

COURSE INTRODUCTION FOR THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This comparative study of the three Synoptic Gospels is designed so as to acquaint the student with a comprehensive understanding of the life and message of Jesus Christ. The course will also examine the unique characteristics of each of these Gospels.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- i. To lead the student to a mature understanding of the Synoptic Gospels in terms of the life and message of Jesus Christ and their value and relevance to our faith .
- ii. To survey each of the three Synoptic Gospels in terms of their origin, authorship, theology and contents.
- iii. To enable the student to use these books in his/her own personal devotions, academic study and preaching.
- iv. To enable the student to understand the "Synoptic Problem" and the sources theory.
- v. To understand and interpret the parables of Jesus.
- vi. To understand Jesus' teaching about the future

LESSON ORGANISATION:

Each lesson consists of the following components:

1. **LESSON OBJECTIVES:** The Lesson Objectives will give you an overview of the subject and help you to focus attention on the important points.
2. **SELF-STUDY TEXT:** The self- study covers the essential content of the course and is usually divided into smaller segments to enable you to make good use of the short periods of time available for study.
3. **SELF TEST:** The self test in the Study Guide are designed to help you to focus on the objectives of the lesson.
4. **READING ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSE:** The different Reading Assignments in the Reader are designed to help you to reinforce and supplement the content covered in the self-study text.

NOTE:

Recommended Bible: The Bible version to be used in this course is the "New International Version" (NIV). If you do not have a copy, please purchase one, preferably with maps, concordance and footnotes/references. You will be using it for over 3 years, if not more in your ministry, so it is a good investment. If other versions are referred to we will mention it.

HOW TO STUDY:

1. Study each lesson in its entirety. Make your own notes as you grasp each point. Answer the Study Questions as they appear. If case studies are given write down your answers.
2. At the relevant point of each lesson, read the required selections in the Reader and answer the questions at the end.

3. As you come to the end of each lesson, go back to the Lesson Objectives and see if you have accomplished the set objectives.
4. If you have any questions as you read, write them down in your notebook and clarify them with your mentor. You are welcome to write to the course writers for further clarifications.
5. As you come closer to the completion of the course read the Course Research Assignment given at the end of the Reader and begin to work on it

CONTENTS:

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Lesson 1: What are the Synoptic Gospels

1. The Genre of the Gospels
2. The importance of the Synoptic Gospels in the Bible
3. Common Themes in the Synoptic Gospels
4. The Synoptic Problem

Lesson 2: How the Synoptic Gospels were written

1. Traditional History and Tests of Authenticity
2. Redaction Criticism
3. Narrative Criticism
4. Textual Criticism

UNIT 2: THE GOSPEL OF MARK -I

Lesson 3: Introduction to Mark

1. A survey of the Gospel of Mark
2. Authorship and intended Readers
3. Structure and Purpose of the Book
4. Divisions, themes and issues

Lesson 4: Introduction and Ministry of Jesus – Mk. 1- 9

1. Mark's Introduction - Mk. 1: 1-13
2. John the Baptist
3. The Son of Man
4. Early ministry at Capernaum
5. Miracles
6. Parables

UNIT 3: THE GOSPEL OF MARK -II

Lesson 5: The Road to Jerusalem – Mk 10- 13

1. The Road to Jerusalem
2. The Third Prediction
3. The healing of blind Bartimaeus
4. The King comes to Jerusalem
5. Discussions in the Temple
6. The Little Apocalypse

Lesson 6: Death and Resurrection – Mk 14 - 16

1. Anointed for Burial
2. The Last Supper
3. In the Garden of Gethsemane
4. The Arrest and Trial

5. The Crucifixion Mk 15
6. Resurrection Appearances
7. The Ending of Mark

UNIT 4: THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW - I

Lesson 7: Introduction to Matthew

1. A survey of the Gospel of Matthew
2. Authorship and intended Readers
3. Structure and Purpose of the Book
4. Style, Structure, themes and issues
5. Who came first – Mathew or Mark?

Lesson 8: Birth and Early Ministry

1. The Genealogy of Jesus
2. The Birth Narratives
3. John the Baptist and Jesus' Baptism
4. The Temptations of Jesus
5. Early Ministry
6. The Sermon on the Mount

UNIT 5: THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW -II

Lesson 9: The Year of Popularity

1. The Year of Popularity
2. The Calling of Matthew
3. The Sending out of the Twelve
4. The Teaching on the Kingdom
5. Recognition of the Messiah and his Church
6. Transfiguration and Mission
7. Further Teaching on the Kingdom

Lesson 10: The Passion Week and Resurrection

1. The Triumphal Entry
2. Teaching and Parables on Judgment
3. The Last Supper
4. The Arrest and Trial
5. The Crucifixion
6. The Resurrection Appearances
7. The Great Commission

UNIT 6: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE - I

Lesson 11: Introduction to Luke

1. A survey of the Gospel of Luke
2. Authorship and intended Readers
3. The Structure of the Book
4. The Purpose of the Book

Lesson 12: Birth and infancy of Jesus Christ

1. Introduction
2. The Birth of John the Baptist
3. The Birth narratives
4. In the Temple at Twelve
5. Infancy and Youth

UNIT 7: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE – II

Lesson 13: The Ministry of Jesus

1. Lukan Themes
2. Baptism and the Temptations
3. The Genealogy of Jesus
4. The Nazareth Manifesto
5. The Sermon on the Plain
6. Jesus Raises the Widow of Nain's son
7. Jesus Anointed by a sinful woman
8. Jesus' Women Disciples
9. Sending out of the Seventy-two
10. The Parable of the Good Samaritan
11. At the Home of Mary and Martha
12. The Lukan Parables
13. Zacchaeus the Tax collector

Lesson 14: Trial, Death and Resurrection

1. The Triumphal Entry
2. The Last Supper
3. The Arrest and Trials
5. The Crucifixion
6. The Resurrection Appearances
7. The Great Commission and the Ascension

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

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| 1. Answers to the Self Study Questions in the Study Guide | 30% |
| 2. An Assignment on the suggested topic of not more than 2000 words | 30% |
| 3. Final Exam | 40% |

COURSE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT:

Write a 2000 word assignment on *any one* of the following:

1. Choose any of the Synoptic Gospels and write notes for a Bible Study for the members of your Church or Cell Group on it. This should start with a description of your Church/ Cell Group, the number of members involved, ages, gender, etc. The Bible Study should include an introduction to the book, its author, date of writing, reason for its composition, etc. Then follow it with 5 studies on different chapters/sections with details on what you will be teaching and discussing.
2. Write an essay on the Synoptic Gospels explaining the name, their characteristics and the background, authorship and aim of each. Explain the Synoptic Problem and give your answer.
3. Chose **Parables** in the Synoptic Gospels and write a survey on it. This should include the meaning and the importance of parables in these books and its characteristics. Then select five Parables – two common to all three Synoptic Gospels and one peculiar to each Gospel and explain its meaning and significance.
4. Chose **Miracles** in the Synoptic Gospels and write a survey on it. This should include the meaning and the importance of Miracles in these books and its characteristics. Then select five Miracles – two common to all three Synoptic Gospels and one peculiar to each Gospel and explain its meaning and significance.

Your assignment must include footnotes and Bibliography