to that part of Scripture helps you understand it better, or helps catch the spirit of what the text is saying in a new way for you. You are certainly also free to incorporate your own reflections on the text and what you are personally learning from reading it, even in sections where there is not a corresponding song. Take some time each week to prayerfully reflect on what you have been reading in the Old Testament, its significance or meaning, and the impact on you of hearing it musically. You may also address what you think the text is saying in contrast to Card's interpretation of it, if you feel he missed the point.

- How is God speaking to you through the text and music? What do you think he is saying to you/teaching you? How are these passages/themes important for us today?
- How is God working in your heart and life through reading and hearing?
- What difference should what you are learning make in the way you live your life? What did you readily embrace or struggle with?
- What changes in attitudes are you seeing or desiring?
- How have you grown closer to God? Grown to know him better?
- What did God show you about himself, his ways, and his relationships with people as you read and meditated?

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What if I have read through the OT many times?

If you have read through the OT, this is the perfect opportunity to pick up a new translation or paraphrase and read the Old Testament in that version. It might be one that has recently been published or one that is new to you.