

“THERE are certain rules for the interpretation of Scripture which I think might with great advantage be taught to earnest students of the word, that they may profit not only from reading the works of others who have laid open the secrets of the sacred writings but also from themselves opening such secrets to others.”

Christian Teaching
 Augustine of Hippo

1. How do we read, interpret, and find meaning from ancient scripture?

- **Hermeneutics:** the science and art of Bible interpretation. Through hermeneutical principles, we derive meaning from the text that may even be beyond the original meaning of the verse when taken in the context of the entirety of God’s word.
- **Exegesis:** Discovering the original intended meaning of the text. Proper exegesis considers proper translation, sentence structure, context within scripture and genre, and the original cultural context.

2. Four Senses of Scripture Exist within both Judaism and Christianity:

- There are numerous hermeneutical principles for finding meaning from the text under these four senses.

Jewish	Christian
1. <i>Pesbat</i> – literal, direct, simple	1. Literal
2. <i>Remez</i> – hint, allegorical, symbolic	2. Allegorical
3. <i>Drash</i> – to seek, inquire	3. Tropological – moral
4. <i>Sod</i> – secret, hidden	4. Anagogical – spiritual/mystical

3. *Pesbat* – literal, direct, simple:

- Start with a simple or plain meaning of the text.
- Numerous genres within the Bible
 - Narrative
 - Commandments
 - Psalms (poetry)
 - Prophets (prophetic imagery)
- Parables? Parables are not to be read literally. Instead, the parable is to be read symbolically.

4. **Remez/Allegorical:**

- *Remez* goes beyond the literal text and seeks to discover meaning at a deeper level.
- Hermeneutical principles within Remez can become complex and require intimate knowledge of the Biblical text.
- Jesus often uses *remez* when speaking to someone he expects would have a high level of familiarity with the Bible: the Priests, Teachers of the Law, Pharisees, and his Disciples.
- The early Church fathers used allegory well, applying the sacred scripture to their own situations.

5. **Drash/Tropological:**

- **Drash** - to seek, inquire.
- Find ways to investigate deeper into the text.
- A parable is a *drash* – called *Midrash*.
- A parable is a simple story that helps the audience investigate something from the Old Testament or about God using symbolic language.
- Parables often contain a moral lesson.
- **Tropological** – a moral lesson within the text.

6. **Sod/Anagogical:**

- **Sod** is usually translated into English as secret or hidden and can include the mystical aspects of Judaism.
- In the Hebrew Bible – *Sod* means counsel (n), a council (n), or assembly (n).
- There is a nuance for *Sod* which indicates a confidential nature to the information.
- **Proverbs 15:22**
- **Psalms 25:14** – God reveals Sod – confidential information to those who fear Him.
- **Anagogical** is derived from the Greek word *anagoge*, which means to climb or ascend.
- Anagogical is a spiritual sense that propels our souls upward.

7. We are to read scripture on all levels:

- **John 9** – Jesus heals a man born blind
 - Literal – Jesus heals a man born blind
 - Allegorical – Jesus brings spiritual light and gives spiritual sight to all humanity.
 - Anagogical – Jesus gave me spiritual sight and continues to increase my spiritual awareness.