



**TYNDALE**  
Seminary

**Course Syllabus  
FALL 2011**

**OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND THEOLOGY  
OLDT 0511**

**Tuesdays 8:30 am - 11:20 am**

**INSTRUCTOR: DR. JOHN KESSLER**

Phone number: (416) 226-6620, ext. 6724

E-mail: [jkessler@tyndale.ca](mailto:jkessler@tyndale.ca)

**Office hours:**

BY APPOINTMENT: Tues. 2:00-3:45; Wed. 1:00-4:00; Thurs. 10:00-12:00

I am usually available at these hours, but not always. If I have no appointments booked, I may not be in my office during these hours. Appointments may be arranged at other hours if need be. To book an appointment, please leave me your preferred day and time, and a possible second choice, and I will confirm with you. Please contact me via e-mail: [jkessler@tyndale.ca](mailto:jkessler@tyndale.ca). If e-mail is unavailable, please call 416-226-6620, ext. 6724. *If I am in my office, and the door is open, please feel free to check with me to see if I am available.*

General questions about the course can be addressed to my research assistant Chris Tam at [christam@rogers.com](mailto:christam@rogers.com).

To access your course materials at the start of the course, please go to  
<https://www.mytyndale.ca>

## **1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to provide the student with a general introduction to:

1. the historical, sociological, and religious world in which the Old Testament was produced;
2. the basic shape and content of the Old Testament;
3. the concept of "Canon" and its relevance for the understanding of the Old Testament;
4. the ways in which the Christian community has sought to appropriate the Old Testament in its life and teaching;
5. the discipline of Old Testament theology;

6. the major theological emphases of the Old Testament;
7. the various forms of response to which the Old Testament calls the people of God in the context of the divine-human relationship;
8. the contemporary relevance of these response forms for the Christian life, especially as it relates to ethics, and character/spiritual formation.

As this course deals with matters of fundamental importance for the understanding of the Old Testament, the focus of the course will be on the objective understanding and mastery of these foundational matters. Put another way, this course is highly content-oriented and designed with the primary goal of providing the student with a strong cognitive base for the use of the Old Testament in study, preaching and teaching.

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

- identify and describe the major theological streams within the OT and the “relational responses” to which they call the people of God;
- articulate a basic knowledge of the structure of the OT;
- articulate an understanding of the concepts of “theological diversity” and “canon” and their relevance for the interpretation of the OT;
- articulate a knowledge of the basic flow of OT history;
- articulate an understanding of the various ways the OT has been employed in the Christian Church;
- articulate an understanding of certain key issues in the discipline of Old Testament theology;
- demonstrate the ability to research a specific area of historical or theological interest relevant to the OT and present a coherent essay reflecting that research OR to understand and interact with a sophisticated monograph of OT scholarship OR to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the key areas of emphasis in this course and articulate a personal strategy for the contemporary appropriation of the OT text.

## 3. REQUIRED TEXTS

Martens, Elmer A., *God's Design*. N. Richland Hills, TX: Bibal, 1998.

Kessler, John., *A Journey to the Source* (pdf available on course page).

Kessler, John., *Ever-Flowing Streams: An Introduction to the Theology and Spirituality of the Old Testament* (pdf available on course page).

**Note: See the document “Course Outline” on the mytyndale.ca course page for a week-by-week breakdown of the topics covered, dates of discussion groups, and due dates for assignments. Please note that there will be no class on Nov 22.**

## 4. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

*Note: See the document, “Good Marks” on the mytyndale.ca course page for a discussion of the grading standards used in this course. All assignments may be*

submitted either as pdf documents (no other format, please) via the mytyndale course page or in hard copy.

#### **4.1. Discussion Groups: 20% of final grade.**

See page 11 of this syllabus for details on the functioning of discussion groups. See the course outline, posted on the mytyndale course page for the dates of the discussion groups. These discussion groups cover specific aspects of the reading assignment in Martens' *God's Design*. Missed discussion group sessions count as zero unless otherwise arranged with the professor *in writing*. Students will only be excused from these sessions on the same basis as extensions for assignments (on which see below).

#### **4.2. Bible Reading and Notations: 25% of final grade. Contract Marking Method. Due: Nov 29, 2011.**

*Note: A full explanation of the methodology and marking scheme for this assignment may be found in the document "Bible Notations. Assignment Instructions" on the mytyndale course page. Any recent translation may be used in the preparation of this assignment. No other resources are required. The student will submit this assignment in pdf format together with the Bible Notation Summary Sheet contained in the Bible Notations. Assignment Instructions" document. Older translations (KJV) or paraphrases (Living Bible, The Message) may not be used.*

#### **4.3. Reading: 15% of final grade. Contract Marking Method. Due: Dec 6. Note: no late submissions will be accepted. Failure to submit a report of readings completed by this date will result in a zero for this portion of the grade.**

A full explanation of the methodology and marking scheme for this assignment may be found in the document "OTTH Reading Assignment Instructions" on the mytyndale course page. Students will fill out the form included in the assignment instructions indicating the readings they have completed during the semester and submit it electronically on the last day of class. *No late submissions will be accepted for this assignment.*

#### **4.4. Essay OR Final Exam: (40% of final grade). Due Nov 22, 2011.**

**Students will opt to write either (1) an essay or an extended book analysis (see description and requirements below) or (2) a comprehensive final exam covering the course content and some of the course readings. *Once a paper is submitted, the student may not choose to write the final as a 'second attempt'.***

### **5. ESSAY OPTION.**

#### **5.1 Form and General Instructions**

Essays must be typed and prepared in good research form. Either Chicago/Turabian/SBL or MLA/APA form may be used. The paper must include documentation (footnotes or APA style references) and bibliography. The paper should be about 15 pages and involve a minimum of 12 sources. Important note: If you are unfamiliar with these styles

and their rules, see the mytyndale course page for further information.

**Note:**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to the Tyndale Student Handbook. See below.

Students are strongly encouraged to:

1. Use the library for the preparation of this assignment, especially the reference collection. *Any one of the suggested topics can be completed at a B+/A- level using only materials that NEVER leave the library.* Such materials include periodicals, encyclopedias and Bible Dictionaries and reference copies of commentaries.
2. Make use of the massive amount of material available on line via the library's e resources (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/>). Many are available in downloadable PDF files, some in MP3 files for listening to in the car or at the gym. The following are especially useful:
  - a. Using the EBSCO portal in "Find Articles" select the ATLA Religion Database and choose ATLA Serials and OT Abstracts.
  - b. The JSTOR database, available through the "Find Articles" portal.
  - c. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Judaica, and Brill Encyclopedia of Religion* in the Gale Online Reference Library—Religion, via "Find e-Resources" portal;
  - d. Excellent bibliographic helps are available via the *Oxford Biblical Studies Online* and *Oxford Bibliographies Online* available via "Find e-Resources" portal.
  - e. Many other excellent tools and resources are available through our library. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the site, and learn how to search the databases.
  - f. Google Books and Google Scholar provide access to many excellent works.
  - g. *Note that there is an enormous difference in the quality of the resources available through the library's e-resources, on the one hand and the Internet in general, on the other. There is much on the general Internet that is inaccurate or written by non-specialists. Remember—only quote qualified experts in the subject you are studying.*
3. Begin early. It is virtually impossible to write a quality essay in biblical studies in just a few days.

Students opting for the essay assignment (as opposed to the final exam) will choose *either* (a) one of the essay topics below or (b) an extended book analysis (see details below).

## 5.2 Research Essay Option

The student will write a research essay on one of the following topics:

1. **Gen 1:1-2:4.** Discuss the structure and key theological ideas of this text. How is this

text similar to and different from other Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts? Your essay should address the following questions:

- a. What accounts for the similarities between Gen 1 and other ANE creation texts?
- b. What theological values lie behind the areas in which the biblical text differs from the ANE texts?
- c. What can we learn about how to interpret the Bible from a comparison like this?

## **2. A Understanding of the Social Roles, Economic Situation, and General Valuation of Women** as reflected in ONE of textual groupings below:

- Genesis 2:4-3:24
- The Laws of Exodus 20-23.
- Leviticus 18; Numbers 5-6, 30, 36

Your essay should include a discussion of the socio-economic context of the original setting of these texts, the foundational assumptions implicit in them, and (where possible) the ways in which they are similar to or different from the ways in which women are portrayed in extra-biblical texts in the ANE.

## **3. Discuss the Relationship between the laws of Hammurabi's Code (CH) and the laws in Exod 21:1-23:19 (sometimes called the Book of the Covenant or the Covenant Code).**

Your essay should address the following questions:

- a. What is the likely dating of each text?
- b. What are the similarities between these two texts and how do we account for them?
- c. What implicit, underlying theological/social values lie behind the areas in which the biblical text differs from the CH?
- d. What can we learn about how to interpret the Bible from a comparison like this?

## **4. Sacrifice in the books of Leviticus and Numbers and the Ancient Near East.**

Based on a careful reading of Lev 1-8; 16;

- a. List and describe various theories of sacrifice as proposed by anthropologists.
- b. Name and describe the various types of sacrifice in Leviticus, and the function of each. Note: scholars differ on the nature and function of the various types of sacrifice listed. Be sure to note these differences and assess them.
- c. Offer theological reflections on the relevance of OT sacrifices to the Christian community.

## **5. The Temple of Solomon. Carefully read 1 Kings 2-10.**

- a. Describe the common procedure for temple building in the ANE, especially in Mesopotamia, and compare it to the description of Solomon's temple building in Kings.
- b. What are the similarities and differences between the biblical material and the common ANE traditions? See especially the Gudea Cylinders (text available in *ANET*).
- c. What might have motivated the biblical writer to shape the account of Solomon's construction of the temple in this manner?
- d. What can we learn about how to interpret the Bible from a comparison like this?

## **5. God's Promise to David: Conditional or Unconditional?**

- Are the promises to David of an everlasting dynasty conditional or unconditional? a. Survey the various biblical texts where the promises to David are given, and other texts which refer back to these promises. For each text, assess that which is promised to David, and whether the promise is seen as conditional or unconditional.
- b. Discuss how the different perspectives in these texts relate to one another.
- c. Present your own hermeneutical reflections on what this teaches us about how the OT communicates its message?

## **6. The Day of Atonement.** Based on a careful reading of Lev 16 and 23:

- a. Present and explain the various aspects of the ritual for the Day of Atonement in Lev 16, including the details of the purification of the community; what is the significance of the 'two-handed rite' involving the scapegoat, and its sending into the wilderness 'for Azazel'?
- b. In what way do the actions of the Israelite community affect the holy of holies (innermost area) of the sanctuary?
- c. Why does OT ritual law prescribe *both* sacrifices at the altar for sins and impurity *and* the annual purification of the inner sanctum and atonement for sin? What is the relationship between these two ritual activities? When were sins forgiven?
- d. What was the community called to do on the Day of Atonement?
- e. Of what relevance is this material for Christians today?

## **7. Circumcision.** Discuss the origin, function and significance of either circumcision in the OT.

Be sure to include a discussion of:

- a. Where and why circumcision was practiced in the ANE;
- b. The meaning and significance of circumcision in Gen 17;
- c. The question of why circumcision is extended to all of Abraham's family and servants;
- d. A summary of other texts relevant to circumcision in the OT

## **8. The Phenomenon of Penitential Prayer in the OT.**

- a. What is penitential prayer and what are its primary elements and characteristics?
- b. Where (i.e. in which biblical texts) is Penitential Prayer found?
- c. Penitential Prayer emerges at a specific period in Israelite history. When was this, and why did it emerge? What are its ideological antecedents? c.
- d. How is it relevant today?

## **9. Other essay topics may be undertaken with the instructor's permission.**

### **5.3 The Extended Book Analysis.**

In lieu of an essay, students may choose to write an extended analysis of one of the books listed on the Book Analysis Bibliography, which may be found in the document "Extended Book Analysis" on the mytyndale course page. Most of these books are available in the library. However they are not placed on reserve. As such they are available on a "first come first served" basis. Students may, however wish to purchase their own copies. Inexpensive, used copies of these books are often available through

the Internet. Students choosing this option will write a 15 page extended analysis of it. The books are classified by length, complexity and difficulty: B-/B/B+, A-/A. To fulfill the requirements and receive the eligible grade the student must do the following: (1) Present a chapter-by-chapter synthesis of the content of the book; (2) read at least 3 reviews of the book, summarize their critiques and make an assessment of the critiques (note-the sources of the reviews must be footnoted) and (3) present a personal reflection on what was learned through the reading of the book and reviews. Papers should be no more than 15 pages in length. Each of the above mentioned elements should be about 1/3 of the length of the paper. If the student's work does not reflect a clear understanding of the book under consideration (i.e. if the student engaged in a superficial reading of the book) a mark of C or D will be given for the assignment.

## **6. Essential Skills in Writing a Biblical Studies Essay/Extended Book Analysis.**

A large part of writing a biblical studies assignment involves understanding an ancient text (the OT) in the context of the ancient world (ancient Israel and its cultural environment). As such, much of the student's work will involve studying words and their meanings (including the grammatical and syntactical relationships in which the words are found). Similarly the student will need to know something about the world in which the words were written. This will involve the historical, sociological, political, economic, geographic, demographic, political and religious context of the text being studied. It will also likely involve a discussion of the process and stages that may have been involved in the writing of the text.

*It is crucial to remember that at this level biblical exegesis must be rooted in demonstrable fact and data. Opinions and assertions abound, however the question is always to what degree does an opinion in print correspond to the 'hard data' needed to support the assertion being made.*

As such the indispensable starting point for a biblical studies assignment is a careful reading and study of the biblical text(s) under consideration. *Beware of moving directly to secondary sources written about the text before immersing yourself again and again in the text itself. Read it over and over again.* Note down any details of the text that are unclear to you and ask questions about them. What do you need to know to really understand what the text is communicating?

Second, try to ascertain what might be most significant for you to know about the context in which the text was written. The specifics of a situation have a profound impact on the way in which we understand the words spoken in that context. Look for works regarding the history and cultural context that characterize the world in which the text was written. Look for any extra-biblical materials (especially ANE texts) which might shed light on the text or issue you are studying

Third, look for good secondary sources—that is material written about the biblical text or the ancient world. Look for scholarly commentaries in the major series (AB, WBC, NIVAC, NICOT, Hermeneia, Interpretation, TOTC, NCBC etc), articles in the major Bible

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias (Anchor, New Interpreters, Eerdmans, IVP *Dictionary of the Old Testament* series, or articles in the major OT scholarly journals (JBL, JSOT, VT, SJOT, ZAW, CBR, CBQ, Bib, etc) or collections of essays (often these are part of a series e.g. JSOT Supplements, VT Supplements, etc).

Fourth, read with a critical eye. Always be aware that authors may draw inferences from data that may be exaggerated, inaccurate, irrelevant, anachronistic, speculative, or simply wrong. Just because something appears in print does not make it accurate. On the most significant points for your investigation, try to 'test' an author's assertion against the data s/he sets forth to back it up. Reading several authors on the same text or subject will help you to see alternative points of view and the weaknesses in various approaches. Although much of the linguistic and historical data is beyond your competence to assess, try to ascertain which assertions best fit the facts. In writing your essay, demonstrate to your reader that you know the various options available, and which one you choose, and why.

Obviously this cannot be done at every point in your discussion, but on the most important points it yields great results.

Your essay will be evaluated in terms of the following:

- Careful Bible study
- Depth of thought and reflection.
- Finding and reading good quality secondary sources, and presenting a reflected interpretation and evaluation of them.
- Logic and clarity in expression.
- Good form and presentation, including spelling, grammar and syntax. *Check your paper carefully before handing it in. Don't think that your spell-checker will get it all!*

Careful reading of primary and secondary sources, depth of thought and research, logical and clear presentation, and good form make for a great paper.

## **7. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

### **7.1 Guiding Principle on the Quality of Papers at the Masters Level**

Your paper must reflect graduate-level research and writing skills. If your paper could have been written by someone with a basic knowledge of the Bible and without the skills you have learned in this and other courses, *it will not receive a passing grade*. Mere re-statement of the biblical text or sermonizing on the basis of a superficial reading of it does not constitute acceptable, graduate-level work.

### **7.2 Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a major problem in contemporary education. As such Tyndale Seminary academic policy stipulates that a paper may be given an F should it contain plagiarized content. Remember: if you use someone else's words, put them in quotation marks and cite the source in a footnote. If you refer to someone's ideas (i.e. 'covenant is the centre

of OT theology') or a fact derived from your reading which is not common knowledge (e.g. 'the territory of Benjamin did not suffer significant destruction during the Babylonian invasions'), but the words are not put in quotation marks, you must still cite your source.

**7.3** *Your essay must be your own work. Do not submit a series of paragraphs written by someone else, and strung together.*

Never cut entire paragraphs out of books or articles and insert them into your text, even if they are footnoted. An essay is *not a series of long quotes strung together*. Such essays will not receive a passing grade. You must attempt to read and assimilate various sources, then attempt to collate, compare, contrast and evaluate them.

Attempting to do your best, even if it is a feeble first try, is far better than copying and failing the assignment and possibly the course. More importantly failing to do your own work means losing the opportunity to learn new things by doing the assignment.

*Remember, essays are about you, as a student learner.* You do not have to provide the last word on complex subjects.

I will post further helps for your essay writing on the class "mytyndale" page.

**7.4** *E-Mail Submissions*

You are encouraged to submit your papers by e-mail, through the mytyndale course page. Assignments must be submitted as a pdf documents. E-submissions must be received by 11:59 PM on the due date. Papers may also be submitted in regular hard copy of you prefer, by 5 pm on the due date.

**7.5** *Language Proficiency*

Tyndale Seminary requires the Professor to identify students who display difficulties with English language skills in their assignments and refer them for further language assessment in the Tyndale Writing Centre. To help them improve in their studies, students may then be required to take the English for Academic Purposes course in conjunction with current courses. Please see the document *Guidelines for Written Work* on the mytyndale course page for further information.

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar>. An excerpt is attached with this syllabus for easy reference.

## **8. MARKING STANDARDS, EXTENSIONS, AND LATE GRADING POLICIES.**

**8.1** The professor will follow the marking standards as stated in Tyndale's academic policies. These are posted on the mytyndale course page.

Generally speaking, assignments which satisfactorily meet the professor's expectations will receive a B/75%.

Excellence or deficiency in the following areas will increase or decrease the mark assigned:

- form and presentation (Note: correct bibliographic form must be used. Additional information available on the class mytyndale page).
- number and quality of primary and secondary sources cited. Generally a minimum of 12-14 good sources is required to write a B level paper.
- thoroughness of historical, grammatical, syntactical, exegetical and theological investigation. This includes doing your own Bible study work (word studies, background studies etc., and quoting other ANE primary sources where relevant -e.g. Code of Hammurabi, Gilgamesh Epic, etc)
- logical and methodological accuracy and consistency.
- The student's own exegetical interaction with the Hebrew text; specialized scholarly articles and studies, interaction with major commentaries.
- quality and clarity of written English.

### **8.2** *Late Grading Policy*

Late assignments are assessed at 1.0% per day. It is far better to submit your work on time than to take a late penalty. Days are calculated from 11:59 pm on the due date (e mail submissions) or 5 pm (hard copies).

### **8.3** *Extensions and Due Date Changes*

Extensions for assignments are granted *only* in exceptional circumstances. These include illness (a medical attestation is required), crisis, severe illness or death in the family, etc.

Requests for extensions must be submitted to the professor in writing.

Extensions will NOT be granted for: family or mission trips, ministry responsibilities, heavy workload in other courses, computer or printer problems, etc.

*Try to follow the '24 hour rule' i.e. have a final version of your work ready 24 hours before it is due.*

Exemptions from discussion groups will be made on the same basis as extensions for assignments.

Requests for alternative dates for the final exam must be made directly to the registrar.

**Dead Date Policy:** According to the Tyndale Academic policy, no papers may be submitted later than the Friday of exam week. Any requests for extensions beyond this time must be made directly to the Registrar. The professor will accept no materials after this date. Remember: it is generally more advantageous to submit an acceptable paper on time, than a better paper one week late.

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at [www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar](http://www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar). An excerpt is attached with this syllabus for easy reference.

## **9. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Discussion Groups	20%
Readings	15%
Bible Notations	25 %
Major Paper or Final Exam	40%
<b>Total Grade</b>	100 %

Attendance at class is of vital importance for this course. An attendance sheet will be circulated in class. In accordance with Tyndale Seminary policy, missing more than two classes without reasonable cause such as illness (a medical attestation is required), crisis, severe illness or death in the family, etc., may result in a receiving an F for the course. If a discussion group session is missed without reasonable cause (as above), the student will receive a zero for the session.

### **Discussion Groups<sup>1</sup>**

During the course, there will be five in-class discussion times of approximately thirty minutes each. These discussions have five purposes:

1. to challenge students to develop their critical, thinking skills.
2. to enable students to improve their skills in developing and expressing theological arguments in a group context.
3. to empower students to foster ability in leading fellow students in discussion.
4. to have students take responsibility for their fellow students' education by mutually supporting one another.
5. to encourage students to listen respectfully to views not their own.

In the second class session, students will be divided into groups of five. They will assign themselves the days for which they will be responsible for leading the discussion.

*Responsibilities of the student as leader.* During the course, each student will lead the group discussion. The group leader has two responsibilities:

1. During the group discussion, the leader's responsibility is to guide the discussion and keep it on track. *The group leader should not prepare a mini-lecture.* For the discussion, the leader may choose to use some of the teacher's questions (see below) and/or develop her/his own.

---

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to my friend and colleague Dr. Ken Fox of the Canadian Theological Seminary for much of the text of this section, and the conceptual use of discussion groups in this way.

2. After the discussion, the leader will assign a participation grade for each member of the group and submit the grade to my Research Assistant, Chris Tam (christam@rogers.com). *Marks must be submitted no more than 24 hours after the group session.* Leaders will assign each student (but not themselves) a letter grade.

3. Marking Guidelines: Leaders will base the grades on the following criteria:

- If the student's comments during the discussion reflected a highly informed and reflective reading of assigned material, allocate a higher grade.
- If the student has contributed their fair share (not too much, not too little), allocate a higher grade.
- Consider a grade of A- to A if the individual has excelled with respect to the above two criteria.
- Consider giving a grade of A-/B+ if the individual has contributed capably with respect to the above two criteria.
- If the student has dominated discussion in inappropriate ways, reduce their grade.
- If the student has not contributed or contributed only minimally, reduce their grade.
- If a student has contributed but their contributions were not informed by a careful reading of the material, reduce their grade. Student who have clearly not read the text should receive an F, those who have read it superficially should receive a mark in the D or C range.
- *The average grade should be between around B/B+. If the student has excelled, give an A. If the student's contribution is less than adequate, give a grade C+ or below.*
- All grades are confidential. Students must not ask the leader regarding them, nor should leaders disclose them.

*Responsibilities of the student as group participant.* Students should come to each class having read the assigned materials and discussion questions (below) carefully. In addition, students should come with their own questions and comments based on the readings.

**Discussion Group Schedule.** See *Course Schedule on the mytyndale page for dates.*

### **Session 1.**

Martens, ix-70

Suggested questions:

Evaluate Martens' discussion of the name Yahweh. If he is correct, what are the implications of the meaning of the name as suggested by him? How does this affect the way a believer thinks of God?

Evaluate Martens' proposal for an organizing structure for the Old Testament. Do you agree with him?

Evaluate Martens' discussion of Yahweh as a Warrior and his critique of liberation theology. Do you agree with him? What is the relevance of this theme in today's world?

Evaluate Martens' discussion of sacrifice. Do you agree with him? What are his strengths and weaknesses? How does this change your understanding of the OT?

## **Session 2.**

Martens 71-137

What is a covenant, according to Martens? What is the difference between a covenant and a contract?

How does law function within covenant? How does this affect the way a Christian understands the OT law?

What is the significance of covenant being at the heart of Israel's existence?

Evaluate Martens' discussion of knowing God. How can his ideas assist Christians in knowing God?

Martens views land as highly significant. According to him, what is its significance for Israel in the light of God's purposes? How is this theme relevant to Christians today?

## **Session 3.**

Martens 141-216

What is the 'Day of Yahweh' and what are the implications of this theme?

How does the Messianic hope, as presented by Martens, differ from your earlier understanding of this idea?

How does the covenant with David 'change' Israel's life? Was Israel wrong to ask for a king? Was kingship part of God's plan all along?

Discuss Martens' view of change and the sovereignty of God on p. 176? Do you agree with his statement that the sovereignty of God is not inflexible?

On pp. 187-88 Martens asserts that the solidarity of all nations is presuppositional to the election of one people. What does he mean? How can one respond to the criticism that the concept of a 'chosen people' is simply God playing favourites?

What is the relationship of the prophets to the power of the king? Are there any implications for this distribution of types of power and authority?

Martens is very strong on community. Discuss his ideas. What is your perspective on the importance of community in light of Martens' remarks?

## **Session 4.**

Martens 217-297

Describe and discuss Martens' understanding of wisdom and creation. How are these themes relevant for the church today?

What is your response to Martens views on land management on pp. 228-31 and his reflections on the implications of these themes in pp. 233-36? Do you agree with him?

What are some contemporary implications of this?

On pp. 274-76 Martens affirms that after the exile, the people of God were seen to be composed of 'the remnant' (of Israelites) and Gentiles. How does this relate to your understanding of the place of Gentiles in the OT? From God's point of view, was Israel primarily an ethnic community?

Discuss Martens' view of the experience of God. How are his ideas relevant in the experience of the Church?

## **Session 5.**

Martens 298-369

According to Martens, what is God's motivation for bringing the people back to the land?

What does the land symbolize in the life of Israel?

Ch. 16 deals with the Gentiles as seen in the OT? What was new to you here? How does this change your understanding? What are the implications of this theme, then and now?

Martens sees the continuation of his four themes as present in the NT in Matthew and Romans. Does he make his case? How are these themes relevant today?

How do you feel about Martens' book as a whole? Is it helpful to the Christian community? Is it tedious or repetitious? Are some of his points strained or weak? How does it help correct common assumptions about the OT?