

All Things Preaching
Pericope Template
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Pericope-a portion of the biblical text which is marked by textual boundary units and expresses the complete thought of the writer on a subject or in a narrative. It typically falls between inherent divisions of the text. Kuruvilla maintains that the pericope is used in a technical sense to indicate that “demarcated portion” of Scripture.¹

It is best to think of the pericope as that unit of thought embedded in the overall text of Scripture which, when rightfully determined, will contain all the details, information, and features required of an expository sermon. It provides the “grist” for the preacher to use in sermon preparation. Thinking in terms of pericope reinforces the truth that textual meaning resides not only in the content of the text (what the text says); it is also found in the format of the text (how the text says it).

This document will provide a template for the preacher to use in determining a textual pericope as a tool for sermon preparation. The following questions should be asked in establishing the textual pericope.

Questions for the Text

- 1. Are there any natural divisions (initiatory or concluding sequences) in the flow of the text?**

- 2. Are there any transitional devices in the text?**

- 3. Does the tentative textual unit present a completion of thought or action?**

- 4. Does a sequence break appear in any English translations?**

¹Abraham Kuruvilla, *A Vision For Preaching: Understanding the Heart of Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 19. The word is actually a transliteration from the Greek word-“perikopto,” which means to cut, strike, or smite around. Kostenberger and Patterson describe pericope as “a narrative unit.” See Andreas Kostenberger and Richard Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 614.