

# Biblical Hermeneutics

## Nazarene Theological Seminary

### Syllabus, BIB 550, May 22 - June 1, 2006

Dennis R. Bratcher, Professor

e-mail: [bratcher@crivoice.org](mailto:bratcher@crivoice.org) - phone: H- 801 497-0946; M- 801 628-0220  
web site: <http://www.crivoice.org/NTS/herm/herm06.html>  
mirror site: <http://www.cresourcei.org/NTS/herm/herm06.html>

(Students should check the web site for easy access to online reading and for any changes to the course schedule.)

## Purpose and Place in the Curriculum

Biblical Hermeneutics is a junior/second-year level core requirement in the M.Div., M.A. (CE) and M.A. (Theological Studies) degree programs. It may serve as a free elective in the M.A. in Missiology program. BIB520, Introduction to Biblical Studies, or its equivalent is prerequisite. Biblical Hermeneutics is designed to provide foundational instruction in exegetical method and a basic introduction to hermeneutics. It is a prerequisite course for exegetical and biblical theology courses at NTS.

## Course Vision

If God were to really bless this course, students would forever approach biblical texts with an appropriate blend of confidence and humility. There would be confidence that when the methods they have learned are applied to the text those methods will open up meaning that will allow God to speak from his word a message that is coherent with the original purpose of the author and with the whole of biblical revelation. There would be humility that the method neither controls nor limits the power of the Holy Spirit to speak through the text. There would be confidence that every exercise of exegesis may produce the joyful surprise of being addressed by God in unexpected ways.

That combination of hermeneutical expertise and openness to the Holy Spirit would unleash a generation of preachers, teachers, and writers profoundly convinced that God's Word can speak in a meaningful way every time it is read, preached, or taught. Should this vision for students begin to happen the church would be shaped by biblical truth toward conformity with the will of God with a depth, power, and directness never before experienced. The world would discover fundamental differences of values and assumptions of reality between itself and the followers of Christ. The biblical vision of evangelism and discipleship would be fulfilled. May God rekindle and increase the vision of hearing him speak to us through his word!

## Course Caution

Because this course takes a strongly methodological approach to the interpretation of Scripture you may discover some of your meaningful and fondly held understandings of the Bible challenged. It is not the purpose of the course to undermine, much less attack, personal faith. It is the conviction of the professor and the experience of most alumni of the course that faith is strengthened by a stronger understanding of and capacity to interpret Scripture with methodological self-awareness. However, such fruits require both the disciplined work expected in this class and the maintenance of an expectant spirit toward the Bible.

## Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course the student should be able to:

- (1) distinguish formational and informational reading of Scripture and to engage in both,
- (2) identify the primary characteristics and shapers of the major periods in the history of the interpretation of the Bible,
- (3) recognize, describe, and practice the major methodologies employed in twentieth century biblical interpretation,
- (4) describe the way in which the Bible functions authoritatively in a community of faith,
- (5) describe the way the Bible developed – from beginning to contemporary versions,
- (6) explain how the application of textual critical principles enable one to analyze textual variants and arrive at a most probable reading of the original text,
- (7) explain the strengths and weaknesses of the various contemporary English versions,
- (8) use computer resources to gain access to the biblical languages,
- (9) describe and practice a method of interpretation that incorporates the historical context, the literary structure and context, and theological content of a passage to arrive at the textual meaning,
- (10) demonstrate the appropriate steps of exegesis for a specific passage of Scripture,
- (11) articulate the reason for and importance of a method of interpretation,
- (12) understand the terminology used in technical discussions of Scripture and its interpretation,
- (13) understand the usefulness of and use appropriately a variety of resources,
- (14) describe the major theological themes of Old and New Testaments as a framework in which to interpret particular passages,
- (15) apply the principles of interpretation to be able to hear the message of the text in light of the historical, literary, and theological contexts,
- (16) and articulate and apply a strategy for arriving at an appropriate application of a text to contemporary life.

## Course Textbooks

The Bible: If you do not work in the Hebrew and Greek text a modern translation such as NRSV, NASB, or NIV should be used. The professor will use the NRSV as his basic version in class with illustrations from other versions and his own translation.

### Required Texts:

- Callen, Barry L. and Thompson, Richard P. eds. *Reading the Bible in Wesleyan Ways: Some Constructive Proposals*. Beacon Hill Press, 2004.
- Davis, Ellen F. and Hays, Richard B. eds. *The Art of Reading Scripture*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.
- Klein, William W., Blomberg, Craig L., and Hubbard, Robert L. Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised and Updated Ed. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004.
- deSilva, David A. *New Testament Themes*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2001.
- Matthews, Victor H. *Old Testament Themes*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

### Recommended Texts:

- Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*. InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Soulen, Richard N. and Soulen, R. Kendall. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Revised and Expanded. Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

## Other Class Materials:

You will find required class materials, study guides, Power Point presentations, class exercises, worksheets, and other class materials, as well as links to supplemental reading and resources on the CRI/Voice, Institute website (hereafter referred to as “the website”) and its mirror site:

<http://www.crivoice.org/NTS/herm/herm06.html>

<http://www.cresourcei.org/NTS/herm/herm06.html>

This material is available for student use in this class. However, most of the material is copyrighted by CRI/Voice or individual authors and it is not in the public domain.

## Course Plan

Because of the intensive nature of this module course, the course work will include pre-class work, in-class exercises and assignments due during the two weeks of the class, and post-class reading and assignments.

A note on submitting assignments electronically: All pre-course work and assignments due during the class are due in hard copy form. Because of the volume of e-mail I receive and the high security settings I must maintain because of the web site, it is too risky to send material via e-mail (I do not use Blackboard for this course). In unusual and rare cases, with permission, assignments may be sent via e-mail **if** the “Guidelines for Submitting Assignments Electronically” are followed. They can be found at: <http://www.crivoice.org/NTS/electronic.html>. Post-class assignments should be given to the Deans’ Administrative Assistant (Pam Rider) or mailed to me directly (address provided later).

## Pre-Class Work

Because of the intensive nature of this course it would be extremely helpful for a significant portion of the textbook mastery to be achieved prior to the beginning of the class (in professor jargon, “extremely helpful” is a non-legal way of saying “pretty much essential to get a decent grade”). The following assignments are designed for that purpose.

**Pre-Class Assignment #1** – Read the books by Matthews and deSilva. For *each book* write (1) a brief outline of each chapter; then (2) write an essay of approximately 500 words (about five short paragraphs, 1 1/2 pages double spaced) in which you describe the most significant contribution each book can make to your interpretation of Old and New Testament passages respectively. These outlines and essays **are due at the beginning of class Monday, May 22, 2006.**

Except for the worksheets, written papers should follow the formatting guidelines found in “Formatting for Written Assignments” at <http://www.crivoice.org/NTS/format.html>.

**Pre-Class Assignment #2** – Read Klein, pp. 3-62, Davis/Hays, pp. 69-142, and study the Power Points entitled, (1) “Jewish Exegesis,” (2) “Patristic Exegesis,” (3) “Reformation Interpretation,” and (4) “Twentieth Century Developments.” Give special attention to the material mentioned on Study Guide #1. Quiz #1 (see below) will be available Monday May 22 at the beginning of class and **is due no later than Tuesday, May 23, 2006 by 6:00 PM.**

**Pre-Class Assignment #3** – Read Klein, pp. 63-131, Davis/Hays, pp. 9-65, and study the Power Point entitled, “How We Got Our Bible.” Give special attention to the material mentioned on Study Guide #2. Quiz #2 (see below) will be available Tuesday May 23 at the beginning of class and **is due no later than Wednesday, May 24, 2006 by 6:00 PM.**

**Quizzes for Pre-Class Assignments-** To master the history of interpretation two take-home quizzes will be given during the first week of class. Study guides to assist in preparing for the quizzes and to guide your study of Davis/Hays and Klein, *et. al* (hereafter Klein) are available on the web site. The quizzes are open book quizzes, but have time limits. You should have already read and studied the material according to the study guide before the beginning of class. Read through the assigned pages, giving special emphasis to the study guide before opening the quiz. Each quiz will be given to you in an envelope. When you are ready open the envelope and take the quiz, noting your starting, stopping, and total time. The time limit is one hour for each quiz. You may take longer, but must record the time spent. The quizzes are due according to the following schedule:

Quiz #1: *no later than Tuesday, May 23, 2006* by 6:00 PM

Quiz #2: *no later than Wednesday, May 24, 2006* by 6:00 PM

## Two Week Intensive Class Schedule

This chart represents an approximate schedule of the subjects that will be covered and the teaching methodologies that will be used during class times. Times and topics are tentative depending on class interaction.

Day	6:00-6:45	6:45-7:30	B	7:45-8:45	8:45-9:30
Mon. May 22	Syllabus Review; Importance and Need of Hermeneutics – Lecture	Interpretation within the Biblical Material – Lecture		Jewish Interpretation– Lecture with worksheets in groups, Class Exercise #1	Role of OT in NT – Lecture with worksheets in groups, Class Exercise #2
Tues. May 23	Patristic/Medieval; Reformation and Post Reformation Interp – Lecture	Enlightenment and Pietistic Interpretation – Lecture; Class Exercise #3		19 <sup>th</sup> Century; Early and Mid 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Interpretation – Lecture	Foundational Issues: Inspiration and Authority – Lecture; Class Exercise #4
Wed. May 24	Foundational Issues: Development and Function of the Canon – Lecture	Foundational Issues: Translation theory/ Versions – Lecture; Class Exercise #5		Textual Criticism – Lecture	Context and Book Reading – Class Exercise # 6
Thurs May 25	Inductive Analysis – Lecture	Poetry, Metaphor, and Symbolism – Lecture; Class Exercise #7		Word Meanings – Lecture; Worksheet #1 Assign	Historical Exegesis – Lecture; Worksheet #2 Assign
Fri. May 26	Cultural/Sociological Exegesis – Lecture; Worksheet #3 Assign	Word Meanings – Worksheet #1 review		Genre and Form Criticism – Lecture	Form Criticism Illustration – Lecture; Class Exercise #8
Mon. May 29	Narrative Analysis - Lecture; Class Exercise #9	Historical, Cultural/Sociological Exegesis – Wrks #2 & #3 review		Rhetorical and Socio- Rhetorical Analysis – Lecture	Source and Redaction Criticism – Lecture; Worksheet #4 Assign
Tues. May 30	Source and Redaction Criticism – Worksheet #4 review	Grammatical Analysis – Lecture; Class Exercise #10		Syntactical Analysis – Lecture; Worksheet #5 Assign	Computer Resources Demonstration
Wed. May 31	Theological Exegesis – Lecture; Worksheet #6 Assign	Syntactical Analysis – Worksheet #5 review		Application of a Text- Lecture; Worksheet #7 Assign	Resources for Exegesis
Thurs June 1	Theological Exegesis – Worksheet # 6 review	Application of a Text – Worksheet #7 review		Spiritual Reading – Lecture; Worksheet #8 Assign	Post-class assignments

## Assignments during the Two-Week Intensive Period

1. **Class Exercises** - Ten class exercises will be available on the website. You should download all of them prior to coming to class and **have them printed out for use in the class** sessions according to the schedule indicated above. You will be placed in a small group to work through these exercises, to respond to class discussion on them, and to correct any mistakes you make in them. At the end of the two-week session all ten class exercises will be due (fastened together and clearly identified with your name). They will be graded as a package. There may be additional class exercises/worksheets used during the course that are not specifically assigned.
2. **Worksheets** – A total of 8 worksheets will be assigned beginning near the end of the first week of class. These worksheets will be located on the website. You should download these so that they are available to you. The worksheets should be prepared before the class session they are to be reviewed. You may fill in the worksheets via paper or digitally (they will be available in MS Word .doc format). You need to have a copy of your *completed* worksheet with you at the time it is listed for review in class. You are free to take notes and even modify your answers as a result of the review process. However, the notes and modifications should be distinguishable from your original work. (Use another color of ink or italic fonts if done on the computer.) Worksheets 1-7 are **due at the end of the class day on which they are reviewed. Worksheet 8 is due with other assignment on June 23.**

## Post-Class Session Work

1. **Outside Reading – Old Testament Interpretation** - 160 pages of material found in the Old Testament Interpretation section of the bibliography must be read. It is recommended that you read the first 160 pages of John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament*. At least five copies of it are available on reserve in the library. If it is not available you may read from another one or selections from several sources in the Old Testament Interpretation section of the course bibliography. A (double-spaced, typed) report of 300-500 words summarizing and evaluating this reading **will be due on Friday, June 23**. In service and modular students wanting to read Bright's book should do so during the two weeks of seminar or make arrangements to acquire the book through purchase or another library.
2. **Callen/Thompson Report** - After carefully reading the Callen/Thompson text, write a review and evaluation of the book of at least 800 words (about 3 1/2-4 pages, double spaced). The review should give evidence that the entire book has been read. You should conclude your essay with some observations on whether or not a Wesleyan hermeneutic is possible and if so, what might characterize it. **The report is due on Friday, June 23.**
3. **Exegetical Paper** - The major project for the class will be a full exegesis paper of 4000 to 5000 words. Each student should select a passage of Scripture upon which to do this exegetical report and submit it to the professor for approval by the end of the first week. The paper should contain full historical, cultural, literary, and theological exegesis of the passage and a brief (no more than 500 words) statement of the direction contemporary application could go with the passage based on the exegesis. It should also include a short section on the interpretation of the passage by significant interpreters in Christian history such as Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, etc. The paper will be **due on Friday, July 21.**

## Due Date Summary Calendar

May 22	Pre-class Assignment #1
May 23	Pre-class Assignment #2/Quiz #1
May 24	Pre-Class Assignment #3/Quiz #2
May 29	Worksheets #1 and #2 and #3 are due
May 30	Worksheet #4 is due
May 31	Worksheet #5 is due
June 1	Worksheets #6 and #7 and the Class Exercises Packet are due
June 1	Course Evaluation is due
June 23	Worksheet #8 is due
June 23	Callen/Thompson Report is due
June 23	Old Testament Interpretation Reading Report is due
July 21	Exegetical Paper is due

## Grading

Class work will contribute to the final course grade according to this formula:

deSilva/Matthews Review	10%
2 Quizzes over Davis/Hays, Klein @ 7% each	14%
1 Package of 10 Class Exercises	8%
8 Class Worksheets @ 2% each	16%
Outside Reading Report	10%
Callen/Thompson Report	12%
Exegetical Paper	25%
Attendance and participation/group work	5%

Late work may result in reduction of the grade. Also, because of the accelerated format of the course and the nature of its content, attendance in 100% of every session is imperative. **Do not plan other activities of any kind that conflict with attendance in class.** *Absence will affect borderline grades.*

It is the commitment of NTS and of this professor to make every reasonable effort to facilitate the learning of students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of her or his abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia or other learning disabilities) should contact the professor immediately, or as soon as possible, to discuss learning needs, alternatives which have worked for the student in the past, and mutually acceptable accommodations to ensure the student's full participation and appropriate evaluation in the course.

## Bibliography

### Old Testament Interpretation

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- Achtemeier, Elizabeth. *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973.
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- Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.
- Holmgren, Fredrick C. *The Old Testament & the Significance of Jesus: Embracing Change – Maintaining Christian Identity*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.
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### General Texts in Hermeneutics and Exegetical Method

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## Vocabulary and Resource Lists

### Vocabulary

There will be no direct assignment for these terms beyond that covered in the Study Guides. However, they will be used throughout the course, in much of your readings for the course, as well as in commentaries and biblical studies in general. Students would be wise to learn their meaning. Soulen's *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* is an invaluable tool here.

<i>Aktionsart</i>	form criticism	pericope
Alexandrian School	gloss	<i>peshet</i>
allegory/allegorical	gnostic/gnosticism	Philo
amphictyony	<i>haggadah</i>	Protestant Reformation
Analogy of Faith	<i>halakah</i>	proverb
Antiochene School	<i>Haustafeln</i>	pseudonymous
apocalyptic	<i>Heilsgeschichte</i>	Quest(s) for Hist. Jesus
apocrypha	hermeneutical circle/spiral	Qumran
apodictic	household codes	redaction criticism
Augustine	hyperbole	<i>Religionsgeschichte</i>
Autographs	inclusio	Renaissance
Biblical Theology	inerrancy	Rhetoric
canon	Jamnia	Rule of Faith
canonical criticism	Jerome	Scholasticism
casuistic	Jesus of history	Semitisms
chiasm	Josephus	<i>sensus plenior</i>
conflict story	judicial rhetoric	septuagint
connotation	kerygma	<i>sola scriptura</i>
corporate personality	kethubim	source criticism
Counter Reformation	Maccabees	structuralism
covenant	majority text	synchronic
Dead Sea Scrolls	manuscripts	syntax
deconstruction	masoretes/masoretic text	Talmud(s)
deliberative rhetoric	midrash	Targum
demythologize	Mishnah	<i>Tendenz</i> Criticism
denotation	morphology	textual criticism
diachronic	Nag Hammadi	topos
diatribe	narrative criticism	torah
discourse analysis	nebiim	Tradition criticism
docetism	New Hermeneutic	Tubingen School
dynamic equivalence	Origen	typology/typological
Enlightenment	O. T. Pseudepigrapha	Vulgate
epideictic rhetoric	Parallelism	
farewell speech	Patristic Period	

## Resources

You should become familiar with the basic format and content of each of the following resources in such a way that you can select the resource that provides the kind of information you need.

*Anchor Bible*

*Anchor Bible Dictionary*

*John Calvin's Commentaries*

*The Bible Speaks Today*

*The Daily Study Bible*

*Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* (by John Wesley)

*Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament* (by John Wesley)

*Harper's Bible Dictionary*

*Hermeneia*

*International Critical Commentary*

*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*

*International Theological Commentary*

*Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*

*The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*

*The New Bible Dictionary*

*The New Century Bible*

*New International Biblical Commentary*

*The New International Commentary on the New Testament*

*The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*

*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*

*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*

*The New Interpreter's Bible*

*The Old Testament Library*

*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*

*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*

*Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*

*Word Biblical Commentary*