**Synoptic Gospels**

Instructor-Pat Reeder (reederp@xenos.org)

Wednesday evenings, 7pm-9:30pm

**Course description**

The Synoptic Gospels together comprise the earliest narrative records available to us of Jesus’ ministry and teaching. This class will be an in-depth study of these three gospels.  In Carson and Moo’s *Introduction to the New Testament*, they write, “The Synoptic Gospels as a whole make an irreplaceable contribution.  Alongside John, they constitute the foundational witness to the person, ministry, teaching, passion and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.” (162,3) In line with the above remark, this class will *primarily* focus on the object of their testimonies: Jesus Christ.  We will also examine their relationship to one another as well as look at their historicity, origins and distinctive styles.

**Course Expectations**

* *Attendance* You must attend 8 of 10 classes to receive credit. Roughly, everyone has 2 “excused absences” before receiving an incomplete. Any further absence is negotiable, to be discussed with the instructor.
* *Readings, Homework* There will be weekly readings to keep in step with the material being covered each week. Questions on the readings can be found on the back of this sheet. These are strictly completion based.
* *Final Assignment* In the Synoptics, Jesus permits people to use the following title of him: Lord, Son of God, Son of Man, Christ (feel free to pick another if you like.) Pick one of these and study it in-depth: include where it’s used, where it comes from in the OT, its meaning and theological significance. Your report should be at least 500 words.

**Calendar**

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| Date | Week | Content | Readings |
|  |  |  | Matthew | Mark | Luke |
| 3/29 | 1 | *Introduction* | –– | –– | –– |
| 4/5 | 2 | **Infancy, Genealogy** | 1-2 | –– | 1-2 |
| 4/12 | 3 | **John, Jesus’ Baptism and Temptation** | 3-4:11 | 1 | 3-4:13 |
| 4/19 | 4 | **Ministry in Galilee** | 4:12ff | 2-3 | 4:14-6:16 |
|  |  |  | 8-12 | 5-10 | 7:1-50 |
|  |  |  | 14-17 |  | 8:19-13:17 |
|  |  |  | 19:1-30 |  | 17:1-37 |
|  |  |  | 20:17ff |  | 18:15-19:10 |
| 4/26 | 5 | **The Passion, Jerusalem** | 21:1-27 | 11:1-33 | 19:28-21:4 |
|  |  |  | 22:15ff | 12:13ff | 22:1-46 |
|  |  |  | 26:1-46 | 14:1-42 |  |
| 5/3 | 6 | **From Arrest to Resurrection** | 26:47-28:20 | 14:43-16:20 | 22:47-24:53 |
| 5/10 | 7 | *Major Sermons of Jesus* | 5-7  |  | 6:17ff |
|  |  |  | 23 |  |  |
|  |  |  | 24 | 13 | 21 |
| 5/17 | \* | NO CLASS- OUT OF TOWN | \* | \* | \* |
| 5/24 | 8 | *The Parables* | 13, 18,  | 4 (esp. 26-29) | 8:1-17 |
|  |  |  | 20:1-16 | 12:1-12 | 13:18-16:31 |
|  |  |  | 25 |  | 18:1-14 |
|  |  |  |  |  | 19:11-27 |
| 5/31 | 9 | *Evidence for Deity of Christ in Synoptics*  | 5-7, 14, 28 | 2 | 24 |
| 6/7 | 10 | *Conclusion: Who Was Jesus Christ?*  |  |  |  |

**Miscellaneous**

Students will be responsible for their own notes. We will provide notebooks and the presentations will be available upon request.

**Homework** Read the weekly selection-Reflect on and answer the following questions (the numbers indicate which week the assignment’s due.)

**2A.** Luke and Matthew emphasize very different aspects of Jesus’ birth. Note two differences between the accounts and offer some suggestion as to what might have motivated these differences.

**2B.** What differences are there between Zechariah and Mary’s response to the angelic visitation? What might explain the difference in the angels’ responses?

**3A.** John the Baptist quotes from Isaiah 40. What is this citation supposed to communicate about Jesus’ identity?

**3B.** Note at least 3 ironies surrounding Jesus’ birth.

**4A.** Indicate at least two lessons Jesus is communicating with the two feedings (5000 & 4000).

**4B.** Why would Jesus accuse the disciples of having weak faith after calming the storm? (Matt 8, Mark 4, Luke 8).

**5A.** In your own words, what is the main point of the Seven Woes (Matt 23)?

**5B.** What do you think Jesus means when he says in Matt 5:20, “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven”?

**6A.** What is Jesus arguing in Matt 22:41ff?

**6B.** Jesus inaugurates the New Covenant during the Last Supper. According to Jeremiah 31:31-34, what does this mean?

**7A.** Indicate at least 2 ironies in Jesus’ trial.

**7B.** What would the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) be like if 28:18 were missing? What if 28:20 were missing?

**8A.** Why does Jesus speak in parables?

**8B.** Compare and contrast the three parables in Luke 15. For each one, articulate a distinct truth it discloses about God.

**9A.** Jesus never explicitly says, “I am God.” What in Mark 2 suggests that Jesus is more than a mere man?

**9B.** Read Daniel 7:9-14. What does this passage indicate about Jesus’ view of Himself given that he regularly calls himself, ‘Son of Man.’

**10.** Complete the Final Assignment.