

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
NT 504: Paul and his Letters
June 5-June 21, 2023
Dr. David L. Palmer
dpalmer@gordonconwell.edu

I. Course Objectives:

This course will prayerfully pursue the following five objectives:

- ❖ Students will deepen their love for God by interpreting Paul and his letters.
- ❖ Students will increase their familiarity with the geographical, cultural, and religious context of Paul's life and missionary journeys by retracing this route through on site visits through Turkey, Greece, and Rome.
- ❖ Students will improve their facility with the academic resources for Pauline exegesis, including archaeological excavation reports, primary sources for historical context, and exegetical commentaries.
- ❖ Students will express the theological message of Paul's letters for the benefit of the church, that is, the Body of Christ.
- ❖ Students will articulate Paul's missionary methodologies in the first century and apply them to global mission in the twenty-first century.

II. Course Required Texts:

1. Peter Walker, *In the Steps of Saint Paul: An Illustrated Guide to Paul's Journeys*. Oxford, England: Lion Hudson, 2011.
2. David L. Palmer, *CASKET EMPTY: God's Plan of Redemption Through History*. New Testament Study Guide (Casket Empty Media, 2016).
3. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
4. N. T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009.
5. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Recommended Texts:

1. John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, *ESV Bible Atlas*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
2. Gerald Hawthorne and Ralph Martin, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
3. William Ramsay, *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen*, revised edition Mark Wilson, ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.
4. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002.
5. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus: Texts and Archaeology*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2008.

III. Course Requirements:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Attend on site lectures in Turkey, Greece, and Rome | 20% |
| 2. Complete course required readings | 30% |
| 3. Integrative Paper (15-20 pages) | 50% |

IV. Course Outline and Tour Itinerary:

June 5 Mon Non-stop direct flight from Boston to Istanbul.

June 6 Tue Arrive **Istanbul** Airport at 16:25 – Private bus transfer to the hotel. We will have a private **Boat Tour** along the Bosphorus seeing both the Asian and European shores of Istanbul. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

June 7 Wed Full day **Istanbul** tour; morning visit to the **Hagia Sophia Church**, built by Constantine the Great and reconstructed by Justinian in the 6th century, one of the world's greatest architectural marvels and a designated World Heritage site. Afternoon visit to the **Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Museum of the Ancient Orient**, containing important biblical artefacts, and **Hagia Irene Church**, site of the 2nd Ecumenical Council (AD 381), which confirmed the Nicene Creed. Transfer to Istanbul Airport for late afternoon flight to Antalya. Transfer to the hotel for dinner and overnight

TOPICS: Paul the Diaspora Jew, Roman Citizen, and Apostle of Christ

June 8 Thu Visit **Perga**, where Paul landed after sailing from the island of Cyprus during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13-14; 14:25). Enter the site through the Hellenistic gates through which Paul would have walked. Tour the impressive remains which include a 15,000-seat theatre, 12,000-seat stadium, and colonnaded street with a flowing water channel in the middle. Afternoon visit to the award-winning **Antalya Archaeological Museum**. Dinner and overnight at the hotel in Antalya.

TOPICS: 1st Missionary Journey, the letter to the Galatians

June 9 Fri Drive through the Lycus River Valley where three important biblical cities are to be found. We begin with the unexcavated mound of **Colossae**, where Epaphras first brought the gospel he had heard from Paul. We continue to the well excavated city of **Laodicea**, which had a close relationship with the nearby churches of Colossae and **Hierapolis** (Col 4:13-16). Laodicea was also one of the seven churches to whom John sent the book of Revelation (Rev 3:14-22). Our final stop explores the vast remains of Hierapolis, where we will see the recently discovered tomb of Philip, one of the twelve, who was martyred here in AD 80. We will explore the remarkable mineral springs of Pammukale and rest overnight in one of the nearby hotels built upon the ancient thermal baths.

**TOPICS: 2nd Missionary Journey, the gospel addresses the pagan world
Paul's leadership model for the local church**

June 10 Sat Drive to Geyre to visit the ancient city of **Aphrodisias**, excavated by New York University. We will visit the **Sebasteion**, (or *Augusteum*), a unique temple complex dedicated to Aphrodite and the Julio-Claudian emperors that depicts the subject peoples of the empire in marble relief. We will also see the largest and best-preserved stadium in antiquity. After visiting the **Aphrodisias Museum**, with a number of important inscriptions that illuminate Paul's ministry context, we continue to Kusadasi on the shores of the Aegean Sea. Dinner and overnight at the hotel in Kusadasi.

TOPICS: The gospel confronts imperial ambition
Paul's theology of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord

June 11 Sun A short drive brings us to Miletus which, due to its four harbors and strategic location on the Aegean coast, became one of the great cities of commerce in the ancient world. Of the surviving buildings, the finest is the 15,000-seat theatre originally built in the Hellenistic period and expanded in Roman times. Paul stopped here on the return of his third missionary journey where he summoned the elders from Ephesus to meet with him and hear his poignant farewell address (Acts 20:17-35). We will visit the recently renovated **Archaeological Museum** and explore Didyma with the well-preserved **Temple of Apollo**, the second most influential pagan oracle in antiquity. We conclude our day in the Greco-Roman city of Priene located on a cliff-side. Return to Kusadasi for dinner and overnight.

TOPICS: The gospel forms a new community through faith in Christ
Paul's Scriptural preaching of the whole counsel of God

June 12 Mon Today we visit the famous ancient city of Ephesus, the site of the Artemis temple—one of seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul visited this city briefly during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21) but returned during his third missionary journey for an extended period of more than two years (Acts 19:1-20:1). We will enter the theatre where 25,000 citizens once gathered shouting "Great is Artemis!" in a riot over Paul's ministry. Timothy later served as pastor in this city, receiving two letters from Paul to guide him (1-2 Tim). The apostle John also ministered from Ephesus where he wrote 1-3 John and sent the book of Revelation. We will visit the **Terrace Houses**, the impressive **Ephesus Museum**, and the **Basilica of St. John**. Return to Kusadasi for dinner and overnight.

TOPICS: 3rd missionary journey, the gospel moves out from urban centers
Paul's commitment to discipleship and church planting

June 13 Tue Significant New Testament events took place at sea. We will transfer to Kusadasi Port at 10:30 am and embark on the **Celestial Cruise Ship** for the Greek island of Patmos, where the apostle John was exiled (Rev 1:9). We will visit the cave where he received the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:1) and the **Monastery of John** with our Greek guide.

TOPICS: The gospel connects heaven and earth in Christ
The city of God and the city of man

June 14 Wed Paul visited the island of Rhodes near the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 21:1). The Colossus of Rhodes, a towering 107 ft bronze statue, once guarded the harbor. Herod the Great met Augustus in Rhodes and was confirmed as Friend of the Romans and King of the Jews (Josephus, *War* 1.386-393). The future emperor Tiberius waited here in self-imposed exile from 6 BC to AD 2 before beginning his reign AD 14-37 covering Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection, and Paul's conversion (Luke 3:1).

**TOPICS: Paul's journey to Jerusalem with the offering of the nations
The competing narrative of Greco-Roman history**

June 15 Thu We will stop at the island of Crete, where Paul left Titus "to appoint elders in every town" (Titus 1:5). Paul harbored on the southern coast of Crete during his journey to Rome (Acts 27). After stopping at the port of Heraklion, we will have a tour of the Minoan palace of Knossos, the oldest city in Europe. We will sail in the afternoon to Santorini, where you will have free time to explore one of the most beautiful islands in Greece.

**TOPICS: The gospel provides new life in Christ
Paul's commitment to develop local church leadership**

June 16 Fri Disembark at the port of Piraeus, where Paul himself arrived. Our tour of Athens begins with the **Acropolis Museum**, recently named one of the best museums in the world. The museum showcases the art, reliefs, and votive offering associated with the Acropolis in a brilliant architectural setting. In the afternoon we will visit the **Acropolis** and then climb **Mars' Hill** where Paul stood before the city council to proclaim Christ (Acts 17). A sunset walk through **Filopappou** park will bring us to the Dora Stratou ethnic dance theatre for the 9:30 pm performance. Dinner and overnight in Athens.

**TOPICS: The gospel addresses Greek philosophy and learning
Paul's legacy: the vibrant ministry of the church in Greece today
Special meeting with GCTS graduate Dr. Panagiotis Kantartzis,
Pastor of the First Evangelical Church in Athens, Greece.**

June 17 Sat We cross the Corinth canal and visit the harbor at Cenchreae, where Paul sailed at the end of his second journey (Acts 18:18). We will explore the city of Corinth, where he preached for a year and a half. We will see the **Temple of Apollo**, the **Agora**, and the **Bema**, or judgment seat, where Paul was brought before the Roman proconsul Gallio. We continue to Mycenae, the city of Agamemnon from Homer's *Iliad*, passing through the Lion Gate, the oldest sculpture in Europe. We will share a special dinner at the picturesque city of Nauplion before returning to Athens for overnight.

**TOPICS: The gospel unmask the commercial age, 1-2 Corinthians
Paul's approach to Christian formation**

June 18 Sun Fly from Athens to Istanbul, then return flight to Boston

TOPICS: The gospel continues to extend in global mission today

Optional Italy extension:

June 18 Sun Fly from Athens to Naples

Transfer to Athens Airport for flight to Naples. Your tour guide will meet you after the customs and baggage claim with a “**Dr. David Palmer - TUTKU**” sign. Private bus transfer to Naples to visit Pompeii. Dinner and overnight in Naples.

June 19 Mon Naples – Ostia - Rome

Drive to Ostia to visit Rome’s ancient port and the Jewish Synagogue discovered there. Then, drive to Rome for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)

June 20 Tue Rome

Visit the Forum, Trajan’s Market and the Forum of Augustus. Then, internal visit of the Colosseum. In the afternoon we pass by the Arch of Constantine and the Arch of Titus onto the Palatine Hill to visit the Palatine Museum and the Alexamenos graffiti, and afterwards pass through the Campidoglio. At the end of the tour the Pantheon will be visited. Return to the hotel. (B,D)

June 21 Wed Rome Airport - Fly back to BOSTON. End. (B)

NT 504: Paul and his Letters Integrative Paper

The major assignment for this course will be an integrative paper. The paper will allow students to integrate the academic disciplines of archaeology and biblical studies. The paper will also encourage students to apply Paul's missionary methods to the global church today in response to their personal experience of retracing Paul's life and letters. The paper will be organized according to five sections, each approximately 3-4 pages in length.

Introduction

Section I: City report (3-4 pages)

- Provide a detailed description of *either* Corinth or Ephesus in the first century.
- Describe the local population, including Jewish community, architectural plan, civic institutions, religion, cultural life, and city history.
You will find primary resources in the works by Jerome Murphy O'Connor cited in the recommended reading. You can also use required readings from the course, Bible dictionaries, a Bible atlas, and the introductions to exegetical commentaries.
- Present the ministry opportunity and challenge of reaching this city with the gospel.

Section II: Paul's missionary activity and mission partners (3-4 pages)

- Detail Paul's missionary activity in this city from Acts and Paul's letters.
- How long did Paul stay there? What happened? What challenges did he face?
- Who did he work with in the city?

Section III: Paul's written correspondence with the church (3-4 pages)

- Summarize Paul's written correspondence with the city.
- Who does he address? What are the principal concerns of his letter(s)?
- How were his letters produced, read, and distributed?

Section IV: Paul's theology of the gospel (3-4 pages)

- What is the theological message of Paul's letter(s) to the believers in the city?
- Describe the content of his gospel concerning the person and work of Christ.
- Summarize Paul's view of the church and the discipleship demands of the gospel.

Section V: Paul's missionary methods then and now (3-4 pages)

- Describe Paul's missionary methods, including travel, preaching, baptism, church leadership development, discipleship, Christian formation, and writing letters.
- How can Paul's missionary methods inform global mission and the life of the local church today?
- Conclude with a personal reflection on how this experience has deepened your own love for God and commitment to serve Christ wherever he might call you.

Conclusion

Please email your paper as a Word and PDF file by July 20th, 2020 and indicate the percentage of required reading that you have completed at the end of the paper.

Appendix 1: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Vision, Mission and Purpose Statement

“To advance Christ’s Kingdom in every sphere of life by equipping Church leaders to think theologically, engage globally and live biblically.”

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is an educational institution serving the Lord and His Church. Its mission is to prepare men and women for ministry at home and abroad. The seminary undertakes this task as a training partner with the Church so that what is learned on campus may be complemented by the spiritual nurture and the exercise of ministry available through the Church.

Gordon-Conwell’s mission arises out of God’s redemptive work in this world effected in Jesus Christ, understood through the biblical Word and mediated by the Holy Spirit. As a theological seminary, it provides learning, resources and training through which men and women may acquire knowledge, gain skills and develop attitudes needed in Christ’s ministry. Its mission, accordingly, is to serve the Church in the following ways:

Article 1: To encourage students to become knowledgeable of God’s inerrant Word, competent in its interpretation, proclamation and application in the contemporary world. Because the teaching of God’s Word is indispensable to the well-being and vitality of God’s people, the seminary has a fundamental responsibility to encourage in its students a love for Scripture. The seminary is to teach exegetical skills by which they will be able to apply Scripture effectively.

Article 2: To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines. Theological education, which is properly done within and for the Church, ought to function with rigor and academic integrity. The seminary, therefore, must provide an environment within which teaching and learning can best occur and encourage high levels of scholarly competence and research in its faculty.

Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry. The Church and the seminary share the goal of seeing knowledge, skills and attitudes integrated in the person who ministers. Both in traditional degree programs and in continuing education, a combination of careful training and supervised experience in ministry are educational practices essential to achieving that goal.

Article 4: To work with the churches towards the maturing of students so that their experiential knowledge of God in Christ is evidenced in their character, outlook, conduct, relationships and involvement in society. Academic learning divorced from a life of biblical spirituality neither honors God nor serves His people. Such spirituality is to be expressed cognitively, relationally and socially. It is to be translated into action, God’s people embodying His compassion, declaring His justice and articulating His truth in society.

Article 5: To provide leadership and educational resources for shaping an effective evangelical presence in Church and society. Gordon-Conwell’s academic and institutional resources are to be put into the service of the Christian community to provide careful research on and informed understanding of critical issues, as well as in exercising leadership in learned societies, in movements of renewal and reform and in a variety of off-campus ministries in order to develop a more informed understanding of what the lordship of Christ means in our world.

Article 6: To develop in students a vision for God’s redemptive work throughout the world and to formulate the strategies that will lead to effective missions, evangelism and discipleship. The central mission of the Triune God is the creation of a fellowship of men and women who are mature in Christ and who will love and serve Him forever. This mission is realized evangelistically through the proclamation of the biblical gospel by those who embody the message they proclaim and who seek to make disciples from all peoples.