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Studying the Synoptics: some parallel passages

Study one set of parallels

- Notice the similarities and differences between the three accounts
- Angalia kufanana na tofauti kati ya akaunti hizo tatu
- What do these similarities and differences show us about the point or points which each writer is emphasising?
- Je, mfanano na tofauti hizi zinatonyesha nini kuhusu jambo au mambo ambayo kila mwandishi anasisitiza?

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**Exegesis: what it is
and how to do it**

What exegesis is

- careful reading
- seeking what the author is communicating through the text

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First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Peter 1:20-21

What exegesis is

- careful reading
- seeking what the author is communicating through the text
 - in Scripture, the human author and the divine author
- how does the author present the story?
 - looking for the structure: how the story is organised
 - asking the seven key fact-finding questions

Looking for the structure

- read the section several times in more than one version (if possible)
- translation
 - are there significant problems of translation?
 - ‘Give us each day our daily [*epiousios*] bread’
Luke 11:3
 - what consequences might issues of translation have for understanding the section?

Looking for the structure

- context
 - what comes before and after the section?
 - what is the relationship of the section to the preceding and following sections of the book?

Contrast

- Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “...But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.” Luke 1:18
- The angel said to [Mary], “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ...Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. Luke 1:38

Looking for the structure

- context
 - what comes before and after the section?
 - what is the relationship of the section to the preceding and following sections of the book?
 - contrast
 - comparison
 - Jesus and Peter on trial—Mark 14: 53-65, 66-72

Looking for the structure

- context
 - what comes before and after the section?
 - what is the relationship of the section to the preceding and following sections of the book?
 - contrast
 - comparison
 - consequence—e.g. prophecy and fulfillment
 - Peter's denial announced Mark 14:29-31 and carried out Mark 14:66-72 (esp. v 72)

Looking for the structure

- context
 - what comes before and after the section?
 - what is the relationship of the section to the preceding and following sections of the book?
 - contrast
 - comparison
 - consequence
 - repetition (for emphasis)
 - the lost sheep and the lost coin Luke 15:3-7, 8-10—both answering the question of vv 1-2

Looking for the structure

- context
 - what comes before and after the section?
 - what is the relationship of the section to the preceding and following sections of the book?
 - contrast
 - comparison
 - consequence
 - repetition (for emphasis)
 - illustration

Matthew 5

- vv 17-20 on the principle of keeping the torah
- the principle is applied to
 - murder and anger vv 21-26
 - adultery and lust vv 27-30
 - divorce vv 31-32
 - oaths and speaking truthfully vv 33-37
 - revenge and generosity vv 38-42
 - love for neighbour and enemies vv 43-48

Looking for the structure

- context
- form
 - what kind of story/saying is it?
 - what are the marks of that 'form'?

“

20 “So they asked [Jesus], “Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. 22 Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar or not?” 23 But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, 24 “Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?” They said, “Caesar’s.” 25 He said to them, “Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” 26 And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said, and being amazed by his answer they became silent.

Luke 20:21-26

Looking for the structure

- context
- form
- structure: how is the text organised?
 - cause and effect
 - means to an end
 - progression to a climax or challenge
 - general statement followed by specific examples
 - the same idea expressed in different ways

Looking for the structure

- context
- form
- structure: how is the text organised?
 - look for grammar and vocabulary (word choice)
 - who does what to whom with what consequences?—verb subject and object
 - ‘shift’ words: but, therefore, for, because, etc.
 - use a Bible dictionary or commentary
 - use a concordance

Looking for the structure

- context
- form
- structure: how is the text organised?
 - look for grammar and vocabulary (word choice)
 - historical and cultural setting
 - check out customs, words, ideas which are alien to your culture or historical situation

The seven key fact-finding questions

- Who?
 - the writer or speaker
 - the readers or hearers } their relationship

The seven key fact-finding questions

- Who?
 - the writer or speaker
 - the readers or hearers } their relationship
- how the writer portrays characters
 - telling and showing
 - what reaction does the writer seek?
 - empathy, sympathy, antipathy
 - or leaving it open—the older brother

The seven key fact-finding questions

- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- What?—the central event or key theme
- How?—does the writer or speaker communicate
- Why?—does it happen
- So?—what results follow

Exegesis in practice

Luke 7:11-17

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Context

- Luke 7:1-10 a partner story
 - both healing stories
 - gentile man/Jewish woman
- Luke 7:18-23 flows from 7:11-17
 - Jesus raises the dead—v 22

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God visiting his people

- “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has **visited** his people and redeemed them.” Luke 1:68
- “Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will **visit** us” Luke 1:78
- “They [your enemies] will crush you [Jerusalem] to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your **visitation** from God.” Luke 19:44

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20 “[Elijah] cried out to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?” 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried out to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again.” 22 The LORD listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him to his mother; then Elijah said, “See, your son is alive.” 24 So the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”

I Kings 17:20-24

Luke 7:11-17

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“...this is less an account of healing and more a disclosure of the character of Jesus’ mission and, therefore, of the nature of God’s redemptive intervention.”

Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 291

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