

# Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

May 9, 16, 23, 30 and June 6, 2006

## BNTD 641 – Studies: Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament: The Bigger Picture

Professor: W.E. Nunnally, Ph.D.

Summer 2006

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### Course Syllabus

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to illuminate the Jewish backgrounds of the history, culture, language, religion, and institutions of the New Testament which are crucial to its understanding, but which go unexplained in the Bible itself.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this course the student should be able to:

- 1) appreciate more fully the Jewish origins of Christianity;
- 2) present a basic portrait of the more prominent aspects of first-century Judaism as discussed in class each session;
- 3) appreciate more fully the value of background and context in interpreting ancient documents; and
- 4) use this background to better understand the New Testament for application to his/her own life and for clearer and more comprehensible preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

#### **TEXTBOOKS**

Gowan, Donald E. *Bridge Between The Testaments*. Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick, 1986.

Cohen, S.J.D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987.

A Modern Version of the Bible. The NASB will be used by the professor. This should be brought to class each day.

A Copy of the Apocrypha. The RSV version of the Apocrypha will be used by the professor. There are numerous modern versions of the Bible that contain the Apocryphal books, such as the Jerusalem Bible, the New English Bible, the New

American Bible, etc. This should be brought to class each day.

## COURSE OUTLINE and ASSIGNMENTS

**WEEK 1 (5/9)** – Timeline due. **INTRODUCTION** to the course. **HISTORY:** Timeline of the period (Gowan, xi-xii, xviii, 1-7, 9-67). Maccabees, nationalism versus Hellenism (Gowan, 71-94; Cohen, 34-45; Schurer II:29-183). Feasts (Gowan, 211- 218; Schurer II:76; III<sup>1</sup>:408, 413, 460-461, 466-467), Apocalyptic, Messianism (Gowan, 353-372), Origins of sectarianism, False messiahs, Hanukkah (*JE* VI:223-226).

**WEEK 2 (5/16)** – Glossary due. **LITERATURE:** Septuagint (LXX), Dead Sea Scrolls (Gowan, 165-182), Apocrypha/Pseudepigrapha (Gowan, 261-303; Cohen, 195-200), NT (Gospel and Epistle genres), Josephus, Philo, Rabbinic Literature (Gowan, 305-307), Targums (Gowan, 237-242). **DOMESTICS:** Family and Home (Gowan, 189-190, Safrai and Stern II:728-792), *Pamalia*, Betrothal-marriage-divorce, Education (Gowan, 233-236; Schurer II:332-334, 415-422; Strack, 10-12, 42-45), Economics (Safrai and Stern II:631-699), Travel. **DIASPORIC JUDAISM:** History and Development (Gowan, 117-123; Cohen, 108-111; Schurer III<sup>1</sup>:3-44), The Growth of the Early Church in the Diaspora (Pfeiffer, 166-196).

**WEEK 3 (5/23)** – **POLITICS:** Rise of the power of Rome in Palestine, Military occupation, politics: the Herods and the procurators (Gowan, 96-115), Boundary-jumping: self-disclosure versus the "Messianic Secret" (handout). Tax collecting, Zealots, Sicarii, Crucifixion (Hengel, 22-90, 1-10), Sanhedrin (Gowan, 227-231; Cohen, 107-108), Relations with Gentiles (Cohen, 27-34, 46-58, 216-217). **LANGUAGES:** Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin (Bivin and Blizzard, 19-91; Fitzmyer, "The Languages," 501-531; Lapidé, 483-501. Topic for Research Paper must be approved by end of class.

**WEEK 4 (5/30)** – **RELIGION:** Canon (Gowan, 245-260; Cohen, 174-213; Schurer II:316-336; III<sup>2</sup>:706-708, handout), Sectarian Judaism (Gowan, 125, 126; Cohen, 116-119, 124-141): scribes, Pharisees (Gowan, 145-154), Sadducees (Gowan, 139-144), Essenes (reread Gowan, 165-182), Zealots (Gowan, 157-162; Cohen, 143-173), Herodians. Calendar (re-read Gowan, 211-218), Samaritans (Gowan, 126-137), *Amey-HaAretz* ([sinners/multitudes/shepherds] Gowan, 185-186). Rabbis-disciples-*chevrah*-table fellowship-apostle (*shaliach*)-schools (Urbach I:286-292; Cohen, 214-224), Parable-discourse-disputation, Rabbinic Hermeneutics (Cohen, 201-209; Strack, 18-34).

**WEEK 5 (6/6)** – Research paper due at beginning of class. **RELIGION, continued:** Torah (Gowan, 185-186), Intertextuality, Oral Torah (Gowan, 329-351; Urbach I:286-292), Torah epitomes (MMT, Temple Scroll, Jubilees, Hillel, Jesus, Akiva), The Confession. Legalism (Cohen, 78-79), Sabbath observance, Prayer, Model prayer, Aids to prayer, Almsgiving, Good deeds (*EJ* VII:374-376), Oath-taking, Conversion. Geographical dynamics, Jerusalem the Holy City, the temple (Gowan, 193-211; Cohen, 106-107), Synagogues (Gowan, 218-224; Cohen, 111-115), the Kingdom of God (Urbach I:400-419), Prophecy-exorcism-miracle working (Cohen, 201; Urbach I:103-104, 117-118), Wisdom (Gowan, 309-328), Messiah-resurrection-final judgment (Gowan, 373-395; Russell, 119-162).

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND METHODS OF EVALUATION**

Broad exposure (through reading) to the results of scholarly investigation will be one emphasis of this class. Therefore, class participation will count 50% (10% per class meeting) of your final grade. Participation will include all of the following: ability to reflect the reading on the subject under discussion by making helpful comments and asking relevant questions, obviously paying attention in class, giving evidence of taking notes, and following along in your own Bible as the class considers specific texts. You should not wait to be called upon for input and answers; rather, verbal engagement in each topic should be viewed much like a paper you know ahead of time is to be handed in each time the class meets. Consequently, as you do your reading for each week, you may want to keep notes on helpful and important aspects of the reading, points at which you need clarification, and instances in which you agree or disagree with the author. These notes can then be used in the upcoming class to help guide your verbal contributions. Absence from class naturally renders participation for that day impossible. You should bring a 3x5 note card to each session upon which you will journal your own oral contributions for that class period. These cards will be handed in at the conclusion of each class. To receive full credit, your name and *very* legible handwriting should appear on each 3x5 card.

At the beginning of the first class, an annotated, detailed timeline of at least 5 full pages is to be submitted. The timeline should commence with the conclusion of the OT and conclude with the publication of the Babylonian Talmud. It should include major dates and events, with brief explanations of the importance of each event. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade. Although it is not a full-blown “term paper,” the same editorial care and consistency of format should be exercised to receive full credit for this assignment.

At the beginning of the second class, a glossary of at least 5 full pages covering the literature relevant to the study of our period is to be submitted. The glossary should cover all corpora of literature important to the study of the Intertestamental Period, beginning with 1 Enoch and concluding with the Babylonian Talmud. Each entry should include the name (or names) of the book, a discussion of authorship and date, a description of the contents, and an explanation of why the work is important to the study of the Jewish backgrounds of the NT. This assignment is also worth 10% of your final grade, so the same care you exercised in composing the first written project should be exhibited here as well.

At the beginning of the final class, a 15-page research paper is to be submitted that will count 30% of the final grade. The paper should be an examination of a NT verse, passage, or topic (to be approved by professor by the end of the third class) using information from class lecture and discussion, your required reading, and your own independent research. Use of non-academic sources such as Study Bibles, Internet sites, and devotionally oriented commentaries is strongly discouraged. You should emphasize reference to original (ancient) sources and you should employ sound methodology in dealing with both ancient and modern sources. Your argument should be cogent; your work should be well-edited; and the work as a whole should demonstrate the thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and care normally associated with graduate work in any field. In terms of format, the sixth edition of Turabian is to be followed. You may wish to organize your material in such a way that lends itself easily to oral delivery, as in a sermon, Bible study, or Sunday School lesson. Plagiarism will not be

tolerated in any form; therefore, if you do not know what does and does not constitute plagiarism, a) err on the side of caution and document copiously, and b) “google” plagiarism and educate yourself as to how to avoid it (Turabian, 5.2 is also a good place to start).

Because you know of these assignments weeks before they are actually due, no extensions will be granted due to emergencies without a grade reduction of 10% for each day they are late.

The following is a summary of the student’s responsibilities in this class:

Week One Participation.....	10%
Annotated Timeline.....	10%
Week Two Participation.....	10%
Glossary of Literature.....	10%
Week Three Participation.....	10%
Week Four Participation.....	10%
Week Five Participation.....	10%
Research Paper.....	30%.

The grade scale is as follows: A, 100-94; A-, 93-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80; C+, 79-77; C, 76-74; C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; F, 59 or below.

## METHODOLOGY

Material relevant to the subject will be presented in a topical format, usually with one topic logically leading into the next. Lecture, audio and visual presentations, class discussion, and classroom small group assignments will be employed each session the class meets.

**Bibliography** (material outside textbooks is in a three-ring notebook on reading reserve):

Bivin, D. and Roy Blizzard. *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Austin: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1984.

Cohen, S.J.D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1989.

*Encyclopedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Keter, 1971.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*. London: G. Chapman, 1971.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D." *CBQ* 32(1970)501-531.

Gowan, Donald E. *Bridge Between The Testaments*. Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick, 1986.

Hengel, Martin. *Crucifixion in the Ancient World*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.

*Jewish Encyclopedia*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901.

Lapide, P. "Insights from Qumran into the Languages of Jesus." *Revue de Qumran* 8(1972-1975) 483-501.

Pfeiffer, R.H. *History of New Testament Times*. New York: Harper and Row, 1949.

Russell, D.S. *Between the Testaments*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989.

Safrai, Shmuel and Menachem Stern, eds. *The Jewish People in the First Century. Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974.

Schurer, E. *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, revised by G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman, and M. Black. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-87.

Strack, H.L. and G. Stemberger. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. by Markus Bockmuehl. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Urbach, E. *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1987.