

**UNIT 1 REVIEW**  
**Rel 211: New Testament Gospels**  
(lectures 1–6 for Quiz 1)

For **identifications**, review the terms below for passive recognition. Make sure that you cannot only identify the person, term, or event, but be able to explain why it is important to the gospel text (e.g., David was the greatest king of united Israel, but he also served as a model for the messianic expectations at the time of Christ and also served as one of the reference points in the Matthean genealogy).

When preparing for **scripture commentary**, be able to explain the original context of the passage (author and situation, not necessarily chapter and verse), and address basic historical questions (when and why was this text written, how did the information in it—from the original source, to the author, through editors and translators—get to us?), literary questions (what kind of writing is the passage, how does it fit into its larger context, and what are its literary aims?), and theological questions (what principles or doctrines does this passage illustrate or teach, and, just as importantly, how does it engage and affect the reader?).

On **essays** (and, to a lesser extent, for the **short answers** on quizzes), try to respond to the question as completely as possible. Begin with a sentence or two for a thesis and then organize it into short paragraphs of three or four sentences for ease of organization and grading (short answers will consist of only four or five sentences or perhaps, in some cases, just a list or chart). While questions may ask you to address rather particular issues of how a gospel is organized or what its purpose is, in the end, your final sentences should address how what the evangelist does causes you to understand the doctrines regarding Christ more fully or appreciate who he is and what he did (Christology!) better.

**Course Objectives**

- First, to increase the student’s knowledge of the gospels—that is, to familiarize him or her with their basic storylines, characters, themes and theological concepts.
- Second, to help the student read, analyze, discuss, and write about the Bible as both a source of scriptural knowledge and as a sacred *text*.
- Third, to strengthen individual testimonies of sacred truths, particularly by an increased understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the Restoration.

**Subjects, Names, and Terms**

GOSPEL

“Good News”

the kingdom of God is at hand

*kērygma* or preaching

literary genre

all-inclusive restoration sense

AUTHORS AND SOURCES

John

John Mark

*kērygma* tradition

Luke

Matthew

Peter

### READING STRATEGIES

ask questions, careful reading, prayerful  
pondering, consider scholarly  
contributions, pray and ponder again

Read in sections

- avoid proof texting
- pericopes
- structural analyses

### INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Understanding a Text (see graphic on last  
page)

- translation
  - > understanding the meaning of the  
words themselves
- hermeneutics
  - > understanding the meaning *then* and  
the meaning *now*
- exegesis
  - > properly understanding the *original*  
meaning
  - > historical questions
  - > literary questions
  - > theological questions

[higher criticism]

- [- historical]
- [- literary]
- [- source]
- [- redaction]
- historical
- form

[lower criticism]

- [- textual]

### GENRES

Narrative (telling a story)

- introductions and prologues
  - genealogies
- transition and summary narratives (at the

end of narrative sections)

- miracle stories
- call stories
- conflict or controversy narratives
- vision and dream reports

Discourse (“quoting” speech)

- teaching saying
- parables
- hymns and prayers (often poetic)
- canticles
- formula quotations
- longer speeches: sermons, monologues,  
etc.

Mixed genres, including dramatic episodes  
longer narratives that contain extended  
dialogues and “pronouncement stories”

- esp. Infancy Narratives, Passion  
Narratives, Resurrection Narratives
- “correction narrative,” dramatic  
encounter of misunderstood teaching,  
often with a passion prediction

### BIBLE TRANSLATIONS AND VERSIONS

JST

KJV

[NIV]

[NJB]

[NKJV]

[NRSV]

### GOSPEL BEGINNINGS

four different points of departure

four different perspectives and emphases

“Christmas and Easter”

Matthean Infancy Narrative

- Genealogy
- Conception and birth
  - > formula quotation (Isaiah 7:14 LXX)
- Visit of the Wise Men (Epiphany)
  - > formula quotation (Micah 5:2,  
2 Samuel 5:2)
- Escape into Egypt
  - > formula quotation (Hosea 11:1)
- Massacre of the Innocents

- › formula quotation (Jeremiah 31:15)
- “Return” to Nazareth
- › formula quotation (?)

#### Lucan Infancy Narrative

- Birth of John the Baptist foretold
  - Annunciation (Birth of Jesus foretold)
  - The Visitation (Mary visits Elizabeth)
    - › *Magnificat*
  - Birth of John the Baptist
    - › *Benedictus*
  - Nativity (Birth of Jesus)
  - Shepherds and Angels
    - › *Gloria in excelsis*
  - The Presentation (Jesus named in temple, requirements fulfilled)
    - › *Nunc Demittis*
  - The Boy Jesus Teaches in the Temple
- [John: the *Logos* Hymn]

#### MAJOR DEEDS AND MIRACLES OF JESUS

casting out evil spirits  
 healing Simon’s mother-in-law  
 cleansing leper  
 healing of man with palsy and following dispute  
 healing of withered hand  
 stilling the storm  
 healing of the Gerasene Demonic  
 raising of Jairus’ daughter  
 healing the woman with the issue of blood

#### MAJOR TEACHINGS OF JESUS

teachings about fasting and the Sabbath  
 true kindred of Jesus  
 Marcan Parables
 

- Parable of the Sower
- Purpose of Parables
- Parable of the Candlestick
- Parable of the Growing Seed
- Parable of the Mustard Seed

#### OTHER EVENTS IN THE GOSPELS

baptism of Jesus  
 temptation of Jesus (brief in Mark)

call of the disciples  
 call of Levi, controversial

#### CHARACTERS IN THE GOSPELS

Anna  
 [Bathsheba] (not mentioned by name)  
 David  
 Elisabeth  
 insiders  
 James  
 Jesus
 

- as Immanuel
- as new Moses
- as true king

 John (the disciple)  
 John the Baptist  
 Joseph the Carpenter
 

- and Joseph in Egypt

 Mary  
 outsiders  
 Peter  
 Rahab  
 Ruth  
 Simeon  
 Tamar  
 Twelve
 

- significance of number, “being” with Christ, being “sent out”

 wise men (*magi*)  
 Zechariah

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Israel and Judah, kingdoms of  
 David
 

- as quintessential king, type of Christ
- Davidic covenant

 Assyrian conquest  
 Babylonian captivity
 

- beginning of the Diaspora
- effects of on later Jews

 Persian Period
 

- Ezra the scribe
- beginning of the Hebrew Bible canon
- *am Ha’aretz*

- expansion of the Diaspora
- Alexander the Great
- Hellenistic World
  - *Koine Greek*
- Hellenistic Judaism
  - Septuagint (LXX)
  - Antiochus IV Epiphanes
  - Maccabean Revolt
    - eschatology, apocalyptic literature, and messianism (this last, particularly a political interpretation of the messiah, is important for NT)
  - Hasmonean Dynasty
- Jewish sects and parties
  - scribes (a profession)
  - Sadducees
  - Pharisees
  - Essenes
  - Zealots
  - *am Ha'aretz*
- Advent of Rome
  - balance of power in the east
  - client states
  - Herodians
    - Herod the Great
    - Herod Archelaus
    - Herod Antipas
    - Herod Philip
    - tetrarchies
- Roman administration
  - Judea proper as province
  - Sanhedrin
  - misconceptions

#### FEATURES

##### Mark

- quick pace, emphasis on action
- intercalation (“Marcan sandwich”)
- “Marcan necklace”
- omniscient narrator

#### THEMES

##### Mark

- Christology, primarily the work of Jesus
- stresses the suffering and death of Jesus
- authentic discipleship
- self-sacrifice for the gospel
- examples of followers who failed but were redeemed
- Kingdom of God
- “Messianic Secret”
- eschatology

#### OTHER TERMS

autographs

*biblia* (“books”)

canon

Christology

- high and low
- person and work of Jesus

Council of Carthage

“cross-textual contamination”

framing (*inclusio*)

genealogy

- descending
- Matthew’s groups of 14, presence of women

“inn” (possible meanings of *katalyma*)

#### SYMBOLS AND IMAGERY

[human/angel]

lion

[ox]

[eagle]

casting out devils = final eschatological triumph over Satan

healing = spiritual healing/forgiveness; resurrection

sea as “the deep”

#### PLACES

Decapolis

Galilee

Idumea

Israel

Judah

Judea

**Notable Passages: See Packet, Section 9**

(Be able to identify the original context of the passage—author, situation, and how we got the text—as well as its meaning, and its importance for individual application today)

**Larger Issues, Potential Essay Questions**FOCUSES

- Mortal Ministry
- Suffering
- Passion
- Sacrifice
- Resurrection

COMPOSITION ISSUES FOR EACH TEXT STUDIED (so far Mark as well as the Matthean and Lucan

Infancy Narratives)

- major themes
- stylistic features
- audiences
- structure (layout, see below for Mark)
  - ▶ ***geographic and thematic, not chronological, progression***
- divisions of Mark, “a drama in three acts”
  - ▶ Heading (1:1)
  - ▶ Prologue (1:2–13)
  - ▶ Act I: Authoritative Mission in Galilee (1:14–8:30)
  - ▶ Act II: On the Road to Jerusalem (8:31–10:52)
    - ▶ The passion predictions begin: “the shadow of the cross falls across the narrative”
  - ▶ Act III: Climax in Jerusalem (11:1–16:8)
- Outline (subdivisions) of Mark so far
  - ▶ Prologue
  - ▶ Authoritative Mission Begins (Narrative and Miracle/healing Stories)
  - ▶ Controversy Narratives
  - ▶ Calling of the Twelve and Rejection by Family and Townsmen
  - ▶ Parables of Jesus
  - ▶ Mighty Deeds in the Galilean Ministry

CONCEPTS, ISSUES FOR REFLECTION, ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT PASSAGES

- Briefly describe how each of the gospels begins its account of Jesus Christ. What are the arguments that scholars make about their relative Christologies, and how else can we explain their different points of departure and emphasis?
- What was the origin of the controversy narratives, how does Mark structure and use them, and what impact did they have on the original audience and continue to have on today’s reading audience?
- How does Mark use the parables of Jesus in Mark 4? What are some instances when the

meanings he ascribes to them differ from the more familiar interpretations from the other gospels? What does this teach us about the importance of reading carefully and in context?

- ❑ How do the deeds in the Galilean ministry illustrate Christ's power over both the spiritual and physical worlds? Be certain to give examples of the different types of miracles and what they represent.
- ❑ Despite its being a "gospel of action," how does Mark highlight the role of compassion in the deeds of Jesus?
- ❑ What is the significance of Christ's power over the sea? How does this incident resonate with Old Testament events or motifs?

