Day One: You may use the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Greek New Testament. You may not use any translation of any kind. You have six hours.

I. Deuteronomy 6 – see attached sheet

II. Translate Revelation 20:1-10

Parse:
1) καταβαίνοντα (20:1)
2) ἔτη (20:2)
3) τελεσθῇ (20:3)
4) εἰκόνα (20:4)
5) ἔζησαν (20:5)
6) μακάριος (20:6)
7) φυλακῆς (20:7)
8) ἔξελευσεται (20:8)
9) ἡγαπημένην (20:9)
10) βασανισθήσονται (20:10)

Explain the textual variants for
1) ὁ ὀφίς ὁ ἀρχαῖος (20:2)
2) μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ (20:6)
3) ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (20:9)
The Catholic University of America  
Biblical Studies  
Comprehensive Examination

Day Two: You have eight hours. You may use any Bibles, English translation or original languages, and a copy of the Reading List. Answer four of these six questions

1. You have been invited as a new hire in biblical studies at a local college to address a large ecumenical group (Christians and Jews) of theologically literate and religiously engaged persons on the topic of “Violence in the Bible.” You will speak for 45 minutes, after which the group will break down for discussion in small groups for ½ hour. Which resources would you draw on in developing your presentation and which biblical passages would you focus on? How would you structure your talk and what points would you especially wish to get across to the group about the topic? You’ve also been asked to provide questions to help stimulate discussion in the small groups—what questions would you suggest?

2. You are the only biblical scholar on a faculty of theologians at a Catholic college. Everyone has to teach an introductory level course that encompasses biblical and other theological material. Your colleagues are struggling to teach a brief unit (one day or one week) on prophecy and they have asked you to detail a possible method for introducing these undergraduate students to the biblical prophets (writing prophets and/or prophetic stories on the historical books) and their wider significance. Write a brief response to your colleagues’ dilemma in which you propose a pedagogical approach for your colleagues to use, which explains the rationale of the proposal including some scholarly resources that inform your ideas.

3. You are on an airplane on the way to the SBL conference. The passenger next to you engages you in conversation and discovers that you are a biblical scholar. This conservative Protestant inquires about the Dead Sea Scrolls because she has heard that the Isaiah scroll confirms that the biblical books have been handed on with perfect fidelity since their composition. In the hour or so before the plane lands, how would you address her interest in the nature and significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls text-critical research on the Old Testament?

4. As a biblical scholar employed at a Catholic college, you have agreed to serve as an instructor in the Archdiocese’s certification program for religious education teachers. As you get to know your students (religious education teachers in parochial schools), you learn that they are informed about the classic Documentary Hypothesis concerning the sources of the Pentateuch, which is often summarized in introductory materials (prefaces in Bibles, popular commentaries, etc.). As you realize that their knowledge does not reflect current trends in the field and that they seem dissatisfied with the visions of a cut-and-paste Bible, you realize they require re-education. Describe a lesson plan designed to help the students understand current knowledge about how scribes worked. What sources
would you draw upon, for your preparation, what materials or information would you provide to the students, and what instructional methods would you employ?

5. The new graduate student rolls his eyes and says to you, “Form Criticism? That’s so 20th-century! I only care about narratology.” How would you formulate a response? Synthesize a dialogue or conversation between Form Criticism as it developed in the last century and narratological methods of reading. Create a common ground for “Muilenburg and Sternberg.”

6. You have been asked to write an entry for a new *Archaeological Commentary on the Old Testament*, whose guiding principle is that “Archeological studies of daily life and culture in ancient Israel shed light all aspects of the Bible from text criticism to feminist approaches.” You have been given your choice of any passage of the Old Testament to comment on. Assemble the relevant knowledge of how the ancient Israelites lived and interpret a biblical text of your choice for this volume.
Day Three: You have four hours. You may use any Bibles, English translation or original languages, and a copy of the Reading List. Answer two of these four questions.

1. A Catholic publishing house is producing a new commentary series, and they have invited you to submit a proposal for a commentary on one of the gospels. The brief for potential authors is that the commentaries should be accessible for clergy and interested laypeople, but well-grounded in contemporary biblical scholarship. Their model is the vision of biblical scholarship set out in the Pontifical Biblical Commission’s The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church. Write up a proposal on your chosen gospel, setting out your priorities, the methods you would chose to use (and why), and illustrate what that might look like in relation to a specific passage.

2. You are teaching a graduate class at your college on patristic and medieval interpretation of the New Testament. Several students wish to meet with you to discuss their possible participation; however, they all have some misgivings about its academic value (“Possibly of antiquarian interest, but hardly relevant for a budding New Testament scholar!” is one comment received in a recent email). Prepare a response which articulates how you would go about addressing their concerns: how would you open up a fruitful discussion about possible pros and cons of pre-modern New Testament exegesis? What resources would you point them to?

3. Your department chair at the college where you teach has asked you to develop a course on the history of biblical interpretation. Several professors in the college and the Provost think this topic may prove an excellent course for the proposed “First Year Experience” that will be required of all freshmen. They hope the course may be a means of introducing students to the richness of the Western intellectual tradition. Write up a proposal describing what this course might look like and what it could accomplish. Include discussion of major source material (primary and secondary) that informs your thinking about the course.

4. An adult bible study group is interested in some of the latest approaches to the New Testament. Three of the newer approaches for which they would like more information are narrative criticism, rhetorical criticism, and feminist hermeneutics. You have accepted their invitation to explain each of these methods, how they differ from one another, and what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of each. How would you respond?