

## **M.A. in Biblical History and Geography**

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The Department of Biblical History and Geography enables students to become well-versed in the history of the biblical world and in the sub-fields of historical geography, archaeology and biblical Hebrew. Upon completing the M.A. degree, students will have had the opportunity to receive a strong foundation in the basic historical and physical realities of the land. At the same time, by studying under leading Jewish and Christian scholars in Jerusalem, students are exposed to the current flow of scholarly discussions and are able to keep abreast of recent discoveries in the field.

Students enrolled in the M.A. in Biblical History and Geography have ample opportunity to draw upon the rich resources of Jerusalem and the lands of the Bible. Numerous field studies provide the student with a first hand understanding of the geographical and historical issues that underlie the ancient history of these lands. By participating in archaeological surveys and excavations, students are exposed to ancient material cultures and the methodology of fieldwork. Students may also become involved with local cultures such as the Palestinian, Bedouin and Druze communities which in many ways reflect the life styles, ways of thinking, interrelationships and ethnic movements of biblical times.

The M.A. in Biblical History and Geography is designed to provide all graduates with a core understanding of the historical and physical realities of the land of the Bible, while allowing the flexibility necessary for individual students to pursue their own interests within the field. By carefully choosing elective courses, students are able to plan a program that emphasizes either the periods of the Old or New Testaments, and either history, archaeology or historical geography.

The M.A. in Biblical History and Geography can prepare a student to pursue further studies at the doctoral level, enhance a preaching or pastoral ministry, or broaden one's general biblical knowledge for teaching in the humanities, ministering overseas, or doing Bible translation. At the same time, students are challenged to incorporate the fruit of their critical inquiry with a deepening of their personal walk with the Lord.

### **Modern Language Acquisition**

One of the unique opportunities afforded to students in Jerusalem is learning modern Hebrew. The acquisition of modern Hebrew not only helps to solidify a student's work in the language of the Hebrew Bible, but also opens a world of scholarship not readily available otherwise. Thus, students in the M.A. program in Biblical History and Geography are encouraged during their two-years of course work to augment their curriculum with a parallel track of modern Hebrew acquisition at an area Ulpan (a modern Hebrew language learning institute). A student's advisor can best direct the student to the Hebrew courses that best suit each individual situation. At the end of the degree program, the student will be able to sit for a proficiency exam that will gauge the level of modern Hebrew attained. At the student's request, the level of proficiency, as gauged by the exam, will be indicated on the student's official academic transcript.

## **Curriculum for the M.A. in Biblical History and Geography**

*Archaeology: 6 hours*

Biblical Archaeology I—Old Testament Period (3)

Biblical Archaeology II—Persian through Byzantine Periods (3)

*Geography: 7 hours*

Physical Settings of the Bible (4)

Regional Explorations in Historical Geography (3)

*History: 9 hours*

History of Ancient Israel (3)

History of the Second Temple Period (3)

Cultural Background of the Bible (3)

*Biblical Languages: 11 hours*

Biblical Hebrew I (4)

Biblical Hebrew II (4)

Readings in Biblical Hebrew Narrative (3)

*Electives in the above areas: 9 hours*

*Thesis-track degree: 6 hours*

Guided Research on Thesis Topic (2)

Thesis Writing (4)

*Non-Thesis-track degree: 6 hours of additional electives*

*Two Bible Content Examinations*

*Two Comprehensive - Integrative Examinations*

*Proficiency Examination in Modern Hebrew or Arabic (optional)*

**Total Credit Hours: 48**