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HERM004	a Grace Notes course

a **Grace Notes** course

## Hermeneutics

Source Materials:

**“Hermeneutics: the Science and Art of Biblical Interpretation”**  
Drue Freeman, Pastor, Trinity Bible Church, Oklahoma City, OK

**“A Syllabus of Studies in Hermeneutics”**, Rollin Thomas Chafer

### HERM004

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

Grace Notes

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## Hermeneutics

### *A Grace Notes course*

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HERM 001	Lessons 1 and 2
HERM 002	Lessons 3 and 4
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### **Lesson 6 - The Protestant System Of Hermeneutics – Theological Perspectives**

There are certain theological perspectives that our method of Bible study must include in order for us to approach the text and interpret Scripture properly.

The first principle involves the Clarity of Scripture, which is clearly taught in 2 Pet 1:20-21 and 1Cor 14:33. The passage in 2 Peter says, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Scripture is clear because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. We must remember that although Scripture is "clear" there still may be parts that are difficult to understand.

One of our basic guiding principles though is that "God said what He meant and meant what He said." We must seek to know His Word as

He intended. We also know that, "God is not a God of confusion but of peace (1 Cor 14:33)," so where there is confusion it is on our part and not God's. Therefore, "problem passages" come from our lack of knowledge, our perspective or desire to "do His will (John 7:17). The use of the original languages under the ministry of the Holy Spirit will clarify many of these problems.

The second principle is that Revelation is Accommodated, which means that it was originally communicated in language to be understood by the initial recipients. The Scripture often uses analogies to inescapable realities that fit the time frame in which it was written. The application of this principle requires some knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of the people to which the portion of the Word was addressed.

The third theological principle is that Revelation is Progressive. This refers to the fact that various precepts are initially presented in a summary form and then enlarged. A wonderful example is found in the

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"promised seed of the woman" found in Genesis 3:15. More information about the Messiah is found throughout the Old Testament, especially in the types and symbols that are used to give a vivid picture of the Messiah who was to come. The New Testament is documentation of the reality that Messiah has come. While this is the clearest example of Progressive Revelation, there are many concepts that are initially presented and then developed.

The fourth principle is that Scripture interprets Scripture meaning that the obscure passage should give way to the clear. This principle realizes that essential truths are not hidden. We should look for detailed passages on a given subject and let them be the guide in the interpretation of the passages with less detail. An illustration of this principle is found in the comparison of Matthew 24:40 with Matthew 13:49.

In Matthew 24, the phrase "one will be taken, and one will be left" could refer either to the righteous being taken at the Rapture of the church or the wicked being taken at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. The passage in Matthew 13 which is also found in a context dealing with the "last days" says that it will be the "wicked who will be taken out from the righteous." Thus, we are able to interpret the Matthew 24 passage as referring to the Second Advent and not the Rapture because Scripture has interpreted Scripture.

The fifth principle is the Analogy of Faith. This principle means that there is only one system of truth in Scripture. There are not two or more theological systems. The practical application of this is that all doctrines and conceptual studies must be in harmony with one another. The interpretation of particular passages of Scripture must not contradict the total teaching of Scripture on a given subject. For example, eternal salvation is either by grace through faith, or by works, but not both. God's Word does not have two different systems or means to eternal salvation, but rather it has one (Eph

2:8-9). Therefore, passages that relate our "works" done in this body to eternity must be understood in view the passages that clearly specify that our eternal salvation is by grace. The sixth theological principle is the Unity of Meaning of the Scripture. This is why believers develop a systematic theology that seeks to understand and explain how various passages and concepts fit together. This principle seeks to understand and communicate how God has put His Word together. Man's tendency though is to "read into" God's Word what he wants to find (eisegesis). When man desires (either intentionally or not) to impose his system upon God's Word he is prone to presumptive allegories and distortions of the Scriptures. Knowing what God says and desires should always be the first priority of the student of His Word.

#### **Exercises for HERM004**

1. Explain in your own words the principle of the Clarity of Scripture.
2. Explain in your own words the principle that Revelation is Accommodated.
3. Explain in your own words the principle that Revelation is Progressive.
4. What is the significance and importance of the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture?
5. What is the Analogy of Faith?
6. What is the value of the principle regarding the Unity of Meaning?