

# How to Study the **BIBLE**



# Why bother?

**There are great benefits to studying the Bible.**

**It is the source of truth, happiness,  
victory, growth, power, & guidance.**

**Because God's Word is without flaw, we have a responsibility  
to get God's original meaning right (to cut a strait path) and  
God will hold us accountable for fulfilling that responsibility.**

# Challenges

We are all  
Bible  
interpreters

- Is a passage intended only for the original audience or does it also apply to all generations?
- Can a passage truly have more than one meaning & if so, how can we know what they are?
- Did some Bible authors write about things they didn't understand?
- Are all proverbs universally applicable?
- How do we interpret Scripture literally, while accounting for things like figures of speech? Does the Bible contain any allegory?
- Does the New Testament use the Old Testament in ways we should not?
- How do we know the right way to apply our interpretation of the Bible?

# Problems

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1. **Time gap** – The Bible is an ancient book.
2. **Space gap** – The Bible was written by & to people in a distant, foreign land.
3. **Customs gap** – The Bible authors & readers lived in foreign cultures shaped by specific historic events.
4. **Language gap** – The Bible was written in three foreign languages.

**DNRTCHTGNRB**

BRNG TH CT RND

Bring the cot around.

Bring the cat around.

Bring the coat around.

# Problems


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5. **Writing gap** – The Bible writers used styles & forms of writing that are uncommon today.
6. **Spiritual gap** – God is God, and we are not. We cannot fully comprehend him.


# Terms & Definitions

**Hermeneutics:** the overarching science & art of interpreting the Bible.

**Exegesis:** the determination of the meaning of the biblical text in its historical & literary contexts.



**Exposition:** the communication of the meaning of a text & its current relevance to people.



**Homiletics:** the science & art of communicating the meaning & relevance of the biblical text through preaching

# Preconditions for Bible Study

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- **Approach with prayer & humility**  
1 Corinthians 2:10–13
- **Repent & get your heart right**
- **Beware of novelty**
- **Consider views of others**
- **Be ready & willing to put in the work**
- **Be objective & resist preconceptions**

*"The blessed Spirit is not only the true Author of the written Word but also its supreme and true Expositor."*



# Bible Interpretation

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## Historic arc of hermeneutics

1. **Literal** – simple, normal, contextual meaning
2. **Allegorical** – replaces literal meaning with hidden or secret meaning
3. **Traditional** – church experts determine the meaning
4. **Rationalistic** – rejects supernatural elements
5. **Subjective** – replaces objective understanding with personal experiences

# Historical Timeline of Major Bible Interpreters



Method	Early Church Fathers	Apologists	Alexandrian & Antiochene Fathers	Late Church Fathers	Middle Ages		Reformation	Post-Reformation	Modern Era
<b>Literal</b>	Clement of Rome Ignatius Polycarp	Justin Martyr Irenaeus Tertullian	Dorotheus Lucian Diodorus Theodore John Chrysostom Theodoret		Rashi Hugo of Victor Richard of Victor Andrew of Victor	Aquinas Nicholas Wycliffe	Luther Melanchthon Calvin Zwingly Tyndale Anabaptists Ernesti	Westminster Confession Francis Turretin John Wesley J.A. Turretin Cappell Bengel Wettstein	Exegetical commentators Evangelical scholars
<b>Allegory</b>	Barnabas		Pantaenus Clement Origen	Cassian Eucherius Adrian Junilius Jerome Augustine	Bernard Joachim Langton Gregory the Great Venerable Bede Rabanus Maurus Alcuin				
<b>Tradition</b>				Vincent			Council of Trent		
<b>Rationalism</b>								Hobbes Spinoza	Jowett Baur Strauss Wellhausen Harnac Peré Fosdick DeWolf
<b>Subjectivism</b>								Boehme Spener Francke	Schleiermacher Barth Kierkegaard Bultmann

# Axiom #1, the Bible is a human book

We are all  
Bible  
interpreters

## Six corollaries

1. Each & every word, sentence, & book in the Bible — was recorded in a written language that followed normal, grammatical meanings, including figurative language.
2. Each book of the Bible was written by someone to specific hearers or readers — in a specific historical, geographical situation — for a specific purpose.

# Axiom #1, the Bible is a human book

We are all  
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interpreters

## Six corollaries

3. The Bible is affected & influenced by the cultural environment experienced by each human writer.
4. Each biblical writing was accepted or understood within its context.

# Axiom #1, the Bible is a human book

We are all  
Bible  
interpreters

## Six corollaries

5. Each biblical writing was done in the style of a specific literary form, just like any other writing.
6. Each biblical writing was understood by its original readers by using basic principles of logic and communication.