

# REL 510: The World of the New Testament

Seaver College, Pepperdine University  
May 20-31, 2002 CAC 214

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Office hours: as needed in the afternoons after class

**A. Course Description:** A study of the historical, social, cultural, and religious setting of early Christianity, with systematic analysis of selected Jewish, Greek, and Roman literary and artifactual remains, as they have bearing upon the New Testament.

## B. Textbooks

1. E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
2. S. J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Library of Early Christianity, no. 7 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987).
3. J. E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

## C. Tests

1. May 24
2. May 31

## D. Requirements

1. Regular and prompt attendance. Because of the compact nature of the course, attendance at each class period is crucial. It is assumed that every person will attend every class unless there is some illness or other serious emergency. A grade penalty will be enforced for anyone who is not in regular attendance.
2. Spend at least three or four hours browsing some of the many websites now available that illuminate the social and historical context of early Christianity. Some specific sites will be recommended in class.
3. A research paper bringing some aspect of the environment of early Christianity to bear on the interpretation of the New Testament. Approximate length: fifteen typed, double-spaced pages. Topics may relate to one or more archeological discoveries, texts, ideas, institutions, practices, etc., as these shed light on some specific passage or theme in the New Testament. Research must include relevant primary sources as well as secondary scholarly works, and all information must be fully documented with footnotes and bibliography.

**Due dates:**

- brief statement of topic, May 28
- preliminary bibliography, May 31
- final paper, June 28

The following are illustrative, but by no means exhaustive, of appropriate topics. You should feel free to be creative and pursue your special interests, but you must work in close consultation with me to ensure that the topic is appropriate and manageable, to define its scope, and to gather pertinent resources.

The Concept of Justification in Paul and Qumran  
 The Lord's Prayer and Ancient Jewish Prayers  
 Jewish Antecedents of Christian Baptism  
 Mystery Initiation and Christian Baptism as Described in Romans 6  
 I Enoch and the Epistle of Jude  
 Flesh-Spirit Dualism in Paul and His World  
 Pauline Ethics and Hellenistic Moral Philosophy  
 Traditions About Melchizedek in Early Judaism and in the Epistle to the Hebrews  
 Traditions About Adam in Early Judaism and in Romans 5  
 Paul as Pastor in the Light of Hellenistic Philosophic Models  
 Gnosticism and the Johannine Epistles  
 The *Logos* in Philo and the Johannine Prologue  
 The Pharisees in Matthew in the Light of Recent Scholarship  
 Messianism at Qumran and in the New Testament  
 "Son of Man" in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and the Gospels  
 Jewish and Hellenistic Roots of the Title "Son of God"  
 The Use of the Old Testament in Matthew and the Qumran Scrolls  
 The Book of Revelation and Jewish Apocalyptic  
 The Concept of *Ekklesia*: Jewish and Greco-Roman Models  
 The Jewish and Hellenistic Background of Paul's Concept of "Mystery"  
 Women's Roles in Ancient Jewish Synagogues  
 I Corinthians 15 in Light of Jewish Views of Resurrection  
 Natural Theology in Stoicism, Hellenistic Judaism, and the New Testament  
 The Lord's Supper and Hellenistic Cult Meals  
 Emperor Worship and the Book of Revelation  
 John the Baptist and Qumran  
 Philemon and Slavery in the Greco-Roman World  
 Patron-Client Relationships in the Greco-Roman World and the Pauline Churches

Note: Content, rather than style, is of primary importance in these written assignments. Nevertheless, careful attention should be given to style of writing. Complete the research early enough to allow ample time for planning and writing a clear and coherent paper. No paper with excessive errors of spelling, grammar, or punctuation will receive better than a "C." Follow the sample forms on the attached pages for footnotes and bibliography.

**E. Grades:** For purposes of determining a letter grade for the course, the various assignments will be weighted approximately as follows.

1. Two tests, 60% (30% each)
2. Research paper, 30%
3. Daily preparation and contribution to class discussion, 10%

## F. Approximate Course Schedule

<b>Monday, May 20</b>	<b>Introduction; The Roman Political Context: From Republic to Empire</b>
<b>Tuesday, May 21</b>	<b>History of Judaism from Alexander to Hadrian</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 1-44 Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 373-406
<b>Wednesday, May 22</b>	<b>Jewish Factions</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 480-502 Cohen, <i>Maccabees to Mishnah</i> , pp. 1-59
<b>Thursday, May 23</b>	<b>Jewish Literature</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 406-480
<b>Friday, May 24</b>	<b>Religious and Social Aspects of Judaism</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 502-546 Cohen, <i>Maccabees to Mishnah</i> , pp. 60-231
<b>Monday, May 27</b>	<b>Memorial Day Holiday</b>
<b>Tuesday, May 28</b>	<b>Social History of the Greco-Roman World</b> Stambauch, <i>Ancient Roman City</i>
<b>Wednesday, May 29</b>	<b>Social History of the Greco-Roman World, continued</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 45-136
<b>Thursday, May 30,</b>	<b>Greco-Roman Religions and Philosophies</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 137-298
<b>Friday, May 31</b>	<b>Greek and Latin Literary Sources; Miscellaneous Topical Studies</b> Ferguson, <i>Backgrounds</i> , pp. 299-371

## Sample Forms for Bibliographical Entries

### Book:

Kingsbury, Jack D. Matthew as Story, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

Rhoads, David, and Donald Michie. Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

### Commentary or other book in a series:

Hagner, Donald A. Matthew, 2 vols. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Books, 1993-95.

Harrington, Daniel J. The Gospel of Matthew. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991.

Soards, Marion L. The Passion According to Luke: The Special Material of Luke 22. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, no. 14. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987.

### Article in a book of collected essays:

Trites, Allison A. "The Prayer Motif in Luke Acts." Perspectives on Luke Acts, ed. Charles H. Talbert. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978. Pp. 168-86.

Robinson, William C., Jr. "On Preaching the Word of God (Luke 8:4-21)." Studies in Luke Acts, eds. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966. Pp. 131-38.

*[Use "ed." for a single editor and "eds." for two or more.]*

**Journal article:**

Keck, Leander E. "Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology." Journal of Biblical Literature 84 (1965) 341-58.

Weber, Kathleen. "The Image of Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31-46." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 59 (1997) 657-78.

*[Note that book titles and journal titles are underlined or italicized. Titles of articles within books or journals are placed in quotation marks.]*

**Primary Sources:**

Danby, Herbert. The Mishnah. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Thackeray, H. St.-J., et al. Josephus, 9 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926-65.

*[Use "et al." ("and others") when there are more than three authors or editors.]*

## Sample Forms for Footnotes

### General:

<sup>1</sup>Daniel A. Harrington, The Gospel of Matthew, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>Kathleen Weber, "The Image of Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31-46," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 59 (1997) 670-71.

*[Note that the specific page numbers are cited, rather than the total page numbers as in the bibliographical entry. Use "p." for a single page and "pp." for multiple pages.]*

<sup>3</sup>William C. Robinson, Jr., "On Preaching the Word of God (Luke 8:4-21)," Studies in Luke Acts, eds. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>Donald A. Hagner, Matthew, 2 vols., Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1993-95), vol. 1, pp. 121-23.

### Subsequent reference to a source cited earlier:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

*[Use "ibid." only when referring to the same source as in the footnote immediately preceding. For all other subsequent references, use the author's last name and a shortened title as in the following.]*

<sup>2</sup>Harrington, Matthew, pp. 116-17.

<sup>3</sup>Weber, "Sheep and Goats," p. 658.

### Primary Sources

<sup>1</sup>Josephus Antiquities 13.11.3.

<sup>2</sup>Mishnah Pesachim 8.8.

*[Note that it is not necessary to give the publication data here; this information is available in the bibliography. Give only the primary source reference.]*

**Multiple works that make the same point can be cited together in one note:**

<sup>1</sup>Jack D. Kingsbury, Matthew as Story, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 16; Leander E. Keck, "Mark 3:7-12 and Mark's Christology," Journal of Biblical Literature 84 (1965) 352; and Weber, "Sheep and Goats," p. 659.

**"Content" Footnotes: Supplementary argumentation or subsidiary discussion can be carried on in footnotes in order to keep the main text flowing smoothly.**

<sup>1</sup>The singular "sign" is most likely original. The variant reading "signs" probably arose by scribal assimilation to the plural in verse 2. So Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 211. However, Raymond Brown, The Gospel of John, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 234, 249, favors the plural reading and suggests that verses 14-15 are only loosely connected to the particular "sign" of verses 1-13.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh Montefiore, "Revolt in the Desert?" New Testament Studies 8 (1962) 135-36. Montefiore is aware of theories which separate out verses 30-34 as Markan redaction, but he finds the case unconvincing and argues that these introductory verses are continuous with the traditional feeding story which follows.