

ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NT 725

The Gospel of Mark

Fall, 2008

Loyd Melton, Ph. D.

John M. Bell Professor of New Testament and Greek

Due West Campus

Thursdays, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Telephone: (864) 379-8883 (Office 20)

E-mail: melton@erskine.edu

Seminary Fax: (864) 379-3171

Seminary Mailing Address: P. O. Box 668, Due West, S.C. 29639

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to introduce the student to the content, structure and theology of the Gospel according to Mark. Selected passages of the Gospel are considered, especially to ascertain their relation to the theological intent of the author. The minister's continuing use of the Gospel is kept in view. Exegesis/Elective. Three hours credit.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

“The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.” (ETS 2007-2008 *Catalog*, p. 5) Knowing who Jesus is and being able to communicate the gospel to the world by word and by deed is central to the mission of the Church. Studying the Gospel of Mark is a direct expression of the Seminary's mission.

The course has more specific goals for the student. By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Define “Gospel” as a distinct literary form;
2. Describe the Synoptic problem and explain the probable literary relationships between Matthew, Mark, and Luke;
3. Outline a basic history of how the Gospel of Mark has been interpreted by the Church from the first century until the present;
4. Describe the likely basic historical circumstances in the first century to which the Gospel of Mark was addressed;
5. Describe the particular portrait of Jesus which is presented by Mark and show how it responds to the likely situation of Mark's readers;
6. Outline the basic contents of the Gospel of Mark by describing the basic structure of the document and summarizing the general contents of each section;

7. Describe the distinctive features of Mark's Gospel as over against the other Gospels of the New Testament;
8. List and describe major scholarly works on the Gospel of Mark that can be of help to the modern interpreter of this Gospel;
9. Describe modern issues in the life of the Church that are addressed by Mark and show how this Gospel addresses them.

III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (available at www.ecampus.com/erskine).

Each student is required to purchase the following textbooks for the course:

James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979.

Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.

In addition, each student will need to bring to class an English text of any translation of the New Testament. Students who read Greek are encouraged to work from the Greek text and to use this course as a way of becoming more skilled in reading the Greek New Testament.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Each student must attend class. If a student must miss a class meeting, he/she is responsible for all work done and/or missed on that day. A student who misses more than a total of 3 class meetings for any reason will not pass the course.
- B. Each student must be adequately prepared for every class session. Adequate preparation consists of completion of all reading and/or writing assignments for that day. It is especially important that each student read the portion of Mark that will be discussed during that class session. The format of the course will be lecture-discussion. The student is expected to participate in an intelligent and informed manner in classroom discussions.
- C. All work must be done on time and all tests should be taken on the assigned dates unless there are unavoidable conflicts. Work that is turned in late may be graded down at least one letter grade. The professor reserves the right to reject any work that is excessively late.
- D. Two tests will be given. See the COURSE OUTLINE for the dates and contents of these tests. Specific instructions will be given prior to test days on how to prepare for them.
- E. A comprehensive final examination will be given at the end of the semester during the scheduled exam days. At present, the final exam for this course is scheduled for Thursday, December 11.

- F. One major research paper will be required. The student has a number of different options for this paper. He/she may choose some topic related to the background, structure, theology, etc. of Mark. Some suggested topics are included in this syllabus.

If the student is using this course to fulfill his/her New Testament Exegesis requirement, then he/she must choose a passage from Mark and do a thorough exegetical study of it using the exegetical procedure that he/she has been taught. In order to do the exegetical paper, the student must have successfully completed **BI 502: Principles of Exegesis**. Specifically what is required in the exegesis paper will be discussed at length throughout the course.

The major paper whether it be exegetical or topical will be graded primarily on the basis of content but also on the basis of style and form. It should be fully documented in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. or later. The Seminary makes available several documents that are designed to assist students in writing a good paper. This paper should be no more than 20 pages long.

The paper must be submitted in hard copy format no later than Thursday, December 4. If the student is using this paper as a part of his/her Portfolio requirement, he/she should correct the returned copy and submit it to the Seminary office to be placed in his/her file. It is the student's responsibility to submit all Portfolio requirements to the Seminary office.

- G. One additional paper will be required. This paper will be a critical analysis of Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark*. A guide-sheet will be provided for this paper. This paper is due no later than November 13.
- H. All papers must be typed/processed (twelve point type, double spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the "Style and Form Standards for All Masters Level Programs" (Erskine Seminary). In this course, footnotes and a bibliography are required in the major paper, but not the review of the Kingsbury book.
- I. Throughout the semester, students may be given short, individual assignments which they will complete and usually report back to the class at a specified time. These assignments will relate to issues raised in our discussion of Mark and do not require anything to be turned in.
- J. The student is encouraged to keep a loose-leaf notebook for the course. He/she can use it for class notes, reading notes, hand-outs, sermon ideas, bibliographical information, etc. If done properly, this notebook can be a great resource for further study, teaching, and preaching from the Gospel of Mark.
- K. **Drop/Add/Withdrawal.** Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the

second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

- L. **Incompletes.** The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F."
- M. **Language about God and Humanity.** Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men.")
- N. **Conduct in Theological Discussions.** Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.
- O. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. Plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both

the witness and integrity of the Christian community. The student should consult the appropriate section in the *Catalog* regarding plagiarism and its penalties.

- P. My normal office hours for the Fall Term are posted on my office door (Office 20). Since, however, my schedule sometimes changes, it is advisable for you to call or e-mail me to make an appointment before coming.

V. EVALUATION

The Seminary grade scale (ETS 2007-2008 *Catalog*, p. 35) will be used. The student's final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Two tests	=	40%
Final examination	=	30%
Major paper	=	20%
Kingsbury analysis	=	10%

COURSE OUTLINE

9-4 Course introduction, procedures, requirements, etc.

- I. An Introduction to the Gospel of Mark
 - A. The literary genre "Gospel"
 - B. The likely origins of the Gospels
 - C. Mark and the Synoptic problem
 - D. Unique features of Mark
 - E. Specific Markan problems
 - F. A probable setting for the Gospel of Mark
 - G. The likely Markan community
 - H. Mark as a theologian
 - I. A brief history of Markan interpretation
 - J. Trends in Markan scholarship today
 - K. Resources for study in Mark

ASSIGNMENT FOR 9-4:

1. Read the Gospel of Mark in its entirety in a translation of your choice. Note the tone of the story. What is emphasized as Mark tells his story of Jesus?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 1-21.
3. Read Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, in its entirety and be prepared to discuss Kelber's approach to Mark in class. Nothing written is required.

- 9-11** II. The Preface of Mark (Mark 1:1-13)
- A. Introduction
 - B. The appearance of John the Baptist (1:1-8)
 - C. The baptism of Jesus and the inauguration of His mission (1:9-11)
 - D. The temptations of Jesus (1:12-13)
 - E. A summary of 1:1-13

ASSIGNMENT FOR 9-11:

1. Read Mark 1:1-13 in a translation of your choice. What is interesting and unusual about this narrative?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 23-42.

- 9-18** III. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee and His Rejection (Mark 1:14—3:6)
- 9-25**
- A. Introduction
 - B. Jesus' proclamation of the coming kingdom (1:14-15)
 - C. The significance of Galilee
 - D. Jesus' call of His disciples (1:16-20)
 - E. The demonstration of Jesus' authority (1:21-28)
 - F. The healing of Simon's mother-in-law (1:29-31)
 - G. The further establishment of Jesus' authority (1:32-39)
 - H. The spreading of Jesus' fame (1:40-45)
 - I. Jesus' radical act of forgiving sins (2:1-12)
 - J. Jesus' eating with the outcasts (2:13-17)
 - K. Jesus' challenge to empty religious ritual (2:18-22)
 - L. Jesus' teaching about a new kind of freedom (2:23-28)
 - M. The hard-heartedness of the Pharisees (3:1-6)
 - N. A summary of 1:14—3:6

ASSIGNMENT FOR 9-18 AND 9-25:

1. Read carefully Mark 1:14—3:6. What specific things does Mark emphasize about Jesus and those around Him in this part of his story?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 43-102.

10-2 TEST #1 ON I – III ABOVE (first part of period)

- 10-2** IV. Belonging to the New Family of God (Mark 3:7—4:20)
- 10-9**
- A. Introduction
 - B. The extension of Jesus' ministry (3:7-12)
 - C. The calling of the Twelve (3:13-19)
 - D. Jesus' explanation of His mission (3:20-35)

- E. The parable of the sower (4:1-9)
- F. The disciples' misunderstanding of the parable (4:10-12)
- G. The explanation of the parable (4:13-20)
- H. A summary of 3:7—4:20

ASSIGNMENT FOR 10-2 AND 10-9:

1. Read carefully Mark 3:7—4:20. In a Bible dictionary of your choosing, read the article on “parable.” How was Jesus’ use of parables different from that of the rabbis of His day?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 102-138.

- 10-16 V.** The Inbreaking of the Kingdom (Mark 4:21—5:43)
- A. Introduction
 - B. Jesus’ warning to listen (4:21-25)
 - C. The parable of the seed growing secretly (4:26-29)
 - D. The parable of the mustard seed (4:30-32)
 - E. Jesus’ explanation of why He teaches in parables (4:33-34)
 - F. The calming of the wind and the waves (4:35-41)
 - G. The healing of the Gadarene demoniac (5:1-20)
 - H. Jesus’ healing the sick and raising the dead (5:21-43)
 - I. A summary of 4:21—5:43

ASSIGNMENT FOR 10-16:

1. Read carefully Mark 4:21—5:43. It is significant that Mark’s story of the Gadarene demoniac and Jesus is longer than the versions in Matthew and Luke. In a Gospel characterized by brevity, what do you make of Mark’s unusually long account here?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 139-168.

- 10-23 VI.** The Radical Authority of Jesus and the Weakness of His Disciples (Mark 6:1-56)
- A. Introduction
 - B. Jesus’ rejection by His kinsmen (6:1-6a)
 - C. The sending out of the Twelve (6:6b-13)
 - D. The fate of John the Baptist (6:14-29)
 - E. The return of the disciples from their mission (6:30-31)
 - F. The feeding of the five thousand (6:32-44)
 - G. Jesus’ walking on the water (6:45-52)
 - H. The crowds’ pursuit of Jesus (6:53-56)
- VII.** Jesus’ Authority Over Religious Institutions and the Blindness of His Disciples (Mark 7:1—8:26)
- A. Introduction

- B. Jesus' challenge to the Pharisees (7:1-23)
- C. The healing of a Gentile (7:24-30)
- D. Further healing in Gentile territory (7:31-37)
- E. The feeding of the four thousand (8:1-10)
- F. The Pharisees' demand for a sign (8:11-13)
- G. The blindness of Jesus' disciples (8:14-21)
- H. The healing of a blind man (8:22-26)
- I. A summary of 7:1—8:26

ASSIGNMENT FOR 10-23:

1. Read thoughtfully Mark 6:1—8:26. Describe the momentum that is building in the story of Jesus here. Describe the tensions. What is Mark's picture of the disciples?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 169-245.

10-30 VIII. The Unveiling of the True Messiah (Mark 8:27—9:13)

- A. Introduction
- B. The question about Jesus' identity (8:27-30)
- C. Jesus' announcement of His suffering (8:31—9:1)
(first Passion prediction)
- D. The transfiguration of Jesus (9:2-8)
- E. Jesus' teaching to His disciples (9:9-13)
- F. A summary of 8:27—9:13

ASSIGNMENT FOR 10-30:

1. Read carefully Mark 8:27—9:13. How does the story of Jesus radically shift at this point? Why are the disciples so resistant to what Jesus announces here?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 245-275.

11-6 TEST #2 ON IV—VIII ABOVE (first part of period)

11-6 IX. The Radical Way of Jesus (Mark 9:14—10:52)

- A. Introduction
- B. The inability of the disciples to heal (9:14-29)
- C. Jesus' second Passion prediction (9:30-32)
- D. The disciples' argument among themselves over greatness (9:33-37)
- E. True discipleship (9:38-40)
- F. Further teaching about discipleship (9:41-50)
- G. Discipleship and marriage (10:1-12)
- H. The child and the kingdom (10:13-16)

- I. The rich young man and Jesus (10:17-31)
- J. Jesus' third Passion prediction (10:32-34)
- K. The request of James and John (10:35-45)
- L. The healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)
- M. A summary of 9:14—10:52

ASSIGNMENT FOR 11-6:

1. Read carefully Mark 9:14—10:52. How does Mark contrast the disciples and Jesus here? In what way are the disciples contrasted with Bartimaeus?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 276-331.

- 11-13 X.** The Triumphal Entry and Its Tremors (Mark 11:1—12:44)
- A. Introduction
 - B. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11)
 - C. Jesus' announcement of Israel's judgment by God (11:12-16)
 - D. The challenge to Jesus' authority (11:17-33)
 - E. A parable of Jesus' Passion (12:1-12)
 - F. A further challenge to Jesus' authority (12:13-17)
 - G. Jesus and several controversies with His enemies (12:18-40)
 - H. The widow (12:41-44)
 - I. A summary of 11:1—12:44

ASSIGNMENT FOR 11-13:

1. Read carefully Mark 11:1—12:44. In a Bible dictionary of your choosing, read the article on the Temple in Jerusalem. Why was Jesus' actions here such a threat to those who controlled the Temple? Why is the widow in the last scene such a vivid contrast with the leaders in the Temple?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 332-382.
3. **The analysis of Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark*, is due in this session.**

- 11-20 XI.** The Plot Against and the Arrest of Jesus (Mark 13:1—14:72)
- A. Introduction
 - B. Jesus' teaching about the last days (13:1-37)
 - C. The plot of the Pharisees to kill Jesus (14:1-2)
 - D. The anointing of Jesus for His upcoming burial (14:3-9)
 - E. Judas' agreement to betray Jesus (14:10-11)
 - F. Preparation for the Last Supper (14:12-16)
 - G. The eating of the Last Supper (14:17-25)
 - H. The blindness of the disciples (14:26-31)
 - I. Jesus' lonely struggle in Gethsemane (14:32-42)
 - J. The arrest of Jesus (14:43-52)

- K. Peter's denial of Jesus (14:53-72)
- L. A summary of 13:1—14:72

ASSIGNMENT FOR 11-20:

1. Read carefully Mark 13:1—14:72. Make a list of all the contrasts Mark uses in this part of his story of Jesus. How do these contrasts heighten the sense of drama and contribute to Mark's likely purpose?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 383-452.

11-27 NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK.

12-4 XII. The Trial, Conviction, and Crucifixion of Jesus (Mark 15:1-47)

- A. Introduction
- B. The condemnation of Jesus (15:1-15)
- C. The humiliation and crucifixion of Jesus (15:16-32)
- D. The death of Jesus (15:33-39)
- E. The burial of Jesus (15:40-47)
- F. A summary of 15:1-47

XIII. The Resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:1-20)

- A. Introduction
- B. The resurrection stories of the New Testament
- C. The women's visit to the tomb (16:1-8)
- D. Later ending(s) to Mark (16:9-20)
- E. A summary of 16:1-20

XIV. The Gospel of Mark for Today

- A. Contemporary issues in the church addressed by Mark
- B. Preaching and teaching the Gospel of Mark today

ASSIGNMENT FOR 12-4:

1. Read carefully Mark 15:1—16:20. In a Bible dictionary of your choice, read an article on the trial of Jesus. In what specific ways was Jewish law violated in the trial of Jesus?
2. Read James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 453-512.
3. **The major paper for the course is due in this session.**

**12-11 COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAMINATION.
POSSIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

1. The Ending(s) of Mark

2. The Christology of Mark
3. The Persecutions of Nero
4. An Analysis of Willi Marxsen's *Mark the Evangelist*
5. The "Divine Man" (Theos Aner) in the Greco-Roman World
6. The Trial of Jesus
7. The Case For or Against Markan Priority Among the Synoptics
8. The Pharisees in the Gospel of Mark
9. The Role of Peter in the Gospel of Mark
10. Recent Trends in Markan Studies

WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF THEOLOGY STUDENTS

This course can be taken as an elective in the Master of Theology program. For the Th. M. student, the course requirements are as follows:

1. The Th.M. student must complete all of the above course requirements.
2. The major paper for the course for the Th. M. student should be more thorough, use a wider variety and a larger number of sources (primary and secondary), and should be at least 25 pages long.
3. One additional requirement for the Th. M. student is that the student will choose a recent monograph on Mark (1980 or later) and write a brief summary and analysis of the book (no more than 10 pages). **This book review will be due no later than December 4.**