

301: New Testament Bible Survey
Session 2: The Synoptic Gospels

The word “gospel” comes from the Old English word “goodspell”, meaning “good news.”

The gospels present the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The gospels are a unique literary genre, combining ancient history and biography .

The first three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are called the synoptic gospels because they have a literary relationship.

The Gospel According to Mark is a very dramatic presentation of Christ.

Many of the characters in Mark fail to understand who Jesus is.

The Gospel of Mark has an abrupt ending, which caused later scribes to create a better one. We call these textual variants.

The Gospel of Matthew has long been known for its deep identification with 2nd

Temple Judaism.

In Matthew, Jesus is the ultimate reference of Torah. He is the living Torah.

Matthew is involved in an intra-Jewish dialogue about the nature of faith and Jesus' revelation, not a condemnation of an entire religion.

Another major theme in Matthew is discipleship.

Discipleship in the community of Jesus is radical , hyper-ethical ,

and leads to persecution.

The Gospel According to Luke is written to a benefactor named Theophilus.

Luke-Acts is the longest work in the New Testament.

A major theme in Luke is that the community of faith includes all ethnic groups.

The idea of salvation in Luke is not simply about personal salvation, but involves a great

reversal in the social dimension as well.

Jesus' message about the Kingdom of God taking root is ultimately fulfilled in the

Book of Acts.