

Interpretation: Literary Context (Adapted from *Grasping God's Word* Chapter 8)

1. Last week was historical context, I gave a Bible handbook as the tool for finding this.
Good news is that Literary Context doesn't require any tools besides a Bible.
2. Genre
 - a. Form (The format the ideas take) vs. Content (The ideas in the text)
 - b. Form = Genre - Narrative (N), Law (I), Poetry (P), Prophets (P), Wisdom (P), Epistle (I), Gospel (N), Apocalyptic (P)
 - c. Narrative, Imperative, and Poetic encompass all these.
 - d. Genre is sometimes defined by the book - Song of Songs is Poetry, Zechariah is apocalyptic.
 - e. Some Books are divided into sections with different Genres - Revelation 1-3 is Imperative while the rest is Apocalyptic, Exodus 1-18 is Narrative, 19-33 is Law, 34-40 is Narrative.
 - f. Example of Genre: Exodus 14:5-31 vs. 15:1-21
3. Surrounding Context
 - a. Note: Verse and Chapter numbers were added much later and are not inspired and not necessarily accurate to the divisions of thought.
 - b. Passage (sometimes called a pericope) > Immediate Context (paragraphs) > Rest of Larger Section (chapter or other section) > Rest of the Book > Rest of the Bible
 - c. Antecedent Theology: Knowing what other Books the author could have been referencing
 - d. Examples: Rev 3:20, Matt 18:20
 - e. Question for Finding Surrounding Context: Why did the author include this unit, and what would happen if it were removed?
 - f. Steps to understanding the Surrounding Context:
 - i. Identify how the book is divided into paragraphs or sections.
 - ii. Summarize the main idea of each section.
 - iii. Explain how your particular passage relates to the surrounding sections¹

¹ J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, Fourth Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 160–161.

Interpretation: Context is King

Grasping the Text in Their Town

Historical Context	<u>Literary Context</u>	Grammatical Context
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1. Biblical Genres and Forms:

- a. Narrative - genre which tells a story about God through the acts of his people
- b. Gospel - narrative genre which tells the story of Jesus Christ
- c. Law - imperative genre which defines God's expectation for human holiness
- d. Epistle - imperative genre in which an author writes specific instructions to a particular audience using letter form
- e. Poetry - genre which uses imagery and structure to communicate truths and emotions
- f. Wisdom - poetic genre which explains general truths about life
- g. Prophetic - poetic genre in which humans communicate the direct words of God
- h. Apocalyptic - prophetic genre in which the prophet is given an image (lit. *revelation*) from God

2. Surrounding Context:

