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NT 530 The Gospel of Mark

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Department of English Bible

NT (EB) 530 - The Gospel by Mark. Three hours. Traina.

Course Objectives:

1. SKILLS or METHODOLOGY -- This area is of primary concern in the course. The stress will be on the observation and interpretation of chapters/segments and individual paragraphs and verses. As a result of the focus on skills, the student should be able to do the following.
 - a. Survey Mark as a whole, including:
 - 1) Giving a brief title to each chapter, and recalling by association the main contents of each chapter on the basis of its title without reference to the biblical text;
 - 2) Locating the main structural units and sub-units of Mark as a whole, and identifying the major laws of relationship operative within and between these units on the basis of the ability to list, define, and observe the laws discussed on pp. 49-55 of METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY, and indicating the specific materials used with each;
 - 3) Asking a few key interpretive questions based on each of the main laws observed, which presupposes a knowledge of the kinds and purposes of interpretive questions discussed on pp. 97-111 of METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY;
 - 4) Identifying the strategic areas or key verses in Mark which provide insights into the book as a whole and giving reasons for their selection;
 - 5) Locating evidence bearing on the identity of the writer and of the recipients, and the occasion, date, and place of writing;
 - 6) Observing other features of the book as a whole, including other literary characteristics and dominant themes.
 - b. Survey parts of a book, especially the chapters/segments of Mark, including:
 - 1) Giving brief titles to the paragraphs of each chapter/segment;
 - 2) Locating the major units within each chapter/segment, observing the main laws of relationship operative within and between them (see MBS, pp. 49-55), and indicating the specific materials used with each;
 - 3) Asking a few key interpretive questions based on each of the main laws observed (see MBS, pp. 97-111);
 - 4) Observing the literary forms used in the chapters/segments, on the basis of the various literary forms discussed on pp. 68-71 of METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY;
 - 5) Identifying the strategic areas or key verses which are important for each chapter/segment as a whole, and giving reasons for their selection;
 - c. Observe the details of individual paragraphs and verses in Mark, including:
 - 1) Noting important and difficult terms and their inflections, sentence structure, and the relations between sentences and groups of sentences within paragraphs, on the basis of a knowledge of the material discussed on pp. 39-49 of METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY;
 - 2) Raising detailed interpretive questions based on these findings (see MBS, pp. 97-111).
 - d. Answer the most significant questions raised, including:
 - 1) Being able to identify the most significant questions, on the basis of importance, difficulty, and interest;
 - 2) Knowing the various types of evidence available for answering such questions, and identifying the evidence relevant for answering the questions raised, on the basis of understanding the interpretive determinants discussed on pp. 135-165 of METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY;
 - 3) Using the relevant evidence to answer some of the most significant questions raised;
 - 4) Integrating the answers to the various questions, including interpreting individual verses, paragraphs, chapters/segments, and the book as a whole, on the basis of understanding parts in the light of the whole and the whole in the light of its parts;

- e. Find truths relevant to contemporary situations and relate them to those situations;
 - f. Correlate truths of Mark with the rest of the New Testament and with the Old Testament to move toward the formation of a biblical theology;
 - g. Use these skills to begin or to continue to develop an individualized, step-by-step, orderly, and thorough study procedure which may be used in examination of any biblical passage;
 - h. Develop and use principles and techniques which contribute to biblical preaching and/or teaching.
2. CONTENT -- Without reference to the biblical text, the student should:
 - a. Attempt to think his/her way through the Gospel by Mark by the use of chapter titles and paragraph titles, based on the principle of association;
 - b. Identify and discuss the main themes of the book, including the person of Jesus, his teaching and the significance of his other activities, the history and meaning of the crucifixion, the relationship of Jesus to the Old Covenant and to the Judaism of his day, and the training of his disciples, locating illustrations and substantiations by episode and chapter;
 - c. Locate by chapter and discuss contextually key statements in the Gospel;
 - d. Demonstrate how a sound methodology is essential for the interpretation of the Gospel, including specific illustrations and substantiations;
 3. ATTITUDES -- In the area of attitudes the student should:
 - a. Appreciate the value of a sound methodology to the end that he/she will continue using and improving in methodology;
 - b. Desire to continue studying Mark on the basis of an appreciation of its value for Christian life and ministry;
 - c. Intend to utilize Mark in relevant aspects of ministry, such as preaching and teaching.

Texts Required:

1. REVISED STANDARD VERSION OF THE BIBLE/NEW TESTAMENT
2. METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY, R. Traina
3. PRINCETON BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR BIBLE STUDY (when available)
4. A BIBLE ATLAS (e.g., Macmillan, Oxford, or Holman)
5. A harmony of the Gospels

Requirements:

1. The preparation of the following lessons in writing, unless otherwise indicated. The lessons will be due at the beginning of the class hour on the day specified by the professor. Late lessons will not be accepted unless permission is granted based on an emergency.
2. Punctual attendance is expected. You will be asked to report absences, if any, at the close of the semester. Punctuality and absences will be considered in evaluating the work of the course.
3. A final examination based on the objectives of the course.

LESSONS

Part I: The Preview of Method-as-a-whole

- A. If you have not read METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY, you are asked to do so by the date specified, using the following suggestions.
 1. Become sufficiently acquainted with the book to be able to use it for reference purposes as we proceed. Do not be concerned with understanding fully its many details or with trying to remember them.
 2. Make full use of the outlines preceding each unit to become acquainted with the main components and organization of the various chapters prior to reading them.
 3. Do not be concerned about implementing the exercises or reading the footnotes.
 4. List the main questions which come to mind as you read.
 5. Read a portion of MBS for every class period.

- B. If you have already read *METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY*, you may either read the book again using the suggestions above, or you may read another book, such as H. T. Kuist, *THESE WORDS UPON THY HEART*, M. Adler, *HOW TO READ A BOOK*, and I. Jensen, *INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY*, or a book approved by the professor.

Part II: The Use of Individual Steps in Method

General Directions

1. Give primacy in sequence and time to the firsthand study of the text, then use secondary sources when time permits. Vary the secondary sources so as to become acquainted with various commentaries. Do not use class notes from previous years.
2. Make primary use of the R.S.V., but also use other translations, and the original language, if possible.
3. Always give chapter and verse references for your findings.
4. Paraphrase whenever possible. Using various translations will assist you in this connection.
5. Be as analytical as possible.
6. Try to do a well-rounded study on each lesson, even though you cannot be exhaustive. Attempt to explore one significant area of each lesson in depth if possible.
7. Organize your work in the best possible way in your initial approach.
8. Be as thorough and as profound as possible.
9. Strive for accuracy in your work.
10. Study Synoptic parallels whenever possible.
11. Constantly compare and contrast the work done in private study with classwork to discover areas of strength and of need. Make a conscious effort to implement your findings in subsequent studies.
12. Note any questions or problems which arise.
13. In all your work make a conscious effort to develop a sound, concrete, orderly, and thorough study procedure which fits your individual abilities and needs.

Lesson 1: Observation -- Survey of Mark as-a-whole

Please read this entire lesson before proceeding. Keep in mind that the survey of books-as- wholes is observational and tentative. Premature interpretation should be avoided. Do not refer to succeeding lessons.

Read Mark rapidly, at least once at one sitting. You may want to re-read the Gospel. During and/or after your reading note the following.

1. MATERIAL -- observe in general and specifically. Give a title to each chapter.
2. STRUCTURE -- look for the primary structural laws which are operative to form divisions and to interrelate them. List the few primary laws found in the book-as-a-whole and indicate in each case the specific materials involved.
3. QUESTIONS -- ask a few key interpretive questions on the basis of each main structural law.
4. STRATEGIC AREAS -- look for key passages which illuminate the book-as-a-whole.
5. CHARACTERISTICS AND IDENTITY OF WRITER AND RECIPIENTS AND DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING -- note evidence having a bearing on these factors.
6. OTHER MAJOR IMPRESSIONS.

Lesson 2: Observation -- Survey of Segment as a Whole

Please read this entire lesson before proceeding. Continue to keep in mind that the survey step is observational and tentative. Premature interpretation should be avoided.

Read Mark 1:14-45 several times at one sitting, noting the following.

1. MATERIAL -- Give a title to each paragraph.
2. STRUCTURE -- Look for major groupings of materials, if any; and list the primary laws used in the segment and the specific materials with which they are used, including verse references.
3. INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS -- Ask a few key structural questions concerning each of the primary laws and the specific material with which each is used. Place the questions after each of the laws listed.
4. STRATEGIC AREAS -- Identify key verses which illuminate the segment as a whole, and give the reason for the selection of each.
5. LITERARY FORMS -- Indicate the literary form(s) found in the passage.
6. OTHER MAJOR IMPRESSIONS -- Note literary features and other characteristics of the segment as a whole not previously mentioned.

Lesson 3: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Apply the suggestions of Lesson 2 to Mark 2:1-3:6. Note any major questions which arise, particularly with regard to methodology. Be prepared to raise these questions in class. Make a conscious effort to improve your work based on comparing your procedure and findings with those presented in class.

Lesson 4: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Apply the suggestions of Lessons 2 and 3 to Mark 3:7-35.

Lesson 5: Observation -- Detailed

Follow the directions below in making detailed observations and raising interpretive questions on Mark 3:29-30. Do independent study only. (See MBS, pp. 31-36, 40-49, 72-79, 99-135.)

- A. For the time being experiment with the two-column format illustrated in MBS as a means of recording your observations and questions.
- B. Number observations and give verse references for them. It might help to begin by copying the text.
- C. Make the clause the basic unit of observation, so as to avoid dissecting the text into isolated fragments.
- D. Try to develop the ability to be exact and thorough in observing and in raising questions. Make as many observations and raise as many questions as you can and record them -- it is better to err on the side of thoroughness at this stage than to omit significant observations and questions.
- E. If you are able to use the original language, base your observations on both the vernacular and the original language.
- F. In recording your observations, try to say something about the text rather than merely copying it.
- G. Avoid limiting your observations to a grammatical analysis of the text.
- H. Find means of grouping observations, while yet avoiding excessive grouping.
- I. Classify the interpretive questions as to kind. (See MBS, p. 111)
- J. Keep interpretation to a minimum, and be able to distinguish between an observation and an interpretation.
- K. Star those observations and questions which seem to be most significant.
- L. Make note of major problems that arise as you proceed.

Lesson 6: Interpretation --

Answer the definitive question, "What is involved in blaspheming against the Holy Spirit?" (Mark 3:29). In so doing use the following suggestions. If you have time after independent study, check some secondary sources (commentaries). If you use commentaries, please note the name of each commentary as well as what you found in each.

- A. Refresh your mind as to the objective determinants which enter into interpretive answers. (See MBS, pp. 139-164).
- B. Keeping in mind the nature of the question asked and the data of the passage being studied, try to decide which determinants are relevant to the case at hand.
- C. Take these determinants one by one, beginning with the most important ones, and try to bring their evidence to bear on each interpretive question by drawing inferences from the evidence. If such evidence has been discovered through previous observation, then merely use it. If further data are needed, look for them wherever they may be found and use them when found.
- D. When you find evidence which seems to point toward a possible conclusion, indicate what the possible conclusion is. At the close of your study, list the various possible answers to the questions which are suggested by various evidence, if more than one answer is possible, and indicate the data supporting each possibility. If the evidence is conclusive, indicate your conclusion. If not, you will need to suspend judgment. Make periodic summaries of your findings if necessary in order to facilitate this final summary.
- E. Please keep in mind throughout that the purpose of this lesson is to become acquainted with the process of interpretation and not to do an exhaustive study which will lead to a final interpretation, and let your work be guided by this purpose as to emphasis and apportionment of time.
- F. Be alert to major problems of methodology which should be explored further.

Lesson 7: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Follow the suggestions of Lessons 2 and 3 in observing Mark 4:1-34 as a whole.

Lesson 8: Observation -- Detailed

Keeping in mind the relevant suggestions of Lesson 5, observe some of the most significant details in the parable of the soils and its interpretation, and raise interpretive questions based on your observations. (Mark 4:3-20) Note that this lesson requires detailed observation in a larger area than a verse or two.

Lesson 9: Interpretation

Using the relevant suggestions of Lesson 6, interpret the parable of the soils. Express its main truth in a sentence or two. Note any major problems which arise as you interpret this parable.

Lesson 10: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Read thoughtfully 4:35-6:56 as a background for the study of the following material (if you have time, name the paragraphs of this background material). Try to identify the segment in which 7:23 is found, and survey the segment as a whole, following the suggestions of Lessons 2 and 3.

Lesson 11: Observation -- Detailed

Apply the suggestions of Lesson 5 to 7:23.

Lesson 12: Interpretation

On the basis of the relevant suggestions of Lesson 6, interpret 7:23. Focus on the three most significant terms in this verse: "evil," "within," and "defile." In those areas where time does not permit you to use available evidence, indicate what you would do given the time.

Lesson 13: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Apply the suggestions of Lessons 2 and 3 to the survey of the remaining segment in 1:14-8:30.

Lesson 14: Observation -- Detailed

Apply the relevant suggestions of Lesson 5 to the detailed observation of 8:15.

Lesson 15: Interpretation

Using the relevant suggestions of Lesson 6, try to answer the definitive question, "What is the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod?" In this case concentrate on contextual evidence, especially in the preceding material.

Lesson 16: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Apply the suggestions of Lessons 2 and 3 to the survey of Mark 8:31-9:29.

Lesson 17: Observation -- Detailed

Trace the paragraphical structure of Mark 8:34-9:1. Then do detailed observation on 8:34, using the relevant suggestions of Lesson 5.

Lesson 18: Interpretation

Apply the relevant suggestions of Lesson 6 to interpret Mark 8:34. In so doing, be aware of the succeeding context, especially 9:30-10:52.

Lesson 19: Observation -- Survey of Segment

Read carefully Mark 9:30-12:44. (If you have time, name the paragraphs and try to discover segment units). Then survey chapter 13.

Lesson 20: Observation -- Detailed

Do detailed observation on Mark 13:14.

Lesson 21: Interpretation

Attempt to answer the definitive question, "What is the desolating sacrilege" to which Christ is referring? (Mark 13:14)

Part III: Synthesis of Method (Final Examination)

Carry out the following steps in relation to Mark 14:1-15:47. Let your work be based initially and primarily on independent study. After such study investigate some secondary sources. Record the name of each secondary source used at the close of your paper and indicate what was found in the study of each. Use this lesson to correlate all you have learned about the methodology of observation and interpretation, and to apply it to this study.

A. Observation -- Survey Mark 14:1-15:47 as a whole.

B. Observation -- Do detailed observation on Mark 15:34.

C. Interpretation and Self-analysis

1. Interpret 15:34b, with an emphasis on the meaning of "forsaken." Where time does not permit you to follow up on evidence, indicate what you would do given time.
2. Make a critical self-evaluation of your progress in the methodology of observation and interpretation. Indicate points of strength and weakness, and major problems in the areas of observation and interpretation which still need to be resolved.

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