NT 630 Exegesis Of Captivity Epistles

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NT 630
EXEGESIS OF CAPTIVITY EPITLES

Ben Witherington, III, Instructor                                    Fall 2004
Study (Home):  859-223-6308                   Enrollment Limit: 60
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Catalog Description
A study of selected passages in Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians this course deals with the various textual, historical, rhetorical, exegetical, theological, and ethical concerns raised by these letters. The focus in the course will be on familiarizing the student not only with the content of these books, but also with the exegetical and hermeneutical issues that it raised and raises.

Introduction
The Captivity Epistles are some of the latest Pauline documents and give us clues as to how his theology ethics matured.

Course Objectives
Having successfully completed this course, participants should:
(1) be able to recognize the importance of a close reading of the text of Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon;
(2) be able to begin to master the skills necessary to exegete the Greek text of the NT documents;
(3) grasp the importance of the rhetorical structure of the works and its importance for understanding Pauline thought;
(4) understand the role of the works in the New Testament canon;
(5) be able to propose fruitful ways in which captivity epistles may be read within the horizons of the contemporary church and world; understand the importance of Romans for the Wesleyan concepts of election and sanctified living;
   to employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of these and other NT letters;
   to be able to identify central issues in the critical study of the captivity epistles;
   to be able to articulate the central theological assumptions and presuppositions one brings to the interpretation of books like the captivity epistles;
   to be able to critically assess commentaries and secondary literature, learning to distinguish between scholarly and devotional treatments of these letters;
   to be able to understand the captivity epistles in its social, historical, literary, and canonical contexts
Course Requirements and Reading

On questions of style, especially with regard to paper organization and references, see Carol Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses*, 11th ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

Students should submit written materials on time; late papers will receive no written comments and the grade will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

(1) **Class Preparation, Attendance, and Participation:** Participants should prepare for each class session by (1) carefully reading the assigned texts in the Captivity Epistles (see the reading schedule, below), (2) taking notes on the text, and (3) comparing their observations with those in at least one of the following commentaries. (15%)

- J. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon* (Sheffield Academic Press, September 1, 1997, pb)

Attendance at all sessions of the course is expected. In order to complete the course with a passing grade, no more than two classes may be missed.

(2) **A Critical Review:**

This review should be approximately 1300-1600 words (i.e., 5-6 pages, with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman and one-inch margins) in length, typed, double-spaced. Due at the beginning of the first class in October. As a critical review, this essay should summarize the authors central theses; demonstrate the author’s approach to the subject matter; and critique the author’s analysis (e.g., with regard to the author’s method, its faithfulness to the primary materials, its engagement with the wider discussion on the topic, and so on). (35%)

(3) **A Research Assignment:** An exegesis paper of approximately 10 pages (with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman and one-inch margins), typed, with 1.5 or double spacing, with appropriate notes and bibliography, treating a selected pericope of Romans. This paper should evidence both a close reading of the text and critical engagement with the range of secondary resources appropriate to the study. (See the bibliographic resources in the commentaries, as well as *New Testament Abstracts* in the Library.) Due by 4:00 November 1. (50%).
**Reading Schedule**
The student should plan to work through the commentaries as we progress through the course. You are expected to read all four assigned tests, beginning with the Paul Quest. I expect you to read at least 300 pages in Hoehner. The latter should be read at the beginning of the course.

**Course Schedule**
Approximately one week will be spent on introductory matters then we will deal with the text working through Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. Because of the length of this work, we will be concentrating on selected passages.

**Bibliography**
There are now several resources one can turn to as guides for selecting commentaries and secondary literature for the preparation of research papers as well as for ministry. The best of these is D.R. Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003).