



Jesus and the Gospels

Yearlong 2023-2024

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

Grades 7- 9

Jesus and the Gospels is for the middle school student who wants to learn about Jesus as He is presented in the four Gospels. Students best situated to succeed will be proficient readers who can write 3-5 sentence summaries and are willing to learn how to take notes and mark texts.

Class Dates: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 through Thursday, May 24, 2024

Class Times: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m. Eastern Time

Instructor: Nathan Dickinson

Email: Nathan.dickinson.scholeacademy@gmail.com

Office Hours: Friday 9:00-11:00 a.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Jesus and the Gospels will explore the major milestones of the Gospel accounts (birth, baptism, miracles, didactic teaching, crucifixion and resurrection, etc.) in the life of Jesus. The way each Gospel highlights these aspects of the life of Jesus will be explored, with an appreciation given to the diversity and unity of Holy Scripture.

It is impossible to capture the impact that Jesus has had on our world. This class is an attempt to begin to understand Him to worship Him more fully. Many in modern culture have things to say about Jesus, but this class, like the Reformation, will say *ad fontes*, or “back to the sources”! We will meet Jesus as He presents Himself in the Gospels, not as He may be presented by modern media. Just like those in Jesus’ day, the participants in this class must engage with what Jesus said and did, and reflect on the implications of that interaction for their lives.

This class will seek to sit “under the text”, drawing out what the text itself means and how it applies to us today. The nature of parables, the purpose of miracles, and the relationship between stories in the Gospels, among other topics that arise in the Gospels, will be discussed as readings occur.

SCHEDULE

CLASS SESSIONS DATES:

Classes will take place on Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m. (ET) for 32 weeks.

Orientation: Tuesday August 29 at 9:00 a.m.

Semester 1:

September 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28
October 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31
November 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 28, 30
[Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 20-24]
December 5, 7, 12, 14,
[Christmas Break: Dec. 18-Jan. 5]
January 9, 11, 16, 18

Semester 2:

January 23, 25, 30
February 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 27, 29
[Winter Break: Feb. 19-23]
March 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 30
[Holy Week Break: March 25-29]
April 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30
May 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23

**Please note that dates are subject to change as the instructor's circumstances might dictate (e.g. illness, family emergency). Any classes canceled by the instructor will be made up in some other way.*

COURSE MAP

QUARTER 1

1. Background to the Gospels
2. Why Four Gospels?
3. Mark Overview
4. Mark's Literary Distinctives
5. Mark's Theological Distinctives

QUARTER 2

1. Matthew Overview
2. Matthew and the Old Testament
3. Matthew's Birth Narrative
4. Sermon on the Mount
5. Matthew and the Kingdom
6. Matthew and Mission

QUARTER 3

1. Luke Overview
2. Luke's Birth Narrative
3. Luke's Literary Distinctives
4. Luke's Theological Distinctives
5. Luke and Acts

QUARTER 4

1. John Overview
2. Review of "synoptic" Gospels and John
3. John's Literary Distinctives
4. John's Theological Distinctives
5. Four Gospels: One Jesus; Reading of *The Man Born to Be King*

COURSE READINGS

COURSE TEXTS TO PURCHASE:

1. ***ESV Bible*** (other translations may be used for completing reading assignments, but for clarity and simplicity everyone must use ESV during class)
2. ***Discovering Jesus: Why Four Gospels To Portray One Person?*** By T.D. Alexander
3. ***Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible*** by Carl G. Rasmussen
4. ***The Man Born To Be King*** by Dorothy Sayers

OTHER READINGS SUPPLIED BY THE TEACHER WILL INCLUDE:

1. The First Homily: “A fruitful exhortation to the reading and knowledge of holy scripture”
2. Various readings from English Reformers and the early church relevant to the topics of discussion

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

1. Students are expected to come to class prepared: with reading assignments completed and contemplated, all materials present, and ready to actively participate.
2. Students are expected to be engaged: listening carefully, asking and answering questions, and thinking about the matters under discussion.
3. Students are expected to take notes on important and relevant content in an organized way so those notes can be consulted for assignments and assessments.
4. Students are expected to submit written assignments on time, completed neatly and thoroughly.
5. Students are expected to act responsibly: to let the teacher know if he or she will be absent and seek a way to make up for the lost class; to keep up with all reading and writing assignments, and ask for guidance and direction from the teacher whenever necessary.
6. Students are expected to be respectful to their teacher, their classmates and the material.
7. Students are expected to submit their work by scanning it and uploading it into the Canvas assignment window.

STUDENT MASTERY

Assessment of students is made in light of the following goals:

1. That they gain knowledge of the basic cultural background of the Gospel accounts.
2. That they understand the literary flow and theme of each Gospel.
3. That they understand the timeline of the life of Jesus.
4. That they know the major figures in the Gospel accounts.
5. That they grow in love toward God and neighbor through extended reflection on the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.
6. That they are able to articulate why there are four Gospels and why it matters.
7. That they are able to explain the major points in the timeline of the life of Jesus.

8. That they develop the habits of reading with care, listening with attention and writing summaries.
9. That they can express what the Gospel is and why it matters.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Assignments:

Students will be given a reading assignment for each class, accompanied by a few questions intended to direct the student to what is most important in the reading for the purposes of this course. Students will also be directed at times to mark in their text in order to make note of key names or terms. Students should expect to spend almost as much time preparing for class as they will spend in class.

Class Discussion and Note-taking:

Class time will be spent drawing out the essential meaning of the readings through Socratic discussion. Students will be directed to take additional notes as necessary.

Commonplace Journal:

At the end of each class, student will be directed to write a few sentences summarizing one or two of the main points of the reading and discussion in a commonplace journal. This journal will become a helpful tool for the student to write short essays on assigned topics. Whenever possible, there will be some time at the end of class given to the students to work on this. Journal entries should be sent to Mr. Dickinson by noon the next day for comment and approval.

Writing Assignments:

One of the most important practices of the Christian life is the movement from the head to the heart. Therefore, students will be asked to write short essays after each Gospel is read in its entirety, reflecting on the most impactful story for his or her relationship with God.

GRADING

The *Jesus and the Gospels* course through the Canterbury House of Studies at Scholé Academy is intended to engage and invite students to read, to think, to question and to express their thoughts in discussion and writing, and these are activities that do not always lend themselves to easy evaluation and assessment. These are not quantifiable activities. Nonetheless, we also recognize the need or desire for grades, so traditional numeric or letter grades will be provided and readily accessed on the *Jesus and the Gospels* Canvas page. Additionally, Scholé will provide a transcript of that grade to the requesting parent at the end of the year.

Student grades will be comprised of:

1. Reading: 35%
2. Summaries: 15%
3. Class Participation: 30%
4. Writing Assignments: 20%

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students will sometimes take assessment tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#) which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. Proper citation of all sources is essential to the academic endeavor. Remember to cite any source if the information is not common knowledge or is an opinion obtained through any source. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade. Students should consult their chosen style manual (see Student Expectations above) for specific direction on obtaining, quoting and paraphrasing sources.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom, one of the leading companies that provides such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer, then attaching those files as .pdfs to an email. They will submit their work to the *Jesus and the Gospels* Canvas assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Nathan Dickinson holds a M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and currently serves as the planting priest at Church of the Good Shepherd in Summersville, West Virginia. He is a West Virginia native who has had approximately a decade of teaching experiences in local churches and missionary settings. He has taught the Bible in Kenya, Zambia, Myanmar, and Jamaica, and has taught English and New Testament (among other things) to students in a Christian school setting. He loves helping students see the beauty of God in Holy Scripture and helping students learn to engage in meaningful dialogue.

His two boys (Barnabas and Martin) keep his home life interesting and full of adventure! When he is not adventuring with his wife and boys, he is looking for a good cup of coffee, a good book, and a good conversation.