

Bible Interpretation

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Course Description:

Scripture is the well from which Christians can draw the life giving waters of truth and wisdom. Sadly, though, many Evangelicals treat the Bible as a stagnate pool fit only for ivory tower theologians to drink from. Despite the confusion, intimidation and boredom we feel at times when we come to Scripture, every believer has the responsibility to hide God's wonderful Word in their heart. By "re-viewing" familiar passages and wrestling with those troublesome sections that are often kept at a safe distance, students will learn the essential principles for interpreting and applying the Bible correctly and consistently.

Course Textbook:

McQuilkin, Robertson. Understanding and Applying the Bible (Revised & Expanded).
Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009.

Course Schedule:

- 9/21: God's Communication Process; From Midrash to Postmodernity: A History of Interpretation (**UAB, 21-89, Hansen essay**)
- 10/5: What are you Looking For?: A Primer on Observation (**Elkins article**)
- 10/12: Bridging the Cultural Gap: The Trouble with Distanciation (**UAB pgs.95-187; 25 observations due**)
- 10/19: Foxes in the Vineyard: Dealing with Meddlesome Texts (**UAB pgs.235-279; Culture Gap #'s 1-10**)
- 11/2: Exploring Joy: Working through Philippians (**Culture Gap #'s 11-20**)
- 11/9: Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Study Tools (**Outlines due**)
- 11/16: Literary Genres: Poetry, Proverbs and Parables (**UAB pgs.209-231**)
- 11/23: Literary Genres: Narrative, Carnival and Prophecy (**UAB pgs.281-301**)
- 11/30: Learning by Heart: Letting the Text Interpret Us (**UAB pgs.304-351**)
- 12/14: **Exegetical Papers Due via email**

Course Assignments:

- A thorough reading of the text, article(s) and essay. Except for the first week of class, readings are due on the specific week listed in the course schedule.
- Each student will prepare an in-depth outline (either the Book of Jonah or I John) that could be used for a 4-6 week Sunday school class. They are to be typed and presented in normal outline format.
- Each student will type an exegetical paper (1750-2000 words, Times New Roman, 1.5 spaced, 12 pt. font) on one of the sections of Scripture to be discussed the second week of class. Each paper will present the section and background material, interact with interpretive options, as well as include the conclusions the student draws through their work. A minimum of four sources other than the Bible *must* be used for this paper.

For Further Study

The following books are listed for a more in-depth study of Bible interpretation. They are categorized as basic (B), intermediate (I), and advanced (A). Those marked with an asterisk (*) are especially recommended.

Adam, A. K. M., Stephen E. Fowl; Kevin J. Vanhoozer; and Francis Watson. Reading Scripture With the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. (I)

Duvall, J. Scott; Hays, J. Daniel. Grasping God's Word. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Publishing Company, 2001. (B/I)

Dyck, Elmer, Ed. The Act of Bible Reading: A Multi-disciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (I)

Fee, Gordon D.; and Stuart, Douglas. How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth, 2nd. ed.. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1993. (B)

Fowl, Stephen E., and L. Gregory Jones. Reading in Communion: Scripture & Ethics in Christian Life. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991. (B/I)

Hall, Christopher A. Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. (I)

*Hendricks, Howard; and Hendricks, William. Living by the Book. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. (B)

*Jensen, Alexander S. Theological Hermeneutics. London: SCM Press, 2007. (I)

Kaiser, Walter. and Silva, Moises. An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1994. (A)

Longman III, Tremper. Reading the Bible with Heart & Mind. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1997. (B)

*McQuilkin, Robertson, Understanding and Applying the Bible, Revised Edition. Chicago: The Moody Press, 1993. (I)

*Osborne, Grant R. The Hermeneutical Spiral. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991. (I/A)

Ryken, Leland. How to Read the Bible as Literature. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1984. (I)

Sire, James W. Scripture Twisting: 20 Ways the Cults Misread the Bible. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1980. (B)

Smith, James K. A. The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational
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Hermeneutic. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. (A)

*Vanhoozer, Kevin J. Is There a Meaning in this Text?. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998. (I/A)

*Zuck, Roy B. Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth.
Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991. (B)