

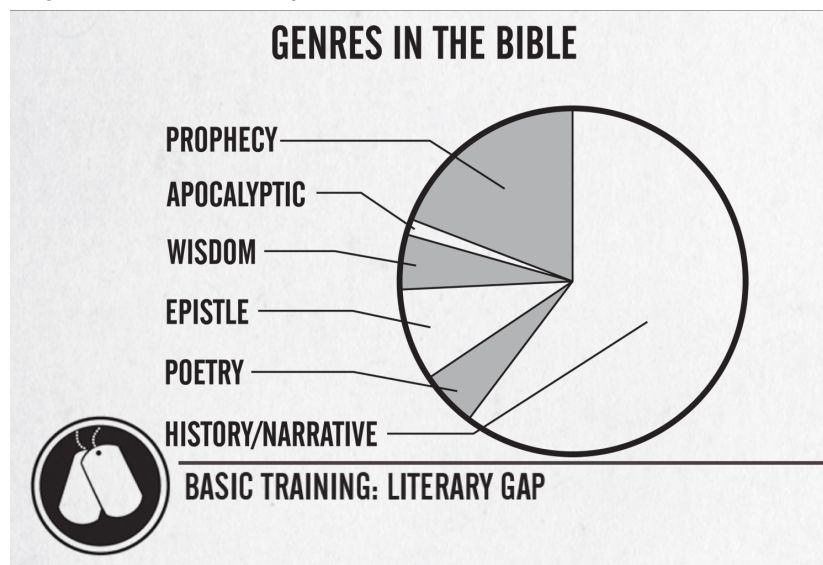


Part 2: The Bible and You

Class 6: Interpreting the Bible, part 2

Objective: To provide a framework of applying hermeneutical principles of Bible study and to raise awareness of common interpretive errors.

“... our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.” (2 Peter 3:15-16)



Question 1: How should we approach various types of genre in the Bible?

- The most common genre in the Bible, _____, should be generally interpreted literally, *descriptive* rather than _____, and considered true _____ as part of God’s unfolding “drama of redemption.”
- _____ compromises the Psalms and other portions of the Bible containing songs and prayers. The reader should understand the value of literary license, metaphor, and symbolism used to communicate truth.
- _____ literature, similar to poetry, is not meant to be literal, but general truths and ethics to order one’s life around. This genre is found in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

- _____ comprises much of scripture: 5 major prophets, 12 minor prophets, Revelation, and a smattering of examples woven throughout the Bible. Interpret this genre carefully, noting that sometimes it has both an *immediate and a future meaning*.
- The _____ given to Israel and the _____ given to the churches should be generally understood as propositional truth, rooted in theology, that was meant to be immediately applied by the original audience, then, by extension, to believers today.
- ◆ **Key takeaway:** *The Bible contains several types of genres, and the student should note carefully what he or she is reading!*

Question 2: How does the New Testament interpret the Old Testament?



- The writers of the New Testament functioned both as *interpreters* and _____ authors at the same time - contrary to us!
- The NT use of the OT shows _____ revelation: God shedding *more light* on a subject than when it was first introduced.
- Some examples of OT usage in the NT employ hermeneutical methods such as word study, context, and a _____ approach.
 - Key example: Genesis 22:17-18 and Galatians 3:15-18
- ◆ **Key takeaway:** *The NT writers had unique insight, but we follow their lead in seeing the OT fulfilled in Christ!*

Question 3: What are common interpretive errors to avoid?

Word-Study Fallacies

- The _____ fallacy presupposes that every word has its definition bound up in its root or components.

- Examples in scripture: different words for love (*phileo, agape*); “only begotten” (*monogenes*)
- Examples in English: “nice” (from the Latin *nescius*, meaning “ignorant”); “good-bye”; “butterfly”
- *Semantic anachronism* occurs when a _____ use of a word is read back into its _____ usage.
 - Examples in scripture: “bishop” (*episkopos*); “power” (*dynamis*); “blood of Jesus”

Logical Fallacies

- A false _____ proposes no middle way between two seemingly extreme meanings.
 - Example: Calls to free salvation (Rev 22:22) and taking up one’s cross to follow Jesus (Mark 8:34)
- Failure to recognize _____ argues that if certain topics are alike in scripture *sometimes*, they are alike *all the time*.
 - Example: The role of women (Galatians 3:28 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15)
- Unwarranted _____ take specific passages and universalize them.
 - Examples: using Jesus’ interaction with the rich, young ruler in Mark 10:17-27 as the *only way* to evangelize; the claim that *all* tradition is wrong (contra 2 Thess. 2:15); only *certain aspects* of Christ’s character are to be lauded



Applicational Fallacies

- Taking passages out of _____ leads to the most problematic applications of scripture.
 - Philippians 4:13 - What are “all things?”
 - Isaiah 54:17 - No weapon? Ever?
 - Jeremiah 29:11 - a future hope for all?
- Failure to interpret the Bible _____ when necessary may result in *overspiritualizing* the text or seeing metaphors or allegories where there are none.
 - Putting oneself in stories (David & Goliath) without acknowledging its historical value and its foreshadowing of Christ
 - Over-emphasizing the allegorical nature of parables (what does the father’s robe represent in the Prodigal Son?)

◆ **Key takeaway:** *Interpreting the Bible in its context helps us maintain the intended meaning!*

Question 4: What tools can aid our study of the Bible?



- A good Bible _____ should be front-and-center and read regularly in order to familiarize yourself with the Bible. Recommended: ESV, CSB, NASB, NKJV, NET, NIV.
- A _____ Bible typically features cross-references to help you compare scripture with scripture as well as helpful maps in the back.
- A _____ Bible contains notes on the bottom of the biblical text to help you navigate through your readings.
- Word-study tools such as a _____, exegetical _____, and _____ are all helpful for digging deep into language, words, and phrases - but remember to avoid the fallacies mentioned above!
- _____ concordances and dictionaries help you find what the Bible says on a given topic.
- Biblical _____ are helpful in analyzing the details of what you are reading; some are technical, others focus on interpretation, and others focus on application.
- Listening to _____ and reading articles and books on specific passages will assist you in seeing meaning that you might not have seen on your own.
- ◆ **Key takeaway:** *We are privileged to have a wealth of resources to consult - but be sure to prioritize feeding your own soul, and do not give greater weight to outside sources than your own church!*

Bibliography

Exegetical Fallacies by D.A. Carson
"Hermeneutical Principles" by R.C. Sproul
"7 Common Fallacies of Biblical Interpretation" by C. Michael Patton
"Reading the Bible: The Importance of Genre" by Tommy Keene
"The Many Genres of Scripture" by Mel Lawrenz
Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament by G.K. Beale

