



DR. MICHELLE R. HICKS

WHAT IS EXEGESIS?

Exegesis versus Eisegesis

Eisegesis literally means “to lead into”, as in “leading our own ideas into the text”. The opposite is “exegesis”, which means “to draw out”. So eisegesis is when we “read something into” a biblical text that may not actually be there. And exegesis is when we try to “draw out” of the text what is actually there.

Exegesis Definition: Exegesis (from Greek “to lead out”) is a method of biblical interpretation that focuses on carefully examining a text to understand its original meaning and context.

Focus: It seeks to understand what the author intended to convey, considering the historical, cultural, and literary context of the text.

Approach: Exegesis involves asking questions about the text, such as:

- Who wrote the text?
- What was the historical context?
- What is the text about?
- What did this mean to the original hearers?

Tools: Exegesis often utilizes commentaries, historical research, and other resources to aid in understanding the text.

Example: An exegetical approach to a biblical passage would involve researching the author’s background, the time period in which it was written, and the intended audience to understand its original meaning.

Eisegesis Definition: Eisegesis (from Greek “to lead into”) is the interpretation of a text by reading one’s own ideas or biases into it, rather than extracting the meaning from the text itself.

Focus: It prioritizes the interpreter’s preconceived notions or agendas over the text’s original meaning.

Approach: Eisegesis often involves imposing modern interpretations or values onto a text, without considering the original context or author’s intent.

Example: An eisegetical approach to the same passage could be to interpret it in a way that supports a modern political agenda, even if that interpretation contradicts the original meaning of the text.

WHAT IS EXEGESIS / WORKSHEET



HISTORY

Examine the Cultural and Historical Context

What occurs before and after the verse?

.....

.....

How does this verse fit into the broader content of the book and the Bible?

.....

.....

THE 5 W'S OF OBSERVATION

- Who? Who is speaking, being spoken to? Who is writing this passage and to whom?
Who is mentioned?
- What? What is the theme of the passage? What is the main point? What is the author trying to communicate? What action is taking place?
- Where? Where is the geographic and physical location? Where is it being written?
Where are the places mentioned?
- When? When was it written? When is this time frame? (Season, time of year, time of day, other actions, festivals, Sabbath, etc.)
- Why? This is the bridge questions of interpretation. Think about why this passage is here.
Why did God put this in the Bible?

LITERATURE:

- Canon (Old or New Testament)
- Genre (narrative, poetry, epistles, prophecy, etc.)
- Language (original language of Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic)

THEOLOGY:

What does this verse or passage teach me about God?

.....
.....
.....

What are the implications for life today?

.....
.....
.....

Sources used in my research and study:

(Author, Title, Publisher, Year, Page #s)

.....
.....
.....

Recommended Resources:

Anyabwile, Kristie. *Literarily: How Understanding Bible Genres Transforms Bible Study*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2022.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014.

Hendricks, Howard G., and William D. Hendricks. *Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible*. Chicago: Moody, 2007.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Richard D. Patterson. *For the Love of God's Word: An Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2015.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Richard D. Patterson. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021.

Widenhouse, Kathy. *Writing Devotionals That Stick*. Orlando: Kathy Widenhouse, 2016.

Yarbrough, Mark M. *How to Read the Bible Like a Seminary Professor*. New York: FaithWorks, 2015.