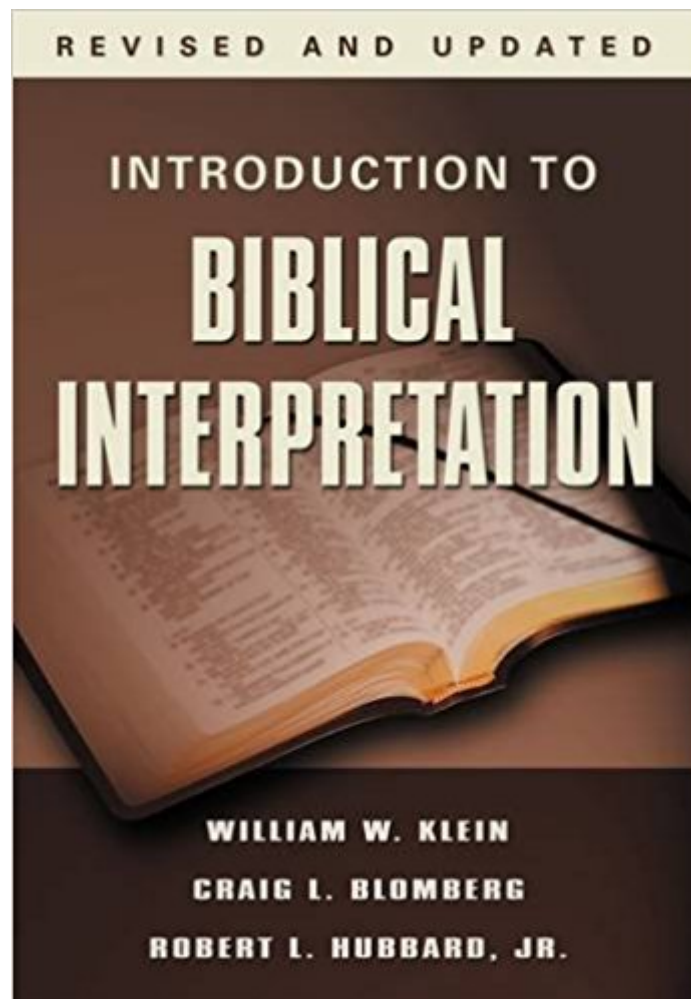




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Introduction To Biblical Interpretation, Revised Edition



Synopsis

The authors of this book have combined years of expertise and devotion to Scripture to provide a truly unique volume that sets forth concise, logical, practical guidelines for discovering the truth in God's Word. Ten years after its initial publication, the authors now have thoroughly updated it in light of the latest scholarship. "This is a remarkably comprehensive study of the whole area of biblical interpretation. Thoroughly evangelical, it also interacts with nonevangelical interpretational stances. No other volume available on biblical interpretation does so much so well."- Douglas Stuart, Professor of Old Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

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Customer Reviews

Klein, et al's Introduction to Biblical Interpretation is a wonderful book that does exactly what it was designed to do - provide the best possible education experience on Biblical interpretation and hermeneutics for advanced Bible students. And when I say advanced, I am referring to students who are in seminary and studying for a Master's degree in Theological Studies, Biblical Studies, or Apologetics. This is how I was introduced to this text. It was one of my main textbooks in a high level (700 level) graduate course at a big evangelical seminary. The book is awesome, but sometimes is it just hard to read because there is just so much information the human mind can handle and comprehend at one time. In other words, this book is written at an advanced level. Just to give you an idea of the level of scholarship that supports this text, in the second chapter about the History of Interpretation, there were 160 footnoted references pointing to external sources, more information, or information that just had to be followed up on by the reader in order to get a full understanding of

what was being introduced in the book. Don't misunderstand me, this book is the best, but it assumes its audience is an audience composed of advanced bible readers, and advanced students of the Scriptures. That's is not to say anybody can't buy this book and read and understand it. But unless you are used to reading scholarly journals, you are not going to be reading this book like a novel and be done with it in a weekend. If you do get it, you will definitely have in your hands one of the best books on Biblical Interpretation and Hermeneutics that has ever been published.

The (obviously well educated) authors state "all believers are competent to study the Bible" on page 262. They provide easy to understand rules of interpretation that we must use to ensure proper understanding yet, also assure us that the Bible is not a cryptogram whose solution is hidden from all but an elite group who know the code (page 150). Therefore, the book explains proper boundaries for interpretation without coming across as a formula list. They contrast "I just read it and God shows me the meaning" as being potentially dangerous (page 4) with "We must ask God to assist" and "prayer puts one in the position to hear and understand" (page 141). They assure us that the Bible is an understandable and accessible book, but caution that perfect understanding may not be possible for every sentence (page 149). While we may not always know what a verse means, good rules of interpretation provide that we can always know what it does not mean. Therefore, they do not allow heresy while encouraging Christians not to divide fellowship when multiple interpretations are possible (page 208). The authors are not opposed to fresh interpretation, yet also point out that "the fresh interpretation must be consistent with the text's historical meaning and with the Bible's total teaching (page 199). This concept is developed further in chapter 7 when they explain the Circles of Context. The chart on page 219 makes understanding the context concept easy. Genres of the Old Testament (chapter 9) explain that "All of the OT applies to Christians, but none of it applies apart from its fulfillment in Christ." (page 347). After reading this chapter you will avoid the extremes of ignoring the OT because "we are a New Testament church" and feeling a burden to follow all of the law that was not specifically repealed in the NT.

This revised and expanded version of a trusted evangelical favourite is, despite what some reviews here suggest, very good at what it does. And what it does is not really what these other reviewers want to call hermeneutics. Fair enough. I actually agree that this is not really a book about hermeneutics, and credit to the authors for keeping that word out of the book title. This is 'steps to biblical interpretation' aimed at people whose default setting is to open the Bible at random and seek 'a word from the Lord'. Compared to that, this book will do much good, and I think it deserves a

welcome. On the other hand, the reviewers who point out the lack of a clear presentation of hermeneutical thinking (esp philosophical hermeneutics) are right, and while I too agree that James Smith's 'Fall of Interpretation' is a great book I simply think that it is trying to do something completely different from this one (and it requires wrestling with Heideggerian ontotheology into the bargain, from which Klein et al mercifully spare us.) So if you want a sophisticated hermeneutical treatment of the legitimacy and limits of an evangelical approach to scripture then you will not find it here, and I recommend going elsewhere (indeed to Kevin Vanhoozer's 'First Theology'). But if you already know that you want to interpret the Bible within a certain framework (viz the evangelical one) then this is a wonderful compendium of practically-orientated good advice, with an excellent reading list. So, three stars for what it is good at. Two stars short because the framework and worldview questions really do require something this book does not have.

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