Iona School for Ministry

Old Testament: Criticism, Sources, Historical and Cultural Background

September 10, 2022

**Summary of “What you need to know…”**

Session 1

Ways in which the canons generally differ, with an example

How the canons compare in terms of overall content

The names of, languages of, and signs for the six important ancient versions

How English translations differ

How to use translators’ notes on textual and translation problems

Session 2

The location and main geographical features of the Fertile Crescent

The five geographical regions of the Holy Land

Session 3

The significance of the Merneptah Stele for Israel’s origins

The three major types of theories about Israel’s formation and occupation of Canaan

Israel’s ancestors worshipped the god El prior to Israel’s identification with YHWH

During the national period the gods Baal and Asherah were commonly worshipped

along with YHWH

Because the pronunciation of the divine name is uncertain, most English translations

render it LORD (in all caps)

The three major periods of biblical history, the turning points from each period to the

next, and how they differ from one another in terms of socio-political form and

religion