

Biblical Interpretation (CL1)

Principles of Interpretation

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Lakeside institute of Theology**



Biblical Interpretation (CL1)

Jan. 29 – Introduction to Biblical Interpretation

Feb. 5 – Starting with the Text

Feb. 12 – Questions of Meaning

Feb. 19 – Principles of Interpretation

Feb. 26 – **No Class**

Mar. 5 – Interpreting the New Testament

Mar. 12 – Interpreting the Old Testament

Mar. 19 – Applying the Principles; Final Exam

Our Mandate from Scripture

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15-16

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. ¹⁰ I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. ¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. ¹² Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees. ¹³ With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. ¹⁴ I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. ¹⁵ I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. ¹⁶ I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

¹⁷ Be good to your servant while I live, that I may obey your word. ¹⁸ Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. ¹⁹ I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me. ²⁰ My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times. ²¹ You rebuke the arrogant, who are accursed, those who stray from your commands. ²² Remove from me their scorn and contempt, for I keep your statutes. ²³ Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees. ²⁴ Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.

Psalm 119:9-37

²⁵ I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word. ²⁶ I gave an account of my ways and you answered me; teach me your decrees. ²⁷ Cause me to understand the way of your precepts, that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds. ²⁸ My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. ²⁹ Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me and teach me your law. ³⁰ I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws. ³¹ I hold fast to your statutes, Lord; do not let me be put to shame. ³² I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding.

³³ Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. ³⁴ Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. ³⁵ Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. ³⁶ Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. ³⁷ Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

Psalm 119:25-37

Principles of Biblical Interpretation

- Approach the Bible in Prayer
- Read the Bible as a Book That Points to Jesus
- Let Scripture Interpret Scripture
- Meditate on the Bible
- Approach the Bible in Faith and Obedience
- Take Note of the Biblical Genre You Are Reading
- Be Aware of Historical or Cultural Background Issues
- Pay Attention to Context
- Read the Bible in Community
- Begin the Journey of Becoming a More Faithful Interpreter

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What role do prayer and meditation play in your study of the Bible?
2. What steps can you take to make prayer and meditation a regular part of your Bible reading?
3. Do you approach all of the Bible as pointing to Jesus? Which parts seem the most difficult to view in this way? Why?
4. What does it mean to let Scripture interpret Scripture?
5. Is it possible to believe and understand the Bible without obeying it? Can you back up your answer with Scripture?
6. When you read the Bible, do you, either consciously or unconsciously, take into account the genre of the book you are reading?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

7. With whom are you reading and discussing the Bible? How have you benefited from studying the Bible with others? If you are not studying the Bible in community, do you know of an existing small-group Bible study that you can join?
8. Can you think of an instance where additional historical or cultural background information aided you in understanding a biblical text?
9. Have you ever changed your view on what a text of the Bible means by studying the context more carefully? “A text without a context is a pretext.” Can you think of an example or illustration of this maxim?
10. What next step can you take on the journey to becoming a more faithful interpreter?

“To interpret a document is to express its meaning through speaking or writing. To engage in interpretation assumes there is, in fact, a proper and improper meaning of the text and that care must be taken not to misrepresent the meaning. When dealing with the Scriptures, to properly interpret a text is to faithfully convey the inspired human author’s meaning of the text, while not neglecting divine intent.”

Robert L. Plummer

