

## COURSE SYLLABUS

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# Biblical Hermeneutics: Understanding Biblical Interpretation

Course Lecturer: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., PhD

## Course Description

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Welcome to *Biblical Hermeneutics: Understanding Biblical Interpretation*, an online graduate-level course designed to expand your understanding of biblical hermeneutics.

The term *hermeneutics* can be intimidating. It sounds academic and is foreign to most of our vocabularies. However, the act of interpretation is as common as communication itself. Whenever someone speaks, a listener interprets what the speaker means. But what is interpretation when we apply it to reading the Bible? How can we legitimately and effectively interpret the Bible? This course will instruct in various parameters for biblical interpretation and will show how specific methods are applied to Bible study.

## Course Objectives

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Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand the characteristics of a good interpreter of Scripture.
- Defend your position on whether a passage of Scripture can have only one or multiple meanings.
- Describe the basic assumptions of the liberal schools of higher criticism of the Bible.
- Articulate particular biblical theologies that provide argument for the unity for all of Scripture.
- Identify and interpret literary devices used in biblical narratives.
- Formulate teaching or preaching outlines of biblical narrative passages.
- Appreciate the depth of understanding of Scripture that can be reached by a more complete understanding of poetry, proverbs, and allegory.
- Recognize key interpretive clues as you approach the study of prophetic passages of Scripture.
- Defend the relevance of the Old Testament for today's world.
- Understand the importance of context in correctly interpreting Scripture.
- Cite numerous principles to be applied in seeking theological truths from Scripture.
- Develop an attitude of both confidence and caution in interpreting Scripture doctrinally

- Explain the right relationship between authorial intent and the role of the reader in determining the meaning of a text.
- Show how cultural aspects of the Bible can be used to teach overarching truths.
- Discuss the concept of principled application of Scripture to contemporary issues.
- Commit to a regular practice of devotional Bible reading, prayer, and meditation.

## Course Lecturer

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Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., PhD

**Education:**

- Brandeis University, MA and PhD
- Wheaton College, BA and BD

**Teaching Career:**

- President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Distinguished Colman M. Mockler Professor of Old Testament Studies, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1966-1993)
- Professor of Bible and Archaeology, Wheaton College (1958-1966)
- Leader of more than 20 graduate and undergraduate study tours abroad, while lecturing and preaching at thousands of schools and churches around the globe

**Other Career Highlights:**

- Advisory Editor, *Christianity Today*
- During his presidency at Gordon-Conwell (1997-2006), theological enrollment increased from 900 to 2,200 students
- Added five PhD programs during his tenure as Academic Dean and Senior Vice President for Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1980-1993)
- Chairman for the Evangelical Seminary Dean's Council (1982-1993)
- President of the Evangelical Theological Society (1977)
- Regularly consulted for his expertise by several Christian publications and organizations

**Publications:**

- Author of more than 40 books, including *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, *Recovering the Unity of the Bible*, *Biblical Ethics: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching*, and his magnum opus, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*

## Course Texts

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Though not required, you may choose to read the textbook shown below to supplement your learning.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. and Moises Silva. *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

*Why Trust the Bible?* Torrance, CA: Rose Publishing, 2008.

Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available. The lecture content for each lesson is provided in two easy-to-use formats: audio and PDF text (if available). Students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

## Course Methods

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