

Week 4: Historical, Literary Analysis

1. Historical, cultural information

Dauids 73-78

- Useful for context
- Limited availability
- Traps and abuses

2. Genre - type of literature

Dauids 78-81, Fee & Stuart 45-245

- Summary overleaf

3. Summarising your exegesis

Dauids 81-82; Morphew 6, 20-21

- Conclusion
- Checking against authorities
- 'Rule of faith'

4. Reference materials

Dauids 82-84; Fee & Stuart 246-254

- Bible dictionaries, encyclopaedias
- Commentaries
- Specialised reference materials

Recommended Reference Materials

Bible dictionaries
New Bible Dictionary, 3d ed., IVP (Marshall, Millard, Packer, Wiseman)

Dictionary of the Latter New Testament and Its Developments, IVP (Martin & Davids)

Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible, Eerdmans (Alexander & Alexander)

Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible, Zondervan (M. Tenney ed.)

International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Eerdmans (Bromiley)

Commentaries
☆☆Fee & Stuart recommendations, 246-254

www.christianbook.com
(commentary ratings)

Good commentary series:

- *New International Commentary (NICOT, NICNT)*
- *Word Biblical Commentary*
- *Tyndale Commentaries*
- *Expositor's Bible Commentary*
- *Barclay's Daily Study Bible*
- *New International Biblical Commentary*

SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL GENRES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS	GENRE	METHOD	CONTENT	KEYS
	Historical literature	Short narratives	Originally, stories told by family fathers and tribal leaders; later sometimes court histories; in the NT, stories told by travelling teachers and evangelists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main character and focus: God • Three levels of narrative: individual, Israel, redemption • Teaching, doctrine: often implicit, illustrative, incidental • Risk: indiscriminately treating precedent as norm, reading things into text
	Legal material	Short statements of foundational law (apodictic law), or case law (casuistic law), sometimes in a covenant structure	Primary audience was priests, Levites and judges who used and applied it. They were to teach the people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important part of God's 'covenant' with Israel • Shows God's standards, leads us to God's mercy in Christ • Not incorporated wholesale into New Covenant • 'Progressive revelation' of God's plan
	Psalms	Poetry	Individual (usually having to do with the king) and collective hymns, normally sung as part of temple services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle for expressing ourselves to God, contemplating Him • Each psalm a stand-alone literary unit • Different types, forms, functions, patterns; much figurative language • Risks: misuse of harsh Psalms, decontextualising, 'over-interpreting'
	Wisdom	Poetry	Teaching of sages and wise men and women passed down in short poetic units that aid memory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General, memorable advice, not exhaustive theological guarantees • Promotes 'wisdom': ability to make godly choices in life • Many figurative, literary devices; some negative examples • Risks: over-specifying, missing contexts, applying selfishly
	Prophecy	Oracles in poetry (2/3 of the time), or prose	Originally individual oracles proclaimed by the prophet publicly or privately to a specific individual or group; later these were gathered into books.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying individual 'oracles', plus date, situation, type • Determining original 'covenant enforcement' and 'foretelling' contexts • Reference materials almost always required • Risk: ignoring context, 'futurising' indiscriminately
	Letters	Prose argument structured by the letter form, often following rules for the composition of speeches	Individual letters originally intended for a church or group of churches, usually churches with which the author has a previous relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Occasional' literature: written to specific 1st century situations • <i>What are the situations addressed?</i> Clues in text • Not 'systematic' but 'task' theology - addresses selected issues • Form: writer-recipient-greeting-prayer-body-greetings and farewell
	Apocalyptic	Visions or dreams deemed to be prophetic	Biblical apocalyptic is usually addressed in written form to a specific group, although some apocalyptic may have been originally oral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with violent end to human history and arrival of God's kingdom • Symbolism, fantasy images, stylised form—keys not always supplied • Exegesis—meaning to first listeners—a vital first step • Risks: skipping exegesis, over-specifying, reading things into text