

Reading the Genesis Creation Stories Again for the First Time

Instructor: Michael Peterson

Time and Place: Fall, 2017 Osher Life Long Learning Institute,
University of Montana, Missoula, MT
Schedule (time and room) to be determined

Online Resources:

- Peterson, Michael T., “*The BEGINNING: A New Translation and Commentary*”, Online at <http://learn-biblical-hebrew.com/hebrew-scripture/beginning-genesis-11-24a/>
- Peterson, Michael T., “The Meaning of Adam and Eve: Immortality Lost, Procreativity Gained”, Online at <http://learn-biblical-hebrew.com/hebrew-scripture/garden-of-eden-story/>

Summary:

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948 along with other archeological findings, the application of modern research technologies to the disciplines of linguistics, philology, and cultural anthropology to the literature of the Ancient Near East have wrought enormous changes to our understanding of these two famous narratives.

Students taking this class will engage the text in the linguistic and cultural contexts of the Ancient Near East. Specifically, we will unpack the literary forms used by the authors in order to interpret the symbolism – allegorical, poetic, and metaphorical – of these two stories.

The content of the course makes no faith claims and is strictly non-denominational. Its design focuses on the literary and cultural context in order to reveal how the stories would have been understood by the ancient Hebrews. Finally, while the course content draws heavily from the biblical Hebrew text, no knowledge of Hebrew is required nor is such knowledge particularly helpful.

About the Instructor: Michael Peterson holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in microbiology and tumor immunology from the University of Washington. Prior to his academic training, he was a combat helicopter and instructor pilot and a Vietnam Prisoner of War. He retired as a software architect in 2003 and has been translating and teaching biblical Hebrew and Old Testament Studies professionally for both secular and religious students for over ten years. Mr. Peterson received his training in biblical Hebrew from Hebrew University in Tel Aviv, Israel in 2004-2005. He and his wife moved to Missoula in the spring of 2017.