Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

NTST536 Exegesis of the English New Testament:

The Gospel Parables

Fall 2023

Robert M. Johnston, Ph.D.

SYNOPSIS OF THE COURSE

CLASS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Class location:	Oklahoma Conference of SDA, 4735 NW 63rd Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132
Class meeting times:	September 24-28. Sun 2-6 pm, M-Th 8-12 am, 2-6 pm EST
Course Website:	learninghub.andrews.edu
Instructor Telephone:	269-471-1109
Instructor Email:	bobjohn@andrews.edu
Office location:	teaching from home (9368 Park Ridge Trail, Berrien Center, MI 49102)
Office hours:	As needed

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Exegesis of selected portions of the New Testament. The same subject cannot be repeated with the other 500-level course number. Does not presuppose Greek proficiency nor count toward MDiv core requirements or emphases, nor the MA major or minor in New Testament.

PROGRAM & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Your degree program seeks to help you achieve the **Program Learning Outcomes** basic to your chosen profession. Your Program Learning Outcome primarily addressed in this course is:

MA in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM)

1) Deliver effective biblically-based sermons
2) Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills
3) Understand the historical-theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
4) Exhibit capability for training church members for evangelism
5) Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership
6) Exhibit capability for reaching specific social groups

The following **Course Learning Outcomes** contribute to the overall Program Learning Outcomes by identifying the key learnings to be achieved by diligent work in this course:

1. Know the nature of parables
2. Know the importance of parables in the teaching of Jesus and the theology of the Gospels
3. Know the history of interpretation of the parables
4. Be aware of current scholarship on the parables
5. Understand sound methods of interpretation and be able to apply them
6. Be able to move from exegesis to sermon
7. Be familiar with the parables themselves
8. Be able to apply the teachings of the parables to your own life and the life of the church
9. Appreciate the relationships among the Gospels
10. Understand how the theological and cultural environment has influenced the understanding of the parables
11. Understand how Ellen White's use and application of the parables relate to scholarly exegesis
12. Be able to exploit the parables homiletically

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course topics and assignments have been selected to contribute to learning and evaluating these Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) as follows:

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
9/24/2023	Bailey videos	Three-page critique	1,4,5,7,8,10
9/24	Reading report #1	Three-page critique of Stein	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9
9/24	Reading report #2	Three-page critique of Blomberg	1,2,3,4,5,10
9/24	Reading report #3	Three-page critique of White	6,11,12
9/24	Introduction	Take notes on lectures and discussion	1,2
9/25	Exam on parables	Look up and study Stein 22-26 *(see next page)	7

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
9/25	Background and history of interpretation	Take notes on lectures and discussion	1,2,3,4,10,11
9/26	Principles of interpretation	Take notes on lectures and discussion	4,5,6,8,12
9/27-28	Case studies Final exam	Take notes on lectures and discussion Exam on lectures and required readings	5,7,12
12/10	Exegesis paper	Turn in paper on chosen parable	5,6
12/10	Sermon	Turn in sermon manuscript on chosen parable	12

Note that there will be two examinations during the class meetings. On the morning of the second day (9/25). The examination will be a short one of matching questions on the scriptures that are listed in Stein, 22-26. In the afternoon of the last day of class there will be a multiple-choice examination on the lectures and the required readings in the textbooks.

* **Preparing for the Parables Test** In this course special importance is placed on the content of the scriptures of which it is a study, so you will write an objective test of your mastery of the parables as they are listed in Robert H. Stein, *Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*, pp. 22-26. You will not be expected to remember the references for them all, so in this test the parables will be identified by the names which Stein assigns to them. But you are expected to know the location of certain clusters of parables, namely those in Matthew 13, Mark 4; Luke 15; and Matthew 24, 25. You should know which parables are in those clusters. Learn what each parable is about, and if the same parable appears in more than one gospel you should know if there are any significant differences between the different versions. The test will be sustained on the morning of September 25 (second day of class), and it will be timed. You will have thirty minutes to answer twenty questions.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required at all classes and other academic appointments. When the total number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may assign a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Course Materials

Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

White, Ellen G. *Christ's Object Lessons*. Washington: Review and Herald, 1941 (many other editions)

Recommended Course Materials

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke.* Combined edition: Two Volumes in One. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984.

Hultgren, Arland J. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

Longenecker, Richard N., ed. *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

For ISBN and price information, please see the listing at the Bookstore www.andrews.edu/bookstore.

MORE ABOUT THE COURSE

When God sent His Son to earth He sent Him as a teacher. When Jesus taught, He taught in parables. "All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable" (Matthew 13:34, ESV). We cannot understand the teaching of Jesus without knowing and understanding His parables, and we ourselves can best teach if we teach the way He did. That is why the study of the parables of Jesus will make you a better theologian and a better preacher.

TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

US Credit-Hour Regulations

For every semester credit, the Andrews University credit hour definition requires that:

- **Courses for professional masters' degrees (e.g. MDiv)** include 15 instructor contact hours and 30 hours of independent learning activities.
- **Courses for academic masters' (e.g. MA [Religion]) and all doctoral degrees** include 15 instructor contact hours, and 45 hours of independent learning activities.

The calculation of hours is based on the study skills of the average well-prepared graduate student. Students weak in these skills: 1) may require more time and should consider taking fewer classes each semester; and 2) can find skill development assistance through the Seminary Study and Research Skills Colloquia, the AU Writing Center, and AU Student Success office.

In order to achieve the outcomes of this course, learning time will be distributed as follows:

		Professional Masters' Programs
		3 Credits
Instructor Contact Hours	**Face to Face Instructional Time**	38 hrs
	Other Instructor-Directed Activities (videos and report)	7 hrs
	Reading reports, prep for exams	60 hrs
	Exegesis paper	20 hrs
Independent Learning Activities		
	Sermon	10 hrs
Total Hours:		**135 hrs**

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Grades are based on the independent learning activities below which provide practice toward, and assessment of, the learning outcomes of this course. The grade weighting for each assignment is provided in the right-hand column. Specific due dates are given in the Course Overview above.

The points available for the assignments add up to 110. The number of points earned for each assignment will be added together and then divided by 110, to give the percentage upon which the grade is determined. Thus, if the total earned is 86, the grade will be 86/110=78%=B-.

Assignment Description	Weighting
Watch and critique the four-part lecture by Kenneth Bailey on the Prodigal Son found on YouTube (three-page report): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d8hF84qMPg&list=PLZk_M4sUVTd_9WEYdR8KcgBBtrYZJ83s9&index=14&t=0s, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWWU-0c5fv8, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSaIw1rBbGA, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pj4ZNNs1Lo	10 pts

Look up and study all the items listed in Stein, 22-26, and be prepared to be examined on them. (GT stands for *Gospel of Thomas*, which can be found on line in such sites as http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gthlamb.html	20 pts
Three book reports on the required textbooks. Write a three-page report for each book, interacting with Stein, especially pp. 15-81, and with Blomberg, especially pp. 17-192, and with Ellen White's book. From the list of parables in Stein 22-26 select which parable you are going to make the subject of your exegesis paper and sermon. The reports should show evidence of thoughtful reading. Each report is worth 10 pts.	30 pts
Exegesis paper on chosen parable	30 pts
Sermon on chosen parable	20 pts
Final examination on Stein, 15-81; Blomberg, 17-192; Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*; and the lectures/discussions.	40 pts

* For grading rubrics that specify grading criteria in more detail, see Appendices.

In order to make grading fair for everyone, grades will be assigned on the basis of the above requirements alone. No individual arrangements will be made for those requesting last minute grade adjustment or extra credit.

Note on INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM. In this class several pieces of written work are required: book reports, exegesis paper, and sermon. Plagiarism is a kind of theft, and therefore a sin. Plagiarism is taking someone else's work and presenting it as your own without giving him credit. In the past this has mainly taken the form of using quotations from books and articles without giving credit in a footnote. In recent times a more acute form has been invented: Large Language Artificial Intelligence.

The best known such program is **ChatGPT**, but other ones are being developed. You can ask it a question, such as Who was Adolf Jülicher? And you will get a very respectable answer. You can give it a command, such as Prepare a three-point sermon on John 3:16, and it will do it.

It works by going through all the vast data on the Internet. Unfortunately, there is some incorrect data out there on the Internet, so sometimes the answers that come back are wrong. There was a news item about a lawyer who asked ChatGPT to prepare a brief. It came up with a brief that referenced nonexistent cases. I think the lawyer was threatened with disbarment, and he lost his case.

If you ask the program to write your sermons you are replacing the Holy Spirit with an algorithm. That can be very dangerous. Using AI is different from citing books and articles only in degree. The same principles apply. ChatGPT can be used as a tool, but not a short cut. Whenever you use it, you must give it credit, just as you would with a book citation. And it must not take the place of doing original work that is your own. Everything must be digested in the crucible of your own mind.

I will give further guidance on this subject in class, including the proper form for footnotes.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on Learning Hub on or before the dates indicated.

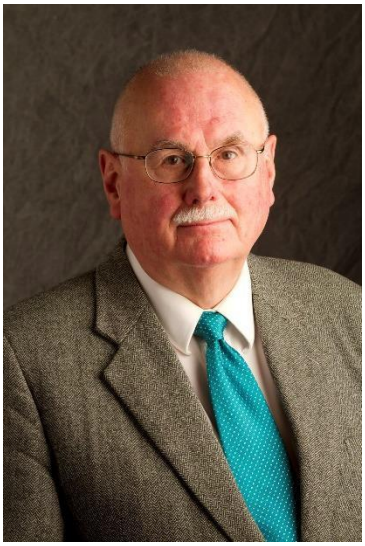
Late Submission

Because student assignments are an essential part of class activities, assignments turned in after the time they are due will be worth a seriously reduced score. Any requests for extra time on an assignment must be made in advance with the professor. Such requests should be a rarity and should be accompanied by a valid reason why the work could not be done by the date due.

Resubmission of Assignments

In order to facilitate maximum learning, students who receive a poor grade on the final project (exegesis paper and sermon) may resubmit the assignment on additional time. Resubmissions will be worth up to 80% of the original total possible score.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR



Robert M. Johnston is emeritus professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, where he has taught since 1974. Before that he was a missionary for twelve years in South Korea and the Philippines.

He has degrees from Pacific Union College, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and the Hartford Seminary. He has also studied at Stanford University, the University of California, and Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has been awarded the J.N. Andrews medallion and the Charles Weniger Award for excellence in teaching. He has published three books and numerous articles and chapters in books.

He is married to Madeline Steele, and the two of them are members of Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs. They have four children and six grandchildren.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Academic Integrity

The Seminary expects its students to exhibit rigorous moral integrity appropriate to ministry leaders representing Jesus Christ. Complete honesty in academic matters is a vital component of such integrity. Any breach of academic integrity in this class is subject to discipline. Consequences may include receipt of a reduced or failing grade, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university. A record of academic integrity violations is maintained by the University Student Academic Integrity Council. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel for recommendations on further penalties.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism in which one fails to give credit every time use is made of another person's ideas or exact words, whether in a formal paper or in submitted notes or assignments. Credit is to be given by use of:
    - Correctly designed and inserted footnotes each time one makes use of another individual's research and/or ideas; and
    - Quotation marks placed around any exact phrases or sentences (3 or more words) taken from the text or speech of another individual.
- Presenting another's work as one's own (e.g., placement exams, homework assignments);
- Using materials during a quiz or examination other than those explicitly allowed by the teacher or program;
- Stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials;
- Copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz;
- Assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof, without permission from the instructors, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course.

For additional details see: https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

Use of Electronics

No recording or streaming is permitted in seminary courses.

Courtesy, respect, and professionalism dictate that laptops and cell phones are to be used only for class-related activities during class time.

Communications and Updates

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking their Andrews University e-mail, Moodle, and iVue alerts regularly.

LearningHub Access

Andrews University Learning Hub hosts this course online. Your Learning Hub username and password are the same as your Andrews username and password. Use the following contact information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with LearningHub.

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Technical assistance with Learning Hub	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Technical assistance with your Andrews account	http://andrews.edu/hdchat/chat.php	

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus, with the consensus of the class, at any time during the semester for the benefit of the learning process. The up-to-date Course Description for this course may be found at www.learninghub.andrews.edu .

APPENDIX 1: INTERPRETING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grades and Percentages

95-100% A	80-84% B	65-69% C
90-94% A -	75-79% B-	60-64% C-
85-89% B+	70-74% C+	55-59% D

THE B GRADE

The B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all of the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is a very good grade and demonstrates a high level of the knowledge, insight, critical competence and professional presentation standards essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional leader in ministry.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is given only when a student not only fulfills the criteria for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and by applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade points to a limited level of knowledge, insight, and critique, as well as to inadequate quality of written work. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, use of English as a second language, or a personal issue that is affecting one's concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling center, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

THE F GRADE

A failing grade is given when very limited or no demonstrable competency has been observed.

APPENDIX 2: ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC(S)

The rubrics to be covered in the exegesis paper will be provided during the class. The criteria for assessing it and the sermon are as follows.

Exegesis Paper

Elements	**6 pts**	**4 pts**	**1 pt**
Covers all bases correctly	Does well what each rubric in the template requires	Omits a rubric or misunderstands a rubric	Clueless about what is being done
Uses references correctly	Perfectly adheres to AU standards, is evidence based, gives credit where necessary	Mistakes in style and formatting, fails to give credit to all sources	Pays no attention to standards of written work
Writes clearly	Good grammar and spelling, interesting and thought provoking	Several mistakes on each page	Barely literate
Originality	New insights and original thinking	Too dependent on secondary sources	No new thoughts at all
Good faith effort	Shows fruit of reading and research, uses computer rightly*	Improper or incompetent use of computer, little reading and research	No evidence of reading or research

*Use computer programs and web sites just as you would use a book: do not copy and paste, but pass the material through the crucible of your own mind and use your own words, unless you are making a direct quotation, in which case you must give credit in the normal way.

Sermon

Elements	**5 pts**	**3 pts**	**1 pt**
Based on the fruit of the exegesis	Clearly utilizes what was learned in the exegesis	Little relation to the exegesis	Ignores the exegesis
Brings home the message of the parable	Applies the parable persuasively and instructively	Message not very clear	No homiletic value
Includes an adequate outline*	Clear outline, showing definite structure and purpose	Poor outline	No outline
Originality	Original insights	Much borrowed	Virtually plagiarized (“scissors and paste”)

*Attach a two or three rank outline to the front of the sermon manuscript and follow it in the body of the sermon.

APPENDIX #: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

MASTERS PROGRAMS

1. MA in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM)

1) Deliver effective biblically-based sermons
2) Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills
3) Understand the historical-theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
4) Exhibit capability for training church members for evangelism
5) Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership
6) Exhibit capability for reaching specific social groups

APPENDIX #: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECOMMENDED BOOKS & RESOURCES

Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation.* Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.

Crossan, John Dominic. "A Basic Bibliography for Parables Research," *Semeia* 1 (1974): 236-73.

Hultgren, Arland J. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947.

Kissinger, Warren S. *The Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography.* Metuchin, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1979.

Linnemann, Eta. *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition.* London: SPCK, 1966.

Longenecker, Richard N., ed. *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000.

McArthur, Harvey K., and Robert M. Johnston. *They Also Taught in Parables: Rabbinic Parables from the First Centuries of the Christian Era.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. Reprinted by Wipf & Stock, 2014.

Scott, Bernard Brandon. *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

Stern, David. *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literatures.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Stern, Frank. *A Rabbi Looks at Jesus' Parables.* Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2006.

Trench, Richard C. *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord.* Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revel, 1953. Often reprinted.

Westermann, Claus. *The Parables of Jesus in the Light of the Old Testament.* Trans. by Friedmann W. Golka and Alastair H. B. Logan. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Wright, Stephen I. *Jesus the Storyteller*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Young, Brad H. *Jesus and His Jewish Parables: Rediscovering the Roots of Jesus' Teaching.* New York: Paulist Press, 1989.

Young, Brad H. *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998.

For additional books and articles, see also the Seminary Library Portal at http://libguides.andrews.edu/religion .