

**NT 503 Reading the New Testament**  
**Take-Home Final Exam**  
**Revised 8/12/2020**

**NT Final Exam**

Discuss the following when approaching the Gospels for teaching, preaching, and discipleship. Be sure to support your answer with evidence and analysis.:

1. Why is it important to understand historical-critical issues, such as authorship, recipients, and dating (even if we cannot determine these details definitively)? **1 to 2 paragraphs.**

Reasons why it is essential to understand the historical-critical issues are because of a few facts. Understanding the authorship, recipients, and dating will give an explanation and rationale for how, why, and when the Synoptic Gospels were written. The written text came at a cost prompting early Judaism to commit to memorizing text. According to the author, Arthur G. Patzia, in *The Making of the New Testament* states, "Manuscripts were very costly to produce." (p53). Because of the recipient's need for memorizing events and stories, scholars imply that Jesus taught in "parables and parallelism" (Patzia, p53). Today, complications surround the current individual abilities to commit things to memory.

Further, a scholarly explanation would shed light on how and why the new testament authors wrote specific events that shaped the Synoptics. According to Patzia, the Gospels were written: "thirty to fifty-years" (Patzia, p88) after Christ's life that serves as another debated issue. Understanding source criticism could help answer the legitimacy of the text. Further, sources used for constructing the Synoptics are also an issue. According to Patzia, a "Two-Document Hypothesis" was used to help combat criticism. (Patzia, p73). And redaction criticism helps compartmentalize Gospel comparisons. (Patzia, p87)

2. Present a well-reasoned argument for your ministry context as to what is significant for people's faith and interpretation of a Gospel for spiritual growth about the phenomenon that the Church has 4 canonical gospels? **1 paragraph**

I believe that encouraging a transformed life through Jesus is significant for faith within our ministry context. The inner-working of the ministry context enhances the cohesion of the Synoptic Gospels as understood through its application. Moreover, part of the ministry is the explanation of the four canonical gospels, written by four different authors, to the Church. The process of understanding the Gospels will empower faith growth and life transformation. It is accomplished through contrasting the Gospels for better biblical scholarship. (2 Timothy 2:15.) Indeed, this is the basis for our ministry belief.

3. When reading the letters of Paul, one must consider the relationship between the Church's context (the recipients) and the argument Paul makes in a specific letter.

- a. Explain the reason why this is an essential step in reading Paul's different letters with competence. **1 paragraph.**

Considering the relationship between context and an argument raised in a specific letter is essential because each letter was to accomplish different goals. The Greco-Roman world in which Paul lived maintained a formative system of writing pursuant to cultural specifics. For example, a section of Paul's letter addressing prayer "expresses the content of prayers said on the recipient's behalf." (Powell, 11.0 & Box 11.1) Or, a section of his letter addressing *encouragement* "urges the recipient to be bold in pursuing some course of action." (Powell, 11.0 & Box 11.1) Reasons behind letters were not general in nature but addressed particular issues.

- b. Focusing on Galatians, discuss the relationship between the context and the theological points emphasized. Be sure to be specific about the context and explain why these theological issues best addressed them. **1 to 2 paragraphs.**

The letter addressed the converted Gentiles of Paul's missionary journeys in Galatia. The converts were seduced to false teachings promulgated by the Jewish opponents. According to Powell, "They upset and confuse the Galatians (1:7; 5:10)" (Powell, 16.3). The Churches in Galatia were caught between the teachings of Paul and false influencers. Further, "They pervert the gospel of Christ (1:7)" (Powell, 16.3). "They prevent the Galatians from obeying the truth (5:7)" (Powell, 16:3). Consequently, the lifestyle of the Galatians reverted to their old living. Paul exhorts the Christians to reconcile with God through faithful obedience.

4. By the end of this course you should be more aware of the diversity of the New Testament, as well as how the message of each book complements God's overarching purpose of reconciliation with humanity. Diversity is a hot-button issue today and education is often construed as the domain of elitists, and that includes Seminary educated pastors and teachers. It is important you are clear about the extent and limitations of diversity.

- a. Is diversity a problem for interpretation, or do you see a value to these different voices for the proclamation and ministry of the contemporary Church? Explain. *Remember the unique presentations of the Catholic or General epistles.* **1 paragraph.**

Diversity is a value for interpretation because of the context of the letters that can relate to believers around the world. For example, although Peter was writing to a specific group of people, it was "relevant to all believers." (Patzia, p152). The apostles' voices through the letters are significant today as much as they were during the New Testament period. Textual diversity allows people from diverse backgrounds to relate to the text.

- b. Describe what steps you would take if an interpretation on a passage of Scripture was not the same as yours, and what you would do if a commentary or

denomination challenged what you have always understood. **1 paragraph.** *This question goes to method more than content, which is a graduate level focus of critical thinking. It helps to think about how you would handle an issue ahead of time so that you are prepared to respond wisely and opened to the Spirit's guidance (1 Timothy 3:16-17).*

If I came across an interpretation of Scripture that conflicted with mine, I would pursue a methodology of "Evaluating The Evidence," as described by Patzia. (Patzia, p242). Contained within the method is "external evidence" and "internal evidence" used for analysis. (Patzia, p243). Proceeding to external evidence, I would look at the age of the Biblical text, authorship location, and the type of text presented. After a careful examination of these points, I would pursue internal evidence and view the transcriptional and intrinsic probabilities based on writing time frames. Next is to examine the translations of the words by using a process of contextual word interpretation. Gaining criterion through both categories and word context investigation, textual variations can then be compared.

5. **OPTIONAL:** "One thing I would like the professor and/or ATS to know about my experience in this course is: \_\_\_\_\_."

## **Bibliography**

Bible Gateway. Accessed December 18, 2020. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=>

Ephesians+4&version=NKJV.

Patzia, Arthur. *The Making of the New Testament*. InterVarsity Press. P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515. 2011

Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing The New Testament*. Baker Academic, 2018.

**NT 503 FINAL EXAM RUBRIC**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
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	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaches Expectations</b>	<b>Minimal Expectations</b>	<b>Misses Expectations</b>
<b>Clarity and Organization of Argument</b>	Organizes the content in an exceptional manner.  Articulates ideas with exceptional clarity, logic, and supporting evidence.	Organizes the content in a reasonable manner.  Ideas are clearly and logically expressed, supported well by relevant investigation and literature.	Organization of the content is difficult to follow.  Has a basic understanding of the question, but is unable to articulate ideas clearly, logically, or with adequate supporting reasons.	The essay is disjointed.  Was unable to present his/her answers clearly, logically, or with persuasive evidence.	Poorly written
<b>Mastery of the Content of a NT Book</b>	Demonstrates comprehensive mastery of the significant, distinctive content.	Demonstrates competent control of the distinctive content.	Demonstrates some knowledge of the content.	Has significant gaps in knowledge of the content.	Has no indication of knowledge of content
<b>Mastery of the Critical Issues of a NT Book</b>	Demonstrates comprehensive mastery of the critical issues of a NT book	Demonstrates competent control of the critical issues of a NT book	Demonstrates some knowledge of the critical issues of a NT book	Has significant gaps in knowledge of the critical issues of a NT book	Has no indication of knowledge of critical issues
<b>Mastery of</b>	Demonstrates	Demonstrates	Demonstrates	Has	Has no

<p><b>the Distinctive Theology of a NT Book</b></p>	<p>comprehensive mastery of the distinctive theology of a NT book</p>	<p>s competent control of the distinctive theology of a NT book</p>	<p>s some knowledge of the theology of a NT book</p>	<p>significant gaps in knowledge of the distinctive theology of a NT book</p>	<p>indication of the distinctive theology of a NT book</p>
<p><b>Ability to Think Carefully through Issues Raised within a NT Book.</b></p>	<p>Demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the interrelationship of critical and faith issues as they apply to a competent reading of a NT book.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a competent grasp of the interrelationship of critical and faith issues.</p>	<p>Demonstrates some grasp of the interrelationship of issues, some awareness of how to apply them to a specific NT book.</p>	<p>Has an insufficient awareness of the interrelationship between issues and how one reads a NT book.</p>	<p>Has no clear awareness of the interrelationship between issues and how one reads a NT book</p>