

Interpreting the Holy Scriptures

The Goal of this class

The goal of this class is to define the principles used in the proper interpretation of Holy Scripture (“Hermeneutics”) and, having learned these principles, to enable the student to properly apply them to the study of the Sacred Scriptures. The class is designed for individuals enrolled in the Atlantic District Diaconate Training Program, and meets the curriculum requirements as set forth by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Instructor

The instructor for this course is The Rev. John G. Fleischmann, STS, Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, East Moriches, NY. Email: ResQRev@optonline.net, Telephone: 631.874.3725, Cell 631.252.0613

Classes

Classes will be held on designated Thursday Evenings at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Dix Hills, NY. Class time is from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Class Schedule

I. Thursday, November 16: Introduction

- ✦ Introduction to Hermeneutics
- ✦ The Doctrine of Inspiration
- ✦ The Purpose of God’s Word
- ✦ The Genre of Scripture
- ✦ The Context of Scripture
- ✦ Translations of Scripture vs. Paraphrases of Scripture
- ✦ What Scripture *is not*.

II. Thursday, November 30: Scripture I

- ✦ The Canon of Scripture
- ✦ The Witness of Sacred Tradition to Scripture
- ✦ Homologoumena
- ✦ Antilogoumena

III. Thursday, December 7: Hermeneutical Principles

- ✦ *Sola Scriptura*
- ✦ *Sensus literalis unis est*
- ✦ *Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*
- ✦ Other important principles

IV. Thursday, December 14: The Confessional Role in Interpretation

- ✦ Law and Gospel
- ✦ The Lutheran Confessions and Scripture
- ✦ All Scripture points to Jesus Christ
- ✦ The Role of the Gospel

V. Thursday, January 4: The Role of the Interpreter

- †The Importance of Proper Interpretation
- †The magisterial position of Scripture and the Ministerial position of the interpreter
- †Allowing the Scriptures to speak for themselves.
- †The role of Commentaries, Biblical helps, etc..., some things to watch out for.

Texts and Readings for the Class

The primary text for this class will be *Just Words* by J.A.O. Preuss. Supplemental texts include the CTCR documents *Seven Theses on Reformation Hermeneutics* by Martin Franzmann, and *The Inspiration of Scripture*. Both of these are included in the appendix of this syllabus. Other books necessary but not supplied: At least 3 different versions of the Bible, the *Book of Concord* (this will be necessary in every class that is taken)

Project for the Class: Due January 4.

The student is to select one of the Biblical sections below. He/she is to write a paper on how this verse is interpreted. The paper should comment on the following aspects:

- The immediate context of the verse (the chapter and book that it is in)
- The genre that the text is written in (literal, symbolic, apocalyptic, allegoric, etc...)
- The extended context of the verse (how it relates to the testament it is included in, the other testament, the whole of the Bible).
- Other verses in Scripture that speak to the same topic, using the cross reference materials and other resources.
- View at least 3 different translations of Scripture (i.e, the NIV, the NKJV, the ESV, the RSV, the NRSV, etc...) and note the differences in translations between Bible
- Word study on key words in the verse to see the different ways that the words are used in Scripture. Consult a book such as *Naves Topical Bible* or a good concordance.
- Note difficult words and phrases in the text
- Consult various commentaries on the verse. and note their explanations.
- Consult the textual index in the *Book of Concord* and record the findings on the verse.
- Explain how either directly or indirectly the verse points to Jesus Christ.
- What law is there? Gospel

The paper should include references (end notes, foot notes or text insertions) and a Bibliography of all books consulted.

The paper can be submitted to the instructor in class on the due date or before. It can also be emailed in MS Word, PDF, or Rich Text Formats to the instructor prior to or on the due date. (Preferred method).

Scripture selections for Paper

Choose one of the following sections of Scripture for your study:

- Isaiah 7:10-16
- Mark 16:9-20
- 1 Corinthians 15:27-29
- Revelation 20: 1-6