

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
MATS Degree Completion Program  
Springfield, Missouri

**BNTD 641 EXPERIENCING THE PASSION OF PAUL, PETER AND JOHN**  
**(GALATIANS, 1 PETER, 1 JOHN)**  
**August 30, September 6, 13, 20, 27, 2007**  
**(3 credits)**

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**Fall 2007**

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**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An interpretive analysis of three apostolic letters whose central emphases reflect the Christian passions of **Faith** (Paul's Letter to the Galatians), **Hope** (1 Peter) and **Love** (1 John).

**OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this course is to help students, using the English Bible, insightfully interpret New Testament Epistles (particularly Galatians, 1 Peter and 1 John) by utilizing interpretive methods that are consistent with a high view of Scripture; and apply the meaning of the texts derived thereby to the contemporary Church. Upon the successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Discuss the respective social-historical background of Galatians, 1 Peter and 1 John and how that information enriches the interpretive task.
2. Employ, with discernment, select hermeneutical methodology that facilitates exegesis of Galatians, 1 Peter and 1 John.
3. Interpret texts in Galatians, 1 Peter and 1 John in terms of their meaning to the original audiences.
4. Apply the meaning of texts in Galatians, 1 Peter and 1 John in relevant ways to contemporary Christian life.
5. Understand and appreciate a few various interpretive approaches (e.g. literary, rhetorical, social-scientific, Pentecostal) which add texture and depth to our understanding of these ancient, inspired texts.

**TEXTBOOKS**

McKnight, Scot. *1 Peter*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Thomas, John Christopher. *The Pentecostal Commentary on 1 John, 2 John, 3 John*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2004.

Witherington III, Ben. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

## **METHODOLOGY**

It is assumed that the students taking this class in either the Degree Completion Program or the regular curriculum have not had the benefit of an undergraduate degree in religion, biblical studies, or theology. Due to the paucity of classroom hours and the nature of adult learning, much of the course objectives will be accomplished through the diligent study and preparation of the adult learner outside the classroom via individual reading, reflection, and writing, which will be supplemented by classroom lectures and guided classroom discussion of issues related to the scheduled readings, written assignments, and lectures.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Class attendance and participation:** Participation in all class sessions is expected. The atmosphere of the class for adult learners is intended to be collegial, with relevant questions, comments and discussion both welcomed and expected as evidence of class preparation (see #2 below). The instructor reserves the right to adjust the final grade in light of class attendance and participation, raising or lowering the grade for significant lapses or contributions.
2. **Timely completion of the assigned readings:** The nature of the Degree Completion Program requires that class sessions move through a significant amount of material rather quickly. Therefore, thorough preparation for each class session is essential for maximum productivity in the face-to-face classroom time allotted. Please note the scheduled assignments below, which are to be completed prior to the designated class session.
3. **Reaction Papers:** A reaction paper (no less than four full pages and no more than five full pages) over the required reading is due at the beginning of the first four classes. The paper should contain a concise summary of the reading, leaving at least half of the paper for a balanced critique of those issues in the reading that you have found to be either (a) particularly insightful and enriching or (b) inadequate and disturbing. Your critique may include such elements as: agreement or disagreement with the contents, and accompanying reasons for your position; an evaluation of the author's logic, view of Scripture, and/or use of sources; how the author's interpretive method provides particular

insights that otherwise might not have been as obvious; an assessment of whether or not any of the author's assumptions or conclusions are inconsistent with a high view of the Scriptures. Because the reading assignments, due to their length, contain far more information than can be summarized in the space allotted, you will need to be selective in choosing to critique what you believe to be the most valuable and important aspects of the reading assignments. Each student will present his/her critique in a small seminar group and then field questions and comments.

For your writing assignments, use standard white 8 1/2 x 11" paper, double-spaced and printed in Times New Roman (or near equivalent) 12-point font. Use standard margins of 1.00" on both sides, top and bottom; and do not "justify" the margins. Include page numbers at the top of the page, centered. The cover page is considered page 0 and does not count toward the number of pages in the assignment. Place your name, course number and name, professor's name, and date on the cover page. Staple the pages together. Do not use any kind of cover for the papers. Reference specific points from the textbooks in the body of your paper as follows: (author, page number).

4. **Interpretive Paper:** Each student shall prepare and present a paper to the class on the interpretation of a paragraph from one of the three epistles studied in this course. The topic, due date, and time of presentation will be agreed upon by the professor. For those who have not completed a course in hermeneutics (biblical interpretation), an alternative assignment may be negotiated.
5. **Final Exam:** A final examination will be given during Session 5.

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

The final grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Reaction Papers	50% (four 5-page papers @ 12.5% each)
Interpretive Paper and Presentation	25%
Final Exam	25%

Prompt and timely completion of assignments is essential to the degree completion program. Late work will be accepted only by pre-arrangement with the professor and only on sufficient grounds. Late work submitted beyond agreed-upon dates, if accepted, may be penalized by one letter grade per week late.

**NOTE:** A \$30.00 fee will be charged to the student's account for every grade change even if the instructor has approved an extension for completing the work. Any exception to the policy will be made by the registrar.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### Session 1, August 30

Topics: Prolegomena: The Nature and Interpretation of Epistles  
 A Brief History of the Interpretation of Galatians  
 Rhetorical Analysis of Galatians  
 The Social Setting of the Epistle to the Galatians  
 The Relationship Between Acts and Galatians  
 Interpretation of Galatians 1:1 – 2:21

Reading: Witherington, 1-196

Writing: Reaction paper due at beginning of class.

### Session 2, September 6

Topics: Interpretation of Galatians 3:1 – 6:18

Reading: Witherington, 197-459

Writing: Reaction paper due at beginning of class.

### Session 3, September 13

Topics Introduction: The Authorship, Date and Social Setting of 1 Peter  
 The Life of Peter  
 Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter: “Home for the Homeless”  
 Interpretation of 1 Peter 1:1 – 5:14 September 13

Reading: McKnight, 17-286

Writing: Reaction paper due at beginning of class.

### Session 4, September 20

Topics: The Johannine Community and John the Elder  
 The Setting of the Epistles of John  
 Pentecostal Perspective: The Holy Spirit in 1 John  
 The Literary Structure of 1 John  
 Interpretation of 1 John 1:1 – 5:21

Reading: Thomas, 1-14; 55-282

Writing: Reaction paper due at beginning of class.

### Session 5, September 27

Topics: Faith, Hope and Love: Continuity and Discontinuity in Paul, Peter and John

Reading: As required for review and exam.

Writing: Take-home final examination due at beginning of class.

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### *Galatians*

- Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Buckel, John. *Free To Love: Paul's Defense of Christian Liberty in Galatians*. Louvain: Peeters Press, 1993.
- Bundrick, David R. "Ta Stoicheia Tou Kosmou (Gal. 4:3)." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34/3 (September 1991):353-364.
- Cole, R. Alan. *Galatians*. Revised Edition. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: A & C Black. Reprinted, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.
- Fung, Ronald Y. K. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament [replaced H. Ridderbos]. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Guthrie, Donald. *Galatians*. The New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Howard, George. *Paul: Crisis in Galatia—A Study in Early Christian Theology*. Second Edition. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Jervis, L. Ann. *Galatians*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Longenecker, Richard N. *Galatians*. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.
- McKnight, Scot. *Galatians*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Silva, Moises. *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Stott, John R. W. *The Message of Galatians*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968.
- Tenney, Merrill C. *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.

### ***1 Peter***

- Achtmeier, Paul J. *1 Peter: A Commentary on 1 Peter*. Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Davids, Peter. *The First Epistle of Peter*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Elliott, John H. *Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- Grudem, Wayne. *1 Peter*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*. Reprint Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *1 Peter*. IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL:

- InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988.
- Selwyn, Edward Gordon. *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Essays*. Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1947; Reprint Edition, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Stronstad, Roger. *The First Epistle of Peter*. Companion Bible Commentary. Vancouver: CLM Educational Society, 1983.

### ***1 John***

- Akin, Daniel L. *1, 2, 3 John*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001.
- Barker, Glenn W. "1 John." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12:291-358. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Epistles of John: Translated, with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. Revised. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Burge, Gary M. *The Letters of John*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of The Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1966.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Rensberger, David K. *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Smalley, Stephen S. *1, 2, 3 John*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984.
- Stott, John R. W. *The Letters of John*. Revised Edition. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988.
- Witherington III, Ben. *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006.

### **SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by David R. Bundrick, Ph.D., July 9, 2007.