Final Exam Study Guide

Why Read the Old Testament?

> - Think about the spiritual, theological, and moral reasons Christians value the Old Testament.
> - Consider how the Old Testament foreshadows the New Testament.
> - Be ready to name examples from Scripture that support each reason.

Christians value the Old Testament today because of: Theology, Liturgy and Spirituality, Ethics, Messianism.

Theology: Creatio ex nihilo in Genesis 1 - God created the world from nothing and it was good, God made man in His Image, according to His likeness, and it was very good. God reveals His personal name (YHWH) in Exodus. Monotheism prophesied - "I am the Lord, and there is no other god"

Liturgy: Psalter is integral to our prayer life. In the Psalter, I will find psalms about joy and about sorrow, about thanksgiving, about struggling with God, etc. The Lectionary and the Liturgical/Hymnographical/Iconographical themes.

Ethical: The Ten Commandments in Exodus, the Schema in Deuteronomy, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" in Leviticus, "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6)

Messianism: Prophecies, e.g. "the virgin shall bear a son and call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah)

Divine Inspiration & Human Language

> - Reflect on how God communicates eternal truths in human terms.
> - Know the term that describes God’s "condescension" in Scripture.
> - Remember which Church Father articulated this idea.

God communicates eternal truths to humanity through natural means (e.g. "The Creation proclaims the glory of God") or supernatural means (e.g. in Scripture and Tradition that are Inspired by God)

Inspiration is "God-breathed"

St John Chrysostom coined the term "condescension"

Old Testament Canon in the Orthodox Church

> - Understand how the Eastern Orthodox canon differs from others.
> - Know the local council that contributed to canon formation in the 4th century AD.
> - Identify the Church Father who helped shape the canon in the East.

The Council of Laodicea (360 AD), canons 59-60 showed the Church which books were canonical (normative for faith)

East - St Athanasius: Festal Letter no. 39 (367 AD) - Canonical, Non-Canonical Readable (Anaginoskomena), Apocrypha (Read by heretics)

West - Hillarius of Pictavium, Rufinus of Aquilea, Jerome, Augustine

Eastern Orthodox Anaginoskomena: Baruch, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, Prayer of Manasseh, 1 Esdras, 1-3 Maccabees

---

Early Manuscripts of the Septuagint

> - Familiarize yourself with major manuscripts from the 4th–5th centuries AD.
> - Know their names and historical significance.

- Codex Vaticanus (4th Century)
- Codex Sinaiticus (4th Century)
- Codex Alexandrinus (5th Century)

Most important manuscripts because they include the whole text of the Bible (Old and New Testament) mostly preserved

---

Orthodox View of Scripture

> - Understand how the Orthodox Church integrates Scripture and Tradition.
> - Be able to recognize which formula best reflects the Orthodox view.

Scripture within Tradition

The Church has been formed and informed by Scripture since its inception.

Tradition is the life and journey of the Church - "delivered" or "handed over"

Tradition includes: Sacraments, hymns, readings, interpretations, icons, asceticism, social involvement

Tradition develops in three phases:

1. Oral Proclamation (Kerygma) by the Apostles. Apostolic Tradition is older than the New Testament
2. Rule of Faith (Statements of faith or creeds)
3. Codification

Scripture is like a textbook and the Tradition are the handouts that explain it

---

The Divided Monarchy: Judah

> - Know the dates and key events of the Divided Monarchy period.
> - Identify Judah’s first king, capital city, and notable prophets.
> - Be able to briefly outline Judah’s role during this era.

Judah's first king after the divide was Rehoboam (son of Solomon, son of David). There are three good kings: Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah

Key events:

- Split of the Kingdom
  - Jeroboam raises altars in Bethel and Dan
- Fall of Samaria: 722 BC
- Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib: 701 BC
- Babylonian Captivity: 586 BC

Capital City is Jerusalem. In the time of King David, before capturing Jerusalem, its capital was Hebron.

Notable prophets:

- Nathan and Gad in the time of King David
- Isaiah & Micah in the 8th Century
- Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah in the 7th-6th Century
- Ezekiel during the Exile
- Zechariah and Haggai after the Exile

Moses’ Encounter in Midian

>

> - Focus on the location, context, and divine message of Moses' encounter.
> - Reflect on the significance of this moment in Moses' calling.

Moses reached a place called the Mountain of God and had a vision of a burning bush that was burning constantly without being consumed by fire. He approached it and heard the revelation of God.

God told him to go back to Egypt, talk to Pharaoh and liberate the people of Israel. Moses asked God "if they ask who sent me, what do I say?" and God tells him His name: I AM - YHWH - The One Who Is

---

Deuteronomistic History

> - Understand the historical and theological scope of this biblical narrative.
> - Know which books are part of this history and its main themes.

Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings

Theological Meanings:

- Fidelity to the Law attracts God's blessing
- Obedience = blessing; disobedience = curse

Joshua is a time of great obedience, and a time of blessing. The Lord was with them as they took over the Promised Land and won many battles and divided the land among themselves.

Judges is a time of great disobedience, and hardship. After the death of Joshua, the people forgot what he commanded them and started to sin and follow idolatry... then the Lord would leave them to be captured by enemies... then they would ask for God's mercy and He would raise up for them a judge... they would be delivered and thank God and be in peace until that judge died. Then the cycle repeats.

This culminates with Samuel, the last Judge. He anoints for them King David under whom is a time of great prosperity.

Now there is a king, and the king's faithfulness will reflect on the people

After King David, most kings are evil and that reflects in Israel with idolatry. King Solomon. Then divided monarchy... every northern king was evil. Most southern kings were evil (except Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah). None of them were like David.

This rebellion of the kings and the people to God is what led to the captivity.

Post-Exilic Prophets

> - Consider what challenges faced Israel after the Babylonian exile.
> - Know which prophets belong to this period and their core messages.

Challenges:

- The Samaritans - remnants in the Northern Kingdom, who at this point could barely identify as Jewish. They did not welcome them, and tried to prevent them from building the Temple and the walls
-

Prophets:

- Haggai
  - The land is suffering drought, hunger, poverty and failure because people are building their own homes and fortunes and neglecting the Temple. The land needs to be purified by the presence of God in His Temple. Until this is done, there will be no blessing.
  - Haggai emphasizes that Zerubbabel will be anointed by God to rule
- Zechariah
  - Similar themes to Haggai, but also stresses the role of the High Priest Joshua
  - Zechariah uses visions
- Malachi
  - Malachi loves the Temple and worship. He rebukes the priests for their sins and their failure to pay tithes
  - He calls for repentance because the Day of the Lord is coming

---

Elijah’s Revelation

> - Recall how God revealed Himself to Elijah—not through expected means.
> - Be ready to describe the setting, the form of the revelation, and its theological meaning.

1 Kings 19:11-15 - God spoke to Elijah through a murmuring sound and he detected meaning in that sound.

- A Great and strong wind, that broke the rocks in pieces...
- An earthquake

- A fire
- A still small voice

Revision #6
Created 2025-04-30 22:03:24 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba
Updated 2025-05-08 08:08:50 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba