

Bible Study for Every Christian

Part 2: Observation

BIBLE STUDY FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN (PT. 2) Observation

THE PROCESS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

- 1) Preparation
- 2) Observation
- 3) Meditation
- 4) Interpretation
- 5) Evaluation
- 6) Application

I. PREPARATION

- **A. The Arguments for Bible Study**
- **B. The Goals of Bible Study**
- **C. The Prerequisites for Bible Study**
 - 1) Must be a Christian.
 - 2) Confess your sin.
 - 3) Pray for illumination.
 - 4) Have a good, literal translation of the Bible.
 - 5) Be willing to work hard.

II. OBSERVATION

- *Exegesis* is using careful reading, thought, and analysis along with all available tools to systematically study the details of the text in order to arrive at its meaning.
- "What does this really say?"

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

- Every reference to the city of Jerusalem has four levels of meaning:
 - 1) literal— the historical city;
 - 2) allegorical – the church;
 - 3) moral—the human soul;
 - 4) eschatological – heavenly Jerusalem

THE LIGHT OF THE REFORMATION

- Luther: "The Holy Ghost is the all simplest writer that is in heaven or earth; therefore his words can have no more than one simplest sense, which we call the scriptural or literal meaning."
- Calvin: "It is the first business of an interpreter to let the author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say."
- Luther: "First I shake the whole tree, that the ripest [fruit] may fall. Then I climb the tree and shake each limb, and then each branch and then each twig, and then I look under each leaf."

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II. OBSERVATION

- A. What to Observe
 - 1) Context
 - Historical context: the setting of the book in human history.
 - Biblical context: the relationship of the paragraph or section to the surrounding passages, the rest of the book, and to the entire message of Scripture.
 - 2) Content
 - Syntax: the relationship of phrases and clauses to one another.
 - Words: the exact sense of the words the author intended.

HELPFUL TOOLS FOR OBSERVATION

- 1) Study Bible
 - MSB, NIV, and ESV

HELPFUL TOOLS FOR OBSERVATION

- 2) A concordance
 - *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*
 - *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible/Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries* by Robert L. Thomas
 - *The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance (Strongest Strong's)* by Zondervan

HELPFUL TOOLS FOR OBSERVATION

- 3) A Bible Dictionary
 - Unger, Merrill F. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Rev. and updated edition ed. by R. K. Harrison. Moody.
 - Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Eerdmans (5 vols).
 - Tenney, Merrill C., ed. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. (5 vols.).

HELPFUL TOOLS FOR OBSERVATION

- 4) A topical Bible
 - *Nave's Topical Bible*.
 - *MacArthur Topical Bible* (expanded from Torrey's Topical Textbook)
- 5) Bible Software
 - Logos.
 - Free Bible software: [www.e-sword.net].

II. OBSERVATION

- B. The Process
 - 1. Always Remember the Big Picture.

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THE BIG PICTURE

- The Bible's History:
 - Written over 1500 years: 1445 BC. to 95 AD.
 - Written by over 40 different authors.
 - 66 books (OT - 39; NT - 27)
- The Bible's Process:
 - God commanded men He chose to write His words: original autographs.
 - None exist today.
 - Copies of those originals and then copies of the copies were meticulously made.
 - Today more than 25000 manuscript copies exist.

THE BIG PICTURE

- The Bible's Authenticity:
- 1) Historically
 - More manuscript copies of the Bible.
 - 25,000 manuscripts of the NT.
 - 643 manuscripts of Homer's *Iliad*.
 - Biblical manuscripts date closer to the events.
 - Time gap between events and the earliest manuscripts...
 - *Iliad* - 400 years
 - The NT - 30 years (fragment); 100 years books; 150 years most the NT

THE BIG PICTURE

- The Bible's Authenticity:
- 1) Historically
- 2) Theologically
 - The chief reason we believe the Bible is that Jesus affirmed the OT to be God's Word.

THE BIG PICTURE

- The Theme of the Bible:
 - God is redeeming a people by His Son, for His Son, to His own glory.
- The Purpose of the Testaments:
 - The OT: He's coming (and why He needs to come)!
 - The NT: He came (Gospels), this is what His coming meant (Acts & the epistles), and He's coming again (Revelation).

II. OBSERVATION

- **B. The Process**
 1. Always Remember the Big Picture.
 2. Choose a Biblical Book.
 3. Read up on the Book's Background.
 4. Read through the Book Multiple Times.
 5. Identify the Paragraphs (Prose) or Sections (Poetry).
 6. Make Observations and Ask Questions of the Text.

6. MAKE OBSERVATIONS AND ASK QUESTIONS OF THE TEXT.

- 1) Ask questions of the text as if you had no idea what the text teaches.
 - Who, what, where, when, why, and how?

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KEY QUESTIONS

- Who?
 - Wrote it? Said it? Who is the main character? Who is in this account? To whom is it written? About whom is it written?
- What?
 - Major ideas? Main theme? Main events? Important lessons?
- Where?
 - Where did it happen? Where will it happen? Where was it said? Where is the author? Where are his recipients?
- When?
 - When did this happen? When was it written?

KEY QUESTIONS

- Why?
 - Why is this important? Why include that detail? Why is so much written about this event or teaching? Why should we do what's commanded?
- How?
 - How can it be done? How should it be done? How is the truth illustrated?

6. MAKE OBSERVATIONS AND ASK QUESTIONS OF THE TEXT.

- I) Ask questions of the text as if you had no idea what the text teaches.
 - Who, what, where, when, why, and how?
- II) Make personal observations about what seems to be going on in the text.
 - What do I see in this passage?
 - Key words.
 - Key topics.
 - Key people.
 - Commands.
 - Repeated words, concepts, or phrases.

YOUR CHOICE...

