

**Interpreting  
and Applying  
the Bible:  
The Three  
Worlds of  
Scripture**





What is the bigger story behind this statement? What is the sign responding to or seeking to communicate?

What is meant by “love” here?

We **care for** hurting people or we **enjoy** hurting people?

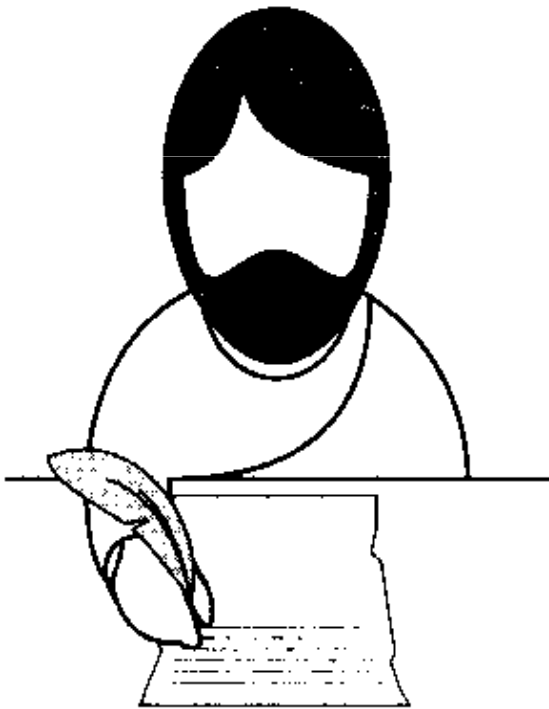
What is the reader’s own experience of “church”?

Positive or negative? Helpful or harmful?

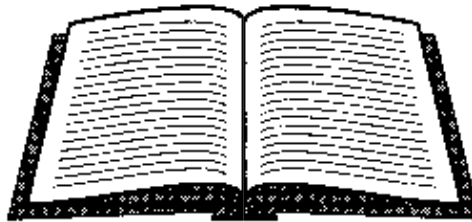
- The context of the message
- The message itself
- The reader of the message

# Three Worlds of Scripture

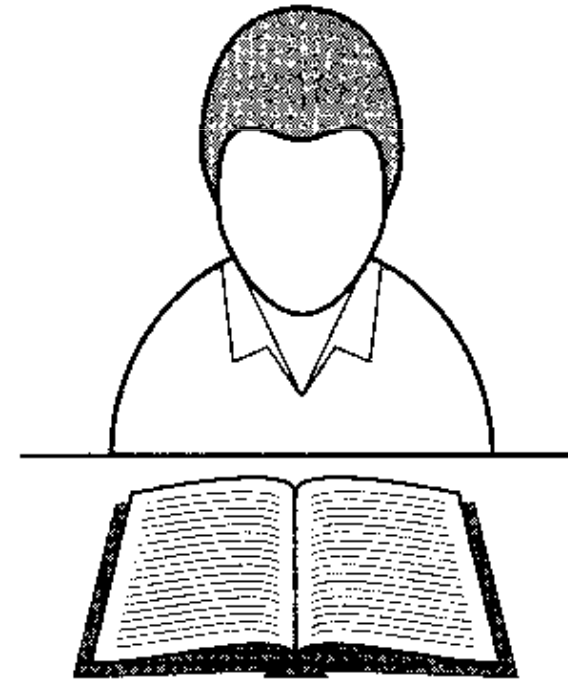
AUTHOR



TEXT



READER





## The World Behind the Text

### THE WRITER

The writer's purpose; historical, cultural & socio-political context; literary context (e.g. its relation to the meta-narrative of Scripture; Old or New Testament, etc.)

## The World of the Text

### THE TEXT ITSELF

Literary genre (e.g. prose narrative, law code, parable, poetry, apocalyptic); lexical & grammatical issues; literary connections & sources, etc.

## The World in Front of the Text

### THE READER

Application of the text; reader bias (presuppositions ranging from theology to view of inspiration)

**EXEGESIS** *because we're reading someone else's mail*

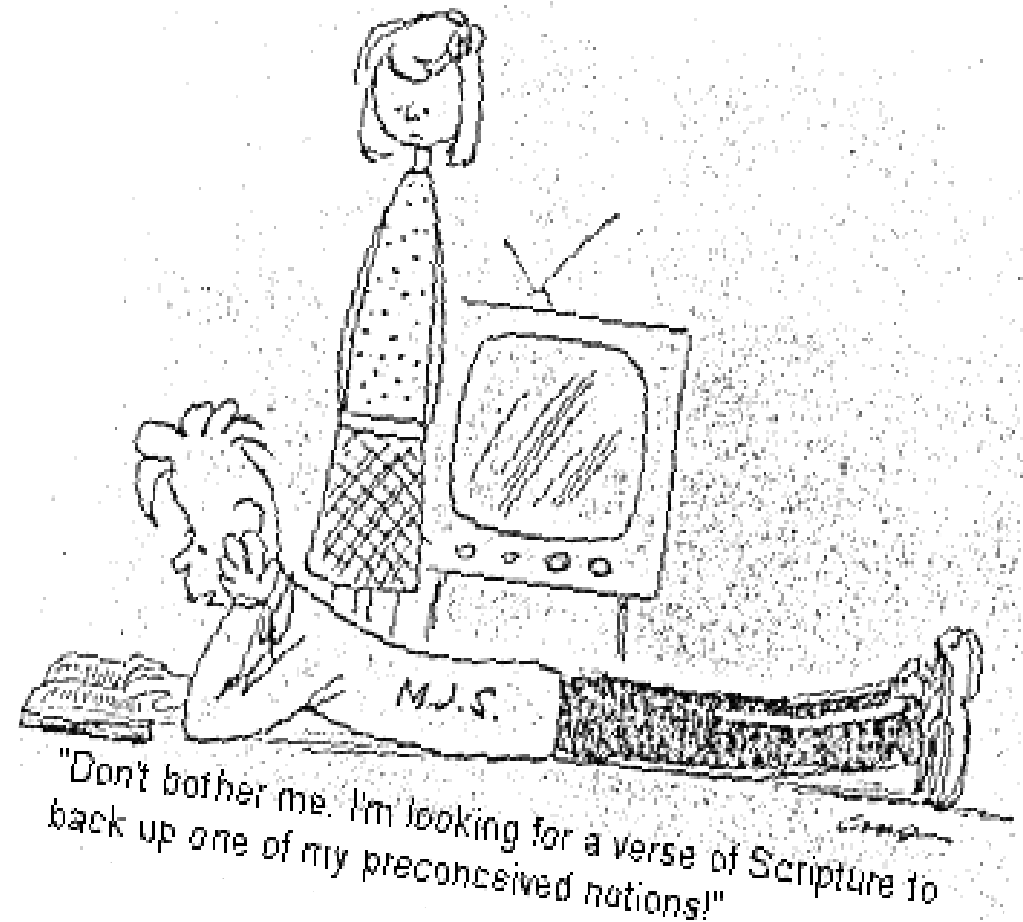
**HERMENEUTICS**

# Exegesis

Is derived from the Greek word *exegeisthai* meaning 'to lead out'. It is a technical word used to speak about the process of Biblical Interpretation.

The opposite of exegesis is eisegesis, meaning 'to lead in'.

Responsible Biblical interpretation seeks to **exegete** (draw out) the biblical author's meaning rather than **eisegete** (read in) one's own meaning.



# Exegesis

... is the “historical investigation into the meaning of the biblical text. Exegesis, therefore, answers the question, What *did* the biblical author *mean*? It has to do both with *what* he said (the content itself) and why he said it at any given point (the literary context). Furthermore, exegesis is primarily concerned with intentionality: **What did the author *intend* his original readers to understand?**” (Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*)

# Hermeneutics

Once the task of exegesis is complete (i.e. uncovered what the biblical author intended their original reader to understand), we move on to the issue of contemporary application (hermeneutics). If this is what it meant for them back then, ***what does it mean for us today?***

# The Lord's Supper

## The World Behind the Text

### THE WRITER

What is the writer's purpose in recording Jesus' "last supper?" Historical and theological background of the Passover. Relationship between the old and new covenants. Sacrifice / atonement. Apostolic (New Testament) church practice and teaching.

## The World of the Text

### THE TEXT ITSELF

"This is my body" and "this is my blood" – literal or metaphorical?  
"Drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" – what is this kingdom and when will that be? Leaven or unleavened bread? Grape juice or alcoholic wine? Communion / Eucharist

## The World in Front of the Text

### THE READER

Contemporary application of the text. Does it apply today? How? Reader bias: my tradition / theology? Post-apostolic church practice and teaching – sacrament or memorial? Importance and frequency of sharing in the Lord's Supper?

# Four Pillars of Spiritual Authority Influencing Interpretation

## Scripture

### Apostolic Authority

derived from the  
Apostles' witness,  
traditions and  
interpretations of  
the Christ Event  
preserved in the  
*inspired Scriptures*  
(hermeneutics)

*Have You Not  
Read? ...*

## Tradition

### Ecclesiastical Authority

derived from the  
Church as the  
temple of the Holy  
Spirit and its  
**Bishops** as the  
custodians/sole  
interpreters of truth  
(sectarian loyalty)

*Apostolic  
Succession*

## Reason

### Human Authority

derived from  
objective human  
ingenuity and  
current science;  
vulnerable to  
modern rationalism  
and cultural  
conformity

*Human  
Wisdom*

## Experience

### Human Authority

derived from  
subjective human  
experience and  
will; vulnerable  
to recreating  
God and religion  
in one's own  
image (ego)

*Mysticism,  
Pragmatism*

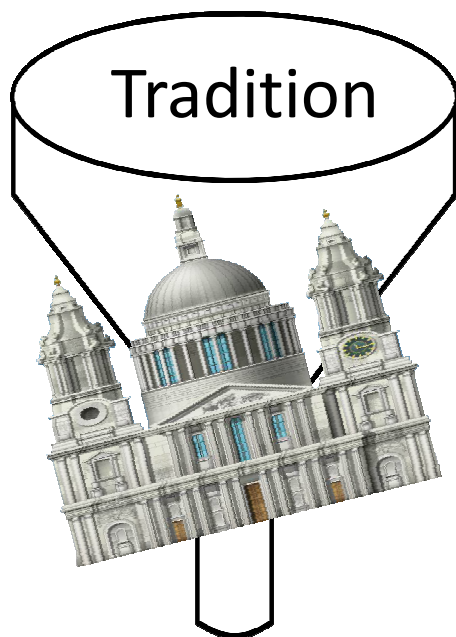


**Interpretation will invariably draw upon a combination of all four  
but which one is considered primary makes all the difference!**

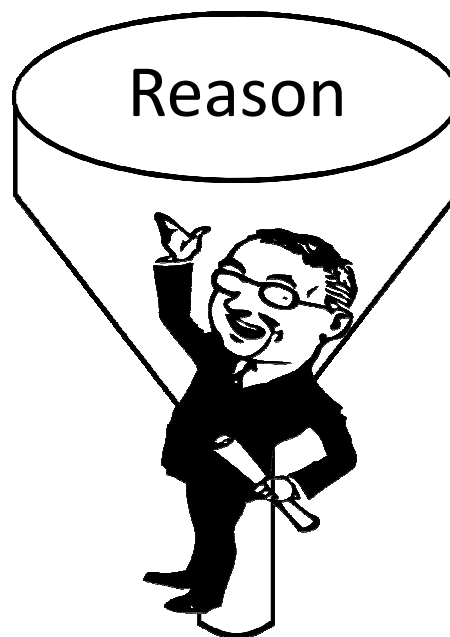
Tradition, Reason  
and Experience  
filtered through



Scripture, Reason  
and Experience  
filtered through



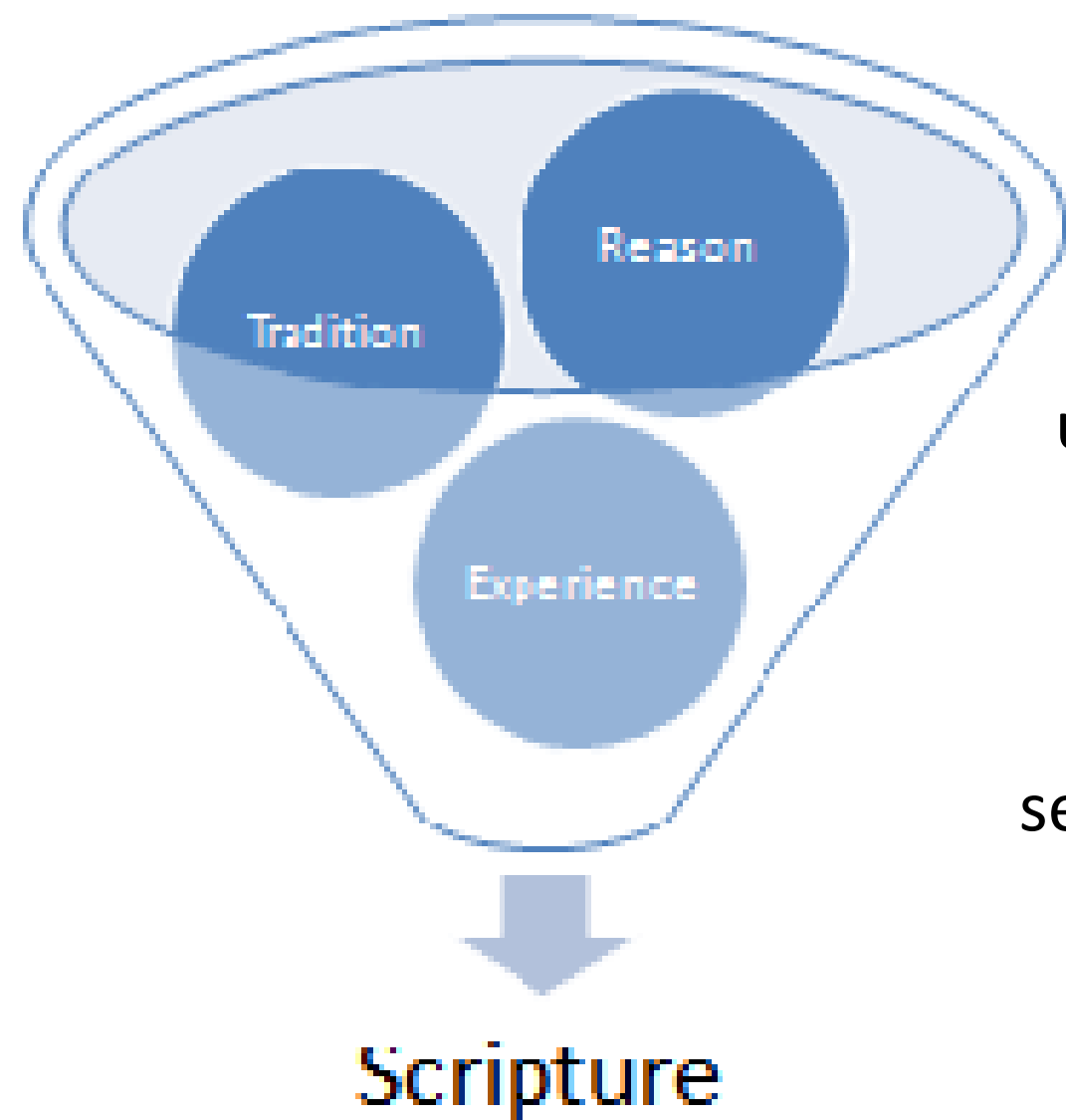
Scripture, Tradition,  
and Experience  
filtered through



Scripture, Tradition,  
and Reason  
filtered through



***Which one trumps the rest? ... Where does the buck stop?***



The basic bias filters that influence our reading and interpretation and application of Scripture.

Awareness of the bias factor allows us to take our own bias into account, as well as that of others. There is no such thing as “total objectivity.”

Confirmation bias = the tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and recall information in a way that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs or hypotheses.



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of an antique book. The book's cover is dark, possibly black or dark brown, with a heavily textured surface that appears worn and aged. On the right side of the cover, there is gold-leaf lettering in a serif font, which is partially visible and reads "HOLY". The book is open, showing the edges of the pages which are discolored and aged. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the cover and the edges of the pages.

# **Small Group Discussion & Prayers**