

I read all of the assigned reading and made highlights.

Simply put, exegesis is any act of interpretation or explanation (Hayes and Holladay, 1). In other words, when someone exegetes something (verbal discussion, joke, comic book, etc.) they take it in through listening, reading, etc., attempt to understand it, and then interpret it appropriately (i.e. laugh, cry, make a change in behavior, etc.). Hayes and Holladay explain that people, whether conscious or not, are exegeting every single day when they attempt to understand something (1). An example of exegesis would be someone reading a subway sign in NYC and planning their route according to what they think the sign means.

There are many forms of criticism that help readers exegete the Bible effectively. One of these methods is historical criticism. This type of criticism focuses on the history of the text (i.e. what year was it written?, who wrote it?, where was it written?, etc.) as well as the history in the text (i.e. what does the story or content in the text reveal about the period of time it was written (Hayes and Holladay, 53). Form criticism examines the text itself. More specifically, it examines small portions or pericopes within the text to determine if they fall into specific genres. Tradition criticism examines the text through the study of cultural traditions that may have been prevalent during the time period the text was written. Redaction criticism examines the changes an author makes in their version of previous material (Hayes and Holladay, 127).

The critical methods discussed above are but a few of the many methods scholars utilize to interpret the Bible. These methods help the conscientious Bible reader by giving them a framework by which they can deeply examine a text and ask questions that lead to a deeper and fuller understanding of the text. These critical methods help a Bible reader go beyond what they have always been taught and explore the text for what it is.

This paragraph will provide specific examples of how the critical methods can be applied to a biblical text. First, if a reader applied historical criticism to Genesis 1 and 2 they may ask what year was this written? or is there any archaeological evidence for the creation story? These questions would lead the reader into a deep exploration of material that deals with this historical time period. Through this, the reader would enhance their understanding of the historical element of Genesis, which would ultimately enhance their understanding of the text itself. Second, if a reader applied form criticism to the book of Isaiah, they would ask questions such as is the genre of Is 7:7-9 different from the surrounding text? If so, how? and how does that enhance the understanding the entire book? Third, if a reader applied tradition criticism to the book of Lamentations, they may ask questions such as what cultural traditions may have led to this type of writing? or what do these laments reveal about the cultural traditions of mourning during that time? Finally, a reader applying redaction criticism to the book of Psalms may ask how the psalmist describes the events of the exodus as compared to the writer of Exodus. Each of these methods of criticism has the reader asking different questions that unlock new areas of study and ultimately new ways of exploring and understanding the text.

For future study I would like to examine the book of Job. In particular the first 5 verses. I am interested mainly in historical and tradition criticism. Historical criticism would ask the question of where was the land of Uz and what do we know about its history? Tradition criticism would ask of verse 4-5 what do we know about these familial celebrations with sisters? and what do we know about the act of purifying children that is described?