

COS 521 - Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

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Summer 2016

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Academic Building 218

This course focuses on the contents and context of these writings, and the theological emphases of their writers. In addition to Acts and Revelation, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, and 1 John will receive special attention. Students will articulate a theology of Scripture.

Student Learning Outcomes Successful students will be able to:

1. Distinguish these genres of biblical literature and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
2. Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
4. Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

Textbooks [available through on-line sources]:

Warren Carter and Amy-Jill Levine, *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*.

Jouette Bassler, *Navigating Paul*.

Supplementary Books:

Victor Paul Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul*.

N. T. Wright, *Revelation*.

Mark Allen Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*.

Suggested Book:

Riley, Gregory J. *The River of God: A New History of Christian Origins*. Harper San Francisco, 2001.

Riley (*River*) traces the vast changes in religious world-view between the OT and the NT. It is a survey of what may be called the “background and culture” of the New Testament world. It explains the ideas that produced Monotheism and Trinitarianism, the Devil, Body and Soul, Christ as Savior of the World, and how these ideas contributed to later Christian orthodoxy. Many of the issues that will be covered in class may be found further explained in this book.

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Two Pre-class Assignments: Due June 24, 2016.

Please email both assignments to Prof. Riley at griley@cst.edu.

Assignment One: The Reasons for the Epistles.

Please describe what two of our introductory textbooks [choose from among Powell, Murphy, and Holladay, texts from COS 321, or those from our present COS 521 list] have to say about the reasons that Romans, Revelation, Hebrews, James, and 1 John were written, in approximately four pages. You may write more if you wish [and include more epistles], but four pages are sufficient. Please cite NT passages to illustrate your points. For example, John the Seer tells us in Rev 1:1 that the matters described were given "to show his servants what must soon take place." There are other reasons for writing, and Powell, Murphy, Holladay, et al., will help you discover them.

Assignment Two: The Authors.

Please write an account in four pages of what two of our introductory textbooks [same group of texts as above] tell us about Paul and the authors of Revelation, Hebrews, James, 1 John. Again, you may write more if you wish [and you may include more authors of more epistles], but four pages are sufficient. Who were they? When and where did they write?

The Course

The course will engage the main issues found in Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation.

The course will consist of seven sessions of approximately three hours each. The student should expect to invest a further one to two hours each day outside of class in preparation for class and written exegesis of a central issue in three of our four major texts.

Exegesis Papers:

"Exegesis" is a transliterated Greek word that means "explanation." One exegetes, that is explains, the meaning of a Biblical text in its historical context, using all the tools available to the scholar: language, history, archeology, ancient literature, and especially other Biblical texts. These help us to understand what the author meant and intended, including helping to evaluate the author's assumptions and biases. That is the historical-critical method used by all competent scholars.

Learning to do exegesis is one of the main purposes of this course. Do not worry if you are new to exegesis. We will work on it together in class.

Exegesis Papers: Each student will hand in three short papers that exegete the Bible passages indicated. These should be written so that they may serve, it is hoped, as the basis for sermons and/or Bible studies. The three papers may be chosen from the list below of four topics [Extra credit will be given if a student does all four]. The papers are to address the issues listed and are due on the days assigned. They are to be typed (if

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possible; if not, hand written is acceptable), correct in grammar, spelling and syntax, and approximately three pages in length.

Day 3 - Exegesis Paper #1: Acts 20:17-38 Paul's Farewell Speech

Please include discussion of:

Acts 19:21 Paul decides to go to Jerusalem

Acts 23:11 The Lord encourages Paul.

Acts 27:23 An angel encourages Paul.

Acts 29 [to be explained in class]

Day 5 - Exegesis Paper #2: Rom 8:1-5 The Mind set on the Spirit.

Please include discussion of:

Rom 6:1-14 Dead to sin but alive to God.

Rom 12:1-2 The Renewing of your mind.

Rom 14:17 The Kingdom of God.

Day 6 - Exegesis Paper #3: Heb 1:3 Christ, the Radiance of God's Glory

Please include discussion of:

Heb 2:17 The Faithful High Priest.

Heb 5:8 He learned Obedience.

Heb 7:27 Christ the Offering.

Day 7 - Exegesis Paper #4: Rev 7:9-17 The Great Multitude in Heaven

Please include discussion of:

Rev 14:14-19 The Harvest and the Grapes of Wrath.

Rev 16:15 See, I am coming like a thief!

Rev 19:1-9 The Marriage supper of the Lamb.

Final At-Home Examination:

A Do-at-Home one-hour “examination” is required at the end of the course to be e-mailed in two weeks after the final day of class. The general subject will be: “Let us hold fast to our confession” (Heb 4:14). A great number of the Biblical texts for the course deal with faithfulness, endurance, and perseverance, and students will receive handouts on this subject to help with this exam. Students are encouraged to write this exam as sermon or Bible study material. Make sense out of these Bible passages for your hearers or congregation.

The exam is designed for one hour. You write for one hour or so, producing four to eight pages, although four are sufficient. You, however, may take as much time as you wish to prepare. You may use all of your notes, books, and helps of any kind. You may even discuss your exam with your classmates. Open books, open notes, open discussion, but individual composition. No collaboration in writing the exam is allowed. You must write your own exam in your own words with your own ideas.