

COS 321 - Bible III: Gospels

August 2021

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This course focuses on the content and message of the Gospels, as well as the theological perspectives of the Gospel writers. The course will emphasize the practice of exegesis.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Successful students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.
2. Exegete this form of literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

**Textbooks:**

Mark Allen Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*.  
Frederick Murphy, *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*.

**Supplementary Books:**

Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Meaning and Message of Jesus Christ*.  
R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)  
R. Alan Cole, *Mark* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)  
Sharon Ringe, *Luke* (Westminster Bible Companion)  
Moody Smith, *Abingdon New Testament Commentary on John*

**Suggested Book:**

Gregory J. Riley, *One Jesus, Many Christs*. Fortress Press.  
This is a book on Christology, what opinions different Christian groups had about Christ, and demonstrates how and why the story of Jesus was so popular in the Greco-Roman world.

**Three Pre-class Assignments: Due Fri, July 30, 2021.**

Please email both written assignments to Mark Kim at: **mark.kim@cst.edu**.

Assignment One: Reading the Gospels

Please read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in one of the following translations: New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), English Standard Version (ESV), New American Standard Updated (NASU).

Assignment Two: The Reasons for Writing the Gospels

Please describe what our main textbooks [Powell, Murphy] or our supplementary textbook [Holladay] has to say about the reasons that each of the Gospels was written, in approximately four pages double-spaced pages. You may write more if you wish, but four pages are sufficient. For example, John tells us in John 20:31 his major reason for writing.

There are other reasons, and Powell, Murphy, and Holladay will help you discover them. Please cite passages from the gospels to illustrate your points.

The paper should be submitted as a Word document in Times New Roman font, 12 pt., with 1 inch margins all around, correct in grammar, spelling and syntax, and approximately four double-spaced pages in length.

Assignment Three: The Authors

Please write an account in four double-spaced pages of what two of our textbooks [same list as above] tell us about the authors of our four Gospels. Again, you may write more if you wish, but four pages are sufficient. Who were they? When and where did they write? The format of the paper should be the same as the previous assignment.

**The Course:**

The course will engage the main issues found in our Gospels, treated in the order Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.

The course will consist of 9 face-to-face class sessions by Zoom videoconference of approximately 2 hours 15 minutes each. In addition, the student should expect to invest a further 1-2 hours each day outside of class for reading and writing assignments.

Dates/Time:

- August 3-5, 10-12, 17-19 (Tuesdays-Thursdays)
- 9:30-11:45 am PST

**Forums:**

Forums are a way for students to actively engage with New Testament scholarship and one another. Students will be assigned weekly articles pertinent to the material covered in class. Each student will read the article and write a reflection to be shared with the rest of the class. Every other student will then post a response(s) to the student's reflection. More instructions about forums will be provided at the beginning of the course.

**Exegesis Papers:**

"Exegesis" is a transliterated Greek word that means "explanation." One exegetes, that is explains, the meaning of a Biblical text in its historical context, using all the tools available to the scholar: language, history, archeology, ancient literature, and especially other Biblical texts. These help us to understand what the author meant and intended, including helping to evaluate the author's assumptions and biases. This is the historical-critical method used by all competent scholars. Learning to do exegesis is one of the main purposes of this course. Do not worry if you are new to exegesis. We will work on it together in class.

Exegesis Papers: Each student will write and submit three short papers that exegete the Bible passages indicated. These should be written so that they may serve, it is hoped, as the basis for sermons and/or Bible studies. The papers are to address the issues listed and are due on the days assigned. **While the first three papers are mandatory, extra credit will be given if a student completes the 4<sup>th</sup> paper option below.**

They are to be submitted as Word documents in Times New Roman font, 12 pt., with 1 inch margins all around, correct in grammar, spelling and syntax, and approximately three double-spaced pages in length.

**Due Mon, Aug 9** - Exegesis Paper #1: Mark 4:1-20 The Parable of the Sower.

Please include discussion of the following related verses:

Mark 8:17 Are your hearts hardened?

Mark 8:35 For those who want to save their life will lose it....

Mark 10:20 Sell what you own, and give the money to the poor....

Mark 13:13 The one who endures to the end will be saved.

These verses illustrate the issues raised in the parable [the kinds of soil] and allow us to explain the parable using Mark's own ideas.

**Due Mon, Aug 16** - Exegesis Paper #2: Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart.

Please include discussion of the following related passages:

Matt 12:33-35 A tree is known by its fruit. ... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Matt 15:1-20 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.

Matt 23:25-26 First clean the inside of the cup.

**Due Mon, Aug 23** - Exegesis Paper #3: Luke 17:21 The Kingdom of God is inside you.

Please include discussion of the following related passages:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were in effect until John came.

Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 13:20-21 [The kingdom] is like leaven....

Luke 13:28-30 29 Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.

**(Opt) Due Fri, Aug 27** - Exegesis Paper #4: John 15:1-10 The Vine and the Vinedresser.

Please include discussion of the following related passages:

John 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

John 7:37-38 Let the one who believes in me drink. Out of one's innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

John 8:12 I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

**Final At-Home Examination:**

A Do-at-Home one-hour "examination" is required at the end of the course to be e-mailed to mark.kim@cst.edu no later than **Mon, Aug 30, 2021**. The general subject will be: "The Kingdom of God in the Gospels." Make sense out of these Bible passages for your hearers or congregation.

The exam is designed for one hour. You will write for one hour or so, producing **four to eight double spaced pages**, although four are sufficient, in the same format as the other papers. You, however, may take as much time as you wish to prepare. You may use all of your notes, books, and helps of any kind. You may even discuss your exam with your classmates. Open books, open notes, open discussion, but individual composition. No collaboration in writing the exam is allowed. You must write your own exam in your own words with your own ideas.