

# Intro to Exegesis

## Week 5: The Interpretive Journey - NT

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## New Testament genres

Genre	Total # chapters	Proportion of NT
Gospels	89	34%
Acts	28	11%
Letters	121	47%
Revelation	22	8%

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## The interpretive journey - Gospels

*“Often the Gospel writers arrange Jesus’ actions topically rather than chronologically...The Gospel writers (like any reporter or historian) could not tell all that there was to tell about Jesus...As a result, under the direction of the Spirit, the Gospel writers chose what to include (and omit) as well as how to arrange it in a way that effectively communicated the good news to their contemporaries. As ancient biographers, the Gospel writers felt free to paraphrase or summarize what Jesus said and to arrange the events according to a particular theme rather than according to strict chronological sequence...Our method of reading the Gospels must respect the means God used to inspire them in the first place. The Gospel writers are saying something about Jesus in each episode and they are saying something by the way they link the smaller stories to form the larger story.” (J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hays).*

Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God’s Word*. 248.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<b>Christ viewed as</b>	Messiah	Servant	Man	God
<b>Written to</b>	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Church
<b>Chapters</b>	28	16	24	21
<b>Unique material</b>	42%	7%	25%	20%
<b>OT quotes</b>	53	36	25	20

Adapted from: Ryrie, Charles. *Ryrie Study Bible*.

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## The interpretive journey - Gospels

When reading the gospels, ask (at least) two interpretive questions:

1. What does this small story teach us (regarding Jesus or anything else)?
2. What is the Gospel writer trying to say to his readers by the way he puts the smaller stories together?

Episode 1	Episode 2	Episode 3
What is this episode telling us about Jesus?	What is this episode telling us about Jesus?	What is this episode telling us about Jesus?
<b>Episode 1, 2, and 3</b> What is the Gospel writer trying to communicate to his readers by the way he connects these stories together?		

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## The interpretive journey - Gospels

When seeking to discover the theological principles in any story in the Gospels, take note of:

- The standard elements of any story (e.g. Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
- Interpretive instructions from the characters or author (e.g. Mt 5:1-2, 19:30, Mk 4:41, 7:19, Lk 14:7).
- Anything repeated in the story. For example:
  - “Remain” (or “abide”) in Jn 15 (vv. 4a, 4b, 6, 7a, 7b, 9, 10a, 10b).
  - “Woe” in Mt 23 (vv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29).
  - “You have heard/It was said...but I say to you...” in Mt 5 (vv. 21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44).
- Any instances of direct discourse (i.e. dialogue, verbal communication)
- Any connections or common themes from one story to another.

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## The interpretive journey - Gospels

An example of the two interpretive questions in action from Lk 10:25-11:13:

Lk 10:25-37	Lk 10:38-42	Lk 11:1-13
We see the principle that love for one's neighbor should transcend all human boundaries such as nationality, race, religion, or economic status.	Here we discover the principle that doing good things for God can sometimes cause us to miss God Himself. Martha's desire to put on a feast for Jesus causes her to miss the best thing: listening to Jesus.	Jesus teaches us how to communicate with God through prayer (11:1-4). This is followed by a parable on prayer (11:5-8) and an exhortation to pray (11:9-13).
<p>The common theme seems to be relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1st story: We are told that followers of Jesus should be loving neighbors to people in need.</li> <li>▪ 2nd story: We are taught that listening to Jesus should take priority over “religious activity.”</li> <li>▪ 3rd story: Luke emphasizes our relationship to God.</li> </ul> <p>Followers of Jesus need to know how to relate to their neighbors (service), how to relate to their Lord (devotion), and how to relate to their Father (prayer).</p>		

- The above process encompasses only the first three steps of the interpretive journey.
- Each story can be applied individually, but achieving accurate understanding of an individual story often requires understanding regarding the connections between individual stories.

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## The interpretive journey - Gospels

Regarding Lk 10:25-11:13, what are some potential applications?

- Remember that your applications should always be rooted in the text, contemporary, and specific!

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Interpret Mt 24:45-51. (Use the following chart to organize your approach.)

Mt 24:43-44	Mt 24:45-51	Mt 25:1-13

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## The interpretive journey - Gospels

What are some potential applications of Mt 24:43 - 25:13?

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Interpret Lk 18:1-8:

## The interpretive journey - Gospels

What are some potential applications of Lk 18:1-8 (and the relevant surrounding pericope)?