

University of Eswatini
Faculty of Humanities
In collaboration with the
Institute of Distance Education
Department of Theology & Religious Studies
2018/2019 Main Examination Paper (Second Semester) May 2019

TRS 112: A History of Biblical Interpretation (M) MAIN PAPER

Course Code : TRS 112
Title of Paper : A History of Biblical Interpretation
Duration : 2 Hours

Instructions:

1. Answer three (3) questions in all.
2. Your answer to each question must be structured and consistently focused on the subject matter at hand.
3. Indicate on the front cover page of your answer script the name of your programme of study and whether you are studying full time or through the Institute of Distance Education.

NB: All questions are worth 20 marks.

DO NOT OPEN THIS PAPER UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR GRANTS YOU PERMISSION TO DO SO.

Question 1

Explain why the following issues have presented points of controversy throughout the history of biblical interpretation in all the three concerned publics of Judaism, Christianity and the academy:

- a) The Bible's authority
- b) Divine inspiration of the Bible
- c) Biblical inerrancy
- d) Custodians of biblical interpretation

Question 2

Giving specific examples from the primary text, explain why it is important to interpret what the Bible says.

Question 3

Discuss the unique contribution of any one of the following personalities to the development of Jewish biblical interpretation within the medieval period:

- a. Philo of Alexandria
- b. Rabbi Hillel
- c. Rabbi Shammai
- d. Saadia
- e. Mainonides

Question 4

Discuss a major effort to harmonise methods of biblical interpretation either in Judaism or Christianity within the medieval period.

Question 5

Either

Discuss the contributions of redaction criticism in the reading of biblical texts.

Or

Explain the influence of the Enlightenment movement on the development of classic biblical criticism in the latter part of eighteenth century Europe.

Question 6

What lessons about biblical interpretation can you draw from the following views expressed by modern and contemporary eminent individuals or groups regarding the Bible and its interpretation in different contexts?

- a. The greatest block today in the way of woman's emancipation is the church, the canon law, the Bible and the priesthood. – *Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Founding*

author of the Women's Bible project and member of the Suffragette movement in the United States of America.

- b. Whether I am a Christian or not is none of your business. Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add. My friend, I can see that your philosophy is running short; The Bible is not the property of one nation or of one group of people, it can be quoted by anyone, even you. I have nothing further to add to the answer that I have already given. I do, however, call upon the Kenya nation to wake up and help itself. Thank you. – *Mzee Jomo Kenyatta (First Independence President of Kenya)*
- c. When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land. – *evoked by South African Black Theologians and known to have been popularised by Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu but its origins more accurately attributable to Mzee Jomo Kenyatta according to the archives of the Kenyan Hansard.*
- d. The Bible is a forest in which individuals select different types of sticks according to their respective needs. – *King Sobhuza II*
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