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NT 615 Exegesis of the Gospel of Luke

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A. Catalog Description.
A close reading of the Gospel of Luke, with attention to its status as historiographical narrative, its relationship to the Acts of the Apostles, and the development of its message within the socio-historical environment of Roman antiquity. Prerequisite: NT(IBS)510 or 511; NT520; and NT500 or 501/502 or equivalent.

B. Additional Course Description.
Note that this is a course that has dual foci: the Gospel of Luke and exegetical method. The Gospel of Luke is the context, a kind of laboratory, for acquiring the exegetical skills and sensibilities that can be applied to the study of other, especially New Testament, texts.

IBS and Exegesis: What’s the Difference? This is largely a matter of relative emphasis. Both are really “exegesis” courses. As I am inclined to teach them, both make the interpretation of the canonical text the primary concern rather than the circumstances and materials of its production or the events that lie behind it. Both are serious and academic approaches to the text, but not merely academic. And both are method courses which “teach to fish” rather than “giving a fish.” For me, traditional exegetical concerns are underwritten by basic IBS sensibilities and IBS is augmented by the more diverse exegetical methods. Ultimately, the difference is a matter of proportion. Exegesis courses will give relatively more attention to questions of the Greek text, are liable to focus more upon details (though never forgetting the whole), and inclined to be methodologically more diverse. IBS courses will tend to focus more upon the English text (though not to the exclusion of Greek) and will tend to be more interested in discourse issues like structure.

C. Learning Objectives for Students. Having completed this course, students should be able to

1. describe the various traditional “behind the text” critical approaches to the gospels (esp. source and redaction criticism) and to assess their value, especially with respect to Luke’s gospel;
2. perform with basic competence and sensitivity the following exegetical tasks: lexical analysis, grammatical and syntactical analysis, sensitivity to genre and literary context, research and application of socio-historical backgrounds;
3. make careful use of the categories and perspectives of narrative criticism;
4. synthesize those diverse exegetical competencies into a coherent and persuasive exegesis of a particular Lukan pericope;
5. recognize and engage with the distinctive theological issues and questions of Luke’s gospel;
6. begin to appropriate the Gospel of Luke to theological concerns, personal life, and to life of the church.

D. Learning Goals for the Instructor:

1. I hope and expect to learn a lot about Luke’s gospel through teaching this class. I will also be doing all of the assignments that you are assigned in order to demonstrate the tasks I am assigning.

2. In addition to reviewing the assigned texts, my reading list for the course includes:


II. Course Materials and Texts

A. Required Texts


B. Biblical Texts

1. **Assumed.** Access to at least two contemporary translation of the Bible based on a critical text, preferably the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New International Version (NIV), or New American Standard (NAS). Excluded are The Living Bible, New Living Translation, *The Message*, the King James, and New King James, which whatever their other merits, do not fit the objectives of this class.

2. **Required.** A Greek-English interlinear NT such as Robert K. Brown, Philip Comfort, and J.D. Douglas, eds., *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1993) or, for more advanced or ambitious readers of Greek, The United Bible Society’s *The Greek New Testament, 4th* ed. or the Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece,* 27th ed. Students may also wish to consider the Greek-English New Testament in which the full NA27 Greek text including apparatus is interfaced with the RSV translation.

3. **Strongly Recommended.** *Bible Works 5.0.* Students will be expected to work with the Bible Works program for certain exegetical assignments. If you do not own the software, it will be your responsibility to find time in the library’s computer lab to fulfill the assignment.

C. Recommended Supplemental Texts

1. **Recommended Commentaries.** The following substantial critical commentaries will make the best dialogue partners for serious exegesis.


Green, *Luke*. This is an especially helpful commentary because it charts a different course than most of the others by taking the narrative shape of the whole gospel more seriously than the history of its constituent traditions.


Kingsbury, Jack D. *Conflict in Luke* (6 points) A deceptively simple book, the strength of this work is to give a kind of bird’s eye view of Luke’s plot and characterization, a forest that tends to get lost in the midst of trees of detailed exegesis of isolated pericopes.

Marshall, I. H. *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (7 points). Marshall argues that Luke is both a historian (against tendencies to denigrate his interest or success as historian) and theologian (that is, no mere disinterested chronicler of events).


Tannehill, Robert. *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*. Vol 1. (8 points). This is one of the benchmark works in “narrative” criticism, which sought to take the literariness of the text—its own interior dynamics rather than merely an account of its production—seriously

3. Research Resources


III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Preparation and Participation (20%)

1. Attendance. Regular attendance and participation is a basic expectation. The course is designed to be cumulative and methodological, so to miss a class—never mind several—would severely disadvantage the student for the material covered.

2. Preparation. In addition to the assignments related to the exegetical research project, students are expected to actively prepare for class each week by studying the assigned text segment as well as the focus pericope. This will involve the following preparation:
a) Spend at least an hour with the assigned text segment apart from any interaction with secondary sources, making a preliminary outline of the contents of the section.

b) Make a list of questions which the passage raises for you. These should be mostly of the exegetical variety, but some more “existential” questions are not inappropriate.

c) Commentaries

   (1) Read carefully and interactively the entire section of the Evans commentary. We will be reading Evans from cover to cover.

   (2) Also read carefully and interactively the section from Joel Green (JBG) for the “focus pericope.” We will be reading significant portions of the Green commentary.

d) Students are expected to bring a couple of pages of “crib notes” to each class that include outlines, questions, and critical interaction with the commentaries. In other words, students should expect to reply to a question such as “What did you find helpful in the Evans' (or Green) comment on this pericope?” “Where did you have questions or disagree?” “What exegetical or theological issue are you interested in pursuing further?” In other words, I expect that students should be able to set the course for the class discussion. These are primarily for the student's own use though the whole “pile” will be turned in at the end of the semester for the professor's superficial review. Handwritten notes are perfectly acceptable. The student's grade for preparation and participation will be assessed both on the quality of class interaction and on the notes submitted at the end of the semester.

3. One of the early class sessions will include a discussion of the Powell text. A few pages of informal notes for this class meeting would also be appropriate and should be submitted with the rest of your notes at the end of the semester.

B. Exegetical Research Project (65%).

1. Preliminary Proposal: Select a pericope from the Gospel of Luke that contains a parable of Jesus. Get a sense for what the “problems” in the passage might be, that is, both what puzzles you or has captured the interest of scholars who have worked with the passage. This assignment has no grade; the preliminary proposal will be accepted or returned for more work.

2. Translation text-critical/lexical/grammatical/syntactical analysis (5 points)

   a) Compare three major English translations; compare choice of vocabulary and the syntax, noting significant differences (differences that are merely stylistic and do not affect meaning can be ignored). For each significant difference compare with interlinear and determine as best as possible what lexical and grammatical choices account for the differences. Do not merely catalog differences; try to account for them.

   b) or, if Greek skill allows, do a fresh preliminary translation, annotating the translation with footnotes indicating the basis for your choices.

3. Literary Context (5 points). Give careful consideration to the literary context of the passage you have chosen. The breadth of relevant literary context cannot be predetermined—at least several chapters on either side, but possibly the whole gospel and maybe even Acts as well. Here you should consider such questions as How is this pericope interpreted by or interpretive of surrounding pericopes? How
are plot and characterization advanced by this pericope? Does this text “fulfill” something earlier in the gospel? Does it portend something later? Write not more than two pages on this. N.B. Green’s commentary is an especially good example of paying attention to this sort of thing (compare also Tannehill, Narrative Unity and L.T. Johnson’s commentary).

4. Lexical study. (5 points) choose at least two, preferably three, words which are either critical to the sense of the passage or for which the meaning is disputed. Do a “word study” appropriate for the questions raised. Minimally this will involve a (a) survey of Bauer-Danker Greek-English Lexicon, (b) an inductive study of the term within Luke-(Acts) or the NT, and (c) a survey of TDNT (G. Kittel, ed.), NIDNTT (C. Brown, ed.), TLNT (C. Spicq) or EDNT (G. Schneider, H. Balz, eds.)

5. Grammatical, Syntactical, and Structural Analysis (5 points). The primary tasks here will be (a) to account for the logical relationships of the clauses to each other by means of graphical display and (b) to isolate, research, and address, any significant syntactical or grammatical ambiguities.

6. Intertextual Analysis (5 points). What OT (really, Jewish scripture) texts does the pericope you are studying refer to directly? Allusively? How does this passage appropriate those texts? What about the form of the text cited or alluded to, is there any significance to it? How do the Jewish scriptures provide a broad context for the pericope you are studying? Report in two pages or less on your findings and their relevance for the interpretation of your passage.

7. Synoptic Comparison (5 points) Note: If the text you are studying is unique to Luke, then for this assignment you will need to select a different pericope. Using the four-color coding system we will learn in class (not Fee’s ☺), underline the parallels as displayed in a synopsis (English or Greek). Comment on the source-critical and redaction-critical outcome of your observations.

8. Background Issues (5 points). Pursue one or two questions related to the socio-historical background of your passage. Find five or six significant articles (at the very least a full column in length) from some of the following sources: IDB, ABD, ISBE, DJG, DNTB. Report in two pages or less on your findings and their relevance for the interpretation of your passage.

9. Major Commentary summary and dialogue (5 points). In addition to Green and Evans, read critically three more treatments of your passage from the major commentaries listed above (or you can propose another with the professor's permission). Write a two-page summary of important differences of approach and result. These can be organized either issue by issue or commentary by commentary, whichever suits the student’s needs and the passage most appropriately.

10. Annotated Bibliography (5 points). Produce an up-to-date bibliography of secondary literature relevant to your passage, not less than twenty and not more than forty entries. Include major commentaries, dictionary/encyclopedia articles (note that individual articles should be cited under the name of the author of the article, rather than the editors of the reference work), journal articles, and relevant sections from monographs. It is expected that students will make use of the ATLA database (also note the bibliographical resources in II.C.3). Note that the bibliography is “annotated,” meaning that each entry should include at least one sentence in which the contribution of the entry is summarized. This will mean that students will have
either read or at least skimmed (where possible) each item. In lieu of that, at least explain what you anticipate will be the contribution of the item. **Important:** Articles which are not held by the ATS Florida campus can be accessed through InterLibrary Loan (most will be available from the Wilmore Library), but this takes time. *Do not wait until the last minute.* Students might also want to check to see if the article they are looking for is available for photocopying in person at RTS (for periodical holdings, see www.rts.edu/libraries/orl-periodicals1.pdf).

11. Exegetical Thesis and Argument Summary (5 points). This is a key step in your paper writing that will make everything that follows much easier. This should consist of four distinct parts: (1) In one paragraph summarize the primary question(s) or problem(s) your paper will address. (2) Again in another paragraph summarize the primary alternatives to the problems, that is, what have important interpreters said about the issues in the first paragraph (think of your major commentators augmented by any other significant treatments). (3) What interpretive thesis will you argue for in your paper? You may choose to align yourself with a previous line of interpretation, suggest some nuancing or revision to it, or you may even choose to forge a new direction altogether. (4) Finally, summarize very succinctly your argument. Ideally you should be able to give a sentence to each of your main arguments all of which cumulatively support your thesis. (Good news. If you do this assignment well, you have essentially written the introduction to your paper! More than that, you will not be writing aimlessly, “making it up as you go.”)

12. Final Paper (20 points). The Final Paper should be between 3,000-5,000 words, excluding bibliography (i.e., 12-20 pages depending on font and formatting). Students are encouraged to make ample though selective use of as much or their earlier research as it proves useful. The better and more thoroughly these tasks were performed, the more potential material for the final paper. Whole paragraphs of those assignments *may* be adapted for use in the final paper. Conversely, weak or incomplete first attempts can be improved upon and redeemed for the final paper. The key to a good exegetical paper is determining what the issues are, what lines of investigation are important to pursue, and, above all, how various exegetical details are to be related to each other in support of the overall thesis.

13. Revised Edition. A revised edition of the Final Paper can be submitted which takes into account the professor’s critique of the earlier draft. *This is optional.* Students satisfied with their initial grade or without time or energy for the revision will be given the original grade on their Final Paper. For students who submit a revision of their final paper, it will be the grade of the revision which will count for the course grade.

14. Final Hermeneutical Reflection (5 points). The final assignment for the class moves from exegesis to appropriation. Here it is your task to reflect on the exegetical results of your work and answer the “so what?” question. No particular format is suggested, since your reflections will be both significantly personal and necessarily varied according to the sort of text you have worked with. To do this well will involve reflection on contextual issues, significant theological integration, and communal and individual applications.
IV. Grading Scale (Descriptions from ATS Catalogue, 28, Emphasis Added)

95-100 = A “Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives”
93-95 = A-
90-93 = B+
87-90 = B “Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives”
85-87 = B-
83-85 = C+
80-83 = C “Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives”
78-80 = C-
76-78 = D+
73-76 = D “Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives”
< 73 = F “Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives”

V. Class Protocol

A. Class Meetings. Our weekly meetings will consist of the following four components:

1. Segment Survey. Format: mostly lecture. Here we will survey the assigned section for the week commenting on selected exegetical issues along the way.

2. Focus Pericope. Format: dialogical teaching. Here, in an interactive format, we will dig more deeply into a particular pericope engaging in dialogue with the text, our assigned commentaries, and one another.

3. Lukan Criticism and Theology. Format: mostly lecture. These will be brief introductory lectures to issues in Lukan studies, either the kinds of issues that have interested critical scholars or various themes/motifs which are integral to the Lukan message.

4. Methodological focus. Format: explanation and demonstration with follow-up hands-on assignment. By showing my own work, I will explain and then demonstrate how to perform a discrete exegetical task in order to prepare you to do the same on a text that you have selected.

B. FirstClass Bulletin Board and Course Center

1. All Power Point slides and class handouts will be uploaded as files into the Course Center for the students’ review.

2. Students are strongly encouraged to ask any questions and to raise any concerns they have about the course on the course bulletin board, whether it be about the meaning of something you are reading, the syllabus, a problem with an assignment, a request for resources, etc. Your question, and hopefully my answer ☺, may well benefit others beside yourself. For that reason, unless the nature of your inquiry is expressly private, please post it on the course bulletin board rather than sending me a private email. I will try to answer postings at least every weekday.

C. Assignments

1. I prefer an electronic copy of your assignment to be attached to an email addressed to me. I will, likewise, grade and comment on your assignment by use of the comment feature of word-processing software and return it to you via email. This approach not only “saves trees,” but I also find that I can comment more meaningfully and legibly ☺ this way. If for
some reason this is impossible, a hard copy is acceptable, of course. I would especially
appreciate receiving the final paper in an electronic format.

2. I prefer that the file come to me in the MS Word format, although a WordPerfect or
Adobe Acrobat file is also acceptable. Please do not use any other formats.

3. It would make me happy if you would do the following with your file name: lastname_
generalassignment_descriptivename.doc. Of course, on your computer, you don’t need your
name on your files, but on mine, all of your assignments run together! So, for example, the
following file name format would make me very happy even before I read you work:

4. I do not intend to write individual emails to acknowledge individual assignments, but if
you have reason to be concerned whether or not I received something, just ask me to
acknowledge the receipt of your assignment.

5. Assignment deadlines are midnight on the due date. A half-grade reduction will
be made for each subsequent day late.

D. Format and Style

1. Students should get used to citing their sources properly and consistently. The
standard style reference for ATS is Carol Slade, Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports,
Theses (11th ed.; New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000). Also acceptable are Kate
Turabian, Chicago: University of Chicago Press or The SBL Style Handbook (the
latter is the generally recognized standard for the discipline of biblical studies).

2. Please be judicious and critical about your use of electronic and Internet sources.
Students under pressure (or who have not planned ahead ☹) are liable to rely
uncritically on this sort of material, but there is peril in doing so. Many electronic
sources include piles of older, public domain material that is not appropriate for
graduate research. Likewise, the Internet is a mixed bag of very high quality and
terribly unreliable resources; very little of it is “refereed.” So caution is in order. A
general rule is that more trustworthy resources can be expected on sites which are
under the auspices of academic institutions or scholarly societies. As for citation of
electronic resources, full Internet URLs and the date accessed is expected (see Slade,
Research Papers). For other electronically stored sources, the goal should be to cite the
material in such a way that a reader could access its paginated equivalent without
frustration.

3. Needless to say, plagiarism is unacceptable. Be well aware when you are offering
another’s ideas and when you are reproducing their words, and know the difference
between the two. On the other hand, it is not necessary to give attribution to any
particular source for a claim that is widely held, although a “catalog” of
representative proponents can be useful, all the more when opinion is divided.
VI.  **Course Schedule (in process and subject to revision)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SURVEY SECTION</th>
<th>PERICOPE FOCUS</th>
<th>CRITICISM AND THEOLOGY FOCUS</th>
<th>METHOD FOCUS</th>
<th>READING AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/25/03</td>
<td>The Birth and Childhood of Jesus (1:5-2:52)</td>
<td>4:14-30</td>
<td>Luke and the Socially Marginalized; Reversal</td>
<td>Translation or Translation Survey (as entry to detailed exegesis)</td>
<td>Preliminary Exegesis Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4/03</td>
<td>The Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Redaction Criticism and Mirror-reading</td>
<td>Lexical Study (and Motif Analysis)</td>
<td>JBG CAE Translation Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/8/03</td>
<td>No Meeting, Reading Week</td>
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