

## I. The meaning of Exegesis Verses Eisegesis

**A. Definition of Exegesis:** “The act of explaining a text.” The explanation is done through careful analysis of the text. The explanation of a text based on a careful, objective analysis. Not subjective: “What do I feel about the text?”

**B. Definition is Eisegesis:** Interpretation of a passage based on a subjective, non-analytical reading. The word eisegesis literally means “to lead into” which means the interpreter injects his own ideas into the text, *He leads the text*, not the text leading him.

**C. Only Exegesis does justice to the text.**

**1. Exegesis is concerned with discovering the true meaning of the text, respecting its grammar, which is the morphology and syntax, and the setting.**

**a. Grammar: Consists of two elements: Morphology and Syntax:**

*i. Morphology: Concerns the forms of individual words.*

*ii. Syntax: Describes the system each language has for combining words to make a sentence:*

*iii. The Setting: To understand the setting one must understand the context in which the book was written.*

**2. The process of exegesis involves:**

**a. Observation:** what does the passage say?

**b. Interpretation:** what does the passage mean?

**c. Correlation:** how does the passage relate to the rest of the Bible?

**d. Application:** how should this passage affect my life?

**D. Eisegesis is a mishandling of the text and often leads to a misinterpretation.**

- 1. Eisegesis is concerned only with making a point, even at the expense of the meaning of words.**
- 2. The process of Eisegesis:**
  - a. Imagination:** what idea do I want to present?
  - b. Exploration:** what Scripture passage seems to fit with my idea?
  - c. Application:** what does my idea mean?

**E. Illustration: 2 Chronicles 27:1-2:**

**F. What Text Should I preach and What Tools will I use to Extract Correct Information:**

- 1. When it comes to determining what to preach on next, verse-by-verse exposition has a distinct advantage.**
- 2. Choose a book wisely.**
- 3. Study the background of the book.**
- 4. Read through the book repeatedly.**
- 5. Decide on the teaching units.**
- 6. Choose commentaries and other resources.**
  - a. Types of Commentaries**
    - i.* The Exegetical/Critical commentaries**
    - ii.* Expository commentaries**
    - iii.* Devotional commentaries**

**G. Begin working on the Text:**

- 1. Pray first – go through a seven-step process for a proper exegetical procedure:**
  - a. Translate the text (Look at the original language with tools)**
  - b. Observe the passage carefully**
  - c. Identify grammar and syntax**

- d. **Examine the context (Text, Immediate context, Book context, Bible Context: same Author, Same Testament, Other Testament)**
- e. **Solve interpretive problems (Exegetical and Lexical commentaries are best)**
- f. **Consult trustworthy commentaries**
- g. **Evaluate your conclusions**

## II. Inductive Bible Study Method:

- **Observation/ Examination:** - Examination – What do I see or what does the text say?
- **Interpretation/ Explanation:** Explanation – What does the text mean?
- **Application/Exhortation:** Exhortation – Why does it matter for today?

**A. Step One – Observation/Examination:** You must ask the question, *What do I see?* The moment you come to the text you ask the question, *What are the facts?* You assume the role of a biblical detective, looking for clues. The first thing we must do is understand the context:

**1. Context:** Summary: With a passage chosen, the preacher must establish the context of the text. There are two main types of context that the preacher must examine if he is to rightly understand the text.

*i.* **Logical Context.** This is the context of the passage within the text – its placement within the logical flow of a passage, a book, and even the entire Bible. There are several circles of logical/biblical context:

**1. Immediate Context:** A preacher must carefully examine the passages that immediately precede and follow the text under investigation. Doing so allows the preacher to understand how the text fits into the author's flow of thought.

**2. Intermediate (Book) Context:** The preacher must also determine how the given passage fits within the entire

book. What is the primary message of the book? What are its main themes?

**3. Remote Context:** Finally, the preacher must determine how this section (and even this book as a whole) relates to other books by the same author, the entire Testament wherein it occurs, and even whole of progressive revelation.

*ii.* **Historical Context.** It is also important for the preacher to understand the historical, geographical, and cultural setting in which a book was written.

Having investigated the biblical context and the historical setting and the preacher delves into the details of the passage being studied. The purpose is to ascertain the correct meaning of the whole by examining the parts. With the context in mind, the preacher is now ready to begin examining the specifics of the biblical text.

## **2. Looking for four things by examining the text:**

Having investigated the historical setting and biblical context, the preacher delves into the details of the passage being studied. The purpose of these details is not simply to acquire data, but rather to ascertain the correct meaning of the whole by examining the parts. This examination includes translating the text, making observations about the text, and identifying key grammatical and syntactical elements within the text. With the context in mind, the preacher is now ready to begin examining the specifics of the biblical text—an examination that includes translation, observation, and identification.

*i.* **Terms:** A term is more than just a word. It is a key word that is crucial to what an author has to say because it unlocks meaning. Example: in the book of John the word “Believe” is used 79 times always as a verb (Action) and never as a noun. John you will discover uses it purposefully and it unlocks meaning. Terms are the basic building blocks with which you construct meaning.

- ii. Structure:** The Bible is not a collection of random sayings and stories that somehow fell together. Rather it is a library of carefully constructed books that display, to those who look for it, two basic kinds of structure: *Grammatical and Literary structure.* **Grammatical Structure:** We first must learn to read with grammar in mind and the more you know about grammar the more you can get out of a passage. **Literary structure:** This will help to answer questions and will show a resolution or the climax to a story. There is usually cause and effect and the authors put structure to their work.
- iii. Literary Form:** There are different types of literary forms in the Bible. The majority of the bible is narrative stories. But you also have poetry, allegory, parables, apocalyptic writing and the Epistles. The Holy Spirit used each of these forms to communicate His message. The easiest to teach are the Epistles, because they tend to be instructive in form and usually follow a logical flow of thought.
- iv. Atmosphere:** Reading for the atmosphere involves picking up the setting and feelings from the biblical text. Asking the question, what was it like to be in the author's shoes? You want to try and transport those feelings and senses of text to your message. Example: Phil 4:4 Paul says: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice. You must first consider where was Paul when he wrote this? Was he in a nice hotel or in the comfort of his home? No he was in a foul smelling Roman prison. You want to get across the atmosphere of where he wrote this. You want to transport your senses into the passage. If there is sunshine, you want the congregation to feel it. If there is odor, you want them to smell it. If there are painful feelings you want to help people feel it. You need to use your imagination, not just your intellect.
- v. Other observations.** Having translated the text from the

original language, the preacher should spend time simply making observations about the text. This allows the Bible student to answer the questions: who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, and how?

### 3. Here are some suggested markers to look for in the text:

- **Connecting words** – "and," "but," "therefore," "for," and others.
- **Verbs** – note the tense (present, past, ect...), voice, whether singular or plural, and make sure you know their meaning.
- **Patterns in context** – look for similar verb forms in the passage, such as the five participles strung out in Ephesians 5:19-21.
- **Repeated words** – note words that are repeated within a verse or within a context.
- **Words a given writer tends to use** – for example, Matthew is the only gospel writer who uses the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven".
- **Contrasts:** Black/White, Soft/Hard, etc...
- **Comparisons:** Luke 13:18 "What is the kingdom of God like?"
- **Commands: Greek Imperatives** – Phil 4:4 **“Rejoice in the Lord always...rejoice”**
- **Exhortations:** 1 Cor. 1:10 **“I exhort you brethren..”**
- **Definitive articles or lack of them:** “The”, “A”
- **Adjectives:** A word that modifies a noun or another adjective. “Big, “Dark” “Brown” are adjectives.

- **Note:** What the verse does not say may also be important. By observing what the text itself says, the preacher has an objective basis upon which to propositionally state the truths of God's Word rather than just subjectively asserting that "this is what such and such means to me."

**B. Step Two Interpretation/Explanation:** Here you ask and answer the question, *What does it mean?*

**1. There are three things that can help to get the meaning of a passage of scripture. Consult, Solve, and Evaluate.**

- a. **Consult:** With observations made and questions asked, the preacher should now turn to the many helpful tools available to him. These include commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, and concordances.
- b. **Solve.** When a question in the text is answered differently by two different commentaries (such that the two interpretations cannot both be right), the preacher must decide which interpretation best fits the passage.
- c. **Evaluate.** With his questions answered and the meaning of the passage understood, the preacher should summarize his findings as concisely as possible.

**C. Step three Application/Exhortation:**

**1. After observation and interpretation comes application.**

Bible study is not complete until the truth discovered is applied to life situations. Application answers the question, "How does this truth relate to me?" The following questions will help apply the truths discovered in Bible study:

- Are there examples to follow?
- Are there commands to obey?
- Are there errors to avoid?
- Are there sins to forsake?

- Are there promises to claim?
- Are there new thoughts about God?
- Are there principles to live by?

### III. Rules for Interpretation

#### A. The reason why proper interpretation is so important:

I can't think of a more holy assignment than to be called to preach or teach the Word of God to the souls of people. Here are eight rules to follow:

1. **The rule of DEFINITION:** What does the word mean? Any study of Scripture must begin with a study of words. Define your terms and then keep to the terms defined. The interpreter should conscientiously abide by the plain meaning of the words.
2. **The rule of USAGE:** It must be remembered that the Old Testament was written originally by, to and for Jews. The words and idioms must have been intelligible to them - just as the words of Christ when talking to them must have been. The majority of the New Testament likewise was written in a Greco-Roman (and to a lesser extent Jewish) culture and it is important to not impose our modern usage into our interpretation.
3. **The rule of CONTEXT:** The meaning must be gathered from the context. Every word you read must be understood in the light of the words that come before and after it. Many passages will not be understood at all, or understood incorrectly, without the help afforded by the context.
4. **The rule of HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:** The interpreter must have some awareness of the life and society of the times in which the Scripture was written. The spiritual principle will be timeless but often can't be properly appreciated without some knowledge of the background.
5. **The rule of LOGIC:** Interpretation is logical reasoning. When interpreting Scripture, the use of reason is everywhere to be assumed. Does the interpretation make sense? The Bible was given to us in the form of human language and therefore appeals to human reason - it invites investigation.

6. **The rule of PRECEDENT:** We must not violate the known usage of a word and invent another for which there is no precedent.
7. **The rule of UNITY:** The parts of Scripture being interpreted must be construed with reference to the significance of the whole. An interpretation must be consistent with the rest of Scripture.
8. **The rule of INFERENCE:** An inference is a fact reasonably implied from another fact. It is a logical consequence. It derives a conclusion from a given fact or premise. It is the deduction of one proposition from another proposition. Such inferential facts or propositions are sufficiently binding when their truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence.