



Come and See

The Journey of Knowing God through Holy Scripture

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Introduction

Question: What is the goal of reading/studying Holy Scripture?

A Journey with Three Friends – Come and See

Information with Ingrid

The informational aspect of reading the Bible refers to the fact that Scripture contains content that informs our minds and understanding. Scripture is more than informational content, certainly, but it is not less than this. God speaks to us in many ways, and we know things in many ways—experientially, emotionally, relationally. But one primary and essential way that we know things is cognitively or through our minds. And our cognitive faculties work on content or information.

“The more ‘spiritual’ we become, the more care we must give to exegesis. The more mature we become in the Christian faith, the more exegetically rigorous we must become. This is not a task from which we graduate.” (Eugene Peterson)

“Exegesis is an act of love. It loves the one who speaks the words enough to want to get the words right. It respects the words enough to use every means we have to get the words right. Exegesis is loving God enough to stop and listen carefully to what he says.” (Peterson)

“These words given to us in our Scriptures are constantly getting overlaid with personal preferences, cultural assumptions, sin distortions, and ignorant guesses that pollute the text. The pollutants are always in the air, gathering dust on our Bibles, corroding our use of the language, especially the language of faith. Exegesis is a dust cloth, a scrub brush, or even a Q-tip for keeping the words clean.” (Peterson)

Three Avenues

Behind the Text

This kind of reading focuses on gaining information about the language, history, culture, geography, and worldview of the times and people of the Bible.

In the Text

This kind of reading pays attention to how the Bible functions as literature, learning skills that help us become better readers.

Take a Turn at the Wheel

Example – Psalm 1 (ESV)

Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither. In all that does, he
prosper.
The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the
judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the
righteous;
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Example – Matthew 14-16

In Front of the Text

This kind of reading listens to how those who have gone before us have read the same Bible, seeking to learn from the perspectives and insights of others.

Example – “Sell all your possessions and give to the poor” – The History of Interpretation

Understanding Different Literary Genres

List of Genres

- Narratives/Stories
- Law/Torah
- Poetry and Proverbs
- Prophetic Writing
- Epistles (Letters)
- Parables
- Apocalyptic Visions

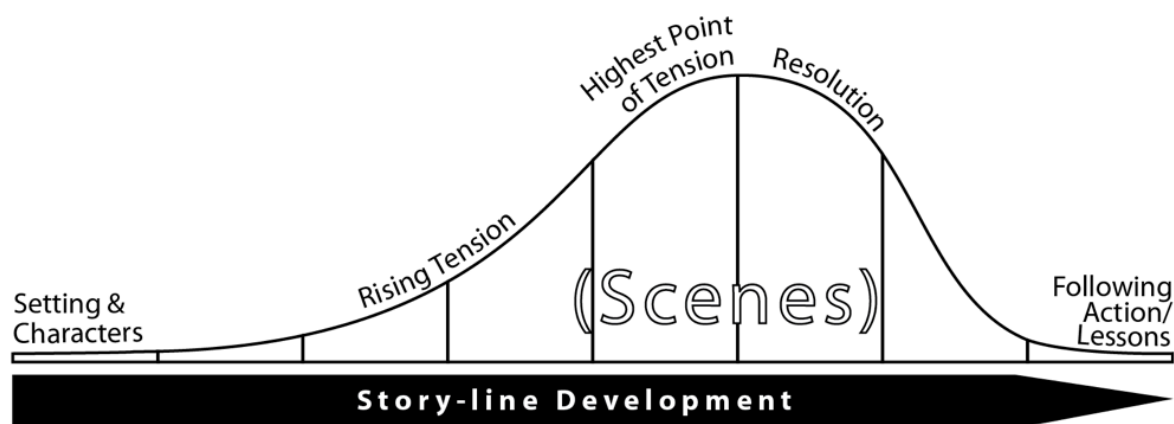
Epistles – Structure & Thought-Flow

We pay attention to:

- Repeated words or phrase or ideas (with different words)
- Connections – therefore, because, so that, when, for, but, and, for example, etc.
- Coordinate and Subordinate Clauses

Narratives – Structure & Thought-Flow

The “Whatever Strikes Me” Method Versus Narrative Analysis



1. Observe the Story
 - Are there key words or phrases or repeated ideas? Are there cause and effect relationships stated?
 - What illustrations are used if any? Note all of these things.
2. Isolate the Different Scenes
3. Analyze the Narrative:
 - (i) Identify the Setting and Characters
 - (ii) Identify the Rising Tension
 - (iii) Identify the High Point of Tension
 - (iv) Identify the Resolution
 - (v) Identify the Following Action/Interpretation
4. Think about the Context
 - (i) immediate literary context
 - (ii) whole Gospel context
 - (iii) four-fold Gospel context
 - (iv) whole canonical context

Take a Turn at the Wheel

Luke 2:41-51

Theology with Tom

The theological element of good reading encompasses several ideas. In the first instance it means that our interpretation must truly be concerned with God from beginning to end. The primary topic of Scripture is God himself. Thus, we don't just read to find historical information but to learn about God. The God of the Bible is triune—one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Spirit)—so a theological reading will necessarily be Trinitarian. Reading theologically also involves paying attention to the scope of the whole Bible, learning how the church before our time interpreted the biblical texts, and understanding how the church's creeds help us read.

The Context of the Canon—Canonical Reading

Redemptive History

Take a Turn at the Wheel

Tracing the Temple throughout Scripture

The Context of the Church's Tradition—Traditioned Reading

Systematic Theology

The History of Interpretation

The Context of Creedal Orthodoxy—Creedal Reading

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the
virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven;
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and
the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Transformation with Taylor

The transformational aspect of reading the Bible focuses on the overall purpose of our journey. Without a clear direction of where we are going, we'll never get there. But Scripture is clear what our goal is—being transformed more into God's image. This can be described as growing in love for God and for others, according to Jesus's explanation of God's will for humanity. Understanding the transformational aspect of our journey involves exploring our goal in reading Scripture, the importance of our posture toward God, and the crucial role that the Holy Spirit plays in interpretation.

The Goal of Reading Scripture

The Posture of Reading Scripture

The Holy Spirit in Reading Scripture – Inspiration and Illumination

Four Questions for Application

- What should I do? Duty
- Who am I? Character
- Where should we go? Goals
- How can I see? Discernment

Take a Turn at the Wheel

Lectio Divina – Ephesians 3:14-19

A Briefly Negative Note: What Happens When We Don't Read in the Three Ways?

Without exegesis, spirituality gets sappy, soupy. Spirituality without exegesis becomes self-indulgent. Without disciplined exegesis spirituality develops into an idiolect in which I define all the key verbs and nouns out of my own experience. And prayer ends up limping along in sighs and stutters. (Peterson)

What Happens When We Reduce Any of the Reading Modes?

Reduction of Informational Reading	Reduction of Theological Reading	Reduction of Transformational Reading
Readings are often shallow in depth and understanding.	Readings are thin in understanding because they are not informed by the riches of theology.	Readings can become merely intellectual exercises, content to not connect to the heart and to real life.
Readings become merely sentimental and groundless.	Readings are sub-Christian and miss the overall point of all of Scripture—to reveal God to us.	Readings are sub-Christian and miss the point that all of Scripture is meant to effect change and growth in us.
Scripture becomes a wax nose, saying whatever the reader wants it to say.	Readings are limited and constrained to modernistic approaches to texts.	Applications of Scripture are disconnected from the voice of the text.

For More Resources from Dr. Pennington, you can check out his website and podcast at –

www.jonathanpennington.com

In addition to Amazon, here's a great way to get a hold of his books –

<https://us.10ofthose.com/partners/jonathan-t-pennington>

