

## UNIT 1 REVIEW

### Rel 211: New Testament Gospels

(v. 1.1, 24 Sep 04, lectures 1–9 for Exam 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  
*kerygma* or preaching  
literary genre  
all-inclusive restoration sense

#### AUTHORS AND SOURCES

John  
John Mark  
*kerygma* 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.
  - prophecies (quoted), including passion predictions
- 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  
feeding 5,000  
walking on water  
healing the Syrophenician woman's daughter  
during the deaf  
feeding 4,000  
curing the blindman . . . in stages  
Transfiguration  
healing the boy with the dumb spirit  
healing of the blind Bartimaeus  
cursing of the fig tree

## 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

on Pharisaic traditions

on the "yeast of the Pharisees and Herod"  
denying self

losing life for Christ's sake

not being ashamed of Christ or his words  
Elijah's "coming first"

the first being the servants of all

"he that is not against us is on our part"

radical self-sacrifice

on marriage

on receiving the kingdom as a child

on worldliness

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye  
of a needle, than for a rich man to enter  
into the kingdom of God."

disciples will suffer for Christ

the Son came to give his life as a ransom for  
many

Jesus' Prophecies of the End

on faith

on forgiveness

"give unto Caesar . . ."

Parable of the Wicked Tenants

about the resurrection and marriage in

## OTHER EVENTS IN THE GOSPELS

baptism of Jesus

temptation of Jesus (brief in Mark)

call of the disciples

call of Levi, controversial

mission of the Twelve

death of John the Baptist

Peter's declaration

Triumphal Entry

## CHARACTERS IN THE GOSPELS

Anna

Bartimaeus

[Bathsheba] (not mentioned by name)

David

Elijah  
 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  
 Rich Young Man  
 Ruth  
 Simeon  
 Tamar  
 Twelve
 

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

 wise men (*magi*)  
 Zechariah

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Israel and Judah, kingdoms of  
 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
 

- culture
  - Alexandria
- Kingdoms
  - Ptolemaic Egypt
  - Seleucid Syria

- *Koine Greek*  
 Hellenistic Judaism
 

- Hellenizers
- 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
 

- 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

“Abomination of Desolation”

autographs

*biblia* (“books”)

canon

Christology

- high and low
- person and work of Jesus

Council of Carthage

“cross-textual contamination”

Elias

“eye of the needle” (supposed back gate;  
*kamelos* vs. *kamilos*; rabbinic  
exaggeration)

framing (*inclusio*)

genealogy

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

hyperbole

“inn” (possible meanings of *katalyma*)

keys of the kingdom

“Little Apocalypse”

some “not tasting of death until . . .”

passion prediction

“Son of Man”

#### SYMBOLS AND IMAGERY

baskets of fragments, twelve and seven

blindness, curing

blindness, curing in stages

casting out devils = final eschatological  
triumph over Satan

cleansing of the temple

cloud/*shekinah*

donkey colt

Elijah/working miracles

fig tree without fruit, withered fig tree

“Get thee behind me . . .”

healing, symbolism of

- spiritual healing/forgiveness
- creation/recreation/resurrection

[human/angel]

John the Baptist/repentance

John the Baptist/presence at Transfiguration  
lion

Moses and Elijah/Law and the Prophets

[ox]

[eagle]

sea as “the deep”

Son of Man as title

- mortal (as in Ezekiel)
- eschatological (as in Daniel)
- Son of God (as in Moses and the D&C)

spreading clothing and branches

tabernacles/*Sukkot*

#### PLACES

Bethany

Decapolis

Galilee

Idumea

Israel

Judah

Judea

Mount of Olives

Nazareth

Perea

Temple Mount

### **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**
  - ▶ **Act I: Authoritative Mission in Galilee (1:14–8:30)**
    - ▶ Authoritative Ministry Begins: narrative and miracle/healing stories (1:14–45)
    - ▶ Five Controversy Narratives (2:1–3:6)
    - ▶ Teachings and Deeds of Jesus Christ Framed by the Calling of the Twelve and the Lord’s Rejection by Family and Townsman (3:13–6:6a)
      - ▶ Parables of Jesus
      - ▶ Mighty Deeds in the Galilean Ministry
    - ▶ The Twelve and John (6:7–30, narrative)
      - ▶ Great Deeds
      - ▶ Christ on Pharisaic Traditions
      - ▶ Peter’s Declaration
  - ▶ **Act II: On the Road to Jerusalem (8:31–10:52)**
    - ▶ Cycle 1: Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction (8:31–9:1, correction narrative)
      - ▶ The Transfiguration (9:2–13, apocalyptic vision)
      - ▶ Healing the young demonic (9:14–29, healing story)
    - ▶ Cycle 2: Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction (9:30–37, correction narrative)
      - ▶ Teachings (9:38–10:31, teaching sayings)
    - ▶ Cycle 3: Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction (10:32–45, correction narrative)

- ▶ The healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52, healing story)
- ▶ **Act III: Climax in Jerusalem (11:1–16:8)**
  - ▶ Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44)
  - ▶ Jesus' Prophecies of End (13:1–37)

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?
- What does Mark suggest by his interweaving of his accounts of John the Baptist and the calling and mission of the Twelve?
- How are the characters and experiences of John the Baptist and Elijah similar? How are the different thrusts of their missions (e.g., repentance and miracles) reflected in the Galilean ministry of Christ?
- How does Mark use the structure of 6:6b–8:30 to emphasize the "hollowness" or "deadness" of Pharisaic Traditions?
- Discuss the symbolism of the Feeding of the Five and Four Thousand. How are these miracles both historical (looking back on Israel's history) and eschatological?
- Illustrate how many of the deeds of Christ were intended to teach the salient fact that he was the God of Israel. How did the disciples understand and misunderstand this fact?
- How is the declaration of Peter in Mark 8:27–30 the natural culmination of the Galilean Ministry? How does it provide a segue to the Road to Jerusalem and the first "correction narrative?"
- Explain the significance of the title "Son of Man." How does Christ's use of it create tension with the eschatological expectations associated with the title and the reality of his mission?
- Describe the three "correction" narratives and explain why they are significant in illustrating the disciples misunderstanding of the Savior's mission. How do we at times fail to understand or properly emphasize the role of Jesus Christ and its implications for our discipleship?
- Describe the Transfiguration as recounted by Mark. What significance does it have in

preparing the disciples for the Lord's Passion? What are some important LDS insights that amplify our understanding of this important event?

- ❑ How does Mark use the literary technique of “framing” to emphasize such points the old order (sc. John the Baptist) and the new (sc. the disciples) or the blindness of the disciples?
- ❑ The Triumphal Entry was one of the few incidents when Christ was accepted generally as the Son of David, yet less than a week later he was rejected and crucified. How did the history of the Jews cause them to have inaccurate expectations of what their messiah would do? How were the earlier deeds of Christ misinterpreted even by the disciples and what bearing may this have had on the issue of the “Messianic Secret” as Mark seems to portrayed it?
- ❑ What is the connection between the cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the fig tree in Mark? How does Jesus follow up on this lesson in the prophecies about the end?

