

Isagogics [¹]

"The science of hermeneutics demands that we approach any study of the Word of God from the three perspectives of ICE teaching: Isagogics, Categorical teaching, Exegesis.

"The "I" in "ICE" stands for Isagogics: the historical background of the Bible. Isagogics recognizes the basic principle of interpretation: the Bible must be interpreted within the framework of its own historical setting. A pastor-teacher must be a detective in order to reconstruct the life, the customs and the idioms of the times during which the Bible was written as they relate to the Word and the usage of the Word. In the ancient world, the meaning of a word was determined by its usage; today it is also determined by etymology (the study of words), present day literature, etc. Isagogics helps bridge the historical and cultural gaps by teaching a little more detail about the customs and culture of the people and of the periods of times the passage was written in. It takes us back into history and gives us a more vivid realization of what others experienced when they had learned and applied Bible doctrine.

"The "C" in "ICE" stands for Categorical teaching: the organization of principles of doctrine based on the comparison of Scripture with Scripture to determine doctrinal classification. A Biblical subject may be taught in a number of passages throughout the Old and New Testaments, and these subjects or concepts are pulled together for the student's consideration by the pastor-teacher. Each one will increase the meaning of the others. Tracing a subject through Scripture in order to compile information about that subject is categorical teaching.

"The "E" in "ICE" stands for Exegesis: the analysis of each verse within its context, emphasizing grammar, syntax and etymology (study) of words from the original languages (Hebrew, Chaldean, Aramaic and Koine Greek). Exegesis is absolutely essential in order to determine exactly what concept the writer was trying to convey and what he actually communicated through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Every passage must have an exegetical approach, not simply to the verse itself, but also to the other verses in the context. Often a verse will seem to have one interpretation; but when it is taken within the framework of its context, it means something quite different." ²

Isagogics is a branch introductory studies leading to an analysis of a Bible passage for its theological content. Isagogics is carried out prior to the actual exegesis of a passage and deals with the literary and external history of the Bible. ³

"The Bible is a collection of writings of various periods from the hands of different authors, written under a wide range of circumstances, and gradually coming into being. To understand this precious Book thoroughly, it is necessary to know accurately the

¹ Grace Notes is a ministry of Austin Bible Church, Austin, Texas: <http://www.austinbiblechurch.com>
For information about regular Bible studies, write to: Warren Doud, wdoud@gracenotes.info
Web: <http://www.gracenotes.info>

² Bible Doctrine Resource, *Doctrine of I.C.E Teaching*, Grace Bible Church, Wichita, KN, bibledoctrine.org.

³ Merriam-Webster and other dictionaries.

facts connected with the origin and history of the collection as a whole, and of the separate parts.

"This is the object of the doctrine or history of the Canon, or the science of Biblical Introduction - Isagogics in the stricter sense. Isagogics again is divided into Introduction to the Old Testament, and Introduction to the New Testament.

"Isagogics is also divided into General Isagogics or Introduction, and Special Isagogics.

"The General Isagogics (Introduction) treats of the rise of the Canon, and of the various facts connected with it; the history of manuscripts, editions, translations, and various similar works connected with the Holy Scripture.

"Special Isagogics (Introduction) has to do with the authenticity and integrity of the particular writings, with the persons of their authors, with the aim, plan, form and style of their works, and with the time, place and circumstances of their composition.

"Widely different opinions exist respecting the idea and treatment of this branch of theological study. Some have maintained that Isagogics comprehends everything that is necessary for the interpretation of the Scriptures, i.e.,

"I. The nature and importance, of the Bible, together with the history of the canon, or Canonics, which is divided into a) Abstract Canonics (authenticity, credibility and genuineness); b) Concrete Canonics, or what is usually termed Introduction or Isagogics in the more limited sense, which is again divided into 1) General and Special, and into 2) Old and New Testament Canonics;

"II. The Compass of the Bible, or the genuineness of its matter (Biblical Criticism);

"III. Its language and contents (Hermeneutics).⁴

The best work of Introduction to the Old Testament is the admirable treatise of Karl Friedrich Keil, *Manual of the Historico-Critical introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament*. This is a perfect thesaurus of all critical matters pertaining to the Old Testament, and being written from a conservative standpoint, it cannot be too highly recommended." (available from the Grace Notes library as PDF files of Volumes I and II).⁵

Isagogics - from Gene Cunningham

"Isagogics is a word that has all but disappeared from English-language dictionaries. It is from the Greek *eis*, "into," and ago, "to lead." In English, an "isagoge" is an introduction, "isagogic," is defined in the 1955 Oxford English Dictionary as "introductory studies, especially that part of theology which is introductory to exegesis."

"Isagogics is the study of the historical and cultural background of biblical passages. The Bible must be interpreted in light of the time in which it was written. All Scripture was written for every believer (2Ti 3:16) but not all Scripture was written to every believer. If our goal is to understand what the writer wanted his readers to understand, then we have to know something about history.

⁴ Weidner, Revere Franklin, *Exegetical Theology*, Garner Press, Philadelphia, 1885

⁵ Keil, Karl Friedrich, *Manual of the Historico-Critical introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament*, Grace Notes files.

“For example, though the four Gospels are similar, each was written to a different audience for a different purpose. Matthew wrote primarily for Jews, to present Christ as king; Mark wrote for the Romans, to present Christ as servant; Luke wrote for Greeks, to prove the humanity of Christ; and John wrote for the world, to prove the deity of Christ. Certain words and phrases are used in each, which uphold these themes; and different historical conditions are relevant to the study of each book.

“Another example is found in First Corinthians 8 to 10, which cannot be understood apart from some knowledge of idol worship in Corinth. The city of Corinth was dominated by the temple of Aphrodite, where gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual immorality were a regular part of worship. Most of the Christians in Corinth had been raised in this system, and some were having a hard time getting out of it. In these chapters, Paul is not just talking about meat; he is talking about meat offered to idols.” ⁶

an ICE study of Nehemiah ⁷

Isagogics

A. Research the history surrounding Nehemiah

1. Sin of Judah and Israel lead to captivity
2. Review Chronology of Rulers of Babylon & Persia
3. Daniel
 - a. 70 Years Prophecy (Jer. 25:10-12; 2 Chron. 36:20-21)
 - (1). 70 years from captivity: from Nebuchadnezzar (605 BC) till edict to rebuild the temple
 - (2). Babylon conquered by Persia (the “writing on the wall” story)
 - (3). Cyrus edict (Isa. 44:23-45:13; 48:14; Daniel 5; Ezra 1:1-4) 536 BC
 - b. 490 Years Prophecy till Messiah (Daniel 9:25)
 - (1). From edict to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls till Messiah arrives
 - (2). Nehemiah gets edict from Artaxerxes on March 14, 445 BC
 - (3). 490 Years = 173,880 days
 - (4). March 14, 445 plus 173,880 days equals April 6, 32 AD
 - (5). Christ Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey April 6, 32 AD
4. Esther – (Ezra – Nehemiah)
 - a. Jewish Persian Queen
 - b. Ezra – scribe (focus is rebuild the temple, restore faith)
 - c. Nehemiah – Sent by King Artaxerxes (focus is restore the walls and gates of Jerusalem)

B. Research Royal Cities of the Persian Empire

1. Persepolis (Capital)
2. Babylon

⁶ Cunningham, Gene, *Hermeneutics*, <http://www.basicttraining.org/index.php?proc=sn&nid=208>

⁷ from Grace Bible Church web site, http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=891

3. Susa (Heb. Shushan)

- a. Understand the importance of city walls/gates
- b. Understand diplomatic position, military escort, authority delegation
 - (1). Cupbearer
 - (2). Nehemiah appointed Governor of Judah – he has letters from the King and a military escort (Nehemiah 13:4-31)

Categorical Teaching

“Now all these things happened to them as types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.” (1 Corinthians 10:11)

At first glance Nehemiah Chapter 3 looks like one of those chapters of the Bible that you would be tempted to skip over (tedious reading required).

1. A long list of names telling where the families worked as they built the walls of Jerusalem – each family was positioned by a different gate.
2. But, if you have been a student of the Bible for any length of time, you know that God never does anything by accident. What appears as a mundane list, or accidental information, really contains a hidden message within the obvious message.
3. In this third chapter of Nehemiah’s Diary, God has just such two messages
 - a. (OPEN) The Historical Account of the Restoration of the Walls of Jerusalem
 - b. (HIDDEN) The Progress of the Believer’s Walk [see map handout]

Exegesis (Hebrew Word Studies)

1. The Hebrew names give us spiritual insight
 - a. Nehemiah – “God comforts”
 - b. Hanani – Nehemiah’s brother, “Gracious”
 - c. Eliashib – (el-yaw-sheeb) the High Priest, “God will restore” [Sheep Gate] 1
 - d. Hassenaah – (na’ah sen-aw-aw’) “to prick, thorny” [Fish Gate] 3
 - e. Jehoiada – (yo-yaw-daw) “Knows God” [Old Gate] 6
 - f. Hanun – (khaw-noon’) “favored” [Valley Gate] 13
 - g. Malchiah – (mal-kee-yaw’) “King, appointed by God” [Dung Gate] 14
 - h. Shallun – (shal-loon’) “secure, reward” [Fountain Gate] 15
 - i. [Water Gate] 26
 - j. Zadok – (tsaw-doke’) “to make morally right” [Horse Gate] 28
 - k. Shemaiah – (shem-aw-yaw’) “God has heard” [East Gate] 29
 - l. Malchiah – (mal-kee-yaw’) “King, appointed by God” [Muster Gate] 31

A Closer Look at Types Found in the Gates of Nehemiah

The Sheep Gate (Nehemiah 3:1-2) [Salvation]

Start with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (John 10).

First gate repaired, for without the sacrifice, there is no salvation.

The sheep gate had no locks or bars

This is the only gate that was sanctified, setting it apart as a special gate.

The Fish Gate (Nehemiah 3:3-5) [Service]

Believers are to be out soul-winning, being “fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

The Old Gate (Nehemiah 3:6-12) [Grounded in God’s Word]

This is the oldest of the gates, was always opened, but not everyone used this gate.

It speaks of the old paths and the old truths of the Word of God (Jer. 6:16 and 18:15).

The world forever looks for “some new thing” (Acts 17:21)

- o Refuse God’s salvation through faith

- o Culture is always changing

The Valley Gate (Nehemiah 3:13) [Suffering & trials]

The Valley Gate was one of the lowest spots in the city

Valleys are a part of our Christian Walk

After teaching comes trials è valley

Count it all joy when you are tried! (James 1:2-5)

The Dung Gate. (Nehemiah 3:14) [Sanctification]

Even lower than the Valley Gate

The lowest point in the city

Raw waste and trash would run out of this gate and deposited in the Valley of Gehenna outside the city walls (smelly and dirty)

Imagine how difficult it would be to repair a gate in such a place! This speaks to us of the need for the cleansing of our souls (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 1:9).

The Gate of the Fountain (Nehemiah 3:15-25) [Renewal/Revival]

Illustrates the ministry of the Holy Spirit; see John 7:37-39.

Speaks of the need to be Filled with the Spirit

It is interesting to note the order of these gates: first, there is humility (Valley Gate), then cleansing (Dung Gate), and then the filling of the Spirit (Fountain Gate).

The Water Gate (v. 26-27) [Daily refreshment from the Word]

Speaks of the Word of God, which cleanses the believer (Eph. 5:26; Ps. 119:9).

This is the seventh gate mentioned, and seven is the Bible number for perfection, completeness—the perfect Word of God.

This gate needed no repairs! “Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven” (Ps. 119:89).

The Horse Gate (v. 28) [Spiritual warfare]

There will always be spiritual battles in the Christian life, and we must be ready to fight. (2 Timothy 2:1-4; Ephesians 6:10-18)

The East Gate (v. 29-30) [Look for the Return of Christ]

Look to the second coming of Jesus Christ, Matthew 24:27.

In Ezekiel 10:16-22; 11:22-25., the prophet saw God’s glory depart from the temple by the east gate, But later (43:1-5) he saw God’s glory return “from the way of the east.”

The Gate Miphkad (v. 31-32) [Bema Judgment – Decorations]

Speaks of the Bema Seat Judgment of the Saints

The Hebrew word miphkad means “appointment, account, census, mustering.” It carries the idea of troops showing up for review. (Rom 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-20; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15)

Educational Preparation for Producing ICE Exposition

It is clear from the discussions on these various sites that the pastor-teacher who expects to produce expository messages using these theological study techniques need to have had very thorough preparation in several academic fields.

Old Testament Languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, Septuagint Greek. At least four years (eight semesters) of study is required for sufficient language training to have the capability to analyze the Old Testament scriptures.

Greek - for thorough analysis, exegesis, and isagogics of New Testament Greek the Bible teacher must be well trained in classical Greek, as well as the **koine**. We're probably looking at four to six years of Greek language and related studies.

History - a great deal of history study and reading is required, probably equivalent to a four-year history major (36 semester hours) in a college or seminary. The reading materials are widely available outside of college, providing the student has study discipline.
