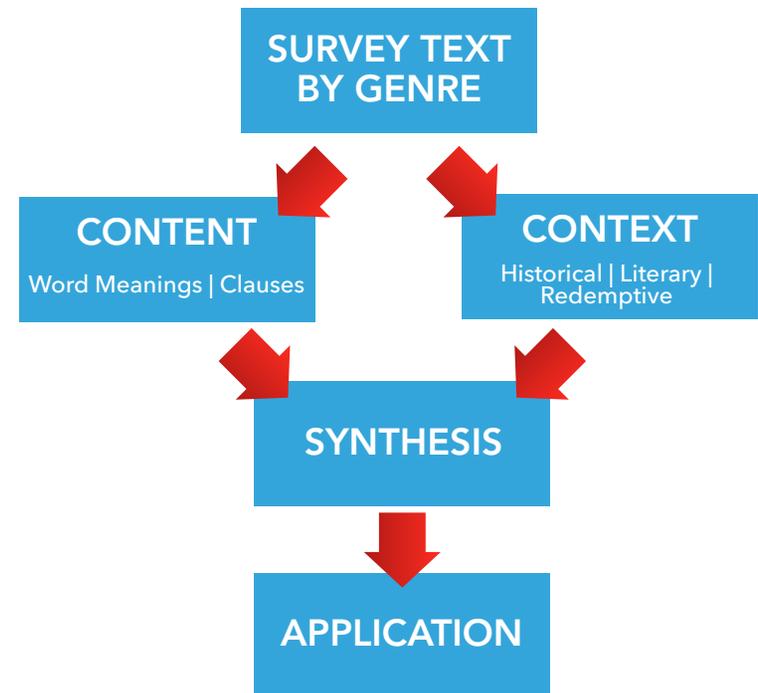


Toolbox

- Good Bible Translations: **NET, ESV, NASB, NIV, KJV**
- Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia: **ISBE** or **Anchor**
- Concordance and Cross Reference tool, especially the **New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge**
- Greek Dictionary: **TNDT abridged in one volume**
- Commentaries: **DSBS from William Barclay** is fun and helpful
- Your prayerful Spirit (available on most knees)
- Reverent Awe
- Inquisitive Mind
- Common Sense
- A Little Imagination

Biblical Interpretation Workflow



MTA
Biblical Exegesis



Survey The Text

- Read, Re-Read, Repeat!!! Take notes to craft a preliminary thesis or “Big Idea” for the passage. Think of yourself like a detective looking for clues to the text’s general idea or theme, alert for anything that will make it clearer. Use at least three to four good translations (ESV, NASB, NIV, NET, NJB) as you repeatedly read the text.

Fine-tune for Genre

- What is the literary genre for this text? What are the general principles for exegesis of this genre? Take everything “literally.”
- What kind of structure does this genre employ (e.g. repetition, contrast, parallelism, chiasm, inclusion, classic rhetorical argument, comedic or tragic narrative)? Why would the author choose this form for his intended affect?

Investigate the Context (Historical, Literary, Redemptive)

- **Historical Context.** In what historical, social, and cultural situation was the passage written? Use a good Bible Dictionary (an important tool), such as the ISBE (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia) or the Anchor Bible Dictionary. Start by looking up the name of the book (e.g. “Luke”) in the dictionary/encyclopedia and reading the introductory material which will provide rich details on the historical context.
- **Literary Context.** How does the passage relate to what precedes and follows it? How does it relate to the overall book? Why THIS and why HERE? Is there an overarching argument or proposition in which THIS section of text plays a role? If so, what is THIS text trying to DO to the original reader?
- **Redemptive Context.** What does this text tell me about God's character? (What does this say about God?) What does this text tell me about human nature that requires the work of Christ? (What does it say about me?) How do I see Christ's person or work predicted, prepared, reflected, or resultant in this passage?

Detail the Content

- What kinds of sentences are used (indicative, interrogative, imperative)? What are the major components of each sentence? What verbal actions or states appear in these sentences, and what subjects are associated with them?
- What words seem to be packed with theological meaning? Does this word have a wide range of meanings? If so, how does the context inform its meaning here? Does the author's use of this word in other places inform its meaning here?
- Does the text appear to use any other earlier sources, whether written or oral? If so, how do these appeals to tradition function?
- If the text is a narrative, what elements of setting, plot (conflict, suspense, resolution), and character development does each part of the text convey?
- Which elements of the text work, individually or together, to instruct, delight, convict, or move the reader?
- What is the tone, or mood, of the passage, and what elements convey that tone?

- How do the various parts of the passage reflect and/or address the situation of the readers?
- Look for repetition, comparison, parallelism, climax, causation & substantiation, instrumentation, particularization & generalization, or explanation in each clause for insights.
- How does each part of the passage relate to the other parts?
- How does each Part contribute to the whole?
- How does my emerging understanding of the whole affect the meaning of the parts?
- Does the author use any technical terms? (TDNT or “little Kittel” or EDNT is a great help here for detailed definitions of Greek terms)
- If I enter the narrative world of this text, what do I see and hear and feel?
- If I join the community that is receiving this letter, what am I being urged to do?
- If I join the psalmist in prayer/song, what are we imagining about God?
- If I am among this crowd encountering Jesus, how do I view Him?

Synthesize Your Findings

- What is the main point of each part of the text?
- Why do you think the passage was included in this biblical book? For what main function?
- What claims did the text make upon its original hearers or readers? What response might the author have desired from the readers?
- What is the main idea that the author talking about? (Subject)
- What is he saying about what he is talking about? (Complements)
- What is the big idea of this passage – stated in a single sentence?
- NOW... Read the passage again using your findings to place you empathetically among the recipients of the original audience
- What do they most need to know from this passage, and why do they need to know it? What else can they know and why?
- What do they need to do from this passage, and why do they need to do it?
- How does the redemptive context promote and motivate you to also know this or do this?

Apply It

- **THE BASIC RULE**
 - A text can't now mean what it never could have meant!
- **THE SECOND RULE**
 - When we share comparable life situations with the 1st century setting, God's word is the same for us, too
- Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves, do what it says!

