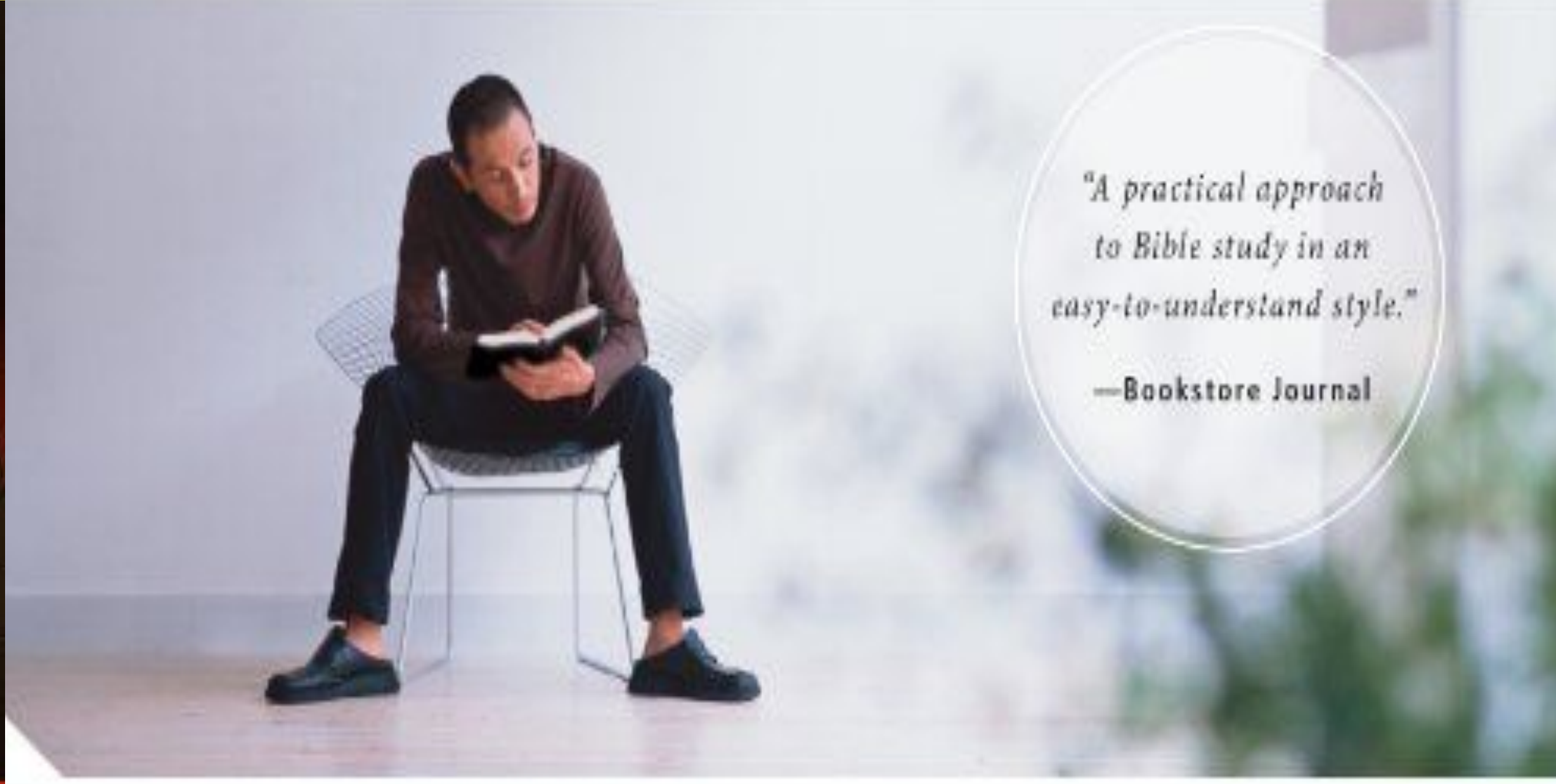




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FOURTH EDITION

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth



*"A practical approach
to Bible study in an
easy-to-understand style."*

—Bookstore Journal

Gordon D. Fee
Douglas Stuart

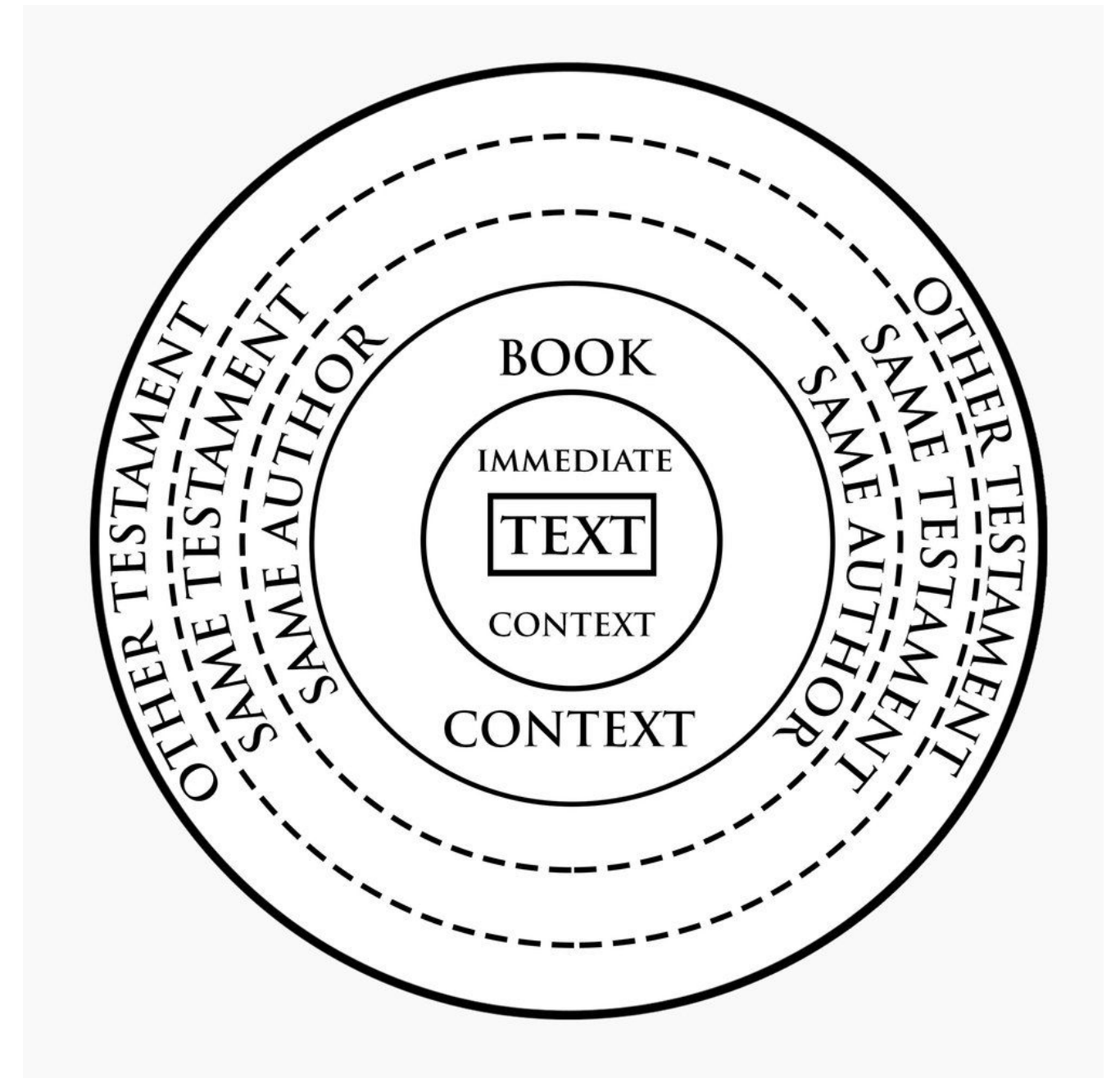
How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth

An 8 week introductory study with
classroom participation

Week 2: How? The Tool Kit: Exegesis and Hermeneutics
(Text Meaning and Application)

Week 1: RECAP: Who/What/When/Where/Why?

- **Pray before reading!**
- Read and *re-read* ENTIRE book start to finish
- Use multiple translations to improve understanding
- Be mindful of the 7 common pitfalls
- The more you read, the more Scripture “clicks”



Prepared by Pastor Ted Rathman and Todd Frehafer
with the grateful assistance of Table Group Leaders

Golden Rule of Biblical Exegesis

A text without a context is a pretext for a proof-text.

- The **aim** of a good interpretation is simple: to get at the plain meaning of the text
 - The **test** of a good interpretation is that it makes good sense of the text
 - The **element** of a good interpretation most important for this task is enlightened common sense

The First Tool: Exegesis (the *'then and there'* meaning)

Exegesis is the careful, systematic study of the Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning. This is basically a historical task. It is the attempt to hear the Word as the original recipients were to have heard it, to find out what was *the original intent of the words of the Bible*. **A text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author, original audience or readers.** In short, our exegetical goal is to balance the equation *'message received = message sent.'*

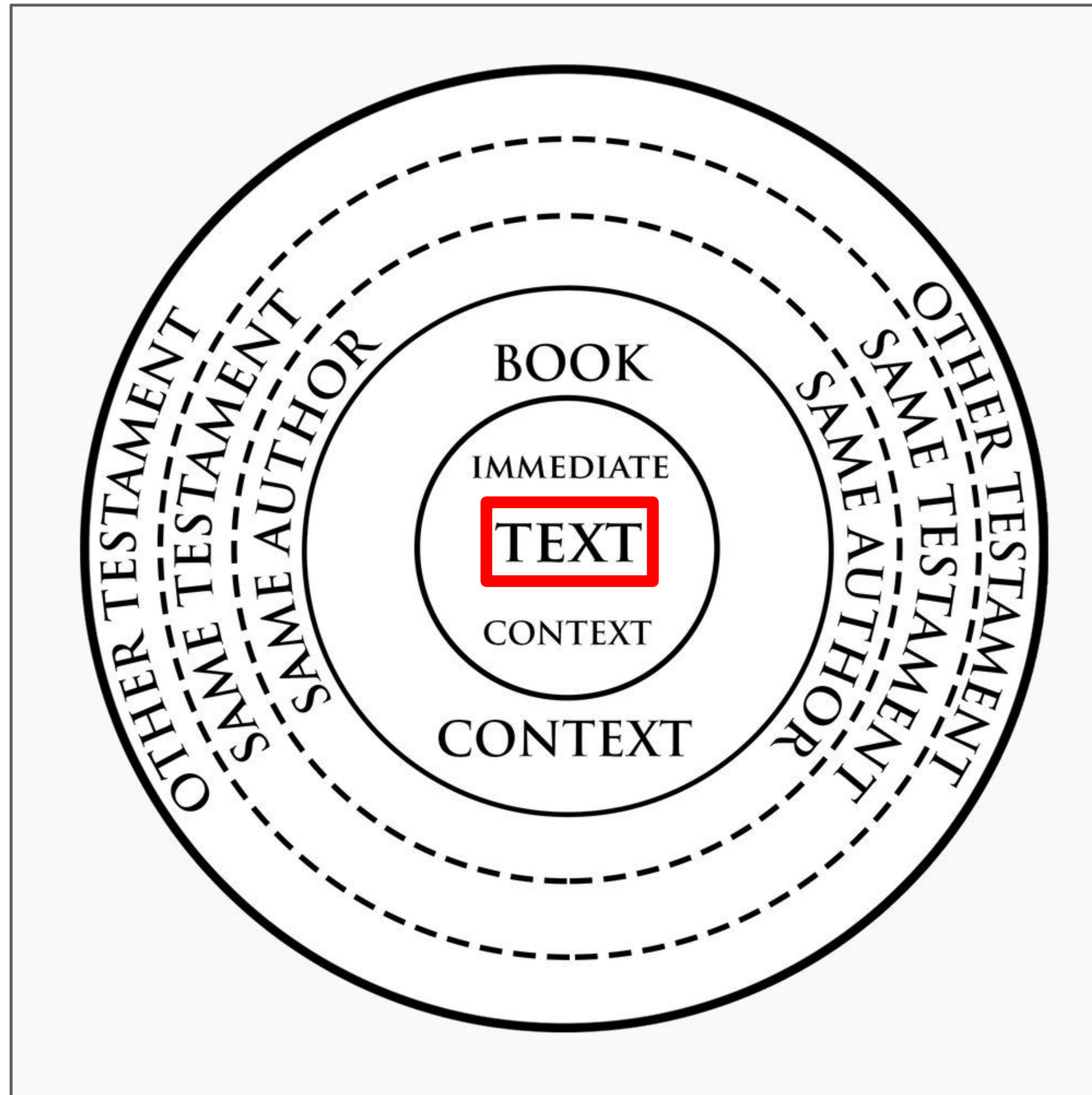
1. Literary **Context** (genre)

- a. OT: Narrative/law/poetry/wisdom/prophecy
- b. NT: gospel/parable/epistles/apocalyptic

2. Historical **Context**

- a. time and culture of the author and his readers
- b. geographical, topographical, political factors relevant to text setting
- c. occasion and purpose of each biblical book

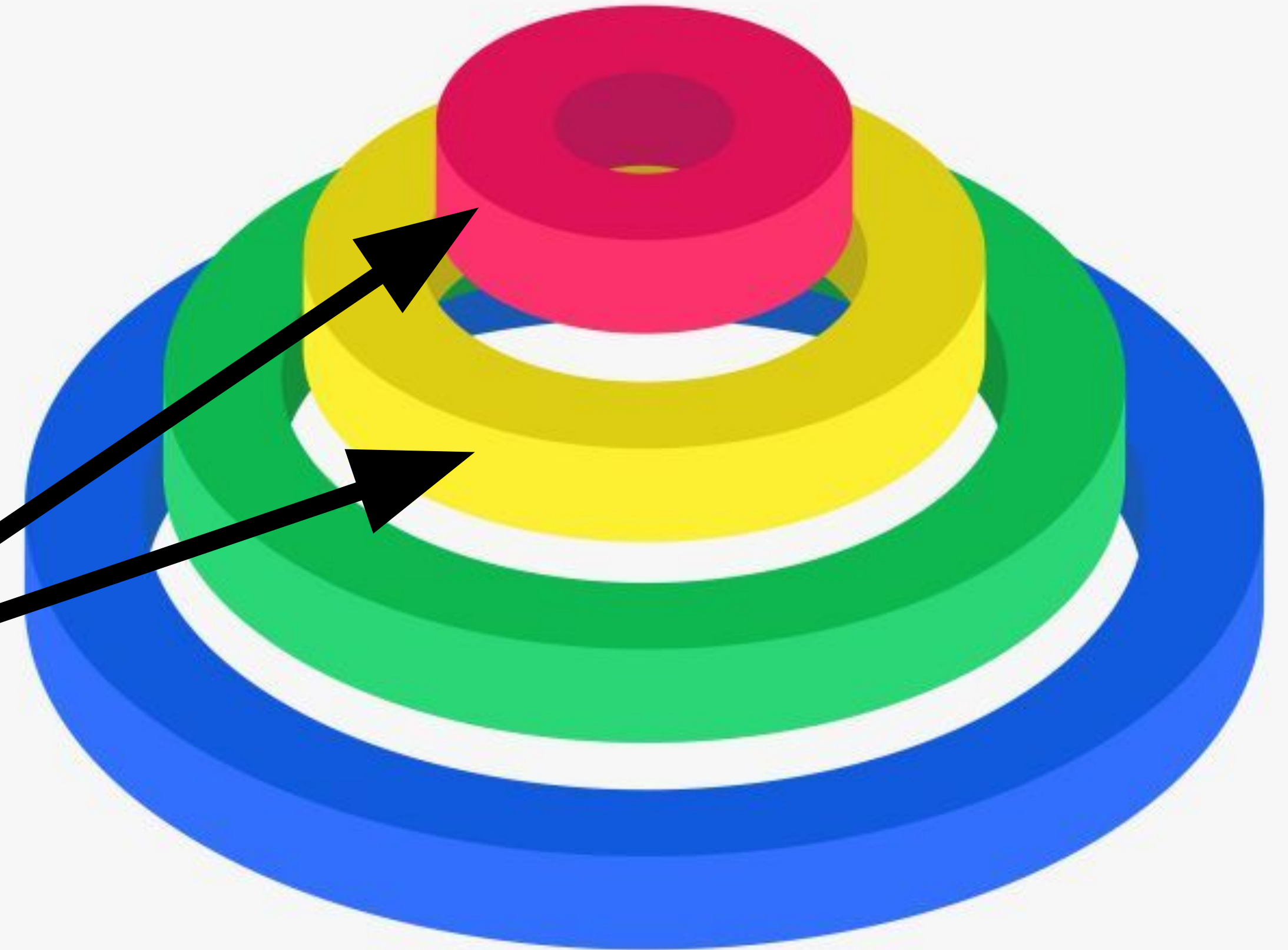
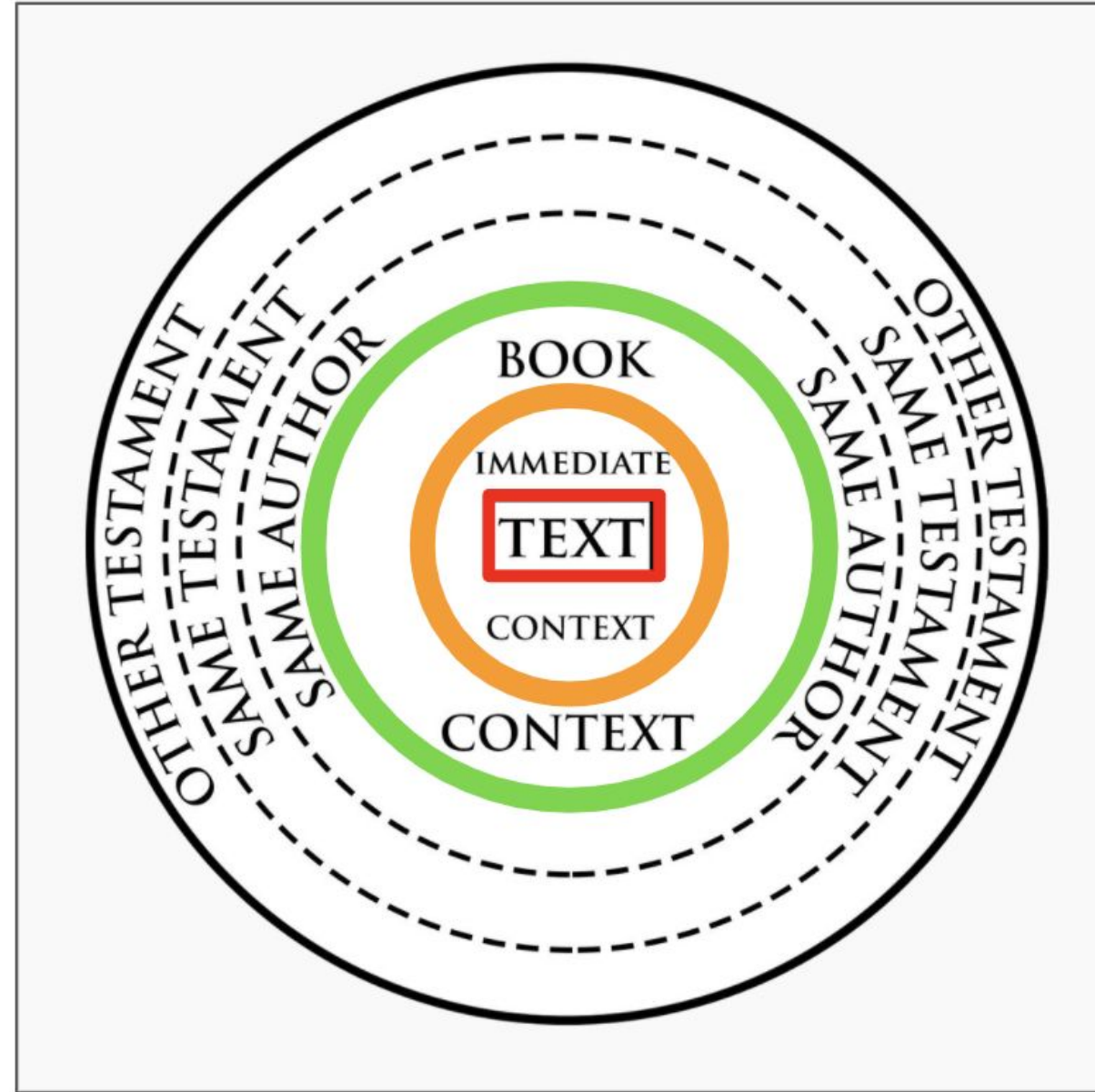
The Concentric Circles of Bible Interpretation



Identify smallest (minor) literary units
Paragraphing is already provided in most translations.

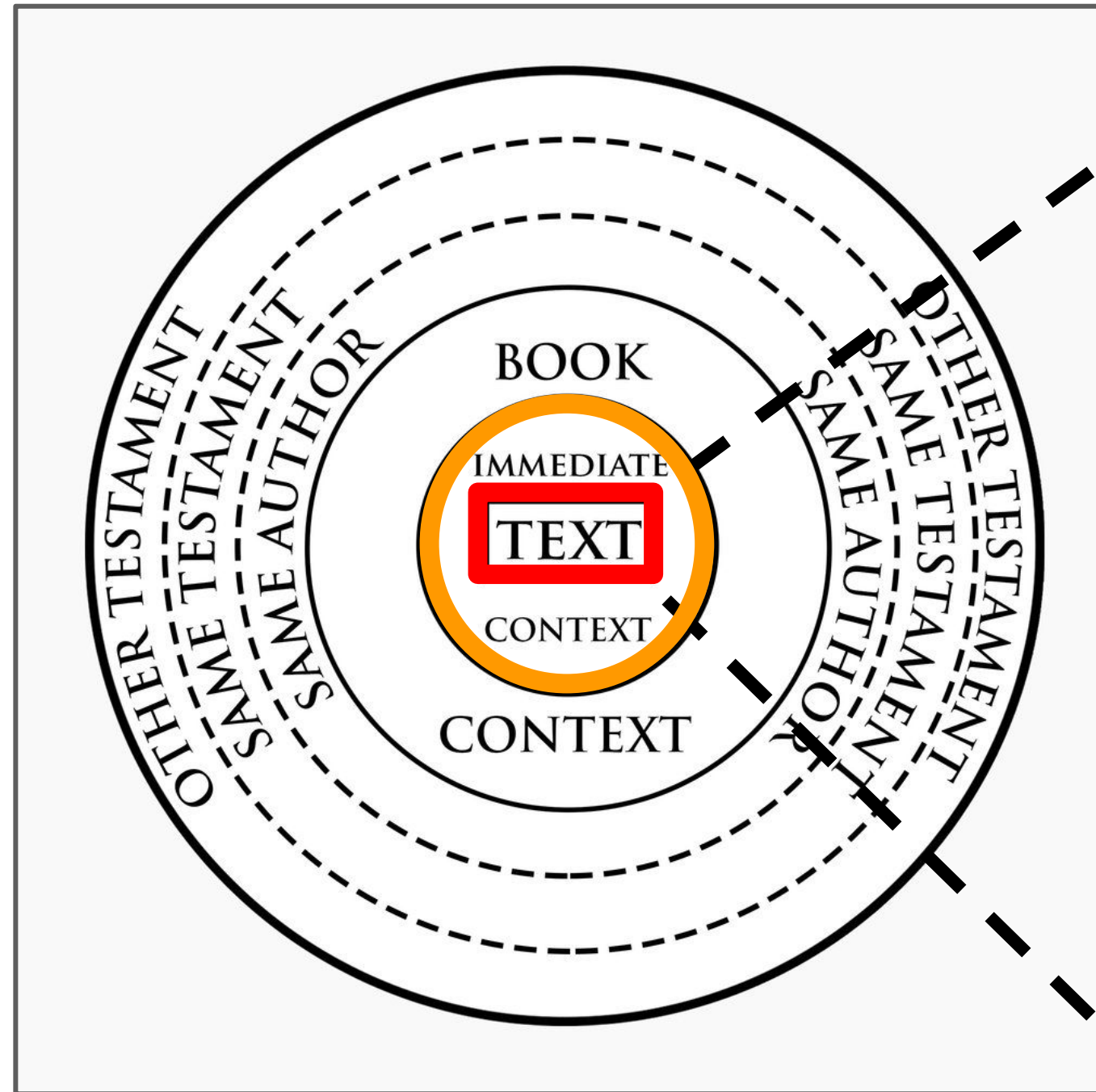
- Epistles and Hebrew Narrative: paragraph
- Poetry: strophe or stanza
- Proverb: overall theme encircling individual proverb
- Prophecy: entire oracle
- Gospel: paragraph (narrative); elsewhere one teaching session, parable, theme

Small Literary Units Roll Up into Larger Units



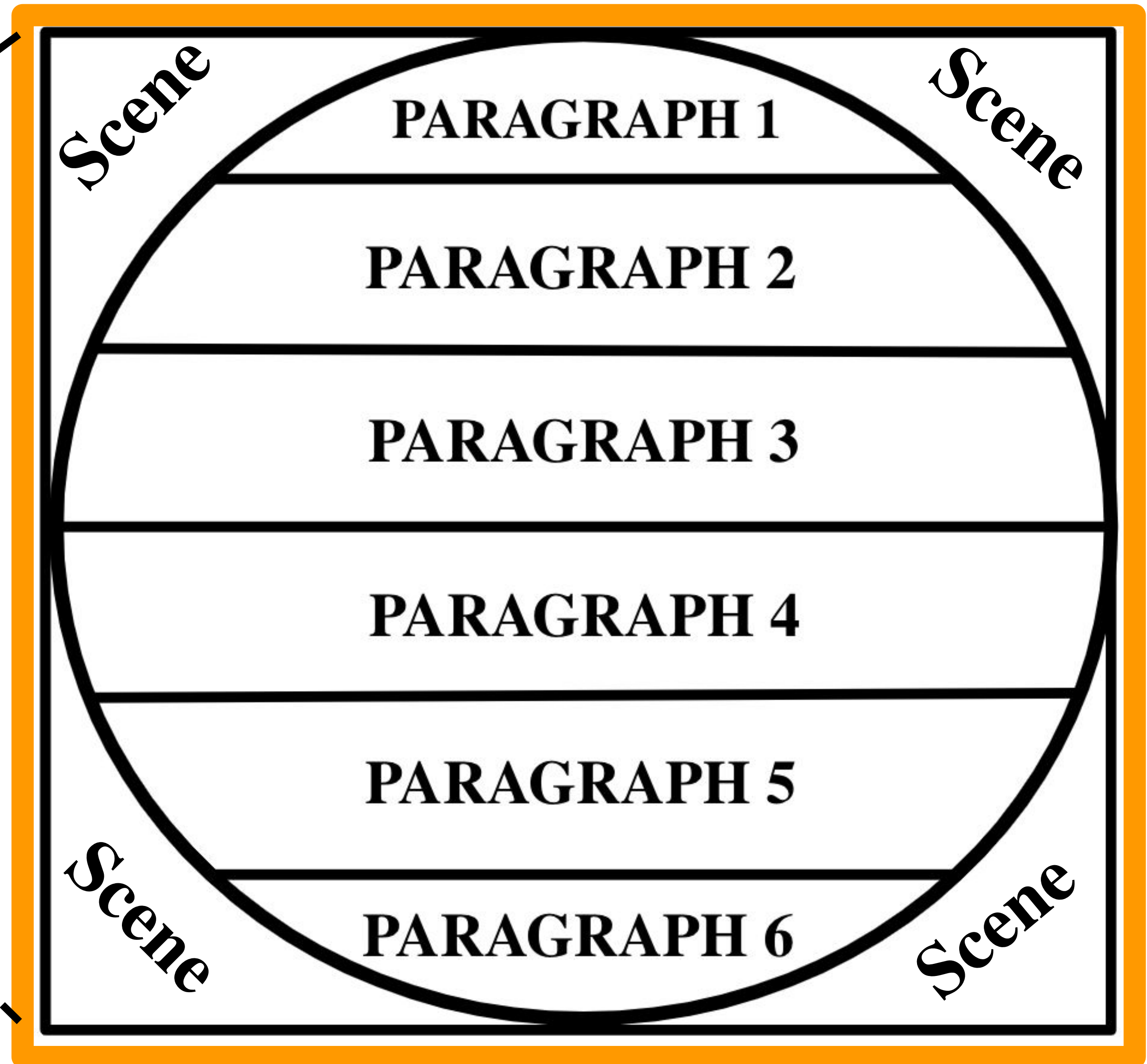
**LITERARY UNITS,
THE SMALLEST OF
WHICH IS THE
PARAGRAPH**

Paragraphs Build to Larger Literary Units



**WE READ IN
PARAGRAPHS NOT
INDIVIDUAL VERSES!**

Larger Literary Unit



Larger Literary Unit

Examples of Larger Literary Units

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW - Five Discourses of Jesus

Narrative

1-4

8:1-9:34

11:2-12:50

13:53-17:27

19:1-23:39

26:1-28:20

(Passion Narrative)

Discourse (Teaching)

5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)

9:35-10:42 (Little Commission)

13:1-52 (Kingdom Parables)

18:1-35 (Church Discourse)

24:1-25:46 (Olivet Discourse)

Text Transition

7:28 (“Jesus had finished”)

11:1 (“Jesus had finished”)

13:53 (“Jesus had finished”)

19:1 (“Jesus had finished”)

26:1 (“Jesus had finished”)

1 Samuel: Literary & Historical Context

1. Come to your Bible reading prayerfully ✓
2. Read the entire book (1 Samuel) ✓

a. Note literary context:

1. Genre: OT Hebrew Narrative (*interpret at paragraph level*)

b. Note historical context

1. Author: Samuel (prophet, judge)
2. Dating: End of period of Judges (approx. 1000 BC)
3. Setting: Israel
4. Culture: 1 Samuel continues the history of the anarchy and moral depravity of the period of the Judges: sin, invasion, prayer for forgiveness, and God's deliverance (Judges 1-17)
5. Theme: God establishes a monarchy and chooses a King

3. Re-read!

- a. Mark out major divisions (literary units or “thought blocks”) of the author. These are identified by changes in subject, time, topic, location, style, etc.**

Analogy Time with Todd



Zoom In for Interpretation, Zoom Out for Themes

● **Samuel** *Entire book as one Literary Unit*

● **Samuel (1-24) Two Major Literary Units**
● **Saul (8-31)**



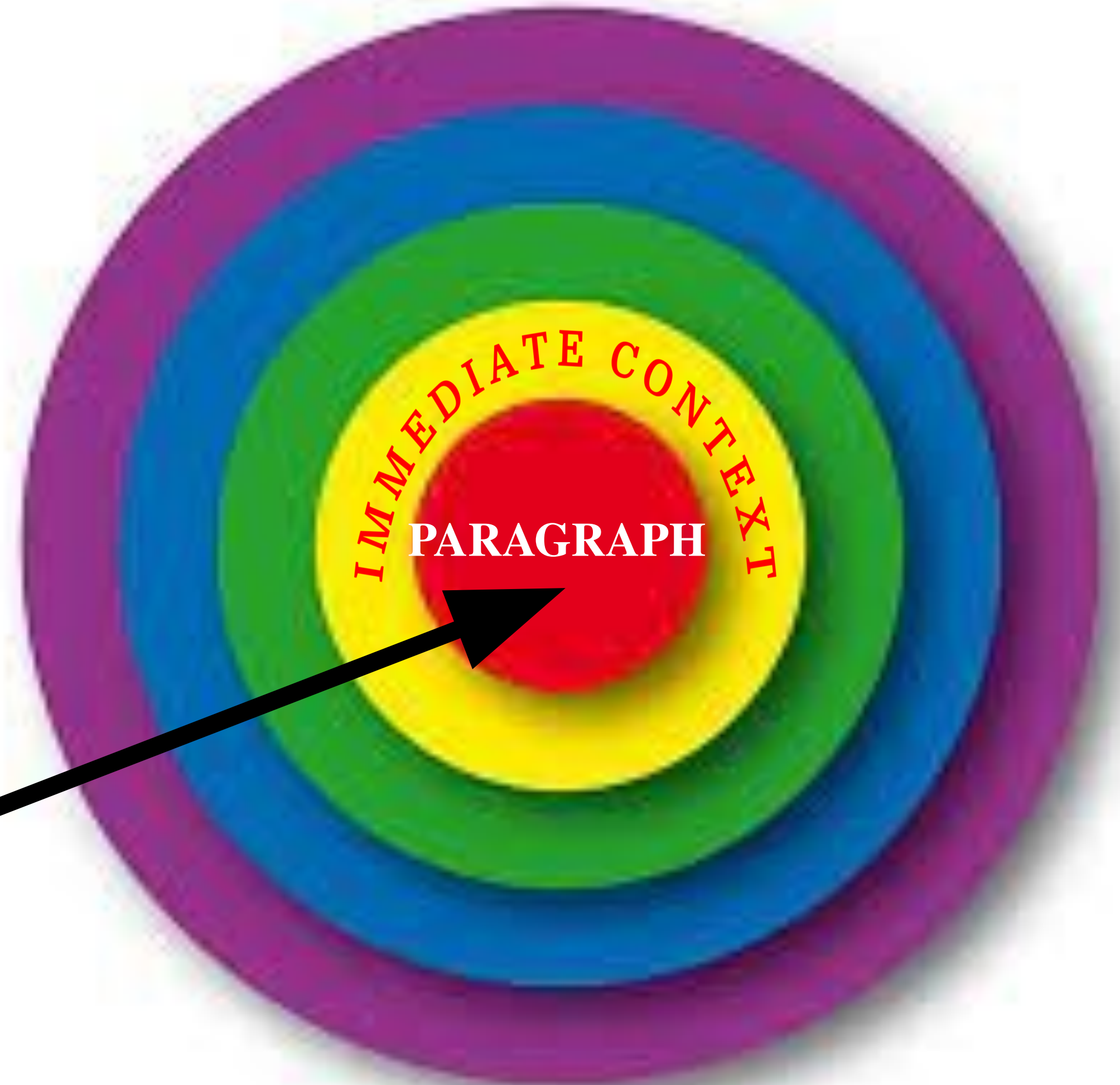
Eli & Samuel (1-7)

Samuel & Saul (8-15)

Samuel & Saul & David (16-24)

Saul & David (25-31)

Four Major Literary Units/Divisions



**EXEGESIS BEGINS AT
PARAGRAPH LEVEL, THE
SMALLEST LITERARY UNIT**

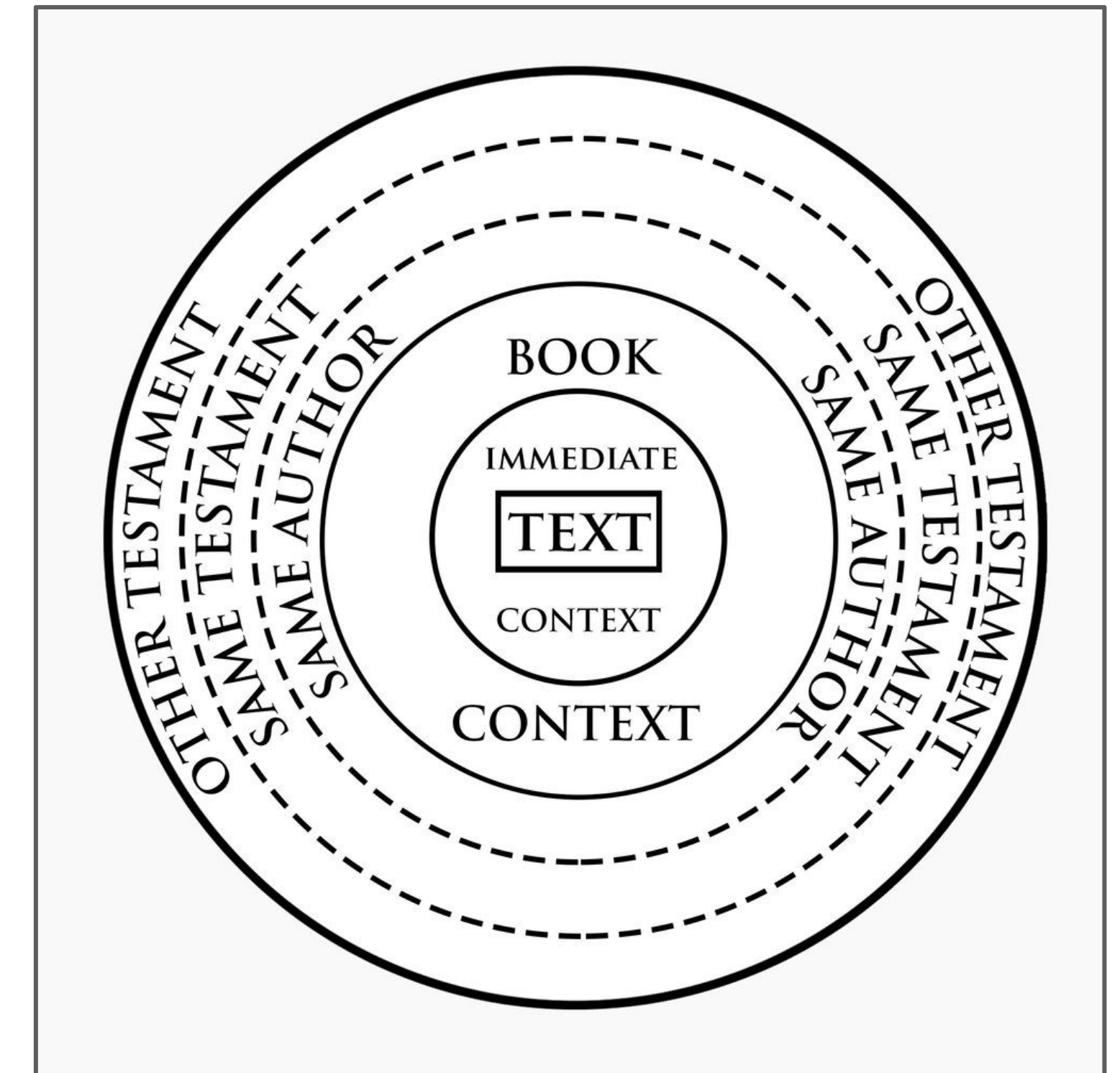
1 Samuel: Zoom In to Paragraphs for Meaning

4. **Identify smallest (minor) literary units** (*paragraphing is already provided in most translations*)

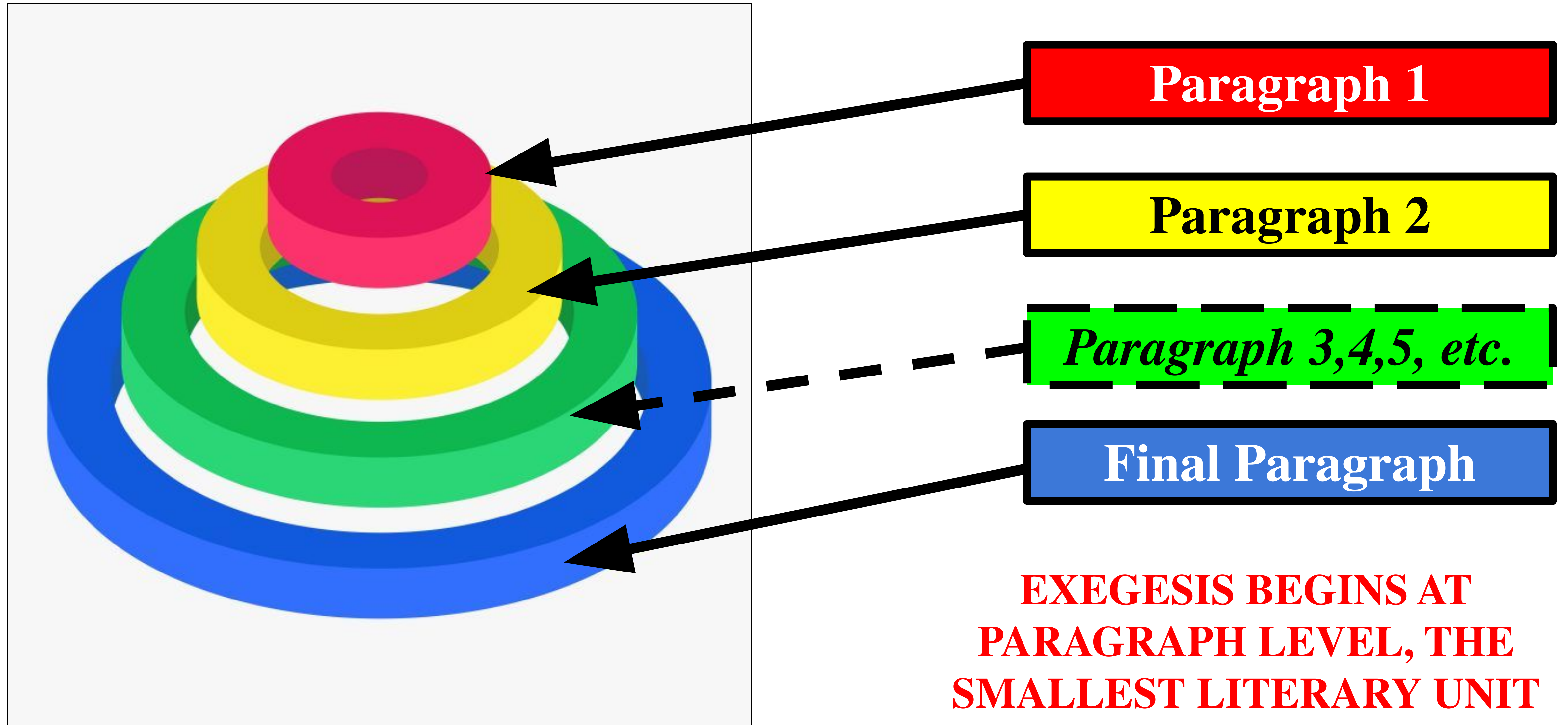
- a. Epistles and Hebrew Narrative (e.g., 1 Samuel): paragraph
- b. Poetry: stophe or stanza
- c. Proverb: overall theme encircling individual proverb
- d. Prophecy: entire oracle
- e. Gospel: paragraph, one teaching session, parable

5. Look for major characters and recurring words or theological terms

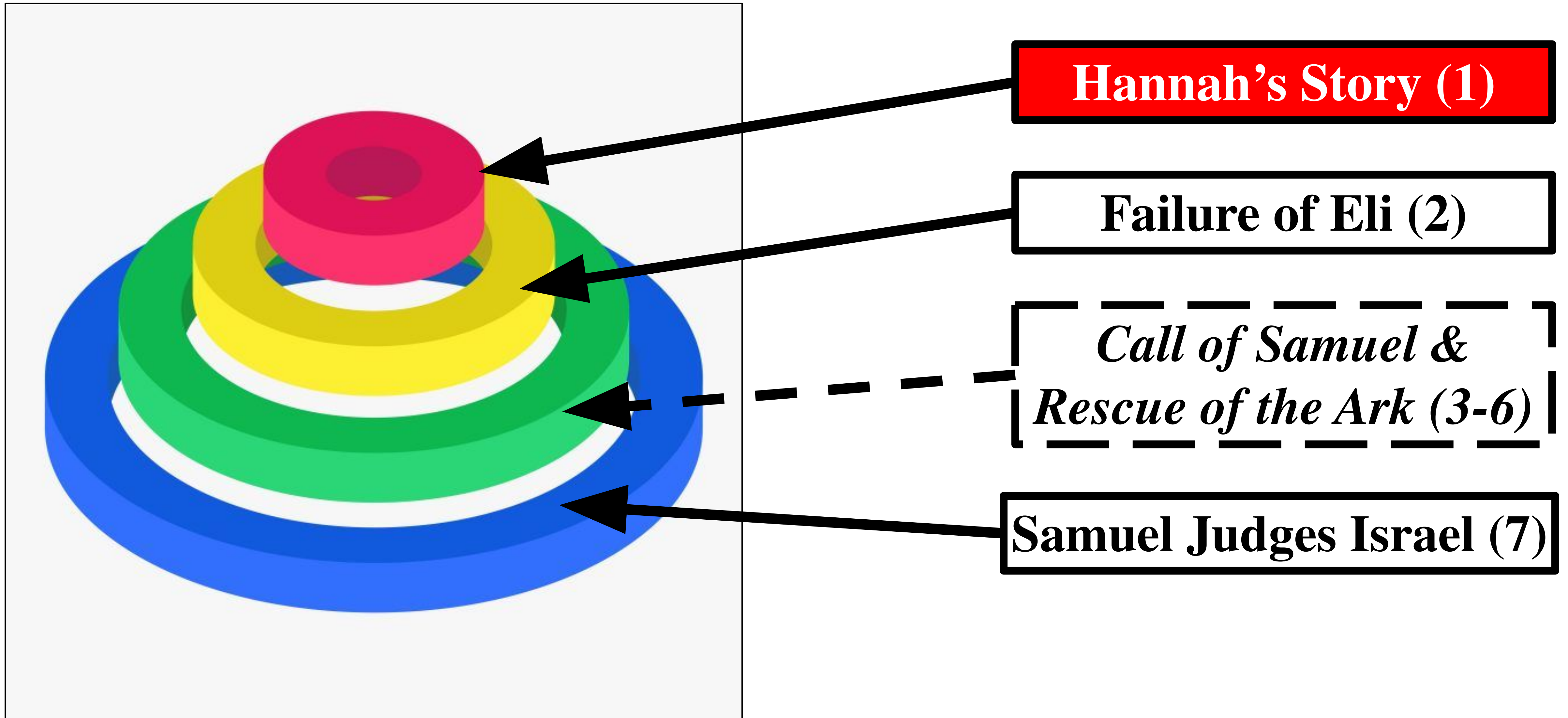
6. **Interpretation moves upward from paragraph/stanza/oracle to larger context of the entire book**



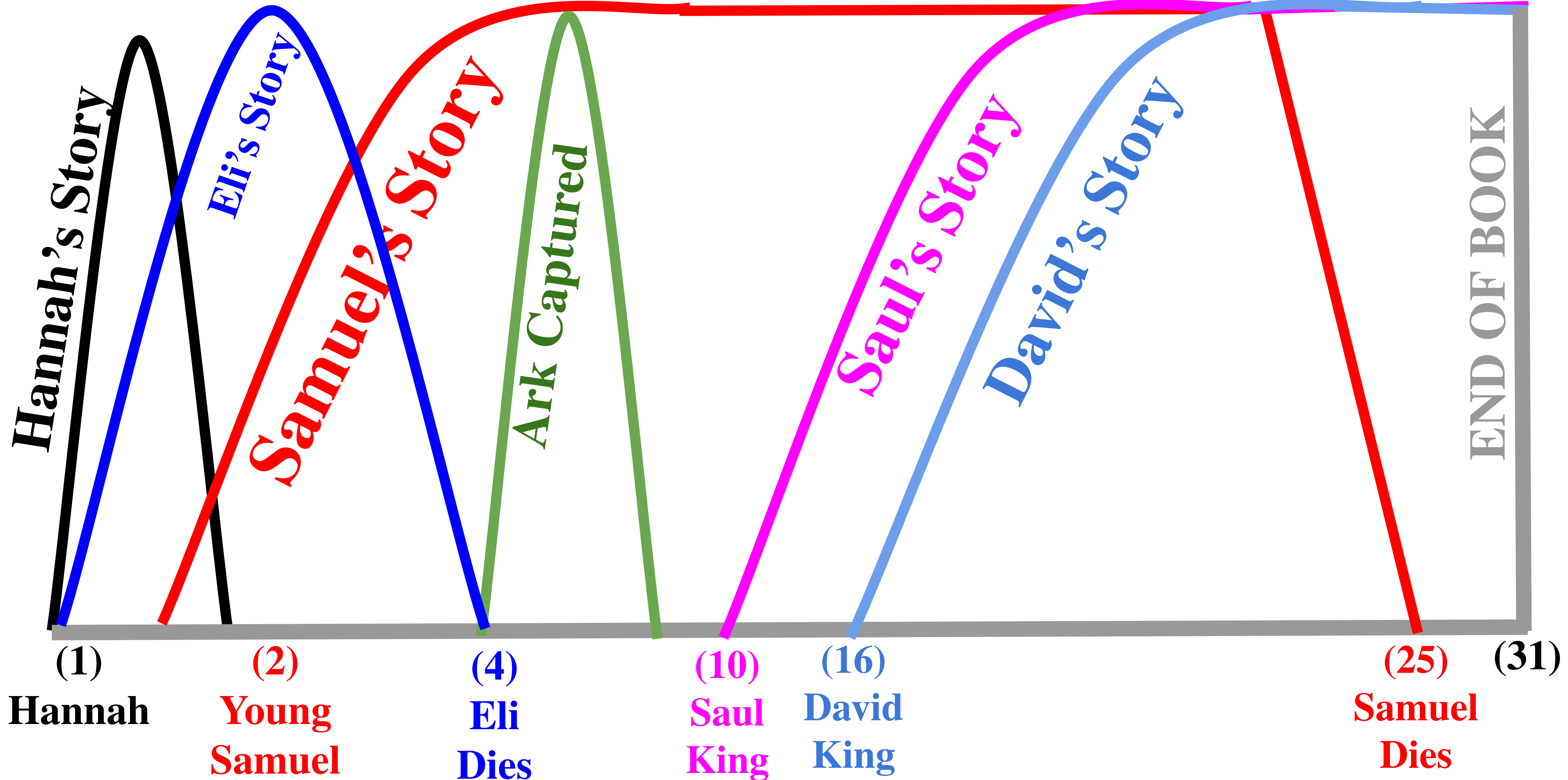
“Hannah’s Story” Forms a Larger Literary Unit



1 Samuel Chapters 1-7: ‘Eli and Samuel’s Story’



Follow the Bouncing Ball of Larger Literary Units



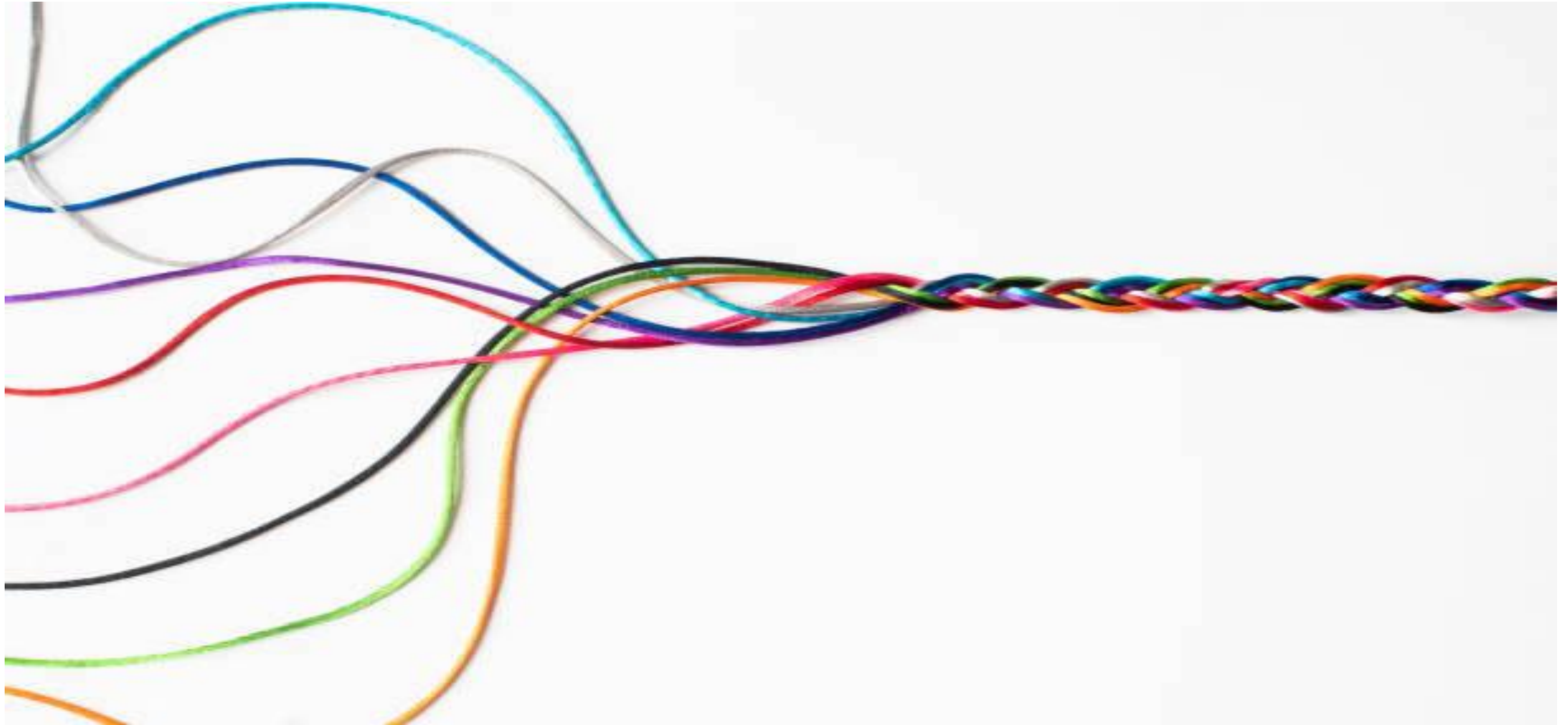
Look for Reccuring Words or Theological Terms

LORD Ark of God **Jesse**
 Priest
King **David**
 Hannah *Israel* Abiathar
Samuel **Saul** Ahimelech
Son **Philistines** *Bethlehem* Abigail
 Offering
Judge Nabal
Eli **Covenant** **Anoint**
 House
People *Keilah*
Shiloh *Mizpah* Jonathan
 Called
 Prophet
Servant Father
Ramah

END OF BOOK

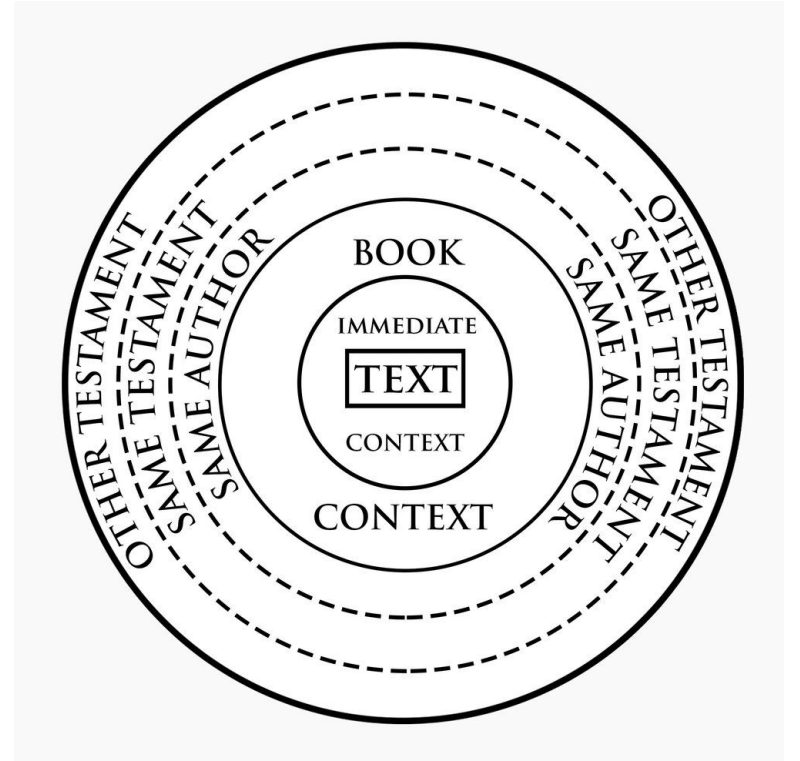
(1) (2) (4) (10) (16) (25) (31)
Hannah **Young Samuel** **Eli Dies** **Saul King** **David King** **Samuel Dies**

Follow Themes Weaving In and Out of Literary Units



Basic Exegetical Steps to Discover Text Meaning

1. **Pray.** We are asking God to give us **illumination** as to what He **revealed** to the **inspired biblical author**.
2. Read the entire book (e.g., **1 Samuel**)
 - a. Note literary genre and the major theme(s) of book - narrative/poetry/gospel/prophecy, etc
 - b. Note historical context - author/date/setting/culture/occasion of book
3. **Re-read!**
 - a. Mark out major divisions (literary units or “thought blocks”) of author.
 - b. Look for changes in subject, time, topic, location, style, etc.
4. Identify smallest (minor) literary units (*paragraphing is already provided in most translations*).
 - a. Epistles and Hebrew Narrative: paragraph
 - b. Poetry: strophe or stanza
 - c. Proverb: overall theme encircling individual proverb
 - d. Prophecy: entire oracle
 - e. Gospel: paragraph (narrative); elsewhere one teaching session, parable, theme
5. Look for major **characters** and recurring **words** or theological **terms** (isolated or pervasive)
6. Interpretation moves upward from paragraph/stanza/oracle to larger context of the entire book
7. Compare text to other books by the same author
8. Compare text to other books of the same period, genre, or Testament
9. Compare text to the Bible as a whole



The Second Tool: Hermeneutics (the *'here and now'* application)

Hermeneutics begins with exegesis and seeks to understand the contemporary relevance of biblical texts for the reader. What are the timeless principles and applications in Scripture for us in the “here and now”?

The true meaning of the biblical text for us is what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken and written. **Application always follows exegesis.**

- (1) Are there examples to follow?
- (2) Are there commands to obey?
- (3) Are there errors to avoid?
- (4) Are there sins to forsake?
- (5) Are there promises to claim?
- (6) Are there new thoughts about God?
- (7) Are there principles by which to live?

Does the *'then and there'* apply in the *'here and now'*?

1. Are there examples to follow? (1 Samuel 1:1-28)

→ Text: Elkanah had two wives (v.1)

◆ Application: No direct application. Polygamy is against God's order (Gen. 1:24)

→ Text: Hannah frequently went to the Tabernacle at Shiloh to petition the LORD (v. 7-28)

◆ Application: *Tabernacle no longer exists, but Hannah is example for persistent prayer in taking our concerns directly to God through our High Priestly Mediator Jesus Christ.*

2. Are there commands to obey?

→ Text: Eli tells Hannah to refrain from drinking wine in Tabernacle (v.14)

◆ Application: No direct application. Eli was mistaken - Hannah was not drunk, but exceedingly sorrowful (v.15-16). Paul, however, warns of the dangers of drunkenness (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18-20) and drinking "wine" if it makes a believer stumble (Rom.14:21)

3. Are there errors to avoid?

→ Text: Eli mistook Hannah's piety for drunkenness.

◆ Application: Don't be rash to judgment. God doesn't judge by appearance, but by heart. (1 Sam. 16:7)

Does the *'then and there'* apply in the *'here and now'*?

4. Are there sins to forsake?

→ Text: Elkanah's first wife treated her sister wife horribly (v.6)

◆ Application: Christians should not mock others but love and pray for them (Matt. 5:11; Matt. 5:43-48)

5. Are there promises to claim? (1 Samuel 1:1-28)

→ Text: Hannah made vow to dedicate her newborn child to the LORD if she conceived (v. 11, 22-28)

◆ Application: When we baptize infants, we are vowing to raise them to be godly followers of Christ

6. Are there new thoughts about God? I'll let you each to mediate upon that question.

7. Are there principles by which to live?

“The story thus far makes it clear that the life and future of a nation depends on the character of the home, and the character of the home depends on the spiritual life of the parents...*Eli and his sons had “religious” homes that were godless, but Elkanah and Hannah had a godly home that honored the Lord, and they gave Him their best...*Never underestimate the power of the home or the power of a little child dedicated to God.” (*Warren Wiersbe, “Wiersbe Bible Commentary”, vol 1. p. 496*)

S.T.O.P. to Discover the Meaning of Any Biblical Text

S. Situation. What's the historical situation? What do you need to know about the people and events in the story? What's the larger context?

T. Type. What's the type (genre) of literature? Is it historical narrative? Poetry? Prophecy? Law? Wisdom? Epistle? What literary devices are being used: Hyperbole? Parable? Metaphor? Apocalyptic Imagery?

O. Object. Who is the object of the text? Everyone? Specific people? Ancient Israel? Is it the Old or New Covenant?

P. Prescription *or* Proscription. Is this passage prescriptive (authorize) or proscriptive (forbid)? Does it apply to us today? Or mere descriptive of an historical event?

C.I.A. Approach

- C**larification:
1. What do I not understand in this text?
 2. What is the historical setting/background/genre?
 3. What words/concepts do not make sense?

Insights: Assuming that God inspired the writing of the Scriptures (which we do) and assuming it accurately represents His own ways, values, thinking, character, etc., one can learn many things about God as one reads through passages.

Caution: one must always keep in mind what one has already discovered about God from the rest of Scripture. If the proposed insight about God is counter to what is known from elsewhere, the “insight” may be erroneous.

Application: In light of what I learn about God, His ways, His values, etc., from what I’ve read, what modifications should I make in my own daily life?

Closing Thoughts

- Exegesis and hermeneutics are interpretive tools, *means not ends*, to our Bible reading. We use these tools to improve our understanding of God's Word. Ultimately the Holy Spirit is the true author of Scripture and illumines our minds.
- **“A Bible that can mean anything, means nothing”.**
- Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture, not our traditions.
- The biggest problem we face in interpreting the Bible, along with the other pitfalls mentioned, is our *sinfulness*. We twist everything, including the Bible, to fit and meet our wants.

Assignment for Week 3

Re-read the entire book of 1 Samuel

Note any major changes in time,
setting, characters, etc.

Week 2

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Context and Content Questions For Every Biblical Text

1. What did the original author say? (*textual criticism* done by Bible translators)
2. What did the original author mean? (*exegetis*, immediate context)
 - a. What did the original author say elsewhere on the same subject? (*exegetis*, parallel passages)
 - b. What did the other biblical authors say elsewhere on the same subject? (*exegetis*, parallel passages)
3. How did the original hearers understand and respond to the message? (original *application*)
4. How does the original message apply to my day? (modern *application*)
5. How does the original message apply to my life? (personal *application*)
6. In light of what I learn about God, his ways, his values, etc., from reading this passage, what modifications should I make in my own daily life?

Things to Consider While Reading The Bible

A. The literary context of the passage

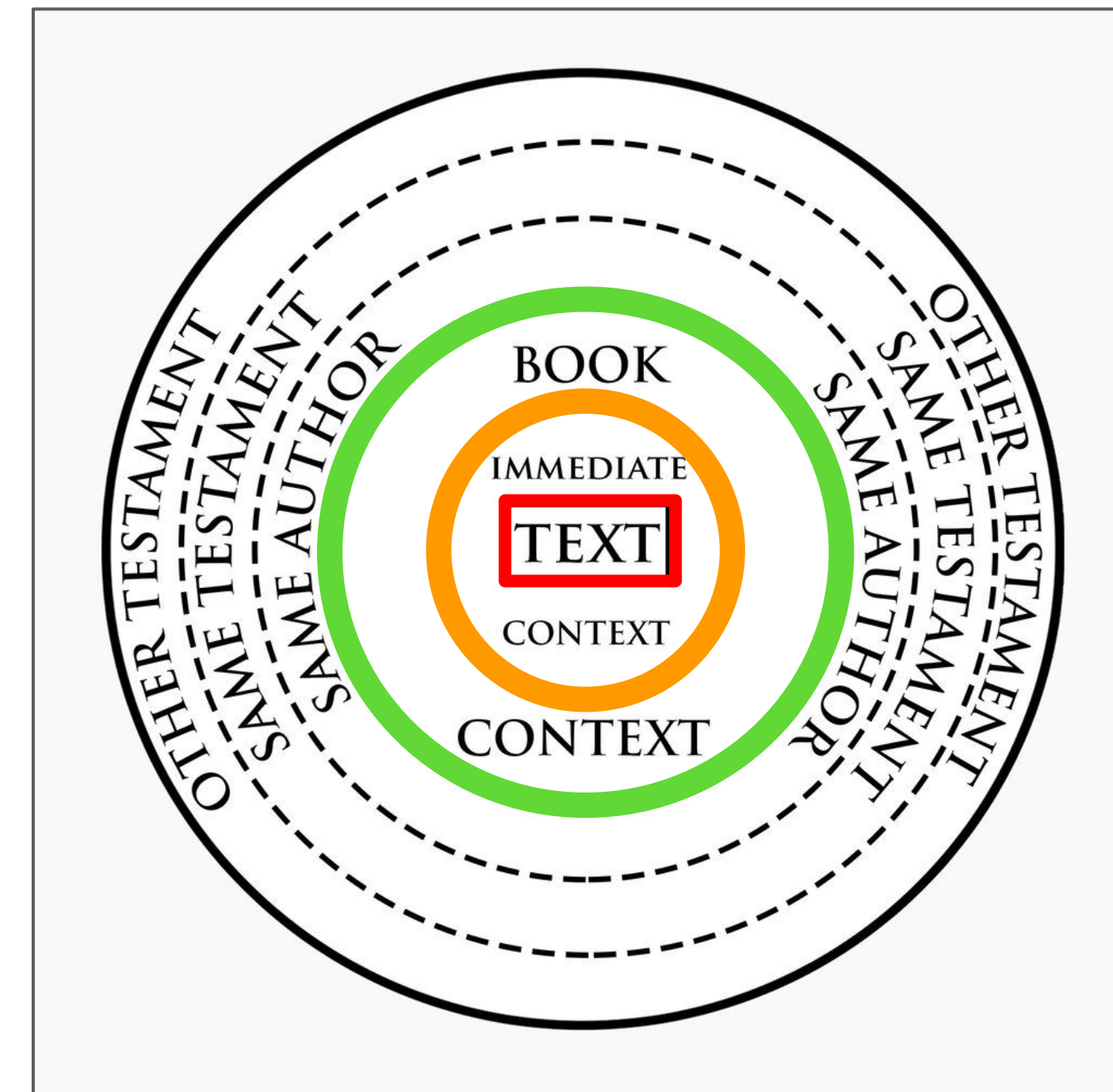
1. immediate (paragraph)
2. several related paragraphs
3. larger literary unit (thought block)
4. entire biblical book (purpose of the author)

B. The historical context of the passage

1. background and setting of the author
2. background and setting of the hearer or reader
3. background and setting of their culture
4. background and setting of any problems addressed in the passage

C. The literary genre (type of literature)

D. The grammar/syntax (relationship of the parts of the sentence to each other and surrounding sentences)



1 Samuel Chapter 1: “Hannah’s Story”



PARAGRAPH 1 (literary unit)

- Hannah has no children

PARAGRAPH 2 (literary unit)

- One wife mocks Hannah for being childless

PARAGRAPH 3 (literary unit)

- Hannah prays for a son and makes a vow to LORD

PARAGRAPH 4 (literary unit)

- Eli prays for sorrowful Hannah to have a child

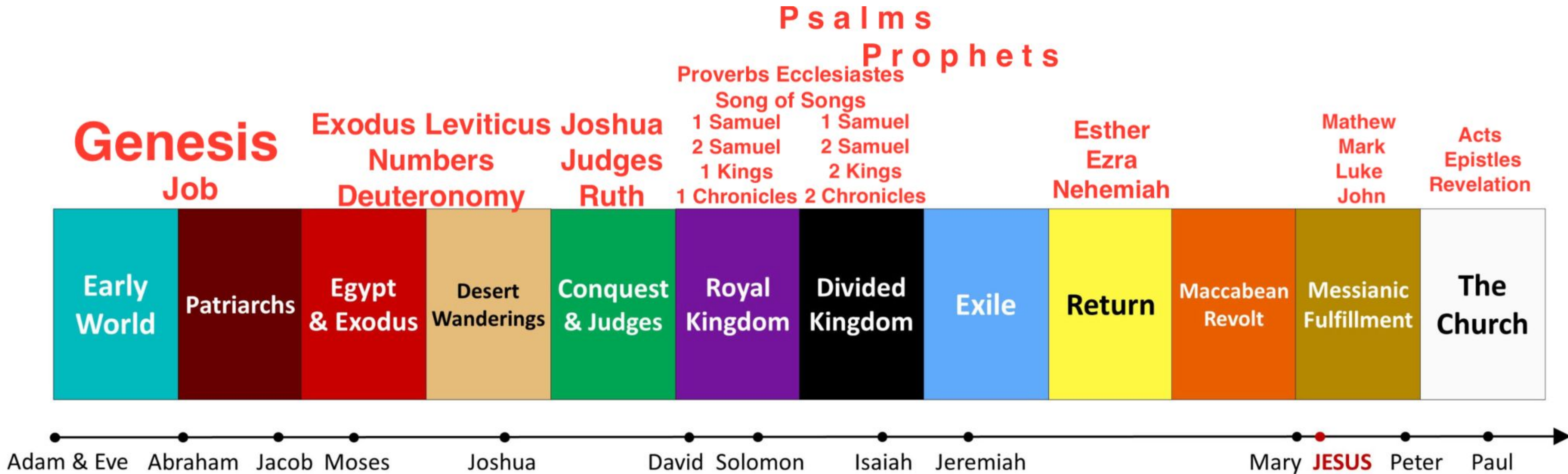
PARAGRAH 5 (literary unit)

- Hannah’s continual prayer answered. Samuel born

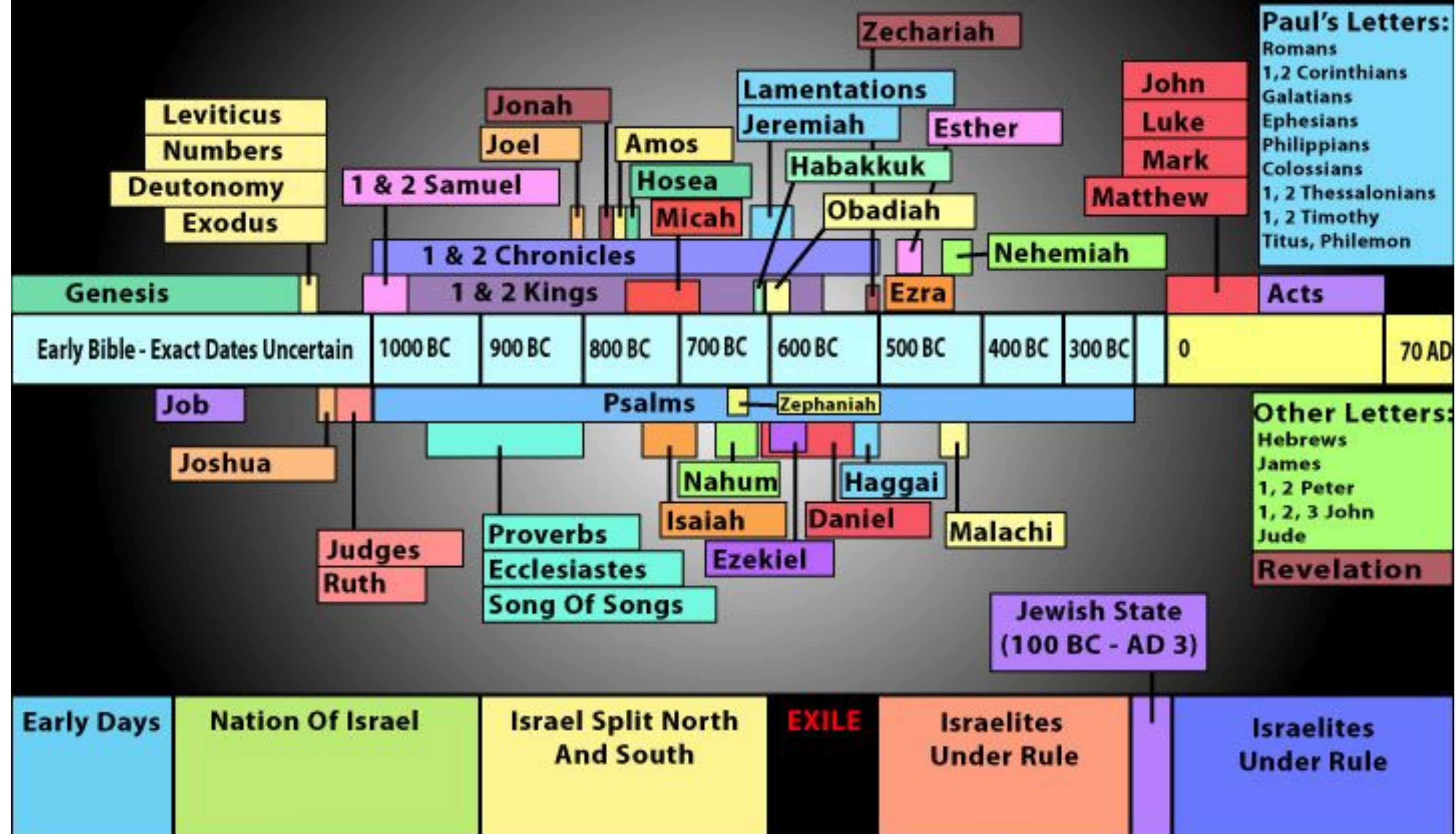
PARAGRAPH 6 (literary unit)

- Hannah dedicates Samuel to the LORD

Simplified Bible Timeline



BIBLE TIMELINE

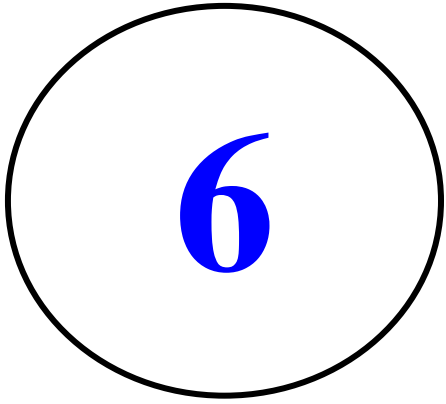
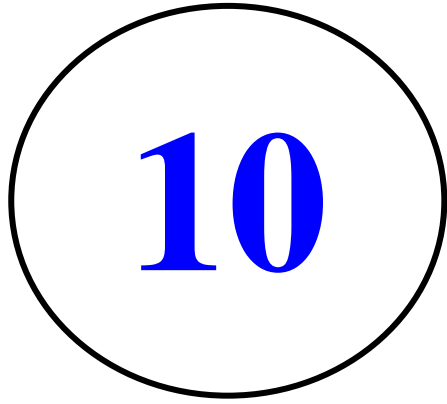
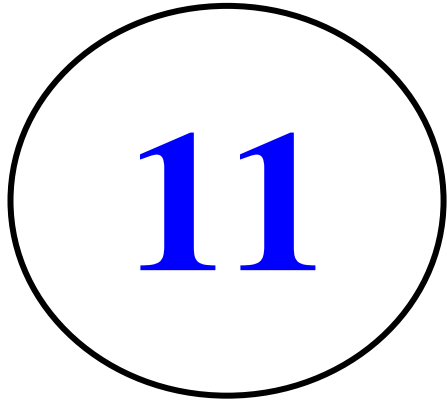


Paragraphing Examples - 1 Samuel 1:1-28

NASB 1995/ESV 2016

NIV 1984

NKJV

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-------|---|-------|
|  | 1-2 |  | 1-2 |  | 1-7 |
| | 3-8 | | 3-8 | | 8 |
| | 9-11 | | 9-11 | | 9-11 |
| | 12-18 | | 12-14 | | 12-14 |
| | 19-20 | | 15-16 | | 15-16 |
| | 21-28 | | 17 | | 17 |
| | | | 18-20 | | 18 |
| | | | 21-22 | | 19-20 |
| | | | 23 | | 21-22 |
| | | | 24-28 | | 23 |
| | | | | | 24-28 |

1 Samuel 1:1-28 Paragraphing (Hannah's son)

NASB95

| <u>Paragraph</u> | <u>Verses</u> | <u>Paragraph Summary</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|------------------|---------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 1-2 | Hannah has no children | Ramah |
| 2 | 3-8 | The second wife mocks Hannah for being childless | Shiloh tabernacle |
| 3 | 9-11 | Hannah prays for a son and makes a vow to LORD | Shiloh tabernacle |
| 4 | 12-18 | Eli prays for sorrowful Hannah to have a child | Shiloh tabernacle |
| 5 | 19-20 | Hannah's continual prayer answered. Samuel born | Ramah |
| 6 | 21-28 | Hannah dedicates Samuel to the LORD | Shiloh tabernacle |

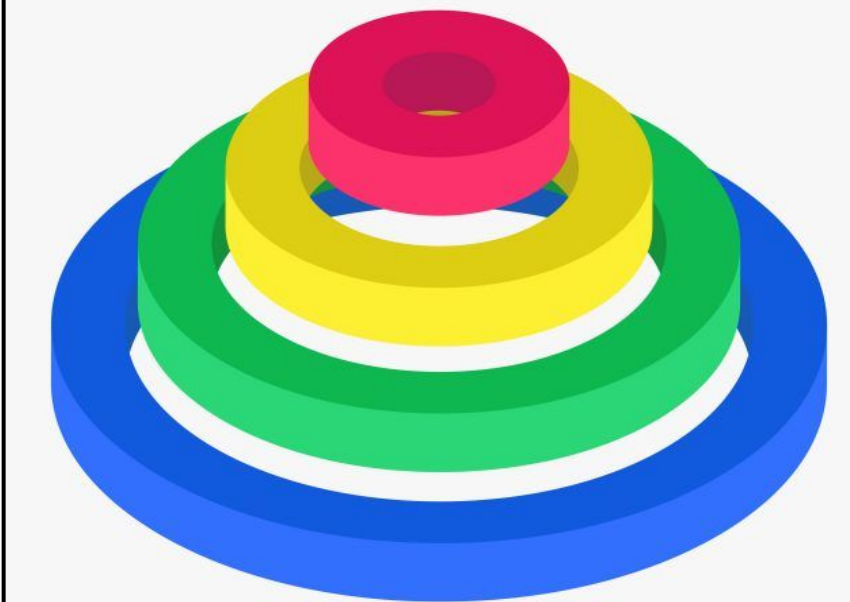
Key Words - LORD (26); Hannah (11); son/s (10); Eli (7); maid-servant (5)

1 Samuel Major Literary Units

I. ELI AND SAMUEL (1-7)

A. Birth of Samuel (Chapter 1)

1. Hannah has no children (1:1-2)
2. The other wife mocks that Hannah for being childless (1:3-8)
3. Hannah prays for a son and makes vow to LORD (1:9-11)
4. Eli prays for sorrowful Hannah to have a child (1:12-18)
5. Hannah's continual prayer answered. Samuel born (1:19-20)
6. Hannah dedicates Samuel to the LORD (1:21-28)
7. Hannah's Song (2:1-2:11)



B. Failure of Eli (2:12-36)

C. The Call of Samuel (3)

D. The Rescue of the Ark (4-6)

E. The Final Judge (7)

7:15-17 “Now Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places. Then his return was to Ramah, for his house was there, and there he judged Israel; and he built there an altar to the Lord.”

II. SAMUEL AND YOUNG SAUL (8-15)

III. SAMUEL AND OLD SAUL AND DAVID (16-24)

IV. OLD SAUL AND DAVID (25-31)

Examples of Larger Literary Units

Sample Outline of Major Literary units in the GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

I. REVELATION OF THE KING (1-10) - *Birth, Preaching, Signs of the Messiah*

A. His Person (1-4) - His Arrival Foretold

1. Genealogy of the Messiah (1:1-17)
2. Angelic Announcement of the Messiah (1:18-25)
3. Magi speak to Herod of the real “King of the Jews” (2:1-12)
4. OT prophecies fulfilled in Jesus (2:13-23)
5. John the Baptist Prepares for the Coming Messiah (3:1-17)
6. Jesus Announces Messianic Kingdom Foretold is Present (4:1-25)

B. His Principles (5-7) - Sermon on the Mount

C. His Power (8-10)

II. REBELLION AGAINST THE KING (11-13) - *Jesus encounters rejection*

III. RETIREMENT OF THE KING (14-20) - *Jesus withdraws to teaching disciples*

OUTLINE

Key theme: The King and His kingdom

Key verses: Matthew 2:2; 4:17

I. THE REVELATION OF THE KING (1—10)

- A. His person—1—4
- B. His principles—5—7
- C. His power—8—10

II. THE REBELLION AGAINST THE KING (11—13)

- A. His messenger rejected—11:1–19
- B. His works denied—11:20–30
- C. His principles refused—12:1–21
- D. His person attacked—12:22–50
- E. Result: the “mysteries of the kingdom”—13

III. THE RETIREMENT OF THE KING (14—20)

(The Lord seeks to leave the multitudes to be alone with His disciples.)

- A. Before Peter’s confession—14:1—16:12
- B. Peter’s confession—16:13–28
(First mention of the cross—16:21)
- C. After Peter’s confession—17:1—20:34
(Second mention of the cross—17:22)
(Third mention of the cross—20:17–19)

IV. THE REJECTION OF THE KING (21—27)

(“The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,” 21:43.)

- A. His public presentation as King—21:1–16
- B. His conflict with the rulers—21:17—23:39
- C. His prophetic message—24—25
- D. His suffering and death—26—27

V. THE RESURRECTION OF THE KING (28)

OUTLINE

Key theme: God’s wisdom

Key verses: 1 Corinthians 2:6–8

I. GREETING (1:1–3)

II. REPROOF: THE REPORT OF SIN IN THE CHURCH (1:4—6:20)

- A. Divisions in the church—1:4—4:21
- B. Discipline in the church—5
- C. Disputes in the courts—6:1–8
- D. Defilement in the world—6:9–20

III. INSTRUCTION: THE REPLY TO THEIR QUESTIONS (7:1—16:12)

- A. Marriage—7
- B. Food offered to idols—8—10
- C. Church ordinances—11
- D. Spiritual gifts—12:1—14:40
- E. The Resurrection—15
- F. The offering—16:1–12

IV. CONCLUSION (16:13–24)

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

| | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| THE LAW | HISTORY 17 | PENTATEUCH 5 | HISTORICAL PENTATEUCH 5 | GENESIS EXODUS LEVITICUS NUMBERS DEUTERONOMY |
| | | HISTORICAL BOOKS 12 | PRE-EXILE HISTORY 9 | JOSHUA JUDGES RUTH I SAMUEL II SAMUEL I KINGS II KINGS I CHRONICLES II CHRONICLES |
| | | | POST-EXILE HISTORY 3 | EZRA NEHEMIAH ESTHER |
| | | POETICAL BOOKS 5 | POETRY (THE HEART) 5 | JOB PSALMS PROVERBS ECCLESIASTES SONG OF SOLOMON |
| THE PSALMS | POETRY 5 | MAJOR PROPHETS 5 | PROPHETICAL PENTATEUCH 5 | ISAIAH JEREMIAH LAMENTATIONS EZEKIEL DANIEL |
| | | MINOR PROPHETS 12 | PRE-EXILE PROPHECY 9 | HOSEA JOEL AMOS OBADIAH JONAH MICAH NAHUM HABAKKUK ZEPHANIAH |
| | | | POST-EXILE PROPHECY 3 | HAGGAI ZECHARIAH MALACHI |

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY 5 | HISTORIC FOUNDATIONS 5 | MATTHEW MARK LUKE JOHN ACTS |
| DOCTRINAL EPISTLES 22 | CHRISTIAN CHURCH EPISTLES 9 | ROMANS I CORINTHIANS II CORINTHIANS GALATIANS EPHESIANS PHILIPPIANS COLOSSIANS I THESSALONIANS II THESSALONIANS |
| | PASTORAL & PERSONAL EPISTLES 4 | I TIMOTHY II TIMOTHY TITUS PHILEMON |
| | HEBREW CHRISTIAN EPISTLES 9 | HEBREWS JAMES I PETER II PETER I JOHN II JOHN III JOHN JUDE REVELATION |