



Truth Today Hermeneutics

Introduction

Colossians 1:28 says, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” The goal of *Truth Today* is to grow in a foundational comprehension and working knowledge of Scripture to faithfully proclaim Christ, warn everyone, teach everyone, and present everyone mature in Him.

Class Goals

This class will introduce the science and art of Bible interpretation with a focus on the grammatical-historical method as the proper approach to interpreting Scripture. This will include a survey of major interpretive approaches to the Bible; a biblical rationale for the grammatical-historical method; and a thorough examination of both (a) the comprehensive set of general interpretive principles which apply to all of Scripture (General Hermeneutics) and (b) the narrower set of specialized principles for interpreting the various literary genres of Scripture (Special Hermeneutics). An additional focus will be given to key issues that are controversial within the field of contemporary hermeneutics.

This class will provide the members of our church with a foundation for a lifetime of studying, applying, and teaching the Bible. The learning outcomes for this class are as follows:

1. To acquire a clear understanding of the correct principles of Bible interpretation and more readily identify practices that obscure the true meaning of Scripture.
2. To acquire a clear understanding of how to employ the grammatical-historical method of interpretation and utilize biblical resources in the interpretive process more effectively.

3. To acquire a clear understanding of how to utilize the grammatical-historical method of interpretation when approaching the various literary genres found in Scripture.
4. To acquire greater objectivity in interpretation and become familiar with key issues that are often debated within contemporary hermeneutics.
5. To be equipped to teach these principles of hermeneutics to others and incorporate them into personal study (as well as various ministries of the church).

Required Texts

1. Class Notes - Provided by the Instructor
2. *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth*
Roy B. Zuck
Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991

Recommended Texts

1. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth (4th edition)*
Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart
Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003
2. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*
Andreas J. Kostenberger and Richard Patterson
Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011
3. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation (2nd edition)*
Henry A. Virkler
Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007
4. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible (3rd edition)*
J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays
Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012
5. *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*
Robert L. Plummer
Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2010

Class Requirements (Assessment Indicators)

1. **Reading Assignments:** Each student is required to read the class notes in preparation for each week's lecture (according to the schedule below) and the entirety of *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Roy B. Zuck) by week 10.
2. **Homework Assignments:** Weekly exercises will be assigned at the close of most classes. They are not intended to cause undue stress, but enforce the material covered with each lecture and encourage personal growth. These assignments are for your benefit and do not need to be turned in to the instructor.
3. **Book Review:** Each student is required to write a 1,000-word book review of *Basic Bible Interpretation* by Roy B. Zuck. This review should include not only an overview of the contents of the book but also a discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. The reading of other reviews or summaries of the book is strictly forbidden. A hard copy of this review is due by week 11. We will discuss our findings from the book on (or before) the final week of class.
4. **Take-Home Exam:** Each student is required to complete a closed-book, take-home exam consisting of a single essay question: "What Is the Grammatical-Historical Method of Interpreting Scripture?" In 800-1,000 words, each student should seek to explain – in their own words – the principles of general hermeneutics set forth in this class. There is no time limit to the exam, but it must be completed sometime between the course lecture in week 10 and the course lecture in week 12. A hard copy of this exam will be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the final class.

Class Policies

Regular attendance is important for the acquisition and understanding of class material. If a student is aware of a foreseeable absence, they should inform the instructor ahead of time. When emergencies occur, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor, receive materials missed, and make-up the work.

All assignments must be double-spaced with 12pt Times New Roman font.

The following should be brought to every class: The Bible each student uses for personal study, a pen, and their class notes binder. The use of laptops, other electronic devices, and additional notebooks should be limited to the taking of supplemental notes from the class's lecture and discussion.

Class Schedule • Material, Reading, and Assignments Due

Week	Material	Reading Due	Assignments Due*
1	Class Introduction: The Search for Meaning		
2	Common Dangers and Mistakes, Part 1		
3	Common Dangers and Mistakes, Part 2	Chapter 1	
4	History and Foundation, Part 1	Chapters 2 - 3	
5	History and Foundation, Part 2		
6	The Need for Historical Context		
7	The Need for Cultural Context		
8	The Need for Literary Context, Part 1	Chapters 4 - 7	
9	The Need for Literary Context, Part 2		
10	Grammatical Analysis, Part 1	All BBI Reading Due	
11	Grammatical Analysis, Part 2		Book Review Due
12	Lexical Analysis		Take-Home Exam Due

*Does not include exercises provided in the class notes and lectures