NT 511 The Gospel of Mark

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I. General Description

This course seeks to introduce the various aspects of methodical, inductive Bible study, especially observation and interpretation. It intends, by study of Mark’s Gospel, to foster Bible study which values orderly procedure, direct personal contact with the text, analysis of relations which hold between text units, and recognition of the book as the crucial context for interpretation.

The English Bible will serve as the text of entry for the study, with emphasis also on appropriate use of the Greek New Testament and “original language” skills and tools for interpreting the book of Mark.

II. Course Objectives

A. Methodology. By the end of the course the student should be able evidentially and contextually to:
   1. Interpret the book-of-Mark-as-a-whole and any of its parts in light of the whole;
   2. Evaluate and apply passages thus interpreted.

B. Content. The student shall be able to:
   1. Think through the contents of the Gospel of Mark studied in the course without recourse to the printed text, identifying strategic passages and delineating major themes;
   2. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Gospel of Mark;
   3. Use a general knowledge of the historical and religious background of the Gospel of Mark in the interpretation of this book.

C. Attitude. The student should desire and intend to:
   1. Apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
   2. Make the Gospel of Mark the object of life-long study;
   3. Use the Gospel of Mark as a resource for preaching, teaching and living.

III. COURSE TEXTS & RESOURCES

A. Required Texts
   1. Revised Standard Version. Any edition that gives an uncluttered text, without paragraph titles or other interpretive comments is recommended. NASB, NRSV, and NIV are also acceptable.

B. Resources in Media Center
   In my “Lectures Folder” on the T-Drive you will find a “Mark” folder. In this folder you can find
   • Hermeneutics Modules. These are written “lectures” on all the basic aspects of method and hermeneutics we will cover in class. They are all there as of the opening of class.
   • Mark Studies. Selected studies I have done on the gospel of Mark as a whole and on various units in Mark will be found there. Some units not assigned for class work will be there during the whole class. Other units assigned for student work will not be in the folder until well after the class has done its own work on the text.

1At numerous points this syllabus reflects the collective wisdom of past and present members of the Department of English Bible of Asbury Theological Seminary. Particular appreciation is expressed to the late Dr. George A. Turner and to Dr. Robert A. Traina, Professors Emeriti of English Bible, and to Dr. David Bauer and Dr. Joseph Dongell, current members of the Department. Specifically the material in Appendix IV is adapted from material of Professor Dongell, and is used by permission.
• Powerpoint Slides. Copies of all the Power point overheads/slides we use in class are also here. **IF YOU PRINT POWERPOINT SLIDES BE SURE TO MARK “PURE BLACK & WHITE” IN THE PRINT DIALOGUE BOX** in order to avoid pools of ink on your paper or the media center floor (It is not a pretty sight.).

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES

A. Inductive Study of Mark

The most important part of the course will be the student’s own independent, direct studies of the Gospel of Mark, due at class time and on the dates assigned.

A word about “independent.” It is understood that these lessons are primarily to be notes of the student’s own direct study of the Bible, with reference to secondary sources only as is appropriate—to minimally interpretive works (e.g., concordance, atlas, Bible dictionary in some cases) during the course of study and to more interpretive works only after considerable interpretive study of one’s own. Then the student will be expected to give evidence of critical interaction with interpretive sources used. When secondary sources are used, clear documentation will appear. This is sufficiently important from methodological and instructional, not to mention moral perspectives that unacknowledged appropriation of significant information and ideas from interpretive or introductory resources will be considered plagiarism. **Plagiarism will certainly lead to a grade of zero for the lesson involved and may constitute grounds for failure in the course.**

Students from cultures where extensive, undocumented use of secondary sources is acceptable should give particular notice to this aspect of North American scholarly expectations.

Independent here excludes reference to any previous student’s work in the course and to lecture notes from any previous semester of NT(IBS)530. It is assumed that all work submitted for this course is the student’s own work, done specifically for NT(IBS)530, and not previously submitted as part of any other course’s requirements. Exceptions to these procedures, when group study is suggested, will be clearly announced.

**Group consultation.** In early stages of the course where group consultation is encouraged, students should still aim to participate in these consultations as independent contributors. Group participants will not simply reproduce and submit each other’s work as their own.

B. Format

To facilitate handling by SPO personnel and also by my office, the following information will appear in upper right corner, front page:

1. SPO number (main info needed by SPO)
2. Student’s name (please print, large “font”)
3. Lesson numeral and page number (IV-1, IV-2)
4. Date due/Date completed, in that order, e.g., “Due Feb 21/ Done Feb 19.”

On succeeding pages you need only put your last name and the lesson-page enumeration. Staple or paper-clip every multi-sheet work submitted.

C. Evaluation and Feedback

1. **Lessons.** All lessons are due to be completed at class time as assigned for credit review. Selected lessons will be graded for written feedback.
2. Classroom instruction and interaction. Main source.
3. **Peer consultation.** Group work will be encouraged on several lessons to make insights and instruction from colleagues available.

D. Grade Components. (See Seminarian: The Catalogue Edition for grade values.)

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2The placement and order are important for SPO handling. Do not use a title sheet with your name centered down in the middle of the page.
1. Lessons. Groups of lessons will be submitted four times during the semester and evaluated as follows:
   Group one: I - IV  15%
   Group two: V - VIII 25%
   Group three: IX - XI 30%
   Group four: XII - XIII 30%

2. Class attendance and completion of lessons. See "course requirements" below.

3. Late work. Work submitted or completed late may be accepted for credit but will not be given a letter grade, except in cases of emergency or by special arrangement with the professor.

E. Criteria for Excellence.
   3. Originality. Take a fresh approach to the material, using your own words and finding new ways of expressing biblical truth.
   4. Depth. Probe beneath the surface of the text to find those truths which are not self-evident as well as those that are.
   5. Organization. Systematize your findings so as to correlate similar ones and so as to indicate logical progression, relative importance and the intended interrelation of your ideas.
   6. Relative Thoroughness. Be as complete as possible within the time limits.
   7. Clarity. Try to express your thoughts in an unambiguous way.

For further specifics of these and other criteria for excellence, see Appendixes.

8. Presentation. Present materials so that, even though they are “rough draft” versions, their organization is clear and understandable.

F. Course Requirements
   1. Completion and submission of assignments and lessons in writing as assigned. At least 70% of the lessons must be completed to earn credit in the course.
   2. Punctual attendance at all classes for the entire class. Two absences without penalty are allowed. Every absence beyond that will cancel credit for a lesson, unless provisions are made for make up work. The final session cannot be missed without penalty or make up.
   3. Responsible handling of difficulty with class content or requirements, of late work, of absences or other matters related to participation in the class. This implies student initiative in asking questions and seeking help.

V. INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK:
Lessons in Methodical Bible Study Theory and Practice

Suggestions for doing the lessons:
   1. Always begin by direct analysis of the biblical text. Do not, in any lesson, turn first to secondary sources of any sort, including the notes in a “study Bible.” Interpretive resources will be well used in due time.
   2. Read through an entire assignment before beginning it.
   3. Recall that items numbered separately are often interrelated and best considered together and done in light of each other.
   4. Review the “Suggestions” sheets often (Appendixes)
   5. Aim at producing "revised study notes" not polished works of art. Easily readable, well organized material is a must. But invest major time in analysis and research rather than artistic production. Computer generated charts are a particularly common "black whole" for precious time.

GROUP ONE: LESSONS I - IV

LESSON I. SYLLABUS & FOUNDATIONS

Do nos. 1 and 2; then 3.
1. To establish the base of your accountability for the course and to acquaint you with the contours of what we are about, read the Syllabus, I-IV, VI and look through Appendixes.
   Due: Feb. 14.

2. Read Bible Study That Works, revised edition. Write a single, full-page (typed, 10 or 12 point font, single-spaced, normal margins, full page), critical interaction (not rehearsal of content) with this work. Emphasize questions, critique, reflections on the material. Due: February 16 (W).

3. As time allows begin Lesson II by giving accurate, non-interpretive titles to each paragraph in the book of Mark.

**LESSON II. SURVEY OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE**


1. Read the Gospel of Mark through quickly in one sitting. Then do numbers 2-9.
2. Materials. Specific: give two to four word titles, descriptive (vs. interpretive) to each paragraph. Then group these paragraphs into segments (roughly chapter length) and title them, group the segments into divisions and title each division, and finally the book a descriptive title.
3. Literary Structure. Tentatively identify the chief semantic structures which govern the book as a whole, binding the parts together as a whole (See App. I:5-9; BSTW 36-43; MBS 36-67). In this introductory inquiry regarding structure, you may find it helpful to focus on identifying:
   a. Major themes or emphases (go beyond “immediately,” and the overall time and place movement of the book)
   b. Possible introduction (its extent and its other possible semantic ties to the book)
   c. A possible major turning point in the book and the logic involved in it?
   d. A possible climax for the whole work?
4. Interpretive questions. With each important structure selected for presentation, ask a set of interpretive questions (definitional, rational or modal, implicational). Use the sample questions in Appendix III as a guide, but tailor/adapt these questions both to the specific materials here in Mark (See App. I:10-12; Appendix III; BSTW 44-49). (Do not try to answer these now. We will work toward an answer to them by studying the book itself over the semester. These questions will guide us in that process.)
5. Strategic areas. Based on your structural observations, identify key passages (single verses, paragraphs at most) through which to view the book as a whole (App. I:13).
6. Literary form and genre. If you were to describe "gospel" genre on the basis of this preliminary study of Mark, what would you list as its chief characteristics and goals.
7. Atmosphere. Observe the overall atmosphere of the book (not paragraph by paragraph but over larger units), noting overall change and movement reflected in atmosphere (BSTW 35; MBS 71-72).
8. Discourse Context. Gather any evidence which might identify the writer(s), the implied readers, the reasons for composing the work as it is, etc. Note: proceed inductively here with regard to "critical" matters also. Do not consult various "introductions" to the book. Work inductively from the Gospel itself (App. I:14). See what you can, but do not make this a major point of your study now.
9. Chart. Present a summary of your findings in a single page chart form to use as a cover page, indicating both content (segment level up) and major, book level structure on the chart.

**LESSON III. MARK 2:1-3:6. SEGMENT SURVEY**

1. Read this segment through in one sitting. Then proceed.
2. Materials. Specific: Give brief, descriptive titles to each paragraph in this segment and to any subunits (larger than the paragraph but smaller than the segment) you may identify, as you discern the segment's literary structure. (Segments will not always have such sub-units larger than the paragraphs.)
3. Structure. Identify the structures (Semantic primarily, Rhetorical secondarily) which govern the segment as a whole, binding its paragraphs and units together as a whole (See App. I:5-9; BSTW 36-43; MBS 36-67).
4. **Strategic areas.** Identify key areas (single verses, paragraphs at most) through which to view the segment as a whole. Give a reason for each selection in terms of the segment's structure (App I:13).

5. **Interpretive questions.** For each set of your major structural observations, ask a coherent set of interpretive questions (definitional, rational, modal, implicational). Remember to adapt the sample questions from App. III to the specific here (App. I:10-11; Appendix III; BSTW 37-41). [At least for Lesson II, do not proceed to answer these qss. Later lessons will have follow-through interpretive work, as outlined in Lesson IV.]

6. **Discourse Context.** Gather any evidence from this section which might identify the writer(s), the implied readers, the reasons for composing the work as it is, etc., thus adding to or correcting data obtained on book survey. Note: proceed inductively here with regard to these critical matters also. Do not consult various introductions to the book. Work from the Gospel itself (App. I:14).

7. **Chart.** Present your findings in a single page chart of this segment, showing both content and structure.

8. Record any other major impressions.

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**LESSON IV.** MARK 4:35-5:43. SEGMENT SURVEY & ANALYSIS Due MARCH 06

1. Survey. Apply and adapt Lesson III to this unit.

2. Analysis-Interpretation.
   a. From your segment survey select the set of interpretive questions you want to deal with (See 1.5 in Lesson III.).
   b. Work toward an answer
      1) first and primarily by your own inductive-independent work:
         • Your own analysis (observation >>>> inference) of relevant biblical text;
         • Your own primary research in minimally interpretive works (lexicons, concordances, ancient texts/artifacts themselves);
         • You may want to begin with the definitional or "What is involved in…?" questions.
         • Answer inductively, by drawing inferences from evidence cited from the text and elsewhere.
      2) and secondarily by consultative-secondary research (commentaries, published word studies, encyclopedias, dictionaries, journal articles, theologies, etc.).
   c. Summarize the results of your own inductive-independent work before moving to your consultative-secondary research work, and then finally summarize again at the end of the process.

3. Synthesis. Briefly treat one of these options in light of your study.
   a. Content Interpreted. Summarize the essential content of the segment, recasting it into fresh wording, making important implicit matters explicit, clarifying ambiguity, drawing out important assumptions and implications.
   b. Context. Reflect on how the segment fits into the division and book.
   c. Purpose. To whom is this segment addressed--with what problems, misunderstandings, weaknesses, etc. in mind?

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**GROUP TWO: LESSONS V - VIII**

**LESSON V.** MARK 7:24-8:30. SEGMENT SURVEY & ANALYSIS Due MARCH 13

1. Survey this segment. Apply Lesson III.1 to this unit.

2. Analysis and synthesis. Apply Lesson IV.2-3 to this unit.

**LESSON VI.** MARK 8:14-21 PARAGRAPH INTERPRETATION Due MARCH 20

**A. SURVEY ANALYSIS**

1. Select text mode
   a. Multiple English Versions/without Greek (for those without Greek training).
   b. Multiple English Versions/with Greek (for those with Greek training).
c. Greek alone.

2. Structure. Divide the paragraph into clauses and discern the structures (Semantic, Rhetorical) which bind the clauses to each other within the paragraph.

3. Interpretive questions. Select one or two structures which you judge are most important to an understanding of the paragraph. Adapting the standard interpretive questions to the specific materials here (Appendix III), address a coherent set of interpretive questions to these structures and the materials involved in them.

4. Other major impressions?

[If for some reason your process has not yielded productive questions, use these questions: "What is the meaning of Jesus' warning against the leaven of Herod and the leaven of the Pharisees?" "How does this warning illumine the meaning of the paragraph as a whole?" "How does the paragraph illumine the meaning of Jesus' warning?" "What do these findings imply?"]

B. INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS

Answer the interpretive questions raised above, by gathering evidence as indicated below.

Remember, you are aiming at a coherent interpretation of the paragraph as a whole in its context, not simply at isolated insights about materials involved in selected structures.

1. Your Own Inductive-Independent Analysis (Analytical Interpretation)

a) Context: immediate, segment & book. Analyze the paragraph, clause by clause. Probe with particular depth the clauses most involved in the structures from which you are approaching the paragraph but deal well with them all. Attend not only to these clauses in this paragraph context but also to the relationships they have with the segment and book contexts. Put major emphasis on this phase of your work.

b) Word meaning. Define key terms by their use--especially in Mark or by the content provided for them in Mark, locating occurrences with a concordance b) by consultation with other interpreters (Wordbooks and other word study resources in Bibliography VI.B). For understanding Jesus' reference to Herod and to the Pharisees, begin with careful attention to Mark's own presentation of these persons. Do not run immediately to read Mark as saying the same thing as Luke or Matthew.

c) Social, historical contexts as inferred from data in the text itself or other primary sources, ancient texts and artifacts

d) Summarize your findings.

2. Consultative-Interactive Work with Secondary Sources

Get at the same items as you worked on independently--the meaning of the text itself and its context, word meanings, social & historical contexts, etc, now enlisting the aid of secondary resources.

a) Other interpreters. Consult critically respected interpreters of your passage and other interpretive resources (Remember App I:37-41). Interact with them and do further study as questions they may raise for you demand treatment.

b) Give a final summary of key aspects of your interpretation.

3. Synthesis (Synthetic Interpretation)

Note questions from your segment survey most directly related to the paragraph you have studied. How do your findings here respond to those questions? That is, reflect on the ways your increased understanding of 8:14-21 contributes to your understanding of 7:24-8:30 and the book as a whole.

LESSON VII. MARK 8:31-9:32 SEGMENT SURVEY & ANALYSIS Due: MARCH 27

READING WEEK: APRIL 3-7, 2000

LESSON VIII. MARK 8:31-9.1. PARAGRAPH INTERPRETATION. Due APRIL 10

Apply and adapt Lesson VI to this paragraph.
GROUP THREE: LESSONS IX - XI

LESSON IX. MARK 9:30-10:52. SEGMENT SURVEY ONLY Due APRIL 17

Survey the segment, adapting Lesson III to this unit. Because of the length and complexity of this unit, we will settle for a solid survey and will devote another lesson to more interpretive work in it.

LESSON X. MARK 11:1-12:44. SECTION SURVEY & ANALYSIS. Due APRIL 24

Survey and interpret this section, using Lessons III & IV as a guide (including App. IV)

LESSON XI. MARK 10:41-45. PARAGRAPH ANALYSIS-INTERPRETATION. Due MAY 01

Analyze, interpret, evaluate and apply this paragraph, following Lesson VI as guide.

GROUP FOUR: LESSONS XII - XIII

LESSON XII. MARK 13:1-37. SEGMENT SURVEY & ANALYSIS Due MAY 08

Analyze and interpret this segment, using Lessons III & IV as a guide (including App. IV).

LESSON XIII. MARK 14:1-16:8/20 FINAL LESSON, FOCUS 15:33-41. Due MAY 15

2. Briefly analyze the addition(s) 16.9-20.
3. On the basis of these analyses and other observations you may make, reflect on the possible significance of these verses for one’s understanding of the 14.1-16.8/20 unit and for meaning of the book as a whole.
4. Focus on 15:33-41. Analyze, interpret, evaluate and apply this paragraph. Adapt Lesson VI to this task. Pay particular attention to verses 34 and 39.
5. Spend at least a fifth of your time on evaluation and application.
VI. Select Bibliography

See Bauer, Biblical Resources for Ministry, especially pp. 24-26 for Biblical Theology and commentaries on the whole Bible; p. 95 for NT commentaries; pp. 103-104 for works on Mark; pp. 21-24, 34-36, 89-90 for exegetical method.

In addition, note particularly:

A. GOSPEL OF MARK


B. WORD STUDY RESOURCES

Concordances and Indexes

† Strong, James. Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Repr. Abingdon, 1973. Ref BS 425 .S8 [Worthless as a dictionary/lexicon, but useful as a concordance and key to several other study resources which are "keyed" to Strong's word identification numbers.]

Wordinbooks and other Resources


† Particularly helpful for students without competence in biblical languages.

C. BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES


