

Spring 2024 Exegesis Exam

Ministry Context

Ephesians 2:11-22

You are the pastor of a congregation with a wide variety of political viewpoints, that some congregation members express strongly. You have noticed that these political disagreements are causing tensions at church activities, as well as within families of the church. You decide to preach on Ephesians 2:11-22.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, and Scriptural and Theological Context

Language of the Text

Write an essay response to the following exegetical question. This response must *focus on the biblical text*. Discussion of the ministry context is not expected in Section I.

First Required Response

In your study of Ephesians 2:11-22 you find the placement of the phrase τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ in Ephesians 2:14 differs in the following translations of Ephesians 2:14-15:

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace... (NRSV)

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, in this way establishing peace... (NASB)

Discuss aspects of Greek grammar and syntax in Ephesians 2:14-15 that explain the differences in translation.

Choose a published translation of Ephesians 2:14-15, or provide your own translation, and justify your choice using the evidence discussed above.

Explain how your discussion informs your interpretation of Ephesians 2:11-22.

Limit your response to 600 words.

Historical Situation

Write an essay response to the following exegetical question. This response must *focus on the biblical text*. Discussion of the ministry context is not expected in Section I.

Second Required Response

Discuss Jewish-Gentile relationships in the first-century church in Ephesus.

Explain how this discussion informs your understanding of the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles depicted in Ephesians 2:11-22.

Limit your answer to 600 words.

Scriptural and Theological Context

Write an essay response to the following exegetical question. This response must *focus on the biblical text*. Discussion of the ministry context is not expected in Section I.

Third Required Response

Discuss the themes of division, reconciliation, and unity in Luke 15:25-32, Acts 10:34-43, and James 2:1-10.

Explain how your findings inform your interpretation of Ephesians 2:11-22.

Limit your response to 600 words.

Scriptural and Theological Context

Write an essay response to the following exegetical question. This response must *focus on the biblical text*. Discussion of the ministry context is not expected in Section I.

Fourth Required Response

The Confession of Belhar states:

We believe

- that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted; ... (10.3)

Compare the description of the people of God in this passage from the Confession of Belhar with the depiction of the “holy temple” in Ephesians 2:19-22.

Explain how this comparison informs your understanding of Ephesians 2:11-22.

Limit your response to 600 words.

Section II: Careful and Critical Interpretation

Write an essay presenting your interpretation of *Ephesians 2:11-22* based on your full exegetical study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I). Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text that reflects the use of scholarly resources. *Limit your essay to 1,200 words.*

This essay must *focus on the biblical text* and provide a basis for your application in Section III: Application. Discussion of the ministry context is not expected in Section II.

Section III:

Application

Provide an outline or summary of themes for your sermon that addresses the required ministry context:

You are the pastor of a congregation with a wide variety of political viewpoints, that some congregation members express strongly. You have noticed that these political disagreements are causing tensions at church activities, as well as within families of the church. You decide to preach on Ephesians 2:11-22.

Your work must be based on your careful and critical interpretation of the biblical text presented in Section II. *Limit your work to 600 words.*

Your response to Section III *must* address the ministry context.

Works Cited

In the text box below, provide a list of all resources cited in your exam responses. Do not include in this list any Internet link that indicates a seminary library or commercial bibliographic database that is available only through subscription or library account (e.g., <https://ezproxy.presbysem.edu/>).