

Assignment for Expository Preaching: Gospels and Acts

Gary W. Derickson, Ph.D.

Reading: Matthew, John, and Acts in their entirety. The other two Gospels will be read as they relate to questions below.

Discussion: Come prepared to discuss these issues based on your reading and reflection.

What is the “synoptic problem” in the Gospels? How do we answer the issues raised in the modern study of the Synoptic Gospels?

Why is the genealogy of Matthew and Luke different?

Why are the temptations of Jesus in a different order in Matthew and Luke? Does this raise a problem with inerrancy?

Look at the material of the five discourses in Matthew (chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 24-25). Assuming they form a chiasm, how should this affect our interpretation of those discourses? Which one is most important (the focus of the Gospel)? Does this then influence our understanding of the Gospel’s message? How?

How applicable is the Sermon on the Mount to the church today? There are at least three major views on how much of it applies to us today. Why do some people have trouble applying it to the church today?

When Jesus sent the apostles out to proclaim the kingdom (Matt 10), they *all* performed miracles. Does this mean that Judas was a believer?

Matthew is the only Gospel that uses the term “church.” Where is the term used? Who uses it? And, what is the significance of this?

In Matthew 24, the disciples ask Jesus two things. Which of their questions does He answer in the Olivet Discourse?

In Mark 14:27-31 Jesus promises that Peter will deny Him three times before the cock crows twice. In the other Gospels it crows just once. How do we resolve this?

Is Mark 16:9-20 part of the original autograph (and therefore Scripture), or added later? Can someone be an inerrantist, have a high view of Scripture, and reject these verses?

Is Luke’s Sermon on the Level Place (Luke 6:17-49) the same event as Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7)? If you say yes, explain the differences. If you say no, explain the similarities.

Does Luke 15:11-32 (Prodigal Son) teach about how to obtain salvation? What does its immediate context contribute to our understanding of the point Jesus is making?

What does Luke 22:35-38 contribute to our understanding of Jesus’ instructions in Matthew 10 and Luke 10?

What major themes are introduced in the Prologue (1:1-18) of John’s Gospel?

At the wedding at Cana, did Jesus make wine or grape juice?

Are the “believers” in the multitude of John 2 regenerate or just seekers?

What is the significance of the man born blind in the message of John’s Gospel?

What are the three reactions to the raising of Lazarus? What does that tell us about miracles?

What is the focus of Jesus' instructions in the Upper Room? Does His "audience" affect how we should interpret 15:2 and 6?

What is the significance of Jesus' prayer in 17:5?

Why did John include the last chapter?

Does the disciples question in Acts 1:6 and Jesus' answer in verses 7-8 help us understand Matthew's Gospel?

Is Matthias a legitimate apostle? Or was it supposed to be Paul?

How does Acts 2:40-41 help us understand Peter's words in 2:38?

The Holy Spirit comes upon Jewish believers (Acts 2), Gentiles (Acts 11), but is given by Peter to Samaritans (Acts 8) and to Jewish believers (Acts 19). Why does Luke recount these four events? And, are they normative, or singular events?

Why did Paul and Barnabas go where they went on the first missionary journey?

In Paul's first missionary journey, he struck a man blind. What does this tell us about apostolic authority?

Did Paul fail in Athens?

Was Paul wrong to go to Jerusalem where he was arrested?

Message Statements for the Gospels and Acts

Matthew – Jesus, Israel's Messianic King,... instructed His followers and postponed the coming of His kingdom because He was repeatedly rejected by the nation.

Mark – Jesus... demonstrated He was the Son of God through His miracles, teaching, passion, and resurrection.

Luke – Jesus... is the Savior of the World, evidenced by His early life, ministry, passion, and resurrection.

John – Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God,... reveals the Father and gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Acts – The spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome... came through the ministries of God's people as they obeyed Christ's command amid opposition.