

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians & Philemon



Faculty Contact

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Please contact me if you have comments, suggestions, questions or you would like to talk about this course or your overall learning and ministry goals.

Course Description

An in-depth verse-by-verse textual study of **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon** in their historical, religious, social, geographical and archaeological contexts.

Special attention is given to Paul's high view of Jesus, His death and resurrection for our redemption and His eternal work of Creation in bringing the universe into existence. In studying Paul's letters, also known as Paul's "Prison Epistles*" (*Greek for Letters), attention is given to the value God places on every individual Christian and their ministries as seen in His redemption of us in all these letters and in the life of Philemon, the church that meets in his house and Onesimus. Insights gained in the study of Paul's letters will be helpful in preaching, teaching, missions, evangelism, disciple making, counselling and personal spiritual growth.

Course Objectives

Bible

1. To know God: Father, Son and Spirit more fully from His self-disclosure in Paul's letters, their revelations about Him, His mighty works in His world for our salvation and His sovereignty over nations and individuals.
2. To know and appreciate the historical, religious, social, geographical and archaeological contexts of Paul's life and letters and their messages to increase our understanding of God's actions in His world and as evidence of the historical reliability of His Word for those who need to know Him.
3. To understand the spiritual, literary and rhetorical power of Paul's letters including an appreciation for his choice of words and grammar that enhances the profound eternal truths God communicates through these letters.

Bible & Ministry

4. To be inspired by these letters in righteous, godly and holy living in our lives today as servants of God.
5. To develop skills in teaching these powerful letters through thorough research, exegesis, hermeneutics and application of their important messages to our lives today in ministry, missions, evangelism and personal spiritual growth.

Worldview

6. Enhance our Biblical worldviews by articulating how God's revelations in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon answer these twelve questions:
 1. Who is God?
 2. What is the nature of external reality, the world around us? (i.e. real or an illusion)
 3. What is a human being?
 4. Where do we come from?
 5. What happens to a person at death?
 6. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
 7. How do we know what is right and wrong?
 8. What is the meaning of human history?
 9. How do we perceive time? (i.e. linear, circular cycles, etc.)
 10. Is the worldview/culture open or closed?
 11. Is the centre of this worldview/culture its groups or individuals?
 12. Where are we going, how does the world end?
7. Articulate ways that we by our thoughts, actions and words can graciously communicate God's worldview to others and fulfil His purpose for these letters.

Required Scripture Readings, Primary Sources

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

Secondary Sources, Textbooks

Lockhart, Jay and David Roper. *Ephesians and Philippians*. Truth for Today Commentary. Searcy, AK: Resource Publications, 2009.

Olbricht, Owen and Bruce McLarty. *Colossians and Philemon*. Truth for Today Commentary. Searcy, AK: Resource Publications, 2005.

Class Resources

Additional class resources are available on the Populi Files page. You may download them for future reference.

Recommended Background Resources (See Bibliography)

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003. Available as a Kindle book.

Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*. Revised edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Available as a Kindle book.

Reading & Assignment Schedule

Reading Schedule

Advance reading of Paul's letters and related chapters in our textbooks before class on as follows will help you get the most from your studies:

Lesson 1	Ephesians 1 & Introduction
Lesson 2	Ephesians 2
Lesson 3	Ephesians 3
Lesson 4	Ephesians 4
Lesson 5	Ephesians 5
Lesson 6	Ephesians 6 Quiz 1 from Ephesians
Lesson 7	Philippians 1 & Introduction
Lesson 8	Philippians 2
Lesson 9	Philippians 3
Lesson 10	Philippians 4 Quiz 2 from Philippians
Lesson 11	Colossians 1 & Introduction
Lesson 12	Colossians 2
Lesson 13	Colossians 3 Supremacy of Christ Informal Paper Due
Lesson 14	Colossians 4 Quiz 3 from Colossians
Lesson 15	Philemon & Intro. Quiz 4 from Philemon, Research Paper Due

Credit Student Assignments

Weekly Reflection and Question	15%
Supremacy of Christ Textual Paper	20%
Research Paper	25%
Quizzes 1-4*	40% (4 x 10%)

*Based on readings, class discussions and notes.
Open Bible, open textbook

For 3 hour credit

Not graded

Please view and enjoy these recordings on the Lessons page:

New Testament World Lessons 1, 2, 3, 6 (start at 2:15:00ff), 7, 8.

These lessons contain helpful background information on the locations Paul wrote to and more on the first century Jewish and Greco-Roman world of the first century. They will serve you well for this course and your further New Testament studies.

Weekly Reflection and Question

15%

You receive full marks for submitting these. They are not graded qualitatively.

1. **Reflection:** Read the chapter from Paul's letter for next week's lesson.
2. Select a short text of 1 or a few verses that you find interesting and helpful.
3. In approximately 200 words express some of the features of this text you find most interesting and helpful. At the end of your reflection include a sentence or two on how you can apply this text in your life.
4. **Question** Pose one question you have about any verse(s) or background to the chapter for next week's lesson. (e.g. Ephesians 2 for January 19)
5. Keep your reflections and questions in one word processing file. Upload your updated file to Populi Assignments "Weekly Reflections and Question" by **midnight on Friday before the next lesson**. This will give me time to consider answers to your question for the upcoming lesson.

Supremacy of Christ Textual Paper

20%

1. Paul's teaching on the supremacy of Christ from Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians is powerful and inspiring and very important to Christians in their first-century world and in ours as well as people who need to know who Jesus truly is.
2. In an informal paper of 4 to 5 pages use quotations from Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians to present Paul's high view of Christ's supremacy in all and realms and discuss how a fuller understanding of the supremacy of Christ can help us in our personal growth and in our ministry with God and His church and in apologetics that will help people come to know and appreciate God.
3. This paper is informal. Use only Scripture quotes and your own words. You don't need to consult any secondary sources and you don't need footnotes or bibliography, etc.
4. Double space text in Times New Roman 12 pt.
5. Upload your paper to Populi Assignments by Friday midnight the end of week 13.

Research Paper

25%

1. Write a research paper on any clearly defined passage from Ephesians, Philippians or Colossians and the passage's related historical, literary and eternal truths that you consider important for the church and the world today. Your selection of verses should be well-defined and no more than one chapter in length.

2. The body of your paper will be a minimum of 8 pages of research content (excluding title page, table of contents, bibliography, appendices, etc.)
3. Consult **seven** high quality printed sources and include these in your bibliography. Do not use internet sites unless you are using them to access high quality peer-reviewed books and articles that are available in electronic formats (pdf, Perlego, openlibrary.org / Internet Archive Library, facsimile, etc.). Do not use AI for any aspect of your research or writing. We are aiming to acquire *real* intelligence of God and His Word within your own mind and heart.

The GLBC library has dozens of quality books helpful for exploring the texts. We can scan relevant pages for you.

4. In your paper conclusion, discuss how your chosen passage can help your congregation and your personal spiritual growth and ministry with God and His church. Your concluding applications for ministry should be at least 20% of the length of your paper (about 1.5 pages).
5. Use the *SBL Handbook of Style*, Second Edition. Available for free access and loan at www.openlibrary.org. Adjust the brightness up using the control on the upper left.
6. If you would like comments and suggestions on your draft paper, please let me know and upload a copy by the end of the week of Lesson 12 or 13.
7. Submit your **final** paper by **the end of Friday the week of Lesson 15 (May 1)**.

Quizzes 1-4 40%

Based on readings, class instruction, discussions and notes. Due to the difficulty of remote proctoring, the **quizzes will be open Bible and open text book.**

Part 1 of the quizzes are based on the text book introductions. Part 2 is a short essay. You will enter your answers on the Populi.

Complete the quizzes within one week of the last class for each letter: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon (i.e. Monday of the next week). If you need more time, please ask and an extension will be given.

Bibliographies

While secondary sources may have some value in understanding Scripture they are not necessarily in harmony with God's Word. You are encouraged to read all secondary sources critically with discernment examining everything carefully in light of Scripture as the Bereans did:

“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Please see your textbooks for individual bibliographies for **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon**. As noted, read all secondary sources critically in light of Scripture.

Bibliography of General Reference Works

The following books may offer helpful background information to supplement your textbooks.

Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Third edition. Edited and revised by Frederick William Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Boland, Todd. www.BiblePlaces.com. *Pictorial Library of Bible Lands*.

Carson, D. A. and Douglas Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Third edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

The Greek New Testament. 4th revised edition Edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger. D-Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, United Bible Societies, 1994.

McRay, John. *Archaeology and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1991, 2009.

Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Third Edition)*. Corrected ed. N.p.: United Bible Societies, 1975.

Ramsay, William M., ed. *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen*. London, UK: Houghton and Stoddard, 1895. Updated and revised edition edited by Mark W. Wilson. Full-colour updated and revised edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001.

Rasmussen, Carl. www.HolyLandPhotos.org.

———. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*. Revised edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.

Tenney, M. C. and S. Barabas, S., eds. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976.

Vos, Howard Frederic. *Beginnings in Bible Geography*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1973.