

**Details.** This is a closed-book test that should take no longer than an hour. Its questions may include multiple choice, fill-in-the blank, and matching formats. You supply the pen; I will supply the paper. I recommend the following strategy as you study:

First, **categorize the material** in your mind. Consider three perspectives on our course content: (1) Biblical content. The New Testament texts themselves are most relevant here, but so are Johnson and either Koester or Bauckham. (2) Commentary. The body of opinion on what the texts mean features relevant historical and biblical background (such as Johnson's early chapters), proposals for structuring the text (like Koester's spirals and others' outlines), and abstractions (like Bauckham's "theology of Revelation"). (3) Implications for the Bible's use in the life of the Church, including hermeneutics. This is where Monroe is focused, though Johnson and Koester pay attention to it too. All three perspectives come into play in lectures. Now you cannot neatly *separate* our material into groups like these! However, thinking in these terms will help you sort through what you are studying. It will also keep you alert to the course's various 'layers' of concern.

Second, **prioritize the material**. Have you noticed that the first chapter of a New Testament book is often a summary? Good. You can praise God for Greco-Roman writing conventions and make each book's first chapter both a priority and a key to what follows. Lectures are also good to emphasize in your studying; they tell you what I care about. (You only need to worry about the parts of lecture outlines that I have actually used in class. You may perhaps find other lecture outlines helpful in clarifying my comments or other materials, but don't feel obligated to draw on them.) The textbooks matter too! But they have much too much information for you to memorize it all. Instead, look for the *more important* over the *less important*. Put Johnson's book-centered chapters first, then Koester or Bauckham and Howard-Brook, then Johnson's early chapters (and, if applicable, Hopkins) on historical background, then Monroe.

As you **review lectures, group presentations, and readings** to gain the following:

- *A sense of what each chapter is for*: not just what information it conveys, but the author's purpose and goals for readers. Ask yourself: How is this chapter or this lecture supposed to help or change you?
- *Familiarity with the main lines of argument of each chapter*. You will typically see these represented in the in-class presentations you all have been delivering. Reviewing the reading with the presentation in hand may give you a better sense of both "the big picture" and how the details serve it.
- *Understanding of basic terms and concepts and their significance*. Identify the key terms involved in the major points in each chapter. Be able to define each term and briefly state its significance, and you will likely do well on the questions that involve them.
- *An appreciation of what matters – what is at stake*. I try to craft test questions according to the importance I attach to major points in the course. For a guide to what *I* consider important, look at where I have focused assignments and class sections. For a guide to what *an author* considers important, look at how central and how well developed the point is. Make a sectional theme or a page-long focus a much higher priority than an isolated point. Think in terms of molecular chains, not atoms. While many of the details in our course might qualify as "trivia," others do not. Part of reading perceptively is gaining skill at telling the difference.
- *A sense of the connections among the materials*. Much of education involves the discovery of connections. You can deepen your appreciation of the material by asking why readings are clustered together. Why have I put a set of readings together with a lecture? What's the connection? How is one week's topic connected with the previous week's topic? What connections have I emphasized in class?

I encourage you to **study in groups** (especially your small groups) and distribute these tasks, so long as you pool your *knowledge* rather than your *ignorance*!

**What am I looking for?**

1. Evidence that you've studied the material closely and understand its important points.
2. Evidence that you are becoming equipped to know what the Bible says, to think 'biblically,' and to put the Bible to fruitful use – both now, and in your life as a Westmont *graduate*.
3. Evidence that you appreciate how the details fit into “the big picture.”

For now consider item (1) the most important task, then (2), then (3). Over our semester together the weight should shift towards the later items as you learn to locate all those details within the overall discipline of New Testament study. Then as time passes and the details evaporate, the structure with which and around which they are built will remain.