

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BNT 533 Studies in the Letters of Paul:
The Thessalonian Correspondence

James D. Hernando

Summer Session I, 2005

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exegetical study of the first and second letters of Paul to the Thessalonians. Emphasis will be given to understanding the occasion of these two epistles, and their relationship to one another as an interpretive framework in which to understand their doctrinal and practical teaching. The major issues of background and introduction will also be surveyed.

OBJECTIVES

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

Knowledge

1. Identify the major introductory issues to each of the Thessalonian epistles about which there is considerable debate and discuss the major views.
2. Locate these two epistles within the life and ministry of the apostle Paul and discuss why two letters were written to the same church containing instruction on the same subject. Be able to reconstruct a plausible occasion for each letter.
3. Discuss what the Thessalonians believed about the *Parousia* and the *Day of the Lord* in each of the epistles. Further discuss what practical problems grew out of their understanding and how Paul corrected their misconceptions.
4. Relate the main features and characteristics of Jewish apocalypticism. Discuss how the contents of the Thessalonian epistles compare.
5. Define the role eschatology plays in Paul's understanding of salvation in Christ. Illustrate your answer with specifics taken from the Thessalonian correspondence.

Skills

1. Translate selected passages in the Thessalonian epistles without the use of grammatical or lexical aids and be able to discuss the grammar and syntax contained therein.

2. Think critically about views challenging the Pauline authorship and authenticity of 2 Thessalonians and be able to provide an alternative way of viewing the internal evidence being considered in the challenge.
3. Use a syntactical/grammatical analysis of a passage to write an exegetical outline which identifies the main topical/thematic content.

Attitudes

1. More fully appreciate the occasional nature of Paul's letters and the value of seeking to reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* as an interpretive framework in which to view the entire contents of a New Testament epistle.
2. Realize more fully the complexity and difficulty of reconstructing the historical setting of a New Testament epistle from the fragmentary evidence therein.
3. Appreciate the vital role the *Parousia* plays in the establishment of "Christian hope" and the importance that hope had for the first century church.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Hawthorne, G. F. and Ralph P. Martin eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Thomas, Robert L. *1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians*. Vol. 11 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

Recommended:

Beale, G. K. *1-2 Thessalonians*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

BASIC OUTLINE

- I. Prolegomena
 - A. Introductory Issues
 - B. Literary Analysis/Composition of the Book
- II. Textual Analysis and Exegesis
 - A. Translation
 - B. Exegesis/Exposition
- III. Theological Analysis and Synthesis:

METHODOLOGY

In this source 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. Whenever possible, absences should be announced beforehand to the professor. Excessive absenteeism is defined by the AGTS catalog and will be dealt with accordingly.
2. Completion of all reading assignments
3. Prolegomena Reading Report
4. Bibliography Project (See handout)
5. Research Project Paper – Options (See “BNT 533 Project Descriptions”)
 - a. Theological Application Paper OR
 - b. Thematic Exposition Paper OR
 - c. Thematic Sermon Series
6. Final Exam (essay)

Note: Work turned in late without the prior permission of the professor will receive a grade reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ letter grade for every day late.

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. Grade Weights

a. Class readings	100pts	10%
b. Class participation	50pts	5%
c. Reading Report	150pts	15%
d. Bibliography Project	200pts	20%
e. Research Project Paper	300pts	30%
f. Final Exam	<u>200pts</u>	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	1000pts	100%
2. 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.

- 3 . Note: Except in rare cases of extenuating circumstances, 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.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beale, G. K. *1-2 Thessalonians*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Best, Ernest. *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1979.
- Bruce, F.F. *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Vol.45 in the *Word Biblical Commentary*. Edited by D.A. Hubbard, G.W. Barker et al. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982.
- Demarest, Gary W. *1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2, Timothy, Titus*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984.
- Donfried, Karl P. *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002.
- Donfried, Karl P. and I. H. Marshall. *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Epistles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1998.
- Green, Gene L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002.
- Hendriksen, William. *Exposition of 1 and 2 Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. In *The New Century Bible Commentary*. ed. R. E. Clements and M. Black. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983.
- Morris, Leon. *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*. In The *NICNT* series. ed. F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959.
- Thomas, Robert L. *1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians*. Vol. 11 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Ward, Ronald A. *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973.

SPECIFIC DATA:

Prepared by James D. Hernando, Ph. D. March 17, 2005