1-1-2003

NT 511 The Gospel of Mark

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Provisional Draft Only
Check with Bookstore for book list

I. General Description: This course aims, through the study of Mark, to foster Bible study which is:

- methodical (following orderly procedure, rather than relying on chance),
- inductive (promoting direct personal study of the text prior to use of secondary sources),
- structural (observing logical connections between units of text as a key component of meaning),
- literary (recognizing the literary character of Scripture and the significance of literary context),
- historical (honoring the location of Biblical texts in their particular historical and cultural settings),
- theological (seeking to place the passage in the context of the Scripture and Christian doctrine), and
- reverent (pursuing Biblical study humbly, prayerfully, under the influence of the Spirit)

II. Course Objectives:

A. Method: As a result of fulfilling the requirements, a student should be able to:
   1. analyze, interpret, evaluate, and apply biblical passages with reasonable skill;
   2. describe with clarity the fundamental principles of effective Bible study.

B. Content: As a result of fulfilling the requirements, a student should be able to:
   1. present a clear and thoughtful interpretation of each biblical passage examined by the class during the course of the semester;
   2. identify and explicate the major themes and concerns of the Gospel of Mark;
   3. place major theological claims of Mark's Gospel within the larger thought of the Bible.

C. Attitude: It is our desire that through this instructional process a student will be:
   1. more deeply committed to the practice and refinement of sound Bible study as a lifelong personal and ministerial pursuit;
   2. more deeply committed to understanding, living, and proclaiming the truth taught within this Gospel and within Scripture as a whole;
   3. more deeply convinced of God's desire to address and transform the Church and redeem the World by the power of his Spirit working through his Word.

III. Course Texts:

A. Bibles: Any assortment of (at least three) modern English translations (not paraphrases), with the Greek New Testament used according to the level of one’s ability.


C. Secondary Resources (recommended for use as needed, but not required; see BRM above for a wider listing of resources for Biblical study.)


Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1989. [Note: The second volume of this commentary is not yet available.]


### IV. Requirements:

Assignments must be:

A. **On Time**: Lessons must be finished by class time, on the dates given in this Syllabus.

B. **Legible**: Lessons may be typed or handwritten. If written, writing must be legible.

C. **Stapled**: Please do not turn in loose sheets, or sheets fastened "creatively".

D. **With Cover Sheet**: Fill out and use the provided Cover Sheet for each assignment.

### V. Grading Policies:

A. **Assignments**

1. The ATS Catalog’s description of grades and their values will apply.

   The final grade within this course will be calculated by averaging the letter grades given to the weekly assignments according the following numerical values below. The numerical average will then be rounded to the nearest grade/numerical value, which will stand as the final grade.

   - A:100; A-:96; B+:92; B:88; B-:84; C+:80; C:76; C-:72; D+:68; D:64; D-:60; F:55 (if an assignment is completed, but at a failing quality); F: 0 (if no work is submitted).

   Each one of the ten (10) lessons will contribute 10% toward the final grade.

2. Exceptional work will exhibit these characteristics:

   • precision, accuracy, specificity, depth, insight, clarity, freshness, thoroughness, and balance. It must me remembered that merely “good and accurate” work does not necessarily merit an “A”.

3. **Lessons: Omitted or Late**: Students are to complete all of the 10 assigned lessons (A through J).

   There are no provisions for skipping or choosing among lessons. An Omitted lesson (one not turned in at all) will be calculated as a zero in the averaging of the final grade. If a student has not completed an assignment by the time it is due, four options remain: a) to receive a zero for the assignment; b) to turn in the incomplete assignment on time, with a lower grade as the likely outcome; c) if the lesson is at least 2/3’s complete at the time due, to complete and turn in the lesson at a later time, but to receive an automatic reduction of a full letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to C+) for lateness; or d) if the lesson is not yet 2/3’s complete, to complete and turn in at a later
time an alternative assignment provided by the professor, with the full letter reduction for lateness. If there are extenuating circumstances (sickness, accident, legal requirement), the professor reserves the right to adjust the dates of assignments, and the grading arrangements. Generally, there are no allowances for “the normal demands of ministry.”

4. Feedback: Feedback will be provided by comments supplied on returned assignments, by daily class lectures, and by interaction with peers in small groups. Additional consultation with the professor after class, or during office hours is also available.

5. Independence: Assignments must reflect the independent, inductive work of each student. Therefore, no resources of any kind (whether books, notes of others, conversations, etc.) may be consulted for the inductive portion of each assignment. Study groups (which are encouraged) must exercise special care to preserve the independence of each member. Group members may encourage each other and provide accountability for study, but may not produce group projects, nor nurse each other along with content-related guidance and suggestions. Violation of "Independence" constitutes cheating, and may result in loss of credit for the entire course.

B. Attendance

Attendance of all class sessions is expected. Instruction, clarification and encouragement are all supplied in significant amounts during class sessions. Any absence creates gaps in these aspects of class life.
VI. The Calendar of Due Dates

| Lesson A | Week 2 |
| Lesson B | Week 3 |
| Lesson C | ..... |
| Lesson D | ..... |
| Lesson E | ..... |
| Lesson F | ..... |
| Lesson G | ..... |
| Lesson H | ..... |
| Lesson I | ..... |
| Lesson J | ..... |

**NOTE:** There will be no class session, and no assignment during exam week.

VII. The Lessons

Advice Gathered from Many Students

*Don't do a whole lesson in a single sitting. Eight straight hours even of Gilligan's Island can be fatal.

**Do work in several blocks of time.**

*Don't do your work during the worst hours of your day. When would you want your doctor operating?

**Do your work during your peak production hours, if possible.**

*Don't do your work around proven distractions. Most minds are not like multi-task computer chips.

**Do find a place conducive to reflective study.**

*Don't postpone work until the day before. Don't join the April 15th 11:59 PM crowd. It's depressing!

**Do begin your work earlier in the week, allowing your thoughts to "percolate".**

*Don't wander through the week, just hoping you'll find an ideal time to do the assignment. You won't!

**Do plan ahead in order to set aside good study time.**

*Don't forget to read the text carefully, first. How could you know much about a person without "dating"?

**Do invest up-front time in careful reading of the text.**

*Don't treat these assignments as "just assignments".

**Do pray for illumination, and expect to learn something life-transforming!**

The Time Factor in Doing Lessons

Each of the Lessons is designed to take from **nine to ten hours (9-10) to complete.**

When multiplied over the ten (10) Lessons of the semester, that translates into ninety to one hundred (90-100) hours of student investment for this course. These figures are just below the range of hours recommended in the catalogue for a three-hour course (97.5-117 hours, calculated as 7.5-9.0 hours of investment each week for a three-hour course, over 13 weeks of the semester, see p. 25 of the 2000-2001 catalog).

No one should interpret the 9-10 hour target for each Lesson as a “time limit,” or think that there would be a penalty for going beyond. I am not interested in penalizing anyone who has the time and desire to invest more than 9-10. However, no one should feel any pressure to do more than the expected. Grading is not based on a simple measure of hours invested. Do your best to complete the phases of each Lesson by the 10 hour target. If you have trouble getting to each phase of the Lessons, reflect on how you are spending your time. You may need
to set the depth of your plow a little shallower, at places; or just “call it quits” on one phase of a Lesson that has gotten out of hand, time wise.

A nice correlation between the weekly investment of 9-10 hours in this course, and in the life of ministry, is to be found in Haddon Robinson’s suggestions about the preparation of sermons. In his view, 8 or 9 hours may be spent in working with the full interpretation of the Biblical text to be preached, with 4 or 5 hours devoted afterwards to crafting the text of the sermon itself. The weekly investment in IBS Lessons, then, may help us develop the monthly rhythm that Robinson submits as a healthy pattern for sermon preparation.

I. Read through the Gospel of Mark...in a single sitting.....and aloud. [Do this twice. Each reading will take about 2 hours.] You may use any translation you wish, or even shift to a second translation for your second reading. As you read, make every effort to ignore editorial headings, notes, outlining, and even the chapter divisions which are supplied by your translation. Try to read Mark’s story of Jesus as an uncharted adventure. [Note: If English is not your native language, please feel free to read a translation in your own vernacular.]

II. In around 200 words, explain some of the benefits of reading the entire Gospel aloud and in one sitting, as opposed to silent, piecemeal readings.

III. Identify ten (10) major themes in Mark’s Gospel. [A theme may consist of the repetition of a key term or phrase, the repetition of similar events, or the repetition of the same concept, claim, or truth.] Explain briefly (50 words for each theme) each of the themes you have located. Limit your explanation to what you can safely say...on the basis of what you have read in the Gospel of Mark itself. [I.e., do not “download” a ready-made Christian theology into the text of Mark.]

IV. Reexamine the Syllabus to be sure your are acquainted with the nature and policies of the course. Also, study over any handouts you received in the first week of instruction.

Note: Be sure to duplicate the cover sheet at the end of this syllabus for use with each of the Lessons you submit throughout the semester. Be sure you have access to a stapler to secure your work.

I. Re-read and study the multi-page handouts about Detailed Observation. Mark on your own copy any areas of question you have, and be prepared to identify them during class discussion for clarification.

II. Detailed Observation
Following the process described in the handout, do a Detailed Observation of Mark 1:9-15.
III. Identify a few (4 or 5) of your most interesting Observations or Questions by highlighting, underscoring, or marking with an asterisk. Be prepared to identify these to your small group.

Note: This assignment is designed as a 9-10 hour Lesson, as are all assignments. If you make it through all seven verses before the allotted time has expired, return to Roman numeral VII of the handout to improve and deepen your work based on its suggestions.
II. Study and Review
• Study and Review the handout entitled “Doing Segment Survey.” Re-examine, especially, the chart provided, and the last three pages of “Report.” These will serve as a template for the Segment Survey you turn in. [About one hour might be a good amount of time to budget on this study phase.]

III. Segment Survey
• Do a Segment Survey on Mark 3:7-35 according to the instructions and example provided in the handout entitled “Doing Segment Survey.” Be aware that the charting (and reporting) of the segment organization and structural relationships will doubtless be the most difficult portion of the assignment.

• In the interest of limiting the scope of this first Segment Survey, please report on no more than 3 of the recurrences which you plot on your chart; report on no more than 1 (one) of the Rhetorical Relations (if you find any), and report on no more than 3 of the Semantic Relationships which you plot on your chart. [Note: I am not limiting the number of structures (etc.) you may show on the chart itself.]


I. Detailed Observation
• Do a Detailed Observation of Mark 9:14-29. This is a long story (16 verses), and it will be impossible to record, in a reasonable time, all of the observations and questions you could generate. Therefore you must discipline yourself to write down only the most salient observations and questions on each verse. But, continue pushing for depth and breadth, even as you economize on the total written output. [Try to work within about a 4 hour limit for this phase of the Lesson.

II. Segment Survey
• Do a Segment Survey on Mark 8:31-9:29, according to the instructions and example provided in the handout entitled “Doing Segment Survey.” Be aware that the charting (and reporting) of the segment organization and structural relationships will doubtless be the most difficult portion of the assignment.

• Report on no more than 5 of the recurrences which you plot on your chart; report on no more than one or two of the Rhetorical Relations (if you find any); but report on all of the structural relationships you find operating between paragraphs, binding paragraphs to each other.

• I am suggesting to you the following paragraph divisions for your consideration: 8:31-33; 8:34-9:1; 9:2-8; 9:9-13; 9:14-29. You may wish to readjust these boundaries as you see need.
I. Detailed Observation

Do a Detailed Observation of Mark 11:15-19 according to the instructions you have been given in your handouts. Continue pushing for depth and breadth, even as you limit the total the total written output to what can be accomplished in about 4 hours. Work to implement more fully the very last suggestions in your “Doing Detailed Observation” handout related to avoiding repeating the text. If you work with these suggestions, you will also likely deepen your work.

II. Segment Survey

Do a Segment Survey on Mark 11:11-25 according to the instructions and example provided in the handout entitled “Doing Segment Survey.” Be aware that the charting (and reporting) of the segment organization and structural relationships will doubtless be the most difficult portion of the assignment.

Report on no more than 5 of the recurrences which you plot on your chart; but do report any of the semantic and rhetorical relationships you find operating between paragraphs, binding the paragraphs to each other.

I am suggesting to you the following paragraph divisions for your consideration: 11:11; 11:12-14; 11:15-19; 11:20-25. You may wish to readjust these boundaries as you see need.

III. Reflection (Do this in writing)

Identify as exactly and concisely as you can:
A. The difficulties or greatest challenges you still sense are yours in doing Segment surveys;
B. The most likely remedies for those challenges, as best you can discern them;
C. Some of the specific benefits for interpreting the Bible that you have discovered in the process of attempting to master Segment Survey. (Be prepared to share with your group.)

Do a survey of the Gospel of Mark according to the Book Survey Handout, and the explanations given in class.

NOTE: This is an “inductive, independent” exercise. It is not our purpose, at this time, to consult with other commentators, scholars, or peers in the processing of the question at hand. Please make this a “real” learning event by refraining from “short-circuiting” the process. Thanks!
I. Re-read the Handout entitled “Interpretation: Independent Research.” Be sure you are able to distinguish conceptually and practically between evidence, inferences, and arguments.

II. Re-examine Mark 11:15-19, recalling your work in Detailed Observation and Segment Survey. I am assigning a specific Interpretive Question to work with. Take it through the “paces” as laid out in the handout “Interpretation: Independent Research.” The Question is: “According to the presentation found within Mark’s Gospel, what might the purpose of Jesus have been in the “temple incident” of Mark 11:15-19?”

III. Read and re-read the text, to begin collecting a set of interpretive options that might serve as answer(s) to the question posed above. At this point, it is not appropriate to determine which options are “right” or “wrong,” “more likely” or “less likely,” or “mutually exclusive with other options” or “able to be combined with other options.” You may use the list of options below as a stimulus to your thinking. Feel free to add to these, or to edit them to represent more clearly what you think the range of options might be for answering the question.
   A. That Jesus had no purpose, this being a spontaneous burst of expressive anger;
   B. That Jesus was cleansing, cleaning, reforming the temple to “make things function right;”
   C. That Jesus was putting an end to the entire sacrificial system;
   D. That Jesus was symbolizing/sealing the (soon-to-come) destruction of the temple;
   E. That Jesus was clearing the temple to establish a place in which to teach;
   F. That Jesus was provoking Jewish authorities to kill him, according to the divine plan;
   G. That Jesus was performing a final, public miracle to prove his status and identity as Messiah
   H. That Jesus was demonstrating his “royal status” or his “messianic status” by doing only what the Messiah would have been expected to do (whether gathered from Scripture or tradition)

IV. Search for evidence that would speak for and against each of these options. Limit yourself to these fields of evidence to make the task manageable for our initial foray into Interpretation:
   A. The immediate context of the paragraph; (11:15-19)
   B. The context of the segment; (11:11-25)
   C. The context of the section; (? 8:31-16:8)
   D. The context of the Book of Mark as a whole;
   E. The Intertextual passages [possibly??] of Jeremiah 7, Isaiah 56, and Malachi 3;
   F. The Intertextual passages of Matt. 21; Luke 19; John 2.

V. Present an argument, built upon a use of evidence, which attempts to argue why the option(s) you chose are to be preferred to the option(s) you reject. Be as clear and concise as possible. Develop a system of organization of your own design, to show the evidences you have collected for and against each option, your assess of each, and the pathway you chose to follow to the conclusion you judge to be most compelling.

NOTE: This exercise is clearly tentative. That is, your “conclusion” does not need to be “your final answer” to the question posed. Nor should it be considered to be so. For we have not yet consulted the interpretations of others (throughout the course of the church’s history, or across the lines of Christian tradition), nor have we engaged with data/evidence that might be located in other ancient texts or artifacts. The primary value of this exercise is to learn to identify and handle evidences, inferences, and arguments.
Exercise in Consultation

I. Re-read the handout entitled Interpretation: Consultation. Be sure also to spend some time examining the important bibliographic resource you have in Bauer’s Biblical Resources for Ministry. Move back and forth between the table of contents and the various listings until you gain some familiarity with the layout and subdivisions employed. [Write a note on the cover sheet of your Lesson confirming that you have done this.]

II. Choose 6 (six) resources with which to consult regarding the question which you pursued in the previous lesson: “According to the presentation in Mark’s Gospel, what might have been the purpose of Jesus in the “temple incident” recorded in 11:15-19?”

A. Two of them must be “Scholarly Commentaries,” [Lane and Gundry are recommended]
B. One of them must be a Bible Dictionary [Anchor, Interpreters’, and International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (revised ed.) are recommended]. Looking up the article on “Temple” will likely bring you to a discussion of Mark 11:15-19.
C. Three of them may come from any category described in the Handout (including those categories already noted in A and B above) excluding translations and paraphrases.

III. Evaluate each of the resources you use by supplying the following information for each:
A. The title of the work, and the author’s name (if possible).
B. The classification of this work, in your estimation (e.g. “Scholarly Commentary”)
C. The various options mentioned (whether considered likely or not by the commentator) as possible “answers” to the question we have been pursuing about Jesus’ purpose in 11:15-19.
D. The conclusion favored by the author of this resource, along with the specific evidence cited as support for this conclusion.
E. The evidences, positive or negative, given with respect to those options rejected by the author.
F. Your evaluation regarding the quality of this author’s thoroughness, fairness, validity of movement from evidence to inference, accuracy, and appeal to the specific data of the text and context of Mark 11:15-19. [A paragraph of 50 words will suffice for each of the resources used.]

[Note: Go through letters A through F for each of the six sources you locate.]

IV. As you review your work in III above, what reflections do you have about the task of Evaluation? Your comments may (but do not necessarily need to) relate to the following:
A. The advantages or disadvantages of various sorts of resources;
B. The degree of unity or disagreement among your resources;
C. The degree of “intimidation” you might have felt while reading these “experts”;
D. The benefit of having done your own intensive independent work on a passage before consulting with other interpreters;
E. The degree to which these “experts” can bring to bear information and details which are generally inaccessible to an uninformed reader;
F. Any strong disagreement you had with a writer;
G. Any decision regarding the type of Consultation you now see that you must do in future work with Scriptural interpretation.
Overview of Observation and Interpretation

The purpose of this last assignment is to help cement together the various phases of Inductive Bible Study you have learned to this point. Each step below will be carefully limited in time and scope, so that no single step overtakes the entire assignment. The goal will not be a “finalized” product at each step, but a “longitudinal synthesis” of the entire project of grasping a text’s historical meaning.

I. Detailed Observation: [2 hours] Read and re-read carefully Mark 15:33-39, aloud and in three different versions. Then do a Detailed Observation on this paragraph. [In allotting your time, be sure to intensify your work when you come to 15:33-34.]

II. Segment Survey: [1 hour] Read Mark 14:1-16:8 again. Identify (in a list, with representative Scripture references and a brief explanatory comment) those terms, expressions, persons, ideas, etc., which connect the paragraph 15:33-39 to its surrounding segment, 14:1-16:8. Also, in a brief paragraph of 50-75 words, point out some particular benefit you gained in reading 15:33-39 in light of its segment..

III. Book Survey: [1 hour] Drawing upon your knowledge of the entire book of Mark in all of your previous exposure to it in earlier assignments and in class lectures, can you spot as many as 5 important Markan themes which “show up” in Mark 15:33-39? Identify these, as you are able, in brief, separate paragraphs, with supporting data of representative Scripture verses. [Each paragraph being about 75 words in length.]

IV. Interpretation- Independent Investigation: [2 hours] Our focus will be upon Jesus’ cry from the cross, reported in Mark 15:34. Our question will be: What did Jesus’ cry from the cross, as narrated in Mark’s Gospel, likely mean?

A. Options: Briefly (from your previous reading of Mark, your previous experience with the segment 14:1-16:8, your Detailed Observation performed above), lay out the several options (two or three??) which occur to you at this time as possible “answers” to the question.

B. Evidences and Inferences: Locate and report what you can find that would seem either to support or speak against these options that you can now imagine or will shortly discover. Remember to think systematically about these “fields” from which evidence can be gathered:

1. from the wording, logic and imagery of the passage itself [15:33-39];
2. from the wording, logic, imagery, plot, and themes of the segment [14:1-16:8];
3. from the wording, logic, imagery, plot and themes of the book [1:1-16:8];
4. from “Intertextuality”: Psalm 22; Gospel parallels [Matt., Lk., Jn.]
C. **Argument**: In 75-100 words, report your best conclusion to this point, based on your assessment of the evidences and inferences. Try to avoid simply “declaring” your opinion. Rather, try to show how you “arrived” at a conclusion through the thoughtful consideration of various pieces of evidence.

V. **Interpretation-Consultation**: [1.5 hours] Consult 3 sources [identify them clearly] on the question at hand. Report their conclusions and the way in which they reached them. Try to express this clearly and concisely, if possible within 125-150 words.

VI. **Interpretation-Synthesis**: [.5 hours] In a span of about 50 words, gather together the fruit of your labor on 15:33-39, and express what you think the cry of Jesus from the cross meant for Jesus in his death, and within the framework of Mark’s Gospel. In your “final answer,” indicate how your engagement with other resources (in Consultation) changed or confirmed your thinking.

VII. **Final Methodological Reflections**: [.5 hour] List out six (6) items (expanding upon each with a paragraph of 50-75 words) in answer to this question: “What skills, insights, understandings, or convictions do I have (or have considerably strengthened) as a result of having taken **NT (IBS) 530 Mark**?
Please Staple Here

Student Name___________________________________________________

Group Name___________________________________________________

Lesson #________________________

Time Invested____________________

Course_________________________

Time of Class____________________

******* Lesson handed in on time?******

Yes_______                                    No________

****If Late, have these items below filled in:

Date actually turned in:____________________

Professor’s signature_____________________

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IBS Lesson Cover Sheet for Dr. Dongell