

The World of the Old Testament

Fall 2026

Dr. Matthew Johnson

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
(Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV)**

I. OVERVIEW & SCOPE

This class will focus on equipping the participant to understand the world of the Old Testament in space and time so that, as the participant reads about about the saving work work of God in this world, the participant will come away with a deeper grasp and understanding about what's being said in the whole Bible, including the words of the New Testament.

II. RESOURCES ON THE WORLD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Arnold, Bill T, and Brent A Strawn. 2019. *The World Around the Old Testament : The People and Places of the Ancient Near East*. Baker Academic, A Division Of Baker Publishing Group.

Richter, Sandra L. 2008. *The Epic of Eden : A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

III. SESSION SCHEDULE

1.	Session 1:	9/9/2026	Introduction
2.	Session 2:	9/16/2026	Creation
3.	Session 3:	9/23/2026	Flood

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| 4. | OUT | 9/30/2026 | Matthew will be at New Room Conference. Attend Dwell in the sanctuary. |
| 5. | Session 4: | 10/7/2026 | Exodus and the gods |
| 6. | OUT | 10/14/2026 | OUT - Fire Camp Worship |
| 7. | Session 5: | 10/21/2026 | Canaan |
| 8. | Session 6: | 10/28/2026 | Assyria and Northern Kingdom |
| 9. | Session 7: | 11/4/2026 | Babylon and Judah |
| 10. | Session 8: | 11/11/2026 | Prophets and Future. |
| 11. | Session 5: | 11/18/2026 | Conclusion |

Bibliography

- Arnold, Bill T, and Brent A Strawn. 2019. *The World Around the Old Testament : The People and Places of the Ancient Near East*. Baker Academic, A Division Of Baker Publishing Group.
- De Vaux, Roland. 1997. *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Hamilton, Victor P. 2005. *Handbook on the Pentateuch : Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Baker Book House.
- Kaufmann, Yehezkel. 1972. *The Religion of Israel*. Translated by Moshe Greenberg. Schocken.
- Michael David Coogan. 2001. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*. Oxford University Press.
- Pilch, John J. 2013. *A Cultural Handbook to the Bible*. Eerdmans.
- Richter, Sandra L. 2008. *The Epic of Eden : A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Tremper Longman, Iii, John H Walton, and Stephen O Moshier. 2018. *The Lost World of the Flood : Mythology, Theology, and the Deluge Debate*. Ivp Academic, An Imprint Of Intervarsity Press.
- Walton, John H. 2009. *The Lost World of Genesis One : Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. Ivp Academic.

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Week 1

What are we doing here?

We're going to do our best to understand the world of the Old Testament as the language in which the Bible was written so that we gain a better understanding of what we're reading..

Why?

Because it's important for us to understand as accurately as we can the interaction of God with people in space and time.

Map notes:

Timeline notes:

Homework:

1. Read Genesis 1-2 through in one sitting. Multiple times if you can.
2. Name each paragraph with a one or two word description.
3. As you read, note the words that seem to pop up a lot. If you notice two ideas pitted against each other (contrast), note that as well.
4. Be ready to discuss these chapters next week

Questions:

- 1) What do you think about the Old Testament? Is it exciting? Daunting? Boring? Something else?
- 2) What is the biggest obstacle you think you face in reading the Old Testament? In understanding it?

Notes: