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# Hebrew Exegesis Worksheets

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# HEBREW EXEGESIS WORKSHEETS

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## ABSTRACT

It is normally not enough for students to prepare translations of passages for biblical Hebrew exegesis courses. This does not necessarily give them a sense of what kinds of questions they should be asking of the text. After all, exegesis is about knowing what game is being played and how to play it. To some degree the in-class discussion of the text will provide this guidance, but a resource that helps students to ask the right questions on their own will make them more independent and better prepared to interact. Exegetical worksheets give students a model to follow and a reference tool for when they teach the text in the future. These worksheets also provide a way for students to maintain their Hebrew reading over summer and winter breaks.

## INTRODUCTION

Students in a typical biblical studies program will ordinarily take two or three semesters of elementary and/or intermediate Hebrew before their biblical Hebrew exegesis courses. These initial courses of basic language learning are often the most challenging not only because many students find the new language difficult but also because it is hard for many of them to see what the benefit of all this work will ultimately be. Some students, of course, understand the value of the language from the beginning, but these are the exceptions. Hebrew professors must make an effort to give their students a sense of the contour of their education so that they do not expect too much in the beginning or too little in the end.

One way to encourage students in their biblical Hebrew studies is to have them read from the biblical text as soon as possible. It is important to learn the rules and paradigms, but the rigor of that memorization needs the satisfaction of actual contact with the literature of the Bible itself. Once the student is reading simple prose and poetry with a fundamental grasp of the syntax, he or she is ready to begin the process of acquiring an essential set of exegetical tools and skills to be maintained and developed over the course of a lifetime: e.g., textual criticism, grammar and syntax, semantics, compositional analysis, intertextuality, etc.

When students enter their exegetical courses, a fuller appreciation of the necessity of biblical Hebrew for Bible study should start to materialize. The gap between translations of the Bible and what lies behind them becomes much more obvious. It is normally not enough for students to prepare translations of passages for these exegetical courses. This does not necessarily give them a sense of what kinds of questions they should be asking of the text. After all, exegesis is about knowing what game is being played and how to play it. To some degree the in-class discussion of the text will provide this guidance, but a resource that helps students to ask the right questions on their own will make them more independent and better prepared to interact.

### **THE EXEGETICAL PROCESS**

Exegesis primarily involves five areas in which the exegete must acquire skill: textual criticism, grammar/syntax, semantics, compositional analysis, and intertextuality. These areas do not constitute steps in the exegetical process but distinguishable disciplines that often affect one another in the interpretation of a given text. They are textual in nature and thus belong to hermeneutics proper and the study of meaning of literature. Historical background information, on the other hand, belongs to the realm of apologetics and corroborative evidence. It answers questions about those things to which the text refers.

### **TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

The goal of textual criticism is to establish the text that stood at the beginning of transmission before the introduction of intentional and unintentional scribal errors that now occupy our textual witnesses. Intentional “errors” also provide insight into the early history of interpretation of the text and in some cases offer interpretations that are consistent with the original text (e.g., the Septuagint of Amos 9:12). The primary textual witnesses include the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, the Targums, the Latin Vulgate, and the medieval Masoretic manuscripts. Although it is not always easy or even possible to trace the linear development of variant readings, analysis of these witnesses helps the critic to return to the text in its final stage of composition on the canonical level sometime during the third and second centuries B.C.

Since the various textual groupings were all found together in one geographical location and from the same general time period at Qumran, internal evidence is foremost in textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. The basic idea is to determine the reading that best explains the origin(s) of the other reading(s). In other words, the reading that apparently gave occasion for the existence of any variants is most probably original. For example, the shorter reading tends to be the original due to the fact that scribes preferred to add rather than delete text. The more difficult reading also tends to be the original since scribes preferred to make texts more understandable rather than less so. But these are not hard and fast rules. Sometimes the more difficult reading is also the longer reading. Thus, it is important to take into account all contextual factors and the overall character of each of the textual witnesses. In some cases the evidence is equally convincing between variants.

The text of Gen 2:2 provides a good example of textual variation. The Masoretic Text indicates that God completed his work on the seventh day and rested on the seventh day. The Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Syriac, however, indicate that God finished his work on the sixth day. Since the Samaritan Pentateuch is a Hebrew text, it appears that the reading “sixth” in the Septuagint and Syriac versions was not the invention of the translators but the reading of the Hebrew text from which the translations were made. But the reading “sixth” does not explain the existence of the reading “seventh.” On the other hand, if “seventh” is the original reading, it is easy to see why a scribe would have changed the text to “sixth.” The Masoretic Text raises the question, “If God completed his work on the seventh day, how could he have rested on the same day?”

One of the most fruitful recent developments in text-critical study of the Hebrew Bible has been the identification of variant literary editions of passages, sections, and whole books.<sup>1</sup> Textual criticism proper works its way through intentional and unintentional scribal errors on the micro-level in an effort to establish the text that stood at the beginning of transmission. The combined evidence of the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, has forced critics to examine the macro-level deviations from the Masoretic

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3d ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 283–326.

Text. Such differences in arrangement and length constitute earlier and later editions that stood at the beginning of separate processes of transmission.<sup>2</sup>

Two examples will have to suffice. The well-known story of David and Goliath in 1 Sam 17:1–18:9 is extant in two versions: the shorter version of the Septuagint minus 1 Sam 17:12–31, 41, 48b, 50, 55–58; 18:1–6a and the longer version of the Masoretic Text. The Masoretic Text fills out the story with extra information about David’s arrival on the scene (1 Sam 17:12–31) and his encounters with Saul and Jonathan after the victory (1 Sam 17:55–18:6a). It is fairly obvious that the Septuagint in this case has the earlier, more original edition of the story, and there is no evidence that a scribe or the translator has shortened the account. Rather, the second edition has simply made some major additions, and both editions have since enjoyed a life of their own.<sup>3</sup>

The second example features variant editions of an entire book – the book of Jeremiah. This book is roughly one sixth shorter in the Septuagint than the Masoretic Text. The longest continuous passages that do not appear in the Septuagint are Jer 33:14–26 and 39:4–13. This edition of the book also contains a significant alternative arrangement of the text (e.g., the nations corpus, which appears in the following order after Jer 1:1–25:13: Jer 49:34–39; 46:2–28; 50–51; 47; 49:7–22, 1–6, 28–33, 23–27; 48). Furthermore, a Hebrew fragment of Jeremiah from Qumran (4QJer<sup>b</sup> 9:21–10:21) agrees with the Septuagint in shortness and arrangement (see also 4QJer<sup>d</sup>). One major difference in content between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text is the identity of the enemy from the north (Jer 1:14) in Jer 25:1–13. The Septuagint leaves this enemy unidentified, but the Masoretic Text

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<sup>2</sup> According to Eugene Ulrich, individual variants within these texts may or may not have large scale ramifications: “But again, texts and their variants have a rich life, and individual variants can and do cross the boundaries between variant editions. Thus those who say simply that texts exhibiting different editions should not be used to correct individual variants in the other begin with a good premise but are also likely to be mistaken as often as they are correct” (*The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 110).

<sup>3</sup> “The suggestion that the Septuagint or the Hebrew text behind the Septuagint shortened the longer text in order to remove difficulties has its basis in modern perception of problems that would not have occurred to ancient readers. For example, it is said that the description of David to Saul in 1 Sam 16:18 makes Saul’s question about David in 1 Sam 17:55 problematic. Therefore, the Septuagint omits 1 Sam 17:55. But someone in Saul’s position would have had little reason to remember trivial information about the father of one of his servants. It was only after David came to the foreground in his defeat of Goliath that such information became important to Saul. Thus, he required Abner to refresh his memory” (Michael B. Shepherd, *The Twelve Prophets in the New Testament* [New York: Peter Lang, 2011], 77, n. 3). For the proposal that the second edition combines two independent versions of the story, see Emanuel Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 333–62.

historicizes the text and consistently identifies the enemy with Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon (Jer 25:1, 9, 11–12), tying Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years to the sixth century. Thus, the Septuagint represents a shorter, more open-ended edition consistent with the interpretation of Jeremiah’s prophecy in Daniel 9 and Ezekiel 38–39, while the Masoretic Text represents a longer, more historicized edition of the book.<sup>4</sup>

It is not always the case that the Septuagint represents the shorter, more original edition. For instance, the final eight chapters of the Septuagint of Proverbs appear in the following order: 24:1–22; 30:1–14; 24:23–34; 30:15–33; 31:1–9; 25–29; 31:10–31. This version has translated away the names of Agur (Prov 30:1) and Lemuel (Prov 31:1) and displaced their words to a less prominent position in the book. Such an attempt to deemphasize this distinctly Gentile element of the book’s conclusion is most likely secondary. Another example from the wisdom literature is the book of Job. The Septuagint of Job is roughly one fifth shorter than the Masoretic Text, but the evidence suggests that this shorter version is due to the work of the translator.<sup>5</sup>

### GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX

Knowledge of biblical Hebrew is not simply a matter of “doing word studies.” Individual words by themselves do not communicate the message of the Hebrew Bible. This is again why it is imperative for the exegete to be a reader of the Hebrew Bible and not merely a user of biblical language tools. Such tools in the hands of someone who is ignorant of what is happening beyond the level of individual words can do more harm than good. The exegete needs to be able to provide an explanation for the network of relations that exists between the words.

The tree diagram is a helpful heuristic device when it comes to analysis of the individual clause.<sup>6</sup> This involves identification of the subject and the

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<sup>4</sup> See Michael B. Shepherd, *Daniel in the Context of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 39–44, 95–99.

<sup>5</sup> “...when we find major deviations from the MT in a faithful translation, they probably reflect a different Hebrew text. On the other hand, if a translator was not faithful to his parent text in small details, even paraphrasing it occasionally, he could have inserted major changes in the translation” (Emanuel Tov, “The Septuagint as a Source for the Literary Analysis of Hebrew Scripture,” in *Exploring the Origins of the Bible*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 33.

predicate and their respective modifiers. Adnominal elements can be appositional, coordinate, prepositional, construct/absolute, or attributive (including prepositional phrases). Verbs relate syntactically to direct objects, indirect objects, and various other adverbial elements (including prepositional phrases).

A block or line diagram can help to show relationships between clauses, especially in a more hypotactic language like Koine Greek. But for biblical Hebrew and Aramaic narrative, clause tagging is perhaps a more appropriate way to study syntax beyond the level of the individual clause. It is also a great way to do database analysis of the language, which allows for retrieval of information on a large scale.<sup>7</sup> Features to tag include but are not limited to: (1) the presence or absence of *waw* at the beginning of the clause, (2) the presence or absence (x) of a verbal predicate in first position, (3) the form of verbal predicate, (4) the type of clause (verbal, nominal, or inverted), and (5) the communication level (1 narration, 2 discourse, 3 narration within discourse, 4 reported discourse, etc.).<sup>8</sup>

## SEMANTICS

Semantics is more than a study of etymology or comparison with cognate languages. Users of a language at any given point in time are not necessarily aware of the origins and derivations of their words or the relationship of every word that they use to a similar word in a cognate language. But users of language do have at least a basic awareness of how their words relate to one another according to current usage, and the meaning of words in this sense should be the goal of biblical semantics. Usage and semantic field are

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<sup>6</sup> See Francis I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (Paris: Mouton, 1974); Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 60–62.

<sup>7</sup> See John H. Sailhamer, “A Database Approach to the Analysis of Hebrew Narrative,” *Maarav* 5–6 (1990): 319–35; Michael B. Shepherd, *The Verbal System of Biblical Aramaic: A Distributional Approach* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 64–74.

<sup>8</sup> In Hebrew, the *qatal* gives background information, but if it occupies first position, then the clause is verbal (foreground). This simply means that the verb is the focus of the background information. The term “foreground” is more appropriate for *wayyiqtol* (narration) and *weqatal* (discourse) clauses. The *yiqtol* is more frequent in discourse than *weqatal* due to the fact that it is syntactically more flexible (i.e., it can stand outside of first position). *Weqatal* (like *wayyiqtol*) is ideal for sequences. It is possible for the narrator to engage in discourse with the reader (e.g., Exod 33:7–11). In such a case the usual discourse forms (*yiqtol/weqatal*) will appear. Sailhamer (“A Database Approach,” 328–30) also suggests tagging changes in actant, time, and place.

better guides to authorial intention (i.e., verbal meaning) than etymology and comparative philology.<sup>9</sup>

The controversial term *עלמה* in Isa 7:14 serves as a good example for a word study. A survey of the word's usage yields the following definition (the standard lexicons provide glosses rather than definitions): "a young woman who does not have a husband." The Septuagint's translation of this term as "virgin" (*parthenos*) is not at all out of bounds given the fact that a young woman who does not have a husband would be a virgin under ordinary circumstances. Why did the writer choose this word instead of a different one? This is where analysis of the semantic field (including antonyms) is usually very helpful. Besides the more general terms for "young woman" and "girl," the word *בתולה*, which means "a young woman who has not conceived," is of particular interest. Since the young woman in Isa 7:14 is pregnant, *בתולה* would not have been a good choice of terms. *עלמה* and *בתולה* describe two different facets of a young woman. They can even have the same referent in some contexts (e.g., Gen 24:16, 43), but the referent does not define the words. Words have meaning according to usage and according to their relationship to other words.

It is important to take into account what a word brings to the context and what the context brings to the word. Does the word have a denotative or connotative meaning? Does the word have a technical meaning of some sort? Does the context indicate use of a figure of speech?<sup>10</sup> For example, the story of the first Egyptian plague says that "all the water in the Nile turned into blood" (Exod 7:20b). The narrative genre suggests that this is a literal account. On the other hand, the poetry of Joel 3:4a (Eng., 2:31) involves the use of a metaphor: "The sun will turn into darkness, and the moon into blood." Here the word "blood" is non-literal. It is a figurative way to speak about darkness.

## COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS

Compositional analysis is the study of how the parts of a text fit into the whole. It examines the overall strategy of an author. Compositional analysis

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<sup>9</sup> See James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford University Press, 1961); *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968; reprint, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> See E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968).



differs from other forms of criticism:

Literary Criticism:	identifies points of unity and disunity
Source Criticism:	isolates individual sources
Form Criticism:	analyzes the structure and genre of pericopes
Tradition Criticism:	traces the oral and written stages of a document
New Criticism:	a reaction against 19 <sup>th</sup> century Romanticism
Structuralism:	treats the text as an autonomous object
Deconstruction:	emphasizes the endless deferment of texts
Text-linguistics:	observes how the text functions and produces meaning
Canonical Criticism:	studies the effect of canon consciousness on a writing
Phenomenology:	examines the effective history of a text

Compositional criticism presupposes a text theory that recognizes the composite nature of texts within the Hebrew Bible and then asks how the pieces fit together.<sup>11</sup>

Composition is not the same as redaction, at least not in the original sense of the term. Redaction was originally a term for activity on lower levels of the text and did not apply to the work that gives a text its overall shape and theological message. The book of Psalms is a good example of a text where recognition of composition or the lack thereof has made all the difference in the history of interpretation. Those who isolate the individual psalms and attempt to set them in their “historical” context usually miss the point of the historical author who composed the book of Psalms in the post-exilic period and intended the individual psalms to be read in light of the whole structure of the book. In other words, the final composer took collections of psalms from various authors of different times and places and arranged them in such a way as to communicate a message that is larger than any one psalm alone.

For instance, the first two psalms of the Psalter form an introduction to the main themes of the book: Scripture and the Davidic king (cf., Pss 18–19 and Pss 118–19). These two psalms lack superscriptions and feature several verbal links between them (e.g., Pss 1:1, 6; 2:1, 12). Whatever life Psalm 2 may have had on its own, the anointed one in the psalm is clearly not a historical Davidic king in the final composition of the Psalter. For the post-exilic composer of the book there is no Davidic king other than the ideal, eschatological king of the messianic age. It is no accident then that the

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<sup>11</sup> See John Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 86–114.

description of the king in Psalm 2 matches so well with the messianic hope of the Prophets. The author intends the reader to study the book through this lens, which is why he places “messianic” psalms along the seams of the five books of Psalms (Pss 40–41; 72; 89; 110). It is thus imperative to understand any one particular psalm within this larger framework.

### **INTERTEXTUALITY**

Intertextuality involves verbal linkage between texts in such a manner that one text presupposes knowledge of another. For example, when Daniel uses the technical phrase “at the end of the days” in Dan 2:28, the eschatology of his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream assumes the larger context of revelation about the end of the days in the Pentateuch and the Prophets (Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 4:30; 31:29; Isa 2:2; Jer 30:24; Ezek 38:16; Hos 3:5). Sometimes intertextuality involves interpretation of one text by another (e.g., Gen 1 and Ps 8) or the use of a parallel text in a new context (e.g., 2 Sam 22 and Ps 18). The phenomenon of intertextuality is a large part of what gives the Hebrew Bible a sense of unity. By means of composition and intertextuality the Bible essentially interprets itself.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the above considerations, it is important to keep in mind the variety of literary forms within the Hebrew Bible: e.g., narrative, poetry, law, prophecy, etc. A good hermeneutics text or introduction to the Old Testament will provide an overview of the literature.<sup>13</sup> But there is no replacement for the reading and rereading of the texts themselves. It is in the multiple readings of the texts that the reader gains competency and learns what questions to ask. Ultimately the goal is better alignment with the intentions of the biblical authors.

### **EXEGETICAL QUESTIONS**

Students who come from a faith-based background will be accustomed to asking questions like, “What does the Bible say about certain topics or issues?” or “What does this have to do with my life?” It will require

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<sup>12</sup> See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991); Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

something of a paradigm shift for them to begin asking questions that have to do with authorial intention (i.e., verbal meaning). That is, the question of what the Bible says is very different from the one of what the Bible says about something. Exegetical worksheets give students a model to follow and a reference tool for when they teach the text in the future. These worksheets also provide a way for students to maintain their Hebrew reading over summer and winter breaks. Here are some examples from the Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings:

### **Genesis 1:1–2**

1. How does Genesis 1:1–2:3 introduce the reader to the Pentateuch (and the Tanakh) as a whole?
2. What does the word ראשית (Gen 1:1) mean? Look up its occurrences in BDB and formulate a definition (not a gloss or translation equivalent). Compare and contrast this word with other words in the same semantic field: תחלה and ראשון. See also the antonym אחרית.
3. Is ראשית in the absolute or construct state (see Rashi)? How does this decision affect the syntactical relationship of Gen 1:1 to Gen 1:2? See the TEV translation of Gen 1:1 (“In the beginning when God created the universe”). See also the beginning of the Babylonian creation story *Enuma Elish* (“When on high no name was given to heaven, nor below was the netherworld called by name”). Cf., Gen 2:4b.
4. What does the verb ברא mean? Who or what is always the subject of this verb’s action in the Tanakh? Does it mean creation “out of nothing” (*ex nihilo*)? See 2 Macc 7:28: “I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. {Or [God made them out of things that did not exist]} And in the same way the human race came into being” (NRSV). Cf., Heb 11:3. Why does the LXX use ποιεο instead of ktizo? Does this reflect עשה in the translator’s *Vorlage* (check Hatch and Redpath)?
5. What does Gen 1:1 “reveal” about God (אלהים)? What does it presuppose about God?
6. What is meant by the collocation את השמים ואת הארץ (see Deut 3:24; 4:39; 1 Kgs 8:23; Isa 1:2; 49:13; 66:1; Jer 23:24; Pss 96:11; 113:6; 148; 1 Chr 29:11)? What is שמים in Gen 1:20, 26, 28, 30? What is ארץ in Gen 1:9–13?

7. See *Targum Neofiti*: “In the beginning, with wisdom, the Son of the LORD completed the sky and the land” (cf., Jer 10:12; 51:15; Ps 104:24; Prov 8:22–31; 30:1–6; John 1:1–3; 1 Cor 1:24, 30; Col 1:13–20).
8. Tag and diagram Gen 1:1. Is this verse foreground or background? Is Gen 1:1 a title/heading/summary (cf., Gen 2:4a; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1, 9; 37:2)? Tag Gen 1:2. What does the syntax tell you about the verse? Is it foreground or background?
9. Remember the meaning of הארץ in Gen 1:9–13. What is the meaning of תהו ובהו? See Deut 32:10; Isa 34:10–15; 45:18; Jer 4:23–29. How do most English translations render this expression (cf., LXX: “unseen and unformed”)? See Plato’s *Timaeus*: “when He took over all that was visible, seeing that it was not in a state of rest but in a state of discordant and disorderly motion, He brought it into order out of disorder, deeming that the former state is in all ways better than the latter.” But see also *Targum Neofiti* of Gen 1:2: “And the land, it was uninhabitable and deserted of humanity and livestock and empty of all work of plants and of trees. And darkness was spread over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of compassion from before the LORD was blowing over the surface of the water.”
10. What is חשך in Gen 1:2 according to Gen 1:5? What is תהום in Gen 1:2a according to Gen 1:2b (see also BDB)? See Ps 24:2. Does רוח אלהים mean “the Spirit of God” or “mighty wind” (cf., Gen 8:1)? See the usage in Gen 41:38; Exod 31:3; 35:31; Num 24:2. What does it mean that the Spirit of God “hovers” over the water (see Deut 32:10–11)? What does the use of the *wayyiqtol* form at the beginning of Gen 1:3 tell the reader (see GKC §111a)?

### Isaiah 1:1–9

1. What is the role of the book of Isaiah in its place at the head of the Latter Prophets (Sir 48:20; cf., *b. B. Bat.* 14b)? Outline the book of Isaiah in 4–7 parts.
2. Compare and contrast Isa 1:1 with Isa 2:1; 13:1. See other prophetic superscriptions (e.g., Jer 1:1–3; Ezek 1:1–3; Hos 1:1).
3. Translate Isa 1:2a (cf., 1:10). In what kind of context does the call for creation to listen appear elsewhere (Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1; Jer 2:12; Mic 6:1–2)? See also Deut 17:6.
4. What kind of parallelism is in Isa 1:2b (hint: note the “x + *qtl*” word order in both clauses)? What kind of relationship between God and his

- people does the word בניִים imply? Where else inside and outside of Isaiah can you find this metaphor (e.g., Isa 30:9; Mal 1:6)?
5. What can you say about the shift of metaphor in Isa 1:3a (cf., Isa 5:13; Jer 8:7; Hos 4:6, 16)? What is elided in part B of the parallelism? Does the plural of בעל have a plural or singular meaning (see BDB, 127)?
  6. Where else in Isaiah and the Prophets does הוי appear (Isa 1:4a)? See GKC §147d. Do a concordance search for קדוש ישראל (Isa 1:4b). Explain the textual variant in *BHS* at the end of Isa 1:4 (cf., Ezek 14:5).
  7. What does על מה mean (Isa 1:5)? Why does Isa 1:5 switch to *yqtl* forms? What is Isa 1:5b talking about (cf., Isa 53:4)? The metaphor continues in Isa 1:6 (cf., Job 2:7). Is there parallelism in Isa 1:6?
  8. What historical background do most commentators presuppose for Isa 1:7? Is this relevant for interpretation of the text in its final form (see Calvin, Childs)? What is the basis for the editor's textual suggestion for Isa 1:7 (see Deut 29:22; Isa 13:19; Jer 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11)?
  9. What is meant by the image of the סכה in Isa 1:8 (cf., Isa 4:6; Amos 9:11)? Explain the textual variants in Isa 1:8 (*BHS*).
  10. What is the meaning of לולי (Isa 1:9)? Do a concordance search for יהוה צבאות in Isaiah. What is the meaning of כמעט (cf., Isa 26:20)? See the textual note in *BHS*. What is the point of the comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah? Where else does this comparison occur (e.g., Isa 3:9; 13:19; Jer 23:14)?

### **Psalm 19**

1. What is the relationship of Psalm 19 to Psalm 18 (see James L. Mays, "The Place of Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106 [1987]: 3–12)?
2. For the superscription of Psalm 19, see BDB, 664.
3. Psalm 19 is a combination of two poems (Ps 19:2–7 and Ps 19:8–15). What is the meaning of their juxtaposition?
4. What is the structure of the parallelism in Ps 19:2?
5. How can Ps 19:3 say that each day pours forth speech when Ps 19:4 says that there is no speech? How does the LXX render Ps 19:4 (cf., Calvin, Delitzsch, Bullinger)?
6. What are the textual variants listed in *BHS* for Ps 19:5a?
7. What is the imagery of Ps 19:5b–7? How does the LXX differ from the MT? What does the image tell the reader about general revelation (cf., Rom 1:20; 10:18)?

8. How are the synonyms in Ps 19:8–10 used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible? Is there a discernible structure in these verses?
9. How does the desirability of the Torah in Ps 19:11 relate to the prevention of sin in Ps 19:12–14?
10. How can the psalmist be pleasing to YHWH (Ps 19:15; cf., Ps 1:2)?