

VARIOUS METHODS OF INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

FOUR SENSES OF MEANING

A Latin rhyme designed to help scholars remember the four interpretations survives from the Middle Ages:

*Litera gesta docet,
Quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas,
Quo tendas anagogia.*^[6]

The literal sense teaches what happened,
The allegorical what you believe.
The moral what you should do,
The anagogical where you are going.

The letter teaches events;
allegory what you should believe;
morality teaches what you should do,
anagogy what mark you should be aiming for.”
_ Augustine of Dacias

The first is simply the *literal* interpretation of the events of the story for historical purposes with no underlying meaning.

The second is called *typological*: it connects the events of the *Old Testament* with the *New Testament*; in particular drawing allegorical connections between the events of Christ's life with the stories of the Old Testament.

The third is *moral* (or *tropological*), which is how one should act in the present, the "moral of the story".

The fourth type of interpretation is *anagogical*, dealing with the future events of Christian history, heaven, hell, the last judgment; it deals with prophecies.

Thus the four types of interpretation (or meaning) deal with past events (literal), the connection of past events with the present (typology), present events (moral), and the future (anagogical).^[6]

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_senses_of_Scripture

Typology in *Christian theology* and biblical *exegesis* is a doctrine or theory concerning the *relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament*. Events, persons, or statements in the *Old Testament* are seen as **types** prefiguring or superseded by **antitypes**, events or aspects of *Christ* or his revelation described in the *New Testament*. For example, *Jonah* may be seen as the *type* of Christ in that he emerged from the fish's belly and thus appeared to rise from death.

In the fullest version of the theory of typology, the whole purpose of the Old Testament is viewed as merely the provision of types for Christ, the antitype or fulfillment. The theory began in the *Early Church*, was at its most influential in the *High Middle Ages*, and continued to be popular, especially in *Calvinism*, after the *Protestant Reformation*, but in subsequent periods has been given less emphasis.^[1]

Source: Typological Interpretation - [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typology_\(theology\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typology_(theology))

BIBLICAL HISTORICAL-CRITICISM

Biblical criticism is an umbrella term for those methods of studying the Bible that embrace two distinctive perspectives: the concern to avoid dogma and bias by applying a non-sectarian, reason-based judgment, and the reconstruction of history according to contemporary understanding. Biblical criticism uses the grammar, structure, development, and relationship of language to identify such characteristics as the Bible's literary structure, its genre, its context, meaning, authorship, and origins.

Biblical criticism includes a wide range of approaches and questions within four major contemporary methodologies: textual, source, form, and literary criticism. Textual criticism examines the text and its manuscripts to identify what the original text would have said. Source criticism searches the texts for evidence of original sources. Form criticism identifies short units of text and seeks to identify their original setting. Each of these is primarily historical and pre-compositional in its concerns. Literary criticism, on the other hand, focuses on the literary structure, authorial purpose, and reader's response to the text through methods such as rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, and narrative criticism.

Biblical criticism began as an aspect of the rise of modern culture in the West. Some scholars claim that its roots reach back to the Reformation, but most agree it grew out of the German Enlightenment. German pietism played a role in its development, as did British deism, with its greatest influences being rationalism and Protestant scholarship. The Enlightenment age and its skepticism of biblical and ecclesiastical authority ignited questions concerning the historical basis for the man Jesus separately from traditional theological views concerning him. This "quest" for the Jesus of history began in biblical criticism's earliest stages, reappeared in the nineteenth century, and again in the twentieth, remaining a major occupation of biblical criticism, on and off, for over 200 years.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, biblical criticism was influenced by a wide range of additional academic disciplines and theoretical perspectives, changing it from a primarily historical approach to a multidisciplinary field. In a field long dominated by white male Protestants, non-white scholars, women, and those from the Jewish and Catholic traditions became prominent voices. Globalization brought a broader spectrum of worldviews into the field, and other academic disciplines as diverse as Near Eastern studies, psychology, anthropology and sociology formed new methods of biblical criticism such as socio-scientific criticism and psychological biblical criticism. Meanwhile, post-modernism and post-critical interpretation began questioning biblical criticism's role and function.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_criticism

EXEGESIS

Exegesis (/ˈɛksɪˈdʒiːsɪs/; from the Greek ἐξήγησις from ἐξηγεῖσθαι, "to lead out") is a critical explanation or interpretation of a text, particularly a religious text. Traditionally the term was used primarily for work with the Bible; however, in modern usage "biblical exegesis" is used for greater specificity to distinguish it from any other broader critical text explanation.

Exegesis includes a wide range of critical disciplines: textual criticism is the investigation into the history and origins of the text, but exegesis may include the study of the historical and cultural backgrounds of the author, text, and original audience. Other analyses include classification of the type of literary genres presented in the text and analysis of grammatical and syntactical features in the text itself.

The terms exegesis and hermeneutics have been used interchangeably.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exegesis>