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# NT 520 New Testament Introduction

M. Robert Mulholland

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PERSPECTIVE: All we are and everything we do is a spiritual matter because our lives are immersed in God's presence, purpose, and power. In all we are, think, say, and do in this course, individually and collectively, we should seek to be conscious of God's constant and pervading presence. We should also consciously and consistently seek God's purpose for us in this course. We need to be open, receptive, and responsive to the power of the Holy Spirit at every level of this course as the mediator of God's presence and the actualizer of God's purposes. We must bathe this course in prayer, releasing ourselves and one another to the presence, purpose, and power of God. Only in this way can this course be all God purposes it to be in our present life and future ministry.

PURPOSE: There are three areas in which we will seek the actualization of God's purpose for us in this course:

- Part I - An Introduction to the New Testament as an historical document
- Part II - An Introduction to the New Testament as a literary document
- Part III - An Introduction to the New Testament as a spiritual document

PARTICULARS: It is prayerfully expected that this course will be used by God to enable you to:

#### Part I

1. Appropriate a basic knowledge of the introductory issues of the New Testament writings (History of New Testament times; authorship, place, date, relationships to other New Testament writings; genres of literature; etc.), and how the cultural contextualization of the New Testament relates to the global, multi-ethnic, cross-cultural nature of the church and its ministry.
2. Understand the process by which the New Testament documents became the canon of the Christian movement.

#### Part II

3. Acquire a knowledge of the history of New Testament Criticism from the Enlightenment to the present and its significance for pastoral leadership:
  - a. The origin and development of various methods of criticism.
  - b. The foundational presuppositions of these methods.
  - c. Evaluation of these presuppositions.
4. Develop a working understanding of the various methodologies of New Testament criticism and their interplay, especially within a biblical and Wesleyan conception of the Gospel:
  - a. Historical Methodologies: Historical Criticism, History of Religions.
  - b. Textual Methodologies: Textual Criticism, Linguistic Criticism.
  - c. Literary Methodologies: Literary Criticism, Source Criticism.
  - d. Structural Methodologies: Form- and Redaction-Criticism,

- e. Post-modern Methodologies: Reader-response theories; Meta-critical, Socio-Critical, and Socio-pragmatic hermeneutics; Deconstruction.

### Part III

5. Nurture an awareness of the spiritual realities incarnate in the text of the New Testament with the ability to discern their incarnation in the historical and literary context of the New Testament.
6. Appropriate these spiritual realities for discipleship and service.

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

#### 1. Textbooks:

- Part I: *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, Everett Ferguson (BEC)<sup>1</sup>  
*Introducing the New Testament*, Achtemeier, Green, Thompson (AGT)  
 Part II: *Interpreting the New Testament*, Black and Dockery, eds. (BD)  
*Hearing the New Testament*, Joel B. Green (HNT)  
 Part III: *Opening the Bible*, Thomas Merton (OB)  
*Shaped by the Word*, M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. (SW)

#### 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 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 to 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 of learning, and presentation of understanding.

#### 3. Class Sessions:

A lecture format will be used as the basic methodology, with class discussion of various points of interest, question, or concern as time allows. It is hoped that you will enter into the class experience with the prayerful expectation that God has things He purposes to do in each mind and heart, and that you will be open and receptive to the work of God in your life.

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<sup>1</sup> The title abbreviations are **boldfaced** throughout the tentative schedule to indicate the primary text for each unit.

## 4. Papers:

One concise research paper (1/3 of course grade) will be required (**DUE October 7**). The paper should be developed within the following parameters:

- a. Select a clearly defined topic or area for study from one of the three parts of the course.
- b. Research the topic/area, reading at least 150 pages.
- c. The paper will follow this format:
  - i. Define the topic/area (about half a page)
  - ii. Identify the position of the source(s) read (about one page)
  - iii. Critique the position of the source(s), what are the strengths, weaknesses (about a page and a half)
  - iv. Present and defend your position (about a page)
  - v. Show the relevance of the issue for your spiritual life (about half a page)
  - vi. Indicate the impact of the issue on your ministry (about half a page)
- d. The paper should be no more than 5 pages (typed, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins all around)

One concise exegetical paper (1/3 of course grade) will be required (**DUE November 18**). The paper should be developed within the following parameters:

- a. The paper should reveal a close reading of the passage in its original contexts, and employ the relevant critical methodologies in unpacking the meaning of the passage for the original readers.
- b. The paper should evidence engagement with appropriate secondary resources. These will be cited appropriately when quoted (Either footnotes or author and date in parentheses with bibliography).
- c. The paper should provide an application of the meaning of the passage for Christian life in the world today.
- d. The paper should be no more than 8 pages (typed, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins all around)

One concise reflective paper (1/3 of course grade) will be required (**DUE December 9**). The paper should be developed within the following parameters:

- a. The paper should focus on one compact NT text, complete in its context.
- b. Reflect the historical and literary context of the text as the setting for the spiritual reality incarnate in the passage.
- c. Unpack the spiritual reality of the passage, framing it within the larger spiritual reality of the document and the New Testament.
- d. Indicate the relevance of this spiritual reality for your own discipleship and ministry.

- e. Indicate the relevance of this spiritual reality in the context of contemporary culture.
- f. The paper should be no more than 5 pages (typed, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins all around)

The quality of these papers should reflect work done "as unto the Lord" for they will represent the cumulative results of the depth and faithfulness of your stewardship of time and study.

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

- Up to 10% unexcused absences: 0 grade-level reduction (A/A-)
- 10 to 20% unexcused absences: 1 grade-level reduction (A/B+), etc.
- Three unexcused lates will equal 1 unexcused absence
- Late submission of work: 1 grade-level reduction/week

BIBLIOGRAPHY: The following list is neither exhaustive nor inclusive. It provides basic resources for additional study. Give attention to the bibliographies given in Guthrie (985-1032). Also helpful are the articles in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.

#### Part I

- F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History*
- *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*
- J. Ellul, *Apocalypse*
- Craig Evans and Stanley Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background*
- W. R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem*
- Feine-Behm-Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*
- Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*
- R. M. Grant, *The Formation of the New Testament*
- *The Jews in the Roman World*
- A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History*
- M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity*
- J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*
- H. Koester, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*
- E. Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*
- H. Mattingly, *Roman Imperial Civilization*
- B. M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and, Content*
- F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism*
- B. Reicke, *The New Testament Era*
- J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*
- J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark*
- M. Rostovtzeff, *Rome*
- E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*
- O. Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*
- E. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*
- A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*
- E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*

H. H. Stoldt, *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*  
 Paul Veyne, *The Roman Empire*  
 H. Von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible*  
 N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*  
*Jesus and the Victory of God*

## Part II

J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*  
 W. A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament*  
 Blasi, Duhaime, Turcotte, eds. *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*  
 W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*  
 R. Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*  
 R. F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament*  
 David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*  
 W. G. Doty, *Contemporary New Testament Interpretation*  
 Cain Hope Felder, ed. *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*  
 R. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and the Word of God*  
 Justo L. Gonzales, *Santa Biblia: The Bible through Hispanic Eyes*  
 R. M. Grant, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*  
 Joel B. Green, *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*  
 A. M. Johnson, *Structuralism and Biblical Hermeneutics*  
 Koester-Robinson, *Trajectories through Early Christianity*  
 E. Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method*  
 W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems*  
 E. V. McKnight, *What Is Form Criticism?*  
 B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*  
 S. C. Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961*  
 D. Patte, *What Is Structural Exegesis?*  
 D. and A. Patte, *Structural Exegesis: From Theory to Practice*  
 N. Perrin, *What Is Redaction Criticism?*  
 R. M. Polzin, *Biblical Structuralism*  
 A. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: Philosophical Description and New Testament Hermeneutics*  
 ----- *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*

## Part III

Gorman, Michael, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*  
 Green, Michael and Stevens, R. Paul, *New Testament Spirituality*  
 Johnson, Jan, *Savoring God's Word*  
 Larsen, David L., *Biblical Spirituality: Discovering the Real Connection between the Bible and Life*  
 Leech, Kenneth, *Experiencing God: Theology as Spirituality*  
 McKenzie, John L. *New Testament for Spiritual Reading*  
 Muto, Susan, A. *A Practical Guide to Spiritual Reading*  
*Renewed at Each Awakening: The Formative Power of Sacred Words*  
*Steps Along the Way: The Path of Spiritual Reading*  
 Pennington, M. Basil, *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*

## On-line Resources:

Eugene Peterson, "The Practice of Spiritual Reading" at <http://www.thelife.com/explore/read.html>

Luke Dysinger, "Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina" at <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>

Armand Veilleux, "Lectio Divina as School of Prayer among the Fathers of the Desert" at <http://users.skynet.be/scourmont/Armand/wri/lectio-eng.htm>

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE PART I

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READINGS</u>	<u>RESOURCES</u>
9-7	<b><u>New Testament History</u></b>	<b><u>BEC</u></b>	Lohse, Bruce, Reicke,
	Palestinian Judaism	AGT 2	Schurer, Jeremias
9-9	Diaspora Judaism	BEC 5 HNT 5	Smallwood, Grant
9-14	Roman-Hellenistic World	BEC 1-4 HNT 6	Rostovtzeff, Mattingly, Peters, Bruce, Koester
9-16	<b><u>New Testament Writings</u></b>	<b><u>AGT 1</u></b>	
	<u>Synoptic Problem</u>	AGT 3, BD 15, HNT 3	
	Matthew	AGT 4	Stoldt, Farmer
	Mark	AGT 5	Robinson 2, Jeremias
	Luke	AGT 6	Harvey
9-21	<u>Johannine Writings</u>		
	Gospel of John	AGT 7, BD 16	
	Letters of John	AGT 23	
	Revelation	AGT 24, BD 20	
9-23	<u>History</u>		
	Acts	AGT 9, BD 17	Hengel, Sherwin-White
9-28	<u>Pauline Writings</u>	AGT 10-11, BD 18	Bruce, Sanders
	Galatians	AGT 14	

	Thessalonians	AGT 18	
	Corinthians	AGT 13	
9-30	Phil, Col. Eph. Phm.	AGT 15-17	
	Pastorals	AGT 19	
	Romans	AGT 12	
10-5	<u>Petrine Writings</u>		
	I Peter	AGT 22.1-2, BD 19	
	II Peter	AGT 22.3	
	<u>Jewish-Christian Writings</u>		
	Hebrews	AGT 20	
	James, Jude	AGT 21, 22.4	
10-7	<u>New Testament Canon</u>	AGT 25	Grant, VonCampenhausen (RESEARCH PAPER DUE)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE PART II

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READINGS</u>	<u>RESOURCES</u>
10-12	<u>Introduction</u>	<b>BD, HNT</b>	
	Why NT Criticism?	BD 1-2 HNT 1, 20	Collins, Doty, Grant
	<u>History of NT Criticism</u>		
	Philosophical Preparations	BD 9	
	Beginnings of Biblical Criticism	HNT 2	Kümmel, Neill
10-14	Quest for the Historical Jesus	AGT 8	Grant
	Issues of 20th Century Criticism		Thiselton 2
	Barth and Bultmann		Thiselton 1



Bultmann and Heidegger

Thiselton 1

Bultmann and the New Quest

Thiselton 1

10-19 **Theories of NT Criticism**

Demythologizing

Bultmann

The New Hermeneutic

Thiselton 1, Funk

Presuppositions in N. T. Criticism HNT 14

**Methods in New Testament Criticism**

10-21 Historical Criticism HNT 4

History of Religions

Bousset, Koester/Robinson 2

Textual Criticism

BD 3, HNT 7 Metzger

Linguistic Criticism

BD 11, HNT 8 Barr

10-26 and 28 No Class

11-2 Literary Criticism

BD 7

Beardslee

Source Criticism

BD 4

Form Criticism

BD 5

McKnight

Redaction Criticism

BD 6

Perrin

Sociological Criticism

BD 8

**(REFLECTIVE PAPER DUE)**

11-4 Post-Modern Theories

HNT 9-10  
12-13, 15-17

Thiselton 2

of Interpretation

Thiselton 2

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE PART III**

**DATE TOPIC READINGS RESOURCES**

11-9 The Word Became Text **SW**

Spiritual Reading OB

11-11 Synoptic Spirituality

11-16	Johannine Spirituality I	
11-18	Johannine Spirituality II	<b>(EXEGETICAL PAPER DUE)</b>
11-30	Pauline Spirituality I	
12-2	Pauline Spirituality II	
12-7	Spirituality of Peter, James	
12-9	Spirituality of Hebrews, Jude	<b>(REFLECTIVE PAPER DUE)</b>