
Exegetical Bible Study Methods!

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This curriculum is designed to teach you how to study the Bible with the tools a good pastor would learn to use in a top level seminary.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is a collection of books in various literature forms, written over a 1500 year period to people 2000 years ago; it speaks to history, and it speaks to our inner soul. To get the most out of our reading and teaching, we must learn to use the tools needed to dig out these precious prospects. This is called the science and art of *Exegetical Method*.

What is *Exegetical, exegesis, xo...*what? *Exegesis* or the *Deductive Approach* to Bible study simply means “to lead out” or “draw out,” extracting objectively, in a systematic study, what a text is actually saying to its original intended readers in their language, culture, and setting before we can discover what it means. In practice with the Bible, it is finding the true meaning of the passages of Scripture from word meanings and context. It is a tool and a discipline which enables us to get more out of what we read, so we can see a text in its background and then gain a better grasp of it by knowing the intended meaning, rather than just what we want it to mean. As a tool, it is an examiner and a detective that interviews a passage in a comprehensive, extensive, and serious manner. This enables a better understanding of the Bible that helps draw out more of the meaning for our personal understanding and spiritual growth. In this way, we can better internalize a passage for our personal conviction and explain it better to others, too. In other words, *I want to know Him and His Word, what He is saying to me.*

The Exegetical method or *exegesis* does not mean going to a passage with a presupposition, idea, or agenda and looking for it, although sometimes in preparing a topical study, one may do this. However, it is always, always best to go to the passage to look for what it actually says and not what we want to find. We never want to try to get from the passage what is not there, and then think we have found something. This is what the cults and false teachers do!

Why should I bother with this? Because, we can gain so much more from His Word, precepts, and call if we just desire to take the time to learn more of His Word. No serious Bible student wants to be naïve or wants things boiled down to only the basic, simple, non-convicting bullet point; we want meat and depth that

can be applied to life and taught to others as God has called. Exegetical Bible study is learning how to systematically analyze and apply the Bible for all its worth with our best efforts. You can be a person who is skilled in learning His Word, something that must be done before engaging in teaching people the Word. If we do not know how to dig out the meaning and then apply it to our own lives, how can we ask others to do it for their lives?

There is also a counteraction by some who cry “foul” to Exegetical study, saying it liberalizes God’s precepts or neuters the Spirit. But, it is my intent to show you that this is not the case. Those who are critical to the Bible use these tools, too. The knife that cuts a hand or stabs a person also carves a work of art or helps us eat our dinner. A tool is as good or as bad as the intent of the person who uses it.

The Different Approaches to Studying Scripture

Here are Some Definitions on the various ways we can read and know God’s Word, the Bible. Some of these methods of Bible Study are very Biblical, beneficial and good and while others are harmful and lead to false teaching.

We, at *Into Thy Word*, are geared toward challenging you to learn how to better understand and study the Bible! We seek to teach people to use logic, induction, reasoning, and good inductive and deductive principles by examining the particulars, facts, and essence of a text first before making any conclusions. Thus, we can lead a mature, meaningful, fruitful, character driven life for Christ’s glory!

Methods to Understanding Scripture

First is the *Deductive Approach*: This is the common way of reading the Bible. The reader acts as a detective, which is good at first, as we all need to deduct what the Bible says. This form usually starts with a premise such as a topic or idea and then pulls out the relative ideas. This method can be done with a good heart seeking to start with a subject and then looking for the corresponding Scriptures that are relevant to it. This can be a good tool for topical studies; however, it can also be dangerous, leading to false conclusions because the context is usually abandoned. This deductive method tends to skip the key process that helps organize, in a logical manner, what the text says. Thus, one skips and misses a lot and does not get out of the Bible reading what should be discovered. The danger is that when ideas are pulled out of context, the results are theology, interpretation, and application that may not exist.

Second is the *Opinion Approach*: This form is the practice of “eisegesis” (see below) that uses the personality of the reader as the template for gathering information from the text. All that is read and studied is compared to his or her experience and education. The reader has the tendency to go to the text with

firm, preconceived ideas from what is presumed, what was previously learned, and not caring or too lazy to check out the facts. The pitfall is that even if you are a seminary graduate and an experienced pastor, you can miss a lot and get things wrong.

In the above approaches, the reader plows into the Bible without knowing how to do it. It would be much like someone using a cookbook without an understanding of how to cook or what the measurements and ingredients mean so, the meal will be less desirable than what may have been intended. The Bible reader becomes confused, overwhelmed, and frustrated. Of course, there is always a benefit to just reading the Bible. Our point is, we can do it much better and gain more for our lives as His child.

Third is the *Inductive Method*: The Inductive approach looks at the whole text in its context and pulls out facts, interprets them, and then applies them. There are no pitfalls with this method as long as the *exegete* is honest to the text.

Analyses Types

Exegetical analysis simply means a serious or *critical* examination of a text of Scripture for the purpose of explanation (clarification) or interpretation. Thus, we become the *redactor* of the Bible, as in breaking down its parts, examining and researching them, and then putting them together for our illumination and benefit. *Critical* means “serious,” and *redactor* means “to draw from.” For the authentic Christian, it provides either a framework of God’s principles, or it can be a shredder for its critics—as in those who oppose Christ and His principles.

A good Christian leader approaches this with reverence. A liberal who is callous to God approaches this purely as academic and thus will just tear it down for tear-down purposes only, and not put it back together for His glory. The same mechanic can tear down a car and strip it for parts so it is of no use, or he or she can tear it down to restore it, make it better, and use it. We, of course, do not make the Bible better; rather, we make ourselves better by understanding Him better.

Inductive simply means to use logical induction and reasoning by examining the particulars, facts, and essence of a Bible text first before making any conclusions. Thus, it means to draw out from the Bible with reverence, humility, and without preconceived ideas, agendas, or theological systems.

Thus, inductive Bible Study enhances the *exegesis* process by enabling us to read the Bible for all its impact, value, and significance. In practice, we first examine the ideas and words of the text; this then leads us to the meanings and interpretations, and then we are led to the conclusions and applications. As we are interviewing a passage, we are also allowing His Word to interview and then intervene in us. Additionally, we are to do this with a sense of worship, prayer,

respect, and humility—without our preconceptions or agendas, thus, seeking what God is actually saying before we seek what a passage means. Then, we can apply it to our lives in a more effective and effectual manner. In other words, *I want to know Christ and His Word better, to be convicted and impacted so I can line my life up to His.*

The Inductive approach looks at the whole text, in its context, and pulls out facts, interprets them, and then applies them. The only pitfall with this method is if we do not investigate word meanings or *genres*, we may miss crucial items or get things wrong. However, the Inductive approach is still the best as long as the *exegete* is honest to the text and comparisons to other passages.

Combining the Inductive and Exegetical (the *Into Thy word* method) is simply using the best of both approaches to enhance our ability to study, know, and practice His Word. The idea of *exegetical* analysis is addition and complementing, to add what is missing from most Inductive approaches so to synergize our leaning and teaching.

Besides asking key inductive questions, we can also act as a detective; we can look for the word meanings, cultural considerations, and use tools such as concordances, Bible Dictionaries, and Lexicons to bring out deeper, more insightful meanings. Then, we match up the passage with what we are studying and other Scriptures that are relevant to it. This can be a good tool for expository, exegetical, and topical studies.

Hermeneutics simply means the application of reason in how to interpret the actual, intended meaning of a passage. Then, the principles of *exegesis* are put into practice, using the science and art of understanding to interpret the Bible for Christ's glory and not ours. In this way, we gain not just what it said then, but what the passage means for us today. Thus, we come to His Word, seek what it actually means, and then transcribe His timeless principles for today.

Criticism simply means "analysis," as in to investigate something, such as a passage, in order to form an opinion and then use it for *didactic* (educational) purposes. It can be positive and helpful or it can be negative and arrogant, like any criticism. There are three major categories of Criticism: first, there is *Higher Criticism* which is considered "scholarly;" it investigates the origins, aspects, authorship, languages, date, compositions, and literary structure and meanings, which is good to do with the right motives and intent. This is what pastors, commentary writers, and Bible expositors do. The second is *Lower Criticism*. This is mainly the study of manuscript evidences to determine wording, grammar, and structure; this is what the Bible translators do. By the way only ½% of the New Testament is in any serious dispute—mostly over grammar and spelling, and none affects any doctrine or meaning! The third type of Criticism is called *Form Criticism*. This is analyzing the literary forms, which is very good; however, another aspect of this form of critique is what liberal scholars use to look for the

origins of legend and myth in the Scriptures. Most of this is reading into it the commentator's ideas and theories, unsubstantiated by fact or sound reason. This is the bad version that many confuse for all the views of Criticism.

The approach of Criticism helps form our understandings and opinions so we can be good learners and educators of the Bible. This is why reverence and humbleness are crucial; otherwise, liberalism and discord will abound.

Eisegesis or Isogesis simply means “to lead in” or “reading into the Scriptures” as in to introduce into the text one's own presuppositions, ideas, and thoughts while ignoring what is actually there in order to satisfy one's own agendas and opinions. In practice, this is using our personal interpretation, agenda, or presupposition, inserting or expressing our own ideas and bias, seeking what we want it to mean rather than the actual, intended meaning of the passage. This ignores the language, context, and culture, leading us to incorrect conclusions, inconsistent understandings, and also leads to heresies and false teachings. This method enables us to read into a text what is not there and draw out what God is not saying. *Isogesis* causes us to think this way: In other words, *don't confuse me with the facts; I have already made up my mind, I want to think my way and or lead my life my way, not His Way.*

We never ever want to do *eisegesis* to God's most precious Word; that would be heinous at best and blasphemous at worst! The improper use of *exegetical* methodologies will skew our understanding of God and His precepts, leading us to an improper life and false teachings. One should always seek the meaning from the actual, original languages (and/or use multiple Bible translations and compare to other passages; do some research), and context, and also what it meant to the intended audience; then, compare it to other passages to find the authentic meaning. This is proper *exegesis*. Never seek a meaning from modern vernaculars, theological agendas, or hearsays—because you will skew the intent that God has for us—that is, reading into the text what God is not saying to us!

Check out Acts 17:11; 2 Corinthians 4:2; and 2 Timothy 2:15, and see how God wants us to study His Word!

However, no matter how good the tools we use are, we have to be aware that they can be limiting and even dangerous (can lead to liberalism through higher criticism that is devoid of Christ and Fruit). It can also lead to false conclusions if the human authors got it wrong or had biases. This *deductive exegetical* method helps you with a process so you can organize what the text says in a logical manner and then outline it and use it for teaching and sermons.

The basic plan is that you interview the Bible; use tools and ask it questions to get to know the account, just as an investigator or a reporter or a

researcher does. At the same time, remember reverence; the *Whom* you are interviewing is God's Most Holy Word in His Holy presence!

The Reason for the Exegetical Method

What about being led by the Spirit?

The basics of understanding Bible Study methods, how to learn from and about God's Word is basically simple, do it. But what we do not want to do is do it bad or erroneous. The science and art of *exegesis* or *exegetical* method is not meant to be scary, but rather provide us with the essential tools so we can better know and teach His Word. It is a science because there are rules of logic and word meanings that are rigid, and it is also an art that requires us to learn the skills of His Word so we can apply them to the canvas of our lives. These are the basic procedures a pastor or experienced teacher of the Word learns in Bible School and Seminary so they can prepare sermons, Bible studies, and commentaries. This primer is designed to compliment the inductive process by helping you use outside tools so to better mine more nuggets of precious precepts and not miss important stuff. This primer goes into the "What Does it Mean" section of Inductive Bible Study. Thus, to get as much as you can, follow the inductive process (either the basics or the advanced steps), and when you are done, use this process to add to your work. This is what we do at *Into Thy Word!* Remember, these Bible study methods are not for professional Christians only; they are tools for all disciples of the Lord to use!

Why is the *exegetical* analysis of the Bible important? Because, we need to know what the Bible is saying before we can gain from it. We do not need to take things out of context; we want what we teach to be truth, not untruths, half truths, or get our facts wrong and thus lead the people who are in our care astray. No real, authentic, Christ-infused leader would ever want to lead people astray. No real pastor, called by God, would ever deliberately teach what is false, what he or she does not fully understand, or teach to mislead for personal, misguided agendas. Yet, many do; that is why this subject is so important! Authentic pastors and Christian leaders always desire to lead people deeper in the precepts and applications of Christ-like character and spiritual growth so they will be impacted and be impacting! Knowing and gaining insight about God's Word helps us give glory to Christ and growth to His church; otherwise, we are the annoying noise of 1 Corinthians 13:1!

This is why leaning how to examine Scripture is so important for a pastor or anyone who wants to be a serious Bible student or teacher. We are to engage the Bible so we can be familiar with His precepts for our personal spiritual formation. And, even more importantly, if we are teaching, we must know what the Bible says before we try to share with others what it says. Too many preachers love to embellish and assume, and thus consciously or unconsciously deceive many people. If we decide that digging into the Scriptures is a waste of

time or it is not for us, consider this: If we just have a superficial overview of Scripture, we will have superficial understanding and then superficial results that lead to a superficial church—all because we do not understand and thus do not apply God's most precious precepts into our lives!

Why do so many people say this is not necessary or that it is even dangerous? Mainly, they do not understand it and/or they just see the abuses by some of the liberal commentators who examine and tear down the Bible, but do not put it back together nor understand that it is still God's precious Word! God calls us to seek and understand His Word. He wants us to tear it down so we can see its parts, elements, and teachings, so we can examine it carefully and steadfastly so we can receive His guidelines and principles, and thus get as much as we can. Then, He calls us to do something with what we have learned, apply it to our lives, and, in turn, teach others by example and by words.

What about being led by the Spirit? Some Christians—even pastors—believe that the *exegetical* or inductive method is not yielding to the voice of the Holy Spirit. They see this as a mechanical mode that separates the believer from God. The problem with this view is, the Bible is truth and we have a God of Truth. If we look at His Word and make up our own meanings for the words and precepts and not seek the actual meaning, we are doing the Holy Spirit and God a disservice by ignoring and even rejecting His Truth. This can even be blasphemous and create all kinds of false teaching. The Voice of the Holy Spirit intercedes so we can know the deeper things of God, but He will never contradict Himself or His Word. Thus, if the Holy Spirit says one thing and the Bible says another, one is lying. And, since neither the Word nor the Spirit ever lies, and what we read is clear, then what we think we hear from the Spirit is our own whim and not Him! God is seeking those *who worship Him in spirit and in truth*; thus, we can never divorce one from the other. The role of the Spirit is not to give us new information, but to convict us on the information God has already given (Is. 66:2; John 4:23-24; 14:17; 1 Cor. 2:10; Eph. 3:16-17; 1 Thess. 1: 4-5; 1 John 4:1)!

The Exegetical Process

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:10

It is of the utmost importance that we are honest and humble in our encounters with God's Holy Word! The Bible is to inform us in order to allow the work of the Spirit to bend us and conform us to God's will and standards. We do not dare seek to bend His precepts to fit our ideas or agendas.

To be honest careful students of His Word, we must be willing to dig and do the research in order to perceive what the text says before we say to others what it says! It is not about what we think it says; it is about what it really does say! We do not want to be the objects of discussion from 2 Peter (false teachers); rather, we want to honor and glorify our Lord. To read, study, and then teach what the Bible honestly says is so much more impacting and effectual than anything we can make up or assume!

These are three crucial areas or rules of *exegesis* that we have to know before we can interpret correctly:

- We must be aware of our nature, as we are filled with sin and desires that do not match up to His Word.
- We must be aware of the nature of Scripture and the Divine Author's intent.
- The Bible was written by the words of people through their cultures, languages, times, and histories, while at the same time all divinely inspired.

Thus, when we are aware of this “tension” between the Bible's language, history, literature, and our perceptions and limited understanding, then we can be careful interpreters so that we are focused on Christ and His Word and not ourselves or our ideas.

Step 1: Select and Identify your Passage. (This step can be incorporated in the “Inductive Bible Study Method” in the first steps of preparation)

For Bible Study and preaching, it is always best to stick to two to six verses unless it is a narrative passage, such as Genesis or Chronicles. This is to make your learning and your teaching more manageable and understandable. You do not want to be overloaded or overload your people with information; at the same time, you want to learn and enable them to be able to give the overview and the “meat” of the passage, making it “hit home” with them, as it relates and applies both to your and their lives. If you are going through the Bible exegetically, as in verse-by-verse through a whole book, outline it first, and then break down your messages into sub-categories. This is for better clarity and understanding, not just for you, but for those to whom you are communicating.

Make sure you are using a good translation and not a paraphrase. Stick to one main translation to work from; even if you are using the Greek text, have the NASB handy and use it as your baseline because you will have to communicate your work so others who may not know Greek can understand and relate. (However, this curriculum is designed for those who are not using Greek.) Only read and refer to a paraphrase to gain more insights; do not study from it unless that is all you have.

- Start by browsing the whole book to see the whole picture of what is going on.
- Then carefully read the chapter of your passage, then, reread it very carefully and slowly in a good translation.
- Keep in mind the inductive question, “what does this passage say?”
- Remember to be in a state of prayer and humbleness before the Father!

By the way, I have found most people hear very little Greek from the pulpit unless it relates to the preacher’s point or is used as an illustration. It is always best to do your work and then communicate so people can understand; speak and preach to their level of understanding and not over them! People do not care how much you know if you do not love and care for them and teach in an humble manner.

Step 2: Explore the General Meaning of the Passage. (This step can be incorporated into the first steps of the inductive method on “What does it say”)

Your objective is to seek the broad-spectrum meaning, the overarching structure of your passage, and clarify it. Thus you observe the structure to see what is going on and report it. In this way, you can understand it then you can communicate that understanding to your people. You can ask, *what does the biblical author mean and what is the intent and objective of the passage? What are the basic and essential elements? What did the original readers see in the passage? What are the general precepts and principles being presented?* At this point, try not to look at the specifics before you have the general idea firmly in your mind. Paraphrase the passage. Diagram and/or outline it. Remember, you are to engage the Bible by examining the general meaning, seeking the parts of it, and then bringing them all together for understanding and application; whole, to parts, to whole.

- The primary goal of interpretation is to find the “plain meaning” of the Bible so it can be used in your life, church, and community!
- What is it? Who is the author? What is the intent, the language, the *genre*....
- What does the passage say? What does the general overview of the passage really say? Ignore what you have been told or what you presume; the point here is to do your own deductive analysis to determine, in context and as accurately as possible, what God is saying in the passage you are studying.
- What is the major theme?
- What is the storyline?

- Start an outline of the passage. I suggest an inductive order in three to four sections.
- Good *exegesis* means we write down what God is actually saying not what we want Him to say.
- Good *exegesis* means that God has control of what is being said and we do not, we are to hear and perceive what He has for us.

Step 3: Explore the Specific Meaning of the Passage. (This step can be incorporated into the middle steps on the inductive method on “What does it mean?”)

In this step, our idea is to explore more of, “What is it?” Who is the author? What is the intent, the language, the *genre*, etc.... Thus, the task is to isolate and then inspect and analyze specific words and phrases to better determine what is going on in the passage. What are the concepts being presented? Start to lay out the specific precepts and principles being presented. Start to do your outline if you have not already, and then add to it in a logical, systematic way what you have discovered. Do this verse-by-verse; under each verse, list the points and principles. Look at each sentence and notice the words. First, look at the key words such as nouns and verbs; then, what is supporting them, and then the adjectives and structure. Remember the context and never divorce specifics from general context or *visa versa*.

- How is the passage arranged and set up?
- What is the sentence structure? The sequence of thought? What is the subordination (how things are supported) and logic, and how are they presented?
- What are the contexts and/or background?
- Look at the grammatical structure; this is the big clue to what is going on! Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and their person and number are crucial to the who, what, when, where, how, and why of the passage.
- What are the word or phrase meanings? Examine the significance of the individual words and phrases. Be aware of idioms, metaphors, hyperbole, and such. When you get to a phrase, seek to determine what is contained in it, the thoughts, precepts, etc...
- Look at other translations and paraphrases.
- What are the maxims, subject, and theme? What is their relevance?

- What are the intentions and propositions?
- What are the problems and solutions?
- Cause and effect?
- Are there any theological terms and ideas that need to be researched and explained?
- What are the arguments and points? What is the flow of the argument, or how is the case presented?
- Good exegesis means we are to seek what God is saying, and not what we want Him to say. We are to dig out His principles—not read in ours!

Note: when you use other resources such as commentaries, there is always a bias from the human author. Be aware of it and remember; human works are not inspired and can be very fallible! God's Word is inspired and is infallible! The problem is in how we interpret it, our predispositions, agendas, and limited reasoning skills. Thus, be humble when you approach His Word!

Step 4: Explore the Context. (This step can also be incorporated in the middle steps of the inductive method on "What does it mean?")

This is where you examine how the passage relates to the surrounding passages, the book and chapter. Remember, the Bible is a library of 66 books written over 1,500 years by many human authors all inspired and directed by God. Within it, there are many language and literature types that give us idioms, metaphors, phrases, and words that mean something different depending on whether it is a narrative (story), poetry, or Apocalyptic. Also, the surrounding passages help determine the meaning of the precepts and the individual words, just like any modern language does today. Even the specific meaning at the time of the writing may have changed or have been translated inaccurately or incompletely.

There are two main areas of "context" we always need to be aware of and ask the text, "What are the historical, and what are the literary settings?" (That is the content of what is going on in the text.) What is going on preceding and after our text? What are the type(s) of literature, and the various cultural factors? What was going on in that time in history? What is the point? The train of thought?

1. **The Historical Context:** This is about the time period and culture of the people who God used to write it and the people they are writing too. Such as the locations, such as the travels of Paul and Jesus, and the time and sequence of events. This refers to the occasion and purpose of the author's intention, how and what it meant to them, and how and what it means to us.

Such as, *what was the personal background of Isaiah? What was his position (job)? Who was he writing to? What were the people like (culture and customs)? What were their expectations?* These are some of the key questions to ask in order to know what is going on. Carefully reading the text plus the use of Bible encyclopedias, handbooks, and dictionaries will give you those insights. But, make sure you make your own observations first!

2. **The Literary Context:** This is the type of literature *genres* that refer to the meaning of the words; the Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives—both the meaning of the word(s) itself as well as what they mean in their context of sentence structure and surrounding passages. You can do this quite simply by comparing the word you wish to “dig” out by looking at a concordance and at various translations. How is it used in other places in Scripture such as the word “denarius” in the Gospels? You may automatically think it is money. And, you are right—but what kind of money? What was it used for? What was the amount and what was its worth? These are critical questions to help you understand the meaning of the passage. Also, be aware that the verse numbers, paragraphs, and chapters are not part of the original text!
- What comes before and after your passage?
 - What is the historical background—the circumstances surrounding the events, cultural concerns, and social considerations?
 - Ask what language the book was written in. Most of the Old Testament is in Hebrew; parts of Daniel are in Aramaic—a dialect of Hebrew—and the New Testament is in Greek. Thus, the passage was originally written in another language than you are reading. We have to realize that it is a translation and investigate the meanings accordingly. This gives us more profound insights into the passage!
 - Who was the author and what does he bring to the passage? What about authenticity and genuineness? Is he using an “amanuensis” (using a secretary to dictate to, as Paul often did)? Is he revealed as in “pseudonymity” (such as the author is not clearly revealed as in Mark) or “anonymity” (the author is unknown, such as Hebrews)?
 - When was the book written? This is significant, such as in Revelation, as to how it is interpreted.
 - Where was the book written? The geographic location tells a lot of culture and insights.
 - To whom was the book written? The book’s destination—who is receiving and reading it—gives a lot of insights too.

- Why was the book written? What was the occasion (circumstance) and purpose (reason and intent)? For example, Paul, to the Corinthians, is responding and addressing their questions and concerns and straightening out their misguided beliefs.
 - What are the cultural considerations? (This is where a background commentary or Bible dictionary would help.)
 - What are the relationships to other passages such as theological and “synoptical” (relations of the Gospels to one another) issues? This is where a cross reference work helps (the verses that are in the margins in most Bibles) or a concordance to see how the word or principle is used in other passages; Scripture helps to interpret Scripture.
 - What are the facts? How do they compare to your opinions? This is how we are challenged so we can learn and grow; when you explain this to others, do so in love and reverence to God because we are all learners of His Word!
3. **What is the Genre Context?** How does the literary type or wording in the passage effect the interpretation? In English, we have story, comedy, tragedy, novel, lyric poem, and epic to name a few. In the Greek and Hebrew, we have narrative, law, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, parable, epistle, and even romance. This is very important, as this helps us interpret the meaning of the text and whether it is literal or figurative.

This is important when determining if we will take a word or phrase as literal. Some are just common sense. When the Bible is referred to as a *rock*, we do not garden with it; when the Bible is called a *mirror*, we do not shave with it; when Jesus says He is the *Bread*...well, you should get the point. Some words are not to be taken literally, but the Bible is still communicating the literal Word of God. How do we determine if something is figurative, a metaphor, or a poetic figure? Usually, the Bible gives a clue in context, such as two or more words that do not go together like *LORD* and *Rock*, in Psalm 18:2, *The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer*. In this case, it means “unfailing strength,” as God is our Strength who does not fail. In this situation, you may need to look it up.

The Basic Genres:

- **History or Narrative:** There are stories and the epics and include Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, and Acts.
- **Law:** These are the instructions and precepts of God given to us through Moses, such as Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

- **Wisdom:** These are the literature of maxims and sayings such as Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.
 - **Poetry:** These are the prose and rhymes such as Psalms, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations.
 - **Prophecy:** These include both major and minor prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
 - **Apocalyptic:** These are combinations of narrative and prose written in vivid imagery and poetic phrases that are intended to exaggerate for a purpose such as Daniel and most of Revelation.
 - **Parable:** These are the sayings of Jesus that are narrative and instructional, contained in the Gospels.
 - **Epistle:** These are the letters written to a specific audience that are practical for us today such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, Peter, John, and the first three chapters of Revelation.
 - **Romance:** These are narrative, written also as love stories, such as Ruth and Song of Solomon.
 - Then, ask how the type of *genre* (type of literature) shows you the significance and implication of the general overview?
 - How does the type of *genre* contribute to possible meanings of specific words and then the point of the passage?
4. **Dealing with Metaphors, Symbols and Figures of Speech.** This is taking what is said and finding out what the text means—how to interpret what is literal, and what points to something else in the correct context. That is, we never take out of God’s Word what is not there, or read in our will as His. In understanding *genre*, within most all of Scripture there is *genre* within *genre*. In a narrative, there is poetry as well as figurative languages such as metaphors (meaning something different such as, a “bull market” does not mean a bull is in a market, it means the stocks went up). A metaphor such as *salt of the earth* or *this is my body given...* can also be an illustration such as when Satan is referred to as a lion, an idiom (expression) such as Jesus’ words to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:27, or a hyperbole (exaggeration) such as Jesus saying a *camel through an eye of a needle*. Are all in the metaphor categories, even Jesus’ parables.

When we encounter a word that does not seem to fit or is out of character, we must say “what is it,” “why is it there?” Such as, is it instruction or is it poetry; is it a story, is it doctrine, is it an exaggeration, such as when Jesus said “a log in your eye,” or “a camel through an eye of a needle.” Does He want us to put a log in our eye or try to get a camel into a needle? You may find it tiresome after the first hump; thus, that is probably not what He means. It may be a point, a metaphor, or an illustration. If you do not understand the *genre* or the type of wording, you will come to a word such as when Jesus says He is the “bread of life” and not realize that He does not come from a bakery. Most do not make that error, but we do it with other words such as “living water,” a “good eye,” “the son of man,” “the beast,” or “being caught up” all of which have meanings very different in the original language than what many think they mean in English today. In Philippians 3:2, we are warned about *dogs*. Is this the K-9 variety or does it mean something else? The context gives us the clue. If you do not get the clue, then get a book and look it up. I do that all of the time and have been for over 25 years with all kinds of initials after my name. I do not presume to know; I check it out, and you should too.

Step 5: Explore the Contents. (This step can also be incorporated into the middle steps of the inductive method on “What does it mean?”)

In this step, you will want to carefully examine all the parts of the passage, define the key words, and compare the passage to other similar ones. You have done the overview; now it is time for the specifics. This is where you can incorporate Inductive reasoning and questions to pull out more information, acting like a detective to see what is going on in the text and determining its impact. Delineate, as in define, what the parts of the passage mean. This step is not to be done mechanically; rather, it is to be done with reverence to God and His Word. At the same time, be willing to discover His wonders and accept challenges. Then, make sure your interpretation is correct, but check other credible resources to make sure you are on the right path.

- Good *exegesis* means we look to what the passage actually means, not what we want it to mean.
- What are the different topics that are involved and how do they relate? Such as, how does topic “x” support topic “y;” how are they interrelated, illuminated, supported, what are the conclusions, and so forth?
- Are there any assertions (statements, proclamations...)?
- Are there any words or phrases repeated? If so, why?
- Re-read the passage in other translations and in its context.
- What are the ethical teachings?

- What are the precepts?
- What are the theological ramifications?
- This is where the word studies come in. Look up key words in lexicons (see our *Bible Aids* channel), and Bible dictionaries to discover their meaning. One word from the Greek can have several sentences of meaning and give you more insights and precepts into a verse. This is why translating a Bible is so daunting, doing it word for word (literally), meaning to meaning (dynamic), or somewhere in between. Then, incorporate to the context and *genre* for more developed and logical understanding and thought.
- What do you recognize and what do you need to look up? Never assume you know! Use an English dictionary to make sure you know what the meaning is; do not assume!
- Itemize each word and phrase in a logical or verse-by-verse order, and then write out the meanings of them from your examinations. Use inductive questions, and then exegetical resources such as commentaries and other tools to expand on it and explain it to yourself and then to those whom you teach.
- What do you not understand?

For advanced study there are parallels to other ancient works, such as the Jewish books, Mishnah, Talmud, apocryphal literature, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Greek works (remember the Apostles and most of the early Christians were fluent in Greek and were immersed in that culture. Paul, John, and others used a good amount of borrowed material, for illustration sake, that they knew but we may not know so well) to gain more insights. Remember, these works are not inspired but human based to give more clarity by showing how the same word or phrase is used elsewhere. This gives us clues to more meaning and sometimes more confusion. Of course, always compare Scripture to Scripture first!

- Now, write out in your own words, and in a meaningful and fruitful way, what the main words mean.

Step 6: Put it all Together. (This step can be incorporated into the final steps of the inductive method on “How does it apply?” and “Charting”).

This is where you reconstruct your work for the intended purpose for Christ’s glory. Now, go back to your paraphrase and add what you missed; and, if needed, subtract what you got wrong or rework what needs to be clarified, and start to polish it up.

You can have an *exegetical* paper, sermon, or Bible study that looks like this: Your paraphrase is about a paragraph or two that explains the general meaning of the passage in a way that you and your audience can clearly understand. Then, you can write out a short paragraph explaining the context or background of what is going on in and around the passage. Write out what you have learned in your explorations, such as using bullet points on each main word meaning or precept in verse order. Then, clarify what you are saying so it is simple and concise and make an application that you have lived out before asking others to do so (this is how most of the *Into Thy Word* Bible studies are done; look at any of the James or Peter studies for example.)

- Smooth it out; add further explanations, questions, and illustrations, depending on how you will use it.
- Make sure you do not spiritualize something that is not there, such as telling people to allow a snake to bite them because Paul did.
- Make sure you do not go by your experience; rather, seek His experience. Be an humble learner of His Word and an humble teacher too! Pride has no place either in the pulpit or in the Kingdom of God!
- Make sure you do not rationalize your behaviors or ideas by seeking a passage to justify them, usually out of context or intent.
- Make sure you do not make dogmatic assertions when it is not justified, such as a way of dress, one style of preaching as better than another, or a minor doctrine like tongues. Major on the majors; minor on the minors.
- Make sure you do not rationalize the passages or bring into His Word your way of theological thinking. Rather, allow Scripture to dictate your theological views.
- In preparing a “topical study,” follow the same procedures, as it is always, always best to go to the passage to look for what it says, not what we want to find. Thus, use a concordance to look up all the passages related to your topic and then *exegete* the pertinent ones; develop an outline and logical flow from your *exegetical* work and you will have a topical study!

Hermeneutical Questions to Ask Yourself to Help Prepare Your Lesson:

- How can you best take what the Bible is saying and bring it to the people you are teaching?
- Your goal is to write and/or teach so your audience can understand and apply His precepts to help them learn about and then lead transformed lives. In prayer, ask God how you can do this and do it better.

- Ask what the implications are and how you can understand and communicate them.
- What do you want your audience to understand?
- *What can I do to make God's Word real in the lives of the people in my care? What will be my church's response? How will I handle people's negative opinions and objections to growing and learning, and do so in kindness and love?*
- Good *exegesis* means that the precepts we have dug out are to be applied and not set aside.
- To grow in Christ, we need to be equipped by His precepts and be ready for His service. (2 Tim. 3:15-16)
- Remember, the Word of God's purpose is to transform us into the image of God—to model His character! And then, we can show and tell others.
- Pray and ask God how to implement His truth in you before you ask others to do so.
- The Word of God should lead us to model the character of Christ, and to form us in the image of God. How should we carry out these changes and then communicate to others how to do so?

You Can Do it!

The Bible is not a difficult book to interpret (Some passages and books like Revelation present some challenges because the *genre*, word meanings, and phrases are not what we are used to and may have meant something entirely different to the original readers than they do in the English today), yet many gifted scholars over the centuries have taken very different views of various passages. This has caused divisions and conflicts that were needless and without purpose that, ironically, only served to give glory to the devil's ways while distracting us from its main purpose of allowing us the opportunity to know about God, learn His precepts, and then to apply them to our daily lives. To escalate the conflicts between scholars and interpretive approaches, many current sensationalists like to reinterpret the Bible as they see fit and suit it to their erroneous agendas and their corrupt whims. Thus, they lead people off course, far away from the treasures and wisdom they could have had!

I do not take my venture into God's Word lightly. In fact, having studied His Book intensely for over 25 years, all my degrees, readings, research, and experience has not prepared me for the *exegetical* quest. I am a sinner with my

own fallibility coming before His Wondrous Holy Word. To think otherwise would be significantly arrogant. I approach His Word as a learner and as a humble student, and I suggest you do so too. Our intention at *Into Thy Word* is to stimulate your thinking and provide you with an honest and open look into God's Word from an *exegetical* and inductive perspective. We seek to honor the science and art of careful biblical interpretation and analysis. We have discovered that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God has given us something that is very important and clear for us to understand today.

I challenge you to be a faithful, honest student of His Word, whether you are still in high school, in seminary, or have decades of pastoral experience behind you as well as advanced degrees, to come to His text without preconceived, theological agendas or personal viewpoints. Rather, research carefully; do word studies (look for original meaning), conduct searches, and use sound reason and logic. In addition, do not forget the historical examination as well as context and comparisons with other passages in the Bible. This may sound like too much or seem overwhelming, but you can do it. You may discover that what you thought you knew fails to compare to what you can further know that will enhance your teaching too. God indeed has a deeper purpose for you to observe, build, dig out, manage, and apply His Word into your daily lives and thus, serve your churches better!

Make the commitment to be a good *exegete* to His Word. Do not assume; rather, come to the text without your theological bias even if it is a good one. If your theological bias is good, then what you discover will back it up, help you understand it better, or show you how you need to modify or change for the better. Do not just state the usual perspectives in your teachings, seek the trends of the day, or try to argue your view without careful evaluation of the facts. And, never, ever twist Scripture to fit your ideas or just go by your theological education or lack thereof or even your denominational agendas. This is what false teachers and cultists do! Rather, challenge your thinking by seeking Christ and His facts and honestly examining what God's inerrant Word says, in context and in truth, through the Spirit.

My other intention is to challenge my, and perhaps your thinking, too, concerning biblical thinking and theories, and to seek sound reason and Scripture—not myths, traditions, or popular theorems. However, I want to state up front that whatever theory or theological framework to which you or I subscribe is not as important as our love for the Lord and our desire for His Truth and authentic, spiritual growth. These are the things that are truly and eternally important! Arguing over conjecture or spurious, elusive doctrine does not bring glory to Christ; it only proves Satan!

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

The Tools and Resources you need to Know About!

These are the research book resources to help you to understand the text of the Bible, its meanings, and historical circumstances, so you can get more out of your studies. These are also available in computer software form and on our website channel, which makes the job fast and easy!

Why do we need tools? Is not the inductive process all we need? Yes and no. Yes, the inductive process gives us the main tool, God's Word, and helps us compare passages to other passages with investigative questions and reason. However, we are reading a work written in other languages over 2000 years ago and in another culture. So, there is a lot that does not transcribe into the language and culture in which we find ourselves today. Thus, we need some tools to help us in this quest to be good expositors.

The question becomes *how do we further and more intensely engage the Bible, dig, and get more tools to dig more out?* The following steps of this curriculum will slow you down to explain the methods and tools, and give you more tools to dig out even more of what is there. In addition, make sure you do not read in what you *want* to find. This is called the science of *exegetical method*, but there is no need for big words here. These are the basic procedures, combined with inductive tools that a pastor or experienced teacher of the Word learns in Bible School and Seminary with which to prepare sermons and commentaries, but boiled down to a clearer and simpler way that anyone can understand and apply.

Concordance: This is the "Yahoo" and "Google" of the Bible; you can use a key word and find the passages that you want, and even others that expand on it. This resource is a complete alphabetical listing of all the words in the Bible. A concordance can be very helpful to clarify word meanings as you look them up in their various contexts; if in doubt, look it up! It relates the principle themes, doctrines, and ideas. It works just like an Internet search without the clicking. Let's say you remember a verse that said something about "wings of eagles," but you did not know how to find it. Just look up the key words, "eagle" and "wings," and visit the *sites*, i.e. passages, until you get to the one you want. Sometimes, it can be hundreds, like for "prayer," or just a few, like eight for "eagle" or seven for "wings." It is easy!

Commentaries: They are designed to expand on the thoughts of the passage through original language study, historical information, settings, and in-depth study by learned scholars with various viewpoints and biases; be aware of this and remember they are expounding their ideas and insights, but not necessarily His. There are many good and bad commentaries. Talk to your pastor, who is knowledgeable and teaches correctly; he may recommend some. For students, I recommend the *NIV Bible Commentary* by Zondervan and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by Walvoord and Zuck, Victor Books. The *IVP Bible Background Commentary* by IVP press is phenomenal for getting the cultural backgrounds. The *Bible Exposition Commentary* by Wiersbe is very basic and insightful. Then, there are multi-volume sets. Pick from such solid biblical publishers as Tyndale, Inter-Varsity, Zondervan, Moody Press, Eerdmans, Baker, or Thomas Nelson.

Ask a pastor you trust because, unfortunately, there is a lot of garbage out there. Beware and be discerning; always compare Scripture to Scripture, and do not rely only on other people's opinions!

Study Bibles: These are Bibles with some basic notes to help you dig deeper into the text. I recommend the *New Geneva Study Bible*, now called *The Reformation Study Bible*, and the *NIV Study Bible*.

However, do not solely rely on commentaries and study Bibles because you will get addicted to relying on them and, thus, get lazy in your personal studies! Nothing beats studying for yourself! Use the commentaries just to see what you may have missed, and for what you do not understand!

Lexicons: These are the linguistic tools to help you define the word meanings and vocabulary. This is very similar to a dictionary that explains the meaning of Hebrew or Greek words. Even if you do not know the original Greek or Hebrew, these tools help describe the word meanings, grammatical structure, and some give you more information about the "morphological" variations; some even provide references for where and how the words are used in other ancient literature. I like the software and web-based ones best; you hold your mouse over a word and a window pops up giving you the details of that word. The book version you can use like a dictionary. If you know a little Greek, the *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* by C. Brown is excellent. For those more advanced in their Greek, then you know about the more scholarly, analytical ones like *Kittle Lexicon* (warning This is an indispensable in-depth work, but tends to be liberal in theology, if you are discerning, this is a must have available on CD too).

Bible Dictionary and Bible Encyclopedia: These work just like a standard dictionary or encyclopedia, with the exception that the words and topics are found in Scripture. This can be a great tool for finding out more information, subjects, and terms so you can understand what is being said or what is going on such as *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament*, Intervarsity Press, and *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. I have found the *New Bible Dictionary*

by Eerdmans to be one of the best. Baker and Zondervan also have several good ones to choose from.

Maps: Most Bibles have maps in them that are designed to show you where events happen and where they are going on; it gives you a “where” perspective, especially in the book of Acts where there is a lot of traveling.

Books about the Bible: These books help the student to understand what the Bible is about and give general overviews. One such book is the classic, *What the Bible is All About* by Henrietta Mears, founder of “Gospel Light,” one of the largest and best producers of Sunday School curriculum. Also, these two works are very helpful: *With the Word* by Warren Wiersbe provides a devotional overview, and *Haley’s Bible Handbook* provides overviews and historical facts.

Theological Dictionaries: These books go in-depth, providing more than just a general understanding of major theological points, such as *Colin-Brown* by Regency and *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* by Baker.

What Are the Types of Literature Genres in the Bible?

The Bible is not one book; it is a library of sixty-six books that were written over a period of more than 1,500 years by many different authors. These authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit in their thinking and writing. Thus, the Bible is the inspired Word of God without error. It also has the human touch from its authors. Paul is different from David, who is different from James or Moses. So, their style and personality come out to us. These create the marvelous depth and wonder of Scripture and how God chooses to use us when He does not need to.

The Bible is literature, as is any book, filled with many kinds or types of language. It has Law, History, Wisdom, Poetry, Gospel, Epistles, Prophecy, and Apocalyptic Literature.

Biblical Genres Include:

Law: This contains the instructions and precepts of Moses, such as Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Law is “God’s law”, and is the expression of His sovereign will and character. The writings of Moses contain a lot of Law. God provided the Jews with many laws (619 or so). These laws defined the proper relationship with God, to one another, and with the world (the alien), as well as for worshipping God, governing the people, priestly duties, what to eat and not eat, how to build the temple, proper behavior, manners, and social interaction, etc. The Ten Commandments are often known as “The Law;” so are Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In the New Testament, the “Sermon on the Mount”

is considered law and the fulfillment of the law, and Paul's calls to the church are law in their literature form.

Most Christians have a distorted view of the law and think it does not apply to us. Jesus repeated and affirmed the Ten Commandments and the Law of Moses. The law points to our depravity and need for a Savior. Without the law, there would be no relationship to God or need for Christ to save us. Christ fulfills the law and thus we are not bound to its curse, but we must acknowledge its role in our lives as the pointer to the Cross and the mirror to our soul.

History or Narrative: These are the stories and the epics, and include: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, and Acts. Almost every Old Testament book contains history. Some books of the Bible are grouped together and commonly referred to as the "History" (Joshua, Kings, and Chronicles); these books tell us the history of the Jewish people from the time of the Judges through the Persian Empire. In the New Testament, Acts contains some of the history of the early church, and the Gospels also have history; Jesus' life is told as history. Even the Epistles have history as they chronicle events. There is also another sub-category of narrative called "Romance;" this is narrative written also as a love story such as Ruth and Song of Solomon.

Wisdom: This is the literature of maxims and sayings, including Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Wisdom Literature focuses on questions about the meaning of life (Job, Ecclesiastes) and on practical living and common sense (Proverbs and some Psalms). This literature contrasts our faulty human wisdom to God's reasoning perfection. Thus, when we live for our own will and not His, we will experience grief and frustration, not because God is vengeful and angry, but because we led ourselves that way out of our pride and arrogance. This literature warns us of our evil nature and desires.

Poetry: These are the prose and rhyme books such as Psalms, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. Poetry is found mostly in the Old Testament and is similar to modern poetry. Since it is a different language of Hebrew, the Bible's poetry can be very different because it does not translate into English very well. Poetry that we are used to is usually based on parallelisms, rhythm, or various types of sound mixings, as is our music. Hebrew poetry is based on a tempo of stanzas and phrases re-told differently called "synonymous parallelism", conveying the same ideas and meaning in contrasting or similar ways. Some called "synthetic parallelism," also have extra ideas and words inserted. "Antithetic parallelism" is mostly contrasting stanzas, and is very predominant in Proverbs. Some Bible books are all poetry (Psalms, Song of Songs, and Lamentations), and some books only have a few verses such as in Luke.

Gospel: This word means the "good news" that we received through salvation by the work and life of God's Son, Jesus Christ. When the Gospels were first written

in the first century, it was a brand new form of literature. The four Gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John) contain a bit of all the literary types with the primary purpose of expressing faith in Christ and what He has done on our behalf. In these works, the stories are not necessarily in chronological or sequential order, except for Luke. In this type of literature, we find what is called a “Parable.” These are the sayings of Jesus that are narrative and instructional, contained in the Gospels. Each of the gospels presents the teachings, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus in a distinctive way, but not contradictory, and for a specific audience. Matthew was written to Jews, and Luke to Greeks, both with different ways of reasoning and thinking. Think of the Gospels like the facets of a diamond, giving more depth and meaning.

Parables: These are the sayings of Jesus told in a short story or illustration form that are narrative and instructional; they teach a truth, and are contained in the Gospels. Usually, these are from everyday life examples that may have taken place or may not. At times, such as in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus was possibly pointing to it as He taught. These had a deeper purpose than the face value of the illustration, thus it took some thinking and a desire to learn in order to understand them. Perhaps, He used them to keep people of impiety and without intent of faith from bothering Him; or, perhaps He wanted to challenge the skeptics and people who were unresponsive.

Epistle: This refers to the 21 letters in the New Testament written to a specific audience that are also practical for us today such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, Peter, John, and the first three chapters of Revelation. Epistles are the personal letters from the Apostles to their churches. These letters are both different and similar to the letters of their time. Most challenge the congregation to wake up out of their selfish ways and to concentrate on Christ in specific ways and clarifications. They begin with the names of the writer and the recipient, then a greeting, a reason for the letter, and then the central message or body of the letter; there is usually a closing, just like most letters today.

The epistles deal with concerns and false teachings that needed immediate correction. Some epistles were written in response to questions from the church, or for clarification for another letter, such as II Corinthians. The teachings of the epistles applied to both to the church they were written to, and also to Christians today. However, we need to understand the cultural and historical situation to better understand what is going on, so we do not misunderstand what is being said.

Prophecy means past, present, and future, not just the future. This includes major and minor prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Prophecy is the type of literature that is often associated with predicting

the future. However, it also contains God's words of "get with it or else." There are two main types. One is "predictive," as in foretelling an event, and the other is "didactic," challenging others to line up morally or to teach a truth. Thus, prophecy also exposes sin and calls for repentance and obedience. It shows how God's law can be applied to specific problems and situations, such as the repeated warnings to the Jews before their captivity. This is found in the Old Testament books of Isaiah through Malachi, the section of the Bible labeled "Prophecy" by both Jews and Christians. There are over 2000 specific predictions that have already come to pass, hundreds of years after the author's death!

In the New Testament, prophecy is mainly found in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation. Prophecy has both an immediate call to a given situation, such as the "seven churches of Revelation", and a predated future to come to pass. That is, it is two fold—a past and a future, both applying to the present. Some predictions are already fulfilled, such as the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and some have yet to come to pass such as sections of Daniel, 2 Peter, Revelation, and the return of Christ.

Apocalyptic: These are combinations of narrative and prose written in vivid imagery and poetic phrases that are intended to exaggerate for a purpose such as Daniel and most of Revelation. Apocalyptic writing is a more specific form of prophecy. Apocalyptic writing is a type of literature that warns us of future events from which full meaning is hidden to us for the time being. Apocalyptic writing is almost a "secret," giving us glimpses of what is to come through the use of symbols and imagery. We may not know the meanings now, but time will flush it out. Apocalyptic writing is found in Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation.

Warning: a lot of Christian writers love to embellish on this subject and give their own version of what will happen. But, the scores of books that have been written in the last hundred years have not panned out in their theories. It is "their" theories, not based on fact or careful study of scripture. The Bible clearly tells us we do not have access to that information; no one will know the time.

For a more in-depth and insightful look into the *genres* and knowing the Bible, see the resources *How to read the Bible for all it's Worth*, by Fee, Zondervan, and *Knowing Scripture* by R.C. Sproul, Inter Varsity. For the serious student or seminarian, *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson, Baker, and *Biblical Exegesis* by Hayes, John Knox Press are very good.

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www.intothyword.org

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2. Research at the Scholarly Archives at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA; Years of study & teaching notes; Seminary notes; Prayer

Please keep us in your prayers!

Please see our website for continual serialized installments of other resources!

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“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Num. 6:24