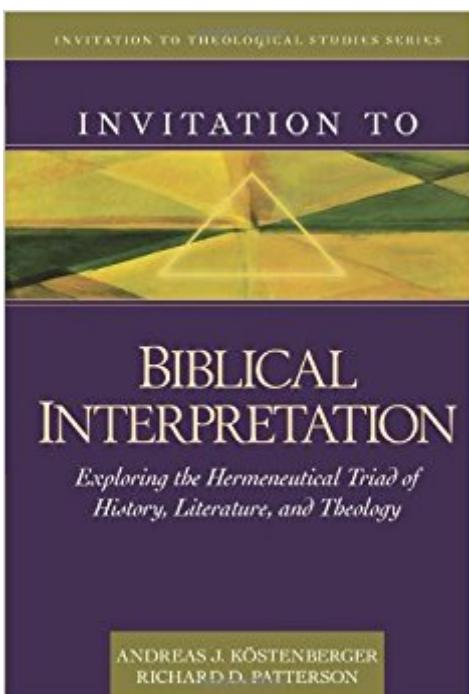


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# Invitation To Biblical Interpretation: Exploring The Hermeneutical Triad Of History, Literature, And Theology (Invitation To Theological Studies Series)



## **Synopsis**

Bible scholars Andreas Kostenberger (NT) and Richard Patterson (OT) provide seminarians and upper-level collegians a textbook utilizing the *hermeneutical triad* • method. This approach to interpretation is based on giving due consideration to both the historical setting and the literary context, as well the theological message. Working through the major genres of Scripture and showing how their method applies to each one, they provide interpretive examples to guide the student in proper exegesis. In addition to the examples, each chapter concludes with exercises and assignments. Also included is a helpful *Building a Biblical Studies Library* • appendix.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"The great merit of Kostenberger's and Patterson's volume is its three-dimension account of biblical interpretation. The authors rightly focus on the history, literature, and theology of the Bible--what they call the hermeneutical triad. Call it hermeneutics in real 3-D. A three-stranded hermeneutical cord may not be easily broken, but it's easy to grasp by following this introductory textbook. Another plus is the authors' reminder that biblical interpretation is not only about method but about virtue: a heartfelt humility before the divine text is as important as any heady procedure." --Kevin J.

Vanhoozer, Blanchard Professor of Theology, Wheaton College and Graduate School "I am filled with admiration. I learned much from this vigorous book. It is a work of great clarity that summarizes the best principles of general hermeneutics with the best principles of biblical interpretation.

Professor Kostenberger's students are lucky to have such a trenchant and learned guide--and so

are the readers of this fine book." --E. D. Hirsch Jr., Professor Emeritus of Education and Humanities, University of Virginia, and Founder, Core Knowledge Foundation "There are certain topics of must reading for serious Bible students--hermeneutics is at the top. There are certain books of must reading for a topic. Andreas Kostenberger's work on hermeneutics is one of them. It is clear, concise, and yet deep, and manages to cover most of the needed areas. Thus it becomes an invaluable guide for the student working through the labyrinth of issues that make up the task of biblical interpretation. It will enable the reader to bridge the gap from understanding biblical portions in their original cultural context and from showing their relevance to a modern audience. I recommend it very highly." --Grant Osborne, Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School "Invitation to Biblical Interpretation is destined to become the standard textbook for colleges and seminaries for the foreseeable future. It is simply the best work available in the field of biblical hermeneutics. It is comprehensive in its breadth and in depth at all the right places. And it is well written! I will be certain to make it my anchor text as I teach biblical hermeneutics." --Daniel L. Akin, President, Professor of Preaching and Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary "Andreas Kostenberger and Richard Patterson, two brilliant and experienced interpreters of Holy Scripture, have produced a first-rate volume on biblical hermeneutics. Distinctive in its approach, with a focus on the 'hermeneutical triad,' this monumental publication is encyclopedic in its thoroughness, masterful in its organizational design, and skillful in its pedagogical emphasis. The clear discussions in each chapter, followed by helpful and informative bibliographies, will make this book a rich resource for students, scholars, and pastors for years to come. I am truly excited about the publication of Invitation to Biblical Interpretation." --David S. Dockery, President, Professor of Christian Thought and Tradition, Union University "I am truly impressed. This introduction to hermeneutics covers all the bases, and I mean all of them. Read this book and you will be well prepared for the task of serious interpretation." --Tremper Longman, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College "This introduction to hermeneutics is outstanding in several ways: It takes full account of the unique divine authorship of the Bible; it is clear, readable, and doctrinally sound; it attends to the spiritual state of the interpreter; it provides detailed guidance for understanding the historical background, literary and linguistic features, and theological significance of each text; it is coauthored by an Old Testament and a New Testament professor; and it insists that right interpretation must end in application to life. It is an excellent book that will be widely used as a standard textbook for years to come." --Wayne Grudem, Research Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies, Phoenix Seminary "This book on biblical interpretation combines training in exegesis with a basic knowledge of hermeneutics. It urges careful consideration of historical,

literary, and theological issues. Thus, historically, it includes helpful chronological charts, and much on cultural history. Its literary focus includes canon, genre, and language. Its theological dimension includes application. Genre is crucial: thus narrative, poetry and wisdom are distinguished in the Old Testament; and parable, epistles, and apocalyptic, in the New. Why responsible interpretation requires toil and labor receives careful explanation. This book contains plenty of common sense, sanity, and love of Scripture. I commend it especially to students, teachers, and even pastors, as helping all of us to use the Bible responsibly and fruitfully." --Anthony C. Thiselton, Professor of Christian Theology, University of Nottingham

"A major task--perhaps the major task--of hermeneutics is to clarify the meaning of texts. This work by Kostenberger and Patterson not only succeeds brilliantly in elucidating the fundamental principles and processes of biblical hermeneutics but itself is a model of how a book ought to be written. Its conception, organization, systematic development, and applications--all work together to make this the finest contribution of its kind to biblical scholarship. There is no stodginess or impenetrable 'academese' here. Layman and scholar alike will find it to be a virtual treasure house of sane and sensible hermeneutical practice." --Eugene H. Merrill, Distinguished Professor of Old Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary

"Don't be misled by the title; this is no typical hermeneutics primer. Here, in considerable detail, covering both introductory and more advanced topics, and interacting with the most current and classic scholarship, is a one-stop shopping resource for the entire exegetical process for the most capable seminary students, pastors, and teachers. Particularly distinctive and/or helpful are the discussions of Old Testament chronology, interpreting Revelation, discourse analysis, grammatical fallacies, biblical theology, and homiletical method. Warmly recommended." --Craig L. Blomberg,

Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary

"Invitation to Biblical Interpretation offers a thorough, scholarly, Scripture-honoring approach to biblical hermeneutics that lays the foundations for genuine expository preaching. Under its 'hermeneutical triad' of the preaching text's historical setting, literary dimensions, and theological message, the book provides a balanced approach even as it explores most of the topics discussed in contemporary biblical hermeneutics. It is well researched and documented and clearly written and illustrated. This student-friendly book is not only an excellent text for a seminary course in biblical hermeneutics but is equally useful for independent study. I highly recommend this book for all who desire to preach and teach the Word faithfully and accurately." --Sidney Greidanus, Professor of Preaching Emeritus, Calvin Theological Seminary

"This is a well-written, clear, and thorough book on the principles of biblical interpretation for the whole Bible. It would be an excellent book for an upper-level hermeneutics course at the college level or an introductory hermeneutics course at the seminary level. Pastors will also find this

a useful book to get an overview of the interpretative principles for different parts of the Bible from which they are preparing to preach. Seminary students and pastors will also benefit from the concluding chapter that applies the interpretative approach of the book to the task of preaching. The authors rightly contend that hermeneutics is to be viewed through the triadic lens of history, literature, and theology. This is not so much a theoretical approach to hermeneutics but a competent hands-on guide for interpreting the different kinds of literature that one encounters in the Bible. In this respect, each chapter helpfully concludes with a sample passage in which the principles discussed in the chapter are applied and illustrated, followed by study questions for the student and important bibliographical resources pertaining to the chapter. This is one of the best general and most thorough introductions to interpreting the English Bible that I have read."

--Gregory K. Beale, Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary"Kostenberger's Invitation to Biblical Interpretation is just that, a rich invitation to engage Scripture as God's Word, making appropriate use of all available tools. His triadic approach is fresh and helpfully non-reductive. This work is wide-ranging and in touch with contemporary scholarly trends while written and produced in a thoroughly accessible way for student, pastor, and professor.

Highly recommended." --Craig Bartholomew, Professor of Religion and Theology, Redeemer University College"In this triad dance of history, literature, and theology, as they move across the floor of biblical interpretation, Kostenberger and Patterson excel at sorting through and clearly presenting massive amounts of material across a wide spectrum of cognate disciplines. Written in a down-to-earth style, the book is as accessible as it is broad, as practical as it is informed on contemporary discussions of these difficult matters. From the particulars of Greek grammar and discourse analysis to helpful introductions on canon, biblical theology, and appropriate application, here one again and again finds a welcome orientation to the bread-and-butter concepts, sound practices, and tools needed for handling the biblical text responsibly and the spiritual posture for approaching it reverently. I am impressed and looking forward to putting this book in the hands of my students, who will find here a rich, expansive resource from which to draw guidance for years to come."

--George H. Guthrie, Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible, Union University"This is indeed a warm invitation to interpret the Bible responsibly, passionately, and practically. Showing readers how to explore the context, literature, and theology of the biblical books, the authors provide a guide to all phases of interpretation. The work climaxes in particularly helpful instructions on how to move from study of the text to crafting of the sermon. Novices should not be put off by the size of the volume. Although comprehensive in scope and breadth, the style of writing and the practical helps at the end of each chapter ensure that the concepts conveyed will be readily grasped even by

non-professionals. If students of Scripture are seeking a single volume to which they can turn for practical assistance in interpretation, this is the book to get. Thank you, Kregel Publishers, for making their work available to us." --Daniel I. Block, Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament, Wheaton College

Andreas J. Köstenberger is founder of Biblical Foundations and senior research professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He is a leading evangelical scholar, a prolific author, and editor of the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. Richard D. Patterson (PhD, University of California, Los Angeles) is distinguished professor emeritus at Liberty University. He has written well over 100 articles for major publishers and periodicals, including commentaries on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah (Moody) and Joel and Kings (with Hermann Austel) for the second edition of the Expositor's Bible Commentary Series.

Overall, a helpful first textbook for hermeneutics. I got this for my first year master's course at Luther Rice seminary. It's a handy resource so I will be keeping it. The summaries and questions at the end of each chapter are helpful. At times the authors are a bit wordy. For an overview/introduction to hermeneutics, they could have been a bit more brief. Students of the Bible will consult testament introductions and book commentaries for more thorough information on a specific genre/book/passage, so these 700 pages could have been 500 or less without feeling like you got shortchanged on what this volume is supposed to be. At times difficult to read, but I finished it in 2 months in preparation for my class.

"Come in and stay for a while"! The opening line is my favorite line so far. I'm only six chapters into the book and I had to write about a few things I like about this book. I really do like the sample exegesis which the authors include. After giving guidelines on interpretive methods and considerations, they show you. I guess the greatest misconception is that reading the Bible is easy. Even when you read the English texts, a lot is lost in translation if you do not consider the historical, literary and theological contexts of the books of the Bible. I must confess, it is a lot of work, but it is worth it. Finally (for now), the book emphasizes the rules for Biblical interpretation. Yes, there are rules for interpreting the literary genres of the Bible and you've got to know them else, you stand the risk of misplacing the meaning of the text.

I was looking for a book that spoke of theological principles yet was written using words and ideas that were understandable to the layman. So many other books on the subject are written in such high theological language that the layman can't begin to understand them. It is a challenging book, and does expand one's understanding and vocabulary, but it does not begin over your head or discourage you from learning more. This book was exciting, challenging, understandable, and helped me become a much more informed interpreter of God's Word. I would recommend it for anyone, including beginning seminary students, who truly desire to understand how to interpret God's Word from a linguistic and historical/cultural aspect and apply its message to our world today.

"Wow! An awesome book! What a lot of useful things to begin working into my own interpretive practices!" Those were my first thoughts as finished reading *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, by Andreas Kostenberger and Richard D. Patterson. Their book is sub-titled *Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature and Theology* and they have put together a comprehensive guide to help navigate the path of Biblical interpretation, so that the person preparing to preach can do so thoroughly and for one overarching purpose: the faithful proclamation of God's word. The authors' thesis is that proper study of a Biblical text in preparation for preaching involves studying the text from three different perspectives. They are the historical setting of the text, its individual literary characteristics, and the theology it expresses. In the first chapter they provide an overview of their thesis and an introduction to their method. This includes a comparative discussion of other models of exegesis, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of those models, as well as the historical settings that they arose in. Then they embark on a systematic discussion of their proposed method. Part 1 explores the importance of the "context of scripture", i.e. history. In order to properly probe a Biblical text we need to understand and consider the historical-cultural setting in which it was written, so that we can accurately discern how an ancient text can speak vibrantly into our time and culture. Part 2 deals with the "focus of scripture", i.e. scripture as literature. This part comprises the bulk of the book, being subdivided into units of canon, genre and language. They dig deeply into each of these literary units, exploring the differences between both parts of the canon, the importance of understanding the text as a type of literature (i.e. narrative, poetry, prophecy, et.al.), and then addressing matters of language (i.e. determining specific textual units, word studies, common fallacies, et.al.). Part 3 considers the "goal of scripture", i.e. the theology it teaches. While this part of the book is only one chapter it is the first of two chapters that bring everything together. The authors have a strong belief that theology should be derived from the Bible, rather than imposed on it. They believe that pastors, preachers and professors need to dig

into scripture and be willing to be taught by it, rather than boxing scripture into a pre-conceived framework. This does not mean that only theology which is explicitly taught is what the church should hold to, but that all of the doctrine and teaching of the church should be built on a Biblical foundation. The book's final chapter addresses application and proclamation of what has been learned through conscientious study. The intent of our study is to bring God's word to life in the world and the authors discuss various ways in which this may be done. This book has a number of strengths. The first is the logical and coherent way the authors have laid out what they intend to teach within the pages. As I read I felt that each chapter and each section fit within a whole. Second is that each chapter contains a summary, review questions and suggested assignments. While the book may have been written primarily as a classroom textbook those features make it easy to learn from in a situation as my own, where I am pursuing additional study independently. The third strength is that each chapter in the Literature section includes a sample exegesis of what has been taught within the chapter. This did a lot for me to illuminate the chapter's teaching. Fourth is the extensive footnoting that the authors have included. While they have compiled a comprehensive way to approach the practice of hermeneutics, their footnotes make it easy to explore any particular subordinate aspect in greater depth. And lastly, the appendix contains extensive suggestions for the biblical student in building their own library. This includes multiple suggestions for each category of general resource and reference work, as well as several suggestions of commentary for each book of the Bible. My own seminary training in hermeneutics was a bit fragmented, coming through classes in language, theology and preaching. I liked the way in which the authors have chosen to teach hermeneutics as its own integrated discipline, and particularly their intent to make it not merely an academic subject but one that serves a greater purpose. The last chapter closes saying "God's Word has real authority and power, but only to the extent that it is faithfully and properly interpreted and proclaimed. To this end, may this book make a small contribution, for the good of God's people and for God's greater glory" (800). To which I say "Amen!"

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