TNARS Exegetical Paper Guidelines

Exegesis is the task of properly interpreting a text of Scripture, i.e. determining the author's original intent. The goal of an exegetical paper is to arrive at an accurate and faithful interpretation of a chosen text and consider its application. While a text will only have one meaning, it may have multiple applications.

Phases/Process:

1. **Selection of text** – (choose a text in collaboration with your mentor)
2. **Inductive Study** - explore and interact with the text. This stage involves your interaction with the text itself, not with secondary sources. Spend time in observation and write down everything you observe along with questions that arise. Denis Haack's *A Practical Method for Bible Study* is a valuable guide for this stage of work.
3. **Research exegetical sources/tools** – explore secondary sources which can provide valuable information on the text. This phase allows you to get a sense of what scholars say about the text and provides important details regarding the text. Write down all significant information you find.

> Concordance
> Lexicon
> Bible/theological dictionaries
> Bible atlas
> Commentaries
> Books
> Bible software

4. **Reflection** – correct, refine, and confirm your exegesis in light of your research. Finalize your thoughts and conclusions regarding the text.
5. **Write** – see "Sections" below.
6. **Review/Revise** – review your paper and make corrections and revisions. Here you want to make sure your paper clearly says what you intend to say, is free from grammatical and spelling errors, and follows the required format.

Sections of the Paper:

Introduction – Introduce the text, your reasons for choosing it, and assert your thesis.

Critical analysis of translation - In this section you should provide a translation of the text based upon the original language or from a comparison of English translations (no paraphrases), commenting on your translation choices.

Form, structure, and context - This section requires you to determine the structure or organization of the text. You may do this by analyzing the passage and offering an outline. The context of the passage should be carefully considered and discussed.

Textual Commentary – here you will relate the significant details of the text.
> Problems and issues
> Grammar and syntax

Semantic analysis
Socio-historical background
Biblical-theological-redemptive context
Themes and motifs
Literary analysis, literary devices, figures of speech
Key words and ideas

Interpretation – this section is a verse-by-verse exposition based upon the information considered above. This is where you present the meaning of the text. What the author meant to convey to his original audience *is* what the text means.

Application - In this section, you will pull together everything that you have done so far and identify a general principle that is based on the original meaning of the text. You should also identify a corresponding contemporary setting in which this general principle is applicable. It is important that your application is clearly based on your exegesis of the text. It is often at this stage that students ignore their own exegesis and "go with their gut" or revert to what they have learned in church.

Conclusion – tie all of the information together and reassert your thesis.

Bibliography/Works Cited – list all the sources you cited in your paper.

Formatting:

- The paper should be typed and double-spaced using a clear, non-ornamental, serif font. Examples of acceptable fonts include Times New Roman or Palatino. The text of the paper should be set in 12-point type with footnotes in 10-point.
- Margins are typically 1" on all sides.
- Page numbers should be included on all pages in a place that remains consistent throughout the paper (i.e., top right on every page, bottom center on every page, etc.).
- Titles of books and other longer works should be italicized, not underlined. Titles of articles, essays, parts of longer works, or other shorter works should be enclosed in quotation marks.
- Follow MLA citation rules. The *Works Cited* page should also follow MLA formatting.