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NT 662 Exegesis of Philippians

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Exegesis of Philippians – NT662

Fall 2000 – Asbury Theological Seminary (Florida Campus)

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Office Hours: Tuesday 4-5 PM, Thursday 11-12 AM, others times by appt.

Course Description

An exegetical study of the letter to the Philippians which focuses upon the application of basic exegetical principles to the Greek text and understanding the text within the literary, linguistic, historical and cultural contexts in which it was originally circulated.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of NT 662 (C or better), the learner will be able:

- 1) To employ an exegetical method relevant to the interpretation of Philippians and other epistolary literature—including the use of Greek-based language tools to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics, to identify grammatical constructions (i.e., with regard to sentence structure and use of clauses) and to engage in syntactical analyses (i.e., with regard to verbal aspect, mood, and voice; use of genitive and dative cases);
- 2) To understand Philippians within its socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
- 3) To identify the central issues in the critical study of Philippians;
- 4) To articulate the importance of one's own presuppositions in the task of interpretation;
- 5) To describe the primary theological and ethical concerns of Philippians;
- 6) To demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of Philippians contributes to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
- 7) To differentiate between the available critical and homiletical/devotional commentaries on Philippians and other NT books;
- 8) To evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of NT books.

Each student should expect to spend 6-9 hours outside of class per week on assignments and reflection.

Texts

Required

David Alan Black. *It's Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.

Recommended Commentaries

Peter T. O'Brien. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

Gordon D. Fee. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Ben Witherington III. *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1994.

On the Reserve Shelf

All of the above texts are on reserve as well as the following:

Anchor Bible Dictionary

F. F. Bruce. *New Testament History*. London: Nelson, 1969.

Fred B. Craddock. *Philippians*. Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.

Everett Ferguson. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Gerald F. Hawthorne. *Philippians*. WBC. Waco: Word, 1983.

Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1993.

Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd, eds. *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998.

Ralph P. Martin. *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1997.

Bruce M. Metzger. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994.

F. E. Peters. *The Harvest of Hellenism: A History of the Near East from Alexander the Great to the Triumph of Christianity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.

N. T. Wright. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

N. T. Wright. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 1. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

Student Feedback

My desire is to facilitate learning so that each of us can acquire knowledge and skills essential for ministry and reach our full potential in Jesus Christ as we grow in grace together. Toward this end, during the last 5-10 minutes of each class period, I will ask each of you to fill out a "Critical Incident Questionnaire." The CIQ will allow you to give me valuable feedback that will strengthen the course. Over the course of the semester, it will also allow you to track yourself as a learner. The CIQ's will be anonymous, but you will be able to get your sheet back the following week. I will open each class with a discussion of themes/issues raised that may be beneficial to the class as a whole. This exercise will enable all of us to take ownership of the learning process.

The CIQ will ask five questions:

1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?
3. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful?
4. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
5. What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you.)

Other comments:

Assignments

All assignments must be typed according to the following specifications: double-spaced, Times New Roman (font size 12), 1" margins on all borders. Weekly assignments are limited to three pages.

Evaluation

Grade Scale

A 100-93	B 86-83	C 76-73	D 66-63
A- 92-90	B- 82-80	C- 72-70	D- 62-60
B+ 89-87	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67	F 59-0

Means of Evaluation

1) Attendance and Class Participation

15%

Attendance and class participation are essential for the fulfillment of course objectives.

Active participation (coming to class prepared, participation in discussion, asking questions) will help you maximize your learning in the class, aid me in being more responsive to student needs/concerns, and provide your colleagues with an additional perspective on the material.

2) Weekly Assignments

60%

These assignments represent the core material of the course. The first eight (30%) are specific in the intent to teach the basic principals of Greek-language based study. The final four (30 %) are broad assignments in which the learners begin to apply exegetical methods to an entire pericope. *All* assignments are to be completed, but I will drop the lowest grade from each of the two groups.

3) Final Exegetical Project

25%

This final project will be due during exam week. It is limited to 10 double-spaced, typed pages (this does not include endnotes or bibliography). Students will apply the exegetical skills introduced and honed during the semester to a selected passage from Philippians.

Class Schedule

The following represents a tentative sequencing of the course. The typical class will begin with a review of the previous week's assignment, discussion of new material, and demonstration.

9/5 Course Introduction; Paul's Letter to the Philippians; Available Resources

Assignment: 1. Read Kaiser, pp. 17-40. 2. Read Philippians through several times and develop a detailed outline of the flow of Paul's letter. Employ your knowledge of IBS methodology.

9/12 Textual Criticism

Assignment: 1. Read Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 1-16 and complete text-critical worksheet. 2. Read Kaiser, pp. 41-104.

9/19 Noun Syntax, Introduction to Advanced Grammatical Resources

Assignment: Analyze the function of the nouns (including those serving as the objects of prepositions) in Phil. 1:27-2:11. Consult handout and Black, 43-56.

9/26 Verb Syntax

Assignment: Analyze the function of the verbs (including participles, infinitives, etc.) in Phil. 1:27-2:11 Consult Black, 91-126.

10/3 Clause Analysis

Assignment: Analyze each clause in Phil. 1:27-2:11. Consult Black, 30-40 & 141-46.

10/10 Lexical Semantics

Assignment: Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 27-64. Kaiser, 105-29. Study the meaning of **αργαμος** in 2:6 and **kenow** in 2:7. How are these words used in this context? Be as precise and specific as possible.

10/17 Historical Context

Assignment: Using resources such as Fergusson's *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Bruce's *New Testament History*, and Wright's *The New Testament and the People of God*, clarify and explain the Jewish background of Philippians 3:1-6.

10/24 Theological Context

Assignment: Kaiser, 131-47. Explore the meaning of 3:9. Specifically focus on the phrase *dia pistewc Cristou*. Whose faith is in view here? What is the meaning of *pisticc*? What kind of genitive is *Cristou*?

10/31 The Practice of Exegesis, Discussion of Final Exegetical Project

Assignment: Interpret 3:7-11

11/7 The Practice of Exegesis

Assignment: Interpret 3:12-16

11/14 The Practice of Exegesis

Assignment: Interpret 3:17-4:1

11/28 The Practice of Exegesis

Assignment: Interpret 4:2-9 and read Kaiser, 149-63, 174-81

12/5 Exegesis and Preaching

Assignment: Kaiser, 235-47; Finish Work on Exegetical Papers

12/15 Exegesis Papers Due by Noon