

Inductive Bible Study: How to Study the Bible

Lesson 1: An Evangelistic Bible Study Method

We begin our Inductive Bible Study course by using a Bible Study method from an international Christian organization. The organization uses this evangelistic Bible Study method with people who are *not* Christians *yet*. This Bible Study Method is designed to use with people who know *little* or *nothing* about the Bible. Here is how it works:

A leader invites unsaved people who have shown interest in spiritual things to attend a one-hour, evangelistic Bible study in a home for 6-weeks. At that study, the leader starts with a time of food and fellowship where everyone gets to know each other. Then the leader reads a passage from the **Gospel of John** and asks the following 6 questions. People participate and answer each question. At the *end* of the 6-week study, some people are ready to trust in Christ as their Savior. The people who trust in Christ are invited to another 4-6 week Bible study in basic discipleship.

Here are the 6 questions the leader asks the people at the evangelistic Bible study about a passage from **John** they have just read:

1. **What did you *like* in this passage from the Bible? What did you find *interesting*?**
2. **What did you *not* like about this passage? What did you *not* understand or find confusing?**
3. **What does this passage teach us about people? What does it teach us about *you*?**
4. **What does this passage from the Bible teach us about *God*?**
5. **How can you put this passage into practice in *your* life? What can *change* in your life from this? Be specific.**
6. ***Who* will you tell about what you have just learned? Give a name.**

I trust all of us here in this class are Christians! But I want us to *start* our course in Inductive Bible Study by practicing this evangelistic Bible Study method. *Why*? Because it is simple, yet it forces us to *think* like some of the people we minister to! One problem we pastors and Christian leaders have in studying the Bible is that we bring our preconceptions and prejudices to our Bible study! So, it helps to walk in the shoes of those who know *little* or *nothing* about the Bible. Every time I study to preach, I ask these and similar questions as I prepare my sermon!

Assignment:

Answer these 6 questions about one *or* the other of 2 of the most famous vss in the OT [Old Testament] and NT [New Testament]:

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs."

Divide into small groups of 3-4 people. Discuss as many of these 6 questions as you have time. Write down your answers. Appoint a spokesperson for your group. Your spokesperson should be ready to share your group's answers with our class. You have 10 minutes!

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Lesson 2: The 4 Basic Steps of Bible Study in one Bible verse

Adapted from the story, *A Scandal in Bohemia* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

On the night of March 20, 1888, I was returning home after seeing a patient. I had begun my medical practice again. My carriage was near 221B Baker Street, so I decided to stop and visit my good friend, detective Mr. Sherlock Holmes. His housekeeper let me in the front door.

Holmes was standing in front of the fireplace warming his hands. He looked me over the way a scientist would examine an insect specimen. He said, "Dr. Watson, I see that marriage is good for you! You have gained 7 ½ pounds since I saw you last!"

"I have only gained 7 pounds!" I answered.

"Indeed, I think if you step on the scales, you will find you've gained another ½ pound! And I also observe that you practicing medicine again."

"How do you know?"

"Watson, I see it. I deduce it. I also know that you have been getting very wet lately and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant who cleans at your home."

"Holmes," I said, "this is too much! It is true that I went walking out in the country on Thursday and came home wet and muddy, but since I changed my clothes I can't imagine how you deduce it. As to our servant girl, Mary, she is indeed a very poor worker, but I can't see how could know that!"

Holmes laughed and rubbed his long hands together. "It is so simple, Watson!" he said; "My eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the light of the fire strikes it, the leather is scored by 6 almost parallel cuts. Obviously those cuts were caused by someone who was very careless when they took a knife and scraped around the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in wet weather in the mud and that you had a servant who did not know how to clean the mud off your shoes properly. As to you practicing medicine again, if a gentleman walks into my home smelling like medical chemicals with a black mark of nitrate of silver on his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top-hat to show where he has put his stethoscope, I must indeed pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession!"

I could not help laughing at the ease with which Holmes explained his process of deduction. "When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive step of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours."

"Quite so, Watson," Holmes answered. "*You see, but you do not observe. ...*"

Sherlock Holmes, the world's most famous fictional detective, is our paragon of *how* to do the *first* step in all Bible study: **Observation**. Good Bible study starts with *observing* the Bible text!

There are 4 basic steps to study the Bible:

- 1. Observation:** What does it *say*?
- 2. Interpretation:** What does it *mean*?
- 3. Application:** What *difference* does it make?
- 4. Correlation:** How does it all *fit together*?

We Use 8 Question Words:

- Who? What? When? Where?
Which? How?**
- Why?**
- So what?**
- We make charts, lessons, sermons**

Assignment:

Divide into small groups of 3-4 people. Do Steps 1-3 of Bible Study using the 8 questions words. Spend *most* of your time on Step 1. Write down your answers. Choose a spokesperson to share your observations with our class. You have 10 minutes.

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

A word of advice: Don't *rush* to do Steps 2 and 3. The *more* time you spend on Step 1—**Observation**—the *less* time you'll need to do the *other* steps!

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Lesson 3: Analysis and Synthesis of a short Bible Paragraph

Review:

<u>The 4 steps to study the Bible:</u>		<u>The 8 Question Words:</u>
1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who? What? When? Where?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Which? How?
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	Why?
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?	So what?
		Charts, lessons, sermons

<u>There are 2 paths we can take to those 4 steps in Bible Study:</u>			
Analysis:	Taking the text apart	[Like taking apart a watch or the motor of a car]	
Synthesis:	Putting the text together	[Like putting together a puzzle or a toy model]	
We need to do <i>both</i> Analysis and Synthesis to be able to do the 4 steps of Bible study!			
<u>Here are some key relationships based on key words in the Biblical text that help us do analysis and synthesis:</u>			
Question→Answer:	8 question words +	Cause→Effect:	“so, so that”
Interjection	“behold, look”	Contrast:	“but, yet”
Result, Purpose:	“so, so that”	Comparison:	“like, as”
Reason:	“because, since, for”	Condition:	“if”
Series, List:	“and, then”	Conclusion:	“therefore, then”

Assignment:

Study one short paragraph from **Mark’s Gospel**:

Divide into small groups of 3-4 people.

Do the 4 steps of Bible Study using the 8 questions words.

Do *both* Analysis and Synthesis by focusing on key relationships and key words listed above.

Write those key relationships in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper.

Choose a Title that sums up your study of this paragraph in **Mark’s Gospel**.

Mark 4:

35 On that day, when evening had come, Jesus told the disciples, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the lake.” **36** So they left the crowd and took Him along since He was already in the boat. And other boats were with Him.

37 A fierce windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. **38** But He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion.

So they woke Him up and said to Him, “Teacher! Don’t you care that we’re going to die?”

39 He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Silence! Be still!” The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. **40** Then He said to them, “Why are you fearful? Do you still have no faith?”

41 And they were terrified and asked one another, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

You have 10 minutes. Choose a spokesperson to share your observations with the class.

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Lesson 4: Correlation: How words, sentences, and paragraphs of the Bible fit together.

Review:

The 4 basic steps to study the Bible:		8 Question Words:	
1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who?	What? When? Where? Which? How?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Why?	
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	So what?	
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?		
2 paths to take to those 4 Steps in Bible Study:			
Analysis:	Taking the text apart	[Like taking apart a watch or the motor of a car]	
Synthesis:	Putting the text together	[Like putting together a puzzle or a toy model]	
Some key relationships based on key words in the Biblical text that help do analysis and synthesis:			
Question→Answer:	8 question words +	Cause→Effect :	“so, so that”
Interjection	“behold, look”	Contrast:	“but, yet”
Result, Purpose:	“so, so that”	Comparison:	“like, as”
Reason:	“because, since, for”	Condition:	“if”
Series, List:	“and, then”	Conclusion:	“therefore, then”

In this lesson, we observe *how* Biblical authors wrote their books. The Holy Spirit inspired *every* word of the Bible’s original text. So, when we read the Bible, we are reading *God’s* words. But the human Biblical authors *also* used their *own* education, experience, and expertise to deliberately structure the Bible’s words, sentences and paragraphs to say what they wanted to say, all guided by God’s Spirit. Although this was a miracle, we can analyze the structure of any Biblical text the same way we study how any human book is put together.

To discover the structure of any Biblical text, we use **Observation—Step 1 of Bible Study** to see how Biblical words, sentences, and paragraphs fit together. The easiest way to find out this structure is to re-write the Biblical text, deliberately underlining or showing its major parts:

Who/What is acting, doing?	[Subject]	[Frank]
What action is going on?	[Verb]	[is teaching]
Who/What receives the action?	[Object]	[this class]
What else is going on?	[Descriptive words]	[in Vietnam.]

Let’s discover the structure of the first verse in the Bible:

Gen. 1:1	In the beginning	<u>God</u>	<u>created</u>	<u>the heavens and the earth.</u>
	[Descriptive words]	[Who]	[What He did]	[What received this action]

Assignment: In this lesson, *I* will study *with* you the paragraph immediately *after* **Mark 4:35-41**

Mark 5:1	Then <u>they came</u>	to the other side	of the sea,
		to the region	of the Gerasenes.
2	As soon as <u>Jesus</u> got out	of the boat,	
	<u>a man</u>		with an unclean spirit
	<u>came out</u>	of the tombs	
	and <u>met Him.</u>		
3	The <u>man</u> lived	in the tombs.	
	<u>No one was able to restrain him</u>	anymore—even with chains—	
	4 because <u>he often had been bound</u>	with shackles and chains,	
		but <u>had snapped off the chains</u>	
		and <u>smashed the shackles.</u>	
	<u>No one was strong enough to subdue him.</u>		

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Mk 5:5 And always, night and day,
he was crying out and cutting himself among the tombs and in the mountains
with stones.

6 When the man saw Jesus from a distance,
he ran
and knelt down before Him.

7 And he cried out with a loud voice,
“What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?
I beg You before God, don’t torment me!”

8 For He had told him,
“Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

5:9 “What is your name?” He asked the man.
“My name is Legion,” he answered Him, “because we are many.”

10 And he kept begging Him not to send them out of the region.

5:11 Now a large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside.

12 The demons begged Him, “Send us to the pigs, so we may enter them.”

13 And He gave them permission.
Then the unclean spirits came out
and entered the pigs,
and the herd of about 2,000 rushed down the steep bank into the sea
and drowned there.

5:14 The men who tended them ran off
and reported it in the town and the countryside,
and people went to see what had happened.

15 They came to Jesus
and saw the man who had been demon-possessed by the legion,
sitting there,
dressed
and in his right mind;
and they were afraid.

16 The eyewitnesses described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man
and told about the pigs.

17 Then they began to beg Him to leave their region.

5:18 As He was getting into the boat,
the man who had been demon-possessed
kept begging Him to be with Him.

19 But He would not let him;
instead, He told him,
“Go back home to your own people,
and report to them how much the Lord has done for you
and how He has had mercy on you.”

20 So he went out
and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him,
and they were all amazed.

Questions:

1. Who *begs* Jesus in this story? What do they beg Jesus to do?
2. Who *reports* Jesus’ actions in this story? *Why*? What is the *result*?
3. Who *obeys* Jesus in this story? *Why* do they obey?
4. Is anything important about the *pigs*?
5. What is the relationship between *this* story and the *preceding* one?

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Lesson 5: Correlation: How units of the Bible fit together.

Review of our Bible Study Tools:

The 4 basic steps to study the Bible:		8 Question Words:	
1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who?	What? When? Where? Which? How?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Why?	
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	So what?	
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?		
2 paths to take to those 4 Steps in Bible Study:			
Analysis:	Taking the text apart	[Like taking apart a watch or the motor of a car]	
Synthesis:	Putting the text together	[Like putting together a puzzle or a toy model]	
Some key relationships based on key words in the Biblical text that help do analysis and synthesis:			
Question→Answer:	8 question words +	Cause→Effect :	“so, so that”
Interjection	“behold, look”	Contrast:	“but, yet”
Result, Purpose:	“so, so that”	Comparison:	“like, as”
Reason:	“because, since, for”	Condition:	“if”
Series, List:	“and, then”	Conclusion:	“therefore, then”
How Biblical words, sentences, and paragraphs fit together:			
Who/What is acting, doing?	[Subject]	[God]	
What action is going on?	[Verb]	[created]	
Who/What receives the action?	[Object]	[the heavens and the earth]	
What else is going on?	[Descriptive words]	[in the beginning]	

Assignment:

In groups of 3-4, study the 2 units of Jesus’ 2 miracles (raising the Dead Daughter and Healing the Bleeding Woman) in **Mark 5:21-43** that *follow* the 2 units of Jesus’ 2 previous miracles in **Mark 4:35-5:20** (Stilling the Storm/ Rescue from Demons).

Be prepared to answer these 2 questions:

1. How do Mark’s 2 units of Jesus’ 2 miracles (Raising the Dead Daughter/Healing the Bleeding Woman) relate to *each other*?
2. How do Mark’s 2 units of Jesus’ 2 miracles relate to *Mark’s previous 2 units of Jesus’ miracles* (Stilling the Storm/Rescue from Demons)?

Mark 5:21	When <u>Jesus</u> had <u>crossed</u> over again by boat to the other side, a large <u>crowd</u> gathered around Him while <i>He</i> was by the sea.
22	One of the synagogue <u>leaders</u> , named <u>Jairus</u> , came, and when <u>he</u> saw <u>Jesus</u> , <u>he</u> fell at His feet 23 and kept <u>begging</u> Him, “My little <u>daughter</u> is at death’s door. <u>Come</u> and <u>lay</u> Your <u>hands</u> on her so she can get well and live.”
5:24	So <u>Jesus</u> went with him, and a large <u>crowd</u> was following and <u>pressing</u> against Him.
25	A <u>woman</u> suffering from bleeding for 12 years 26 had <u>endured</u> <u>much</u> under many doctors. <u>She</u> had <u>spent</u> <u>everything</u> she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, <u>she</u> became worse. 27 Having heard about Jesus, <u>she</u> came behind Him in the crowd and <u>touched</u> His robe.
Mk 5:	28 For <u>she</u> said, “If I can just <u>touch</u> His <u>robes</u> , I’ll be made well!”
29	Instantly her <u>flow</u> of blood <u>ceased</u> .

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and she sensed in her body that she was cured of her affliction.

5:30 At once Jesus realized in Himself that power had gone out from Him.
He turned around in the **crowd**
and said, “Who touched My robes?”

5:31 His **disciples** said to Him, “You see the crowd pressing against You,
and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”

32 So He was looking around to see who had done this.

33 Then the **woman**, knowing what had happened to her,
came with fear and trembling,
fell down before Him,
and told Him the whole truth.

34 “Daughter,” He said to her, “your faith has made you well.
Go in peace
and be free, from your affliction.”

5:35 While He was still speaking,
people came from the synagogue leader’s house
and said, “Your **daughter** is dead. Why bother the Teacher anymore?”

5:36 But when Jesus overheard what was said,
He told the synagogue **leader**, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”

37 He did not let anyone accompany Him except **Peter, James, and John**, James’s brother. **38** They came to the leader’s house,
and He saw a commotion—people weeping
and wailing loudly.

39 He went in
and said to them, “Why are you making a commotion
and weeping?
The child is not dead but asleep.”

5:40 They started laughing at Him,
but He put them all outside.
He took the child’s **father, mother,** and **those** who were with Him,
and entered the place where the child was.

41 Then He took the **child** by the hand
and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*”
(which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).

42 Immediately the **girl** got up
and began to walk. (She was 12 years old.)

At this they were utterly astounded.

43 Then He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this
and said that **she** should be given something to eat.

Homework: Do a comparative study with other Bible books:

Compare and contrast the *other* 2 Gospel accounts of Jesus’ 2 miracles (the Daughter and the Woman)—**Matthew 9:18-26** and **Luke 8:40-56**. What details are *unique* to each Gospel? *Why?* For example, what does Dr. Luke *add* or *leave out* of his account? And *why?*

Compare Jesus’ Raising of Jairus’s Daughter in **Luke 8:40-56** to Peter’s Raising of Dorcas in **Acts 9:36-41**—*both* were written by Dr. Luke! What elements do the miracles have in common?

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Lesson 6: Making Bible Charts of a Section of Scripture (made up of units)

Review of our Bible Study Tools:

The 4 basic steps to study the Bible:		8 Question Words:
1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who? What? When? Where? Which? How?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Why?
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	So what?
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?	
2 paths to take to those 4 Steps in Bible Study:		
Analysis:	Taking the text apart	[Like taking apart a watch or the motor of a car]
Synthesis:	Putting the text together	[Like putting together a puzzle or a toy model]
Some key relationships based on key words in the Biblical text that help do analysis and synthesis:		
Question→Answer:	8 question words +	Cause→Effect : “so, so that”
Interjection	“behold, look”	Contrast: “but, yet”
Result, Purpose:	“so, so that”	Comparison: “like, as”
Reason:	“because, since, for”	Condition: “if”
Series, List:	“and, then”	Conclusion: “therefore, then”
How Biblical words, sentences, and paragraphs fit together:		
Who/What is acting, doing?	[Subject]	[God]
What action is going on?	[Verb]	[created]
Who/What receives the action?	[Object]	[the heavens and the earth]
What else is going on?	[Descriptive words]	[in the beginning]

Assignment: Study this short, event in **Mark 6:1-2** using all of our Bible Study tools so far:

Mark 6:1 He went away from there and came to His hometown, and His disciples followed Him. **2** When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished. “Where did this man get these things?” they said. “What is this wisdom given to Him, and how are these miracles performed by His hands?” **3** Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t His sisters here with us?” So they were offended by Him. **4** Then Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his household.” **5** So He was not able to do any miracles, there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. **6** And He was amazed at their unbelief.

Make your own chart of this section (using the blank page provided) of the 4 units in this section of **Mark’s Gospel: Mk 4:35-6:6**—Storm (**Mk 4:35-41**), Demonized Man (**5:1-20**), Woman and Daughter (**5:21-43**) and Nazareth (**Mk 6:1-6**). Use my model of 3 units below *only* as a guide.

A Title for this Section of a Bible Book: <i>Jesus: Love Him or Lose Him!</i> Mark 4:35-5:43		
A Title for Each Event:		
Storm: “ <i>Be still!</i> ”	Demons: “ <i>Come out!</i> ”	Woman: “ <i>Go in peace!</i> ” Daughter: “ <i>Get up!</i> ”
Bible passage for each event:		
Mk 4:35-41	Mk 5:1-20	Mk 5:21-43
Comparisons: Where?		
<i>On the Sea of Galilee</i>	<i>By the Sea of Galilee</i>	<i>Near the Sea of Galilee</i>
Contrasts: Fear or Faith?		
<i>Jesus’ disciples</i>	<i>Demoniac, people</i>	<i>Jairus, woman, mourners</i>
Interpretation: Why: For this entire section: <i>Is there anything Jesus cannot do?</i>		
Application: So What: For this entire section: <i>Is there anything Jesus cannot do in my life?</i>		

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Lesson 7: Studying a Book of the Bible, chapter by chapter: Jonah

Review:

The 4 basic steps to study the Bible:		8 Question Words:
1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who? What? When? Where? Which? How?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Why?
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	So what?
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?	

Jonah 1:1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: **2** “Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because their wickedness has confronted Me.” **3** However, Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the LORD’s presence. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish, from the LORD’s presence.

4 Then the LORD hurled a violent wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break apart. **5** The sailors were afraid, and each cried out to his god. They threw the ship’s cargo into the sea to lighten the load. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down to the lowest part of the vessel and had stretched out and fallen into a deep sleep.

6 The captain approached him and said, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up! Call to your god. Maybe this god will consider us, and we won’t perish.”

7 “Come on!” the sailors said to each other. “Let’s cast lots. Then we’ll know who is to blame for this trouble we’re in.” So they cast lots, and the lot singled out Jonah. **8** Then they said to him, “Tell us who is to blame for this trouble we’re in. What is your business and where are you from? What is your country and what people are you from?”

9 He answered them, “I’m a Hebrew. I worship Yahweh, the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

10 Then the men were even more afraid and said to him, “What is this you’ve done?” The men knew he was fleeing from the LORD’s presence, because he had told them. **11** So they said to him, “What should we do to you to calm this sea that’s against us?” For the sea was getting worse and worse.

12 He answered them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea so it may quiet down for you, for I know that I’m to blame for this violent storm that is against you.” **13** Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they couldn’t because the sea was raging against them more and more.

14 So they called out to the LORD: “Please, Yahweh, don’t let us perish because of this man’s life, and don’t charge us with innocent blood! For You, Yahweh, have done just as You pleased.” **15** Then they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. **16** The men feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

17 Now the LORD had appointed a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the fish 3 days and 3 nights.

Observation Questions:

- 1. Who?** Who are the *main* characters in this chapter?
- 2. What?** What words or phrases are *repeated* throughout this chapter?
- 3. When?** *When* did Jonah live during Israel’s history? *Why* is that important?
- 4. Where?** Verses 2-3 mention 3 cities. What is so important about those cities to the story of Jonah? (You will need a map of the Bible world at that time in the OT to answer this)
- 5. Contrasts?** What are some contrasts between Jonah and the sailors? Between Jonah and the LORD?
- 6. Humor? Irony?** What are some examples of humor and irony in this chapter?

Interpretation Question: What is the author teaching us in this chapter?

Application Question: How can we apply what this chapter teaches in our lives?

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Lesson 8: Studying Old Testament [OT] Hebrew Poetry in Psalm 1 and Jonah 2

Jonah 2:2-9 introduces us to OT Hebrew poetry (**Jonah 2:1, 10** are written in prose). A lot of English poetry rhymes with similar *sounds*. Hebrew poetry “rhymes” with similar *ideas*.

There are 3 basic kinds of “rhyming” ideas in OT poetry:

A. Synonymous Poetry: 2+ lines of poetry have parallel or repeated ideas

Ps 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not survive the judgment,
and sinners will not be in the community of the righteous.

B. Antithetical Poetry: 2+ lines of poetry have opposite or contrasting ideas

Ps. 1:6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

C. Synthetic Poetry: 2+ lines of poetry amplify or expand an idea

Ps. 1:1 How happy is the man
who does not follow the advice of the wicked
or take the path of sinners
or join a group of mockers!

NOTE: Sometimes more than one kind of poetry is found in a stanza of poetry:

Ps 1:3 He is like a tree planted beside streams of water [Both synonymous and synthetic:]
that bears its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

There are 2 major literary devices used in OT Hebrew Poetry are:

Simile: A comparison using “like” or “as”

Ps. 1:4 The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Metaphor: A direct comparison between 2 things

Prov. 18:10 The name of Yahweh is a strong tower;
the righteous run to it and are protected.

Now, with these OT Hebrew Poetry ideas and devices, let’s study **Jonah 2:**

Jonah 2:1 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish: [Prose]

2:2 I called to the LORD in my distress, and He answered me. **Ps 18:4-6; 120:1**
I cried out for help in the belly of Sheol; You heard my voice.

3 You threw me into the depths, **Ps. 69:1-2, 14-15**
into the heart of the seas,
and the current overcame me.
All Your breakers and Your billows swept over me. **Ps 42:7**

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4	But I said: I have been banished from Your sight, yet I will look once more toward Your holy temple.	Ps. 31:22-33 Ps 5:7; 138:2
5	The waters engulfed me up to the neck; the watery depths overcame me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.	Ps. 69:1-2 Ps. 18:4-5 Ps. 116:3
6	I sank to the foundations of the mountains; the earth with its prison bars closed behind me forever! But You raised my life from the Pit, LORD my God!	Job 38:8-10 Job 33:28; Ps. 30:3; 86:13
7	As my life was fading away, I remembered Yahweh. My prayer came to You, to Your holy temple.	Ps. 77:10-11 Ps. 11:4; 88:2
8	Those who cling to worthless idols forsake faithful love,	Ps. 31:6
9	but as for me, I will sacrifice to You with a voice of thanksgiving. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation is from the LORD!	Ps 26:7; 50:14, 23 Ps. 22:25; 116:14, 18 Ps. 3:8; Is 45:16-17

Jonah 2:10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. [Prose]

Assignment:

1. For each of the poetic stanzas (boxes above), name the type(s) of OT poetry.
2. Use our 4 steps of Bible Study to focus on God, Jonah, and their relationship.
3. What do the cross references to the other OT books tell us about Jonah and his knowledge of God's Word?
4. Name at least 2 miracles in Jonah 2

Frank's Notes:

In the Bible, God's Judgments on believers and unbelievers are different:

On unbelievers, God's judgment is *punishment* and *retribution*: Purposes: Justice/Evangelism

Jonah 1:2; 3:1-4

On believers, God's judgment is *discipline* and *correction*: Purpose: Mercy/Grace/Discipleship

Jonah 1:17; 2:10

God's judgment can also meted out in different ways:

Active: **Gen 7** (God sends Flood 40 days)

Fast: **Gen 19** (Short warning before fire falls)

Passive: **Rom 1:24,26,28** (God "lets them go")

Slow: **Gen 6** (Long warning of 120 years)

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Lesson 9: Using all the tools in our Bible Study Tool Box that we've learn up until now!

Bible Study Tool Box:

The 4 basic steps to study the Bible:		8 Question Words:	
1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who?	What? When? Where? Which? How?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Why?	
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	So what?	
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?		
2 paths to take to those 4 Steps in Bible Study:			
Analysis:	Taking the text apart	[Like taking apart a watch or the motor of a car]	
Synthesis:	Putting the text together	[Like putting together a puzzle or a toy model]	
Some key relationships based on key words in the Biblical text that help do analysis and synthesis:			
Question→Answer:	8 question words +	Cause→Effect :	“so, so that”
Interjection	“behold, look”	Contrast:	“but, yet”
Result, Purpose:	“so, so that”	Comparison:	“like, as”
Reason:	“because, since, for”	Condition:	“if”
Series, List:	“and, then”	Conclusion:	“therefore, then”
How Biblical words, sentences, and paragraphs fit together:			
Who/What is acting, doing?	[Subject]	[God]	
What action is going on?	[Verb]	[created]	
Who/What receives the action?	[Object]	[the heavens and the earth]	
What else is going on?	[Descriptive words]	[in the beginning]	

Jonah 3:1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a 2nd time: **2** “Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you.” **3** So Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the LORD’s command. Now Nineveh was an extremely large city, a 3-day walk. **4** Jonah set out on the 1st day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, “In 40 days Nineveh will be demolished!” **5** The men of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast and dressed in sackcloth—from the greatest of them to the least.

3:6 When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7** Then he issued a decree in Nineveh: By order of the king and his nobles: No man or beast, herd or flock, is to taste anything at all. They must not eat or drink water. **8** Furthermore, both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth, and everyone must call out earnestly to God. Each must turn from his evil ways and from the violence he is doing. **9** Who knows? God may turn and relent; He may turn from His burning anger so that we will not perish.

3:10 Then God saw their actions—that they had turned from their evil ways—so God relented from the disaster He had threatened to do to them. And He did not do it.

Assignment:

Divide into small groups of 3-4. Choose 2 “tools” from our Bible Study Tool Box (above) and use them to study **Jonah 3**. Use those same tools to study **Jonah 1-2**. Be prepared to share with the class: Which 2 tools you used, why you chose those 2 tools, and one discovery you made using each tool. For example:

1. “Our team picked Observation as a Bible Study Tool. We picked it because it’s easier! ☺ Using Observation, we observed in all 3 chapters, people pray to God when they think they’re going to die: In **Jonah 1** the pagan sailors pray; in **Jonah 2**, Jonah prays; and in **Jonah 3**, the people of Nineveh pray.”

2. “Our teamed picked Application as a Bible Study Tool. We picked it because we like it! ☺ Using Application, we applied the lesson of God’s grace to Nineveh to ourselves. Like those people, when we turn to God in faith and repentance, He will show us grace and mercy too!”

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Theological Word Study: Repentance

The words “repent” or “repentance” are important Bible words used in *both* the Hebrew language in the OT and in the Greek language in the NT. Here in **Jonah 3**, *both* God and people of Ninevah “repent” (the Hebrew word), but for different reasons:

When used of people: to repent of our sins means to change our minds and change our actions. For us, repentance is normally accompanied by faith. In **Jonah 3**, when Jonah finally announced God’s impending judgment, the people of Nineveh believed God’s message and repented—their faith was accompanied by changing their minds and then changing their wicked ways.

When used of God: Because God is Perfect and has no sins, God repents by changing His mind or His decision. This means God changes His course of action that He has revealed to us. In **Jonah 3**, God repented—He did *not* carry out the judgment He had told Jonah to proclaim against the people of Nineveh. From *our* point of view, God’s response to the people of Ninevah’s faith and repentance is both mysterious and gracious—He changed His course of action and did not judge them. Of course, because God knows *all* things, He knew ahead of time the chain of events and what He would do. But, the people did *not* know God’s course of action ahead of time. God’s promised judgment was just as real and true as His change of action. We don’t understand how these fit together, but *both* are true!

Much Christian preaching and witnessing today emphasizes the emotional and experiential side of repentance. Our emotions are important, but when we repent, our change of mind and change of action is even more important. And most important of all, is the *faith* that goes *with* repentance in **Jonah 3**.

The Miracles in Jonah:

Much has been said about the miracles in the **Book of Jonah**, especially the great fish swallowing Jonah alive and vomiting Jonah on dry land after 3 days. There are *other* great miracles in Jonah too: The storm being stilled instantly. The salvation of the sailors. The worm killing the plant. But no miracle in this book is as great as the repentance and salvation of an entire nation. To our knowledge, this may be the *only* time in history when God’s salvation came on this grand scale or magnitude to an entire nation!

Inductive Bible Study: How to Study the Bible

Lesson 10: Correlation of the whole Book of Jonah

4 Basic Steps in Bible Study:

1. Observation:	What does it say?	Who? What? When? Where? Which? How?
2. Interpretation:	What does it mean?	Why?
3. Application:	What difference does it make?	So what?
4. Correlation:	How does it fit together?	

In this lesson, we use **Step 4: Correlation** to fit the **Book of Jonah** together using **Step 3: Interpretation**, all based on **Step 1: Observation!**

Jonah 4:1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. **2** He prayed to the LORD: “Please, LORD, isn’t this what I said while I was still in my own country? That’s why I fled toward Tarshish in the 1st place. I knew that You are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to become angry, rich in faithful love, and One who relents from sending disaster. **3** And now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

4 The LORD asked, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

5 Jonah left the city and sat down east of it. He made himself a shelter there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. **6** Then the LORD God appointed a plant, and it grew up to provide shade over Jonah’s head to ease his discomfort. Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant. **7** When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, and it withered.

8 As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun beat down so much on Jonah’s head that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, “It’s better for me to die than to live.”

9 Then God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

“Yes,” he replied. “It is right. I’m angry enough to die!”

10 So the LORD said, “You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. **11** Should I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than 120,000 people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?”

Assignment:

Answer the question assigned to your small group. Be ready to share 1 or 2 of your answers:

1. In **Jonah 4**, what is God like? What does **Jonah 1-3** add to this picture of God?
2. In **Jonah 4**, what is Jonah like? What does **Jonah 1-3** add to this picture of Jonah?
3. Give some examples of *irony* in **Jonah 4**. List *other* examples of irony in **Jonah 1-3**.
4. Compare **Jonah 4** to **Jonah 1-3**. Who or what *obeys* or *disobeys* God? And *why*?
5. Compare **Jonah 4** (and **Jonah 1-3**) to the rest of *the OT*. Who or what is like or unlike Jonah?
6. Compare **Jonah 4** (and **Jonah 1-3**) to *the NT*. Who or what is like or unlike Jonah?
7. **Application:** Who or what is like God *today*? Who or what is like Jonah *today*?

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Lesson 11: Application

4 Basic Steps in Bible Study:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Observation: What does it say? | Who? What? When? Where? Which? How? |
| 2. Interpretation: What does it mean? | Why? |
| 3. Application: What difference does it make? | So what? |
| 4. Correlation: How does it fit together? | |

Success in Steps 1, 2, and 4 is nothing *without* **Step 3—Application!** Application may be the *hardest* step, because Application without *obedience* is worthless!

Correct *Application* must be based on Correct *Interpretation*:

Let *context* be your guide: OT/NT? Israel/Church? Prose/Poetry/Prophecy/Proverb/Promise?

3 Famous Quotes:

“The least initial deviation from the truth results in deviation 1,000-fold later on.” Aristotle
“In Evangelicalism, more heresy is taught by application than by interpretation.” Howard Hendricks
“It’s easy to apply the Bible to *others*. The hard part is applying it to *ourselves!*” Frank Carmical

Some examples of application from the OT:

Gen 39: 3 steps to deal with temptation: Refuse/Resist/Run!

Lev 7:11-15 How to express our gratitude to God: Give Him a thanksgiving offering!

Prov 22:6 What will be the result of good child training and discipline? “When he is old...”

An example from the NT:

Mt 5:48 “Be *perfect* as your Heavenly Father is *perfect*”

3 errors to avoid in applying Mt 5:48 =

1. Lay a guilt trip on everybody: Why aren’t *you* sinlessly perfect?
2. “Nobody’s *ever* going to be perfect, so forget about being perfect!
3. Mis-using the Greek language: “The word ‘perfect’ in Greek *also* means ‘Mature!’”

Applying Mt 5:48 to ourselves the *right* way =

1. Think about what perfection is: Is it just a *lack* of evil or *also* the quality of good? God is *both* sinless *and* holy! To be like God is not *just* to be without sin, but *also* to be holy!
2. Is there any situation or circumstance when I can be as perfect as God is? Sure! Every day! (**Gal 2:20** At any moment ,when I think or act or speak as Christ would by the power of the Holy Spirit in me, I am obeying **Mt 5:48!**)

A Few Suggestions for Personal Application:

1. Pray before you read or study the Bible and ask God to teach you thru His Spirit.
2. After your Bible reading or study, ask yourself these questions:

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- a. What is God teaching me about *Himself* and my relationship with Him?
 - b. What is God teaching me about *myself* and my relationship with myself?
 - c. What is God teaching me about *others* and my relationship with them (Christians or not)?
 - d. Keep going: What is God teaching me about my family, my money, ...?
3. Write a plan of action: How should my life *change* based on what I've learned?
- a. Is there a *sin* I should confess/forsake/get help with? What? When?
 - b. Is there a *command* I should obey? Which one? What's stopping me?
 - c. Is there a *truth* I should remember/share with others? What? Who?
 - d. Is there an *act* of service or worship I should do? Where? What time?
 - e. Is there a *character trait/habit* I should develop? How?