

## Bible --

1. Scripture is both a fully divine and fully human book, designed to serve the Living Word's ongoing ministry of creating, establishing, sustaining, and perfecting covenant fellowship with God the Father through God the Son by God the Holy Spirit. It is the Triune God's self-revelation through His authorized and commissioned servants, which comes to us progressively in redemptive history that is fulfilled/centered in Christ. That definition is very dense, so let's simplify it with just three easy words: Scripture is revelation, it is redemptive, and it is readable. [Watermark Church](#).
2. "...it is a reliable collection of historical documents, written by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses, reporting supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies, and claimed their writings are Divine and not of human origin." [Voddie Baucham](#)
3. "A unified story that leads to Jesus," [The Bible Project](#) ([Here is an expanded definition from The Bible Project](#))

**Bible Study** -- the consistent, careful examination of God's Word to better understand who He is and what He expects of us as followers of Christ.

**Context** -- the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning ([Merriam-Webster](#))

**Exegesis (exegetical)** – Exegesis is a complex practice primarily associated with biblical interpretation, involving the analysis and explanation of texts to determine their original meaning[1][2][3][4]. Derived from the Greek term *exēgēsis*, meaning "to lead out," it involves drawing meaning from the text[1]. While often applied to religious texts, particularly the Hebrew or Christian Bible, exegesis can be used for any text[2][3]. This practice requires a combination of scientific analysis and creative interpretation, making it more of a craft than purely a science or art[1]. **Exegesis involves careful consideration of historical, cultural, literary, and theological contexts**[2][4]. It is distinguished from hermeneutics, which is the theory of interpretation[2]. The process includes various activities such as text determination, translation, and interpretation of structure, setting, and purpose[4]. Importantly, exegesis is a communal enterprise, building on the work of previous interpreters and involving dialogue with others[1]. While traditional approaches focused on literal and grammatical interpretation, modern methods have incorporated historical-critical methodologies, though these have been controversial in some religious circles[2].<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [1] William P. Brown, [A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis](#), First Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 4.

[2] Daniel G. Reid, Robert Dean Linder, et al., [Dictionary of Christianity in America](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990).

[3] W. Randolph Tate, [Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 152–153.

[4] Allen C. Myers, ["EXEGESIS,"](#) in *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 361.

**Hermeneutics (Interpretation)** -- the study of the general principles of biblical interpretation. For both Jews and Christians throughout their histories, the primary purpose of hermeneutics, and of the exegetical methods employed in interpretation, has been to discover the truths and values expressed in the Bible. ([Britannica](#))

**Genres** – Genre is a fundamental literary concept referring to a class or group of writings with shared characteristics in style, content, or form[1]. It serves as a key element in literary analysis and interpretation, acting as a conventional framework that guides both authors and readers[2][3]. Genres are not rigidly defined but rather exhibit a 'family resemblance,' allowing for flexibility and variation within identifiable features[3]. They can be applied to various forms of creative expression, including literature, music, and biblical texts[1][3]. In biblical studies, genre recognition is crucial for textual interpretation, as it provides a frame of reference for extracting meaning[4]. However, contemporary genre theory challenges some traditional form-critical assumptions, emphasizing that genres can be complex, mixed, and not necessarily tied to a single setting in life[4]. Understanding genre conventions is an essential part of literary competency, as it helps readers navigate the unstated expectations between writers and audiences across different cultures and time periods[3].<sup>2</sup>

**New Testament** - Genesis through Malachi

**Old Testament** - Matthew through Revelation

**Authorship** – Authorship refers to the origin or originator of a written work[1]. It encompasses various practices in antiquity, ranging from direct writing by the author to dictation to a secretary, and even collaborative efforts[2]. The concept of authorship evolved over time, with the Greeks credited for elevating the importance of individual authors in literature[3]. In biblical studies, authorship investigations are crucial for interpretation and establishing the reliability of texts, though modern scholarship has shifted focus from individual authors to the religious communities behind the documents[4]. The approach to interpretation that aims at authorial intention assumes that the author's intended meaning is accessible through the text, rejecting the notion of semantic autonomy[5]. However, the complexity of authorship in some texts, particularly those resulting from redactional processes, necessitates careful literary-historical analysis to determine the stages of textual development and the appropriate focus of interpretation[5].<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [1] René Péter-Contesse and John Ellington, [A Handbook on the Book of Daniel](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 350–351.

[2] Tremper Longman III, [“Literary Approaches.”](#) in *The State of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. H. H. Hardy II and M. Daniel Carroll R. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2024), 381.

[3] Jonathan T. Pennington, [Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 19.

[4] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, [“Genre.”](#) in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 493.

<sup>3</sup> [1] [Collins English Dictionary](#). (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2006).

**Audience** – A broad term referring to the receivers of a communication, whether oral, written, monumental, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

**Background** – Background is a multifaceted term with various applications across different contexts. In general, it refers to information or elements that provide context or support for the main subject<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>. In literature and narrative, background information is described as content that doesn't directly advance the storyline but instead offers commentary, amplification, or support for the main narration<sup>[2][3][4]</sup>. Linguistically, it can be related to cataphoric references, where a word or phrase refers to something mentioned later in the text<sup>[2][3]</sup>. In visual arts, background forms the setting for the main figures or events in a scene or picture<sup>[1]</sup>. The term can also denote the circumstances or conditions prevailing at a particular time or underlying an event, including a person's education, experience, and social circumstances<sup>[1]</sup>. In scientific contexts, background can refer to persistent low levels of phenomena like radioactivity or radiation in an environment<sup>[1]</sup>. In computing, it describes tasks or processes running without requiring user input<sup>[1]</sup>. Historically, the term has been used to describe a place of obscurity or shade, or a situation that is little seen or noticed<sup>[5]</sup>.<sup>5</sup>

**Culture & Setting** – The setting of a story encompasses both physical and cultural elements, playing a crucial role in understanding narratives, especially those from ancient times like the Hebrew Bible. While the physical setting refers to the time and place of the story, the cultural setting involves the beliefs, values, and practices assumed by the storyteller and original audience<sup>[1]</sup>. This cultural context is particularly important when interpreting ancient texts, as modern readers often lack the necessary background knowledge to fully grasp the story's meaning<sup>[1]</sup>. Cultural location, which includes factors such as family structure, socioeconomic status, education, geography, and language, significantly influences an individual's behavior and understanding of communication<sup>[2]</sup>. In biblical interpretation, identifying timeless truths across various cultural settings can help

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[2] Charles H. Talbert, [\*Ephesians and Colossians\*](#), Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 7.

[3] Morris Jastrow Jr., [\*A Gentle Cynic: Being a Translation of the Book of Koheleth\*](#) (Philadelphia; London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1919), 39.

[4] Robert Kysar and Joseph M. Webb, [\*Preaching to Postmoderns: New Perspectives for Proclaiming the Message\*](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 7.

[5] Michael V. Fox, [\*"Job 38 and God's Rhetoric."\*](#) ed. John Dominic Crossan, *Semeia* 19 (1981): 54.

<sup>4</sup> [\*Oral Tradition and the New Testament: A Guide for the Perplexed\*](#), p 16

<sup>5</sup> [1] Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., [\*Concise Oxford English Dictionary\*](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[2] Mikeal C. Parsons, Martin M. Culy, and Josiah D. Hall, [\*Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text\*](#), ed. Lidija Novakovic, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded, vol. 1, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2022), 380.

[3] Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall, [\*Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text\*](#), Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 766.

[4] Fredrick J. Long, [\*2 Corinthians: A Handbook on the Greek Text\*](#), ed. Martin M. Culy, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), 266–267.

[5] Noah Webster, [\*Noah Webster's First Edition of An American Dictionary of the English Language\*](#). (Anaheim, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 2006).

extract the essence of doctrines[3]. When studying the Bible, it's crucial to consider its original Middle Eastern Semitic cultural context, including aspects like agrarian societies, clothing, and lifestyle, to avoid misinterpreting passages through the lens of our own modern culture[4]. Understanding the background, cultural customs, and historical setting is essential for accurate biblical interpretation and application[4].<sup>6</sup>

**Original Language** – The original language refers to the language in which a text was initially written[1]. For the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Old Testament, the original languages were primarily Hebrew and Aramaic, while the New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek[1]. However, there is some debate about whether the Gospel of Matthew might have been originally composed in Aramaic[1][2]. The use of original biblical languages, such as Greek and Hebrew, provides a certain stability in interpretation, as it requires scholars and readers to examine the original meaning and context of the text[3]. This approach, known as historical grammatical interpretation, involves studying the grammar, culture, and etymology of words as they were used at the time of writing[3]. It's worth noting that for some deuterocanonical books recognized by the Catholic Church, the original language is believed to be Hebrew, though they are now only extant in Greek translations[2].<sup>7</sup>

**Original Intent** – The concept of "authorial intent" in biblical interpretation refers to understanding a text as the original writer meant it, considering the historical and cultural context of its creation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [1] Christopher D. Stanley, [\*The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach\*](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 199.

[2] Colleen R. Derr, [\*Renewing Communication: Spirit-Shaped Approaches for Children, Youth, and Families\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 106.

[3] Millard J. Erickson, [\*Christian Theology\*](#), 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 80.

[4] Skip Heitzig, [\*How to Study the Bible and Enjoy It\*](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2002), 79.

<sup>7</sup> [1] W. Randolph Tate, [\*Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts\*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 304.

[2] Sylvester Joseph Hunter, [\*Outlines of Dogmatic Theology\*](#), Third Edition, vol. 1 (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1896), 170.

[3] David E. Olander, [\*"The Importance of the Biblical Languages."\*](#) in *Dispensationalism Tomorrow & Beyond: A Theological Collection in Honor of Charles C. Ryrie*, ed. Christopher Cone (Ft. Worth, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2008), 79.

<sup>8</sup> Mark J. Boone et al., [\*Originalism in Theology and Law: Comparing Perspectives on the Bible and the Constitution\*](#) (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2024), 33.