

# ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## BIB 532 Hermeneutics

James D. Hernando

Fall, 2008

### COURSE SYLLABUS

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the principles, methods and skills needed for proper biblical interpretation. The interpretation of Scripture is examined in view of its historical, social and literary environments with the goal of understanding the author's intended meaning and applying that meaning to contemporary needs. The student will survey the history of hermeneutics and learn the principles and methods that apply to both general and special hermeneutics.

#### OBJECTIVES

At the successful completion of this course the student should be able to demonstrate mastery of the course material, specifically, by being able to do the following:

##### *Knowledge:*

1. Discuss his/her understanding of the nature and work of hermeneutics as it relates to the task of exegesis and expository preaching.
2. Identify and discuss the significant developments throughout the history of biblical interpretation, describing their characteristic strengths and weaknesses.
3. List and define the principles that are: 1) appropriate for interpreting texts in general (general hermeneutics) 2) appropriate for interpreting specific literary genres (special hermeneutics) within the Bible.
4. Identify and define the specialized terminology connected with the science of biblical interpretation.

##### *Skills:*

1. Apply the principles of interpretation to the exegesis of a biblical text.
2. Identify the use or violation of sound hermeneutical principles in an example of biblical exposition.
3. Identify major critical issues in contemporary hermeneutics and isolate the hermeneutical presuppositions at work among the divergent views.

##### *Attitudes:*

1. Form an increased awareness of the responsibility incumbent upon the Christian to rightly divide the word of truth.

2. Appreciate the task of biblical exegesis in the discovery and illumination of the biblical text.
3. Appreciate more fully the nature of biblical revelation and its timeless utility as an instrument of the Holy Spirit to speak to our lives.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

### ***Required:***

Blomberg, C., William W. Klein, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1993. **(KBH)**

Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001. **(DH)**

Hernando, James D. *Dictionary of Hermeneutics: A Concise Guide to Terms, Names, Methods and Expressions*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2005. **(H)**

### ***Recommended:***

Kaiser, Walter C. and Moises Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Stein, Robert. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing By the Rules*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996.

McQuilkin, J. Robertson. *Understanding and Applying the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983, rev.ed.

## **BASIC OUTLINE<sup>1</sup>**

### **I. Introduction:**

- A. Discovering the Need for Hermeneutics
- B. Defining the Task of Hermeneutics
- C. Determining the Purpose of Hermeneutics
- D. Deciphering the Presuppositions of Hermeneutics

### **II. The History of Biblical Interpretation**

- A. Jewish Interpretation
  1. Intertestamental
  2. Qumran
  3. Rabbinic
- B. New Testament Period
  1. Jesus and the OT
  2. The OT in the NT

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<sup>1</sup> A separate Reading Schedule will be provided.

- C. Early Patristic Period
- D. Medieval Period
- E. Reformation and Post Reformation Periods
- F. Modern Period
- III. General Hermeneutics
  - A. Language
    - 1. lexical study
    - 2. grammatical study
    - 3. syntactical study
  - B. Context
  - C. History
  - D. Culture and Contextualization
- IV. Special Hermeneutics
  - A. Introduction to Genre
  - B. Historical-Narrative
  - C. Prophecy & Apocalyptic
  - D. Typology
  - E. Wisdom & Poetry
  - F. Gospels
  - G. Parables
  - H. Epistles
- V. Application of Hermeneutics
  - A. The Doctrinal Use of the Bible
  - B. Principlization and Preaching
  - B. The Devotional & Practical Use of the Bible

## **METHODOLOGY**

The course will pursue its objectives via the following:

1. Individual reading, research, and writing.
2. Class lecture in order to:
  - a. provide a framework for integrating the readings.
  - b. explore other relevant areas not covered in the readings.
3. Class discussion of issues raised by the readings and lectures.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Class participation: Attendance is expected at all class sessions. Whenever possible, absences should be announced beforehand to the professor.
2. (5) 2-3 page interpretive essays (describing how hermeneutical principles and methods apply to specific texts and/or problematic interpretation)
3. Completion of all text book reading assignments (see Reading Schedule) by the dates corresponding to the related class topics. In addition, prepare a brief annotated bibliography

of all supplemental readings completed during the Fall Study Break. These readings should include material read in preparation for your interpretive essays or hermeneutics project paper.

4. (5) 2-3 page interpretive essays (see handout)
5. Take-home Mid-term exam **OR** Hermeneutics Project Papers (See Descriptions)
6. Final Exam

### **CHAPEL ATTENDANCE**

The seminary chapel schedule intersects with our class schedule on Thursday, September 20, 1:30 p.m. Attendance is required. We will attend chapel as a class on that date and return to class after chapel for the remaining time of our class.

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Grade Weights:

Class Participation	10%
Course Readings	10%
Interpretive Essays	30%
Project Paper (see options) OR	20%
Take-home Mid-term	
Final Exam	<u>30%</u>
	100%

***NOTE: Except under unusual extenuating circumstances, late work will be penalized at the rate of 1/2 letter grade for every day of lateness.***

### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Baker, D. L. *Two Testaments, One Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976.

Berkhof, L. *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950.

Blomberg, C., Klein, W. and Hubbard, R. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1993.

Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Bullinger, E. W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated*. 1898; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968.

- Caird, G. B. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.
- Carson, D.A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.
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- Dockery, David S. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001.
- Fee, Gordon, and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983.
- Gasque, W. Ward, and William Sanford LeSor. *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978.
- Grant, Robert, and David Tracy. *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Hernando, James D. *Dictionary of Hermeneutics: A Concise Guide to Terms, Names, Methods and Expressions*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2005.
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- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Toward An Exegetical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Larkin, William J. *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988.
- Longenecker, Richard N. *New Testament Social Ethics for Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.
- Longman, Tremper, III. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation. In Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, ed. Moises Silva, Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.
- Marshall, I. Howard, ed. *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977.

- McKim, Donald K. ed. *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley. *Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963.
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Ramm, Bernard ed. *Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970.
- Ryken, Leland. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Silva, Moises. *God, Language and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*. Vol. 4 in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Edited by Moises Silva. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Soulen, Richard N. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 2d ed. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.
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- Stuart, Douglas. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors*. 2d ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984.
- Terry, Milton S. *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments*. Reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001.
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## **SPECIFIC DATA**

Syllabus prepared by James D. Hernando, Ph.D., June 27, 2008

