

**Oklahoma Baptist University**  
**REL 2013—The Life of Christ**  
Fall 2009 Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Bobby Kelly  
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Office: Owens Hall 113  
Office Hours: MWF 3:30–4:30; TR 3:30–4:30

**PURPOSE**

The OBU Academic Catalog states that this course is to be a study of the life and teachings of Jesus with emphasis on the historical and religious background of his life, major events, and themes of his teachings.

This course is based on the premise that "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, in order that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). Although I affirm the inspiration, authority, and absolute trustworthiness of all Scripture, I embrace studying the Gospels analytically. To ignore the critical issues in reading the gospels leads to a faith that is more *superstition* than substance. Thus, we will pay attention to, nay even glory in the difficult questions that the Gospels raise. We will also find legitimate application in our contemporary world. To ignore the consequences of the gospels for our lives and focus only on the critical issues is to invite *cynicism*.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Gain perspective on the nineteenth and twentieth-century "portraits" of Jesus, which set the context for all future work on the life and ministry of Jesus.
2. Acquire an understanding of the political, religious, and socioeconomic setting of first-century Palestine, the canvass on which a legitimate portrait of Jesus must be painted.
3. Be aware of the issues involved in the Synoptic Problem (question?) and its implications for interpreting the text.
4. Enhance your understanding of the contents, distinctive themes, and theology of each Synoptic Gospel.
5. Grasp the broad picture of the life and teachings of Jesus both through an overview of the Gospels as well as through a close examination of specific texts.
6. Develop skill in reading the gospels vertically and horizontally, respecting the fact that we have four Gospels, not one.
7. Discover the similarities between modern attempts to capture Jesus in film and the ancient attempt of the Gospel writers to capture Jesus in narrative.

**TEXTBOOKS**

- Aland, Kurt. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. New York: United Bible Societies.
- Stassen, Glen. *Living the Sermon on the Mount: A Practical Hope for Grace and Deliverance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Theissen, Gerd. *The Shadow of the Galilean*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

## MEANS OF MEASURING REALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES

### *Exams* (300 pts)

Two unit exams (Oct 2, Nov 6) and a final exam will be given. The exams may contain some objective questions (T/F, matching, multiple choice, short answer) but the overwhelming majority of the questions will be subjective (long and/or short essay). Make-up exams will be given only in extreme cases (e.g., illness, death in family, participation in an official University activity). In such cases the exam must be scheduled with Janet Burns (x2229 or [janet.burns@okbu.edu](mailto:janet.burns@okbu.edu)) either for Thursday afternoon @ 3:30 or Friday morning @ 10:00. Exams should be made up within one week of the date of the scheduled exam.

### *Book Reviews* (100 pts)

As part of the course opportunities, you are responsible to read and gain command of two books, Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean*, and Glen Stassen, *Living the Sermon on the Mount: A Practical Hope for Grace and Deliverance*. For each book you must submit a three-page, double-spaced review. The review should include information about the author (use the internet!), a one-page summary of the book, and two pages of analysis (strengths/weaknesses, value, readability, etc.). The review for Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean* is due September 9 and Glen Stassen, *Living the Sermon on the Mount: A Practical Hope for Grace and Deliverance* is due October 28. The Book review in each case is due at the beginning of class. **NO LATE REVIEW WILL BE ACCEPTED AND I WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM VIA EMAIL.**

### *Reading the Gospels in the Dark* (90 pts)

We are going to watch three Jesus movies in an attempt to find the "reel" Jesus (30 pts per movie). I will offer two viewings of each film as follows:

Monday Oct 5 - 5:00-7:30 **The King of Kings**

Tuesday Oct 6 - 7:00-9:30 **The King of Kings**

Monday Nov 9th - 7:00-9:20 **The Gospel According to St. Matthew**

Thursday Nov 12th - 5:00-7:20 **The Gospel According to St. Matthew**

Monday Nov 30 - 7:00-8:45 **The Miracle Maker**

Thursday Dec 3rd - 5:00-6:45 **The Miracle Maker**

The Reviews will be due as follows:

**Oct. 9th:** *The King of Kings*, Cecil B. DeMille, 1927; 155 minutes

**Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>:** *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1966; 136 minutes

**Dec. 7th:** *The Miracle Maker*, Derek Hayes & Stanislav Sokolov 2000; 90 minutes

You will be responsible for writing a review of each film that will take up the following questions as appropriate:

(1) **Use of the Gospels.** How are the Gospels employed in the film? Look for four issues: (a) What is added; (b) What is included; (c) What is excluded; and (d) How does the film handle the four Gospels? (For example, does the film tend to follow one more closely than another, is there consistent harmonization?). Overall, do you think the film is true to the "historical Jesus"?

(2) **Depiction of Jesus and Others.** Describe Jesus' physical characteristics as well as overall mood? How old does Jesus look in the film? Is he wimpy and meek, or powerful and in control? Did the physical image of Jesus match your own image of Jesus? Does the film emphasize Jesus' deity or humanity or does it strike a balance? How are Romans and Jews depicted? Who bears the blame for the death of Jesus? Did you feel the portrayal of the Jews anti-Semitic?

(3) **Personal.** Did you enjoy the film? Did the film challenge your own ideas about Jesus? Did the film open up any new understandings?

\* On a scale of one to four stars, with one the lowest and four the highest, how many stars would you give this film overall?

**NO LATE REVIEW WILL BE ACCEPTED AND I WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM VIA EMAIL.**

*Daily Assignments/Quizzes* (100 pts)

#### *Grading*

The course will be based primarily on the three exams (300 pts), the book reviews (100 pts), the movie reviews (90 pts) and quiz/worksheet average (100 pts). Class attendance, participation, and general attitude will be considered in the final analysis of grades (10 pts).

#### *Absences & Tardiness*

This is not a required class for any major. If you choose to take advantage of the opportunities offered in this course, then I will expect you to attend every class. My responsibility is to make the course worth your time. If you determine I am failing in my responsibility, please make your feelings known to me. Also, I will strive to begin class on time; I expect you to strive to be here when we begin. You must be a responsible member of this community of learners.

#### *Electronic Devices*

No electronic devices may be used in class with the single exception of a laptop computer for note-taking purposes. If you are using a laptop, you must turn off the wireless capability. You may not use a Blackberry, Iphone, or other smartphone in class for any reason. Facebook and/or Twitter updates can wait until class has been dismissed.

#### *Disability Statement*

Oklahoma Baptist University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests and submit documentation to the Director of Student Services at (405) 878-2416. The Student Services office is located in the Geiger Center, Room 101.

Date	Topic	Assignment
W 8/26	Course Introduction	
F 8/28	The Existence of Jesus: Non-Canonical Sources	Theissen, 189-95
M 8/31	<b>I. The Quest of the Historical Jesus: 1778-1906</b>	Is Jesus History? N.T. Wright, Quest of the Historical Jesus,” in <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
W 9/2	The Quest Continued	<a href="http://www.bsw.org/project/biblica/bibl80/Comm11.htm">http://www.bsw.org/project/biblica/bibl80/Comm11.htm</a>
F 9/4	<b>II. A Legitimate Quest for the Historical Jesus: Setting the Historical Context: Political Situation</b>	<a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/jews.html">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/jews.html</a>
M 9/7	<b>Labor Day Holiday: No Class</b>	
W 9/9	Socio-economic & Religious Situation	<b>Book Review: <i>The Shadow of the Galilean</i></b>
F 9/11	The Historical Context Continued	<a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/religions.html">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/religions.html</a>
M 9/14	Critical Methods: Source, Form, & Redaction Criticism	
W 9/16	Critical Methods: Coloring your synopsis	<a href="http://www.ntgateway.com/maze/synopses.htm">http://www.ntgateway.com/maze/synopses.htm</a>
F 9/18	Introduction to Mark	Read Mark & Worksheet
M 9/21	Mark Continued	
W 9/23	Introduction to Matthew	Read Matt & Worksheet
F 9/25	Introduction to Luke	Read Luke & Worksheet
M 9/28	Luke Continued	
W 9/30	Introduction to John	Read John & Worksheet
F 10/2	<b>EXAM ONE</b>	
M 10/5	<b>III. Jesus According to the Gospels: BIRTH NARRATIVES</b>	Matt 1-2; Luke 1-2; A §2-12 <a href="http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=17">http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=17</a>
W 10/7	Birth cont. and Genealogy	Matt 1-2; Luke 1-2; A §2-12
F 10/9	PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY: John the Baptist and Jesus' Baptism	A §13-18 (Mark 1:2-11): <b>Review Due</b>

M 10/12	The Temptation	A §20 (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)
W 10/14	MINISTRY IN GALILEE: Kingdom of God	A §32-33 (Mark 1:14-16; Luke 4:16-30)
F 10/16	<b>Fall Free Days</b>	
M 10/19	Early Galilean Ministry	A §34-42 (Mark 1:16-45)
W 10/21	Early Galilean Ministry	A §43-49 (Mark 2:1-3:19)
F 10/23	Early Galilean Ministry	A §137-39; 146-48; 150-56 (Mark 5:1-6:6; 6:32-56)
M 10/26	JESUS' TEACHING: The Sermon on the Mount	Matt 5-7; A §50-83
W 10/28	The Sermon on the Mount	<b>Book Review: Stassen, <i>Living the Sermon on the Mount</i></b>
F 10/30	The Sermon on the Mount	
F 11/2	Parables	A §122-34
W 11/4	Parables	A §183; 186; 199-200; 203; 207; 220-222; 228; 236; 237
F 11/6	<b>EXAM TWO</b>	
M 11/9	JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM: Blindness of the Disciples in the face of Jesus' passion predictions	A §156-68; Mark 8:22-9:50
W 11/11	Journey cont.	A §251-56; Mark 10:1-10:52
F 11/13	PASSION WEEK: Triumphal Entry	A §269: <b>Review Due</b>
M 11/16	Cursing the Fig Tree/Temple	A §272-275
W 11/18	Interrogation in the Temple and Olivet Discourse	A §276-294
F 11/20	Anointing in Bethany; The Upper Room	A §306; 308-312; 315
M 11/23	<b>Viewing: Miracle Maker (MLC 12:00-1:45)</b>	
11/25-27	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	
M 11/30	Gethsemane and Arrest	A §330-331
W 12/2	The Trial of Jesus	A §332-342
F 12/4	Death of Jesus	A §343-351
M 12/7	Death of Jesus	<b>Review Due</b>
W 12/9	Resurrection	A §352-367
F 12/11	Reflections	

### **FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE:**

**Section A (12:00): Wednesday, Dec 16, 8:00-10:00 am**

**Section B (1:00): Wednesday, Dec 16, 3:15-5:15 pm**