

Syllabus for “Biblical Exegesis: A Deeper Look at the Bible”

Audience: We hope the course would benefit anyone who is curious about the Bible—as literature, as theology, as or as inspiration. Generally exegesis is undertaken by people who are familiar in a general way with the Bible and who may have done some form of “Bible study” but are looking for way to study the Bible in a more rigorous way, to prepare Biblical texts for preaching, or to deepen their understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Purpose: This short, free course provides a basic introduction to exegesis, which is the process of reconstructing, as far as possible, the ORIGINAL historical and cultural context of Biblical passages. Generally, this is done as a first step, as a way of determining what the passages ought to mean to us today. That second step goes by different names: hermeneutics, or interpretation or exposition.

Strategy and Structure: We will be taking our basic approach from a book by Gordon Fee, called *New Testament Exegesis*. Basically Fee presents exegesis as a process with many distinct “steps.” In practice, the process is more flexible and intuitive than that and grows more so with practice. Still, Fee’s steps provide a good beginning guide.

We will apply the steps to several Bible passages--some Old Testament, some New--taking one or two passages per week. The passages will be drawn, time permitting, from Genesis, I Samuel, Isaiah, The Gospels, the Epistles, and Revelation. Different phases of Fee’s “steps” will be highlighted and practiced as we work through each text. There will be plenty of opportunity for discussion and questions.

Instructors: The Rev. Jackie Bernacchi has been rector (senior pastor) at All Saints’ Episcopal Church since she was ordained in 2001. She formerly worked as a real estate appraiser and has earned the M.Div. from Trinity Seminary in Ambridge, PA. The Rev. George Slinger has been an assisting priest at All Saints, also since 2001. He taught for English and Humanities (including the Bible as Literature) for 29 years at Minot State University.

Texts: Students are encouraged to bring a Bible, preferably “close” translation, or a good study Bible in such a translation. Examples are the RSV, the NRSV, the NASB, and the Jerusalem Bibles. Paraphrases, such as the Living Bible are acceptable, if that is what you have, but we will be distinguishing between paraphrases and translations. Gordon Fee’s book is available from Amazon.com for \$13.17 but students would not need to buy it, since it’s content will be developed in class.