

TRAD 104: THE BIBLE'S GREATEST HITS

FINAL EXAM PART I: ESSAYS

Write on two of the topics presented below, one from the first (New Testament) group, and one from the second (including both Testaments). Each essay is worth 100 points.

Your essays should each be approximately 1000 words in length. They should be **coherent**, clearly developed, and well **supported** by specific **evidence** from the text of the Bible. Each essay should have a clear **introduction**, defining the subject and stating a **thesis**, and a **conclusion** that follows plausibly from the **development** of your argument.

A: New Testament

1. Discuss the differences between the way Matthew and Paul understand the significance of Mosaic Law.
2. Why do you think the Gospel of Thomas was not accepted as part of the New Testament canon? Do you agree or disagree with that decision? Why?
3. How does Luke's unique focus on women reflect his understanding of Jesus?

B: Both Testaments

1. In Matthew, Jesus likens himself to the Hebrew Prophet Jonah: "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!" (Matthew 12:39-41)

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this analogy as a way of defining Jesus's relation to the Hebrew Scriptures (TANAKH).

2. The Binding (not the "Sacrifice") of Isaac is often seen by Christian interpreters of the Hebrew Scriptures as a foreshadowing God's sacrifice of his Son. This association is problematic for a number of reasons. For example, as W. Gunther Plaut observes in his edition of *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York, 1981), 149: "Abraham's religion [viz., Judaism] not only rejects the sacrifice of a son by a father but rejects, as well, its use as a theological theme. This is in stark contrast to Eastern religions and to Christianity, in which a father's sacrificial gift of his son plays an important role."

Discuss the ethical and religious implications of child sacrifice as developed in the Bible.