

Suggested structure of Exegesis papers

Introduction – (10% of word count)

This should be no more than 10% of your word count. The introduction should be brief; you are really highlighting information here, not going into depth. The depth of your discussion about these topics needs to be integrated into your verse by verse exegesis.

- Brief outline of major/significant theological themes and motifs: *what is the passage about?*
- Brief outline of its context:
 - Literary context: *Where does the passage fit in the book or a section of the book? Does it have a specific genre? Focus? Function?*
 - Historical context: *Does it relate to a specific event? Purpose? Is it important who the author was, when it was written, or the audience? Where does the passage fit in the whole Bible narrative?*
- Brief outline of major scholarly perspectives on the passage: *Who are the significant themes discussed by scholars and commentators on this passage? Is this passage controversial? Is it interpreted in various ways?*

Exegesis of the passage (verse by verse) (80% of word count)

- *The main section of your paper should be a verse-by-verse discussion of the passage. Work systematically through the text discussing significant examples related to the following topics. You don't need to include something from each topic for each verse – but these topics are prompts to facilitate discussion regarding the way the text communicates and shapes its meaning – don't just add things for mere information, always link discussion to the meaning and significance of the passage. You can use the planner on the last page as a guide.*
- *Topics you could include and incorporate:*
 - Vocabulary/lexical issues
 - Grammatical issues
 - Translation issues
 - Literary context
 - Historical context
 - Function
 - Links to other verses in same passage
 - Links to other passages in book/Bible
 - Scholarly perspectives
- *The exegesis should be structured using a subheading for each verse, for example:*

Deutoronmoy 6:1

(discussion here)

6:2

(discussion here)

6:3

(discussion here)

... and so on:

- *At times you might also start your Exegesis section with a translation: If you are studying Greek or Hebrew you might need to provide a translation – check with your lecturer. This should not be included unless specifically requested.*

Conclusion (10% of word count)

You conclusion should briefly pull together the main points and themes of the passage. Your conclusion might highlight:

- The main message of the passage
- The overarching function of the passage
- The theological or practical application of the passage for the original readers or today: *this should only be brief – an exegesis paper is not a devotional paper.*

Bibliography

This is not counted in your word count and should be on a separate page. Be sure to use Chicago 16 Footnotes style. Check the Study Skills Page for advice if necessary.

A note about using Secondary sources and different biblical scholars

Although an exegesis is focused on the primary biblical source, in preparing and writing your exegesis paper you will need to use secondary sources. Secondary sources can help you discover new ideas about the passage, highlight how the passage has been interpreted over time, and give you specific detail about the passage. When using secondary sources:

- Stay focused on the biblical text: *if the passage highlights something then refer to the passage instead of citing a secondary source that says the same thing.*
- Make sure that you work systematically through the passage first before you look at commentaries, articles, books or other sources: *Look closely at various translations and note similarities and differences in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, structure (including the demarcation of verse numbers). If you are studying an exegesis subject in Greek or Hebrew you should look carefully at the original language.*
- Try to include recent scholarly perspectives (less than 5yrs old): *historical scholarly discussions are also worthwhile if the passage has been debated for a long time but recent literature will most likely include some historical overview as well as highlighting current perspectives on the passage.*
- Ensure that the secondary sources are more academically focused than devotionally focused: *since an exegesis aims to be critically focused on a specific text make sure that you use sources that provide you with rigorous exploration of the passage and a more academic approach. Sometimes more devotional sources will move your focus too quickly to application instead of critical discussion of the text – and you will end up looking too much at themes and broad biblical principles than the details of the passage verse-by-verse.*
- Ensure that you correctly cite the sources that you use: *you should footnote sources as well as include them in your Bibliography*
- Consider the theological and cultural perspectives of the authors: *when using secondary texts you should always keep in mind the author's own perspectives and how that might shape their discussion. Considering their perspectives will be helpful when you come to discussing the various interpretations/perspectives of the passage.*
- If your lecturer has provided readings or suggested resources make sure that you use them.

Need more help?

On the Moodle Study Skills Page you can find:

- General Requirements for Assessments
- How to write in different genres/exegesis (in the Writing Assignments section)
- Referencing guides and helpful links to using Chicago 16 Footnotes (or Chicago 16A) and also using EndNote bibliographic software

PLANNING YOUR EXEGESIS (you can download this planner in WORD format from the Study Skills Page)

*You don't need to include something from each topic for each verse – but these topics are prompts to facilitate discussion regarding the way the text communicates and shapes its meaning – don't just add things for mere information, always link discussion to the meaning and significance of the passage. You can use this planner to simply place a tick in each box – or type some brief notes. **Your actual paper should be formatted in full sentences and not in table form.***

| Verse # For this verse, will I discuss | <i>specific words/phrases?</i> | <i>specific grammatical issues?</i> | <i>significant or critical translation/interpretation variants?</i> | <i>how it illustrates the literary context?</i> | <i>how it illustrates the historical context?</i> | <i>how it illustrates the function of the passage?</i> | <i>direct links to other verses within the passage (imagery, themes, structure, vocab?)</i> | <i>significant links to other biblical texts? (through imagery, themes, context, vocab?)</i> | <i>significant discussion within secondary literature (e.g. scholarly biblical/theological perspectives)</i> |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Eg 2:1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2:2 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2: 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| ... | | | | | | | | | |