

Course Syllabus

I. Course description

This course is an introduction to Bible study methods, or more specifically biblical hermeneutics which is the science and art of biblical interpretation. It surveys the major interpretive approaches to the Bible, both historical and contemporary, and attempts to convey both general and special hermeneutics by examining parables, prophecies, poetry, and a great variety of figurative constructs. This course also elucidates the principles of normal, cultural, literary, and historical interpretation.

II. Course objectives

This course is designed to help each student:

- A. Learn the principles and methods of sound biblical hermeneutics
- B. Grow in the ability to exegete a text of Scripture by applying sound biblical hermeneutics
- C. Receive friendly, direct, correction and exhortation related to his biblical hermeneutics
- D. Move closer to, and grow more richly in, his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

III. Course materials

- A. Professor's notes and handouts
- B. *Basic Bible Interpretation* by Roy B. Zuck (14.99 at christianbook.com)
- C. *The Interpretation of Prophecy* by Paul Lee Tan (20.00 at bibleprophecyresources.com)

IV. Course requirements

- A. Attendance of and participation in all classes
- B. Book reviews
 - 1. Read each of the two assigned textbooks and critique them chapter-by-chapter, evaluating the author's inclusion of his material into his argument for the book.
 - 2. Write approximately 3 pages per review (certificate and bachelor students will read and review Zuck only).
- C. Papers
 - 1. Construct a rough and final outline of Genesis (instructions will be given under the "Macro exegesis" portion of the course –consult only a non-outlined Bible)
 - 2. Construct final outline of Revelation (masters students only)
 - 3. Choose 3 topics from the following list and write 6-8 page exegetical defense papers (bachelor students will outline Genesis and choose two exegetical papers, certificate students will outline Genesis and choose one exegetical paper).
 - a. Isaiah 7:10-17 – Identify the virgin and her son in Isaiah's prophecy
 - b. Isaiah 53:6 – Are the sheep in this passage humanity in general or someone or some group more specific? In this context, what does it mean for the sheep to go astray?

- c. Ezekiel 37:1-14 – Determine whether this is a spiritual or literal resurrection
- d. Joel 2:1-11, 25 – Identify the nature of this army (literal or figurative)
- e. Acts 1:10-11 – From the context of Acts 1 are these verses referring to the rapture or Second Coming of Christ?
- f. Acts 2:14-21 – Is this event a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy?
- g. Galatians 4:21-31 – Identify why Paul used allegory and determine whether it is or is not a legitimate use of our interpretation of the Old Testament today
- h. Revelation 11:3-14 – Identify the two witnesses
- i. Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21– Is Babylon historic Old Testament Babylon or is it representative of another city?
- j. John 15:1-8 – Considering the context, who is Jesus referring to in these verses when He mentions the branches “in Me” who do not bear fruit and are taken away (2), and who do not abide in Him and who are cast out and burned (6)?
- k. Malachi 4:5-6 – From New Testament passages such as Matthew 11:12-15; 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17; and John 1:21, determine if John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy.
- l. Matthew 9:35-38 – What does Jesus mean that the people “were weary and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd”?
- m. Luke 21: 1-4 – Why does Luke insert this passage at this point?
- n. John 1:29; John 3:16 – Specifically, what does “world” refer to in these verses? How does John use the word “world” generally in his Gospel?
- o. John 12:32 – Who does “all” refer to in this verse?
- p. Ezekiel 3:16-21 – Can the watchman be more broadly applied to anyone else besides Ezekiel? If so, who?
- q. I Corinthians 2:6-16 – Identify the “we,” “us,” the “natural man,” and “he who is spiritual” in this passage.
- r. I Corinthians 3:10-17 – Identify the “anyone” and “each one” in verses 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 in this passage.

Note: Papers shall be 1” margins, double-spaced New Times Roman 14 font (or equivalent), each paper with a cover page. General guidelines for papers will be discussed in class. Only hard copies of book reviews and papers will be accepted. No email copies.

V. Course grading

Thirty-five percent of the grade will be based on class attendance and participation, 40 % on reading, 20 % book reviews, and 40 % percent on outlines and exegetical papers.

All late book reviews and papers will be reduced 1 letter grade per week.

Each absence will be counted as a one letter grade reduction on the final grade.

VI. Course schedule

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| 1 | June 22 | Orientation, hermeneutics and exegesis resource books assigned, discussion of required papers, knowledge quiz
Lesson 1: Definition of hermeneutics and other related disciplines |
| 2 | June 29 | Lesson 2: Need for hermeneutics
Papers selection due
Lesson 3: Qualifications and presuppositions for hermeneutics
First outline of Genesis due |

3	July 6	Lesson 4: Bibliographical resources Zuck reading and review due
4	July 13	Lesson 5: Hermeneutical systems: Chronological, eschatological, and theological First exegetical paper due for masters
5	July 20	Lesson 6: General hermeneutics: Presuppositional approach General hermeneutics: Macro exegesis – identifying structural markers
6	July 27	Lesson 7: General hermeneutics: Macro exegesis – identifying authorial purpose and theme General hermeneutics: Macro exegesis – charting Lesson 8: General hermeneutics: Micro exegesis Final outline of Genesis due
7	August 3	Lesson 9: Special hermeneutics: Definition and genre Second exegetical paper due, first for bachelors Lesson 10: Special hermeneutics: Figures of speech, symbols, prophecy, types
8	August 10	Lesson 11: Special hermeneutics: Figures of thought – parables Tan reading and review due, final outline of Revelation due Third exegetical paper due for masters, second for bachelors, first for certificate

Selected Bibliography

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- Ryrie, Charles C. *Dispensationalism Today*: Moody Press, 1965.
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- Trench, R. C. *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*: Baker, 1981.
- Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutic: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*: Baker, 1981.
- Walvoord, John F. *The Millennial Kingdom*: Zondervan, 1959.
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