

912 – Biblical Interpretation

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Western Reformed Seminary

Spring PMP, 2022

Course Objectives

1. To convince students of the importance of hermeneutics as a discipline.
2. To adequately survey the history of interpretation in the church, including significant errors.
3. To convey the basic principles used to accurately interpret the Bible.

Course Outcomes

1. Students will be able to explain why hermeneutics is vital to Christian ministry.
2. Students will explain and have a biblical answer to significant historical interpretative methods.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in a proper interpretation of various biblical genres.

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
5/23-27	Lectures	All Texts Due on or before 5/23
6/27	Final Exam and Special Project Due	

- TEXTS:**
- Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Baker Publishing, 1994. [Selected Portions]
[Principles of Biblical Interpretation: Berkhof, Louis: 9780801064777: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989.
[The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature \(Relativism: 2\): Greidanus, Sidney: 9780802803603: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Baker Publishing, 1980. [Selected Portions]
[Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics: Ramm, Bernard: 9780801020834: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Texts must be completed before the first day of class.

SPECIAL PROJECT: Choose one of the following:

1. *Book reading and review* – Select and read a scholarly book in the area of hermeneutics or exegesis. Write a review article on the book of 500-1000 words which would be suitable for publication in a theological journal.
2. *Analysis paper* – Select a passage of Scripture. Write a paper, typed in the standard format, of about 1500-2000 words analyzing how various standard interpreters have interpreted that passage in different ways. Provide a critique, reasons for the view you favor, and a bibliography, of course.
3. *Article response* – Write an article critiquing another article written in a scholarly journal concerning hermeneutics of exegesis. Your article should be about 1000-1500 words.
4. *Subject overview* – Produce an annotated outline of Berkhof's *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, organized into five to ten sections. This outline should have enough material included to provide the basis for a series of five to ten lectures on this subject. Include additional material in areas in which you would supplement Berkhof (especially if present a different viewpoint that you would have).

You will have a month to complete and submit your project after the conclusion of the class.

FINAL: Study Questions are provided for you to prepare. This exam will cover all the lecture material for the class. *You will have a month to complete and submit it after the conclusion of the class.*

GRADING:	Reading	30%
	Special Project	40%
	Final	30%

Study Questions

1. Define and distinguish the terms *hermeneutics* and *exegesis*. Give at least one OT and one NT application of each term. (4)
2. What is eisegesis? (2)
3. Define the grammatical-historical-theological [GHT] method of exegesis. (3)
4. Distinguish letters from GHT exegesis. (2)
5. What four trends of error can one find in the history of exegesis? (4)
6. Define *allegory* and *allegorism*. List the primary Jewish writer and at least two historical Christian writers who practiced allegorical exegesis. (5)
7. What were the four types of meaning found in the text by Catholic exegetes? (4)
8. Why did the church take to itself the position of the official interpreter of Scripture? (2)
9. In what three rules did the Council of Trent establish RC exegesis? (3)
10. Define and contrast rationalism's and neo-orthodoxy's views concerning biblical history. (6)
11. What is "consistent eschatology"? (2)
12. Name the three most famous promoters of neo-orthodoxy. (3)
13. Why did the Pietistic movement develop in biblical interpretation? Who were the two early prominent leaders of this movement? (4)
14. What have been two dangers of the devotional school? (2)
15. Discuss how subjective interpretation is found today in those with various social or political agendas. (4)
16. List at least three of the rules of interpretation proposed by Hillel. (3) [Extra credit if you can name all seven!]
17. Basically, how does the NT interpret the OT portions it quotes? (2)
18. Name two church fathers who favored literal exegesis. (2)
19. Which 14th-century writer was a "hermeneutical bridge" to the Reformation? (1)
20. What were three keys to Luther's exegesis? (3)
21. What were three main principles of Calvin's exegesis? (3)
22. What theological writer has closely analyzed the Westminster doctrine of inspiration? (1)
23. Fully discuss the relation of one of the following doctrines to the work of exegesis? (10)
 - a. Inspiration of Scripture
 - b. Unity of Scripture
 - c. Accuracy and precision of Scripture
 - d. Perspicuity of Scripture
24. True or False? (6)
 - a. General statements take precedence over specific ones.
 - b. The Bible employs the language of appearance and accommodation.
 - c. It requires only one clear authentic passage to establish a truth.
 - d. The "accidents" of Scripture are not normative today.
 - e. *Usus loquendi* means the use of the term in cognate languages.
 - f. The Bible is inerrant but not complete, accurate but not precise.
25. List three consequences of inspiration being in the original languages of Scripture. (3)
26. List at least three NT passages that are of doubtful textual authority. (3)
27. Describe the desired balance between scientific study and biblical exegesis. (4)
28. What is the *analogy of faith*? (2)
29. What is harmonization? Is it desirable? Why? (3)
30. Name three sorts of passages that can and should be harmonized. (3)
31. Write four rules regarding clear and obscure passages. (4)
32. List at least four general rules of conduct that can be applied to particular situations. (4)
33. Describe what is meant by *accommodation*, *anthropocentrism*, and the *language of appearance*. (3)
34. What is meant by *singleness of meaning*? (2)

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35. Briefly define these figures of speech: (10)
 - a. Simile
 - b. Metaphor
 - c. Parable
 - d. Allegory
 - e. Metonymy
 - f. Synecdoche
 - g. Euphemism
 - h. Litotes
 - i. Hyperbole
 - j. Irony
36. List in their order of importance the four means of defining a word in a particular context. (6)
37. List five sources that can be used in conducting a word study of a Greek NT word. (5)
38. List the six tenses of the indicative verb in Greek. (6)
39. Distinguish these meanings of tense: *time*, *Aktionsart*, and *aspect*. (3)
40. List the moods of the Greek verb, other than the indicative. (5)
41. List four ways participles are used in Greek. (4)
42. What is meant by a *circumstantial participle*? (1)
43. How do temporal participles work? (3)
44. Define an absolute construction. (2)
45. Explain how infinitives can act as adverbs expressing time. (4)
46. List the five cases of Greek nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. (5)
47. List two ways a prohibition may be expressed. (2)
48. List at least four ways Greek can express purpose. (4)
49. For each class of conditional sentence, tell the meaning. (4)
50. What was the suggested approach for understanding how the NT writers quoted and used the OT? (3)
51. List at least two examples of prophecy fulfilled literally within the Bible itself. (2)
52. What is meant by the *apotelesmatic nature* of prophecy? (2)
53. How can one determine whether a biblical event is to be understood as a type? (3)
54. List four “types of types.” (4)
55. Which number is generally conceded to have symbolic value? (1)
56. Define *simple* and *complex* parables. (4)
57. What should be the exegete’s attitude toward biblical narratives of apparently supernatural events? (2)
58. List the nine steps in exegetical study – in order. (9)