

**American Baptist Churches of New York State  
Lay Study Program**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**A Brief Course Description**

This course is designed to introduce the student to:

- the historical and cultural context of the Old Testament
- the concepts of scriptural inspiration and canon
- the types and characteristics of the literary genre and corresponding methods of interpretation of the books of the Old Testament
- the purposes for writing the various books of the Old Testament
- the theories of authorship of the books of the Old Testament
- the major themes of the books of the Old Testament and their role in developing covenants between God and the Hebrew people.

**Expected Outcomes**

Students will have developed their own understanding of the inspiration of scripture and the nature of canon.

Students will have an understanding of the significant historical events that occurred during the period of time in which the books of the Old Testament were composed and be able to place the likely times of composition of each book in appropriate places on a timeline of Old Testament events.

Students will have begun to become familiar with the Canaanite, Egyptian, Syrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Persian and Hebrew cultures present during Old Testament times and will have a basic understanding of how those cultures impact our understanding of the Old Testament.

Students will have a basic understanding of the development of the covenantal relationship of God to his Old Testament people.

Students will have a basic understanding of the roles, relationships, and historical development of the positions of prophet, priest, and king.

Students will have a basic understanding of the Hebrew sacrificial system and religious calendar.

Students will have a basic understanding of all the types of literary genre found in the Old Testament with an emphasis on Hebrew poetry and the methods of interpretation that are appropriate for each type of scripture encountered.

Students will have a basic understanding of the major theological themes presented in the Old Testament.

Students will have an appreciation for the contribution that archaeology makes to our understanding of scripture.

Students will have a basic understanding of the various theories of authorship, purpose, and themes of the books of the Old Testament.

Students will have become acquainted with the various resources and tools that are available for deepening our understanding of the Old Testament.

Those students who are gifted and called to lead in teaching and preaching will have become more confident and capable in presenting the Word of God in their present context of ministry.

### **Class Expectations**

Students will read the assigned readings and participate in class discussions.

Students taking the course for credit will attend at least eight out of ten classes.

Students who are taking the course for credit will create and hand in the written assignments and/or completed projects, designed by the teacher, which may include paper/s on particular subjects, and etc.

### **Classes**

The expectation is there will be 20 hours of class time. The course is usually set up as ten classes which are two hours long. A short break may be included in the middle of the class time. Classes may be designed to include a variety of learning experiences, including but not limited to: interactive lectures, presentations, and group discussions. Modifications to this structure may be done at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Suggested Resources**

#### **Texts**

**Introduction to the Old Testament, Second Edition** by: Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard (Zondervan 2006)

#### **Other Resources (a starting place)**

**How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: Fourth Edition** by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart (Zondervan 2014)

**How to Read the Bible Book by Book**  
By Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart (Zondervan 2002)

**The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times, Revised**  
By Ralph Gower (Moody Publishers 2005)

For Scripture: a good student Bible, preferably an Archaeological Study Bible. Bible Hub, Bible Gateway.