

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.

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**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.*

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PASSAGES FOR AUGUST 2009

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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.*

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**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 *λυομένων* is conjugated/inflected using the present tense 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 *στοιχῆα* 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 and Interpretation**

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.*