

Study Guide
Wesley Theological Seminary Course of Study for
the
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
Term 2 | July 24- August 3, 2017

CS-521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

Faculty: Jamie Coles

e-mail: colesj@spu.edu

We have made changes to the process for turning in your pre-courses assignments as well as obtaining textbooks. Please read this study guide *carefully*. We have split the previous pre-course work up into two parts. **Everyone will have one assignment due by June 1 submitted via Blackboard and one assignment due the first day of class.**

Please schedule time each week to work on your pre-course work. If you are able to do this you will have the opportunity to come to DC next summer and enjoy some Sabbath time with us. Please let Sara Sheppard or Doug Powe know if we can help you with this in any way.

Course Description

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

Objectives

1. Improvement of the student's ability to effectively use scripture in the preparation of sermons and Bible studies
2. Deepening of the student's understanding of the various assigned biblical studies
3. Strengthening of the student's skills in using critical methods for biblical study
4. Development of a rationale for the hermeneutical task
5. Relating of the process of exegesis with sound hermeneutical methods for the student's pastoral role
6. Assisting the student in relating the eternal biblical message to the context of ministry

Texts:

[MP] Powell, Mark Allen. *Introducing the New Testament; A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009

[CL] Carter, Warren and Amy-Jill Levine. *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013

Bassler, Jouette Bassler. *Navigating Paul*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.

Students are encouraged to build a library of commentaries on the various books of the New Testament. There are many one volume and series commentaries in existence differing greatly in content, style, and level of difficulty. Suggested commentaries include the following:

Harper's Bible Commentary. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988.

Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1982--.

New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992--.

The New Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994--.

The Oxford Bible Commentary. New York: Oxford U.P., 2001.

Textbooks: We no longer have a bookstore on campus at Wesley. Books should be ordered online via Amazon, Cokesbury or any other bookseller or borrow from friends.

Assignment Instructions

All students are to turn in the first pre-course assignment no later than midnight June 1 by posting the paper on Blackboard. Instructions on posting to Blackboard are on the COS webpage. If you run into trouble, please contact blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu and they will help you.

If you are new to Course of Study at Wesley, please be sure to check Blackboard **once you receive your logon information from our IT department**. Some faculty will use Blackboard heavily and some will not, but it is up to you as the student to check and see what is posted. You should have access to your courses in Blackboard on or around May 15.

****Be sure to include your name, course number and annual conference on each page of your paper. ****

Assignment:

Format:

Papers should have one-inch margins on all sides, be double-spaced, and use a 12-point Times New Roman font. Please proofread papers carefully, avoiding as much as possible spelling, typographical, and grammatical errors, which can easily diminish the effectiveness of your writing.

Grading:

Students should be clear from the start that good, solid work, fulfilling the assignments responsibly, deserves the "B" grade. The "A" is awarded only for work that is excellent.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as forms of plagiarism or dishonesty:

Copying from another student's paper

Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another person

Using unauthorized material during an examination

Borrowing and presenting as one's own (i.e., without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another

If in doubt, ask in advance. Do not risk the possibility that your work will not be accepted due to an issue of plagiarism.

Note that you must provide proper bibliographical citations for works you consult. For my pre-course work, MLA parenthetical citations are preferred. See below for more information on citations. More on Citations:

Within your work you **MUST** give credit to the sources of your information. However, the work should **NOT** be quote heavy. If you quote something from your textbook, then you must **ENGAGE** that quote. Why did you quote the scholar? Do you agree with what they said? If so, why? If not, why is their statement a problem for you?

The point of this work is for you to engage the textbooks and the perspectives and information offered regarding the New Testament. You do **NOT** have to reference other sources such as dictionaries, commentaries, encyclopedias, or other textbooks. Simply use the assigned textbooks, your Bible, and your own thoughts to answer the questions. When you do quote from the textbooks or include an idea you read from the textbooks, use MLA Style parenthetical citations. This information is included within the body of your paper and includes within parenthesis: (1) Author's last name; and, (2) page number. Below is an example of how to properly quote and cite from a textbook. Given that I already know the textbooks, you do **NOT** need to include a Works Cited page. If you do not properly cite the sources of the information you include in your work, it is considered plagiarism! Again, the work should **NOT** be quote heavy! You are to **ENGAGE** the information and demonstrate you understand what is being said.

Example: "One of the major goals in the book is to explore the religious theological dimensions of the New Testament writings" (Holladay 2).

DUE JUNE 1: SUBMITTED TO BLACKBOARD:

Please note: Your work should reflect engagement with the reading from the required texts. While you may consult (and properly cite) supplemental resources (i.e. commentaries, journal articles, etc.), it is not required for the assignments given in this class.

1. Introduction to the Book of Acts and an Exploration of its Canonical Context (To be completed by June 1, 2017)

[MP] Chapters 7, 9, 15 and [CL] Chapters 5 – *Assignments in this section total 8 pages*

- A. Read [CL] Chapter 5, "Acts;" the book of Acts in your Bible; and [MP] Chapter 9, "Acts."
Notice that many popular characters in the Christian tradition appear in this book (i.e. Paul,

Peter, Stephen, Jesus, Holy Spirit, James, Barnabas, Mary, etc.). From your reading of the Book of Acts and in consideration of the material read in the textbooks, who do you think is the main character of the Acts narrative and why? **In 4 pages**, describe where and how some of the other marquee figures (at least 2 characters), in contrast to the figure you select, appear and make a case for your choice. Your answers should draw on the material from the textbooks as well as Scripture and it should demonstrate comprehension of some of the main literary and theological issues arising from the Book of Acts.

- B. Next, describe the literary relationship between the Book of Acts, the Gospel of Luke, and Paul's Letter to the Galatians by comparing the two sets of passages listed below. To help you, I have included 2 comparison charts similar to what you find in Throckmorton's Synopsis. Look carefully at the following short accounts, paying careful attention both to the ways in which the accounts are similar and the ways they differ:

Set 1: Compare Luke 24 to Acts 1

Set 2: Compare Acts 22 to Galatians 1:11-2:14

Now consider the way the [CL] textbook discusses the relationship between the Book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke on pages 94-96 (also see [MP] pages 165-166, 201); and the relationship between Acts and the Pauline letters in [MP] pages 233-246.

In 4 pages, analyze how the similarities and differences in the above stories might be explained based on the chronological ordering of the NT books and the literary genre and purpose of each book (the book of Acts, Gospel of Luke, and Letter to the Galatians). Which text would you privilege over the other? What specific details are hardest to explain? We'll review these books in class and discuss their character. For now, the point is to see that there are duplicate stories in the NT, become aware of the kinds of difficulties they present, and what various theories regarding the chronological development and literary shape of the New Testament try to explain.

2. Introduction to Paul and Interpreting the Pauline Letters (*To be completed by the June 1, 2017*) [MP] Chapters 10-11, and [CL] Chapters 7, 9, 13 (introductory information on letters in the NT and Paul, overview of 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians). –
Assignment in this section totals 2 pages

- A. Other than Jesus, the apostle Paul is undoubtedly the most significant individual found in the pages of the New Testament. Nevertheless, the true nature of his importance is often misunderstood. For example, Paul was neither the founder of Christianity nor even the originator of its Gentile mission. On the other hand, Paul is treated by some modern interpreters as a convenient scapegoat, blamed for whatever they find objectionable about Christianity. If the real Paul was neither the creator nor the corruptor of Christianity, why does he matter—historically and theologically, then and now? Answer this question in **2 pages**

DUE BY THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS (via Blackboard):

3. Introduction to Paul and Interpreting the Pauline Letters and General Letters (*To be completed by the 1st day of class; July 24, 2017*)

[MP] Chapters 10-11, 13, 24 and [CL] Chapters 7, 9, 17 (introductory information on letters in the NT and Paul, overview of Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and James). – *Assignment in this section totals 7- 8 pages*

- A. (Paul's Letter to the Galatians) In **1 paragraph**, describe the Letter of Galatians by stating its core message and one theme, idea or concept that could be used for future preaching or teaching. Then in **2 pages**, describe what is the main issue at stake in Galatians. Why is Paul so angry in this letter and how does he solve the crisis with the Galatians?
- B. (Paul's Letter to the Corinthians) In **1 paragraph**, describe the First Letter to the Corinthians by stating its core message and one theme, idea or concepts that could be used for future preaching or teaching. Then in **2 pages**, describe what the Corinthians are fighting about. What factors created divisions in the church at Corinth? Why does Paul rehearse the tradition of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians Letter and what does it have to do with the factionalism in the church?
- C. (The Letter of James) In **1 paragraph**, describe the Letter of James by stating its core message and one theme, idea or concept that could be used for future preaching or teaching. Then in **2 pages** describe what accounts for the marginalization of James in the history of interpretation? If you had been asked, would you include it in the New Testament? Why or why not?

Grading

The Wesley Course of Study School follows the grading scale of the Seminary. Grades are assigned on the following scale:

A 4.0
A- 3.7
B+ 3.3
B 3.0
B- 2.7
C+ 2.3
C 2.0
C- 1.7
F 0.0

Academic Policies

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty member have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another students paper
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination □
Using unauthorized material during an examination

- Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office at 202-885-8688.

Comparison set 1 for Assignment 1b:

Luke 24:36ff	Acts 1:1-14
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Luke 24:36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be 37 with you.” They were startled and terrified, and 38 thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your 39 hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh 40 and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had 41 said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to 42 eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he 43 took it and ate in their presence.

Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the 45 prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he 46 opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to 47 suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed 48 in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 49 You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Luke 24:50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, 51 lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up 52 into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to 53

Acts 1:1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all 2 that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom 3 he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of 4 God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the 7 kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his 8 own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to 9 the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out 10 of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white 11 robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath 13 day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 All these were constantly devoting themselves to

<p>Jerusalem with great joy; in the temple blessing God.</p>	<p>and they were continually prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.</p>
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Comparison Set 2 for Assignment 1b:

Acts 22:1-21	Galatians 1:11-2:14
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Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I now make before you.”

Acts 22:2 When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet. Then he said:

Acts 22:3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. 4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

Acts 22:6 “While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 8 I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Then he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 I asked, ‘What am I to do, Lord?’ The Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.’ 11 Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

Acts 22:12 “A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, 13 came to me; and standing beside me, he said, ‘Brother Saul, regain your sight!’ In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him. 14 Then he said, ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; 15 for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay? Get up, be

Gal 1:11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human **12**

origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Gal 1:13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God **14** and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was

15 far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born **16**

and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the **17** Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

Gal 1:18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; **19** to but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord’s

20 brother. In what I am writing to you, before God, I do

21 not lie! Then I went into the regions of Syria and **22** Cilicia, and I was still unknown by sight to the

23 churches of Judea that are in Christ; they only heard it said, “The one who formerly was persecuting us is now

24 proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.” And they glorified God because of me.

Gal 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. **2** I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running,

3 or had not run, in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a **4** Greek. But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ

baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.'

Acts 22:17 "After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw Jesus saying to me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.' 21 Then he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

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Jesus, so that they might enslave us— we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the

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gospel might always remain with you. And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows

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o partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had

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een entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to

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the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the

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Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

Gal 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed

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him to his face, because he stood self-condemned;

for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with

the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept

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himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.

And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that

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even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

*****Please note this study guide/pre-course assignment was created and developed by Dr. Shively Smith.*****