

## Class Prospectus

### THE NEW TESTAMENT: Historical Background

**Fall Term 2010**  
**Course Number: R212**  
**CRN#: 21471**  
**Room Number: Benton Center 204**  
**Time: 6:00-8:50 PM Wednesdays**

**Instructor:** The Rev. Dr. Jon Goman

**Contact Info:**

Work Address: Canterbury House (St. Anselm of Canterbury Episcopal Campus Ministry)  
2615 NW Arnold Way  
Corvallis, OR 97330  
Phone: 541-752-3734 (w)  
Email: [jon@saintanselmomoregon.org](mailto:jon@saintanselmomoregon.org)

My office is in Corvallis, just north of OSU, at the intersection of Monroe St., 26<sup>th</sup> St. and Arnold Way, across 26<sup>th</sup> from the Monroe Street Beanery. If I'm not in my office, the Beanery is a good place to check before giving up.

**Office Hours:**

**Wednesdays 4:00-5:30 PM at my St. Anselm Office**

**You are not limited to these hours.** You are welcome to drop in. A call first would be prudent. I am frequently available on weekends or evenings for LBCC students who cannot see me during the day. If you want an evening or weekend appointment, let me know.

St. Anselm has a 6,000 volume religious studies library and study facilities (WiFi) available for students.

**PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:**

*In this class we will examine the New Testament as an historical, literary and cultural document, using the same tools as would be used to investigate any other ancient document or document originating in a culture radically different from our own. The truth of theological claims about Jesus, about scripture and such matters will concern us only when they overlap with what can be established by standard academic investigation.*

In this class you will keep two important distinctions in mind:

First, the distinction between understanding what the author of a New Testament writing meant by a word or an idea and whether what he meant is true or not. Our class task is to understand what the New Testament authors meant, not to judge whether they were correct or incorrect.

Second, the distinction between what a word, act or idea meant in its First Century context and what it means now. We translate first century Greek words into English because that's all we have to work with. That does not mean that "βασιλιος" and "king" mean the same thing even though "king" is used to translate "basilios."

Remaining aware of these two things will prevent a great deal of mistaken understanding of the New Testament and reduce your prof's stress to manageable levels.

#### TEXT-BOOKS:

The only required text book is a copy of the **New Testament**.

Many different translations are adequate: Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, Jerusalem, New Jerusalem, The Authorized Version (the so-called King James), New International Version, The New English Version and the New English Version Revised. If you have questions about the adequacy of a particular version, ask me.

Unacceptable for use in this class are paraphrases such as The Way, The Message, and the Good News Bible.

NOTE: Although the Authorized Version (King James) is adequate, it requires great care to use. Shifts in English since the 16th century have changed the meaning of many words. I encourage you to use a more contemporary translation alongside the King James if you use it.

The secondary source material for this class is found on the World Wide Web: **Frontline: From Jesus to Christ**. Search the Web for **Frontline: From Jesus to Christ** and you'll find the site. (Last time I checked there was something wrong with their web address and I couldn't access the documentation from the web address. Use a search engine and the above title to find the material. **If you have trouble, contact me.**)

If you do not have easy access to the Internet, computers are available for your use at the Benton Center Learning Center or in the Corvallis Public Library. If internet access is tremendously inconvenient for you, make arrangements with me for paper copies of the reading assignments.

#### GRADING and EVALUATION:

1. Pop Quizzes are always a possibility, but are not likely. I'm too lazy to correct them. Nevertheless, you are responsible for remaining current with the scheduled readings.

2. Specific assignments are listed in your class prospectus. I prefer typed papers, but will accept hand written ones if your writing is legible. I will be the judge of that.

3. Written material must conform to standard English usage. I will refuse to grade papers written in substandard English. Refused work may be rewritten for credit, but must be handed in within a week. So please proof read your work. Don't trust spell checkers. They were invented by the devil and lead you down the path to academic destruction. There is no substitute for

the knowledgeable human eye. After you write your paper, let it sit for at least an hour then read it again, looking for errors in spelling and grammar.

4. In studying religion the questions you ask are as important as the answers you give. In this class I will ask you to practice asking questions of your assigned readings. *Unless I specifically say otherwise, I do not want the answers to your questions.*

5. I strongly recommend regular attendance. While I do not grade on attendance, if you are to deal with the writing assignments regular attendance will be helpful.

6. You are welcome to turn in papers by means of e-mail. BUT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR ASSIGNMENT.

7. There will be no mid-term or final exam unless you miss them terribly. I can easily arrange an exam for those who can't live without them.

## Class Sessions and Assignments

I will give extra credit for a final paper of five pages or less which draws parallels between the Monty Python movie "Life of Brian" and the material we discuss in this class. Inform me by December 1 if you wish to take advantage of this.

### September 29

#### We'll Cover in the lecture-discussion:

Administrative Stuff: Grading, class procedures, personal introductions

Ancient Books: Their physical structure, role in culture, reproduction techniques.

The sources materials for the text of the New Testament

#### Reading Assignments for Oct. 6:

The Gospel of Mark Chapters 1:1 through 9:1.

#### ***Jesus to Christ: A Portrait of Jesus World***

(The following are the titles of articles on the web page to read for Oct. 6. Most of them are quite short.)

Judaism's First Century Diversity

The Essenes and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Galilee

John the Baptist

The Jewish Diaspora

Apocalypticism

Josephus, Our Primary Source

Jews and the Roman Empire  
Temple Culture

Writing Assignment:

Write five questions you'd ask Mark to help you understand his gospel. Try to avoid questions about theological truth claims. Ask rather about unknown terms, customs, geography, history, social and cultural background. Ask about what you don't understand in your reading of his gospel. REMEMBER, I DON'T NEED TO HAVE ANSWERS AND YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.

**October 6**

**We'll Cover in the lecture-discussion:**

The Jewish Background to the World of Jesus

The Roman and Greek Background to the World of Jesus

Reading Assignments for Oct. 13:

The rest of The Gospel of Mark

***From Jesus to Christ:*** A Portrait of Jesus's World

Religion in the Roman World – Marianne Bonz

Hellenistic Culture

The Empire's Religions

Portraits of Graeco-Roman Cities - Hendrix

Biblical Archeology: Cities (Click on the name of the city on the map)

**Writing Assignment:** Choose either A or B.

A. Write out five questions raised but not answered by your readings in *From Jesus to Christ*. Describe three ways you'd go about getting answers to these questions besides asking me. Remember to cite the article/author from which the question came.

B. Write two pages or less on the differences between Roman religion and what you read in Mark's gospel. (Be careful, don't read your present ideas into Mark.)

**October 13**

**We'll Cover in the lecture:**

Summary of the Cultural Background of the New Testament

Reading Assignments for October 20: *From Jesus to Christ*: The Story of the Storytellers

The Emergence of the Canon – Mellows, found in "An Overview of the Four Gospels of the New Testament"

The Emergence of the Four Gospel Canon

*From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*

Jewish Scriptures: From Hebrew Bible to Christian Bible – Hamilton

No written assignments for Oct 20.

October 20

**We'll cover in the lecture:** The Canon – How the New Testament Came to Be (How the separate parts became a single whole.)

Reading Assignments for October 27:

Luke 6:17-7:1, Matthew 5:17-28; Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 20:1-16

*From Jesus to Christ:* Jesus' Many Faces

What Can We Really Know About Jesus?

The Historian's Task

He was born, lived and died a Jew

His Social Class

The Surprises of Sepphoris

The Complexity of His Religious Identity

Jesus's Ministry and Teaching

Arrest and Execution

Searching for Jesus

Jesus as Rabbi – Jaroslav Pelikan

The Parables – Madeleine Boucher

Writing Assignments:

Option#1: What differences do you find between the beatitudes in Matthew (Matthew 5:1-12) and the beatitudes in Luke (Luke 6:17-26)? Read slowly and carefully. Note as many differences as possible.

Option#2: Identify three different approaches to the historical Jesus. List their differences and similarities.

October 27

**We'll cover in the lecture:** The Historian Considers Jesus: What Can We Know About Him?

Reading Assignments for November 3:

*From Jesus to Christ: The Story of the Storytellers*

Importance of the Oral Tradition

What are the Gospels?

Q – the Hypothetical Gospel

The Four Canonical Gospels

The Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Matthew  
The Gospel of Luke  
The Gospel of John  
Death and Resurrection  
Gnostics and Other Heretics  
The Gospel of Thomas  
More about Q, and the Gospel of Thomas  
The search for a No-frills Jesus

Also read: Luke 1, John 20 and Matthew 1

**Writing Assignment Due Nov. 3:**

Option #1: What are the similarities and differences between the opening of Matthew's gospel and the opening of Luke's gospel? If you chose this option you may want to read more than just the first chapter of Luke and Matthew. I'd suggest Matthew 1 and 2 and Luke 1, 2 and 3:23-38.

Option#2: What do we know and what don't we know about the people who tell us the story of Jesus?

**November 3**

**Covered in the lecture:** The Four Gospels and Their Authors

Reading Assignments for November 10:

Material on Paul in *From Jesus to Christ*:  
The First Christians  
Paul's Mission and Letters  
Paul's Congregations  
Wrestling with their Jewish Heritage

Begin Reading the Essays On Pauline Ethics – Found on the Instructor's Website [www.saintanselmomoregon.org](http://www.saintanselmomoregon.org) under *Class Material*

No writing assignment for November 10.

**November 10**

**The Lecture-Discussion will be:** On Paul – An Introduction

Reading Assignments for November 17:

Finish Reading the Essays on Pauline Ethics  
1 Corinthians chapters 1-6

No writing assignment for Nov. 17

### **November 17**

The New Person and the Freedom of the Christian

Reading Assignment for November 24:

***From Jesus to Christ:*** The First Christians

Diversity of Early Christianity

The Roles for Women

The Collision with Paganism

In the Catacombs

Women in Christianity: the New Discoveries – Karen King

Kingdoms in Conflict

Found in The Symposium section: *Magic, Miracles and the Gospel*

Writing Assignment for November 24

Pick **one** of the following topics and write a couple of pages on it: women and early Christianity, the place of miracles in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, religious conflict (pagan and Christian, Jewish and Christian), the conflict of early Christianity with the Roman State. If you'd like to tackle another topic, clear it with me.

Or, Write a couple of pages outlining Paul's beliefs about Jesus and contrasting his emphasis with that of the gospels.

### **November 24**

**In the lecture we'll cover:** The Revelation to John and Movements in the Post-Pauline Church

**Reading Assignment for December :** Browse the Revelation to John (also called the Apocalypse and the Book of Revelation.)

It's the final book of the New Testament.

Read the first two chapters of the notes on Revelation on my web-site [www.saintanselmomoregon.org](http://www.saintanselmomoregon.org). The notes are found under the button "Academic Works" and are labeled "Revelation."

No written assignment for December 8

### **December 8**

**An introduction to apocalyptic literature**

(OK. It's finals week and some of you will prefer to study for other exams or finish papers. But you paid for my time, you might as well take advantage of it.)

**The Final Class will be held at the Episcopal Campus Ministry House at 2615 NW Arnold Way. It's on the corner of Arnold, Monroe and 26<sup>th</sup> St.**

### ***Supplementary Readings Organized by Lecture***

Books marked by an asterisk (\*) are easier reading or especially accessible for some other reason.

Books marked by the # sign are available for use in the LaVerne Goman Library located in my office.

### ***Possible Readings for Lecture #1 Textual Criticism***

#### **Dictionary Articles and Encyclopedia Essays**

\*#Cowell, E.C. "Text and Ancient Versions of the New Testament," Interpreter's Bible Vol. 1, pp. 72-83.

#Epp, Eldon J. The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 6 pp. 412-435

#Skehan, McRae and Brown, "Texts and Versions," Jerome Bible Commentary Essay #69 pp.561-589.

#Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Vol. 4, pp. 594-613.

A fairly dry but relatively easy to understand introduction.

#### **Articles and Essays**

#Birdsall, J.N. "How the New Testament Came to Us" in Understanding the New Testament ed. O. Jessie Lace pp. 121-144.

\*#Collins, Raymond F. Introduction to the New Testament See chapter #3 "Textual Criticism" pp.75-114

Westcott, B.F. and F.J.A. Hort, The New Testament in the Original Greek Cambridge-Macmillan, 1881. See the introductory essay and forget the Greek!

#### **Books**

Finegan, Jack Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Textual Criticism Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

#Metzger, B.M. The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration

#----- The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission and Limitations

### **Possible Readings for Lectures #2 & 3: Roman and Jewish Background**

\*#Bouquet, A.C. Everyday Life in New Testament Times, Scribner's, 1954.

The best simple introduction, recommended highly for those who want to get their bearings

#Bultmann, Rudolf Primitive Christianity

Has extensive sections on the Jewish and Greek backgrounds to the New Testament.

This book is a classic.

\*#Davies, W.D. Invitation to the New Testament Chapter #3 "The Background in First Century Judaism" and Chapter #2 "The Background in the Graeco-Roman World"

#Kee, Howard Clark and Francis Young, Understanding the New Testament Part 1, "The Community Emerges" pp. 7-45. Covers both Greek and Jewish background.

\*#Lace, O. Jessie, "The Historical Background of the New Testament" Chapter #2 in

Understanding the New Testament, Cambridge Bible Commentaries Series

#Perkins, PHEME Reading the New Testament Chapter #2 "The World of Jesus" pp. 23-50.

#\*Pilch, John J. The Cultural World of Jesus, Sunday by Sunday, Cycle A, Cycle B and Cycle

C. The Liturgical Press, 1995. A good, easily read, scholarly introduction to a multitude of important topics.

### ***Possible Readings for Lecture #4: The Formation of the Canon***

#### **Dictionary Articles and Encyclopedia Essays**

#Brown, Raymond "Canonicity" in The Jerome Bible Commentary

Metzger, Bruce "Canon of the New Testament" in the Revised edition of Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible

Sundberg, Albert C. "The Making of the New Testament Canon" in The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary

#"Canon" in The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 1, pp. 852-861

#\* "Canon of the New Testament" in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Vol. 1, pp. 520-532.

#### **Books**

#Kümmel, Werner Georg. Revision of Feine-Behm Introduction to the New Testament. See Part II, "The Origin and Canon of the New Testament"

#Metzger, B.M. The Canon of the New Testament, Oxford, 1987.

#\*Moule, C.F.D. "How the New Testament Came into Being" in Understanding the New Testament, ed. O. Jessie Luce. Pp. 64-120.

#Perrin, Norman The New Testament: An Introduction Appendix #3 pp. 325-335.

#Campanhausen, Hans Freiherr von The Formation of the Christian Bible Fortress, 1972.

#### **Articles**

#Dungan, David "The New Testament Canon in Recent Study" Interpretation 29(4/78)339-351.

#Kalin, Evertt "The Inspired Community: A Glance at Canon History" Concordia Theological Monthly 42 ('71)541-549.

#Sundberg, Albert C. "The Bible Canon and the Christian Doctrine of Inspiration Interpretation 29(4/75)352-371.

#Wainwright, Geoffrey "The New Testament as Canon" Scottish Journal of Theology 28('75)551-571

### ***Possible Reading for Lecture #5: The Historical Jesus***

#Marcus Borg Jesus, A New Vision, Harper, 1987.

#Rudolf Bultmann Jesus Christ and Mythology, Scribner's, 1958.

Challenging, but absolutely fundamental to understanding thinking about Jesus in the twentieth century. Fortunately, also short (only 85 pages.)

#\*Henri Daniel Rops Daily Life in the Time of Jesus New York: Hawthorne, 1982.

Designed for the reader without specialist knowledge of the New Testament. Written from a decidedly Roman Catholic perspective but full of sound scholarship.

G.S. Sloyer *Jesus in Focus: A Life in Its Setting* Mystic, CN: Twenty-third Publishers, 1983.

#\*Gerd Theissen *The Shadow of the Galilean* Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987.

This is a fascinating book, presenting a sociology of the time of Jesus in the form of a number of fictional snapshots of people. Theissen is one of the foremost New Testament scholars of the last half of the 20th century and writes with an immense knowledge of the time.

-----See also Theissen's other book: *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*. It is a classic.

#John Dominic Crossan *The Historical Jesus* San Francisco: Harper, 1991.

A relatively advanced book, but full of a sense of the cultural background of the time of Jesus. Just dip in several chapters, don't try to read the entire book.

#\*W. Barnes Tatum *In Quest of Jesus: A Guide Book* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.

This is one of the simpler as well as one of the better introductions to the times and life of Jesus.

#Hans Kung *On Being a Christian* Garden City, NY: Double Day, 1976.

See especially sections B.II "The Real Christ" and Section C.I "The Program"

#Gunther Bornkamm *Jesus of Nazareth* New York: Harper, 1960.

See especially chapters 1-3. This is one of the classic modern expositions of Jesus.

#Rudolf Bultmann *Jesus and the Word* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

Sections I and II are particularly important.

#\*Morton Scott Enslin *Christian Beginnings Part I* Harper, 1956.

#Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, Crossroad Press, 1979.

A massive and challenging work, not for the faint hearted, but immensely rewarding to those who don't mind diving into the cold water.

Reginald H. Fuller. *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus* Studies in Biblical Theology, Series 1, number 12.

### ***Possible Readings for Lecture #6: the Gospels***

#\*Davies, W.D. *Invitation to the New Testament Especially Part II, "The First Three Gospels" and Part IV "The Fourth Gospel"*

#Kee, Howard Clark and Francis Young *Understanding the New Testament Chapter 15, The Hope According to the Synoptics*, pp. 445-448.

#Mays, J.L. ed. *Interpreting the Gospels* Fortress, 1981.

#Perkins, Pheme *Reading the New Testament Part Four "The Gospels -- Four Portrayals of Jesus"*

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

#\*Tatum, W. Barnes *In Quest of Jesus: A Guidebook Chapter 3 Gospel Portrayals*, p.37-59.

***Possible Readings for Lecture #7 and #8: On Paul***

- #Bornkamm, Gunther Paul, Harper, 1971. The companion volume to this author's Jesus of Nazareth. A very helpful book, and only moderately challenging to read.
- #\*Davies, Invitation to the New Testament Part III "Paul"
- #Dodd, C.H. The Meaning of Paul for Today Meridian, 1957.
- #\*Hooker, Morna D. , A Preface to Paul Oxford University Press, 1980. A clear introduction to Paul's thought.
- #Kasemann, Ernst Perspectives on Paul Fortress, 1969. A difficult and immensely rewarding work.
- #W.A. Meeks, The Moral World of the First Christians, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1986.
- #\*Moule, C.F.D. "How the New Testament Came into Being" pp. 85-102 In Understanding the New Testament ed. O. Jessie Luce
- #Nock, Arthur Darbey St. Paul. Harper, 1938. An older book but so lucid and clear that it is still very much worth reading.
- #Perkins, PHEME Reading the New Testament Part Three, "Paul, Missionary to the Gentiles"
- #Scroggs, Robin Paul for a New Day, Fortress Press, 1977. Short and clear but very important work explaining the general direction of Paul's thought and his life.
- #Stendahl, Krister Paul among Jews and Gentiles Fortress, 1976. One of the fountain heads of the contemporary scholarly reassessment of Paul. A profound and not particularly difficult book -- Stendahl writes clearly.

***Readings for Lecture 10: The Revelation to John, Movements in the Post Pauline Church***

- #Rowley, H.H. The Relevance of Apocalyptic Attic Press, 1980.
- #Pilch, John J. What are they saying about the Book of Revelation? Paulist Press, 1978.
- #Minear, Paul S. New Testament Apocalyptic Abington, 1978.  
For a more advanced set of essays see, Journal for Theology and Church ed. Robert W. Funk, #6 "Apocalypticism" Herder and Herder, 1969.

**VARIOUS COMMENTARIES AND COMMENTARY SETS**

- #The Pelican Gospel Commentaries. Four paperback volumes, one devoted to each gospel. Mark is by DE Nineham, Luke by G.B. Caird, John by John Marsh and Matthew by John Fenton.  
These are introductory level, cheap and scholastically solid. Worth having as reference books.

#Bruce Vawter, *The Four Gospels: An Introduction*. Doubleday Image, 1967. Another easily read and illuminating introduction.

Among commentary series I recommend: The Cambridge New Testament, and The Torch Commentary series. Image Books has published a series of commentaries on the text of the Jerusalem Bible called Invitation to . . ., and then followed by the name of the book commented on. It is a good serious, competent, elementary introduction for those with the Jerusalem Bible. Harper's New Testament Commentaries series is a little more advanced but still much worth consulting.

The Hermania Series is for advanced students, but the very best that there is in the shop. The volumes of *The Anchor Bible* are also somewhat advanced but give much information on the history of the text and on cultural background.

#### Non-Canonical Writings, Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Stuff

#Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Viking Press, 1955. An older but still lucid and excellent account of the discovery and meaning of the scrolls by a person who was involved in the process.

#Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Pelican, 1968. It never hurts to read the originals. Just reading about something doesn't really let you know it.

#Hennecke, Edgar and Wilhelm Schneemelcher (eds.) *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vol. The Westminster Press, 1963.

The standard source for texts and discussion on apocryphal gospels, acts, letters etc.

There are a number of translations of the Gospel of Thomas: See *The Gospel of Thomas* by Marvin Meyer#. There is also a translation in the back of the *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*# ed. Kurt Aland and one of the Coptic text by Guillaumont, Puech, Quispel, Will and Al Masih#.

There is a good web-site on New Testament Apocrypha:  
[www.ntgateway.com/noncanon.htm](http://www.ntgateway.com/noncanon.htm) It has a great set of links to both texts and commentary.

#### Studies Dealing with Special Areas:

##### The Sociology of the New Testament World:

#J. Stambaugh and D. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, Westminster, Philadelphia and SPCK, London, 1986.

Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament Word: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* Westminster, Louisville, Kentucky, 2001.

##### Women in the New Testament World:

#E. Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her. A Feminist Reconstruction of Christian*

Origins, SCM, London, 1983.  
#Russell, Letty M. Ed. Feminist Interpretation of the Bible. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1985.

The Parables of Jesus:

#Jeremias, Joachim The Parables of Jesus New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.  
#Jeremias, Joachim Rediscovering the Parables New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.  
#Dodd, C. H. The Parables of the Kingdom New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.

Finally, on a topic of great contemporary interest, a work by one of the best

American Biblical Scholars:

#Robin Scroggs, The New Testament and Homosexuality. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989.

## **Largely Trustworthy Web-Sites Dealing with the New Testament**

*Title: The New Testament Gateway*

Address: [www.ntgateway.com](http://www.ntgateway.com)

An extensive site linking its user to massive amounts of both primary and secondary material on many aspects of the New Testament. Among the areas covered are noncanonical literature, studies of individual New Testament books or parts of books, Paul, the cultural and social background, the Synoptic problem (be careful, the webmaster has a non-standard solution), textual criticism, women and gender issues, Jesus in art, Jesus in film, the search for the historical Jesus movement and many others.

This site is comprehensive, searchable, and the place to start for online New Testament research.

*Title: Resource Pages for Biblical Studies*

Address: <http://www.torreys.org/bible/>

Broken down into four sections: 1) Bible texts, translations and related texts

- 2) Biblical studies electronically published
- 3) Aspects of the Mediterranean social world
- 4) The Philo of Alexandria Page

Section one includes more than just different versions of the Bible. It also includes sections on textual criticism, on Josephus, rabbinical, papyrological info, gnostica and so forth.

Section 2 contains not only links to material organized book by book, but also bibliographies, research projects, reviews, journals and material on the historical Jesus.

Section 3 is heavy on the sociological approach, but includes much material on New Testament archeology

The Philo Page has texts of Philo available online, secondary articles on Philo and a section of links to the homepages of scholars specializing in Philo.

*Title: From Jesus to Christ*

**Address:** [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion)

Contains a mountain of background information on the New Testament. Focuses on archeological interpretations and historical evidence useful for understanding the New Quest for the Historical Jesus.

In addition to background discussions and texts, the site contains pictures of archeological sites, accounts of archeological findings and maps.

The material is divided into five categories, each with sub-divisions. The site is full of worthwhile information, organized, for the most part, in chunks small enough to read in five minutes.

*Title: Electronic New Testament Educational Resources*

**Address:** <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/>

Created by Felix Just S.J., this website bristles with New Testament

information and sources. Besides sections dealing with each book of the New Testament there is a list of separate topics leading to collections of articles. Examples are *Parables and Images*, *Household Codes in the New Testament*, and even *The Number of the Beast: Some Fun with 666*.

Just has also posted on the site a useful collection of official Roman Catholic documents demonstrating the history of the relationship between that church and the academic investigation of scriptures.

This is a site worth searching no matter what aspect of the New Testament you are investigating.

*Title: Selected Articles by Jerome H. Neyrey*

Address: <http://www.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/articles.html>

Neyrey is a member of *The Context Group*, a loose community of scholars dedicated to investigating the New Testament through the methods of the social sciences. At the time of writing this list, the site contained twenty-seven articles on different aspects of the New Testament, all illustrating the use of social science tools and categories in New Testament studies. Neyrey is particularly interested in the gospels, especially John.

Selected Article Titles: *Who is poor in the New Testament?*, *Spaced out in John: Territoriality in the Fourth Gospel*, *Witchcraft Accusations in 2 Cor 10-13: Paul in Social Science perspectives*.

In my judgment, the articles on this site are a valuable collection which would be helpful to any serious student of the New Testament.

*Title: K.C. Hanson's HomePage*

Address: <http://www.kchanson.com/>

A wonderful melange of New Testament material which repays browsing. Hanson is another member of *The Context Group* and his site has a number

of his full-text articles on the results of applying social science to the interpretation of the New Testament. In addition, the site has his own collection of ancient documents, a series of chronologies of the ancient world, bibliographies, three collections of photographs illustrative of the history, monuments and culture of 1) Ancient Greece and Rome, 2) Ancient Syria and Palestine, and 3) Ancient Mesopotamia as well as a section on New Testament Papyri and Codices. He also has cross links to the other members of the Context Group with websites.

Well worth exploring.

*Title: The Johannine Literature Web*

Address: <http://catholic-resources.org/John/index.html>

“This website provides a wide variety of materials helpful for research and/or teaching purposes.”

This site contains not only texts and translations, essays and bible study guides, an extensive bibliography, structural outlines of each chapter of John’s Gospel, but also a collection of art and images relating to John’s gospel organized chapter by chapter and a set of maps and pictures of places mentioned in the gospel (careful -- some of the sites are more traditional than established by scholarly methods)

A fair amount of the material on this site seems to come from relatively conservative sources. It will pay to check the background of authors/sources. (Not that it doesn’t pay to check them anyway \_)

*Title: The Fourth Gospel and John’s Epistles*

Address: <http://www.fourthgospel.com/>

A bibliography of material on *The Gospel according to John* searchable by author and organized under the following headings: books, periodical articles, articles in books, and material posted on the web.

*Title: The Jewish Roman World of Jesus*

Address: <http://www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/JDTABOR/indexb.html>

This site describes the political and social conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean basin during the life of Jesus and the first few centuries of the Christian Church. Site contains two long essays, one on the Roman environment into which Christianity came and one on the Jewish environment. In addition, the site includes a series of brief sketches on a variety of topics relevant to the study and understanding of the New Testament and the early church. Historical quotations which illumine the subject matter are a particularly attractive feature of the site.

The shorter sketches are divided into four basic categories: Hellenistic/Roman Religion and Philosophy, Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Christians Origins and the New Testament, and Ancient Judaism.

A good place for beginners to begin.

**Title: Wesley Center Online: The Works of Flavius Josephus**

**Address: [http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical\\_studies/josephus/](http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/josephus/)**

This site has the William Whiston translations of the complete works of Josephus: ***Antiquities of the Jews, The War of the Jews, Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades, Against Apion, and the Autobiography.***

Whiston is an old war-horse of a translation and, on some disputed points needs to be supplemented by more modern works, but it does make available the mass of works by the only Jewish historian contemporary with the rise of the early church.

***Title: Interpreting Ancient Manuscripts***

**Address: [http://www.earlham.edu/~seidti/iam/interp\\_mss.html](http://www.earlham.edu/~seidti/iam/interp_mss.html)**

A scholarly introduction to textual criticism, paleography and the history of the manuscript tradition of the New Testament. Also contains a glossary of text-critical terms, short bibliography and a list of Greek manuscripts containing New Testament text. Fairly rich in secondary material.

***Title: The Gospel of Thomas***

**Address: <http://home.epix.net/~miser17/Thomas.html>**

Primary and secondary sources for the study of the Gospel of Thomas. A lot of good information. The organization of the site is a bit confusing, the distinction between material housed at the site and links to other sites isn't always clear. There are, however, several helpful downloadable books on Thomas including the webmaster's (Stevan H. Davies) own book, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*. A translation of Thomas is posted as are translations of a number of other New Testament apocrypha and pseudipigrapha.

### **Sites Dealing with The Dead Sea Scrolls**

***Title: Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran***

**Address: [www.flash.net/~hoselton/deadsea/deadsea.htm](http://www.flash.net/~hoselton/deadsea/deadsea.htm)**

Provides an extensive and technical bibliography of secondary works relating to the Dead Sea Scrolls, an extensive series of links to the sites of particular scholars working on the scrolls, English translations of a fair amount of the Dead Sea Scroll material, and a considerable number of online articles, some of them extremely technical.

The site also provides both ancient and modern time lines, profiles of the major actors in the story of the scrolls, both ancient and modern, and a glossary of technical terms.

***Title: Scrolls from the Dead Sea: The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Scholarship***

Address: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/toc.html>

An older site, based on an exhibition relating to the scrolls at the Library of Congress in 1993. The site includes translations of many of the scrolls, maps, a glossary, a bibliography (not current, of course) and resources for teachers

A good introduction to the scrolls.

*Title: The Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*

Address: <http://orion.msc.huji.ac.il/>

This is the homepage for the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature and is based at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Provides “Beginners” and “Advanced” lists of readings and online articles.