

How To Study The Bible

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics - The science of interpretation of a text and the methods used in that science.

Comes from the Greek *hermeneu(te)s* (interpreter).

Hermeneutics are the tools that we use to best understand a given text or passage. The following tools must always be used;

Eisegesis verse Exegesis

Eisegesis – To read into Scripture through a predetermined position whether cultural, doctrinal or intellectual

Comes from the Greek *eis-* (into) + *hègeisthai* (to lead) therefore, *to read into*

Definition: To read or study a text with a pre-conceived idea of its meanings. In eisegesis, *we read things into Scripture that are not necessarily there.*

Eisegesis will always lead to error and false doctrine because it seeks to conform the Scriptures into specific beliefs or ideologies instead of the Scriptures forming our beliefs, doctrines and ideologies.

Exegesis - Exegesis is what comes out of the Bible, as against what gets read into it.

Comes from the Greek *exègeisthai* (to interpret out or to lead out)

Definition: To interpret a text by way of a *thorough analysis of its content*. Letting the content of a text speak for itself in the context in which it was written, with the intent determined by the writer.

- In its most basic Bible-relevant meaning, exegesis means finding out what the Spirit originally was saying through its author in that Bible passage.

One seeks to understand the scripture through 5 following lenses;

1. **Historical** -using the historical context to find what a passage meant to the reader when it was first written
2. **Canonical** -treating the Bible as a whole book/document written to be understood as a complete work.
3. **Symbolic/allegorical** -figuring out what each story, character, and event represents i.e. typologies
4. **Literary** -using the literary forms, word choices, themes, etc., to understand what was written
5. **Rational** -thinking it through using logic and deductive techniques

Text, Context, Co-text

-Context, context, context is the only way to understand Scripture. Ask these questions, why is the writer saying what he is saying? Does it refer to something he has already written or does it refer to something he is about to write? Who is he writing to and what is the purpose or the motivation of the letter or the book? What was the writer's relation with the people he was writing to?

- A text must always be read in context with the rest of the chapter, book and Bible as a whole. No text is of any private (eisegesis) interpretation and must be understood as a whole. **2 Peter 1:20-21**, *"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"*. Never ever entertain another opinion. God is not the author of confusion.

Scripture always interprets Scripture

If two verses of Scripture seem to be contradictory there will always be a third or fourth that brings clarity. For Example, the apparent contradiction between **2 Samuel 24** and **1 Chronicles 21** is understood through **James 1:13** and **Job 1&2**

The Bible is one Book

The Bible is one Book and although man has divided it into two parts (Old and New Testaments) it is in fact one volume. It must be understood that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. The New Testament writers are revealing this mystery to the Church by the Holy Spirit.

- The Books of the Bible were never written with chapters and verses and heading at the top of each paragraph. All these were added by men. When reading a New Testament Book, for example a Gospel or an Epistle, you are reading one letter that was meant to be read as a whole. Each part of the Book leads to the next part i.e. it must be read in context. Which brings me to the next point.

- Conjunctions. Those responsible for cutting up the Scriptures into chapters and verses more often than not chop up the context of a portion of Scripture with verse numbers. Note how many times a verse starts with a conjunction. When you see a conjunction at the beginning of a verse make sure that you understand the proceeding verse because the next verse is directly related to it.

How To Study The Bible

Listen to your spirit

-The Holy Spirit is our teacher (**John 14: 26; 1 John 2:20-21 & 26-27 Read**), He will lead you into the correct understanding of a text or passage if you ask and...

Prayer

-The Bible is God's Word therefore humbly and in faith pray and ask Him to reveal it to you each time you read it. The Holy Spirit is our teacher (**John 14:26**) *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send*

in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

-Ask the Lord to teach, instruct you and give you wisdom (**Matthew 7:7-8; James 1:5**)

Use Study Tips and Tools

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV) *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV) *"Study (spoudazō - verb - to exert one's self, endeavour, give diligence, labour ,study) to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

1. Be diligent and disciplined. Read and study the scriptures daily, preferably at a set time when you will not be disturbed or distracted.
2. Make use of Bible Study resources like E-Sword (Link on YouTube teaching).
3. Read systematically from both the Old and New Testaments.
4. Do not try to get through a Bible reading program. Instead take your time to read the scriptures and understand them. It is better to read and fully understand a verse than to read a chapter or more and not understand or remember what you have just read.

5. Pause and meditate on what you have read. **Psalm 119:15**, *“I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.”* **Psalm 119:27**, *“Make me understand the way of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works”*
6. Ask, does what I have read apply to me? Do I need to change my behavior, understanding or mindset according to what I have just read (**Romans 12:2** – Renew your Mind).
7. How does what I have read fit into and relate to the themes of the Bible and other scriptures on the same subject? Learn to form mind maps that link scriptures, themes and doctrines together.
8. Unless you have a photographic memory and plenty of film you are going to need to make notes and cross references to help you remember revelations and important facts. Your Bible is a tool in knowing and learning about the Lord and His will. It is a text book - make notes in it, underline verses that are meaningful to you, colour in verses that you want to remember and find easily (more on this in a moment).
9. Listen to sound Bible expositors and teachers doing Bible Study and you will learn practically how to read and interpret Scripture. 5 FoldTeachers are called not only to expound Scripture but to teach believers how to understand God's Word.
10. If you don't know ask. We are all learning and there are mature believers that you can approach.
11. Colour code your Bible (This has been one of the best tools I have used to remember and find Scripture) i.e. colour verses of Scripture that have the same topics in a particular colour, i.e

Colour Coding Your Bible

	Light Red/Pink - money, giving, generosity
	Dark Red - The Trinity, Names and character of God
	Orange - In OT scriptures speaking of Jesus and Salvation through Him. In NT, the gospel and salvation.
	Yellow - Prayer, fasting and intercession
	Light green - water baptism
	Olive Green – Church, church government, roles of elders, deacons
	Dark Green - Our position in Christ
	Light blue - The Holy Spirit and His gifts
	Blue - praise and worship
	Purple - Faith
	Light brown - healing and miracles
	Dark brown – The Word of God and prophecy
	Grey – The Day of the Lord , God’s judgements
	Black – Hell, Sin, Satan and demons

Some verses can be coloured in two separate colours because there are two distinct themes.