

C2 - Inductive Bible Study, Part 1

Introduction

00:00

We know that the Bible is your Word to us. And in order to understand this message accurately, we need to be equipped with the right tools and skills to dig into your Word. And so we pray you give us that heart of diligence, and that hunger and desire for your word that would motivate us and strengthen us on this journey. Bless this session, we pray. Thank you for everyone who have taken the time out on a Sunday afternoon, to join us on this journey. We give thanks, we ask for You to bless the hearts of all who are attending, in Jesus name, Amen. All right, welcome, once again to our How To Study The Bible course under the Christian Education Programme. If you have the notes with you, you should be on this page that says Inductive Bible Study Part One. Now when trying to describe how to study the Bible, some people describe it like Sherlock Holmes, trying to look for clues to solve a crime. Or some would also describe it maybe like looking for a hidden treasure. And so you have to dig into the past in order to find the location in order to eventually uncover the treasure. But whether you imagine yourself to be a Sherlock Holmes or an Indiana Jones, you do need the right tools. You do need the right knowledge and methods to help you on the way more effectively. So what we're going to do in this course, is to equip you with those tools you need to dig into God's Word. And today, we are going to introduce you to this topic called Inductive Bible Study. In a moment, I'm going to explain to you what is the difference between inductive and deductive and hopefully, you are not lost. And then we will go into what and how you can conduct an Inductive Bible Study. So I understand from some feedback, from some folks that this you find to be quite cheem,

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quite deep.

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You know, it's actually going to be more and more cheem. Not because we're going into deep theology, but because we're going to introduce you to some tools that you may not have thought about before. It's not what you normally encounter. Only last week, a pastor jokingly replied and said, How does he study the Bible? He said, All I do is I pray and then I read the Bible. I said, Okay, that's great. Why not? At the end of our session, you'll come and share with everybody this, so that they can be reassured. Now, I do understand that you you do need to pray and you do need to read. And the Lord can speak to you by His Holy Spirit. I fully understand that. But you see, we're talking not about how to read the Bible, devotionally. We're talking about how to study the Bible intentionally, to come to a precise understanding that it's accurate. So imagine it is like driving. Okay, when you learn how to drive, there are definite rules on the road you must observe. For example, you need to know when you can turn left, turn right, when you need to slow down, the direction, etcetera. But even with all the rules, there will still be some times when it's not so clear, and you have to use common sense, to take the necessary precaution whether to slow down to pick up speed. Like let's say it's raining very heavily, or when the visibility is low, to signal a little longer, etcetera. These are all about common sense. All that will apply in

your own Bible study. But in order for you to apply them correctly, you need then to learn this route. That's why I say that it might become more cheem because you are going to learn about these tools, and you're going to be introduced to this skills.

I. What is the Inductive Bible Study Method?

So let me begin with the first tool or method that you need to be familiar with, which is Inductive Bible Study. Now you'll notice here that there is two categories in your note. One is inductive and one is deductive. Now if you're less familiar with this words, it can be quite confusing. But inductive is simply referring to a way we reason. We do it all the time. You're going to see later that you do it all the time. Okay, just have a name to it. Now, you might be more familiar with the term deductive reasoning. So I'm going to come in from the angle first.

A. Deductive Study

It comes from the word to deduce. What does it mean to deduce? What does it mean to have deductive reasoning? Let me give you a definition. Deductive reasoning is a type of reasoning that goes from general to specific. From general to specifics, it's based on premises. And if the premises are true, then the reasoning will be valid. Quite cheem right? Now, let me give you an example. I deduce that my next appointment is in 15 minutes and I'm more than 30 minutes away. Then I will be late for that appointment. So you see I took 2 true statements, two premises. Okay. My appointment, okay, is 15 minutes away, if I want to travel. I need 30 minutes to travel to that location, second premise. I put the two together, my deduction is I will be late. You see we do that all the time. Right. We think about our travel plans, our locations, what we're going to do, what portrays us and we put things that we know are true and then we bring it together to come to a conclusion. So what was the first premise? Appointment is 15 minutes away? What was the second premise? I am 30 minutes away. What's the conclusion? I am going to be late.

B. Inductive Study

What is inductive reasoning? So we're going to look the other one, inductive reasoning. Now, inductive reasoning is a little different. It is a reasoning that takes specific information, okay, and makes a broader generalisation that is considered probable, allowing for the fact that the conclusion may not always be accurate.

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Let me give you an example. A good example of inductive reasoning is this. Okay, I always leave 15 minutes earlier to get to my appointment on time. My appointment is 30 minutes away. Therefore I should arrive early for my appointment. So what am I doing here? I am telling you that because I normally leave 15 minutes earlier and my apartment is 30 minutes away, I should be, not absolutely, but I should be early. Okay, so allow me now to type in so that you all can follow, okay the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning

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deals with certainty,

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okay and goes from the universal

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to a particular.

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Okay, so that was what I was trying to show you just now. Okay, it deals with certainty. What is absolute. If your premise is correct. If your appointment is 15 minutes away, if in 15 minutes time and you're 30 minutes away, if both premises are correct, It is certain you are going to be late. Okay, so you take two correct premise, you come to a conclusion that's called deduction. What's induction or inductive reasoning?

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Okay, inductive

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reasoning deals with probability

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and generally, goes from the particular

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to a universal. All right. So when you do inductive reasoning, you're looking at the specifics. Okay. What I normally do? I normally leave 15 minutes earlier, that's a specific Okay, and my appointment is 30 minutes away. So based on this, when I put together, I'm saying that I should be early for my appointment, I may still be late, because who knows there might be a traffic jam. Maybe I got delayed by other unforeseen circumstances before I step out the house. So there is still the possibility that I will be late, but the probability is that now, when is deductive study useful? Okay, when is deductive study useful? Deductive reasoning is useful when you want to do a topical study of a subject. Let's say you want to know about the deity of Christ. You want to know how you know from the Bible that Jesus is the Son of God. So you take statements that are true from all over the Bible that speaks of Jesus as God. His claims to be God, the powers he demonstrated as God, You show verses that describe how we accepted the worship of his disciples and others as God. How He was called God in the Bible, and you put all this together. And as long as all these statements are true, the premises are true, you can come therefore to the certainty that Jesus is God. That is when deductive reasoning is very useful. In theology, we call this systematic theology. We have confidence that certain conclusions about Jesus, about salvation, about the inerrancy of Scripture, about the Holy Spirit, etc, are true because they are clear statements that we bring together. From there we make a conclusion of which we are certain. Now here's the next question. When is inductive reasoning, useful? When is inductive Bible study useful? Now to understand this, think of deductive reasoning as when you use a rake and you go out to the field to try to rake in all the dead leaves. So what happen is you can actually move a lot of leaves

and bring them to where you want it to be, to collect. Okay, so that is like a rake deductive reasoning. So when you collect all these verses together, it gets very useful because you can form a very clear picture about what the Bible says on a topic. But when is deductive reasoning not useful? Well, when you are digging a hole, you can use a rake to dig a hole. In other words, you can't use a rake to go deep into the Bible. So when you use inductive reasoning, what you are doing is you are really digging into the Word of God, to observe all the specifics of what the Bible is saying in that passage, to come to a reasonable conclusion of what God is saying to you. And that is what is happening every Sunday, when the pastor come up to preach. He took that passage, he didn't use a rake and give you a whole tonne of verses to prove to you a subject with certainty. He dug into that passage with deductive, with inductive reasoning. Okay, he didn't use a rake, he use a shovel. And he's digging, he's digging, he's digging. He is show you all the different parts and telling you, this is what it meant. This is high probably what happened. And if you put the picture together, you say, Wow, I didn't realise that is actually what the passage is talking about. How come before that you didn't realise, after listening to the pastor, you realise. Simply because he dug well, right? He dug hard, he considered all the different minute details, brought it together to present to you a clearer picture of high probability that this is what happened at that time. And so what you're going to learn here is how to do Inductive Bible study for yourself. You're going to learn how to dig for yourself into the Word of God.

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So now, how do you do Inductive Bible study? First, always begin your Bible studies with prayer. We need the Holy Spirit to help us to understand the Bible because 1st Corinthians chapter 2 verse 14 says, 'The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God for their foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned.' In other words, if you don't pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, based on our own intellect, based on our own emotional makeup, we may end up with a wrong conclusion. So we need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us as we begin digging. But now, when you are ready to begin digging, how do you dig? 3 words to guide us. We'll look at two today.

II. Observation

Number 1, observation number 2, interpretation and number 3, application. Okay, so how to do Inductive Bible study? How to dig into the Word of God? How to uncover the treasures of God's Word for yourself? How can you like a detective, look for all the right clues and come to the right conclusion and have that wow moment or that hallelujah moment. Yes, I finally understood! How can you do that through Inductive Bible study on your own. Observe, interpret, apply. Now put it in another way. In observation, you are asking what does it say? Okay, you got to start there. What does it say? What is the passage saying to you? When you are interpreting, you are asking, 'what does it mean?' You're not going to stop just what it says. You got to pause and ask, 'what does this verse mean?' And when you apply, you are saying what does it mean to me? Okay, so let me repeat three words in Inductive Bible study. Are you ready? Observation. What's the second word? Interpretation. What's the third word? Application. Okay, good. Now, when you come to observation, what is the question you're asking? Very good. What does it say? Not what I want it to say, Okay. Sometimes you'll become more excited. And you have all these ideas. I heard this sermon, I heard this pastor say this, I read this devotion. And you read into the verse what you want it to say. That's not Inductive Bible study. Okay. That is what you

may have heard Pastor Jason mentioned, eisegesis. Reading into the texts. Happens to the best of us because we get excited. That's why we pray that the Holy Spirit to guide us, right. But we also need to apply common sense when it's raining heavily, you know, when it's raining heavily and the visibility is low. Usually when you and I are excited about a passage, okay. When you have heard a lot on that passage, all these ideas starts flooding in. Visibility is low, you are not really asking what does it say. You are asking what do I want it to say? Okay, so we've got to be very careful, common sense. Now, when you have finally found out what it says, then the next step is, what's the next word? Interpretation, good. In interpretation, what is the question you're asking? What does it mean? You see, you can't know what it means until you find out what it says. And the error always begins from here. When I tell the passage what I want it to say, because of what I heard, what I feel, what I experience, then I begin to explain what it means based on what I know, not based on what the Bible says. And when we are finally confronted with the truth, then we are very shocked. We thought all along. I thought that's what the Bible means. How come? Because you never ask what does it say? So observation must always come first. What does it say? When you're very clear what the Bible says, then you can move on to what does it mean? That interpretation must be based on what the Bible said, not based on what I wanted it to say. Okay, so there has to be very clear. Because one builds on the other. Now, when that happens, when you finally know what it says, what it means, and the last step is

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application. Good. And application. What do we ask? What does it mean to me? Yes, and that is the part we are most excited about. Because we want to apply. We want to know how to live out God's will and that's wonderful. But it has to be accurate. And this is what digging into God's word correctly does. So let's learn how to apply this tools. Okay, now for observation. What can you do in order to help you? Shall we say interrogate the texts? What can you do to help yourself really dig into what it says. Now I like you to look into your notes, and you will notice that there is this little passage right here. That's right. Now, this is a very interesting passage. It's not written as a Christian article. But I think it has very instructive insights into observation. Into what does it say? So if you have downloaded this notes, I like you to refer to it. If you have not downloaded the notes, I like you to look at it with me on the screen. If you can't, I'm going to read you the article. Take a few minutes, but I think it's useful. Now, Agassiz was the founder of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, and a Harvard professor. The following account was written by one of his students Samuel H Scudder, under the title Agassiz and the fish. Now it sounds very flippant, but actually is quite instructive for this student, by a student in American poem edition etc. So Agassiz and the fish. It was more than 15 years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz and told him that I enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object incoming my antecedents generally, the mood in which I afterward proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire and finally whether I wish to study any special branch. So he's just having a simple interview. To the latter I replied that while I wish to be well grounded in all departments of zoology, I purpose to devote myself specifically to insects. So he wants to study insects. When do you wish to begin, he asked? Now I replied. This seems to please him and with an energetic very well, he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol. Take this fish he said and look at it. We called it a, I don't know how to read this ha mu lon, can that work? All right sounds like scientific word. Anyway, we call hei mu lon, a bit Chinese now.

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But you know its a fish alright. By and by I was asked what you have seen. With that he left me and I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment for gazing at a fish. Did not commend itself to an ardent entomologists. So he wants to study insects but the professor asked him to study a fish. In 10 minutes, I've seen all that could be seen in that fish. Probably a brilliant student, a clever chap you know, 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. Stop in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting fit, and look of anxiety for return of anomalous sloppy appearance. This little excitement over nothing was to be done, but return to a steady gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour, an hour, another hour, the fish begin to look loathsome. Could you imagine, you want to study insects and then he has to look at the fish, and then the fish get more and more disgusting to you? That was what he was experiencing. I turn it over and around and look it in the face ghastly. It did not like the experience. From behind, beneath, from side wards, that three quarters view just as ghastly. So you can imagine he's having a really horrible time. And he said, I was in despair. At an early hour, I concluded that lunch was necessary. So with finite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour, I was free, so he really enjoyed his lunch break. On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and will 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 again, looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass, instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes and the fish. So you cannot use telescope and all that stuff. It seems almost limited few. I push my fingers down its throat to see how sharp its teeth were. I begin to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me. I withdraw the fish and now, with surprise, I begin to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor return. That is right, he said. A pencil is one of the best eyes. I am glad to notice too that you kept your specimen wet and your bottle taut. With this 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 fringe gill arches, the moveable operculum, the pores of the head, fleshy lips, lidless eyes, lateral lines, spinners fin, and fork till the compressed and arch body. When I had finish he waited as if expecting more. And then with an air of disappointment, he said, You have not looked very carefully. Why, he continued. 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 puffed, I was mortified, still more of that wretched fish. But now I set myself to the past with a will and discovered one thing after another, until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly and towards his close the professor inquired. Do you see it yet? No, I reply. I am certain I do not. But I see how little I saw before. That is next best, he said earnestly. But I won't hear you now, put away your fish, go home. Perhaps you'll be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you 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 two perplexities. The cordial welcome from the professor the next morning was reassuring. Here was a man who seemed to be as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw. Do you perhaps mean, I asked that the fish had symmetrical sights with pad organs? He's thoroughly pleased. Of course, of course, repeat the wakeful moments of the previous night. After this discourse most happily and enthusiastically as he always did.

On the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next. Oh, look at your fish, he said. And let me again to my own devices, and a little more than an hour, he returned and heard my new catalogue. This 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 artificial aid. Look, look, look, was his repeated injunction. This was the best entomological lesson I ever had. A lesson whose influence was extended to the details of every subsequent study. A legacy the professor had left to me as he left it to many others of inestimable value, which we could not buy with which we cannot part.

28:07

The fourth day, a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first and I was bidden to point the resemblances and differences between the two. Another and another followed, until the entire family was laid before me and a whole legion just covered the table and surrounding shells and the odour had become a pleasant perfume. Even now, the sight of an old six inch worm eaten brings fragrant memories. The whole group of ha mu lon was thus brought into review, 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 in their orderly arrangement was ever accompanied by the urgent exaltation, not to be content with them. Facts are stupid things he would say, until brought in the connection with some general law. At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left this friends and turn to insects. But what I gained from this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation into my favourite groups. So this is a really unusual and helpful article on the subject of observation. Perhaps, when you heard the word observation as the first step in Inductive Bible study, what does it say? You thought, of course, I could find that out easily. In fact, many people think the more clever they are, the more well read, the more well informed, the faster they will find out what the Bible says. But here you have an example of someone in Harvard who learned how to study insects by looking at a fish for three days. Now, what does it tell us? How much you observe is not merely a function of your intelligence or IQ. It's a function of how hard you think about the subject. And so you saw how when he went back and thought about it, more and more things came to light. If you read in the Scripture, you will realise that there is a lot of exaltations in this order. Verses such as, 'Day and night I meditate upon your Word.' Such as 'Blessed is the man who meditates on the Word of God.' That word meditate, as you have probably heard, means to chew the cart, the cow chewing the cart. But you know what, although we know that, theoretically, if you have been reading and studying a Bible, very few of us do it practically. We want a quick fix. We want to read the commentary. We want to get some famous Bible teacher, make a statement, memorise a definition so we can quote him and have score some points when you share. But how many of us will sit down and read the Bible over and over and over and over again, until the Holy Spirit turn on the light? You notice this? Did you notice that? Do you see this Word? Do you see that? Nothing can replace proper observation. And that's why Bible study takes time. Because it's all there. Like the professor Agassiz said facts are stupid things until they're connected with some general law. So as you read the verse, you think, I know this, I heard this 100 times since I was young. You know, I know this verse. But you know what, it means nothing to you until you begin to see the connection with the rest of the passage. When you begin to see in the context. When something begin to pop up, as you memorise it, as you think about it, then you are truly beginning to observe. A famous Bible teacher, in the time pass, about 100 years ago by the name of G Cambell, Morgan.

32:08

He said that you need to read the Bible, at least 40 times of that passage before you even start studying it. What is he saying? He's saying you need to observe, observe, observe, observe, observe and observe, nothing else. He says its hard work, pure hard work. So if you come here thinking that I'm going to learn some tips and tricks and go home, and have better skills to prepare for my care group or Bible study, I'm afraid that's not the intent of this class. We want you to have precision and accuracy in studying the Bible. And that requires observation. All right. Observation requires hard work and effort. So I'm going to share with you some ways in which you can do observation properly. Turn with me in your notes now. And you will see, number one, how can you observe until the facts begin to connect. Until things you have not noticed before come on. Campbell Morgan says read your Bible at least 40 times. And you know what? We can do that with have our minds closed, right. But perhaps if you pick up a pencil, or a pen. If you want to use your devices, you can key in some notes. If you have one of those high tech features where you can write, maybe you can circle certain verses, highlight certain things to yourself, so that you observe as you write. Now, another way you can do because now there's all this digital Bibles and what not, is that you can print out that passage you want to study, so that you can write it out in an easier manner.

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Then what happens is, if you look at page two, you need to be marking those linking words and highlight them to yourself. When there's a but, you're going to learn later there will be a shift of thought. When there's a so that, that is a purpose statement that. So all these things are the things you should be picking out as you observe a certain passage so that you will begin to follow that train of thought. Write down quotations or allusions to other passages and all this is going to be in the Bible. The apostles, our Lord Jesus, is going to be quoting from scripture. Even Old Testament prophets, they are going to be quoting from one another. Do you know who they are quoting from? Where the passage is found? All this you need also to observe. All right, now what else? Note mentioned of time and space? You know, when you do your devotional reading, all these details, you skip over because you want to find that verse that speaks to your heart. That's wonderful. Okay, God does speak to our heart in the morning when we read His Word, and seek His mind to remind all of that one truth that we need. Or to encourage our soul with that one fact that would strengthen our walk. But you see, you're not talking about devotional reading here. So you can't settle for just one. You need to dig, so you need to observe. You need to observe and so you need to look out for all the details, including things that you may skip over, such as time and place. Because all that then brings the Word of God into the reality of that moment, when he was given. And then you will come up with more clarity and light. Now mark any terms of conclusion, such as thus for this reason, therefore, and any significance. It might have all the things that you should be observing when you are trying to find out what does that passage say. Okay, now, how about writing down some questions? Maybe you observe this, but you are not quite sure what it meant. Well, write down your questions and pray. Maybe do some research. And soon the answer may be something that will bless your heart in ways you have not considered before. Now, number nine, memorise. One of the best tools for observation is memorization. Put your passage in your head, and you will probably notice things as you call it to mind throughout the day. In other words, when you memorise the Word of God that passage you're studying, you're filling your mind with it. All the Words, bringing it in an accurate manner to your memory, and you know what? The Holy Spirit can take those

Words have memorised and start to show you things that you're not considered before. Memorization is another method of observation. Now, some of you may think that because some of the pastors in this church, they've been teaching, studying the Bible so much, that the smarter they are, the more spiritual they are, you know that often times, I hear the joke, you know that they think that the pastor just put the Bible under the pillow on Saturday night. They wake up with a good feeling, and they start preaching like machine gun. Now, if you have that idea of a teaching pastor in Gospel Light, I'm afraid that's not quite true. Okay. In fact, nothing can be further from the truth. What actually happened is your pastor, who preaches to you every Sunday morning, he has to label in the Word. It means he has to go through exactly what we're talking about here. Every week. He has to plough and dig and think. Sometimes it doesn't come to him. Sometimes, you know, he has no idea what the passage is talking about. He has to almost tear his hair out in order to find out what is going on. It's like a Agassiz and

37:57

the fish. It's ghastly, It's hideous. And because why?

38:03

You don't know what's happening. You don't know what is expected of you. And then soon as you continue to plough on, to dig, to observe, it becomes beautiful. It becomes a fragrant, because what you thought you knew you didn't know as well. What you thought you saw, you didn't see as clearly. Even things you didn't see before now you'll begin to see why. Because of observation. Now, does that help you now to have a better idea of what it means to ask what thus the passage says? I hope it does. Okay. It simply means hard work. Hard work. Whatever passage you want to study, begin with observation. Now, any questions? Any questions? All right. Okay. No questions is okay. Later, you might have some question. Since you have no question. I got a question for you. I prepared. Turn with me in your notes to page. Let me see where is it. Okay, yes. Right here. Can you see this example? Nehemiah 1-3. I believe it should be on page two. Have you got it? Have you found it? If you don't have the notes, it's fine. You can turn in your Bibles. All right. Now, what I'd like you to do now is do what that student did with the fish. Except your fish is not that yellow fish. Your fish is now Nehemiah chapter one verses 1-3. I like you now to spend 10 minutes staring at this passage. Observing. Ask yourself, What does it say? Don't write over anything. Every name that appears ask yourself, who is this person? Write down your questions. Write down your notes. Note the time, the place that is mentioned. Start asking those questions. Okay, so 10 minutes begin now. Okay. So do take out your Bible, take out your notes. Start observing, practising. Okay, I shall take this like a class and ask you, can you share with me, what are some of your observation in this passage? What did you notice? What did you ask yourself about this simple three verse,

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Now, let me give a bit of a preamble. If you are familiar with Nehemiah an old time Christian you're going to jump over this three versus straight into the passage where you get the exciting parts about him praying and seeking and crying and then chapter two, it's more even more exciting about doors open and he began to set off for Jerusalem. But it's all built based on these first three verses that sets the background. Right. So you need to start there for Inductive Bible study. So what did you observe? What did you maybe just passed over but now you'll begin to notice, if you're familiar with the story of Nehemiah.

40:53

Anyone wants to volunteer?

41:42

You mean it was really that bad?

41:45

Yes, I hear someone say something.

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Very good question. There is an exile. Okay. So now there's a historical context. Right? Very good question. I'm not going to provide the answer but I'm so glad you asked. Good. That's an exile. Something happened in these people's life. What else does you observe? Sorry. Jerusalem was destroyed. Ah, okay, good. So now why is Jerusalem destroyed? When was it destroyed? What does it mean that it's destroyed? Right. It might be related to the exile. So you have to dig. Okay, some more observations.

42:44

Very good. What is the great trouble and disgrace? Is it a national disgrace alone? Is it a tribal level? Were they fighting among each other among the families? What is the level of the disgrace? Is this in any way connected with God's greater Kingdom purposes? Right. I mean, we can't just read disgrace and trouble and aiya malu. No Face. Oh, disgrace. Oh, okay. That's disgrace. You know, like, when I go to school and I enter my hall and my teachers scold me. Disgrace. Well, that's your classroom disgrace but what disgrace is this talking about? So you see, when you observe you have to start asking question and it directs you to look at what the passage says. Not what you think or want it to say. Very good. What else? What observations? Sorry.

43:48

Okay, what is the month of Chislev? Anyone knows? No one knows. Honestly. I also don't know. I got to go and check. Do you know why? I'm not a Hebrew. I don't live in Nehemiah's time. I know where's January? I know when it's August. I know it's October. So I don't know what's Chislev. I don't know what's the timeframe. So I had to dig. Get a picture? In the 20th year of who? When? What?

44:28

Right, good. What else? Someone else just now. Yes.

44:36

Excellent question. We all pretend we know who is Nehemiah right? But who was Nehemiah? Is he one of the Minor Prophets or the Major Prophets? You know, when I taught this passage, and I preached from this book in Chinese, his name is Ni Ce Mi. And I got to emphasise to the Chinese folk that this is not a new type of rice. You know how it sounds right? How you make associations and jump to conclusion. Ni Ci Mi. Wa, how chi ma?

45:10

Totally misses the point. Who is Nehemiah? Who is a son of Hachaliah? Hachaliah. Not Haka okay. But you see,

45:24

if you dig into that further, you are also going to make some connections later when the Bible talks about Nehemiah being, should I say tempted, manipulated to try to enter into the temple and he said no, I'm not going to do that. Okay all this is going to have bearings on the rest of the plot. So, who is Nehemiah? Very good question. What else?

45:56

What else? What else do you observe?

46:11

Ah, okay, the survival to the remnant. Okay.

46:23

Right.

46:28

Okay, that is a good question. You know what, those are good questions, because we are reading from translations of the Bible. Last week, remember, I told you that you should go for the word for word translation, such as the ESV. Certain translation like the NIV, and others for thought for thought may miss some of these things. So a better approach when you are really serious is to compare different translations. Right? Then you can see what is the consistency, whether there are a certain significant difference between remnant and survivor, etc. So again, a good thought. If you have other versions in your memory, you can also make some comparisons. And then I encourage you to look into other translations, as well. Anything else? Any other observations?

47:17

Yes?

47:32

Could you repeat that again? Before and after account? Ah, very good. You see, what happens is we actually enter into every book without really a lot of before after. And so right at the beginning of this book, we'll need to start observing, slowing down, asking question. So that you bring the before after into view before you jump into the rest of the passage. All right. So this is a reason we have this exercise. To let you know that a very simple book of about 13 chapters, you need to pause and not rush headlong into it. If you want to study the Bible. Okay? So other observations you might want to highlight would be where is Susa? Right, the Citadel. Whose Citadel is that? You notice it didn't mention. And it talks here about remnant in the province to survive the exile in great trouble and shame. The wall is broken down. Why the wall? What about the temple? How about the city? Why the wall? So these are the different things that you need to look into and ask yourself. when you begin to observe. Now, I hope that this simple exercise have helped you notice that there are things that you need to start

picking up if you are going to find out what the text says. It's very different from reading the Bible. Now allow me to finish up the last bit. Okay, on interpretation so that I can release the class and those who have questions can stay behind and I'll be happy to answer.

B. Interpretation

Now, let's go on to interpretation. Okay interpretation. Now, after you have observed, it is good to now ask the next question, what does it mean? Now, here are some rules to help you. Guidelines or interpretation. Number one, contexts. I think you have heard this often. I will repeat it. Your interpretation should be consistent with the theme purpose structure of the book in which it is found. You are going to learn about how to uncover the theme and purpose subsequently. Structure of the passage or the book will also be introduced to you so that you can understand what is before and after and how the entire book is written. You also sometimes need to consider historical contexts, cultural contexts. All these have a bearing. So this is what we mean by context. It's not just the passage. It's everything surrounding the passage as we have considered just now. Number two, let Scripture interpret Scripture.

50:18

One thing we must learn about interpretation is never take obscure passages to interpret and teach major truths. Always take a passage that is not clear and see it in the light of clearer passages. What do I mean? For example, many people read Genesis, and they read how Abraham brought the wife into Egypt, and then told a lie that my wife is my sister. He came out of Egypt, and then he was blessed, and he had even more flocks. So what is the interpretation? When you go into a fix, tell a good lie, after that God will still bless you. Is that true? No. Why? Because the 10 commandment says, you shall not bear false witness. You should not lie, because you come to the New Testament in Ephesians four, the Scripture says, speak the truth in love. So, God is holy, He is righteous, He does not condone lying. So we cannot use a story that is obscure, not very clear to try to teach moral truths. So never tell your children this Bible story and say, child, sometimes it's okay to lie. Abraham did it too. You know, that would be a wrong interpretation. All right, totally wrong. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Use clear passages to interpret unclear passages. Number three, never base convictions on obscure passage. An obscure passage is one in which meaning isn't clear, even when the proper principles of interpretation are used. Again, employ the full counsel of the Bible. So there are little stories here and there that we don't fully understand, even when you see the context and everything. Let me give you an example. When Saul, the king in the Old Testament was in his very, very, shall we say, ungodly spiral downwards towards the end of his life, he decided in his final war against the Philistines, to go and visit a witch at Endor, not Star Wars. This is Old Testament. So some other names are borrowed from the Bible, not the Endor in Star Wars. This is the Endor in the Old Testament. Now, and when the witch was approached, she got a shock that the king would approach her. And she said you have been wiping us out because we practice witchcraft. Why are you calling on me to do something for you? And the king Saul, told her, never mind what I did in the past. You just call up Samuel. I want to talk to him. And before the witch could even do anything, Samuel appeared. You know, if you are any serious reader of the Bible, you think this is really obscure. You know, on one hand so clear, don't practice witchcraft. The king had to wipe them out. And then the next moment, Samuel appeared. So do I do

this or not? Can I go to my house and say dad, I really miss you. You have gone on for so long. Can you appear now?

53:27

Then he appear how? Don't appear how? I also don't know. But try. Now if you base your conviction on my parents, or my grandfather, who I miss will definitely come to me. I believe this because Saul also like that. Why? Because you took an obscure passage, and you will make it the basis of your faith. Okay. This is a very difficult passage. One of the difficult passage to interpret and explain. Okay, but again, we'll use a clearer passages to explain the unclear ones. And we certainly don't encourage anyone to follow the example of king Saul in the final days of his life, when he was desperate, and he was clearly not obeying and following God. All right. So that's what we mean, don't base conviction on obscure passages. Number four, interpret Scripture according to the author's intent. What does this mean? It means that the scripture should mean what the author means when he wrote it. Okay. Now, this is not easy. But that's why it has a lot of study to observe the facts to come to the point whereby at this point in time, when the author said this, or wrote this in the context of what is happening, this is probably what he meant. Okay, so that takes work in order to come to those conclusions. Number five, look for the main message of the passage. Okay, there is always going to be a main idea in a passage. There's always going to be main idea in a passage. For example, you have gone through Matthew chapter five. When you hit the first passage, you will see blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed. Obviously, when Jesus gave the Beatitudes, the main intent was to tell us about what is the true meaning of blessedness. Right, and how you can arrive there. So there's always a main intent in a passage. Look for that. Number six, study the Old Testament in view of Jesus and the New Testament. In other words, the way the Bible is written, truth gets clearer and clearer as you go along the way. When you come to the New Testament, the Bible says that Jesus is the culmination. He is the clearest expression of God's character, person and glory. So we always interpret the rest of the Old Testament in the light of who Jesus is, and what he did. We have a precedent, after his resurrection, when the disciples on the road to Emmaus wasn't very clear about what happened with the death. And supposed it in their mind, resurrection of Jesus, What did Jesus do? Did He pull off his hood, reveal Himself said, see, I'm alive. No, He didn't do that. What did Jesus do? Bible tells that Jesus opened up the Old Testament Scripture and began to teach them from Moses to the prophets, the things concerning himself. In other words, Jesus himself use the Old Testament to help them understand what the Bible meant in the light of who He is, and what He did at the cross. So because of this example of Jesus, we want you to know that when you study the Bible, study in view of Jesus and the Old Testament. So these are seven simple guidelines to help you in studying the scriptures. In interpreting them. So remember, in Inductive Bible study, you need to observe. I hope we have managed to stress this to you. Then you need to interpret, need to know what it means. And then next week, we're going to look at application. Okay, so instead of asking any questions, I will encourage those who have questions to stay behind after I pray, so that those who needs to go can go. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this session on how to study the Bible. I recognise that it's not easy if we have not considered studying the Bible in this light. And perhaps we have not even thought that we need to work hard at observing. We pray that you will teach us to do so if we are to be serious, and successful, accurate students of the Bible. And we pray that the results of this observation would go a long way to help us understand what the Bible really mean. And then to see the treasures as they are unfolded before our eyes, and brought home to our hearts to bring rich blessings beyond measure to

our spiritual life. So Father, I pray for everyone here that you help them not to be discouraged if they found this information to be new or unfamiliar. But that they would be challenged to work even harder beyond the devotional reading to a serious study of Scripture for themselves. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen. All right, thank you everyone for your time. It's a little behind the 230. So I apologise for the time delay. Those of you who need to go can go. Those of you who have questions, you can stay behind, ask , and I'll be happy to answer them.

58:56

Yes,

58:59

Oh, point seven. You know why? Because of the notes. Thank you for reminding me. I will highlight to you. Adopt the New Testament attitude towards the Old Testament, which is basically trained to make the connection between the NT passage and what has come before in the Old Testament. In other words, you look for whether this passage is the fulfilment of what happened or was prophesied in the Old. Okay. Like when you come to the New Testament, it says that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Then you will have to trace and see is there a prophecy in the Old Testament about that, God wanting to be with us. So connect between the Old and the New consistently. Thank you so much for reminding me of that. I'm so sorry. I missed that out. Point number seven.

59:48