

Studying the Bible



Studying the Bible

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God
as a workman who does not need to be ashamed,
handling accurately the word of truth.”*

2 Timothy 2:15



**For BEE-approved
facilitator and translation use only.
Not for public distribution.**

Copyright © May 2007

Revised July 2007

1.0

**BEE World®
Colorado Springs, Colorado**

**All Scripture noted by NASB were taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD
BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960,1962,1963,1968,1971,1972,1973,1975,1977,1995 by The
Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.**

All Rights Reserved

Contents

Course Introduction	7
Student Instructions	13
Lesson 1: The Importance of Bible Study	18
Topic 1: Ezra’s Example	19
Topic 2: Paul’s Command.....	23
Topic 3: Jesus’ Command	26
Topic 4: Paul’s Teaching.....	27
Lesson 2: The “Studying the Bible” Method	32
Topic 1: Reading	34
Topic 2: Writing.....	38
Topic 3: <i>Studying the Bible</i> Method.....	41
Topic 4: Study Habits.....	44
Lesson 3: Observation—Beginning the Observation Process	50
Topic 1: Observe the Background.....	52
Topic 2: Observe the Literary Style	54
Topic 3: Read the Passage and Its Context	55
Topic 4: Make General Observations.....	58
Lesson 4: Observation—Discovering Structure	75
Topic 1: Discerning the Structure	77
Topic 2: Structural Outline.....	78
Topic 3: Structural Indicators.....	96
Topic 4: Structural Outline with Structural Indicators	106
Lesson 5: Observation—Determining Theme and Purpose	130
Topic 1: Identify the Main Theme.....	132
Topic 2: State the Purpose.....	135
Topic 3: Identify the Theme and Purpose of a Whole Book	138
Lesson 6: Interpretation—Beginning the Interpretive Process	147
Topic 1: Observation vs. Interpretation.....	149
Topic 2: The Process of Interpretation	150
Topic 3: Twenty Principles of Interpretation	153

Lesson 7: Interpretation—Researching, Evaluating, and Drawing Conclusions	168
Topic 1: Research Your Interpretive Question.....	169
Topic 2: Evaluate and Conclude	184
Lesson 8: Application—Preparing the Applications	199
Topic 1: Observation and Interpretation vs. Application	200
Topic 2: Bridging the Gap for Ourselves	202
Lesson 9: Application—Relating the Applications of Life	219
Topic 1: Relate the Application to Life	220
Topic 2: Practice the Application	228
Lesson 10: Application—Outlining	237
Topic 1: Teaching Outlines	238
Topic 2: The Greek Letter Format	242
Lesson 11: Application—Charting	251
Topic 1: How to Survey a Book of the Bible.....	252
Topic 2: Summary of the Procedure for Doing a Book Survey.....	266
Lesson 12: Review and Final Exam	272
Topic 1: The Five Observation Questions.....	273
Topic 2: Theme and Purpose.....	275
Topic 3: Interpretative Questions	277
Topic 4: Applications	277
Final Exam	284
Appendix 1: General Bible Familiarity	285
Appendix 2: The Student, the Fish, and Agassiz	287
Appendix 3: Study Helps for Poetic, Wisdom, and Prophetic Literature	291
Lesson Notes	323

Course Introduction

When you sit down to study your Bible, do you know how to begin? Perhaps you have the *desire* to be a good student of the Word, but you lack the knowledge of *how* to do it. You *want* to help others by teaching them the Word of God, but you are not sure how to communicate well to them.

Many people experience these frustrations because they do not know how to approach the Bible in a way that will yield truth to them. This course is designed to provide you with all the basic tools you will need to do effective Bible study and arrive at reasonable interpretations on your own. Once you have completed this course, you will undoubtedly build upon the foundation that will be laid here. But if you study diligently and learn this method well, you can have the confidence that you can sit by yourself, study the Bible, and understand what it means. Then you can apply the truths you have learned in a way that will enhance your relationship with God and others.

This introduction will tell you about the course, its overall goals, and the specific objectives of each lesson. It can be likened to a map. It gives you the overall picture of where your journey begins and where it will end. It shows the direction of the journey and the steps you will need to take to arrive at your destination. Then, with that in mind, you will begin to work with the individual steps in the twelve lessons to guide you along the way toward your goal.

Our prayer and hope for this course is to provide you with the skills you will need for a lifetime of fruitful Bible study, whether you are a beginner or a seasoned veteran of the Scriptures.

The Bible: The Perfect Library

If you could own only one book, your best choice would be the Bible. The Bible, by itself, would give you a perfect library. If you study that Bible thoroughly, you could become a better scholar than someone who has read hundreds of other books. The Bible contains the tremendous description by David in one of his psalms that God's words are sweeter than honey and more precious than gold. Honey appeals to a person's physical appetite; the Bible satisfies the spiritual. Gold speaks of earthly wealth; the Bible promises eternal wealth.

History contains multitudes of people who lived, or now live, solely for the pleasures of physical appetites and the wealth and security of riches. And even if they fulfill their greatest expectations of either or both, it all stops at death's door. Only the Bible satisfies the ultimate needs and desires of the heart, for time and eternity.

The Bible is the one book that comes directly from God. The Bible claims to be divine revelation from beginning to end. The prophets continually preached, "This is what the Lord says." The apostles repeatedly wrote that God called them into apostolic ministry, which included writing His words. Jesus Christ taught that seeing Him meant seeing God the Father. No other book in the world makes such extensive and lofty claims about itself. And no other book is perfectly true in what it asserts. The Bible is the one book for those who want truth.

The Bible tells about the greatest Person, Jesus Christ. There is no hope for the world besides Him. Jesus claims to forgive sins. He claims to give life in all its abundance. The true Bible scholar realizes, sooner or later, that he is not just dealing with a book. The true Bible scholar is pursuing Jesus Christ.

The Bible student gradually becomes a different person. The Scriptures change that person who allows God's words to penetrate his soul. God is in the process of making His children more and more like Jesus Christ. God uses the Bible to transform people.

As the Bible student continues to labor in the Scriptures, he grows wiser. It is only in the Scriptures that a person can increase in true wisdom. The Bible warns about the dangers of worldly wisdom. True wisdom comes from an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Christ.

The depths of the wisdom and truth in the Scriptures can never entirely be plumbed. The student can never say that he has completed his study of the entire Bible, that he has finally understood everything in the Bible. But the more he studies the Scriptures, the more he will know and better grasp the truths of Scripture. Thus, studying the Bible is a lifetime pursuit.

Objectives of the Course

The major objective of this course, *Studying the Bible (STB)*, is to enable you to study the Scripture diligently and effectively, with the intended result that you will love God fervently and depend on the Holy Spirit for illumination.

STB is primarily a skills course, in which you will come to know certain things. As such, there are two important objectives:

- To understand the content of the course and complete the lesson exercises
- To become acquainted with available resources and tools that can enhance Bible study.

Using the *STB* skills is intended to lead to changed lives, that is, what you will be. As such, there are two objectives:

- To be diligent and effective in studying the Scripture
- To seek after God and allow God to change your life, as measured by self-evaluation and Life Notebook entries

STB creates in you a new ability, what you will do. This aspect has two objectives:

- To use the *STB* method to complete the Bible study project on Philippians 2:1-11 and the final exam
- To equip the student to teach others the *STB* method after successfully completing the course

LESSONS

The course is composed of twelve lessons as described below:

Lesson 1: The Importance of Bible Study

This lesson explains the importance of Bible study through understanding the priority of using your intellect to learn the content of Scripture, in the context of loving God fervently and depending on the Holy Spirit for illumination.

Lesson 2: The “Studying the Bible” Method

This lesson prepares you to learn the *STB* method, which you will demonstrate by successful completion of the lessons that follow.

Lesson 3: Observation—Beginning the Observation Process

This lesson enables you to determine context and make observations of select Bible passages.

Lesson 4: Observation—Discovering Structure

This lesson discusses the creation of structural outlines, so that you may understand how and why the biblical authors arranged thoughts and words in Scripture.

Lesson 5: Observation—Determining Theme and Purpose

This lesson shows you how to determine, based on observations, the theme and purpose of select biblical passages.

Lesson 6: Interpretation—Beginning the Interpretive Process

This lesson begins the process of interpretation by teaching you how to ask interpretative questions.

Lesson 7: Interpretation—Researching, Evaluating, and Drawing Conclusions

This lesson continues the process of interpretation by teaching you how to do research on a verse or passage, evaluate your research, and then draw conclusions.

Lesson 8: Application—Preparing the Applications

This lesson will allow you to write statements of truth from selected Bible passages.

Lesson 9: Application—Relating the Applications to Life

This lesson tells you how to write personally helpful applications relating to God, yourself, and others.

Lesson 10: Application—Outlining

This lesson describes how to write a teaching outline for a specific Bible passage.

Lesson 11: Application—Charting

This lesson demonstrates how to create a simplified chart for the book of Jonah.

Lesson 12: Review and Final Exam

This lesson draws together all you have studied to help you summarize the *STB* process and use it in a Bible passage.

Student Instructions

As you read through the course Table of Contents and Introduction, you saw that this course teaches a three-step inductive approach to Bible study. In order to benefit most from your study of this material, you should plan to work through the lessons in the order they are presented. In other words, we would encourage you to work through the course systematically, rather than choosing a topic in the middle of the course as a place to begin.

You should allow yourself a minimum of six hours of study time to complete each lesson. This would include doing the required reading, answering the questions, doing the exercises, and completing the study projects.

If you plan to teach this course to someone else later on, you may want to keep track of how many hours you needed to complete each lesson. In addition, you might wish to note any problems encountered or questions raised as you work through the course.

Course Design

In the Course Introduction you also found a list of course objectives which summarize the most important things you will learn as you work through the following lessons. Study these objectives attentively and refer to them periodically to gauge your mastery of the course material. They will also serve as guidelines for the final examination found at the back of this study guide.

Since most individuals taking this course are extremely busy people, we have designed each lesson with clearly defined steps for easy reference. Also, if you study the course and lesson objectives, you will know from the start which topics to spend the most time on.

The material covered in Lesson 1 is a review of what was discussed during the first seminar. Sometime between Seminar 1 and Seminar 2, review the contents of Lesson 1, do the exercises, and answer the questions if you have not already done so. The answers will be discussed during Seminar 2.

Your group leader will tell you whether the final examination is to be done by each student at home or together as a class.

Lesson Design

Several standard components are built into each lesson to facilitate your study and develop your skills. They are explained below so that you may recognize and use them to full advantage:

1. **Lesson Outlines** provide an overview of the sections of each lesson. In this way you can anticipate the flow and sequence of the various topics to be covered before you begin your study.
2. **Lesson Objectives** are provided to help you identify the most crucial parts of each lesson. They give you guidance in the effective use of your study time and will be used by your group leader for class discussion, so be prepared!
3. **Repetition and review** are woven into the course to help you learn new concepts.
4. **Examples** are given so that you can see how the steps taught apply to the study of specific passages of Scripture. By studying these examples closely, you will not only review the steps taught, you will also have a better idea of how to proceed when asked to study a passage on your own.
5. **Summary Charts** are useful tools for pulling together materials taught throughout the course. When you want to review a given lesson, you can turn to the summary sheets and charts, which serve as a reminder of all of the steps you studied.
6. **Questions** are posed from time to time in most lessons to help you interact with the material being covered. Whenever you see the heading “Question,” stop and write an answer in your personal notebook. Check your answers with those provided at the end of each lesson.
7. **Exercises** give you opportunities to practice new concepts and procedures just covered in the lesson material. Whenever you see the heading “Exercise,” do not proceed further in the lesson until you have completed the required work by writing an answer in your personal notebook or doing the required reading.
8. **Study Projects** give you the opportunity to personally discover what God’s Word says using the Bible study method taught in that lesson. Each project is based on Philippians 2:1-11 and should be completed before the next seminar. The projects will be discussed and evaluated during the seminar.
9. **Appendices** include both resources needed for lesson completion and useful reference materials that may be of benefit to you outside of the study requirements of this course.
10. **Examination** is an important component of this course. There is a final examination that is comprehensive in nature, requiring you to use the Bible study skills learned throughout the course. The exam results will contribute to your final course grade.

Materials Needed

To work through this course, you will need a Bible, preferably with cross-references, a copy of this workbook, and a personal notebook entitled Life Notebook for all written work. All the Scripture references and Scripture quotations in this workbook are from the

Student Instructions	Page 14
----------------------	---------

Net Bible. Every time you see the heading “Question,” “Exercise,” or “Study Project,” you should respond by writing an answer in your Life Notebook.

We suggest that you divide your Life Notebook into two major sections: the first one-third should be reserved for your answers to all questions and written assignments given throughout the course. The remaining two-third of the notebook should be reserved for your study projects. (NOTE: If you would like to keep a separate notebook for this second half, please do so, as it may serve as a study commentary later on.) If at all possible, keep together all the work you do on a particular book or passage for future reference.

Reference books, such as a concordance and Bible dictionary, will also be helpful in the completion of some assigned work. Instructions will indicate when the use of supplementary reference books is advisable.

Your Questions about Bible Study

What questions would you like to have answered about the study of the Bible? How do you expect to benefit by working through this course? Take a few minutes to write down your questions and expectations in your notebook. Refer to this list periodically during the course to check your progress.

Course Grading System

Read through the grading system outlined below and be prepared to discuss it with your group leader. The group leader should designate someone to keep the records for the course.

The grading scale is intended to accomplish the following:

1. Help determine a **final grade** for the course
2. Identify **definite standards** for the completion of the course
3. Reflect a **balanced concern** for the student’s personal development in the areas of academics, faithfulness in attendance, and practical involvement
4. Serve as an **evaluation tool** in identifying areas of need and growth in the life of each student.

Grading

The final grade is based upon four things:

Average of all exam scores	25%
Lessons completed	25%
Attendance	25%
Seminar Assignments	25%

Each area of the course (exams, lesson completion, attendance, and assignment completion) is given a 25% weighting.

Average of exam scores

If a student takes three exams, and receives scores of 75, 85, and 95, his average is $255/3 = 85$.

$$25\% \text{ of } 85 = 21$$

Lessons

If there are 12 lessons in the course and the student completes 10 then he receives $10/12 = 83$ for lessons. $25\% \text{ times } 83 = 21$.

Seminar Assignments

If there are seven assignments in a course and the student completes three of them, he would receive $3/7 = 43\%$. Multiply times $25\% = 11$.

Therefore this student achieved a total score of $21 + 21 + 19 + 11 = 72$.

The numerical grade you report to us is based upon the following:

$$94 - 100 = 1$$

$$85 - 93 = 2$$

$$75 - 84 = 3$$

$$65 - 74 = 4$$

Below 65 = 5. We no longer have a 6. 5 is the lowest score. We will record all current 6's as 5's.

To earn a certificate, a student must score a 75 or above (grade 1, 2, or 3). If he receives a four or a five, and wants to apply to retake the exam or do the missing work, we will do that on an individual basis.

Guidelines to Follow in Determining the Grade

1. **Grade.** The final grade is determined on the basis of the minimum standards completed for **all** parts of the course.
2. **Exam.** There is one final examination.
3. **Workbook.** Completion of a lesson includes **all** related reading and written exercises and projects.
4. **Attendance.** Attendance is impossible to make-up. The student should be personally counseled to determine if he or she should continue in further course work. If, however, reasons for absence are **valid**, credit can be given but only under extraordinary circumstances.
5. **Study Projects.** The student must complete all study projects based upon the stated instructions in the workbook and share the results of his study in the seminars as instructed by the facilitator.

Lesson 1: The Importance of Bible Study

Lesson Introduction

Psalm 19:8 says, "The LORD's precepts are fair and make one happy. The LORD's commands are pure and give moral insight." Here David tells us that reading, knowing, and applying God's Word bring joy to the heart and moral guidance to the life. That is what you have to look forward to as a result of taking this course. As you learn how to study the Bible and glean its truths, you can experience this joy and godliness in your life.

To gain the utmost from your study, you should be motivated by love for God and dependent on the Holy Spirit for illumination. Methods imply a certain mechanical aspect to study, but it must never be thought that mechanical methods alone will unveil the truth of Scripture to you. Your love for God and the illuminating work of the Spirit form a vital foundation for all Bible study.

Lesson 1 carries you through four different Bible passages that will teach you about the importance of Bible study. Topic 1 looks at Ezra as a committed student and obedient servant. You will see how he devoted his life to a study of the Word and how it made him an effective spiritual leader in his community.

Topic 2 examines Paul's command in 2 Timothy 2:15. He urges Timothy to become an approved worker before God, based largely on his ability to know and handle the Word of God well and live it out before his people. The results will be his own personal godliness and his ability to guide his congregation in a straight walk through the pagan distractions of his day.

Topics 3 and 4 present the two fundamental factors in studying the Word. Topic 3 considers the command of Jesus to love God fervently. Without such a love for God you will have little or no motivation to study the Bible and obey it. In Topic 4 Paul shows you why you need the illumination of the Spirit. He explains that human wisdom and intelligence is not enough to grasp the spiritual significance of God's message. Only the Spirit can communicate to believers spiritual truths.

May this recognition of the importance of studying the Bible send you off on a fruitful journey through this course.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Ezra's Example

Bible Scholar

Bible Teacher

Public Bible Reader

Topic 2: Paul's Command

Be an Approved Worker

Be an Accurate Worker
Topic 3: Jesus' Command
Love God Intellectually
Love God Fervently
Topic 4: Paul's Teaching
Unbelievers Cannot Understand the Scriptures
The Holy Spirit Gives Understanding to Believers

Lesson Objective

After completing this lesson, you will be able to explain the importance of Bible study through understanding the priority of using your intellect to learn the content of Scripture.

Specific Objectives

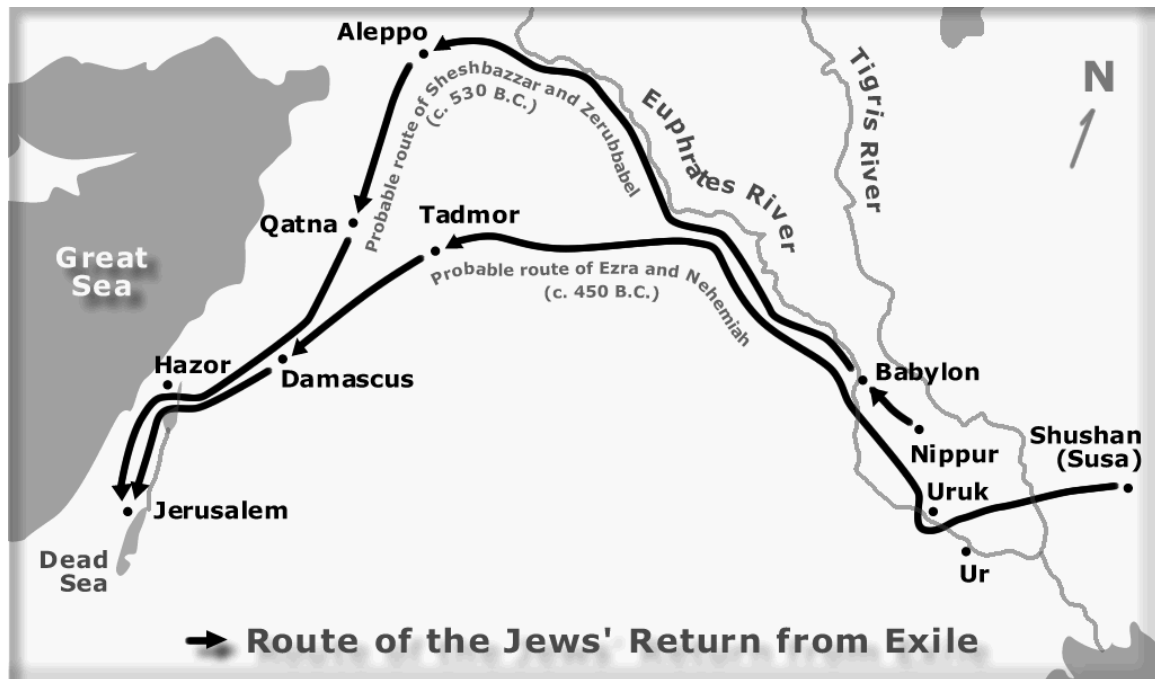
When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how the example of Ezra can motivate you to be a devoted student of the Scriptures since you are already devoted to ministry
- Describe how Paul's command in 2 Timothy 2:15 can help you become a diligent student who handles the Scriptures correctly
- Explain how Jesus' command to love God with your mind in Mark 12:30 can inspire you to grow intellectually in your understanding of the Bible
- Appropriately apply Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 to assist you in depending on the Holy Spirit as you study the Bible

Topic 1: Ezra's Example

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand how the example of Ezra can motivate you to be a devoted student of the Scriptures since you are already devoted to ministry.

Ezra was a priest who lived about 450 years before the time of Jesus Christ. He successfully led thousands of people from exile in Babylon back to the city of Jerusalem. He often referred to the good hand of the Lord his God being on him. He was a great spiritual leader, and he wrote the book of Ezra. One of the factors that contributed to his ministry success was the fact that he was a devoted student of the Scriptures. You will enjoy studying the following passages that describe Ezra.



Bible Scholar

Ezra 7:6 tells us: “This Ezra is the one who came up from Babylon. He was a scribe who was skilled in the law of Moses which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king supplied for him everything that he requested, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.”

It is unlikely that Ezra belonged to the group called scribes in the New Testament since that group had not yet been created. Instead, the term probably suggests a position or office, which in this case was centered on the law of Moses. As a “skilled” scribe Ezra would have been trained, careful, and well-versed in the Scriptures. As you will see in the next section, Ezra developed this skill by being a faithful student.

QUESTION 1

Which of the following are true of Ezra? He was: *(Select all that apply.)*

- A. A scribe
- B. A Pharisee
- C. A spiritual leader
- D. A skilled scholar
- E. From Babylon
- F. An apostle

Bible Teacher

In Ezra 7:10 we read: “Now Ezra had given himself to the study of the law of the LORD, to its observance, and to teaching it statutes and judgments in Israel.”

This verse describes Ezra both as a teacher and as a student. Ezra’s lifetime commitment was to study God’s Word. He had set his heart firmly on his goal of Bible study.

Even though he was a serious scholar, Ezra was interested in more than just the content of the Scriptures. He wanted to obey the Bible. Ezra wanted to personally observe God’s law. In other words, he wanted to apply the teachings of the Scriptures to his own life.

Ezra then taught others what he had learned in his study. It was only after he had done the hard work of personal study and integrating God’s principles in his own life, that he was then able to teach God’s law to his people.

QUESTION 2

In what sequence did Ezra apply himself to follow and serve God?

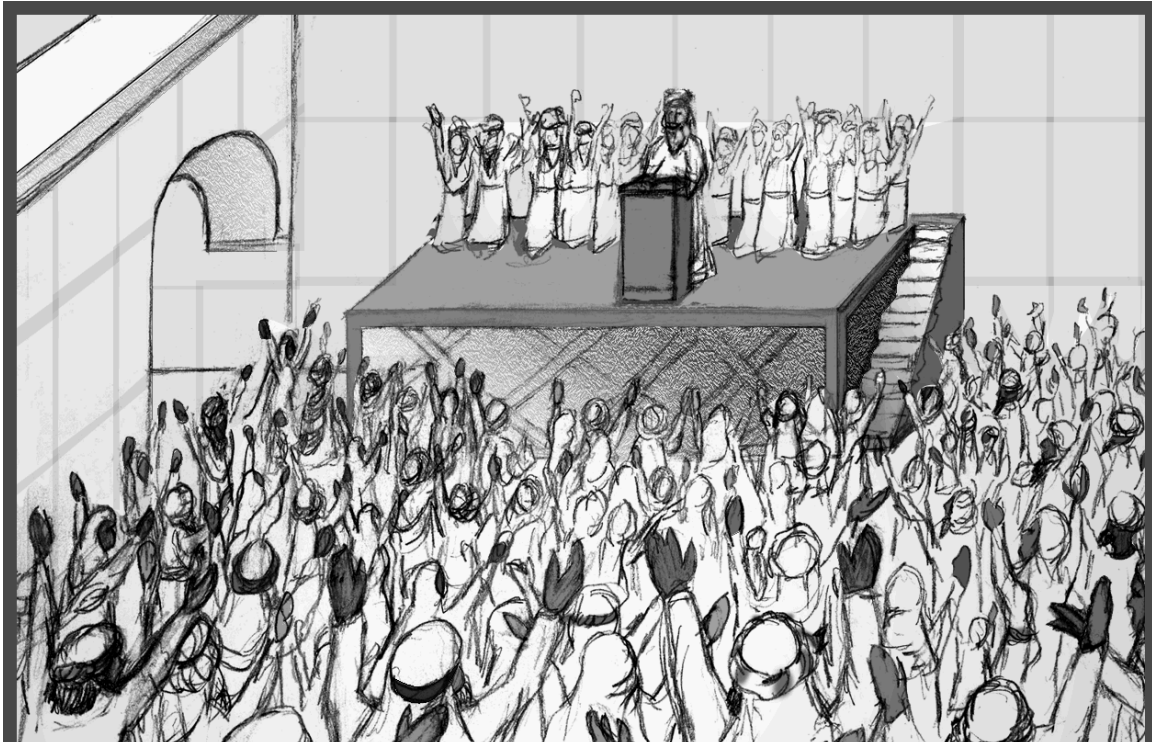
<i>Chronology</i>	<i>Ezra’s Service</i>
First	Obeying God’s law
Second	Teaching God’s law
Third	Studying God’s law

Public Bible Reader

Nehemiah 8:1-6 says:

All the people were gathered together in the plaza which was in front of the Gate of Waters. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly which included men and women and all those able to understand what they heard. (This happened on the first day of the seventh month.) So he read it before the plaza in front of the Gate of Water from dawn till noon before the men and women and those who could understand. All the people were eager to hear the book of the law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a towering platform which had been constructed for this purpose. Standing near him on his right side were Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Masseiah. On his left side were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. Ezra opened the book in plain view of all the people, for he was elevated above all the people. When he opened the book, all the people stood. Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people replied “Amen! Amen!” as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.



About fourteen years passed between Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 8. Ezra reappears in Scripture at just the right moment in history. As part of his responsibilities as scribe, he was called on to read God's Word before the people.

The group who heard Ezra read the Word was not limited to intellectuals, nor was the group limited to men. In such a male-dominated culture it is highly significant that women as well as men heard the reading of the Scriptures. Even children were invited to the public service. Everyone who could hear with understanding came to hear Ezra. People revered him for his knowledge about the Scriptures. They recognized Ezra as an expert in God's law.

Ezra read the Scriptures to all the people in such a way that they responded by worshipping the Lord. An oral reading of the Bible is most effective when the reader has first grasped the meaning through personal study. Ezra had done his work. Ezra was an effective Bible teacher and a great spiritual leader. God sovereignly chooses to whom He gives success. God chose Ezra for greatness at that moment. But from a human point of view Ezra succeeded because he studied the Scriptures.

QUESTION 3

The response to Ezra's public reading of Scripture may be attributed to:

- A. Ezra's good appearance
- B. Ezra's Babylonian background
- C. Ezra's platform location
- D. Ezra's study and obedience

QUESTION 4

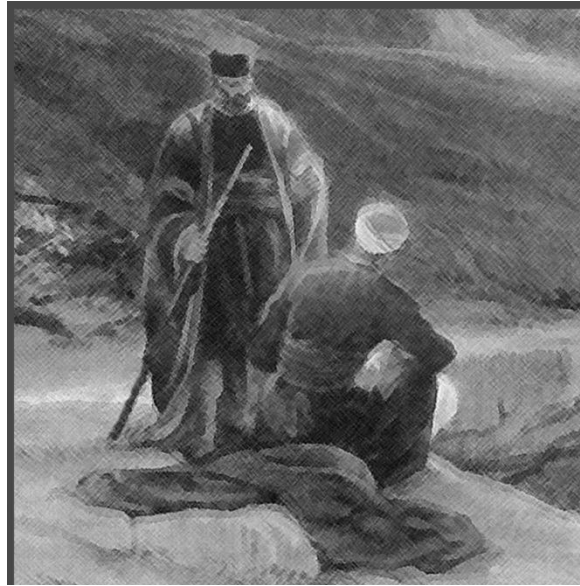
Think about your attitude toward the Bible. Is it a book you rely on in your life? Do reading and studying Scripture provide you comfort? Write your thoughts down in your Life Notebook under, "My attitudes toward the Bible."

Topic 2: Paul's Command

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to explain Paul's challenge to Timothy to become a worker whom God approves.

Paul wanted Timothy to work hard at making his life and ministry something God would approve. In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul wrote: "Make every effort to present yourself before God as a proven worker who does not need to be ashamed, teaching the message of truth accurately."

The last letter that the apostle Paul wrote before his death was 2 Timothy. Paul considered Timothy to be his spiritual son. Paul had disciplined Timothy for many years, and Timothy had already proven himself faithful in the ministry. Paul sensed that his own death was near. He gave some commands to Timothy, so Timothy and others would continue the ministry after Paul was gone. One of those commands was 2 Timothy 2:15 in which Paul exhorted Timothy to be an approved worker.



Be an Approved Worker

The best worker is one who does not need to be ashamed. In the future Timothy would stand before God who is his Judge. The Lord would inspect his life and ministry. Paul wanted Timothy to have no regrets as he stood before his Judge.

Earlier in his letter to Timothy, Paul had written about shame before people (2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16) but having shame before God is much worse. Paul wanted Timothy to be unashamed before God. Instead, he urged him to be a proven worker before God by “making every effort.” Timothy needed to have diligence. He needed to work hard as he served God.

QUESTION 5

If Timothy failed to be a proven worker in his studies, he would be ashamed before _____.

Be an Accurate Worker

As the leader of the church at Ephesus, Timothy was responsible to teach the message of truth. Paul was concerned that Timothy would handle the Bible accurately. Paul wrote his letter to Timothy in Greek, and he used a rare Greek word, *orthotomeō*, (used only here and in Prov 3:6; 11:5) to describe how Paul wanted Timothy to handle the Bible.

The central idea of this Greek word is “straight.” In the two Proverbs passages the idea is to cut, lay down, or pave a straight path. The implication is that it would go through terrain that would otherwise be difficult to traverse. Such a straight path would bring the traveler directly to his destination.



Paul wanted Timothy to use the Word of God to cut a straight path through the jungle of wrangling over words (2 Tim 2:14) and profane chatter (2 Tim 2:16) to keep himself and his people on the path of godliness (2 Tim 2:16; note 2 Tim 2:18, where Hymenaeus and Philetus strayed from the truth). Just as a person can cut a crooked path through dense landscape, so a person can twist the content of the Bible to conform to a person's preconceived ideas.

In addition, in light of verses 2 Timothy 2:8-13 and 2 Timothy 2:16-18, handling the truth accurately may also involve endurance. Walking straight toward a goal, not wavering or being distracted, implies enduring faithfulness and obedience to the Word of God.

Thus, Timothy would need to understand and teach the truths of the Bible accurately, avoiding false interpretations, in order to become an approved workman, guiding himself and his congregation straight toward the goal of godly living.

The principles you will learn in *Studying the Bible* will help you accomplish these goals by bringing together all that can be obtained from Bible verses and passages. It will also help you be careful not to go beyond what a passage actually teaches. As a result, you can handle the message of truth well in teaching yourself and others, so that you may walk straight in this world of sin and ungodliness.

QUESTION 6

What are the dangers of not studying the Bible accurately? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. False interpretations of Scripture
- B. Wrong use of Greek terms
- C. Going beyond what the passage teaches
- D. Conforming the passage to your ideas
- E. Showing too much interest in the Bible
- F. Developing a heretical theology

Topic 3: Jesus' Command

Objective 3 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to explain how Jesus' command to love God with your mind in Mark 12:30 can inspire you to grow intellectually in your understanding of the Bible.

In Mark 12:30 Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

Jesus gave this command in response to a question asked by a scribe. The scribe had been listening to what Jesus had been saying to the other religious leaders. The scribe recognized that Jesus seemed to have divine authority as He taught. So he asked Jesus a question. He asked which commandment is the most important in the Scriptures.

Love God Intellectually

Jesus' command to love God was not new. The Lord had first given this command to Moses, who recorded it in Deuteronomy 6:5. The point of the command is that a believer should love the Lord with every aspect of his being, including his mind (Mk 12:30; Rom 12:2).

QUESTION 7

Jesus considered loving God to be the second most important commandment. *True or False?*

When Jesus was growing up, he matured in every way. He grew physically, spiritually, socially, and intellectually (Lk 2:52). Likewise, believers should mature in these four aspects. The Lord has given minds to people, and He expects them to use their minds as they grow in their love for Him. Some believers are gifted with greater intellectual ability than others. But all believers have some degree of intelligence with which they can love God. Bible study is an obvious intellectual exercise.

QUESTION 8

The believer who loves God with his heart does not need to also love Him with his mind. *True or False?*

Love God Fervently

Loving God with all of your heart, soul, and mind means that your love for God should come from your whole person. You should love God with the full capacity of who you are. You should give yourself totally to God as you express your love for Him.

One aspect of loving God is to love His Word. If you love someone, you want to know him and all about him. You know God through His Word. You should zealously study the Bible as an expression of love to Him. This is a clear way to love God fervently.



QUESTION 9

According to Jesus, the believer should love God

- A. Because loving God is important to his parents
- B. With all his heart, soul, and mind
- C. If he has time to do so
- D. Because he will feel guilty if he does not love God

Topic 4: Paul's Teaching

Objective 4 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to appropriate Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 to assist you in depending on the Holy Spirit as you study the Bible.

The Spirit of God inspired the writing of Scripture. He also illumines the minds of believers who read it. Bible study should be a balanced blend of hard work by the student plus dependence on the Holy Spirit for understanding. Bible study must not be solely a human scholarly pursuit. If it is, then intellectual pride can result. Even worse, the results will lack divine power. The Bible student should keep a humble attitude as he looks to the Lord for help.

Unbelievers Cannot Understand the Scriptures

In 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul taught us: “The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Paul stated clearly that unbelievers have no spiritual capacity to discern spiritual truths from the Bible, just like a deaf person cannot judge music.

It cannot be stressed enough, here at the beginning of *STB*, that you as a Bible student must be a genuine believer in Jesus Christ. God has promised to give His Spirit to those who trust in the death of His Son for forgiveness of their sins (Rom 8:9).

The Holy Spirit Gives Understanding to Believers

According to 1 Corinthians 2:15-16, “The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood by no one. ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”

The Bible is a spiritual book. It is God’s revelation to men and women. And they need Him to help them comprehend it. As the psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:18, “Uncover my eyes so I can gaze at marvelous things out of your Law!”

Believers can understand the Bible only because the Holy Spirit enables them to understand it. The Holy Spirit clarifies the written Word in the minds of believers. They are able to recognize the spiritual truths that the Lord wants them to know. Having the Holy Spirit makes all the difference in how people read, study, and understand the Scriptures. People are forever changed once the Spirit of God is within them. The Lord equips believers to spiritually judge the words in the Bible.

Having the mind of Christ does not mean that believers understand absolutely everything. It does mean, however, that they see the Bible from the perspective of Jesus Christ and not from the perspective of the world. As believers study the Bible, humbly depending on the Holy Spirit to teach them, they will gradually comprehend more and more of God’s Word.

QUESTION 10

Since Bible study is an intellectual endeavor, an intelligent unbeliever can understand the Bible better than a less intelligent believer. *True or False?*

QUESTION 11

Record in your Life Notebook what your Bible reading habits were before you began this course.

QUESTION 12

Now that you understand the importance of Bible study, what commitments do you need to make? For example, if you have never read through the entire Bible, what commitment will you make now to do so? Record your answers in your Life Notebook.



QUESTION 13

Open your Life Notebook and evaluate your confidence in your ability to understand the Bible through your own study. Then write out how you plan to increase that level of confidence (if it is low) or what is the basis for your confidence (if it is high).

Conclusion

You have seen from different Scriptures that studying the Bible is very important. Ezra's example, Paul's command, Jesus' command, and Paul's teaching should motivate you to work hard in this course. The Bible is the only book in which God has precisely revealed His will for men and women. Therefore, you must study it and apply its truths to your life.

If you study the Bible diligently and apply its teachings accurately and effectively during your entire lifetime, in the end you will find yourself approved by God. You will have no cause to be ashamed before Him. May the Lord bless you in your study!

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1:

- A. A scribe
- C. A spiritual leader
- D. A skilled scholar
- E. From Babylon

QUESTION 2:

<i>Chronology</i>	<i>Ezra's Service</i>
First	Studying God's law
Second	Obeying God's law
Third	Teaching God's law

QUESTION 3: D. Ezra's study and obedience

QUESTION 4: *Your answer*

QUESTION 5: Correct answers include:

- God
- The Lord
- His Judge
- Jesus
- Christ

QUESTION 6:

- A. False interpretations of Scripture
- C. Going beyond what the passage teaches
- D. Conforming the passage to your ideas
- F. Developing a heretical theology

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9: B. With all his heart, soul, and mind

QUESTION 10: False

QUESTION 11: *Your answer*

QUESTION 12: *Your answer*

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

Lesson 2: The “Studying the Bible” Method

Lesson Introduction

Whether you want to repair a bike, prepare a meal, or learn how to play a sport, you must have a plan, a method. Often you have to receive or read instructions, such as a recipe. Then a particular sequence must usually be followed. A great deal of practice is usually required before you can do it well. In time you can learn how to do it so well that it becomes almost second nature.

The same is true of studying the Bible. In this lesson you will be given instructions in how to study the Bible. At first, as you learn each step, it may seem mechanical or feel awkward. But with practice it will become part of who you are.

Topic 1 introduces you to three different kinds of reading — superficial, analytical, and targeted. By these you will gain a firm grasp on what the Bible says. You must know the facts of the Bible well before you can understand what any verse or passage means.

Topic 2 discusses writing. When studying the Bible, it is important to know how to record what you have observed and learned. At a later time you can read these notes and meditate on them for yourself or use them to prepare to teach others.

Topic 3 introduces you to the foundation of good Bible study, the *Studying the Bible* method. Three steps that will lead you to understand the Bible accurately and then make it part of your life are observation, interpretation, and application. These are not unique to studying the Bible. Scientists, historians, and others use these same three steps. They must gain a clear understanding of the facts before them before they can accurately interpret and use them.

Finally, in Topic 4 you will learn about good study habits that will help you make the best use of your time. Most people do not have a great deal of extra time. This topic shows you how to use the time you have wisely and effectively.

Because these ideas are the basis for everything else you will do in this course, work hard to grasp them clearly before you go on to the other lessons.

Lesson Outline

- Topic 1: Reading
 - Level 1: Superficial Reading
 - Level 2: Analytical Reading
 - Level 3: Targeted Reading
- Topic 2: Writing
 - Taking Notes
 - Using Tools

Topic 3: *Studying the Bible Method*

Step 1: Observation—“What does it say?”

Step 2: Interpretation—“What does it mean?”

Step 3: Application—“What should I do?”

Topic 4: Study Habits

Studying a Passage

In this course you will learn how to study a passage of Scripture. Book and topical studies will be dealt with at another time. Let us begin with a short exercise to find out how you currently study a passage. Suppose Matthew 28:16-20 is a text that you want to study. How would you study it? What is the first thing you would do? What would you do next? Take a few moments to think about the steps you would take to study this passage.

QUESTION 1

Under the heading “If I Were Studying Matthew 28:16-20,” write out in your Life Notebook the steps you would take and the order in which you would do them. Then write about the strengths and weaknesses of the study method you described. How is it helpful to you? What is the goal of your method? Does it give you a good understanding of the passage?

Lesson Objective

When you complete this lesson, you will be prepared to learn the *Studying the Bible* method which you will demonstrate by successful completion of the lessons that follow.

Specific Objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between different levels of reading and intentionally read Psalm 1 at those different levels
- Demonstrate note taking and writing techniques, which enhance Bible study
- List and explain the three steps (Observation, Interpretation, and Application) of the Studying the Bible method
- Recognize personal study habits that may help or hinder Bible study

Preparing to Study

As you begin this study, take a few moments to prepare your heart for what the Lord wants to teach you. Find a secluded place, if possible, and read Psalm 119:1-8 to help focus your attention on the Lord and on His Word. Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask the Lord to bless this time and to help your understanding. Thank Him for what He is

about to do. Be sure to make this a regular habit before beginning any lesson or Bible study.

Topic 1: Reading

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to distinguish between different levels of reading and intentionally read Psalm 1 at those different levels.

Reading is the unspoken assumption of Bible study and the foundation upon which all Bible study stands. If we dare to be godly men or women, then we must read. Reading will:

- Familiarize us with facts
- Acquaint us with persons
- Reveal to us historical time periods
- Introduce us to culture
- Expand our view of God's redemptive plan
- Develop our overall understanding of Scripture

As someone once said, "When we suffer a cut, we should bleed Bible." Reading will help us reach this level.

There are, however, different ways you can read. You may read to fill your heart and mind with a principle or truth, to fill your mind with general knowledge and facts, or to gain a detailed understanding of a passage or book. Sometimes you will read without focusing on any details. At other times finding or understanding a detail is all-important. For Bible study purposes you will want to read at different levels.

These levels of reading will be described below. But first, you will want to pre-read your text. In pre-reading you become acquainted with your passage and book. Do this by turning the pages and reading a paragraph now and then, reading in different portions of the book to observe the general content. For example:

- How many chapters are in the book?
- How is it divided?
- Does it develop according to any general time line?
- What are the names of individuals involved in the book?
- With what subjects does the book begin and close?
- Does this book belong to a general type of literature such as prose, wisdom, poetical, prophetic, or epistolary literature?
- When did the author live?

The three levels of reading are actually three different ways you read when you study. You probably read in these different ways already. Your goal in this lesson is to read at each level intentionally. The three levels are:

- Level 1: Superficial Reading
- Level 2: Analytical Reading
- Level 3: Targeted Reading

The three levels of reading are described in the following sections. In each level, you will be given a brief assignment to help you understand reading at that level and how it relates to the other levels.

Before going through the levels, pre-read Psalm 1. To do this, look at the structure of the psalm. Let your eyes wander over the verses and see what catches your attention. Do not read every word or linger over any part of the psalm.

QUESTION 2

There are _____ verses in Psalm 1.

Level 1: Superficial Reading

In superficial reading you simply read the text without focusing on anything. Your goal is to read through your portion of study. This type of reading will give you a general idea about the passage. In superficial reading you will often start reading before your passage and continue past it in order to understand the context. You will probably read quickly, but speed is not the goal.

This is how you will read if you are reading through the Bible in a year or six months. Do not stop to think about a detail. Practice this level by reading Psalm 1 superficially. This time read every word from beginning to end.

QUESTION 3

What do you think Psalm 1 is about? What is the main contrast?

You should have the habit of daily Bible reading. Here are some suggestions for daily Bible reading at this level.

- Once you have inspected your book, give it a superficial reading. This will give you a greater awareness of all the contents.
- Read the book through without stopping to look up or ponder things you do not understand. What you understand will help you the next time through.

- Try to read the book in a limited amount of time, no more than one hour. Obviously, some books may have to be split into two or more reading sessions
- Take time to think about how the book was arranged.
- When you have finished, meditate over what you think the general purpose of the book might be and what themes were included throughout the book.

As you become better acquainted with individual books, your general Bible knowledge will grow. Therefore, make your Bible explorations turn into a daily habit. This should be independent of any Bible study projects that you are presently working on.

Bible reading is sometimes easier to do if you set up a daily reading schedule. A simple way to do this is to divide the Bible according to the number of chapters it contains. Since the Old Testament has 929 chapters and the New Testament has 260, one must read 3.25 chapters a day to go through the Bible one time in a year (1,189 chapters divided by 365 days). Or to read through the Bible twice a year, you would have to read 6.5 chapters per day.

Actual organization of such reading can vary. Some choose to read straight through from Genesis to Revelation. Others like to alternate between a book of the Old Testament and a book of the New Testament. Another method is to read book by book, ending each session with one chapter from the Psalms and/or one chapter from the Proverbs. One may read the New Testament through twice for each time the Old is read. Some enjoy reading through the same book each day for a month. A combination of these methods will provide fruitful variety. Whichever option you choose, be faithful.

QUESTION 4

Plan out a year's schedule for daily Bible reading. Determine how many chapters a day you will read. Fix your order of reading by noting the sequence of books you will read. Write out your plan in your Life Notebook. Determine when and where you will accomplish this reading and start following your plan.

Level 2: Analytical Reading

Analytical reading is the main basis for gaining detailed information from your passage and is used heavily in Bible study. Reading in this manner seeks more than a general familiarity with content. It looks for the arrangement or organization of the material and tries to discern what problem the author may be seeking to resolve.

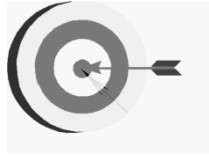
When reading analytically, the reader strives to understand the meaning of words and sentences and the author's style. He will also want to find the underlying theme of the passage. In other words, the goal of analytical reading is to help determine what exactly an author said and why he said it.

Most of the work you will do throughout the rest of this course will be based on analytical reading. As you read, you will be raising questions about the things you see.

QUESTION 5

Read through Psalm 1 and record in your Life Notebook at least three questions you would ask about the text.

Level 3: Targeted Reading



Targeted reading is best described as “reading to answer a question.” You will have a specific question in mind, then you will scan superficially until you locate the answer to your question. The answer may be in the text itself or may require additional study. You are already accustomed to searching a text for answers. The key is to have a clear question in mind before you begin searching.

Often the objective of targeted reading is to locate a specific verse, phrase, or word. Perhaps you want to know more about a Bible character and are looking for mention of his name. Maybe you remember seeing a theological term that appears in your text.

QUESTION 6

According to Psalm 1, where does the godly man find pleasure? You may look at the psalm to find the answer.

- A. In not following the wicked
- B. In studying day and night
- C. In obeying the Lord’s commands
- D. In succeeding in what he attempts

QUESTION 7

Match the level of reading with the correct description.

<i>Type of Reading</i>	<i>Description</i>
Superficial	Seeks answers to questions
Analytical	Avoids questions while reading the text
Targeted	Raises questions to ask about the text



QUESTION 8

If you wanted to read the Bible in a year, how many chapters would you need to read each day?

- A. 2 chapters per day
- B. 3.25 chapters per day
- C. 4.5 chapters per day
- D. 7 chapters per day

QUESTION 9

Without looking at Psalm 1 match the Scripture reference with the correct text.

<i>Verse Number</i>	<i>Verse Text</i>
Psalm 1:1	Certainly the LORD rewards the behavior of the godly, but the behavior of the wicked is self-destructive.
Psalm 1:2	Not so with the wicked! Instead they are like wind-driven chaff.
Psalm 1:3	How happy is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of arrogant fools!
Psalm 1:4	He is like a tree planted by flowing streams; it yields its fruit at the proper time, and its leaves never fall off. He succeeds in everything he attempts.
Psalm 1:5	For this reason the wicked cannot withstand judgment, nor can sinners join the assembly of the godly.
Psalm 1:6	Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the LORD's commands; he intently studies his commands day and night.

Topic 2: Writing

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to demonstrate note taking and writing techniques, which enhance Bible study.

Along with good reading skills, you need good writing skills to study the Bible well. Good writing skills include things like penmanship and proper grammar. But in this course you will concentrate on note taking and form. Jeremiah 36:2-6 demonstrates how important careful note taking is if we are to understand God's will. Note especially the portions with the added emphasis of bold characters.

“Get a scroll. **Write on it everything I have told you to say about Israel, Judah, and all the other nations since I began to speak to you in the reign of Josiah until now.** Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the disaster I intend to bring on them, they will all stop doing the evil things

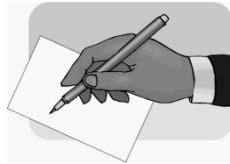
they have been doing. If they do, I will forgive their sins and the wicked things they have done.” So Jeremiah summoned Baruch son of Neriah. Then Jeremiah dictated to Baruch everything the LORD had told him to say **and Baruch wrote it all down** in a scroll. Then Jeremiah told Baruch, “I am no longer allowed to go into the LORD’s temple. So you go there the next time all the people of Judah come in from their towns to fast in the LORD’s temple. Read out loud where all of them can hear you **what I told you the LORD said and you wrote in the scroll.**”

QUESTION 10

In Jeremiah 36, accurate note taking by Baruch was essential for Jeremiah’s ministry. *True or False?*

Taking Notes

Improving your writing skills should be a lifetime goal. While you are working on this course, you will want to focus on the two things mentioned above—note taking and form. Note taking has to do with the quantity and quality of information you write down. Form is the arrangement of your notes in order to be more useful.



In order to take good notes, you will want to follow these simple rules.

- **Date and label your notes.** This will help you organize and find quickly the information that you have written down. Your headings should be brief but descriptive, such as “Observations of Matthew 28:16-20, Oct 3, 2001” or “*STB* Seminar, Unit 3, June 14, 2001.”

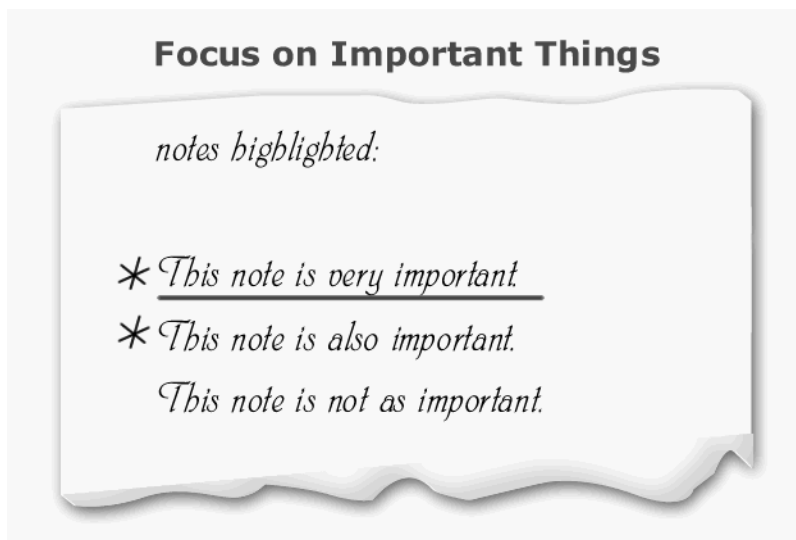
Date and Label Your Notes

*Studying the Bible, Unit 1, Lesson 2 – Observations
6-14-2005*

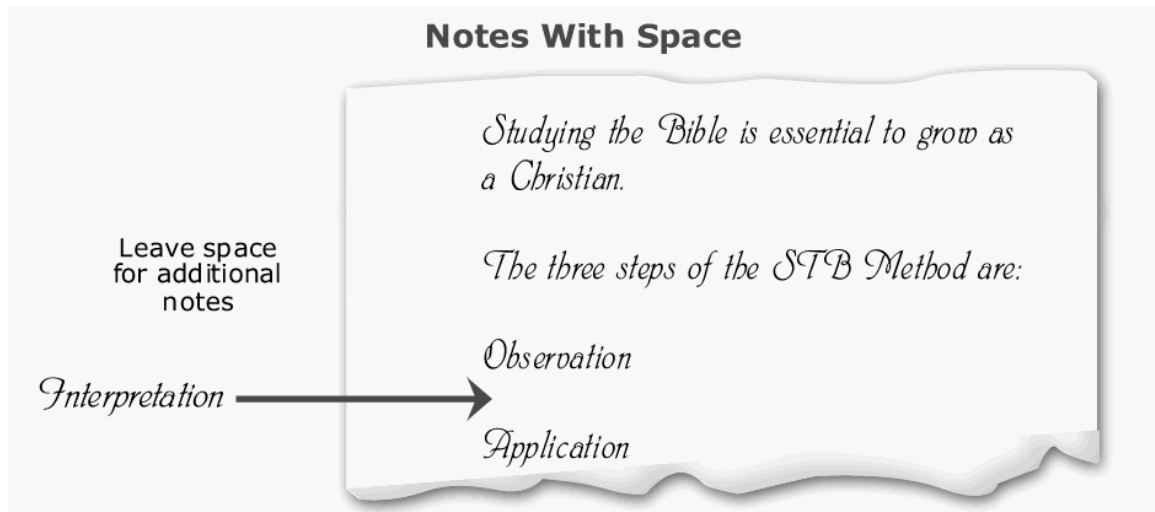
- **Write as if you wanted someone else to be able to read and understand your notes.** One of the most common errors in note taking is to write too briefly. Excessive use of abbreviations, inventing an abbreviation, or using a letter to

symbolize a word can leave you confused when you go back to read your own notes. When something is fresh in your mind, one word could represent a paragraph. But by the next day many details will already be lost. In a month, you will lose all recollection of what that word represented!

- **Focus on the important things.** Knowing what not to write down is as important as knowing what to write. As you make notes, you may not know what is most important. As you begin to discover the more important things, use some technique, such as underlining or asterisks (*), to identify those things.



- **Do not crowd your notes.** Always leave plenty of extra space to add things and make changes. For example, you will be taught that you continue to make observations when you move on to the other steps of the *Studying the Bible* method. Therefore, you will need to leave space on your paper for these additional observations.



Using Tools

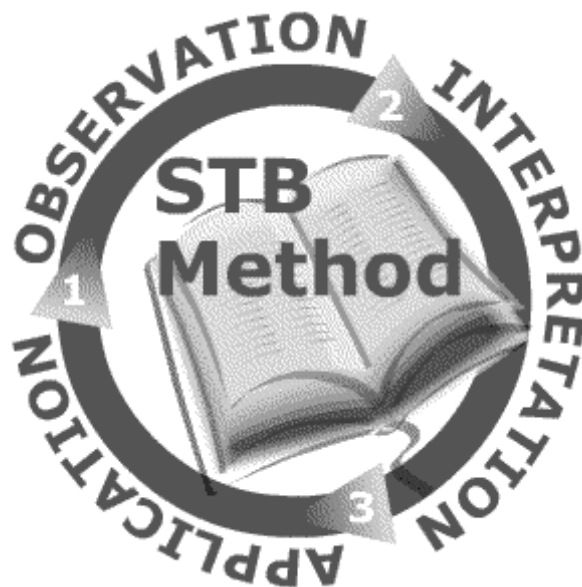
One tool that will simplify your note taking is the use of form. You will learn how to make notes using specific forms. You should always use those forms as you work through this course. Later, you may decide to make some changes to the forms you use for personal Bible study. But in this course you will learn useful forms that will save you time and help organize your notes. The forms you will learn are designed to:

- **Simplify.** Use of a form reduces the quantity of information that you must write down. And it is easier to find your information because it is in its proper place. You can often replace a sentence with a phrase or even a word because the subject is understood for that part of the form.
- **Clarify.** The forms you will learn will allow you to organize information so that it is easily understood.
- **Unify.** By using a form, you will study the same way each time. Your work will consistently be of the same high standard. You will also be able to compare passages with one another.

Topic 3: *Studying the Bible Method*

Objective 3 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to list and explain the three steps (Observation, Interpretation, Application) of the *Studying the Bible (STB)* method.

The three steps of Bible study are Observation, Interpretation, and Application. You will learn them and generally practice them in this order. However, they do overlap. For example, observation is continuous. You will continue to make observations even as you move on to the other steps. It may be helpful to think of the process as a circle.



As you study these steps, take special note of the question associated with each title. Along with the steps, you will want to memorize these questions.

QUESTION 11

The three steps of Bible study are:

- A. Reading, Writing, and Preaching
- B. Interpretation, Study, and Prayer
- C. Observation, Study, and Preaching
- D. Observation, Interpretation, and Application



Step 1: Observation—What does it say?”

Observation is the starting ground of every Bible study. While it is a very simple process, few people really observe well. Observation is a skill that will improve with practice. What may seem like hard work for you during this course will, with practice, become easier and more rewarding over time. Observation includes everything that you notice about a passage. But you will want to be sure to focus on three things: background, literary style, and structure.

Background

As you read through a book of the Bible, it is easy to see that it is often written to specific people, talks about historical events, mentions dates, and addresses real issues of concern. The writer is not writing history for history’s sake. You can assume that the historical events and situations used are chosen to reflect the writer’s overall message and intention. As a result, you will want to research the background of a passage or book. Who wrote the book and at what point in history do the events occur? What were the circumstances under which it was written? To whom did the author write? What other peoples, countries, and nations were influential at this same time?

Literary Style

Because God wrote through the personality of different people, each book and passage has its own unique literary style suited to the writer’s personality. This means that you must observe literary form and details. What literary devices or style has the writer used to declare his message? Did he use prose, poetry, narrative discourse, parable, figurative language, or apocalyptic imagery? What is the underlying feeling in the passage? Is it praise, rebuke, instruction, or comfort? What is the nature of the grammar used? Is it composed of commands, statements of fact, questions, or wishes? In what tense did the author write?

Structure

How an author arranged and organized his material is known as structure. Each writer wrote according to the accepted custom of his day. Each passage has order. Understanding this order will lead you into a clearer understanding of the passage. It may even help inspire your thinking later when you preach or teach a passage.

QUESTION 12

Observing whether the author used prose or poetry is an example of which of the following?

- A. Background
- B. Literary style
- C. Structure
- D. Interpretation

You will do well if you **devote half of your study time to the observation process**. The more time you spend in observation, the more accurate and rapid the rest of your studies will be. Observation answers the question, “What does it say?” You will learn the observation process in Lessons 3–5.

Step 2: Interpretation—“What does it mean?”

One of the most common errors in Bible study is to do interpretation without doing observation first. On the other hand, observation alone is worth little unless you know what it means. The primary cause of division in Christian theologies is a failure to base interpretation on the foundation of what the Bible says.

Even after observation has been done, you still need to understand specific words, phrases, and sentences. For example, the Bible speaks about renewing the mind (Rom 12:2), but what does it mean to “renew” the mind, and how does one do it? Interpretation helps you to develop your understanding of the meaning of these various words, phrases, and sentences. Interpretation answers the question, “What does it mean?”

Our theology is only correct if our interpretation of the Bible is correct. Interpretation will be studied in Lessons 6 and 7.

QUESTION 13

The first step in Bible study is interpretation. *True or False?*

Step 3: Application—“What should I do?”

Application is the goal of all Bible study. In application you will look for the truths stated in the passage. Each writer’s message was from God. Each writer intended that his

readers heed the truths of His message. Therefore, you need to be aware of the same truths so that you may apply them to your lives. You need to ask yourself, what circumstances the readers face that you confront today? What truths, commands, or rebukes apply directly to you? What was specifically said to the reader that is only indirectly related to you?

QUESTION 14

The goal of Bible study is _____.

You have not completed your study of the Bible until you have applied it to your life. Application answers the question, “What should I do?” In other words, what changes should you make in your life and how should you respond to the Lord? Lessons 8 and 9 teach you about application.

QUESTION 15

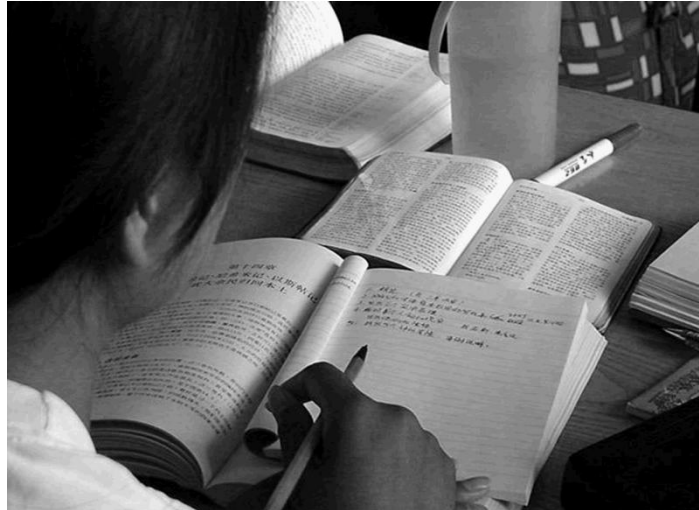
Match the Bible study step with the question that reminds us of that step.

<i>Bible Study Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What should I do?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What does it say?

Topic 4: Study Habits

Objective 4 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to recognize personal study habits that may help or hinder Bible study.

Bible study can be hard work. But it is always rewarding because it reveals the mind of God. Some students do not have good study habits. Others have developed bad habits over time. In order to study effectively, you must develop and maintain good study habits. The methods you will learn in this course have been proven to work for Bible students all over the world.



QUESTION 16

Open your Life Notebook and evaluate your own study habits. Write out how you plan to improve them if they need improving or what you do that makes them strong.

In order to get the most out of your Bible study skills, you will need good Bible study habits. Below are some suggestions that may improve your study habits.

- **Plan for study time.** Many pastors and Christian workers do not have time to study because they do not schedule time for study. If you have not already done so, you should write out a schedule of your typical week. Then decide when in your week you will have time for study. You may have to cancel something else in order to make time. If you do not plan a regular study time, your studies will be haphazard.



- **Protect your study time.** Study is an important part of your ministry. You are not selfish to protect that time. If you allow yourself to be interrupted, even for other ministry matters, you may be hurting your future ministry.
- **Study in the best place.** Ideally, you will study in a private place with a desk, your books close by, and adequate light and ventilation. Whatever your situation,

try to study in the best place possible. Privacy protects you from distractions. Comfort and efficiency allow you to study more effectively.



- **Set study goals.** You should study for a purpose. Before you begin, decide on the goal for your study period. Examples: “I will complete Lesson 2 of *STB*,” or “I will read Ephesians three times and make initial observations of chapter 1.”



- **Study neatly.** Arrange your study area so that everything is orderly. Keep your books and papers in a way that you can easily find them.



- **Study with paper.** Use paper freely, if possible. It is helpful to write down your ideas and make notes to yourself.
- **Study prayerfully.** This suggestion is purposely the last one because it is the most important. Begin each study session with prayer. When things get tough, stop and pray. Nothing will make your studies more effective than the power of the Holy Spirit.



QUESTION 17

Think about the list of suggestions above. Then take some time to pray about how you can improve your own study habits. Write down in your Life Notebook the highlights of your prayer, any thoughts or impressions you believe are from God, and any commitments you will make to Him about your study habits.

Conclusion

Bible study is a continual process involving human and spiritual dimensions. The human dimension is the three-step method of Observation, Interpretation, and Application. The spiritual dimension is the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. You must remember both dimensions as you continue your Bible study.

From this point forward, no more time will be spent discussing the need to read the Bible regularly and consistently. As a serious student of the Bible you should already have, or be developing, a system of regular Bible reading. Lessons 3–9 will teach you how to use the three steps of Bible study. Lessons 10–12 will teach you some more advanced techniques.

STUDY PROJECT

In preparation for your next lesson, read the book of Philippians twice (Phil 1; 2; 3; 4). You should read straight through the entire book in one sitting each time.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2:

Correct answers include:

6

six

QUESTION 3:

Your answer should include something about the contrast between the godly and the wicked.

QUESTION 4: *Your answer*

QUESTION 5:

You will have your own list of questions. You will learn how to select and organize questions to ask about the text in the following lessons.

QUESTION 6: C. In obeying the Lord's commands

QUESTION 7:

<i>Type of Reading</i>	<i>Description</i>
Superficial	Avoids questions while reading the text
Analytical	Raises questions to ask about the text
Targeted	Seeks answers to questions

QUESTION 8: B. 3.25 chapters per day

QUESTION 9:

<i>Verse Number</i>	<i>Verse Text</i>
Psalm 1:1	How happy is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of arrogant fools !
Psalm 1:2	Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the LORD's commands; he intently studies his commands day and night.
Psalm 1:3	He is like a tree planted by flowing streams; it yields its fruit at the proper time, and its leaves never fall off. He succeeds in everything he attempts.
Psalm 1:4	Not so with the wicked! Instead they are like wind-driven chaff.
Psalm 1:5	For this reason the wicked cannot withstand judgment, nor can sinners join the assembly of the godly.
Psalm 1:6	Certainly the LORD rewards the behavior of the godly, but the behavior of the wicked is self-destructive.

QUESTION 10: True**QUESTION 11:** D. Observation, Interpretation, and Application**QUESTION 12:** B. Literary style**QUESTION 13:** False**QUESTION 14:** Application**QUESTION 15:**

<i>Bible Study Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What does it say?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What should I do?

QUESTION 16: *Your answer***QUESTION 17:** *Your answer*

Lesson 3: Observation—Beginning the Observation Process

Lesson Introduction

Several times in His ministry Jesus reprimanded His disciples with the words: “Though you have eyes, don't you see? And though you have ears, can't you hear?” This exhortation from Mark 8:18 is for all who seek to be students of the Bible. Many of us see only what we have seen before or what we have habitually seen. Too many of us are in the habit of reading Scripture without really seeing what the words are saying.

Good observation skills will correct this bad habit. Observation is training our eyes and mind to notice the details. It answers the question, “What do I see?” It is observing what the text itself says, not what we may think it says. Since observation is also a learned skill, it must be developed with practice. The goal of the next three lessons is to help you to develop your observation skills in the study of God's Word.

This lesson contains four topics. Topic 1 deals with the observation of the background to any and every biblical passage you might study. Here you will consider such things as the author, time and place of the writing, the audience, and historical, geographical, and chronological factors.

Topic 2 talks about literary styles. The Bible may be one book, but it contains many different literary forms and styles, such as prose, poetry, prophecy, and letters. It is important to know the kind of literature you are studying if you want to achieve an accurate interpretation.

Topic 3 may be the single most important part of effective Bible study — context. No word, sentence, paragraph, or even chapter of the Bible has sure meaning apart from its context. Therefore, you cannot achieve an accurate interpretation apart from a clear understanding of the context.

Topic 4 begins the process of observing the text of Scripture. In this step you will be shown how to gain an overall view of what the passage contains. That is, you will begin to grasp the context of the passage you are studying. Once you have a sense of the whole, you can begin to examine the parts in light of the whole.

Diligence in learning how to observe a passage of Scripture will pay rich dividends in learning how to interpret and apply that passage.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Observe the Background

Topic 2: Observe the Literary Style

Topic 3: Read the Passage and Its Context

Topic 4: Make General Observations
A Five-Step Approach
Applying the Five-Step Approach

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to determine context and make observations of select Bible passages.

Specific Objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Discover background information of a Bible book or passage, using the resources available to you
- Discern and understand the various literary styles used in the Bible
- Discern and understand a Bible passage's immediate and extended context
- Demonstrate the use of the five observation questions

Preparing to Study

As you begin this study, take a few moments to prepare your heart for what the Lord wants to teach you. Find a secluded place, if possible, and read Psalm 119:9-16 to help focus your attention on the Lord and on His Word. Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask the Lord to bless this time and to help your understanding. Thank Him for what He is about to do. Be sure to make this a regular habit before beginning any lesson or Bible study.

QUESTION 1

Do you remember the three steps of the *STB* Method from Lesson 2? Choose the answer that lists the right steps in the correct order.

- A. Application, Communication, Observation
- B. Observation, Interpretation, Application
- C. Communication, Interpretation, Application
- D. Application, Interpretation, Communication

The observation process may be compared to the work of a miner searching for precious gems. As you are initially exposed to a passage of Scripture, you begin to unearth facts. The more time you spend digging, the more facts you unearth and the richer the discovery will be. Skill in observing is the key to how much or how little you are able to find out about a passage of Scripture. How do you begin?

QUESTION 2

After reading the illustration of the miner above, write in your Life Notebook your own illustration about how you have studied the Bible in the past.

Topic 1: Observe the Background

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to discover background information of a Bible book or passage, using the resources available to you.

The observation process begins with discovering as much as we can about the background and conditions at the time when the author was writing. Background information will help us understand a passage more fully. For example, knowledge of the Babylonian Captivity will help us understand why Daniel wrote his book. For example:

- The people had not repented of their sins.
- Jeremiah had promised that the captivity would last only seventy years.
- The Mosaic covenant had been broken.

What would happen to Israel? Would God abandon them? Were God's promises no longer valid? Daniel wrote to clarify Israel's future.

QUESTION 3

Read Daniel 9:2. This verse gives you important background information about the length of the Babylonian captivity. *True or False?*

Where does one get background information? First, aside from the book in which your passage occurs, read other books of the Bible that describe the same period of time in the passage you are studying. For example:

- Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel recorded background events for the book of Daniel.
- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give background to the book of Acts.
- The book of Acts, in turn, gives the background for the Epistles.

QUESTION 4

Match the books in the first column with the book that may provide background information in the second column.

<i>Bible Books</i>	<i>Background Information</i>
Psalms	Acts
Daniel	Luke
Acts	1 and 2 Samuel
Ephesians	Isaiah

Next, consult sources outside of the Bible if available. For example:

- Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias (Look up names, places, and the book of the Bible being studied.)
- New and Old Testament surveys and introductions
- Commentaries (Look first in the front sections for information, then before each testament, in the passage you are studying.)

QUESTION 5

Check all the books listed below that would be good resources for background information on the book of Ephesians. (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. New Testament Survey
- B. Commentary on Ephesians
- C. 1 John
- D. Bible Encyclopedia
- E. Hebrew Grammar
- F. Bible Dictionary

Read the following background study for 1 Peter 3:1-7. Some of the information comes directly from the Bible and some from the sources listed above.

1 Peter 3:1-7

Author: Scholars generally accept the apostle Peter as the author.

Place of writing: According to 1 Peter 5:13, Babylon is the place of writing. Did Peter mean literal Babylon, Rome symbolically, or some other place? Literal Babylon is possible since there was a large Jewish community there. Thomas, however, is the only apostle for whom we have any record of a connection with this part of the world. Many commentators accept that Babylon is used symbolically for Rome because records indicate that Peter spent his last years in Rome.

Time of writing: Given the date of Peter's death and of the writing of 2 Peter, 1 Peter was probably written in AD 63–64. This would have been just before Nero persecuted the church.

Intended audience: The first paragraph of the letter says it is for the scattered believers in the various places mentioned. Are they primarily Jews, primarily Gentiles, or a mixture? Comparing 1 Peter 1:1 to Acts 2:9-10 suggests that it was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles.

Historical/social circumstances: It was either just before or during Nero’s persecutions. The readers were experiencing increasing persecution (1 Pet 4:12-14). The geographical locations of Asia Minor are given in 1 Peter 1:1.

QUESTION 6

Marriage is the focus of 1 Peter 3:1-7. Consider your concept of a Christian marriage. Write as many details as you can about your idea of a Christian marriage in your Life Notebook. As you work with 1 Peter 3 in this course, you will be asked to consider any changes that may occur in your ideas.

EXERCISE 1

Do a background study of Acts 17:22-31. Then try to organize your material under the same topics as in the 1 Peter 3:1-7: author, place of writing, time of writing, intended audience, historical/social circumstances. Collect your sources, spend no more than about ten minutes for this exercise, and then check your answer, recognizing that some sources that the workbook used may not have been available to you.

EXERCISE 2

Do a similar background study for Nehemiah 1, and then check your answer.

EXERCISE 3

Complete a background study for Mark 2:1-12, and then check your answer.

EXERCISE 4

Perform a background study for Jonah 2 and then check your answer.

Topic 2: Observe the Literary Style

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to discern and understand the various literary styles used in the Bible.

The authors of the Bible used different literary styles as they wrote. Therefore, the style of literature we are dealing with is important.

- Is the passage poetry, prophecy, or narrative?
- Did the author use symbols or imagery to convey his message?
- Are there parables, allegories, or other forms of speech that one should be aware of?

Knowledge of these different styles of literature and figures of speech will help you understand the intent of the language.

Literary Styles

- Parable (Story)
- Poetry
- Prophecy
- Narrative
- Figures of Speech
- Symbols or Imagery

QUESTION 7

Look at the Bible chapters listed. Then match the chapter to the correct type of literature.

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Type of Literature</i>
Psalm 23	Parable
Matthew 24	Hebrew Poetry
Mark 2	Narrative
Luke 15	Prophecy

An illustration of different literary styles describing the same event can be found by comparing 1 Samuel 21:10-15 with Psalm 34. For now, simply be aware that you will develop in your understanding of this area as your Bible study skills grow.

QUESTION 8

You have compared 1 Samuel 21:10-15 with Psalm 34. Below, match the passage with its correct description.

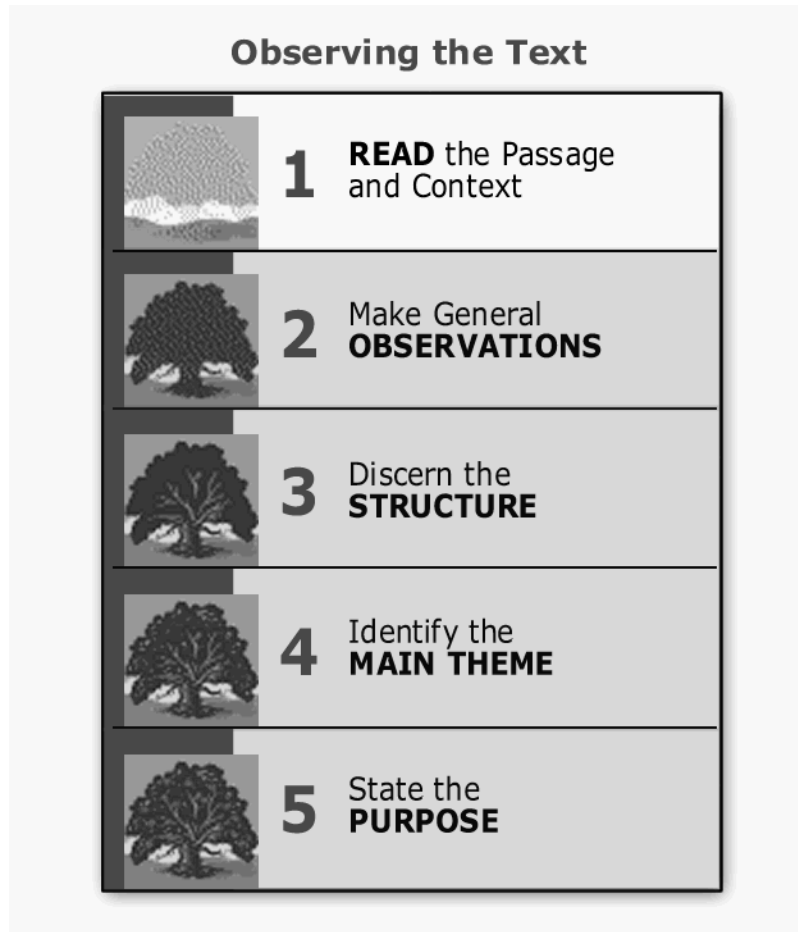
<i>Passage</i>	<i>Description of the Passage</i>
1 Samuel 21:10-15	Describes David's attitude toward the Lord in the midst of the event
Psalm 34	Describes the historical event

Topic 3: Read the Passage and Its Context

From observing the background and literary form, you move to observing the text itself. As you study from an overall awareness of a passage to a deeper understanding of its

details, its meaning will gradually come into focus. It may be likened to seeing a tree from a distance. At first only the broad outline of the tree is visible. Then, as you move closer, the tree actually becomes clearer in detail, until finally you can recognize the type of tree it is and all its parts. So it is with a passage. The closer we observe it and its parts, the clearer our understanding of what a writer is saying becomes.

This will be your experience as you use the five important steps illustrated below. The first two will be presented in this lesson, with steps 3–5 discussed in the next lesson.



Objective 3 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to discern and understand a Bible passage's immediate and extended context.

It is important to begin observation by reading the whole passage and its context. Do this to gain a broad familiarity with the text. If you immediately begin to look at the details, you may miss the author's own interpretive clues in the surrounding context.

QUESTION 9

Revelation 12:3 mentions a dragon. Which verse in the context of this verse identifies who the dragon is?

- A. Revelation 12:4
- B. Revelation 12:5
- C. Revelation 12:7
- D. Revelation 12:9

Observation requires that you read through a passage and its context (normally, the chapter before and the chapter after) as many times as you can. As you read,

- You will gain some general familiarity with what is written.
- You will begin to focus on the author's primary idea.
- You will also want to note details that are connected to this idea.

QUESTION 10

Look at Hebrews 11. In the context, the author's primary idea of Hebrews 11 is:

- A. Old Testament characters
- B. The believer should live by faith
- C. We all live and die
- D. The world is not worthy of great believers

In the first and second readings, do not focus on details. You will spend time focusing on the details as you become acquainted with a portion of Scripture and its context. Look for the author's primary idea and what he wrote about it. As you continue to read, note specific issues that the author addresses.

QUESTION 11

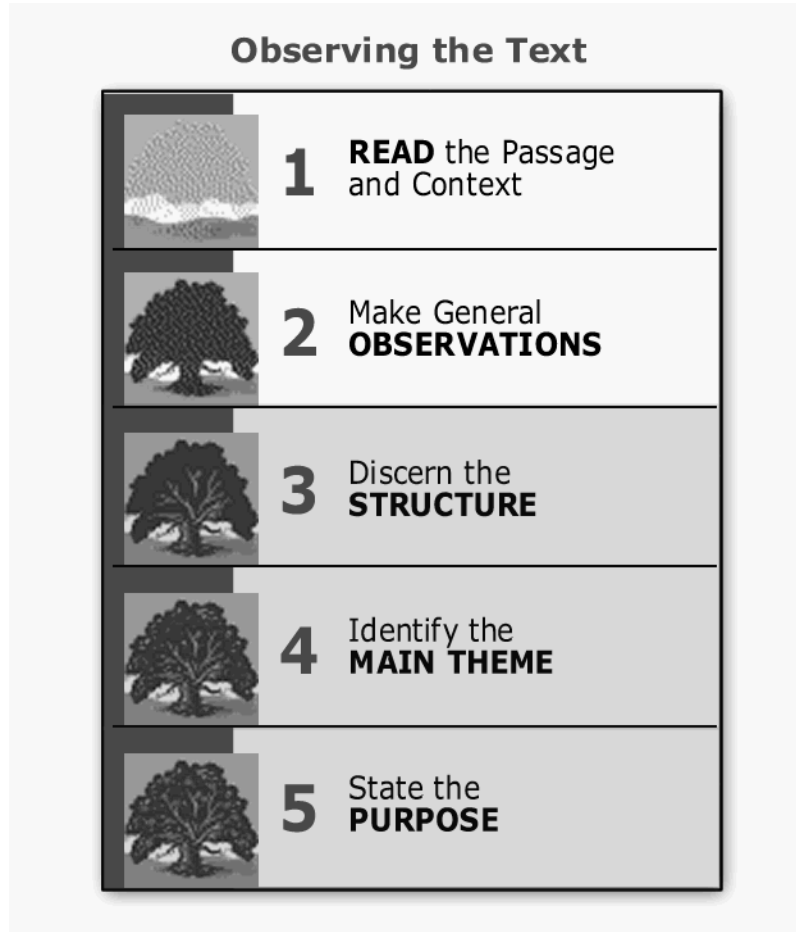
Again look at Hebrews 11. For the verses and paraphrases listed below, which ones contribute to the author's primary idea? (Do not select any that do not contribute to the primary idea of the overall passage.) (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Hebrews 11:8—By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called.
- B. Hebrews 11:12—As many descendants as the stars of heaven.
- C. Hebrews 11:18—In Isaac your seed shall be called.
- D. Hebrews 11:28—By faith he kept the Passover.

During your time of focused reading, take a few moments to write, in one or two sentences, what you think is the author's primary idea. The author's primary idea should

be the theme of the passage. You will learn how to determine if it is the theme in Lesson 5. You may modify this primary idea throughout the observation process.

Topic 4: Make General Observations



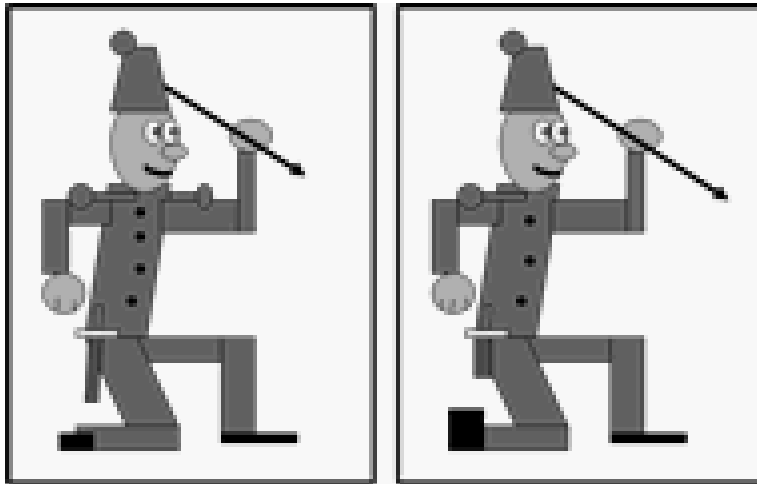
Objective 4 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to demonstrate the use of the five observation questions.

Observation of a text usually moves from the general to the specific. You move from an overview of the passage to a deeper understanding of the details. Again, it is like seeing a tree from a distance. At first, only the broad outline of the tree is visible. Then, as you move closer, the tree becomes clearer in detail. Finally, you can recognize the type of tree it is and all its parts. So it is with a text. The closer you observe it and its parts, the clearer your understanding of what the author is saying.

It is possible to observe in the reverse order (from the specific to the general). But if you move from the general to the specific, you can more easily record your observations. Making general observations first helps you to organize your more detailed observations.



After you have an initial idea of what is being talked about in the Bible passage, begin confirming this idea. You begin this process of confirmation by writing down your initial general observations.



OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT

Look at the two pictures above. Can you observe at least five things that are different? When you think you have found at least five things, write them down, and then check your answer.

The great scholar and Bible translator John Wycliffe (1328–1384) summed up the essentials of general observations in this way:

It will greatly help you to understand Scripture if you mark not only **what** is spoken or written, but of **whom** and to **whom**, with what **words**, at what **time**, **where**, to what **intent**, with what **circumstances**, considering what goes **before** and what **follows**. (emphasis added)



Wycliffe’s keen insight, made over six hundred years ago, is still valid today. Based upon his instructions, we learn to observe such things as who, where, when, what, and why. These are the five observation questions.

- **Who (People).** Who are the characters involved, and what can we learn about them from this passage?
- **Where (Places).** What places are mentioned? What buildings, what cities, what nations, or what landmarks are noted?
- **When (Time references).** When did these events take place? Is the duration of the action mentioned? At what point in history did the action occur?
- **What (Events, ideas).** What is the basic content being discussed? What events are taking place? What ideas are being communicated? Is the tone of the passage one of joy, sorrow, victory, or defeat? Are there any key concepts or key words? What promises, commands, or warnings are given? What figures of speech, if any, are being used?
- **Why (Reason).** Why did the author write what he wrote? Many students confuse this observation question with interpretive questions you will learn later. In Interpretation, “why” asks about the meaning of a passage. In Observation, “why” asks the reason that the author included this passage at this point in the book. In Observation, “why” asks how the passage connects to the context.

A Five-Step Approach

QUESTION 12

Match the five observation questions with the word or words which best describes the answer to the question.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer to the Question</i>
Who?	Reason
Where?	Event and ideas
When?	Locations
What?	Time
Why?	Characters

Because observation involves seeing many details, a necessary part of observation is writing down what the Holy Spirit shows you. Remember the importance of good writing habits from Lesson 2? Recording your observations **as you make them** will save time in the future when you return to study the same passage. Rather than starting over with new observations, you can move on to more in-depth study. Writing your observations will also help you think more clearly.

Here is a suggestion for recording your observations. Divide a piece of paper into two vertical columns with the left column just wide enough to write the words Who, Where, When, What, and Why underneath each other. Leave six to seven centimeters between these words. Draw a horizontal line across the paper just above each word. Over the other column write “Observations.” Now you are ready to record what you find. See the sample chart that follows. Your chart will be spread over one or more sheets of paper. Please follow these instructions every time you make observations.

Observations	
Who	
Where	
When	
What	(This is usually the largest section.)
Why	

While it is important to make as many observations as possible, the *number of observations* is not as essential as the *type of observations*. Remember, observations are made for the purpose of understanding *what* the author wrote and *why* he wrote it, so that you may apply the message to yourself and others. Some of your observations will be more important than others. The more you practice, the easier it will be to focus on the important observations.

QUESTION 13

A large number of observations are far more helpful than the type of observations made. *True or False?*

You should also remember that *observation is a continuous process*. Even when you move on to other steps, you will continue to make observations. So leave extra space on your five-question chart for these later observations.

As you begin working through the five questions, you may find things you have never found before. You may have never heard them in a sermon or Bible study. You will begin to sense the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit.

Applying the Five-Step Approach

Open your Bible to 1 Peter 3:1-7 and locate each of the observations which are included in the chart below.

Observations for 1 Peter 3:1-7

Who	Wives, husbands, Abraham, God, Sarah, holy women
Where	No specific place mentioned.
When	Long ago
What	<p>Peter issued several commands.</p> <p>Wives are to be submissive to their own husbands.</p> <p>A wife's behavior is to be pure and reverent.</p> <p>Her adornment is to be primarily conduct, not clothes, jewelry, etc.</p> <p>Peter gives an example from the holy women of the past.</p> <p>Peter highlights Sarah and Abraham. Husbands are to live with their wives with consideration.</p> <p>Husbands are to show wives honor as a fellow believer.</p> <p>Wives are addressed before husbands.</p> <p>Peter tells wives to emphasize behavior over words.</p> <p>Their adornment was to be a gentle and tranquil spirit, submissiveness, not outward appearance.</p> <p>Obedient wives become "spiritual" children of Sarah.</p> <p>A woman is called a weaker vessel.</p> <p>A woman is a fellow heir of the grace of life.</p> <p>Good conduct and answered prayer are connected.</p> <p>Wives were only to be submissive to their own husbands.</p> <p>A gentle and tranquil spirit is precious to God.</p> <p>Apparently the wives of nonbelievers had something to fear.</p> <p>Sarah called Abraham "lord."</p> <p>What was true "long ago" concerning the submission of the wife was still true when Peter wrote.</p> <p>Improper husband conduct can hinder his prayers."</p> <p>In the same way" suggests that the strength or importance of the commands is equal.</p> <p>No special literary form is used.</p> <p>The atmosphere is stern but aimed at spiritual victory.</p> <p>More space is given to the woman's role than the man's.</p> <p>Peter quotes from the Old Testament as an example.</p>
Why	<p>A wife's excellent behavior is meant to win a non-believing husband. Women are to do this because of the example of the holy women of the past.</p> <p>Husbands are to treat wives right so that their prayers may not be hindered.</p> <p>Peter is writing about this right after a passage admonishing the readers to be prepared to suffer for Christ, as He suffered for us. He follows the passage with a command for all believers to live in harmony.</p>

Observations for 1 Peter 3:1-7

EXERCISE 5

Now it is your turn to make your own Five-Question Chart. Create a chart for Acts 17:22-31. When you are finished, check your work.

EXERCISE 6

Now make a similar chart for Nehemiah 1 and check your answer.

EXERCISE 7

Make a five-step chart for Mark 2:1-12 and check your answer.

EXERCISE 8

Make a chart for Jonah 2 and check your answer.

QUESTION 14

Perhaps this is the first time you have seen so many details in a passage of Scripture. Now that you have a method for finding so much information, you may want to evaluate how you will study the Bible in the future. Spend some time praying to God about your Bible study habits and any commitments you will make for future Bible study. Record your thoughts and prayers in your Life Notebook.

STUDY PROJECT: BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS IN PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

You have already done a background study and five-question chart for Acts 17:22-31 and other passages. Now complete the same two assignments for Philippians 2:1-11. Be prepared to share and discuss your results in your next seminar. If you are unsure of any steps to be completed, review this lesson and particularly the 1 Peter 3:1-7 examples.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have finished your third lesson in *STB*. Take a minute to think about what you have learned. You have learned that there is much more in the text than appears on the surface. This is only the beginning of a method that will greatly enrich your Bible study. The next two lessons will teach you even more exciting principles about the process of observation.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: B. Observation, Interpretation, Application

QUESTION 2: *Your answer*

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4:

<i>Bible Books</i>	<i>Background Information</i>
Psalms	1 and 2 Samuel
Daniel	Isaiah
Acts	Luke
Ephesians	Acts

QUESTION 5:

- A. New Testament Survey
- B. Commentary on Ephesians
- D. Bible Encyclopedia
- F. Bible Dictionary

QUESTION 6: *Your answer*

QUESTION 7:

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Type of Literature</i>
Psalm 23	Hebrew Poetry
Matthew 24	Prophecy
Mark 2	Narrative
Luke 15	Parable

QUESTION 8:

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Description of the Passage</i>
1 Samuel 21:10-15	Describes the historical event
Psalm 34	Describes David's attitude toward the Lord in the midst of the event

QUESTION 9: D. Revelation 12:9

QUESTION 10: B. The believer should live by faith

QUESTION 11:

A. Hebrews 11:8—By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called.

D. Hebrews 11:28—By faith he kept the Passover.

OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT

You could have found six differences: longer spear, missing one button, sword scabbard shorter, missing epaulette, rear foot bigger, extra line on hand.

QUESTION 12:

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer to the Question</i>
Who?	Characters
Where?	Locations
When?	Time
What?	Event and ideas
Why?	Reason

QUESTION 13: False

QUESTION 14: *Your answer*

Answers to Exercises

Exercise 1: Background Study on Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally like this:

Acts 17:22-31

Author: Most scholars agree that Luke wrote Acts.

Place of writing: Luke wrote from different places as he traveled with Paul. He also gathered information from different sources.

Time of writing: Since Luke does not mention the death of Paul, the great fire of Rome, or the fall of Jerusalem, it is likely that Acts was written between AD 60–64.

Intended audience: Acts 1:1 says it was written for Theophilus. This could be a man's name or mean any believer. Theophilus means "lover of God."

Historical/social circumstances: The Lord has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. The church is established and begins growing and experiencing opposition. In particular for this passage, Paul was on his second missionary journey in Athens, having just been chased out of Thessalonica. The Areopagus is either the place where he spoke or the body in front of whom he spoke.

Exercise 2: Background Study on Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally like this:

Nehemiah 1

Author: Nehemiah 1:1 states that Nehemiah is the author.

Place of writing: Not stated, but at the end Nehemiah is in Jerusalem.

Time of writing: It is not certain, but probably 445–425 BC.

Intended audience: The intended audience was Israel.

Historical/social circumstances: Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I in Susa in Persia. This means that he lived at least during the period 464–430 BC. Jerusalem and Canaan were under the rule of the Persians, who had given the Jews permission to return to Canaan. The Jews returned under Zerubbabel and later under Ezra.

Work had begun on rebuilding the temple, but opposition stopped the work for about sixteen years. They finished work on the temple in 515 BC. So about seventy years passed before the events of Nehemiah.

Jews from Jerusalem came to tell him that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and that the people were discouraged. They came to ask him to return to help get Jerusalem back in order.

Exercise 3: Background Study on Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally like this:

Mark 2:1-12

Author: The authorship of Mark has never been seriously questioned, even though his name is not mentioned in the book. This Mark probably is John Mark of the New Testament, a relative of Barnabas (Col 4:10). The implication in 1 Peter 5:13 is that Peter led Mark to the Lord, because Peter called him “my son.” It is believed that this gospel reflects the preaching and authority of Peter.

Place of writing: Not mentioned, but most scholars favor Rome.

Time of writing: Opinions range from AD 40–75. Most scholars believe it is the earliest of the Gospels. Others still hold to the priority of Matthew.

Intended audience: It was probably written for Gentiles in general and Romans in particular.

Historical/social circumstances: The setting was the places Jesus lived and ministered.

Exercise 4: Background Study on Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2 should look generally like this:

Jonah 2:1-10

Author: No mention is made of the author in the book itself. There is no good reason to deny that Jonah was the author.

Place of writing: Not mentioned.

Time of writing: According to 2 Kings 14:25, Jonah ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 BC).

Intended audience: As with so many Old Testament books, it was intended for Israel.

Historical/social circumstances: Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, a powerful country. It had been prophesied that Assyria would one day overcome Israel. They were known as a cruel, warring people. The Lord called Jonah to go preach to these people. Israel at this time was consistently wicked, worshiping idols, walking far away from the Lord. Jonah resisted God’s call to go to Nineveh. The Lord stopped his retreat and gave him another chance to serve. The Lord caused the sea to rage and Jonah to be thrown into it, threatening his life with drowning.

Exercise 5: Observations for Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally like this:

Acts 17:22-31

Who	Paul, Athenians, unknown god, every nation of the human race, some of your own poets, a man, Areogapus (?).
Where	Athens, Areogapus (?), earth, world.
When	On Paul's second missionary journey, times of ignorance, now, a day in which He will judge the world.
What	<p>Paul spoke either to or on the Areogapus.</p> <p>Paul called them "men of Athens."</p> <p>He addressed the issue of the "unknown god."</p> <p>An altar entitled "To an unknown god."</p> <p>God does not live in temples made with hands.</p> <p>He gives to all life and breath.</p> <p>He made all people, determined the set times and fixed limits of the places where they would live.</p> <p>He made all nations from one source.</p> <p>We live and move about and exist in God.</p> <p>We are the offspring of God.</p> <p>"Deity" is used to refer to God.</p> <p>Deity is not like gold or silver or stone.</p> <p>God overlooked past times of ignorance.</p> <p>Now He is commanding all to repent.</p> <p>He has set a day of judgment with Christ as judge.</p> <p>God raised Jesus from the dead.</p> <p>God is Lord of heaven and earth.</p> <p>The resurrection is proof of a coming judgment day or of who the judge will be.</p> <p>Paul quotes one of their poets to support his point.</p> <p>Paul based his sermon on something in their experience.</p> <p>Paul observed their society to know what they worshiped.</p>

	There was probably apprehension and opposition, but Paul’s tone was positive.
Why	Paul gave his message because he saw an altar with the inscription “To an unknown god.” God commands everyone to repent because a day of judgment is coming. God furnished proof of the day of judgment by raising Jesus from the dead.

Exercise 6: Observations for Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally like this:

Nehemiah 1

Who	Nehemiah, Moses, Hanani, one of my brethren, servants, some men from Judah, the king, God, Jews, remnant.
Where	Susa the citadel, Jerusalem, Judah.
When	In the month Cisleu, in the twentieth year, when I heard these things, Nehemiah mourned for many days.
What	Men came from Jerusalem. Nehemiah asked about the people and the city. The people were in distress, and the wall was breached. Nehemiah prayed. The prayer is the longest part of the chapter. In the first part Nehemiah talked with men. In the second part Nehemiah talked with God. The prayer contains praise, confession, references to the Word of God, and requests. Nehemiah described himself as cupbearer to the king. The problem included both the city and the people. The remnant was from the captivity. The first verse appears to be a title. A delegation, not an individual, came from Judah. Nehemiah’s immediate response was prayer. The order of the content of the prayer is adoration, appeal, confession, claiming God’s promise in His Word, appeal.

	<p>The atmosphere of the prayer is humility yet boldness, distress but hope. Nehemiah prayed earnestly.</p> <p>He included himself in the sins of his people.</p> <p>The need of Jerusalem was presented to Nehemiah, then to God.</p> <p>The main request of the prayer was: “Prosper your servant today” and “Give compassion in the presence of this man.”</p> <p>Nehemiah based his request on a biblical promise.</p> <p>The literary style is prose.</p>
Why	<p>Nehemiah prayed because of the need of his people and city.</p> <p>This first portion fixed the purpose for writing the book.</p>

Exercise 7: Observations for Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally like this:

Mark 2:1-12

Who	Jesus (Son of Man), experts in the law, many people of God, paralytic, four men.
Where	Capernaum, in a home (possibly Peter's), roof.
When	After some days.
What	<p>The literary form is historical narrative.</p> <p>Jesus was speaking to a crowd.</p> <p>Four men brought a paralyzed man on a stretcher.</p> <p>They let him down through the roof at Jesus' feet.</p> <p>Jesus healed the man.</p> <p>The experts in the law turned things over in their minds.</p> <p>Jesus dealt with them through a question that was almost like a riddle.</p> <p>The man picked up his stretcher and walked away.</p> <p>The people were amazed and praised God.</p> <p>Jesus responded to the faith of the four men.</p> <p>Jesus showed His authority to forgive sins by healing.</p> <p>Jesus perceived in His spirit that the scribes were turning things over in their minds.</p> <p>The ability to heal was connected with the ability to forgive sins.</p> <p>There are no special literary features, except the use of questions.</p> <p>The four friends worked hard to have their friend healed.</p> <p>The atmosphere was one of total control on the part of Jesus.</p> <p>“Authority” seems to be a key word here.</p>
Why	<p>The four men put the paralytic through the roof because the people were blocking the doorway.</p> <p>The experts in the law turned things over in their minds because they thought Jesus' granting forgiveness was blasphemy.</p> <p>Jesus did what He did to show His authority on earth.</p>

Exercise 8: Observations for Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2:1-10 should look generally like this:

Jonah 2:1-10

Who	Jonah, God, those who worship useless idols.
Where	In the fish's stomach. Belly of Sheol. The deep waters. Heart of the seas. Your holy temple. Ends of the mountains. The grave. Dry land.
When	Before he was in the fish's stomach. When he was in the fish's stomach. After he was vomited onto dry land. Future ("will").
What	Fish, water, current, your holy temple. Breakers and waves, weeds. Mountains, bars. Prayer, loyalty. Sacrifice, audible thanksgiving. Salvation comes from the Lord. Jonah prayed from the stomach of the fish. His prayer included a plea for help, praise, and a promise to thank God publicly. Jonah was drowning. The Lord commanded the fish. Fish vomited Jonah onto dry land. The literary style is poetic. Some figurative expressions.

	<p>The main atmosphere is praise and thanksgiving.</p> <p>There were expressions of terror when he was drowning.</p> <p>The two lines of verse 2 are parallel in thought.</p> <p>Jonah felt rejected by God as he was drowning.</p> <p>Jonah realized God delivered him by means of the fish.</p> <p>The Lord's control is evident in this passage.</p> <p>God is contrasted with a useless idol.</p> <p>The flow of thought seems to be: problem, hope, problem, victory, praise.</p> <p>The chapter begins and ends with the fish.</p>
Why	<p>Jonah prayed for help because he was drowning.</p> <p>Jonah promised public thanksgiving because he expected the Lord to rescue him.</p>

Lesson 4: Observation—Discovering Structure

Lesson Introduction

Under the leadership of Nehemiah the people constructed the wall around Jerusalem. They followed a definite plan while constructing the wall. Built according to the plan, this wall could fulfill its intended purpose of protecting the city. In the same way, each Bible passage has an intentional structure. The structure is important to the purpose of each passage. In fact, the structure is just as important as the details that make up that passage.

Modern archaeologists study ancient structures. As they begin to understand how these ancient buildings were put together, they usually can determine what their original intended use was. As a Bible student you face a similar task while studying Scripture. You must understand how these ancient writings were put together in order to determine their original intended use. You will find an understanding of structure to be an important step toward your goal of understanding God's message to you in Scripture.

Four topics comprise the outline of study in this lesson. Topic 1 talks about the basic structural elements in a biblical passage, especially the sentence and the paragraph. The goal is to discover the author's flow of thought.

Topic 2 shows you how to construct a structural outline of a passage. In this process you will look at each sentence, determine the paragraph breaks, and then visually demonstrate your understanding of the relationships between those paragraphs.

Topic 3 introduces you to structural indicators. These indicators show the specific ways in which an author connects his thoughts as he develops his flow of thought. You will work with fourteen of the more common kinds of structural connections.

In Topic 4 you will examine the connections between paragraphs in the structural outline you created and mark those connections with the appropriate structural indicators. This is an important exercise in that it gives you a firm understanding of the author's flow of thought.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Discerning the Structure

Topic 2: Structural Outline

Topic 3: Structural Indicators

Association

Contrast

Repetition

Cause to Effect

Effect to Cause
Explanation
Illustration
Climax
Pivot
Interchange
Preparation
Summary
Question Posed
Question Answered

Topic 4: Structural Outline with Structural Indicators

QUESTION 1

Think about a time in your life when understanding a physical structure such as a building or a physical layout (as of a place) helped you accomplish a goal. Now, write about that experience in your Life Notebook.

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to, by creating structural outlines, demonstrate an understanding of how and why the biblical authors arranged their words and thoughts in Scripture.

Specific Objectives

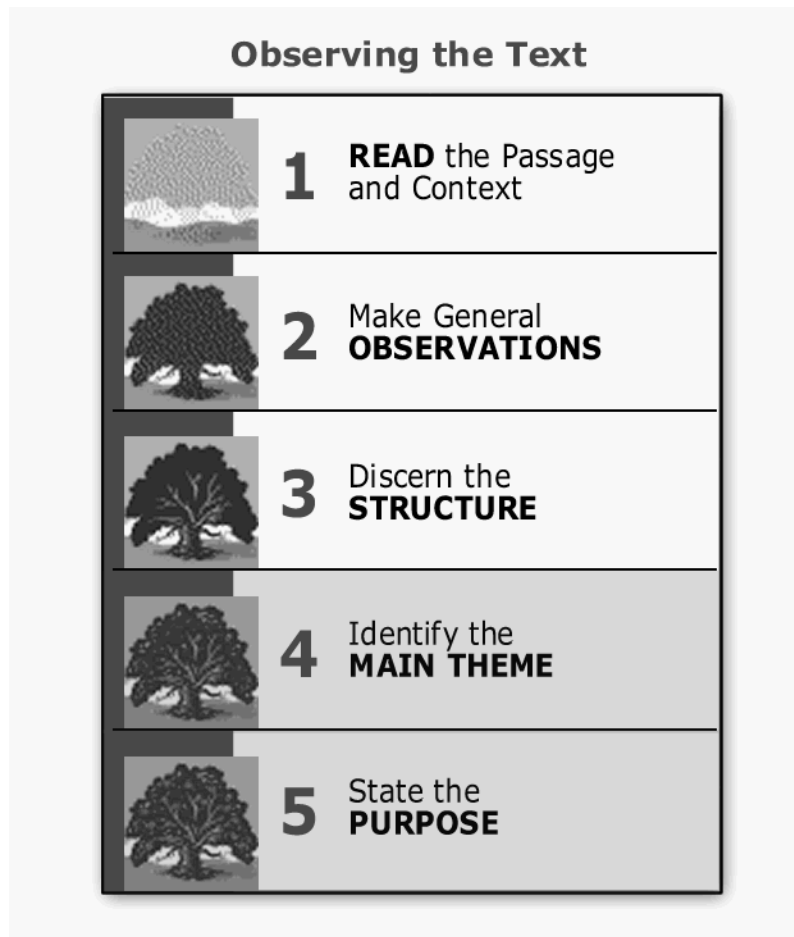
When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Appreciate the fact that every Bible passage has a definite structure
- Create a structural outline of a Bible passage
- Demonstrate an understanding of each of the fourteen structural indicators
- Mark a structural outline with the structural indicators that the author used

Preparing to Study

As you begin this study, take a few moments to prepare your heart for what the Lord wants to teach you. Find a secluded place, if possible, and read Psalm 119:17-24 to help focus your attention on the Lord and on His Word. Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask the Lord to bless this time and to help your understanding. Thank Him for what He is about to do. Be sure to make this a regular habit before beginning any lesson or Bible study.

Topic 1: Discerning the Structure



Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to appreciate the fact that every Bible passage has a definite structure.

Now that you have learned how to develop a basic understanding of Bible passages through general observation, your next step is to develop your understanding of the author's structure. Just as Nehemiah understood the types of mortar and stone used in his wall, you will need to understand the parts that make up the structure of a Bible passage.

Your intent should be to discover the author's flow of thought. You will study how he developed the passage. Remember, all biblical writers wrote logically. They did not necessarily write chronologically, nor did they all use the same style. Therefore, an author's message can be broken down into logical divisions of thought.

Divisions of thought are reflected in paragraphs and sentences. The simplest expression of thought is the sentence, which is made up of one or more clauses. One or more sentences make up paragraphs, and one or more paragraphs make up a Bible passage. Since a sentence requires a context to have specific meaning, we will work with the paragraph as the basic unit of thought. Therefore, in determining the structure of a Bible

passage, the student must group related sentences together into a paragraph. Then the student must understand the relationships between the paragraphs to see the structure of the passage.

Chapter and verse divisions in your Bible will sometimes agree with the author's divisions of thought, and they are often a helpful place to begin study. But because they are not inspired divisions, they should never be considered definitive. By locating these divisions of thought, you should be able to form an outline of the author's message. This outline can serve as a basis for developing a teaching or preaching outline.

Structure may be defined as the way different ideas, parts, or actions within a passage connect to one another.

QUESTION 2

Most of the Bible has no structure. The authors wrote whatever thoughts occurred to them. *True or False?*

QUESTION 3

In this lesson, structure is defined as:

- A. The chapter and verse divisions of our Bible translations
- B. A series of stories that a Bible author tells
- C. The way that different ideas, parts, or actions within a passage connect to one another
- D. The grammar, such as nouns and verbs, used by the author

Topic 2: Structural Outline

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to create a structural outline of a Bible passage.

Once you have selected the biblical passage you want to study, the process of uncovering the structure of that passage is as follows:

Write each sentence in the passage on a separate line.

Identify the connecting words, such as “and,” “but,” and “therefore.” It is considered helpful to write them with all capital letters.

Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.

Display the relationships between the sentences in the paragraph by the use of a structural outline.

Display the relationships between the paragraphs in the passage by the use of a structural outline.

A **structural outline** is a way of visually showing the structure of a passage by relating the sentences of a paragraph and the thoughts of the passage, written on separate lines.

To do this:

- Place main sentences or thoughts to the left on the page.
- Indent subordinate sentences or thoughts to the right, under their corresponding main sentences or thoughts.
- Write the key connecting words on separate lines.

The indentation shows how sentences and thoughts connect to one another. The following outline of Galatians 5:16-26 is an example of how a structural outline might look:

Uncovering a Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

- ▶ **Start with selected passage. (Galatians 5:16-26)**
- 1. Write each sentence in the passage on a separate line.**

¹⁶But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh; for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

Uncovering a Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

- ▶ Start with selected passage. (Galatians 5:16-26)
- ▶ 1. Write each sentence in the passage on a separate line.

¹⁶But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh; for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things.

I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things there is no law.

²⁴Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another

Now spend time meditating on and observing these sentences to see which can be grouped together into paragraphs. The following graphic shows one way to view the grouping of sentences into paragraphs in this passage. Observe that each sentence remains at the left margin of the page.

Uncovering A Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

- ▶ Start with selected passage. (Galatians 5:16-26)
- ▶ 1. Write each sentence in the passage on a separate line.
- ▶ **2. Identify the connecting words, such as "and," "but," and "therefore." (It is considered helpful to write them with all capital letters.)**
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.

¹⁶But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh; for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things.

I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things there is no law.

²⁴Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another

Uncovering A Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

Start with selected passage. (Galatians 5:16-26)

1. Write each sentence in the passage on a separate line.

2. Identify the connecting words, such as "and," "but," and "therefore." (It is considered helpful to write them with all capital letters.)

▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.

¹⁶BUT I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷FOR the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh; for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

¹⁸BUT if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹NOW the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things.

I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²BUT the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control.
Against such things there is no law.

²⁴NOW those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

Now you should look at each paragraph individually to identify the relationships of the sentences and main clauses to each other.

Uncovering a Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.

▶ 4. Display the relationships between the sentences in each paragraph by using a structural outline.

¹⁶BUT

I say, live by the Spirit

AND

you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷FOR the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit,

AND

the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh;

FOR

these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

¹⁸BUT

if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹NOW

the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity,

²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things.

I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²BUT

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things there is no law.

²⁴NOW

those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

Having determined the relationships between the sentences in each paragraph, the foundation has been laid for creating the structural outline of the whole passage. Now the question is how each of the paragraphs relates to each other. The structural outline displays these relationships.

Because the focus of this structural outline is the relationships between paragraphs, sentences and main clauses that do not contribute directly to understanding the relationships between paragraphs can be restored to their original places in the sentence

or paragraph. For example, observe in the outlines below that both Galatians 5:16-17 become normal sentences again. In verse 23 “Against such there is no law” is not placed on a separate line (see also vv. 19-21).

The less important connecting words can also be returned to their original positions. You may choose to leave them written in all capital letters or not.

The following structural outlines show two ways of viewing these relationships. In the first outline you describe the nature of the relationship verbally. In the second you show it visually. They both accomplish the same thing. You choose which one helps you understand the structure better.

The first style depends on verbal descriptions of the relationships, tied in primarily with the connecting words or phrases. You will observe that all paragraphs remain at the left margin, but the explanations reveal where they would be placed if indented.

Uncovering a Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

5. Display the relationships between the paragraphs in the passage by the use of a structural outline.

Verbal descriptions OR  Visual structure

●
¹⁶BUT

I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷FOR the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh;

FOR

these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

●
¹⁸BUT

if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹NOW

the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things.

I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²BUT

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things there is no law.

●
²⁴NOW

those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

●
²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

This structure indicates that Paul makes two main points in this passage.

Uncovering a Structural Outline of a Bible Passage

5. Display the relationships between the paragraphs in the passage by the use of a structural outline.

Verbal descriptions OR Visual structure

¹⁶BUT I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷FOR the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh; FOR these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. ¹⁸BUT if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹NOW the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²BUT the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴NOW

those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

The paragraphs were collapsed by removing the structural outline of each paragraph. This helps to see the relationships between the paragraph more clearly.

A case can be made for placing Galatians 5:24 on the same level as verses 19 and 22 or at the left margin as the beginning of a new paragraph. The decision to place verse 24 on the same level as verses 17 and 18 was guided by the apparent sequence of thought in these verses. Verse 17 states the opposition, verse 18 states that living by the Spirit releases the believer from being under the law, and verse 24 says the Christian can overcome the flesh because the power of the flesh has been broken by Christ's death.

This structure indicates that Paul makes two main points in this passage. Verse 16 states the principle. It is explained and supported in verses 17, 18, and 24. Verses 19-23 list the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. The second main point is the exhortation to live according to the Spirit since believers live by the Spirit.

QUESTION 4

Throughout Galatians 5:16-26 the Spirit is consistently opposed to the flesh. What are two things that the Spirit is opposed to that are exceptions to this pattern? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Becoming conceited
- B. Impatience
- C. Law
- D. Passion

You have been working with 1 Peter 3:1-7. Now see what the structural outline of that passage might look like:

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

▶ Start with selected passage.

▶ 1. Break into sentences.

▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.

▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.

▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.

▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:

▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands. Then even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct. ³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴but the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight. ⁵For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, ⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so. ⁷Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands.

Then even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴but the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, ⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life.

In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹IN THE SAME WAY, wives, be subject to your own husbands.

THEN even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴BUT the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵FOR in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, ⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷Husbands, IN THE SAME WAY, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life.

In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹IN THE SAME WAY, wives, be subject to your own husbands.
THEN even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴BUT the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵FOR in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands, ⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷Husbands, IN THE SAME WAY, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life.
In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹IN THE SAME WAY

wives, be subject to your own husbands.

THEN

even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word

by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—

⁴BUT

the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵FOR

in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves in the same way, by being subject to their husbands,

⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

You become her children, when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷IN THE SAME WAY

Husbands, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners

AND

show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life.

In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹IN THE SAME WAY (*continues in some way the previous passage*)

wives, be subject to your own husbands.

THEN (*gives the result of the exhortation*)

they will be won over without a word by the way you live, even if some are disobedient to the word, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

(*names a specific way to be subject*)

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴BUT the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵FOR (*explains why they should have this kind of beauty*)

the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves in the same way being subject to their husbands

(*illustrates being subject*)

⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

You become her children, when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷IN THE SAME WAY (*continues exhortation, now to the husband*)

Husbands, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹IN THE SAME WAY



COLLAPSE

wives, be subject to your own husbands. <"Main thought"

THEN

even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

<"Subordinate thought to main thought"

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—

⁴BUT

the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

<"Subordinate thought to main thought"

⁵FOR

in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves, by being subject to their husbands

<"Subordinate thought to a subordinate thought"

⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children, when you do what is good and have

no fear in doing so. <"Subordinate thought to a subordinate thought"

⁷IN THE SAME WAY

Husbands, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers. <"Main thought"

A Structural Outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7 (Steps 1-5)

- ▶ Start with selected passage.
- ▶ 1. Break into sentences.
- ▶ 2. Identify the connecting words in all capital letters.
- ▶ 3. Group sentences of like thought into paragraphs.
- ▶ 4. Display structural relationships within each paragraph.
- ▶ 5. Display relationships between paragraphs with the use of a structural outline:
 - ▶ Verbal descriptions OR ▶ Visual structure

¹IN THE SAME WAY



wives, be subject to your own husbands. THEN even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

³Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—⁴BUT the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵FOR the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves in the same way, by being subject to their husbands, ⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children, when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷IN THE SAME WAY

Husbands, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

QUESTION 5

In the structural outline, indentation is based on:

- A. Chapter and verse divisions
- B. Sentence and paragraph divisions
- C. Main thoughts and subordinate thoughts
- D. The number and importance of subordinate thoughts

QUESTION 6

In 1 Peter 3:1-7 match the correct label with the quoted thought.

<i>Label</i>	<i>Thought</i>
Main thought	For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands.
Subordinate thought to a main thought	Husbands treat your wives with consideration
Subordinate thought to a subordinate thought	Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold or fine clothes

Now it is your turn to create structural outlines. Use the same passages that you have been working with in Lesson 3.

EXERCISE 1

Display the structural outline for each paragraph in Acts 17:22-31 and then for the whole passage. When you finish, check your answer. It is not necessary that you agree in every detail, but you should be able to justify the divisions and levels of your outline.

EXERCISE 2

Display the structural outline for each paragraph in Nehemiah 1 and then for the whole passage. When you finish, check your answer. It is not necessary that you agree in every detail, but you should be able to justify the divisions and levels of your outline.

EXERCISE 3

Display the structural outline for each paragraph in Mark 2:1-12 and then for the whole passage. When you finish, check your answer. It is not necessary that you agree in every detail, but you should be able to justify the divisions and levels of your outline.

EXERCISE 4

Display the structural outline for each paragraph in Jonah 2 and then for the whole passage. When you finish, check your answer. It is not necessary that you agree in every detail, but you should be able to justify the divisions and levels of your outline.

Topic 3: Structural Indicators

Objective 3 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand and explain each of the fourteen structural indicators.

Once you have developed your structural outline, the next step is to go back and mark the structural indicators that show the ways the author developed his thought. You should take note of two things. First, an author may use **one or more** of these indicators in any given passage. Second, these are not the only structural indicators that an author may use. These merely show some of the common ways authors develop their thought. If you observe a structural relationship that does not fit these categories, assign your own description to that structure. The point is to recognize how the author is developing his thought, not to force that development to conform only to these fourteen indicators. As you develop in your Bible study ability, you will find that observing structure becomes easier.

A **structural indicator** classifies a specific type of relationship between ideas, parts, and actions within a passage.

Fourteen structural indicators commonly used by biblical writers are:

14 Structural Indicators

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Association | 8. Climax |
| 2. Contrast | 9. Pivot |
| 3. Repetition | 10. Interchange |
| 4. Cause to Effect | 11. Preparation |
| 5. Effect to Cause | 12. Summary |
| 6. Explanation | 13. Question Posed |
| 7. Illustration | 14. Question Answered |

Association

Association is the joining of similar ideas or thoughts. Association refers to those things that go together, as opposed to things that are contrasted. The most common way to identify association is through the word “and.”

Biblical Examples:

A typical example is found in Titus 1:5: “The reason I left you in Crete was to set in order the remaining matters **and** to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you” (emphasis added). The “and” connects the two-part reason for leaving Titus in Crete: to set in order and to appoint.

The student will find the use of “and” far more frequently in the Old Testament than in the New. This is due to the nature of the Hebrew language. If “and” occurs in the middle of a sentence, it probably is simple association. But if “and” occurs at the beginning of the sentence, it may have implications other than association. The student, therefore, must look at the context to see if “and” implies more than simple association.

Leviticus 4 illustrates both uses. Verse 33 says, “He must lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, **and** slaughter it for a sin offering in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered” (emphasis added). Here two associated actions are connected by “and.”

Verse 35, the last verse on this subject in this chapter, says, “**So** the priest will make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed **and** he will be forgiven” (emphasis added). The word (actually, just one Hebrew letter) translated “so” is the same letter translated “and” in verse 33. But in verse 35 it is clear that Moses is summarizing the instructions of the chapter. The “and” in the middle of verse 35 might be considered association, since it connects two grammatically parallel verbs, “make atonement” and “be forgiven.” But this use of “and” might be understood as speaking of result. The meaning would then be that the priest made atonement for the man’s sin, and as a result the man was forgiven.

QUESTION 7

The key word for identifying *association* is:

- A. But
- B. And
- C. Therefore
- D. Because

Contrast

Contrast is the joining of ideas or thoughts that are dissimilar or opposite. Contrast is the opposite of association. With association, strength and force are created with “and.” With contrast, showing how two or more things are unlike each other creates strength and force. Contrasts usually use the word “but.”

Biblical Example:

Return to Psalm 1 for an illustration. The word “but” occurs in verses 2, 4, and 6. In verse 2 a contrast is made between what the righteous man does not do and what he does. The other two verses contrast the righteous man and the wicked man.

Verses 1-3 teach that the righteous man does not live in sin, **but** instead he lives in the Word of God. Contrast emphasizes the point.

In verse 3 the righteous man is like a green, living, fruitful tree. In verse 4, the wicked man is like useless, dead chaff. The consequences of his wickedness are noted in verse 5. Again, contrast strengthens the point.

Finally, the psalm concludes in verse 6 with another contrast between the eternal destiny of the righteous and the wicked.

QUESTION 8

The key word for identifying *contrast* is:

- A. But
- B. And
- C. Therefore
- D. Because

Repetition

Repetition is the repeating of the same or similar terms, phrases, clauses, or concepts.

Biblical Example:

Paul used repetition in Ephesians 1.

Repetition

See how Paul used repetition in Ephesians 1:3-13.

³Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms **in Christ**. ⁴For he lovingly chose us **in Christ** before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished in his sight. ⁵He did this by predestining us to adoption as his sons **through Jesus Christ**, according to the pleasure of his will--⁶to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us **in his dearly loved Son**. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us **in all wisdom and insight**. ⁹He did this when he revealed to us the secret of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth **in Christ**, ¹⁰toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things **in Christ**--the things in heaven and the things on earth. ¹¹**In Christ** we too have been claimed as God's own possession, since we were predestined according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, may be to the praise of his glory. ¹³And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)--when you believed **in Christ**--you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

By using repetition, Paul made it clear that all of our spiritual blessings are because of Jesus Christ and His work on our behalf.

QUESTION 9

In Ephesians 1 “in Him” and “through Jesus Christ” are examples of repetition. *True or False?*

Cause to Effect

When using cause-to-effect structure, the text first states the cause, and then it states its effect.

Galatians 6:7-8 provides examples of cause to effect.

Cause to Effect

The highlighted "Causes" and associated "Effects" are shown.

Biblical Example

Galatians 6:7-8: "Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows, because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit."

In this text the causes are "sowing to one's flesh" and "sowing to the Spirit," and the resulting effects are "corruption" and "eternal life."

QUESTION 10

With that example in mind, match the correct designator to the corresponding thought from 2 Peter 1:10.

<i>Designator</i>	<i>Thought</i>
Cause	You will never stumble into sin
Effect	Do this

Effect to Cause

The effect-to-cause structure is the opposite of cause to effect. The text first states or describes the effect. Then the text states its cause.

Biblical Example:

Romans 8:22-30 is an example of this structural principle. Paul first wrote the effect in verses 22-27. He described the believer's eager longing for the redemption of the body and his unshakable hope, even in the face of suffering (compare with v. 18). The cause of this attitude is given in verses 28-30. Paul described the assurance that all believers have, that "all things work together for good." He wrote that the believer's glorification at Christ's return is certain.

QUESTION 11

In Romans 8:22-30 "we . . . groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption" is an example of cause. *True or False?*

Explanation

When using explanation, an idea is first introduced and then expanded or explained.

Biblical Example:

An excellent example of this structural principle is found in Mark 4:3-20. First, Jesus told the parable of the sower in verses 3-9. He then explained this parable in verses 10-20.

QUESTION 12

On many occasions Jesus did not give an explanation for His parables. *True or False?*

Illustration

When an illustration is used, an idea is first introduced and then illustrated.

Biblical Example:

You can see an example of illustration in 1 Peter 3:1-7. In verse 5 Peter mentioned the holy women in the past who put their hope in God. Then in verse 6 Peter illustrated his point by reminding his readers of a specific godly woman of the past. Peter used the illustration of Sarah as a woman who had a good relationship with her husband.

QUESTION 13

The man named _____ is used to illustrate justification by faith in Romans 4.

Climax

In the use of climax the text is arranged in such a way that it progresses from the lesser to the greater. The story or discourse builds to a climax.

Biblical Example:

In Galatians 5:16-26 Paul's thoughts progressed toward a climax. He described the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Then he wrote a climax in verse 25: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit."

QUESTION 14

Choose the phrase from Jonah 2 that best represents a climax.

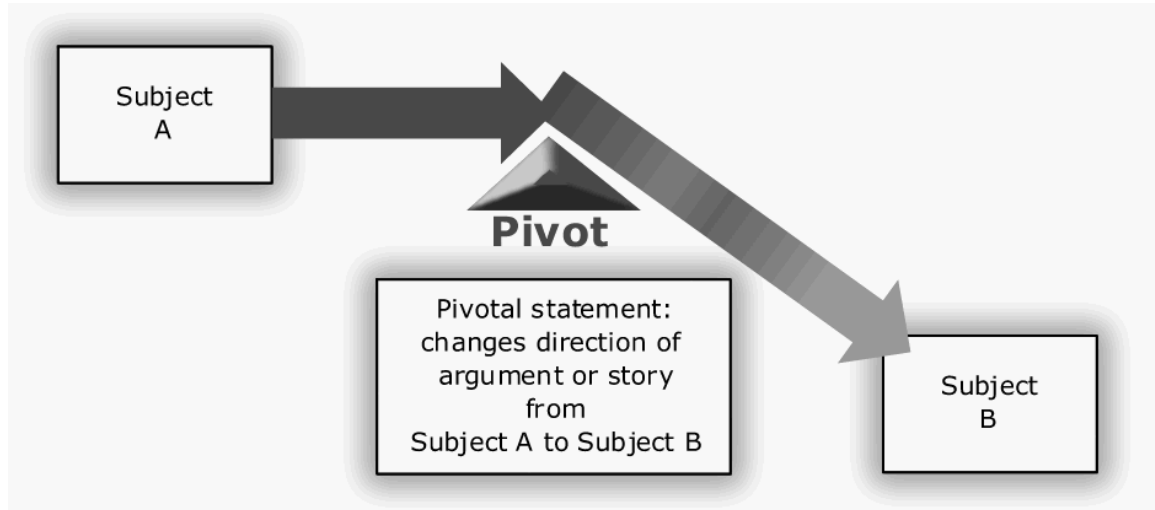
- A. I said, "I have been banished from your sight."
- B. When my soul was fainting away within me, I remembered the LORD.
- C. I went down to the ends of the mountains.
- D. Salvation comes from the Lord.

Pivot

A pivot acts like a hinge. That is, the subject matter is arranged so that at the point in the text where the pivot occurs, the story changes direction.

Biblical Example:

When Paul spoke to the men of Athens in Acts 17:22-31, he used a pivot in his message. He first told them about how he had walked around and observed their objects of worship. He had even seen an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” Paul used the pivot in verse 23 when he said, “Therefore what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you.” This statement forms a hinge between the religious ignorance of the men of Athens and Paul’s message about the true God who sent Jesus Christ.



QUESTION 15

Which verse in Nehemiah 1 may contain a pivot?

- A. Nehemiah 1:2
- B. Nehemiah 1:6
- C. Nehemiah 1:7
- D. Nehemiah 1:11

Interchange

Interchange involves certain elements of the text in which they are alternated or exchanged; the author goes back and forth between several ideas.

Biblical Example:

This structural principle can be seen in the first three chapters of Luke where the stories of John the Baptist and Jesus are interwoven. The text moves back and forth between the two. First you read about the miraculous announcement of the birth of John (Lk 1:5-25). Then you read about the miraculous announcement of the birth of Jesus (Lk 1:26-56). Next Luke described the birth and early years of John (Lk 1:57-80), then the birth and early years of Jesus (Lk 2:1-52), finally the early ministry of John (Lk 3:1-22). Here the

interchange ended, for after Jesus was baptized, His public ministry began. The ministry of John faded into the background.

Luke 1-3	
JOHN	JESUS
1:5-25	
	1:26-56
1:57-80	
	2:1-52
3:1-22	3:21-22
	3:23-24:53

Another example of interchange can be found in Nehemiah 1:1-4. The text moves back and forth between “they” (the men from Judah) and “I” (Nehemiah).

QUESTION 16

In an interchange the subject remains the same. *True or False?*

Preparation

In using the preparation as a structural indicator, background information or a setting is given to prepare the reader to understand what follows.

Biblical Example:

Genesis 2 prepares the reader for Genesis 3 by describing the Garden of Eden, the creation of woman to be a helper for man, and the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, when eating the fruit is described in chapter 3, the reader understands that Adam and Eve’s action was sinful rebellion against God. Even though God had placed them in a perfect paradise where all of their needs were being met, they were not satisfied and wanted the one thing God had commanded them not to take.

You can see another example of preparation in Acts 17. When Paul began to speak to the men of Athens, he first prepared them for his message in Acts 17:22. He said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.” Paul was preparing them to listen to his message about the true religion.

QUESTION 17

Briefly explain why you think it was necessary for Paul to prepare the men of Athens to hear his message about true religion.

Summary

As you might guess, in the use of this indicator the author gathers together his main written ideas and then restates them in a summary.

Biblical Example:

Hebrews 8:1-2 gives an example of the use of a summary. In the previous chapters the author of Hebrews described the ministry of Jesus Christ as high priest. Then in chapter 8 he summarized, “Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We have such a high priest, one who *sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven*, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that the Lord, not man, set up” (emphasis added). The writer’s summary was that Christ, because He is a heavenly high priest, is vastly superior to any earthly high priest.

You can see another example of summary as an indicator in Acts 17:22-31. Paul summarized the point of his message in verse 29.

Summary

The text summaries related to verse 29 are shown here.

Biblical Example Acts 17:22-31

²²So Paul stood before the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects. ²³For as I went around and observed closely your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: 'To an unknown god.' Therefore what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For in him we live and move about and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' ²⁹So since we are God's offspring, we should not think the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image made by human skill and imagination. ³⁰Therefore, although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to all by raising him from the dead."

QUESTION 18

If it exists, where would you expect to find a summary?

- A. At the beginning of a passage
- B. In the middle of a passage
- C. At the end of a passage
- D. At any place in the passage

Question Posed

As the name suggests, the text is structured around questions that the author raises.

Biblical Example:

The book of Romans uses this structural principle. Paul used questions to teach his doctrines. Each new question represented a change in the subject Paul was addressing. Listing the questions Paul asked in Romans 2–11 provides a good overview of the topics he discussed.

Another example is in Mark 2:1-12. After Jesus raised the paralytic, He posed a question in verse 9. He asked, “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your stretcher, and walk?’”

QUESTION 19

Good questions help the student to focus on and learn new material. *True or False?*

Question Answered

Similar to the previous indicator, the text is structured around answering a question, whether the question is stated or implied.

Biblical Example:

This structural principle is seen in 1 Corinthians 7–8. In chapter 7 Paul answered the Corinthians’ questions about marriage. In chapter 8, Paul addressed another question they had posed about eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Evidently these were important issues in the Corinthian church, and Paul had been asked to give the church an authoritative answer. Notice that the specific questions the church asked are not stated in the text but must be deduced from Paul’s answers.

You can find another example of the question-answered indicator in Mark 2:1-12. After Jesus posed a question in verse 9, He then answered the question in verses 10-11. He answered, “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—he said to the paralytic—“I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher, and go home.”

QUESTION 20

Before using the structural question-answered indicator, you should first locate the question stated in the text. *True or False?*

QUESTION 21

Each example of a structural indicator was demonstrated with one or more Bible passages. Choose two or three of these passages that are meaningful to you. Write about the passages and why they are meaningful to you in your Life Notebook.

Remember that an author may use **one or more** of these indicators in any given passage. In addition, remember that these are not the only structural indicators that an author may use. This discussion of these fourteen indicators is meant to draw your attention to structure in an author's work. You are free to identify his structure in whatever way is meaningful to you.

Topic 4: Structural Outline with Structural Indicators

Objective 4 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to mark a structural outline with the structural indicators that the author used.
--

With the fourteen structural indicators in mind, you need to mark your structural outlines with the indicators the authors use. You will notice that, because the relationships between the paragraphs have already been explained (above), the structural indicators are much easier to mark. Here is how Galatians 5:16-26 might be marked:

Structural Outline with Structural Indicators

Galatians 5:16-26

Observe the structural indicators outlined in this scripture.

¹⁶BUT (**CONTRAST**)

I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

¹⁷FOR (**EXPLANATION**)

the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh;

FOR (**EXPLANATION**)

these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

¹⁸BUT (**CONTRAST; EXPLANATION**)

if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹NOW (**ASSOCIATION; EXPLANATION**)

the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, ²¹envyings, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

²²BUT (**CONTRAST; EXPLANATION**)

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴NOW (**EXPLANATION**)

those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(**SUMMARY or CLIMAX**)

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

Now it is your turn to mark your grammatical outlines with the indicators that you have just studied. We will show you how to do it again with 1 Peter 3:1-7. Study this and then go on to Exercise 5.

Structural Outline with Structural Indicators

Peter 3:1-7

Observe the structural indicators outlined in this scripture.

¹IN THE SAME WAY (**ASSOCIATION**)

wives, be subject to your own husbands.

THEN (**CAUSE TO EFFECT**)

even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, ²when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

(**ASSOCIATION**)

³Let your beauty not be external--the braiding of hair and wearing of gold or fine clothes--

⁴BUT (**CONTRAST**)

the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

⁵FOR (**EXPLANATION**)

in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves, by being subject to their husbands

(**ILLUSTRATION**)

⁶like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children, when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

⁷IN THE SAME WAY (**ASSOCIATION**)

Husbands, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

Now, in the following exercises, use the same Bible passages that you have been working with and mark your structural outlines with the structural indicators. Compare your answers with those at the back of this lesson. Remember, too, it is not necessary that you agree. Be prepared, however, to state why you marked your grammatical outlines as you did.

EXERCISE 5

Mark the structural outlines with the structural indicators for Acts 17:22-31. After you finish, check your answer.

EXERCISE 6

Mark the structural outlines with the structural indicators for Nehemiah 1. After you finish, check your answer.

EXERCISE 7

Mark the structural outlines with the structural indicators for Mark 2:1-12. After you finish, check your answer.

EXERCISE 8

Mark the structural outlines with the structural indicators for Jonah 2. After you finish, check your answer.

You might find it difficult to use the structural indicators in narrative literature, such as the Gospels or the Old Testament, and in poetic literature, especially Proverbs. In narrative literature you are more concerned with the theme and the flow of the plot. You would want to use any indicators that would show you how the plot is developing or changing in the text. You will also have to limit the amount of material that you incorporate if you use structural outlines. Obviously, short phrases representing several verses may have to be used.

The very nature of poetic literature makes it less likely to have precise, clearly marked logic and structure. As with narrative literature you may need to look more at units of thought and their relationships and progression. Proverbs is even more difficult because few chapters have units or development of thought.

Also, throughout the Old Testament the word “and” may indicate more than simple association. Therefore, you may need to look at the structure more closely, in light of the context, to determine these relationships. For example, in the brief look at Psalm 1, under “Association,” the “and” in the portion “he meditates and he will be like a tree” may be understood as indicating cause and effect. That is, the cause (or, perhaps, result) of his meditating in the Word is that he becomes like a tree.

QUESTION 22

Once a student learns how to use the structural indicators, it can be easily done to any type of Bible literature. *True or False?*

STUDY PROJECT: OBSERVING STRUCTURE IN PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

You have created and marked structural outlines of the assigned passages. Now take Philippians 2:1-11 and complete the same steps. Be prepared to discuss your findings and results for this study project in the next seminar. If you are unsure of the steps to be completed, go back over this lesson.

QUESTION 23

Many students find this to be a difficult lesson. Write in your Life Notebook about the struggles you may have had learning this material. Also, describe the steps you plan to take to master anything you have struggled with.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have finished your fourth lesson in *STB*. This lesson contained a lot of information about structure. Mastery of this material will require continued practice on your part. As you continue to learn new things about Bible study, do not neglect the practice of the old. You will finish learning the observation techniques in the next lesson.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2: False

QUESTION 3: C. The way that different ideas, parts, or actions within a passage connect to one another.

QUESTION 4:

A. Becoming conceited

C. Law

QUESTION 5: C. Main thoughts and subordinate thoughts

QUESTION 6:

<i>Label</i>	<i>Thought</i>
Main thought	Husbands treat your wives with consideration
Subordinate thought to a main thought	Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold or fine clothes
Subordinate thought to a subordinate thought	for in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands.

QUESTION 7: B. And

QUESTION 8: A. But

QUESTION 9: True

QUESTION 10:

<i>Designator</i>	<i>Thought</i>
Cause	Do this
Effect	You will never stumble into sin

QUESTION 11: False

QUESTION 12: True

QUESTION 13: Abraham

QUESTION 14: D. Salvation comes from the Lord

QUESTION 15: D. Nehemiah 1:11

QUESTION 16: False

QUESTION 17:

The men of Athens were unfamiliar with Jesus or Christianity. Paul used an element of their religion to prepare them for something new.

QUESTION 18: C. At the end of a passage

QUESTION 19: True

QUESTION 20: True

QUESTION 21: *Your answer*

QUESTION 22: False

QUESTION 23: *Your answer*

Exercise 1: Structural Outline of Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally similar to the following outlines:

By paragraphs:

17:22 SO

Paul stood before the Areopagus and said,

“Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects.

17:23 FOR

as I went around and observed closely your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown god.’

THEREFORE

what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you.

17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands,

17:25 NOR

is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone.

17:26 From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, **17:27** so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

FOR

17:28 in him we live and move about and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

SO

17:29 since we are God’s offspring, we should not think the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image made by human skill and imagination.

17:30 THEREFORE

although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, **17:31** because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to all by raising him from the dead.”

As a Passage:

Verbal Style

17:22 SO (*follows from the request of the Athenians*)

Paul stood before the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects.

17:23 FOR (*explains how Paul came to the conclusion in v. 22*)

as I went around and observed closely your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown god.’

THEREFORE (*summary statement turns Paul from the unknown god to the known God*)

what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you.

(*Paul explains his statement of v. 23*)

17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands

17:25 NOR (*two negative statements are associated*)

is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone.

(*continued explanation*)

17:26 From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, **17:27** so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

FOR (*explains how God is not far from each of us*)

17:28 in him we live and move about and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

SO (*a summary of what Paul’s entire explanation*)

17:29 since we are God’s offspring, we should not think the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image made by human skill and imagination

17:30 THEREFORE (*climactic challenge to the listeners*)

although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, **17:31** because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to all by raising him from the dead.”

Visual Style

17:22 SO

Paul stood before the Areopagus and said,

“Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects.

17:23 FOR I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown god,’ as I went around and observed closely your objects of worship.

THEREFORE

what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you.

17:24 The God, who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands

17:25 NOR

is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone.

17:26 From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, **17:27** so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

FOR

17:28 in him we live and move about and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

SO

we should not think the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image made by human skill and imagination, **17:29** since we are God’s offspring

17:30 THEREFORE

he now commands all people everywhere to repent, although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, **17:31** because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to by raising him from the dead.”

Exercise 2: Structural Outline of Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally similar to the following outlines:

By Paragraphs:

1:1 These are words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah:

It so happened that in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, I was in Susa the citadel.

1:2 Hanani, who was one of my brethren, along with some of the men from Judah, came to me,

AND

I asked them about the fugitive Jews who remained from the exile, and about Jerusalem.

1:3 They said to me,

“The remnant that remains from the exile there in the province are experiencing considerable adversity and reproach.

The wall of Jerusalem lies breached, and its gates have been burned.”

1:4 When I heard these things I slumped down, crying and mourning for several days. I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **1:5** Then I said,

“Please, O LORD God of heaven, great and awesome God, who keeps his loving covenant with those who love him and observe his commandments,

1:6 may your ear be attentive and your eyes be open to hear the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today throughout both day and night in behalf of your servants the Israelites. I am confessing the sins of the Israelites that we have sinned against you—both I myself and my family have sinned.

1:7 We have behaved in a corrupt fashion against you, not obeying the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments that you commanded your servant Moses.

1:8 Please recall the word that you commanded your servant Moses: saying,

‘If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the nations.

1:9 BUT

if you repent and observe my commandments and do them, then even if your dispersed people are at the most remote location, I will gather them from there AND I will bring them to the place that I have chosen for my name to reside.’ **1:10** They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your mighty strength and by your powerful hand.

1:11 Now,

O Lord, listen attentively to the prayer of your servant

and to the prayer of your servants who take pleasure in showing respect to your name.

Prosper your servant today

and

give compassion in the presence of this man.”

NOW

I was a cupbearer for the king.

As a Passage:

Verbal Style

1:1 These are words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah:

(From vv. 1-4 “I” and “they” are interchanged)

It so happened that in the month of Cisleu, in the twentieth year, I was in Susa the citadel.

1:2 Hanani, who was one of my brethren, along with some of the men from Judah, came to me,

AND (connects the arrival of the brethren with the question Nehemiah asked of them)

I asked them about the fugitive Jews who remained from the exile, and about Jerusalem.

(Nehemiah’s question answered)

1:3 They said to me, “The remnant that remains from the exile there in the province are experiencing considerable adversity and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem lies breached, and its gates have been burned.”

(The news of this situation causes Nehemiah to pray)

1:4 When I heard these things I slumped down, crying and mourning for several days. I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **1:5** Then I said, “Please, O LORD God of heaven, great and awesome God, who keeps his loving covenant with those who love him and observe his commandments, **1:6** may your ear be attentive and your eyes be open to hear the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today throughout both day and night in behalf of your servants the Israelites. I am confessing the sins of the Israelites that we have sinned against you—both I myself and my family have sinned.

(explains how the Israelites had sinned)

1:7 We have behaved in a corrupt fashion against you, not obeying the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments that you commanded your servant Moses.

1:8 Please recall the word that you commanded your servant Moses: saying, ‘If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the nations.

1:9 BUT if you repent and observe my commandments and do them, then even if your dispersed people are at the most remote location, I will gather them from there and I will bring them to the place that I have chosen for my name to reside.’ **1:10** They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your mighty strength and by your powerful hand.

1:11 Now, *(the climax of Nehemiah’s prayer)*

O Lord, listen attentively to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take pleasure in showing respect to your name. Prosper your servant today and give compassion in the presence of this man.”

NOW (*explains who Nehemiah is, which leads into the next chapter*)

I was a cup-bearer for the king.

Visual Style

1:1 These are words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah:

It so happened that in the month of Cislev, in the twentieth year, I was in Susa the citadel.

1:2 Hanani, who was one of my brethren, along with some of the men from Judah, came to me,

AND

I asked them about the fugitive Jews who remained from the exile, and about Jerusalem.

1:3 They said to me,

“The remnant that remains from the exile there in the province are experiencing considerable adversity and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem lies breached, and its gates have been burned.”

1:4 When I heard these things I slumped down, crying and mourning for several days. I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **1:5** Then I said,

“Please, O LORD God of heaven, great and awesome God, who keeps his loving covenant with those who love him and observe his commandments,

1:6 may your ear be attentive and your eyes be open to hear the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today throughout both day and night in behalf of your servants the Israelites. I am confessing the sins of the Israelites that we have sinned against you—both I myself and my family have sinned.

1:7 We have behaved in a corrupt fashion against you, not obeying the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments that you commanded your servant Moses.

1:8 Please recall the word that you commanded your servant Moses :saying, ‘If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the nations. **1:9** BUT if you repent and observe my commandments and do them, then even if your dispersed people are at the most remote location, I will gather them from there and I will bring them to the place that I have chosen for my name to reside.’ **1:10** They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your mighty strength and by your powerful hand.

1:11 NOW,

O Lord, listen attentively to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take pleasure in showing respect to your name. Prosper your servant today and give compassion in the presence of this man.”

NOW

I was a cupbearer for the king.

Exercise 3: Structural Outline of Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally similar to the following:

By Paragraphs

2:1 NOW

after some days, when he came again into Capernaum, it was reported that he was at home.

2:2 So many gathered that there was no longer any room, not even by the door;

AND

he preached the word to them.

2:3 Some people came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them.

2:4 When they were not able to bring him in because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Jesus.

THEN

after tearing it out, they lowered the stretcher the paralytic was lying on.

2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

2:6 NOW

some experts in the law were there, sitting and turning these things over in their minds,

2:7 “Why does he speak this way? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

2:8 NOW

at once, when Jesus knew in his spirit that they were contemplating such thoughts, he said to them,

“Why are you thinking such things?

2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic,

‘Your sins are forgiven,’

Or to say,

‘Get up, take your stretcher, and walk’?

2:10 BUT

so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—he said to the paralytic—

2:11 “I tell you, get up, take your stretcher, and go to your home.”

2:12 AND

immediately the man got up, took his stretcher, and went out in front of them all.

They were all amazed and praised God, saying,

“We have never seen anything like this!”

As a Passage

Verbal Style

2:1 NOW (*relates this paragraph to the previous passage*)

after some days, when he came again into Capernaum, it was reported that he was at home. **2:2** So many gathered that there was no longer any room, not even by the door; and he preached the word to them.

2:3 Some people came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them.

(*explains how the paralytic was placed before Jesus*)

2:4 When they were not able to bring him in because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Jesus. THEN, after tearing it out, they lowered the stretcher the paralytic was lying on. **2:5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

2:6 NOW (*contrasts Jesus’ act with the grumbling of the Jews*)

some experts in the law were there, sitting and turning these things over in their minds,

2:7

“Why does he speak this way? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

2:8 NOW (*contrasts Jesus’ response to the Jews’ thoughts*)

at once, when Jesus knew in his spirit that they were contemplating such thoughts, he said to them, “Why are you thinking such things?

(*Jesus poses a question*)

2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ Or to say, ‘Get up, take your stretcher, and walk’?

2:10 BUT (*question answered but contrary to views of the Jews*)

so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—he said to the paralytic--**2:11** “I tell you, get up, take your stretcher, and go to your home.”

2:12 AND (*relates these two paragraphs in a cause-to-effect relationship*)

immediately the man got up, took his stretcher, and went out in front of them all.

(climax of the account)

They were all amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Visual Style

2:1 NOW

after some days, when he came again into Capernaum, it was reported that he was at home. **2:2** So many gathered that there was no longer any room, not even by the door; and he preached the word to them.

2:3 Some people came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them.

2:4 When they were not able to bring him in because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Jesus. THEN after tearing it out, they lowered the stretcher the paralytic was lying on. **2:5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

2:6 NOW

some experts in the law were there, sitting and turning these things over in their minds,

2:7

“Why does he speak this way? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

2:8 NOW

at once, when Jesus knew in his spirit that they were contemplating such thoughts, he said to them, “Why are you thinking such things?”

2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ Or to say, ‘Get up, take your stretcher, and walk’?

2:10 BUT

so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”— he said to the paralytic--**2:11** “I tell you, get up, take your stretcher, and go to your home.”

2:12 AND

immediately the man got up, took his stretcher, and went out in front of them all.

They were all amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Exercise 4: Structural Outline of Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2 should look generally similar to the following:

By Paragraphs

2:1 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish **2:2** and said,

“I called from my distress to the LORD,

AND

he answered me;
I shouted for help from the belly of Sheol,
AND
you heard my voice .

2:3 You threw me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas;

AND

the current surrounded me;
all your breakers

AND

your waves went over me.

2:4 AND

so I said,
‘I have been banished from your sight;
YET
I will again look to your holy temple.’

2:5 Water engulfed me completely;
the ocean surrounded me;
weeds were wrapped around my head.

2:6 I went down to the ends of the mountains;
the earth with its bars was behind me forever;

BUT

you brought my life up from the grave, O LORD, my God.

2:7 When my soul was fainting away within me, I remembered the LORD,

AND

my prayer came to your holy temple.

2:8 Those who worship useless idols forsake their loyalty.

2:9 BUT

as for me, with audible thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you;
I will pay what I have vowed.
Salvation comes from the LORD!”

2:10 THEN

the LORD spoke to the fish
AND
it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

As a Passage

Verbal Style

2:1 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish **2:2** and said,

“I called from my distress to the LORD,

AND he answered me;

(The following lines repeat the preceding according to Hebrew parallelism)

I shouted for help from the belly of Sheol,

AND you heard my voice.

(explains Jonah’s situation that prompted the prayer)

2:3 You threw me into the deep,

into the heart of the seas;

AND the current surrounded me;

all your breakers and your waves went over me.

2:4 AND *(here “and” indicates a cause-to-effect relationship)*

so I said,

‘I have been banished from your sight;

YET *(contrasts Jonah’s current and hoped-for future situations)*

I will again look to your holy temple.’

2:5 Water engulfed me completely;

the ocean surrounded me;

weeds were wrapped around my head.

2:6 I went down to the ends of the mountains;

the earth with its bars was behind me forever;

BUT *(contrasts Jonah’s dying and rescued situations)*

you brought my life up from the grave, O LORD, my God.

(reflects a cause-to-effect relationship)

2:7 When my soul was fainting away within me, I remembered the LORD,

AND my prayer came to your holy temple.

(explains the consequences of false worship)

2:8 Those who worship useless idols forsake their loyalty.

2:9 BUT *(contrasts false worshipers with true)*

as for me, with audible thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you; I will pay what I have vowed.

(climax of the prayer)

Salvation comes from the LORD!”

2:10 THEN *(relates the previous passage to this event and leads to the next chapter)*

the LORD spoke to the fish AND it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Visual Style

2:1 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish **2:2** and said,

“I called from my distress to the LORD,

AND he answered me;

I shouted for help from the belly of Sheol,

AND you heard my voice.

2:3 You threw me into the deep,

into the heart of the seas;

AND the current surrounded me;

all your breakers and your waves went over me.

2:4 AND so I said,

‘I have been banished from your sight;

YET

I will again look to your holy temple.’

2:5 Water engulfed me completely;

the ocean surrounded me;

weeds were wrapped around my head.

2:6 I went down to the ends of the mountains;

the earth with its bars was behind me forever;

BUT

you brought my life up from the grave, O LORD, my God.

2:7 When my soul was fainting away within me, I remembered the LORD, AND my prayer came to your holy temple.

2:8 Those who worship useless idols forsake their loyalty.

2:9 BUT

as for me, with audible thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you; I will pay what I have vowed.

Salvation comes from the LORD!”

2:10 THEN

the LORD spoke to the fish AND it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Exercise 5: Structural Outline (with Indicators) of Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally similar to the following outlines:

17:22 SO (ASSOCIATION)

Paul stood before the Areopagus and said,

(PREPARATION)

“Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects.

17:23 FOR (EXPLANATION; PREPARATION)

I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown god,’ as I went around and observed closely your objects of worship.

THEREFORE: (SUMMARY; PIVOT)

what you worship without knowing it, this I proclaim to you.

(EXPLANATION)

17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands

17:25 NOR (ASSOCIATION)

is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives life and breath and everything to everyone.

(EXPLANATION)

17:26 From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, **17:27** so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

17:28 FOR (EXPLANATION)

in him we live and move about and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

17:29 SO (SUMMARY)

we should not think the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image made by human skill and imagination, since we are God’s offspring

17:30 THEREFORE (CLIMAX)

he now commands all people everywhere to repent, although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, **17:31** because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to all by raising him from the dead.”

Exercise 6: Structural Outline (with Indicators) of Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally similar to the following outlines:

1:1 These are words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah:

(INTERCHANGE - “they/I” through v. 4)

It so happened that in the month of Cislev, in the twentieth year, I was in Susa the citadel.

1:2 Hanani, who was one of my brethren, along with some of the men from Judah, came to me,

AND (QUESTION POSED)

I asked them about the fugitive Jews who remained from the exile and about Jerusalem.

(QUESTION ANSWERED)

1:3 They said to me,

“The remnant that remains from the exile there in the province are experiencing considerable adversity and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem lies breached, and its gates have been burned.”

(CAUSE TO EFFECT)

1:4 When I heard these things I slumped down, crying and mourning for several days. I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **1:5** Then I said,

“Please, O LORD God of heaven, great and awesome God, who keeps his loving covenant with those who love him and observe his commandments, **1:6** may your ear be attentive and your eyes be open to hear the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today throughout both day and night in behalf of your servants the Israelites. I am confessing the sins of the Israelites that we have sinned against you—both I myself and my family have sinned.

(EXPLANATION)

1:7 We have behaved in a corrupt fashion against you, not obeying the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments that you commanded your servant Moses.

1:8 Please recall the word that you commanded your servant Moses saying, ‘If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the nations. **1:9** BUT if you repent and observe my commandments and do them, then even if your dispersed people are at the most remote location, I will gather them from there and I will bring them to the place that I have chosen for my name to reside’ **1:10** They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your mighty strength and by your powerful hand.

1:11 NOW, **(CLIMAX)**

O Lord, listen attentively to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take pleasure in showing respect to your name. Prosper your servant today and give compassion in the presence of this man.”

NOW (**EXPLANATION; PIVOT**)

I was a cup-bearer for the king.

Exercise 7: Structural Outline (with Indicators) of Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally similar to the following outlines:

2:1 NOW (ASSOCIATION)

after some days, when he came again into Capernaum, it was reported that he was at home. **2:2** So many gathered that there was no longer any room, not even by the door; and he preached the word to them.

2:3 Some people came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them.

(**EXPLANATION**)

2:4 When they were not able to bring him in because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Jesus. THEN, after tearing it out, they lowered the stretcher the paralytic was lying on. **2:5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

2:6 Now (**CONTRAST**)

some experts in the law were there, sitting and turning these things over in their minds, **2:7** “Why does he speak this way? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

2:8 NOW (**CONTRAST**) at once, when Jesus knew in his spirit that they were contemplating such thoughts, he said to them, “Why are you thinking such things?”

(**QUESTION POSED**)

2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your stretcher, and walk’?

2:10 BUT (**CONTRAST; QUESTION ANSWERED**)

so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—he said to the paralytic—**2:11** “I tell you, get up, take your stretcher, and go to your home.”

2:12 And (**ASSOCIATION; CAUSE TO EFFECT**) immediately the man got up, took his stretcher, and went out in front of them all.

(**CLIMAX**)

They were all amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Exercise 8: Structural Outline (with Indicators) of Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2 should look generally similar to the following outlines:

(CAUSE TO EFFECT)

2:1 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish **2:2** and said,

“I called from my distress to the LORD,

AND he answered me;

(REPETITION)

I shouted for help from the belly of Sheol,

AND you heard my voice.

(EXPLANATION)

2:3 You threw me into the deep,

into the heart of the seas;

AND the current surrounded me;

all your breakers and your waves went over me.

2:4 AND **(CAUSE TO EFFECT)**

so I said,

‘I have been banished from your sight;

YET (CONTRAST)

I will again look to your holy temple.’

2:5 Water engulfed me completely;

the ocean surrounded me;

weeds were wrapped around my head.

2:6 I went down to the ends of the mountains;

the earth with its bars was behind me forever;

BUT (CONTRAST)

you brought my life up from the grave, O LORD, my God.

(CAUSE TO EFFECT)

2:7 When my soul was fainting away within me, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to your holy temple.

(EXPLANATION)

2:8 Those who worship useless idols forsake their loyalty.

2:9 **(CONTRAST)**

as for me, with audible thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you;

I will pay what I have vowed.

(CLIMAX)

Salvation comes from the LORD!”

2:10 THEN (ASSOCIATION; PIVOT)

the LORD spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Lesson 5: Observation—Determining Theme and Purpose

Lesson Introduction

You are now beginning the final lesson on observation. Are you becoming more aware of observing things, not just in the Bible text but also in everyday life? We hope that you are. Sooner or later, you need to sort out your observations and try to organize them. This lesson will help you do that. You will learn how to think through all of your observations of a biblical passage and identify in them a single theme. You will also learn how to write a statement of the purpose of the passage.

The following three topics will help you achieve these goals. Topic 1 deals with the main theme of a passage. The theme is the passage's central subject and the author's treatment of it. In this process you will identify the subject and complement of the passage. When the two are combined, they become a statement of the theme.

Topic 2 shows you how to state the author's purpose in writing this passage. Here you will consider especially the author's motivation in writing the letter and the response the writer hopes to create in his readers. You will then formulate a statement to represent your understanding of the purpose, keeping in mind that the structure, theme, and content of the passage are also important in seeing why the author wrote this passage.

Topic 3 takes the work you have done on each passage, especially content and structure, and uses it as the basis for identifying the theme and purpose of the whole book. When you can identify the theme and purpose of a whole book, you can be assured that you now understand that book extremely well.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Identify the Main Theme

The Subject of the Theme

The Complement of the Theme

Combining Subject and Complement

Topic 2: State the Purpose

Topic 3: Identify the Theme and Purpose of a Whole Book

Review of the Main Theme

The Main Theme of Habakkuk

Review of the Purpose

The Purpose of Habakkuk

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to determine the theme and purpose of select biblical passages based on observations.

Specific Objectives:

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Write out the main theme of a Bible passage in the form of a subject/complement statement
- State the author's purpose for writing a Bible passage to his original audience
- Understand and explain the theme and purpose of a whole book in the Bible

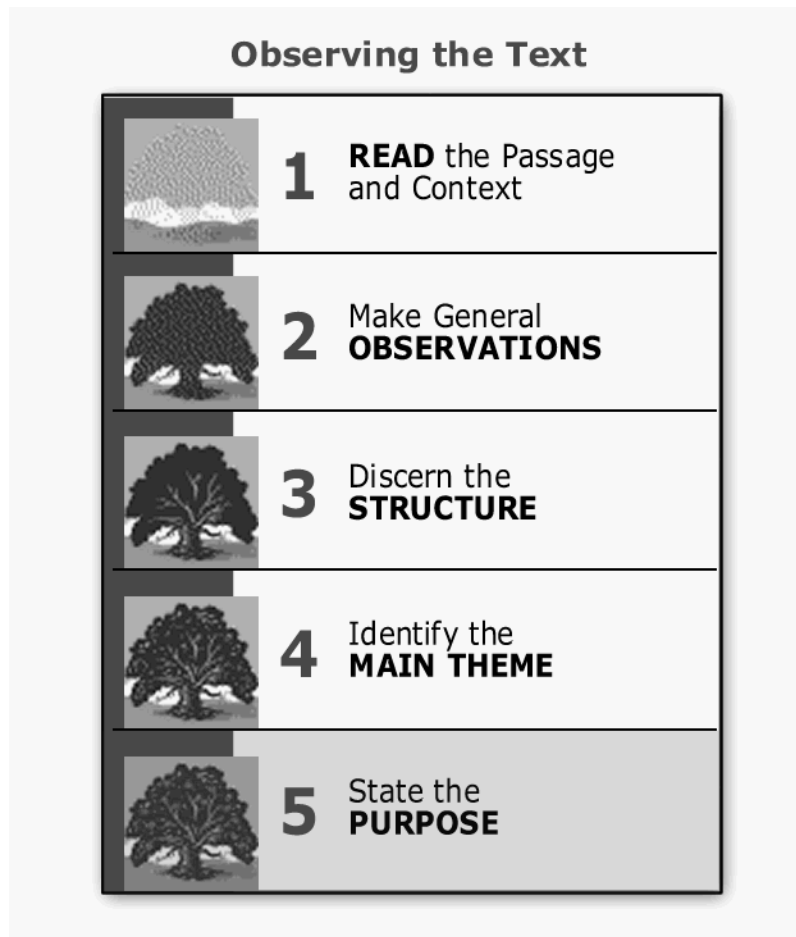
Preparing to Study

As you begin this study, take some time to get your heart ready for what the Lord wants to teach you. Find a secluded place, if possible, and read Psalm 119:25-32 to help focus your attention on the Lord and on His Word. Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask the Lord to bless this time and to help your comprehension. Thank Him for what He is about to do.

QUESTION 1

Look at verse 28 in Psalm 119. Think about recent times in your life in which you have needed the Lord's strength. Write in your Life Notebook some specific ways in which the Lord has sustained you by His Word.

Topic 1: Identify the Main Theme



Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to write out the main theme of a Bible passage in the form of a subject/complement statement.

The **theme** is essentially the passage's central subject and the author's treatment of it. In Lesson 3 you learned to look for what you thought might be the primary idea of a passage. What you think is the primary idea may be your theme. When you become more confident of what you think the primary idea is, then you can begin to call it the theme. Even though you may be able to express the theme in just a few words, you should write it out in a complete sentence. Sometimes the author himself expressed the theme in the passage for you.

Now it is time to evaluate your primary idea and determine if it is indeed the theme of the passage. There are several ways to do this. But the first thing you should do is meditate on your Bible passage. Take the time to read your observations. Review your structural outline. Then think about what the observations are communicating about the passage.

Here are some things you might look for:

- Context: What precedes the passage and what follows?
- How does the passage connect to the context?
- Think about what is being said in the passage.
- What are the main ideas?
- Finally, think about the one idea that would summarize all that the writer is saying.

QUESTION 2

The **theme** should be expressed in a complete sentence. *True or False?*

The Subject of the Theme

As you consider the previous five points, you will begin to understand the central idea of the passage. This central idea is the **subject** of the main theme. The subject is what the writer was mainly concerned with in the passage. For example, in Galatians 5:16-26, the main thought appears to be “living by the Spirit.” Paul wrote that you now have the Spirit to help you live in conformity with the Lord. The passage also describes “living by the flesh,” but it is not the main thought. Your flesh opposes the supernatural outworking of the Spirit. If you were preaching a sermon on Galatians 5:16-26, you might use much of your time warning about the dangers of “living by the flesh.” But your concern would be for your audience to “live by the Spirit.”

QUESTION 3

The subject of Galatians 5:16-26 is “living by the flesh.” *True or False?*

The Complement of the Theme

The next step of developing the main theme is to state what the writer is saying about this main idea. This is the **complement** of the main theme. The complement says in summary form what the writer told you about his **subject**. For example, the “complement” to “living by the Spirit” in Galatians 5:16-26 is that living by the Spirit “will prevent the Christian from carrying out the desires of the flesh.” Do not write out all the things about living by the flesh. Instead, summarize them into a simple statement.

QUESTION 4

Match the concept with the correct description.

<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
Primary Idea	A summary of what the author wrote about his subject
Theme	The passage's central subject and the author's treatment of it
Subject	The central idea of the main theme
Complement	What you think the theme is

Combining Subject and Complement

The last step of identifying the main theme is to combine your subject and complement into a final statement. For Galatians 5:16-26 it would be:

Subject: Living by the Spirit

Complement: Will prevent the Christian from carrying out the desires of the flesh.

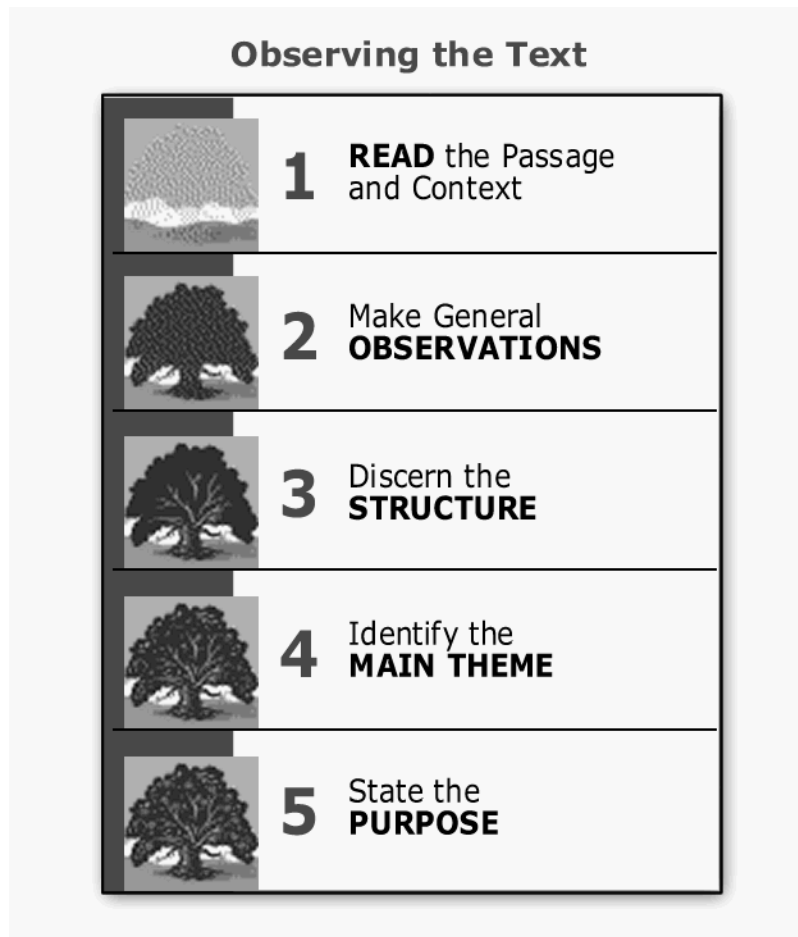
Combining the two elements, subject and complement, gives you the **main theme of the passage**: Living by the Spirit will prevent the Christian from carrying out the desires of the flesh. Defining the theme in this way enables you to grasp the author's thought.

QUESTION 5

The main theme is a statement that combines what two elements?

- A. Subject and object
- B. Cause and effect
- C. Subject and complement
- D. Purpose and goal

Topic 2: State the Purpose



Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to state the author's purpose for writing a Bible passage to his original audience.

QUESTION 6

Think of a sermon that you recently preached or heard. What was the purpose of the sermon? What response did you or the preacher desire from the audience? Record your thoughts about this in your Life Notebook.



The next aspect of observing the text is to state its **purpose**. Why does the author write what he wrote? What did this text mean to the original readers? Here, context matters. By seeing what precedes and follows in the context, you can often determine the passage's **purpose**.

The author's **purpose** refers to why he wrote his book to the original readers. Basically, the **purpose** reveals the author's motivation in writing and the response he desired from the readers. You should consider the occasion that prompted the writing, as well as the content itself. Knowing the author's purpose enables you to know why he wrote each verse.

You should also consider the structure, theme, and general content. You already observed these things. Often a passage reveals its purpose through any combination of these. For example, in Galatians 5:16-26, the preceding context says it was for freedom that Christ set you free (vv. 1, 13). Verses 2, 4, and 7 also indicate that some individuals desired that the Galatians be circumcised according to the law. Internally, the passage says that, if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law (v. 18). Also, if you live by the Spirit, you should behave in accordance with the Spirit (v. 25). The following context (Gal 6:1ff) indicates that a new subject begins. Galatians 5:26 is the transition from "living by the Spirit" to this new subject.

Therefore, the purpose seems to be that Paul was encouraging the Christians in Galatia, who are being challenged to go back to the law and circumcision. He wanted them to recognize that, because they live by the Spirit, they are free from the law. He also wanted

them to understand that life in the Spirit will overcome the works of the flesh. Therefore, you might phrase your **purpose statement** as follows:

The purpose of Galatians 5:16-26 is to encourage the Christians in Galatia, who are being tempted to live under the legalism of the law, to recognize that they are to be led by the Spirit, for life in the Spirit frees them from the law and overcomes the works of the flesh.

QUESTION 7

Which statement below is **not** a consideration in determining the purpose of a Bible passage?

- A. Consider the structure, theme, and general content.
- B. See what precedes and follows in the context.
- C. Consider the occasion that prompted the writing.
- D. Evaluate the audience's response to your sermon.

Below is a sample of a theme and purpose statement in the form we want you to use.

Theme and Purpose - 1 Peter 3:1-7

Subject: The behavior of husbands and wives

Complement: Should show love and honor

Theme: The behavior of husbands and wives should show love and honor

Purpose: To show how husbands and wives are to follow and thereby honor Christ in their marriages

Now it is your turn to practice identifying the theme and purpose. Take the same Bible passages that you have been using in the previous exercises and determine a subject and complement for each. Use the same form that was demonstrated for 1 Peter 3:1-7 above. Be prepared to defend your answers.

EXERCISE 1

For Acts 17:22-31, combine the subject and complement into a single theme statement. When you have finished, write a purpose statement. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 2

For Nehemiah 1, combine the subject and complement into a single theme statement. When you have finished, write a purpose statement. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 3

For Mark 2:1-12, combine the subject and complement into a single theme statement. When you have finished, write a purpose statement. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 4

For Jonah 2, combine the subject and complement into a single theme statement. When you have finished, write a purpose statement. Then check your answer.

Topic 3: Identify the Theme and Purpose of a Whole Book

Objective 3 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand and explain the theme and purpose of a whole book in the Bible.
--

You need to understand the author's theme and purpose for an entire book of the Bible. This means examining the **content** and **structure** of the book. Understanding the **theme** and **purpose** will, in turn, give you greater understanding of a book's content and structure.

The Theme of a Bible Book - The theme is essentially the book's central subject and the author's treatment of it. Even though you may be able to express the theme in just a few words, we recommend that you write it out in a complete sentence.

The Purpose of a Bible Book - The author's purpose refers to why he wrote his book to the original readers. Fundamentally, the purpose has to do with the author's motivation in writing and the desired response he wanted from the readers. You must consider the occasion that prompted the writing, as well as the content itself, to fully understand why an author wrote. Knowing the author's purpose, you will better understand why each verse of the book is there.

By asking why the author arranged his ideas the way he did, you will have a firmer grasp of the content of the book. Also, you can summarize the flow of thought in one or more paragraphs, depending on the size of the book.

QUESTION 8

Because entire books of the Bible are so long, it is not possible to identify a single theme and purpose for an entire book. *True or False?*

Review of the Main Theme

Remember that the theme statement is composed of two parts: the **subject** and the **complement**. The subject is what the book is about and is the key to stating the theme. The complement is what the writer says about the subject. It is literally a completing construction. The complement is the predicate of a sentence.

Here are some guidelines for finding the subject and complement as you do your research. As you study a passage, write out the answers to each of these guidelines:

- Look first for an express statement of the theme in the text.
- Identify elements in the text that point to the theme, such as repeated words or ideas and key words.
- Note the subject that is supported by the main weight of the text.
- Look for a subject that is discussed in every major section of the book.
- Distinguish between major and minor points. Do the major ideas of the book support one central theme?
- Study the beginning and end of the book carefully. These locations are often where the theme is introduced and brought to a conclusion.

Once you have a subject in mind, check to see if it is too broad or too narrow. For example, to say “the Gospels are about religion” is obviously too general. To say “the Gospels are about the crucifixion of Christ” would be too narrow. The Gospels concern Jesus Christ, and more specifically, they deal with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

QUESTION 9

The subjects of Bible books in the following list are poorly defined; some subjects are **too broad** and some are **too narrow**. Which ones are **too narrow**? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Jesus Christ is the subject of the book of Hebrews.
- B. The Passover is the subject of the book of Exodus.
- C. The lions’ den is the subject of the book of Daniel.
- D. The church is the subject of the book of Acts.
- E. The church at Corinth is the subject of 1 Corinthians.

The Main Theme of Habakkuk

Now you will determine the theme of an entire book of the Bible. Read the book of Habakkuk two times. As you read, be thinking of the subject and complement of a theme statement.

Subject - Complement - Theme of Book

A reasonable expression of the subject and complement of the book of the Book of Habakkuk is:

Subject: Habakkuk’s dialogue with God about His ways

Complement: Results in trust and worship from Habakkuk

Combining the two elements, subject and complement, we have the theme of the book:

Theme: Habakkuk’s dialogues with God about His ways result in trust and worship from Habakkuk

QUESTION 10

Write in your Life Notebook some specific ways that you identify with Habakkuk's struggles with, and then trust in, God's ways.

Review of the Purpose

The author's **purpose** explains **why** he wrote the book to the original readers. This is different from the theme, which states **what** the author wrote. There are two main aspects to the author's purpose:

- His motivation for writing
- The desired response he sought in the readers

An author's motivation may include such things as informing, exhorting, appealing, or encouraging the readers. The desired response he hoped for might be obedience, repentance, service, or unity, and the like.

Thus, such a simple statement of the purpose should be something like: to encourage them to remain steadfast. "To encourage" is the motivation, and "to remain steadfast" is the desired response. Normally, a purpose statement expands this simple statement.

You should formulate this purpose statement in light of the three factors: the author's situation, the readers' situation, and the content of the book. Maybe it will help to outline the assumed sequence of the author's experience that led to his writing his book:

- The author found himself in a certain situation.
- He became aware of a specific situation involving a specific person or group of people.
- He was moved to communicate something to them.
- Through this communication, he hoped to motivate them to respond in a specific way.

To have a full understanding of why the author wrote, you must know something about each of these factors. Therefore, you should do the following:

- Look to see if the author openly stated his purpose for writing.
- Describe the personal situation of the author. This may include something he had just experienced, something he was now experiencing, something he was expecting to experience, or any combination of these.
- Identify, if possible, the specific audience to whom the book was written and the circumstances its members found themselves in. This is vital since it is this situation that often prompted an author to write.
- What are the main problem and main solution of the book, if any?
- Determine the tone of the book (harsh, gentle, troubled, encouraging, excited). The tone is revealed through the author's choice of words and phrases.
- Consider how the theme points to the purpose.

- Establish what the author wants his audience to do as a result of reading what he has written. This can be discovered by looking at the commands he gives them and the applications he suggests.

If a factor is unknown, it can simply be left out of the statement. For example, we do not know exactly where many of the Old Testament writers were or what their personal situations were when they wrote. This applies to the original readers as well.

Taking all these factors together, a **statement of the author's purpose**, along with the occasion and content, should follow this model sentence:

The writer in his situation wrote something to the readers in their situation in order to motivate them to respond in a certain way.

QUESTION 11

Which items below identify necessary elements in writing the **purpose** statement? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The theme statement
- B. The tone of the passage or book
- C. What the author wants his readers to do
- D. The author's motivation for writing
- E. Specific people to whom the book was written
- F. The readers' situation

The Purpose of Habakkuk

Using the model sentence just mentioned to create your own purpose statement, you would write down the information of each part of the statement from the results of your study. The following comparison demonstrates how to substitute each part of the model statement with the specific findings of the Habakkuk study:

Model Statement Table - Habakkuk

THE WRITER	HABAKKUK
In his situation	He saw sin all around him among his people and could not understand why God was not doing anything about it. So he contended with Him about it, after which he saw a vision of the greatness, goodness, and power of God.
Write something (theme)	Habakkuk's dialogue with God about His ways results in trust and worship from Habakkuk
To his readers	His people Judah
In their situation	Sinning and facing judgment
In order to motivate them to respond in a certain way (purpose)	To encourage the people to trust the Lord in the face of the coming judgment

Bringing these parts together, the full statement of purpose for Habakkuk could read as follows:

Habakkuk, having seen the sinful situation around him, having contended with God about the way He was handling the situation, and having seen a vision of God's greatness, goodness, and power, records his dialogue with, and his response to, God for his people, who are facing judgment for their sin, to encourage them to trust God in the face of this coming judgment.

This first attempt at formulating such a statement may sound a little awkward. If so, then it may be reworded or made more concise, as follows:

Habakkuk, having contended with God about the sin all around him and then having seen a vision of His greatness, records his encounter with God for his people, who are facing judgment for their sin, to encourage them to trust God in the face of this coming judgment.

The precise form is not as important as arriving at a brief but complete statement that includes all the factors. Then you can take the motivation and desired response portion of that statement as the simple statement of the author's purpose. In the case of Habakkuk such a purpose statement would read:

To encourage the people to trust the Lord in the face of the coming judgment

This may seem like a fairly long and involved process. But the rewards of thinking through all these factors will be significant in understanding the book you are studying. Then, you will have an important framework for understanding all the verses in the book. You will also be far more effective in communicating the content of the book to others.

QUESTION 12

Which of the following is part of the purpose statement of Habakkuk?

- A. To describe the wickedness of the Babylonians
- B. To encourage the people to trust the Lord
- C. To complain to God about all the sin in Israel
- D. To try to persuade God not to judge Israel

STUDY PROJECT: OBSERVING PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

You have worked your way through identifying the theme and purpose of 1 Peter 3:1-7, Acts 17:22-31, Nehemiah 1, Mark 2:1-12, and Jonah 2. Now take Philippians 2:1-11 and complete the same steps. Be prepared to discuss your findings and results for this study project in the next seminar. If you are unsure of the steps you completed, go back over the lesson.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have finished your fifth lesson in *STB*. You have learned that there is much more in the text than appears on the surface. You have seen for yourself how much there is to learn in a careful reading of the text. You have learned how to find the **theme** and **purpose** of a passage. While doing the observation process, you have probably thought of more questions about the passages. Lessons 6 and 7 focus on interpretation, which will help you find some answers to your questions. Before you proceed further, summarize the steps of observation that you learned in these lessons.

- Observe the background
- Observe the literary style
- Read the passage and its context
- Make general observations (five questions)
- Discern the structure
- Identify the main theme
- State the purpose
- Identify the theme and purpose of a whole book

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2: True

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4:

<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
Primary Idea	What you think the theme is
Theme	The passage's central subject and the author's treatment of it
Subject	The central idea of the main theme
Complement	A summary of what the author wrote about his subject

QUESTION 5: C. Subject and complement

QUESTION 6: *Your answer*

QUESTION 7: D. Evaluate the audience's response to your sermon.

QUESTION 8: False

QUESTION 9:

B. The Passover is the subject of the book of Exodus.

C. The lions' den is the subject of the book of Daniel.

QUESTION 10: *Your answer*

QUESTION 11:

A. The theme statement

B. The tone of the passage or book

C. What the author wants his readers to do

D. The author's motivation for writing

E. Specific people to whom the book was written

F. The readers' situation

QUESTION 12: B. To encourage the people to trust the Lord

Exercise 1: Theme and Purpose of Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally similar to the following:

Acts 17:22-31

Subject: The living (“unknown”) God.

Complement: Calls men to repentance in view of the coming judgment by the resurrected Christ.

Theme: The living God calls men to repentance in view of the coming judgment by the resurrected Christ.

Purpose: To explain his (Paul’s) mission and beliefs in response to the request of the Athenians.

Exercise 2: Theme and Purpose of Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally similar to the following:

Nehemiah 1

Subject: News of trouble in Jerusalem.

Complement: Leads Nehemiah to seek God in prayer.

Theme: News of trouble in Jerusalem leads Nehemiah to seek God in prayer.

Purpose: To present Jerusalem’s problem and the human and divine resources that will be involved in solving it.

Exercise 3: Theme and Purpose of Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally similar to the following:

Mark 2:1-12

Subject: The authority of Jesus Christ.

Complement: Is shown by forgiving the sins of the paralytic man.

Theme: The healing of the paralytic man shows the authority of Jesus Christ to forgive **sins**.

Purpose: To demonstrate another area of Christ’s supreme authority.

Exercise 4: Theme and Purpose of Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2:1-10 should look generally similar to the following:

Jonah 2

Subject: Jonah's prayer of help and thanksgiving.

Complement: Honors the faithfulness of God.

Theme: Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving honors the faithfulness of God.

Purpose: To show why Jonah returned to the Lord to follow His original command.

Lesson 6: Interpretation—Beginning the Interpretive Process

Lesson Introduction

In the previous lessons you learned how to get started in Bible study. You also learned how to carefully observe the Bible text. By means of observation you have come to a clear understanding of what the biblical text says. That extremely important step has prepared you for the next step — interpreting the passage accurately. After asking the observation question “What does it say?” you now ask the interpretation question “What does it mean?”

As you begin the process of interpreting the texts you have been working with, this lesson will clarify the difference between observation and interpretation. With that in mind you will take the first step of interpretation, which is to ask interpretative questions. This will be followed by a presentation of twenty principles of interpretation.

In Topic 1 you will see that observation deals with the collection of facts, whereas interpretation deals with the meaning of those facts. To do this, you seek to put yourself in the place of the author, in his time and setting, to understand what he meant to say to his original readers.

Topic 2 introduces the first step of interpretation—asking interpretive questions. It can be said that accurate interpretation is based largely on the ability to ask the right interpretive questions. This topic will show you how to ask the questions that will lead to accurate interpretation.

Topic 3 presents twenty principles of interpretation. These principles guide you in knowing how to arrive at an accurate interpretation of the passage. They help you weave together all the information you have gathered through observation and interpretive questions into a reasonable and coherent understanding of the text. From another perspective, they guide you away from serious error in your interpretation.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Observation vs. Interpretation

Topic 2: The Process of Interpretation

Topic 3: Twenty Principles of Interpretation

Principle 1: Simplest Interpretation

Principle 2: Original Audience

Principle 3: Single Meaning

Principle 4: Author's Interpretation

Principle 5: Personal Perspective

Principle 6: Best Fit

- Principle 7: Immediate Context
- Principle 8: Biblical Harmony
- Principle 9: Clearer Passages
- Principle 10: Objectivity
- Principle 11: Doctrinal Integrity
- Principle 12: Double Checking
- Principle 13: Honest Interpretation
- Principle 14: Theme
- Principle 15: Description or Decree
- Principle 16: Universal or Specific
- Principle 17: Comparisons
- Principle 18: Weight of Evidence
- Principle 19: Final Authority
- Principle 20: Humble Attitude

In the previous lessons, you have learned how to get started in Bible study. You have learned how to carefully observe the Bible text. The next step is to interpret the passage accurately. After asking the **observation** question “What does it say?” you next must ask the **interpretation** question “What does it mean?”

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to ask interpretative questions.

Specific Objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain the difference between observation and interpretation
- Ask interpretative questions
- Follow the twenty principles of interpretation in your own study

Preparing to Study

As you have learned, Bible study is not just a human endeavor. Rather, it is the combination of our work coupled with the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, take time again to prepare your heart and mind before beginning this lesson. Find a quiet spot. Read Psalm 119:33-40, asking again for the Lord to bless this time and to open your mind to understanding.

QUESTION 1

Record in your Life Notebook some specific prayers from Psalm 119:33-40 that you think you especially need to pray personally as you continue your study of Scripture.

Topic 1: Observation vs. Interpretation

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand and explain the difference between observation and interpretation.

Through the process of observation you should have developed a general understanding of your passage. You know something about your passage's background. You may have an idea as to what literary techniques the writer used. You have developed his flow of thought, and you have identified the main theme and purpose of the passage. Other aspects of Bible study remain that you have not done. Another aspect of Bible study is **interpretation**. Interpretation involves a decision about the meaning of a writer's content. It determines what the writer actually wrote, using various words, phrases, and verses. For example, you know that the subject of the main theme in Galatians 5:16-26 is "living by the Spirit." But you might ask, "What does it mean to live by the Spirit?" Or you might ask, "What does Paul mean by the word 'flesh'?" Interpretation is discovering the meaning of these various words, terms, phrases, and verses and what they say in relation to the main theme.

QUESTION 2

Match the Bible study step with the question that reminds us of that step.

<i>Bible Study Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What should I do?
Interpretation	What does it say?
Application	What does it mean?

Interpretation is therefore defined as:

The process of discovering the meaning intended by the author for his original audience and the significance of that meaning to them.

In this interpretation process you will try to put yourself in the author's place. You will empathize with him, in order to recapture his thought. Interpretation is the process of recalling the motivations, opinions, and feelings of the Bible's authors and of the people to whom they wrote. Consequently, you should try to re-create the meaning of the message as if you were the writer. You will then understand the passage's significance. Complete merging of thought between you and the original author, while not possible, is a worthy goal. Grasping the original meaning of a Bible passage enables you to communicate that passage effectively to others.

QUESTION 3

What is the process of interpretation?

- A. Discovering the answers to the five observation questions
- B. Discovering the meaning intended by the author for his original audience
- C. Discovering the personal lessons for a modern Christian from a Bible passage
- D. Discovering the personal applications of the word “flesh”

Topic 2: The Process of Interpretation

Ask Interpretive Questions

Accurate interpretation will hinge on two things:

- Skill in asking interpretive questions about the text
- Skill in researching answers to these questions

This lesson deals with the skill of asking questions. The next lesson deals with the skill of answering questions.

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to ask interpretive questions.

Interpretive questions are those questions that occur to you because of what a biblical author wrote. They are those questions that you pose about a passage because you desire to understand the passage’s meaning. You will want to investigate the significance of certain details, words, and phrases. The better the questions you can ask, the greater your understanding will be when the questions are answered.

For example, if you are reading 1 Timothy or 2 Timothy, you might ask, “Who is Timothy?” If you happen to already know, then you do not need to research that question. But you also want to ask, “Why is he mentioned here?” “What is his significance in this passage?” In other passages you might ask, “What does the phrase ‘filled with the Spirit’ mean?” “Why does Paul command them to do this?” and “What would they do to fulfill that command?” Again, you might ask, “Why does John follow the thought in verse 14 with the thought in verse 15?” Or, “Why does Peter say **that**, and why does he say it **here**?” Make sure that you understand the meaning of each part and that you know the implication of the relationship of each part to the other. Note that interpretive questions usually are what, why, and how questions (1 Tim 1; 2 Tim 1).

As a further example of this process, consider again Galatians 5:16-26. Some natural interpretive questions are:

- What does it mean to “live by the Spirit”?
- Why should I “live by the Spirit”?
- How do I “live by the Spirit”?
- What is “the flesh”?

- What are some illustrations of the “works of the flesh”?
- What does it mean that the flesh has desires?
- How does the flesh have desires that are opposed to the Spirit?
- Is the fruit of the Spirit attitudes, qualities, or deeds?
- Why does Paul follow his presentation of the works of the flesh with a presentation of the fruit of the Spirit?
- How was my flesh crucified?
- How does “living by the Spirit” differ from “behaving in accordance to the Spirit”?
- How does this whole section relate to the previous section and the following section?

To formulate interpretive questions, go back over your observations and the passage. Then write down anything that you want to know in the form of a question. Ask about things that are said that you do not understand and anything else you might want to research. Write your questions in your notebook, or develop a chart to record your questions and answers. Any form or method that is orderly, systematic, and thorough will work. Look at the example below.

Once your questions are recorded, go back and put an asterisk (*) by the ones that you believe **must be answered** in order for you to interpret the passage. In other words, if you cannot find the answers to these questions, you will not be able to fully understand the passage. You may have to research all other questions at a later time.

Here is an example of interpretive questions asked for 1 Peter 3:1-7. Look at the Scripture and see where each question comes from. Also compare the observations made about 1 Peter 3:1-7 in previous lessons.

Questions

1 Peter 3:1-7

- What does it mean to "be subject"?
- What would be included in the idea of being subject to a husband?
- What does it mean to treat a wife "with consideration"?
- What does it mean when it says that a woman is "a weaker partner"?
- What does it mean to grant a wife honor?
- What would a husband specifically do?
- Why are prayers hindered when the man does not fulfill his responsibilities?
- What does it exactly mean to say that prayers are hindered?
- Why does Peter give so much more space to the wife's responsibilities than to the husband's?
- Why did Peter use Sarah and Abraham as examples of his point?
- What does "if any of them are disobedient" mean?
- Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God?
- Why are women not forbidden to wear jewelry and make-up in this verse?
- What is the significance of the phrase "own husbands"?
- The section for the woman begins with "in the same way." What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?
- The section for the man begins with "in the same way." What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?
- What is "pure and reverent conduct"?
- Why would that win someone to Christ?
- Does "won" actually mean "won to Christ"? If not, what else could it refer to?
- What significance, if any, is there to treating the responsibilities of the woman first?
- What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?
- What one overall quality is this passage suggesting for the woman and for the man?
- Explain all thought connections between the units of thought.

QUESTION 4

In Lesson 3 we asked you to write about your concept of marriage. Now that you have been working with 1 Peter 3 for several lessons, record your thoughts again. After doing so, look back at your Lesson 3 entries and compare the two. If there are any changes or differences, note them now.

Now, again, it is your turn. Use the same passages you have worked with in the previous lessons and write down your interpretive questions concerning them. You took these passages through the observation process in the previous lessons.

EXERCISE 1

Write at least ten interpretative questions for Acts 17:22-31. Make sure to mark those questions that must be answered in order for you to interpret your passage. When you have finished, check your answer.

EXERCISE 2

Write at least ten interpretative questions for Nehemiah 1. Make sure to mark those questions that must be answered in order for you to interpret your passage. When you have finished, check your answer.

EXERCISE 3

Write at least ten interpretative questions for Mark 2:1-12. Make sure to mark those questions that must be answered in order for you to interpret your passage. When you have finished, check your answer.

EXERCISE 4

Write at least ten interpretative questions for Jonah 2. Make sure to mark those questions that must be answered in order for you to interpret your passage. When you have finished, check your answer.

Topic 3: Twenty Principles of Interpretation

Objective 3 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to follow the twenty principles of interpretation in your own study.

As you think about interpretation, there are certain principles you need to remember. The following principles about biblical interpretation will help you develop your skill in finding the meanings of passages.

Principles of Good Bible Interpretation

1. Seek the normal and simplest interpretation
2. Remember the passage is addressed to the author's original audience
3. Find only one meaning, many applications
4. Let the author's stated interpretation guide
5. Consider reason, common sense, and your own experience of life
6. Choose the interpretation where most pieces fit together in the smoothest fashion
7. Examine the immediate context
8. The Bible is a consistent and harmonious whole
9. Let clearer passages interpret obscure passages
10. Allow Scriptures to speak for themselves
11. Do not import theological truths
12. Check your interpretation with other reliable interpreters
13. Do not say more or less than what the passage says
14. Identify major ideas that point to the theme
15. Note differences between descriptions and commands
16. Note differences between universal truths and specific applications
17. Use different translations to clarify meanings
18. Let the weight of evidence determine the interpretations
19. Give precedence to the New Testament over the Old
20. Approach Scripture with humility and prayer

Principle 1: Simplest Interpretation

The normal and simplest interpretation has precedence over complex interpretations.

As a general rule, the authors of Scripture did not intend to hide the meaning of their words in complex language. They wrote with the intention of being understood. For example, the simplest interpretation of John 14:6 is that Jesus is the only way of salvation.

QUESTION 5

God intended for Scripture to be understood. *True or False?*

Principle 2: Original Audience

The meaning and significance of the passage is first and foremost addressed to the author's original audience.

Your job is to try to understand the passage as the original audience would have understood it. The historical, cultural, and background situation of the people to whom the book was written is crucial to understanding the meaning of the text. You must take great care when you transfer what was said to the original audience to audiences today. For example, in 1 Corinthians 16:20 Paul says to “greet one another with a holy kiss.” This is clearly a cultural custom of Paul’s day. Paul’s point is that we should greet each other warmly, within the customs of our culture. A warm greeting may be a kiss, a hearty handshake, or some other customary greeting.

QUESTION 6

Place the following events in the correct order.

<i>Sequence Number</i>	<i>Event</i>
1	The Bible student interprets seeking the original meaning.
2	The Bible student applies the universal truth to his audience.
3	The original audience receives and understands the Scripture.
4	The author is inspired and writes a Scripture.
5	The Bible student finds the universal truth.
6	The present-day audience receives and understands the Scripture.

Principle 3: Single Meaning

Any given passage has one meaning and one meaning only, although there may be many applications of it.

Beware of ascribing double meanings to words, phrases, or illustrations. The Bible is not a mysterious book with hidden and deeper meanings that are available only to those clever enough to discover the code. God’s Word is for everyone who will read and obey its truths. James 1:21 says, “Humbly welcome the message implanted within you, which is able to save your souls.” The word “save” has several meanings in the New Testament. It cannot mean all of those here. In this context it has just one meaning.

QUESTION 7

In Genesis 32, “Israel” refers to:

- A. The land of Palestine
- B. All Jews
- C. The Jewish nation
- D. A man, also called Jacob

Principle 4: Author’s Interpretation

The author’s own explanation or interpretation of his words (if they are given) determines the passage’s meaning.

For instance, Jesus frequently interpreted His parables. In John 20:31, the apostle John stated his purpose for writing his gospel. These statements greatly simplify the interpretive process. Watch for the **author’s interpretations** in your passage.

QUESTION 8

Match the passage in 1 John with the author’s given interpretation.

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1 John 1:1-4	Know you have eternal life
1 John 1:5-10	Share joy
1 John 2:1-11	Not sin
1 John 5:1-13	God is light

Principle 5: Personal Perspective

Reason, common sense, and your own experience of life play a major role in helping to understand what the author might be saying.

Scripture gives truth about life. You have observed and experienced the realities of life. When Scripture speaks, your experience and reasoning often can confirm the truth of what it is saying.

For instance, because of your own experience, you understand what Paul wrote in Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But if a person interpreted another verse to say that some people never sin, that interpretation would be false. Interpretations that seem irrational or unobservable in life may be false interpretations.

CAUTION: Because this is a subjective element, it cannot be the final authority for the interpretation of a passage. God’s Word is not limited by our experience, nor is it to be judged by our own sense of reason, morality, or philosophy. But common sense and our experience and reasoning often can confirm the truth of what it is saying and help us to understand it intuitively.

QUESTION 9

Human reason has no place in the interpretation of Scriptures. *True or False?*

Principle 6: Best Fit

The best interpretation is the one that fits the most pieces together in the smoothest fashion.

Consider, for example, John 15:1-8 and the issue of whether or not the Lord taught about believers or unbelievers. Textually, these people were “in Me.” Contextually, the Lord was talking with disciples about fruit bearing, not salvation. Theologically, only believers can bear fruit. Interpreting “thrown into the fire, and are burned up,” as a cleansing judgment of believers (compare with 1 Cor 3:12-15) is preferable to interpreting it as unbelievers being cast into hell.

Principle 7: Immediate Context

Each verse is to be interpreted in the light of its immediate context.

A verse never stands by itself. You must know how the text in question relates to the previous text and the text that follows. Ignoring this principle results in countless interpretive mistakes. For example, in Romans 6:1 Paul asked, “Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase?” A quick study of the context assures you that the answer is a strong “No!”

QUESTION 10

You studied context in the observation phase in order to be more accurate during the interpretation phase. *True or False?*

Principle 8: Biblical Harmony

Always base your interpretations on the fact that the Bible is a consistent and harmonious whole.

All portions of the Bible fit into one unifying system of truth. The correct interpretation of a specific passage never contradicts the total teaching of Scripture. For example, John 10:28 and Hebrews 6:1-6 cannot simultaneously teach the security and insecurity of the believer. Likewise, Romans 4 and James 2 cannot simultaneously teach that we are justified by faith alone and that justification is by faith and works.

QUESTION 11

The Bible is consistent,

- A. Except between the Old and New Testament
- B. Except when Jesus contradicts Moses
- C. Except on unimportant issues
- D. Without exception

Principle 9: Clearer Passages

Interpret obscure passages through clearer passages whenever possible.

Since Scripture is a consistent whole, the passages concerning the same teaching should agree with each other. You should refrain from making doctrinal points based solely on a single, unclear passage of Scripture. Research reveals no less than thirty different interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:29. Yet the Mormons construct a complex practice of baptism for the dead based on this one verse. You must consult clearer passages to determine a correct doctrine of baptism.

Principle 10: Objectivity

The objective interpreter must allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves.

No matter what you have been taught previously, you should not prejudice the passage with preconceived ideas. You may discover a truth in Scripture that contradicts a tradition or belief that you hold. Traditions are valuable, but only when they conform to the clear teaching of Scripture. You must let the text, in context, determine your thinking.

Principle 11: Doctrinal Integrity

Do not insert theological truths into a passage if the doctrine is not actually taught there.

You may be theologically accurate, but still have the wrong interpretation for the passage at hand if the doctrine is not taught there. You could be right, but for the wrong passage! For example, in 2 Samuel 12:23 David, after the death of his first child, said, "I will go to him, but he cannot return to me." David did not clearly assert whether or not infants will go to heaven. He merely said that since the baby cannot return to him from the grave, he could only go to him when he dies. At best, it leaves the door open for a possible New Testament clarification of this particular doctrine.

QUESTION 12

Luke 4 teaches that when you are full of the Holy Spirit, you can go forty days without eating. *True or False?*

Principle 12: Double Checking

An interpreter should check his interpretation with other reliable interpreters.

If godly men disagree with your interpretation, then there is a good chance you have gone wrong at some point. If your interpretation is a sound and logical one, then other interpreters should see it also.

Principle 13: Honest Interpretation

An interpretation should not go beyond what the passage says, neither should it stop short of what it says.

You must make sure you do not make the passage say too much or too little. For example, the issue of confession as expressed in 1 John 1:9 illustrates this. It would go beyond the passage to say that confession must include tears, special grieving, penance, and other forms of contrition. It would be stopping short of confession to make it merely mechanical without any feeling for how our sin has offended God and perhaps others.

QUESTION 13

Based on the book of Philemon, match the statement with the correct truth or condition.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Truth or Condition of the Statement</i>
Onesimus had been Philemon's slave.	Going beyond interpretation
Philemon should free Onesimus.	Observation
All slaves should be freed.	Application
All believers should be treated respectfully.	Proper interpretation

Principle 14: Theme

Identify the main ideas that point to the theme of the passage.

In any given passage there are several important ideas. But not every one of them has something directly to do with the theme of the passage. It is very important that you think carefully about which ideas are **important to the theme**. This is particularly important in a passage where there is a popular verse. For example, Philippians 1:6 is a well-known verse. But it is not important to the theme of the passage. Instead, the focus of Paul's thought in Philippians 1 is in verse 5, which states the participation of the Philippians in the gospel.

Principle 15: Description or Decree

An interpreter must distinguish between descriptive statements and commands.

Descriptive statements **tell** what has happened, what was done, what will be done, or what has been said. Descriptive statements **do not** decree that the thing described is good or bad. For example, the passages that say that David and Solomon had many wives do

not indicate whether it is good or bad to have more than one wife. These passages are only descriptive statements. By contrast, **commands** must be obeyed. For example, Titus 1:6 says that elders must be the husband of one wife. This is a command limiting the elders of the church to one wife.

QUESTION 14

Judges 19 teaches that in cases of a rape and murder, the victim's body should be cut up and sent to various parties as evidence of the crime. *True or False?*

Principle 16: Universal or Specific

An interpreter must distinguish between universal principles or commands and specific principles or commands.

Universal principles and commands are always true and carry great weight in determining the meaning and significance of a passage. But some principles and commands apply only to a few people under certain circumstances. They are less important to the overall message of a passage. For example, when the Lord commanded Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees to go to the Promised Land, that command was only for Abraham. It was not meant to be a universal command for all people. On the other hand, when Christ told the disciples to love one another, it was a universal command.

QUESTION 15

Which passage is best interpreted as commanding us to forgive our enemies?

- A. Matthew 5:43-47
- B. Matthew 18:21-22
- C. Acts 9:10-16
- D. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Principle 17: Comparisons

Meanings can often be clarified through the use of different translations of the Bible and dictionaries in the student's own language.

When comparing translations of John 14:26, the Holy Spirit is called "Comforter," "Helper," "Counselor," "Advocate," and "Intercessor." This gives different facets of the meaning of the Greek word.

Principle 18: Weight of Evidence

Interpretation of difficult passages should be made on the basis of the weight of evidence for or against the various possible interpretations.

A good interpreter judges the different possible interpretations and makes his decision accordingly. This includes lexical, grammatical, theological, historical, and cultural

evidence. Examples of passages that require such considerations are Genesis 1:1-3, Genesis 6:1-4, and 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

Principle 19: Final Authority

The New Testament takes precedence over the Old Testament as the final authority in doctrinal matters.

The New Testament is the final revelation of God and fulfills and completes that which is found in the Old Testament. It is God's communication to His church. The New Testament is the basis for such doctrines as the church, heaven and hell, the Trinity, and Christ's second coming. The New Testament is necessary for a clear statement of these doctrines. Wherever the Old Testament makes reference to these doctrines, they must be in agreement with the New Testament.

QUESTION 16

Compare Acts 10:9-16 with Leviticus 11. Indicate what you believe Scripture teaches as dietary restrictions on the Christian.

- A. Cannot eat what Moses forbids
- B. Should not eat what Moses forbids
- C. May now eat what Moses forbids
- D. Should/must eat what Moses forbids

Principle 20: Humble Attitude

Finally, and most importantly, Scripture should be approached with a humble and prayerful attitude.

The words of the Bible are the words of God. And God will hold us accountable for how we use or misuse them. Interpretations should not be made casually. Prayerful caution is always in order. We can teach what Scripture says with confidence, only we must do enough homework to make sure that our interpretation is indeed correct.

QUESTION 17

Consider the final principle about approaching Scripture humbly and prayerfully. Write in your Life Notebook your feelings about this and how you apply it.

Conclusion

You have concluded the first of two lessons on interpretation. As important as determining the meaning of a passage is, interpretation should never replace the process of observation. Also, you should keep observing even as you interpret. You cannot exhaust the possibilities of what you can observe in the Scriptures. The more you observe, the easier the process of interpretation will become. In Lesson 7 you will

continue to improve your skill of interpretation. May the Lord continue to bless your efforts in *STB*.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2

<i>Bible Study Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What does it say?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What should I do?

QUESTION 3: B. Discovering the meaning intended by the author for his original audience.

QUESTION 4: *Your answer*

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6

<i>Sequence Number</i>	<i>Event</i>
1	The author is inspired and writes a Scripture.
2	The original audience receives and understands the Scripture.
3	The Bible student interprets seeking the original meaning.
4	The Bible student finds the universal truth.
5	The Bible student applies the universal truth to his audience.
6	The present-day audience receives and understands the Scripture.

QUESTION 7: D. A man, also called Jacob

QUESTION 8

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1 John 1:1-4	Share joy
1 John 1:5-10	God is light
1 John 2:1-11	Not sin
1 John 5:1-13	Know you have eternal life

QUESTION 9: False

QUESTION 10: True

QUESTION 11: D. Without exception

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Truth or Condition of the Statement</i>
Onesimus had been Philemon's slave.	Proper interpretation
Philemon should free Onesimus.	Observation
All slaves should be freed.	Going beyond interpretation
All believers should be treated respectfully.	Application

QUESTION 14: False

QUESTION 15: A. Matthew 5:43-47

QUESTION 16: C. May now eat what Moses forbids.

What type of grace should you give to your brother that differs with you?

QUESTION 17: *Your answer*

Exercise 1: Interpretive Questions for Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally similar to the following:

Acts 17:22-31

- What or where is the Areopagus?
- What title should be given to this sermon? (i.e., what is Paul's main point in the sermon?)
- What qualities of God are highlighted in this sermon? Why these and not others?
- What does the phrase "determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation" mean? Is that knowledge important for the point of the sermon or passage? Why or why not?
- How would you outline this sermon?
- How does the last paragraph serve as the summary or conclusion of the sermon?
- When were the times of ignorance?
- Which is the key verse and why?
- Why should Paul give **this** sermon, this content, based on seeing the altar "To An Unknown God"?
- What or who was the "one" from which God made every nation in this context?
- Explain all thought connections between the units of thought.

Exercise 2: Interpretive Questions for Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally similar to the following:

Nehemiah 1

- Why did Nehemiah include verse 11 about his being cupbearer to the king? Why here? Why so abruptly after the prayer?
- What is a cupbearer?
- Who or what caused the people distress and reproach?
- Who ruined Jerusalem's walls?
- Which captivity did the remnant survive?
- Who is the king?
- Who is "this man"?
- What do "Chislev" and "twentieth year" mean?
- Where is Susa?
- Why did the people come to Nehemiah and not someone else?
- Why is this event the first thing in the book?

- How does the first chapter compare with the last chapter in the book?
- Is Hanani a blood brother or spiritual brother? Would the answer make a difference in the interpretation of the passage? Why or why not?
- Why is so much space given to the prayer?
- What does this chapter tell us about Nehemiah?
- Would it help us to know whether or not the men came to Nehemiah by his invitation or not? Why or why not?
- Why did Nehemiah quote this Scripture to the Lord?
- Why did Nehemiah describe and praise God the way he did?
- What success did Nehemiah want?
- Explain all the thought connections between units of thought.

Exercise 3: Interpretive Questions for Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally similar to the following:

Mark 2:1-12

- Who are the “they” of verse 3?
- What is the key verse or thought of this passage? Why?
- Does the “faith” of verse 5 include that of the paralytic? What is the effect of the answer?
- Why were the scribes there?
- Why did so many come to hear Him?
- Is there any reason why this event is included so early in the book? If so, why?
- How would the people have reacted to the idea of tearing someone’s roof apart?
- What significance, if any, is there to the fact that four men brought the paralytic?
- Which is easier to say? “Your sins are forgiven” or “Arise, and take up your pallet and walk”? Why?
- What were the people referring to when they said they had never seen anything like that before?
- What significance is there, if any, that Jesus came back to Capernaum?
- Explain all the thought connections between the units of thought.

Exercise 4: Interpretive Questions for Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2 should look generally similar to the following:

Jonah 2

- What kind of salvation is Jonah talking about?
- Is Jonah’s experience in the great fish positive or negative? Explain.

- What does this chapter tell us about Jonah?
- What are the thought divisions of this chapter?
- Why does Jonah attribute his being cast into the sea as well as his delivery from it to God?
- Where did Jonah call out of his distress to the Lord?
- What is Jonah experiencing in verses 5-6?
- How did the Lord bring Jonah's life up out of the pit?
- How would you paraphrase verse 8?
- How will Jonah sacrifice with a voice of thanksgiving?
- What is the relationship between the two sentences in verse 2?
- Explain all thought connections between the units of thought

Lesson 7: Interpretation— Researching, Evaluating, and Drawing Conclusions

Lesson Introduction

This lesson continues the process of interpretation, which asks and answers the question, “What does it mean?” You learned that the Bible's meaning is not an obscure mystery. The Bible's meaning is available to all believers. God communicated to us through human language in the Scriptures. Words in the Bible have their normal meanings, just as they do in other works of literature. Just as you study other works of literature to better understand their meaning, so also you study the Bible to understand its meaning.

After you have asked interpretive questions, you must find answers to those questions. Acts 8:26-39 provides a good example of answering an interpretive question. In this passage the Ethiopian eunuch was reading from Isaiah. In verse 34 he asks the interpretive question, “Who is the prophet saying this about — himself or someone else?” Philip, who has joined him, answers the question by using one of the methods you will learn in this lesson, comparing Scripture with other Scriptures. This example from the Bible should inspire you to master this important phase of the *STB* method.

Topic 1 gives you the four main methods for finding answers to your questions. The first one is to examine the content, in which you look to see if the answer is found in the passage you are studying. In the second method — review the context — you look in the text surrounding your passage. A third method, used by Philip, is to compare Scripture with other Scriptures. The final method is to consult secondary sources, such as a Bible dictionary.

Topic 2 helps you to evaluate your research in order to draw conclusions about the answers to your interpretive questions. Sometimes the answer will be clear from just one of the four methods. Other questions will require combining the information found in more than one of these methods. Once you have found the answer to each interpretive question, you can answer the ultimate interpretive question: What does the passage mean?

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Research Your Interpretive Question

Examine the Content

Review the Context

Compare with Other Scripture

Consult Secondary Sources

Topic 2: Evaluate and Conclude

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to research, evaluate, and draw conclusions about your study.

Specific Objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Use the four phases to research interpretative questions
- Understand and explain how to evaluate your research and draw conclusions

Preparing to Study

As you begin Lesson 7, take a few minutes to put your heart in order so that you can discern what the Lord wants to teach you. Find a remote place, if possible, and read Psalm 119:41-48 to help you focus your attention on the Lord and on His Word. Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask the Lord to bless this time and to help your understanding. Thank Him for what He is about to do.

QUESTION 1

Record in your Life Notebook any progress you are making toward delighting in and loving God's Word. What might be hindering your progress?

Topic 1: Research Your Interpretive Question

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to use the four phases to research interpretative questions.

In the previous lesson you learned how to ask interpretative questions. The next step is to research these questions in order to answer them. Your study should develop in the form of concentric circles, like the rings that a pebble creates when dropped into a calm pool of water. Research begins at the center and moves to the outer rings in the following sequence:

- Examine the content.
- Review the context.
- Compare with other Scripture.
- Consult secondary sources.

QUESTION 2

Place the steps for researching your answers to interpretive questions in the correct order.

<i>Sequence Number</i>	<i>Research Step</i>
1	Examine the content.
2	Consult secondary sources.
3	Compare Scripture with Scripture.
4	Review the context.

Examine the Content

Answers to your interpretive questions should arise, whenever possible, out of the passage you are studying. Do not begin with someone else's comments on what the passage means. **Always** begin with the Bible as your primary source. When you look at the passage, what seems to be the **obvious and sensible answer** to your questions? If you had only this passage and nothing else, what would be your best guess as to the meaning? Another helpful place to compare meaning is through the use of **other translations**. Other Bible translations can often add to your understanding of a particular passage.

QUESTION 3

You should study outside sources, such as available commentaries, before you begin your Bible study. *True or False?*

As you examine the content, pay attention to the literary style. Interpret the text as literally as possible, yet watch for poetry, prose, and prophecy. Be aware of any figures of speech. For example, poetry uses many forms of speech that are meant only for comparison. Prophecy uses symbolic language (e.g., the locusts in the book of Joel). The Gospels use parables.

QUESTION 4

In which of these Bible books would you expect to find the most figurative language?

- A. Numbers
- B. Psalms
- C. Luke
- D. Colossians






Use the observations you have written, along with your open Bible, to answer the interpretive questions. For example, you would consult your structural outline to “explain all thought connections.”

In the previous lesson, you saw examples of interpretative questions from 1 Peter 3:1-7. Now you can read some examples of how to begin to answer these questions by **examining the content**.

Interpretation

Use these steps when interpreting scripture, recording your results for each of the interpretive questions identified.*

1 Peter 3:1-7 Interpretive questions

1 	Examine the Content	<p>What does it mean to "be subject"?</p> <p>What does it mean to treat a wife "with consideration"?</p>
2 	Review the Context	<p>What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?</p> <p>Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God? *</p>
3 	Compare with Other Scripture	<p>The section for the woman begins with "in the same way." What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?</p> <p>The section for the man begins with "in the same way." What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?</p>
4 	Consult Secondary Sources	<p>What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?</p>
5 	Evaluate and Conclude	<p>Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. *</p> <p><small>The asterisk (*) represents those questions that are considered most essential for understanding of the passage.</small></p>

Examine the Content:

- **What does it mean to “be subject”?**

It appears that being subject has something to do with pure and reverent conduct, perhaps including the gentle and tranquil spirit. Sarah is an example of being subject. The text says that she called Abraham lord. [1 Peter 3:6] So being subject relates to the idea of obeying authority.

- **What does it mean to treat a wife “with consideration”?**

The immediate content [1 Peter 3:7] suggests that living in an understanding way is to be aware that the woman is a weaker partner and thus treat her accordingly. Perhaps, when she submits to her husband for his leadership, he should understand the vulnerability of that attitude and position. He should honor it with proper treatment and appreciation. He should not regard it as slavery. Also, the

following clause implies that such a husband should remember that the wife is a believer. She is fellow heir of the grace of life and needs to be treated accordingly.

- **What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?**

It could mean either that it discourages the act of praying or that the Lord will not respond to the prayers. Perhaps both are implied, though the latter seems more likely.

- **Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God?**

Nothing is clearly stated. Certainly there is an implication that being subject expects or requires a gentle and tranquil spirit. Without a gentle and quiet spirit, there is no submission.

- **The section for the woman begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?**

This question, by referring to the text, will be answered under the next research phase “Review the context.”

- **The section for the man begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?**

Even though the husband is not commanded to submit, the expression “in the same way” is a continuation of the series started in chapter 2. [1 Peter 2:18-25] Perhaps the idea is, “Likewise, husbands, do all you can on your part to preserve order, unity, and love by being a loving, caring partner. Do not be like a slave master!”

- **What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?**

Assuming that the wives are married to unbelievers (“disobedient”) the fear is probably of reprisals from the husbands for the wives’ faith.

- **Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. ***

Verses 1-2 go together as one sentence. Verse 3 follows from 2 as an additional command. Verse 4 is a contrast verse to 3. Verse 5-6 are an illustration of verses 1-4. Verse 7 is the instruction to the husband, so it starts a new but related thought. [Refer to the structural outline of 1 Peter 3 in Lesson 4].

- **Conclusion:**

In this context, Peter told the wives to have a positively humble, willingly supportive, cooperative, noncontentious, attitude with their husbands as a proper expression of the Spirit of Christ within them.

Review the Context

What do the paragraphs coming before and after the passage add to your understanding of questions you have asked? The teaching of a single passage should be viewed within the setting of the entire book in which it is found. Understanding the development of the whole book is often essential to interpret the meaning of a single text.

QUESTION 5

The parts of the context for 1 Peter 3:1-7 include: (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The paragraph before and the paragraph following.
- B. The chapter before and the chapter following.
- C. The whole book of 1 Peter.
- D. The whole Bible.

QUESTION 6

How do you determine the context of a passage?

QUESTION 7

You should review the context of your passage in the interpretation phase even though you have already done so while making observations. *True or False?*

Look at the following examples from the 1 Peter 3:1-7 interpretive questions. Notice the different ways used to show how to **review the context**.

Interpretation

Use these steps when interpreting scripture, recording your results for each of the interpretive questions identified.*

1 Peter 3:1-7 Interpretive questions	
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">1</div> <p>Examine the Content</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">What does it mean to "be subject"?</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;">What does it mean to treat a wife "with consideration"?</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div> <p>Review the Context</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;">Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God? *</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">3</div> <p>Compare with Other Scripture</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">The section for the woman begins with "in the same way." What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;">The section for the man begins with "in the same way." What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">4</div> <p>Consult Secondary Sources</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;">What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">5</div> <p>Evaluate and Conclude</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;">Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. *</div>
<p style="font-size: small;">The asterisk (*) represents those questions that are considered most essential for understanding of the passage.</p>	

Review the Context:

- **What does it mean to “be subject”?**

The immediate context before the verses [1 Peter 2:18-25] had to do with being subject—everyone to authority, servants to masters, Christ to death. In 1 Peter 1:3-7 wives are instructed to be subject to husbands. A consistent topic in the book is “suffering.” Apparently, being subject contains the ideas of authority and possible suffering. If there is suffering, it should be undeserved because of goodness, not deserved because of wrongdoing. In the summary of the following portion of chapter 3, [1 Peter 3:8] the emphasis is on harmony and unity. So perhaps being subject is also connected to unity.

- **What does it mean to treat a wife “with consideration”?**

The general tone of the next section is harmony, unity, and love. The husband needs to understand the need for unity, harmony, and love in the marriage relationship. This probably goes a little beyond the actual meaning, because the implication in verse 7 is that the husband needs to understand her as a woman and not as a member of the community of believers.

- **What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?**

There is nothing in the immediate context to suggest an answer.

- **Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God?**

In the previous context Peter wrote that praise would be accorded those who suffer for good. Suffering for good means not rebelling or being insubordinate. Since the essence of sin is rebellion, it would seem that any submissive spirit would be gentle, tranquil, and precious to God.

The following context, in talking about harmony, unity, and love, also suggests that these qualities can only be obtained through lack of a rebellious spirit.

- **The section for the woman begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?**

Review the context: It would appear that the association is the attitude of submissiveness as found in everyone toward the government [1 Peter 2:13] and slaves toward masters [1 Peter 2:18]. As they are expected to be submissive to their respective authorities, so are women to be in subjection to their own husbands.

- **The section for the man begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?**

The answer is the same for the question above. It would appear that the association is the attitude of submissiveness as found in everyone toward the government [1 Peter 2:13] and slaves toward masters [1 Peter 2:18]. As they are expected to be submissive to their respective authorities, so are women to be in subjection to their own husbands.

- **What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?**

The immediate previous context talks about the possibility of suffering on the part of servants, even when doing what is good. The pagan husbands of that very day very likely thought themselves as masters of their wives. The wives could easily fear being treated like slaves.

- **Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. ***

This cannot help here.

Compare with Other Scripture

The Bible sheds light on its own meaning. You should let Scripture interpret Scripture. Sound interpretation ultimately takes into account the whole Bible. **Cross-references** in the margins of some Bibles compare the verses on a particular page with verses elsewhere in the Bible that contain a similar theme or idea. If you have cross-references, look up those verses. See what they say about the questions you are studying. Perhaps you know other passages from your personal study that might have comparable thoughts.

For example, Ephesians 5:18-19 exhorts believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to one another in spiritual songs. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” Note that “speaking to one another” relates to “exhorting one another” and that “spiritual songs” is in both passages. Therefore, the filling of the Holy Spirit may be related to the word of Christ dwelling in you.

A **concordance** is the best tool for comparing different Scriptures. This reference book contains an alphabetical list of every word in the Bible and every verse in the Bible where that word is used. A concordance helps you find other places in Scripture where a similar teaching or topic is discussed; thus giving you more insight into the passage you are currently studying. The process is relatively simple. First, identify the key words in the passage you are studying. Next, find these words in a concordance just as you would in a dictionary. Under each word will be a list of Scripture references where that word is used. Then look up these references in your Bible to see if they help. (If you have a concordance, make sure to read the preface so you will understand how your specific concordance works. Each concordance is a little bit different in terms of arrangement and detail.)

QUESTION 8

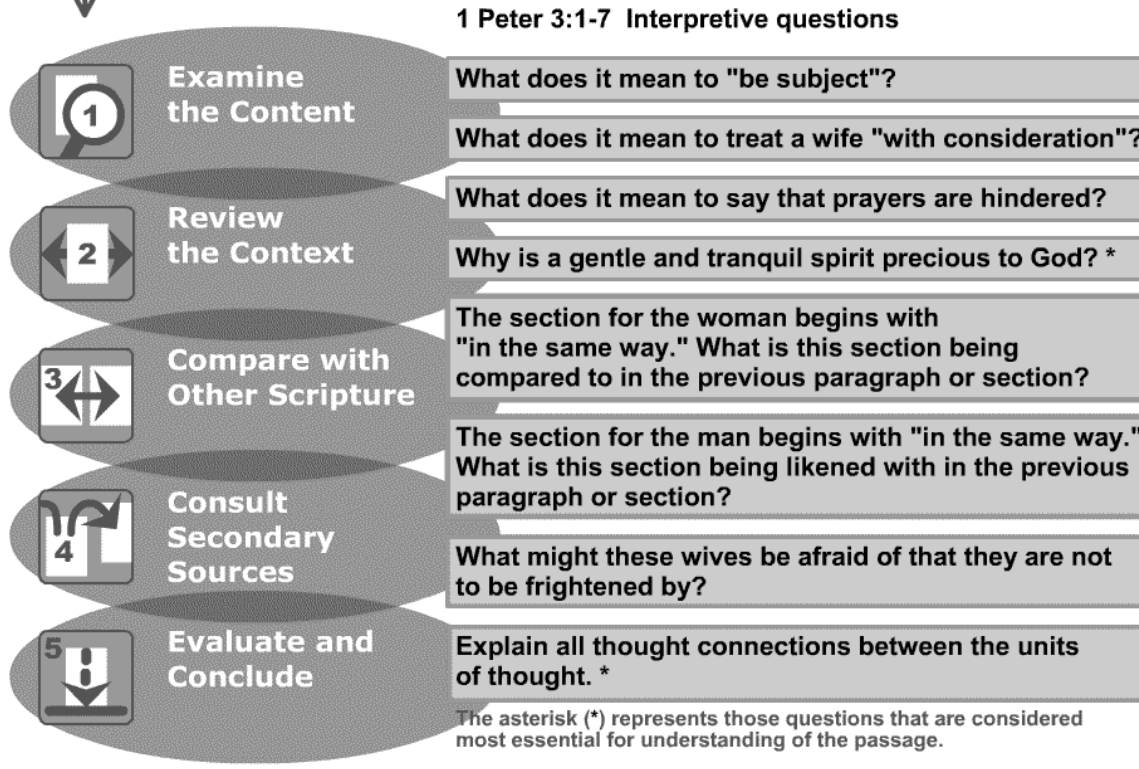
By what ways can you compare your passage with other Scripture? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Commentaries
- B. Concordance
- C. Parallel passages
- D. Cross-references
- E. Bible map
- F. Notes in the margin of a Bible

Look at the following examples from the 1 Peter 3:1-7 interpretive questions. Be aware of the different ways to **compare with other Scripture**.

Interpretation

Use these steps when interpreting scripture, recording your results for each of the interpretive questions identified.*



Compare with Other Scriptures:

- **What does it mean to “be subject”?**

Looking first to see if there is anything else in 1 Peter, you see that Peter referred to it previously. In chapter 2, as indicated above, he wrote about everyone being subject to authority and slaves to masters. In chapter 5 younger men are to be subject to elders. And everyone is to be subject to one another. Likewise, they are all to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Thus, you see the repetition of order and authority.

- **What does it mean to treat a wife “with consideration”?**

In a related marriage passage, Ephesians 5:22-33, it says that a man must love his wife as Christ loved the church (v. 25). Certainly this should be a part of treating a wife with consideration. The emphasis seems to be on understanding who she is as a woman.

That means the man must work diligently at getting to know his wife. He must

recognize her needs, desires, weaknesses, and strengths. And then he must live with her in a way that encourages and helps her in line with who she is.

- **What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?**

Acts 8:36 records the Ethiopian eunuch saying, “What is to stop me from being baptized?” Acts 8:36 does not use the same word, but the idea is the same. Substituting the word “prayer” for “being baptized,” suggests that the prayer itself is being hindered, not the answer to the prayer.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:18, Paul wrote that Satan thwarted him from coming to Thessalonica. Thus, Paul could not begin his journey, just as the husband could not pray. Other Scriptures reflect the same idea.

- **Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God?**

In the previous context Peter wrote that praise would be accorded those who suffer for good. Suffering for good means not rebelling or being insubordinate. Since the essence of sin is rebellion, it would seem that any submissive spirit would be gentle, tranquil, and precious to God.

The following context, in talking about harmony, unity, and love, also suggests that these qualities can only be obtained through lack of a rebellious spirit.

- **The section for the woman begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section**

This step is not as applicable as others, since the issue is language and immediate context. Yet value can still come from comparing the usage of the phrase in other Scriptures to see if there is a pattern of usage or meaning. The best place to start is within the same book, if possible. In this case “in the same way” appears in 1 Peter 5:5: “In the same way, you who are younger be subject to the elders.” Since this seems to be contrasted with the elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4, it does not seem like “in the same way” would mean “just like the elders,” because the elders were not asked to be submissive. Therefore, the implication seems to be, “Just as I have given instructions to the elders, in the same way, I now have instructions for the younger people.” It would be worth investigating if Peter is making the same use of “in the same way” in 1 Peter 3:1, 7. Then look elsewhere in the New Testament for its usage there to see if there might be a parallel pattern of use.

- **The section for the man begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?**

This step is not as applicable as others, since the issue is language and immediate context. Yet value can still come from comparing the usage of the phrase in other Scriptures to see if there is a pattern of usage or meaning. The best place to start is within the same book, if possible. In this case “in the same way” appears in 1

Peter 5:5: “In the same way, you who are younger be subject to the elders.” Since this seems to be contrasted with the elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4, it does not seem like “in the same way” would mean “just like the elders,” because the elders were not asked to be submissive. Therefore, the implication seems to be, “Just as I have given instructions to the elders, in the same way, I now have instructions for the younger people.” It would be worth investigating if Peter is making the same use of “in the same way” in 1 Peter 3:1, 7. Then look elsewhere in the New Testament for its usage there to see if there might be a parallel pattern of use.

- **What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?**

This is primarily a contextual question. A study of the word “fear” will not answer this question.

- **Explain all thought connections between the units of thought.**

This cannot help here.

QUESTION 9

You have just been given a wide choice of Scriptures that help you to understand more about a “gentle and tranquil spirit.” We recognize that in 1 Peter 3 this quality concerns only women. But the other Scriptures cited imply that men also need to exhibit a gentle and tranquil spirit. Therefore, choose one (or two) of these passages which speaks most clearly to you about your own need to have a “gentle and tranquil spirit.” How does the passage help you? What do you learn from it? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Consult Secondary Sources

Only when you have completed a thorough study of the Bible—your primary source—are you ready to look elsewhere for help. Do not look at the commentaries first! Grabbing a commentary before doing any personal Bible study will possibly lead you to inadequate conclusions. In addition, you deprive yourself of the joy of discovering eternal truths for yourself. The scholars who wrote the commentaries studied the material in the same way that Bible students today can. Christians should grow toward the spiritual maturity that will enable them to go beyond constant dependence on the biblical scholarship of others.

What do secondary sources add to your understanding? They give you the insights of other wise and godly men into the passage you are studying. Also, secondary sources may point you to an error or oversight in your own interpretation. Many commentaries give alternative interpretations as well as those of the author.

Secondary sources include Bible commentaries, atlases, dictionaries, theology books, and other reference books about the Bible. You should use all secondary sources with discernment. Some commentators are more skilled than others in interpreting the Bible.

QUESTION 10

When should you first consult secondary sources?

- A. Before reading the passage
- B. Immediately after reading the passage
- C. While recording your observations
- D. After completing your own thorough study

Commentaries

What is a commentary?

A good commentary provides a detailed, verse-by-verse interpretation of an entire book of the Bible. Experienced interpreters write good commentaries. They bring to their work knowledge of the historical background of the book, the original language in which it was written, and how it has been interpreted in the past.

What is the value of consulting a commentary?

- To be able to consult such a commentary after doing your own study is like having a teacher at your side who is an expert on the passage.
- The commentary can help you evaluate the results of your study.
- It can deepen your understanding of the passage and offer insights you may have overlooked.
- It can provide information from other sources about the historical and literary background of the passage.
- Finally, it can provide a good model for how to interpret Scripture.

Is there a negative side to the use of commentaries?

- The commentary should not take the place of personal study. Study the passage itself first (steps one and two). Then consult the commentary. If you go to the commentary first, you will not learn as much. You will also deny yourself the joy of discovery.
- Commentaries are not inspired. Two good commentaries may disagree on the interpretation of a passage. Nevertheless, good commentaries are the work of experienced scholars and usually offer reliable (though not infallible) guidance.
- All commentators are influenced by their own theological assumptions. This means they may champion interpretations that are inconsistent or even wrong. Be

aware of the commentator's theological presuppositions. Also, be aware of your own.

QUESTION 11

Some of the following statements reflect positive values of commentaries, and some reflect problems with commentaries. Which ones are the positive values? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Like having a teacher at your side who is an expert on the passage.
- B. Commentators are influenced by their own theological assumptions.
- C. Offer insights you may have overlooked.
- D. Provide information about the historical and literary background of the passage.
- E. You will deny yourself the joy of discovery.
- F. May promote interpretations that are inconsistent or even wrong.

Look at the following examples from the 1 Peter 3:1-7 interpretive questions. Observe possible ways to write your research as you **consult secondary sources**.

Interpretation

Use these steps when interpreting scripture, recording your results for each of the interpretive questions identified.*

1 Peter 3:1-7 Interpretive questions

1 Examine the Content	<p>What does it mean to "be subject"?</p> <p>What does it mean to treat a wife "with consideration"?</p>
2 Review the Context	<p>What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?</p> <p>Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God? *</p>
3 Compare with Other Scripture	<p>The section for the woman begins with "in the same way." What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?</p> <p>The section for the man begins with "in the same way." What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?</p>
4 Consult Secondary Sources	<p>What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?</p>
5 Evaluate and Conclude	<p>Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. *</p>

The asterisk () represents those questions that are considered most essential for understanding of the passage.

Consult Secondary Sources:

- **What does it mean to “be subject”?**

A dictionary defines “being subject” as yielding to the control of another. A commentary says that Peter's attitude is not merely the accepted submissive way of thinking of his times. Peter wrote about a Christian willingness to subordinate oneself to others.

- **What does it mean to treat a wife “with consideration”?**

A dictionary can help you understand “with consideration.” The dictionary meaning can be summarized as “sympathetic regard, based on careful thought and taking into account” the nature and needs of the wife. A commentary says that it means demonstrating sensible consideration and tact in the complete relationship of married life.

- **What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?**

A dictionary says, “to hinder,” means:

- * To keep back
- * To restrain
- * To get in the way of
- * To prevent
- * To make difficult for
- * To thwart
- * To impede
- * To frustrate
- * To delay action

These definitions help you see that hindering in the verse has more to do with stopping the act of praying rather than stopping the answers.

A commentary says that the husband's poor behavior would affect his spiritual life and be a hindrance to his prayer life.

- **Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God? ***

One commentary differentiated between gentleness and tranquility by regarding gentleness as giving no cause for trouble. In contrast, tranquility bears calmly the

trouble that others cause.

- **The section for the woman begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?**

One commentary says that Christ's spirit should be demonstrated in the home just as in the social relationships in the previous context.

- **The section for the man begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?**

One commentary says that the term honor has in it some sense of subjection. The husband should demonstrate Christian subordination himself as he relates to his wife.

- **What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?**

A commentary says the basis of fear may have been that of harassment by their pagan husbands. They probably tried to compel their wives to leave their faith. Another possibility is that the wives feared a display of bad temper on the part of their husbands. Still another possibility is that fear should be taken in a general sense. Fearing God would release them from other fears.

- **Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. ***

Nothing is specifically stated in this regard.

In the previous lesson, you wrote interpretative questions for four passages of Scripture (Acts 17:22-31; Neh 1; Mk 2:1-12; and Jon 2). You also marked those questions that you thought were very important to answer in order to understand the passage. In the following exercises, research your marked questions under each of the four categories: examine the content, review the context, compare with other Scripture, and consult secondary sources.

EXERCISE 1

For Acts 17:22-31, research your marked questions under each of the four categories. Examine the content, review the context, compare with other Scripture, and consult secondary sources. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 2

For Nehemiah 1, research your marked questions under each of the four categories. Examine the content, review the context, compare with other Scripture, and consult secondary sources. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 3

For Mark 2:1-12, research your marked questions under each of the four categories. Examine the content, review the context, compare with other Scripture, and consult secondary sources. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 4

For Jonah 2, research your marked questions under each of the four categories. Examine the content, review the context, compare with other Scripture, and consult secondary sources. Then check your answer.

Topic 2: Evaluate and Conclude

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand and explain how to evaluate your research and draw conclusions.
--

At some point in your research you must stop, evaluate your data, and come to a conclusion. Time limits may force you to stop. Or you may have exhausted all available resources at your disposal. You may find yourself drawing conclusions even as you study, throwing out unacceptable interpretations and thinking of other possible interpretations to pursue.

QUESTION 12

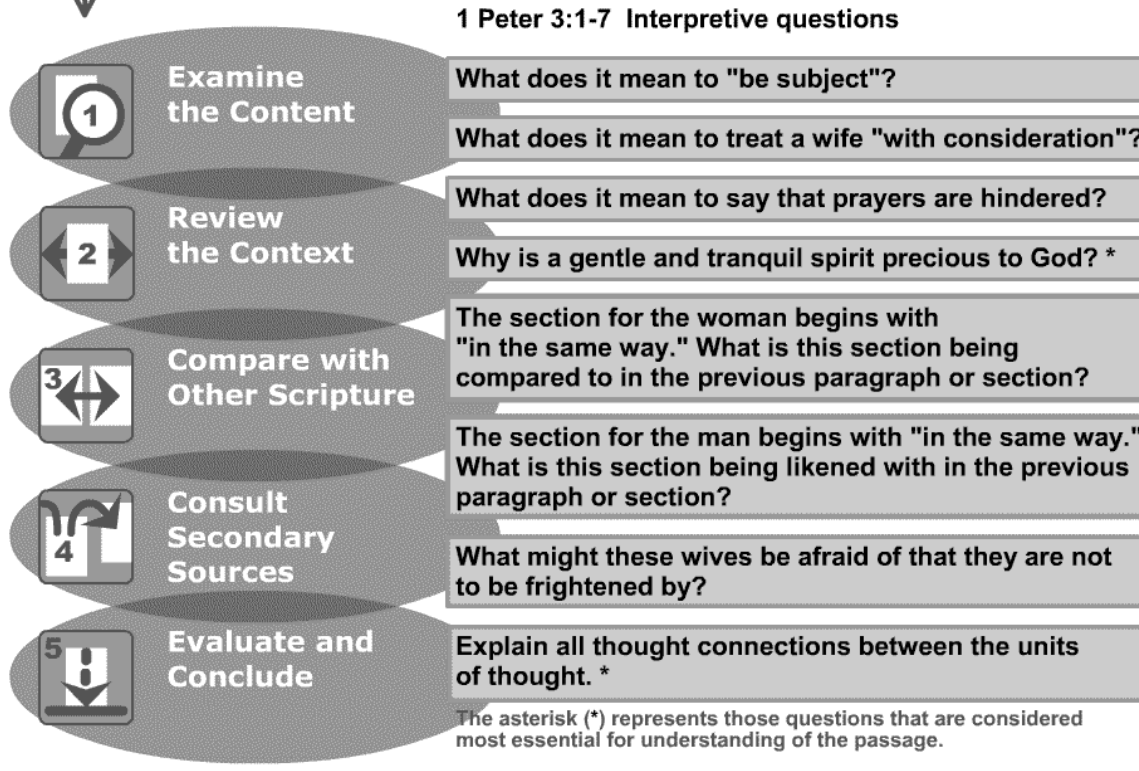
Which of the following is NOT a valid reason for concluding your study? When you have:

- A. Lost interest in the passage
- B. Run out of time
- C. Exhausted resources
- D. Evaluated your research

Look at the following examples from the 1 Peter 3:1-7 interpretive questions. The **conclusions** result from examining the content, reviewing the context, comparing other Scriptures, and consulting secondary sources.

Interpretation

Use these steps when interpreting scripture, recording your results for each of the interpretive questions identified.*



Evaluate and Conclude

- **What does it mean to “be subject”?**

In this context, Peter told the wives to have a positively humble, willingly supportive, cooperative, noncontentious attitude with their husbands as a proper expression of the Spirit of Christ within them.

- **What does it mean to treat a wife “with consideration”?**

The husband must understand the nature of a woman and, in particular, of his wife and live with her in a way that does not harm her nature.

- **What does it mean to say that prayers are hindered?**

The idea of hindering prayer seems to mean stopping the act or practice of praying, not the hindering of answers to prayers.

- **Why is a gentle and tranquil spirit precious to God? ***

A gentle and tranquil spirit is precious to God because it expresses submission

and promotes unity. Both submission and unity are precious to God.

- **The section for the woman begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being compared to in the previous paragraph or section?**

In general, the phrase “in the same way” continues the exhortation to a humble and noncontentious spirit toward those in authority, as exhibited in Christ's example in the previous passage.

- **The section for the man begins with “in the same way.” What is this section being likened with in the previous paragraph or section?**

Since it is clear that “in the same way” is a continuation of the series starting in chapter 2, the husband's conduct in his leadership over his wife must likewise be with a humble, positive, supportive, nonrebellious spirit.

- **What might these wives be afraid of that they are not to be frightened by?**

The comment of the commentary is a good answer - the basis of fear may have been that of harassment by their pagan husbands. They probably tried to compel their wives to leave their faith. Another possibility is that the wives feared a display of bad temper on the part of their husbands. Still another possibility is that fear should be taken in a general sense. Fearing God would release them from other fears.

- **Explain all thought connections between the units of thought. ***

See Examine the content. - Verses 1-2 merely go together as one sentence. Verse 3 follows from 2 as an additional command. Verse 4 is a contrast to verse 3. Verses 5-6 are an illustration of verses 1-4. Verse 7 is the instruction to the husband, so it starts a new but related thought.

QUESTION 13

Think about your views on marriage and how 1 Peter 3:1-7 has shaped those views. What is the most significant issue that you have drawn from 1 Peter 3:1-7 in shaping your views? How has the process of interpretation helped you to define this issue? Write down your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

In summary, in 1 Peter 3:1-7 Peter was telling wives and husbands to love and honor their respective mates by being humble, supportive, cooperative, and noncontentious as an expression of the Spirit of Christ in them and as a means of preserving harmony.

Now summarize your research for our several passages.

EXERCISE 5

For Acts 17:22-31, what summary do you think adequately represents the original meaning of the author? Write your interpretation of the passage in one paragraph and check your answer.

EXERCISE 6

For Nehemiah 1, what summary do you think adequately represents the original meaning of the author? Write your interpretation of the passage in one paragraph and check your answer.

EXERCISE 7

For Mark 2:1-12, what summary do you think adequately represents the original meaning of the author? Write your interpretation of the passage in one paragraph and check your answer.

EXERCISE 8

For Jonah 2, what summary do you think adequately represents the original meaning of the author? Write your interpretation of the passage in one paragraph and check your answer.

STUDY PROJECT: INTERPRETING PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

Research the interpretation and meaning of Philippians 2:1-11 by first asking interpretive questions of the passage. Then, mark with an asterisk those you feel must be answered. Once you have finished, go back and research the answers to those questions. You may find that you have several answers for a question. If so, evaluate and conclude by making a determination of which answer you believe to be correct.

Conclusion

You have now completed a thorough study of interpreting passages of Scripture! You should now have a better understanding of the interpretation process. You should know how to find the answers to the major questions that arise from the text. Always keep in mind that your conclusions can change as you learn more from the Scriptures and from others who teach the Bible.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2:

<i>Sequence Number</i>	<i>Research Step</i>
1	Examine the content.
2	Review the context.
3	Compare Scripture with Scripture.
4	Consult secondary sources.

QUESTION 3: False

QUESTION 4: B. Psalms

QUESTION 5:

- A. The paragraph before and the paragraph following.
- B. The chapter before and the chapter following.
- C. The whole book of 1 Peter.
- D. The whole Bible.

QUESTION 6: Scan the verses before and after the passage to find the immediate context. The extended context considers the whole book and its relationship to the whole Bible.

QUESTION 7: True

QUESTION 8:

- B. Concordance
- C. Parallel passages
- D. Cross-references
- F. Notes in the margin of a Bible

QUESTION 9: *Your answer*

QUESTION 10: D. After completing your own thorough study

QUESTION 11:

- A. Like having a teacher at your side who is an expert on the passage.
- C. Offer insights you may have overlooked.
- D. Provide information about the historical and literary background of the passage.

QUESTION 12: A. Lost interest in the passage

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

Exercise 1: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 may look generally similar to the following. (But note that these answers are based on the course answers from previous lessons. If you asked different interpretive questions, your answers will be different.)

Acts 17:22-31

1. What title should be given to this sermon? (i.e., what is Paul's main point in the sermon?)

Examine the content: Paul's attention was on God's identity. He compared the living God with the dead, pagan gods of Athens. He also compared the living God with the unknown god.

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: One commentary stated that Paul declared his mission in this passage. Paul wanted to make this unknown God known to them. As Paul continued to preach, he explained God's work in creation and providence.

Conclusion: The main point is to describe the living God to the Athenians. A possible title might be "Knowing the Unknown God."

2. What qualities of God are highlighted in this sermon? Why these and not others?

Examine the content: Paul described God as creator (v. 24) and His immensity (v. 24), His goodness (v. 25), His immanence (vv. 25, 27), His sovereignty (v. 26), His personal nature (v. 29), His morality (vv. 30-31), His justice (v. 31), and His righteousness (v. 31).

Presumably, Paul felt that these qualities drew the greatest differences between God and their personal gods. Also, these qualities would indicate that their unknown God is the supreme God. These qualities also touched on the various beliefs about gods that they had. These are the basic qualities about God that everyone should be aware of. People especially need to come to salvation.

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries mentioned nothing.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

3. How does the last paragraph (vv. 30-31) serve as the summary or conclusion of the sermon?

Examine the content: The word "therefore" indicates a summary or conclusion. Paul presented God as the creator. God has a claim on each person's life, so God's existence has moral consequences. The people must repent or face judgment. Paul

tied this final judgment to Christ's resurrection. Without the Resurrection, there was no basis for forgiveness.

Review the context: The only connection is in the following verses, where the listeners especially focused on the Resurrection. This was the point that caused division between belief and unbelief.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries offered nothing specific.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

4. Which is the key verse and why?

Examine the content: The most important verses are 30-31. These two verses call the people to repentance and introduce the resurrection of Christ.

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: A commentary emphasized that 30-31 were the key verses because the audience listened attentively until Paul spoke of resurrection. Then they could not tolerate hearing about a man rising from the dead.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

5. Explain all thought connections between the units of thought.

Examine the content: In verse 22, Paul identified with the people and where they were in their experience. He went from general to specific in verse 23. He pointed to the unknown god, whom they ignorantly worshipped. He described the true God in verses 24-26. In verse 27, he gave the purpose for their creation. God created them so that they would find Him. Then in verse 28, he explained why God is not far from each of them. He deduced that idols are useless in verse 29. Verses 30-31 conclude the whole message.

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: To summarize one commentary, Paul mentioned the unknown god, presented his desire to preach the true God, and then described Him. The people should not worship their gods. Now they must repent because of the coming judgment of Christ, who rose from the dead.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

Exercise 2: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 may look generally similar to the following. (But note that these answers are based on the course answers from previous lessons. If you asked different interpretive questions, your answers will be different.)

Nehemiah 1

1. Why did Nehemiah include verse 11 about his being cup-bearer to the king? Why here? Why so abruptly after the prayer?

Examine the content: Assuming that “this man” is the king, then Nehemiah used that reference to transition from his prayer to his coming before the king. Nehemiah was establishing why he would have any basis for approaching the king in the first place. There is nothing specific to tell you why it appears so abruptly, but again it must be because of his mention of “this man.”

Review the context: Looking at chapter 2, you see more clearly that verse 11 is a hinge verse to take you out of chapter 1 and into chapter 2.

Compare with other Scripture: No other Scripture could explain the place of this verse here.

Consult secondary sources: The one available commentary made no comment about the abrupt appearance of the verse.

Conclusion: Nehemiah’s statement that he was a cup-bearer is primarily a hinge verse, connecting the prayer with the answer to his prayer. It also explains why he would have access to the king.

2. What is a cup-bearer?

Examine the content: Nothing in chapter 1 helps.

Review the context: Chapter 2 implies that a cup-bearer delivers the wine to the king. Perhaps the emphasis on sadness in this passage connects with the responsibilities of a cupbearer.

Compare with other Scripture: Nothing in Scripture helps with a definition or description of a cup-bearer other than in Genesis 40. A cup-bearer occupied a high office in the ancient world.

Consult secondary sources: One source says that the cup-bearer’s duty was to serve and taste wine in the king’s presence to prove that the wine was safe to drink. In later times, cup-bearers were eunuchs. Another commentary said that being a cup-bearer was a privileged position. A cup-bearer often had political influence over the king.

Conclusion: Being a cup-bearer was a position of influence before the king. The cup-bearer apparently both protected and advised the king.

3. What do “Cislev” and “twentieth year” mean?

Examine the content: Nothing in chapter 1 helps.

Search the context: Chapter 2 tells you that “twentieth year” refers to the year of the reign of King Artaxerxes. Chapter 2 uses the month Nisan, confirming that Cislev is also a month.

Compare with other Scripture: Zechariah 7:1 confirms that it is the ninth month, but it does not indicate which month by modern calendars. Since the calendars are different, you cannot assume that it is the ninth month from January.

Consult secondary sources: A Bible dictionary says that Cislev is the month on the western calendar from the middle of November to the middle of December. The years that Artaxerxes reigned were from 464 to 424 BC.

Conclusion: The twentieth year is about 444 BC, and Cislev is sometime between November 15 and December 15.

4. Why is so much space given to the prayer?

Examine the content: Since nothing is explicit in the chapter, it has importance in what Nehemiah was trying to communicate. Perhaps it is a way of indicating that his

trust for success is the Lord, not his own skills or maneuvering. It certainly tells you something significant about the man.

Review the context: The context likewise cannot help you specifically. However, Nehemiah 2:3 merely says, “Then I quickly prayed to the God of heaven.” Because Nehemiah already established lengthy communication with the Lord in chapter 1, he could pray quickly in the face of an emergency.

Compare with other Scripture: Other Scripture cannot help you here, except with other examples of more space given to more important issues.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries gave no specific help with this question.

Conclusion: A final, definite answer is not possible here. It is enough to say that Nehemiah was a man of prayer who appealed to the covenant-keeping God for help with the pathetic condition of Jerusalem.

5. Why did Nehemiah quote this Scripture to the Lord?

Examine the content: There is nothing explicitly stated as to the reason. He perhaps chose a passage that focused on God’s faithfulness to His people and to His city. Nehemiah boldly told the Lord that He cannot let His city or His people fall into destruction.

Search the context: There is nothing specific in the surrounding context to help.

Compare with other Scripture: Nehemiah referred to Deuteronomy 12:5; 30:2-4. The passage emphasizes the city the Lord chose to be as His dwelling place. It also records the promises of prosperity and growth.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries made no comment.

Conclusion: Nehemiah concentrated on Jerusalem as the place where the Lord chose for His name to dwell and on God’s covenant faithfulness to Israel.

6. Why did Nehemiah describe and praise God the way he did?

Examine the content: The prayer focused on God’s greatness, power, faithfulness to His covenant, faithfulness in general, and love. These were on his mind as he thought of the needs at hand. He called on God to be faithful to His promises and to grant him favor with the king.

Search the context: There is nothing more specific in the context to amplify on the preceding answer.

Compare with other Scripture: Other Scripture would not help here. However, you can read the Scriptures referred to and see how literally they were quoted. You can see if there is anything in the context of those Scriptures to help you understand what might have influenced the use of them. Here, as mentioned, the Scriptures are associated with promises of growth and security. Nehemiah knew that these two things were not happening in Jerusalem.

Consult secondary sources: No specific comments.

Conclusion: Again Nehemiah was concentrating on God’s ability to accomplish His will and His covenant-keeping faithfulness.

7. What success did Nehemiah want?

Examine the content: The content of chapter 1 does not say.

Review the context: The context of chapter 2 suggests that the success he wanted was to be granted leave from his office to go help out in Jerusalem.

Compare with other Scripture: Scriptures beyond Nehemiah would not help with this issue.

Consult secondary sources: The available secondary sources offered no help.

Conclusion: See **Review the content:** The context of chapter 2 suggests that the success he wanted was to be granted leave from his office to go help out in Jerusalem.

8. Explain all the thought connections between units of thought.

Examine the content: There are two parts: the need presented to Nehemiah by his brothers (vv. 1-3) and the need presented to God by Nehemiah (vv. 4-10). More specifically, verse 1 seems to be a title along with the chronological data. He asked the question in verse 2. They answered in verse 3. Nehemiah responded in verse 4. He emphasized his personal mourning and preparation. He worshiped in verse 5. He confessed his sin and that of his people in verses 5-7. Nehemiah claimed the Scripture promise in verses 8-9. Then in verse 10, Nehemiah prayed that if God could redeem His people from Egypt, He could also save Jerusalem. Nehemiah imploringly but simply set his request before the Lord. Then with the mention of the king (“this man”) Nehemiah recorded that he was a cup-bearer. Nehemiah could expect to have influence with the king but could not always count on it.

Review the context: This does not help here.

Compare with other Scripture: This also does not help.

Consult secondary sources: Available sources said nothing about it.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content.**

Exercise 3: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 may look generally similar to the following. (But note that these answers are based on the course answers from previous lessons. If you asked different interpretive questions, your answers will be different.)

Mark 2:1-12

1. What is the key verse or thought of this passage? Why?

Examine the content: It would appear that verse 10 is the most important, since it focuses on the key issue of forgiveness. More importantly, it focuses on the issue of Christ’s authority.

Review the context: The decision that Jesus’ authority is emphasized can be traced back to Mark 1:22. The people recognized His authority. In the following verses, He demonstrated that authority over different aspects of life. In chapter 2, the focus is the authority to forgive sins.

Compare with other Scripture: The parallel passages do not give additional insight.

Consult secondary sources: A commentary states that this authority is the crucial issue in the story.

Conclusion: Verse 10 is the key verse. The key thought is the authority of Christ, especially to forgive sins.

2. Does the “faith” of verse 5 include that of the paralytic? What is the effect of the answer?

Examine the content: There is nothing in the text that specifies to whom the comment was directed. You can assume that all five men had faith. The effect is the fact that the Lord responded to faith. You cannot determine who initiated the action of coming to Jesus. The paralytic might have sought help because of his faith. Or the others may have convinced the man to be taken. In either case, they worked together in an action that demonstrated trust in the Lord.

Review the context: Nothing in the surrounding context helps this question.

Compare with other Scripture: The two parallel passages in Matthew and Luke do not provide any additional insight.

Consult secondary sources: A commentary declared that all five had faith.

Conclusion: Apparently all five had faith. The effect is to demonstrate the Lord’s response to faith.

3. Is there any reason why this event is included so early in the book? If so, why?

Examine the content: There does not seem to be any apparent reason why it occurs so early in the book. As noted earlier, it is tied in with the question of authority, brought up in Mark 1:22. But the authority of Jesus is an issue in much of the book, so it is not confined to the early part of His ministry.

Review the context: Nothing, other than the reference to Jesus’ authority, is in the context to help.

Compare with other Scripture: The parallel passage in Matthew recorded this story following a different event from the one in Mark. But the following account is the same. The following narrative referred to health and the Pharisees, that only the ill need a physician. Luke followed the same order of accounts as Mark. Possibly Mark wanted to emphasize early the importance of forgiveness in salvation.

Consult secondary sources: One commentary says that this event is the first of a series in this section. Mark demonstrated the steadily mounting antagonism to Jesus from the scribes and Pharisees. This event has more to do with what follows than with what precedes.

Conclusion: Exactly why this incident is recorded early in the book is difficult to say. Mark possibly wanted to make Jesus’ authority and the Pharisees’ reaction to it an emphasis of his account.

4. Which is easier to say: “Your sins are forgiven” or “Arise, and take up your pallet and walk”? Why?

Examine the content: It is easier to say, “Your sins be forgiven,” because there is no outward evidence. Anyone could claim to forgive sins by just saying it. No one would know for sure whether or not the person’s sins were truly forgiven. But if someone says to such a person, “Rise up and walk,” then it will be instantly clear whether or not the man has actually done what he said he would.

Review the context: Nothing in the context helps.

Compare with other Scripture: The question cannot be answered from other Scriptures.

Consult secondary sources: One commentary says that the claim to forgive sins could not be validated by any immediate consequence. However, Jesus established His power to heal at once.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

5. Explain all thought connections between the units of thought.

Examine the content: Verse 1 continues from the events of chapter 1 and tells about Jesus' location. Verses 2-4 merely are a connected narrative about Jesus' teaching and the coming of the five men. Verse 5 indicates Jesus' shift of attention to these men and His immediate granting of forgiveness. Verse 6 is a contrast to this action, revealing the negative attitude of the scribes. Verse 7 describes their thoughts. Verse 8 is Jesus' reaction to those thoughts. Then in verse 9 He puts a question to them, the answer to which is evident on the surface. He goes on in verse 10, apparently without waiting for an answer, to show that it is harder to heal a man. Then He does so at that moment to show that He has authority to forgive sins also. Verse 11 records the command to rise and walk. Verse 12 tells how the people glorified God.

Review the context: This cannot be answered in context study.

Compare with other Scripture: This does not help.

Consult secondary sources: The sources specified nothing.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

Exercise 4: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2 may look generally similar to the following. (But note that these answers are based on the course answers from previous lessons. If you asked different interpretive questions, your answers will be different.)

Jonah 2

1. What kind of salvation is Jonah talking about?

Examine the content: Jonah used "salvation" in the sense of "deliverance." The Lord had delivered him from drowning.

Review the context: Nothing in the immediate context helps with the meaning of the word. At the end of chapter 1, the sailors threw Jonah into the sea. Thus, Jonah faced imminent drowning. At the end of chapter 2, the great fish deposited him on dry land. Jonah was delivered from drowning. Jonah expressed thankfulness for deliverance in his prayer.

Compare with other Scripture: The word "save/salvation" is used frequently in the Old and New Testaments with a wide range of meanings. These would include physical healing, material well-being, a life of worth and meaning, rescue from danger, and eternal deliverance from hell. Psalm 3:8 is an example with a similar phrase, where the context clearly has to do with deliverance from enemies. Thus, you

can never assume what the word “save/salvation” means until you examine the context closely.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries say nothing about this concept. A Bible dictionary says that salvation means the result or action of preservation from disease or danger. It implies safety or good health. The movement in Scripture goes from physical salvation towards moral and spiritual deliverance.

Conclusion: The salvation in this passage is deliverance from death.

2. Is Jonah’s experience in the great fish positive or negative? Explain.

Examine the content: Both are possible. Jonah’s experience was mainly positive because the fish saved him from drowning. But many people would consider spending time inside a great fish as an extremely negative experience!

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries do not answer the question directly. But one commentary suggests that Jonah was unconscious when the great fish swallowed him, so the fish was the means of salvation.

Conclusion: The experience in the fish was basically positive, since it was the means of Jonah’s salvation.

3. What are the thought divisions of this chapter?

Examine the content: The first verse introduces the situation. Then verses 2-4 appear to be his plea. Verses 5-6 (or 5-7) are praise for deliverance. Then verses 7-9 (or 8-9) are Jonah’s promise of public thanksgiving. Verse 10 closes the chapter to prepare you for chapter 3.

Search the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: To summarize one commentary,

- Jonah cried in extreme anxiety to his God,
- The Lord heard Jonah’s prayer,
- And Jonah guaranteed a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**

4. How would you paraphrase verse 8?

Examine the content: Those who worship pagan idols will leave the object of their faithfulness.

Search the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Psalm 31:6 sounds very much like Jonah’s words. Psalm 31:6 says, “I hate those who serve worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD.” In this parallel setting, worthless idols are the opposite of the Lord. Acts 14:15 also puts idols and the Lord in opposition. Part of Acts 14:15 says, “...you should turn from these worthless things to the living God...”

The word “loyalty” is a form of the word that usually refers to God’s faithful covenant love. Thus, here it may be a personification of God.

Consult secondary sources: One commentary says that those people who worship false gods cut themselves off from the true God. The true god is the only true source of liberation for them.

Conclusion: Those who worship pagan gods cut themselves off from Jonah’s faithful God.

5. What is the relationship between the two sentences in verse 2?

Examine the content: These two sentences are equally parallel. “Called” is the same as “shouted for help.” “From my distress” equals “from the belly of Sheol.” “And He answered me” corresponds to “you heard my voice.” The phrases express the same thought twice. The second line expands a little on the first. For example, the second line adds the idea of the “belly of Sheol” that expands on the simple first line idea of “distress.”

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: The Psalms contain many examples. This is a standard feature of synonymous Hebrew parallelism.

Consult secondary sources: Available commentaries make no comment.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

6. Explain all thought connections between the units of thought.

Examine the content: Verse 1 introduces the situation. Verse 2 describes the call for help. Verse 3 explains the reason for the call. Verse 4 concludes in light of the situation—despair, then hope. Verses 5-6 describe perhaps a subsequent experience with the sea. The final portion of verse 6 declares deliverance. Verse 7 may be a reason for verse 6. Or verse 6 introduces the thoughts of verses 8-9. Then verses 8-9 are a promise to give thanks. Verse 10 puts Jonah back on land in preparation for chapter 3.

Review the context: Not applicable.

Compare with other Scripture: Not applicable.

Consult secondary sources: One commentary summarizes the sequence of thought in verses 2-7. After his desperate prayer, the water and pressure of the depths overcame Jonah. He then became conscious of the fact that he was still alive. As a result, Jonah promised a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Conclusion: See **Examine the content**.

Exercise 5: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Acts 17:22-31

Conclusions concerning your research on Acts 17:22-31 have been included in the answers to Exercise 1 under each of the researched questions. The following answers give only a summary of the interpretation of the passage.

Acts 17:22-31

Paul made known to the Athenians who their “unknown god” is by describing the living God. He then called them to repentance in the light of the coming judgment of the resurrected Christ.

Exercise 6: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Nehemiah 1

Conclusions concerning your research on Nehemiah 1 have been included in the answers to Exercise 2 under each of the researched questions. The following answers give only a summary of the interpretation of the passage.

Nehemiah 1

The city and people of Jerusalem were in a state of physical and personal deterioration and disarray. This situation would be corrected through the human work of Nehemiah and the divine work of Israel’s covenant-keeping God.

Exercise 7: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Mark 2:1-12

Conclusions concerning your research on Mark 2:1-12 have been included in the answers to Exercise 3 under each of the researched questions. The following answers give only a summary of the interpretation of the passage.

Mark 2:1-12

Mark confirmed the sovereign authority of Jesus that was expressed in Jesus’ teaching in chapter 1. This was accomplished by demonstrating the ultimate in authority—Jesus granted forgiveness of sins, made visible through the healing of the paralytic.

Exercise 8: Answers to Interpretive Questions for Jonah 2

Conclusions concerning your research on Jonah 2 have been included in the answers to Exercise 4 under each of the researched questions. The following answers give only a summary of the interpretation of the passage.

Jonah 2

Jonah in this prayer from the stomach of the great fish described how he was drowning, sinking to the bottom of the sea when he cried out to the Lord for deliverance, and then thanked the Lord for His deliverance through the providence of the fish. Jonah then vowed to publicly praise the Lord for His faithfulness

Lesson 8: Application—Preparing the Applications

Lesson Introduction

Jesus told His disciples in John 14:9 that they have seen God the Father if they have seen Him. As the people of the world see you, what do they see? Do they see the truth of God's Word living among them? Unfortunately, many Christians have more abstract knowledge of God than practical experience with Him. They do not live out the truths of Scripture.

If you stop your Bible study before making personal applications, you are ending before you begin. It is like listening to a sermon but not “doing” it. It is like cooking a sumptuous meal and then walking away before eating it. The result is that the Bible becomes a closed book.

Lessons 8 and 9 help you bridge the gap between what you have learned and what you still need to do — apply the truths of God's Word. In this lesson Topic 1 shows the difference between the process of application and that of observation and interpretation. Observation and interpretation led you to understand the truths of a passage. Application transfers those truths into experience in your life.

Topic 2 begins the process of bridging the gap from the time the Bible was written to today. That is, you must determine the timeless truths of the Bible and then prepare a statement of how each of those truths applies to you today. If John told his readers that God is love and that they should therefore love one another, John is also telling us that we must apply that timeless truth of God's love to those around us. That timeless truth and statement of application is clear. It may take more thought and meditation to determine the timeless truths in other passages.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Observation and Interpretation vs. Application

Topic 2: Bridging the Gap for Ourselves

Determine the Truths of a Passage

Prepare a Statement of Application

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to write statements of truth from select Bible passages.

Specific Objectives:

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the difference between the process of application and the process used for observation and interpretation
- List the four steps of the process of application
- Determine the truths of a specific passage of study
- Prepare a statement of application for a specific passage of study

Preparing to Study

Once again, take some time to prepare your heart before beginning this lesson. While you have learned that there is a strong emphasis on the method of Bible study, Bible study is much more than a technique. It is a spiritual discipline that needs the continuous ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, begin this lesson with some time in prayer. Read Psalm 119:49-56. Meditate on the benefits of the Word of God that these verses teach.

QUESTION 1

Psalm 119:49-56 contains some words of comfort. Write in your Life Notebook how the Bible has comforted you in recent days.

Topic 1: Observation and Interpretation vs. Application

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand the difference between the process of application and the process used for observation and interpretation.

By now you should feel that your understanding has grown immensely in relation to Bible study and to the passages you have been studying. You gleaned background knowledge from a variety of sources. You studied the writer's flow of thought, along with some of the various structural indicators that the author used to declare his message. You learned how to state the theme of a passage through a subject/complement sentence. Finally, you probed many questions about the meaning and the significance of your passage. You learned all these things in Observation and Interpretation.

Application is the goal of all Bible study. In application you will look for the truths stated in the passage. Each writer's message was from God. Each writer intended that his readers heed the truths of His message. Therefore, you need to respond to these truths and apply them to your life. You need to ask yourself what circumstances the readers faced that you also face today. What truths, commands, or rebukes apply directly to you? Also, you should notice which truths relate to you only indirectly.

QUESTION 2

The goal of Bible study is _____.

QUESTION 3

Match the Bible study step with the question that reminds us of that step.

<i>Bible Study Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What should I do?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What does it say?

Now it is time to write down some of the truths that should be emerging from your understanding of a passage. You will transfer these truths into application for your daily use. Application arises out of the discoveries that you make in the observation and interpretation phase of Bible study. You may define **application** as:

Determining the truths or principles of the passage studied and then seeing how your life should be affected by these truths.

Another way of saying this is: **Translating your understanding of God's Word into action.**

Application is the essential step of transferring the meaning a biblical text had for its original hearers into the implications it has for believers today. Application must transfer the original significance of a text to a different historical time and culture. In some cases, the transmission happens fairly easily. In others, the transfer across cultures becomes more complex. But remember, the ultimate aim of knowing spiritual truth is **application**.

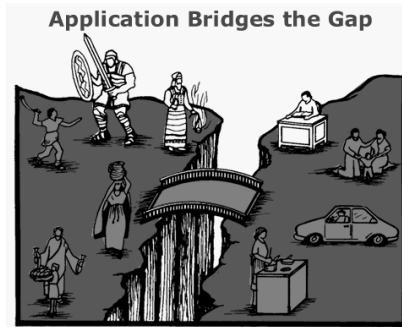
QUESTION 4

Application is translating your understanding of God's Word into action. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Look up the following three passages and write down in your Life Notebook what each passage teaches about the importance of application:

- Matthew 7:24-27
- John 8:31-32
- James 1:22-25



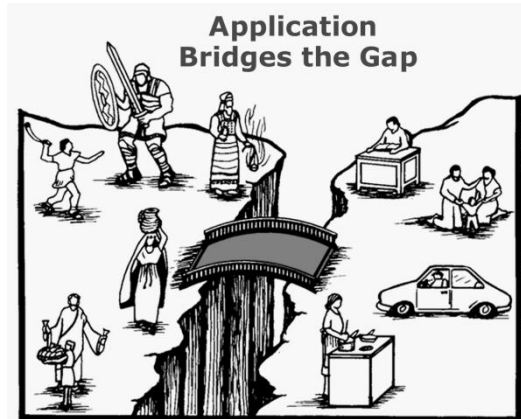
Topic 2: Bridging the Gap for Ourselves

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to list the four steps of the process of application.

The actual process that leads to bridging this gap has four steps:

- Determine the truths of a passage
- Prepare a statement of application
- Relate the application to your life
- Practice the application

The process of application bridges the gap between the world of Bible times and your world today. It takes the scriptural truths that God revealed to the people of biblical times and applies them to the world in which you live. It particularly applies them to your own life.



You can understand some truths clearly. They are obvious. For example, “Love your neighbor as yourself” means the same now as it meant a thousand years ago. If the truth of your passage is explicit, universal, and timeless (see below), then it already bridges the gap. You need only put it into practice.

You will often find, however, the truths of your passage affected by culture, time, and custom. In these cases, you must use each of the four steps of the application process.

- “Determine the truths of a passage” means that you **identify the universal truths** in the author’s message for his original audience.
- “Prepare a statement of application” means that you **write out a contemporary application (in your time and culture) of the universal truth.**
- “Relate the application to your life” means that you **relate that contemporary application to specific areas of your life.**
- “Practicing the application” means that you actually **carry out that application.**

(You will learn about **relating the application to life** and **practicing the application** in the next lesson.)

QUESTION 6

What is the correct order of the Bible study steps?

<i>Sequence Number</i>	<i>Step</i>
1	Practice the application
2	Determine the truths of a passage
3	Relate the application to your life
4	Prepare a statement of application

Determine the Truths of a Passage

Objective 3 - When you have completed this subtopic, you will be able to determine the truths of a given passage.

Through the interpretive process you clarified the author's meaning. You researched what you did not understand. Now it is time to apply your understanding by determining the truths that relate to the theme of the passage.

Generally speaking, there are two ways that Scripture reveals truths: (1) the Bible explicitly states many truths, but (2) other truths are implicit. The Bible can embed implicit truths in a command, an action, a situation, a promise, or a prohibition.

Explicit Truths

You can find many explicit truths in the Bible. The Bible records them openly as statements of fact. They can either be temporary or timeless. An example of a timeless truth would be "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8b). This is a clearly stated truth that will never change and upon which you can immediately base application. You must use application in conformity with the context and theme of the passage. See, for example, 1 John 4:8a, where the Bible makes its own application.

As another example, look again at Galatians 5:16-26. Several of the explicit truths that you can find in this passage are:

Explicit Truths – Walking by the Spirit

- Walking by the Spirit will prevent carrying out the desires of the flesh (v. 16).
- The Spirit and the flesh are constantly in opposition to each other (v. 17).
- Wishing to do right will not overcome the deeds of the flesh (v. 17).
- Those led by the Spirit are not under the law (v. 18).
- The deeds of the flesh are self-evident (v. 19).
- Those who practice the deeds of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (v. 21).
- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (vv. 22-23).
- Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (v. 24)

Implicit Truths

The Bible does not state all truths openly. Some truths are embedded in a command, an action, a situation, a promise, or a prohibition. The Bible reveals some truths through cultural situations or narrations of events. These truths lie beneath the surface. You need to draw them out.

You can see an example in Romans 15:30-32 with Paul's request for prayer for success and safety on his mission to Jerusalem. Paul no longer needs your prayers! But you may draw from this the principle of application that Christians should pray for their missionaries. Similarly, missionaries should actively seek prayer from churches for their work.

As you are seeking truths, you should ask, “Are they just for specific people or for everyone?” You could answer this question using several categories. You can determine if the situation in the Bible passage was local or universal, or temporary or timeless.

Local or Universal Truths

When you search for truths from a passage, you need to determine if the biblical situation is local or universal. For example, the early chapters of Acts record the early days of the

church. Acts 4:32 says, “The group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one said that anything that belonged to him was his own, but everything was held in common.” The believers in Jerusalem eliminated the idea of private property. Does this mean that all believers should live in communes?

You can look in vain throughout the rest of the New Testament for any such command. Nowhere (not even in Jerusalem) did the believers receive a command from the Lord to practice this. Possibly, having all property in common was a spontaneous expression of love in the Jerusalem church. Acts 2:44-45 attribute this action as a means of providing for those in need. Among some of the new believers were those who depended on provisions for the poor. Their Jewish law stressed the importance of helping the poor. This seemed like the most loving solution to the **local** problems.

Of course, you most likely see the **universal** truth. You should care about your brother and be ready to help him in love. But the specifics in this example from Acts concern a local situation.

Compare the example from Acts with the Great Commission from our Lord in Matthew 28:18-20: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” There is nothing local here. It is a **universal** command from your Master.

Temporary or Timeless

Another way to look for truths in a passage is to determine whether the biblical situation is **temporary** or **timeless**. For example, Luke 9:3 says, “He said to them, ‘Take nothing for your journey—no staff, no traveler’s bag, no bread, no money; and do not take an extra tunic.’” If this command were **timeless**, then every minister and missionary should go out with no provision.

But we know that this was a **temporary** command because Jesus later said in Luke 22:35-36, “‘When I sent you out with no money bag, or traveler’s bag, or sandals, you didn’t lack anything, did you?’ They replied, ‘Nothing.’ He said to them, ‘But now, the one who has a money bag must take it, and likewise a traveler’s bag too. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.’” So the command to go out without provision was replaced by the command to take provision when you go out.

You may recall that one of the twenty principles of interpretation in Lesson 6 was “The New Testament takes precedence over the Old Testament as the final authority in doctrinal matters.” This principle is also known as “progressive revelation.” That is, God revealed His truth progressively. During this progress of revelation God can clarify, change, modify, or negate earlier revelation through later revelation. So, not only does the New Testament take precedence over the Old, there is a progression of revelation within each testament, and even within some books of the Bible (as we saw above between Lk 9 and Lk 22). Another clear example of the principle of progressive revelation can be found by comparing Acts 10:15 with Leviticus 11. In Acts God told

Peter that the Levitical restrictions on foods no longer apply! Truths that are changed or replaced by later revelation are clearly **temporary**.

A **timeless** truth can be found in Leviticus 11:44a, “for I am the LORD your God and you are to sanctify yourselves and be holy because I am holy.” This timeless truth is reinforced by later revelation, such as 1 Peter 1:16: “for it is written, ‘you shall be holy because I am holy.’” But Leviticus 11:44 concludes with a **temporary** truth, “You must not defile yourselves by any of the swarming things that creep on the ground.”

QUESTION 7

Deuteronomy 7:2 says, “And he delivers them over to you and you attack them, utterly annihilate them; make no covenant with them nor show them compassion.” Which terms apply to this command? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Temporary
- B. Timeless
- C. Local
- D. Universal

QUESTION 8

Which would be true if Deuteronomy 7 were an explicit truth? Which if it were an implicit truth?

<i>Type</i>	<i>Truth</i>
Explicit	Jews should annihilate any inhabitants of the land.
Implicit	Believers should not allow evil influences in their mindsets.

QUESTION 9

Do you think the truth for Deuteronomy 7:2 is explicit or implicit? _____.

Limited Applications

As you have seen, **the Bible sometimes limits its own audience**. You can know this from the context or from the teaching of other Scripture passages. The following four principles can help you determine if the Bible passage limits itself.

- The author may limit the application by addressing a specific person or a limited group.

In 1 Corinthians 7:8, for example, Paul wrote it is better not to marry. But this is limited only to those who have this “gift from God” (v. 7).

- The context may tell you it is not a universal truth.

An example would be the words of Eliphaz to Job in Job 15:5. The context makes plain that his wisdom was contrary to God’s. Therefore, Job should not have adopted it.

Though at times Eliphaz expressed wise things, Job 15:5 is human wisdom. Eliphaz applied his human wisdom wrongly to Job.

- A requirement due to the historical or cultural context may limit the application.

In John 9:1-12 Jesus applied clay to a blind man's eyes. Then Jesus told the blind man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He then received his sight. You, however, should not apply clay to the eyes of the blind! You should not tell the blind to wash in the pool of Siloam to receive their sight! John 9 records a historical miracle performed by Jesus. That context limits the application.

- Subsequent revelation may limit the application of some Scriptures. Or subsequent revelation may complete that which was only partially revealed in earlier periods of history. This again is the principle of progressive revelation.

Acts 10:15 teaches that believers should no longer consider foods formerly unclean for God's people as unholy today. Hebrews 9 and Hebrews 10 indicate that the Levitical laws are no longer valid because of the finished work of Christ. Therefore, you need to understand the teaching in the Levitical laws in relation to the work of Christ before you apply them to your life. Subsequent revelation limits your application of Leviticus 11.

QUESTION 10

Which one of the following passages contains an explicit, universal truth that you can apply to your life today?

- A. John 9:6
- B. Acts 10:15
- C. Leviticus 11:7
- D. Job 15:5

More Examples of Finding Truths

If the Bible does not limit the command, prohibition, request, or situation to the original readers, you should obey. It may not be necessary to search for an implicit truth.

On the other hand, if the command, prohibition, request, or situation is limited to the original readers, you should search for the implicit truths upon which these situations are based. For example, Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 7:8 that his readers should remain single. He also wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:26-27 that a man should remain in the condition in which he is called. Paul wanted men and women to seek the Lord. He did not want them to be divided in their concerns because of the impending crisis (vv. 26, 32-35). An implicit truth behind the command could be: changing circumstances may require differing types of self-sacrifice in order to maintain your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Consequently, when you think that a command or situation is temporary or if you are having trouble deciding, you should search the context for help. There you will find what circumstances, doctrines, laws, or other truths may have preceded or followed. Then you will know on what the present command, action, or situation is based.

Consider Matthew 28:16-20 and the command to go and make disciples of all nations. This command is based on the truth stated explicitly in verse 18 that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Christ. In other words, the command is based upon the truth that Jesus is King of Kings and Lords of Lords, both in heaven and upon earth. Therefore, all nations are to become disciples of the King. All Christians should be disciple makers. In Matthew 28 the Lord commissioned His disciples to go into the entire world.

You can find another illustration in the Lord’s command to Saul concerning waging war against Amalek. God said, “Put them to death—man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike.” (1 Sam 15:3). This command from the Lord is clearly limited to this one specific circumstance of war against Amalek. You would not want to make a truth out of this and say that Christians are to kill all Amalekites or any other unbeliever! A theological truth behind this command, however, is that all sinners stand under the sentence of death that resulted from God’s judgment upon Adam’s sin. In fact, Romans 8:20-22 says that all of creation groans under this curse and will one day experience the judgment of death, eternal damnation.

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 Paul told the Corinthian believers to set aside money regularly. When he came to Corinth, he wanted it to be ready for him to take to the church of Jerusalem for distribution to the poor. Is regularly setting aside money for the Jerusalem church a direct statement to you today? No! It was a specific request for a specific need. Is there a truth for you today? Yes! You should regularly set aside money for the needs of the church.

As these examples demonstrate, you will find that almost all temporary commands and situations have some relevant truth behind them.

QUESTION 11

Match the passage with a truth from that passage.

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Truth</i>
1 Samuel 15:3	All sinners are under God’s condemnation.
Acts 13:1-5	All Christians should be disciple makers.
Matthew 28:18-20	Christians should regularly set aside money.
1 Corinthians 16:1-3	Churches should send out certain believers as missionaries.

Here are five truths that relate to the theme of 1 Peter 3:1:

- The Christ-like response of a wife to her husband is submission.
- The Christ-like response of a husband to his wife is understanding and honor.
- Nonbelieving husbands may be attracted to the Lord through the silent, upright, humble behavior of their wives.
- The adornment that God loves is internal purity and humility.
- Husbands and wives are equals (fellow heirs) in the Lord.

EXERCISE 1

Below are listed the passages that you have been studying in previous lessons. Write down at least five truths that you can find in relation to the theme of each passage. Be prepared to discuss these truths and explain why you chose them.

- Acts 17:22-31
- Nehemiah 1
- Mark 2:1-12
- Jonah 2

You have learned how to find the truths related to the theme of a passage. Often you have to derive these truths from a temporary situation. At other times the passage plainly states the truth. You are now ready for the next step-to prepare a statement of application in response to these truths.

Prepare a Statement of Application

Objective 4 - When you have completed this subtopic, you will be able to prepare a statement of application for a specific passage of study.
--

You can apply all truths of God in some way. In other words, you can respond to all the truths of God with appropriate actions. Determining in what way you should respond to these truths is a matter of expressing them in a statement of application. You may define a statement of application as:

The action or response you should make in relation to the truths of a passage and the main theme.

For example, a truth in Matthew 28:16-20 is that believers should make disciples from all peoples, tribes, and nations. The statement of application is that, wherever you are, you should proclaim the gospel to all men in hope of making some disciples.

To help you formulate your statements of application, keep these four hints in mind. First, keep them in harmony with the theme of the passage you are studying. While some truths might evoke several applications, try to choose those that are in keeping with the main theme. Second, make your statements as concise as you can. Choose your words carefully for accuracy and impact. Third, make your statements contemporary. Use words and idioms that you use in everyday life. This will help you articulate your statements with vitality. Finally, make your statements as specific as possible. Your statement should let you know without a doubt what you need to do. Here is a summary of these four points:

Attributes of a Statement of Application

1. In Harmony with the Main Theme
2. Succinct
3. Contemporary
4. Specific

Note: Where you find a command, prohibition, situation, or request to be timeless and applicable, you already have the statement of application. You simply write it down as it is or restate it as a “should.” For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Constantly pray.” That can be restated as, “I should pray constantly.” You may want to make “constantly” more specific and say, “I should pray throughout each day, as I have opportunity” or “Each day I should be in a constant attitude of prayer.”

QUESTION 12

Match the item with the correct description of it.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Item Description</i>
Statement of Application	Recorded in the Bible openly as statements of fact
Explicit Truth	Bridges the gap between the original meaning and implications for today
Implicit Truth	Embedded in a cultural situation or narration of events
Application	As brief and specific as possible

QUESTION 13

In light of the command in Matthew 28:16-20, what are you doing to make disciples? Write down the names of those people whom you are attempting to disciple. Write down the names of those whom you plan to disciple. Explain what you are doing, or plan to do, in order to obey this command.

Here again are the truths from Galatians 5:16-26 given above. Several of the explicit truths found in this passage are as follows:

- Walking by the Spirit will prevent carrying out the desires of the flesh (v. 16).
- The Spirit and the flesh are constantly in opposition to each other (v. 17).

- Wishing to do right will not overcome the deeds of the flesh (v. 17).
- Those led by the Spirit are not under the law (v. 18).
- The deeds of the flesh are self-evident (v. 19).
- Those who continually practice the deeds of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (v. 21).
- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (vv. 22-23).
- Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (v. 24).

In Galatians 5:16-26 you could express the following statement of application from truths 1-3: Believers wishing to overcome the opposition of the flesh need to walk by the Spirit. Notice that this one statement came from three truths. You do not always need to make a one-to-one correspondence, one truth to one statement of application.

Likewise, take truths 5 and 7 from the same list. You can express at least two statements of application: (1) You should scrutinize your deeds to see whether you have been walking by the Spirit or by means of the flesh; and (2) If you have been walking by the flesh, then you need to stop and begin walking by the Spirit.

Here are statements of application for the truths previously listed for 1 Peter 3:1-7:

- As a Christian wife I should provide cooperative, noncontentious support for my husband.
- As a Christian husband I should be aware of the nature and ways of my wife and honor her by not doing things that would offend that nature.
- As a Christian wife married to a non-Christian husband I should seek to bring my husband to the Lord through my supportive, loving life, not my nagging or preaching.
- I should give more attention to my attitudes than to my attire.
- As a Christian husband I must treat my wife honorably as a fellow heir of God's grace and not as a servant who is with me only to do my bidding.

Now it is your turn to develop your own statements of application.

EXERCISE 2

Using the same four passages that you have studied, write statements of application for the truths you have found. Then be prepared to discuss your statements about these passages:

- Acts 17:22-31
- Nehemiah 1
- Mark 2:1-12
- Jonah 2

Conclusion

James 1:23-24 contains an unforgettable illustration about the danger of neglecting application: “For if someone merely listens to the message and does not live it out, he is like someone who gazes at his natural face in a mirror. For he gazes at himself and then goes out and immediately forgets what sort of person he was.” What do you see when you look at yourself in the mirror of God’s Word? Do you have the tendency to turn away and not try to change what you see? Resist the temptation to turn away and do nothing. Accept the Bible’s assessment of yourself and begin making some changes!

The next lesson will give you some additional help in application. May the Lord bless you as you courageously keep looking in the mirror of God’s Word and seeking to become more like Jesus Christ!

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2: Application

QUESTION 3:

<i>Bible Study Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What does it say?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What should I do?

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5: *Your answer*

QUESTION 6:

<i>Sequence Number</i>	<i>Step</i>
1	Determine the truths of a passage
2	Prepare a statement of application
3	Relate the application to your life
4	Practice the application

QUESTION 7:

A. Temporary

C. Local

QUESTION 8:

<i>Type</i>	<i>Truth</i>
Explicit	Jews should annihilate any inhabitants of the land.
Implicit	Believers should not allow evil influences in their mindsets.

QUESTION 9: Implicit

QUESTION 10: B. Acts 10:15

QUESTION 11:

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Truth</i>
1 Samuel 15:3	All sinners are under God's condemnation.
Acts 13:1-5	Churches should send out certain believers as missionaries.
Matthew 28:18-20	All Christians should be disciple makers.
1 Corinthians 16:1-3	Christians should regularly set aside money.

QUESTION 12:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Item Description</i>
Statement of Application	As brief and specific as possible
Explicit Truth	Recorded in the Bible openly as statements of fact
Implicit Truth	Embedded in a cultural situation or narration of events
Application	Bridges the gap between the original meaning and implications for today

QUESTION 13: *Your answer*

Exercise 1: Truths of Selected Passages

Your solution to this exercise should look generally similar to the following:

Acts 17:22-31

- God is Creator.
- God is immense and infinite.
- God is the giver of all things, especially life and breath.
- God cannot be likened to anything, especially anything material.
- God calls all men to repent in view of the coming day of judgment before the resurrected Christ.

Nehemiah 1

- The best immediate response to a problem is to go to the Lord.
- God is a faithful, covenant-keeping God.
- God's promises will always be fulfilled.
- Recognition of sin and confession are essential to a good relationship with the Lord.
- The best prayers are based on the clear truths of the Word of God, especially those concerning the person of God Himself.

Mark 2:1-12

- The Lord responds to faith and faithfulness.
- The Lord has authority over all things, including and especially the forgiveness of sins.
- The Lord can heal all physical infirmities.
- It is possible to know the truth and have a hard heart toward God.
- Christ's authority, truth, and power are beneficial to us only when we respond to them.

Jonah 2

- The Lord often uses crises to get our attention.
- God in His grace gives us many chances when His justice could cut us off.
- It is proper to give the Lord public praise for His work in our lives.
- The best way to endure crises is to prepare for them before they happen through an ever-deepening knowledge of, and walk with, the Lord.
- No situation is so great that the Lord is not able to preserve us in it or through it.

Exercise 2: Statements of Application of Truths of Selected Passages

Your solution to this exercise should look generally similar to the following:

Acts 17:22-31

- I should depend on God's power and knowledge of me because He created me.
- I should have total confidence in God's ability to deal with my situation because He is infinite.
- Because my every breath comes from Him, I should be in an attitude of constant praise and thanksgiving and dependence.
- I should rejoice in the fact that God is alive, personal, and greater than any created thing.
- I should be God's instrument in spreading the call to all men to repent.

Nehemiah 1

- I should make it my practice to turn to the Lord immediately whenever I face a difficulty or think anything negative.
- I should give all of my worry and concern over to God because I know He is faithful to take care of me as His child.
- I should trust that God would always operate in accordance with His Word and thus find guidance and comfort in it.
- I should immediately confess my sin any time I am aware that I have sinned.
- I should read the Word regularly if I am to pray knowledgeably and effectively by truly knowing my God.

Mark 2:1-12

- If I want the Lord to respond to me, I must trust Him and be faithful to Him.
- I must bow before His authority and be thankful that He uses that authority on my behalf as His child.
- I should give Him thanks for my daily health and certainly for special healing, recognizing that He may choose to use ill health in my life for His glory.
- I must regularly and immediately apply the truth of the Word to my life so that my heart will not become hard through lack of obedience to what I know.
- If I am to please the Lord and experience His blessing, I must trust Him implicitly in all things.

Jonah 2

- I should respond to my crises with an attitude of looking for what the Lord is teaching me.
- I should live in a way that shows gratitude for His grace in not dealing with me after my sins.
- I should take the opportunities at church to publicly thank the Lord for His work in my life.
- I need to know God better so that, when I come into a difficulty, I will be prepared with the right attitude to handle it for His glory.
- I must trust that, no matter how difficult a situation might be, the Lord is totally in control and able to take care of me in it.

Lesson 9: Application—Relating the Applications to Life

Lesson Introduction

The conclusion of the previous lesson reminded you about the truths in James 1:23-24: “For if someone merely listens to the message and does not live it out, he is like someone who gazes at his natural face in a mirror. For he gazes at himself and then goes out and immediately forgets what sort of person he was.” When you look at yourself in the mirror of God’s Word, you must not turn away before making some changes. Learning to accept the Bible’s assessment of yourself and making appropriate changes in response, is what application is all about.

In this lesson you will continue learning about the third step in the process of Bible study application. In the previous lesson you learned how to determine the truths of a passage and how to prepare a statement of application. In this lesson you will build on these statements of application. You will learn how to relate the application to life and how to practice the application.

Topic 1 discusses how to relate the application of the truths you find in Scripture to your life. This topic looks at three relationships where your application can be applied to yourself, others, and God. The truths of Scripture are meant to change each individual. But then each individual is to apply those truths to relationships with others and especially with God.

Topic 2 helps you take the statement of application off the page it is written on and put it into practice. It is one thing to say that you “should” actively apply a given truth. It is quite another to say “I will” and then actually put that truth into action. For many people this is the most difficult part of learning the truth of Scripture. But if it isn’t done, the point of knowing the truth is missed.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Relate the Application to Life

In Regard to Myself

In Regard to Others

In Regard to God

Example From Matthew 28:16-20

Topic 2: Practice the Application

Example From Judges 16:4-31

Help to Get Started

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to write personally helpful applications relating to God, yourself, and others.

Specific Objectives:

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how to apply Scripture to the various relationships in your life
- Realize change in your life because of the application of God's Word

Preparing to Study

As you have done before, take some time to prepare your heart before beginning this lesson. You have learned that Bible study is a spiritual discipline that needs the continuous ministry of the Holy Spirit. Again, begin this lesson with some time in prayer. Read Psalm 119:57-64. Meditate on the benefits of the Word of God that these verses teach.

QUESTION 1

In Psalm 119:57-64 several of the verses refer to obeying God's words. Write in your Life Notebook a prayer that expresses your commitment to God, your commitment to obeying His words.

Topic 1: Relate the Application to Life

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to understand how to apply Scripture to the various relationships in your life.
--

Application of the Bible to your life should be a lifelong process. James 1:22-26 contains some important ideas that can help you stay on target with Application. Think about James 1:22: "But be sure you live out the message and do not merely listen to it and so deceive yourselves." This verse contains a strong warning against deceiving yourself. You may have a high position in your church. Or you may have a solid Christian background. But if you are trusting in your position or background and not applying the Bible to your life, then you are deceiving yourself. A Christian leader will sooner or later lose his spiritual influence if he is not living out what the Word says.

When James originally wrote his letter, many of the believers did not have their own copies of the Scriptures. They needed to hear someone read the Bible at church. When you apply James 1:22 to your own situation, you can paraphrase it as, "Do not merely read the Bible."

QUESTION 2

The goal of Bible study is _____.

QUESTION 3

Match the Bible study step with the question that reminds us of that step.

<i>Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What should I do?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What does it say?

The steps of observation and interpretation are equivalent to listening to the Bible. Of course, it is important to hear the message. But James warned not merely to listen to it. You must also be a doer of the Word.

QUESTION 4

If you only read the Bible but do not live it out, you _____ yourself.

- A. Compliment
- B. Educate
- C. Deceive
- D. Strengthen

Some Bible scholars believe that James 1:22 summarizes the entire book of James. The message of James's letter is that believers should do what they claim they believe.

To assist you in doing what you claim to believe, the previous lesson (Lesson 8) showed you how to write statements of application. Now you need to think about how you can use your statements of application in every facet of your life. Application should affect the way you think, act, and interact with other people and with God.

Think of your life in terms of relationships. Then ask yourself the following questions: How could your particular statements of application affect these relationships? How would they affect your thoughts, attitudes, and actions? The following three relationships can help you focus your thinking in this area:

- In regard to myself
- In regard to others (home, church, work, school, society, world)
- In regard to God

QUESTION 5

Application should affect the way you think, act, and interact with God. *True or False?*

In Regard to Myself

Your relationship with yourself is an important area of application. James 1:23-25 has some helpful ideas in this area. James wrote:

For if someone merely listens to the message and does not live it out, he is like someone who gazes at his natural face in a mirror. For he gazes at himself and then goes out and immediately forgets what sort of person he was. But the one who peers into the perfect law of liberty and sticks with it, and does not become a forgetful listener but one who lives it out—he will be blessed in what he does.

James’s illustration of looking in a mirror comes out of daily life. A person looks into a mirror to see if his face is dirty or his hair needs combing. Normally, if a person sees those things, he immediately washes the dirt off or combs the hair. Otherwise, what was the point of looking into the mirror? He walks away without changing what needs changing.

Comparing the mirror to the Word of God, James wanted his readers to take a careful look at the “face” of their lives in the mirror of Scripture. By doing that, the believer can see where his spiritual face is dirty or hair uncombed. If he sees his face in that mirror and walks away without changing, the look in the mirror was in vain, pointless.



Verses 23-24, therefore, teach about an attitude to avoid. In contrast, verse 25 contains a positive example to follow. James wrote: “But the one who peers into the perfect law of liberty and sticks with it, and does not become a forgetful listener but one who lives it out—he will be blessed in what he does” (Jas 1:25).

The Perfect Law of Liberty

James referred to the Bible as the "**perfect law of liberty.**" He certainly knew Psalm 19:7: "**The law of the LORD is perfect** and preserves one's life" (emphasis added). James repeated the truth found throughout the Bible, that God's Word is flawless. That means that any application you make from the Bible is built on a perfect foundation and is therefore worth the effort.

The New Testament authors continue to refer to the Bible as the law, meaning that it still holds believers accountable. But it is the "**law of liberty,**" meaning that it enables believers to have complete freedom from sin so that they can be the people the Lord wants.

Someone who peers into the Bible must come with an attitude of humility in order to see and comprehend fully God's truth. Then God will bless him. According to this verse, four reasons why God blesses a believer are:

- He looks carefully at the truth.
- He continues with the truth.
- He does not forget the truth.
- He lives the truth.

Once a believer has decided on a lifetime of godly obedience, he can and should go back to the mirror of Scripture repeatedly to continue his growth in holiness. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul is not speaking specifically of the Bible. He is speaking of the Lord Himself. But because believers see the Lord in Scripture, the wording of 2 Corinthians 3:18 can be an admonition to gaze intently and regularly in the Word: "And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting [or, beholding] the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

QUESTION 6

Match each verse with the best term that relates to that verse.

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Terms</i>
Psalm 19:7	Is the truth
James 1:25	Preserves life
John 20:11	Transforms
2 Corinthians 3:18	Is the perfect law of liberty

As you apply a Bible passage to yourself, the following list can help you be specific.

Applications in regard to myself:

- A thought or a word to examine
- An action to take
- An example to follow
- An error to avoid
- An attitude to change or guard against
- Priorities to organize
- Goals to strive for
- Personal values or standards to hold
- A sin to forsake, avoid, or confess
- Spiritual armor to wear
- A temptation to resist

In Regard to Others

After writing about a believer's relationship with himself, James then wrote some important instructions about a believer's relationship with others in James 1:26-27:

If someone thinks he is religious and does not control his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is futile. Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their misfortune and to keep yourself unstained by the world.

Most relationships that you have with other people are built on words that you say to them. To speak words that enhance your relationships requires that you control your tongue. Throughout the Bible are truths about speaking graciously and wisely to others. You must apply these truths to your life in order to have the best possible relationships with others.

According to James 1:27, you should be especially concerned about widows and orphans. That is, you should focus on relationships with those people who are needy and have

nothing to give you in return. These kinds of relationships best illustrate true Christian religion.

QUESTION 7

The application of Bible truths to others is limited to the congregation of your church.
True or False?

As you apply a Bible passage to help you relate to others (home, church, work, school, society, world), you should be as specific as possible. The following list will help:

Applications in regard to others:

- A witness to share
- An encouragement to extend
- A service to accomplish
- A forgiveness to ask
- A fellowship to nurture
- An exhortation to give
- A burden to bear
- A kindness to express
- A hospitality to extend
- An attitude to change or guard against

In Regard to God

In James 1:27 he used the terms “religion” and “God the Father.” This verse has some important truths about your relationship to God. James wrote, “Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their misfortune and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” God describes Himself in Psalm 68:5 as “a father to the fatherless, and an advocate for widows.” To have a growing relationship with God involves knowing God’s heart and His priorities. Also, according to James 1:27, you must live a pure life in order to have a close relationship with the one pure God.

QUESTION 8

Which of the following actions, according to James 1:26-27, will enhance your relationship with God? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Visit widows
- B. Memorize Scripture
- C. Feed orphans
- D. Control your speech
- E. Pray without ceasing
- F. Keep oneself pure

As you apply a Bible passage to help your relationship with God, the following list can help you be as specific as possible.

Applications in regard to God:

- A truth to rest in
- A command to obey
- A prayer to express
- A challenge to heed
- A promise to claim
- A fellowship to enjoy

Example from Matthew 28:16-20

As an example of relating the application to life, consider Matthew 28:16-20: “So the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain Jesus had designated. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came up and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” A statement of application from this passage is:

Wherever you are, you should proclaim the gospel to all people so that they might become disciples of Jesus Christ.

QUESTION 9

Which phrase from Matthew 28 leads you to conclude that the gospel should be proclaimed to “all people”?

- A. When they saw him, they worshiped him.
- B. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
- C. Go and make disciples of all nations.
- D. I am with you always.

Here are some examples of how your statement of application can be applied to all of life:

In regard to **myself**:

- I should view the main purpose of my life as bringing others to Jesus Christ. (Thought)
- My greatest joy and priority should be to see an unbeliever become a disciple of Jesus. (Attitude)
- I should view all of my past experiences, friends, and knowledge as useful resources for reaching out to those around me. (Thought)
- I should seek training on how to be more effective in leading people to Christ. (Action)
- I should plan with whom and how I can share Christ. (Action)
- I should examine what opportunities I have or can make to communicate the gospel. (Action)
- I should remember Christ is with me, and He is more powerful than Satan. (Thought)
- I should not let other activities get in the way of having the time and opportunity to reach out to non-Christians. (Thought and Action)
- I should not allow fear and the other barriers that the world and Satan place before me to keep me from sharing the good news of Christ to others. (Thought and Action)

In regard to **others**:

- I should view those I work with as people whom God loves and wants me to lead to Jesus. (Thought and Attitude)
- I should model a commitment to make disciples in my attitudes, conversation, and actions to my family. (Action)
- I should get to know my neighbors better so that I can begin to share Christ with them. (Action)
- I should talk to my cousin about how he can find an exciting new life in Jesus Christ. (Action)

- I should rejoice that Christ frees people from the bondage of the evil one. (Attitude)

In regard to **God**:

- I should understand that *making disciples* is not an option but a command that God expects me to obey. (Thought)
- I should enjoy fellowship with Christ as I share with others the life I have found in Him. (Attitude)
- I should pray that God will enable me to effectively lead others to be His followers. (Action)

Topic 2: Practice the Application

Objective 2 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to realize change in your life because of the application of God's Word.

You have now come to the final aspect of Application—action. It is easy to talk about what you will do. But until you actually practice it, it does not have spiritual value in your life. This is the part of Bible study that some believers avoid. You can go through the process of observation and interpretation and maybe even the first steps of application. But it is possible that you might stop short and never allow the Scriptures to change your life.

After coming this far in the *STB* course, you certainly want to permit the Bible to change your life! Turning your application into practice involves five steps. These are:

- Select an application.
- Plan its implementation.
- Meditate on the truth.
- By faith and prayer, do it!
- Evaluate your progress.

Select an application. You cannot diligently apply everything to your life at once. But you can apply some things immediately. Trying to apply too many truths at once is distracting and often spreads your energy too thin. You probably have the ability to work on only one or two things at a time. Changing your life is challenging work!

Plan its implementation. Think through the steps you will have to take to make the application a reality. It is not enough just to state what action needs to be done. You must bring an application to fruition. Therefore, plan what steps you will take and when you will take each step. Include which day or even what hour you will do it. You may want to give yourself a deadline in which to carry out your application.

Meditate on the truth. Continue to allow the truth to settle into your heart and mind. You might want to select a key verse from your passage to memorize. Think about the verse while you go about your daily business.

By faith and prayer, DO it!! Pray for God’s power in your life to be obedient to His Word. Then, knowing that He is strengthening you as you have asked, do what you have planned.

Evaluate your progress. Did you accomplish it? If so, do you need to plan to do it again? Has it become a habit yet? If not, what steps can be taken to overcome the barriers that have stopped you from faithfully practicing your application? Consider whether you are trying to do too much at one time. Perhaps your application needs to be broken down into smaller and easier applications. Evaluation helps you to continue to work on your application until it becomes a reality in your life. Do not give up!

QUESTION 10

Put the five steps in their correct order.

<i>Sequence</i>	<i>Step</i>
1	Plan its implementation.
2	Evaluate your progress.
3	Meditate on the truth.
4	By faith and prayer, do it!
5	Select an application.

As an example, suppose you had a friend named Tom with whom you wanted to share Christ. Here are some practical steps to take:

- At every meal I will pray that God will prepare Tom’s heart to hear and receive the gospel.
- I will call Tom tomorrow, invite him to go fishing with me some day soon (within the month), and arrange with him what day we can go.
- I will think about what I want to say to explain the gospel. I will talk to the pastor this Sunday for help with this. I will also ask him to pray for Tom and me.
- Sometime during the day, either as we are fishing or talking, I will ask him what he knows about Jesus Christ. I will then explain how knowing Jesus Christ as my Savior has really given joy and meaning to my life. Then I will explain the gospel to him and ask him if he would like to accept Christ as his Savior.

After writing these steps, you are more likely to talk to your friend Tom and begin practicing Christ’s command in Matthew 28:16-20.

Example from Judges 16:4-31

Determine the truths of the passage. Let us give you an example of application from the account of Samson’s life as found in Judges 16:4-31. First, here are several truths.

Following each truth is a statement in parentheses explaining the basis in the story for that truth:



- Satan attacks the believer at the point of his vulnerability.

(Samson had an ungodly lust for women and demonstrated this weakness repeatedly, as in Judg 14:1-4; 16:1-31.)

- Broken commands yield broken lives.

(Someone has said, “We do not break God’s commandments; they break us.” Samson’s life lay shattered by broken commandments, as in Judg 14:1-3, 8-9; 16:1, 4-20; compare with Gal 6:7.)

- You cannot play with sin and not expect to get hurt.

(In Judg 16:5-21 Samson arrogantly played Delilah’s temptation games, but he played too long. The result was imprisonment and death in verse 30.)

- Sin is first an attitude before it becomes an action.

(Samson’s attitude toward the commandments of God is apparent in Judg 14:1-2. This defiant attitude led him into further sins, as in Judg 16.)

- Sin is never committed in isolation.

(Other people are affected. Because Samson was a leader of the nation Israel, the whole nation was adversely affected and kept in submission to the godless Philistines.)

- God is never far away and is always ready to hear the cry of the repentant sinner.

(Though the “Lord had left” Samson in Judg 16:20, He later heard and answered Samson’s cry for help in Judg 16:28.)

- Ultimately, the character of a person is determined by daily decisions.

(Samson’s life did not suddenly fall apart. His character was molded by the decisions he made, beginning in his youth. An example is Judg 14:2.)

For the sake of illustration we will demonstrate the rest of the process of application with just one of these truths, though you are encouraged to do this with several, if not all, of them. One truth to apply is: You cannot play with sin and not expect to get hurt.

Prepare a statement of application. One such statement would be: I should not involve myself with sin at all, even when I think I can handle it.

Relate the statement of application to life. I will apply this principle in the following ways, with regard to:

Myself: I will be aware of my strengths and weaknesses and keep myself from situations that give Satan an opportunity to attack.

Others: I will seek help from others through an accountability relationship and through corporate worship and small group Bible study.

God: I will seek strength from Him through a daily quiet time and memorizing of Scripture, and will consistently confess my sin when I fail.

Practice the application. You might express it this way: I will call David now to make an appointment for lunch. At this time I will ask him to be my accountability partner and talk about where I need the most help in avoiding sin.

Help to Get Started

To help you get started on this Life Notebook entry, ponder the following statements of application from 1 Peter 3:1-7:

- As a Christian wife I should provide cooperative, noncontentious support for my husband.
- As a Christian husband I should be aware of the nature and ways of my wife and honor her by not doing things that would offend that nature.
- As a Christian wife married to a non-Christian husband I should seek to bring my husband to the Lord through my supportive, loving life, not through my nagging or preaching.
- I should give more attention to my attitudes than to my attire.
- As a Christian husband I must treat my wife honorably as a fellow heir of God’s grace and not as a servant who is with me only to do my bidding.

QUESTION 11

Your assignments in the previous lessons also included Acts 17:22-31, Nehemiah 1, Mark 2:1-12, and Jonah 2. Record in your Life Notebook your plans to apply these four passages to your life. Be as specific and detailed as you can. To help you get started, some statements of applications from these four passages are as follows:

Statements of Application

Acts 17:22-31

- I should depend on God's power and knowledge of me because He created me.
- I should have total confidence in God's ability to deal with my situation and me because He is infinite.
- Because my every breath comes from Him, I should be in an attitude of constant praise and thanksgiving and dependence.
- I should rejoice in the fact that God is alive and personal and greater than any created thing.
- I should help spread God's call to all men to repent.

Nehemiah 1

- I should make it my practice to turn to the Lord immediately, whenever I face a difficulty or think anything negative.
- I should give all of my worry and concern over to God because I know He is faithful to take care of me as His child.
- I should trust that God will always operate according to His Word, and I can thus find guidance and comfort in it.
- I should immediately confess my sin any time I am aware that I have sinned.
- I should read the Word regularly if I am to pray knowledgeably and effectively by truly knowing my God.

Mark 2:1-12

- If I want the Lord to respond to me, I must trust Him and be faithful to Him.
- I must bow before His authority and be thankful that He uses that authority on my behalf as His child.
- I should give Him thanks for my daily health and certainly for special healing, recognizing that He may choose to use ill health in my life for His glory.
- I must regularly and immediately apply the truth of the Word to my life so that my heart will not become hard through lack of obedience to what I know.
- If I am to please the Lord and experience His blessing, I must trust Him implicitly in all things.

Jonah 2

- I should respond to my crises with an attitude of looking for what the Lord is trying to teach me or show me.
- I should live in a way that shows gratitude for His grace in not dealing with me after my sins.
- I should take the opportunities at church or with groups of believers to publicly thank the Lord for His work in my life.
- I need to know God better and better so that, when I come into a difficulty, I will be prepared with the right attitude to handle it for His glory.
- I must trust that, no matter how difficult a situation might be, the Lord is totally in control and able to take care of me in it

Conclusion

Application is the third and final step in the process of *STB*. Congratulations on accomplishing so much! May you continue to be one who consistently peers into the perfect law of liberty and does what it says! In these lessons on Application, you learned how to bridge the gap between the world of Bible times and your world today. In the next lesson, you will learn how to bridge the gap to others. Also, you will continue to strengthen your skills in the next three lessons as you use what you have learned to study whole books of the Bible.

STUDY PROJECT: APPLYING PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

As a result of your studies from these lessons on Application, do the following in relation to Philippians 2:1-11:

- Write at least six truths and corresponding statements of Application in your Life Notebook. Keep in mind the attributes of a good statement of application.
- Based on the section on adapting principles to life situations, take one of the principles you have developed from your passage in Philippians 2:1-11, and write down as many possible ways as you can think of that you might apply it to life.

Set up your notebook page using the three relationships (self, others, God) as headings. Then ask and answer the following question of the principle you have selected: How does this principle affect my thoughts, attitudes, and actions in each of the three relationships of my life? Remember to be specific and practical. You should complete this assignment before moving on to the next section.

- Single out one or two of your applications from Philippians 2:1-11, and concentrate on actually doing them. Plan how you will accomplish them and when. Then in faith and prayer, practice it! Be ready to share your experiences at the next seminar. It will be encouraging for others to hear how the Lord enabled you to take this step of obedience in applying His Word to a real life situation!

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2: Application

QUESTION 3:

<i>Step</i>	<i>Reminder Question</i>
Observation	What does it say?
Interpretation	What does it mean?
Application	What should I do?

QUESTION 4: C. Deceive

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6:

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Terms</i>
Psalm 19:7	Preserves life
James 1:25	Is the perfect law of liberty
John 20:11	Is the truth
2 Corinthians 3:18	Transforms

QUESTION 7: False

QUESTION 8:

- A. Visit widows
- C. Feed orphans
- D. Control your speech
- F. Keep oneself pure

QUESTION 9: C. Go and make disciples of all nations.

QUESTION 10:

<i>Sequence</i>	<i>Step</i>
1	Select an application.
2	Plan its implementation.
3	Meditate on the truth.
4	By faith and prayer, do it!
5	Evaluate your progress.

QUESTION 11: *Your answer*

Lesson 10: Application—Outlining

Lesson Introduction

As important as it is to apply the truth of God's Word to our lives, the application process does not end there. “Bridging the gap” between the world of biblical times and today involves more than you alone. It also involves others.

In this lesson you will learn how to “bridge the gap” for others. This is not the same as applying truths in your relationships with others. This aspect of application has to do with communicating to others your personal Bible study and applications. This can be done in several different ways. This lesson will focus on just one—learning how to outline as a means of teaching others.

Topic 1 shows you what a good teaching outline accomplishes and then how to create it. It guides you into the skill of proper outlining so that you can accurately communicate what a passage teaches. Then it gives you practice in doing it.

Topic 2 deals with a particular kind of outline that is commonly found in the New Testament. This kind of outline is found in Greek letters. Since twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are letters, it is important that you understand the outline used in writing a Greek letter so that you can interpret it properly.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: Teaching Outlines

Proper Outlining

Practice Making Outlines

Topic 2: The Greek Letter Format

The Outline of a Greek Letter

Example From Philemon

How to Use the Greek Letter Format

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to write a teaching outline for a given Bible passage.

Specific Objectives:

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Know what information should be included in a teaching outline
- Describe the proper format of an outline
- Create teaching outlines for assigned passages
- Apply the Greek letter format to New Testament epistles

Preparing to Study

As you have learned, you must prepare your heart before beginning this lesson. You know that Bible study is much more than a method. The study of the Bible is a divine discipline that needs the Lord's ongoing help. Begin this lesson with prayer, and read Psalm 119:65-72. Meditate on the benefits of God's Word that these verses teach.

QUESTION 1

In Psalm 119:65-72 the psalmist used the word "good" several times. Write in your Life Notebook about a recent event in which you have experienced God's goodness.

Note: There will be very few questions in this lesson. Please concentrate on producing good outlines and completing the exercises.

Topic 1: Teaching Outlines

Objective 1 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to know what information should be included in a teaching outline.

You do not study just for yourself. Often you study in order to teach others. Whether it is for a sermon that you prepare or an informal Bible study, you need a means for transferring what you have learned into the lives of others. There are several ways this might be done. You might write your own paraphrase of the passage. Or you might write an essay that summarizes and explains the flow of the passage. Another useful method that you can use very effectively for sermon or teaching preparation is writing a **teaching outline**.

A good teaching outline accomplishes three things:

- It summarizes your interpretation, providing a visual overview of the whole.
- It shows the principal parts of the passage, along with the truths derived from them.
- It shows how parts one and two relate to each other.

It should be simple and easily understood, so that the main points can be discerned by someone reading it for the first time. Here are the important points to remember when making a preaching or teaching outline:

1. Write the biblical reference of your passage, the theme, and its purpose statement at the top of your page.
2. Distinguish the main ideas, and then determine whether subsequent statements are main points or subpoints. All main points and subpoints should relate to the main theme, being clear subdivisions of them.

3. Incorporate the truths of your passage into the main and subordinate ideas.
4. Use symbols to demonstrate the relationship between main and subordinate ideas and truths (see “Proper Outlining”).
5. List at least two points under every heading whenever subpoints are used.
6. Write out your outline in full sentences at first. Later, you may abbreviate it for convenience.

Objective 2 - When you have completed this subtopic, you will be able to describe the proper format of an outline.

Proper Outlining

One set of symbols commonly used for outlines is shown below. Every time you create a subordinate category, you must have more than one item at that level of subordination. Thus, if you have an “A,” you must at least have a “B.” Every “1” must at least have a “2,” every “a” a “b,” and so on.

Sample Outline (Levels of Subordination)

- I. (Roman numeral)
 - A. (Capital letters)
 - B.
 - 1. (Numbers)
 - 2.
 - a. (Lower case letters)
 - b.
 - (1) (Numbers in parentheses)
 - (2)
 - (a) (Lower case letters in parentheses)
 - (b)
- II. (Roman numeral)

A teaching outline builds on and expands the structural outline created in Lesson 4 and includes many of the truths that you have observed. Below is an example based on Galatians 5:16-26. Please note that this is not the only way that this passage might be outlined, but it is an example of how to do it.

Example: Galatians 5:16-26

Theme: Living by the Spirit will prevent the Christian from carrying out the desires of the flesh.

Purpose: The purpose of Galatians 5:16-26 is to encourage the Galatian Christians, who are being tempted to live under the legalism of the law, to recognize that they are to be led by the Spirit, for life in the Spirit frees them from the law and overcomes the works of the flesh.

- I. Christians can live in freedom from the law, yet fulfill the law and not the desires of the flesh by living by the Spirit (5:16-24).
 - A. The Christian experiences a conflict because of the internal opposition of the flesh and the Spirit, preventing him from doing what he pleases.
 - B. But the Christian is not bound to yield to the flesh (law) if the Spirit leads him.
 1. A Christian can know that he is under the influence of the flesh (Law) if he is experiencing the works of the flesh, which works will deny him inheritance in the kingdom of God.
 2. A Christian can likewise know that he is under the influence of the Spirit if he is experiencing the fruit of the Spirit, against which deeds there is no law.
 - C. A Christian is not bound to yield to the flesh because the controlling power of the flesh has been broken through union with Christ.
- II. Christians should, therefore, in view of these truths live by the Spirit (5:25-26).

QUESTION 2

Think about the method you use to study and teach the Bible. Do you already have a way that you outline or organize your material? Now that you have learned how to organize based on the content of the passage, how will your preparations change? Do you see a value in using the teaching outline? What excites you about it? Do you have any concerns about using this method? Write out your thoughts in your Life Notebook.

Objective 3 - When you have completed this subtopic, you will be able to create teaching outlines for assigned passages.

Practice Making Outlines

Below we have presented a sample teaching outline for 1 Peter 3:1-7.

1 Peter Teaching Outline

1 Peter 3:1-7

Theme: The behavior of husbands and wives should show love and honor.

Purpose: To show how husbands and wives are to follow and thereby honor Christ in their marriages.

- I. Peter instructed Wives (vv.1-6).
 - A. Be submissive to, and supportive of, your husbands through quiet, respectful behavior.
 - B. Do not seek beauty in external things, such as clothes and jewelry.
 - C. Let your beauty be the internal quality of a gentle, nonrebellious, noncontentious spirit.
 1. Holy women of the past adorned themselves this way.
 2. Follow Sarah's example.
 - a. She submitted by calling Abraham lord.
 - b. You become just like her by doing the same without fear.
- II. Peter instructed Husbands (v. 7).
 - A. Live with your wife in a way that does not offend or injure her nature as a woman.
 - B. Treat her as an equal in Christ.

QUESTION 3

Throughout this course you have had a chance to focus on 1 Peter 3:1-7. You have thought about and recorded in your Life Notebook how your study of this passage has affected your own thoughts and actions. Now, think about how you teach this passage to others. What are some of the problems in marriages in your congregation and among the people around you? How will knowing and applying 1 Peter 3:1-7 help them? Record your thoughts in your Life Notebook. Write down a few names of couples whose marriages you will be praying for.

Now, again, it is your turn. Using the sample teaching outline for 1 Peter 3:1-7, complete the following four exercises.

EXERCISE 1

Use your previous answers to exercises to help you create a teaching outline for Acts 17:22-31. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 2

Use your previous answers to exercises to help you create a teaching outline for Nehemiah 1. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 3

Use your previous answers to exercises to help you create a teaching outline for Mark 2:1-12. Then check your answer.

EXERCISE 4

Use your previous answers to exercises to help you create a teaching outline for Jonah 2. Then check your answer.

STUDY PROJECT: APPLYING PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

As a result of your studies from this chapter, do the following in relation to Philippians 2:1-11:

Develop an expanded teaching outline. Follow the example given above.

Topic 2: The Greek Letter Format

Objective 4 - When you have completed this topic, you will be able to apply the Greek letter format to the New Testament Epistles.
--

Outlining is an ancient custom. We do not always recognize ancient outlines because they do not have the same identifying features that modern outlines have. Scholars have discovered that throughout the ancient Greek world certain formal customs were consistently followed in writing letters. New Testament scholars discovered that the writers of the New Testament Epistles followed these rules, which were really an ancient outline!

The Outline of a Greek Letter

The Greek letter was a standard style of organizing a letter. Just as there are standards for writing a business letter or diplomatic note today, the ancients used the Greek letter format. You will find the Greek letter format most useful if you remember the following guidelines:

- The Greek letter format applies in the Bible only to the New Testament Epistles. It is most clearly seen in the writings of Paul.
- Just as in modern letters it is common for elements to be omitted or their order changed. The outline should not be slavishly imposed on any particular book.
- The Greek letter format organizes the letter's content. It does not change that content or determine the theme or purpose.

- Discovering a Greek letter format in the Epistles can help you understand why certain things are written and can help you locate the theme and purpose.

The Greek letter format has three major sections, each containing three subsections. The three major sections are the **Opening**, **Body**, and **Closing**. The opening and closing are purposefully short. Normally, they make up one short chapter or less. The bulk of the epistle remains in the body.

Opening

The **Opening** can have three parts: the **Salutation**, **Health Wish**, and **Prayer Formula**. The standard salutation formula was “X to Y, greetings.” This identified the author and recipient(s), followed by a greeting, as in “Sostratos to Zenon, greeting.” The greetings of all of the New Testaments letters, except for Hebrews, James, 1 John, 3 John, and Jude, contain the words “grace” and “peace.” The most formulaic expression is Paul’s “grace and peace to you.” The health wish is an expression of desired good for the recipients and is usually followed by a formal prayer. One example reads, “Before all else I pray that you are well; I myself am well and make obeisance on your behalf to the gods here.” Characteristic of Paul is the addition of an introductory thanksgiving. This section usually presented main themes in the letter. You will find all of these elements in Philippians 1:1-11.

Opening

Salutation (1:1-2)

From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Health Wish (1:3-8)

I thank my God every time I remember you. Always in my every prayer for all of you I pray with joy because of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. For it is right for me to think this about all of you, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel all of you became partners together with me in the grace of God. For God is my witness that I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Prayer Formula (1:9-11)

And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight so that you can decide what is best, and so be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Body

The **Body** also has three parts. It is probably best to describe the three parts simply as the **Body-Opening**, **Body-Middle**, and **Body-Closing**. The opening usually establishes a common ground between sender and recipient(s) and introduces the purpose or occasion for writing, possibly including the author's theme and purpose statements. Sometimes, this is very brief and explicit. More often it touches on several subjects, and you will need the full contents of the epistle to choose the most important. The middle of the body typically develops the topics introduced in the opening. It may also give or seek new information or exhort the recipient(s) to particular actions, among other possibilities, depending on the purpose for writing. Normally, the body has a succinct closing. It usually at least emphasizes his point in writing. It may include a repetition of the author's theme and purpose. But it may contain other personal information. Or it may be just a summary of the subjects he has written about. Philippians 1:12-4:20 contains the body of that epistle.

Body (1:12-4:20)

Body-Opening (1:12-26)

Body-Middle (1:27-4:7)

Body-Closing (4:8-20)

Closing

The body-closing is not the end of the letter. The Greek letter ends with its own formal **Closing**. The standard three parts of a full closing are the **Greetings**, **Health Wish**, and **Farewell**. This is the section most likely to be missing one or more parts or have the order changed. The greetings would be friends or people around the author who might know the recipients. The health wish often takes the form of a benediction. The farewell is a final word from the author, such as found in Colossians 4:18. Notice in the sample **Closing** from Philippians 4:21-23, there is no farewell.

Closing

Greetings (4:21-22)

Give greetings to all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers with me here send greetings. All the saints greet you, especially those from the emperor's household.

Health Wish (Benediction) (4:23)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Complete Greek Letter Format Outline

Opening

Salutation

Health Wish

Prayer Formula

Body

Body-Opening
Body-Middle
Body-Closing

Closing

Greetings
Health Wish
Farewell

Example from Philemon

Here is an outline of the book of Philemon, using the Greek letter format:

Opening (1:1-7)

Salutation (1:1-3)

1:1 From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our dear friend and colaborer, **1:2** to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your house. **1:3** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Health Wish (none in Philemon)

Prayer Formula (1:4-7)

1:4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, **1:5** because I hear of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. **1:6** I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective in the knowledge of everything good that is in us in Christ. **1:7** I have had great joy and encouragement because of your love, for the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

Body (1:8-22)

Body-Opening (1:8-9)

1:8 So, although I have quite a lot of confidence in Christ and could command you to do what is proper, **1:9** I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—I, Paul, an old man and even now a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus—

Body-Middle (1:10-18)

1:10 I am appealing to you concerning my child, whose spiritual father I have become during my imprisonment, that is, Onesimus, **1:11** who was formerly useless to you, but is now useful to you and me. **1:12** I have sent him (who is my very heart) back to you. **1:13** I wanted to keep him so that he could serve me in your place during my imprisonment for the sake of the gospel. **1:14** However, without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your good deed would not be out of compulsion, but from your own willingness. **1:15** For perhaps it was for this reason that he was separated from you for a little while, so that you would have him back eternally, **1:16** no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a dear brother. He is especially so to me, and even more so to you now, both humanly speaking and in the Lord. **1:17** Therefore if you regard me as a partner, accept him as you would me.

1:18 Now if he has defrauded you of anything or owes you anything, charge what he owes to me.

Body-Closing (1:19-22)

1:19 I, Paul, have written this letter with my own hand: I will repay it. I could also mention that you owe me your very self. **1:20** Yes, brother, let me have some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. **1:21** Since I was confident that you would obey, I wrote to you, because I knew that you would do even more than what I am asking you to do. **1:22** At the same time also, prepare a place for me to stay, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given back to you.

Closing (1:23-25)

Greetings (1:23-24)

1:23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you. **1:24** Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my colaborers, greet you too.

Health Wish (Benediction) (1:25)

1:25 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Farewell (Embedded in 1:19a) *“I, Paul, have written this letter with my own hand.”*

How to Use the Greek Letter Format

1. Lay out the Greek letter format outline.
2. Survey the epistle, seeking to assign specific verses to their places in the outline.
3. Remember that some items may be missing or in a different order.
4. Inspect those subsections that may indicate the author’s theme and purpose (Body-Opening and Body-Closing).
5. Complete the details of the outline, using the techniques you learned above for teaching outlines.

EXERCISE 5

Outline the book of 1 Peter using the Greek letter format outline. Try to identify the epistle’s theme using only your outline.

Conclusion

If you have written your own outlines of the assigned biblical passages and books, then you have demonstrated that you understand outlining. You have learned an important tool for both your personal Bible study and your ministry. In your preaching or teaching ministry, you should constantly think about how you can communicate biblical truth more clearly. Outlining greatly enhances clarity. If you outline your passages consistently, you will both think and speak more clearly. Lesson 11 will introduce you to another tool that can greatly aid your study and ministry-charting.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2: *Your answer*

QUESTION 3: *Your answer*

Exercise 1: Teaching Outline for Acts 17:22-31

Your solution to this exercise for Acts 17:22-31 should look generally similar to the following:

Acts 17:22-31

Theme: The living God calls men to repentance in view of the coming judgment by the resurrected Christ.

Purpose: To explain his mission and beliefs in response to the request of the Athenians

- I. Paul addresses their belief in an unknown god (vv. 22-23a).
- II. He presents his living God as their unknown god (vv. 23b-29).
 - A. God is the infinite creator.
 - B. God is the giver of life.
 - C. God made mankind to seek after Him.
 - D. Thus, God is personal, not a man-made image.
- III. This living God calls on all people to repent in view of the coming judgment before the resurrected Christ (vv. 30-31).

Exercise 2: Teaching Outline for Nehemiah 1

Your solution to this exercise for Nehemiah 1 should look generally similar to the following:

Nehemiah 1

Theme: News of trouble in Jerusalem leads Nehemiah to seek God in prayer.

Purpose: To present Jerusalem's problem and the human and divine resources that will be involved in solving it.

- I. This book contains the words of Nehemiah (v. 1a).
- II. Men of Judah come to Nehemiah with a great need (vv. 1b-3).
 - A. Nehemiah asks about the people and city of Jerusalem.
 - B. The men say that the people are in reproach and the city is broken down.
- III. Nehemiah goes to God with the great need (vv. 4-11).
 - A. Nehemiah worships the Lord.
 - B. Nehemiah prays and confesses on behalf of his people.
 - 1. He and his fathers have sinned.
 - 2. They have not kept Moses' commandments.
 - C. Nehemiah reminds God of His promises in His Word.
 - 1. God promises dispersion for unfaithfulness.
 - 2. God promises regathering to Jerusalem for faithfulness.
 - D. Nehemiah asks the Lord to grant him favor before the king, before whom he was cupbearer.

Exercise 3: Teaching Outline for Mark 2:1-12

Your solution to this exercise for Mark 2:1-12 should look generally similar to the following:

Mark 2:1-12

Theme: The healing of the paralytic man shows the authority of Jesus Christ to forgive sins.

Purpose: To demonstrate another area of Christ's supreme authority

- I. Four men in faith bring a paralyzed friend to Jesus (vv. 1-4).
 - A. They cannot get to Him because of the crowd.
 - B. They dig a hole in the roof and let him down to Jesus.
- II. Jesus in response to their faith forgives his sins (vv. 5-11).
 - A. Scribes were incensed that He claimed to forgive their sins.
 - B. Jesus responds to their indignation.
 - 1. He challenges them with a question about authority.
 - 2. He answers them with a miracle showing authority.
- III. The people are amazed at Jesus' authority (v. 12).

Exercise 4: Teaching Outline for Jonah 2

Your solution to this exercise for Jonah 2 should look generally similar to the following:

Jonah 2

Theme: Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving honors the faithfulness of God.

Purpose: To show why Jonah returned to the Lord to follow His original command.

- I. Jonah's prayer for deliverance from drowning (v. 1).
 - A. Jonah pleaded to the Lord for deliverance (vv. 2-4).
 1. He knew the Lord was disciplining him.
 2. He had confidence he would be delivered.
 - B. Jonah acknowledged the Lord's deliverance (vv. 5-7).
 1. He was at the point of death.
 2. Then the fish came and delivered him.
 - C. Jonah promised to publicly praise the Lord for his deliverance (vv. 8-9).
 1. Jonah chides idolaters for leaving this faithful God.
 2. Jonah vows to proclaim the faithfulness of God.
- II. The Lord completes the deliverance (v. 10).

Exercise 5: Outline of 1 Peter using Greek Letter Format

Your solution to this exercise for 1 Peter should look generally similar to the following:

1 Peter (using Greek Letter Format)

Opening

- Salutation (1:1-2)
- Health Wish (1:3-12)
- Prayer Formula (none)

Body (1:13–5:11)

- Subject Introduced (1:13-25)
- Request for Readers (2:1–5:5)
- Conclusion (5:6-11)

Closing (5:12-14)

- Greetings (5:12-14a)
- Health Wish (5:14b)
- Farewell (none)

The **theme** may be found in the sections, subject introduced, or conclusion. Verses, which could be taken as explicit themes, include 1:13, 22-23; 5:6-7, and 10. Of these, the first three exhort the readers toward a more holy, pure, and humble life. The final possibility (1 Pet 5:10) also encompasses the idea of present suffering and attributes the

believer's perfection to God. It is therefore the most complete and best representation of the contents of the epistle.

The conclusion in 1 Peter 5:10 reads, "And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

The **theme** of 1 Peter could thus be expressed:

Through (or after) suffering, the believer will be perfected into holiness by God. And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Lesson 11: Application—Charting

Lesson Introduction

You have just learned how to outline a Bible passage or an entire book. In this lesson you will learn about another tool that will help you study an entire book of the Bible. This tool is called charting. A chart graphically represents the structure, main points, and flow of a Bible book. The lessons in this course have stressed the need to understand the author's flow of thought. Creating a chart is an effective means of helping you identify and demonstrate his flow of thought.

Knowing how to make a chart, therefore, can greatly help you in your personal study. It can also help you in your teaching ministry. You can use a chart as a visual aid while you teach others about a Bible book. You probably will experience a high level of joy as you use both your Bible study skills and your creativity to produce your very own chart!

The single topic in this lesson teaches you how to survey an entire book of the Bible. The principles used here are similar to those used for a Bible passage. They involve especially reading and observing. You will study the background of the book. Then you will learn how to read for the express purpose of creating a chart. After that you will create two different kinds of charts. One chart will be used to record your observations. The second will present in a simplified way the structure, main points, and flow of thought of the book. From these charts you will identify the theme and purpose of the book.

The work invested in creating such charts will result in a clearer understanding of the book and more effective teaching of others.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: How to Survey a Book of the Bible

Research the Background

Read the Book

Make an Observational Chart

Create a Simplified Chart

Write Theme and Purpose Statements

Topic 2: Summary of the Procedure for Doing a Book Survey

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to create a simplified chart for the book of Jonah.

Specific Objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Formulate and answer background questions for a Bible book
- Explain how to read a Bible book in preparation for creating a chart
- Create an observational chart for the book of Jonah
- Convert an observational chart of the book of Jonah into a simplified chart
- Identify the theme and purpose of a Bible book from its simplified chart

Preparing to Study

As you know, you need to take some time to prepare your heart before beginning this lesson. Bible study goes far beyond any course on studying the Scriptures. Bible study is a spiritual exercise that needs the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. As always, begin this lesson with some time in prayer. Read Psalm 119:73-80. Meditate on the benefits of the Word of God that these verses teach.

QUESTION 1

In Psalm 119:73-80, the author used the terms “hope,” “loyal love,” and “compassion.” Write in your Life Notebook the ways in which your relationship with God is growing in these three areas.

Topic 1: How to Survey a Book of the Bible

The study of a book of the Bible begins with a broad overview of the whole book. Detailed study of the verses starts after you have looked at the whole. You begin with the overview because it reveals the context of each part. Context is the most basic factor in interpretation. To interpret a passage correctly, you must understand it in relation to the whole book. The overview must come first, and then the detailed study of the parts.

This overview of the whole book is called a **book survey**. The basic task of a book survey is to trace the book's flow of thought from beginning to end. The survey identifies the major parts and how they fit together into a unified whole. This process can be described in five steps, which are as follows:

- **Step One:** Research the background.
- **Step Two:** Read the book.
- **Step Three:** Make an observational chart.
- **Step Four:** Create a simplified chart.
- **Step Five:** Write theme and purpose statements.

Research the Background

Objective 1 - When you have completed this subtopic, you will be able to formulate and answer background questions for a Bible book.

This step involves answering questions about the author of the book, his original readers, and the historical/social circumstances.

About the author

- Who wrote the book?
- When did he write it?
- From where?
- And under what circumstances?

About the original readers

- Who were the original readers?
- What was their situation?
- What specific need or problem did they face?

About the historical/social circumstances

- Who were the important people or leaders?
- What nation or nations were involved?
- What significant events had happened or were about to happen?
- What were the public attitudes and feelings?

You can find answers to some of these questions through a quick reading of the book. Finding other answers may require some digging. A Bible dictionary or commentary can assist you in this. Lessons 3–5 taught you how to make observations that answer many of these questions.

QUESTION 2

Some of the pieces of information you seek to discover in a background study include:
(*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Author
- B. Date
- C. Recipients
- D. Situation
- E. Theology
- F. Attitudes

Examples from the book of Habakkuk are used throughout this lesson to show how to chart a Bible book. Therefore, a background study of Habakkuk yields the following results:

Author

- Identity of author: Habakkuk.
- Place of writing: Unspecified, but presumably in Judah.
- Time of writing: Probably about 605 BC.
- His personal situation: Unknown other than what we know of him from the book itself.

Readers

- Specific identity of the original readers, if possible: Unspecified, but undoubtedly the people of Judah.
- Readers' situation: There is apparently much personal, social, and national sin and general disobedience to God.

Historical/social circumstances

- Josiah (640–609 BC) had brought reform to Judah, but after his death ungodly living, corruption, injustice, and worse dominated the land (2 Kgs 22:1–23:30; 2 Chr 34:1–35:27).
- Babylon was a new world power, having defeated Assyria and Egypt.
- They threatened further conquests, especially of Judah.
- A weak and ungodly king Jehoiakim was on Israel's throne, placed there by Egypt (2 Kgs 23:34–24:7; 2 Chr 36:5-8).
- When Babylon defeated Egypt, both Egypt and Judah came under Babylonian rule.

Read the Book

Objective 2 - When you have completed this subtopic, you will be able to explain how to read a Bible book in preparation for creating a chart.
--

Read the book quickly at one sitting. Do not pause to ponder individual paragraphs or difficult concepts. The purpose is to get a quick overview of the book. As you read, notice the major events, ideas, general flow of thought, and organization. You may recall that in Lesson 2 this was called superficial reading (Level 1). You should read the book at least twice.

One technique for Bible study involves repeated readings. In this technique you would purpose to read through the Bible book you are studying twenty times. After each reading you would record your observations and notes. Each reading should occur in one sitting, with the notes recorded immediately afterward. You should complete a reading every

day, no more than two readings in one day. You may be amazed at how accurately you will learn a book using this method. Follow these steps:

- Plan to read through your book once or twice a day for twenty readings.
- Record your notes immediately after each reading.
- For the first five readings simply record whatever comes to your mind. Do not look for specific items. Do not read your notes before reading the Bible book.
- For readings 6-15 read all of your notes before reading the Bible book each time. You may begin to look for specific items, or you may continue to read in an unguided fashion.
- The last five readings are targeted to achieve specific goals. You will have some of your own goals, but you must outline the book and discover its theme and purpose. Devote two or three readings to creating your outline. You will write out the theme and purpose in one reading and check them during your next reading.

If possible, you should use a good modern translation (not a paraphrase) that divides the book according to paragraphs.

QUESTION 3

The Bible book you are reading should be read at least two times as part of this survey method. *True or False?*

QUESTION 4

The Bible book you are reading should be read at least twenty times as part of this survey method. *True or False?*

QUESTION 5

Reading through a Bible book twenty times is a good alternative or supplement to the survey method. *True or False?*

QUESTION 6

What are the most times you have read through a Bible book? Why have you read that book so many times? If you have ever read a book repeatedly over a short period of time, what were the results? After recording your thoughts, choose a short book or psalm. Read it at least twice each day for the next week. Make another entry in your Life Notebook describing what you have learned.

Make an Observational Chart

Objective 3 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to create an observational chart for the book of Jonah.

Draw an observational chart. An observational chart can be designed for any book of the Bible, usually allowing one column for each chapter. In each column, record units of thought, key words, and phrases so that you can see at a glance how the writer organized the book's contents.

You can gain much from developing your own observational chart. You improve your study skills by going through the process yourself. Here are six other benefits:

1. **Content retention.** As you integrate facts, putting them down in summary form on a chart, you will be more likely to remember the contents of the passage. At a later time the chart will serve to remind you at a glance of the information you have collected.
2. **Content overview.** On a one-page chart you can see how the book begins and ends, as well as how the thoughts flow in between. In this way you will see the structure and general content of the book without being diverted by details.
3. **Content integration.** The chart requires you to weave the facts, ideas, and doctrines of the book into a coherent whole. In this way you begin to grasp the intent of the biblical author.
4. **Relative importance of content.** A clear and correctly made chart distinguishes primary ideas from secondary ideas. You may use large print, bold print, underlining, circling, or other methods.
5. **Efficiency and method in study.** The construction of a visual chart, by its very nature, leads to concise expression and organization of thought. It especially helps you discover the theme and purpose of the writer.
6. **Communication of content to others.** The book chart, with its visible and succinct expression of thought, makes the chart an excellent teaching tool. You may create a teaching chart as a communication tool.

The creation of an observational chart takes place in at least two phases. In the first phase the chart is essentially a worksheet on which you record initial observations and anything that appears important. It will not, however, be the final product, so you do not have to be neat or perfect.

Then you will simplify this chart by drawing another chart and filling it in with summarized information from the first chart. This time be neater and more concise. You could conceivably create another chart to use for teaching purposes. But for our purposes two charts are sufficient to understand the book's essential message.

With all this in mind, begin your study by learning how to construct an observational chart. The blank chart that follows is helpful as a model to adapt for any book of the Bible you are studying.

Lay out the chart with a column for each chapter and a space for each paragraph

The diagram below illustrates this procedure. It shows an imaginary book that has three chapters with four paragraphs in each chapter.

Observational Chart

The diagram below illustrates this procedure. It shows an imaginary book that has three chapters with four paragraphs in each chapter.

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3
1-4	1-5	1-3
5-10	6-11	4-9
11-15	12-19	10-16
16-23	20-25	17-18

Write a summary of each paragraph

Read through the book again, and write a brief observational summary of each paragraph in the space allotted as in this example of Habakkuk 1:1-11.

Habakkuk Chapter 1

1 The message introduced.

2-4 Problem: Why does God allow wickedness in Judah?

5-11 Answer: God will use Babylonians to punish.

12-2:1 ———

Work quickly, jotting down what you see of the main points of the paragraph, and then move on to the next paragraph and the next. Beware of getting bogged down in details. Remember your purpose at this stage is the broad overview.

Why use paragraphs, rather than verses and chapters, as the basic units of thought? The chapter divisions were not added to the biblical text until the thirteenth century by the Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton. In AD 1551 Parisian publisher Robert Estienne (Stephanus) created the verse divisions for a Greek New Testament he was publishing. Tradition says that he often worked while riding his horse and that some divisions are the result of the horse jostling his pen!

Verse divisions greatly help the public reading or study of Scripture. One serious problem, however, is that verse divisions often break up whole sentences into smaller parts. For example, Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long sentence in the Greek text but is divided into twelve verses. This diverts attention away from the complete thought. That is why you must focus on paragraphs, not just verses. Your observational chart is laid out in chapters simply to evenly distribute the paragraphs you are working with.

QUESTION 7

Which of the following descriptions are more “Paragraph” concepts than “Chapter and Verse” concepts? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Universally recognized
- B. Author’s division
- C. Accurate
- D. Inaccurate
- E. Easy to find
- F. Uniform

QUESTION 8

Which of the following descriptions are more “Chapter and Verse” concepts than “Paragraph” concepts? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Exposes truth
- B. Imposes truth
- C. New system
- D. Ancient system
- E. Good for finding passage
- F. Key for understanding passage

An example is always helpful. Therefore, take time now to look at the observational chart of the book of Habakkuk below. Notice in a general way how the content, structural clues, and chapter titles are recorded. Read the explanation of how the chart was created. Be sure to record any questions you may have.

Note: As with virtually all Old Testament books, Habakkuk is not as tightly reasoned as a letter by Paul. Thus, an observational chart of such a book will look somewhat different from, and lack many structural relationships often found in, a New Testament letter. After this Old Testament example, you may practice with New Testament books in the exercises and study project. The answers given are only examples of how a chart can look. Your answers may be different.

The Just Shall Live By Faith

1. HABAKKUK'S QUESTION:	2. LORD'S ANSWER:	3. HABAKKUK'S PRAYER: I
<p>1 The message introduced <u>Question Posed</u></p> <p>2-4 Problem, Why does God allow wickedness in Judah?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence, Strife, Contention • Law Ignored, Justice Perverted <p>5-11 <u>Answer</u> the Lord will use the Babylonians to punish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be shocked and amazed! • Babylonians described <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ruthless, greedy -Frightening, terrifying -Determined, proud, fast, strong <p>12-17 Question, why does the Lord use <u>unholy</u> people to judge holy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is pure • You look on wicked with favor • Will he always destroy? 	<p>1 <u>Pivot</u>, Habakkuk waits for answer <u>Preparation</u> THEN</p> <p>5-3 Lord's plan is decreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable • May take time, wait • Certain <p><u>Question answered</u></p> <p>4-5 The proud ones's soul is not right BUT ↓ The just shall live by faith (Innocent preserved by his integrity) <u>Explanation</u></p> <p>6-19 Woes to the Babylonians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbed many, shed blood, • Built house on unjust gain, • Drunkenness, idolatry <p>20 The Lord in His palace The world trembles ←</p>	<p>1 <u>Introduction</u> Prayer</p> <p>2 Habakkuk fears judgment and asks for mercy, <u>Cause-Effect</u>, Answer to Prayer</p> <p>3-7 Lord's Majesty Sovereign, splendor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glory, power, ancient <p>8-15 Lord's works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control nature • Deliver people <p><u>Cause - Effect</u></p> <p>16-17 Habakkuk fears and waits for judgment on Babylonians. <u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>18 Habakkuk rejoices in the Lord</p> <p>19 The Lord is my strength</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; gap: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="margin: 0;">Cause - Effect</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="margin: 0;">Cause - Effect</p> </div> </div>		

A Brief Explanation of the Observation of Habakkuk

Chapter 1: The first verse is a title or introduction. Then the pattern is clearly *question posed/question answered* to the end of the chapter. The description of the Babylonians does not contribute significantly to the point of the book, though a person must know that they were a powerful, brutal people. Chapter 1 is a *cause* leading to the *effect* found in chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Verse 1 is a good example of what might be called a “hinge verse,” or pivot. It does not clearly belong to chapter 1 or chapter 2, but like a hinge it stands in the middle, connecting one chapter to the next.

The Lord prepares Habakkuk for His main answer and answers his last question, which is the Lord’s main message to Habakkuk. Then the Lord explains that the Babylonians will

ultimately be judged. As in chapter 1 little time need be spent on an examination of the crimes of the Babylonians in verses 5-18. The last verse is a contrast to verse 19 and leads into chapter 3, thus forming another *cause/effect* relationship between chapters.

Chapter 3: Verse 1 again is a title or introduction. Habakkuk begins with his basic petition. The next thirteen verses are a poetic vision of the majesty and work of the Lord. This causes Habakkuk to respond in fear of the coming judgment but also to rejoice in the Lord.

Identify relationships between paragraphs

As you proceed through the book, observe how the author develops his argument. Link the thought of one paragraph to the next and beyond. The task here is to recognize and label the structural relationships between paragraphs. There are many types of relationships to look for:

- Does one paragraph or group of paragraphs explain further a concept introduced in an earlier paragraph?
- Perhaps the explanation takes the form of an illustration, an application, or a conclusion.
- The relationship may be one of contrast, cause-to-effect, problem-to-solution, question-to-answer, or general-to-specific (e.g., a general principle to a specific case).
- A paragraph may be pivotal, concluding one section while introducing the next.
- There may be no apparent continuity between paragraphs, rather the introduction of a new subject.

The author often signals the nature of the relationship by introducing the paragraph with a connective word, such as “therefore,” “for,” “but,” or “finally.” Summarize the nature of the relationship in a word or two. You might find it helpful to draw and label an arrow from one paragraph to another. This is illustrated below using the imaginary book.

Identify Relationships Between Paragraphs		
CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3
1-4 Short summary of paragraph	1-5 <i>For</i> Short summary Explanation	1-3 Short summary
5-10 New Subject Short summary	6-11 Short summary Cause to Effect	4-9 New Subject Short summary
11-15 <i>But</i> Contrast Short summary	12-19 <i>Therefore</i> Conclusion Short summary	10-16 Explanation Short summary
16-23 New Subject Short summary	20-25 Application Short summary	17-18 Short summary

Group the paragraphs into larger units of thought

The final step in making an observational chart is to identify and label the larger units of thought in the book. The paragraph is the most basic unit of thought. The author has combined these basic units into larger units (sections and subsections). These function together like the parts of a bicycle function together, in order to produce the overall message of the book. By identifying these larger parts, you are able to see more clearly what this overall message is and how each part contributes to it.

Begin by looking for small groups of paragraphs that are closely related in subject matter. For example, in Habakkuk 1:2-4 the author poses a question and the Lord answers in Habakkuk 1:5-11. Draw a horizontal line at the beginning and at the end of the group of paragraphs to mark it off from the rest. Then, write in a brief descriptive title at the beginning of the section such as, "Habakkuk's question."

Two or more of these smaller groups of paragraphs can be grouped together into a larger section on the basis of common subject matter. When you locate a section like this, mark it at the beginning and end with a heavy horizontal line and give it a descriptive title.

Some of these larger and smaller sections are quite easy to spot. Others are not so easy. At this stage you will sometimes need to guess. The overall organization of the book will become clearer to you later as you study the paragraphs in detail. Look at the example using the imaginary book below.

Larger Units of Thought - Chart

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3
1-4 Short summary of paragraph <hr/>	1-5 <i>For</i> Explanation Short summary ↓ 6-11 Cause to Effect Short summary <hr/>	1-3 Short summary <hr/>
5-10 New Subject Short summary	12-19 <i>Therefore</i> Conclusion Short summary	4-9 New Subject Short summary
11-15 <i>But</i> Contrast Short summary <hr/>	20-25 Application Short summary	10-16 Explanation Short summary
16-23 New Subject Short summary		17-18 Short summary

Create a Simplified Chart

Objective 4 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to convert an observational chart of the book of Jonah into a simplified chart.

Your observational chart is a rough worksheet, which by this stage may look quite messy. The purpose of this step is to create a simpler and tidier chart. Display in columns the larger units of thought that you identified in the final step of making your observational chart. Begin by making a list in outline form of these larger units and sub-units

(subsections) that you found within them. Look at the following example, based on the imaginary book:

- I. First Section 1:1-4
- II. Second Section 1:5-15
- III. Third Section 1:16–3:3
 - A. Subsection 1:16–2:11
 - B. Subsection 2:12–3:3
- IV. Final Section 3:4-18

Next, arrange these sections and subsections by column on your new chart. Then write in a title for each, as shown in the diagram below. Within the columns themselves you may write a title for each paragraph. If you prefer, give some other brief representation of that section’s contents. Notice that chapter divisions have been dropped in favor of sections.

Descriptive Title for the Book

Section Title		Section Title		Section Title		Section Title			
Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title	1. Paragraph Title		
	2. Paragraph Title	2. Paragraph Title	2. Paragraph Title	2. Paragraph Title	2. Paragraph Title	2. Paragraph Title	2. Paragraph Title		
	3. Paragraph Title	3. Paragraph Title	3. Paragraph Title	3. Paragraph Title	3. Paragraph Title	3. Paragraph Title	3. Paragraph Title		
1:1	4	1:5	15	1:16	2:11	2:12	3:3	3:4	18

A simplified chart of Habakkuk follows. Since Habakkuk is short and uncomplicated, you will not see the major changes that occur with longer books.

A Simplified Chart - Habakkuk

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH		
Habakkuk's Question: Why?	Lord's Answer: Trust Me	Habakkuk's Prayer: I Rejoice
<p>MESSAGE</p> <p>HABAKKUK: Why aren't you doing something about this sin?</p> <p>LORD: I will. I will use the Babylonians.</p> <p>HABAKKUK: Why will you use a people more wicked than we?</p>	<p>HABAKKUK WAITS FOR ANSWER</p> <p>LORD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My plan is sure, wait for it • Just live by faith • Wicked will be punished 	<p>PRAYER</p> <p>HABAKKUK'S REQUEST: Work plan with mercy</p> <p>HABAKKUK'S VISION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's majesty • God's works <p>HABAKKUK'S PRAISE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will rejoice • He is my strength and security

Write Theme and Purpose Statements

Objective 5 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to identify the theme and purpose of a Bible book from its simplified chart.

The task is to summarize the book in a single sentence by identifying its theme. The best way to do this is to answer the question, “What did the author intend to accomplish by writing this book?”

- What was his objective?
- What was his purpose?
- What result was he seeking to bring about in the lives of the original readers?

Each part of the book can then be understood as contributing to this single overall objective.

To illustrate, consider the way a bicycle works. It has a variety of parts, wheels, seat, frame, handlebars, pedals, and chain that do different things. Yet they all work together to accomplish a single purpose. The unity of the parts is seen in their common purpose. It is the same with a book of the Bible.

Your task in this step is to identify the theme and purpose. The correct answer will be the one that provides the simplest and most direct explanation for the role of each part within the book. Ideally, the statements should include three things:

- What the writer wrote
- The need or problem faced by the original readers
- The solution offered by the writer

Remember, the theme statement is a summary of what the author wrote. A model purpose statement might run along these lines: The writer in his situation wrote something to the readers in their situation in order to motivate them to respond in a certain way.

Here are three guidelines for identifying theme and purpose.

1. First, look to see if the author himself makes a clear statement of his purpose for writing. John, for example, explains towards the end of his gospel that he has written “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:31).
2. Some books do not have a clearly stated purpose from the author. You will not find such a clear direct statement of purpose in Colossians. What you find instead is a prayer in 1:9-10 for what Paul wishes God to accomplish in the lives of these believers. But as Colossians unfolds, it becomes evident that this prayer also expresses what Paul intends this letter to accomplish. Your second step is to seek for the purpose in something the author writes, such as a command or the prayer mentioned above.
3. Finally, you may infer the theme of the book by examining the themes of its various parts to see how they work together toward a common end. This approach may be compared to observing how each part of a bicycle functions in order to discover what this entire device is supposed to accomplish.

You have looked at the two charts of Habakkuk. You will remember from Lesson 5 that the theme is a combination of a subject and a complement. A reasonable expression of the subject and complement for Habakkuk is:

Subject: Habakkuk’s dialogue with the Lord about His ways

Complement: Results in trust and worship from Habakkuk

Combining the two elements, subject and complement, we have the theme of the book:

Theme: Habakkuk’s dialogue with the Lord about His ways results in trust and worship from Habakkuk.

Taking all these factors together and using the model purpose statement, given above, as your guide, you can create your own purpose statement by filling in the information of each part of the statement briefly from the results of your study. The following comparison demonstrates how each part of the model statement substitutes specific findings from the Habakkuk study:

Theme and Purpose Statements - Habakkuk

THE WRITER	HABAKKUK
In his situation	He saw sin all around him among his people and could not understand why the Lord was not doing anything about it. So he contended with Him about it, after which he saw a vision of the greatness, goodness, and power of the Lord.
Wrote something (theme)	Habakkuk's dialogue with the Lord about His ways results in trust and worship from Habakkuk.
To his readers	His people Judah
In their situation	Sinning and facing judgment
In order to motivate them to respond in a certain way (purpose)	To encourage the people to trust the Lord in the face of the coming judgment

Bringing these parts together, the full statement of purpose for Habakkuk could read as follows:

Habakkuk, having seen the sinful situation around him, having contended with the Lord about the way He was handling the situation, and having seen a vision of the Lord's greatness, goodness, and power, records his dialogue with, and his response to, the Lord for his people, who are facing judgment for their sin, to encourage them to trust the Lord in the face of this coming judgment.

This first attempt at formulating such a statement may sound awkward. If so, then it may be reworded or made more concise, as follows:

Habakkuk, having contended with the Lord about the sin all around him and then having seen a vision of the Lord's greatness, records his encounter with the Lord for his people, who are facing judgment for their sin, to encourage them to trust the Lord in the face of this coming judgment.

It is important to arrive at a brief but complete statement that includes all five factors. Once you understand the whole picture of why the author wrote his book, you can take the motivation and desired response portion of that statement as the simple statement of the author's purpose. In the case of Habakkuk such a purpose statement would read:

To encourage the people to trust the Lord in the face of the coming judgment

This may seem like a long and involved process. The rewards of thinking through all these factors will be significant in understanding the book you are studying. Whether you conclude your study at that point or go on to do further study, you will have an important framework for understanding every verse and portion.

Topic 2: Summary of the Procedure for Doing a Book Survey

Step One: Research the background.

Step Two: Read the book.

Step Three: Make an observational chart.

1. Lay out the chart with a column for each chapter and a space for each paragraph.
2. Write a summary for each paragraph.
3. Identify relationships between paragraphs.
4. Group the paragraphs into larger units of thought.

Step Four: Make a simplified chart that displays the larger units of thought in columns.

Step Five: Write a theme statement that reflects the purpose of the book.

EXERCISE 1

Complete the five steps of a book survey for the book of Jonah. Use whatever sources you have available to complete a background study. Record your findings, and note how many times you read through the book. You must include an observational chart and a simplified chart. Write out the theme statement on your simplified chart. Finally, use your creativity to make an illustrated chart of the book that you can share with your group or audience.

ADVANCED EXERCISES

Complete the five steps of a book survey for 1 Timothy or 1 Thessalonians, or both. Use whatever sources you have available to complete a background study. Record your findings, and note how many times you read through the book. You must include an observational chart and a simplified chart. Write out the theme statement on your simplified chart. Finally, use your creativity to make an illustrated chart of the book that you can share with your group or audience.

Conclusion

You are to be congratulated! Your completion of this lesson means that you have studied how to make a chart of a Bible book. You have seen examples of several charts. You have learned how to make both the initial observational chart and then the simplified chart. You have also produced your own chart. May you continue to develop and use your charting skills for the rest of your life.

You have only one more lesson left in the *STB* course. Lesson 12 will help prepare you for the final exam. More importantly, Lesson 12 will encourage you to continue using the *STB* method in your life and ministry.

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2:

- A. Author
- B. Date
- C. Recipients
- D. Situation
- F. Attitudes

QUESTION 3: True

QUESTION 4: False

QUESTION 5: True

QUESTION 6: *Your answer*

QUESTION 7:

- B. Author's division
- C. Accurate

QUESTION 8:

- B. Imposes truth
- C. New system
- E. Good for finding passage

Exercise: Book Survey for the Book of Jonah

Your answer to this exercise should look something like this:

Jonah

Background of Jonah

Author:

- a. Identity of author: Jonah.
- b. Place of writing: Unspecified, but presumably in Israel.
- c. Time of writing: Probably about 760 B.C.
- d. His personal situation: Jonah was a prominent prophet under Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25-27).

Readers:

- a. Specific identity of the original readers, if possible: Unspecified, but undoubtedly the people of Israel.
- b. Readers' situation: Israel lived in fear of the powerful and cruel Assyrian Empire, of which Nineveh was a capital.

Historical/social circumstances:

- a. Nineveh was a capital of Assyria.
- b. Tarshish was ancient Spain. It was as far away from Assyria as an ancient Israelite could imagine.
- c. Under Jeroboam II Israel had regained much of the territory to its north previously ruled by David and Solomon.
- d. This renewed prosperity was threatened by the growing menace of Assyria.
- e. The Assyrians were extremely cruel and powerful in battle.
- f. Several events, such as plagues and an eclipse of the sun, may have softened the Ninevites to hear Jonah's message.
- g. Assyria would go on to destroy Israel in 722 BC.
- h. Nineveh was destroyed about 713 BC as predicted by Nahum (Nah 1:1).

Reading—Student should read Jonah at least twice.

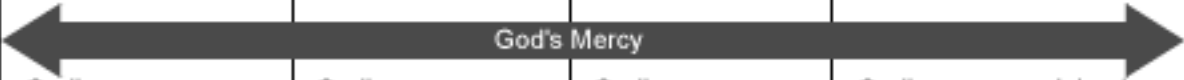
Observation Chart of Jonah

Jonah, Observations

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
<p>1-3 Jonah is commanded to go to Ninevah, BUT Contrast takes a ship to Tarshish.</p> <p>4-9 The Lord sends a great storm. Cause/Effect The sailors try everything, until Jonah confesses.</p> <p>Cause/Effect 10-14 The sailors confront Jonah, who asks to be thrown into the sea.</p> <p>15-16 Jonah is thrown in to the sea.</p> <p>17 Pivot: The great fish swallows Jonah.</p>	<p>1-9 POETRY THEN Jonah prays, lamenting his circumstance. Then he remembers the Lord and vows a sacrifice. "Salvation is from the Lord."</p> <p>10 Pivot: The great fish vomits Jonah.</p>	<p>1-4 The Lord commands Jonah to go to Nineveh a second time, and he goes.</p> <p>5-9 THEN Cause/Effect Nineveh repents! Even animals must show repentence.</p> <p>10 Pivot: God withholds judgment.</p>	<p>1-4 Jonah complains bitterly and asks to die. Question posed The Lord asks if he has reason.</p> <p>5-8 Jonah makes shelter. God appoints a plant. God appoints a worm. God appoints a wind.</p> <p>9-11 Question answered God explains His compassion, citing even babies and animals.</p>

Simplified Chart of Jonah

Jonah, A Great Story

GREAT STORM	GREAT FISH	GREAT CITY	GREAT DISPLEASURE
Above Water	Below Water	In the City	Outside the City
Jonah is called He disobeys God sends a storm Sailors despair Jonah confesses Jonah thrown overboard	Jonah prays a lament He describes his fate He remembers the Lord He vows a sacrifice	Jonah is called again He preaches in Nineveh Nineveh repents	Jonah complains God asks "Why?" The lesson of the plant and the worm God explains His mercy
Jonah runs	Jonah swims	Jonah walks	Jonah sits
			
God's mercy on sailors	God's mercy on Jonah	God's mercy on Nineveh	God's mercy explained
Pivot: Jonah swallowed	Pivot: Jonah vomited	Pivot: God has mercy	Conclusion: Mercy

Theme and Purpose of Jonah

Subject:

Compassion of God toward all people

Complement:

Is expressed in Jonah's life and in the deliverance of Nineveh

Theme:

Compassion of God toward all people is expressed in Jonah's life and in the deliverance of Nineveh.

Purpose:

Full Statement: Jonah, having experienced God's loving discipline and compassion and having been taught by God about his lack of compassion, writes of his experiences to his brothers to magnify God's compassion to encourage them to trust their God and express the same kind of compassion.

Simple Statement:

To encourage Israel to trust their God and to express the same kind of compassion as God does.

Creative Teaching Chart of Jonah—Student's own work.

Lesson 12: Review and Final Exam

Lesson Introduction

You have now arrived at the final lesson in *STB*. Appropriately, this final lesson focuses on the final exam for the course! This might be the most important lesson for you for at least three reasons. First, it will help you see how well you understand the *STB* method. Second, it will strengthen the skills you have learned in *STB*.

Third, it will help you pull together and integrate all that you have learned in this course. In learning to do almost anything, you learn it in individual steps. Then you come to a point of putting all those steps together into a process that yields rich and profitable results. So also with this course. You have been learning how to study the Bible in several individual steps. This lesson will help you put those steps into a smooth process.

This lesson has two parts. First, you will review the main points of the *STB* course. Following that, you will take the final exam. The purpose of the review is to help get you ready for the final exam. In particular, you will review the five observation questions, theme and purpose, interpretative questions, and application. Then you will take the exam.

Try not to be fearful about the exam! Yes, it is a test; but more important, it is an opportunity to demonstrate and rejoice in how much better you can read and understand the Bible than when you began this course.

Lesson Outline

Topic 1: The Five Observation Questions

Topic 2: Theme and Purpose

Topic 3: Interpretative Questions

Topic 4: Application

Lesson Objective

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to summarize the *STB* process and use it in a Bible passage.

Specific Objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you will be able to:

- Ask and answer the five observation questions on the final exam
- Write a theme and purpose statement on the final exam
- Write some interpretative questions on the final exam
- Write some statements of application and plans to put applications into practice on the final exam

QUESTION 1

Life Notebook entry: Think about your attitude toward the Bible. Is it a book you rely upon in your life? Do reading and studying the Word of God provide you comfort? Write your thoughts down in your Life Notebook under the title, “My attitudes toward the Bible.” Compare your answers to these same questions that you answered in Lesson 1.

Preparing to Study

As you know, you were instructed to begin each of the previous lessons with prayer and meditation on some verses from Psalm 119. The “Preparing to Study” section of this lesson is lengthier than the previous ones. You will probably want to spend more time in prayer because of your impending final exam! But also you will want to complete your reading and reflections of Psalm 119. Read Psalm 119: 81-176. Meditate on the benefits of the Word of God that these verses teach.

As you have noticed, Psalm 119 is a very long Bible chapter. With its 176 verses it is the longest psalm in the book of Psalms. There are twenty-two groups of eight verses each. In the Hebrew language there are twenty-two letters. The eight verses in each group all begin with the same letter, and each group matches, in order, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus, in Psalm 119:1-8, each verse begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In Psalm 119:9-16, each verse begins with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so forth through the last group of eight verses (169-176), all of which begin with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

As you read Psalm 119:81-176, remember the five observation questions. They are: *who*, *where*, *when*, *what*, and *why*.

QUESTION 2

Divide Psalm 119:81-176 into eight-verse sections. After each section write an observation statement from that passage about God’s Word that you find personally helpful.

Topic 1: The Five Observation Questions

Objective 1 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be prepared to ask and answer the five observation questions on the final exam.

It may seem to you that much time has elapsed since you first started learning about observation in Lessons 3–5. Hopefully you still remember that observation asks and answers the question, What does it say? Observation is the first of the three steps in the *STB* method. You should try to spend the majority of your study time doing observation.

The five questions—*who*, *where*, *when*, *what*, and *why*—can greatly help you as you observe a biblical text. **You must ask and answer these five questions on the final exam!**

Who?

You answer the question *who* by searching for all the people that you can find in the Bible passage. You list all the persons who are involved. You determine what you can learn about them in the passage.

QUESTION 3

Which of the following answer the question *who* from Psalm 119:81-96? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. The author of Psalm 119
- B. The Lord
- C. The arrogant
- D. All generations
- E. “Your servant”
- F. The wicked

Where?

To answer the question *where*, look for all the places that are mentioned in the Bible passage. Look for specific nations, cities, and buildings. Search for any mention of geographical locations and landmarks.

QUESTION 4

Two of the answers to the question *where* in Psalm 119:81-96 are **heaven** and **earth**. *True or False?*

When?

The question *when* can be answered by looking for all time references in the Bible passage. Try to determine when the events in the passage took place. Look for clues that will tell you the duration of the action mentioned in the passage. Find out at what point in history the action occurred.

QUESTION 5

Which phrase in Psalm 119: 105-112 answers the question *when*?

- A. The wicked lay a snare
- B. At all times to the very end
- C. The freewill offerings from my mouth
- D. A light that shines on my path

What?

You answer the question *what* by looking at the basic **content** in the Bible passage. Look for **events** that are taking place. Search for **ideas** that are being communicated. Try to determine the **tone** of the passage—joy, sorrow, victory, defeat, etc. Look for such things as key words, promises, commands, warnings, and figures of speech. This normally will be your biggest category.

QUESTION 6

In Psalm 119:113-120, the psalmist both loves and fears God's Law. *True or False?*

Why?

The answer to this question is found by trying to determine why the author wrote what he wrote. Often you can discover why the author wrote certain material by looking at the preceding and following contexts of the Bible passage.

Remember that some *why* questions are interpretative questions, not observation questions. In Interpretation, *why* asks about the meaning of a passage. In Observation, *why* asks the reason that the author included this passage at this point in the Bible book. Also, in observation, *why* asks how the passage connects to the context.

QUESTION 7

Match each of the five questions with the phrase that is an answer to that question from Psalm 119:145-152.

<i>Observation Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Who?	That I might keep your rules
Where?	Oppressors
When?	Your commands
What?	Nighttime hours
Why?	The Lord is near

Topic 2: Theme and Purpose

Objective 2 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be prepared to write a theme and purpose statement on the final exam.

The theme is what the Bible book or passage is about. You should always try to state the theme in one complete sentence. Sometimes students think that they can state the theme in one or two words. No! **A one- or two-word theme will not be a correct answer on the final exam!** What the student states in one or two words is merely the subject of the

theme. You must write a complete sentence in order to communicate what the author wrote about the subject.

In contrast to the theme, the purpose states why the author wrote the passage or book to the original readers. When you write a purpose statement, you must decide what the author's motivation for writing was. Also, you must establish what response the author wanted from his readers.

The **theme** reveals **what** the author wrote. The **purpose** discloses **why** he wrote it.

QUESTION 8

Match each of the following passages from Psalm 119 with the theme statement that best describes it.

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Theme Statement</i>
Psalm 119:81-88	The psalmist loved God's Law, which gave wisdom.
Psalm 119:97-104	The psalmist prayed for insight and deliverance.
Psalm 119:105-112	The psalmist hoped in the reliable Word of God.
Psalm 119:169-176	The psalmist vowed loyalty to the light-giving law.

QUESTION 9

Identify the two words, in the right order, that correctly complete the following sentence: The biblical author's motivation for writing is found in the _____ statement, and a concise statement of what the author wrote is found in the _____.

- A. Subject and conclusion
- B. Conclusion and subject
- C. Cause and effect
- D. Effect and cause
- E. Purpose and theme
- F. Theme and purpose

QUESTION 10

Which of the following best describes a purpose statement of Psalm 119?

- A. The psalmist wanted to communicate his deep commitment to the Lord and His Word by writing in an alphabetical form of poetry.
- B. The psalmist was so excited about the benefits of God's Law that he could have easily written another 176 verses.
- C. The psalmist was consumed with the sovereignty of the nation of Israel.
- D. The psalmist wanted to be known as the author of the longest chapter in the entire Bible.

Topic 3: Interpretative Questions

Objective 3 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be prepared to write some interpretative questions on the final exam.

Interpretative questions ask about the meaning of a Bible passage. You write your own interpretative questions as you encounter things that you do not understand. You write questions to help you investigate the significance of certain details, words, and phrases. If you can formulate simple and clear questions, then you will more easily find answers.

To compose interpretative questions, review your observations and read the passage again. Write down anything that you want to know in the form of a question. Ask about things in the passage that you cannot grasp. Ask a question about anything that you might want to research.

You will not be expected to research interpretative questions on the final exam. But while you are taking the exam, you must write some of your own interpretative questions for the exam passage.

QUESTION 11

Which of the following give an example of an interpretative question from Psalm 119?
(Select all that apply.)

- A. Psalm 119:177—How can you apply Psalm 119 to your life?
- B. Psalm 119:145—Who cried out with all his heart?
- C. Psalm 119:163—What did the psalmist love?
- D. Psalm 119:176—Why did the psalmist feel vulnerable?
- E. Psalm 119:167—How did the psalmist keep God’s rules?
- F. Psalm 119:158—What is the meaning of treacherous people?

Topic 4: Application

Objective 4 - When you have completed this lesson, you will be prepared to write some statements of application and plans to put applications into practice on the final exam.

The three steps are observation, interpretation, and **application**. This third and vital step in Bible study means translating your understanding of God’s Word into action. This is the ultimate aim of knowing spiritual truth.

Once you have understood the meaning of a Bible passage, then you can write statements of application that should lead to a personal response to the truth. Often you can lift these statements almost directly from the text itself. At other times, you must dig below the surface of the Bible passage.

QUESTION 12

Observation means translating your understanding of God's Word into action. *True or False?*

QUESTION 13

A statement of application should lead to a correct interpretative question. *True or False?*

After you write statements of application, you are not yet finished with application! You must then relate the applications to life. To do this, you must write some specific plans to make your application a reality. You should think through the steps that will bring the application to completion. It is not enough to state what action you need to take. Plan what steps you will take and when you will take them. Include which day or perhaps even what hour you will do what you now know you should do.

QUESTION 14

Read the following personal reflections and then answer the question that follows:

"Psalm 119:97-100 can be incredibly ego-satisfying to me. The thought of being the best certainly sparks my pride. I would love to be wiser than my enemies, more insightful than all my teachers, and more discerning than the older men. I like these possibilities. I don't know whether the psalmist was young or old, whether he was writing out of the spiritual enthusiasm of his youth or out of the quiet observation of his old age. In either case, however, he was not writing to satisfy his ego. He kept pointing, not to himself, but to God's law. The wisdom that God's Word can give me will make me wiser than all the people who ignore His Word. But that is not what I should seek. Verse 97 directs my energy toward God's law, not toward the goal of being the best that I can be. I should love God's law."

The above personal reflections contain an excellent description of relating applications to life and putting them into practice. *True or False?*

QUESTION 15

In your Life Notebook evaluate your confidence in your own ability to understand the Bible through your own study. On a scale of 1-5, where 5 indicates very strong confidence and 1 indicates very little confidence, note your own confidence.

Conclusion

This course concludes as it began, with strong words about the Bible:

The Bible student gradually becomes a different person. The Scriptures change that person who allows God's words to penetrate his or her soul. God is in the process of

making His children more and more like Jesus Christ. God uses the Bible to transform people.

As the Bible student continues to labor in the Scriptures, he grows wiser. It is only in the Scriptures that a person can increase in true wisdom. The Bible warns about the dangers of worldly wisdom. True wisdom comes from an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Christ.

The student can never say that he has completed his study of the entire Bible. He can never claim to have finally understood everything in the Bible. The study of the Bible is the pursuit of a lifetime. A scholar who is able to study the Bible for fifty years perhaps will say at the end of his life, "I have just begun to study!"

The believer who consistently and deeply studies the Bible is participating in the highest work, the supreme calling. To devote oneself to Bible study is the greatest passion. Studying the Word of God means working in the perfect library.

May the Lord bless you richly as you study His Word diligently in the remaining days on earth that He has for you!

Answers to Questions

QUESTION 1: *Your answer*

QUESTION 2: *Your answer*

QUESTION 3:

A. The author of Psalm 119

B. The Lord

C. The arrogant

D. All generations

E. “Your servant”

F. The wicked

QUESTION 4: True

QUESTION 5: B. At all times to the very end

QUESTION 6: True

QUESTION 7:

<i>Observation Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Who?	Oppressors
Where?	The Lord is near
When?	Nighttime hours
What?	Your commands
Why?	That I might keep your rules

QUESTION 8:

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Theme Statement</i>
Psalm 119:81-88	The psalmist hoped in the reliable Word of God.
Psalm 119:97-104	The psalmist loved God’s Law, which gave wisdom.
Psalm 119:105-112	The psalmist vowed loyalty to the light-giving law.
Psalm 119:169-176	The psalmist prayed for insight and deliverance.

QUESTION 9: E. Purpose and theme

QUESTION 10: A. The psalmist wanted to communicate his deep commitment to the Lord and His Word by writing in an alphabetical form of poetry.

QUESTION 11:

- D. Psalm 119:176—Why did the psalmist feel vulnerable?
- E. Psalm 119:167—How did the psalmist keep God’s rules?
- F. Psalm 119:158—What is the meaning of treacherous people?

QUESTION 12: False

QUESTION 13: False

Course Conclusion and Evaluation

Objective: Review the objectives for this course and give a personal evaluation of your progress toward each objective.

Evaluation of Progress: The following were your course objectives that were stated in the introduction. Read them and place an x in the column that best describes your progress toward each objective. Take these evaluations to your facilitator on your last meeting.

- Understanding the content of the course and completing the lesson exercises.
- Becoming acquainted with available resources and tools that can enhance Bible study.
- Being diligent and effective in studying the Scripture.
- Seeking after God and allowing God to change your life, as measured by self-evaluation and Life Notebook entries.
- Using the *STB* method to complete the Bible study project on Phil 2:1-11.
- Preparing to teach others the *STB* method

Progress Toward Objectives			
Objectives	Little	Good	Excellent
1 Understanding the content of the course and completing the lesson exercises.			
2 Becoming acquainted with available resources and tools that can enhance Bible study.			
3 Being diligent and effective in studying the Scripture.			
4 Seeking after God and allowing God to change your life, as measured by self-evaluation and Life Notebook entries.			
5 Using the <i>STB</i> method to complete the Bible study project on Philippians 2:1-11.			
6 Preparing to teach others the <i>STB</i> method.			

Final Exam

It is now time for you to take the final examination. Unless your facilitator indicates otherwise, you will have one hour to write your answers. The exam passage is Romans 12:1-2. As you study this passage of Scripture, do not refer to your workbook or notebook while taking the exam. Use the three steps (observation, interpretation, application) that you learned in the course. As a minimum, you must include the following in your study of the passage:

- Answers to the five observation questions
- A proposed theme
- A purpose statement
- At least two interpretative questions
- At least two statements of application
- A specific project for each statement of application showing a practical way of putting the application statements into practice

APPENDIX 1

General Bible Familiarity

The purpose of this assignment is to test your general Bible familiarity which comes from a regular time of reading in your Bible. You should complete it without using your Bible or any aids. On the next page, you will find an “Event Line” filled in with significant names and events. On the left side, under the title “Time Line,” write in a general date that will reflect when the person lived or the event happened (i.e., whenever it is possible to do so). The first line to the right is entitled “Book Line.” List the books that speak about these events or persons (Note: in some cases you may lump books together where appropriate, such as Pentateuch, Prophets, Epistles). Next to the “Book Line” is what we call the “Historical Line.” Under this heading write in the key nations with which the persons interacted or that were in historical prominence at these times (other than Israel). The next line is called the “Theme Line.” List five or at the most six verses or passages of Scripture that you think would adequately represent the redemptive plan of God. Be prepared to defend your choices. Then, in your notebook describe this plan in five sentences or less. The final line is called the “Style Line.” Under this section, list the type of literature that is associated with the books of the Bible that you noted earlier, i.e., prose, poetry, wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, and epistolary.

To illustrate what we are looking for, we have filled in all the lines (except the “Theme Line”) with the facts related to Creation.

GENERAL BIBLE FAMILIARITY QUIZ

TIME LINE	EVENT LINE	BOOK LINE	HISTORICAL LINE	THEME LINE	STYLE LINE
15000 - 4000 B.C.	Creation	Genesis 1-3	↑	↑	↑
	Fall	↑	Pre-Flood Man	<i>Write in this column 6 Bible references that would indicate the theme of the Bible as you conceive it.</i>	↑
	Flood	↓	↓		Prose (Narrative)
	Abraham	↓			↓
	Moses				↓
	Joshua, Judges, Samuel		↑		↓
	Saul		↑		↓
	David		↓		↑
	Solomon		↓		↓
	Division				↑
	Northern Kingdom to Assyria				↓
	Southern Kingdom to Babylon			↓	
	Rebuilding of Temple/ Jerusalem			↓	
	Intertestamental			↓	
	Birth & Life of Christ	↓	↑	↓	
	Death of Christ/ Birth of Church	↓	↓	↓	
	Fall of Jerusalem	↓	↓	↓	
	End of New Testament			↓	

APPENDIX 2

The Student, the Fish, and Agassiz

By the Student

Taken from William C. Lincoln's *Personal Bible Study* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1975) pp. 139-43.

(Jean Louis Agassiz — 1807-1873] was a naturalist who studied many kinds of animals in Europe and America. He became noted for his work on both recent and fossil forms of fishes. At Harvard University he founded the Museum of Natural History, now known as the Agassiz Museum. He established a zoological laboratory on an island in Buzzard's Bay off the coast of Massachusetts to provide a place to study animals in their natural surroundings. He believed that animal species do not change and criticized Charles Darwin's theories on evolution. As a geologist he showed that glaciers once covered large areas of the earth. Agassiz was born at Montier-en-Vully, Switzerland. He studied at the universities of Zurich, Heidelberg, and Munich. Agassiz came to the United States in 1846 and in 1848 became a professor of zoology and geology at Harvard. [— from *The World Book Encyclopaedia*, 1962])

It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well-grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

“When do you wish to begin?” he asked.

“Now,” I replied.

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic “Very well,” he took from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

“Take this fish,” said he, “and look at it; we call it a Haemulon (pronounced Hem-yulon); by and by I will ask what you have seen.”

With that he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object entrusted to me.

“No man is fit to be a naturalist,” said he, “who does not know how to take care of specimens.”

I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers and elegantly shaped exhibition jars; all the old students will recall the huge, neckless glass bottles and their leaky, wax-besmeared corks, half-eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor who had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish was infectious; and though this alcohol had “a very ancient and fishlike smell,” I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed when they discovered that no amount of Eau de Cologne would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor who had, however, left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, I found my specimen to be dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting spell, and looked with anxiety for a return of the normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, an hour, another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around, looked it in the face—ghastly; I looked at it from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarters’ view—just as ghastly. I was in despair. At an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so with infinite relief, I carefully replaced the fish in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation looked at it again. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish—it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my fingers down its throat to see how sharp its teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me—I would draw the fish—and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

“That is right,” said he, “a pencil is one of the best eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked.” With these encouraging words he added, “Well, what is it like?”

He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me: the fringed gill—arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fin, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body.

When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment, he said, “You have not looked very carefully.” He continued, more earnestly, “You haven’t seen

one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself. Look again! Look again!" and he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish? But now I set myself to the task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been.

The afternoon passed quickly, and then, towards its close, the professor inquired, "Do you see it yet?"

"No," I replied, "I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before."

"That is next best," said he earnestly, "but I won't hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you then, before you look at the fish."

This was disconcerting. Not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be, but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring. Here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

"Do you perhaps mean," I asked, "that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs?"

His thoroughly pleased, "Of course, of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically, as he always did, upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

"Oh, look at your fish!" he said, and then left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalogue.

"That is good, that is good!" he repeated, "but that is not all; go on." And so, for three long days he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. "Look, look, look," was his repeated injunction.

This was the best entomological lesson I ever had, a lesson whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study. It was a legacy the professor has left to me, as he left it to many others, a legacy of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

A year afterwards, some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the blackboard. We drew prancing starfishes; frogs in mortal combat; hydro-headed worms; stately crawfishes standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas; and grotesque fishes with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after, and was as much amused as any at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

"Haemulons, every one of them," he said, "Mr. _____ drew them."

True; and to this day, if I attempt to draw a fish, I can draw nothing but Haemulons.

The fourth day a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and differences between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves. The odor had become a pleasant perfume, and even now the sight of an old, six-inch, worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

The whole group of Haemulons was thus brought into view; and whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, preparation and examination of the bony framework, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement, was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

"Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law."

At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

APPENDIX 3

Study Helps for Poetic, Wisdom, and Prophetic Literature

The Bible is a collection or anthology of works written by a variety of writers over the span of many centuries. As a result, many literary forms are represented in the Bible. Along with historical narrative, theological exposition, and epistolary letters, we also find poetic, wisdom, and prophetic literature. These last three types of literature account for major portions of the Bible and often pose unique interpretive problems of their own. This appendix is designed to furnish you with some study helps that should aid your time of research.

This material is intended as a resource to increase the productivity of the studies you undertake after this course. The appendix is divided into three parts: Poetry, Wisdom Literature, and Prophecy. Each of the three main divisions is subdivided into two parts: (1) general information and orientation to the special characteristics of the type of literature being discussed and (2) hints for applying the inductive Bible study method you have already learned. Be sure to write down any questions you may have for future reference. Of course, the basic strategy for studying this portion of God's Word is the same as that used in your other studies: observe, interpret, and apply.

APPENDIX OUTLINE

Poetic Literature

- The Uniqueness of Hebrew Poetry

 - The Psalms

 - The Song of Solomon

- Hints for Studying Hebrew Poetry

Wisdom Literature

- Distinctive Features of Wisdom Literature

- Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament

 - Job

 - Proverbs

 - Ecclesiastes

- Hints for Studying Hebrew Wisdom Literature

Prophetic Literature

- The Prophets and Their Writings

 - The Nature of a Prophet

The Message of the Prophet
The Background of the Prophet
The Language of the Prophet
The Collected Writings of the Prophets
Hints for Studying the Prophets

Poetic Literature

Poetry is important enough to occupy about one-third of the Old Testament. Only seven Old Testament books contain no poetry: Leviticus, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Malachi. Two of the most well-known books of poetry are the Psalms and the Song of Solomon.

The Uniqueness of Hebrew Poetry

The Psalms. The book of Psalms was the prayer book and hymnal of God's people. It was used in worship to praise the character and works of God. Merrill Unger, in *Unger's Bible Handbook*, says:

The Hebrew title for the Psalter is "Book of Praises" (*Sepher Tehillim*). Praise, worship, confession and the outpouring of prayer characterize the Psalms. The Psalter was the hymnal of the Jewish people and is the prayer and praise manual of the Christian church. Martin Luther called the Psalter "a Bible in miniature." Our English word "Psalms," from the Septuagint *Psalmoi*, means "songs" accompanied by string instruments. In the Hebrew Bible, Psalms head the third division, called the *Kethubhim* or Writings (cf. Lk 24:44). The Hebrew Bible contains 150 psalms.¹

Presently, the book of Psalms is divided into five sections also called books. After the Jewish exile, the psalms were collected into these divisions and used as a formal book of worship in the temple. The Israelites recognized many different types of psalms, each of which had a given function in the life of Israel, an intended purpose that governed its interpretation and application.

The book of Psalms, called "Praises" in the Hebrew Bible, **is a collection of songs from a wide range of authors and dates.** The book does not claim to be the work of one individual but many. David, of course, was the primary author; seventy-three psalms are attributed to him. That means, however, that more than half of them are from other authors, ranging in date from Moses, the earliest of the named authors (Ps. 90), to the anonymous poet of Psalm 137, who lived in the exilic or postexilic age.² Because of this variety in the type of psalms and the multitude of authors, the book of Psalms has been called **a book of little books.**

Hebrew parallelism. The most unique feature of the psalms is their poetic structure. Like all poetry and songs, the poetic literature of the Bible has a certain rhythm of ideas. This is known as **parallelism.** Parallelism is the correspondence of one verse or line with another. First, the poet presents us with an idea, image, or proposition. Then he varies that idea in the next verse or line. Sometimes he leaves out certain parts or substitutes other sentence elements.

There are six major types of parallelism in Hebrew poetry (we have not listed all the possibilities here):

1. Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), p. 273.

2. Morris A. Inch and C. Hassell Bullock, ed. *The Literature and Meaning of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), p. 83.

1. *Synonymous*. The second line is equivalent (or very similar) in meaning to the first.

Psalm 2:4 - He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

Psalm 1:5 - Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

CAUTION: They are often not precisely synonymous.

Psalm 22:18 - They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

2. *Antithetic*. The second line contrasts with the first by stating the opposite idea.

Psalm 1:6 - For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 37:9 - For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.

3. *Synthetic*. The second line takes up and further develops a thought begun in the first line.

Psalm 95:3 - For the LORD is a great God, And a great King above all gods.

Psalm 37:11 - But the humble will inherit the land, And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

4. *Climactic*. The second line completes the first by repeating one element of the first line and adding to it.

Psalm 29:1 - Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Psalm 96:1 - Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

5. *Emblematic*. One line conveys the main idea, the other illuminates it by an image.

Psalm 42:1 - As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God.

Psalm 23:1 - The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

6. *Formal*. There is no observable parallel relation of ideas, images, or propositions between lines; the two lines are simply joined together. (Some believe that “synthetic” and “formal” are two labels for the same kind of parallelism.)

Psalm 2:6 - But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.

When examining a particular psalm in an analytic study, try to identify the type of parallelism being used. Being aware of these categories will help your general understanding of the poetic books as you read them. Parallelism also appears in other places in Scripture where poetry is found.

Types of psalms. Understanding the types of psalms and their structure will help you to discover the author’s intended meaning so that you can apply it today. Below is a description of eleven categories of psalms and some of their common forms:

1. *Psalms of thanksgiving and adoration.* These are joyous psalms that express the gratitude of God’s people for blessing bestowed from the Lord’s hand. Some of these psalms are

directed to the Lord in prayer. Some are directed to others by way of a call to worship or a testimony by the writer.

The basic outline and format of these psalms is:

- a. Call to Worship
 - (1) Call to Praise
 - (2) Reason for Praise
 - (3) Conclusion
- b. Descriptive Praise
 - (1) Opening Imperative
 - (2) Summary of God's Mighty Acts (a reminder of who God is and what He has done)
 - (3) Concluding Instruction or Testimonial
- c. Declarative Praise
 - (1) Opening Statement of What "I Will" Do
 - (2) Specific Works or Intervention of God
 - (3) Personal Confession or Testimonial

2. *Psalms of individual praise.* These are psalms that extol the character and works of God after a victory, when deliverance has been granted or when God has answered after long periods of silence. Often they express a general form that can be outlined as follows:

- a. Proclamation
- b. Narration
- c. Acknowledgment of the Role of God
- d. Instruction or Moral

3. *Psalms of individual lament.* One of the most appealing characteristics of the psalms is the honesty and straightforwardness of the authors as they express their feelings to God. Life is often hard and perplexing, and the laments were cries of the people to God for help in their trials and sorrow. A typical form for individual laments is:

- a. Introductory Petition (begins with vocative, "O God")
- b. Lament
- c. Confession of Trust
- d. Petitions and Motivation
- e. Optional Vow of Praise, Confession, or Imprecation

4. *Psalms of national lament.* These were the laments of the nation Israel. Like the individual laments, they express the cries of the people, only through a corporate voice. For their general form, see the outline under the individual lament.

5. *Royal psalms about the king.* What we term royal psalms are, to a large extent, psalms of mixed genre, i.e., those in which one of the other psalm genres can still be recognized. They do not have a unique format, for they are too diverse. Instead, emphasis in the psalm is upon the role of the king. Since the royal line of David eventually led to the Messianic King, these psalms can also be used to celebrate the kingship of Christ.

6. *Psalms of enthronement.* These psalms speak about God who is on His throne in heaven. A common feature of all these psalms is the phrase “The Lord has become king” and the praise of God for His majesty. Special emphasis is given to the reign of Yahweh over the entire world. Since these psalms blend several genres, there is no typical outline or format that can be given.

7. *Songs of Zion.* These verses sing the praise of Jerusalem which is on Mount Zion. The New Testament has much to say about the New Jerusalem, and these psalms reflect the special emotion attached to this “holy city”—past, present, and future.

8. *Penitential psalms.* Penitential psalms breathe deep contrition for sins committed. Often included in this contrition is a request for the Lord not to chasten or rebuke the penitent in His anger.

9. *Imprecatory psalms.* These psalms call forth God’s wrath upon the wicked. The imprecatory psalms do not seek personal revenge but are expressions of intense zeal for the Holy One of Israel whose holy character has been blasphemed. They call for God’s justice when others have ridiculed or persecuted the people who are called by His name.

Behind the imprecations is a recognition of a divine moral governance in the world, a belief that right and wrong are meaningful for God, and that judgment must operate in the moral world order as well as grace.³

10. *Messianic psalms.* These psalms include prophetic utterances about Christ, the coming Messiah. Because they include a variety of genres, they are listed among the other types of psalms.

11. *Wisdom Psalms.* Wisdom psalms contain practical instruction on a variety of topics. Some expositors consider them to be transitional between worship psalms and instruction in wisdom.

To help you see the arrangement of the Psalms and their types, we have included this chart of psalm classifications.

3. J. G. S. S. Thomson, “Psalms, Book of,” *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 1058.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE PSALMS

	BOOK I 1-41		BOOK II 42-72				
Author → Type of Psalm ↓	David	U n k n o w n	David	A s a p h	S o l o m o n	U n k n o w n	Son of Korah
Thanksgiving and Adoration	8, 19, 29	33	65, 68			67	
Individual Praise	11, 18, 23, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41					66	46, 48
Individual Lament	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 35, 39		51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 69, 70			43, 71	42
National Lament							44
Royal	18, 20, 21	2			72		45
Enthronement							47
Songs of Zion						43	42
Penitential	6, 32, 38		51				
Imprecatory	35		58, 69				
Messianic	16, 22, 24	2			72		45
Wisdom	9, 12, 14, 15, 19, 36, 37	1, 10	52, 53	50			49
Total	37	4	18	1	1	4	7

BOOK III 73-89					BOOK IV 90-106			BOOK V 107-150		
Asaph	D a v i d	Songs of Korah	H e m a n	E t h a n	M o s e s	D a v i d	Unknown	David	S o l o m o n	Unknown
81							91, 95, 96, 98, 100, 104, 105	124, 131, 133, 145		107, 111, 113, 114, 115, 117, 123, 134, 135, 136, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150
75		84, 85					92, 106	108, 138, 139		116, 118
76, 77	86	88	88				102	109, 140, 141, 142, 143		120, 130
74, 79 80, 83					90					
				89		101		110, 144		132
							93, 96, 97, 98, 99			
		87						122		121, 125, 126, 129
							102	143		130
83								109		137
								110		
73, 78, 82							94		12 7	112, 119, 128
11	1	4	1	1	1	2	14	15	1	28

A final resource for your study is a sequential list of the Psalms and their classification, as given by B. W. Anderson in the appendix of his book *Out of the Depths*.⁴ Anderson notes that his list is only a working basis for the study of the Psalms. There are too many uncertainties to permit exact and rigid classification according to type. You will also notice that the individual listing does use some different terminology. When you encounter this new terminology, look it up on the chart.

Chart of Book Division of the Psalms	
Psalm	Type
BOOK I	
1	Torah (wisdom) psalm
2	Royal psalm
3	Individual lament
4	Individual lament (psalm of trust?)
5	Individual lament
6	Individual lament (penitential psalm)
7	Individual lament
8	Hymn
9-10	Individual lament? (alphabetical acrostic)
11	Song of Trust
12	Community lament
13	Individual lament
14	(= 53) Individual lament
15	Liturgy for admission to the cult
16	Song of trust
17	Individual lament
18	(= II Sam. 22) Individual thanksgiving (royal)
19:1-6	Hymn

4. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1974), pp. 173–177.

19:7-14	Torah (wisdom) psalm
20	Royal psalm
21	Royal psalm
22	Individual lament
23	Song of trust
24	Hymn
25	Individual lament (alphabetical acrostic)
26	Individual lament
27:1-6	Song of trust
27:7-14	Individual lament
28	Individual lament
29	Hymn
30	Individual song of thanksgiving
31	Individual lament
32	Individual song of thanksgiving (alphabetical acrostic)
33	Hymn
34	Individual song of thanksgiving (alphabetical acrostic)
35	Individual lament
36	Wisdom psalm (including lament, hymn)
37	Wisdom psalm (alphabetical acrostic)
38	Individual lament (penitential psalm)
39	Individual lament
40:1-11	Individual song of thanksgiving
40:12-17	Individual lament
41	Individual lament
BOOK II	
42-43	Individual lament
44	Community lament

45	Royal psalm
46	Song of Zion
47	Hymn
48	Song of Zion
49	Wisdom psalm
50	Covenant-renewal liturgy
51	Individual lament (penitential psalm)
52	Individual lament (mixture of types)
53	(= 14) Individual lament
54	Individual lament
55	Individual lament
56	Individual lament
57	Individual lament
58	Community lament
59	Individual lament
60	Community lament
61	Individual lament
62	Song of trust
63	Song of trust (individual lament?)
64	Individual lament
65	Community song of thanksgiving (hymn?)
66:1-12	Hymn
66:13-20	Individual song of thanksgiving
67	Community song of thanksgiving (hymn?)
68	Zion liturgy (?)
69	Individual lament
70	(= 40:13-17) Individual lament
71	Individual lament
72	Royal psalm

BOOK III	
73	Wisdom psalm
74	Community lament
75	Community song of thanksgiving
76	Song of Zion
77	Individual lament
78	Salvation history psalm (wisdom psalm?)
79	Community lament
80	Community lament
81	Covenant renewal liturgy
82	Liturgy
83	Community lament
84	Song of Zion
85	Community lament
86	Individual lament
87	Song of Zion
88	Individual lament
89	Individual lament (royal)
BOOK IV	
90	Community lament
91	Song of trust
92	Individual song of thanksgiving
93	Hymn
94	Community lament
95	Hymn
96	Hymn
97	Hymn

98	Hymn
99	Hymn
100	Hymn
101	Royal psalm
102	Individual lament including hymnic elements (penitential)
103	Hymn
104	Hymn
105	Salvation history psalm (hymn)
106	Salvation history psalm
BOOK V	
107	Community song of thanksgiving
108	(= 57:7-11; 60:5-12) mixed type
109	Individual lament
110	Royal psalm
111	Hymn (alphabetical acrostic)
112	Wisdom psalm (alphabetical acrostic)
113	Hymn
114	Hymn
115	Liturgy
116	Individual song of thanksgiving
117	Hymn
118	Individual song of thanksgiving (royal)
119	Torah (wisdom) psalm (alphabetical acrostic)
120	Individual lament
121	Song of trust
122	Song of Zion
123	Community lament
124	Community song of thanksgiving

125	Song of trust (community lament?)
126	Community lament (?)
127	Wisdom psalm
128	Wisdom psalm
129	Community lament (?)
130	Individual lament (penitential psalm)
131	Song of trust
132	Liturgy of the Davidic covenant
133	Wisdom psalm
134	Liturgy
135	Salvation history psalm (hymn)
136	Salvation history psalm (hymn; community thanksgiving?)
137	Community lament
138	Individual song of thanksgiving
139	Individual lament (wisdom psalm?)
140	Individual lament
141	Individual lament
142	Individual lament
143	Individual lament
144:1-11	Royal psalm
145	Hymn (alphabetical acrostic)
146	Hymn
147	Hymn
148	Hymn
149	Hymn
150	Doxology to conclude the Psalter

The Song of Solomon. Another book of poetry, the Song of Solomon, is a wedding song, celebrating the love between Solomon and his bride. This is its literal meaning and the primary point of application. Over the years it has been allegorized to represent the love of God for Israel and the love of Christ for His Church. While it may be possible to draw some of those parallels, the normal literal meaning is the proper interpretation of Song of Solomon. It is a song of lovers.

Unger, in his *Bible Handbook* in the section on the Song of Solomon entitled “Sanctity of Wedded Love,” describes the interesting background of this story:

H. A. Ironside’s presentation of the setting of the poem is meaningful. King Solomon had a vineyard in the hill country of Ephraim, about 50 miles N of Jerusalem, 8:11. He let it out to keepers, 8:11, consisting of a mother, two sons, 1:6, and two daughters—the Shulamite, 6:13, and a little sister, 8:8. The Shulamite was “the Cinderella” of the family, 1:5, naturally beautiful but unnoticed. Her brothers were likely half brothers, 1:6. They made her work very hard tending the vineyards, so that she had little opportunity to care for her personal appearance, 1:6. She pruned the vines and set traps for the little foxes, 2:15. She also kept the flocks, 1:8. Being out in the open so much, she became sunburned, 1:5.

One day a handsome stranger came to the vineyard. It was Solomon disguised. He showed an interest in her, and she became embarrassed concerning her personal appearance, 1:6. She took him for a shepherd and asked about his flocks, 1:7. He answered evasively, 1:8, but also spoke loving words to her, 1:8-10, and promised rich gifts for the future, 1:11. He won her heart and left with the promise that some day he would return. She dreamed of him at night and sometimes thought he was near, 3:1. Finally he did return in all his kingly splendor to make her his bride, 3:6-7. This prefigures Christ, who came first as Shepherd and won His Bride. Later He will return as King, and then will be consummated the marriage of the Lamb.⁵

Hints for Studying Hebrew Poetry

The following suggestions on methodology based on the three steps of Bible study (observation, interpretation, and application) are designed to aid you in your study of the book of Psalms.

Since the book of Psalms is actually a collection of songs, you will not follow the usual process of studying the book as a whole and then developing one theme and purpose statement. It is better to treat each chapter in the book of Psalms as its own individual unit of study, using the steps in the analytic method of study. On the other hand, some of the psalms are so long that you might want to apply the principles of synthetic study to examine them. There is another very meaningful way to study the psalms synthetically, that is, to study the psalms according to their category.

The goal of this type of study is to look at all the psalms of a certain category and determine the major theme, purpose, and characteristic of that entire category of psalms. One way to do this

5. Unger, *Handbook*, pp. 299–300.

is to make an observational chart on one psalm which in turn should then be combined with similar observational studies of the other psalms of the same category. We have provided an example of an observational chart on Psalm 32, a penitential psalm.

Penitential Psalms
6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

Theme: God’s unfailing love and mercy to forgive the penitent and restore his life is sought, because the sinner recognizes that his sin has caused him to experience great agony and the destructive wrath of God.

Purpose: To express and encourage the confession of sin to God so that men may find restoration and healing in God’s mercy.

Example: Psalm 32

Cry for Mercy	vv. 1-2	This psalm is the only one that does not begin with a plea for mercy from God. Still, it states the theme of the psalm found in the beginning verses of all the penitential psalms, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!”
Experience of Guilt and God’s Judgment	vv. 3-4	The penitent gives his own testimony of how difficult it is to experience God’s heavy hand of judgment
Prayer for Forgiveness or Deliverance	v. 5	The psalmist describes how the penitent acknowledged his sin before God, and God forgave the guilt of the sin
Expression of Faith in God’s Unfailing Love	vv. 6-7	As the psalmist found God to be his refuge, he asserts that others should also pray to God.
	vv. 8-10	An exhortation is made for people not to be stubborn in coming to God, because “many are the sorrows of the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him” (10).
	v. 11	Finally, the psalmist commands all who are righteous—who have experienced God’s forgiveness—to rejoice in the Lord. They indeed have much to sing about.

Once you have finished your observation of the individual psalms of a specific category, you may want to combine them to see their various parts. One way of doing this is illustrated in the chart below.

PENITENTIAL PSALMS OBSERVATIONAL CHART

Psalms	Psalms 6	Psalms 32	Psalms 38	Psalms 51	Psalms 102	Psalms 130	Psalms 143
1-5 Plea for mercy and healing	1-2 Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven	1-2 Plea for mercy	1 Plea for mercy and forgiveness	1-2 Plea for help	1-2 Plea for mercy	1-2 Plea for mercy	1-2 Plea for mercy
6-7 Experience of sorrow	3-4 Experience of judgment	2-20 Experience of judgment and guilt interspersed with confession	3-6 Confession of sin	3-11 Experience of judgment	3-4 Declaration of God's forgiveness	3-4 Experience of judgment	3-4 Experience of judgment
8-10 Confidence that God has heard and has mercifully accepted the penitent	5 Confession of sin and forgiveness	21-22 Plea for God to be near and help	7-12 Plea for cleansing and restoration	12-17 Declaration of God's glory and compassion	5-6 Expression of trust and hope in God	5-6 Longing for God	5-6 Longing for God
	6-10 Exhortation for people to pray to God and trust in His unfailing love		13-17 Offerings of the heart made to God	18-22 Praise to be given for the Lord's deliverance	7-8 Exhortation for Israel to hope in the Lord's unfailing love	7-10 Plea for God's answer, help and guidance because of the author's trust in Him	7-10 Plea for God's answer, help and guidance because of the author's trust in Him
	11 Rejoice in the Lord		Plea for the prosperity of Zion	23-24 Plea for God not to cut short one's days			
				25-28 Declaration of God's eternity			11-12 Plea for preservation from enemies because of God's unfailing love

After developing observational charts for all the psalms in a specific category, combine these observations onto a simplified chart. One method is to list the various aspects that were found in all the psalms (these were the categories that were listed to the left on the above chart). The next step is to number which psalm or psalms have which specific traits. Look at this example:

Simplified Observational Chart of the Penitential Psalms		
	Plea for Mercy Psalms 6, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143	
	Experience of Judgment Psalms 6, 32, 38, 102, 143	
Confession of Sin Psalms 32, 38	Plea for Cleansing and Restoration Psalms 51, 143	
	Petition for Help Psalms 32, 38, 51, 143	
	Praise and Declaration of Trust and Hope in God Psalms 6, 32, 130, 143	

(Note: Not every psalm has each one of these elements, though if it did, this would be the general order. As a practice, you might want to make an observational chart of the psalms of thanksgiving and adoration.)

The poetic books not only teach us doctrine, they also express how we should feel about those doctrines. The emotional tone of the Psalms gives them a greater vibrancy than some other portions of Scripture that are more didactic in nature. As you interpret the poetic books, look for the emotions they express, the attitudes they encourage, and the view of God they portray.

If you are doing a synthetic study of a psalm, see if there is a historical background to be studied. This will give you insight into the situation that prompted the writer to express the feelings and thoughts that he was experiencing. Was the writer experiencing an army attacking his kingdom, joy at the entry of the ark into Jerusalem, or betrayal by close friends? Not all psalms can be traced to their historical roots, and some proposed backgrounds are simply scholarly guesses.

How does one apply the lessons from a poem or a song? Fee and Stuart observe that the Psalms benefit our lives today in three specific ways:

First, it must be remembered that the Psalms are a **guide to worship**. By this we mean that the worshiper who seeks to praise God, or to appeal to God, or to remember God's benefits, can use the Psalms as a formal means of expression of his or her thoughts and

feelings. A psalm is a carefully composed literary preservation of words designed to be spoken. When a psalm touches upon a topic or a theme that we wish to express to the Lord, our ability to do so may be enhanced by employing a psalm as an aid. It can help us express our concerns in spite of our own lack of skill to find the right words.

Second, the Psalms demonstrate to us how we can **relate honestly** to God. Although they do not so much provide doctrinal instruction on this point, they do give, **by example**, a true sort of instruction. One can learn from the Psalms how to be honest and open in expressing joy, disappointment, anger, or other emotions.

Third, the Psalms demonstrate the importance of **reflection and meditation** upon things that God has done for us. They invite us to prayer, to controlled thinking upon God's Word (that's what meditation is), and to reflective fellowship with other believers. Such things help shape in us a life of purity and charity. The Psalms, like no other literature, lift us to a position where we can commune with God, capturing a sense of the greatness of His kingdom and a sense of what living with Him for eternity will be like. Even in our darkest moments, when life has become so painful as to seem unendurable, God is with us. "Out of the depths" (Ps 130:1) we wait and watch for the Lord's deliverance, knowing we can trust Him in spite of our feelings. To cry to God for help is not a judgment on His faithfulness, but an affirmation of it.⁶

A further warning is that the Psalms should not be used as a spiritual pacifier or baby bottle, using all their promises as guarantees of a pleasant life. Remember, the Psalms are expressions of the feelings of faith; not everything in them is valid for application or building doctrine. As Fee and Stuart observe:

It is a misunderstanding—an over-literalization—of the language of the Psalms to infer from some of them that God promises to make His believers happy and their lives trouble-free. David, who expresses in the Psalms God's blessing in the strongest terms, lived a life that was filled with almost constant tragedy and disappointment; as 1 and 2 Samuel describe. Yet he praises and thanks God enthusiastically at every turn, even in laments, just as Paul advises us to do even in the midst of hard times (Eph 1:16; 5:20). God deserves praise for His greatness and goodness in spite of and in the midst of our misery. This life holds no certainty of freedom from distress.⁷

Wisdom Literature

Wisdom literature was used extensively throughout ancient Near Eastern cultures. Its outstanding characteristic is a practical orientation to life. It is filled with precepts based upon observation of

6. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), pp. 184–185.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

the laws of human nature and rules for success in social, business, and political life.⁸ There are two characteristic words used in the wisdom books that help us to understand their nature and purpose: *hokhmah* (wisdom) and *binah* (understanding or discernment). The repeated refrain throughout the wisdom books is that wisdom and understanding come from God. These qualities arise outside of man rather than from within man. The wise man is the one who knows and fears the living God and receives from Him these two precious gifts.

The first word, *hokhmah*, is the most frequently used word for wisdom. It emphasizes that wisdom is the ability to live successfully or skillfully and to apply consistently that which we know to all that we do. Above all, it suggests that the wise man is the one who is able to apply the truth he knows about God to his life. He not only knows God's truth, he lives by it. The wise man is a keen observer of life, able to perceive the positive and negative consequences of actions. He also has the moral strength to act upon these observations.

The second word, *binah*, represents the ability to discern between good and evil and is often translated "discernment." The wise man discerns truth from error, good from evil, and that which is of eternal significance from that which is merely temporal. God is the source of such discernment. In summary, the goal of wisdom literature is to teach men to live a successful life by discerning truth and applying it to their lives.

Distinctive Features of Wisdom Literature

Like poetic literature, wisdom literature also uses differing literary devices. Some of these are the same as are found in poetical sections, while some are different.

Parallelism. Like the book of Psalms, the wisdom books are poetic books that use the literary device of parallelism. In fact, the Hebrew title for the book of Proverbs is *mashal*, which means "parallel" or "similar." We frequently find ideas described through two or more parallel statements that are placed side by side. If this concept is unclear to you, review parallelism in the section on poetic literature.

Comparison. Often wisdom books use comparison between two or more characteristics or ideas. For example, Proverbs 12:9 compares the man of humble standing who works to support himself with the great man who lacks bread:

Better is he who is lightly esteemed
and has a servant,
Than he who honors himself
and lacks bread.

Metaphors and similes. This is comparison through the use of figures of speech. In a metaphor one aspect is likened to another, while a simile makes an explicit comparison using the words "like" or "as." For example, Proverbs 12:4 uses simile:

8. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), p. 437.

She who shames him
is as rottenness in his bones.

Portraits. Portraits are extended pictures of a type or category of person. For example, Proverbs 31 is the portrait of a wise and mature woman of God.

Brief narratives. Some wisdom literature tells a story or gives an account of events or experiences. These accounts are usually much shorter than those found in other narrative sections. For example, in Ecclesiastes there are a number of narratives by Solomon on his pursuit to find the meaning of life (e.g., Chapter 2). In Proverbs 7:6-23 there is a narrative about the harlot who entices a fool.

Vignettes. A vignette is a short literary composition that is characterized by compactness, subtlety, and delicacy. It is like painting a small picture through the use of words. Proverbs 27:23-27, for example, pictures the rewards of the wise works of a diligent farmer.

Along with individual literary features, it is helpful to remind ourselves about the nature of various books. Knowing the purpose, arrangement, and plot of each book enables the student to discover the book's message.

Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament

Job. The story of Job is structured like a modern problem play. A problem of a philosophical nature is posed, and various characters offer their solutions to the problem. As such, the plot is carefully and artistically structured. Leland Ryken outlines the plot of Job as follows:⁹

Prologue (chapters 1-2)		
Dialogue or debate (chapters 3-31)		
Job's lament (3) Cycle 1 (4-14)	Cycle 2 (15-21)	Cycle 3 (22-27)
Eliphaz (4-5) Job's reply (6-7) Bildad (8) Job's reply (9-10) Zophar (11) Job's reply (12-14)	Eliphaz (15) Job's reply (16-17) Bildad (18) Job's reply (19) Zophar (20) Job's reply (21)	Eliphaz (22) Job's reply (23-24) Bildad (25) Job's reply (26-27) ----- -----
Job's concluding monologue (28-31) Elihu's speeches (32-37) Confrontation between God and Job (38-42:6) Epilogue (42:7-17)		

9. Leland Ryken, *The Literature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), p. 110.

This outline should highlight the fact that the characters are very important to a proper understanding of the book of Job. The interpreter should familiarize himself with who the various participants are and what they represent. This can be determined from what they say. Notice as well that the speeches of Job's friends in the cycles of dialogue get shorter until there is nothing more they can say. Zophar does not even bother to reply in the third cycle.

In this ancient drama the writer has put the words of Job's friends against those of Job. When you read the dialogue of Job's three friends, you will notice that much of what they say is true, but it is misapplied to Job. The prologue has already shown that Job is righteous, as he so argues. This is also affirmed by God in the epilogue (Job 42:7). Therefore, to understand Job, one must follow the flow of the plot and carefully observe what is happening between the characters through the participants' dialogues.

Proverbs. In the Proverbs it is helpful to understand the nature of proverbs by getting a better glimpse of the Jewish society in which they arose, especially the teacher-pupil relationship. Inch and Bullock, in *The Literature and Meaning of Scripture*, explain:

To interpret wisdom literature, one must understand the cultural situations in which it arose. Probably the two key areas were the royal court and the teacher-pupil relationship. From the Old Testament it is clear that wise men, as well as astrologers and soothsayers, flourished in the courts of Egypt and Babylon. Moses encountered them in Egypt (Ex 7:11) and Daniel became the leader of Nebuchadnezzar's core of wise men because of his ability to interpret dreams (Dan 2:48). These men were called on to give advice in matters of state, particularly in relation to military campaigns and strategy. The lives of Nebuchadnezzar's wise men were in jeopardy when they could not meet his demands (Dan 2:12). In Israel, Ahithophel was a gifted counselor whose wisdom was highly regarded by both David and Absalom (2 Sam 16:23).

Solomon was renowned as the wisest man in Israel, and God gave him a wisdom that surpassed that of the Egyptians and the men of the East (1 Kgs 4:30). During his reign, interest in wisdom literature reached its peak, and Solomon himself was acknowledged as the author of three thousand proverbs (1 Kgs 4:32) and the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

Wisdom also developed within the broader framework of education. The "wise man" (or woman) was generally an older person who instructed the young about life. Often in Proverbs "my son" may refer to the pupil who was under the tutelage of a wise man. Their relationship was like that of a father and son.¹⁰

In Jewish tradition the fathers were responsible to train their children in the ways of wisdom. Perhaps you recall the important verses from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, instructing the fathers of Israel to teach their sons all of the principles of the law:

10. Inch, pp. 65–66.

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall **teach them diligently to your sons.** (emphasis added)

The book of Proverbs is a handbook for teaching your children the ways of wisdom. Here we find one of the greatest concentrations of good advice parents could ever give to their children. The Proverbs offer you and your family the promise of abundant spiritual life, if you abide by their teachings.

It is important to remember when studying Proverbs that the wise men made general observations about life. **Rarely can we interpret a statement in Proverbs as a “promise” of God.** For example, Proverbs says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). Clearly, this is generally true. But is it a promise of God? We all know of situations, however rare, where godly parents see their children turn away from the Lord. On the other hand, sometimes children from the most depraved homes choose the way of the Lord.

Ecclesiastes. As with Job and the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes is often misunderstood. To read the negative attitudes Solomon portrays in some chapters leaves you wondering if this book even belongs in the Bible! This confusion has driven some away from Ecclesiastes and the riches of the wisdom it teaches. Let us try to clear up this confusion and to understand the uniqueness of Solomon’s book. It is a storehouse of wisdom about the meaning of life.

Leland Ryken explains why Ecclesiastes has been so misunderstood and how we can avoid the same problem in our study:

Ecclesiastes might well be the most misunderstood book in the Bible. Most commentators have found the theme of the book to be inconsistent with the rest of biblical teaching. How such a view of the book arose is baffling. It is no exaggeration to say that this book espouses the most basic theme of biblical literature—that life lived by purely earthly or human values, without faith in God and supernatural values, is meaningless and futile. The key term in the book is the phrase “under the sun.” This phrase, or its equivalent “under the heaven,” occurs thirty times in the book and denotes that which is only earthly. To be “under the sun” is to be earth-bound, cut off from the supernatural order.

In developing his theme, the writer has chosen a common literary device. He demonstrates at length the inadequacy of any world view other than a theocentric one, and he combines with this demonstration an affirmation of an alternate world view. **This means that the individual passages must be placed carefully in their contexts.** If we read every passage as being equally indicative of the writer’s settled philosophic position, we are left with a meaningless collection of contradictory statements, for it is indisputable that the views of some passages contradict those of others. Actually the contradiction is part of a meaningful pattern in which the writer’s negative comments are understood to be the conclusions that emerge **when he limits his gaze to the earthly scene.** When the

narrator voices despair over the futility of life under the sun, he is not affirming this as his final answer to life's existence.¹¹ (emphasis added)

Ecclesiastes is a book written from two perspectives—the perspective of the man without God and the perspective of the man who lives in harmony with God. Seeing these perspectives will help you discover the principles God wants to teach you through Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes.

Having studied the characteristics of wisdom literature generally, and of the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes specifically, we now turn our attention to a synthetic study of these books. As always, you must observe, interpret, and apply the Scripture you are studying. In the following sections we will learn specific approaches to each of these books.

Hints for Studying Hebrew Wisdom Literature

The book of Job contains a great deal of narrative material that can be observed and charted in roughly the same fashion as the historical books. Since Job revolves around the dialogue of key individuals, mark each of their speeches on the chart. This will help unravel the human and misapplied wisdom of Job's friends versus the wisdom of Job and God.

The key to understanding the book of Proverbs is to find the major themes. It is not as helpful to look for elements of structure between the chapters, since they are often unrelated sayings on wisdom. Nevertheless, you will notice that Proverbs has a prologue and a number of longer essays in chapters 1 through 9. Do you see a common theme in these chapters? Chapters 10 through 30 cover many subjects, while chapter 31 is one complete essay. On your chart write one-word descriptions for the major teachings of the last twenty-one chapters.

In Ecclesiastes note the two different perspectives Solomon has on life—sometimes all is vanity; at other times life has rich meaning. What makes the difference?

When doing a synthetic study of the wisdom books, remember that you are studying the books as a whole, not the details of individual chapters. Because of other numerous topics covered in the wisdom books—especially in Job and Ecclesiastes—it is necessary to group these topics under much broader themes. These broader themes will generally be the major focus of your study.

Various themes can be discovered by observing the underlying ideas that run throughout the book. These major ideas may or may not be neatly divided into sections, but they may be constantly repeated throughout the book.

Since the books were written for the benefit of a general audience, the purpose of wisdom books is not usually aimed at a specific problem or need. Thus, the setting does not play a crucial role in determining the author's purpose in writing. The purpose is best determined by the subject matter and theme of the book. The author may also give his own general statement of purpose in the book, so be on the alert for his comments.

11. Ryken, pp. 250–251.

There are so many truths and principles that can be applied from the wisdom books that choosing one to apply can be as difficult as choosing one piece of candy in a candy shop. Try to find the broader principles that can be applied from your synthetic study. For instance, how do you or your people generally approach the search for God’s wisdom in your lives? Or, is there a basic attitude that needs attention in your life that can be corrected by applying a principle from Proverbs? Sometimes, of course, you will find that a specific proverb or truth does sum up what needs the most attention in your life. If so, focus on that for your application.

Prophetic Literature

Prophecy as a literary category occupies a large portion of the Bible. Seventeen of sixty-six books are known as prophetic books (the major and minor prophets, and the book of Revelation). Aside from these, many other books contain prophetic sections or discuss prophecy (Genesis, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, the Psalms, Matthew 24–26, and 1–2 Thessalonians). As a literary category prophecy also utilizes prediction and preaching. Hence, prophecy poses a unique set of difficulties when it comes to Bible study. What then will help in understanding the prophetic books and passages and their messages?

The Prophets and Their Writings

The Nature of a Prophet. The term “prophet” may be defined as “one who speaks directly for God.” Hobart E. Freeman, defining the term in his textbook *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, says of Exodus 7:1-2:

Here the function of the prophet is to speak forth the divine message. The same concept is taught in Exodus 4:16: “And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; . . . he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God.” Thus the prophet is a speaker, a mouthpiece or a spokesman for God. The Septuagint [Greek Old Testament] translators understood *nabhi*’ to have this meaning, for they translated the word by the Greek **prophets**, a noun derived from the preposition **pro**, “for, on behalf of,” and the verb *phemi*, “to speak,” hence, “to speak for another.”¹²

Even before the prophetic books, we find prophets speaking for God. But in the prophetic books the prophets become the main channel of God’s divine revelation to His people Israel.

The Message of the Prophet. When people think about the message of a prophet, most often they think about some predictive aspect of his message. Yet the prophet’s message also had a declaratory or didactic function and oftentimes a conditional aspect. As Fee and Stuart say:

The primary difficulty for most modern readers of the Prophets stems from an inaccurate prior understanding of the word **prophecy**. For most people this word means what appears as the first definition in most dictionaries: “Foretelling or prediction of what is to come.” It often happens, therefore, that many Christians refer to the Prophets **only** for

12. Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1968), p. 39.

predictions about the coming of Jesus and/or certain features of the New Covenant age—as though prediction of events far distant from their own day was the main concern of the Prophets. In fact, using the Prophets in this way is highly selective. Consider in this connection the following statistics: **Less than 2 percent of Old Testament prophecy is messianic. Less than 5 percent specifically describes the New Covenant age. Less than 1 percent concerns events yet to come.**¹³ (emphasis added)

The declaratory aspect. As a spokesman for God the prophet was not simply one who predicted the future. His function was much broader. He was the main spokesman between God and His people, informing them of Yahweh’s will on a daily basis. Hence, his ministry was often didactic. As Israel was disobedient and unwilling to live up to its covenantal agreement—the Mosaic covenant—it was the prophet’s job to inform them of their sin and call them back to the covenant. Consequently, it was also his job to teach them the ways of God.

The predictive aspect. Israel did not always listen to the prophet; in fact, they usually rejected his messages. So God’s spokesman often had to prophesy what would happen to Israel if it continued in its rebellion. This often involved the prediction of both imminent as well as future judgment and how the nations would treat Israel. This is why some of the predictive prophecy included messages to the Gentile nations. Some prophetic messages involved simultaneously occurring events, while some involved intervening periods of time before complete fulfillment.

The conditional aspect. The judgment of God was often conditional upon a nation’s response. If the nation repented and humbled itself, God would withhold His judgment. Therefore, many of the prophetic messages and their fulfillments must be studied in light of Israel’s or the neighboring nation’s response.

Unger summarizes the message of the prophets:

These were primarily moral and spiritual in their purpose. Israel’s prophets were rugged reformers, divinely raised up to call the nation from sin and idolatry in its periods of decline. They thundered forth warnings of impending doom in the centuries preceding the fall of Israel in 722 BC and the fall of Judah in 586 BC.¹⁴

The prophets’ message, then, included:

1. Calling the nation back to covenant faithfulness
2. Condemning the nation when it refused to repent
3. Consoling the condemned nation with promises of God’s future blessings

The Background of the Prophet. Because the prophets are linked with the nation of Israel and its actions, they are also tied to a certain point in history. So the prophetic message is clarified by understanding the history of Israel and the nations among whom the people lived.

13. Fee and Stuart, pp. 149–150.

14. Unger, *Handbook*, p. 303.

When the majority of the prophets spoke, the kingdom was already divided and in decay. In fact, all of the Old Testament prophetic books were written during the period of the divided kingdom. On the following page you will find a summary chart of the period of history during which the prophets spoke. The chart covers the three periods of prophetic ministry—pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic. It shows when the prophets spoke in relation to the exiles to Assyria and Babylon. The chart also lists the approximate dates of ministry for each prophet, along with the king who was then ruling.

IMPORTANT HEBREW PROPHETS AFTER THE TIME OF SAMUEL*

Before the Kingdom was Divided			
Prophets		Kings	
Nathan 2 Sam. 7:2-17; 12:1-25		David (1011-971)	
Gad 1 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:11-19		David	
Ahijah the Shilonite 1 Ki. 11:29-40		Solomon (971-931)	
Important Prophets During the Divided Kingdom			
Active in the southern kingdom (Judah)		Active in the northern kingdom (Israel)	
Prophets	Kings	Prophets	Kings
Shemaiah 2 Chron. 11:2-4; 12:5-8	Rehoboam (931-913)	Ahijah the Shilonite 1 Ki. 11:29-39; 14:1-18 Unnamed Prophet from Judah - 1 Ki. 13:1-32	Jeroboam I (931-910)
Azariah, son of Oded 2 Chron. 15:1-7	Asa (911-870)	Jehu, son of Hanani 1 Ki. 16:7, 12	Baasha (909-886)
Hanani 2 Chron. 16:7-10	Asa		
Jehu, son of Hanani 2 Chron. 19:2-3	Jehoshaphat (873-848)	Elijah 1 Ki. 17 – 2 Ki. 2	Ahab (874-853) Ahaziah (853-852)
Jahaziel 2 Chron. 20:14-17	Jehoshaphat	Micaiah 1 Ki. 22:13-28	Ahab
Eliezer, son of Dodavahu 2 Chron. 20:37	Jehoram (853-841)	Elisha 1 Ki. 19:16 – 2 Ki. 13:21	Ahaziah (853-852), Jehoram (852-841), Jehu (841-814), Jehoahaz (814-798), Jehoash (798-782)
Zechariah, son of Jeholadah 2 Chron. 24:20-22	Joash (835-796)		

JOEL time uncertain, perhaps in reign of Joash		HOSEA	Jeroboam II (793-753)
ISAIAH	Uzziah (791-740), Jotham (750-732), Ahaz (735-716), Hezekiah (716-687)	AMOS Amos 1:1; 7:10	Jeroboam II
MICAH	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	JONAH 2 Ki. 14:25	Jeroboam II
		Oded 2 Chron. 28:9-11	Pekah (752-732)
		Exile of northern kingdom, 721 B.C.	
NAHUM	Prob. Written between 660 and 615		
HABAKKUK	Time of Josiah (641-609)		
Huldah 2 Ki. 22:14-20	Josiah		
ZEPHANIAH	Josiah		
JEREMIAH	Josiah (641-609), Jehoahaz (609), Jehoiakim (609-598), Jehoiachin (597), Zedekiah (597-586)		
Uriah Jer. 26:20-23	Jehoiakim (609-598)		
IMPORTANT PROPHETS DURING THE EXILE			
	EZEKIEL	Prophesied in Babylonia between 593 and 570	
	OBADIAH	Probably written in 585 BC	
	JEREMIAH	Active in conquered Judah (Jer. 40-42) and in Egypt (Jer. 43-44)	
	DANIEL	In Babylonia during reigns of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562) and his successors including Cyrus, the Persian (539-529)	
PROPHETS AFTER THE RETURN FROM EXILE			
	HAGGAI - Ezra 5:1	Written about 520 BC	
	ZECHARIAH - Ezra 5:1	Written about 520 BC	
	MALACHI	Probably written in 5 th cent. BC	

* Names of those prophets who wrote books of the Bible are printed in capital letters. The right-hand columns give names and dates of kings associated with each prophet. Each king's dates include his entire reign, even if part of it was in association with a preceding king, as was often the case. Since the evidence for precise dating is generally scanty, and since in ancient reckoning years did not begin in the same months as today, but varied in different areas, dates given by authorities sometimes differ by one or two years.

Under the name of each nonwriting prophet Scripture references are given to his main activities, but none are given for writers of Bible books except when there is an important mention in some other book, or when a reference is important to show the time of his activity.

It is also helpful to read the biblical background that is associated with each prophet. To help you in this area, we are providing the following chart that gives the Scripture that corresponds to the prophet's historical background:

THE HEBREW PROPHETS AND THEIR HISTORICAL SETTINGS			
THE PROPHET	HISTORICAL SETTING	RULING KING	DATE B.C.
OBADIAH	2 Kings 8-12	Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash	840-830
JOEL	2 Kings 11-15:7	Perhaps in reign of Joash	837-800
JONAH	2 Kings 13-14	Jeroboam II	825-782
AMOS	2 Kings 14:23; 15:7	Jeroboam II	810-785
HOSEA	2 Kings 15-18	Jeroboam II	782-725
ISAIAH	2 Kings 15-20; 2 Chron. 26-32	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	758-698
MICAH	2 Kings 15:8-20; Isa. 7-8; Jer. 26:17-19; 2 Chron. 27-32	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	740-695
NAHUM	(Jonah, Isaiah 10; Zephaniah 2:13-15)		640-630
ZEPHANIAH	2 Kings 22-23; 34 2 Chron. 34-36:4	Josiah	640-610
JEREMIAH	2 Kings 22-25 2 Chron. 34-36:21	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah	627-586
HABAKKUK	2 Kings 23-24:20 2 Chron. 36:5-23	Josiah	609-598
DANIEL	2 Kings 23:35-25:30 2 Chron. 36:5-23	Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus the Persian	606-534
EZEKIEL	2 Kings 24:17-25 2 Chron. 36:5-23	In Babylon	592-572
HAGGAI	Ezra 5-6	After return from exile	520

ZECHARIAH	Ezra 5-6	After return from exile	520-518
MALACHI	Nehemiah 13	After return from exile	433-425
These dates cannot be fixed with certainty, and the margin here given is that within which the prophet is likely to have ministered, and does not represent the duration of his ministry.			
This cart was adapted from Merrill C. Tenney, ed., <i>The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i> , 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975, 4:879, 900).			

The Language of the Prophet. Prophecy is a type of literature that is rarely found outside of the Bible. Like all literature, prophecy contains figures of speech. This does not necessarily mean that it is obscure but that we must understand the nature of prophetic language.

Plain language. Since biblical prophecy is given to reveal truth and not to veil it, we should assume that the language of prophecy is largely nonfigurative. Most of the language should be accepted as literal and historical and should be read according to customary usage. In other words, it should be interpreted literally.

Figurative language. The prophets also used figurative language. We might define a “figure” as a legitimate grammatical device intended to convey more clearly an original literal idea; it is a literal concept made more graphic. These figures of speech fall into the same categories as those used in the Psalms: simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, apostrophe, hyperbole, irony, allegory, parable, riddle, and fable.

Symbolic language. A symbol is a representative and graphic presentation of an event, truth, or object. That which is depicted is not what is real, but it conveys a representative meaning. Symbols can be words or actions. Symbolic words are sometimes in the form of proper names (e.g., Babylon in Rev 17:3). Symbolic acts are actions performed by the prophet in order to convey specific messages to his contemporaries (e.g., Ezk 4:1-13).

Poetic language. Poetic language naturally contains large numbers of figures of speech. The main characteristic of poetic language is parallelism, discussed in the section of this appendix on poetry.

Parabolic language. A parable is defined as an extended simile whose imageries always involve facts that are true to life. The basic function of a parable is to reveal or conceal truth according to the receptivity of each individual listener or reader.

Typical language. Generally speaking, a type is an actual Old Testament institution, event, person, object, or ceremony that serves to foreshadow something that has not yet been fully revealed. For example, Adam serves as a type of Christ in the book of Romans (Rom 5:12-21).

The Collected Writings of the Prophets. Many students of the Bible tend to view the prophetic books as a disoriented collection of prophetic sayings. They see, as in Daniel, that the books are often not in sequential order. Sometimes they appear to repeat the same thing or say it in a similar way. But it is not until each book is approached as containing a unified purpose that it will become evident how beautifully the prophecies are arranged. Therefore, one of the main goals should be to understand the overall purpose of each book.

Hints for Studying the Prophets

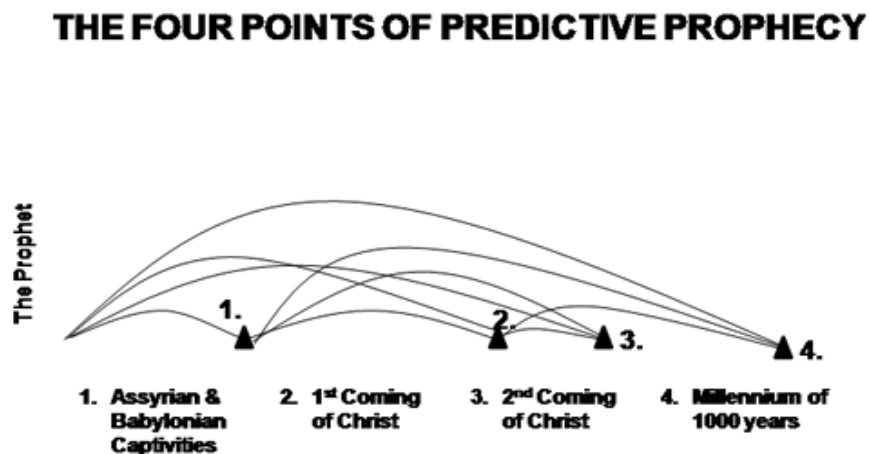
In the prophetic books a student should do a synthetic analysis of the book before attempting any analytical studies. A synthetic study will show you the overall arrangement of the book, develop your understanding of the plot's flow, and help you synthesize its purpose for being included in the canon.

The student must also pay attention to the historical detail. As previously mentioned, the Old Testament prophets spoke from within a rich historical setting. As you did in Lesson 2, you will need to spend time researching the **historical background** of the book, known as the **setting**.

The prophetic books have clearly definable structures. It is particularly fruitful to make outlines and charts of these books, unlocking what often seem to be long and difficult prophetic utterances. The task at hand is to observe the clues to the prophetic book's structure and to make an observational chart of its content.

Since the prophets spoke God's word to both Israel and Judah as well as to other nations, an important structural element to watch for is a change in whom the prophet is addressing. The prophet might finish one discourse and then say, "Concerning the sons of Ammon . . ." This indicates that a different discourse is being addressed to this new group. Be alert for structural elements marked by prophetic formulas such as, "The word of the Lord came to me," "Thus says the Lord," and "Hear the word of the Lord." These formulas may introduce a new discourse from God or may emphasize a particular word of God. Also note how the reigns of different kings correspond to different themes in the prophetic utterances.

When interpreting the prophetic books, remember that there are four events to which the prophets pointed. The following diagram illustrates these "events" or "times" of prophecy:



#4 in this graphic should be 1000 years. Chance will fix this.

The prophetic books are rich in application for our day. For example, they speak volumes about the love of God as seen against the backdrop of man's unfaithfulness. For someone struggling with the ideas of forgiveness and the love of God, these books provide great encouragement. Of course, the prophets also teach us a great deal about the anger and justice of God and His lack of tolerance for sin in our lives.

How would you apply the major truths you have found in the prophetic books? Here is an example of an application of a general principle from the book of Hosea:

In Hosea 5:15 the Lord says:

I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

Affliction is what forces the believer described in this verse to return to God. When the believer has wandered from God into sin, God brings pressure that will make him turn back. Of course, the Lord will never force him to repent and return, but that is His desire. When the believer is in the midst of affliction, he should ask himself, Have I drifted away from God? Do I need to repent of a sin I am holding on to? What can I do to return to Him?

Notes for STB

Amalekites

Amalekites descended from Esau via his firstborn son Eliphaz (Genesis 36:12; 1 Chronicles 1:36). They occupied much of the territory between Egypt and the Dead Sea. They were always bitter foes of Israel. They attacked the people of the Exodus at Rephidim (Exod 17:8-16). This treacherous attack earned the curse from the Lord that the Amalekites would be utterly destroyed and their memory wiped out. Both Saul and David inflicted heavy defeats upon them. But it was left to Hezekiah to complete their destruction (1 Chr 4:43). As God commanded, there remains no identifiable evidence of their existence in the lands in which they lived.

Babylonian Captivity

The Babylonians carried away the southern kingdom of Judah into captivity. Three distinct deportations occurred between 607-587 B.C. These deportations are described in 2 Kings 24-25, 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 52:28-30, and Daniel 1:1-2. Jeremiah 25:12 and Jeremiah 29:10 predicted a seventy-year duration. Because the deportations and returns were staggered over multiple events, it is difficult to determine exactly when the seventy years occurred. One possibility is to measure from the first deportation under Nebuchadnezzar in 607 B.C. until the decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return in 538 B.C. Seventy years also transpired between the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C. and the completion of its reconstruction under Zerubbabel in 516 B.C. During the captivity most Jews were settled in communities where they worked and paid tribute to the Babylonians and later the Persians. Only a portion of the people returned to Israel. See also the notes “Ezra,” “Nehemiah,” and “Return from Babylon.”

Bible Translations

Approximately forty human authors wrote the Bible over a period of sixteen hundred years. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew with a few portions written in Aramaic (Dan 2:4-Dan 7:28; Ezra 4:8-Ezra 6:18; Jer 10:11). The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, the common language of much of the Roman world. None of the original manuscripts still exists, although there are thousands of copied manuscripts and fragments still available to us today. We also have the many translations of the Bible into other national languages. Two of the best known of these are the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX), and the Latin Bible, called the Vulgate. For many centuries the Roman Catholic Church suppressed all translations into national tongues. Availability of the Scriptures in the language of the people was one of the inspirations of the Reformation. Many men, such as Englishmen John Wycliffe (1329?-84) and William Tyndale (1494-1536), were martyred so that we might be able to read God’s word in our mother tongue.

Scholars normally work from the ancient manuscripts to produce modern translations. Some modern versions are based on existing popular translations, whether English or other languages, rather than from the Greek and Hebrew. The translator must always balance fidelity to the original writing with readability for the modern reader. Different translators will resolve this tension in different ways. That is why comparing translations is a very useful method of Bible study.

Circumcision

Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin from the penis. God commanded that Abraham and his descendants be circumcised as a token of the covenant made in Genesis 15. It was formally enacted in the law of Moses in Leviticus 12:3 (see also John 7:22-23). It applied to all male Jews, their slaves, and foreigners before they could partake of the Passover or become citizens. Circumcision is still practiced by the Jews today. It is also widely practiced for health reasons in western nations. A form of female circumcision is also practiced as a tribal custom in parts of Africa. (This note is based on information found in Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, 3d. ed., 206-7 [Chicago: Moody, 1960].)

Corinth

Corinth was an impressive, thriving metropolis and the most important commercial center of Greece in the first century A.D. It was also noted as one of the wickedest cities in the Roman Empire. Acts 18 describes Paul's introduction of the gospel to Corinth. The reader gets a taste of the city's corruption and how it infected the church by reading 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Daniel

Daniel was a prophet of the Babylonian Captivity. His history is recorded in the biblical book that carries his name. We know nothing of his genealogy except that he was of noble birth. In addition, Daniel 1:3-4 tells us that he was handsome and extremely gifted. He was carried away to Babylon with other youths as part of the first deportation (about 604 B.C.). Like Joseph, he rose to high position after interpreting the king's dreams. Daniel remained in high office throughout the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He served in lesser capacities or retired under Nebuchadnezzar's successors. Belshazzar elevated him again after he interpreted the handwriting on the wall. Belshazzar and the Babylonian kingdom were defeated by the Medo-Persians that very night. Daniel was again elevated to high position in the Persian Empire. His skill and honesty caused his peers to become jealous. They conspired to fool the king into sentencing Daniel to be thrown into a den of lions. God protected Daniel and restored him, while his accusers were themselves thrown

to the hungry lions. As a prophet, Daniel recorded several visions that describe the various Gentile empires and the coming of Messiah.

The Book of Daniel

The book of Daniel, authored by the prophet of that name, was written in the sixth century before Christ. Daniel divides into two general sections, chapters 1-6 (historical) and chapters 7-12 (prophetic). Daniel provides a foundation for New Testament prophecy, specifically the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25) and the book of Revelation. Modern liberals attack the authenticity of Daniel. Their views rely on plausible sounding, but false, assumptions. Perhaps a desire to date Daniel after the fulfillment of his accurate prophecies concerning Gentile empires, Alexander the Great, and Antiochus IV Epiphanes motivates them.

is a common term in the New Testament. It simply means “learner.” It usually has the idea of pupil or follower, in the sense of an adherent to a person, philosophy, or cause. Jesus, John, and the Pharisees all were said to have disciples. The disciples of Jesus can be all those who followed Him and adhered to His teaching, or they can be the twelve He chose to follow Him (Matthew 10:1; 11:1; 20:17). Care should be taken not to limit the term to the twelve if the context does not dictate that limitation. In fact, every Christian is a disciple of Jesus and should act accordingly.

Ethiopian Eunuch

The term “eunuch” is used in the Bible for two classes of men. Basically, it refers to men who have been emasculated by whatever means and for whatever reasons (e.g., Est 1:10; 7:10). Because eunuchs in the ancient world often served as guards, soldiers, and in important offices of trust, the term came to refer to someone in high office, whether or not they were physical eunuchs (Gen 39:1; 40:2). The use in Acts 8:27 is uncertain. The physical meaning may be implied since he is further described as “a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasury” (cf. Isa 56:3-5). This man is held by tradition to be the first preacher of the gospel in his country.

Ezra

Ezra led the second group of Jews returning from the Babylonian Captivity. Ezra 7 describes him as a scribe. He was commissioned by King Artaxerxes to lead those who wished to return and to take along a freewill offering. They departed about 459 B.C. and arrived in Jerusalem without incident. Once there, Ezra was established as chief judge of the people. In this capacity, in a famous encounter recorded in Ezra 9-10, he confronted the people about their intermarriage with neighboring pagans. When Nehemiah ascended to the governorship, Ezra appears to have functioned as a priest (Nehemiah 8:9; 12:26). Perhaps he returned to Babylon prior to Nehemiah’s departure, because everything fell into confusion at that time. See also the note “Nehemiah.” (This note is based on information found in Merrill F. Unger, Unger’s Bible Dictionary, 3d. ed., 338-39 [Chicago: Moody, 1960].)

The Book of Ezra

The book of Ezra has long been associated with 1 and 2 Chronicles and the book of Nehemiah. Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew Bible. This book immediately follows Chronicles, which tradition says Ezra also authored. Ezra's activity and writing probably occurred during the reign of Persian King Artaxerxes (465-424 B.C.). The book divides into two sections: chapters 1-6 deal with the first return under Zerubbabel, and chapters 7-10 with the second return under Ezra. See also the notes "Ezra," "Nehemiah," and "Nehemiah, The Book of."

Exile in Babylon

The Babylonians carried away the southern kingdom of Judah into captivity. Three distinct deportations occurred between 607-587 B.C. These deportations are described in 2 Kings 24-25, 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 52:28-30, and Daniel 1:3. See also the notes "Ezra," "Babylonian Captivity," and "Return from Babylon."

Flesh

Please be aware that the Scriptures cited in this note refer to the usage of the Greek and Hebrew words, not English translation. Your Bible translation may use words other than "flesh" to translate the Greek and Hebrew.)

We can distinguish the following varieties of meaning in biblical language:

- **Physical Sense:** the chief substance of the animal body, whether or not used for food and sacrifice; also the flesh of man (Genesis 2:21; Exodus 21:10; Isaiah 31:3; Ezekiel 23:20; 1 Corinthians 15:39; Revelation 19:18, 21).
- **The Body/The Whole Body:** this meaning is the extension of the preceding meaning (Genesis 40:19; Leviticus 15:2; Numbers 12:12; Job 33:25). This meaning is also very clear in passages like Exodus 4:7, Leviticus 17:14, Numbers 8:7, 2 Kings 4:34, Proverbs 5:11; 14:30, and Ecclesiastes 12:12.
- **The Term "All Flesh":** "flesh" is often used to refer to living things, animals, and mankind, especially the latter (Genesis 6:13, 17, 19; Numbers 16:22; Jeremiah 12:12; Mark 13:20). This can be seen more clearly in the phrase "all flesh" (Psalm 65:2; Isaiah 40:5, 6; Jeremiah 25:31; Ezekiel 20:48; Joel 2:28; Luke 3:6).
- **Flesh as Opposed to the Spirit:** both were comprised in the preceding meaning (Genesis 6:3; Psalm 16:9; Luke 24:39, where "flesh and bones" are combined; John 6:63). Thus, we find "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14), "He was revealed in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16), 1 John 4:2, and all passages where the incarnation of Christ is spoken of. The word in this sense approaches the meaning of "earthly life," as in Philippians 1:22 ("living in the body") and Philippians 1:24 ("remain in the body"). See also Philemon 16 and perhaps 2 Corinthians 5:16.

- **Flesh as Hostile to God:** sinful flesh is naturally hostile to God (cf. Rom 8:7-8). It is not submissive to Him and His Word. It demonstrates independence from God, rather than dependence on Him. It prefers self rather than God. It lives according to earthly, not heavenly, standards (Romans 7:5, 18, 25; 8:3-9, 12-13; 1 Corinthians 3:1, 3; Galatians 5:16-26; 1 John 2:16).
- **Flesh in the Sense of Relationship:** this deals with tribal connection, family relationship (Genesis 2:24; 37:27; Job 2:5). Compare the New Testament passages: Matthew 19:5, 6; Romans 1:3; 9:3, 5, 8. The expressions “bone” and “flesh” are found in combination (Genesis 2:23; 29:14; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 5:1; 19:13, 14).
- **Other Meanings:** some other subdivisions of meanings might be added. For example, “flesh” takes almost the place of “person,” as in Colossians 2:1, 5. (This note is based on information found in H. L. E. Luering, “Flesh,” in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ed. James Orr, 2:1118-19 [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1939].)

Galatia

Galatia is mentioned six times in the New Testament: Acts 16:6; 18:23; 1 Cor 16:1; Gal 1:2; 2 Tim 4:10; 1 Pet 1:1. It occurs by itself in the letters, but it occurs with Phrygia in both verses in Acts (given the geographical nature of Acts, Luke was probably being more geographically precise). In all cases Galatia appears as a region, not a specific city. It was a Roman province situated in the central region of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). When Paul writes to a place, he normally writes to “the church” in that particular city. But when he writes to the Galatians, he addresses them as “the churches” of Galatia (see also 1 Cor 16:1). Acts 16 records the time when Paul brought the gospel to the Galatians.

Habakkuk

Little is known about the man, except that he was a prophet who authored the book bearing his name. Based on Habakkuk 3:19, he was probably a Levite from one of the families responsible for liturgical music.

The Book of Habakkuk

The prophet of that name wrote Habakkuk, probably between 620 and 607 B.C. The contents are simple, yet the theology is often mentioned in the New Testament (Habakkuk 2:4 cf. Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). In each of the first two chapters the prophet asks a question that is then answered. These questions are, Why does God allow wickedness to continue in Judah, and Why will God use wicked nations to punish Judah? The answer to the first, that the Babylonians will punish Judah, raises the second question. The second answer is theological. God will do what He will, and the righteous must live by faith. The third chapter is a psalm of praise to the Lord.

Law

The term “law,” used about two hundred times in the Bible, signifies the revealed will of God for man. In its most general sense, it includes all of the divine commands and instructions. Most often, the term “law” refers to the law of Moses. This term itself has at least two designations. It can refer to specific laws and instructions, known as the commands (Exodus 20:1-17), the judgments (Exodus 21-23), and the ordinances (Exodus 25-31). These are elaborated in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and the Prophets (cf. Gal 5:14). It can also refer to the five books written by Moses (Lk 24:44). More generally it can refer to the Old Testament or part of it (e.g., John 10:34; cf. Ps 82:6). In the New Testament, Paul often contrasts life under the law to life under grace (Romans 5:20-21), faith (Galatians 3:2), or the Spirit (Galatians 5:18). Yet the righteousness of the law is never questioned. In fact, it is affirmed (Matthew 5:17; Galatians 3:21). Other uses of “law” include man’s laws (Lk 20:22), natural law (Rom 2:14-15), a general reference to God’s will (Ps 119:142), and specific laws (Lev 6:9). (This note is based on information found in Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, 3d. ed., 646-47 [Chicago: Moody, 1960].)

Mosaic Covenant

A covenant was made with the nation Israel at Sinai (e.g., Exodus 19:5; 24:7, 8; 34:10, 27, 28). It was ratified by a covenant sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood (Exodus 24:4-8). This constituted the nation as the peculiar people of God and was accompanied by promises of blessing for obedience and penalties for disobedience. This covenant was renewed on the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy 29:1). In this national covenant the individual had a place, but only as a member of the nation. The individual might forfeit his rights under the covenant, however, by deliberate rebellion against Yahweh, sinning “with a high hand” (Numbers 15:30-31). Then he was regarded as no longer a member of the nation and was “cut off from among his people,” that is, put to death. In the mercy of God, however, the punishment was not always inflicted. (This note is based on information found in George Ricker Berry, “Covenant, (in the OT),” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, 2:727-9 [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1939].)

Nehemiah

Nehemiah is the Jewish patriot whose life is recorded in the biblical work named after him. All that we know about him and his family from contemporary sources is found in this book (Nehemiah 1:1-2; 7:2). From Nehemiah 10:1-8 some have inferred that he was a priest, since Nehemiah comes first in the list of names that ends with the statement, “these were the priests.” Some have thought that he was of the royal line of Judah, inasmuch as he refers to his “fathers’ sepulchers” at Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:3). This would be a good argument only if it could be shown that none but kings had sepulchers at Jerusalem.

Apparently at an early age he was appointed to the responsible position of cupbearer to the Persian King Artaxerxes (464-424 B.C.). The office of cupbearer was “one of no trifling honor.” It was one of his chief duties to taste the wine for the king to see that it was not poisoned. He was even admitted to the king while the queen was present (Nehemiah 2:6). This position of close intimacy with the king allowed Nehemiah to obtain his commission as governor of Judea and the letters and edicts that enabled him to restore the wall of Jerusalem. (Note: The sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, are mentioned in a letter written to the priests of Jerusalem in 407 B.C., among whom Johanan is especially named. This proves that Sanballat must have ruled in the time of Artaxerxes I rather than in that of Artaxerxes II.)

The occasion of Nehemiah’s commission was the news from his brother Hanani and others that the Jews in Jerusalem were in great affliction and that the city wall was broken down. He sought and received permission from the king to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. He was also appointed governor of the province, of which Jerusalem was the capital.

The restoration process was hindered and harassed primarily by Sanballat, the governor of Samaria. Nevertheless, Nehemiah succeeded in his rebuilding venture. Having accomplished these external renovations, he instituted a number of internal social reforms. Of greatest importance was a national fast, at which the sins of the people were confessed and a new covenant with Yahweh solemnly confirmed. Nothing is known as to when or where he died. It is certain, however, that he was no longer governor in 407 B.C., for at that time, according to the Aramaic letter written from Elephantine to the priests of Jerusalem, Bagohi was occupying the position of governor over Judea. See also the note “Ezra.” (This note is based on information found in R. Dick Wilson, “Nehemiah,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, 4:2131-32 [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1939].)

The Book of Nehemiah

Its main character of that name wrote the book of Nehemiah. It divides into two parts. Chapters 1-7 describe the third return of exiles under Nehemiah’s leadership and the restoration of Jerusalem’s wall. Chapters 8-13 describe the religious reformation under Nehemiah and Ezra. See also the notes “Ezra” and “Nehemiah.”

Paul’s Journeys

The Apostle Paul carried the gospel throughout much of the ancient Roman world. His missionary journeys are recorded in Acts 13-28. Additional details can be found in his epistles. Many sources list Paul’s journey to Rome as a prisoner as his fourth missionary journey. The map below will give you a good idea of the area in which Paul concentrated his missionary efforts.



Mission to Jerusalem

Acts 20 reveals that Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem. He had hoped to be there in time for Pentecost (Acts 20:16). He was apparently keeping a vow. Many prophets warned him that he would be imprisoned if he went to Jerusalem. Paul continued as one compelled to go. In Acts 21:27-36 we read of his arrest. The rest of the book of Acts describes his imprisonment and transport from Jerusalem to Caesarea, and finally to Rome.

Return from Babylon

The Persian King Cyrus brought about the fall of Babylon and ended the New Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C. He was “the war club” with which Yahweh shattered Babylon (Jeremiah 51:20). Isaiah, two centuries before, had prophetically welcomed him as the liberator of his people: “This is what the LORD, your protector, says . . . about Jerusalem, ‘She will be inhabited,’ and about the towns of Judah, ‘They will be rebuilt, her ruins I will raise up,’ who says to the deep sea, ‘Be dry, I will dry up your sea currents,’ who commissions Cyrus, the one I appointed as shepherd to carry out all my wishes and to decree concerning Jerusalem, ‘She will be rebuilt,’ and concerning the temple, ‘It will be reconstructed’” (Isaiah 44:24, 26-28). Because of that victory, the exiles centered their hopes in him.

Within a year of the entry of Cyrus into Babylon an edict was issued (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). It granted permission to the exiles to return and build a house for the Lord in Jerusalem. He also brought forth the vessels of the temple, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away, and handed them over to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. Sheshbazzar, in turn, brought them with him when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Particulars of the return are given in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Of the exiles 42,360 returned under Sheshbazzar, besides slaves. Under Jeshua, the son of Jozadak the priest, and Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, first an altar was built, and then the foundations of the temple were laid. The

opposition of the Samaritans, who were refused any share in the restoration of the temple, caused the work of rebuilding to stop.

It was then that Haggai and Zechariah urged the resumption of the work. They denounced the stinginess of the people and foreshadowed the glorious future for the temple. This caused work on the temple to go forward. Finally, in the month Adar, in the sixth year of Darius (515 B.C.), the work was completed. Then the Passover was celebrated within the courts of the restored sanctuary (Ezra 6:15-18).

For some decades the history was silent. Then in 458 B.C. Ezra set out for Jerusalem, taking eighteen hundred Jews along with him. He found that the returned Jews had become allied in marriage with the people of the land and were in danger of losing their racial characteristics by absorption among the heathen (Ezra 9). Due no doubt to his efforts and those of Nehemiah and supported by the searching and powerful utterances of Malachi, this peril was averted. Thirteen years later (445 B.C.) Nehemiah heard of the desolate condition of Jerusalem and obtained permission from the king to visit Jerusalem. With letters to the governors on the route and to the keeper of the king's forest, he set out and came safely to Jerusalem. Having inspected the wall, he called the people to the work of repairing the ruins. Despite the taunts and slander and active hostility of the Samaritan opposition, he had the satisfaction of seeing the work completed, the gates set up, and the city repopulated. Nehemiah and Ezra then gathered the people together to hear the words of the law. At a solemn convocation the law was read and explained to the assembly. Thereafter, the people entered into a covenant, by which they would observe the law of Moses, not intermarry with the heathen, nor conduct business on the Sabbath. Instead, they would pay a third of a shekel annually for the services of the temple and would bring firstfruits and tithes (Nehemiah 10:28-39). See also the notes "Ezra," "Ezra, The Book of," "Nehemiah," "Nehemiah, The Book of," and "Babylonian Captivity." (This note is based on information found in T. Nicol, "Captivity," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, 1:569-76 [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1939].)

Saul

Two great Bible characters shared the name Saul. Christians know the second Saul best as the Apostle Paul. But the first was Israel's first king. He first appears in 1 Samuel 8 and is prominent throughout the rest of the book. Saul came from the smallest tribe, Benjamin. But his father, Kish, may have been a wealthy and powerful chieftain. Saul was tall and handsome, just the sort that looked like a great king. But he had several character flaws. These included his unreasonable jealousy of David and his disregard for the commands of God. His primary human enemies were the Philistines, but he also fought the other warlike peoples surrounding Israel. When he spared the defeated king of Amalek, in direct disobedience to the command of God, the Lord rejected him in favor of David. Saul continued as king for many years, as his soul grew harder and further from the Lord. Finally, he and his sons were killed in battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:1-6).

The Pool of Siloam

The pool of Siloam was very important in ancient Jerusalem. Water flowed through a tunnel cut in solid rock a distance of 1,780 feet (about 542 meters) from the only adequate spring in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This was one of the means for ensuring the city's survival during time of siege. A narrow ridge runs south from the temple mount to the joining of the Tyropoeon and Kidron valleys. The pool of Siloam was located just above the place where the valleys joined, with the water tunnel cut through the rock. The tower referred to in Luke 13:4, which fell killing eighteen, must have been well known to the people of that day. The modern reader, however, cannot pinpoint its location.

Spirit

“Spirit” in Scripture, generally denotes spiritual beings. In this sense it can obviously refer to God the Holy Spirit. But it can also refer to the being of God the Father (John 4:24), to the Son (Mk 2:8), to angels (Heb 1:14), or to men (Heb 12:23). Often it is used interchangeably with “soul” for the immaterial part of man (Matt 10:28; cf. Matt 26:41). In a few places a distinction is drawn between spirit and soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12). According to 1 Corinthians 3:16 the Holy Spirit dwells within us. His residence is the human spirit. Thus, in Paul's writings it is sometimes difficult to determine if he is referring to the Holy Spirit in person or to the human spirit as His residence. The study of the Holy Spirit is a major division of theology. Living in, or walking by, the Spirit means living in a righteous manner in fellowship with God.

Spiritual Songs

The exact meaning of “spiritual songs” is unknown. Many commentators speculate, but there is not even enough evidence to distinguish songs, hymns, and spiritual songs from one another. “Psalms” almost certainly refers to passages from the book of Psalms as well as other psalms throughout the Old Testament. “Hymns” may refer to more formal songs, incorporating Christian doctrine. It is suggested by some that “songs” refers in some passages to speaking in tongues. “Spiritual songs” may refer to spontaneous singing, praise songs, popularized Christian songs, or songs which are a unique gift of the Holy Spirit. The point of Colossians 3:16 is to encompass all expressions and types of songs rather than making distinctions among them.

Suffering in 1 Peter

Most Bible scholars note that 1 Peter addresses the subject of “why Christians suffer.” This suffering covers everything from incidental trials experienced by everyone to personal satanic attack. A good way to follow Peter's argument is to identify the key “suffering” verse from each chapter. These are:

- 1 Peter 1:6 – Various trials
- 1 Peter 2:19 – Undeserved suffering
- 1 Peter 3:14 – Suffering for righteousness' sake
- 1 Peter 4:13 – Sharing Christ's suffering
- 1 Peter 5:8-9 – Personal satanic attack

Book of Timothy

The book of 2 Timothy was last of Paul's writings that still exists. He probably wrote it during the winter of A.D. 67-68, shortly before his execution by Nero in the spring. The first chapter is an appeal to faithfulness and endurance. The second chapter gives examples, such as a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, and a good student. Chapter 3 both commends Timothy for his faithfulness to the Scriptures and exhorts him to continue. The final chapter begins with a charge to Timothy and closes with Paul's latest testimony and greetings.