

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BNT 542

Studies in the General Epistles: James

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Fall, 2009

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exegetical and theological study of the Epistles of James. Special emphasis will be given to the distinctive theological contributions of this letter as well as its practical value in addressing and providing guidance for the Church today.

OBJECTIVES

At the successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

Knowledge

1. Identify and discuss some of the characteristics of Diaspora Judaism as the cultural-historical backdrop for James' letter to Jewish Christians.
2. Discuss the main introductory issues for which there is considerable debate and identify the most plausible position.
3. Discuss James' view of faith and works and why his view need not be viewed as antithetical to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith.
4. Explain why James has been regarded as "the Amos of the New Testament", giving concrete illustrations of passion for social-justice.

Skills

1. Read and analyze a New Testament pericope by constructing an exegetical outline (in English) which considers both the immediate context and its relationship to the New Testament letter as a whole.
2. Identify and locate pragmatic concerns of James in this epistle, positing a plausible *Sitz im Leben* by appealing to the internal evidence of the letter and relevant cultural historical evidence.
3. Identify the moral/ethical and theological truths expressed in James and discuss relevant and legitimate application of such in the life of the present-day Church.

Attitudes

1. Attitudes appreciate the historical-cultural nature of all the New Testament writings and how examination of their life-setting serves and aids the task of interpretation.
2. Appreciate the diversity of this New Testament epistle within an overall canonical unity.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Adamson, James. *The Epistle of James*, in *The International Commentary on the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, repr. 1984.

Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Recommended:

Davids, Peter H. *The Epistle of James*, in *The New International Greek Testament Commentary Series*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

BASIC OUTLINE

I. Prolegomena

- A. Assign a Cultural Historical Context to the Epistle
- B. Introductory Issues
- C. The Structure of James: Question and Controversy (?)

II. Exegetical Analysis

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|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Chapters 1-2 | Examining Christian Maturity |
| B. Chapters 3-4 | Community Problems |
| C. 4:13- 5:11 | Developing a Christian Worldview |
| D. 5:12-20 | Concluding Exhortations |

III. Critical Reflection/Synthesis

METHODOLOGY

In this course we will seek to meet our objectives through:

1. Classroom lecture.
2. Guided classroom discussion of issues related to assigned reading, lectures, and class assignments.
3. Individual reading, research, and writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Planned absences should be announced beforehand to the professor. Excessive absenteeism is defined by the AGTS catalog and adversely affect your course grade.
2. Completion of all reading assignments.
3. One Reading Summary (see handout)
4. Mid-term Exam
5. Exegetical Outlines (see handout)
6. Term Paper – 12-14 pp (see handout)
Topical OR Thematic Essay
Problem – Description Paper.
Theological Application Paper

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. Grade Weights:

Class Participation	5%	50 points
Reading Summary	10%	100 points
Reading Assignments	10%	100 points
Mid-term Exam	20%	200 points
Exegetical Outlines	25%	250 points
Term Paper	<u>30%</u>	<u>300 points</u>
	100%	1,000 points

2. Grade Penalties: Work turned in late without the prior permission of the professor will receive a grade reduction of 1/2 letter grade for every day late.

3. The total number of possible points to be earned in the semester is 1000. Point totals at the end of the semester are tabulated and a grading curve plotted relative to the collective grade profile of the class.

CHAPEL ATTENDANCE:

Attendance at Community Chapel is required (date and time TBA). Class members will proceed to the chapel on that day. Class will resume after the chapel service.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, J.B. *The Epistle of James*. In the *NICNT* Series, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948. Reprint ed.
- Davids, Peter. *The Epistle of James*. In the *NIGTC* Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Hort, F.J.A. *The Epistle of James*. London: Macmillan, 1909.
- Kistemaker, Simon. *Exposition of the Epistle of James and the Epistles of John*. Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1986.
- Laws, Sophie. *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*. In the *HNTC* Series. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Martin, Ralph P. *James*, In the *WBC*. Waco, Texas: Word Publishers, 1988.
- Maynard-Reid, P.V. *Poverty and Wealth in James*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Mayor, J.B. *The Epistle of James*. London: Macmillan, 1913.
- Mitton, C.L. *The Epistle of St. James*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.
- Moffat, J. *The General Epistles: James, Peter, Judas*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The Letter of James*. In the *TNTC*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Perkins Pheme. *First and Second Peter, James and Jude*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995.
- Randall, G.H. *The Epistle of St. James and Judaistic Christianity*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1927.
- Ropes, J. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*. In the *ICC*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1916.
- Tasker, R.V.G. *The General Epistle of James*. In the *TNTC*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by James D. Hemando, Ph.D., June 4, 2009.