

BASIC NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS—NT 1023

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Spring 2008
Professor: Dr. Marion L. Soards

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Statement of Purpose and Method

The goal of this course is for students to develop a working knowledge of the methods for exegesis of the NT writings and the use of the methods in reading the books of the NT. Students will study the methods of interpretation and practice applying these to different kinds of NT materials. During the initial weeks of the course, we will examine the methods of exegesis, essentially in isolation from one another, and illustrate the application of these methods to various kinds of New Testament writings. Then, we will use the remainder of the semester to apply the full range of methods to passages of scripture.

While the first part of the course examines the methods of NT exegesis (considering texts in light of those methods), the second part of the course focuses on a series of selected texts and uses the methods of interpretation, as they are suitable. Here, we will both translate these passages from Greek and apply the methods studied in the first part of the course to the texts.

Requirements and Grading

1. Students should prepare all assigned texts in advance of the class sessions in which they will be studied. There will be in-class recitation, wherein we shall read the Greek text aloud, translate into reasonable English (with notes but without access to translations), and explain noteworthy grammatical features. Class preparation and participation will count **15%** of the total grade.
2. Ms. Angela Morris (in the library) will be offering training in BibleWorks. She will inform the class of times that are available for getting this training. She will keep a list of those who attend these sessions and your attendance at the sessions will count for **5%** of the total grade.
3. Students will write two exegesis papers: The first of 5-10 and the second of 10-12 pages in length. The text for the first paper is Luke 22:39-46. The text for the second paper may be selected from the list below.
 - (a) The first paper is to be done in installments as outlined on the syllabus, and, then, the pertinent portions of the installments are to be edited in a reorganized, rewritten, and integrated final form. The rewritten paper will be due no later than the end of class time, April 17. This paper should be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages

including footnotes or endnotes, but not including title page and bibliography. This paper will count **30%** of the total grade.

(b) The second paper will be due no later than 5:00 p.m., May 16. It should be no longer than 12 pages (same qualifications). The first 7-10 pages should be an exegesis similar to, but better than (!), the first paper. The last 2-3 pages of the paper are to be a prose communication based on the text and intended for a contemporary audience. Between the "exegesis" and the "application" in this paper, there should be an explanatory paragraph that delineates the hermeneutical assumptions and methods that are used in moving from the exegetical work on the biblical text to a biblically-based re-presentation of the material. This paragraph is crucial and should build or provide a bridge from the exegesis to the prose communication. A short sermon may be the best way for most students to fulfill this requirement of a prose piece, though some other form of prose exposition may be permitted. Students desiring to submit something other than a sermon should clear their projects with the professor well in advance of submitting the final paper. This paper will count **50%** of the total grade.

Recommended texts for exegesis:

Acts 10:34-43	Col 2:6-10 (11-15)	James 3:13-18
Rom 5:6-11	Titus 3:3-7	1 Pet 1:3-9
Gal 3:23-29	Heb 11:1-6	Rev 14:1-5

Textbooks

Either: Novum Testamentum Graece. Nestle-Aland 27th Edition.
or: Greek-English New Testament. N-A 27th/RSV.

Gordon D. Fee, New Testament Exegesis. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. (Cited as NT Exegesis with appropriate page numbers.)

Joel B. Green, ed., Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. (Cited as Hearing with appropriate page numbers.)

Richard N. Soulen & R. Kendall Soulen, Handbook of Biblical Criticism. 3rd revised and expanded edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001. (Cited as Handbook with article title.)

Copies of F. Blass and A. Debrunner (trans. and rev. by R. W. Funk), A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (cited as BDF with paragraph numbers rather than pages);

Raymond E. Brown et al., The New Jerome Biblical Commentary (cited as NJBC);

Phyllis Trible, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies";

and other items mentioned in the syllabus are on reserve in the library--as well as copies of the "required" books for the course.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(N.B., this schedule is not carved in stone and may be altered if necessary.)

- February 7 **Introduction to the Course--Its Shape and Sense**
 Note: In relation to almost any topic imaginable, you will find an up-to-date, helpful article in the Anchor Bible Dictionary. Furthermore, the major "topical" articles in the NJBC are always worthwhile.
- February 12 **Textual Criticism**
 Read: Hearing pp. 1-36, 127-45;
 "Modern New Testament Criticism," NJBC pp. 1130-45;
 NT Exegesis pp. 59-70;
 Handbook: "Textual Criticism" and see "Appendix."
 Translate: Luke 2:13-14; 1 Thess 2:7; Mark 1:1; Luke 23:33-34.
- February 14 **Translation, Key Words, and Grammatical Analysis**
 Read: Hearing pp. 146-74;
 NT Exegesis pp. 71-95;
 NJBC pp. 1109-12 (look over pp. 1104-9).
 Translate: Luke 22:39-46 and, then, read the renderings of this passage in an interlinear, NASB, NRSV, NIV, TEV, REB (other translations if desired).
 Paper: Using critical commentaries on the Greek text (e.g., Brown [Death of the Messiah], Fitzmyer, Green, Johnson, Marshall, and Plummer) work through the text-critical problem(s) related to Luke 22:39-46 and write up your findings and conclusions.
- February 19 **Grammatical Analysis: Subjunctives, Optatives, Infinitives, and Participles—**
 Read: Paine, Beginning Greek, Lessons 25 & 7 § 58; §§ 556-83;
 NT Exegesis pp. 71-95; and
 consult BDF §§ 357-425.
 Translate: Rom 14:13; Mark 12:14; Acts 8:20; Acts 17:18; Acts 28:16;
 John 3:7; Mark 4:3; Luke 4:15; Matt 9:18; John 20:20.
- February 21 **Grammatical Analysis: Pronouns, Adjectives, and Adverbs**
 Read: Beginning Greek §§ 536-41; 542-44; 15; 239;
 NT Exegesis pp. 71-95; and
 consult BDF §§ 64, 277-306; 59-62; 241-46; 434-37.

- Translate: Mark 12:16; John 8:35; 1 Thess 4:14; John 1:1; Mark 12:17; Rom 8:26; 2 Cor 4:13; John 8:18; Acts 28:13; Rom 10:19; Heb 1:4; John 3:3; Acts 17:15.
- February 26 **Grammatical Analysis: Purpose, Object, Causal, and Result Clauses**
 Read: Beginning Greek §§ 562, 568, 576, 581; 554; 573; and consult BDF §§ 369; 456; 391; 456 (2).
 Translate: 2 Cor 4:7; Matt 4:13-14; John 7:3; 2 Cor 11:3; Matt 18:10; Gal 4:6; Luke 11:5-6; Matt 8:24; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 2:13; 1 Pet 1:21.
- February 28 **Grammatical Analysis: Conditional, Temporal, and Relative Clauses**
 Read: Beginning Greek §§ 593-604 (see handout on conditional constructions); and consult BDF §§ 371-73, 360; 455, 381-83; 377-80.
 Translate: Luke 4:9; John 15:20; John 5:46; 1 John 1:10; Rom 10:9; Matt 26:33; John 17:20; 2 Tim 4:3; Mark 14:30; John 1:9; Heb 1:2; Rom 16:6.
 Paper: Analyze the grammar of Luke 22:39-46, noticing the unusual, difficult, and important items of grammar. Write up your analysis.
- March 4 **Genre, Contextual Analysis, and Form-Criticism**
 Read: Hearing pp. 197-221;
NT Exegesis pp. 39-58, 112-31;
Handbook: "Form Criticism" and "Gattung".
 Translate: Philemon 1-3.
 Paper: Analyze the genre, context, and form of Luke 22:39-46, and write up your findings and observations.
- March 6 **Source Criticism and Tradition History**
 Read: Hearing pp. 37-60;
Handbook: "Literary Criticism" and "Tradition Criticism."
 Translate: Philemon 4-7.
 Paper: Analyze Luke 22:39-46, asking about possible sources and the history of the tradition and seeking pertinent literary parallels. Write up your findings and observations.
- March 11 **Backgrounds, Sociological Analysis, and Literary Parallels**
 Read: Hearing pp. 61-126;
NT Exegesis pp. 96-111
Handbook: "Sociological Interpretation."
 Translate: Philemon 8-21.
 Paper: Consider the historical and religious backgrounds, the sociological factors and assumptions, and pursue possible literary parallels to Luke 22:39-46 in canonical and non-canonical works. Write up your findings.

- March 13 **Redaction Criticism and Rhetorical Criticism**
 Read: Hearing pp. 239-77;
 Handbook: "Redaction Criticism" and "Rhetorical Criticism";
 and consult G. A. Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation
 through Rhetorical Criticism pp. 3-38 (on reserve).
 Translate: Philemon 22.
 Paper: Consider redactional and rhetorical elements in Luke 22:39-46.
 Write up your findings and observations.
- March 18 **Historical Issues and Archaeology**
 Read: Again, NT Exegesis pp. 96-111;
 consult Brown and North, "Biblical Geography," NJBC pp.
 1175-95;
 and North and King, "Biblical Archaeology," NJBC pp.
 1196-1218.
 Translate: Philemon 23-25.
 Paper: How do history and archaeology elucidate Luke 22:39-46?
 Write up your findings and observations.
- March 20 **Easter Recess**
- March 25/27 **Research & Study Week**
- April 1 **Theological Exposition and Hermeneutics**
What a Text "Meant" and What a Text "Means"
 Read: (These readings may be spread throughout the remainder of
 the semester.)
 Hearing pp. 278-410;
 NT Exegesis pp. 181-85;
 Soards, "Some Neglected Theological Dimensions of Paul's
 Letter to Philemon" and "Reframing and Reevaluating the
 Argument of the Pastoral Epistles toward a Contemporary
 New Testament Theology";
 Brown & Schneiders, "Hermeneutics," in NJBC, pp. 1146-65;
 Trible, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies" (on reserve).
 Translate: Go back over Philemon 1-25.
- April 3 **Methodological Reflection Session**
 Read: NT Exegesis pp. 1-38, 133-79.
- April 8/10 **JCPS Break—No Classes**
- April 15 **Methodological Reflection Session**
 Read: NT Exegesis pp. 1-38, 133-79.

- April 17 **The Teaching of Jesus: Matt 5:1-16**
 Translate: Matt 5:1-16.
Due: **Edited final form of first exegesis paper.**
- April 22 **Parables: Mark 4:26-32**
 Translate: Mark 4:26-32.
 Paper: Work on your bibliography and research for the second exegesis paper.
- April 24 **Miracles: Mark 8:22-26**
 Translate: Mark 8:22-26.
 Paper: Work on bibliography and research for the second exegesis paper.
- April 29 **Johannine Story: John 4:1-15 (16-42)**
 Translate: John 4:1-15 and read over 4:16-42.
 Paper: Be at work on the second exegetical paper.
- May 1 **Epistles: 1 Thess 1:1-10**
 Translate: 1 Thess 1:1-10.
 Paper: Be at work on the second exegetical paper.
- May 6 **Epistles: Rom 5:12-21**
 Read: Hearing pp. 222-38.
 Translate: Rom 5:12-21.
 Paper: Be at work on the second exegetical paper.
- May 8 **Apocalyptic: Rev 21:1-14 and 1 Thess 4:13-18**
 Read: Hearing pp. 411-27.
 Translate: Rev 21:1-14 and 1 Thess 4:13-18.
 Paper: Be at work on the second exegetical paper.
- May 16 **Second exegesis papers are due no later than 5:00 p.m.**

NOTE: Additional training in "BIBLEWORKS" is available from Angela Morris in the library. Please inquire with Ms. Morris about further experience with this resource and the training available for using it. Don't be hesitant or shy about this matter, since Ms. Morris invites your inquiries concerning this very valuable tool for work in biblical studies.

ISSUES FOR EXEGETICAL PAPERS

(for full final papers)

Broadly speaking, exegesis is the process of interpreting a text; and it comprises four large concerns:

1. Determining the text--*What is the text?—(textual criticism).*
2. Translating the text--*strongly related to item 3.*
3. Analyzing the text--*What does the text say?—(interpretation).*
4. Summarizing or applying the text--*What is the significance of the text?—(appropriation).*

These activities may be broken down further for the purposes of thorough "exegesis." Your exegetical paper will need to evince all four activities in some fashion. In a final form, the paper should probably have five parts:

1. An outline of the passage.
2. An overview of the exegetical problems for interpreting the text (the major portion of the paper).
3. A summary of the historical, ethical, or theological significance of the passage.
4. A statement of how this study might inform or guide the practice of ministry in administration, counseling, teaching, or preaching.
5. A bibliography.

In doing the work, you may want to consider some of the following issues. But, be sure that you are attentive to the text. Let it set the agenda. Listen, then speak. Questions and considerations differ from one passage to another, and so, the first lesson to learn is that while there may be a finite number of questions which we are capable of posing in relation to the interpretation of the Bible, the combinations are nearly limitless; and you can determine which questions are appropriate only by considering the text. As Sean E. McEvenue has said, "The fact is that method is nothing more than a description and systematization of acts of understanding ... ultimately the researcher must simply stare at [the] text, or fumble with it, until acts of understanding begin to take place."

Outline

Formal structure. Are there patterns in the text? Repetitions? Chiastic arrangements? Balanced clauses? Or, is the material some clear rhetorical form?

and/or

Logical structure. What is the line of thought, argument, or reasoning? What are the points? The illustrations of points?

Exegetical Considerations

Establishing the text. The English texts are translations of critically established Greek texts, determined by studying scores of ancient manuscripts that are not always in agreement. Thus, to get behind some of the decisions made by textual critics you may want to study several different translations, reading the footnotes and annotations provided in many of these about textual variants. The critical apparatus in the UBS 4th or the N-A 27th texts are crucial. B. M. Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* is quite useful. Critical commentaries are often helpful here.

The text in its context. There is an old saying, "A text out of context means something, anything, and nothing." To understand the meaning of a text, it is crucial to understand where it appears in the whole document. What preceded the passage? What follows? How does the passage fit into its context? What is going on in the text in general? Why was the whole document written? What motivated the writing of the section in which the passage under consideration appears? The passage itself?

Determining the type of material, its form, and detecting traditional materials that the author employed or from which inspiration was drawn.

What kind of material are you dealing with?

Narrative? Epistle? Both--i.e., one within the other or a hybrid?

What does the passage do?

Narrate? Declare? Report? Summarize? Respond? Admonish?

Does the passage contain "traditional" material?

An OT quotation or allusion? Early Christian traditions? Liturgical material--hymn, confession, prayer, other?

What is the tone of the material?

Didactic? Humorous? Witty? Ironic? Hostile? Sarcastic?

How is the material constructed?

Are there rhetorical devices--midrash or pesher, allegory, diatribe/dialogical? Rhythm? "Poetic" arrangement?

What is the language of the passage? Are there crucial words or phrases?

Consult concordances, NT and "theological" dictionaries, commentaries, and journal articles (use New Testament Abstracts to get at these). Remember, words have usage, not meaning. They denote in context of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and the overall context of one's thought. Beware of defining a word and then going about plugging that predetermined sense into every text you encounter--sometimes this may work, but often not.

Considering similar texts. Often there are helpful "parallels" to the biblical passages in other literature, canonical and non-canonical--but contemporary to the text! Commentaries and lexica frequently point to these, and in annotated versions of the Bible there are usually cross-reference apparatuses. Are there similar texts in Paul? In the OT, apocrypha, or pseudepigrapha? The Dead Sea Scrolls? Hellenistic literature--philosophers, playwrights, historians--e.g., Plato, Epictetus, Philo, Lucian, Sophocles, Pliny the Younger, Josephus, Tacitus? NT apocrypha? Apostolic "fathers"? Rabbinic literature?

Significance

Strikingly there are two dimensions to this consideration and a number of different appreciations of the relation of the two: (1) what the text meant; and (2) what the text means.

1. *What the text meant.* Though not all scholars agree on the meaning of every text, one is more likely to find a consensus on what a text meant to its first readers than on what it should mean for Christians today. By examining and thinking about texts we can determine a range of POSSIBLE meanings that, in light of all factors, moves toward WHAT IS PROBABLE. In this area one may need to address theological, ethical, and historical concerns.

What understanding of God, Christ, the Spirit, or human existence does the passage evince? How would the content of the passage affect Christian living? How does the passage affect our understanding of early Christianity?

2. *What the text means.* The implications and importance of the text for modern ethical and theological considerations sometimes produces a parting of the ways among scholars, often because of denominational sensibilities. How does the passage speak to the Church today? What is your evaluation of the message? Do you have problems with the teaching or with the reaction of some person to the passage? How do you propose to deal with this?

Statement Related to Ministry

Your remarks should grow out of the exegetical work, from any one or all of the levels of that study. You may comment in detail on how the passage might inform a specific task of ministry, or you may comment briefly on how the passage might affect various pastoral responsibilities.

Bibliography

List items, in standard form, which were important or helpful for your study.