

# "Paul and Early Christianity"

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## **TEXTBOOKS:**

Fant, Clyde E., et al. An Introduction to the Bible, revised edition. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

Jordan, Clarence L. A Letter to the Christians in Atlanta, or First Corinthians in the Koinonia "Cotton Patch" Version. Americus, GA: Koinonia Partners, 1968.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, with the Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Michael Coogan, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Selby, Donald J. Reprint of selections from Toward the Understanding of St. Paul. Bethlehem: Al-  
phagraphics, 2003.

Soards, Marion L. The Apostle Paul: An Introduction to His Writings and Teaching. New York: Pau-  
list Press, 1987.

Winn, Albert C. The Acts of the Apostles. "The Layman's Bible Commentary," vol. 20.  
Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002. (previously published by John Knox Press,  
1982).

## **INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE:**

Liberally educated citizens should be able to think and write about "ultimate questions." That means understanding the relevance and importance of such questions, both to you personally and to society. That, in turn, should help you evaluate critically the answers which you and which others propose to such issues. Ultimate questions in this course will be approached by studying the origins and development of the earliest Christian movement. This should acquaint you with the methods of historical study of the Bible, with some issues and dilemmas of first-century Christianity, and thereby with implications today for your own thinking about what is "really Real" in life.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Introduction to Study of the Bible	(Read rapidly all of Book of Acts [in any Bible], then hand in study questions on last page of syllabus)
A. Overview of the Early Church	
B. What is the Bible?	(Fant, et al., <u>Introduction to Bible</u> [hereafter referred to as <u>Intro</u> ], pp. 21-34, 55-73).
C. How to study the Bible	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 35-54, <u>New Oxford Ann. Bible</u> <sup>3</sup> [hereafter referred to as <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> ], pp.xii-xv; study the syllabus chart, p. 9)
Biblical Background	
Hebrew Bible ("Old Testament")	(on reserve, Anderson, <u>Understanding the Old Testament</u> , 2nd ed., pp. 1-12)
1. Origins: Moses	
a. The Exodus	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 109-15; Exodus chapters 3, 10-12, and 14-15)
b. The Covenant	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 115-19; Exodus chapters 19-20, and 24)
2. Post-Exilic Judaism	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 221- to mid-223, 251-59)
Methods of preserving the heritage	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 230-32, 259-70, 288-91; "Intro. to Apocryphal Books" <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> , pp.3-4, 6-7 of the Apocrypha section)
Apocalyptic hopes	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 271-77; then in <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> Apocrypha, II Esdras 3:1--5:19; in Hebrew Bible, Daniel 7, 10, 12; in N.T., Mark 13; Revelation.14. Tom Sine, "Bringing Down the Final Curtain," <u>Sojourners</u> 13:6 [June-July, 1984], pp.10-14 xeroxed handout)
The New Covenant added (i.e., "New Testament")	("Introduction to the Gospels.," <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> , pp. 3-6 NT)
Jesus, The Messiah/Christ	
Historical Jesus	( <u>Intro</u> , 295-318; all of Gospel of Mark; on reserve: Metzger, <u>The NT: Its Background, Growth &amp; Content</u> , pp. 132-35 on miracles, & pp. 126-30 on Jesus' resurrection)
b. Gospels about Jesus	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 319-26)
c. Luke's gospel: a case study	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 343-49; all the Gospel of Luke)
d. Early Church	
e. Producing Paul: I Thessalonians	(read I Thessalonians, fill out the worksheet on I Thess. found at end of syllabus; <u>Intro</u> , pp. 395-99)
f. Hellenistic World of the First Century A.D.	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 379-86; Soards, pp. 14-17; Selby/ Alpha-graphics reprint, <u>Toward the Understanding of St.Paul</u> , pp.94-112)
g. C. The Book of Acts	("Acts" in <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> , pp 183-85 NT; read (as daily assigned) all of Acts in <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> ; together with the commentary on Acts by Winn and with <u>Intro</u> , pp. 359-77; when the Map Assignment [see end of syllabus] is given, consult map 14 at the rear of <u>NOAB</u> <sup>3</sup> )
Rel. 116, p. 3	
h. The Apostle to the Gentiles	
A. The Life of Paul	
1. His Background	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 386-87; Soards, pp. 7-13, 19-21; Selby, pp. 126-35; study Acts 21:39; 22:3; II Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:5)
2. His Early Life	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 387 to bot. of 389; Soards, pp. 21-24; Selby, pp. 135-38, 141-48, 155-61; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; II Corinthians 12:7-9; Galatians 4:13-15; 6:11)
3. His "Conversion"	( <u>Intro</u> , pp. 389-90; Soards, pp. 24-25; Selby, pp. 161 to 173; Acts

9:1-22; 22:3-21; 26:9-18; compare this with Daniel 10:7-12; Galatians 1-2; Philippians 3:4-14; and I Corinthians 15: 3-10)

4. His Travels

(Intro, pp. 390-94; Soards, pp. 33-36; Selby, pp. 182-86, 196-204, 210-15; 224-32, together with Acts 13-28, as assigned; see map # 14 inserts in NOAB<sup>3</sup>)

5. His Message

(Intro, pp. 412-16; Soards, pp. 37-41, 173-205)

B. Some Letters of Paul

("Introduction to Letters/Epistles in the NT" NOAB<sup>3</sup>, pp.240-41 NT; Soards, pp. 27-32)

1. Galatians

(Intro, pp. 400-402; Soards, pp. 57-67; Galatians in NOAB, as assigned)

2. I Corinthians

(Compare I Cor. 5:9-11 with II Cor. 6:14--7:1; & compare II Cor. 2:3-4 with 7:8 --how many letters were written?! And in what sequence? Then Intro, pp. 402-406; Soards, pp. 71-81; read I Cor. in both NOAB<sup>3</sup> and Cotton Patch translations, as assigned)

Next Generation: A Pauline Tradition...

(Intro, pp. 426-29; Soards, pp. 206-207, 156-62; I and II Timothy and Titus)

D. Summary and review. . .

## EXPLANATIONS OF SCRIPTURE CITATIONS

All biblical books (with first page numbers within the sections Hebrew Bible, Apocrypha, New Testament) are listed in The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. ("NOAB<sup>3</sup>"), the front p. xxiii.

In U.S. publications the standard way of separating "**chapter**" and "**verse**" in biblical citations is the colon (or sometimes, as in NOAB<sup>3</sup>, a period). For example, Luke 22:23 means "chapter 22, verse 23." Luke 22:23-25 means "chapter 22, verses 23 through 25." And Luke 22:23--24:31 means "chapter 22, verse 23, through chapter [note the colon!] 24, verse 31." Always watch for a colon [or period]! If there's none, then it's the context of a number that determines whether it refers to a verse or (more commonly) an entire chapter. Remember: the chapter number is always more important; a verse after all is only a subdivision.



## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Responsible preparation for each session's assignment, and readiness to participate in class. You yourself are actually the "teacher" for whatever you learn! I can only assist you in your responsibilities.

2. Grading is described below. Qualitative judgement as well as quantitative may be applied in grading an assignment or the course as a whole. The following should be helpful, but the syllabus is subject to change.

3. Tests: There will be two hourly examinations, **Feb. 13** and **March 25** (each worth 20% of the semester grade) and at the end of the semester a comprehensive final exam (25%). You may expect several quizzes (announced or unannounced) over the assignment of that session, usually with emphasis on its biblical readings.

4. Written Activities: Several worksheets are to be filled out and handed in, concerning various aspects of biblical study. These, together with the average of the quizzes, will comprise 10% of the semester grade.

5. Library Project: A research project (worth 25%) will be due at the beginning of class time, **April 12**. Its purposes are to train you in the historical approach to the Bible, help you learn some of the standard tools of biblical study available in most libraries, and give a depth of understanding about a representative passage in the New Testament. Two preliminary check sheets for the early stages of your research (due **March 24** and **31**) will help you get started. The finished paper should be about five pages of text, typewritten and double-spaced, and should give clear evidence of what you have learned from a variety of reputable biblical reference works.

Here is the biblical passage to be studied this term. You will locate its place in the Bible by using a concordance (see John Kohlenberger, *The NRSV Concordance*, in Reeves Library--Ref BS 425 .K645 1991).

*Now it is not necessary for me to write you about the ministry to the saints, for I know your eagerness, which is the subject of my boasting about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated--to say nothing of you--in this undertaking. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you, and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion. The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"* (NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION)

Here are the essentials which, as a minimum, your finished paper must include:

- an outline of your presentation (perhaps as a table of contents).
- an analysis of 3 or 4 places in the text where a comparison of English translations is interesting or significant--and be sure to use at least 4 English versions in this comparison.
- most important of all: a discussion of our historical knowledge of the biblical author's intended meaning in this passage--i.e., the situation addressed at that time and place, the local problems which are implied, the deliberate emphases made by the author, etc.
- in conclusion, about ½ page of your own interpretation of this passage, what meaning you think it may or may not have today (i.e., "hermeneutics"), and any comments you would like to add.
- a bibliography (in proper form, of course!) of all sources actually consulted. Be sure you include at least the minimum number of biblical dictionaries (1) and commentaries (5)--and the latter must include some advanced commentaries.
- proper documentation is always necessary for any research. The footnotes or endnotes you use must follow standard form. (Consult English manuals such as MLA Style Sheet or MLA Handbook.)

In addition to these essentials, those papers aspiring to a grade higher than "B" should also discuss at least several instances of form criticism, source criticism, and/or textual criticism found within this passage.

*Here are some suggestions and reminders for working on your paper:*

The first step is to identify the assigned passage, using a New Revised Standard Version concordance (since the passage above is given in the N.R.S.V. translation). Then begin reading in biblical commentaries (at least **five** reputable ones must be used) and biblical dictionaries (at least **one** reputable one). It is best to start with some "one-volume" commentaries (which cover the entire Bible) and also the simpler of those "single volume" commentaries (which cover only a single biblical book) dealing with your passage. List several of the most important words (persons, places, basic concepts) found in this passage and look up them and their background in (one or more) biblical dictionaries. Then work up to reading several of the more advanced commentaries, to finish and refine your comprehension of what the biblical author was trying to say.

For this project, documentation is required--although not necessarily in the form of footnotes or endnotes. However, any quotation **or** substantial paraphrase **or** reference to disputed or controversial viewpoints must acknowledge its source. There are two options for doing so, and each is illustrated by a "Sample Research Paper" on my reserve shelf. One choice (APA) would be to do this by putting at the end of the appropriate sentence (and before the period) the author and (even tho APA may not require this) always the page number; of course the full title, plus the other bibliographic data, will always be on your bibliography. Or, on the other hand (MLA), you may choose to use regular footnotes or endnotes.

Put your name on a title page of your paper, and nowhere else; that enables me to read without first knowing who wrote the paper. Please remember that in writing this or any paper, your name on it is a personal pledge that you have used **only** your own words in it (except of course when clearly and explicitly quoting from an author). At all costs, **avoid any taint of plagiarism**.

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In comparing English translations, look for significant variations in wording, punctuation, paragraphing, and general "color" of language. Save space by referring to translations by their customary abbreviations, such as NEB, KJV, RSV, etc. The following are examples: King James Version (KJV), New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), New American Bible (NAB), Today's English Version (TEV), and Smith-Goodspeed's The Complete Bible in American Translation (referred to as "Smith-Goodspeed")

If you are on the lookout for textual criticism, remember you are watching for any discrepancies in the Greek text as it has come down to us through various surviving MSS (manuscripts). Do these MSS differ in the actual Greek wording used? (These variants may or may not affect the resulting English translation, so you cannot depend on the latter to tell you!) Sometimes italicized footnotes in your NOAB<sup>3</sup> will help you: "other ancient authorities read so-and-so," or "add/lack so-and-so," etc. But most examples are found only in advanced commentaries; in this case your clue will be such introductory phrases as "some texts say....," or "some witnesses read....," "some ancient authorities have....," "a variant reading is....," and so forth. Another clue is the symbols by which manuscripts are labeled, such as **A, B, D, G**, , or--in the case of papyri, superscripted numbers such as **p<sup>15</sup>, p<sup>46</sup>**, etc.

6. Academic Honesty Policy: As in all Moravian College classes, you are expected to be familiar with this entire policy (see *Moravian College Student Handbook*; for 2005-2005, the pages are 54-59).

7. Attendance Policy, Lateness, and Class Notes: Students who have taken this course in earlier years have commented that class attendance is important if one is to learn the material effectively. If there are valid reasons why you must be absent, see me in my office. You may expect that more than four unexcused absences will lower your final grade. Assignments handed in late must be penalized, usually by awarding ½ credit. Taking good class notes is important, and a valuable skill. So to assist us in regular review and skills in summarization, members of the class will experiment by taking turns reading aloud their class notes from the previous class.

8. Grading policy: "C" represents satisfactory and average work--no more, but no less. That means that higher grades would represent achievements that go beyond satisfactory, and lower grades those that are less than average or satisfactory. For the college-wide definition of grades, see *Moravian College Catalog 2004-06*, p. 44.

When grading your work, the first question I ask myself is: Is this satisfactory, an average piece of work that could be fairly expected? If so, then the numerical grade is 70 to 79%. (For a 30-point essay, then, 70% is 21 points. 80% is 24 points. For a 5-point short answer, that means a subtraction of 1 or 1½ points) If I judge it to be better than satisfactory, a "B" is worth 80 to 89 %, and an "A" is 90-100% of whatever the question is worth. If the work being judged is below average/satisfactory, a "D" is 60-69%. Lower than that is.... but let's don't even think about that!

9. An option for extra credit: You may choose to do a field work project off campus, if you wish, totaling about 12 to 15 hours during the semester. The purpose would be to immerse you in a concrete situation requiring deliberate effort to communicate with people somehow different from yourself; that's what would make it a task modestly comparable to the struggles of the earlier church as it emerged into the Gentile/Hellenistic world. A one-page informal essay would be due, then, on the first class meeting of the last week of the semester, evaluating the experience; include also a letter from your off-campus supervisor certifying satisfactory efforts on your part. A final decision on whether or not to sign up for this optional project must be made by the third week of the semester. (the extra credit: a 3% increment on the raw numerical average of all your grades for the semester.)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. The following simpler biblical commentaries and biblical dictionaries are examples of those recommended and to be found on the Reference shelves, section **Ref. BS 440**, the main floor of Reeves Library:

Hastings, James, ed. Dictionary of the Bible, rev. ed. by F. C. Grant and H. H. Rowley. New York: Scribner's, 1963.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, G. A. Buttrick, et al., editors. 4 volumes + 1 supplementary volume. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962-76.

McKenzie, J. L. Dictionary of the Bible. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1965.

The Interpreter's Bible, G. A. Buttrick, et al., editors. New York: Abingdon Press, 1952-57. (When using this, omit the bottom third of most pages -- because, as you'll see, it is mainly devotional material)

Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley, editors, revised edition. London: Nelson & Sons, 1962.

2. For your research paper, you'll need to use some books from biblical commentary *series* (i.e., multi-volume). They are shelved both as series in Reeves Library as **BS 491-94**, & also under the individual titles of Paul's letters as **BS 2665 thro 2725**. Many books written about the Bible are unsuitable. But to guide your browsing, you can trust the following commentary series as *acceptable*. Note that these are only the series titles! (By contrast, the title of each individual volume [not the series] is what you'd find if consulting online our Reserve Shelf listings).

## Less advanced/technical series titles:

"The Anchor Bible" (Doubleday)

Barclay, William, "The Daily Study Bible" (Westminster/John Knox)

"Black's New Testament Commentaries" (Black)

"The Cambridge Bible for Schools & Colleges" (Cambridge)

"The Cambridge Bible Commentary: New English Bible" (Cambridge)

"Epworth Preacher's Commentaries" (Epworth)

"Harper New Testament Commentaries" (Harper & Row)

"Interpretation: A Bible Commentary" (Westminster/John Knox)

"The Layman's Bible Commentary" (John Knox Press)

"The Moffatt New Testament Commentary" (Harper)

"The New Interpreter's Bible" (Abingdon)

"The Pelican New Testament Commentaries" (Penguin)

"Torch Bible Commentaries" (SCM Press)

"The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries" (Tyndale Press)

"Word Biblical Commentary" (Word)

## More advanced/technical series titles:

"The International Critical Commentary" (T&T Clark)

"The New International Commentary on the New Testament" (Eerdmans)

"The New International Greek Testament Commentary" (Eerdmans)

"Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary" (Fortress/Augsburg)

"The New Clarendon Bible" (Oxford University Press)

"Westminster Commentaries" (Methuen)

3. **Online sources:** In using such sources, beware--because many do not follow the scholarly/critical method. Check first to be sure they are reliable!! And any online sources used must be cited properly. To learn the proper citation style, go to Reeves Library website, [www.moravian.edu/library](http://www.moravian.edu/library). Then click on:

- Selected Internet Sites, then
- Bibliographic Citations, then
- Resources for Documentary Electronic Sources, then
- one of the several titles, either for MLA style or APA style (whichever you use)



## I Thessalonians: A Worksheet

Read the Letter of I Thessalonians – first rapidly for an overview, and then a second time carefully (together, of course, with the annotations). Then answer these questions in the space provided:

1. Note the “letter” format and structure of this writing. Write here the verses where you find the  
 Salutation\_\_\_\_\_ Opening words of thanksgiving\_\_\_\_\_  
 Personal words of explanation, information\_\_\_\_\_ Ethical advice\_\_\_\_\_  
 Theological message\_\_\_\_\_ Benediction and farewell\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 From this letter (not in Book of Acts), what do we learn about the background these Thessalonians had before the time they became Christian? And what do we learn about their present problems?
3. a. Why did Paul leave abruptly? (See Acts 17:1-10)  
 b. Why did he not return, as he’d promised?  
 c. So what substitute action did Paul take, which has now relieved his mind?
4. For what actions and attitudes does Paul praise these new Christians?
5. What sort of worries does he still have about their situation?
6. Paul goes out of his way to be tactful with his converts. What evidences of this do you find in this letter? Or in his references to when he had been visiting with them earlier?  
  
 There is a major issue of theological concern (not just moral or personal) for the Thessalonian Christians (4:13–5:11).  
 a. What is this issue?  
  
 b. What does this issue imply about early Christian faith in general?  
  
 c. Does this issue imply that I Thessalonians is one of Paul’s earliest or one of his final letters?

8. What answers to this theological issue does Paul offer, by way of assurance?

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Second Assignment:  
An Exercise in What Form and Source Criticism Might Look Like:**

*In these whimsical and contrived paragraphs are buried a number of quotations or allusions. How many do you think you can find?! Some are direct citations, others are only indirect, and still others are mere allusions. Try your hand at it! Here are the three steps:*

1. *Underline as many as you can discover.*
2. *What do you think the source of each one is? Write your best guess on the margin.*
3. *Do you consider the source of each to be a written document (if so, write “W” beside it)? Or a oral (spoken) tradition (if so, write “O” beside it)? It may be uncertain, but use your best guess.*

Dear customer,

Perhaps you haven't noticed, but it's now been at least four-score and seven years ago that our fathers brought forth on this continent a new idea, a way to enjoy the good life. This idea may prompt some to turn the other cheek, but make others run it up the flag pole and see who salutes. You deserve a break today, so we are going to make you an offer you cannot refuse. Since you, dear customer, surely know that all men are created equal, we think you won't want to miss the boat either. Go ahead and make my day, read further..

What is this new idea? Did somebody say McDonalds? No, it's a form of society called “democracy.” You know,” government of the people, by the people, and for the people”—that sort of notion. But this is the real thing! True, the word has been around a long, long time, but we think it's an idea whose time has come, and he who hesitates is lost. This is the road to the future; drivers are wanted! It means governments are formed to protect the unalienable rights give man by God, our Father who is in heaven, and whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, with liberty and justice for all in the land of the free and the home of the brave. In God we trust.

After all, we do it all for you, you know. So take advantage now of this sensational new offer; it's made for a limited time only, while supplies last. Democracy can work!