

Biblical Exegesis Terminology

The following terms were discussed in our lectures. Some may also be included in your reading. There will be a total of 25 of these on your exam. They will be in a short answer format where you will see either a word, or a definition and will need to write out your answer.

1. Literary Criticism: The informed analysis of literature according to style and other technical elements.
2. Textual Criticism: The study of manuscripts or printings to determine the original or most authoritative form of a text, especially of a piece of literature. Literary criticism stressing close reading and detailed analysis of a particular text.
3. Exegesis: Analysis of scripture to discern original intended textual meaning. There are three forms; Symbolic or allegorical, Grammatical-historical, and rational.
4. Hermeneutics: The application of the text to the modern church. The practical implementation of scriptural principles.
5. Historical Distance: The fact that we as modern Christians are removed in time and culture from the original situation in which the biblical text was conceived and written. This distance creates challenges for interpretation.
6. Receptor Language: The language into which the biblical text is translated, English for us.
7. Genre: The literary form or style of a text. Genre's have distinct characteristics and therefore specific rules and principles for their interpretation. Gospel, narrative and poetry are some examples.
8. Compound Narrative: A narrative with multiple coincidental or connecting storylines and characters. Usually longer, by definition, and connected across time through common motif's themes or characters.
9. Variant(s); in text criticism, the existence of differences in manuscripts that contain the same content. There are often multiple ancient textual witnesses to the same biblical content, and often there are minute scribal differences.
10. Cultural Relativity; having to do with a custom or prohibition that was more predominant in the past than it now is. The holy kiss and women's head coverings are good (American) examples of this today.
11. Normative; An abiding general principle that is binding on all Christians for all times. It is the 'norm' for all matters of Christian practice regardless of culture or historical timeframe. The need for forgiveness, or mercy or the universal law of love is examples of normative principles. This might be seen as the opposite of cultural relativity.

12. Task Theology; theology or instruction written to address a specific historical issue or problem. Highly contextually driven. 1 Corinthians is full of this kind of theology where Paul is addressing numerous infractions and is developing theological principles or arguments explicitly to deal with the issue at hand. "situation specific theology"
13. Systematic Theology: General theological principles from which task theology is generally derived. These are usually the 'big idea' concepts. Sin, redemption, holiness etc. These principles are predominant throughout scriptures and transcend the covenants. These are building blocks from which task theology is derived.
14. Metanarrative: The 'first level of narrative' or big story of God redeeming all of mankind.
15. Omnipotence; All Knowing-ness. Said of God, and often of the narrator in the Old Testament narratives. Knowing the 'before and after' as well as motives of the characters in a narrative plot.
16. Foreshadowing; An instance or event that pre-figures a later event of similar or greater theological significance. Abraham and Isaac on the mountain as a foreshadowing of God sending Jesus to the cross, (God went through with it.)
17. De-Contextualizing; ignoring the literary or historical context of a passage of scripture, often resulting in an oversimplification or incorrect interpretation.
18. Moralizing; Oversimplifying or drawing overly basic conclusion without doing the careful work of exegesis. Wrongly assuming that a principle for Christian living can be gleaned from every text, often ignoring the entire sweep or context of a passage and thus missing its essential meaning.
19. Allegorizing; Reading hidden meanings of extra-biblical meanings into a text; assigning arbitrary symbolism or values to otherwise face value meanings in the text.
20. Covenant; a contract between two parties, God and Israel. A sacred agreement with terms and conditions for both parties, a blood oath.
21. Apodictic Law; Commands and Prohibitions. Direct commands telling Israel how to show covenant loyalty and faithfulness to God.
22. Casuistic Law; Case-by-case law. Those portions of the Old Testament law that apply to unique or specific situations and/or infractions of the covenant. Casuistic law gives example of what may or may not be the case, or what may or may not happen in a specific situation. These laws would apply only generally to you, unless your situation was the same as that for which the law was written. (Slave ownership, accidental killing of an animal etc.)
23. Harmonizing; The discipline of considering all relevant textual evidence on a topic or event in order to have a complete sense of the complete contextual meaning or significance.

24. Source Material: In the study of the gospels particularly, the material or stories from which the evangelist selected when he compiled and edited the gospel texts we now possess. The ‘saying source’ or “Q” material is notable source material. The Old Testament could also be considered under this heading.
25. Synoptic: having to do with the first three gospels. The term means ‘same view or one view’ gospel narratives told from the same essential vantage point.
26. Eschatology/Eschatological: the study of last things or of the last times
27. Realized Eschatology; sometimes called inaugurated eschatology, meaning the initial or partial fulfillment of the events generally associated with the end of the world.
28. Kingdom of God: If you still think there is a simple definition for this, please study some more! You should understand the basic ‘now’-‘not yet’ tension, and be prepared to discuss elements of the kingdom of God.
29. Pericope: A literary unit of teaching material common to the gospels, normally with a common theme or principle throughout.
30. Parable: A unit of teaching common to Jesus, normally in story form, that contains an eternal truth or representation of the nature of Gods kingdom.
31. Hyperbole: Deliberate overstatement.
32. Woe Oracle: A prophetic oracle of judgment, or warning.
33. The Book of the Twelve: in the Hebrew bible, the literary unit composed of what are now known as the Minor Prophets.
34. Talmud: the authoritative body of Jewish tradition comprising the Mishnah and Gemara. Literally: “the teaching” or “the instruction”
35. Prophecy: The act of enforcing Gods covenant by warning or promise. May or may not be predictive.
36. Oracle: A unit of prophetic teaching or rhetoric. Normally in poetic verse. An interpretive unit of prophetic text.
37. Enactment Prophecy: The use of a physical act or set of actions in an idiomatic or symbolic way to illustrate a divine principle or prophetic message (usually of judgment)
38. Eisegesis: Reading into the text of foreign or modern ideas.
39. Parousia: (relating to) the second coming of Christ
40. Analogy of Scripture; the principle that ‘scripture interprets scripture’, also the discipline of using a clear textual principle or passage to clarify a more obscure teaching on the same topic.
41. Chiasm/Chiastic; A literary technique that inverts the elements in two parallel phrases.

42. Apocrypha/al; extra-canonical or un-inspired historical texts. Also said of the group of texts contained at the end of some catholic bibles.
43. Protagonist: The main character in a narrative. The person who drives the action or around whom the narrative action centers.
44. Antagonist; The character in the plot who instigates or initiates action against the protagonist, (Satan in many instances of OT Narrative)
45. Sedes Doctrinae; or “Chair Passage” A large block of biblical text that give sustained teaching on a particular doctrine. 1 Cor. 15 on the resurrection, John 1 on the nature of Jesus Christ, etc.
46. Antecedent Theology; related to analogy of scripture, using previous texts or older texts to shed light on later passages; the use of scripture to interpret scripture. ((Generally) that the theology that is oldest or most clear, illuminates the later or less clear.
47. Canon/Canonicity: The works of a writer that have been accepted as authentic, the books of the Bible officially accepted as Holy Scripture.
48. Semantics: The study of meaning
49. Metonymy: referring to something using an associated item. (“your *hands* are stained with blood” means that all of you is guilty)
50. Synecdoche: Stating a part to represent the whole. (Gray hair, as a representation of old age), (Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood= kill him when he is old)