

## EXEGETICAL PROCESS NOTEBOOK<sup>1</sup>

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PASSAGE: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

“The aim of exegesis is to make as explicit as possible the precise meaning of a text. This is done when the proper connotation of the words and concepts is found and when the text is placed in the context of the presuppositions, questions, and concerns of its author.”  
--A. Malherbe

**Instructions:** Use this template for your investigation of a biblical text and answer the questions thoroughly and with supporting evidence. Include scriptural references for easy referral later when you begin to write your projects. There are no page limits for any of the steps, just be satisfied that you have adequately gathered all that you can (time permitting).

This “Exegetical Process Notebook” is your *WORK PRODUCT* that lays the foundation for the final course project. It is *NOT* the project itself, but it contains everything you need to know about your passage before you decide (1) which theological connections to make in a sermon, (2) key points to explain in a bible study, emphasize in staff training, or include in support of a conference topic, and (3) what private and public attitudes/behaviors best reflect the character of Christ.

### Important Working Assumptions:

1. Always start with “what” questions before attempting to answer “why” or “how.”
2. Always do your own close reading first before referring to a commentary or secondary scholarly resource.
3. Recognize that what you think initially about a text (without prayerful critical reflection) is not the same as what the Holy Spirit intends. Let each author and each passage have its own voice within its own context before ever attempting to apply it to yourself or a ministry context.
4. The original audience is different from us in most every way possible except for their basic human condition and need of Christ. This includes language, culture, social values and norms, religious worldview, politics, family structure, etc. Consider this notebook as your *PASSPORT* into the foreign country of the original human author and recipients. Do not assume you will understand the language or customs of these ancient peoples without preparing for this journey.
5. The nature of inspiration is such that God used every day, flawed individuals to preserve a trustworthy/true authoritative message that is efficacious for salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Dr. William Barclay, Gordon Conwell  
<http://www.gordonconwell.edu/charlotte/current/documents/chareg-nt502-barclay-su12.pdf>  
Accessed Sept. 1, 2016. Also, from Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Third edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. Refer to the appropriate sections of Fee’s text for further clarifications and discussions.

Thus, eventually shift your attention *from* solving the identity of the original author *to* understanding the message being conveyed.

6. With every interpretive act you are creating sacred space in which to encounter a free and living God.
7. Do not assume the message will simply reaffirm cherished beliefs. Surprisingly at times, God's message is just as much a word *against* us as a word *for* us.

## STEP 1. SURVEY THE GENERAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Read the entire document through in English in one sitting (aloud), considering the specific prompt questions in the syllabus (Week 1): YES X NO\_\_\_\_\_

1.1 AUTHOR. (a) **What do you observe about the identity of the author and his circumstances?** (b) **What else do you know about the life of the author and his situation at the time of writing that might influence the exegesis of this text?**

*Always start with the biblical book in front of you. You can learn quite a bit about the author from his own words (e.g., does his language skill reflect a high level of education, does he appear to quote the Scriptures directly from the Hebrew Bible or has he altered the text in some way (may indicate the use of the Greek Septuagint), is he in prison or under duress of some kind, etc.). Make your own observations; then check the secondary literature (New Testament and Old Testament Introductions, Critical Commentaries, Critical Bible Dictionaries) to see what they add to your initial observations.*

**Who was the Author?** He (Paul) made himself known at the start of the epistle. He was writing the passage along with his friends Silvanus and Timothy.

**Where was the Author?** It seems like they were quite far from the church in Thessalonica. For them to mention hearing words about the Thessalonian church all the way from Macedonia and Achaia, shows that they've covered quite a bit of distance from Thessalonica. They might have been in Athens since Chapter 3:1 says that they were at Athens at one point when they initially sent Timothy back to Thessalonica.

**What are the conditions/situations of the author?** Chapter 2:2, Paul writes that they were in Philippi and have been mistreated there. Paul had previously shared the gospel with the people from Thessalonica and lived life with them. Paul was thankful to God that their labor was not in vain.

He didn't seem to be in prison yet. His words didn't have some sort of urgency behind it. Although Chapter 2:17 may imply otherwise.

1.2. RECIPIENTS: (a) **What are your observations about the identity of the recipients?** *Be careful to base your observations on what the text says, not what you have always heard.* (b) **Are there any hints about their ethnicity or socioeconomic and cultural contexts?** (c) **Where do the recipients live?** *Are there direct or indirect hints that help you identify the geographic region?* (d) **What are their present**

**circumstances? (e) What historical situation occasioned this writing? (f) What is the relationship between the author and the recipients?**

*Hypothesize about the answers to these questions from your observations. If you are unable to answer any of these questions give an initial reason why not. Perhaps the text only provides suggestive clues with gaps you will need to fill in with caution.*

**What are your observations about the identity of the recipients?** (ch1:1) Thessalonian church  
**Are there any hints about their ethnicity or socioeconomic and cultural contexts?**

Greco-Roman, Low-income or lower class (may include slaves) – 2:2.

**Where do the recipients live?** Thessalonica, Macedonia

**What are their present circumstances?** They live in a place with lots of Trading since it's a port town.

**What historical situation occasioned this writing?** None directly from the text.

**What is the relationship between the author and the recipients?** Paul was their previous Teacher of the gospel

**1.3 PURPOSE: (1) What can you discern about the author's purpose for writing?**

Does the author explicitly say anything about it, or is the purpose implied (through suggestive clues)? *Be attentive here. Authors share certain preunderstandings with their audience that need not be stated (i.e., the author and recipients are privy to information well-known to each that we would have no way of knowing). Your job will be to make the implicit clear, i.e., what is implied needs to be explained carefully.* (2) **What is the overall theme or concern?** *Did you notice words or ideas that were frequently repeated? Did you notice special word choices or exhortations/ideas that fit the overall presentation? What might these repetitions, vocabulary, or ideas tell you about the purpose of the writing?* (3) **Does the argument or narrative have an easily discerned outline, or does it seem to be a loose, thematic collection of sayings or teachings** (e.g. Sermon on the Mount or James)? *You need not work out the outline here, just observe!*

**What can you discern about the author's purpose for writing?**  
state the purpose of his writing.

Paul didn't explicitly

**What is the overall theme or concern?**

The epistle to Thessalonica, in parts, seem to resemble a *letter of praise, letter of thanksgiving, and letter of instruction*. Praises and commendation seemed to be repeated quite often throughout the passage. Even in chapter 4(1<sup>st</sup> half of instructions in all of 1 Thes), there were quite a bit of statements regarding what the Thessalonian church is already doing or already knows.

**Does the argument or narrative have an easily discerned outline, or does it seem to be a loose, thematic collection of sayings or teachings** I believe the epistle can be outlined. He starts out with introduction, thanksgiving, praise, instruction, and then closing.

## STEP 2. CONFIRM THE LIMITS OF YOUR PASSAGE.

Decide where your *pericope* [i.e., “self-contained unit”] begins and ends. *Examine whether or not the paragraphs and divisions in your bibles correctly reflect the limits of your chosen passage.*

For non-language students, it is best to compare the paragraphing of several modern translations (e.g. NRSV, TNIV, NET, AV, NASB, NKJV, etc. Fee, p. 12). Where do the translation differ as far as paragraph length and divisions? Then decide for yourself what the basic unit is. (Your conclusions should be based on your own observations from these texts). *The final decision is part of the exegetical process. Choose passages approximately 5-10 verses for a project this size.*

“The passage I intend to investigate is 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10.”  
(E.g. John 2:1-11, the narration of the wedding at Cana)

## STEP 3. BECOME THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR PARAGRAPH/PERICOPE (Fee, 12).

3.1. Read the paragraph through in 5-7 translations and *note the differences* among the translations. Copy these translations and mark well these differences using colored highlights. *List the differences here.* (WHY DO THIS STEP? Without knowledge of biblical languages one can miss the different options translators have when moving from one language to another. *THERE IS NO ONE TO ONE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGES.*)

For example:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, (Phil. 2:5 NRS)

You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had (Phi 2:5 NET)

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (Phi 2:5 ESV)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: (Phi 2:5 NIV)

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, (Phi 2:5 NAB)

Translation	Verse
ESV 1Thes 1:2	We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,
NIV 1Thes 1:2	We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.
NET 1Thes 1:2	We thank God always for all of you as we mention you constantly in our prayers,
NRSV 1Thes1:2	We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly
NASB 1Thes1:2	We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;
ESV 1Thes 1:3	remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
NIV 1Thes 1:3	We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
NET 1Thes 1:3	because we recall in the presence of our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
NRSV 1Thes1:3	remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
NASB 1Thes1:3	constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,
ESV 1Thes 1:4	For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,
NIV 1Thes 1:4	For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you,
NET 1Thes 1:4	We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you,
NRSV 1Thes1:4	For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you,
NASB 1Thes1:4	knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;
ESV 1Thes 1:5	because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.
NIV 1Thes 1:5	because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.
NET 1Thes 1:5	in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you).
NRSV 1Thes1:5	because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake.
NASB 1Thes1:5	for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.
ESV 1Thes 1:6	And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
NIV 1Thes 1:6	You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.
NET 1Thes 1:6	And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received <sup>[m]</sup> the message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, despite great affliction.
NRSV 1Thes1:6	And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit,
NASB 1Thes1:6	You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

ESV 1Thes 1:7	so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
NIV 1Thes 1:7	And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.
NET 1Thes 1:7	As a result you became an example <sup>[a]</sup> to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
NRSV 1Thes1:7	so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
NASB 1Thes1:7	so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
ESV 1Thes 1:8	For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.
NIV 1Thes 1:8	The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it.
NET 1Thes 1:8	For from you the message of the Lord <sup>[a]</sup> has echoed forth not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread, <sup>[a]</sup> so that we do not need to say anything.
NRSV 1Thes1:8	For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it.
NASB 1Thes1:8	For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.
ESV 1Thes 1:9	For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,
NIV 1Thes 1:9	for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,
NET 1Thes 1:9	For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God
NRSV 1Thes1:9	For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God,
NASB 1Thes1:9	For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,
ESV 1Thes 1:10	and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
NIV 1Thes 1:10	and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.
NET 1Thes 1:10	and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath
NRSV 1Thes1:10	and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.
NASB 1Thes1:10	and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

**3.2 Determine which of these differences are exegetically significant** (e.g. are the differences a matter of synonyms, grammar, stylistic or theological preference, or textual criticism? Do these differences alter the meaning in any way? Does a particular translation have slightly different theological implications? Which is closer to the original author's meaning given the overall argument?)

*Exegetical differences:* For the most part, I believe the differences in the translation could be a matter of grammar, stylistic, and synonyms. Those that aren't will be discussed in the "Exegetically Significant" portion in 3.2.

*Exegetically significant:* (that could alter the meaning or emphasis of the passage)

**Still in development Verse 2**

The translations pretty much convey the same meanings. The difference appears in the *frequency, occurrence, and length (of time)* of the word "mention": mentioning of the Thessalonian church in the prayer of Paul(et al.). ESV and NET changes the structure to frequency of occurrence in the prayer. In NIV the prayer seem to have a lengthy part of mentioning the church. In NRSV and NASB, the mentioning of the church seemed to only occur once in Paul's prayers.

NRSV used the adverb *constantly* to modify the verb "remembering" in Verse 3. NIV ended the sentence to start a new one in Verse 3.

*In the above example, notice the difference between the choice of "same mind," "same attitude," "same mindset," or "this mind." Do these synonyms mean the same thing? What does each add to the meaning of the text? Notice the words in green: What is the difference between "in you," "toward one another," "among yourselves," and "in your relationships with one another"? What difference might these observations make in a sermon?*

**Explain these differences as far as you can** (develop a hypothesis of which translation you think is the best rendering of the passage and explain why this hypothesis best explains these differences based on supporting evidence). *Pay particular attention to marginal notes that usually refer to matters of textual criticism. NET translator notes (included in the Accordance package) are particularly helpful.*

*You will be coming back to these initial observations to check your initial ideas with a good critical commentary for deeper insight. Hypotheses can always be revised the more you investigate.*

## **STEP 4: LITERARY CONTEXT**

**4.1 Identify the particular literary character of the document** (i.e., narratives, psalms, law, Gospel, prophecy, epistle, apocalypse, etc.) and be alert to the fact that specific genre issues will arise.

For **epistles**, do you suspect the letter is *ad hoc* (addressing a specific local situation), formal (perhaps meant for a wider general audience), casual (friendly and exhortative), or perhaps more representative of a treatise or extended sermon

(e.g. Hebrews) than a letter (Fee, 17)? *This observation is foundational before working through the next steps.*

For **narratives**, is your pericope/passage a narration of an event or a specific teaching/saying aimed at a particular group or character (e.g., parable, prophetic utterance, poetic utterance, etc.)? Consider whether this story or saying employs metaphor, overstatement, irony, etc. that will need further investigation (Fee, 23-24; *See Step 5.2 for the rhetorical discussion*).

WHY DO THIS STEP? *You are not going to approach a letter in the same way you approach a narrative that has character, plot, and dialogue. You would not interpret a psalm in the same way you would interpret one of the commandments of Moses. There are different expectations and techniques associated with different kinds of literature*

**4.2 Pay detailed attention to the unique characteristics of your passage's genre** (refer to the appropriate section in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* and the power point presentations throughout the course):

1. **(Epistle) To what formal structure of an ancient letter does your particular text belong?** *For a quick overview visit [http://www2.ferrum.edu/dhowell/txt\\_cntxt/](http://www2.ferrum.edu/dhowell/txt_cntxt/) and click the "pathway" tab on the left and follow the directions. Is it part of the initial greeting? Is it part of the thanksgiving period typical of Paul's letters? Will this affect your exegesis in any way? (Fee, 17).*
2. **(Narrative) Does your narrative describe an event, highlight a character/s, include dialogue, sayings, OT quotations or allusions, attitudes to emulate or avoid, etc.** **(a)** How does the dialogue and interaction of characters illumine attitudes or behavior? **(b)** Does the event highlight something presented earlier in the text, or does it prepare us for something about to follow? **(c)** If you removed your passage from the larger narrative, how would our understanding of this event or saying be affected? *Be careful of over exegeting and making the section say more than it does.*



<sup>11</sup> He **came** to what was **his own**,  
and **his own** people did not accept him. HUMAN CONDITION (REJECTION)

<sup>12</sup> But to **all** who received him,  
who believed in his name,  
he gave power to become children of God, GOD'S REVERSAL/INITIATIVE

<sup>13</sup> who were born,  
not of blood  
or of the will of the flesh  
or of the will of man,  
but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word **became** flesh and lived among **us**, POINT WHERE WORD BECOMES  
and **we** have seen his glory, SOMETHING IT WAS NOT INITIALLY  
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. WHO ARE THE "WE/US"?

ASIDE ON  
JN the BAPT

<sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out,  
"This was he of whom I said,  
'He who **comes** after me ranks ahead of me because he **was** before me.")

<sup>16</sup> From his fullness **we** have all received, grace upon grace.

<sup>17</sup> The **law** indeed **was given** through Moses; RELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND  
**grace** and **truth came** through Jesus Christ. EFFICACY OF GRACE

<sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God.

It is God the only Son,  
who is close to the Father's heart,  
who has **made him known**. (Joh 1:1-18 NRS) SON AS DIVINE REVEALER

Outline: John 1:1-18

- I. Christological Encomium/Hymn
  - a. 1:1-2 Introduction to the pre-incarnate existence ("isness") of a personified Word
  - b. 1:6-4 The Word is an active agent in the world's creation (thus, not a created being)
  - c. 1:5 Light is juxtaposed with darkness; but light is stronger
  - d. 1:6-8 [1<sup>st</sup> Aside] Role of John the Baptist: to testify to the light
  - e. 1:9-13 Discussion of the human condition of blindness that lead to rejecting the light;  
But God has a plan of adoption through faith
  - f. 1:14 Pivotal point in history: The Word BECAME flesh in spite of identity with God
  - g. 1:15 [2<sup>nd</sup> Aside] Content of John's testimony: Jesus is the greater than me
  - h. 1:16-17 Complementary relationship between Law, truth, and grace: Made possible through  
The one who dwelt among "us" (eyewitnesses?)
  - i. 1:18 Jesus introduced now in his role as the revealer of God's nature and will
- II. John's Ministry . . . (as you continue to pay attention to the outline of an entire book)

## STEP 5: LITERARY ANALYSIS

### 5.1 STRUCTURE, SYNTAX, AND LOGIC OF ARGUMENT.

#### WHY DO THIS STEP?

*Every author has a structure in mind when writing a narrative or letter. Note how the author prepares the hearer-reader for what follows (Ask yourself, “What leads into my text?” and “What leads out of this text?”). There is always some logical coherence and structure in the way a letter or story is told. Our job is to figure out this structure and determine how our passage functions to communicate a particular theological perspective.*

**5.1.1. Analyze the structure of your pericope.** You may use a “sentence flow” or “sentence diagram” method (cf. Fee, 41-58). *The idea is to clarify the flow of the author’s argument or story. Highlight (color code) repeated words or concepts, pay attention to syntactical relationships, look for chiasmic or any other types of organizing structures (see John 1:1-18 example above).*

*Use your own method for organizing and asking questions. Think logically and grammatically. Exegesis is about asking good questions. Questions about structure include:*

- a. Adverbial questions answer: *When? Why? Under what conditions/circumstances? How? Where? For what purpose? Etc.*
- b. Adjectival questions answer: *What kind of? Which? How many? Whose?*
- c. Pay attention to coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. *Coordinate conjunctions--and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet--are button words that hook like things together (e.g. coordinate clauses, subjects, verbs, etc.). Subordinate conjunctions—although, as, because, if, in order that, when, after, before--are button words that hook unlike things together (e.g. a main clause followed by a subordinate clause).*

#### Example: Luke 1:1-4

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account

ANSWERS WHY WRITE? Gives the reason for writing)

of the events

WHAT KIND OF ACCOUNT?

that have been fulfilled among us,

WHICH EVENTS?

<sup>2</sup> just as they were handed on to us

HOW RECEIVED? Gives manner/circumstances of reception.

by those

CIRCUMSTANCES/AGENCY

who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word

WHAT KIND OF AGENTS?  
Gives credentials

from the beginning, WHEN?

I too decided . . . to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

MAIN, INDEPENDENT SENTENCE (Main Idea)

after investigating everything carefully from the very first,

WHEN?  
HOW?  
HOW LONG?

so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

WHY?

5.1.2 Write a summary here of the information you can derive from your structure above. What lexical, syntactical or other structural indicators are important and why?

5.1.3 **Set out briefly the logic and content of your text** (How does the author unfold each step in his argument? At what point does he reach the main thought or idea?). Show the significance of your paragraph in the overall development of the argument/exhortation/story, etc? (Fee, 19-20).

WHY DO THIS STEP?

*It is an unfortunate truth that most pastors and seminary students can describe the content of a biblical passage, but they have no clue as to the development of a biblical author's argument or position. This leads to misunderstandings and a proliferation of clichés that have no power to address the needs of the contemporary context. Do you know the strategy that drives the development of the argument in 1 Thessalonians or Romans? Can you articulate it clearly?*

*For example, it is one thing to describe the introduction of Jesus as a cosmic figure in John 1:1-18 who comes to earth to reveal God through his own enfleshment, it is quite another to understand how this introduction prepares us for what follows. Why is 1:1-18 followed by testimony ("This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, 'Who are you.?'") How does testimony function in this ancient Jewish culture? It must be important because it is embedded within the prologue alerting us to John's role as testifier to the light. What is the significance that the first public testimony of John is that "I-AM not the Christ" and that every use of "I-AM" afterwards is Jesus' own testimony to who he is? Testimony is scattered throughout the Gospel in strategic places where Jesus' identity is critical to the message. What we begin to suspect is that a scene of judgment is taking place in which the one being tried is not Jesus, but us.*

5.2 RHETORIC. What "rhetorical features" (hyperbole, questions, commands, irony, parable, allegory, allusion, etc.) does your text display? How are they important for exegesis?

**Hyperbole:** exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

**Questions:** sentences that draw the hearer-reader into an active role by requiring them to provide the

Information or answer (has the effect of making people commit to a position)

**Commands:** authoritative orders; forces one to inquire as to the legitimacy of the authority as well as

respond to the request

**Irony:** Expressing meaning by using language usually signaling the opposite of what one meant (often

Humorous)

**Parable:** Succinct, didactic story that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles

**Allegory:** literary devices/rhetorical devices that convey hidden meanings through symbolic figures,

actions, imagery, and/or events, which together create the moral, spiritual, or political meaning the author wishes to convey.

**Allusion:** an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect

or passing reference (most often from the Hebrew Scriptures).

### 5.3 GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

*Students without the biblical languages must proceed with caution. Step 3 should give an early indication of where the grammar or meaning of individual words is dependent on the original language such as the use of grammatical structures (i.e. clauses, prepositional phrases, verb tenses, etc.) or the original meaning of words that are theologically significant (see Step 5.4 below) .*

*Here you will need to depend on a good critical commentary as well as the Accordance software to discover the Greek/Hebrew behind the translations (the Biblical Hebrew or Biblical Greek Companion for Bible Software Users will help explain the terms used by these commentaries so do not be hesitant to consult these resources).*

**5.3.1 List any difficult or unusual grammatical features of your text addressed by the scholars** (use several critical commentaries to compare their explanations) and explain their importance for understanding this passage.

**5.4 LEXICOGRAPHY.** *(Note well Fee's warnings, pp.79-80. On this whole section consult closely Fee's Sect. II.4 and pay particular attention to 82-93).*

**5.4.1 Identify any words which are “theologically loaded,” ambiguous, repeated or emphasized by the author.**

**5.4.2. Choose one or two of these words listed in 5.4.1 and look them up in a concordance to see where they are used elsewhere in your book and how context brings out different nuances of the meaning.** *Be reflective. For example, the term “life” in John’s Gospel appears in several contexts such as eschatological, with the adjective descriptor “eternal,” and in relation to Christ himself. There is no right or wrong...just be thoughtful in your observations.*

**5.4.3 Next, look up the word in one of the Hebrew or Greek lexicons provided in Accordance and notice the ranges of meanings for this word. Which best fits the context?**

## **STEP 6. CULTURAL CONTEXT**

**6.1 List features of your text which you suspect might be illuminated or explained by a greater knowledge of Jewish or Greco Roman history and culture.**

WHY DO THIS STEP? The gap between an ancient culture and the contemporary context is great. They shared common knowledge about religion, society, and cultural values that we know nothing about. By studying these background issues you avoid anachronism (assuming a society remote in time from us shares our culture or perspectives) and ethnocentrism (assuming the values of another society are the same as ours).

6.2 **Choose one of these ancient issues** noted in 6.1 and, using the bibliography in Fee, Sec. II.5 (and any supplementary bibliography), **(a) explore the cultural background a little further** and **(b) explain how this study may aid in an understanding of the cultural milieu of the author.**

6.3 **Evaluate the significance of this background data for the understanding of your passage.**

## **STEP 7. CANONICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS**

7.1 **How does your passage compare to other passages in Scripture** which address similar issues? (Fee 31-32)

7.2 **What does your passage contribute to the overall teaching of this subject in the Bible?** What specifically would be lost or how would the message of the Bible be less complete if your passage did not exist?

### 7.3 What are the theological implications of your passage?

## **STEP 8. ACCUMULATE A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES AND READ WIDELY.**

WHY DO THIS STEP LAST? Scholars and secondary sources are your conversation partners. Learn to ask questions of their perspective, argue with them, listen attentively to their point of view, and then state why you think your perspective is just as valid or more valid, much like you would do if having this conversation at Starbucks. To start with their positions without having investigated the issues yourself is the lazy way out of doing the hard work of exegesis . . . in fact, without doing your own investigation you cannot claim to have exegeted the passage to your congregation or to your peers.

**8.1 Find at least 8 commentaries, books or journal articles which deal with your passage and read the contributions of other scholars.** List the sources here using correct Turabian style). *DO NOT USE MATTHEW HENRY OR OTHER DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARIES! These may add some additional insight, but remember, they did not have access to the most recent manuscript or archeological discoveries nor did they live in the complexity of our modern context.*

**8.2 What are some of the most significant differences** (presuppositional, theological, hermeneutical, etc.) **between your approach and that of some authors you have read?**

**8.3 State a few places where significant differences between you and some scholar(s) demand that you deal with their views in your paper and show why they are wrong** (see Fee, 33). *You need not write your full refutation here.*

YOU ARE NOW READY TO WRITE/PRODUCE YOUR PROJECT (PAPER, SERMON, ETC.)!