

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

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PASSAGE:   1Thessalonians\_\_\_\_\_ [Identify by the 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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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?**

(a)The author of 1 Thessalonians is Apostle Paul. He starts off by giving thanks to the Lord for the salvation of the Thessalonians. (b)He defends his ministry against those that desire to sully his name and his good works. A formal greeting and the writing of a letter is an indication of a higher-level of education. Most people didn't know how to read or write during that time people.

**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)The identity of the recipients are new converts of Jesus Christ that resides in Thessalonica. (b)The text opens up by giving greeting to the church that inhabit that area. 1 Thess. v.7 gives indication of the region by making mention of Macedonia and Achaia. Paul makes mention of their present situation on several occasions. (d)He acknowledges when they became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea, they suffered the same persecution from their countrymen. (e)Due to their persecution he sent Timothy to encourage and build up their faith, lest they be tempted to revert back to their old ways. (f)The relationship between the author and the recipients are that of Apostle and disciples.

**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!*

The author's purpose for writing this letter is defend his ministry, his integrity, and his love for the people of Thessalonica. He also expresses his concern for their suffering, his desire to see them and he communicates his love through Timothy. Paul encourages the people to be sanctify, to abstain from sexual immorality. Also, he elaborates on the proper conduct of a Christian and the return of Jesus Christ.

1. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians salvation
2. Paul's defense of his ministry in Thessalonica
3. Paul prays for their spiritual growth
4. Paul's exhortation for their sanctification
5. The return of Jesus Christ
6. The day of the Lord

## **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 2:1-12, Paul's Conduct

## **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 yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:(1 Thess. 2:1 KJV)

For you know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you has not been ineffective (fruitless, in vain) (1 Thess. 2:1 AMP)

You yourselves know, dear brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not a failure. (1 Thess. 2:1 NLT)

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. (1 Thess. 2:1 ESV)

For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, about our coming to you it has not proven to be purposeless. (1 Thess. 2:1 NET)

But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. (1 Thess. 2:2 KJV)

but after we had already suffered and been outrageously treated in Philippi, as you know, yet in the strength of our God we summoned the courage to proclaim boldly to you the good news of God regarding salvation amid great opposition. (1 Thess. 2:2 AMP)

You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition. (1Thess. 2:2 NLT)

But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. (1Thess. 2:2 ESV)

But although we suffered earlier and were mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of much opposition. (1 Thess. 2:2 NET)

For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: (1 Thess. 2:3 KJV)

For our appeal does not come from delusion or impure motives, nor is it motivated by deceit our message is complete, accurate, and based on the truth it does not change. (1 Thess. 2:3 AMP)

So, you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery. (1 Thess. 2:3 NLT)

For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, (1 Thess. 2:3 ESV)

For the appeal we make does not come from error or impurity or with deceit, (1 Thess. 2:3 NET)

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. (1 Thess. 2:4 KJV)

But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel that tells the good news of salvation through faith in Christ, so we speak, not as if we were trying to please people to gain power and popularity, but to please God who examines our hearts expecting our best. (1 Thess. 2:4 AMP)

For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts. (1 Thess. 2:4 NLT)

but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. (1 Thess. 2:4 ESV)

but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we declare it, not to please people but God, who examines our hearts. (1 Thess. 2:4 NLT)

For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness (1 Thess. 2:5 KJV)

For as you well know, we never came with words of flattery nor with a pretext for greed God is our witness (1 Thess. 2:5 AMP)

Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you well know. And God is our witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money! (1 Thess. 2:5 NLT)

For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed God is witness. (1 Thess. 2:5 ESV)

For we never appeared with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed God is our witness (1 Thess. 2:5 NET)

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. (1 Thess. 2:6 KJV)

nor did we seek glory and honor from people, neither from you nor from anyone else, though as apostles of Christ we had the power to assert our authority. (1 Thess. 2:6 AMP)

As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else. (1 Thess. 2:6 NLT)

Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. (1 Thess. 2:6 ESV)

nor to seek glory from people, either from you or from others, (1 Thess. 2:6 NET)

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: (1 Thess. 2:7 KJV)

But we behaved gently when we were among you, like a devoted mother tenderly caring for her own children. (1 Thess. 2:7 AMP)

As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. (1 Thess. 2:7 NLT)

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. (1 Thess. 2:7 ESV)

although we could have imposed our weight as apostles of Christ; instead we became little children among you. Like a nursing mother caring for her own children, (1 Thess. 2:7 NET)

So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. (1 Thess. 2:8 KJV)

Having such a deep affection for you, we were delighted to share with you not only God's good news but also our own lives, because you had become so very dear to us. (1 Thess. 2:8 AMP)

We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too. (1 Thess. 2:8 NLT)

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thess. 2:8 ESV)

with such affection for you we were happy to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. (1 Thess. 2:8 NET)

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. (1 Thess. 2:9 KJV)

For you remember, believers, our labor and hardship. We worked night and day practicing our trade in order not to be a financial burden to any of you while we proclaimed the gospel of God to you. (1 Thess. 2:9 AMP)

Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day, we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. (1 Thess. 2:9 NLT)

For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. (1 Thess. 2:9 ESV)

For you recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery: By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. (1 Thess. 2:9 NET)

Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: (1 Thess. 2:10 KJV)

You are witnesses, and so is God, how unworldly and just and blameless was our behavior toward you who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 2:10 AMP)

You yourselves are our witnesses and so is God that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers. (1 Thess. 2:10 NLT)

You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe. (1 Thess. 2:10 ESV)

You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. (1 Thess. 2:10 NET)

As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, (1 Thess. 2:11 KJV)

For you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you just as a father does in dealing with his own children, guiding you (1 Thess. 2:11 AMP)

And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. (1 Thess. 2:11 NLT)

For you know how, like a father with his children, (1 Thess. 2:11 ESV)

As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children, (1 Thess. 2:11 NET)

That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:12 KJV)

to live lives of honor, moral courage, and personal integrity worthy of the God who saves you and calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:12 AMP)

We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:12 NLT)

we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. 2:12 ESV)

exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a way worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and his glory. (1 Thess. 2:12 NET)

**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?)

(a)I believe for the major part, the synonyms between the passages are conveying the same message. (b)In my opinion, the New Living Translation provides the most detail. This translation specified the nature of which the term greed in 1 Thess. 2:5 was pertaining to and that is money. Without that specific detail I am left to assume what was being coveted. Whether it be land, resources, status, money or significant others?

*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).*

1 Thessalonians is a Greco-Roman letter which is evident by its salutation and introductory of a thanksgiving prayer. My analysis is on 1 Thessalonians 2v1-20 which present itself as part of the body of the letter.

**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.*

(a)The dialogue presents itself as a declaration and affirmation of Paul, Silvanus, and timothy good works.(b) The letter highlight the reputation of the Thessalonians growing due to their love of God and prepares us for further instructions on how to live as believers because the church were still filled with new converts in the Lord Jesus Christ. (c)Paul and his companions were facing slander for what they were professing. If they didn't take the time out to reinforce and reassure the Thessalonians of what they were saying were true, and from God, they increase the chance that further messages or preaching would have been dismiss or not received at all.

**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):

As you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, our visit with you wasn't a waste of time. 2 On **integrity in his ministry** the contrary, we had the courage through **God** to speak **God's good news** in spite of a lot of opposition, although we had already suffered and were publicly insulted in Philippi, **as you know**. 3 Our appeal isn't based on false information, the wrong motives, or deception. 4 Rather, we have been examined and approved by **God** to be trusted with the **good news**, and that's exactly how we speak. We aren't trying to please people, but we are trying to please **God**, who continues to examine our hearts.

**Paul's expresses**

5 **As you know**, we never used flattery, and **God** **sacrificing and loving ministry** **is our witness** that we didn't have greedy motives.

6 We didn't ask for special treatment from people not from you or from others 7 although we could have thrown our weight around as Christ's apostles. Instead, we were gentle with you like a nursing mother caring for her own children. 8 We were glad to share not only **God's good news** with you but also our very lives because we cared for you so much. 9 **You remember, brothers and sisters**, our efforts and hard work. We preached **God's good news** to you, while we worked night and day so we wouldn't be a burden on any of you.

10 You and **God** **are witnesses** of how holy, just, and **behavior** blameless we were toward you believers. 11 **Likewise, you know** how we treated each of you like a father treats his own children. 12 We appealed to you, encouraged you, and pleaded with you to live lives worthy of the **God** who is calling you into his own kingdom and glory.

13 We also thank **God** constantly for this: when you **concerning for their suffering** accepted **God's word** that you heard from us, you welcomed it for what it truly is. Instead of accepting it as a human message, you accepted it as **God's message**, and it continues to work in you who are believers. 14 **Brothers and sisters**, you became imitators of the churches of **God** in Judea, which are in **Christ Jesus**. This was because you also suffered the same things from your own people as they did from the Jews. 15 They killed both the **Lord Jesus** and the prophets and drove us out. They don't please **God**, and they are hostile to the entire human race 16 when they try to stop us from speaking to the Gentiles so they can be saved. Their sins are constantly pushing the limit. **God's** wrath has caught up with them in the end.

17 **Brothers and sisters**, we were separated from **desire to see them** you for a while physically but not in our hearts. We made every effort in our desire to see you again face to face. 18 We wanted to come to you I, Paul, tried over and over Again, and Satan stopped us. 19 What is our hope, joy, or crown that we can brag about in front of our **Lord Jesus**

**Paul's self-**

**Paul's blameless**

**Paul show's**

**Paul express a**

when he comes? Isn't it all of you? 20 You are our glory and joy!

Outline: 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-20

- I. Paul's defense of his ministry in Thessalonica
  - a. 2:1-2 Paul's coming to Thessalonica was questioned or under attack
  - b. 2:3-4 Paul answers criticism of his motives for preaching
  - c. 2:5-8 Paul denied that he used flattery in his trip to Thessalonica
  - d. 2:9 Paul demonstrates his affection by his labor so he wouldn't be a financial burden
  - e. 2:10-12 The Thessalonians were comforted and challenged to live a life worthy of a mighty God
  - f. 2:13 They were thankful for the way the Thessalonians had welcome the word of God
  - g. 2:14-16 Thessalonians were being persecuted like their fellow believers in Judea
  - h. 2:17-20 A longing to see the Thessalonians and a reaffirmation they will ultimately see them when Christ undoubtedly return
- II. Concern for their faith

## 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.)!