

#912 Biblical Interpretation
Western Reformed Seminary
Pastoral Mentorship Program
John A. Battle, Th.D.
Academic Year 2011-2012

COURSE INFORMATION

Course goals

This course is designed to acquaint you with the importance of biblical interpretation as a discipline, with the history of biblical interpretation in the church, with several important errors in interpretative methods, and with basic principles used to accurately interpret the Bible. You will, in addition to surveying this subject through the class syllabus and discussion with your instructor, read two books on this subject and complete a special assignment in a particular area of study. At the end of the course you should be able to discern the most common errors in interpretation as they occur, and to recognize proper interpretation. You will have a knowledge of the tools necessary to carry out detailed, accurate interpretation of the Word of God, leading to a lifetime of profitable Bible study and teaching.

Required reading

These two books are required to be read by the dates given on the course schedule.

- Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*
- D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*

Special assignment

Choose one of the following for your special assignment:

Book reading and review

Select and read a scholarly book in the area of hermeneutics or exegesis. Write a review article on the book of about 300 words, which would be suitable for publication in a theological journal.

Analysis paper

Select a passage of Scripture. Write a paper of about 1,500 words analyzing how various standard interpreters have interpreted that passage in different ways. Provide a critique, and reasons for the view you favor. The paper should be typed in standard format.

Article response

Write an article critiquing another article written in a scholarly journal concerning hermeneutics or exegesis. Your article should be about 1,000 words in length. Use standard formatting.

Subject overview

Produce an annotated outline of Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Interpretation*, organized into five to ten sections. This outline should have enough material included to provide the basis for a series of five to ten lectures on this subject. Include additional material in areas in which you would supplement Berkhof (especially if he presents a different viewpoint than you would have).

Examinations

The midterm (Study Questions #1-35) and final examinations (Study Questions #36-61) will be based on the course syllabus. You may use an unmarked Bible during these examinations.

Grading

Reading	30%
Special Assignment	15%
Midterm Examination	20%
Final Examination	20%
Class attendance and participation	15%