

Biblical Interpretation

Course Facilitator: Jeff Lark, Th.M.
Institute of Biblical Studies
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Virtual

Course Purpose

The Institute of Biblical Studies exists to help develop Christ-centered missionaries who possess the biblical and theological competencies they need (head, heart, and hands) to live out the Great Commandment and help fulfill the Great Commission through the ministry of Cru. As an organization, we are passionate about connecting people to Christ. To fulfill our global missionary mandate, we need to be growing in our understanding and experience of the good news about Christ revealed in the Scriptures, increasing in our understanding of people (as created, fallen and redeemed), and growing in our capacity to communicate Christ to people in their brokenness from the Scriptures. It is also essential that we can contextualize scriptural teaching for ethnically and culturally diverse audiences. Biblical Interpretation exists to help you grow in your capacity to read and apply the Scriptures in a Christ-centered way.

Course Description

The Biblical genre of narrative makes up roughly 40% of our Bibles. Faithfully interpreting God's Word requires understanding this literary form through which God speaks to us, applying sound hermeneutical principles, and connecting every passage to God's redemptive message throughout the Scriptures that centers on Jesus Christ. Building on the foundation of Bible Study Methods, this course will introduce you to an interpretive process that will enable you to understand God's Word and encounter the living God more profoundly. You will have the opportunity to learn this process working in small groups with the aid of a coach who will guide you to handle the treasure of God's Word faithfully and meaningfully.

Prerequisite: *Bible Study Methods*

Learning Outcomes

Cognitive (Knowledge and Thinking Skills)

1. Discover tools that can help you better understand and apply one key literary form through which God speaks to us in Scripture: narrative (Old and New Testament).
2. Better understand the grand story of Scripture and why it is important that we relate every passage to this larger story that culminates in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

3. Grow in your awareness of how culture shapes our reading and application of Scripture as well as the importance of listening to believers in other cultural contexts to understand what God is saying to us in his Word.

Affective (Attitudes, Motivation and Character)

1. Grow as a disciple of Jesus who joyfully submits to the authority of God's Word and who builds movements of disciples who "truly follow Jesus" by embracing his Word in their lives.
2. Develop greater confidence and humility in your ability to understand and apply God's Word.
3. Be motivated to apply sound interpretive principles to your future reading, study, application and teaching of Scripture.

Behavioral (Personal and Ministry Skills)

1. Grow in your ability to ask good questions as you read, study, and apply the Scriptures.
2. Grow in your aptitude to read and apply the Scriptures in a Christ-centered way by discerning how Scripture exposes your brokenness/rebellion and points your heart to find true life in Christ.

Required Texts

(There are Kindle versions of these books available. The ISBN is for the print versions)

Duvall, Scott J. and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-310-49066-1 [Duvall and Hays introduce you to a process of interpretation that closely resembles the process we teach in our class. While some of their language is different, the concepts are essentially the same. And, they walk you through the process using each of the major literary genres of the Bible. This book will get you well down the road in understanding our method in Biblical Interpretation. But, a word of caution: do not get "married" to their language. We will introduce you to language that we will use throughout Biblical Interpretation and Biblical Communication. NOTE: *Make sure you buy the third edition.*]

Georges, Jayson and Mark D. Baker. *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016. ISBN-978-0-8308-5146-1 [We will only be reading three chapters from this book. But the entire book is extremely helpful to learn how to minister to those who come from an honor/shame context.]

Keller, Timothy. *The Prodigal Prophet* New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2018
[The ultimate goal of biblical interpretation is seeing and savoring the glory of Christ. In this book, Keller unfolds the beauty of Jesus through Jonah. We will discuss chapters 1-9 in our coaching groups. We recommend that you wait to read this till the night before we discuss each chapter.]

ESV Study Bible. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-1433502415. The ESV Study Bible is one of the most helpful single-volume resources for studying the Bible. It contains a wealth of notes and articles addressing everything from the meaning of individual verses to the big picture of God's story. [NOTE: When you buy the print version, you also get free online

access to the ESVSB. If you don't want a print version of the ESVSB, you can simply buy one of the electronic versions available at esv.org.]

NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids, MI, USA: Zondervan, 2018. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/0310450403/?tag=andynaselli-20> This bible recently changed names from the Zondervan NIV Study Bible. (I would recommend purchasing the digital version at <https://www.olivetree.com/store/product.php?productid=26449>. Or, you can purchase it on BibleGateway - <https://www.biblegateway.com> (Note, be sure to purchase the Zondervan edition, not just the NIV Study Bible)

Recommended Texts

Bartholomew Craig G. and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama Of Scripture: Finding Our Place In The Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

Doriani, Daniel M. *Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1996.

_____. *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 2001.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Biblical-Theological Foundations and Principles*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

_____. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

Kostenberger, Andreas and Richard Patterson. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.

Roberts, Vaughan. *God's Big Picture: Tracing the story-line of the Bible*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2002. ISBN-13: 978-0830853649

Richards, E. Randolph. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2012.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised and Expanded. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.

Learning Tasks:

1. **Reading/watching:** You will engage with five books in this class. (1) *Grasping God's Word* provides a great overview of the biblical interpretation process and various literary forms we find in the Bible and will be a good supplement to the lectures. (2) *God's Big Picture* are 9 videos based off the book by the same title that traces the entire story of the Bible. You are required to interact with the material in the videos by filling out the notetaking sheet. We will discuss *GBP* in our coaching groups. (3) *The ESV Study Bible* and the *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible* are great resources for studying the Bible. They are resources you will continue to consult long after the class ends. (4) We will use Keller's *Prodigal Prophet* devotionally and will be a complement to our times in narratives. We will be discussing chapters 1-9 from this book. (6) *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures* is a wonderful introduction to a biblical theology of honor and shame. The last day of class you will submit a reading report to your coach indicating how much of the required reading you completed.
2. **Preparation for the First Class:** There is required work that needs to be completed prior to the first class session. See "Course Assignments" below.

3. **Participate in a Coaching Group:** Much of the learning in this class will take place in a small group context. You will be assigned to a coaching group with eight to ten of your peers. You will have a chance to practice the skills you are learning under the watchful eye of a coach.
4. **Study a Passage:** You will complete five worksheets which will give you the opportunity to practice the specific skills on which we focus that day. You will be able to incorporate all of your work into your final exegetical paper. The worksheets are all in Google Drive in one Google Doc. You will do a worksheet and then share (or comment) the file with your coach to let them know you completed it. As you continue to work through the worksheets, you will have all of your work in the one Google Doc:
 - a. Worksheet #1: Observations (10 points) – Pre work
 - b. Worksheet #2: Context (10 points)
 - c. Worksheet #3: Observations and Textual outline (10 points)
 - d. Worksheet #4: Theological Analysis (10 points)
 - e. Worksheet #5: Application (10 points)
5. **Write an Exegetical Paper:** You will communicate what you have learned from studying your passage in an exegetical paper.

COURSE GRADE

Reading	15 % (Turn in the reading report to your coach)
Exegetical Assignments	50 %
Exegetical Project	35%
Total	100pts

Grading Scale:

94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
84-89	B
82-83	B-
80-81	C+
74-79	C
72-73	C-
65-71	D
0-65	F

Course Assignments

Pre-Class Work

Prior to the first class, you need to read (or watch) the following:

- Roberts, *God's Big Picture* Videos [fill out the video notetaking sheets]
- Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*
 - Part 1 – Ch. 2-5 [52]
 - Part 2 – all [48]
 - Part 3 – all [44]

- Part 4 – Ch. 15 [22]
- Part 5 – Ch. 18 [[22]
- Appendix 1 – Inspiration and Canon [12]
- Read Johnson, “Hearing the Music of the Gospel” (NOTE: We will discuss this article in the first class session.)
- Georges and Baker – Part 2 (chapters 4 and 5)
- Complete worksheet #1 (Observations) by Wednesday, May 15

DAILY SCHEDULE/READING DUE/ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Note: *For the Keller discussions, you will need to read the chapters before class.*

Additional Note: *Because this class is being offered virtually, it can be tempting to try to maintain a normal (or limited) work schedule during this course. The pace will be demanding, so please clear your schedule so you can focus on this course. You will be glad you did.*

Monday, May 20

MORNING

Reading due: Hearing the Music of the Gospel

Assignment due: nothing

10:00-10:40am (All times throughout the syllabus are Central Time Zone)

Lecture: Introduction / Overview of Model

10:50-12:30

Workshop #1

Discuss *Hearing the Music of the Gospel*

Exercise #1: Foundational Principles

Homework - nothing

AFTERNOON

Reading due: Keller – Ch. 1, Appendix 1 (back of lecture notes)

Assignment due: nothing

2:00-2:40pm

Lecture #2 – Introduction to Narratives

2:50-4:30

Workshop #2

Keller – Ch. 1

Exercise #2

Homework – nothing

Tuesday, May 21

MORNING

Reading due: Keller – Ch. 2, Appendix 2 and 3 and begin reading your commentaries for your passage

Assignment due: nothing

10:00-10:40am

Lecture: Context

10:50-12:30

Workshop #3

Keller – Ch. 2

Exercise #3: Context in Luke 7

Homework – Worksheet #2 – Context – Due Wednesday, May 22 at 9:00am

AFTERNOON

Reading due: Keller, Ch. 3

Assignment due: nothing

2:00-4:30pm

Workshop #3 (no lecture)

Keller – Ch. 3

Exercise #3: Context in 1 Samuel 16

Homework – Worksheet #2 – Context – Due Wednesday, May 22 at 9:00am

Wednesday, May 22

MORNING

Reading due: Keller – Ch. 4

Assignment due: Worksheet #2 - Context

10:00-10:40am

Lecture: Textual Outline

10:50-12:30

Workshop #4

Keller – Ch. 4

Exercise #4: Textual Outline of Luke 7

Homework – Worksheet #3 – Textual Outline – Due Thurs, May 23 at 9:00am

AFTERNOON

Reading due: Keller, Ch. 5

Assignment due: nothing

2:00-4:30pm

Workshop #4 (no lecture)

Keller – Ch. 5

Exercise #4: Textual Outline of 1 Samuel 16

Homework – Worksheet #3 – Textual Outline – Due Thurs, May 23 at 9:00am

Thursday, May 23

MORNING

Reading due: Keller - Ch. 6, Appendix 4, and continue reading your commentaries for your passage

Assignment due: Worksheet #3 – Textual Outline

10:00-10:40am

Lecture: Theological Analysis (part 1)

10:50-12:30

Workshop #5

Keller – Ch. 6

Exercise #5: Theological Analysis of Luke 7

Homework – Worksheet #4 – Theological Analysis – Due Friday, May 24 at 9:00am

AFTERNOON

Reading due: Keller – Ch. 7

Assignment due: Nothing

2:00-2:50pm

Lecture #6 – Theological Analysis (part 2)

3:00-4:30pm

Workshop #6

“Into the Word” Genesis 38

Keller – Ch. 7

Exercise #6: Theological Analysis of 1 Samuel 16

Homework – Worksheet #4 – Theological Analysis – Due Friday, May 24 at 9:00am

Friday, May 24

MORNING

Reading due: Keller – Ch. 8, Appendices 5-8

Assignment due: Worksheet #4 – Theological Analysis

10:00-10:40am

Lecture: Application

10:50-12:30

Workshop #7

Keller – Ch. 8

Exercise #7: Application of Luke 7

Homework – Worksheet #5 – Application – Due Saturday, May 25 at 9:00am

AFTERNOON

Reading due: Keller – ch. 9

Assignment due: Nothing

2:00-4:30pm

Workshop #8 (no lecture)

Keller – Ch. 9

Exercise #8: Application of 1 Samuel 16

Homework – Worksheet #5 – Application – Due Saturday, May 25 at 9:00am

Exegetical Paper – Due Sunday, May 26 at 10:00pm.

EXEGETICAL PROJECT

OVERVIEW

Your exegetical project is an essay you will write on the passage you have studied. Your paper should be written in paragraph form and contain the following clearly marked sections designated in bold below. It should be 9–11 pages in length, double-spaced, written using Times New Roman, 12 point font and 1-inch margins. Within the body of your paper, simply use parentheses (not footnotes) to cite works listed in your bibliography. For example: (Grudem, 124). You will find a sample version of the paper posted in the google team drive for the class.

I. SURVEY THE BIG PICTURE (2 pages)

1. **Historical context:** Begin by discussing the author and original audience. Then discuss the specific historical-cultural setting for your story including location and a possible date for the events. (Note: *Any elements in your passage that require some historical or cultural background information to understand their significance to the original audience should be incorporated into the explanation of the passage.*)
2. **Literary context:** Discuss the literary context of your passage. Begin by describing how the book is structured. Next, explain how your passage fits into the book. Is it part of a larger unit? If so, how does it relate to that unit? What occurs in the passages immediately before and after your section? How does your passage relate to what comes immediately before and after?
3. **Redemptive context:** Discuss the redemptive context of your passage. In what chapter of redemptive history is this story found? Describe the key features of this chapter in God's story. What is important to understand about this particular chapter in God's story to understand this passage properly? What is unique to this chapter as it relates to God's people, God's place, and how God is blessing/ruling his people? (To answer these questions, you will need to consult the appropriate chapter in *God's Big Picture*).

II. EXPLORE THE PASSAGE (4-5 pages)

1. **Textual Outline:** Present your textual outline with specific verses and complete sentences. It should include clearly marked sections: For example, in a narrative: Beginning: Setting, Middle: Tension, Turning Point, and End: Following Actions/Lessons. This is the only part of your paper that you will be write in outline form.
2. **Statement of the Author's Big Idea (ABI):** This should be one complete sentence summarizing the big idea of your passage. You should write your ABI in the *past* tense (reflecting the examples in class).
3. **Explanation of the Passage:** In paragraph form, you will explain the flow of the passage. You should structure your explanation around your textual outline. Be sure to include headers from your textual outline and verse references for each section. You should explain what the author is teaching in each section and how it contributes to the big idea. You should include appropriate interpretive insights gleaned both from your study of the passage and engagement with the commentaries. This could include important observations, discussion of the meaning of key terms, explanation of the historical or cultural significance of certain practices or events, insights from your contextual analysis that shed light on the passage, etc. Remember that you will not be able to share everything you have learned. Select the most important insights that would help a reader understand the main ideas of the passage.

EXEGETICAL PROJECT (*continued*)

III. THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (2–3 pages) – DRAWS ON WORKSHEET 3

1. **Discontinuities:** In paragraph form, describe any discontinuities in your passage related to cultural differences and changes in redemptive history. First, concisely describe your own culture. Then, describe the discontinuities between your culture and the culture represented in your passage. Particularly, describe the chapter of God's story in which your narrative takes place and how that chapter is different than our present chapter (the proclaimed kingdom).
2. **Continuities:** In paragraph form, explain the continuities in your passage concerning the triune God, the nature of humanity and redemption. Rather than simply listing topics in each category, explain how the topics are expressed in the passage and how they are timeless truths, even today. For example, in 1 Samuel 16, God graciously provided a king after his own heart to lead his people. That king points forward to God's gracious provision of the ultimate King to rescue and rule his people and whose reign would be eternal. OR, just as God chose David to lead because he looked at David's heart, and not his appearance, God still is more concerned about the hearts of people he chooses for his purposes than about external factors.
3. **Statement of Theological Big Idea (TBI):** Develop a one-sentence summary of the theological big idea following the criteria outlined in your notes. It should be written in the *present* tense.
4. **Explanation of TBI:** In one page or less, explain and defend your theological big idea. First, explain the essential elements you have chosen to include in the TBI. Then tell your reader *why* you believe these elements should be part of the TBI. To defend your TBI, you will need to show that these elements in your TBI are both rooted in your ABI and represent continuities in the passage and are true in our present chapter of God's story.

IV. PERSONAL APPLICATION (1-2 pages)

1. **Application/Personal Impact:** Identify a fallen condition(s) of the original audience to which you can personally relate. Try to focus on the primary fallen condition of the passage. How do you see this fallen condition played out in your own life? What does this passage reveal about your brokenness that requires the redemptive work of Christ? What are one or two specific examples of how this brokenness is expressed in your life? Describe the redemptive focus of this passage. What's the good news? How does this passage point you to Christ and the gospel? How has God used this passage in your life? *Make it personal.*

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY (1 page)

1. List any sources you cited in the following format: Author's last name, author's first name. *Title of the volume.* Title of the commentary series. City of publication: Name of publisher, date. You will find bibliographic information on the IBS website.

Reading Report

(To be submitted to your coach)

Can be found on the last page of your google worksheets

Date Due	Assignment	Assigned Pages	# Pages Completed
Prior to the first class	Roberts, <i>God's Big Picture</i> Videos [fill out the video notetaking sheets and count as 50 pages. Duvall and Hays, <i>Grasping God's Word</i> [200] Georges and Baker – Part 2 (ch. 4 and 5) [47]	297	
Monday, May 20	Johnson, Hearing the Music of the Gospel [14] Appendix 1, "Tracing Redemptive Themes" [3] Keller, Ch. 1 [13]	30	
Tuesday May 21	Appendix 2 – Intro to Commentaries [2] Keller, Ch. 2 [7] Keller, Ch. 3 [11]	20	
Wednesday, May 22	Keller, Ch. 4 [13] Keller, Ch. 5 [11]	24	
Thursday, May 23	Appendix 3 – Identifying the TBI [1] Keller, Ch. 6 [13] Keller, Ch. 7 [13]	27	
Friday, May 24	Finish reading commentaries on your passage [count as 20pp] Appendix 4 – Understanding the Fallen Condition Focus of Scripture [7] Appendix 5 – Developing an Application Big Idea [3] Appendix 6 – Drilling down on your Application [2] Appendix 7 – Heart longings [2] Keller, Ch. 8 [15] Keller, Ch. 9 [23]	72	
	TOTAL	470	