

## **GETTING STARTED**

### **Suggestions for Writing Your Exegetical Paper**

1. Pick a passage. Your pericope (self-contained passages) can be anywhere from a few verses to a section of a chapter.
2. Look at the outlines in the packet to see how your passage fits into the rest of its section and book.
3. Read it several times, taking a few notes of major ideas, images, and principles.
4. Write a brief sketch of passage for yourself, as if it were a scripture commentary for a quiz or an exam, outlining the basic historical, literary, and theological issues.
4. Look at a commentary or two on that passage to see what others may have said about your passage.
5. Finally, follow the Paper Instructions and write your paper according to the outline provided there. For both your and our ease, break the paper into sections and use the subtitles given (Survey, Contextual Analysis, Formal Analysis, Detailed Analysis, etc.)

### **Paper Sections**

(See Exegetical Paper Instructions in Packet)

- **Survey or Introduction** (for this short paper, 1 paragraph)
- **Contextual Analysis** (2 paragraphs, one on historical context and one on literary)
- **Formal Analysis** (indicates what type of writing [form] the passage is, how it fits into the larger narrative; 1–2 paragraphs)
- **Detailed Analysis** (4–5 paragraphs, treating each verse or section of your text)
- **Synthesis** (1 paragraph)
- **Reflection** (1–3 good paragraphs; this is the place for your existential exegesis and exposition)

## EXEGETICAL PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

Rel 211 Huntsman

The exegetical paper is a short treatment (usually between 5–7 pages) of a single passage of text, consisting of a close reading and HISTORICAL, LITERARY, and THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS.

The first step is to select a passage for analysis. A discrete section of text is often referred to as a *pericope* (Greek for “cutting around,” that is, a section extracted from the surrounding text). This can consist of a single episode of narrative, a parable or group of related parables, a controversy narrative, etc. Generally a manageable pericope is between 5–25 verses.

A good reference for the process of writing an exegetical paper is Michael Gorman’s *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (Peabody: Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), selections of which have been reproduced in the accompanying handout.

First read Gorman, 7–11, to review what exegesis is. In sum, the process of exegesis is asking questions of the text:

1. **HISTORICAL QUESTIONS:** What situation is the context of the pericope—first, what occasioned the event, teaching, miracle, or parable; and second, what caused the writer to record it and include it in his text? Also, what historical and cultural factors influenced the original actors and, separately, which influenced the writer in the way that he portrayed or crafted the pericope? This is largely a *diachronic process*. Refer to class discussions, packet readings, and commentaries for information on such questions.
2. **LITERARY QUESTIONS:** What kind of writing is the passage (genre or form) and what are its literary aims (that is, what is the author trying to accomplish by including the passage)? Also, how does this passage relate to its immediate context (surrounding passages) and to the overall organization of the book? This is *synchronic exegesis*. The outlines of each gospel found on the class website (<http://erichuntsman.com/rel211/outlines.htm>) may be particularly useful for this.
3. **THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS:** What principles or doctrines does this passage illustrate or teach, and, just as importantly, how does it engage and affect the reader? This is the point where you can reflect on what the passage means to you. This is *existential exegesis*, and is, ultimately, the most important kind of analysis. It is also the place for exposition, where one can harness other restoration scripture and LDS doctrine in understanding and teaching the text.

Next, read Gorman, 28–30, and note the six main steps in the exegetical process. Each of these will form a section of your paper. They are summarized as follows:

- **Survey or Introduction** (for this short paper, 1 paragraph)
  - Describe the passage and why it is significant; in a short pericope, you could include the passage as a block quote (single-spaced, double-indented)
- **Contextual Analysis** (2 paragraphs, one on historical context and one on literary)
  - the first paragraph should treat the historical context, that is, what event occasioned the teaching, parable, miracle, sermon, etc.

- ▶ the second paragraph, among other things, should explain why the author chose to include this event or story in his larger narrative and treat the literary context; why was it important to him and to his original audience? How does the larger context, the text before and after the passage, affect its reading? Look at the outlines at <http://erichuntsman.com/rel211/outlines.htm> to see how your pericope fits into the larger narrative
- **Formal Analysis** (indicates what type of writing [form] the passage is, how it fits into the larger narrative; 1–2 paragraphs)
  - ▶ The formal analysis discusses what kind of writing the passage is—a piece of narrative, a cantical or hymn, a controversy narrative, a parable, a sermon, a discourse, etc.
  - ▶ How is the pericope itself structured?
- **Detailed Analysis** (4–5 paragraphs, treating each verse or section of your text)
  - ▶ Careful scrutiny of the word choice, imagery, allusions to other passages, etc. What are the main points of each part of the text and how does the writer make these points?
- **Synthesis** (1 paragraph)
  - ▶ The synthesis is essentially a summation or conclusion before the reflection. Although we are accustomed to summarizing at the end of a paper, what the synthesis at this point does is help keep the paper text-focused: what does your passage say and how does it say it as a TEXT before you begin to discuss what claims it makes on the reader, that is, what it calls upon the reader to believe or do
- **Exposition and Reflection** (1–3 good paragraphs; this is the place for your existential exegesis and exposition)
  - ▶ The reflection section is where you can discuss how it engages the reader and what the importance of the passage to you individually or to Latter-day Saints in general. *As a result, it is the best place to do exposition, using restoration scripture and LDS doctrine to explicate the teachings of the passage.* What does this passage tell us about the Savior and his mission; what doctrines does it teach; how does it motivate us to exercise greater faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; how has it changed you?

The weight of your paper should be on the *detailed analysis* and the *reflection*.

Review “Practical Guidelines for Writing a Research Exegesis Paper” in Gorman, 205–209, and then read the sample exegetical paper provided in Gorman, 211–216. Note how Ms. Chappell used section headings for each of step of the exegetical process.

Scriptural citations can be noted with parenthetical references. Other citations should be done as footnotes, either according to the *SBL Handbook of Style* (published by the Society of Biblical Literature) or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Examples from the *SBL Handbook of Style* appear on the website at the link <http://erichuntsman.com/rel211/SBLHandbookExcerpts>.

You need not rely excessively on commentaries or secondary sources, but it would be good to refer to a few to see how they treat your passage. You may want to begin by looking at the notes of a good study Bible such as *The Harper Collins Study Bible* or *NIV Study Bible*. Then look at an LDS introduction or commentary such as the packet readings from *Studies in Scriptures 5: The Gospels*; Daniel Ludlow’s *A Companion to Your Study of the New Testament*; Elder McConkie’s *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*; or other works by LDS authorities. Also consult at least one scholarly commentary, such as a pertinent volume of *The Anchor Bible Commentary*, or *The New International Greek Commentary*, looking up the pages that treat your passage.



## A Few Reference Works

The Anchor Bible Series (volumes for most biblical books). E.g., Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 27. New York: Random House, 1999.

*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman *et al.*. 6 Volumes. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Brown, Raymond Edward. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

*The Gospels*. Edited by Kent. P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Studies in Scriptures vol. 5. Salt Lake City, Utah, 1986.

*The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. Edited by Wayne A. Meeks. San Francisco: Harper, 1997.

Ludlow, Daniel H. *A Companion to Your Study of the New Testament: the Four Gospels*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1982.

McConkie, Bruce R. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. 3 volumes. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970.

The New International Greek Testament Commentary Series (volumes for most New Testament books). e.g., Marhsall, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1978.

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

*NIV Study Bible*. Edited by Kenneth L. Barker and Donald W. Burdick. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984.

## Sample Grade Sheet

**NAME:**

**SECTION** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

### MECHANICS AND STYLE

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ /20

Problems included:

\_\_\_ Sentence Mechanics (spelling errors, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, dangling modifiers, punctuation, agreement, other grammatical lapses)

\_\_\_ Style and Diction (proper word choice, redundancy, choppy sentences, contorted and difficult sentences, appropriate tone, awareness of audience)

\_\_\_ Correct use of citations!

### SURVEY/INTRODUCTION

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ / 5

Choice of pericope. Describe the passage and why it is significant.

### CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

\_\_\_ **Historical:** what event occasioned the teaching, parable, miracle, sermon, etc.

\_\_\_ **Literary:** why the author chose to include this event or story in his larger narrative; why was it important to him and to his original audience? How does the larger context, the text before and after the passage, affect its reading and how does pericope fit into the larger narrative?

### FORMAL ANALYSIS

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

What kind of writing is the passage—a piece of abridged narrative, a sermon, editorial commentary, a prophecy, a quoted letter, etc. How is the pericope structured?

### DETAILED ANALYSIS

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ / 30

Careful scrutiny of the word choice, imagery, allusions to other passages, etc. What are the main points of each part of the text and how does the writer make these points?

### SYNTHESIS

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ / 5

A summation of what the passage says and how it says it as a TEXT before you begin to discuss what claims it makes on the reader

### EXPOSITION AND REFLECTION

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_/20

*How do other scripture (including restoration scripture) and LDS doctrine help us understand the passage? How does the passage engage the reader and what is the importance of the passage to you individually or to Latter-day Saints in general? What does this passage tell us about the Savior and his mission; what doctrines does it teach; how does it motivate us to exercise greater faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; how has it changed you?*

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**