

EXEGETICAL PROCESS NOTEBOOK¹

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PASSAGE: _____ [Identify by the 4th week of class]_____

“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.

¹ 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?** *Jonah was a Hebrew prophet of God. He was running from the calling that God placed on him. He faced death as a result of his disobedience and knew he had to repent and call out to God. He knew he had to be obedient despite of how he felt. Jonah was angry that God forgave the people of Nineveh. He was concerned with how he would look, for he spoke a word against Nineveh and now it would not come to pass.* (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?** *According to Barne's Notes "Jonah's mission fell in the later part of his life, at least after he had already exercised the prophetic office. Jonah's mission from God to go to Nineveh is in harmony with God's other dealings with Pagan nations, although, in God's manifold wisdom, not identical with any."*

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.

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?** *(a) My observations about the identity of the recipients are that they were not people of God. The scripture says that they were wicked and violent. Some of the people were royalty, the king and nobles repented, fasted and mourned. The king ordered the people to do the same. (b) As mentioned before, some were royalty and*

others may have been well off. Scripture says they lived in a large city, had animals and they changed from regular clothes to garments of mourning so they were people of means. The fact that the city was large meant that it was a place of power. (c) The recipients live in Nineveh the capital city of Assyria. (d-e) The present circumstance of Nineveh was that they were about to be judged for their wicked ways. God's initial message was the city would be destroyed. (f) Jonah was not related to the people from Nineveh he was an Israelite, the only relation they had that Jonah was not aware of was that they too were people loved by God.

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

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!*

(1-2) I believe the author's purpose for writing is to show that God is not a respecter of persons, God is a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. (3) The argument is written in a narrative.

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 ***Jonah 4: 1-10, Jonah's Anger at the Lord's Mercy.***"

(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)

NIV Jonah 4:1-10

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

NLT Jonah 4: 1-10

This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. ²So he complained to the LORD about it: "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people. ³Just kill me now, LORD! I'd rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen."

⁴The LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry about this?"

⁵Then Jonah went out to the east side of the city and made a shelter to sit under as he waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶And the LORD God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head, shading him from the sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

⁷But God also arranged for a worm! The next morning at dawn the worm ate through the stem of the plant so that it withered away. ⁸And as the sun grew hot, God arranged for a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint and wished to die. "Death is certainly better than living like this!" he exclaimed.

⁹Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?"

"Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"

¹⁰Then the LORD said, "You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. ¹¹But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, ^a not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?"

ESV Jonah 4:1-10

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, ^a and he was angry. ²And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. ³Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

⁵Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. ⁶Now the LORD God appointed a plant ^b and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. ^c So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the

sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." ⁹But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" ¹⁰And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." ¹¹And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹²And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

NET Jonah 4:1-10

This displeased Jonah terribly and he became very angry. ²He prayed to the Lord and said, "Oh, Lord, this is just what I thought would happen when I was in my own country. This is what I tried to prevent by attempting to escape to Tarshish! – because I knew that you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and one who relents concerning threatened judgment. ³So now, Lord, kill me instead, because I would rather die than live!" ⁴The Lord said, "Are you really so very angry?"

⁵Jonah left the city and sat down east of it. He made a shelter for himself there and sat down under it in the shade to see what would happen to the city. ⁶The Lord God appointed a little plant and caused it to grow up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to rescue him from his misery. Now Jonah was very delighted about the little plant.

⁷So God sent a worm at dawn the next day, and it attacked the little plant so that it dried up. ⁸When the sun began to shine, God sent a hot east wind. So the sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he grew faint. So he despaired of life, and said, "I would rather die than live!" ⁹God said to Jonah, "Are you really so very angry about the little plant?" And he said, "I am as angry as I could possibly be!" ¹⁰The Lord said, "You were upset about this little plant, something for which you have not worked nor did you do anything to make it grow. It grew up overnight and died the next day. ¹¹Should I not be even more concerned about Nineveh, this enormous city? There are more than one hundred twenty thousand people in it who do not know right from wrong, as well as many animals!"

NKJ Jonah 4:1-10

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ²So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!"

⁴Then the LORD said, "*Is it* right for you to be angry?"

⁵So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. ⁶And the LORD God prepared a ^[a]plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah ^[b]was very grateful for the plant. ⁷But as

morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. ⁷And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "*It is better for me to die than to live.*"

⁸Then God said to Jonah, "*Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?*"

And he said, "*It is right for me to be angry, even to death!*"

¹⁰But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which ⁹came up in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

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?)

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.

I think the translation the differences in Jonah 4:1 are synonyms and grammar. On the other hand In 4:2 the NIV describes God as gracious and compassionate, that He is slow to anger and abounding in love. The NLT reads that God is merciful I think that can be attributed to textual criticism in that mercy is defined as "bringing someone relief from something unpleasant" while grace "is defined as the free unmerited

favor of God as manifested in the salvation of sinners and bestowal of blessing.”(online dictionary) describing God as Gracious in this context is more accurate because it is talking about Sinners repenting and God forgiving and allowing salvation and restoration.

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/ 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.*

4.3 Give an original, detailed outline of the whole book and note the placement of your text within the outline. *Do not use the outlines you find by scholars as they lean toward a particular theological position that may/may not reflect your own reading of the entire book. The more you struggle to do these steps yourself, the better you will get at thinking theologically and exegetically.*

What I do: *I use bible software and copy/paste the entire book into a word document. Using different highlighters, I mark changes in themes, characters, geographical locations, events, or groups of exhortation, teaching, warnings, and commands, etc. I also pay attention to noticeable repetitions and color code them as well. On the side I might jot down one or two words that seem to capture something significant about the progression and interconnectedness of the different stories or arguments. Use any method that makes sense to you.*

WHY DO THIS STEP?

1. *By providing an original outline the text's own voice moves forward, while previous points of view or agendas are forced to recede. (You will test the validity of these other outlines later).*
2. *This step slows one down and forces a closer reading of the entire passage that often reveals previously overlooked details or patterns such as the overall inter-connection of the whole, how the ideas build upon one another, or how the stories, sayings, or events prepare you for what follows.*
3. *You will better situate your passage within the flow of the larger argument of the biblical book, which is the next step in an exegetical investigation.*

The following example from John 1:1-18 includes color coding that will be useful in Step 5 (of your passage only):

EVANGELIST

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORD AND
HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

RELATIONSHIP OF THE WORD TO
CREATION

What has **come into being in him** was **life**, and the **life was** the **light** of all people.

Why: "was" vs. "come into being"?

⁵ The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

INTRODUCTION OF LIGHT vs. DARKNESS

ASIDE ON
JN the BAPT

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷ He **came** as a witness to testify to the **light**, so that all might believe through him.

⁸ He himself **was not** the **light**, but he **came** to testify to the **light**.

⁹ The true **light**, which enlightens everyone, **was coming** into the world.

¹⁰ He **was** in the world, and the world **came into being through him**; yet the world did not know him.

HUMAN CONDITION (BLINDNESS)

¹¹ He **came** to what was **his own**, and **his own** people did not accept him.

HUMAN CONDITION (REJECTION)

¹² But to **all** who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,

GOD'S REVERSAL/INITIATIVE

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

¹⁴ And the Word **became** flesh and lived among **us**, and **we** have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

POINT WHERE WORD BECOMES SOMETHING IT WAS NOT INITIALLY

WHO ARE THE "WE/US"?

ASIDE ON
JN the BAPT

¹⁵ (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.'")

¹⁶ From his fullness **we** have all received, grace upon grace.

¹⁷ The **law** indeed **was given** through Moses; **grace** and **truth came** through Jesus Christ.

RELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND EFFICACY OF GRACE

¹⁸ 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. 1:3-4 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 [1st 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 [2nd 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?

² 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.)!