

STUDY *to* SHOW YOURSELF APPROVED

A Course in Biblical Hermeneutics

DAVID R. REID



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

Study to Show Yourself Approved

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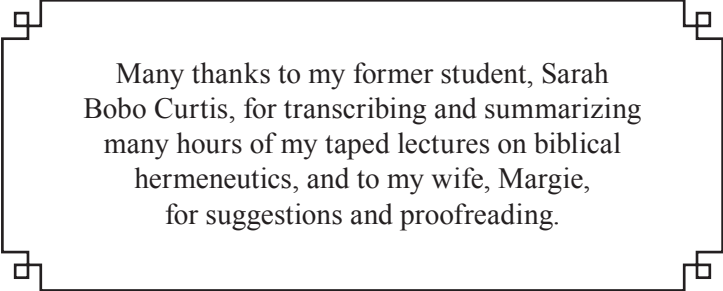
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Many thanks to my former student, Sarah Bobo Curtis, for transcribing and summarizing many hours of my taped lectures on biblical hermeneutics, and to my wife, Margie, for suggestions and proofreading.

Dr. David R. Reid served as a faculty member at Emmaus Bible College for 28 years before retiring to devote himself to the ministry he founded, Growing Christians Ministries. This correspondence course is based on Dr. Reid's college-level course titled *Hermeneutics*. If you would like to study more on this topic, check out Dr. Reid's website at www.growingchristians.org.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

You have chosen to study a course on biblical hermeneutics. This course will teach you to interpret God’s Word correctly. You will learn 30 biblically-based principles for interpreting Scripture. These principles emphasize the historical–grammatical–contextual approach for determining the meaning of a biblical passage. A number of examples from Scripture are used to illustrate each principle.

Begin by carefully reading the Introduction. It contains foundational information that is essential in understanding the rest of the course. Also, for your convenience and quick reference, a complete listing of the 30 principles for biblical interpretation are given on page 7.

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has twelve chapters that will greatly help you. Each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to open your heart to receive the truths He would teach you from His Word. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up all the Scripture references.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material and the Scripture verses given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam, and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the Bible or textbook where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

- 1. Meditate, Pray, Obey, and Be Open**
- 2. Assume the Clarity of Scripture**
- 3. Stress the Priority of the Original Languages**
- 4. Look at the Literary Context**
- 5. Remember the Basic Unit of Scripture**
- 6. Let Scripture Interpret Scripture**
- 7. Avoid Confusion Between Truth and the Inspired Record**
- 8. Never Determine Doctrine from an Illustration**
- 9. Check Out the Historical and Cultural Background**
- 10. Aim for One Interpretation with Many Applications**
- 11. Always Proceed from “Then” to “Now”**
- 12. Be Careful About Spiritualization**
- 13. Allow for the Fuller Meaning of Scripture**
- 14. Determine the Teaching Intention of the Author**
- 15. Distinguish Between the Cultural and the Transcultural**
- 16. Discern What Is More Critical and What Is Less Critical**
- 17. Recognize the Fact of Progressive Revelation**
- 18. Comprehend the Biblical Covenants**
- 19. Differentiate Between Israel and the Church**
- 20. Distinguish Between the Rapture and the Return**
- 21. Submit to the Hierarchy of Scripture**
- 22. Know the Different Types of Literature**
- 23. Understand the Use of Language**
- 24. Highlight the Theme of Salvation**
- 25. Realize That Not All Truth Has Been Revealed**
- 26. Acknowledge That the Finite Cannot Completely Fathom the Infinite**
- 27. Beware of Pride and Prejudice**
- 28. Watch Out for “Hobby Horses” and “Pet Peeves”**
- 29. Respect the Insight of Other Christians**
- 30. Consider the Historical Interpretations of the Texts**

INTRODUCTION

What Does “Hermeneutics” Mean?

When people hear that you’re studying hermeneutics they might be impressed and think you’re very smart. But hermeneutics is just a big word with a simple meaning. It comes from a Greek word meaning “to interpret.” We can define biblical hermeneutics as *the science and art of biblical interpretation*. Biblical interpretation is a science because it is guided by systematic rules, or principles. It is also an art because the application of these principles requires skill. Throughout this course you will learn principles and develop skills that will help you interpret the Bible correctly.

The goal of hermeneutics is to obtain the author/Author’s intended meaning. The Bible is not only a human book, written by men; it is also a divine book because it was inspired by God. We look for the human author’s intended meaning because ultimately we want to know what the Holy Spirit of God—the divine Author—meant. The goal of hermeneutics is not to come up with your own meaning!

In order to understand the author’s meaning, we must begin with three presuppositions, or three statements, that we accept as true:

1. The Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

Inerrant means “no error.” We believe that the Bible was inspired by God. Because God is perfect and infallible, His Word is without error.

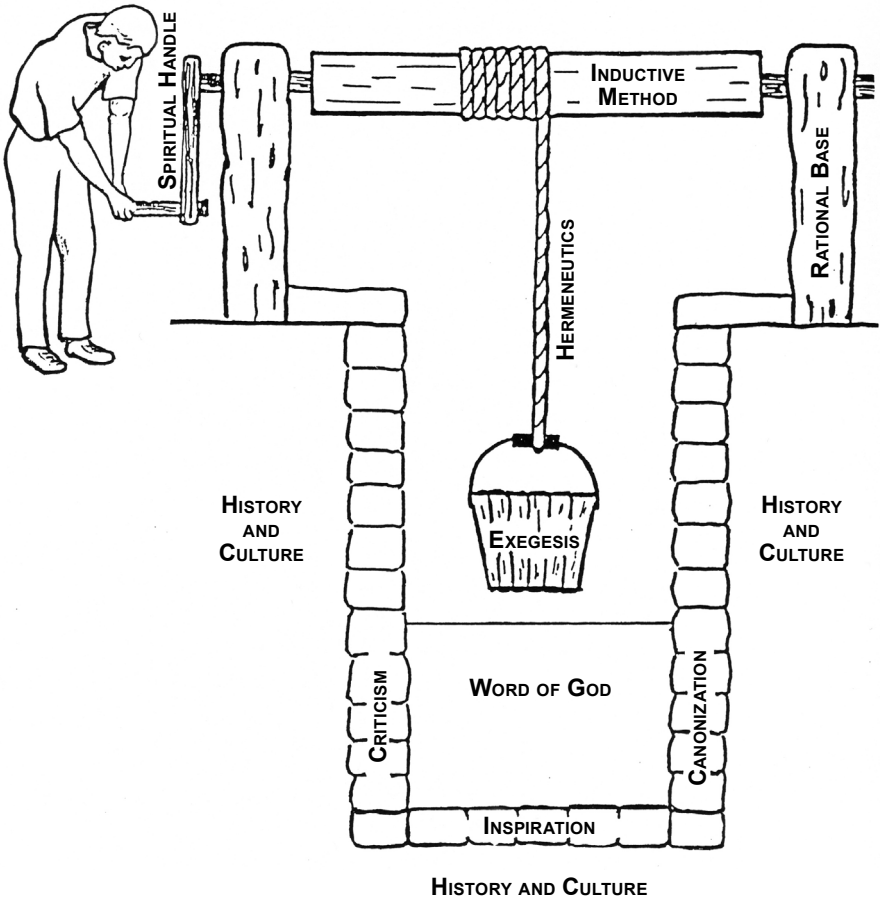
2. There is one correct interpretation.

A Scripture passage may have many applications, and the interpretation of a passage may be deep and multi-faceted, but by using hermeneutics, we seek to discover the one correct interpretation.

3. Most Scripture is easy to interpret.

As we look at many difficult passages in this course, you may think that interpreting the Bible is too hard for you. At times like this remember verses such as John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” This beautiful truth is simple enough for a child to understand. Most Scripture is easy to interpret and does not require a course in hermeneutics. But even the apostle Peter (in 2 Peter 3:16) admits that there are certain passages, such as some written by the apostle Paul, that are hard to understand! Knowing the principles of hermeneutics can be very helpful for correctly interpreting difficult passages.

THE FUNCTION OF HERMENEUTICS



Why Study Principles of Biblical Interpretation?

To answer this question we must understand the *function* of hermeneutics. Interpreting the Bible is like drawing water out of a well. The water symbolizes the Word of God. Just as we draw out water from a well by using a rope and bucket, so we draw out the meaning of Scripture by a process called *exegesis* and by applying our principles of hermeneutics.

First, let's look more closely at the water, the pure Word of God. We can define the Bible as *the Word of God written in the words of man in history and culture*. The Bible is not the words of man about God. It is the words of God to man (see Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4).

If the Bible was written in human language, in history and culture, how did God protect it from the error of its surroundings? Just as the well water is protected from the surrounding dirt by the walls of the well, so God protected His Word from error. These walls of protection are Inspiration, Canonization, and Textual Criticism.

Inspiration is the process by which the Holy Spirit superintended the writers and writings of Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21). Imagine you picked up a pen and wrote your name. What did the writing? The pen did. But you superintended the very words the pen wrote. In the same way, God "picked up" a Moses, Paul, or Luke and used them to write His Word. You can see the characteristics of which "pen" God used in the writings, but all the written words were superintended by God. In this way God protected His Word from any surrounding error.

A second wall, *canonization*, concerns the question of what books are Scripture. Canonization is the process by which the people of God recognized the Scripture as the Word of God. We believe God controlled this process as a way to protect His Word from error. All sixty-six books of the Bible are Scripture. No books of Holy Scripture were left out of the Bible, and no extra books that were not Scripture got into the Bible. Romans 3:2 says that the Jews were entrusted with God's Word in Old Testament times, and they never accepted the apocryphal books (included in some Bibles at the end of the Old Testament) as Scripture.

A third way God protected His Word from the surrounding error of history and culture is through *textual criticism*. Textual criticism is the method used to ensure that our texts of Scripture are as close to the original manuscripts as possible by examining all the manuscripts available. The

original manuscripts, which no longer exist, were written in Hebrew or Greek, and were copied repeatedly over thousands of years. These handwritten copies contain some minor variations. Textual critics analyze these copied manuscripts and delete the obvious scribal errors and bring our texts today as close as possible to the original writings.

Look now at the bucket labeled *Exegesis*. Ex means “out from.” We want to draw the meaning out of Scripture. Exegesis is determining or drawing out the meaning of a biblical text in its original setting. Exegesis is the opposite of *eisegesis* (*eis* means “into”), which would be reading your own meaning *into* Scripture. We practice good exegesis by applying the principles of hermeneutics. As the many-stranded rope draws the bucket with the water out of the well, so the many principles of hermeneutics draw the meaning of various texts out of the well of Scripture. In this course we will study thirty principles of hermeneutics.

The rope, labeled *Hermeneutics*, is secured to the winch labeled *Inductive Method*. When we use the inductive method of studying Scripture, we arrive at a conclusion after studying the specific Scriptures. In contrast, using the Deductive Method, we start with a premise or an idea and then find Scriptures to support it. This is eisegesis, and **bad hermeneutics!**

Notice on the picture that the inductive method is supported by a *Rational Base*. By this we mean that the inductive method is based on reason and the laws of logic. We do not use irrational or illogical methods to understand God’s Word, such as chanting a passage of Scripture to determine the interpretation!

The final element of our water well illustration is what we will call the *Spiritual Handle*. Non-Christians can practice the proper principles of hermeneutics, but they don’t have the advantage of the spiritual handle. Christians have the spiritual handle because the Holy Spirit helps us understand the texts we are studying (see John 16:13-15 and 1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

Over the next twelve chapters you will learn thirty principles of biblical hermeneutics. These principles are listed on page 7. There is nothing special or sacred about the order of these principles. All of them are important, but obviously some are more important when interpreting certain texts of Scripture. These thirty principles were not dreamed up by the author or by ECS Ministries; they have been used throughout history by students of God’s Word. Many of them can be shown from Scripture

itself, for example, when we see how New Testament authors interpreted Old Testament Scriptures.

As Scriptures are mentioned throughout this course, **be sure to look up the passages in your Bible**. Don't take someone else's word for it! Be like the Bereans, and make sure Scripture backs it up (Acts 17:11).

Our prayer is that you will learn and apply these principles, gain great insight into God's Word, and be better able to recognize and reject false doctrine.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

–2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

1

PRINCIPLE 1

MEDITATE, PRAY, OBEY, AND BE OPEN

The importance of the “Spiritual Handle” in the well diagram (p. 10) leads us directly to our first principle of hermeneutics: *Meditate, Pray, Obey, and Be Open*.

This principle is foundational to applying the other biblical principles. The more we meditate on Scripture, pray about the meaning, obey what we learn, and stay open to changing any preconceived opinions we may have, the more we will be practicing good principles of biblical interpretation.

Biblical meditation is not subjective, like eastern meditation; it is objective. You’re not focusing on your inner-self or your feelings; you’re focusing on the Word of God. For practice, try reading one Scripture in the morning and meditating on it throughout the day. In addition to meditating on Scripture, we must pray. The psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:144, “The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; give me understanding, and I shall live.” God delights to answer a prayer that asks for help in understanding His Word.

It is also important to obey God’s Word. From John 7:16-17 we see that if we are willing to do God’s will, we will receive insight into His teaching, or His Word. Finally, we must be open. We must be ready to change our views if they are not in line with Scripture, even if we don’t initially agree or like what the Scripture is saying. The Bereans are a good example of believers following this fundamental principle of hermeneutics (Acts 17:10-12).

PRINCIPLE 2

ASSUME THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE

When we “assume” something, we take it for granted and accept it is true. When we assume the clarity of Scripture, we accept that God meant it to be clearly and easily understood. How do you read the Bible? Do you accept that it means what it clearly and plainly says—even the parts you don’t like? Or do you try to find another meaning for the verses and passages that make you uncomfortable? Assuming the clarity of Scripture is a crucial principle of hermeneutics. It is the commonsense principle of biblical interpretation. It states that God is not playing guessing games with us when it comes to understanding His Word. This principle also assumes that the human authors were not trying to hide the real meaning of a passage behind an *apparent* meaning.

We see this principle taught in Scripture in Proverbs 8:8-9, where wisdom is personified and speaking: “All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them. They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.” God is telling us to assume the clarity of Scripture. He wrote the Bible for us to understand!

We could expand this principle to say: Always go with the simple, straightforward, ordinary, obvious, plain, direct, normal, natural meaning unless there is a very good reason not to do so. Notice that in this expanded definition the word “literal” is left out. We must remember that the Bible does include figurative language.

What about the phrase, “unless there is a very good reason not to do so”? What would be “a very good reason”? The very good reason must come from *other* Scripture. Not agreeing with it because of our preconceived ideas, or not liking what the passage says, are not good reasons to interpret it differently. However, if the simple, straightforward meaning would contradict other clear Scriptures, we may have cause to interpret it differently.

Now let’s look at a few examples which illustrate the clarity of Scripture principle.

Exodus 20:11

Assuming the clarity of Scripture, what do you think the author, Moses, meant when he wrote “six days”? How do you think the nation of Israel, the original audience, understood it? Did they understand six days to mean six twenty-four-hour periods or six geological ages? Practicing Principle 2 you would say, obviously, six twenty-four-hour periods! We always assume the clarity of Scripture unless there is a very good reason not to do so, and this very good reason must be from Scripture, not from science, and not from our own opinion. As we look at other Scriptures on this subject, they confirm the idea that it did not take long for God to create the universe (see Hebrews 11:3 and Psalm 33:9). When we apply this principle to the creation account in Genesis 1-2 we are even more convinced that these were literal twenty-four-hour days. If God had wanted to convey that the days of creation were “geologic ages,” there are words in the Hebrew language that He could have used to say that.

Some people turn to 2 Peter 3:8, which says, “With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” They say, “Isn’t this our very good reason? See, the creation days were actually thousand year periods!” No! When you look at 2 Peter 3:8 *in the context* of the verses that surround it (Principle 4), it is not an equation that allows you to replace every day with a one thousand year period. (Our Lord was not in the tomb for three thousand years, for example!) Peter is teaching that God is not bound by time. If anything, this verse would argue that something that normally looks like it would take a long time to accomplish is no problem for God to do in a short time. Using 2 Peter 3:8 as a reason to re-interpret Exodus 20:11 as geological ages would be **bad hermeneutics!** Applying Principle 2, we believe that when God said He created the heavens and the earth in six days, He is using the word “day” in the way it is normally used in Hebrew—twenty-four-hour solar days.

2 Peter 3:3-6

From reading this passage, do you think Peter believed that the Genesis flood was a local flood or a worldwide flood? The reading of verse 6 certainly indicates a worldwide flood. Peter uses Principle 2 here when he interprets Genesis 6-8. When Peter read in Genesis 7:18-23 that all the high mountains were covered, all flesh perished, and every living thing was wiped out, he accepted that the words said what they meant. He saw that this historical event was a worldwide flood.

You can see, then, that this hermeneutical principle is not something we have invented. The authors of the Bible practiced it when they interpreted Scripture. Notice also that, in context, Peter spoke about three different universal cosmographies, a heavens and earth before the flood, a heavens and earth since the flood, and a future new heavens and earth. The fact that different cosmographies existed before and after the flood would certainly indicate that the flood was a global catastrophe. We will find in our study of Scripture that often several principles of hermeneutics are helpful in determining the meaning of a text.

Matthew 5:27-30

We have learned to always go with the simple, straightforward, ordinary, obvious, plain, direct, normal, natural meaning unless there is a very good reason not to do so. Let's look at a passage that fits the exception clause. The simple, straightforward meaning of this passage from Matthew is that if you have a problem with lust you should pluck out your eye or cut off your hand. Is the Lord Jesus teaching self-mutilation? No! Remember, we are to interpret Scripture plainly unless there is a very good reason from Scripture not to do so.

Here are four reasons from Scripture that indicate we should not follow the simple meaning of Matthew 5:27-30:

1. The rest of Scripture indicates that lust is not a problem of the eyes, but of the mind and heart. You could still lust with one eye.
2. The rest of Scripture indicates that mutilation of the body does not solve the problem of lust. Colossians 2:23 says, "These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh."
3. The rest of Scripture indicates that maiming oneself does not keep a person out of hell. The question of going to hell is determined by whether or not a person accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (see John 5:24; 1 John 5:12).
4. The rest of Scripture indicates that we should care for our bodies, not maim them (see 1 Corinthians 6:15; Ephesians 5:28-29).

So what is the interpretation of Matthew 5:27-30? In this passage Jesus was using highly figurative language to emphasize that we must deal ruthlessly and decisively with the problem of lust. In other words, we must throw out the literature, DVDs and videos, and never log on to internet websites that may be part of the problem.

From these examples we have learned to accept, or assume, the clarity of Scripture. The vast majority of the time, God's Word means just what it says in plain language.

PRINCIPLE 3

STRESS THE PRIORITY OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES

The New Testament was written in Greek and the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with a few sections in Aramaic. Therefore, the best way for you to study the Bible is to read it in its original languages—but what do you do if you don't know Hebrew or Greek?

Even people who don't learn Greek or Hebrew can apply this principle of hermeneutics. There are many aids available today to help us with the original languages. You will find a list of recommended word study aids on page 141. These helps include lexicons, Bible dictionaries, and word study books. Many commentaries will also refer back to the original languages for insight.

Stressing the priority of the original languages means that we study both the vocabulary (words) and grammar (sentence structure) of the languages. Let us take a few examples to see how word studies from the original language help us with vocabulary.

Galatians 6:2 and 5

Here is how Galatians 6:2 and 5 appear in the King James Version of the Bible: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. . . . For every man shall bear his own burden." Is this a contradiction in the Bible? We should bear one another's burdens, yet everyone should bear their *own* burdens? To study this we would take one of our word study aids and

look up the word “burden.” We see that there are actually several Greek words that are translated into our one English word. One word, *baros*, denotes something heavy, like a piano. This is the word used in Galatians 6:2; we should help out with our brothers and sisters with the things that weigh them down (i.e. troubles and trials). Another word that is translated “burden” is the Greek word *phortion*. This word means responsibility, not weight. This word is the one found in Galatians 6:5. It teaches us that we should fulfill our personal responsibilities as we live our Christian lives. We could paraphrase these verses this way: “Help relieve the one who is weighted down with excessive burdens (v. 2). Everyone should bear his own normal load of responsibility (v. 5).”

Psalm 16:10

This psalm is one of the messianic psalms. Both Paul and Peter quoted it to refer to Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Acts 2:27 and 13:35). We understand how the second part of the verse relates to Jesus Christ, since His body did not decay. But how does the first part relate to Christ? The King James Version reads, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” If you don’t do a word study on this word “hell,” you might think that Jesus went to hell between His death and resurrection. From a word study you would find that the Hebrew word for hell in Psalm 16:10 is a place called *sheol* and in Acts 2:27 it is *hades*. Sheol or hades is not hell. Neither is sheol or hades the Lake of Fire. Sheol or hades is not the *gehenna* of the New Testament. Sheol or hades is the place of the grave, or the realm of the dead. If we practice good hermeneutics we will not use this Scripture to teach that Jesus went to hell between His death and resurrection.

Another way to give priority to the words of the original languages is to look out for *word fallacies*. A word fallacy is a false notion of the meaning of a word. There are several varieties of word fallacies. It is easy to be misled by them if you are not careful.

1. Be careful about trying to figure out the meaning of the original word from the construction of the word in English.

Example: Atonement. What does the word *atonement* mean? Some well-meaning preachers say it means “at-one-ment.” That is, we are reconciled to God and made “at-one” with Him. Is this a good interpretation of the word? We must be careful interpreters,

because “at-one-ment” is *not* the meaning of atonement. It is true that we are reconciled and brought into a relationship with God because of Christ’s work, but that is not the meaning of atonement. When we do a proper word study, we find that the Hebrew word for atonement actually means “to cover.” In the Old Testament, when the blood of the sacrifice was placed on the Mercy Seat on the Day of Atonement, the sins of the people were covered until the coming of the Lamb of God.

2. Be careful about reading back the meaning of an English word into the original Hebrew or Greek word.

Example: Romans 1:16. Preachers have been known to give a sermonette like this: Do you see that word “power”? “Power” is from the Greek word *dunamis*. Dynamite comes from this word *dunamis*. The gospel is the ‘dynamite of God.’ It is an explosive power!” This sermonette sounds good, but did you see that it is based on a word fallacy? Although we do get the word dynamite from the original Greek word *dunamis*, we cannot read the meaning of dynamite back into the original meaning. Paul was not alluding to dynamite when he wrote this passage. Do a word study on *dunamis* to find its real meaning, and thus avoid committing this word fallacy.

3. Be careful about giving an original compound word the meaning of its two parts.

Example: In English there are many compound words that don’t have anything in common with the meaning of their two parts. Consider the word “butterfly”: the meaning of this word is not a combination of the meanings of the words “butter” and “fly”!

The same is true in Greek. In John 3:16, Jesus Christ is called the “only begotten Son” of God. The phrase “only begotten” is from the Greek word *monogenes*. *Mono* means “only” and *genes* means begotten. But this does not mean that Christ was literally begotten! Jesus has always existed; He was not created *or* begotten! This term does not imply birth or beginning. It means that Jesus Christ has a one-of-a-kind, intimate relationship with God. A relationship that is unique. (Compare Hebrews 11:17, where this word speaks of Isaac’s special relationship with his father.) Don’t commit a word fallacy here, as the cults do, and conclude that Christ is a created being.

Another good way to stress the priority of the original languages is to refer to multiple and reliable translations such as the King James Version, New King James Version, and New American Standard Bible. John 14:2 is a good example of this. The King James Version reads, “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” The New American Standard Bible says “dwelling places.” By reading different translations, we get a more balanced view of what Jesus was teaching. He was not teaching that we will all have the elaborate mansions of millionaires—His point is that we will all be there together! Like a joyful family reunion, heaven will be one big happy family of God with a place for all believers. As new translations of the Bible become available, we recommend you use ones that are word-for-word translations. If you are unsure, check with one of the elders of your local church.

Besides stressing correct word translations, we must give priority to the grammar or structure of the original languages by doing grammatical studies. In school grammar classes we learn about parts of speech, sentence structure, noun-verb agreement, etc. A knowledge of grammar is useful as we seek to give priority to the original languages. Let’s consider a couple of examples where knowing the grammar of the original languages helps with interpretation.

1 Timothy 6:21

When Paul ended this letter, “Grace be with you,” to whom was he speaking? Just to Timothy, or to others also? By doing a grammatical study we learn that this “you” is plural. People in the South might say, “Grace be with y’all!” So we see that this is not just a private letter to Timothy; it is to a wider audience. Timothy was to share it with all the believers at Ephesus, and we can benefit from its teachings today.

Matthew 22:31-32

Here, Jesus was debating with the Sadducees, a religious group that did not believe in the resurrection of the body. Jesus quoted Exodus 3:6, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Jesus was emphasizing grammar here. The verb is not past tense; He did not say, “I was the God of Abraham;” it is present tense: “I *am*.” Abraham is still in existence. He will be resurrected, and God’s covenant with him will be fulfilled. The Lord Jesus Himself gave priority to the grammar of the original languages.

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EXAM BOOKLET
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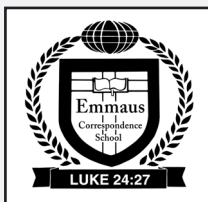
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. They will help you to apply the principles and concepts in this course. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

PRINCIPLES 1, 2, AND 3

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The first principle for interpreting the Bible is
A. Read, Pray, Study, and Obey
B. Meditate, Pray, Obey, and Be Open
C. Meditate, Pray, Memorize, and Apply
D. Pray, Memorize, Study, and Obey _____

2. Biblical meditation
A. is the same as praying
B. is only expected to be done by preachers
C. puts you in tune with your inner emotions
D. is an objective mental exercise that focuses on the Bible text _____

3. According to Acts 17:10-12, the Bereans were good examples of
A. praying without ceasing
B. meditating on Scripture and memorizing it
C. bringing their views in line with what they learned
D. obeying biblical commands _____

4. "Assuming the Clarity of Scripture" means
A. the Bible has been purposefully written for us to understand
B. we should take a common-sense approach as to the meaning
C. the human authors did not deliberately mask the true meaning
D. all the above _____

5. Which of the following would count as “a very good reason” for not going with the “obvious” meaning of a text, according to the second hermeneutical principle?
- A. not liking what the passage teaches
 - B. measuring it by my Sunday School teacher’s interpretation
 - C. other clear Scriptures contradicting the straightforward meaning
 - D. whenever science contradicts it
6. How many principles are usually helpful in determining the meaning of a Bible text?
- A. never more than one
 - B. at least five
 - C. several
 - D. one for the Old Testament and two for the New Testament
7. The Bible was originally written in
- A. Hebrew and English
 - B. English, Latin, and Aramaic
 - C. Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic
 - D. Latin and Greek
8. To stress the priority of the original languages means to study both the _____ and the _____ of the original languages.
- A. vocabulary / grammar
 - B. vocabulary / history
 - C. grammar / spelling
 - D. alphabet / ethnicity
9. Reading back the meaning of an English word into the original Hebrew or Greek word
- A. always leads to heresy
 - B. is how scholars double-check Bible translations
 - C. is the only way we can understand the original meaning
 - D. often leads to misunderstanding the real meaning

10. When Jesus quoted God saying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,"
- He made a grammatical mistake; He should have said "was" because they're dead
 - He was showing that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still exist
 - He was stressing that God is a personal God
 - He was confirming that God chose the Jews to be His own people

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

- A. A new believer expresses concern to you after reading Matthew 12:36. She understands it to mean that God will one day judge her for all her "careless words." Applying the exemption clause of Principle #2, cite at least two other Scriptures that would reassure her that this verse *does not apply* in her case. What do you think is the correct interpretation for this verse?

- B. The Bible states that Jesus is the "only begotten" Son of God. Some people say this means He is a created being. Explain why this is a word fallacy.
