

Lecture 2.1 — What is Hermeneutics?

Session 2: Basic Issues and Aspects of Hermeneutics

I. Defining Hermeneutics

hermēneuein = interpret, explain, translate.

Definition:

- Hermeneutics = principles of interpretation.
 - Exegesis = practice of applying those principles.
- Everyone has a hermeneutic.** The question is not *if* you interpret, but *how*.

II. My Hermeneutical Presuppositions

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| 1. The Bible is about Jesus (Luke 24; John 5). | 5. Pay attention to arguments (especially in epistles). | 8. Pay attention to history (audience, customs, geography). |
| 2. Let the Bible interpret the Bible. | 6. Pay attention to context (verse → book → canon → culture). | 9. Interpret in community (church past and present). |
| 3. Pay attention to words (in context). | 7. Pay attention to genre (narrative, poetry, apocalyptic, etc.). | 10. Interpret for transformation (James 1:22) |
| 4. Pay attention to structure (how authors arrange material). | | |

III. A Historical Overview

OT Period: Ezra & Levites → clarity and explanation (Neh. 8:8).

NT Period: Apostles → bold, Christ-centered fulfillment (Acts 2, 13).

Early Church:

- Alexandrian (allegory): Christ-centered, but often uncontrolled.
- Antiochene (literal): text-focused, but could miss deeper unity.

Medieval Era: Quadriga (literal, allegorical, moral, anagogical). Rich but often arbitrary.

Reformation: *Sola Scriptura*, clarity, Bible to the people. Rooted in languages.

Post-Reformation & Modern:

- Enlightenment: historical study, but skeptical of revelation.
- 20th–21st c.: Canonical, redemptive-historical, theological approaches. Rich, but sometimes subject.

Lecture 2.2 — Exegesis vs. Eisegesis

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Big Idea: You can either pull truth **out of** the text or shove your own truth **into** it—only one way honors God.

I. Defining the Terms

Exegesis → meaning “out of”; drawing truth out of the text, respecting authorial intent and context.

Eisegesis → meaning “into”; reading my own ideas into the text.

II. The Process of Exegesis

1. **Observation** → Read slowly; mark repeated words, connectors, contrasts.
2. **Structure** → Outline thought-units; follow the argument or movement.
3. **Lexical** → Study key words in context; avoid word-study fallacies.
4. **Context** → Word → sentence → paragraph → book → canon.
5. **Background** → Audience, customs, geography—only what’s essential.
6. **Theological Reflection** → Place in the sweep of redemption; see Christ.
7. **Application** → Move from truth (indicative) to response (imperative).

III. How Eisegesis Creeps In

Motivations: laziness, pride, fear, cultural pressure.

Expressions: prooftexting, over-allegorizing, over-literalizing, ignoring genre, selective reading.

Practice 2.3 — Exegesis vs. Eisegesis

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Instructions: Your table has been assigned a text. Work through the **7 Steps of Exegesis** together. Take notes in the grid below. Be ready to present: (1) what you saw at each step, and (2) how the text points to Christ and applies to us.

Step	What to Do	Helpful Tips
1. Observation	Read the text aloud 2–3 times. Mark repeated words, contrasts, connectors (for, but, therefore).	Don't rush. Circle verbs & key nouns. Look for tone shifts.
2. Structure	Break into thought-units. Trace flow (e.g., problem → solution → result).	Draw arrows. Can you summarize the logic in 1–2 sentences?
3. Lexical	Identify 2–3 key words. What do they mean <i>here</i> ?	Compare translations. Avoid “root = meaning.” Context rules.
4. Context	Place it in the surrounding chapter, book, canon.	Ask: “Why here? Why now?” Trace echoes or themes across Scripture.
5. Background	Note cultural, historical, or audience details.	Only use what text requires (not trivia). Geography, customs, politics.
6. Theology	Place the meaning in the big story of redemption.	Ask: What does this show about God, man, sin, salvation, Christ?
7. Application	Move from truth (indicative) → response (imperative).	Head (believe), Heart (love), Hands (do), Habits (repeat).

Presenting Your Work

- Share **1 key observation** for each step.
- End with: **“This text points us to Christ by...”** and **“We apply it by...”**