

INSTRUCTIONS

EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew or Greek

****Please read all these instructions carefully
before beginning your exam.****

- A. The goal of this exam is to test a Candidate’s competency in working with 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, be able to complete a competent sermon transcript to communicate this understanding to others, and demonstrate how the passage displays the Gospel of Christ.
- B. You have seven (7) days to complete this exam and return it for grading. The EPC General Assembly Offices will give you specific details on this process.
- C. There are two sections to this exam:
- 1) Biblical Hebrew OR Greek Exegesis, (Language Section)
 - 2) Written Sermon Manuscript drawn from the same language work
- D. **To successfully complete this EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew or Greek, you must pass both sections. Failure to pass a single section will necessitate taking the whole exam again.**
- 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, online sources, etc. Sources are selected by you but should reflect a biblical and evangelical perspective. A list of normal reference sources is attached. (See the *EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew or Greek Selected Bibliography*.)
- 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. If you use the words of another, give them the appropriate credit. 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 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. Citations:

1) In the Greek/Hebrew language section, in-body citations should follow the point being made in parenthesis, and include a) the author or editor's name, b) the source, and c) 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 to 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.

2) In the Sermon Manuscript, endnotes should be used for citations in the standard format preferred by Candidate.

J. A grading rubric is included below. The successful candidate will take note of how this exam will be evaluated and the points assigned to each section. The rubric requires two short paragraphs written, one for the Language Section, and one for the Manuscript. The candidate can include the *Biblical Context* paragraph required for the Language Section along with the *Word Study and Grammar* section. The paragraph required for the Manuscript should be included at the beginning of the sermon manuscript. Of special note on the Manuscript rubric is ensuring that the sermon "Adequately and clearly connect the text to the Gospel of Christ."

The EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew or Greek is Pass/Fail. 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 for each section. A 7.5 on each section is required to Pass the EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew or Greek. Each section—(Language Section and Manuscript) will be graded separately, perhaps by different scholars or grading teams.

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. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Write a short paragraph on how this passage fits within its context in Scripture. Answer the question, "How does this passage relate to what comes immediately before and after?"

Psalm 23 is a Psalm of David that expresses confidence in the Lord's shepherding care. It follows the much lengthier Psalm 22, in which David begins with desperation and ends with the reassurance of God's deliverance. In this way, Psalm 23 flows naturally from Psalm 22, continuing the theme of God's provision and protection. Psalm 24 follows by extolling the Lord not only as the Psalmist's personal shepherd, but as the King of glory, the one to whom the whole earth belongs (Psalm 24:1).

2. 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*, *Psalm 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*, *Psalm 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).

3. 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.

4. OUTLINE

Based on your Hebrew study and exegesis, outline this passage.

OUR RELATIONSHIP **1 The Lord** (*is* supplied for English, not in the Hebrew)

IS SEEN IN: **shepherds me.** (one active verb, personally connected)

(a) HIS PROVISION **1b I shall not be in want** (be without the key things, as follows)

(b) HIS RESTORATION **2 He makes me lie down** (verb, one Hebrew word)
 in green pastures.

(c) HIS GUIDANCE **2b He leads me** (verb, one word)
 beside still waters.

(b) HIS RESTORATION **3 He restores** (verb, one word)
 my soul (my heart, my life, my being)

(c) HIS GUIDANCE **3b He leads me** (verb, one word)
 in paths
 of righteousness
 for (to the end that)
 his name.

5. APPLICATIONS

Give three examples of real life applications for today that flow from an accurate interpretation of this text.

- a. The Hebrew language in the Psalms is pictorial (full of images) and poetic (repeating ideas in different phrases). This is clear in Psalm 23, as the chiasmic exchange of images and phrases paint the reader a picture of the good shepherd’s care. This is an image that God is painting of himself: The Shepherd. Calvin writes, “God, in the Scripture, frequently takes to himself the name, and puts on the character of a shepherd, and this is no mean token of his tender love towards us” (*Calvin’s Commentaries at sacred-texts.com*). In Isa. 40:10-11, we read of God’s intent: “See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.” Jesus reminds his disciples that he, too, is the good shepherd, and that his sheep hear his voice and follow him (John 10:14-27). When we wrestle with “where is God?” or “Does he 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).

EPC Candidate Exam in Biblical Hebrew or Greek

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Botterweck, G. J., H. Ringgren, H.-J. Fabry (eds.). Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Eerdmans, 1977-2006.

Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, revised, 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-86.

Brown, Francis, C. Briggs, S.R. Driver. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon. Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.

Carpenter, Eugene, Warren Baker, ed. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament. AMG Publishers, 2003.

Evans, Craig A., ed. The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter, eds. Dictionary of New Testament Background. Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.

Even-Shoshan, E. A New Concordance of the Old Testament Using the Hebrew and Aramaic Text. 2nd edition. Baker, 1989.

Freedman, David N., ed. The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1993. Goodrick,

E.W., and J.R. Kohlenberger, III. The NIV Exhaustive Concordance. Zondervan, 1990.

Green, Jay P. The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible, One-Volume Edition. Hendrickson Publishers, 2005.

Green, Joel B., Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. 2nd edition. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013.

Harris, R.L., G.L. Archer, Jr., and B.K. Waltke (eds.). Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Moody, 1980.

Holmén, Tom and Stanley E. Porter. Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus, 4 vols. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011.

Jenni, E. and C. Westermann (eds.). Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament. 3 vols. Hendrickson, 1997.

Keil, C.F. and F. Delitzsch. Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, 10 volumes. Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.

Kittel, Gerhard, Ed. et al. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 volumes or condensed 2 volume set. Eerdmans, 1964.

Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments. Downers Grove: IVP, 1998.

Ryken, Leland, et al., eds. Dictionary of Biblical Imagery. Downers Grove: IVP, 1998.

Sakenfeld, Katharine D., ed. New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 6 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006. Strong, James. The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Thomas Nelson, 2009.

Tenney, Merrill C. and Moisés Silva, eds. The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible, Revised, 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Thayer, Joseph. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

VanGemeren, Willem A. (ed.). New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. 5 vols. Zondervan, 1997.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

Vine, W. E., Merrill F. Unger, William White Jr. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. (Thomas Nelson, 1996).

Wigram, George. The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament (Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

Zodhiates, Spiros, Warren Baker, ed. The Complete Word Study Old Testament. (AMG Publishers, 1994).

Zodhiates, Spiros. The Complete Word Study New Testament (AMG Publishers, 1991).

Zodhiates, Spiros. The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament (AMG Publishers, 1992).

Hebrew and Greek Grading Rubric

Passing requires 7.5 of 10

ITEM TESTED	PASSING: A successful Candidate will have...	Scoring
Biblical Context	1. Written a short paragraph on how this passage fits within its context in Scripture. Answered the question, "How does this passage relate to what comes immediately before and after?"	____/ 1 point
Word Study and Grammar	2. Identified and clearly defined four (out of five) words or phrases which are central, important or key to understanding the passage. 3. Used at least four significant or reliable Hebrew/Greek sources in four (out of five) of their definitions. 4. Shown a basic understanding of Hebrew/Greek grammar and 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.	____/ 1 point ____/ 1 point ____/ 1 point
Main Idea of the Passage	5. Summarized concisely and clearly the main idea.	____/ 2 points
Exegetical (Passage) Outline	6. Demonstrated an ability to outline the passage based on an understanding of the language.	____/2 points
Application	7. Listed three correct, clear and precise applications that flow from an accurate interpretation of this text.	____/2 points
	Total Score	____/10 points

Sermon Manuscript Rubric

Passing requires 7.5 of 10

PASSING: A successful Candidate will have...	Scoring
1. Summarized the real or envisioned situation where the sermon might be preached in no more than 2 sentences.	____/ 1 point
2. Written sermon in an organized manner easily followed by a reader. No distracting patterns in the manuscript that would be evident in oral presentation.	____/ 1 point
3. Reflected main idea of the text in the sermon.	____/ 1 point
4. Covered the entire text appropriately.	____/ 1 point
5. Reflected at least 2 insights from original language in manuscript.	____/1 point
6. Used applications from exegetical work that are tailored to specific audience.	____/ 1 point
7. Written sermon of adequate length (2000-3000 words).	____/ 1 point
8. Utilized and appropriately cited scholarly, biblical resources in the manuscript.	____/ 1 point
9. Adequately and clearly connected the text to the gospel of Christ.	____/ 2 points
Total Score	____/10 points