

BI550 - Introduction to the New Testament

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Course Description and Objectives

This course is a survey and introduction to the content, message, interpretation, and background of the New Testament.

By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

- *Identify* the distinctive theological concerns of the New Testament authors.
- *Interpret* the New Testament texts within their social and historical settings.
- *Analyze* New Testament texts from historical and theological perspectives.
- *Construct* a synthesis of theological themes drawn from multiple New Testament texts and authors.
- *Evaluate* scholarly and theological interpretations of New Testament texts.
- *Justify* their own opinions about and interpretations of New Testament texts using evidence.

From a discipleship perspective, the course will aim to 1) foster an appreciation for the message of the New Testament; 2) encourage students to grow in their appreciation and understanding of Scripture; and 3) strengthen students' connection with Jesus Christ through their knowledge and understanding of the New Testament writings and their historical contexts.

Requirements and Procedure

Online lectures and discussion, weekly assignments, readings, and major papers will provide the platform for achieving the course objectives. Students are expected to be well-prepared, respectful, and insightful when participating in online discussion. Weekly reading assignments must be completed before viewing the lecture and before engaging in online discussion.

Students will be expected to complete weekly assignments and to contribute to the online discussion by posting answers to a question that I will ask. Students are also expected to write no more than 2-3 paragraphs each week commenting on the aspects of the primary and secondary text readings that they found most interesting or engaging.

Students are also expected to complete two short research assignments on the background and context of the New Testament, as well as two interpretive papers, one on a Gospel text, and another on a New Testament epistle. The first research assignment will be on one aspect of the historical, archaeological, or cultural

background of a Gospel narrative. The second research assignment will be a brief study of a New Testament city in historical, cultural, and archaeological perspective.

The primary text for this course will be the New Testament itself. It is strongly recommended that students make use of a good study Bible, such as the New Oxford Annotated Bible, to aid in their reading. However, the use of a study Bible is not required. The secondary text (the textbook) for the course will be *Introducing the New Testament* by Mark Allan Powell.

Required Texts

Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.

A good study Bible, such as the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* (4th ed.) is highly recommended. Other study Bibles, such as the Harper Collins Study Bible or the ESV Study Bible are also acceptable.

We will also make use of the Biblical Archaeology Society Library in electronic form.