

November 2023

Dear Friends and Supporters,

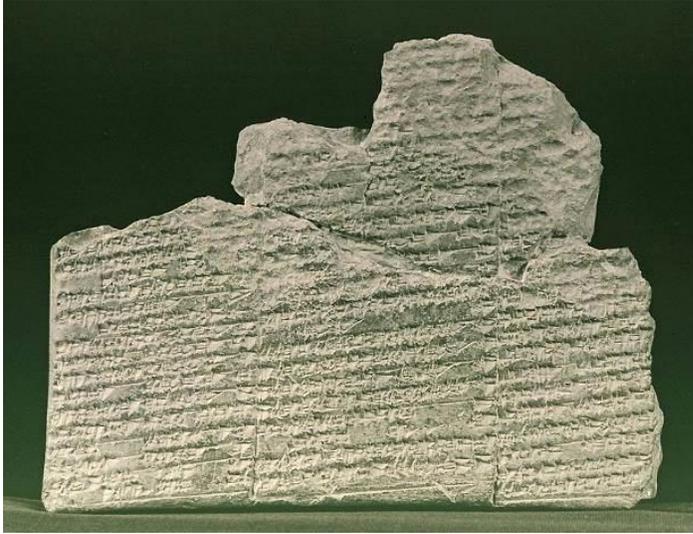


*ABOVE (the campus at San Antonio del Mar, Mexico)
BELOW (classroom shot of my international students)*

After a somewhat lighter summer, Fall kicked in with several lecture trips. The first was in September to Mexico, where I lectured in the School of Biblical Studies at San Antonio del Mar on the Book of Genesis and the Canon of Scripture. I had 16 students from nine nations: Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Germany, Canada, and the USA—quite a cross-cultural mix! I had to smile when

talking to the young man from New Guinea: when I asked him how he was doing with the food, he simply said, “Everything is new!” Yes, I suppose it was!

Genesis is always a fascinating set of lectures, since there are so many interpretive challenges, especially in the creation and flood narratives. We thread our way through the intersection of science and the Bible, exploring different theories about everything from the age of the earth to the extent of the flood, and interacting with the various ancient Near Eastern texts from Egypt and Mesopotamia, both of which had their own creation and flood stories, some even



The Sumerian Flood text, one of the earliest flood stories, describes Ziusudra, a hero who built a boat for saving animals and humans during the great flood.

(University of Pennsylvania)

earlier than Genesis. Then, we trace the lives and journeys of the patriarchs through the late Middle Bronze Age, climaxing with the relocation of the family of Jacob from Canaan into Egypt.

The students were excellent, and even though all the lectures were translated into Spanish (and all my written material was translated as well), they were very engaged and seemed to find a good rhythm with the back-and-forth style of lecture with translation.

Some of you may remember that a year or so ago my lectures in 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicle were video-recorded in

Richmond, VA. These video lectures are now being used in other parts of the world, and in mid-October, I had the opportunity for a Question/Answer session via Zoom with Chinese Bible students in Guangzhou, China, the 5th largest city in



The city of Guangzhou, where there is now a biblical studies school for Chinese Christians.

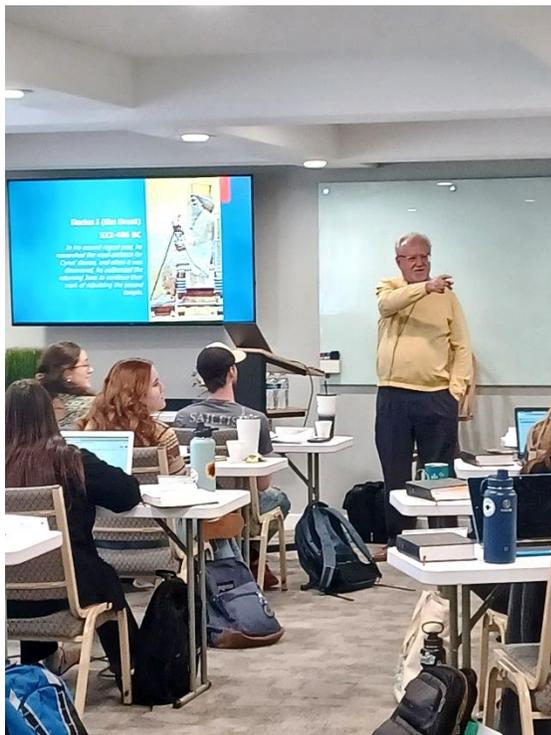
the country (population of 15 ½ million). The students had just completed these video-recorded lectures, and the leader of the school invited me to join the class on Zoom and field their questions. What a privilege to spend this time, even if on a computer screen, with these precious believers from half-way around the world!

One of the students, a young Chinese girl, was so deeply moved that I took time to spend with them that she simply sobbed in expressing her gratefulness. You'll no doubt remember when you were a child when you sobbed so deeply that you couldn't catch your breath—this was the what happened with this young lady. She was overwhelmed that a fellow Christian from the other side of the globe would interact with them in a world where being a Christian is illegal and sometimes life-threatening.

In mid-October, Chad, our son, flew to Honolulu to lecture on the Book of Jeremiah. As is usual, he fills the white board with massive content. The “BCC” on the wall are the initials for Basic Core Course, which is the school in which he was teaching. The BCC occupies a full quarter and addresses a selection of



This classroom at the Honolulu Campus is like a huge Quonset hut. Chad had some 25 students in his Jeremiah lectures.



biblical books, Jeremiah being one of them. Lectures are typically three teaching hours each morning, though sometimes there is also Q/A in the afternoon and evenings as well as individual meetings with students and faculty.

In late October, Peggy and I traveled to Colorado Springs, where I covered several biblical books: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, plus

Here, I'm discoursing on the reign of Darius I of the Persian Empire, who enabled the Jews to get “back on track” with rebuilding the 2nd Temple.

Intertestamental History. This was our first time on this campus, which is located just beneath Pike's Peak.

One of the administrators of the Biblical Studies department was Sandy Gould, a veteran missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators for many years. She shared how Wycliffe had just completed the first Bible translation for the deaf (using the American system of signing). Some might suggest, "Why don't deaf people just read the Bible," but it is not that simple, since our alphabet depends upon sounds. Four more deaf translations are now in process as well for Mexico, Cuba, Colombia, and Moldova. There are approximately 70 million deaf individuals in the world, and none of them have a Bible in their heart language except this one just completed.

I had a very good group of 28 students, and on Tuesday evening, the department staged a Q/A. I was quite impressed with some of the students' questions, and here is a sample of the kinds of things they asked me to address:

- *How were the canons of the Old and New Testament fixed?*
- *Was there death prior to the fall of humans in Genesis 3 (i.e., animal predation, etc.)*
- *How do you see apologetics changing as we now live in a postmodern culture that no longer believes in truth?*
- *What do you think about Replacement Theory? (This is the idea of the Reformers that Christianity replaced Israel as the people of God.)*
- *What is the difference between Historic Premillennialism and Dispensationalism?*
- *What is the difference between Evolution and Intelligent Design?*



We had a pretty lively discussion for about three hours!

Finally, in November I flew to the main campus in Kona, Hawaii for lectures on 1 Corinthians. This turned out to be a rather large class of 57, and in addition to our class time, every lunch and dinner

School of Biblical Studies, Kona, Hawaii



The Kona Campus is beautiful, and the Biblical Studies Department is the building in the center.

was packed with students asking questions. 1 Corinthians has more than its share of complicated issues, especially against the background of Greco-Roman culture, and it was a joy to have so many students so deeply engaged.

For those who use our website (<http://www.dkonos.org>), I have developed a new Powerpoint on New Testament Archaeology (280 slides). Click

on “Powerpoint Presentations,” then scroll down to the section titled “History and Culture” and click on “NT Archaeology.” It covers everything from Herod’s building projects and the birth of Jesus to the travels of Paul and the texts of the early Christians. Initially, I developed this presentation for Mariners’ Church in Detroit, but I will be using it widely in my travels.

Speaking of travels, this coming year shapes up to be a full one, especially now that the Covid debacle is no longer interfering. Much of the 2024 is already booked, and the immediate future will see me in Seattle in December and Cartagena, Colombia in January. Afterwards, I have lectures scheduled in Pennsylvania, Florida, Amsterdam, Virginia, Mexico, Switzerland, and Costa Rica.

For those of you who support this ministry, Peggy and I are deeply grateful. Pastors, teachers, students, and missionaries around the world are benefitting from this outreach, and we feel privileged and humbled to be able to contribute.

Grace to you all,