

New Testament Foundations  
NT 501 (three credit hours)  
Canadian Theological Seminary  
Fall 2003

Course Syllabus

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Tuesdays, 7 – 10 PM

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Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the context, content, and interpretation of the New Testament. As such it focuses upon the following four elements:

- 1      An overview of the essential features of first-century Judaism and the wider Greco-Roman world with particular reference to the Jewish Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.
- 2      A survey of the four gospels, Acts, Letters, and Revelation, with particular reference to their respective historical settings, literary forms, persuasive designs, and theological content.
- 3      An introduction to basic exegetical tools and main interpretive approaches that can be used in the reading and application of these texts.
- 4      An appreciation of the New Testament in relation to the Old Testament as together comprising a two-testament witness to the triune God's redemptive purposes for his people and the world.

This introductory course lays the foundation for the study of the New Testament at Canadian Theological Seminary and is a prerequisite for all other New Testament courses offered at CTS.

## Learning Outcomes

At the end of this introductory course, students will possess greater competence in

- 1 Interpreting and exegeting the Bible faithfully and relevantly according to a clearly articulated hermeneutic
- 2 applying the teaching of the New Testament in solving problems faced in Christian life and the world today
- 3 understanding the worldwide mission of Jesus Christ and his church in all of its local, international, private, and public dimensions
- 4 reflecting theologically and biblically within the context of the evangelical tradition
- 5 elucidating (1) the reasons why each of the New Testament books were written; and (2) the major theological ideas found in each book

## Course Prerequisites

No prerequisites.

## Textbooks (required)

*The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version.*

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993.

Marshall, I. Howard, S. Travis, and I. Paul. *Exploring the New Testament*. Volume 2, *A Guide to the Letters and Revelation*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002

Wenham, David, and Steve Walton. *Exploring the New Testament*. Volume 1, *A Guide to the Gospels & Acts*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.

### Textbooks (recommended but not required)

- The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman et al. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Green, Joel B., Ralph P. Martin, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1970.
- Harrington, Daniel J. *Invitation to the Apocrypha*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Kümmel, Werner G. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Translated by H. C. Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Revised Edition by D. A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*. A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.

### Course Requirements

Attendance	5%
Reading and Reflection Papers	40%
Assignment #1	20%
Assignment #2	20%
Reading the Apocrypha Paper	25%
Exegetical or Thematic Paper	30%

### ***Attendance (5%)***

Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class.

Perfect attendance	5
One absence	4
Two absences	3
Three absences	2
More than three absences:	zero

### ***Two Reading and Reflection Papers (60%)***

Students are required to write *two* Reading & Reflection Papers based on their reading of the New Testament and the three required textbooks. The Reading & Reflection Papers must be typed, double-spaced of approximately seven pages each.

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to read carefully and reflect critically upon the readings for the course. *Students are given the greatest flexibility in how they structure their Reading & Reflection Papers.* The following instructions are given only as guidelines.

I would recommend that you write each Reading & Reflection Paper in such a way that it will be useful to you in your future ministry. This means spending significant time in creatively laying out the material so that it will be useful to you in five or ten years.

When reading the *course textbooks*, you might keep the following questions in mind:

- 1 What questions did your reading of textbook generate in your thinking? How did the book deal with your questions?
- 2 In what ways has the book generated ways of thinking and questions that might assist you as you read the New Testament? You might generate a list of questions to ask and ponder as you read through the New Testament.
- 3 Evaluate various themes of interest to yourself and which hold the entire book and/or chapters together. Why does the author come to the conclusions that he does?
- 4 How do aspects of the book's content compare with what you have thought in the past? Where there is a difference between your thinking and what the author affirms, how has the author gone against what you've thought? Where were you wrong? How wrong? Where is he wrong? Why?

- 5 In the two volumes of *Exploring the New Testament*, you will find many shaded boxes that begin “What do you think?” or Digging Deeper.” You may wish to spend time on some of these stimulating questions and avenues for further study.

When reading the New Testament, I want you to reflect on what the New Testament says about the mission of Jesus and the mission of the church. Since the New Testament has much to say on this topic, you will not be able to discuss every passage. Only discuss those passages that speak meaningfully and significantly to you about mission. You might focus on what the New Testament says about the basis for mission, how mission is accomplished, and what is the intended goals or outcomes of mission.

### *Reading & Reflection Paper #1*

- 1 Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Book of Acts
- 2 *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, chaps 1-7
- 3 *A Guide to the Gospels & Acts*, chaps. 1-13

Due Date: **October 14**

### *Reading & Reflection Paper #2*

- 1 Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John, Revelation
- 2 *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, chaps. 9-11, Appendix
- 3 *A Guide to the Letters & Revelation*, 1-21

Due Date: **December 9**

### *Reading the Apocrypha paper (20%)*

Students are responsible for reading the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books and for writing a seven-eight paper interaction with these books. The following questions can be used as a guide. Do not feel obligated to answer every question (or any of the questions for that matter).

Our interest is not in the canonical status of the apocryphal books. Nevertheless, these writings have been meaningful to many people down through the ages. As you read each book of the Apocrypha imagine how the texts may have been meaningful to their original Jewish readers.

The Apocryphal books were written in a period when Hellenism, the dominant cultural matrix in the eastern Mediterranean from the fourth century BCE onward, was exerting tremendous influence on ethnically-based cultures in the direction of

homogeneity and conformity. As you read the Apocrypha, pay attention to the ways Jews responded to Hellenism.

Each of the apocryphal books deals with the question of theodicy, that is, how can an omnipotent and just God allow human suffering? How do the books provide a perspective on the mystery of suffering?

According to each apocryphal book, how does one manifest one's Jewish identity? Or, who is the true Israel? What is the attitude toward 'outsiders' and non-Jews? How important is Jewish self-identity to the writer? Does God deal with Jews differently than non-Jews? How does God deal with non-Jews? How, if at all, can one convert to Judaism? Pay attention to the diversity within Judaism.

In what ways do the authors explain historical events? In what ways do the natural and supernatural worlds (the world of God, angels, demons) intersect in the book?

What are the theological issues that the writer of 2 Esdras 3-14 (4 Ezra) is wrestling with? What solutions does he offer? In what ways are his solutions similar and different from views found in the New Testament?

Before you begin reading the Apocrypha: in view of your reading of the Old Testament and other readings in 'Old Testament Theology and History', write down how you perceive the written Torah functioning within Israelite religion. As you read the Apocrypha determine areas of continuity and discontinuity in the function of the written Torah in Jewish religion.

The role of the giving of alms plays a significant role in Tobit and in the New Testament books of Luke and Acts. Compare their 'theologies' of almsgiving. To do this, look up usages of 'alms' in an exhaustive concordance to the New Testament.

How is Judith described in the book of Judith? What cultural and religious values are reflected in these depictions? Contrast this with the 'stereotype' of men!

Does the book of Judith raise disturbing moral questions? What is your assessment of this?

According to one scholar, 'Ben Sira was a pioneer in integrating biblical and secular wisdom' (Harrington, *Introduction* 79). In what ways do you see this manifested in the book?

Women are a major topic for Ben Sira. What attitudes toward women come to expression in Ben Sira? What are your reactions to his attitudes toward women? Compare what Ben Sira says with 1 Tim 2.9-15 and 5.1-16.

In what ways are the sins of those who fear the Lord dealt with according to Sirach?

Does 1 Esdras promote a kind of racism? What do you think?

Could 2 Macc 12.45 explain 1 Cor 15.29?

In what ways does the writer of 2 Maccabees see the power of God manifested?  
How do the seven brothers in 2 Maccabees understand their deaths?

I have not assigned readings in the Additions to Esther, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, or the Additions to Daniel. You are welcome to read them if so inclined.

### *Exegetical or thematic Paper (30%)*

In consultation with the professor, select a short passage from the New Testament and do an exegetical study based on instructions provided in class and guidelines in *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. The passage should address a problem or issue of significance to yourself, your church, and/or contemporary society. The paper should be eight-ten pages in length.

Due Date: **November 29**

### Class Schedule

week 1	Sept 9	Introduction to course
week 2	Sept 16	Gospel of Mark <i>A Guide to the Gospels &amp; Acts</i> , chaps. 1-2, 9
week 3	Sept 23	Gospel of Matthew <i>A Guide to the Gospels &amp; Acts</i> , chaps. 3-5, 10
week 4	Sept 30	Gospel of John <i>Introduction to Biblical Interpretation</i> , chaps. 1-3 <i>A Guide to the Gospels &amp; Acts</i> , chaps. 6, 12
week 5	Oct 7	Gospel of Luke <i>Introduction to Biblical Interpretation</i> , chaps. 4-5 <i>A Guide to the Gospels &amp; Acts</i> , chaps. 7-8, 11
week 6	Oct 14	Acts of the Apostles

*Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, chaps. 6-7  
*A Guide to the Gospels & Acts*, chap. 13  
**Reading & Reflection Paper #1 Due**

week 7	Oct 21	Romans <i>Introduction to Biblical Interpretation</i> , chap. 9 <i>A Guide to the Letters &amp; Revelation</i> , chaps. 1-3, 8 <i>Apocrypha</i> : Tobit, Judith, Sirach, 1 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, Prayer of Manasseh
week 8	Nov 4	The Corinthian Correspondence <i>Introduction to Biblical Interpretation</i> , chap. 10 <i>A Guide to the Letters &amp; Revelation</i> , chaps. 6-7, 14-15 <b>Scripture memorization test</b>
week 9	Nov 11	Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus <i>Introduction to Biblical Interpretation</i> , chap. 11 <i>A Guide to the Letters &amp; Revelation</i> , chaps. 4-5, 13 <i>Apocrypha</i> : Wisdom of Solomon, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees
week 10	Nov 18	Prison Epistles (Phil. Eph. Col. Phlm.) <i>Introduction to Biblical Interpretation</i> , Appendix <i>A Guide to the Letters &amp; Revelation</i> , chaps. 9-12 <i>Apocrypha</i> : 2 Esdras 3-14 (also known as 4 Ezra)
week 11	Nov 25	No class <b>Exegetical/thematic paper due November 28</b>
week 12	Dec 2	Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John <i>A Guide to the Letters &amp; Revelation</i> , 16-20
week 13	Dec 9	Revelation of John <i>A Guide to the Letters &amp; Revelation</i> , 21 <b>Reading &amp; Reflection Paper #2 Due</b>

*Most of all, go with your interests. If you would like to tailor aspects of the syllabus to address some of your concerns and questions, feel free to speak to the professor.*