

**Wesley Theological Seminary  
Spring 2018 – New England Satellite School  
April 20-21; May 11-12, 2018**

**CS321 Bible III: Gospels**

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This course focuses on the content and message of the Gospels, as well as the theological perspectives of the Gospel writers. The practice of exegesis will be emphasized.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.
2. Exegete this form of literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

Textbooks: Please purchase books from amazon or Cokesbury, or borrow from friends

**REQUIRED**

- 1) New Revised Standard Version of the Bible

Please choose a solid study bible such as

*New Interpreters Study Bible, 2003, Nashville, Abingdon Press*

or *Harper Collins Study Bible, 2006, HarperOne*

**Read:** *Matthew; Mark; Luke and John*

including the introductory material for each book and all of the notes offered.

- 2) Mark Allan Powell *Introducing the New Testament*

**Read** the Preface and chapters 1-8 carefully.

- 3) R. Allan Culpepper *Anatomy of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*

**Read:** all

- 4) Gerd Theissen *The Shadow of the Galilean*

**Read:** all including the notes. They are essential to what I (and I dare say Gerd Theissen) hope you will get out of this book.

The course is delivered over two weekends with 10 hours of class room time each. All four gospels and all three books are expected to be read before we meet on April 20. Take notes as you read, especially of anything that you find confusing or don't agree with, and bring them to class.

**Pre-Class Assignment Instructions:**

- Please type your papers, double-spaced, 12 font. Make sure your name, the assignment number and title and page number are in the heading of each page, and all pages of an

assignment are stapled together. Be ready to submit a paper copy of your assignment at the start of the class on which it is due.

- Be sure to refer to all textbooks and reference books, and the Bible itself in your answers.
- Don't use footnotes or endnotes when you quote but simply give the author and page number in parentheses after the quote, e. g. (Coogan, 49).
- Pay attention to page limits. Anything over the posted limit may be discounted.

Course Outline:

**April 20-21**

The Gospels and God's Way of Salvation:

Sharing the good news of the Work of God where you serve.

Exegesis clarification

Matthew

**May 11-12**

Mark, Luke and John

Due April 20, 2017

**1. Why You Deserve an A in this Course** Write me a letter describing how you, your congregation and the community to which you are appointed will benefit when you giving your best time and attention to this course. How will becoming better acquainted with the content and message of the Gospels, the theological perspective of the authors and methods of exegesis help you grow as pastor? (1 page)

**2. One Thing You Lack** Write a sermon based on Mark 10:17-22 (the Gospel for October 14, 2018 in the Revised Common Lectionary. (4 pages – please bring two copies, one for me and one for a classmate to analyze).

**3. Consider the Source** Pick one of the following paricopes and read Matthew Henry's Commentary and John Wesley's Notes regarding them. Then consider what Powell and Cullpepper offer to our understanding of the passages. What do you gain by using modern exegetical tools and what, if anything, of Henry and Wesley do you find to still be valuable contributions to understanding the meaning for a life of faith today? Why? (3 pages)

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc5.Mark.ii.html>

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/notes>

Matthew 6:7-15

Mark 11:20-25

Luke 15:11-32

John 21:15-19

**4. Good Samaritan -**

(2 pages)

Due May 11

**5. Collaborate with your Colleague:** Read your colleague's sermon on Mark 10:17-22. In the first third of your essay affirm what is "right on" about this sermon. Use the rest of the essay to suggest how this sermon could be strengthened so that the congregation understands to their own lives. (2 pages)

6. Choose one of the following assignments designed to engage both sides of your brain:

**a. Everybody Ought to Know** The following song by Alfred B. Smith adds a chorus to verses sung to CONVERSE ("What a Friend We Have in Jesus" 8.7.8.7). He drew on various scripture for his verses.

*Refrain:           Everybody ought to know, everybody ought to know,  
                          everybody ought to know who Jesus is.*

*He's the Lily of the Valley<sup>1</sup>, He's the Bright and Morning Star;<sup>2</sup>  
He's the fairest of ten thousand,<sup>3</sup> everybody ought to know.*

*On the cross He died for sinners<sup>4</sup> and His blood makes clean as snow<sup>5</sup>,  
Loving, living, coming Savior, He's the one you ought to know.*

Write 8 original verses to this song drawing only from the Gospels. Your goal is to capture some essential truths each Gospel writer wants people to know about Jesus. Write two verses for each gospel. Using footnotes cite the scripture chapter and verse that each phrase draws from, and write a sentence or two explaining why this is essential to knowing who Jesus is according to Matthew, Mark, or Luke, or John. Bring copies so that we may sing them together in class. (3 pages)

**b. Sacred Art**

Pick one passage from each of the gospels and create a painting or sculpture that represents how that passage is shaping your relationship with Jesus. Write an essay describing your art and how it might invite others to grow in their relationship with Jesus (3 pages).

7.

**a. Shady Facts vs. Truth and Light** In the forward to *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, Frank Kermode writes of a "proper understanding of the gospel as story, and of the relation of story to truth." In the *Shadow of the Galilean* Andreas encounters much of the factual evidence gathered from the time and place of Jesus. The notes at the back of the book describe the evidence. Write

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<sup>1</sup> Song of Solomon 2:1

<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter 1:9; Revelation 2:28

<sup>3</sup> Song of Solomon 5:10

<sup>4</sup> Colossians 2:13-14

<sup>5</sup> 1 John 1:7

an article for your local newspaper describing how this factual evidence is helpful, but is rarely enough to lead someone to faith in Christ. (3 pages)

b. In 1820 Thomas Jefferson published a “Bible” which had all of the references to the Old Testament removed. Write a letter to this Founding Father of our nation describing the ways in which it is essential to know the Old Testament in order to accurately understand the Gospels. In your argument identify how the “God of Jesus” is the same God testified to by Old Testament characters such as Abraham, Moses, Hannah and Deborah (3 pages).

**8. Known By Heart:** Pick two of the following passages (from two different gospels) to memorize. In your paper name your choice (but don’t take up space copying it directly) and describe how your understanding of these passages has been changed through the readings and discussions of this class. How are they good news for people today? (2 pages)

Matthew 5:  
Beatitudes

John 14  
I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me.