ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Valley Forge Christian College
1401 Charlestown Road
Phoenxiville, PA
April 25-29, 2005

BIBB 532 HERMENEUTICS

David M. Dippold **Summer 2005**

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The student learns both principles and skills of interpreting scripture in terms of historical, social, and literary environments, and the process of applying the meaning to today's needs. The history of hermeneutics is also covered. A special feature concentrates on Pentecostal issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to
1. Define the specialized vocabulary for hermeneutics.
2. State the principles for general and special hermeneutics and apply the principles in actual exegesis.
3. Outline a brief overview of the history of hermeneutics.
4. Use hermeneutics in theology, practical ministry, and preaching/teaching.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart. How to Read the Bible for All its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1993.

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

Stein, Robert H. A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction to Hermeneutics: Kaiser ch.1, Stein chs. 1-4, and Fee ch.1.
- A. Need for Hermeneutics
- B. Goal of Hermeneutics

C. Qualifications of the Interpreter
D. A Short History of Interpretation: Kaiser 12 and 13.

General Hermeneutics
A. Basic Tool: Fee ch.2
B. General Principles: Context, grammatical/historical, language, terminology, OT in NT, hermeneutical spiral, etc. Stein 8, 9.
C. General Tools: word studies, commentaries, encyclopedia, introductions, etc.
D. Application:
E. Cultural Use of the Bible. Kaiser 10
F. Theological Use of the Bible. Kaiser 11

Special Hermeneutics
A. Narrative: Kaiser 4; Stein 11; Fee 5 and 6
B. Wisdom/Poetry: Kaiser 5; Stein 5, 7; Fee 11 and 12
C. Gospels/Parables: Kaiser 6; Stein 10; Fee 7 and 8
D. Epistles: Kaiser 7; Stein 12; Fee 3 and 4
E. Prophecy/Apocalyptic: Kaiser 8; Stein 6; Fee 13 and 10
F. Law: Fee 9; Stein 13

Application
A. Kaiser ch. 9
B. Exegetical Project

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Pre-session:

Textbook Reading: The student is required to read the textbooks prior to the start of the class sessions.

Session:

1. Outside Readings: The student is required to read all materials given out in class.

2. Class Attendance: The student is required to attend the class sessions.

3. Exam: There will be a final exam given the last day of class. The exam will focus on the material covered in class and textbook readings.

Post session:

Exegesis Project Paper: The student is required to complete an exegesis project paper (length 25-30 pages, double spaced). The paper should include thorough research, adequate documentation, clarity of presentation, and adherence to the guidelines given.

The paper will follow the outline for the exegesis project paper (see end of syllabus) as assigned in class. The project is due August 1, 2005.

Submit all assignments to:

Dr. David M. Dippold
Valley Forge Christian College
1401 Charlestown Rd.
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Phone: 610-917-1446
E-mail: dmdippold@vfcc.edu

COURSE METHODOLOGY

Methodology will include class lectures, discussions, readings, and papers. Class interaction and participation is expected and required.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Reading (textbook and outside)	10%
Exam	30%
Exegesis Project Paper	60%

NOTE: Work received after the post-session due date specified in the syllabus will result in a change of grade fee ($15.00) being charged, even when an extension has been granted by the instructor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Beale, G.K. (ed.). The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

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Braga, James. How to Study the Bible. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1982.

Bray, Gerald. Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Caird, G.B. The Language and Imagery of the Bible. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976.

Carson, Donald A. Exegetical Fallacies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.

Corley, Bruce, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy (eds.). Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Biblical Hermeneutics. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.

Dockery, David S., Kenneth A. Mathews, and Robert B. Sloan. Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994.

Doriani, Daniel M. Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1996.

Erickson, Millard J. and James L. Heflin. Old Wine in New Wineskins. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997.

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_____. Towards an Exegetical Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.

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

Klein, William, Craig Blomberg, Robert Hubbard. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Dallas: Word, 1993.

Kugel, James L. The Idea of Biblical Poetry. New Haven, CT: Yale Press, 1981.

McGee, Gary B. (ed.). Initial Evidence. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1991.

McQuilkin, J. Robertson. Understanding and Applying the Bible An Introduction to Hermeneutics. Chicago: Moody, 1983.

Menzies, Robert. Empowered for Witness. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

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.

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Scorgie, Glen A. "Hermeneutics and the Meditative Use of Scripture: The Case for a Baptized Imagination." JETS 44 (2001): 271.

Soulen, Richard N. Handbook of Biblical Criticism. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976.

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Virkler, Henry. Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.

Exegesis Project Paper Overview

(Section #1; 3-4 pages)

I. Determine the Meaning of the Text: What it meant.
   A. Determine the "sitz im leben" (setting in life) of the text.

1. Author. Describe the author of the text including both internal and external evidence. What is known about the author that would affect your understanding of the passage? Consider such things as nationality, calling/vocation, personal history, age, life stage, geography, spiritual history, etc. If the author is not explicitly stated, what inferences can be drawn from the book about the author?

2. Audience. Describe the original audience or recipients of the book including both internal and external evidence. What is known about the audience that would aid in understanding the passage? Consider such things as nationality, history, geography, spiritual history, cultural, political, economic conditions, etc. If the audience is not explicitly stated, what inferences can be drawn from the book about the readers?

3. Date. What are the possible dates for the writing of the book? How might the dating of the book affect the understanding of the book or passage? What historical events precede, concur, and follow the writing of the book that may affect the understanding of the text?

4. Occasion. What is the occasion for the writing of the book and passage? Consider the internal and external evidence for the occasion and the explicit and implicit evidence for the occasion.

5. Place. What is the place of writing of the text? Consider if and how this might impact the understanding of the passage.

Tools: OT and NT Survey textbooks, ISBE, IDB, Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (ZPEB), Commentaries (introductory sections), Bible handbooks, Bible (your own reading of the text and its parallels).

(Section #2; 2-3 pages)

B. Determine the "sitz im buch" (setting in the book) of the text.

1. Construct an outline or chart of the book. Read the book several times yourself, watching for the flow of ideas, subject matter, tone, etc. After you have constructed your own outline, check your findings with at least two other sources.

2. Define the limits of the passage in light of the outline of the book. Where does your passage fit into the overall message of the book? What precedes and follows your passage? Is your passage the introduction to a longer section, the main argument of a longer section, a supportive section to the main subject, the conclusion to a main section, etc? What role does your passage play in the overall message of the book?

Tools: Bible (your own reading and outline), OT and NT Survey textbooks, ISBE, IDB, ZPEB, Commentaries, Bible handbooks.

(Section #3; 4-6 pages)

C. Determine the meaning of the passage in light of A and B above, keeping in mind "authorial intent." What did the Holy Spirit-inspired author say to his audience?

1. Determine the genre of your passage. What rules apply to this genre? How will the genre affect your approach to the passage?

2. Analyze the passage according to the rules of the genre.

3. Study the grammar, style, etc. Look for natural divisions in the text, the flow of thought in sentences and paragraphs, any verb changes (mood, tense, person, number), the use of connectives, adjectives & adverbs, pronouns, figures of speech, etc. Read the passage in at least three different versions (preferably from different theories of translation, ie literal, dynamic, free, etc.) Note how the different versions translate the passage. Note if there are any textual variants as given in the Bible's footnotes.

(Section #4; 3-4 pages)

4. Word Studies. (2 word studies). The steps involved in word studies are as follows: 1) choose the words to be studied. Choose words you do not understand, "theological" words, rare words, or repeated words. STATE WHY YOU CHOSE THE WORD. 2) Determine the semantic range of meaning for the word (norms of language). What are all the possible meanings for the word? 3) Determine the meaning that best fits the context (norms of utterance). State why. What meaning does the author have in mind for the word in this particular context?

5. Deal with all cultural and historical issues. Are there any cultural and/or historical issues that affect the meaning of the passage?

(Section #5; 4-6 pages)

D. Summarize the meaning of the passage in a few short sentences. **KEY: HIGHLIGHT THIS SUMMARY STATEMENT IN YOUR PAPER.** The summary statement should reflect all of your study and research from above. The statement should only reflect what the biblical writer said to his audience. The statement will later be universalized and particularized to your contemporary setting.

II. Determine the Implications of the Text: What it always means.

A. Determine legitimate implications of the text.

1. Determine appropriate submeanings, subtypes, unconscious meanings, truth intentions, etc. (see Stein, A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible for definitions to these terms.)

2. State the universal theological truth or truths in the passage. Distinguish the universal from the cultural.

B. Cross check your findings within the canon of Scripture.

1. Compare parallel passages, seemingly inconsistent passages, complementary passages, etc. Use a topical Bible, theology books, concordances, etc.

2. Determine the scope of the universal truth stated in the passage. How comprehensive is the treatment of the truth in this passage?

C. Restate your implications based on the canon of Scripture. Restate your summary statement from above (I. D.) as a universal Biblical truth.

(Section #6; 4-5 pages)

III. Determine the Significance of the Text: What it means to us.

A. Self Significance

1. Exegete yourself: where are you in light of the truth(s) of the text?

2. Ask how you need to respond, what type of applications need to be made: intellectual, volitional, behavioral, attitudinal, spiritual, etc.?

B. Determine the significance of the text for your intended audience.

1. Exegete your audience: Define your intended audience and state where the audience is in light of the truth of the text?

2. Determine relevant applications of the meaning of the text in light of the audience's context. The following questions are from Elizabeth Achtemeier, Preaching from the OT, p.54-55. Questions to ask when thinking of the text for the congregation; a) what would my people doubt to be true in this text?; b) what do my people need to know or to be reminded of from this text?; c) with what inner feelings, longings, thoughts, and desires of my people does this text connect?; d) if this text is true, what kind of world do we live in? or what if the text were not true, what would be the consequences? **Be sure to answer or address these questions in your paper.**

(Section #7; 3-4 pages)

IV. Develop a sermon or teaching outline based on and reflecting the meaning, implications, and significance of the passage. Include title, thesis statement, introduction, main points, sub points, and conclusion. Your main points should be taken from the Biblical passage you studied and reflect your research and conclusions.

For further help on sermon outlines see James Braga, How to Prepare Bible Messages. Oregon: Multnomah, 1981.

Title: Braga states a title "is an expression of the specific feature to be presented in the sermon, stated in a manner which may be suitable for advertising the sermon."

Thesis statement: This should reflect your universal truth gained from your exegetical work in the outline above. See II. C. above.

Introduction: The introduction should create interest and attention in the sermon. It should further prepare people for understanding what is to come and show why they should listen to you for the next 20-30 minutes.

Main Points: Your main points should reflect the flow of the biblical passage. They should be connected to your thesis statement in subject and thought. See I. C. 2. above.
Sub Points: Your sub points should reflect further development of the main points. You may include in the sub points your illustrations and applications to highlight the main point.
Conclusion: Your conclusion should focus and apply the sermon to your audience. You should include some sort of call for response whether immediate or delayed. Braga, p. 229 "the conclusion is the climax of the whole sermon in which the preacher's one constant aim reaches its goal in the form of a forceful impression."

Section #8>
V. Bibliography: Include a complete bibliography of all sources used.

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by David M. Dippold, February 2005.