

Evangelical Theological Society

# The Bible in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context

Museum of the Bible, Washington

April 21–22, 2023





## Letter to the Conference Attendees

Welcome to the annual spring meeting of the ETS Eastern region. The theme of this year's conference is The Bible in It's Ancient Near Eastern Context. We look forward to hearing our presenters, including the keynote speaker, Dr. Scott Stripling of The Bible Seminary. Dr. Stripling will address two issues pertaining to biblical and archaeological studies: the recently discovered curse tablet from Mount Ebal that mentions the name Yahweh; and ritual purity in the late Second Temple period.

Normally, the officers of the executive committee serve for a three-year cycle, but this year had a few exceptions. Jordan Jones of Regent University replaced Matthew Fretwell as second vice president. And I remained the president for a second term due to the death of treasurer-secretary Gregg Strawbridge and Mark Deckard's gracious transition to fill the vacancy.

I would especially like to thank the Museum of the Bible for hosting this year's meeting. Daniel Gilbert and Mark Deckard of the ETS team played significant roles in coordinating the logistics, and I am grateful for their leadership.

Mark A. Hassler  
President of the ETS Eastern Region  
Professor of Old Testament, Virginia Beach Theological Seminary

## General Conference Information

**Registration:** conference attendees must register online by April 17. We cannot accept walk-in registrations this year because the museum requires an advance count of participants. Regular registration: \$50.00 ([link](#)). Student registration: \$20.00 ([link](#)). Spouse registration: \$10.00 ([link](#)).

**Location:** the conference will be held at the Museum of the Bible in Washington. The check-in table is situated inside the main entrance on the first floor near the museum store. The book exhibit and plenary sessions are located in the Scholar's Initiative room. Room locations appear as follows:

Members Lounge:	Floor 6	Demo Lab:	Floor 4
Scholar's Initiative:	Floor 5	Multipurpose Room:	Mezzanine
Boardroom:	Floor 5	Vatican Exhibit:	Floor 1

**Recordings:** audio recordings of the sessions will be available at <https://www.wordmp3.com>.

**Student paper competition:** the winners of the competition will be announced at the business meeting. Prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place.

**Transportation:** parking is limited so you may want to arrive via the Federal Center SW Metro Station, located right next to the museum; the station can be reached by the Blue, Orange, and Silver lines ([link](#)). If you are driving, check the Museum of the Bible's Spot Hero Parking web page for rates and reservations ([link](#)). See also the Museum of the Bible's "Plan Your Visit" web page ([link](#)).

**On-site cafés and restaurants:**

Milk + Honey Café—located on the Mezzanine; open daily, 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Manna restaurant—located on Floor 6; open daily, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

**Our Plenary Speaker**

Scott Stripling is the director of excavations at ancient Shiloh (2017–present) and Khirbet el-Maqtar (2013–2017). Stripling earned master’s degrees from the University of Texas and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, and a PhD in archaeology and biblical history from Veritas International University. He serves as provost and director of the Archaeological Institute at The Bible Seminary in Katy, Texas and president of the Near East Archaeological Society. His geographical research focuses on the highlands of Israel, across multiple time periods, ranging from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Islamic period.



**Executive Officers of the ETS Eastern Region**

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Mark A. Hassler

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary

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Jordan W. Jones

Regent University

**Friday, April 21**

- 12:00–1:00 Check-in and book tables
- 1:00–1:10 Welcome and announcements
- 1:10–2:05 Plenary Session I
- 2:15–2:50 Parallel Sessions A
- 3:00–3:35 Parallel Sessions B
- 3:35–5:00 Museum free time

**Saturday, April 22**

- 8:30–9:00 Business meeting
- 9:00–9:15 Book tables
- 9:15–9:50 Parallel Sessions C
- 10:00–10:35 Parallel Sessions D
- 10:45–11:20 Parallel Sessions E
- 11:30–12:25 Plenary Session II
- 12:25–5:00 Museum free time

## Overview of the Plenary Sessions

### Plenary Session I: A Seminal Inscription from Mt. Ebal: Cursed by the God YHW

From 1982 to 1989 Adam Zertal excavated at el-Burnat(A) on Mt. Ebal's second steppe. He uncovered a 9 × 7 meter rectangular altar which sat atop a 2 × 2 meter round altar. He dated the smaller altar to approximately 1250 BC and the larger altar to about 1225 BC, but the smaller altar may date as early as 1400 BC. A 2019 expedition to Mt. Ebal recovered a small, folded *defixio* from Zertal's east dump pile. Tomographic scans revealed a proto-alphabetic inscription, a curse using the name YHW. This is the oldest Hebrew writing ever found in Israel and the earliest known mention of YHW.

### Plenary Session II: Ritual Purity in the Late Second Temple Period

The archaeological record reflects a shift in Israel's material culture in the mid-first century BC. Ritual baths, stone vessels, and ossuaries (reflecting secondary burial) stand out among the changes, but other indicators are also evident. This lecture documents these changes and explores the possible motivation(s) of what Andrea Berlin calls a "wave of ritual purity." The New Testament authors and other ancient writers display an awareness of this cultural shift. Recent excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir (= biblical Ephraim of John 11:54?) and Shiloh serve as microcosms for exploring the regions of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

## Parallel Sessions A

### **David Alan Black** (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary)

A Sturzian Solution to the Problem of "Original Text" in Three Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Eph. 1:1; Matt. 5:22; and John 3:13

Room: Scholar's Initiative

### **John Ronning** (retired)

Bait and Switch: Biblical Archaeology and the Historicity of the Bronze Age Biblical Narratives

Room: Demo Lab

### **Gloria Hague** (Faith Theological Seminary—Catonsville)

Consequences of Theological Positioning in the Lives and Friendships of J. Gresham Machen, Allan A. MacRae, and Francis Schaeffer

Room: Multipurpose Room

### **Robert W. Herron Jr.** (Regent University)

Simultaneity in Mark's Story About Jesus' Trial and Peter's Denial: Mark 14:53–72

Room: Members Lounge

### **J. Ryan Davidson** (Grace Baptist Chapel; International Reformed Baptist Seminary)

Cassiodorus' *Institutiones* and the Preservation of Scripture

Room: Boardroom

## Parallel Sessions B

**Michael Erickson** (Faith Theological Seminary–Catonsville)

Fresh Perspectives on the Fall (Gen 3:5, 7, 22): God’s Role in Opening of the Eyes and Knowing Good and Evil

Room: Members Lounge

**Kevin Koslowsky** (Faith Presbyterian Church)

The Whole Counsel of God: A Pauline Practice for Today’s Pulpit

Room: Demo Lab

**Henry Smith Jr.** (Associates for Biblical Research)

On the Migration of Abram: An Overview of Genesis 11:26–12:5

Room: Scholar’s Initiative

**Lucas Moncada III** (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary)

The Meaning of Παρθένος in Classical Antiquity and the Implications for LXX Isaiah 7:14

Room: Multipurpose Room

**Alberto Paredes** (Reformed Theological Seminary–Charlotte)

Foul Medicine and Female-Flow Laws: An ANE Approach; Lev. 15:19–30

Room: Boardroom

## Parallel Sessions C

**Corné J. Bekker** (Regent University)

*Cursus Honorum* or *Cursus Pudorum*: The Mimetic Christological Leadership of Jesus Christ as a Challenge to the Timocratic Leadership of the Roman Emperors of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty (24 BC–AD 68) as Exemplified in the *Carmen Christi* (Philippians 2:5–11)

Room: Scholar’s Initiative

**Jordan W. Jones** (Regent University)

The Gift of ~~Gab~~ Shutting Up: The Hand-on-Mouth Gesture as an Expression of Deferential Silence in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East

Room: Members Lounge

**Mac McIntyre** (Liberty University)

Forward Pointing γέγραπται in the Gospel of Matthew: A Solution to Matthew’s Inexplicit Citation in Matt. 26 (student paper)

Room: Demo Lab

**Jack Davis** (Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary)

Is the One God of the Old Testament and Judaism *Exactly* the Same God as the Trinitarian God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—of the New Testament and Christian Creeds?

Room: Boardroom

**Michael Bythe** (Nations University)  
Echoes of Jonah in Luke-Acts?  
Room: Vatican Exhibit

## Parallel Sessions D

**Jesse Johnson** (Immanuel Bible Church; The Master's Seminary)  
Zechariah 6: How a Postexilic Covenant Informs Christology  
Room: Demo Lab

**Daniel Sloan** (Liberty University)  
Shechem: A Marker of Israel's Spirituality  
Room: Boardroom

**Carrie Wood** (Regent University)  
Reading the Gospels Spatially: Situating the Recipients in the Context of Social and Political Unrest of the First Century  
Room: Members Lounge

**Stephen Fix** (Faith Theological Seminary–Catonsville)  
Interpreting Philippians 3:3 in Light of Ambrose, Augustine, and Aquinas: Demonstrating the Divinity of the Holy Spirit  
Room: Vatican Exhibit

**Stephen Hague** (Faith Theological Seminary–Catonsville)  
The Signs and Seals of the Two Covenants of Works in the History of Creation and Redemption: “Then they will know that I AM YHWH”  
Room: Scholar's Initiative

## Parallel Sessions E

**Melissa Davis** (Regent University)  
The Love Command as Worship  
Room: Members Lounge

**Mark A. Hassler** (Virginia Beach Theological Seminary)  
Shiloh in the Bible and Archaeology: The 2017–2022 Excavations  
Room: Scholar's Initiative

**Daniel McConaughy** (California State University–Northridge)  
An Odor at Pentecost and Old Syriac Texts of Acts 2:2  
Room: Boardroom

**Kevin Washington** (New Valley Church)

Confronting the Evangelical Gaze: Christian Theology as Story and Song

Room: Demo Lab

## **Book Exhibit**

Stop by the exhibitor tables and purchase books at a deep discount from publishers such as Baker Academic, Crossway, Eerdmans, Glossa House, Hendrickson, InterVarsity Press, Kregel, Lexham Press, Presbyterian & Reformed, Reformation Heritage, Reformation Trust, and Zondervan.

## **ETS Doctrinal Statement**

“The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs. God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.”