

Nature of Exegesis:

Below is a plan and roadmap for doing exegesis. The advantage of this plan is the balanced treatment of both essential elements of history and literary. Far too many proposals for doing exegesis in the modern world favor either the history the literary side to the neglect of the other. This way of doing exegesis automatically skews the final product with only a lop sided understanding.

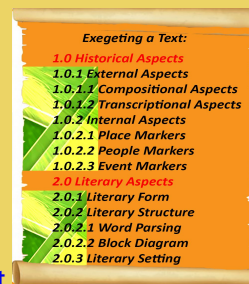
Remember that exegesis is but the first leg of the interpretive process. The other leg is exposition. The connection between these two segments is absolutely essential. To only do exegesis is to leave your understanding in the past. Christian interpretive experience strongly asserts the probing of scripture in order to find relevant principles of timeless truth applicable to our lives today. To do exposition without exegesis is to doom yourself to the deception of stuffing your voice into the scripture text and then to hear it speak as though it were God's voice. This is the birth of heresy at its worst and corrupted understanding at its best. What scripture study seeks is to hear God speaking to us through the pages of scripture. The very heart of **biblical based inspiration** of scripture is the energizing of **the divine voice** in the verbal reading of the text. This demands both exegesis and exposition.

Nature of Exegetical Sequence:


The plan listed below sets forth 14 steps in the process of exegesis. The image of "steps" suggests a rigid sequence where one step must follow the previous one without deviation of pattern. But such is not intended or assumed in this plan. At times the nature of the scripture passage being exegeted will necessitate sequence shifts and / or omission of some steps. For example, if no variation of readings occurs in the existing manuscripts, then step 4 can be skipped. I would recommend close following of the steps in the plan at the beginning of your work with exegesis. But as you become comfortable with the exegetical process, then consider sequence shifts and / or step omissions.



[Steps to Exegeting a Text](#)



For audio explanation, click on hyperlinks in the Steps column.

<p>STEPS:</p>	<p>Sequence to Follow:</p>	<p>Parallel Aspect from Depiction</p>	<p>Description:</p>	<p>Analysis of Ideas:</p>	<p>Reflective Analysis:</p> 
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(1)	1.0 Start out with history	1.0 Historical Aspects	Identify and do preliminary analysis of the historical elements in the scripture passage. Given the historical basis of Christianity, history is the starting place of exegesis.	<p>(1) Be sure to stay in a past time frame of reference.</p> <p>(2) Remember that this is preliminary and not finalized activity. Your notes will grow in size.</p>	<p><i>Probe every available secondary source for insights. This included commentaries, study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, theological journals. Give first priority to serious publications rather than pop religious publications.</i></p>
(2)	1.0.1 Distinguish differences between history about the document and the story embedded inside the passage.	1.0.1 External Aspects and 1.0.2 Internal Aspects	Identify generally the historical elements having to do with the composition and preservation of the document over the centuries. In contrast, identify the historical markers inside the passage. Jot down questions that come to mind with each category.	The difference between external history and internal history is the perspective of the history of the creation and preservation of the document as external history. Internal history is the story told by the text itself that reflects the views of the documents author.	<p><i>Two outstanding commentary sources at the serious historical levels are the WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY and the NEW INTERNATIONAL GREEK TESTAMENT COMMENTARY.</i></p>
(3)	1.0.1.1 Analyzing the Compositional	1.0.1.1 Compositional Aspects	The first focus is on the document containing the passage. Then on the passage itself. The details of the writing of the text are the goals of the study. Much modern writing on this topic has taken place in the modern era.	Here the so-called reporter questions are to be asked. Who wrote it? To whom was it written? When was it written? Why was it written? These questions open up	<p><i>In addition to commentaries, introductions to the Bible, to the Old Testament, and to the New Testament are very helpful secondary resources. Often used as textbooks in Religion 101</i></p>

	History			insights into the writing of the text.	<i>and 102 courses in universities, they provide overviews of the Christian Bible.</i>
(4)	1.0.1.2 Establishing the most likely original reading of the scriptural text.	1.0.1.2 Transcriptional Aspects	The second aspect of external history is labeled Textual Criticism. For more details on how to use this tool, see " Study in Textual Criticism " in the course room for Greek 202 at cranfordville.com.	The hundreds of manuscripts containing any particular NT text must be scientifically analyzed to get back to the original reading of that text.	<i>Rational Eclecticism is the methodology used. The critical apparatusa in The Greek New Testament (5th rev. ed) and in the Novum Testamentum Graece (28th ed) are the tools.</i>
(5)	1.0.2 Analyze the history inside the text.	1.0.2 Internal Aspects	Every text will have allusions to people , places , and events of some kind. Even texts describing ideas will typically contain at least indirect references to concrete markers.	References to both people and places are easier to spot in a text. Events are more challenging because they represent a combination of people and places, usually with time markers mixed into the narrative.	<i>Individual words and phrases can most easily denote these markers. But events will more commonly be referenced by clauses and sentences. Experience in searching for such markers comes with lots of practice.</i>
(6)	1.0 Sketch out in writing a brief synopsis of your findings of the historical elements in the text	1.0 Historical Aspects	Nothing in detail is needed. But just make note of what you have found thus far.	This is a good place to write down questions to check on.	<i>Don't be shy in asking questions. Here is the place where secondary tools such as commentaries, Bible dictionaries etc. should be checked. They will also treat things you have overlooked.</i>
	2.0		Here the external / internal	Literary genre is a	Most classroom study of

(7)	Identify the various literary elements in the text.	2.0 Literary Aspects	categories are not as useful labels.	clear external form. But word, phrase, clause, and sentence analysis are more internal aspects.	Koine Greek overly stresses word analysis to the neglect of large languages units. Both the 'forest' and its individual 'trees' must be studied.
(8)	2.0.1 Familiarize yourself with the literary forms in the New Testament.	2.0.1 Literary Form	Literary form, i.e., genre , exists at different levels. Each level needs analysis. This means identification and comparison with similar forms elsewhere. Forms are for easier communication.	Broad forms: Gospel, History, Letter, Apocalypse. Dependence on secondary tools here is necessary.	Prayers, doxologies, sayings, benedictions etc. should be identified and compared to like forms elsewhere in ancient writings. Most forms widely exist in writings generally in the biblical world.
(9)	2.0.2 Give attention to how a text is grammatically assembled.	2.0.2 Literary Structure	Remember that paragraphs are modern translation insertions. But words need to be analyzed along with thought flow in a passage.	.Greek students remember parsing the words in a passage. Very necessary for translation and exegesis.	Analysis of thought flow can be accomplished via a Block Diagram of the text. An activity for Greek students. A copy is found in each volume of the BIC commentary.
(10)	2.0.2 If possessing Greek skills, parse the words in the text.	2.0.2.1 Word Parsing	Begin analysis with smallest grammatical unit: words.	Follow the guidelines in Appendix 2: Guides to Parsing (cf. BIC vol. 35)	Write out notes rather than full parsing. With practice, shorter notes will suffice.
(11)	2.0.2.2 Create a Block Diagram of the passage.	2.0.2.2 Block Diagram	Again, this requires Greek skills to create.	Practice makes this process easier and more accurate. So hang in there.	The Block Diagram lays the foundation for the Semantic Diagram in the Exposition phase. This is the source for preaching and teaching outlines of the passage.
				Make a multi-	Coupled with the Block

(12)	<p>2.0.3</p> <p>Analyze the literary context.</p>	<p>2.0.3</p> <p>Literary Setting</p>	<p>In the beginning, utilize paragraph breaks in both the Greek texts and translations.</p>	<p>column comparative listing from several sources.</p>	<p>Diagram this comparative list will provide a sense of the context of your passage.</p>
(13)	<p>2.0</p> <p>Sketch out a short summary of the literary aspect of the passage.</p>	<p>2.0</p> <p>Literary Aspects</p>	<p>Jot down questions arising from your own analysis.</p>	<p>Utilize the secondary tools such as dictionaries etc. in seeking answers.</p>	<p>By this point, a pretty clear sense of the past meaning of the passage should be emerging.</p>
(14)	<p>1.0 & 1.2</p> <p>Pull it together.</p>	<p>1.0 & 1.2</p> <p>Historica & Literary Aspects</p>	<p>Pull together your notes on both aspects into a summary presentation.</p>	<p>Note carefully the inner connections between history and literary.</p>	<p>Create a notepad summary, not a formal paper format. These are for your own use.</p>