

HEBREWS TO REVELATION (NT522)

Syllabus, Winter 2016

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to better understand the (often under-appreciated) latter section of the canon. That understanding, however, requires not only growing in *knowledge* but also and even preeminently growing in wisdom, maturity, and love for God. Additionally we want to see how this section of God's word equips us to be better shepherds of those that God has put in our care, better ministers and servants of his Word.

Due to the brevity of our time together we will have to proceed selectively. Rather than working linearly through the entirety of each book we will highlight important themes and passages, attempting to understand those themes in the context of their place within their own books and in redemptive history. While I hope to focus in some detail on important particulars, the choice of these particulars will be determined by a broader concern: to see how these books augment, magnify, and deepen our understanding of God's plan for redemption, a redemption that is cosmic in scope and yet intimately personal and practical.

In short, this section of our Bible is often mysterious and confusing to us, and this is perhaps because we do not have a big enough Gospel. Thus we are involved in a beautiful spiral: studying the General Epistles and Revelation expands our understanding of the Gospel, and that understanding in turn helps us to better appreciate and appropriate these wonderful and encouraging books. And all this that we might draw nearer to our Great High Priest who reigns even now in heaven!

- B. DATES AND TIMES.** Class will be held from 8:00-4:00 on January 16-20. **Your final exam, paper, and reading list are all due Friday March 9th**, though I recommend completing either the exam or the paper at least one week prior to that date (that is, don't leave *everything* until the last minute).

C. INSTRUCTOR

Thomas Keene

email: keenetommy@gmail.com (this is the fastest way to reach me)

Phone: 215-346-6717

Net: <http://unfinalizable.com> <http://twitter.com/tommykeene> <http://facebook.com/keenetommy>
<http://christthekingpca.org>

D. COURSE WEBSITE

You can find all course documents and some of the readings online. The URL will be provided the first day of class, or can be requested by email.

II. REQUIRED READING

All the following readings except Carson and both Bauckham books are available on the course website or elsewhere online. I suggest you start with the "special introduction" readings (Jobes on 1 Peter, Lane on Hebrews, Yarbrough on John, Carson on everything else), particularly if you are less familiar with a particular book. We will do very little "special introduction" in class, but you are still expected to know the issues, which means that the best way to get ahead is to load up on that reading now. The other (more interesting!) readings are designed to draw out specific issues or themes that we will develop in class. Starred readings will be made available to you in a reading packet.

Note: These readings are not being assigned to give you “the right answers” but rather to call you to engage in an ongoing dialog with Scripture and with those who interpret the Scriptures. Please read with humility and “critical appreciation.”

A. BIBLE READING. Read Hebrews through Revelation at least once (in English)

B. SPECIAL INTRODUCTION

Carson, D. A, and D. J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. Read only the chapters on James, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.

Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2005. Pages 1-57.

Lane, W. L. “Hebrews.” Pages 443-458 in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Yarbrough, R. W. *1, 2, and 3 John*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. Pages 3-28.

C. HEBREWS

Barrett, C. K. “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews.” Pages 363-93 in *The Background of the NT and Its Eschatology*. Edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Caird, Goerge Bernard. “The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews.” *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5 (1959): 44-51.

Gaffin, R. B. “Christ, Our High Priest in Heaven.” *Kerux*, 1986.
<http://www.kerux.com/documents/KeruxV01N3A2.asp>.

Schreiner, T. “Perseverance and Assurance: A Survey and a Proposal.” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, no. 2 (1998): 32-62. Available online at
http://www.sbts.edu/docs/tschreiner/2.1_article.pdf

Silva, M. “Perfection and Eschatology in Hebrews.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 (1976): 60-71.

D. JAMES

Bauckham, R. *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*. London: Routledge, 1999. Pages 1-73, 93-157. [Available on Amazon, or for rent on a Kindle, or in the library. It's expensive, so you do NOT need to buy it—wait for class.]

McCartney, D. G. “Suffering in James.” Pages 477-486 in *The Practical Calvinist*. Edited by P. A. Lillback. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2002.

E. 1 PETER, 2 PETER, JUDE

Bautch, K. C. “‘Awaiting New Heavens and a New Earth’: The Apocalyptic Imagination of 1-2 Peter and Jude.” Pages 63–82 in *Reading 1-2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*. Edited by E. F. Mason and T. W. Martin. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006): 64-89.

Dunnett, Walter M. “The Hermeneutics of Jude and 2 Peter: The Use of Ancient Jewish Traditions.” *JETS* 31, no. 3 (1988): 287–92.

Selwyn, E. G. “Eschatology in 1 Peter.” Pages 394-401 in *The Background of the NT and Its Eschatology*. Edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.

F. REVELATION, JOHANNINE EPISTLES

OPTIONAL: Barr, D. L. “The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis.” *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 39-50.

- Bauckham, R. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Helm, D. R. *An Approach to Apocalyptic Literature: A Primer for Preachers*. The Simeon Trust, 2009.
<http://www.simeon.org/media/poe-helm%28apocalyptic-primer%29.pdf>
- Lieu, J. *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1991. Pages 1-21, 31-49.
- Poythress, V. S. "Counterfeiting in the Book of Revelation as a Perspective on Non-Christian Culture." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 3 (1997): 411-18. Available online at http://www.frame-poythress.org/poythress_articles/1997Counterfeiting.htm
- . "Genre and Hermeneutics in Rev 20:1-6." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36 (1993): 41-54. Available online at http://www.frame-poythress.org/poythress_articles/1993Genre.htm

III. ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be determined by three factors: (1) your completion of the required reading, (2) a 10-15 exegetical paper on a text of your choosing, (3) a three-question final exam.

A. READING (10%)

On the day you take the final exam you will also be required to fill out a form stating the percentage of reading that you completed. Each of your required reading assignments will be listed and you will be required to estimate, on your honor, the percentage of each you completed. I consider a book "read" if you have made every effort to understand its main points and the various justifications offered for that point. This usually requires reading and comprehending each paragraph, but not necessarily each word or sentence. In short: skimming is permissible at certain points and in certain cases, but not skipping.

B. PAPER (50%)

1. OVERVIEW

You are required to write a 10-15 (double-spaced) page exegetical research paper on a text of your choosing. You can choose any text in the General Epistles or Revelation. The paper should be submitted by email no later than midnight on the due date listed above.

2. TEXT SELECTION

Text selection can make or break an exegetical paper, so choose your text carefully. Your text needs to be short enough that you can do it justice in the space of 10-15 pages, but long enough that it can stand on its own and has its own integrity. Aim for about a paragraph, maybe two if necessary. It is not always easy to determine where your paragraph begins and ends—different English translations and Biblical commentaries divide the text differently (there are no paragraphs in the "original," at least not as we might consider them), so you will need to do a little research before coming to a final decision. I suggest you pick a section of Scripture (a verse or two) that seems interesting to you, then do a little research on those verses to determine the beginning and ending of the paragraph in which they occur. That final paragraph (or two) should be the center-point of your paper.

3. HOW TO WRITE AN EXEGETICAL PAPER

An exegetical paper, unlike a theological or thematic one, is centered upon one particular pericope of Scripture (a paragraph or two, depending on genre). That text is the heart of your paper, and your goal should be to explain what that text means in both its immediate and canonical context.

Once you have picked a text that interests you (see above), begin your research by reading your text (and its surrounding context) over and over again. Go verse by verse and ask yourself tons of questions (and write them all down). No question is too simple (or too complex)! Sometimes the key to a text is found in the questions that seem "too obvious." Make sure at least one of these questions is "What is

the *point*?" In fact, several of your questions should be variations on that all-important idea. Why does Peter say it *that way*? Why does John include *this* in his argument? Why does the author of Hebrews go there? These are all *purpose* questions, and they are the most important ones to ask.

Now start answering your questions. Don't pick up a book or a commentary quite yet. Answer your questions first by prayerfully and humbly looking at the text itself. You will need to look at the immediate context of your passage. How does it fit into the flow of the book as a whole? How does it further the author's main point? Outline your text, and outline the book in which it occurs. These types of activities help you view the text as a small piece of a larger whole.

Once you have started to explore your text a little more a "main point" should begin to coalesce in your mind. Try to write down that main point in a sentence or so. Aim for a "tweetable" main point. Then broaden your horizons. What is the main point of this section of the book? What is the main point of the book as a whole? And how does this book contribute to our overall understanding of the canon, of redemptive history, and of the Christian life?

Only after you have at least preliminary answers to these questions are you ready to crack open a commentary. Start researching your passage in reliable commentaries and articles (the *Word* series of commentaries usually have excellent bibliographies you can consult). In the course of your research you will be able to refine and develop (or reject) the ideas you have already come to on your own.

Now it's time to start writing. Sketch up a preliminary outline. Your organization will of course be dependent on your passage and the main point you want to make, but I suggest you start narrow (that is, with the details of your text) and work your way out (that is, with the literary and then canonical context of your text). After a brief introduction, start by explaining the immediate concerns of the text you picked. Are there any translation issues to note? Any strange words? Describe the flow of the argument and tell us the main point being made. Next, describe how your passage fits into the broader context of the book—start with the immediate context and then increasingly "zoom out" until the whole book is in view. As a final concern, show how your passage deepens our understanding of the Bible as a whole, how it fits into the Gospel of our redemption (this is not the major emphasis of an exegetical paper, but it's good to do). Along the way, or at the end, you can feel more than free to make some "practical applications."

4. GREEK REQUIREMENT

If you have taken Greek please use it in your paper. Provide your own translation of the passage that you picked and justify that translation when appropriate. Use Greek when appropriate throughout. You do not need to be detailed here, but if you know Greek use it!

5. FORMAT

Your paper should be double spaced with 1-inch margins. Use Times New Roman or equivalent font, 12pt. Cite all your sources following the guidelines laid out in the *SBL Handbook*. or the *Chicago Manual of Style* (I'm fine with either the "standard" method or the newer author-date format) You might want to considering using bibliography software, such as the free Zotero plugin for Firefox to make this process easier. Include a bibliography with all the works you cited in your paper as described in the aforementioned guides.

C. FINAL (40%)

The final exam will be posted online on the last day of class. It will consist of three essay questions. The first question will be a "special introduction" question over one of the books we have covered. Some examples include "Discuss the authorship of 2 Peter" or "How would you describe the genre and main point of the Epistle to the Hebrews." The second question will be about a specific book and will focus on

analyzing a major theme or topic found in that book. For example, “Discuss the nature of perseverance as it is treated in Hebrews.” The last question will be more general, allowing you to “show off” by integrating your re-readings with the material we have covered in class in a more open-ended kind of way. Examples here include questions like “How does this section of the canon address Christian suffering?” or “How might you use what you have learned in class to counsel someone who constantly doubts their salvation?” For each question you should be able to critically interact with both the readings and lectures while simultaneously demonstrating your understanding of the actual book.

You will need to complete the exam by the due date listed above. You may download the exam at any time but please do not look at it until you are ready to complete the exam in one 3-hour sitting. Include your name, email address, and your start and completion times on the exam.

You may use an unannotated English or Greek bible during the exam, but no other helps are permitted.

D. GRADING SCALE

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	Etc.
93-96	A	83-86	B	<60 F
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	

IV. OUTLINE

An outline of lecture material will be provided on the first day of class to assist you in studying. I will also provide slides of my lecture material as we proceed in class. An extended bibliography will also be provided. -

V. SCHEDULE

A detailed outline will be provided on the first day of class, but you can expect us to proceed roughly as follows:

- Monday: Introduction, “Unity, Diversity, and Redemptive History,” Hebrews
- Tuesday: Hebrews
- Wednesday: James, 1 Peter
- Thursday: 2 Peter, Jude, John's Letters
- Friday: Revelation, Conclusions