

NT 2063 — EXEGESIS OF PAUL'S MAJOR LETTERS: GALATIANS IN GREEK

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Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky

The main purpose of this exegesis course is to read the Greek text of Paul's letter to the Galatians carefully and with discernment, in order to practice and gain facility in exegetical skills. While a direct encounter with the text of the Epistle sets the itinerary for our work, we will explore critical linguistic, historical, and theological issues in the interpretation of Galatians and consider prominent scholarly literature all along the way. Thus, in addition to basic matters of the historical-critical understanding of the text, we will reflect upon theological issues as these arise in the context of the letter. Among other things, we will be particularly interested in the implications of Galatians for religious dialogue between Christians and Jews.

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance and participation. See the Course Policy Statements below.
2. A reflection paper: Read Galatians several times—as much as possible in Greek, but also in different translations from the one(s) that you normally read. Try the New Jerusalem Bible, the New International Version, Today's New International Version, the Revised English Bible, the New Revised Standard Version, the New American Standard, the New King James Version, the Common English Bible, the New American Bible—or one of the many other *translations*. Avoid *paraphrases*. By all means avoid so-called "study Bibles" with prepackaged outlines and superimposed themes.

Once you believe you are familiar with Paul's letter, pretend you are a leading member of a church in Galatia and write a letter responding to Paul. You may take any approach you wish, so long as you engage in a substantive exchange focused on the concerns Paul identified and discussed in his own letter. Please refer only to Galatians and pretend that you do not even know that Paul has written other letters to other congregations.

Your letter should be 1000 words at most and in 12-point font.

Due: February 24 at the beginning of class.

3. Each student will read and write a critical book review of B. R. Braxton's *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience*. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 2002. The instructions for this project, developed by Profs. Frances Adeney and Lewis Brogdon, are included as the last part of this syllabus.

Due: March 24 at the beginning of class.

4. Finally, each student will engage in original exegesis of a text of her/his choice in order to produce a paper of approximately 4500-5000 words, not including any title page and bibliography. For matters of form see the style guides listed in the Course Policy Statements below.

Due: May 8 by 5:00 p.m.

Grading

1. Attendance and preparation for the class, as indicated by cogent participation in the sessions will account for **15%** of the final grade. Participation is not merely talking, but saying something germane that reveals careful preparation and engagement with the text and assignments.
2. The “letter to Paul” (due February 24) will account **10%** of the final grade.
3. The critical book review of *No Longer Slaves* (due March 24) will account for **25%** of the final grade.
4. The original research that will be presented in the final paper will account for **50%** of the final grade (due May 8 by 5:00 p.m.).

Papers are expected at the times indicated on the syllabus. Papers that are late will be marked down one full letter grade for each day that they are overdue. No extensions can be given. Plan accordingly. There can be no exceptions. *Please don't ask.*

Books for the Course

Each student is required to have and read the appropriate materials in the following:

1. A Greek NT — preferably the Nestle-Aland 27th or 28th edition.
 2. Braxton, B. R. *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience*. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 2002.
 3. De Boer, M. C. *Galatians*. NTL. Louisville: WJKP, 2011.
 4. Martyn, J. L. *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997. Hereafter referred to in reading assignments as *TILP*.
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SCHEDULE

For each class session students are expected to translate in advance the relevant portion(s) of the epistle and to read carefully both the assigned essay(s) and the relevant portions of the designated commentary. More specific assignments for translations of portions of the Greek text of Galatians will be made in advance of the sessions in which those translations will be employed.

February 10 • **Introduction to the Course: Focus, Goals, Methods**

• **The World in Which Paul Lived and Worked**

February 17 • **Paul: Person, Mission, Message, and Aims**

• **Galatia, the Galatians, and the Situation Paul Faced**

Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Part I Preface, pp. 3-5; Chaps. 1, 3, and 7.

February 24 • **Galatians 1:1-10**

Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Part II Preface, pp. 87-88; Chap. 6.

March 3 • **Galatians 1:11-24**

Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 5.

March 10 • **Galatians 2:1-10**

Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 2.

March 24 • **Galatians 2:11-21**

Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 9.

March 31 • **Galatians 3:1-14**

Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 11, and Chap. 13 pp. 209-26.

- April 7** • **Galatians 3:15-29**
 Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 10.
- April 14** • **Galatians 4:1-7, 8-11, 12-16**
 Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 8.
- April 21** • **Galatians 4:17-20, 21-31**
 Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 12.
- April 28** • **Galatians 5:1-26**
 Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chaps. 14, 15, and 16.
- May 5** • **Galatians 6:1-18**
 Assignment: Martyn, *TILP*, Chap. 17.
- Final Exegesis Paper Due: 05/08/2015—no later than 5:00 p.m.**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bachmann, M. *Anti-Judaism in Galatian? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Barclay, J. M. G. "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1987) 73-93.
- _____. *Obedying the Truth: Paul's Ethics in Galatians*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988.
- Barrett, C. K. *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.
- Bassler, J. A., ed. *Pauline Theology I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

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- Braxton, B. R. *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience*. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 2002.
- Cousar, C. B. *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters*. OBT 24. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
- Das, A. A. *Galatians*. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2014.
- _____. *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001.
- DeSilva, D. A. *A Sri Lankan Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians: Global Readings*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.
- Elliott, N., and M. Reasoner. *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
- Fee, G. D. *Galatians*. Pentecostal Commentary Series. Blandford Forum, Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2007.
- Gaventa, B. R. "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm," *NovT* 28 (1986) 309-26.
- Hays, R. B. "Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ," *CBQ* 49 (1987) 268-90.
- _____. "The Letter to the Galatians" in L. E. Keck *et al.*, eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. 11. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.
- Jervis, L. A. *Galatians*. NIBC. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Kahl, B. *Galatians Re-imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010.
- Lightfoot, J. B. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*. Lynn, MA: Hendrickson, 1982. Original, 1865.
- Lyons, G. *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding*. SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985.
- Martyn, J. L. *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997. Hereafter, *TILP*.
- _____. "A Law-Observant Mission to the Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," *SJT* 38 (1985) 307-24 — and *TILP* chap. 1, pp. 7-24.

_____. "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 31 (1985) 410-24 — and *TILP* chap. 7, pp. 111-23.

_____. "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Corinthians 5:16," in W. R. Farmer et al., eds., *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967. Pp. 269-87 — and *TILP* chap. 6, pp. 89-110.

_____. "Paul and His Jewish-Christian Interpreters," *USQR* 42 (1988) 1-15 — and *TILP* chap. 3, pp. 37-45.

_____. "The Covenants of Hagar and Sarah," in J. T. Carroll et al., eds., *Faith and History. Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990. Pp. 160-92 — and *TILP* chap. 12, pp. 191-208.

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ISSUES FOR EXEGETICAL PAPERS

Broadly speaking, exegesis is the process of translating and interpreting a text; and it comprises four large concerns:

1. Determining the text — *What is the text? — (textual criticism).*
2. Translating the text — *How should the Greek be rendered?*
3. Analyzing the text — *What does the text say? — (interpretation).*
4. Summarizing or applying the text — *What is the significance — (appropriation).*

These activities may be broken down further for the purposes of thorough "exegesis." Your exegetical paper will need to evince all four activities in some detail. In a final form, the paper should probably have these parts:

1. Your original translation of the text — or, the version of the text with which you have been primarily working.
2. An outline of the passage.
3. An overview of the exegetical problems for interpreting the text (the major portion of the paper).
4. A summary of the historical, ethical, or theological significance of the passage.

In doing the work, you may want to consider some of the following issues. But, be sure that you are attentive to the text. Let it set the agenda. Listen, then speak. Questions and considerations differ from one passage to another, and so, while there may be a finite number of questions which we are capable of posing in relation to the interpretation of the Bible, the combinations are nearly limitless; and you can determine which questions are appropriate only by considering the text. As S. E. McEvenue has said, "The fact is that method is nothing more than a description and systematization of acts of understanding . . . ultimately the researcher must simply stare at [the] text, or fumble with it, until acts of understanding begin to take place."

Translation (when applicable)

Vocabulary. What are the words?

Syntax. How are the words related in phrases, clauses, and sentences?

Grammar. How and how well does the linguistic system cohere?

Outline

Formal structure. Are there patterns in the text? Repetitions? Chiasms? Balanced clauses? Or, is the material some clear rhetorical form?

and/or

Logical structure. What is the line of thought, argument, or reasoning? What are the points? The illustrations of points?

Exegetical Considerations

Establishing the text (when applicable). The text we read is a critically established entity. Experts study scores of ancient manuscripts that are not always in agreement and make decisions about textual variants. Critical commentaries are very helpful here. It is crucial at least to recognize the presence of a "real" problem when it is there and to have some sense of the merits of the variants, even if you do not plan or want to become a text critic.

The text in its context. There is an old saying, "A text out of context means something, anything, and nothing." To understand the meaning of a text, it is necessary to understand where it appears in the whole document. What preceded the passage? What follows? How does the passage fit into its context? What is going on in the text in general? Why was the whole document written? What motivated the writing of the section in which the passage under consideration appears?

Determining the type of material, its form, and detecting traditional materials that the author employed or from which inspiration was drawn.

What kind of material are you dealing with?

Narrative? Epistle? Both — i.e., one within the other or a hybrid?

What does the passage do?

Narrate? Declare? Report? Summarize? Respond? Admonish?

Does the passage contain "traditional" material?

An OT quotation or allusion? Early Christian traditions? Liturgical material — hymn, confession, prayer, other?

What is the tone of the material?

Didactic? Humorous? Witty? Ironical? Hostile? Sarcastic?

How is the material constructed?

Are there rhetorical devices — midrash or peshet, allegory, diatribe/dialogical? Rhythm? "Poetic" arrangement?

What is the language of the passage? Are there crucial words or phrases? Consult concordances, NT and "theological" dictionaries, commentaries, and journal articles (use *New Testament Abstracts* to get at these). Remember, words have usage, not meaning. They *denote* in context of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and the overall context of one's thought. Beware of defining a word and then going about plugging that predetermined sense into every text you encounter that uses that word — sometimes this may work, but often not.

Considering similar texts. Often there are helpful "parallels" to the biblical passages in other literature, canonical and non-canonical — but contemporary to the text! Commentaries and lexica frequently point to these, and in annotated versions of the Bible there are usually cross-reference apparatuses. Are there similar texts in Paul? In the OT, apocrypha, or pseudepigrapha? The Dead Sea Scrolls? NT apocrypha? Apostolic fathers? Rabbinic literature? Hellenistic literature — philosophers, playwrights, historians — e.g., Plato, Epictetus, Philo, Lucian, Sophocles, Pliny the Younger, Josephus, Tacitus?

Significance

Strikingly there are two dimensions to this consideration and a number of different appreciations of the relation of the two: (1) what the text *meant*; and (2) what the text *means*.

1. *What the text meant.* Though not all scholars agree on the meaning of every text, one is more likely to find a consensus on what a text meant to its first readers than on what it should mean for Christians today. By examining and thinking about texts we can determine a range of POSSIBLE meanings that, in light of all factors, moves toward WHAT IS PROBABLE. In this area one may need to address theological, ethical, and historical concerns.

What understanding of God, Christ, the Spirit, or human existence does the passage evince? How would the content of the passage affect Christian living? How does the passage affect our understanding of early Christianity?

2. *What the text means.* The implications and importance of the text for modern ethical and theological considerations sometimes produces a parting of the ways among scholars, often because of denominational sensibilities. How does the passage speak to the Church today? What is your evaluation of the message? Do you have problems with the teaching or with the reaction of some person to the passage? How do you propose to deal with this?

Course Policy Statements

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. For more information, see:

<http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.
- Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Three or more absences (1/4 of the course sessions) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Use of Electronic Devices in Class

Serious work requires serious attention. Serious study is serious work. Jesus once said, "If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand" (Mark 3:25). Let us do everything that we can to maintain our unity as we work together in class. Along these lines: Do not send or read text messages during class. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask for an exception to this rule prior to breaching it. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking. You may not access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for being excused from the session and will negatively affect the course grade.

Late Papers

Papers are expected at the times indicated by the syllabus. Papers that are late will be marked down one full letter grade for each day that they are overdue. There can be no exceptions. *Please don't ask.*

Der Ungeduldige, dem es bloß um Ergebnis und mögliche praktische
Verwendung geht, soll die Finger von der Exegese lassen. Er taugt
nicht für sie, rechtschaffen betrieben sie nicht für ihn.

Ernst Käsemann
An die Römer