



Faculty Contact

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

Course Description

A study and experience of the world of Jesus and the New Testament through primary sources such as archaeology, art, literature, coins, geography and historical and political documents. We want to expand our understanding of the social, political, religious and geographical settings of Jesus' life and ministry, the work of His Apostles and disciples and the early church and the Jewish people in the Greco-Roman world and their relevance today. These studies give us a deeper appreciation for Scripture in its original historical contexts so God's Word can further enrich and guide our lives and ministries today. We will recognize parallels between the ancient world and our own and see how the gospel and New Testament speak to the deepest spiritual needs of every generation. All these factors will help us in our work with God and His gospel in our ministries of preaching, teaching, evangelism, missions, counselling and encouraging and building up the body of Christ towards maturity as we look forward to Jesus' return and eternal life with God in His glory.

Course Objectives

Bible

1. Know God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their relationship to one another and to us through a deeper understanding of how God revealed Himself in profound ways fulfilling His prophetic promises from Scripture through Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection for the forgiveness and salvation of all who would believe in Him.
2. To have a deeper appreciation of God's prior work of preparation of the world for Jesus to come as Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4-5, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption."
3. To develop awareness of first-century places, geography, culture and religion that heighten our understanding of the setting and meaning of the New Testament texts at the verse, chapter, book and whole canon of Scripture levels. Recognize the many strong parallels between first and twenty-first century life, pursuits and values. This awareness will in turn enhance our work of "accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15b) in exegesis, interpretation and application for the benefit of others.

4. Appreciate how the Old Testament Scriptures' covenants, events and prophecies lead up to and find their fulfilment in the New Testament - and - appreciate how both Old and New Testaments (covenants) inform each other and thus our appreciation of both.
5. Gain a basic understanding of the times between the Testaments, how they fulfil Old Testament prophecy. Recognize many of the religious, cultural and historical dimensions of this period that appear in the New Testament texts and backgrounds, often without any obvious presence in the Old Testament.
6. Develop a greater awareness of the literary genres of the New Testament and how they are ideally suited to speak to their original first-century readers and hearers and to people today. This includes awareness of how New Testament authors expanded upon existing forms and created new ways of communicating eternal truths through the written word.

Ministry

7. Develop awareness of primary resources and skills in researching the New Testament World for life-long learning and personal spiritual growth.
8. Further refine your skills in research, presentation and communication to make your findings and insights accessible to church members and seekers in ways that enhance their appreciation of God and His work in the New Testament world and its relevance to their lives today.
9. Use these resources and skills in all dimensions of ministry to edify the lives of others through our preaching, teaching, worship, prayer, evangelism, apologetics, benevolence, visitation and counselling, etc.
10. Be better equipped to engage in dialogue with people who have yet to know God by helping them to see the historicity of Scripture and God's profound actions in history that make possible the salvation of all who believe.

Worldview

11. Enhance our Biblical worldviews through a deeper understanding of how God acted and viewed His world in the first-century world - and - by contrast articulate dimensions of Judeo-Greco-Roman worldviews and how they differ from God's worldview.

Use these questions to analyse both God's worldview and a contrasting example of a first-century worldview:

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?
12. Articulate ways we by our thoughts, actions and words can graciously communicate God's worldview to others and that they may fulfil His purpose for their lives, including obeying the gospel where necessary.

Sources

The New Testament and the Old Testament

New Testament Readings

Matthew 1–2
Mark 13
Luke 1–2
Acts 2, 13-28 (Journeys of Paul)
Galatians 4:1–7

Old Testament Readings

Daniel 7–12

Textbooks (See below for list of readings)

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Third Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. (Available as Kindle Book.)

Josephus. *The Complete Works of Josephus*. Translated by William Whiston. Any recent edition.

Other Book Excerpts, Articles, etc. (See below for list and readings)

Course Assignments & Evaluation

Bible

Bible Passage Exegesis, Interpretation & Application	15%
Employing New Testament World Backgrounds	

Bible & Ministry

Research Paper	30%
First-century Book Review	15%
<i>Backgrounds of Early Christianity</i> Book Review	15%
Short Quiz	10%

Worldviews

Biblical and First-Century Worldviews Comparison	15%
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Sources, Form and Evaluation for All Written Assignments

Sources

Any primary sources from the New Testament world and its historical backgrounds. High quality peer-reviewed scholarly books and articles which may also contain primary source material.

You may include visual materials in appendices as you like where applicable.

Form

SBL

Times New Roman font double spaced for the body of the work.

Page counts do not include bibliography, appendices, title and contents pages.

Grading Evaluation

Research and Use of Sources	40%
Development of Thought	25%
Application Today	15%
Clarity of Structure	10%
Correct Language & Form	10%

Bible

Bible Passage Exegesis, Interpretation & Application
Employing New Testament World Backgrounds 15%

Four to five page exegesis, interpretation and application of any short passage of the New Testament for which primary source material from the first-century world is particularly helpful in expanding our understanding of God's eternal truth and its application in our lives today.

Bible & Ministry

Research Paper 30%

Research and write a 10–12 page paper on any aspect of the New Testament world that you find particularly interesting and informative for your ministries.

First-century Book Review 15%

Read 20 to 30 pages of an English translation of any ancient book that is particularly relevant to our understanding of the first-century Judeo-Greco-Roman world.

Write a 4–5 page review briefly highlighting:

- * Author's life and context
- * Brief summary of content
- * Brief analysis
- * Relevance
- * Recommendations for further reading.
- * Bibliography

***Backgrounds of Early Christianity* Book Review** 15%

Write a 4–5 page book review briefly highlighting:

- * Author's life and context
- * Brief summary of content
- * Brief highlight of 2 or 3 published reviews
- * Brief analysis
- * Relevance Today

Short Quiz 10%

Choose 20 of 24 pairs of questions about topics from the course. A study guide will be provided listing topics.

Worldviews

Biblical and First-Century Worldviews Comparison

15%

Using the template of worldview questions above compare a first-century worldview with God's worldview revealed in Scripture. Six pages.

Selected Readings from Text Books

Backgrounds of Early Christianity.

Two hour credit students will read approximately 60% of this book, less pictures and bibliographies as listed below.

Three hour credit students will read all of this book.

Pages:	Topics:
1–4	Introduction
396–407	Judaism: Jewish History, 538 B.C. to 167 B.C.
5–47	Political History: Persian, Greek, Roman
48–147	Society and Culture: Roman
148–182	Hellenistic-Roman Religions:
199–200	Ruler Cult
213–251	Personal Religion
319–345	Hellenistic-Roman Philosophies
408–432	Judaism (continued):
513–536	Parties and Sects
539–540	Torah, Tradition and Scripture
562–582	Organizations and Institutions
583–620	Christianity in the Ancient World

Josephus, The Complete Works of Josephus.

Josephus (A.D. 37-ca. 100) is known among Christians for his references to Jesus, James and John the Baptist. His writings are also of value for understanding the inter-testamental period, Jerusalem in the first century and the eye-witness accounts of the conflicts of the Jews and Romans surrounding the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70. While his writings are too long to all be read for this course, the following readings are selected to provide you with some insights into one approach to ancient history writing and the flavour of Josephus' life and times. Josephus' writings will *not* be examined in detail on either the quiz.

Title: Book/chapter/paragraph as applicable:

Life of Flavius Josephus 1–8, 76

<i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>	Preface 1–2	
	11.8.1–7	Alexander's entry into Jerusalem, etc.
	12.1.1	Ptolemy takes many Jews to Egypt
	12.2.1	Ptolemy has Jewish laws translated into Greek
	12.4.1–2	Ptolemy, Antiochus, Joseph, Hyrcanus
	12.6.1	Mattathias resists Antiochus, introducing Judas
	12.8.2	Judas subdues the nations
	18.3.1–3	the Jews against Herod; the Christ the "Testimonium Flavianum"
	18.5.1–4	Herod and John the Baptist
	20.2.1–5	Helena and Izates of Abiadene embrace Judaism
	20.9.1	Albinus kills James the brother of Jesus, the Christ
<i>Wars of the Jews</i>	5.5.1–8	description of the Temple and tower of Antonia
	6.4.1–8	burning of the temple against Titus' will

Selected Readings from Articles and Other Books

- Evans, Craig A. "Jesus in Non-Christian Sources." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight and I. Howard Marshall, 364–68. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Baptism in the Early Church : History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, 27-37; 60–82.
- _____. "Baptism in the Second Century." In *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries*. Rev. ed., 33–43. Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1987.
- Gutman, Shmaryahu. "Gamala." In *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern, A. Lewinson-Gilboa, J. Aviram, vol. 2, 459–63. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
- Lightfoot, Neil R. *How We Got the Bible*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, 11–24.
- Malherbe, Abraham. *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1989, 138–39.
- Oster, Richard E. "Ephesus." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, ed. D. N. Freedman, 542–49. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1992.

- Reich, Ronny. "Miqva'ot." In *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam, 560–63. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Richardson, Peter. *Herod, King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1996, 196–202.
- Ritmeyer, Leen and Kathleen. "Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount in Jerusalem." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15 (Nov/Dec 1989): 23–53.
- Roller, Duane W. *The Building Program of Herod the Great*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998, 33–42.
- Rousseau, John J. and Rami Arav. "Ritual Baths." In *Jesus and His World: an Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, 236–40. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Scott, J. Julius. Jr. "Josephus." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight, I. Howard Marshall, 391–4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Strabo, *Geography*. Loeb Classical Library, 1.1.1–7ff; 16.2.33–40.
- Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, 12–30.
- Walls, A. F. "Maccabees." In, *New Bible Dictionary*. Second Edition, 719–21. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England, 1982.
- Wise, Michael O. "Languages of Palestine." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight, I. Howard Marshall, 434–44. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Witherington, Ben III. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, 5–33, 194.
- Wolf, H. "Maccabees." In *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, volume 4, ed., Merrill C. Tenney, 2–22. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976.

Online Class Resources Folder

Resources uploaded to Populi will also be available in this online folder so you will have access to them after the Populi page closes at the end of term.

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