



**BL 621 *Advanced Greek Exegesis – Acts (3)*<sup>1</sup>**

**Fall 2009**

**Instructor: R. R. Remin**

**Contacting the Instructor**

**Office: L2081**

**Class Times: Tu 8:15-11:00**

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**Class Location: A2212**

**Course Description**

An advanced study of Greek grammar for the purpose of gaining insight in the meaning of the New Testament text. This study will enable the student to understand a text in more detail as well as how the grammatical structures of Greek may have lent themselves to different interpretations. May be repeated for credit depending on the biblical books selected for study. *Prerequisite: BL522.*

This year the Greek reading will be primarily the speeches in the *Acts of the Apostles*. The Attic style of *Acts* is somewhat distinctive in the New Testament and serves as a good place for Greek students to practice their skills and develop their understanding of Greek syntax. The speeches have been chosen because in ancient historiography author's used speeches as a vehicle for the characters to express their points of view and values which in the case of *Acts* would be their theology.

**Student Outcomes**

1. The student will prepare before class and read and discuss in class as many of the speeches of *Acts* in Greek as the students' abilities and the limitations of the academic semester allow.
2. Each student will improve their understanding of Greek grammatical structures *per se* and how these structures relate to exegesis. The professor will work with each student in order to assist the student in setting goals for themselves in their development of their knowledge and abilities in Greek.
3. Each student will learn the text critical, exegetical, and hermeneutical issues of *Acts* and the implications for preaching and teaching *Acts*.
4. Each student will read more of *Acts* in Greek and English than is actually dealt with in class.

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<sup>1</sup> NT 710 New Testament Book Study in Greek – Acts (3) is the companion course.

## Required Texts

1. The fourth edition of the United Bible Society's Greek New Testament.
2. Danker, Frederick William. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., revised and edited by F.W. Danker, University of Chicago Press, 2000).<sup>2</sup>

Note: You now need to know the Hebrew alphabet in order to count in the subsections.

Note 2: As with all the best books, the colour of this edition is burgundy. First English edition was blue; the second was green.

3. Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1996).
4. A list of commentaries and monographs for *Acts* will be distributed and discussed in class. Students are encouraged to read extensively from the better ones.

## Course Schedule

This course meets on Tuesdays from 8:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. every week of the semester.

Special dates to remember are:

December 10	Last lectures for the semester and <u>final day to hand in assignments</u> .
November 30	Last day to apply for time extension for course work. No professor can give an extension for course work beyond the end of the semester (December 18). November 30 is <i>the Day</i> by which you must apply to the Dean and/or Registrar's Office for an extension beyond December 18.

## Course Requirements

1. Attend all scheduled sessions of this course. The purpose of this course is not "an information dump." Exegesis is a skill and an art both of which improve as a result of the interaction in class between instructor and students and between students. This is how students learn methodology and passion for the task at hand. Students will not receive marks for attendance but absences will directly affect their final grade.
2. Read *Acts* in Greek as directed for class sessions. The class sessions will be taken with discussion of Greek grammatical structures, discussions of implications of grammatical structures for interpretation and translation. If students are finding a particular text difficult,

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<sup>2</sup> Previous edition was Bauer, W., Gingrich, F., and Danker, F. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (2nd Eng. ed. revised and augmented by F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Danker incorporating the additions and corrections of the 5th German ed., Chicago, 1979).

students need to prepare the text by formulating and articulating their questions. The professor will also systematically teach grammar as the need arises.

3. Read in the various reference works available to students. Keep a record of this reading. Demonstrate initiative.
  - Use and read entries in Danker's NT Greek-English lexicon as part of preparing for class and/or as directed by the professor. Students are expected to demonstrate some initiative in the use of Danker.
  - Read in Greek grammars sections relevant to the Greek text being read. The professor will regularly identify relevant sections. Students should take the initiative to identify the relevant sections in grammars by using the indices of the grammars and Robert Hanna's *A Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* (1983).
  - Read Bruce Malina, John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (2008). Everyone needs to read the first eleven pages.
  - Read Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods, The Strange Triumph of Christianity* (The Free Press, 1999).
  - Read F.F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James & John, Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity* (Eerdmans, 1979).
  - Read and report on reading in commentaries and monographs on *Acts*.
  - Watch the A&E "Rome" series of videos! Easy "reading" and it will put *Acts* into the ancient context. Switch the commentary on.
4. Read (only read) Daniel Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (1996).

Or, if you are taking this as NT 710 *Advanced Biblical Study in Greek, Acts*, read Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar: The Abridgement of "Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, (2000)*.

If you have read either of them before, read them again.

5. Write two sermons (in outline) or lesson plans each of which are based on a specific text from *Acts*. The sermons must be consistent with perspectives learned in this this exegetical study of *Acts* and the overall "message" of *Acts*. Thus, for example, you cannot prepare a sermon or lesson which advocates "This is the everyone is filled with the Holy Spirit." These sermons or lessons will be:
  - expository in nature (as opposed to allegorical or topical);
  - based on units of the text which are of a length realistic for teaching or preaching;
  - consistent with the message and emphasis of the whole of *Acts*;
  - relevant to a contemporary audience;
  - each sermon will be accompanied by a summary of the critical issues of the text on which that sermon is based.
  - The sermon outlines or lesson plans may be submitted as a completed collection or one at a time.

Each of the sermon outlines or lesson plans must include the following:

- a. a bibliography of items read relating to the passage,
- b. a one page, single spaced and typed, summary of the more technical aspects of the identified unit of Greek text, such as significant points of grammar, interpretation, etc.
- c. a sermon outline or lesson plan of two pages length. The sermon or lesson plan must begin with a clear statement of the purpose of the sermon or the lesson. This statement is not to be part of the sermon or lesson.

6. Research any three (3) of the following critical issues relating to *Acts* and write a concise summary of your findings. All topics must be approved by the professor, and here are a few examples. The following list is only illustrative. If you have another topic, talk with about it.

6.1 Recreating the NT (*Acts*) in the twenty-first century. Describe and evaluate the hermeneutic behind this use of *Acts*. In other words is *Acts* descriptive or prescriptive. Here is the most recent example of this hermeneutic as its author develops his apologetic for house churches:

- Frank Viola and George Barna, *Pagan Christianity* (2008).
- The internet sites advocating this approach are beyond number.
- Bruce Malina, John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (2008) 9-11.

Here are some aspects of the topic.

- Compare *salafism* in Islam (which also advocates inerrancy) and Christian *fundamentalism* with this interpretation of *Acts*. For *salafism* and *fundamentalism*, see some discussions such as Norman Cohen (*ed.*), *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* (1990) and especially chapter one by Jaroslav Pelikan.
- This approach to *Acts* as a characteristic of fundamentalism (salafism also holds a literalistic interpretation of an inerrant *Koran*).
- Does this interpretation of *Acts* work for the same reasons in Christianity as in Islam, especially among European Muslims?
  - the younger generation
  - rejecting their parents abuses
  - frustration with their lot in life both socially, religiously, economically
  - feeling of righteousness
- In as much as this movement among conservative Christians in NA is a reaction to the diversity and lack of unity among the same, always remember this – an abundant and immanent presence of HS does not guarantee absence of disagreement or controversy!
- Develop the details of the hermeneutic:
  - Arguments from silence, *e.g.* non-use of musical instruments.

- Implication that there is a canon within the canon. (*Acts* absence of musical instruments trumps any other references to instruments.)
- Accept no more and no less than the explicit (cf. *salafism*).
- The irony of course is that among North American Christian *salafists* they want it all from *Acts* but not common property nor the speaking in tongues, etc. VERY SELECTIVE!
- See some of the published reflections on the use of *Acts* to justify the charismatic/ Pentecostal phenomena of the twentieth century.
- Whereas *salafism* looks back to the first three generations, the practitioners of this hermeneutic for *Acts* only look back to the first generation.
  - However the revival of interest in early church worship is more an interest in those first three generations; the revival of interest in the Church Fathers, e.g. Thomas Oden (Ask yourself what pushed Oden to this interest!).

6.2 The nature of the sermons (speeches) in *Acts*. Are the speeches *verbatim*, summaries or Luke's creations? Start with Ward Gasque's "The Book of *Acts* and History," *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Robert Guelich, ed., Eerdmans, 1978).

6.3 What is actual content of *to khrugma* (*the proclamation, preaching*) in the book of *Acts*? See C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936) in which he makes distinction between *to khrugma* and *h( didaxh* (*teaching*), and E.G. Selwyn's comparison of Peter's sermons in *Acts* and 1 Peter in his *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (1969). Will this proclamation be effective in our context of the twenty-first century? Why?

6.4 In what sense is *Acts* "history?" Is this history descriptive or prescriptive? How then does one use this history to edify the church? Start again with Gasque as cited in 6.2 above. See some of the published reflections on the use of *Acts* to justify the charismatic/ Pentecostal phenomena of the twentieth century.

6.5 Change in *Acts*. Change is a theme in *Acts* but the word is never used

- The divine agent in change.
- Examples of change:
  - Outpouring of HS
  - Paul's conversion reflects a change in values
  - Stephen's theology of the temple, may not be new, but certainly a change with which even some Christians felt uncertain
  - Peter and the sheet from heaven (kosher as a symbol of traditional Jewish and early Christian *sharia*')
  - Council of Jerusalem

6.6 Spirituality in *Acts*



- 6.11 A lot of people do a lot of traveling in *Acts*. What is the literary and theological significance of Lukan travel narratives. See David P. Moessner, *LORD of the BANQUET, The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Fortress, 1989). Moessner has a large section on *Acts*. Be sure to share your understanding of the implications of the subject for interpreting *Acts*.
- 6.12 Describe the changes in the nature and tone of the narrative of *Acts* at the point at which Luke adopts the first person.
- 6.13 What was the mission strategy of the early church as recorded in *Acts*? If *Acts* were the record of a missions society's activities, how would that mission have articulated its strategy? Just make it good
- 6.14 The optative mood of the Greek verb occurs only 69 times in the Greek New Testament of 28 of these are in Luke (11) and *Acts* (17). Write a description of the optative mood and its uses in Greek and in the books of Luke-*Acts*. Check out Goetchius lesson 50.
- 6.15 Greek style. Write a paper describing the Greek style of Luke-*Acts*. A basic knowledge of Hebrew is essential for this paper. Hint: previous generations of NT Greek professors described Luke's style as "Attic Greek." See F.F. Bruce's commentaries on Greek *Acts* on this point. However more recently Nigel Turner has become skeptical of the very existence of anything Attic in Luke's writing and has spent much time pointing out the abundant Semitisms in Luke-*Acts*.
- Nigel Turner, *The Grammar of NT Greek, Vol. IV Style* (1976). Chapter 4 is all about Lucan style. Compare with chapter 8 which is on the book of Hebrews.
  - F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*<sup>3</sup> (1990) 66-69. Bruce "finds more truly classical Greek in Luke's writings than anywhere else in the NT."
- 7 If the professor becomes convinced that a student or students are not working to their potential in this course, the student may be required to participate in an interview with professor at the semester's end in which interview the student and professor discuss a selected text from *Acts*.

## Course Grade

The final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

Attendance, preparedness, participation in class and reading	20%
Mastery of Greek, as demonstrated in class	20%
Reading Wallace's grammar	10%
Critical Issues in <i>Acts</i> papers (3)	30%
Two sermon or lesson plans	20%

Although marks are not given for attendance, marks will be deducted for absences.

### Important Notes

1. Students will not use Greek-English interlinear editions of any sort in class. This rule is absolute. The same applies to translations. Do not insult the professor or yourself by bringing these to class.
2. No *ad hominem* arguments on points of exegesis, interpretation, translation or theology derived from the same, will be tolerated in this class. *Ad hominem* arguments attack the person who proposed the idea instead of the idea itself. *Ad hominem* arguments have typically dismissed an idea by pointing out that the author of the idea was a socialist (Amos), or a Pentecostal (Gordon Fee), or used to play in a night club (Wimber). Students must argue their point on its own merits. More recently *ad hominem* arguments have taken the form of *who are you to disagree with....* This means you cannot dismiss a point of view by citing the name and point of view of your favorite theologian or theological tradition, nor your preferred translation. Likewise, students cannot dismiss a contrary point of view because it didn't come from a well known scholar or is different from a favorite published translation.
3. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. These assignments must use Greek and/or Hebrew fonts. The fonts will be made available to students. Beware not all printers will print all fonts correctly. This is your responsibility. You are responsible to make sure all fonts are printed correctly in your papers. Italicized Greek (and/or Hebrew) is not an option. Do not submit anything in electronic form!
4. By means of a written examination, demonstration of preparation of Greek text and reading of the scholarly materials a student may challenge their final grade in this course.
5. As the need may arise minor modifications to this syllabus and the class schedule may adopted from time to time.
6. You may contact your professor by various means.
  - a. Office Hours mean that I am available on campus at these times but do not guarantee that I'll be sitting in my office waiting for you. Remember presidents and deans call meetings, professors have emergencies and medical/dental appointments too. You're welcome to drop by on the chance I'm there. To ensure I'm there (or will inform you of an emergency) please make an appointment by email.
    - i. Monday           Afternoons
    - ii. Tuesday        Between my early morning double block and my late afternoon double block and when not in a committee meeting.
    - iii. Wednesday    Between the first and second class period; after lunch.
    - iv. Thursday       Not available; usually not on campus.
    - v. Friday           Between the first and second class period; after lunch.
  - b. Email in the office: [rremin@ambrose.edu](mailto:rremin@ambrose.edu)
  - c. Voice in the office: 410-2000 ext 7906



7. Absences are intolerable because of the nature of the subject being learned and the manner in which this course is taught. If you must miss a class please work through the lesson(s) missed and then come to the instructor with any problems or questions. In the event you cannot be prepared, you are better being in class unprepared than not in class at all.
8. The instructor shall comply with all academic regulations as printed in the current *Catalogue* and *Student Handbook*, and it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these regulations. The following academic policies are particularly relevant.

**a. Add/Drop Policy:** Students wishing to add a course should refer to the current academic calendar for the last day to officially enter the class. Students intending to withdraw from a course must complete the relevant Registration Revision form and failure to complete this form will result in an F. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are contained in the academic calendar.

**b. Course Extensions or Alternative Examination Requests:** Students may not turn in course work after the date of the scheduled final examination for the course unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension.” Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination times must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office several weeks prior to examination week (noted as the “Last Day for Alternative Exam or Course Extension Requests” on the academic calendar). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

**c. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty.** The seminary maintains a zero tolerant policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, academic dishonesty (cheating), and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.

Readings in *Acts* for 2007:

Focus is on the speeches:

<i>Acts</i> 1.1-2.42	Introduction, two of Peter's speeches
<i>Acts</i> 3.12-16	Peter again in Solomon's portico
<i>Acts</i> 4.6-20	Peter before the leaders
<i>Acts</i> 4.24-4.31	A prayer
<i>Acts</i> 5.27-5.39	Peter, Gamaliel
<i>Acts</i> 7.2-7.60	Stephen's speech
<i>Acts</i> 10.34-43	Peter in Cornelius' house
<i>Acts</i> 11.4-17	Peter's accounting to the circumcised
<i>Acts</i> 13.16-41(-51)	Paul in synagogue in Antioch (interesting statements about devout women, destined Gentiles and blaspheming Jews.
<i>Acts</i> 14.15-17.1	Paul and Barnabus to the people and priest of Zeus who want to sacrifice.
<i>Acts</i> 15.5(1-2)-21	Peter in Jerusalem on Moses and the requirements of the law
<i>Acts</i> 17.19-34	Paul on the Aereopagus

## Very Select Bibliography

F.F Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3<sup>rd</sup> and enlarged ed., Eerdmans, 1990). Good on the Greek text and the historical and geographical details.

Bruce Malina, John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (2008).

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Anchor Books 1998).

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Liturgical Press 1992).

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Eerdmans 1997).

Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Eerdmans 2003).

Howard Marshal and David Peterson (eds.), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Eerdmans, 1998). 626 pages.

Reta Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Eerdmans, 2007). 336 pages.

Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 2004). 520 pages

Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1993). 491 pages

Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1996). 299 pages

David W.J. Gill, *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1994). 641 pages

Richard Bauckham (ed.), *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1995). 540 pages

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1997). 923 pages.

David W. Kling, "Filled with the Holy Spirit": The Roots of Pentecostalism," *The Bible in History, How the Tests Have Shaped the Times* (Oxford,

[www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty\\_publications/articles/aker Acts2.pdf](http://www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/articles/aker_Acts2.pdf)

