

## Acts and Paul

Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta  
Spring 2005

Daniel W. MacDougall  
Professor of Biblical Studies  
Covenant College  
([macdougall@covenant.edu](mailto:macdougall@covenant.edu))

### I. Purpose

1. To begin an understanding of how to handle critical questions concerning Acts and the Pauline letters.
2. To be able to appreciate the man Paul and the time in which he lived.
3. To develop proper hermeneutical practices for interpreting Acts and the letters of Paul.
4. To get an understanding of the message of Acts and of each of the letters of Paul and how they can be applied today.

### II. Texts

1. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977.
2. D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, pp. 111-134, 215-390.
3. Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts*, Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P. & R. Publishing Co., 1997

### III. Grading

1. There will be a take home final (worth 50%). The test will cover all the material covered in class and in the assigned readings. This test will be distributed on the final class period. (May 28), and must be returned by June 11.
2. There will be two small papers (each worth 10%). The first, dealing with the "New Perspective" on Paul will be due at the beginning of class on **April 8**. The second will be due **May 13** at the beginning of class. See section **IV**.
3. There will be one larger exegesis paper due on **May 27** (worth 20%). See section **IV**.
4. Class participation (10%). This is a necessary and vital component for this class. You must be prepared.

### IV. Papers

You are to write two papers (about 1200 words each), and each will be worth 10% of your grade, and a third larger paper worth 20% of your grade. If the papers are late the grade will be lowered.

The first paper (due on **April 8**) will be a comparison of two articles on the "new perspective" on Paul. These articles will be distributed on the first class period. In your comparison define what the "new perspective" is, what are the key terms used, and what are the important biblical terms or phrases that are reinterpreted. Evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of each position, and state what steps you would use to further examine this issue.

The second paper (due on **May 13**) is a review of Johnson's book. Show your knowledge of his basic approach to the book of Acts and give your evaluation of this approach, especially on how Acts should be applied today. What strengths do you see in his presentation, and what weaknesses? How was it helpful to you?

The third paper (due on **May 27**) is an exegesis paper on some portion of Ephesians (at least 10 verses). The section should be a coherent section. Use significant commentaries (6-8), lexicons and other important resources to help you understand the passage. You must incorporate in your research not only commentaries and other exegetical helps, but also you must find at least 2 relatively recent

articles on your section. Be sure to footnote any information you get from any sources. Include a bibliography. The paper is to be typed, double-spaced. This is a major paper, but should not exceed about 12 pages.

1. Pick a coherent section Ephesians you are interested in studying of at least 10 verses.
2. Show how your section fits into the outline of the whole epistle and further develops Paul's argument as a whole in this letter.
3. Give a single sentence stating the theme of the section you are examining.
4. Give a very detailed outline of your passage (how every phrase fits in relation to the others).
5. Explain each verse in your passage, discussing any problems in the text and giving your understanding of each verse. This may be done in a commentary style. This is the main portion of the paper.
6. State how the information from your passage should be applied today.

**V. Course Outline and Schedule** (You need to have these assignments ready for the day listed. Take notes, you will be tested over this material even if it is not covered in class.)

**I. February 11-12, Introduction to Acts and Paul**

Read: Carson Moo and Morris, pp. 111-134, 181-238  
Bruce, Chapters 1-8

**II. March 4-5, The Book of Acts and Epistolary Analysis**

Read: Bruce, Chapters 9-16

**III. April 8-9, The Pauline Epistles: the early letters**

Read: Carson Moo and Morris, pp. 289-304, 343-358  
Bruce, Chapters 17-24  
Assignment: Analysis of New Perspective Articles

**IV. May 13-14, The Pauline Epistles: the long letters**

Read: Carson Moo and Morris, pp. 239-288  
Bruce, Chapters 25-32  
Assignment: Book Review on Johnson's book

**V. May 27-28, The Pauline Epistles: the prison and pastoral letters**

Read: Carson Moo and Morris, pp. 305-342, 359-390  
Bruce, Chapters 33-38  
Assignment: Exegesis Paper on Ephesians

Final: Take home, given out on May 28, send it to me by June 11