NT 633 Exegesis of Colossians

M. Robert Mulholland
PERSPECTIVE: Nothing requires a deeper level of spiritual maturity than the exegetical study of God's Word. Nothing enhances our spiritual maturity more consistently than the exegetical study of God's Word. This symbiotic reality is the primary dynamic of biblical exegesis. All teaching and learning, in the Christian and biblical perspective, must be directly related to a personal and growing relationship with Jesus as Lord. It is my prayerful intention to seek to be all the Lord purposes for me to be in leading this class; and it is my prayerful hope that you will seek to allow the Lord to so guide your study and participation that His full purpose for you might be fulfilled in this course.

PURPOSE: We will seek to actualize God’s purposes for us in this course through the development of a sound methodology of biblical exegesis and its application to selected passages in Paul’s letter to the Colossians.

PARTICULARS: It is prayerfully expected that your faithful stewardship and discipline in this course will be used by God to enable you to acquire the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

Understanding of the value of sound biblical exegesis in every phase of Christian life and ministry.

Cognizance of the best basic resources for biblical exegesis, knowledge of their use, and ability to employ them.

Acquisition of the necessary tools for sound biblical exegesis:

The ability to establish:
- the textual context of a passage
- the literary context of a passage
- the historical context of a passage
- the theological context of a passage

The ability to "translate" the passage into contemporary life.

Development of a sound exegetical methodology

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


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, interlaced with prayer and praise 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 that you may 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 learning, and presentation of understanding.

3. Class Procedures:
   There will be two types of class session. One will be basically lecture, during which essential aspects of exegetical methodology will be explained and illustrated. The other will be “lab” sessions in which prepared assignments will be reviewed and discussed.

4. Written Assignments:
   These will be in the form of assigned exercises as noted in the TENTATIVE SCHEDULE, and will be due on the date listed. These are to be not more than two, typed double-spaced pages in length. (Legibly handwritten assignments will be allowed when frequent use of the Greek words or phrases is required)

5. Final Exercise:
   There will be a final exercise in which you will be given an opportunity to reflect your grasp, integration, and utilization of the tools and methods of biblical exegesis. At least part of this exercise will be "take-home" in nature.

6. The quality of written assignments and the final exercise should reflect work done "as unto the Lord" for they will reflect the cumulative results of the depth and faithfulness of your stewardship of time and study.

PERFORMANCE: Your comprehension and integration of the particulars of the course will be evaluated on the basis of the written assignments and the final exercise. If, at any time, you feel that my evaluation of your work has not been accurate, please come and discuss it with me. A 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, will result in the successful completion of the course.

In order to maintain integrity with those who are faithful to the learning covenant of seminar attendance and submission of work, the following actions will govern unexcused absences and late submission of work:

- Over 10% unexcused absences: 1 grade-level reduction (A to A-)
- Over 20% unexcused absences: 2 grade-level reduction (A to B+)
- Etc.

Late submission of work: 1 grade-level reduction/week

Three unexcused tardies will be equivalent to one unexcused absence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: The following list is neither inclusive nor exhaustive. It presents a few of the basic resources for exegesis.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL
*Bibliographical Resources for Ministry, David Bauer, ed.*

DICTIONARIES
*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (10 vols.), Kittel*
*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (1 vol.), Kittel*
*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, (3 vols.) Balz and Schneider*

GREEK RESOURCES
*Bauer, A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*
*Moulton & Geden, Concordance to the Greek Testament*
*Metzger, Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*
*Greenlee, A Concise Exegetical Grammar of New Testament Greek*
*Dana and Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*
*Brooks and Winbery, Syntax of New Testament Greek*
*Winter and Winter, Word Study New Testament and Concordance*

TEXTUAL CRITICISM
*Metzger, The Text of the New Testament*
*---------  A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ITS TIME
*Bruce, New Testament History*
*Feine, Behm, Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament*
*Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity*
*Guthrie, New Testament Introduction*
*Reicke, The New Testament Era*
*Schurer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, (Revision by Black, Vermes, Millar)*

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 4</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Why Exegesis? Hebrews 4:12-13; Mark 12:18-27; KBH Ch.1, 5; Merton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 6</td>
<td><strong>Textual Context</strong></td>
<td>Discuss Merton KBH 59-69; List Greek Sentences in Colossians*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Outline Colossians from Greek Sentences*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td><strong>Literary Context</strong></td>
<td>Lab KBH 155-171, 199-214; Diagram Col 2:20-23*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 20</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Diagram Col 3:1-4*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syntax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Define the Syntax of Col 3:1-4*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>KBH 183-199.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Do a study of στοιχείω and cognates*</td>
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<td>Oct 9</td>
<td><strong>Historical Context</strong></td>
<td>Jewish Background KBH 172-182.</td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Identify Jewish Elements in Col 2:6-19*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Hellenistic Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Identify Hellenistic Elements in Col 2:6-19*</td>
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<td>Oct 23</td>
<td><strong>Theological Context</strong></td>
<td>KBH Ch 11.</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Clarify¹ the meaning of Col 2:20-23*</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Clarify the meaning of Col 3:1-3:4*</td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Clarify the meaning of Col 3:5-11*</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Clarify the meaning of Col 3:12-17*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Colossians 1-2</td>
<td>For the assignments through Dec. 3, study the passages to be covered in the Greek text. Be alert to the various aspects of exegetical methodology and note particular issues of interpretation that arise in these passages.</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Colossians 2-3</td>
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<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>Colossians 3-4</td>
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<td>Nov 29</td>
<td><strong>Exegetical Sermons</strong></td>
<td>KBH Ch. 10;</td>
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<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Be acquainted with 2 Cor 2:14-3:18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Be acquainted with Revelation 3:14-21</td>
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¹ That is, employ the whole exegetical process to arrive at as complete an understanding of the passage as is possible. Your written assignment will be steps III and IV of “Steps of Exegesis” on page 6.
STEPS IN EXEGESIS:

I. Outline the document according to its internal structure (GK)
   A. Develop the Major Units (I. II. III. etc.)
   B. Define the sub-divisions of each major unit (A, B, C)
   C. Clarify the parts of each sub-division (1, 2, 3, etc.) if needed

II. Work with a sub-division (A, B, etc.) as the basic unit.
   A. Establish the text if necessary (Textual Criticism)
   B. Clarify the syntactical structures of the unit (Diagram)
   C. Identify focal contextual elements and research
      1. Literary Context:
         a. Syntax--identify, determine function
         b. Vocabulary--frequency, usage, meaning
         c. Form--identify, determine use
      2. Historical Context:
         a. Historical situation of the writing
         b. Jewish background (Palestine/Diaspora)
         c. Hellenistic background
   D. Determine the meaning of the text.
   E. View the text within its larger context

III. Write out a verse by verse commentary on the unit, drawing together the material from step II.

IV. Summarize the focal message of the text (Christian perspective/lifestyle)
   A. For the original readers.
   B. For your own spiritual life.
   C. For contemporary readers.