

A Basic Critical-Historical Approach

- Step 1. **Read** the text in different translations.
- Step 2. **Decide what type of literature the text is** (parable, poetry, history, etc.).
What does the type of literature say about the nature of the content?
Is this a literal or a metaphorical statement?
- Step 3. **What is the historical situation?** Use a Bible dictionary and commentary to gain a perspective on
- the setting for the text
 - the author
 - the audience
 - the author's intention
 - the cultural and historical influences on the author
- Step 4. **How is the passage constructed?** Brainstorm the key words, symbols, and images. Check for cross references to other passages. Discuss what each of the parts means to the text. Summarize the message of the text.
- Step 5. **What does the text say about life today?** What are some social and personal issues that relate to the text? How does the text give us a perspective on those contemporary issues?
- Step 6. **What have we learned and what do we plan to do?**

Close the group meeting with prayer.