

4NT508 Gospels

Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta
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I. Purpose

1. To understand the current critical and academic climate concerning the interpretation of the gospels.
2. To learn the uniqueness, character and contents of each gospel.
3. To set Jesus and the gospels in their historical context.
4. To develop proper hermeneutical practices for interpreting and applying the gospels.
5. To know better the Jesus of the Scriptures.

II. Texts

1. D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 2005, (ISBN 0-310-23859-5).
2. Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*, 2nd Edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 (ISBN (0-19-515464-9).
3. Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel, The Book of Q and Christian Origins*, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993 (ISBN 0-06-065375-2).
4. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, Downers' Grove: IVP, 1978 (ISBN 0-87784-296-5)
5. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996 (ISBN 0-8006-2682-6).

III. Grading

1. There will be a take home final (worth 50%). The test will cover all the material covered in class and in the assigned readings. This test will be distributed on the final class period. (April 28), and must be returned by May 10.
2. There will be two small papers (each worth 10%). The first, dealing with Burton Mack's book, will be due at the beginning of class on **March 3**. The second will be due **March 24** at the beginning of class. See section **IV**.
3. There will be one larger exegesis paper due on **April 21** (worth 20%). See section **IV**.
4. Class participation (10%). This is a necessary and vital component for this class. You must be prepared.

IV. Papers

You are to write two papers (about 1200 words each), and each will be worth 10% of your grade, and a third larger paper worth 20% of your grade. If the papers are late the grade will be lowered.

The first paper (due on **March 3**) will be a review of Mack's book. Show your knowledge of his basic approach to the gospels and in particular to "Q." Give your evaluation of this approach. What strengths do you see in his presentation, and what weaknesses? What problems do you see with his methodology? Why or why not is his reconstruction plausible?

The second paper (due on **March 24**) is an analysis of one of the following parables in Luke (7:36-50; 10:25-37; 11:5-13; 12:13-21; 13:1-9; 14:15-24; 15:3-10; 15:11-32; 16:1-13; 17:7-10; 18:1-8). Be sure to footnote any information you get from any sources. Include a bibliography. The paper is to be typed, double-spaced.

1. Pick one of the parables listed above and set the parable in the context of Luke's gospel stating how it

further Luke's overall goals.

2. Give a single sentence stating the theme of the parable you are examining.
3. Explain any difficulties in the text and giving your understanding of the parable as a whole. This is the main portion of the paper.
4. Update the imagery of the parable to today, rewriting the parable in this form. State how the information from your passage should be applied today.

The third paper (due on **April 21**) is a major exegesis paper on some portion of John 1-12 (at least 15 verses). The section should be a coherent section. Use significant commentaries (6-8), lexicons and other important resources to help you understand the passage. You must incorporate in your research not only commentaries and other exegetical helps, but also you must find at least 2 relatively recent articles on your section. Be sure to footnote any information you get from any sources. Include a bibliography. The paper is to be typed, double-spaced. This is a major paper, but should not exceed about 12 pages.

1. Pick a coherent section from John 1-12 you are interested in studying of at least 15 verses.
2. Show how your section fits into the outline of the whole book of the gospel and further develops John's argument as a whole in this book.
3. Give a single sentence stating the theme of the section you are examining.
4. Give a very detailed outline of your passage (how every phrase fits in relation to the others).
5. Explain each verse in your passage, discussing any problems in the text and giving your understanding of each verse. This may be done in a commentary style. This is the main portion of the paper.
6. State how the information from your passage should be applied today.

V. Course Outline and Schedule (You need to have these assignments ready for the day listed. Take notes, you will be tested over this material even if it is not covered in class.)

I. January 27-28, Introduction to the Gospels, Historical background

II. February 17-18, Introduction to the Gospels, Interpretive background

Read: Carson and Moo, pp. 77-133
Wright, pp. 1-124
Ehrman, pp. 116-142

III. March 3-4, Mark, Matthew

Read: Carson and Moo, pp. 134-197
Wright, pp. 198-368, 443-474
Assignment: Analysis of Burton Mack's *The Lost Gospel*

IV. March 24-25, Luke

Read: Carson and Moo, pp. 198-224
Stott
Assignment: Lucan parable paper

V. April 21-22, John

Read: Carson and Moo, pp. 225-284
Assignment: Exegesis Paper on John

Final: Take home, given out on April 22, send it to me by May 10