

## EXEGETICAL PROCESS NOTEBOOK (EPN)<sup>1</sup>

**NAME:** Angelita McDonald-Major

**PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 - 18

**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). Please do not remove any of the sections or prompts from this document. I will expect to see all of the appropriate sections filled in/prompts addressed each time that you submit your document to grade the step/steps you have completed.

This EPN 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. Do not assume you will understand the language or customs of these ancient peoples without preparation and thought.
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.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from a similar document by Dr. William Barclay of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. 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.

You will be using the Bible and scholarly, academic sources in this Exegetical Process Notebook (EPN). Your required textbooks provide bibliographies of modern, well-researched and documented resources for you to use, and you should also make use of electronic versions of such works available online through the Nyack Library.

**You will not be making use of other online, public-domain commentaries and/or teaching/preaching websites, such as, but not limited to, the following:**

1. Barnes' Notes
2. Matthew Henry's Commentary
3. Adam Clarke's Commentary
4. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown (JFB) Bible Commentary
5. Other similar commentaries from the 1700s, 1800s, and early 1900s
6. Online Sermon, Preaching, and Teaching websites

**If you have any doubt about whether you should or should not use a source, please contact me *before using it*, and I will be happy to provide you with some guidance. In general, if you cannot determine the author, the date, and/or the publisher, then the source is not appropriate for your use in this EPN.**

For **all** information that you include from another source, such as your *NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, a modern commentary, a modern Bible dictionary, etc., you will cite the source using footnotes in accordance with the Turabian style manual.

**Here are what the footnotes for your required texts should look like, with ### representing the page number(s) you would insert (*feel free to cut and paste them into your footnotes when needed*):**

Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), ###.

Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), ###.

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014), ###.

Craig S. Keener and John H. Walton, eds., *NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), ###.

Gary Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), ###.

Simpson, John W., "Letters to the Thessalonians," ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), ###.

Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

Douglas Stuart, "Jonah, Book Of," ed. Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), ###.

Kevin J. Youngblood, *Jonah: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Daniel I. Block (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2015), ###.

**STEP 1. SURVEY THE GENERAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

First, you will need to decide whether you are going to engage with Jonah or 1 Thessalonians.

For this EPN, I will be working with: **EITHER Jonah OR 1 Thessalonians**

Read the entire document through in English in one sitting (aloud).

**1.1 AUTHOR.**

**(a) What do you observe about the identity of the author and his circumstances?**

In 1 Thessalonians 2:18 we see Paul made multiple attempts to revisit Thessalonica, however, Satan hindered (locked) them. <sup>2</sup>

**(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?**

Thanks to Paul's ministry in (Acts 16:5) the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily.<sup>3</sup> It stated also in Acts 17:5 – 10 that adversaries charged Paul with illegal announcing Jesus as a royal rival to Caesar, therefore, the Jews became jealous, enlisted ruffians in marketplace who formed mobs that caused the city to uproar. The people accused Jason of harboring them and accused them of disobeying the emperor's decree. For fear the believers sent Paul and Silas were forced to leave for Berea.<sup>4</sup>

*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.***

Thessalonica was a city at the crossroads from approximately AD 44 -49 and served as the capital of Macedonia. Act 17:4 states the recipients of the gospel were Thessalonian Jews who came to faith, a large number of God-fearing Greeks and a few prominent women. Paul reasoned with the Jews for three Sabbaths, where some were persuaded and many devout Greeks and a few women to join them.<sup>5</sup> Also, the tension may be attributed to the rapid growth among the Gentiles with less growth among a smaller population of Jews.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gary Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), #130.

<sup>3</sup> Craig S. Keener and John H. Walton, eds., *NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), #1924.

<sup>4</sup> *NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, #1928

<sup>5</sup> *NRSV* #1928

<sup>6</sup> Gary Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), #23-24.

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

Thessalonica was a populous city which enjoyed good fortune throughout most of the Hellenistic and Roman period. It was an important military and commercial port which became the principal city of Macedonia.<sup>7</sup>

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

As stated in 1 Thessalonian 1:7 – 8 speaks to believers in Macedonia and Achaia as Acts 17:1 tells of the team passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia. The city was founded at or near the site of Therma at the head of the Thermaic Gulf (now called the Gulf of Salonika) about 315 B.C. by Cassander.<sup>8</sup>

(d) What are their present circumstances?

1. There was confusion centered around expected time of Jesus' return. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
2. Question from those remaining concerning those already dead could benefit from Christ's return. (1Thess. 4:13)
3. Problem with Christian preachers claiming support from their audiences who refused to work. (1 Thess. 2:9)<sup>9</sup>

(e) What historical situation occasioned this writing?

1. Paul, Silas and Timothy left Thessalonica for Athens, (1Thess. 2:17 and 3:1). The Thessalonian Christians prevented Paul from returning and thus Paul sent Timothy because of concerns for the new converts.

(Acts: 17:9)

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

Paul was their pastor for the group of new converts and those who would subsequently believe.??

*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.*

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<sup>7</sup> Simpson, John W., "Letters to the Thessalonians," ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), #2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Simpson, John W., "Letters to the Thessalonians," #3.

<sup>9</sup> Simpson, John W., "Letters to the Thessalonians," #6.

1 Thessalonian is an outpouring of relief and gratitude to God for His protection of the new converts.<sup>10</sup> The author's (Paul) theme is to encourage, admonish, praise and correct the converts.<sup>11</sup>

(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?*

- a. The overall theme in this book is thanksgiving and pray
- b. Hope in Jesus Christ
- c. Remain faithful to God

(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!*

Yes, it does

## 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 4: 13 - 18**”  
(E.g. John 2:1-11, the narration of the wedding at Cana)

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 NKJV]

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of [the] archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain

<sup>10</sup> Gary Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), #17.

<sup>11</sup> Simpson, John W., “Letters to the Thessalonians,”#5

will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 NASB]

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 NIV]

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 ESV]

13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. 15 For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 NET]

13 And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. 15 We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. 17 Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. 18 So encourage each other with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 NLT]

13 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. [1Th 4:13-18 CSB]

### 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)

**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?*

In the example listed above there is minimal difference between “the” and “this” are grammatical and does not change the meaning.

**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 noticed in the passage I chose that the subject, verbs and some adjectives are different and yet does not change the meaning of the passage.

- a. We do not want you to be uninformed/ignorant/what will happen
- b. Those who are asleep/those who died
- c. Brethren/brothers & sisters

**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.

1 Thessalonians is an epistle (letter), delivered by Timothy to the converts in Thessalonica.

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/passagage 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?** *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).*

This Epistle's formal structure is greetings and thanksgiving.

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?

Yes, when we came to you.

- b. Does the event highlight something presented earlier in the text, or does it prepare us for something about to follow?

The event highlight presents, "Remember how we were among you, this is how we behaved. You became imitators."

- 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.*

Yes, Paul brings this up already mentioned in Chapter 1

**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 table within 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. He was in the beginning with God.	INTRODUCTION OF THE WORD AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD
	<sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.	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”?
	<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	

	<p>to the light, so that all might believe through him.</p> <p><sup>8</sup> He himself <b>was not</b> the light, but he <b>came</b> to testify to the light.</p> <p><sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, <b>was coming</b> into the world.</p>	
	<p><sup>10</sup> He <b>was</b> in the world, and the world <b>came into being through him</b>, yet the world <u>did not know him</u>.</p>	HUMAN CONDITION (BLINDNESS)
	<p><sup>11</sup> He <b>came</b> to what was <b>his own</b>, and <b>his own</b> people <u>did not accept</u> him.</p>	HUMAN CONDITION (REJECTION)
	<p><sup>12</sup> But to <b>all</b> who <u>received</u> him, who <u>believed</u> in his name, he gave power to become children of God,</p> <p><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.</p>	GOD'S REVERSAL/INITIATIVE
	<p><sup>14</sup> And the Word <b>became</b> flesh</p> <p>and lived among <b>us</b>, and <b>we</b> have seen his glory,</p> <p>the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.</p>	POINT WHERE WORD BECOMES SOMETHING IT WAS NOT INITIALLY  WHO ARE THE "WE/US"?
ASIDE ON JN the BAPT	<p><sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who <b>comes</b> after me ranks ahead of me because he <b>was</b> before me.'")</p>	
	<p><sup>16</sup> From his fullness <b>we</b> have all received, grace upon grace.</p> <p><sup>17</sup> The <b>law</b> indeed <b>was given</b> through Moses; <b>grace</b> and <b>truth came</b> through Jesus Christ.</p>	RELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND EFFICACY OF GRACE
	<p><sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son,</p>	SON AS DIVINE REVEALER

	who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.	
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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)

## OUTLINE

- I. Greetings
- II. Paul’s Personal thoughts
  - a. Thanksgiving
  - b. Reminders for the Church
  - c. Concerns for the Church
- III. Practical Instructions
  - a. Moral Purity
  - b. Disciplined living
  - c. Holy living and the Day of the Lord
  - d. Church relationship
  - e. Basics of Christian living
- IV. Paul’s benediction
- V. Paul’s final remarks

## **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	ANSWERS WHY WRITE? Gives the reason for writing)
an orderly account	WHAT KIND OF ACCOUNT?
of the events	WHICH EVENTS?
that have been fulfilled among us,	
<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	WHEN?
carefully	HOW?
from the very first,	HOW LONG?
so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.	WHY?

**1 Thessalonian 4:13 - 18**

MAIN SENTENCE	MODIFIERS	DESCRIPTION
But		(Contrast to what?)
We		(Who?)
Do not want you to be uninformed,		(Does he think they are?)
Brothers and sisters		(to whom?)

	about those who have died,	(what is uninformed?)
so that		(to what end or why?)
(purpose or reason why he does not want them uninformed)		
You may not grieve as others do		(do not grieve) (like others)
	who have no hope,	(like others? What are they lacking? Hope)
For		(either cause or explanation: here)
Since		(why? Sounds like he believes "we" do and we do, don't we? Assumption)
We believe that Jesus died and rose again		(and we do, don't we? Assumption)
even so,		(since A is true, then B must be true)
through Jesus,		(through whom?)
God		(Who?)
will bring		
with him		
	those who have died.	(whom?)
For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord,		
That we	Who are alive,	
	Who are left until the coming of the Lord	
Will by no means precede those		
	Who have died,	
For the Lord himself,		Who?
	With a cry of command,	With what?
	With the archangel's call	Who?
And with the sound of God's trumpet,		What?
	Will descend from heaven	From where?
Then we		Who?
	Who are alive	Why?
	Who are left until the coming of the Lord,	When?
Will be		
	then to meet the Lord in the air;	When and where to meet?
	and so, we will be with the Lord forever.	
Therefore encourage one another with these		

words.		

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

<sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died: <sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, and with will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

<sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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?

Paul, the author of Thessalonian, was writing to the people out of concern. The passage shows that there were multiple persons involved in the concern with the repetitive use of “we”. The direct use of “you”, as it was instruction or inquiry. He made the clarity and distinction that what their participation was for the Lord and God, ultimately the end result for their obedience and a reassurance.

**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).

The author went directly to the main thought in the passage I chose. In the preceding verses, Paul set the tone by stating the benefits of living a life pleasing to God. He reiterated the instruction given through Jesus and the need for purification. He constantly referred to the new converts (Gentiles) as brothers and sisters (endearment) who should depend solely on God.

#### 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).

I cannot definitively state that this Book or verses chosen are any of the rhetoric features. 1 Thessalonian is a narrative, a letter that he focused on comfort, thanksgiving and exhortation.

I noticed a synoptic parallel and a metaphor of the synoptic apocalypse to this passage in reference to the lord of the household and his servants.<sup>12</sup>

### 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 (e.g., Logos, Accordance, Bible Works, etc.) 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.

I do not see any difficult or unusual grammatical feature in the text I selected. Paul was seeking to provide hope.

**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.**

- Uninformed
- Grieve
- Asleep
- Alive and remain
- Coming
- Caught
- In the air
- Encourage

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<sup>12</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Mark 13:29

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.*

- a. Alive – Genesis 7:23 - Noah only remained alive, and they...with him<sup>13</sup>
- b. Grieve – Psalm 78:40 – oft did they...him [God] in the dessert<sup>14</sup>
- c. Caught – Acts 8:39 – the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip<sup>15</sup>

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?**

Sad to say I couldn’t find an accordance online that gave me Greek translation. I will make the addition in the upcoming sections.

## 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).

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

16 and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. **[NASB]**

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

Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament, vol 1. History, culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Knight, George w., 2002, *Bible Concordance*, Barbour Publishing, Inc.#20

<sup>14</sup> Bible Concordance, #151

<sup>15</sup> Bible Concordance, #73

<sup>16</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), #100.

**(b) explain how this study may aid in an understanding of the cultural milieu of the author.**

It is important to understand that Paul and Silas preached in Thessalonica and helped many new Christians which was not well (Acts 17:7). They had to leave quickly because he upset the status quo and faced persecution. He was accused and faced persecution by his adversaries who charged him with illegally announcing Jesus as royal rival to Caesar.

Paul draws on biblical and ancient Jewish end-time imagery, coming directly from Jesus.

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

It is important to understand the significance of this background data in that the Thessalonians were commended for their faith and good works. They became example of faith and love to all Believers.

Paul's letter to the Thessalonian Christians do not seem to support the Acts account of the beginning of the church and the letter does not quote the Old Testament. There have been vague mentions most significant being Daniel 11:36 in 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

**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)

Passages in scripture which compares to 1 Thessalonica 4:12 - 18 are: -

1. 1 Corinthians 6: 11            Sanctification through Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God
2. 1 Corinthians 15                Resurrection of the dead
3. Galatians 5:16 – 21            Christian freedom
4. Hebrew 11:12 – 22            Raising of the dead
5. Acts 15: 6 - 7                 Paul speaking to brothers and sisters that God made a choice that he would bring the message of the gospel to the Gentiles

**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?

My passage tells of Paul expressing the Thessalonians that their lives should remain pure as they watched for the second coming of Christ. The experiences of the Gentiles and Jewish converts in Thessalonica and their concerns for family members as well as those who had already died and had not converted. Paul became an example of faith and love to all Believers. What happened to their souls?

Although there are many passages in the bible which speaks of Jesus' return, I believe it's very important to realize that the book would not be the same. There would be no hope for those family members who have died in the pass.

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

The theological implications of the passage are the euphemism of sleep with death. That God will bring with Him, those who have died. the implication of states that God is forgiving and makes

**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.

Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993.

Keener, Craig S., and John H. Walton, eds. *NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

MacDonald, William., *Believer's Bible Commentary*. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, Tennessee, 1985.

Shogren, Gary. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. Edited by Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

**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?**

There have been little to no difference between the literary documents of authors and my approach. I heard about what was referred to as, the Rapture of the Church, the Coming of the Lord and comforting one another.

**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.*

As stated above, there were no significant differences between myself and other scholars.

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