

INSTRUCTIONS

EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew and Greek

- A. The goal of this exam is to test a Candidate's ability to understand competently the Scriptures in the original languages using modern research tools, concluding in a sermon manuscript based on that exegesis. A successful candidate will show clearly how understanding the Hebrew/Greek adds to one's development of real-life applications for today, and be able to complete a competent sermon transcript to communicate this understanding to others.
- B. You have seven (7) days to complete this exam and return it for grading. The EPC General Assembly Offices will give you specifics on this process.
- C. There are two sections to this exam:
- Biblical Hebrew OR Greek Exegesis, and
 - Written Sermon Manuscript on the passage assigned.
- D. This is a Pass/Fail exam. **To successfully complete this Language exam, you must pass both sections.** If you fail a section or sections, you may retest those sections.
- E. You do not need to read or write the original languages for this exam but must show *sensible and astute research* using several original language tools in either Greek or Hebrew. These tools include Bible dictionaries, lexicons, word studies, scholarly papers, biblical commentaries, on-line sources, etc. Sources are selected by you but should reflect a biblical and evangelical perspective. A list of normal reference sources is attached.
- F. A successful Candidate will “know his or her way” around the biblical languages, as evidenced in grammar and word studies. Using tools, you should research and demonstrate some sense of the parts of Hebrew or Greek speech—e.g. noun, verb, adverb, conjunction—and be able to speak about verb forms like person, number, gender, voice, mode, strength, stem, action, conjugation, etc. You should use the original words in transliterated forms where possible, and use the insights gained from the original language to help find the passage's meaning, build your outline, and structure your manuscript. See the example exam offered.
- G. You must write in your own words, use short quotes, and give citations and sources in a clear manner. A successful candidate must do their own work, and not simply cut and paste definitions or quotes from sources.

- H. You are—above all—to seek a clarity of ideas. This exam requires scholarship but is not a research project or term paper. Work to be concise but thorough, as if you were preparing for an actual sermon in one week.
- I. For citations: in the Greek and Hebrew Exams, in-body citations should follow the point being made in parenthesis, and include 1) the author or editor’s name, 2) the source, and 3) the page or electric location. Clearly identify your sources to the grading team. For example, you might add after a comment on “lordship” the citation (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, p. 2136; Brown-Driver-Briggs, Logos Software, on “LORD”*). Sources from our reference list need simply identify author and location. Outside or unknown sources must include as much data as necessary to allow a grader to check them. See our example test for more citation examples.

In the Sermon Manuscript, endnotes should be used for citations in the Turabian (7th ed.) format, as per the examples below:

1. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine, Revised, a Translation for the 21st Century*. (Kindle ed., Edited by John E. Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007), 227.
2. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Bible*, Kindle 2008 ed. (Amazon Digital Services, Inc.: Acheron Press, c.1560), Kindle location 368-370.
3. John Bakas, "Prayer as Listening to God: A Call to the 21st Century" (<http://www.examiner.com/article/prayer-as-listening-to-god-a-call-to-the-21st-century>, accessed Sept 1, 2011).
4. Warren Baker and Gene Carpenter, eds. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003), 1141.

- J. A Grading Rubric follows. Each section—Hebrew, Greek, Manuscript—will be graded separately, perhaps by different scholars or grading teams. Review the rubrics closely; your work will be evaluated, Pass/Fail, on how you fulfill these exact items. **Each section is graded on ten (10) areas of competency. A score of seven and a half of ten (7.5 of 10) is a passing grade.**

Hebrew and Greek Grading Rubric

Passing requires 7.5 of 10

ITEM TESTED	PASSING: A successful Candidate will have...	Scoring
Word Study and Grammar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chosen four (of five) words or phrases which are central, important or key to understanding the passage. 2. Clearly and correctly defined the Hebrew/Greek nuance and meaning of four (of five) of the words or phrases. 3. Used several Hebrew/Greek sources in four (of five) of their definitions. 4. Used significant or reliable Hebrew/Greek sources in four (of five) of their definitions. 5. Shown a basic understanding of Hebrew/Greek grammar and used some grammatical terms. 6. Shown a reasonable understanding of how Hebrew/Greek grammar influences meaning. One need not understand all Hebrew/Greek grammar, but should <i>cite with comprehension</i> the grammar involved in their words or phrases. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Passing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Passing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Passing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4. Passing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5. Passing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6. Passing</p>
Main Idea of the Passage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Summarized concisely and clearly the main idea. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 7. Passing</p>
Exegetical (Passage) Outline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Demonstrated an ability to outline the passage based on an understanding of the language. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 8. Passing</p>
Application	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Listed three correct, clear and precise applications of this text. 10. Shown clearly how understanding the Hebrew/Greek adds to one's ability to comprehend the text (the meaning) and adds to one's development of real life applications for today. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 9. Passing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10. Passing</p>

Sermon Manuscript Rubric

Passing requires 7.5 of 10

Sermon Manuscript Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Begins with one or two sentences about the context or location of the sermon (real or envisioned)2. Written down in a logical manner that can be easily followed by a reader, and shows organization and flow.3. Written down a sermon that is adequately connected to the main idea of the text.4. Content of the passage is clearly reflected in the manuscript.5. Included several insights from the original language.6. Demonstrates appropriate expression of meaning and application for the context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Passing
Writing and Mechanics	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Adequate length (20-25 minute sermon), typed, double spaced, 12 pt. font – approximately 8 pages with 1 inch margins.8. No distracting patterns of error consistent with the context of an oral presentation.9. Significant research and scholarship. Sources should be solid and biblical.10. Solid and clear citations as endnotes, as per Turabian (7th ed), including author or editor, title, publisher, year, and page or location. See instructions for examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 7. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Passing<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Passing

Example Exam: BIBLICAL HEBREW EXEGESIS EXAM Psalm 23:1-3

The following is included as an example as to what the grading committee is looking for in your exegesis work. Please note the example's length, level of detail, and citation style. Completion of the Greek exegesis exam would be similar.

1. WORD AND GRAMMAR STUDY

Choose and explain five (5) key words or phrases in the original language from this passage. Be sure the ones you choose are important to the text's meaning.

- (1) **“LORD”**: Hebrew, often pronounced in English as “Yahweh, or Jehovah”, meaning “the Existing One” or “the Self-Existent,” it speaks to God’s eternality, immutability, and uncreated nature (*Jamieson, Fausset, Brown*, p. 2017). From the root word, *hayah*, “I am”, it is the name God gives Himself in Ex. 3:14 (*Barnes Notes and Commentary*, Biblesoft Program, location 20199). Called “the Tetragrammaton,” it is composed of four Hebrew letters: YHWH, it is the personal name of the biblical one true God, and the personal Jewish nation’s name of God. Usually unpronounced by Jewish readers because of its holiness, or replaced with “Adonai” (master, owner), it is translated simply as, “LORD” (master, source). God is over all, and above all creation. It is the most frequent name of God in the Bible, occurring 5321 times (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, p. 2136; Brown-Driver-Briggs, Logos Software, “LORD”*).
- (2) **“shepherd”**: Hebrew, *rowee* (row-ee), from a primitive root—to tend, to graze, to pasture, to feed; especially of a group like sheep, goats, cattle; as extended, to associate with a group as a friend and protector (*Strong’s, Logos Software, on “shepherd”*). Used here in the Hebrew Qal for someone active and deeply personal: a shepherd, a leader, a teacher, a guide, or a special friend (*Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 2120; Garipey, Treasures from the Psalms, p. 129*). It is an active verb here: “The Lord shepherds me.” In the OT it is often used of God’s oversight of Israel as the flock. Ray Stedman notes that it is a primary relationship of familiarity and provision: “There are really only two options in life. If the Lord is *my* shepherd, then I shall not be in want; but if I am in want then the Lord is not my Shepherd” (*Stedman, Psalms of Faith, p. 921*). A shepherd lives with his flock and is everything to it, for sheep are not able to protect themselves. “David had lots of experience caring for his family’s sheep in Palestine, and he draws from this, using the ‘most comprehensive and intimate metaphor in the Psalms’” (*D. Kidner, p. 1870; Tyndale OT Commentary, p. 1170*).
- (3) **“leads”**: Hebrew verb, *nahal* (naw-hal), a primitive root word—to guide, to guide to a watering hole, to lead to pasture, to feed, to refresh, to bring to a place of rest (*Strong’s Concordance, from www.BibleHub.com*). Hebrew is a language of active pictures that focuses most on verbs (<http://hebrew4christians.com/Grammar>.) According to *Brown-Driver-Briggs*, *nahal* is a Piel verb (signifying intensive action, active voice) and best means, “to lead to watering-place (or station), and cause to rest there.” (*BDB, Biblesoft version, “nahal”*). It is used of a shepherd here, and in Isaiah 40:11; 49:10. The Hebrew word most often has a sense of destination or location tied with it—to a place. In Arabic, the same word is used as a noun for a watering hole or a place one is refreshed (*BDB*,

2288). Genesis 47:17 uses *nahal* for “to feed”; and in Exodus 15:13 it means, “to bring to a goal” (*Englishman’s Concordance*, p. 2933 on “*nahal*”).

- (4) **“he makes me lie down”**: This is one word in Hebrew, the verb *rabats* (raw-bats), meaning to stretch out, to recline, to lie down, to rest, to crouch or to sit (*Strong’s*, p. 1191; *BDB*, p. 2160). It is used as a Hiphil stem, middle voice here (showing causal action of one person on another), emphasizing God’s control of the stopping and resting (*Thayer’s Word Study*, *Kindle location 29988*, on *rabats*). Benson points to the safety required here for sheep after feeding, to lie down rest, and enjoy tranquility, and peace (*Benson’s Commentary*, *Psalms 23*, p. 488) Security emanates from God, and he provides “green pastures” and watches over us when we rest (*Kidner*, p. 1123 on *rabats*; *Tyndale OT Commentary*, *Psalms*, p.677). Bob Deffenbaugh (Th.M. Dallas TS) writes, “I am inclined to think that the emphasis of verses 2-3a falls upon the rest which the Good Shepherd provides for his sheep. This seems to be the point of the key terms in each line. The expression ‘lie down’ speaks of rest (cf. the use of the same term in Gen. 29:2; Isa. 17:2; Ezek. 34:15)” (www.Bible.org/psalm23).
- (5) **“restores”**: The Hebrew word is *shuwb* (shoob), meaning to turn back, to return to the beginning, to reset or carry back again. It is the twelfth most used verb in the OT, appearing over a thousand times, with 71 usages in the Psalms (*Kittel’s Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, on “*restores*”). It often carries the meanings of rescue, relief, retrieval, or recovery, but can also mean, “a tuning away” or apostasy (Strong’s concordance). In the Polel Imperfect Third Person usage, it speaks of something that happens from one to another—someone restores or refreshes me or leads me back (*Brown-Driver-Briggs*, p. 720). For example, *shuwb* may picture the rescue of someone or something lost, like a straying sheep brought back, as in Isaiah 49:5. Both Kidner and Calvin (*Calvin’s Commentaries*, *Psalms 23*, *Kindle location 29987*) offer that the same verb can be used in the intransitive sense as ‘repent’, “turn back’ or ‘be converted’ (e.g. Hosea 14:1 f.; Joel 2:12). James Boice agrees, “In Hebrew the words ‘restores my soul’ can mean ‘brings me to repentance’ (*Boice’s Exegetical Commentaries*, *Psalms*, p. 541).” *Shuwb* often is used with the sense of “again” –a recurrence of time or place, or of some characteristic (*BDB*, *TWOT*). Baker writes of the soul that is restored here, “He restores it to its original purity, that was now grown foul and black with sin; for also, what good were it to have ‘green’ pastures and a black soul!” (*Baker*, cited in *Spurgeon*, *A Treasury of David*, p. 771) “When the soul grows sorrowful, He revives it; when it is sinful, He sanctifies it; when it is weak, He strengthens it.” (*Spurgeon*, *A Treasury of David*, p. 771).

2. MAIN IDEA (give only one)

In one sentence, what is the major theme or main idea of this passage?

God exercises his Lordship as he provides for, guides and restores us, his powerless sheep.

OR Our all-powerful and ever-present God exercises his relationship with David, and with all his people, as a shepherd would over his sheep, including providing for our needs, giving us guidance, and restoring our souls to the way they were supposed to be.

really care?” we can be reminded of Psalm 23 and its promise—God takes his role of being our shepherd seriously, and will take care of his people.

- b. The contrast in power between the Shepherd and the Psalmist is key here. David casts himself as a sheep—weak, powerless, and prone to wander. It is the LORD who shepherds David; it is the LORD who leads, feeds, waters and even makes David lie down and rest. God is the active one. All of the sheep’s life is under the Shepherd’s care. As they sing this worship song, the Israelites would be reminded of how big God is and how much he cares for them, and of how little power over life they had as simple sheep. As we try to run our worlds, and gain control of these lives we live, we too often fool ourselves. We are—whether we like it or not—simple, weak, and powerless sheep and much of life is beyond our control. We desperately need a Good Shepherd. And we have one in Jesus.
- c. David understands that his soul, even his whole life, needs restoration. He is the LORD’s sheep, and under his perpetual care. Even so, he needs rest. This is a physical restoration, but it is a spiritual renewal as well. He needs to be restored and refreshed in every way. Like a toddler, David needs a God who will make him eat, drink, and lie down to rest. And God, for David’s good, does so. I hear the Beloved Parent, “Stop, honey. Leave your toys alone for now. It is naptime. Let’s rest for a little while.” When we are weak or tired, why do we press on and on? Can we not trust God to keep us safe? Do we recognize that we pick up pollution from the world and need a restored soul? Psalm 23 cries out and waves its arms at us: Stop! Trust God! Rest! Be restored! Baker writes of the soul that is restored here, “He restores it to its original purity, that was now grown foul and black with sin; for also, what good were it to have ‘green’ pastures and a black soul!” (Baker, cited in Spurgeon)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

An evangelical list of some Greek and Hebrew study tools (most recommended in bold)

THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

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