

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BIB 532 Hermeneutics

James D. Hernando

Spring, 2003

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the various methods and principles of biblical interpretation which have been employed up to the present and the necessity for the grammatical-historical method of interpretation. The student will learn and apply the tools and methods of 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 in 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. Give adequate evidence of familiarity with the specialized terminology connected with the science of biblical interpretation.

Skills:

1. Apply the principles of interpretation to the exegesis 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., Klein, W. and Hubbard, R. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1993.

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

Webb, William J. *Slaves, Wommen and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001.

Recommended:

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

BASIC OUTLINE

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
- C. Early Patristic Period
- D. Medieval Period
- E. Reformation Period
- F. Modern Period

III. General Hermeneutics

- A. Language
 1. lexical study
 2. grammatical study
 3. syntactical study
- B. Context
- C. History
- D. Culture/anthropology

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. 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 attendance** and **participation** is expected at all class sessions. Whenever possible absences should be announced beforehand to the professor.
2. Completion of all **assigned reading** (see Class Schedule) by the date corresponding to the related class topic.
3. A 5-6 page **critical book report** on the text by William Webb, plus written responses on **selected reflection questions**.
4. One 10-12 page hermeneutic project-paper (see **Project-Descriptions**)
5. **Mid-term Exam**
6. **Final Exam**

NOTE: Late work will be penalized at the rate of 1/2 letter grade for every day of lateness.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Grade Weights:

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|----------------------|------------|
| Class Participation | 5% |
| Course Readings | 10% |
| Critical Book Review | 10% |
| Reflection Questions | 10% |
| Project Paper | 15% |
| Mid-term | 20% |
| Final Exam | <u>30%</u> |
| | 100% |

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

- 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.
- Carson, D. A., and John D. Woodbridge, eds. *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.
- Fee, Gordon, and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Fee, Gordon. *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.
- Johnson, Elliott, E. *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- 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.
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- _____. *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.
- Sterrett, N. T. *How to Understand Your Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974.
- 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.
- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001.
- Wenham, John W. *Christ and the Bible*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1972.

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by James D. Hernando, Ph.D., December 9, 2002

