

Main feature of Biblical Studies is *exegesis*

ἐξήγησις - explanation, interpretation, detailed description (ἐξηγέομαι – to explain in great detail)

Exegesis – getting out of the text the author’s intended meaning

Use all of our tools from our foundational subjects (esp. hermeneutics) in order to determine the author’s intended meaning of a text.

- Remember, each genre of literature has its own “rules” of interpretation.
- Now take those rules and use them to interpret a certain passage (verse by verse, pericope by pericope)
- Mainly uses *analysis*
 - o Definitions, grammar, syntax (logical relationships)
 - o Context, culture, background (idioms)

Starting from the bottom up; starting from the small picture and moving out to the bigger picture. You might call this discipline “applied hermeneutics.”

What we want to avoid is *eisegesis* – (from εἰσηγέομαι – to lead in, introduce, bring to bear, apply)

Eisegesis – reading into a text information that comes from outside

Remember the hermeneutical circle – there is always some aspect of the bigger picture that affects the details. In general, though, in exegesis, we want to start with analyzing a passage, breaking it apart, understanding the pieces, and putting the pieces together.

Some examples of eisegesis:

- John 3:16
- Gen 1-2 (2 Pet 3:8)

Main product of Biblical Studies: a *commentary* (comment verse by verse), usually on one book of the Bible (or 2 or 3 very closely related books), or perhaps even the entirety of Scripture.

Although different kinds of commentaries are becoming more popular, this is still the primary kind.

There are an overwhelming number of good commentaries available in English. In fact, I recently heard one experienced, theologically conservative professor wonder out loud why there is still such a glut of commentaries on the books of Scripture being written and published. He would like to see

commentaries on more of the early church literature, on which there are currently either no or very few commentaries.

Common Types of Commentaries:

Devotional:

- Intended for the average Christian's devotional use reading through a book of Scripture

Pastoral/homiletical:

- The primary intent is to help a preacher preach through such a book. Less technical than the technical commentaries, but more technical than the devotional commentaries.
- Often appear in series (P(illar)NTC, B(aker)ECNT, NICNT, NICOT, etc.)

Technical:

- Deal heavily with in-depth language issues (may even comment heavily on the Hebrew or Greek text), cultural background issues, etc.
- Often appear in series (EGGNT, NIGTC, BECNT, NICNT, NICOT, etc.)

Recommended resource: <https://www.bestcommentaries.com/>

Comment about acquiring commentary sets: many Christians, even pastors, acquire far more commentaries than they will ever need or ever even read, mostly because the sets look nice on the shelf, and for anyone who loves books, it's a nice feeling to say, "I have all these sets." I see this over and over as I see pastors (young and old) selling their libraries.

My personal practice:

- Find one or two really good commentaries on the entire Bible (mine is Gill).
- When I'm preparing to preach through a book, I will try to find one or two highly recommended original-language commentaries and one or two highly recommended pastoral/homiletical commentaries, especially at least one with modern scholarship.