1-1-1999

NT 520 New Testament History and Criticism

M. Robert Mulholland
PERSPECTIVE: All we are and everything we do is a spiritual matter because we live in the context of God’s presence, purpose, and power. In all we are, think, say, and do in this course, individually and collectively, we should seek to be conscious of God’s constant and pervading presence. We should also consciously and consistently seek God's purpose for us in this course. We need to be open, receptive, and responsive to the power of the Holy Spirit at every level of this course as the mediator of God's presence and the actualizer of God's purposes. We must bathe this course in prayer, releasing ourselves and one another to the presence, purpose, and power of God. Only in this way can this course be all God purposes it to be in our present life and future ministry.

PURPOSE: There are two areas in which we will seek the actualization of God's purpose for us in this course:

Part I -- The History and Practice of New Testament Criticism
Part II -- Introduction to the Writings of the New Testament Canon

PARTICULARS: It is prayerfully expected that this course will be used by God to enable you to:

Part I.

1. Acquire a knowledge of the history of New Testament Criticism from the Enlightenment to the present:
   a. The origin and development of various methods of criticism.
   b. The foundational presuppositions of these methods.
   c. Evaluation of these presuppositions.

2. Develop a working understanding of the various methodologies of New Testament criticism:
   a. Historical Methodologies: Historical Criticism, History of Religions.
   c. Literary Methodologies: Literary Criticism, Source Criticism.
   e. Post-modern Methodologies.

Part II

3. Appropriate a basic knowledge of the introductory issues of the New Testament writings (History of New Testament times; authorship, place, date, relationships to other New Testament writings; genres of literature; etc.)

PROCEDURES: The following will provide some of the scholarly disciplines of loving obedience and stewardship through which I trust the Lord will enable you to actualize His purposes for you in this course:

1. Textbooks:

*New Testament Introduction*, Donald Guthrie (G)

2. Preparation:

   a. It is hoped that you will enter into a covenant of prayer for the class and the course.
   b. It is urged that each period of individual study be started with prayer and dedicated to God in prayer at its close.
   c. It is expected that you will be a faithful steward of time in two areas:
      i. Consistent participation in class sessions.
      ii. Commit at least two hours to the Lord for prayer and study in preparation for each class hour.
   d. It is expected that you will come to class fully prepared through disciplined prayer and study to be all God wants you to be in the class session.
   e. It is presumed that you will exhibit graduate level competence in comprehension of reading, integration of learning, and presentation of understanding.

3. Class Sessions:

   A lecture format will be used as the basic methodology, with class discussion of various points of interest, question, or concern as time allows. It is hoped that you will enter into the class experience with the prayerful expectation that God has things He purposes to do in each mind and heart, and that you will be open and receptive to the work of God in your life.

4. Papers:

   One concise paper will be required. The paper should be developed within the following parameters:

   a. Select a clearly defined topic or area for study from one of the two parts of the course.
   b. Research the topic/area, reading at least 150 pages.
   c. The paper should:
      i. Define the topic/area (about half a page).
      ii. Identify the position of the source(s) read (about one page).
      iii. Critique the position of the source(s), what are its strengths/ weaknesses (about a page and a half)
      iv. Present and defend your position (about a page)
v. Show the relevance of the issue for your spiritual life (about half a page)
iv. Indicate the impact of the issue on your ministry (about half a page).
d. Papers should not exceed 5 pages (typed, double spaced), and should indicate by marginal notes or paragraph headings the six segments listed under c.

5. The quality of these papers should reflect work done "as unto the Lord" for they will represent the cumulative results of the depth and faithfulness of your stewardship of time and study.

GRADE CONTRACT: Regular class attendance, fulfillment of the assignments listed under TENTATIVE SCHEDULE, and submission of the paper will be considered "essential achievement of course objectives" and earn a grade of "C" (Cf. Catalog, p. 24). Anyone desiring a higher grade will enter into a contract for the desired grade in which they set forth the additional learning experience(s) they intend to fulfill for the grade desired. Possible options would include (but not be limited to): research papers, additional readings, extended book reviews, exams, lesson plans, charts, etc. This is an opportunity for you to design your own learning experience in an area and a mode which will be of most benefit to you in your life and ministry. Those choosing this option do not have to do the paper noted in the previous section.

PERFORMANCE: All work will be evaluated on the basis of the grade contract. Any work not measuring up to the level of the contracted grade will be returned for reworking and resubmission. You are urged to consult with me if, at any time, you believe that you have not been fairly or accurately evaluated. Faithful, consistent, obedient stewardship of time and work, in which you seek to be faithful to the Lord's purposes for you in the course, should result in high quality work and corresponding evaluations.

In order to maintain integrity with those who are faithful to the learning covenant, the following actions will govern attendance and submission of work:
- Up to 10% unexcused absences: 1 grade-level reduction (A/A-)
- 10 to 20% unexcused absences: 2 grade-level reduction (A/B+), etc.
- Late submission of work: 1 grade-level reduction/week

BIBLIOGRAPHY: The following list is neither exhaustive nor inclusive. It provides basic resources for additional study. Give attention to the bibliographies given in Guthrie (985-1032). Also helpful are the articles in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.

Part I

J. Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language
W. A. Beardslee, Literary Criticism of the New Testament
W. Bousset, Kyrios Christos
R. Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth
W. G. Doty, Contemporary New Testament Interpretation
R. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and the Word of God

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R. M. Grant, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible
A. M. Johnson, Structuralism and Biblical Hermeneutics
Koester-Robinson, Trajectories through Early Christianity
E. Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method
E. V. McKnight, What Is Form Criticism?
B. M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament
D. Patte, What Is Structural Exegesis?
D. and A. Patte, Structural Exegesis: From Theory to Practice
N. Perrin, What Is Redaction Criticism?
R. M. Polzin, Biblical Structuralism
A. Thiselton, The Two Horizons: Philosophical Description and New Testament Hermeneutics
---------- New Horizons in Hermeneutics

Part II

F. F. Bruce, New Testament History
---------- Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free
J. Ellul, Apocalypse
W. R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem
Feine-Behm-Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament
Everett Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity
R. M. Grant, The Formation of the New Testament
---------- The Jews in the Roman World
A. E. Harvey, Jesus and the Constraints of History
M. Hengel, Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity
J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus
H. Koester, History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age
H. Mattingly, Roman Imperial Civilization
B. M. Metzger, The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and, Content
F. E. Peters, The Harvest of Hellenism
J. A. T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament
J. M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark
M. Rostovtzeff, Rome
E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism
E. Schurer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ
A. N. Sherwin-White, Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament
E. M. Smallwood, The Jews under Roman Rule
H. H. Stoldt, History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis
H. Von Campenhausen, The Formation of the Christian Bible
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3-18  Textual Criticism  JG:7  Metzger
3-19  Linguistic Criticism  JG:8  Barr
3-23  Literary Criticism  JG:10  Beardslee
3-25 and 3-26 No Class: Work on readings, paper, projects.
3-30  Source Criticism
Form Criticism  G:6  McKnight
4-1  Redaction Criticism  Perrin
4-13  Tradition Criticism
Structuralism  Collins, Johnson, Patte, Polzin

PART II
4-15  New Testament History
Palestinian Judaism  JG:5  Schurer
       JG:11  Jeremias, Ferguson
Diaspora Judaism  Smallwood, Grant
4-16  Roman-Hellenistic World  JG:6  Rostovtzeff, Mattingly,
                                      Ferguson, Peters
                                      Bruce, Koester
4-20  New Testament Writings
Synoptic Problem  G: Appendix D
Matthew  G:1,2,5  Stoldt, Farmer
Mark  G:3  Robinson 2, Jeremias
Luke  G:4,  Harvey
4-22  Johannine Writings
Gospel of John  G:7
Letters of John  
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4-23  Revelation  
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4-27  History  
Acts  
G:8  Hengel, Sherwin-White

4-29  Pauline Writings  
G: App. A, B  Bruce, Sanders

Galatians  
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Thessalonians  
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4-30  Corinthians  
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5-4  Phil, Col. Eph. Phm.  
G:12, 13, 14,15,18

5-6  Pastorals  
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5-7  Romans  
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5-14  New Testament Canon  
JG:18  Grant, VonCampenhausen