

**New Testament History & Religion**  
**BIB 102, - Spring, 2007 Section 3 (TR)**  
**Point Loma Nazarene University - Dennis R. Bratcher, Professor**

**Culture and History of the New Testament**  
**Extra Credit**

Pick one of the topics below and write a paper, 3-4 pages long, typed double-spaced, to answer the questions for that topic. In preparation for writing the paper, look up the topic in two or three Bible dictionaries listed below to find answers to the assigned questions. There are other sources available that can be used as well. You will find some of the answers by reading the biblical passages mentioned in the Bible dictionaries. Include a bibliography to indicate the sources you used. Use documentation (footnotes) where appropriate.

*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols., 1992.

*Harper's Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier, 1996.

*Harper's Encyclopedia of Bible Life*, ed. Madeleine Miller, *et al.*, 1996.

*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Trent C. Butler, 2003.

*Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas, 1998

*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Freedman, 2000

*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 4 vols., 1979-88.

*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George A. Buttrick, 4 vols. + suppl, 1962-76

*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, 5 vols, 1999

Rome and the Roman Empire: When and how did the Roman Empire begin to impact the Jewish people in Palestine? How did it impact Jesus and his followers in the New Testament?

Herod: Who was Herod the Great and what role did he have in the life of Jesus? Who were the different members of Herod's family that had a role in the New Testament? What were they like and what all did they do in relationship to Jesus or others in the New Testament?

Pilate: What office did he hold? What type of person was he? What role did he have in the New Testament?

Gospel: What does it mean to say that there is only one gospel? What does *gospel* mean? What factors led to the *writing* of the four gospels? How is it that we have *four* gospels? How can the gospel be one and four at the same time?

Synagogue: When and why did the synagogue emerge? What is its significance in the New Testament?

Sanhedrin: What was the Sanhedrin? Where was it located? What type of people were part of it? How much power did it have? How does the Sanhedrin relate to the story of Jesus and other events in the New Testament?

- John the Baptist: How do the gospels portray the life, work, and message of John the Baptist? What are some similarities and differences between John and Jesus?
- Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: *How* and *why* does the New Testament quote or make reference to the Old Testament? Give examples to illustrate your answer.
- Jewish Parties/Sects in the New Testament; Jews in the New Testament: What points of agreement and/or disagreement were there between these parties and Jesus?
- Samaritans: What references are made to the Samaritans in the New Testament? What was their origin? What were some of their religious ideas? What were their points of agreement and/or conflict with Jews? What was Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans?
- Mission: What does *mission* mean? In what sense is the idea of mission present in the Old Testament? How does the New Testament speak about mission? Who was the most outstanding missionary in the NT and how would you describe his mission objective?
- Peter: What all does the New Testament say about Peter? What is his significance the New Testament?
- Paul: Briefly tell Paul's life story, making references to his letters and to the book of Acts.
- Disciples, Apostles: What do these two words mean? What are the differences, if any, between an apostle, a disciple, and a follower of Jesus? How many apostles did Jesus have, and why such a number? What does the New Testament say about these apostles: James, the son of Zebedee; Andrew; Philip; Thomas; Matthew.
- Offices in the New Testament: What were the different leadership positions in the New Testament church and what type of positions were they? Illustrate your answer by making references to New Testament persons, stories or statements that shed light on these offices.
- Gnosticism: What does the word *gnosticism* mean? What are some gnostic concepts and how and why did they emerge? How are the basic ideas of gnosticism different from biblical ideas that you have learned so far?
- John the Apostle: What does the New Testament tell us about the personal life of John the Apostle, his relationship to Jesus, and his apostolic role?