

## COS 511 -- New Testament II

At MTSO Spring 2010

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(Call or e-mail anytime you have a question)

This course focuses on the beginning and the end of the New Testament by looking at the gospels of *Matthew* and *John*, plus the letter of *James*, and the book of *Revelation*. It emphasizes the integration of previous learning in exegesis and biblical studies within the practice of your own preaching and ministry.

We will do *Matthew*, *John* and *James* the first weekend, *Revelation* the second.

### Objectives:

1. Hermeneutics - interpretation, putting it to work: continued improvement of the student's ability to effectively use and interpret scripture in the preparation of effective sermons and Bible studies
2. Proper development of a biblical point of view and theological perspective
3. Exegesis - does it mean today what it did when it was written: finding out what it (really) says and what it (really) meant then -- and means today

### Required recommended textbooks:

1. Your Bible -- and at least **one** of the following three:
2. Gordon D. Fee -- *New Testament: a Handbook for Students & Pastors*, 3rd edition (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002; ISBN 0664223168) **or**
3. Luke Timothy Johnson -- *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Augsburg Press, 2002; ISBN 080063439X) **or**
4. Frederick J. Murphy -- *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels* (Abingdon Press, 2005; ISBN 0687496926)

### Optional recommended supplementary textbooks

1. Warren Carter -- *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Abingdon Press, 2006; ISBN 0687343941) \$17
2. Burton Throckmorton, Jr. -- *Gospel Parallels: a Synopsis of the First Three Gospels With Alternative Readings* (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1949; ISBN 0000000000) \$35 (There are other good Gospel parallels out there unused in church libraries: I use *A Harmony of the Gospels* by John H. Kerr, published by Fleming Revel. Any one is fine.)
3. James M. Efird -- *Revelation for Today* (Abingdon Press, ISBN 0687361729) \$15
4. I recommend any of the *Basic Bible Commentary* series. For this course, vol. 17 (Matthew), vol. 20 (John), vol. 28 (James through Jude), and especially volume 29 (Revelation). A busy pastor's best friend at only \$6.50 per volume.
5. Walter Klaassen -- *Armageddon and the Peaceable Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1999; ISBN 0836190807) Absolutely outstanding -- superb!
6. *The New Interpreter's Bible (the NIB)* -- appropriate volumes

7. *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible (the IOVC)*, (Abingdon Press ISBN 0687192994) (The NIB and IOVC are always excellent references for you often available in church or local libraries)

### Written Questions:

I would like all written work sent to me by e-mail or regular mail two weeks before our first session -- by about March 1. You may hold off your work on *Revelation* and send it to me two weeks before our second session if you wish.

If you are going to miss the due date by a few days, just send it when you can. Do not spend money on overnite express mail; e-mail or regular mail will be fine -- I can wait.

- ♦ Please put COS 511 in the subject line on all e-mails to me
- ♦ Number your questions so I know which one you are answering
- ♦ Keep a copy of all your written work for backup.
- ♦ Put your name and date on each page and number the pages

Two or three pages of quality writing per question is fine unless the question obviously calls for less. You may single space or double space as you wish.

If you tend to go on and on and on beyond three pages, send it. I'll read anything you write me. However, ☠☠☠☠, *I expect to see many quotations/citations from your textbook(s), commentaries, and references* -- anywhere from several to numerous citations -- per page on each page. I want to know how your reading informs your thinking.

You do not need to footnote anything. If you are quoting from, say, page 34 of Gordon D Fee's book, or from page 453 of volume 7 of the NIB, simply put (GDF p 34) or (NIB vol 7, p 453) at the end of the last sentence quoted. Then simply list all books cited on a single bibliography page or section at the end of the work you are submitting.

### Questions:

1. Why is Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22) so important to *Matthew's* telling of the Gospel? Is Matthew a Jewish document? Why would you say so, or not so?
2. What is so significant (*sign-ificant*) about Jesus' saying "You have heard it said, but I say unto you..." (Mt 12.6, 41, 42) Are these random assertions of superiority? Or do they stand for the Law, Prophets, and Writings? Is Jesus claiming to be equal to Torah?
3. a.) Why was Matthew written? Was he so disappointed in what Mark wrote that he was constrained to correct Mark? b.) Why (theologically speaking) is the Sermon on the Mount so prominently featured in Matthew -- more than in Mark or Luke? c.) Why is there no altar call at the end of this, the greatest of all our Lord's sermons? d.) Citing and exegeting appropriate passages from Matthew, tell me if Matthew was written to save people *in* their sins or *from* their sins. e.) State the Sermon on the Mount in one sentence.

4. Matthew chapter 24 (as well as Mark 13 and Luke 21) is called "*the small apocalypse*." What is the primary lesson Jesus taught in Matthew chapter 24? How does studying these small apocalypses prepare us for our study of *Revelation*?

5. *John's* gospel is so different from the synoptics. a.) Tell me some of the significant differences between *Matthew* and *John*. So, why was *John* written? b.) Was *John* written so you might believe (conversion), or so that you might go on believing (reinforcement)? c.) Compare Matthew's temptation of Jesus (4.1-10) with John's temptation stories in John 6.14-15 and 7.3-4. d.) Why is the making of wine the first sign (miracle) John chooses to tell his readers? e.) And why does John say "*sign*" instead of "*miracle*?" f.) Put *John* into one fresh sentence for the XXI Century.

6. *James* is a book of wisdom, much like the OT -- lots of quotable verses. Did James just happen to make these up, or is he quoting Jesus? For instance, tell me, is the command to pray without doubting (1.5-6) taken from Mt 7.7-8, or is 5.9 taken from Mt 24.33? James 2.8 comes from Lev 19.18, but how about from Mt 22.39? Any possibilities that material from the Sermon on the Mount appears in James? Too bad James didn't cite his quotations like you have to! In one final line, tell me what *James*, this "strawy epistle" according to Martin Luther, is really all about.



7. (I would like these answers before our first class session but you may feel free to submit them two weeks before session 2 if it is more convenient for you.)

- a.) What is the only proper attitude a Christian should have in approaching the study of *Revelation*?
- b.) What is the proper name of this book?
- c.) Is this a Christian document or a Jewish document? Explain
- d.) Define clearly: *apocalypse, eschaton, parousia, rapture, Day of the Lord, servant, witness, saint, Tribulation*.
- e.) What are the clear characteristics of *apocalyptic literature*?
- f.) Which books of the OT and NT are apocalyptic books?
- g.) If I said "*The first readers of this great book understood everything in it,*" what would you say to me on the basis of your readings?
- h.) In *Revelation*, and according to what you read, is the *triumph of God over evil and death* a future expectation or has it been already realized? Is *Revelation* a history of the past, or a history of the future?
- i.) John Wesley said words to the effect that "our human thoughts on end times are really our puny speculations reaching out far beyond faith's basic surety that God's final purposes for his human creation *have already been validly revealed in Jesus Christ*." What do you say to that? (Have you read *The Good Steward* or *The Great Assize*?)
- j.) Again, in one or two clairvoyant and prescient sentences, tell me the main theme of the *Book of Revelation*.



