

Biblical Interpretation Curriculum Course Syllabus

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Rationale: The primary textbook for a serious and committed Christian Pastor/ Clergy person/ Minister pursuing Church Ordination/ Licensure is the BIBLE. His or her ethic should be *sola scriptura*, the Bible as his or her source for faith and practice. As a written medium, the Bible can best be understood and interpreted if the following tenants are adhered to. Hermeneutics is the academic discipline for this course. It deals with the principles and methods for interpreting writing materials. By laying aside one's preconceived notions, ideas, and opinions, he or she can discover the basic meaning of the Bible's content.

1. What is the first essential for rightly interpreting the Bible?

- That the Bible has supernatural ability to transform its readers.
- That the Bible can change people for the better; not instantaneously, but over time.
- Write your opinion and reflection on these assertions, 2-3 pp.
- Research the origin and historical development of the Bible. Draft a report on its credibility contemporary Christianity and ministry, 8-10 pp,
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Revelation 1:3), 2-3 pp.
 - If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book Revelation 22:18, 19), 2-3 pp.
 - For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12), 2-3 pp.
- That as you read daily, weekly, and monthly your mind will be shaped into the values of God Himself, who inspired the Bible.

- Write your opinion and reflection on these assertions, 2-3 pp.
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a worker that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2Timothy 2:15), 2-3 pp.
 - So, then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17), 2-3 pp.
- That reading the Bible reader/ student to live with success. According to the Bible, success has to do with living a life of liberty, of empowerment, of opportunity, and of goodness and love.
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:8), 2-3 pp..
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What do you know? How do you know it? What do you agree or disagree with and why? (3-5 pp.)

2. What is the second essential for rightly interpreting the Bible?

- That the Bible is the Creator God’s medium for revealing himself and communicating with humankind.
 - The book of nature
 - The written word
- Write your opinion and reflection on these assertions, 2-3 pp.
- That the Bible writers wrote what God wanted them to write, by a process of INSPIRATION (the fusion of human intellect and God’s sovereign will).
- Write your opinion and reflection on these assertions, 2-3 pp.
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; ¹⁵ And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which can make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is*

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works
(2 Timothy 3:14-17), 3-5 pp.

- That the Bible writers wrote with distinctive styles and in diverse expressions (i.e., poetry, prose, narratives, prophecy), and from a matrix of Afro-Asiatic cultural-thought forms, 2-3 pp.
- Write your opinion and reflection on these assertions, 2-3 pp.
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost (2Peter 1:20, 21).
 - Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. ⁹ Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. ¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need (Philippians 4:8-12), 3-5 pp.
 - The Scribes and Pharisees as examples of bad Bible interpretation “practitioners.”
 - The Pharisees were scribes who professed and viewed as experts of the law. Thus, they were teachers in charge of the synagogues and influenced the temple education system. The seat of Moses reflects the seat of authority for interpreting biblical instruction. Jesus approved the method of public instruction but condemned the disconnect between profession and practice as exhibited by many Pharisees, 3-5 pp.
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - Then spoke Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, ² Saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: ³ All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵ But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, ⁶ And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ⁷ And greetings in the markets, and

to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. ⁸ But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. ⁹ And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. ¹⁰ Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. ¹¹ But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Matthew 23:1-12), 3-5 pp.

- **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)

3. What is the third essential for rightly interpreting the Bible?

- That the Bible can be difficult to understand if one does not respect that its original languages must be respected in the interpretation process. Hebrew is the language for the Old Testament and Greek and a little Aramaic for the New Testament. For example, Jesus’s last or sir name is not Christ. Christ is a Greek to English translations of the Hebrew word Messiah and means “anointed one.” In the Old Testament, priest, prophets, and kings were anointed to fulfill their role.
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *They are* weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. ¹⁰For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; Line upon line, line upon line; Here a little, *and* there a little (Isaiah 28:9, 10), 3-5 pp.
 - Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a worker that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), 3-5 pp.
 - Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39), 3-5 pp.
 - And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶ As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. ¹⁷ Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. ¹⁸ But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen (2 Peter 3:15-18), 3-5 pp.
- That the Bible necessitates the gift of discernment to decipher its fundamental meaning. Jesus spoke to this when He asserted about the human eye and intellect.

- **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. ²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness (Matthew 6:22, 23), 3-5 pp.
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What do you know? How do you know it? What do you agree or disagree with and why? (2-3 pp.)

4. What is the fourth essential for rightly interpreting the Bible?

- That each Bible “book” has its own historical context yet provides a united revelation of God’s creation and redemption purpose.
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)
- That the theme of the Bible is God and particularly Jesus, the Christ, Son of God, and Son of Man.
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30, 31), 3-5 pp.
- That each Bible book should researched for its author, audience, location, societal background, psychological, theological focus.
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)
- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - Who hath believed our [†]report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? ² For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; And when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He is despised and rejected of men; A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: And [†]we hid as it were *our* faces from him; He was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely, he hath

borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: Yet we did esteem him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; And with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned everyone to his own way; And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: And who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: For the transgression of my people was he stricken. ⁹ And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; Because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; For he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, And he shall divide the spoil with the strong; Because he hath poured out his soul unto death: And he was numbered with the transgressors; And he bare the sin of many And made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53), 3-5 pp.

- Then the Spirit said unto Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot. ³⁰ And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, understand thou what thou reads? ³¹ And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³² The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: ³³ In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. ³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaks the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ³⁶ And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷ And Philip said, if thou believe with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:29-29), 3-5 pp.
- **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you discover in this section you did not know? How will you use this learning? (2-3 pp).

5. What is the fifth essential for rightly interpreting the Bible?

- That Bible interpretation is about discovering God’s will, values, and principles for living righteously in this present world until Jesus returns to fulfill the redemption enterprise and restore believers to pursue their God-given destiny to be “fruitful, multiply, replenish, and subdue God’s environment to His glory and their edification.
 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn new? Do you believe or disbelieve it? How will you use it or not use it? (2-3 pp.)

- **Reflection scripture:** Read, Reflect, and Write your thoughts about the following—
 - If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself (John 7:17), 3-5 pp.

 - GOD, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1, 2), 3-5 pp.

 - **Write an opinion paper on this section**—What did you learn in this section? How do you know it? What do you agree or disagree with and why? (2-3 pp).