

Biblical Exegesis

The Big Picture of the Bible & Dispelling Lies in Our Understanding

Introduction:

As we are all aware, there are incredible opportunities and obstacles to understanding God's Word. None of us would be where we are now, if we did not understand a great deal about navigating through both of those issues.

Consider the opportunities as highlighted in a couple of verses:

Psalm 19:7-11

The **law** of the Lord is **perfect**,
refreshing the soul.

The **statutes** of the Lord are **trustworthy**,
making wise the simple.

The **precepts** of the Lord are **right**,
giving joy to the heart.

The **commands** of the Lord are **radiant**,
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.

The **decrees** of the Lord are **firm**,
and all of them are **righteous.**

They are **more precious than gold**,
than much pure gold;
they are **sweeter than honey**,
than honey from the honeycomb.

By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

BUT...There's an OT and NT, 66 Books, >40 authors, 3 languages, 10 different literary genre, written over ~1600 yrs, and between 2000 and 3600 years ago!

AND...the best MSS, of the NT for example, are copies of copies of the original portions of parts of one book.

SO...how do we really get the most out of the Bible? How do we avail of the opportunities but avoid the obstacles?

There are two basic approaches to this challenge:

*Exegesis: What did the writings mean to the original readers?

*Hermeneutics: What do the writings mean to us?

These two approaches go hand in hand, because the bible student should want to know what the original text meant to the original readers. Then and only then are they ready to address how that applies to our lives today. So if we can figure out what message the original readers understood, then and only then can we more readily ensure that we get appropriate message today.

This is what this class is going to address. Mike Fontenot and I will be co-teaching this class. Both of us are Evangelists who love preaching the Word, but we are also classically trained, if you will, as we both have our Master's Degrees in Religion from great universities. We both have a passion for preaching the full depths and truths of God's Word...in a very dynamic and relevant way.

This is the balance that we all need to aspire to maintain. Such is what the Bible inherently sets out to accomplish—convey deep truths of God in dynamic and relevant ways. The NT, for example, is primarily written in Koine Greek, not Classical Greek. Koine Greek is like “street Greek;” the common spoken language of the normal people. Classic Greek is much higher and more eloquent...but not as relevant and pertinent to the common man. So even God intended His Word to be relatable and understandable...while being deep.

Here's how we are going to structure this class...

Introduction: Mike

Literary Context: John

Historical Context: Mike

Hermeneutics: Mike

Exegetical Fallacies: John

[Start Recording](#)

As Mike has taught us, the goal of Exegesis is to understand what the Scripture meant to its original hearers. I am going to cover a huge part of that, under a broad heading called:

Literary Context

There can be different meanings of Literary Context. What I want to cover in this segment are the literary issues most pertinent to understanding the bible and its various parts.

In order to best understand what the original writers intended, there are three dimensions of the Bible's Composition that I want to introduce. Two of them I will cover relatively quickly, then the third I will spend quite a bit of time on.

Three Dimensions of Bible Composition

I. Testaments

(Testament=Covenant, so the books are not really the "Testament" but rather about life and relationship with God while men lived under each of those "Testaments" or covenants).

~39 books of the OT and 27 of the NT

~OT more rooted in Law; NT more rooted in Grace, but both have both.

~OT traditionally referred to as the Tanakh: Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim (Law, Prophets, and Writings) Acrostic: T N K

~Not unlike the NT, which is comprised of Gospels, Acts, Letters, and Revelation.

II. Text and Translation

The Bible is the most translated book in the world today.

Impressive...and not easy.

It was originally written in 3 different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek.

These 66 books from >40 authors were written over a period of ~1600 years, between 2000 and 3600 years ago.

There are two significant challenges that scholars face in "presenting" the bible in another language, like English.

A. Determining the Best Text from which to Start

Canon comes from Hebrew *cunah*, which means measuring rod. It became a word meaning a collection of commonly accepted religious books.

The OT canon was basically established by Jewish leaders and the NT canon was basically established by Christian leaders. If you are interested, you can study out all about the process of canonization.

But once you have the basic canon, then you face the challenge of determining which ancient text should be used to form the basis from which to translate.

As there were no copy machines, each mss was hand written; it was extremely time consuming. While great care was taken to preserve the message, there would be inevitable mistakes; additions, deletions, decay, destruction, etc.

With the NT for example, we have no original MSS, but the best we have is copies of copies of fragments of the original text. Marcion's Fragment is a copy of a copy of a portion of the Book of John.

*That being said, determining the best text is not hard in most places, but it is very hard in others.

*New archaeological discoveries are made that help or modify the foundation text.

*Scholars used to use "best preserved" texts...then switched to "most warn."

*Most widely accepted for the NT is the 26 ed of the Neslic Text.

*The USB gives a rating of their confidence in the validity of each text in the NT. A for super sure...E for not sure at all.

*Each translation faces the challenge of how to document their lack of confidence in a certain text: Do they mention it? Do they put a footnote? Do they put the note in the text itself?

Ex: Mark 16..."A" not part of the text

Ex: John 8...part of the text, but not here

B. Translating the Text

Huge philosophical challenge: Three basic approaches:

1. Literal—KJV, NASB

2. Free—Phillips, Living Bible
3. Dynamic Equivalent—NIV, GNB, JB

KJV probably the worst (poor text, poor English)
NIV probably the best (but hate the new non gender lingo)

When trying to understand a passage, always read multiple versions—best substitute for not knowing Greek.

III. Literary Genre

**Literary Genre: There are roughly 10 different literary genre through which writers conveyed their messages.

~Narrative, Law, Prophets, Psalms, Wisdom, Gospels (and Parables), Acts, Epistles, and Apocalyptic.

~It is absolutely crucial to identify the type of literature a book is utilizing and the defining characteristics of that genre, in order to accurately derive its message.

Illus: CBS vs Fox; Wall Street Journal vs Charlie Hebdo;
Farmer's Almanac vs Weather Report

~This identification will significantly affect the exegesis and hermeneutics...just as it would identifying whether a book is in the Old or New Testament.

A. Narrative

Simply put—stories...true stories, to show God at work in the life of man, and to provide historical perspective to that work.

>40% of the OT is Narrative, and the OT is about 75% of the entire Bible, so almost 1/3 of the entire bible.

Primary Narratives: Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah, Haggai

Portions of: Exodus, Numbers, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Job, Gospels, Acts.

There are three levels to the narratives that are being told:

- *Top Level: The whole universal plan of man; the story of redemption.
- *Middle Level: The story of Israel, in the OT
- *Bottom Level: Hundreds of individual stories, all connected; bottom to middle to top.
 Ex: David and Goliath in 1 Samuel, Ruth and Boaz in Ruth

It is crucial to note that the narratives are NOT commands, NOT allegories; NOT purely teaching; NOT all complete stories; NOT completely good or bad, necessarily; NOT all moral or spiritual in and of themselves.

Their purpose can be any of the following:

- *To illustrate a doctrine...like Judges (in those days, Israel had no king...)
- *To illustrate a nature of God (where God is always the hero)...like David and Goliath in 1 Samuel
- *To provide a record of history...like Ruth

So be very careful how you apply narrative!

Narrative contains some some commands, some teaching, and many illustrations/examples.

- *Commands can either be Universal or Circumstantial
 Universal commands must be obeyed (Mt 28:18-20, Acts 2:38)
 Circumstantial commands should not be obeyed (Mt 21:2)
- *Teaching must be understood and considered (2 Chron 16:9)
- *Illustrations and examples demonstrate commands, teaching, or history of how God worked at certain times in certain ways with certain people; They must be understood and considered, but they cannot be obeyed. Ex: Samson with long hair

B. Law

The OT alone contains >600 different commandments as part of the Law.

- *All are found in 4 of 39 books: Ex, Lev, Nu, Dt, which comprise the Book of the Law or the Torah (first five books of the bible)
- *Genesis is also part of the Torah, but there are no laws in it.
 “Law” refers most of the time, to Ex 20 thru Deut, and sometimes Genesis through Deut.
- *The OT Law is a covenant between God and Man

Historically, it's most similar to a Suzerainty Treaty, or an agreement between a Suzerain and Vassal nation.

*OT or Old Covenant was not binding after the New Testament/ Covenant began.

The Law was not taken away by the NT, but rather fulfilled (Luke 16:17)

It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

*Some parts of the OT were renewed in the NT, like some aspects of Ethical Laws—Justice, Love, Righteousness.

*Many parts of the OT were not renewed in the NT—Israelite Civil and Ritual Laws

*Only that part of the OT which is specifically renewed is part of the NT.

Ex:

10 Commandments—Mt 5:21-37

2 Greatest Commandments—Deut 6:5, Lev 19:18—
Mark 12

C. Prophets

There are more individual books in the Prophets than any of the other genre in the Bible.

They can be broken down into two categories: Major Prophets & Minor Prophets.

*There are **4 Major Prophets**: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel

*There are **12 Minor Prophets**: Hosea thru Malachi

Major and minor simply due to length

All are written between 760 and 460bc.

Prophecy is a very misunderstood word.

*We tend to think of it as a foretelling of the future, but that is on a very small dimension of it.

< 2% of the OT is Messianic, or speaks of the future Messiah.

< 5% is of the New Covenant

< 1% is of other events that have not yet happened.

The best way to describe Prophets is not future tellers but Covenant Enforcement Mediators. Their messages were filled with both

blessings and curses, to inspire righteousness and adherence to the Covenant.

There were two primary parts of their message:

1. Identify sin or God's love for them (examples...)
2. Predict blessings or curses accordingly (examples...)

There is another often misunderstood type of prophetic fulfillment that we must be very careful with: **Typology**.

*Typology is where a meaning or fulfillment in the NT is attached to a prophecy in the OT that does not seem to fit with the context at all.

Example:

Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matt 2:14-15 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

*These can only be claimed as accurate and appropriate if they are inspired, in the NT itself; we are not free to do the same, or we could make the Scriptures say anything.

Example: **1 Cor 10:1-4**

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ

Example (bad): Deut 19:15, **2 Cor 13:1**

This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

Mormons: Use this verse to say there is an OT, NT and Book of Mormon.

D. Psalms

*A collection of inspired prayers and hymns.

*5 books, as man's response to God's 5 books of the Law.

*Interesting genre, as they are words from man to God, not God to man.

*So what is the value?

Connection with God!

1. They show us how to express ourselves to God no matter what we are feeling or experiencing.

*Every human emotion can be documented in Psalms

*The prayers are not always in accord with God's will
Imprecatory Psalms (Ex: 137:8-9)

Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is the one who repays you
according to what you have done to us.
Happy is the one who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks

2. They help us consider God's ways.

*The language of Psalms is largely poetic:

metaphors: Ex: Ps 1:3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

hyperbole (exaggeration)

Ex: Ps 32:3-4 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

~So it's important to note that due to this genre, they are not always to be taken literally.

Repetition: Ex 42: 5, 11 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Parallelism: Ex 116:3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me

*There are 7 primary categories or types of Psalms:

1. Laments:

Individual Laments: 3, 22, 31, 39, 42, 57, 71, 120, 139, 142

Communal Laments: 12, 44, 80, 94, 137

2. Thanksgiving:

Individual: 18, 30, 32, 34, 34, 40, 66, 92, 116, 118, 138

Communal: 65, 67, 75, 107, 124, 136

3. Praise:

Creator of the Universe: 8, 19, 104, 148

Protector of Israel: 66, 100, 111, 114, 149

Lord of History: 33, 103, 113, 117, 145-147

4. Salvation History:

78, 105, 106, 135, 136

5. Celebration and Affirmation

Covenant Renewal: 50, 81

Royal (the spiritual role of Kings): 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 144

Enthronement (God as King): 24, 29, 47, 93, 95-99

Songs of Zion or Jerusalem: 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122

6. Wisdom

36, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133

Proverbs 8

7. Trust

11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131

E. Wisdom

Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs

*When wisdom literature appears in narrative form, there is an overall point to the story, but not necessarily individual points along the way. BE CAREFUL.

Ecclesiastes: Narrative addressing the purpose and meaning of life.

Comprised of cynical wisdom—life without the last two verses; do not take out individual lines in the narrative, because they are simply what this man experienced and thought in life; the individual verses along the way may be true or may not be, but they are not intended to be truths from God, rather thoughts from man; the whole point is the last two verses.

Example... **Ecc 2:22-24**

What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless. A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil.

Job: Incredibly well written narrative addressing the cause and nature of suffering.

Comprised of popular wisdom—friends sharing the various reasonings of man for why man faces suffering. As with Ecclesiastes, some may sound more appealing than others, and some may say good things, but these are only thoughts of man and not thoughts of God. They are each condemned for what they said!

Proverbs: A compilation of probability statements not promises!

Ex: 16:3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.

Ex: 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath

Ex: 22:6 Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

We tend to pick and choose which we recognize as probability and which we claim as promises—inconsistent and misuse of Scripture.

Song of Songs: Beautiful story of romantic love between a man and a woman.

*Over the years, Jewish scholars have viewed this as an allegory of God's love for the Kingdom; Christian scholars as Jesus love for the church.

*There's no reason to take those leaps; it simply expresses the purity and beauty and power of romantic love between a husband and wife. As Dr Jack Lewis said, if the world would simply embrace that message, it would be a whole lot better off.

F. Gospels

Comprised of both teachings of Jesus and teachings about Jesus.

The greatest challenge of them is that there are 4 of them! Each a little different.

The greatest strength of them is that there are 4 of them! Together, we get a more complete picture of the most important person, saying the most important things, at the most important time in history.

*Note: another challenge is that Jesus probably spoke in Aramaic (many times when he spoke it is recorded in Aramaic and culturally, he would have spoken in Aramaic), but the gospels are primarily written in Greek. In some minor instances, this causes some translation confusion.

Ex: Matt 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it

Back to the challenge and the strength of having 4 of them...

First, there are many similarities between the gospels:

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels. They are very similar to one another. It is fairly clear that Matthew and Luke both used Mark as a resource in the writings of their gospels, as Mark is the common denominator of all three.

Matthew, Mark and John were all eye witnesses. Luke was an historian, who wrote after the fact, as he describes in his introduction.

Second, there are also many differences between the gospels.

So how do we explain the differences?

This goes back to the strength of having 4 of them. They are not 4 snapshots of the life and teaching of Jesus, but rather 4 paintings of the life and teaching of Jesus.

Illus: If four of us all went out to Artist Point on Flagstaff Mountain and painted a sunset...each one would have definite similarities, but also have definite differences. Would any of them be wrong? No, due to our specific vantage point and individual eyes, and personal perspective, our records of what we saw would differ slightly. But if you look at all 4, you would get a really good view of that sunset.

So it is with the Gospels.

Mark: Focuses on the Messiahship of Jesus and consistently presents him as the suffering servant. It is the fastest moving and

most active view of Jesus. When I am recommending a gospel to a friend whose studying the bible for the first time, if he's not a deep intellectual guy, I usually recommend Mark. It's also the shortest :)

Luke: Focuses on the universality of Jesus: Women, Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, etc.

Matthew: Focuses on the Kingdom, has the most Jewish flavor, and the greatest emphasis on OT Scripture.

John: Focuses on the apologetic reasoning to Greeks and Romans that Jesus is both God and Man. In many ways, it is the most intellectual of the Gospels. If I am recommending a Gospel to an intellectual, or someone with no faith, I recommend John.

Whenever you encounter an apparent discrepancy between different Gospel accounts, simply ask yourself: "Can both be true?"

*Sometimes we look for differences rather than looking for reconciliation.

Ex...Judas and the field of blood

Matt 27 says because they used the money Judas was paid to buy a burial place for foreigners

Acts 1 says because Judas' blood and guts spilled out.

The teachings in the Gospels can be categorized in three different ways.

- 1. Explanations**—the whats, whys and hows of God and man, either from Jesus or from the Evangelist (author).
- 2. Imperatives**—the commands that are to be obeyed. Sometimes people wonder if it's imperative for Christians to obey the commands of Jesus, as they come before the Crucifixion and Resurrection, and thus before the New Covenant. Absolutely they should be obeyed (when they are not trivial or circumstantial, like "Go untie a colt."). They are being recorded by the early church for a reason. They show us how followers of Jesus, Christians, should live both as a response to grace and in order to remain in the grace.

Ex: [Luke 9:23](#) “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

3. Parables—these could be categorized as a completely separate genre altogether, since they are so unique and prevalent. But since they primarily appear in the Gospels, we will address them in this context.

*There are 46 different parables in the gospels.

*They are often an answer to a single question or issue and make a single point. Like a punchline to a joke.

Ex: “Who is my neighbor?”

Ex: “dividing the estate”

*They cannot be allegorized unless Jesus so interpreted them to be.

Ex: Parable of the Soil vs Parable of the Lost Coin, Lost Sheep and Lost Son

G. Acts

Acts presents a [unique opportunity and also a unique challenge](#). It is basically a narrative of the expansion of Christianity in the first century.

It’s outline and theme are [1:8](#)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

It shows the history by presenting glimpses through windows of time into certain significant events in history, rather than a day by day account.

But given that it is in the NT, and presents the clearest image of the original church that was most influenced by Jesus and least corrupted by the world, it has more direct application value than typical OT narrative.

Furthermore, it does contain some universal commands for all to obey, and some clear examples of how Christians practiced the commands and implemented the teachings of Jesus. So again, it carries more practical, theological weight than a typical OT narrative.

As we have said before re narrative holds true with Acts. There are Teachings, Commands, and Examples.

***Teachings** are to be Understood: **Ex: Acts 2:22-24**

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

***Universal Commands** are to be obeyed:

Ex: Acts 2:37-40

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off —for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

***Examples** are to be Considered, as they may illustrate commands or teachings.

Ex: Acts 2:41-47

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

Ex: Acts 10:44-46

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Ex: Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread...

Examples cannot necessarily be obeyed.

Teachings cannot necessarily be obeyed.

Non universal commands are examples, and thus should not necessarily be obeyed

Acts 10:47-48

Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

H. Epistles

Though there are different types of Epistles, there is one general nature: these are occasional documents—from a specific author to a specific audience at a specific time for a specific purpose.

The intriguing feature about them is that they show God’s will and wisdom applied to real life.

The challenging feature about them is that it is theology at the service of a specific need. We are left with the question of how does it apply to us?

Additionally, in examining a letter, we are basically listening to one side of a phone conversation, if you will. From that one side, we have to try to figure out both sides. That is, we have to find the context of the letter.

There are a few different dimensions of the context that are important to consider:

1. Historical Context: When was the letter written and what social, governmental, relational, circumstantial or church wide issues were taking place at that time that may be playing a role writer or reader’s minds and hearts.

Ex: Concept of Family in 1st C Jewish thinking

Ex: Concept of Messiah in 1st C Jewish thinking

Ex: Undercurrent of Persecution in 1 Peter

Ex: Undercurrent of Division in 1 Corinthians,

Gnosticism in Colossians or Docetism in 1 John

Ex: Undercurrent of Jewish-Gentile tension in Romans

Ex: Undercurrent of Euodia-Syntachee conflict in Philippians.

2. **Geographical Context:** What locations, distances, or cities of the writer or the reader play a contributing role?

Ex: Paul in Prison as he wrote Philippians about Joy

Ex: Port city and temple of Artemis in Ephesus

Ex: 7 churches in Asia Minor in Revelation:

Laodicea: known for medical school with specialty in vision, and wealth and textiles/clothing.

In Lycus River valley between hot springs and ice caverns.

Pergamum: Throne of Zeus carved in cliffs

3. **Literary or Writer's Context**

What is the specific plan and outline of the author to address the issues? What is the overall plan and how does each paragraph fit into that overall plan?

By establishing the Historical, Geographical, and Literary Context, you should be able to summarize four key questions in every letter:

1. **Who were the People?** Writer and Readers (can often tell from internal references, direct and indirect)
2. **What were the Places?** Writer and Readers
3. **What was the Problem?** What was the reason for the letter? Some people criticize leaders for just getting involved when there's a problem, but that's what happened in the NT as well.
4. **What was the Plan?** Again, how is the author going to try to fix the problem?

Ex: Whenever I teach an Epistle, I repeat those questions and answers each class, so as to drill it into their heads and hearts.

When it comes to hermeneutics, or application of the letter to our lives, we must be careful to be consistent and thoughtful.

Ex: **2 Tim 2:1-2**

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Ex: **1 Tim 5:23**

Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses

Or

Ex: **Heb 3:13** ...encourage one another daily

Ex: **2 Cor 13:12**...greet one another with a holy kiss

One key that helps is trying to determine what is principle and what is personal; or what is spiritual and what is cultural; what is universal and what is circumstantial.

*Principles or spiritual issues are broader, more general statements and may draw reference to other universal or biblical truths or are supported by other Scriptures.

Ex: Holy Kiss vs Baptism

Two Crucial Hermeneutical Rules for Epistles:

1. A text cannot mean something to us that it did not mean to its original readers.
2. Whenever we share similar life situations as the readers, God's Word must be to us what it was to them.
Ex: Baptism—Brothers what shall we do?
Ex: Immorality

Sometimes, we have to be content to simply not know enough to bind something on others.

Ex: Women with short hair vs long hair in 1 Corinthians

I. **Apocalyptic**

Apocalyptic literature refers to writings about eternal judgment and salvation at the end of times. Typically, they are to be sealed for future times.

The primary example of this is Revelation, which is why I put this genre at the end. Though, Revelation also includes some Prophecy and also Epistles, as I noted in our last genre about Epistles.

*Revelation was a bit different than classic Apocalyptic writings in that it was primarily written for the purpose of its original readers, as it specifically says it was “not to be sealed” for the future (22:10)

*It was primarily God’s Word for their present situation.

Additional examples of Apocalyptic literature in the bible are parts of Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and parts of Isaiah.

Apocalyptic writings are usually in the form of various dreams, numbers and symbols.

*This symbolism is rather obscure to us in our day and age, which is why it lends itself to so many fanatical and fearful interpretations. It kind of has the mystery appeal of Aliens and Bigfoot.

*The symbolism was much clearer to the original readers, because it was more culturally and biblically relevant and not uncommon.

Ex: # 3 or 7 today...or Red, White, Blue...Red Shirt on Star Trek...Cowboy in black hat on black horse...

*But with study of culture and the OT, you can more readily understand what the symbolism represented (or multiples/ combinations)

Ex: 1=Unity or Oneness

2=12x...Strength and Confirmation

3=11x...God or Perfection

3 1/2...1/2 of 7 which is the totality or completeness of God’s authority on earth, so = incomplete or indefinite period of time.

4=30x...the world

5=1/2 of 10, which is human completeness, so = human incompleteness

6=1 short of the totality or completeness of God’s authority on earth; like sin—fall short of God’s glory==evil.

12= organized religion

*Also, in Apocalyptic literature, the whole “feel” of the vision is the point, like a dramatic scene; not everything is symbolic and allegorical.

*The overall message of Revelation is that God is in control of history and the church, even though things may look tough now; X will triumph, so stay faithful and you will as well.

*Like every book, it helps to read it all the way through to get the whole impression, and then focus on the individual points along the way, not the other way around.

Fallacies of Exegesis:

Goal of Exegesis is to “bring out” the meaning of the text; to make it known. Jesus came to “make known” or “exegete” the Father.

(Some from C. Michael Patton, of Credo House)

1. **Pre-Understanding Fallacy:** Believing you can approach the Scriptures completely objectively, without any preconceived notions. We all come to any topic with certain biases based on our culture, upbringing, life experiences, etc. Recognizing your potential for subjectivity helps prevent you from falling into its trap. **Ex:** baptism...speaking in tongues
2. **Incidental Fallacy:** Reading incidental history and accounts as prescriptive rather than descriptive. Prescriptive means this is God’s direction for you to follow. Descriptive means this is an account of what happened to a certain people at a certain time for a certain reason. **Ex:** Apostles casting lots
3. **Obscurity Fallacy:** Building certain theological views based on obscure or unclear passages. Most of the bible is very clear...but some of it is not. Often those obscure passages intrigue us and cause us to attach a meaning to it that is not fair or right to attach.
Ex: I Cor 6:2 Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!
4. **Etymological Root Fallacy:** Looking at the root etymology of a word to discover its meaning.
Nice—from Latin *nescious*, meaning ignorant
Butterfly—not butter and fly
Good-bye—from Anglo Saxon “God be with you”

Dunamos in Romans 1

5. **Illegitimate Totality Transfer Fallacy**: Bring the full meaning of a word with all its nuances to the present usage. In Greek Lexicons there are different meanings for different contexts for a reason; they don't all apply all the time.
6. **Selective Use of Meaning Fallacy**: Using the definition or meaning of a word that you like best, rather than letting the context determine that.
7. **Maverick Fallacy**: Believing you only need the HS to determine the meaning of a text...or feeling like God made it clear to you.
8. **Greek Scholar Fallacy**: Elevating yourself to the status of Greek/Biblical Scholar because you read a book. Relatedly, quoting one author as though they are the final authority on a matter. **Ex**: A Little Exercise for Young Theologians.
9. **Any Verse Can Fit Any Situation Fallacy**: Finding cool sounding verses and taking the out of context to suit your needs
Ex: Habakkuk:
10. **All Scripture Reads the Same Fallacy**: Not noting and applying the different literary genre to the Scripture.

Safeguards: Preach the Word with great patience and careful instruction.

1. Study a lot
2. Stay humble; Isa 66:1-2—tremble at His Word
3. Become an expert at Expository Preaching
Read books, listen to series, develop your own
4. Preach the Word with Confidence!

2 Tim 4:2

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry