

NT 2235 – THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS – Fall 2009

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Office Hours: 11:00 – 1:00 Tues., Fri. & by appointment

The introductory material of Part One constitutes about one fourth of the course. The course begins with a critical survey of the history of the Synoptic problem (how to explain the relationship between Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and proposed solutions. The readings in paragraph 4 below deal with the methodological advantages and limitations of 20th-century criticism. Exegesis of selected passages (see outline below) will be used to provide in-depth understanding of the origins of the Synoptic traditions and their theology, ecclesiology and eschatology as seen in the life, Passion, and Resurrection of Jesus and in the early Church. This discussion will include the Christological titles, the miracles of Jesus, the parables of the Kingdom, the Sermon on the Mount, the Passion Narrative, and the Resurrection Narrative.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. There will be a short (ten-minute) quiz on the five readings listed under “Read before 14 September”. The mid-term will be on October 22nd. The Final Examination is scheduled for December 14th. It will cover material from the mid-term on, although the student will be expected to apply what was learned in the first part of the course. The final paper, see description below, is due on 30 November 2009.
2. There is no required textbook. A bibliography of useful sources will be distributed separately. Printed handouts will be provided to supplement lectures. Aside from the reading assigned below, you may find the following book helpful.

Perkins, P. Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). ISBN-13: 978-0802817709; retails for \$28.00.
[Available through <http://astore.amazon.com/dspt-20>]

You may find a synopsis of the four gospels useful. Recommended is

Aland, K., ed. Synopsis of the Four Gospels: Completely Revised on the Basis of the Greek Text of the Nestle Aland (English-only text) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

Please note that this is an all-English edition. There exists an all-Greek edition, and a bilingual edition both of which are quite expensive.

- 2.1. The course outline makes reference to the following books, which may be consulted to supplement lectures. They will be on reserve at the GTU library.

Aland, K. and B. The Text of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).

Brown, R. E. An Introduction to the New Testament (ABRL; Garden City: Doubleday, 1997).

Collins, J. J. The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature (2nd rev. ed.; Biblical Resource; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998).

Haynes, S. R. and S. L. McKenzie, eds. To Each Its Own Meaning. An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Its Application (rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999).

Kümmel, W. G. Introduction to the New Testament (English translation of Kümmel’s 17th revised edition of P. Feine/J. Behm, *Einführung in das Neue Testament*; London: SCM, 1975).

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McDonald, L. M. and S. E. Porter. Early Christianity and its Sacred Literature (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000).

McKnight, E. V. What is Form Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969; r. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 1997).

Perrin, N. What is Redaction Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969; r. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2002).

Sanders, E. P. and M. Davies. Studying the Synoptic Gospels (London: SCM – Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).

Scott, B. B. Re-Imagine the World: An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge, 2001).

3. Read through Mark, Matthew, and Luke, preferably in that order. Additionally you will find on MOODLE my précis of basic issues. It is important that you read through the notes on the characteristics of the individual Synoptic gospels.

4. Read before 14 September (these are all available on MOODLE):

Fitzmyer, J. A. “Historical Criticism: Its Role in Biblical Interpretation and Church Life,” Theological Studies 50 (1989) 244-259.

Brown, R. E. The Critical Meaning of the Bible (New York: Paulist, 1981).

Commissionis Biblicae Instructio de Historica Evangeliorum Veritate (1964). English translation in Catholic Biblical Quarterly 26 (1964) 305-312.

Brown, R. E. An Introduction to the New Testament (ABRL; Garden City: Doubleday, 1997) pp. 99-125.

Sabourin, L. “The Synoptic Problem: Old and New Approaches,” Biblical Theological Bulletin 3 (1973) 306-315.

5. Essay of approximately 10-15 pages due Monday, 30 November 2009.

“**The Temptation of Jesus**” (Mark 1:12-13, Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). Your paper should include but not be limited to the following. What is the Old Testament background? What is the role of Satan in pre-Christian Jewish literature? What is the meaning of temptation/test in the Jewish Scriptures? Are the three accounts from the Triple Tradition, or are there separate Markan and Q accounts? If we assume Markan priority, how do we account for the minor agreement between Matthew and Luke against Mark? Does Matthew or does Luke represent the original narrative sequence of the three temptations? How is each account related to the individual evangelist’s christological and narrative concerns?

Submit a comprehensive bibliography on the topic by 5 October. This must include periodical literature. Articles in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary or Anchor Bible Dictionary or similar comprehensive commentaries do not count; neither do annotations in study Bibles.

6. If the library permits, we will spend part of one class at the GTU Library looking at the traditional resources for bibliographic research.

7. At a time of mutual convenience the students will meet at least once individually with the professor.

8. Additional material will be posted on MOODLE from time to time.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part One — Introductory issues.

1. What is a “gospel”?
2. Synoptic problem. **Consult** Sanders, E. P. and M. Davies. Studying the Synoptic Gospels (London: SCM – Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).
Some solutions:
Griesbach Hypothesis
Two-Source Theory
Other solutions
3. Tools used. **Consult Haynes, S. R. and S. L. McKenzie**, eds. To Each Its Own Meaning. An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Its Application (rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999).
 - a. Text Criticism. **Consult** Aland, K. and B. The Text of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.)
 - b. Form Criticism (*Formgeschichte*) presupposes small discrete units of narrative. **Consult** McKnight, E. V. What is Form Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969; r. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 1997).
 - c. Redaction Criticism (*Redaktionsgeschichte*) presupposes conscious adaptation of existing source. **Consult** Perrin, N. What is Redaction Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969; r. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2002).
 - d. Use of the Old Testament (“source criticism”).
 - e. Use of extra-biblical Jewish material, 1st century Judaism and the growth of the rabbinic tradition (“source criticism”).
Jesus’s technique of argument like that of early rabbis.
 - f. Historical, Social and Literary Background.
4. Apocalyptic (**read** 2 Thess 2:1-12; Mark 13, Matthew 24-25, Luke 21, Luke 12:4-56 and handout on apocalyptic). **Consult** Collins, J. J. The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature (2nd rev. ed.; Biblical Resource; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998).
5. Dating the gospels. (**Consult** Brown, Kümmel, or NJBC.)
6. Theological perspectives of the different gospels. Title Christology. Luke as historian.

Part Two — Exegesis

1. **THE ORIGINS OF JESUS:** Mark 1:1-15, Matt 1:1-4:17, Luke 1:5-4:30

Superscription to the individual gospels.

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke.

John the Baptist (Compare Mark 6:14-29, Matt 14:1-12, Luke 9:7-9).

Kingdom of God.

2. **CALL OF THE TWELVE:** Mark 1:16-20, 3:13-19; Matt 4:18-22, 10:1-4; Luke 5:1-11, 6:12-16.

The lists.

The role of the twelve among the disciples.

Role of Peter.

The relationship between *hoi dōdeka* and *hoi apostoloi*.

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3. **EXORCISMS AND HEALING MIRACLES:** Mark 1:21-28, Luke 4:31-37; Mark 2:1-12, Matt 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26; Mark 5:21-43, Matt 9:18-26, Luke 8:40-56

The paradigm of the gospel miracles and their theological significance.

“Son of Man” title.

Healing looks forward to Resurrection.

4. **NATURE MIRACLES:**

Jesus operating in the power of YHWH.

Apocalyptic motifs.

5. **CONTROVERSY:** Mark 3:20-35, Matt 12:22-32.46-50, Luke 11:14-23, 8:19-21, 12:10

Jesus’s technique of argument (cf. Mark 2:1-12, Matt 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26; Mark 7:1-23, Matt 15:1-20; Mark 12:18-27, Matt 22:23-33, Luke 20:27-40)

6. **PARABLES:** Matt 11:16-19, Luke 7:31-35; Mark 4:1-20, Matt 13:1-23, Luke 8:4-15.

Consult Scott, B. B. Re-Imagine the World: An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge, 2001).

Concentrating on genre of the parables, Parables of the Kingdom, and their use in Jesus’s teaching.

7. **SERMON ON THE MOUNT/SERMON ON THE PLAIN** Matt 5-7, Luke 6:17-49 (and parallels in Luke to “Sermon on the Mount” not found in “Sermon on the Plain”)

Role of Sermon on the Mount in Matthew.

Jesus as new Moses.

The Beatitudes.

The Lord’s Prayer.

8. **CONFESSION OF PETER:** Mark 8:27-33, Matt 16:13-23, Luke 9:18-20

Messiah.

Passion predictions.

9. **APOCALYPTIC ESCHATOLOGY: TRANSFIGURATION:** Mark 9:2-8, Matt 17:1-8, Luke 9:28-36 and **ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM:** Mark 11:1-11, Matt 21:1-11, Luke 19:28-40

Jesus as revealer of eschatological hope.

Themes of the Sukkoth.

Adam’s lost glory.

Apocalyptic eschatology and the Holy War: glory of God re-enters the Temple.

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10. **FEEDING OF THE 5000/4000**: Mark 6:30-44.52, 8:1-10; Matt 14:13-21, 15:32-39; Luke 9:10-17 and **LAST SUPPER**: Mark 14:1-31, Matt 26:1-35, Luke 22:1-34, 1 Cor 10:16, 11:23-25

Passover.

Liturgical re-formation of the traditions.

Institution of the Eucharist.

Jesus as representative of divine providence in the Exodus.

Eucharistic motifs.

11. **TRIAL OF JESUS**: Mark 14:53-15:15, Matt 26:57-27:26, Luke 22:54-23:25

Problems when compared with Jewish law.

Literary parallels between trial before Sanhedrin and trial before Pilate.

12. **PASSION**: Mark 15:16-47, Matt 27:27-61, Luke 23:26-56

Formation of the traditions.

Perspective of each of the evangelists.

13. **RESURRECTION**: Mark 16, Matt 28, Luke 24

Empty tomb tradition.

Structure and purpose of the narratives.

The ending of each of the Gospels.