

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

NAME: SMITH, DONNA J

PASSAGE: Jonah 4:5-11 \_\_\_\_\_ [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. 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

<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.

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?

*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.*

- The author is anonymous.
- No date is provided
- The author seemed to be educated and expresses himself through the use of history and literary devices. According to David A. Dorsey, there is a structure to the layout of the book emphasizing “seven episodes arranged in chronological order” (The Literary Structure of the Old Testament, 290). We also see evidence of satire, hyperbole and use of irony (ESV Study Bible, 1685).
- The author seems to know who Jonah is, providing a links to 2Kings 14:25. From this reference we can ascertain that Jonah is from northern Israel and he was a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II. This is about all we can detect from this information.
- It appears that the author is familiar with the history of Jonah seems to assume that the readers are familiar with it as well. We do not know how the account of Jonah was preserved unless it was through Jonah himself and it is an oral culture?
- The author identifies the Jewish God YHWH in the first verse so we can also assume that he is a Jew
- The author seems familiar with the geography of the area including Tarshish, Nineveh, Joppa. Gath-hepher is in northern Israel (see 2 Kings 14:25). Jonah went down to Joppa which is on the Mediterranean coast.

#### (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?

- The author does not identify the purpose for writing. Kevin J. Youngblood estimates the book was written between 750-250BC. (Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament, 35)
- The author seems to be writing from Israel because of his familiarity with the geography, i.e. he refers to Jonah going down to Joppa (Jonah 1:1)
- The author seems to be aware of the situation with Nineveh

### 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.*

- There is no specific statement identifying the audience.
- The author uses the Hebrew word “the LORD” (YHWH) in upper case letters which is the name of God that is revealed to his chosen people, the Jews. This suggests that the author is communicating to a Jewish audience.
- The author refers to YHWH 26x which emphasizes that God is central to this story and seems to reach a climax in the final chapter.

- The prophet, in Jonah 1:9, identifies himself as a Hebrew who worships “the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” It seems therefore feasible to assume that the author is a Jew writing to fellow Jews.

**(b) Are there any hints about their ethnicity or socioeconomic and cultural contexts?**

- Israel in Jonah’s day were prejudice against Pagan nations because Israel is God’s chosen people.
- The Israelites would expect “retribution” and “vengeance” toward Assyria and the city of Nineveh.
- The Israelites and Jonah would have difficulty believing/accepting that God would show mercy to Nineveh.

**(c) Where do the recipients live? Are there direct or indirect hints that help you identify the geographic region?**

- The author does not specify this, but we can assume that it is to the nation of Israel.

**(d) What are their present circumstances?**

- It would be feasible to assume that the current circumstances would be post exilic so there would be a nationalistic attitude and hatred toward Assyrian enemies. Jonah as an angry prophet could be reflecting the attitude of the Jewish readers.
- Jonah’s ability to run to the sea to escape from God indicates the extent of his hatred of Assyria and choosing sea travel vs land travel seems to supply evidence of his desperation because the Jews were land people. Perhaps he felt that God’s plan would be thwarted if he was literally on a ship in the middle of the sea.
- The author stresses that although God is sending Jonah to “cry out against it” (1:2) it is in God’s character to forgive and to restore those who repent. Jonah knows this about YHWH when he prayed to the Lord in 4:2, “Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.”

**(e) What historical situation occasioned this writing?**

- The author refers to the city of Nineveh, which God himself describes as wicked (Jonah 1:1). Nineveh was a city of the Assyrian empire, an enemy of Israel and a constant threat.
- The current situation does not indicate to us that Israel is under threat by Assyria.

**(f) What is the relationship between the author and the recipients?**

- The author does not seem sympathetic to Jonah’s nationalistic attitude which suggests to me that the author may be addressing readers who support Jonah’s position and are not getting on board with what God is doing—extending the borders to include the Gentile nations.
- The author may be trying to stir things up--if you do not follow God’s plan and purpose you may also go downward just as Jonah did.

*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.*

- The author as John Bright put it, "felt an active obligation to win Gentiles to the faith and who chafed at the narrowness of their brethren and their failure to take their mission to the world seriously" (A History of Israel, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 444).
- There was something going on that Jonah could not see. The pagan sailors were demonstrating thankfulness in the mercy of Jonah's God. The people of Nineveh believed the words of the prophet and were trusting in Jonah's God for mercy. God is characterized by his mercy and compassion.

(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?*

- LORD is mentioned 26x
- Jonah is commissioned by God twice
- "great" is repeated 6x : referring to the city of Nineveh, the fish, the wind, the storm, people of Nineveh
- Repetition:
  - o **going down.** For example: Jonah went "down to Joppa" (1:3), Jonah went down "into the hold of the ship" (1:2); "I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever" (2:6), "You cast me into the deep" (2:3), "the deep surrounded me" 2:5).
  - o **running from God:** for example, "away from the presence of the LORD" (1:3), "he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD" (1:10)
  - o **God's control over nature:** "God hurled a great wind upon the sea" (1:4), "The LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah" (1:15), "The LORD spoke to the fish" (2:10), "God appointed a bush...to give shade over his head" (4:6) "God appointed a worm that attacked the bush" (4:7), "God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah" (4:8)
  - o **"Is it right for you to be angry"** – repeated twice in 4:1 and 4:9

God is indicating he is about to do something new which is in keeping with his character. The people of Israel need to get on board with what he is doing.

(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!*

There seems to be an overall theme of God's compassion versus Jonah's anger and hatred. The narrative is initiated by a commission from God to Jonah to go to Nineveh. Within that is a series of events including Jonah and the sailors, Jonah and the fish, Jonah and Nineveh. There are two occasions when he prays regarding death: when he is in the fish and when he is outside the fish. There is a clear climaxing event at the end.

### 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 4:5-11.**”  
(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)

### 1Jonah 4:4-11 ~ 5 Translations

Jonah 4:5-11 (NIV2011) <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> 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.” <sup>9</sup> 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.” <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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?”

Jonah 4:5-11 (NRSV) <sup>5</sup> Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city. <sup>6</sup> The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. <sup>7</sup> But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live." <sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." <sup>10</sup> Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup> And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

Jonah 4:5-11 (ESV) Jonah 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. <sup>6</sup> Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. <sup>7</sup> But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When 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." <sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." <sup>10</sup> And 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. <sup>11</sup> And 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?"

Jonah 4:5-11 (NET1) <sup>5</sup> Jonah 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. <sup>6</sup> The 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. <sup>7</sup> So God sent a worm at dawn the next day, and it attacked the little plant so that it dried up. <sup>8</sup> When 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!" <sup>9</sup> God 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!" <sup>10</sup> The 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. <sup>11</sup> Should 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!"

Jonah 4:5-11 (NASB) <sup>5</sup> Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city. <sup>6</sup> So the LORD God appointed a

plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. <sup>7</sup> But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life." <sup>9</sup> Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death." <sup>10</sup> Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. <sup>11</sup> "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

**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?)

- Verse 5: the difference is in the use of "shelter" (NIV, NET1, NASB) and "booth" (NRSV, ESV). These both seem to suggest protection from the heat and waiting.
- Verse 6: There is no indication of what kind of plant it was. According to the ESV footnotes, the "castor oil or gourd plant has large leaves." (1690) Four of five translations indicate that God appointed the plant which indicates direct action for provision. The NIV translation uses "provided" which seems more passive.
- Verse 7: God "appointed" (NRSV, ESV, NASB), "sent" ((NET1), "provided" (NIV) the worm. Only the NIV states the worm chewed the plant, all the other translations state the worm "attacked the plant", which emphasizes the worm aggressiveness. First God provides the plant (vs 6) and then he sends the worm to take it away.
- Verse 8: God "provided" (NIV), "prepared" (NRSV), "appointed" (ESV, NASB) and "sent" (NET1). The wind from the east is a "drying wind from the desert" (ESV, 1690). But all translations indicate that the sun caused Jonah to feel faint (NRSV Cultural Bible, 1522). The NASB provides the most dramatic response on Jonah's part. In each translation Jonah's response to the loss of the plant underscores the author's use of satire.
- Verse 9: In the NIV and NRSV God asks the question, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant/bush?" These translations seem to best capture the issue that God is bringing to Jonah's attention. Death could appeal to Jonah in order for him to escape God's justice evidenced by his removal of the plant.
- Verse 10: God stresses the absurdity of Jonah's response to the loss of the plant: "concerned" (NIV, NRSV), "pity" (ESV), "upset" (NET1), "compassion" (NASB)
- Verse 11: In each translation God states, "Should I not....?" takes the corresponding word used to describe Jonah's distress over the loss of the plant (v10) and relates it to how God should respond to Nineveh. It is ironic, yet the tone is not harsh toward Jonah. We see the evidence of

God's nature contrasted with Jonah's. The final irony is described through the reference to the animals. If Jonah feels distress over the loss of the plant, would he at least feel badly over the loss of the cattle and animals?

- In each translation we see the use of repetition, irony, satire. We see that God provides and God takes away. We see that God is in control over nature and the wind. We see the contrasting natures of Jonah and God.

*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.

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.**

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORD AND  
HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

<sup>2</sup> He **was** in the beginning with **God.**

<sup>3</sup> All things **came into being through him,**  
and **without him** not one thing **came into being.**  
What has **come into being in him** was **life,**  
and the **life was** the **light** of all people.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE WORD TO  
CREATION  
Why: “was” vs. “come into being”?

<sup>5</sup> The **light** shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it. INTRODUCTION OF LIGHT vs.  
DARKNESS

ASIDE ON  
JN the BAPT

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.  
<sup>7</sup> He **came** as a witness to testify to the **light**, so that all might believe through him.  
<sup>8</sup> He himself **was not** the **light**,  
but he **came** to testify to the **light**.

<sup>9</sup> The true **light**, which enlightens everyone, **was coming** into the world.  
<sup>10</sup> He **was** in the world,  
and the world **came into being through him**;  
yet the world did not know him. HUMAN CONDITION (BLINDNESS)

<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**,  
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

<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;  
**grace** and **truth came** through Jesus Christ. RELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND  
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. 1:3-4 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 [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.)!