



# OLD TESTAMENT AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

ENGAGING WITH THE TEXT

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Each essay is eligible to receive 100 points and may be written in either **English or German**.

Each essay must have your **first and last name** *and* the **word count** clearly visible on the first page.

Each essay must have a **signed reading statement** on the first page that you have read all of the relevant material in its entirety.

Each essay must give credit where credit is due and include some form of **citation** (quotes, works cited, footnotes, etc.) Because of our international setting, we will accept a variety of these as valid.

## DEDUCTIONS

Because of our international context we will not place much emphasis on grammatical or technical correctness in the essays. In other words, the assignments will primarily be graded on content. If however, there are enough technical or grammatical errors as to indicate carelessness or sloppiness, points may be deducted. Of course, it goes without saying: if we cannot understand your paper—because of poor spelling, grammar, sentence structure, etc.—we cannot appropriately grade the content.

Point deductions will be given for the following:

LATENESS	[-2% per day]
WORD COUNT	[-5% for every 200 words under/over the min/max.]
MISSING READING STATEMENT	[-50%]

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	SEE FOR QUESTIONS
WITH	16 OCT	TABEA MESSNER
TORAH	30 OCT	MEIKE RECHBERGER
THE PURSUIT OF GOD	13 NOV	HANNAH LENUIK
BSP	27 NOV	CAMERON TATE
HISTORICAL	15 JAN	AMELIA STONE
COUNTERFEIT GODS	29 JAN	EMMA GREEN
POETIC	12 FEB	BRYAN FUGELSTAD
LIVE NO LIES	05 MAR	
PROPHET PRESENTATIONS	16 MAR	CAMERON TATE

*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading With” and sign your name.*

Skye Jethani uses the four prepositions (over, under, for, and from) to describe and help us diagnose the inadequate ways we might relate to God.

- (1) Which of the four postures best describes how you relate to God now? Has this changed over time? How has your family, culture, and/or faith community in the past and present shaped how you relate to God? 500-750 words. [50%]
- (2) According to Jethani, what does a life with God look like? What would you do differently if you could fully trust that God is with you? 250-375 words. [25%]
- (3) How do you (personally) move from merely communicating with God toward richly communing with him? 250-375 words. [25%]

*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading Genesis-Numbers” and sign your name.*

The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt into the Promised Land is the first major illustration of redemption in the Bible. In the rest of the Old Testament, poets, prophets, and God Himself reference the Exodus as undeniable evidence of God’s love for His people and His plan for their futures.

In the New Testament Jesus Christ’s sacrifice displays God’s continued love not only for Israel, but for all people. Just as the Exodus was only the beginning of the Israelites journey to the Promised Land, so one’s redemption is only the beginning of a life-long walk with Christ.

- (1) Discuss why and how God lays the foundation for His people and the redemption of the world through His promises and covenants in the book of **Genesis**. Use specific references from the book of Genesis. [35%]
- (2) Moving forward to **Exodus**, explain the significance of Israel’s enslavement, deliverance, wandering in the desert, and (eventual) entrance into the Promised Land, and draw some parallels between these four events with the Christian Life. Use specific references from your chosen passage, and at least one New Testament reference. [45%]
- (3) Finally, locate and explain at least one *clear* picture or analogy of Christ, as found in the one of the books of **Leviticus** or **Numbers** or **Deuteronomy**. (Example: The bronze snake in Num. 21 is picture of Christ’s death on the cross. Jesus himself explains this in Jn. 3:14-15. Do not use this passage). [20%]

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## > THE PURSUIT OF GOD

WORD COUNT: 1000 – 1500

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*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading The Pursuit of God” and sign your name.*

A.W. Tozer is well-known for his call to a total commitment to Christ.

- (1) According to this book, what does it mean to have a “total commitment” to Christ? Explain. [30%]
- (2) Select two of Tozer’s examples of interacting with God and reflect either on (a) their significance or (b) why you disagree with them. Your reflections should evidence independent thinking as well as consideration and quotation of relevant Biblical texts. This section **should not be a summary**, but a reflection (that is, your own thoughts, not just restating Tozer’s words). [70%]

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## > THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

WORD COUNT: 2000 – 3000

**Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther**

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*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading Deuteronomy - Esther” and sign your name.*

Israel was redeemed/rescued through the Exodus and brought into the land of Canaan under Joshua, however the purpose was for them to show the character of God to the surrounding nations.

As Israel’s history progresses, we see various leaders (i.e. the judges, kings, prophets, and priests) and notice that while many had some good qualities—God used severely flawed people to reveal Himself and accomplish His purposes.

For *EACH* of the following leaders (1, 2, & 3), complete steps a) and b):

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| (1) Any judge of your choosing                   | (Judges)                  |
| (2) Any Israelite/Judahite king other than David | (Samuel/Kings/Chronicles) |
| (3) Ezra   | (Ezra-Nehemiah)           |

- a) Discuss (with references to the scripture) this leader’s mistakes, failures, lack of social standing, or flawed character trait. [10% per leader]
- b) How did God use this person despite, or through, what you discussed above to reveal Himself or accomplish His purposes among His people or the nations surrounding Israel? [10% per leader]  
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- c) Now: reflect on your own life. If the book of Judges was written about your life, how would it tell your story? What mistakes, failures, difficult social situations, or negative character/personality traits have you seen in your life? How has God used these to reveal Himself to you or others? If you can’t think of specific instances in the past or present, write a hypothetical scenario of how it might look in the future. [40%]

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## > COUNTERFEIT GODS

WORD COUNT: 1000 – 1500

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*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading Counterfeit Gods” and sign your name.*

Tim Keller refers to the human heart as an “idol factory” throughout this book and introduces this concept already in the intro on pg. xix (English version)

- (1) In your own words, what is an idol? Give two examples of idols from your life or from culture. [30%]
- (2) Keller uses biblical characters as case studies for different types of idolatry. Explain one of the characters and their struggle. How and why does that person resonate with your life? [30%]
- (3) How does the gospel of Jesus Christ impact and apply to our struggles with idols. Please be sure to integrate scripture in this answer. [40%]

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## > THE POETIC BOOKS

WORD COUNT: 2000 – 3000

**Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations**

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*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading Job - Lamentations” and sign your name.*

Many in the ancient world held the belief that suffering in a person’s life was a direct result of the sins they had committed. This false belief carried on into New Testament society and even lives on today.

The true picture of suffering the Bible portrays is more complex. While several books of the Bible explore this theme, the books of poetry have a special ability to delve into the complex and emotionally-wrought reality of suffering and reveal God’s truth in the midst of the most difficult things of life.

For the Poetic Books Essay:

- (1) Using the book of Job as your basis, explain why the view of suffering stated above is a misconception and explain a better view of God’s justice. [40%]
- (2) Demonstrate what the truth of God’s Word says about the origins and nature of suffering, how we are supposed to live with the reality of suffering and how to comfort those who suffer. Use a minimum of 2 references from the book of Job, a minimum of 2 references from other poetic books (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations), and at least 1 reference from the New Testament. [60%]

*On the first page, write: “I have completed reading Live No Lies” and sign your name.*

John Mark Comer shares about the lies we believe about ourselves, God, and the world. He gives advice on how to combat those lies and overcome them with truth.

- (1) Pages 259-262 contain the appendix ‘A monastic handbook for combating demons,’ based on Evagrius’ method. This will only make sense after reading part 1 of the book. Engage in this method for at least 1 thought, feeling, and/or sensation, identifying the lie beneath it and finding and writing out a scripture as a truth to resist this lie. Fill out each of these boxes, utilizing this method for at least 48 hours, and then write an honest reflection. The boxes are found on pages 261-262, or you can download a file on [students.bodenseehof.de](http://students.bodenseehof.de). You will be graded on an honest report of how this exercise went, not for how well it ‘worked.’ 400-600 words. [40%]
- (2) Comer proposes a couple of strategies to combat ‘the flesh’. One is fasting, and the other is confession. In your opinion, why does Comer pick those practices and how might you incorporate one or both of these into your life back home practically? What effect over the long term might this have on your life? 200-300 words. [20%]
- (3) On pages 232-241, Comer suggests Christian church should cultivate (a) deep relational ties, (b) holiness, and (c) order. Have you experienced any or all of these 3 things at Bodenseehof? If yes, pick one area and give an example (or more) and reflect on what has been significant about that. If no, what do you think was missing? 200-300 words. [20%]
- (4) Read the Epilogue. Reflect on the following quote from page 247:

“That is why it is absolutely crucial for us to recapture the idea of spiritual war; because as long as we deny the reality of demonic evil, we will demonize *people*—the very people we are called to love and serve.”

Write a brief reflection on who (individual or group) you have been most likely to demonize. How can you, going forward, address the ‘powers and principalities’ of evil without dehumanizing people? 200-300 words. [20%]

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## > THE PROPHET PRESENTATION

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

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*On your Peer Evaluation Sheet, sign that you have read the entire Old Testament this year.*

In the Jewish worldview, the so-called “minor prophets” (Hosea-Malachi) are considered to be one unified work called “The Book of the Twelve.” Since these books are small and prophetic communication is often confusing for modern readers, they are sadly misunderstood or simply overlooked. However, understanding the main messages, themes, and contexts of each of the 12 helps us understand the overall the Prophetic hope and God’s message to His people (back then & today!).

For the Prophet Presentations:

- (1) At the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term (January) the student will be assigned one of the following prophets: Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi. Each prophet will have a group of approximately 10 people.
- (2) The group will make a class presentation during a lecture hour on one of the dates above. The group will have up to 20 minutes to present. Because time is tight, the presentation must end at 20 minutes without exception.
- (3) Creativity in your methods of presentation is encouraged! If you are using Power Point, video, or other technology, it is the students’ responsibility to ensure that they know how to set up and operate the needed equipment (working with the student sound technician).
- (4) You will be graded on 3 criteria:
  - a. How well you present the meaning of the book: main idea, purpose (in its historical context), and themes/metaphors. [45%]
  - b. How well you explain the internal structure of the book, and its links to the rest of the Book of the Twelve (minor prophets). [25%]
  - c. How this book points to Christ or the need for Christ and God’s redemptive plan; including how it applies today. [15%]
- (5) You will only receive a grade for the presentation if you fill out a peer evaluation and you will receive up to 15% for your fellow group members’ evaluation of your participation. The instructor reserves the right to deduct additional points for cases of significantly low group participation. Little to no group participation will result in a 0 for the entire project.