Course: **Gospels Survey: Ministry Insights from Jesus**

Alpha Omega International College, July 12-23, 2021

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DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to give a general introduction to the life and teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, and to focus that study toward practical insights for evangelism and discipleship ministry today. We will read the gospels with a view to understanding: comparing and contrasting the style, structure, and purpose of each of the gospels writers. Significantly, however, we will also be focused on mining the gospels for direct applications to the preaching, teaching, training, discipleship and evangelistic strategies of leaders today. The course will model the use of scripture study as a source of insight into ministry, specifically in skills and character training and discipleship, and in ministry vision, equipping and empowerment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The course seeks the following goals for each student: (1) *Cognitive:* theoretical knowledge relating to the gospel texts, their purpose and structure, and each one’s unique contribution to the testimony about Jesus; (2) A*ffective:* deepened appreciation for the unique power of the life and teaching of Jesus; (3) *Skills*: capacity to use Jesus’ teaching in the gospels to engage young disciples in their own development.

COURSE FORMAT: The course will meet for twelve 3-hour sessions, with work prepared before and after the class time. Much of the discussion-based class time will be spent in inductive scripture study led by the instructor, but students will receive opportunities to lead their own Bible study discussion in a gospel text in class. They will then shape and adapt one or more Gospel passages to present it in a church setting, in a sermon or a discussion-based Bible study teaching setting, within one month of class, with detailed self-evaluations of both learning experiences.

REQUIRED READING: 600 pp. of required reading, depending on level.

1. Biblical Texts: Read each gospel in a single sitting. Then, read through each book a second time, this time making a list of as many distinct textual and exegetical questions you can think of, at least one key question per chapter of each gospel.
2. Watch the Bible Project overview of each Gospel as an introduction to the structure and themes of each. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/matthew/> etc
3. Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey, Second Edition*. 2nd ed. edition. Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2009. Pages 5-109, 198-361.
4. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Edited by Michael J. Kruger. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016. Read the chapters on each of the four Gospels, pp 29-139.
5. Kenneth E Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2008. Read pp 65-87, 189-409.
6. Various Exegetical Gospels notes from the teacher, distributed in class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT: All page counts are single-spaced pages. With electronic paper submissions, it does not make sense to hand in double-spaced papers.

1. **Exegetical Questions** from the second reading of the gospels. Follow the models presented in class for crafting good exegetical questions. Three pages and 89 questions (one per chapter per gospel) minimum. (10%).
2. **Bible Study Discussion:** Students will prepare a Bible study covering one of the assigned parables or other teachings of Jesus. Students will lead a small group discussion with prepared questions and a prepared summary with an individual or group from the student’s church or ministry context. I would like for you now to be looking to choose a passage of scripture that you would like to explore in the gospels. Of course you can use any passage, but the best choices will be: 1) one that is a little more obscure rather than famous (Don’t choose John 3:16) 2) one that we have not discussed in class, and 3) one that you might very well hope to use in your ministry or small group. Please do not choose a passage that you are so familiar with there is no hope that this will be a learning process. Follow the model presented in class for good Bible study discussion. The preparation notes for the Bible study (2 pages), and a 1 page self evaluation and reflection will be turned in at the end of term. (20%)
3. **Key Character Identification and Gospel Event Timeline:** Students will prepare a list of key gospel characters and events of the life of Jesus in the Gospels. Four pages minimum. (20%)

**Characters:** Identify who they are, the key passages in which they show up, and their significance as characters in the gospel story: Simon, Andrew, James, John, Nathaniel, Philip, Thomas, Matthew, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah, John the Baptist, Herod, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea. You can list others as you believe they are significant.

**Key Gospel Events,** placed on a timeline and in their Gospel context (John 11:1-44, for example) and their significance briefly described: the announcement to Mary and to Joseph, Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, John the Baptist’s birth, Jesus’ birth, the visits of the shepherds and wise men, Jesus ministry begins in Nazareth, John the Baptist’s preaching in the wilderness, Jesus’ baptism, Jesus being tempted by Satan, the calling of the first disciples, the calling of Levi/Matthew, the transfiguration, famous teachings (Sermon on the Mount, key parables, “I am” statements in John, the three predictions of Jesus’ death in Mark, key challenges and clashes with religious leaders, etc), and famous healings and miracles (the paralytic, the man born blind, Bartimaeus, the man at the pool of Bethsaida, the widow of Nain’s son, Jairus’ daughter, the woman with the flow of blood, the leper, the seven signs in the gospel of John, etc.). Also key events during Holy Week and post-resurrection accounts, especially identifying events that are described in all four gospels.

**My goal with this assignment is that you feel that you know the gospels and could easily find a particular passage without having to look up its reference.** I want you to know the gospels so well you feel able to turn to the gospels not Google in your ministry.

1. **Congregational or Organizational Use of a Gospel Text in teaching, training, or preaching:** Students will prepare an in-depth study of a gospel text (or shorter related texts) used or referenced in class for use in a congregational or organizational teaching or training setting. A five-page exegetical paper and a one page reflection and self evaluation will be submitted after the presentation. (30%) You should use at least two of the readings as sources for your paper, and all sources including additional sources need to be noted and cited. **I will be giving you more guidance on an exegetical paper.** You perhaps have already done one for another one of your courses. I will poll the class on this.
2. **Gospel Ministry Development Self-Reflection and Growth Plan:** (3 pages, 10%)
3. Self-Reflection: Students will reflect on their own engagement with the gospel texts, identifying one or more passages of gospel scripture that have been important *in this course* for their own ministry development.
4. Growth Plan: Students will outline their own reading/study plan and set forth a ministry plan based on key insights from their own study of the gospels in this course. In what ways would you like to learn from the teaching techniques and ministry strategy of Jesus? How is his message and his method informative for your own incarnational ministry?
5. Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory, as is enthusiastic participation in class discussions and exercises. Participation in class Whatsapp discussions will also count toward attendance grade. Grade will be reduced for unexcused absences or persistent lateness. (10%)

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

* Exegetical Questions on the gospel readings due the sixth day of class, July 19, 2021.
* Remaining assignments due the last week of term, August 21, 2021.

**Course Schedule:**

* **Dates: July 12-23, 2021.**
* **Monday Through Friday, 8PM to 10:30PM**

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| **Day** | **TOPIC** | **Topic and Passages Studied** |
| 1  July 12 | **Mark: The Earliest Gospel** | Mark 1:1-8, Mark’s Purpose: Sketch 90 |
| The King of the Kingdom: The Parable Miracles (Mark 1-2). Sketch 91 |
| The Parable of the Sower and the Purpose of the Parables (Mark 4:1-34). Sketch 94 |
| Reading: Kruger, pp 61-91, Blomberg, pp 5-71 |
| 2  July 13 | **Mark: Peter’s Witness** | Mark 3:7-19: Focus on the few for the sake of the many. Sketch 93 |
| The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-31). Sketch 102. |
| Motivation for Discipleship; Mark 8:34-38, Mark 10:29-31, Mark 10:41-45. Sketch 12. |
| Reading: Blomberg, pp 73-109, Blomberg pp 198-283 |
| 3  July 14 | **Luke: The Gospel for the Poor** | The Lost Items (Sheep, Coin, Sons) (Luke 15:1-32). Sketch 71. |
| The Use of Money (Luke 16:1-31). Sketches 80 and 81. |
| Unlikely Heroes (Luke 7:36-51, Luke 10:25-37). Sketches 72 and 74. |
| Reading: Kruger, pp 93-113; Bailey, pp 279-409 |
| 4  July 15 | **Luke’s Jesus: A Man of Prayer** | Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, Luke 11:1-13, Luke 18:1-14. Sketch 75 and 82. |
| Jesus at Prayer in Luke. Sketch 27. |
| Reading: Bailey, pp187-275 |
| 5  July 16 | **Matthew: The Gospel for the Jews** | The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Sketches 119-123. |
| The Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13, 18, 20) Sketches 124, 125, 126. |
| Reading: Kruger, pp29-60; Bailey, pp 65-87 |
| 6  July 19 | **John: The Beloved Disciple** | John’s Prologue and the first disciples (John 1) Sketches 111 and 112. |
| “I am” statements: The woman at the Well (John 4). Sketch 52. |
| The Seven Signs: Lazarus: Life and Death, Love and Loss (John 11:1-45). Sketch 114. |
| Reading: Kruger, pp 115-139; Blomberg pp 286-305, Blomberg, pp 330-362 |
| 7  July 20 | **Passion Week** | The Destruction of the Temple (Mark 13) Sketch 107. |
| Acceptable Offerings (Mark 12:28-44; Mark 14:3-9) Sketch 106. |
| The Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17) Sketch 115, 116, 117. |
| 8  July 21 | **The Crucifixion and Resurrection Narratives** | The Two Trials (Sketch 108) |
| Barabbas and Simon of Cyrene, the Ransom and the Model (Mark 15) Sketch 109. |
| The Faithful women (Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24, John 20-21), Sketch 110 |
| 9  July 22 | **The Method and Message of Jesus** | Missionary Vision: Matthew 28:18-20., Sketch 127 |
| The Good Shepherd: Sketch 1 |
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| 10  July 23 | **The Method and Message of Jesus** | Missionary Vision: Mark 6:1-13, 30; Sketches 43 |
| The Nature of Suffering: Sketch 128 |
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| Aug 21 | **Final Due Date** | End of Term all remaining assignments due. |