

2021 COS 521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

Dates: **2021 Asynchronous Pre-Course – Aug. 13-21**
2021 Synchronous Virtual In-person Classes – Aug. 21, Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 9
2021 Asynchronous Post-Course – Oct. 9–30

Instructor: **Joseph Jarrett**

Home address: 2317 Washington Ave., Saint Albans WV 25177 Cell Phone: (304) 633-6495

Email Address: umpastorjoe@msn.com Put “2021 COS 521” first in the Subject line of your emails.

- Attendance requirements and grading guidelines are described in the *Course of Study Student Handbook*.
- In the nature of Course of Study, much is required to be completed before the virtual in-person class sessions.
- **The Instructor may modify course content and assignments at will, in keeping with Course Objectives.**
- Synchronous Class Sessions may include presentations, videos, discussions, question-and-response, and in-class writing.
- Asynchronous viewing may include content publicly posted online or other content posted by this Instructor.

COS 521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

This course focuses on the **content** and **context** of these writings, and the **theological emphases** of their writers. In addition to *Acts* and *Revelation*, the letters of *Romans*, *1 Corinthians*, *Hebrews*, *James*, and *1 John* will receive special attention. Students will articulate a theology of scripture.

Course Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Distinguish these genres of biblical literature, and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
2. Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
4. Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

NOTE: *The Course Description and Course Objectives are specified by the Course of Study School of Ohio, with Required books #2 and #3 and Recommended books #3, #4, and #5 listed below. This Instructor has added Required Textbook #1 and Recommended books #1 and #2.*

Required Textbooks: (available from Cokesbury, Amazon.com, Amazon Kindle, Google Books, and other booksellers)

1. Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation, 3rd Edition*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2010; 9780800663612.
2. Carter, W., and A.J. Levine, *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2013; 9781426741906.
3. Bassler, Jouette. *Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts*, Westminster Press, Louisville, 2006; 9780664227418.

Recommended Optional Texts:

1. Fee, Gordon. *New Testament Exegesis, Third Edition: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2002; 0664223168. [Note: A model by this Instructor, adapted from Fee's *Exegesis* and "Short Guide for Sermon Exegesis," will provide the step-by-step pattern that you will use for your exegesis for this course. The adapted model is printed in this Syllabus.]
Other good books and models for Exegesis are available, and you may have used some other models in other courses. Nevertheless, the model adapted from Fee's book, included in this Syllabus, will be basic for this course.
2. Hill, Craig C. *In God's Time: The Bible and the Future*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2002; 0802860907. Kindle edition less than \$10.
3. Furnish, Victor, *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues, 3rd Edition*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2009; 9780687332939.
4. Wright, N.T., *Revelation (N. T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guides)*. Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, 2012; 9780830821990.
5. Powell, Mark Allen, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey, Second Edition*. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 2018; Print: 9780801099601; Kindle ASIN: ...B0752SZSWZ. [Fully revised and expanded] or First Edition. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 2009; Print: 9780801028687; Kindle ASIN: ...B00ARGXH2.

Required Bible:

A **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Study Bible** with annotations and introductions (Examples: *Oxford*, *Interpreter's*, *Wesley*, or *HarperCollins*). The **NRSV** will be the basis for study and for your work of **Exegesis and Sermon**. Other versions, in print or online, should be consulted and cited in your research and preaching. Nevertheless, the **NRSV** will be our "common" version for classwork, although you may prefer another version for ordinary use in your pastoral setting.

A MODEL FOR SERMON EXEGESIS (adapted by this Instructor from Fee's *Exegesis*)

You may use the *Short Guide* in Fee's *Exegesis*, or you may learn to apply and adapt that step-by-step model, such as in the manner of the model below, as approved by the Instructor (with apologies to Gordon Fee).

Quoted material is from Fee's *Exegesis*. Notes in [brackets] are added by this Instructor.

New Testament Exegesis by Gordon Fee, especially *Chapter III. Short Guide for Sermon Exegesis*. Adapted JJ.

A. The Exegetical Task [approx. 5 hours]

1. Getting Started [approx. 1 hr 20 min]

1. "The best way for you to become acquainted with the paragraph and to discover what in the paragraph needs special study is to read the paragraph through ...[several] translations." [i.e., NRSV, NIV, KJV, NASB, etc.]
2. "Mark well the differences between/among your translations. You may do this ... by making a list of the differences and supporting translations at every point."
3. "Determine ... which differences are merely synonyms or matters of taste and which make a genuine difference in meaning."

[Note: There are helpful online versions, **BibleHub** for example, that point to word backgrounds and many alternative translations, including Greek-English "interlinear" versions.]

2. Matters of Content [approx. 1 hour]

1. "Look specifically for textual variations that would affect the meaning of the text for your congregation in the English translation." [These often appear as footnotes that indicate alternative translations or omissions]
2. "Note any grammar that is unusual, ambiguous, or otherwise important."
3. "Make a list of key terms."
4. "Do a mini-word study for any crucial terms."

3. Contextual Questions [approx. 1 hour]
For Epistles, Acts, and Revelation

"Most people in a congregation are usually helped when you explain some of the historical-cultural matters that are truly significant to the meaning of the text."

▪ **Examine the historical context**

1. "Since the Epistles are all occasional documents (i.e., they were occasioned by some special circumstance, either from the reader's side or from the author's), it is important to try to reconstruct the nature of the situation to which your major subsection of the letter is a response."
2. "Read the subsection through several times. As you read, pay close attention to the details of the text. As best you can, try to imagine what it would have been like to be sitting in an early Christian community hearing the letter read for the first time."
3. "Make a list of everything that tells you something about the recipients and their situation."
4. "Make another list of key words and repeated phrases that indicate the subject matter of the section."
5. "Try at this point, in a tentative way, to write a paragraph that puts all these data into a coherent expression of the problem or situation of the readers."

▪ **Examine the literary context**

1. "For your specific text, you have now come to the absolutely essential exegetical question. What is the point of this passage? How does it fit into the overall scheme of the letter? And, more important, how does it fit right at this point in the author's argument or exhortation?"
2. "On the basis of what the author has said up to here, why does he now say this?"

4. Secondary Literature [approx. 50 min]

"There are three reasons for reading the commentaries at this point:

1. To look at the options of scholars for some of the difficulties you had at various points in your exegesis. At times, of course, you will consult the commentaries when you meet [with] difficulty as you exegete the text.
2. To listen to at least three other interpretations of the text, with which you can compare your own and make adjustments if another turns out to be more convincing.
3. To be alerted to issues or options that you overlooked in your exegesis that may prove crucial for your sermon."

5. Biblical-Theological Context [approx. 30 min]

1. "What is this passage similar or dissimilar to? Is it one of many similar types, or is it fairly unique? What gaps does it fill? Does anything hinge on it elsewhere? Do other Scriptures help make it comprehensible? How? Where does it fit in the overall structure of biblical revelation? What value does it have for the student of the Bible? In what ways is it important for your congregation?"
2. "To what theological doctrines does the passage add light? What are its theological concerns? Might the passage raise any questions or difficulties about some theological issue or stance that needs an explanation? How major or minor are the theological issues on which the passage touches? Where does the passage seem to fit within the full system of truth contained in Christian theology?"

6. Application [approx. 45 min]

1. "List the life issues in the passage."
2. "Clarify the possible nature and area of application."
3. "Identify the audience and categories of application."

B. From Exegesis to Sermon [approx. 5 hours]

7. Spend time in reflection on the text and in prayer.
8. Begin with a sense of purpose.
9. Decide on the introduction and conclusion.
10. Construct an outline.
11. Construct the sermon.

COS 521 NOTE: Your exegesis and sermon are separately considered for grading purposes.

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Some assignments are to VIEW an online video (asynchronously), most are to READ, some ask you to make STUDY NOTES to prepare for in-class discussion, and others are WRITTEN ESSAYS. Some require citations and Works Cited pages, some omit Works Cited page.

All Study Notes and Written Essays are to be emailed, when requested, to the Instructor for grading.

Pre-Course Work to be completed BEFORE August 21

1. Read Johnson's INTRODUCTION; PART 1: SYMBOLIC WORLD; and PART 2: CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.
2. View Luke Timothy Johnson's lecture *Resurrection Session 1 AM* online at <https://vimeo.com/324317934>. **Asynchronous viewing credit will apply (46)**. The author of our primary textbook, Johnson was Professor of NT and Christian Origins at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta. In this video posted in 2019, Johnson is 2 years retired but very engaging.
3. **Study Notes #1:** 1-3 pages, no citations needed. From Johnson's INTRODUCTION, be prepared to name and briefly describe the four dimensions of the *Search for An Interpretive Model* in Johnson, print pp. 4-6; and be prepared to describe briefly the interplay of Experience that calls for *Interpretation and Interpretation* (symbolic world) that helps make sense of our *Experience*; then be able to list the four basic steps of the "framework for investigation" in Johnson, print p. 14 (which is the outline for Johnson's book).
4. **Written Essay #1:** 4-5 pages minimum, using MLA formatting, full pages, double-spaced, *in addition to* Works Cited page. When your thoughts derive directly or indirectly from Johnson or any other source, then cite where that comes from. Your essay will reflect on the following questions:
 - a. What is the foundational claim of the first Christians and the effects they experienced?
 - b. How and why was the symbol of the Holy Spirit so central to the early followers of Jesus?
 - c. How did Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, followed by his singular resurrection, create "cognitive dissonance"—especially for the Jews who were the first Christians—and what did they do about it?
 - d. What does it mean to say that the resurrection was (and is) "a new way of experiencing Jesus"?
 - e. What is the "resurrection faith" and how is it relevant to the Church at its beginning—and now?
 - f. How would you describe your own Resurrection Experience and on-going Resurrection Faith? Your church(es)?

5. View Craig C. Hill's lecture *Are We There Yet?* online at [\(7\) Session 1: Are We There Yet? - YouTube](#). **Asynchronous viewing credit will apply (17)**. This is the first of Hill's series *In God's Time: The Bible and the Future*, of which we shall see more later in exploring *Revelation* near the end of this course. At that time, Hill was at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC. Dr. Hill is presently Dean of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas.
6. **Written Essay #2:** 1-3 pages, no citations needed. Reflecting on Hill's lecture and the content of Romans 5, especially verses 1-5, how does the apocalyptic eschatology of *Revelation* express hope? How is the Resurrection Faith the basis of Christian Eschatology? How does the death and resurrection of Jesus give rise to hope for the future in our own day?

Virtual In-Class Session 1, Saturday, August 21, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. (Synchronous)

Unique Zoom link for this session will be emailed to students. Each session has its own unique Zoom link.

Topics: Experience-Interpretation; Resurrection Experience; Paul the Eyewitness

Out-of-Class Work to be completed BEFORE September 11

1. View Johnson's lecture *Paul—Oppressor or Liberator* online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dF7CGup9gZQ>, delivered in 2013 at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church, Bloomfield Township, Michigan. **Asynchronous viewing credit will apply (60)**.
2. View Johnson's lecture *What Kind of Jew Was Paul?* online at https://youtu.be/rXMhr_rom_4, delivered in 2013 at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church, Bloomfield Township, Michigan. **Asynchronous viewing credit will apply (60)**.
3. Read Johnson's PART 4: INTRODUCTION TO PAULINE TRADITIONS; CHAPTER 10: PAUL'S MINISTRY AND LETTERS; CHAPTER 12: CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE. Read Bassler's NAVIGATING PAUL, CHAPTER 1: GRACE and Carter&Levine's CHAPTER 7: 1 CORINTHIANS.
 - a. **Study Notes #2:** 1-3 pages, no Works Cited page needed. Sourced by Paul's letter and the textbooks, how does **1 Corinthians 1–4** work out a "theology of the cross" (and the ethics/behavior derived therefrom) and **1 Corinthians 15** develop a "theology of resurrection" (and the appropriate ethics/behavior)?
4. Read Johnson's CHAPTER 14: LETTER TO THE ROMANS; Bassler's NAVIGATING PAUL, CHAPTER 3: FAITH; and Carter&Levine's NEW TESTAMENT METHODS AND MEANINGS, CHAPTER 6: ROMANS (for an interestingly different approach to Romans).
 - a. **Study Notes #3:** 2-3 pages, no Works Cited page needed. In what way is **Romans 1:16-17** the thesis of the entire letter? How does **Romans 3:21-31** "re-state" and elaborate on this thesis? How is the righteousness (or, justice) of God revealed to—or received by—faith and faithfulness ("obedience of faith"), without allowing for human faith or faithfulness to be the **causative** factor in God's saving activity ("All this is God's gift") ?

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5. Read in Johnson’s CHAPTER 4: LUKE-ACTS, the section beginning THE ACTS NARRATIVE (print, p. 209ff.) and continuing through THE PICTURE OF PAUL IN ACTS. Also read Carter&Levine’s CHAPTER 5: ACTS.
- Study Notes #4:** 1-3 pages, no Works Cited page needed. Describe some of the **differences** between **what Paul writes about himself** in his own letters and the **portrayal of Paul by Luke** in Acts, especially the accounts of Paul’s interactions with leaders in Jerusalem and his relationship with Peter. What does this mean when attempting to use Acts (or Paul’s letters) as biography in the modern sense? ...when using both Paul’s letters and Acts in interpreting Paul in preaching and teaching?

Virtual In-Class Session 2, Saturday, September 11, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. (Synchronous)

Unique Zoom link for this session will be emailed to students.

Topics: Paul in 1 Corinthians; Romans; Acts

Out-of-Class Work to be completed BEFORE September 25

- Read Johnson, CHAPTER 20: HEBREWS; CHAPTER 23: JAMES; CHAPTER 25: 1, 2, 3 JOHN. Also read Carter&Levine, CHAPTER 16: HEBREWS; CHAPTER 17: JAMES; and CHAPTER 20: 1, 2, 3 JOHN.
 - Study Notes #5:** 2-3 pages, no Works Cited page needed. When studying Johnson and Carter&Levine, make notes of some of the unique qualities of each writing (Hebrews, James, and 1 John) in which you find opportunity and challenge for preaching and teaching. Be prepared to describe and discuss these in class.
- Read Johnson’s CHAPTER 26: REVELATION and Carter&Levine’s CHAPTER 21: REVELATION.
 - Written Essay #2:** Describe in your own words the central message of the letters to the seven churches. Then summarize the argument of the whole of Revelation and the effect of this writing then and now.

3. View Craig C. Hill’s lectures *Revelation, Once and Future Kingdom*, and *Hope Unseen* using the Zoom link that will be emailed to students. These lectures will be **posted for viewing only** from September 14 through Sept. 24. Students may view each in different visits or all at once. **Asynchronous viewing credit will apply (60).**

4. View N. T. Wright’s lecture *Jesus and the Future* online at https://youtu.be/GYfZbD1_MH4 . **Asynchronous viewing credit will apply (85).** This is the second of two lectures given in 2016 at Perkins School of Theology, SMU, Dallas. For the first lecture, Wright is introduced by Craig. C. Hill. That lecture is found at <https://youtu.be/3ITQuM8f8LY>. **Viewing is optional, no credit.**

Virtual In-Class Session 3, Saturday, September 25, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. (Synchronous)

Unique Zoom link for this morning session will be emailed to students.

Topics: Hebrews, James, 1 John

Virtual In-Class Session 4, Saturday, September 25, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (Synchronous)

Unique Zoom link for this afternoon session will be emailed to students. It is NOT the same as morning link!

Topics: Revelation; About your Exegesis and Sermon

Out-of-Class Work to be completed BEFORE October 9

- Written Essay #4—Exegesis:** approx. 5-7 pages or more. Using the **Model for Exegesis** in this syllabus, adapted from Fee’s Short Guide, develop an Exegesis of a passage of your choice from 1 Corinthians, Romans, Acts, or Revelation.
 - NUMBER AND NAME each “major step” as given in the model [1. Getting Started, 2. Matters of Content, 3. ...].
 - Properly use and cite sources, including the assigned texts/sources for this course, and add Works Cited page.
- Written Essay #5—Sermon:** approx. 5-7 pages. Using your Exegesis, develop a Sermon of approximately 5-7 pages (or more) that you could (and, hopefully, will!) preach.
 - Your Sermon will follow MLA writing form and rules. See Writing Help online at www.coswv.org/resources .
 - In your written sermon, you will include source citations in the text and add a Works Cited page at the end, even though you might not “speak” all the source citations in actual preaching.
 - Do the hard work! Study and listen for the Word of God; then deliver it, to the best of your God-given ability.

Virtual In-Class Session 5, Saturday, October 9, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. (Synchronous)

Unique Zoom link for this session will be emailed to students.

Topic: Proclaiming Christ Crucified and Risen

Post-Course Work to be completed BEFORE October 23

- Following class discussions and careful review, you may revise your Exegesis/Sermon and re-submit in final form.
- Complete or revise any other work previously assigned and submit in final form.
- Complete any supplemental work due to Instructor changes and recommendations and submit.