

EFCC Ministerial Accreditation Seminar
The Bible in Today's World
Syllabus | Spring 2027
David H. Johnson, Ph.D.

Description

The Bible never changes, but over the past 2000 years the interpretation of the Bible in the church has changed. A knowledge of this story of change helps us understand the nature, interpretation, and application of the Bible today.

This Seminar will explore the role of the Bible in ministry in the twenty-first century in the Evangelical Free Church of Canada in light of the history of the church. Topics include the nature of Scripture as the book of the church, how the church comes to understand Scripture, and how the understanding of Scripture is communicated to the church.

The Seminar will meet six times for one hour each time according to the schedule below. Three hours will be a total group meeting and three hours will be in smaller groups. Small groups will meet with the facilitator on the day after each total group meeting.

An Introduction to Seminar Two will be available on video by December 1.

Objectives

Participants will:

1. Discuss how the church understands Scripture in the current intellectual milieu of Canada.
2. Interpret various texts of Scripture.
3. As a group, prepare an expository sermon outline.
4. When participants complete the Seminar they will understand the nature, interpretation, and relevance of the Bible in the Evangelical Free Church of Canada.

Textbook

Jaeger, Lydia and Craig Bartholomew, eds. *The Bible Throughout the Ages: Its Nature, Interpretation, and Relevance for Today*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024.

This book is not an easy read because it summarizes so much material arising over the entire history of the church. It is written by a wide array of scholars from around the globe who all love God and the Bible. We will read it to stimulate our thinking, not simply to tell us what is true or false. The various chapters will be the bases for discussions on how the Bible should be studied, understood, and what factors impact preaching/teaching today. Although we will discuss the book each time we are together, it will be best for your schedule if most of the book is read before the first session. It will probably take 10-15 hours of reading time to finish the thirteen chapters of the book. I suggest you read one chapter in one sitting. Mark up the margins with comments and questions.

Assignments

1. Read *The Bible Throughout the Ages* and prepare to discuss key concepts, controversial ideas, and practical applications with the cohort. Make notes and questions for the discussion.
2. In five minutes, present to the seminar the interpretation of an assigned passage of Scripture from Hebrews 11. Treat this assignment as the initial stage of preparing a sermon on the text. Study the text without any tools and then consult whatever tools you have available.
3. Contribute to the preparation of a sermon on Hebrews 1:1-4 as a stand-alone sermon.
4. Write a 1000-word essay stating things you have learned in this seminar and how they apply to your ministry. Forward this "Learnings Paper" to the facilitator at david.johnson@prov.ca and to Kirby Thompson at kirbyt@efcc.ca.

Suggested Resources

Barth, Karl. *Homiletics*. Louisville: WJK, 1991.

Buttrick, David. *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.

Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006².

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Mere Christian Hermeneutics: Transfiguring What It Means to Read the Bible Theologically*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024.

Wheeler, Stephen H. *Fish the Bible! Understand Scripture and Apply It to Life*. Self-Published, 2012.

Schedule

Date	Topics	Assignment Due
February 10 Full Group 9am – 10am Pacific	A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting the Bible in the EFCC Today 1. Introduce the Seminar: Review the Syllabus 2. Three Hermeneutical Spirals and the problem of certainty 3. The Significance of Genre for Interpretation	
February 10 or February 11 Small Groups Selection of Times	What Is the Bible in the EFCC Today?	Discuss the key concepts, controversial ideas, and practical application from Chapters 1-5 of Jaeger and Bartholomew.
February 24 Full Group 9am – 10am Pacific	How Do We Interpret the Bible in the EFCC Today? 1. The Interpretation of the Bible 2. From Text to Sermon 1	Discuss the key concepts, controversial ideas, and practical application from Chapters 6-10 of Jaeger and Bartholomew.
February 24 or February 25 Small Groups Selection of Times	Practical Experience in Bible Interpretation Present the interpretation of an assigned passage from Hebrews 11 in five minutes.	Present the interpretation of an assigned passage to the seminar.
March 10 Full Group 9am – 10am Pacific	How do we preach/teach the Bible in the EFCC today? 1. The Relevance of the Bible 2. From Text to Sermon 2 3. Conclusion	Discuss the key concepts, controversial ideas, and practical application from Chapters 11-13 of Jaeger and Bartholomew.
March 10 or March 11 Small Groups Selection of Times	Practical Experience in Sermon Creation Create a sermon outline for Hebrews 1:1-4	Prepare to contribute to the development of a sermon on Hebrews 1:1-4.
April 2	Learnings Paper	Seminar 2 Learnings Paper is due on April 1.