



The Bible ... *for Smarties*

New Testament 2: Beyond the Gospels

Spring 2023

David Moseley, Ph.D.

You've heard of *The Bible for Dummies*. Now, introducing **The Bible ... *for Smarties!*** A chance to explore and learn about the Bible without dumbing it down. Going beyond your typical Bible Study, this seminar will be a university-level academic class focused on **Nurturing Students towards a Nuanced, Critical Interpretation and Sophisticated Understanding of the Texts of the Bible.**

Participants will learn Skills and Develop Techniques that will allow them to Demystify these ancient Scriptures by placing them in their proper Historical, Social, Cultural, Political and Religious Context, and identifying the Literary Structures and Theological Perspectives necessary to delve into the Meaning and Interpretation of the Bible.

Seminar Content

The Bible is the most widely read and influential set of texts in human history, and is really a library of many books that chronicle the stories about God's revelation in two volumes:

- I. The Story of God's Covenantal Relationship with the Jews in the Hebrew Scriptures (the *Tanakh* or "Hebrew Bible")
- II. The Life, Teachings, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Story of his Followers in the Early Church (the "Christian Scriptures" or "New Testament")

This class will pursue the academic discipline of Biblical Studies by examining all the other material in the New Testament beyond the Four Gospels – specifically, the literature of the Early Apostolic Church, especially the Life and Writings of St. Paul. Most of the Pauline Letters were composed before the Gospels, and forms the earliest written traditions of the "Jesus Movement" as it evolves into Christianity. In addition to the towering figure of Paul, we will also encounter the disciple Peter, leader of the Apostles who led the "Jesus Movement" after Pentecost, and sometimes operates as a counterpoint to Paul in the Early Church. Other early Christians, known and unknown, also contributed various letters to the literature of the New Testament, and we will attempt to hear their distinctive voices, and attune ourselves to the issues and disputes in the nascent Christian community for which their letters provide a one-sided partial version of an incomplete conversation.

Seminar Objectives

Participants who have completed the New Testament seminars will be able to:

- Understand the Historical Context within which the Religious Texts of Early Christianity were Created and Read / Heard
- Be aware of the Social, Cultural, Political and Religious Issues Relevant to the Formation of the Texts and their Ethical Implications
- Distinguish between various Interpretative Methods used to Study, Examine, Analyze, Research, and Comprehend Biblical Texts
- Appreciate the various Literary Genres found in the texts of the Christian Scriptures, and Understand their Functions for Interpretation
- Comprehend the Significance, Relevance, and ongoing Influence of the Christian Scriptures on Contemporary Life and Debates, both inside and outside of the Church

Seminar Structure

- The course will be made up of 12 two-hour classes (24 total hours of class time)
- We will meet on Zoom Monday evenings between 6:00-8:00 p.m. PST.
- A small seminar-style class will enable authentic interactions and intellectual discussions to unfold.
- Classes will be recorded and shared for those unable to attend all the classes.
- Readings from the New Testament texts being studied will be shared each week prior to class, and Outlines and other Study Materials will be made available for all students, including suggestions for Further Reading & Study.
- Classes will be a mixture of Illustrated Lectures (slideshows with photos, maps, images, diagrams and video-clips) and Facilitated Discussion.
- There will be no written assignments or grades for the class – just the opportunity to plunge deeper into the Biblical texts and the world in which they were produced 2,000 years ago.

Seminar Instructor

David Moseley, Ph.D. holds undergraduate and graduate Degrees in Law, Theology and Philosophy from Oxford University; and a Doctorate in Theology from Cambridge University. He is Director of Global Education and Teaches Religious Studies & Philosophy at The Bishop's Episcopal School, La Jolla, CA. Dr. Moseley taught Theology and Biblical Studies at the University of San Diego for 16 years; he was formerly Theologian-in-Residence at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in San Diego; and was a founding member of the Faculty of the San Diego Diocesan School for Ministry, teaching all four of their Biblical Studies classes (Hebrew Bible 1 & 2, New Testament 1 & 2) for five full cycles over the last decade. Dr. Moseley has Led Trips to the "Holy Land", and regularly Teaches Adult Religious Education Classes in Episcopal Parishes throughout the County.

The New Testament 2 Class will begin on **Monday 30th January**. The cost for the class is \$295. For more information about the class and registration, please email Dr. Moseley:

drdavidmoseley@gmail.com