EXEGETICAL PAPERS

Exegetical papers are common in theological degrees. According to Dale B. Martin, these papers present a Scripture passage, argue its interpretation, and discuss its application. Logos’ website states that exegetical papers require you to consult various Bible translations and commentaries.

PREPARATION

1. Pray - Before researching, pray for God’s guidance and clarity (University of Toronto).

2. Be familiar with the passage – Read the passage multiple times in your preferred translation and then in multiple other translations (Logos).

3. Context and genre – Examine the passage’s literary and historical context and genre (Logos).

4. Analyze the text – Outline the passage, examine words, discover relationships, look at cross-references, and note your questions (Logos).

5. Interpret the text – Ask, “what do I see in this passage?” (Logos).

6. Reference commentaries – Logos advises you to not read every page of a commentary; read what relates to your questions. Use multiple commentaries, because different commentaries are intended for different uses (Logos).

7. Refine interpretations – Now that you’ve done research, some of your questions should be answered and maybe some of your assumptions have been corrected (Logos). Use this information to refine your interpretations.

8. Ponder theology – Discover the passage’s theological themes, its relation to broader themes, opposing positions, the topic’s history, and its implications (Logos).

FORM

1. Turabian - Turabian style is commonly used in theological papers. Below are a few basic Turabian requirements. For more help with Turabian, see our Turabian resources.

   a. 1” margins

   b. 12 pt. Times New Roman or 10 pt. Arial, both double spaced
c. ½” paragraph indent

d. Footnotes-Bibliography citations

2. Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) - According to Dr. Jan A. Sigvartsen, you may be required to use SBL style. SBL style is similar to Turabian with a few differences, which are noted below. For more help with SBL, view Academic Coaching’s SBL Formatting Checklist.

   a. Center the first page numbers of the body and bibliography at the bottom
   b. Subsequent page numbers are on the top right
   c. Two blank lines separate sections

3. Professor’s requirements - Check if your professor has special formatting requirements. If any instructions contradict SBL or Turabian style, always follow the professor’s preferences.

CONTENT

The following is based on North Central University’s outline.


2. Introduction – A paragraph that introduces your topic and contains your thesis.

3. Contextual analysis – Include the passage’s literary and relevant historical context. Relate these to the passage rather than simply stating them. This part spans about 20% of the paper.

4. Detailed analysis – Analyze the passage verse-by-verse with word studies, discuss the passage’s form, and enter into a theological discussion. This section proves your thesis. This part comprises about 50% of the paper.

5. Theology – Discuss how the passage’s theology relates to the Old and New Testaments. This section constitutes about 20% of the paper.

6. Application – Conclude your paper by offering applications of the text, a brief summary, a restated thesis, and any questions for further research. This part forms about 5% of the paper.


Note: Follow the assignment’s instructions and your professor’s preferences. These guidelines will affect your paper.