Answer: *Exegesis* and *eisegesis* are two Greek terms that describe opposing methods of interpreting Scripture. Understanding the difference between them is essential for sound theology and faithful biblical teaching.

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1) Exegesis

The term *exegesis* comes from the Greek word *exēgeomai*, meaning “to lead out.” In biblical interpretation, it refers to drawing out the original meaning intended by the author, using context, grammar, historical background, and literary analysis. It’s a disciplined, objective method that allows Scripture to speak on its own terms.

Theological foundation: Exegesis reflects the principle of *Sola Scriptura* that Scripture is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16–17, ESV).

> “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for

> teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” *(2 Tim. 3:16, ESV)*

Hermeneutical tools used in exegesis include:

Historical context (Who was the author? To whom was it written? What was the setting?)

Literary context (What genre is the text? How does the passage fit within the surrounding text?)

Original languages (Greek/Hebrew meaning and grammar)

Covenantal framework (Understanding where a text fits in redemptive history)

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2) Eisegesis

From the Greek *eis* (“into”) and *hēgeomai* (“to lead”), *eisegesis* means “to read into the text.” This approach imposes one’s own ideas, experiences, or cultural assumptions onto the Scripture. It

can result in misinterpretation or distortion, even when done with sincere intentions.

Theological risk: Eisegesis contradicts the biblical command to rightly handle the Word of Truth.

> “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved… rightly handling the word of truth.” *(2 Tim. 2:15, ESV)*

This approach can produce personalized interpretations disconnected from the author’s intent, often leading to doctrinal error or spiritual confusion.

A Practical Example: Matthew 11:28

> “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” *(Matt. 11:28, ESV)*

Exegetical meaning: In the context of first-century Judaism, Jesus

was addressing the heavy burden of legalism imposed by the Pharisees (see Matt. 23:4). The “rest” He offers is spiritual rest freedom from the oppressive weight of trying to earn righteousness through works. Ultimately, it points to salvation by grace through faith in Him (cf. Hebrews 4:9–10).

Eisegetical misuse: Some may interpret “burdens” as modern troubles like stress, debt, or family problems while that may feel applicable, it misses the text’s original meaning. The personal application is valid only after the core message is understood.

> *Cross-reference:*
> “For we who have believed enter that rest...” *(Heb. 4:3a, ESV)*
> “Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” *(1 Peter 5:7, ESV)*

Why This Matters

God can, at times, use a verse to speak personally or prophetically to someone—but we must never elevate subjective impressions above biblical truth. Scripture must first be allowed

to interpret itself.

> “Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.” *(2 Peter 1:20, ESV)*

Common Errors from Eisegesis

Claiming the “Mark of the Beast” in Revelation 13 refers to COVID-19 or a modern vaccine. Revelation must be interpreted using symbolic apocalyptic language, rooted in first-century context and not modern fear.

Imitating Jesus’ miracles (e.g., using spit and mud in John 9:6–7) as a normative practice. That miracle was a unique act of divine authority, not a prescribed method for healing. The New Testament model for ministry is to operate under Christ’s name and authority:

> “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus...” *(Col. 3:17, ESV)*

Conclusion: How to Stay Theologically Sound

To be faithful interpreters of God’s Word:

1. Begin with exegesis understand the original intent through proper study.
2. Apply Scripture carefully after understanding its meaning, then explore how it applies to your life.
3. Guard against twisting Scripture to fit personal agendas or emotions.

This is the only way to rightly divide the Word of truth, teach others faithfully, and remain anchored in biblical doctrine.

> “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” *(2 Tim. 4:2, ESV)*

May the Lord bless you.

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