

# BIBLIOLOGY 27 – HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE PART 4

## **INTRODUCTION**

Colossians 3:15-16 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

The Bible is the authoritative Word of God in all aspects of our lives. The Bible is the single source for our worldview and principles of life. We believe that the original autographs are perfect in form and function. We believe that we have an accurate representation of the original autographs in the Greek and Hebrew Bibles. We understand that the translations are good and useful for study, but how do we study?

## **REVIEW**

We are settling into the Biblically mandated method for studying the Bible. We are you use the Literal, Grammatical, Historical approach (LGH). This approach respects the text's natural reading flow, follows linguistic rules, and preserves the historical setting while being mindful of the culture. It ensures that the author's intended meaning and the audience's understanding are maintained.

We also saw that we need to maintain a persistent attitude in Bible Study:

## **LGH IN PRACTICE**

Attitudes when we approach Bible study:

- Prayer –
- Respect for the Word of God.
- Desire to learn, not prove – in other words we learn Inductively
  - a. Seek Information
  - b. Build toward principles or broader understanding
  - c. Premise
- Our goal is to be able to maximize our Bible study using only a Bible and a Notebook. How far can we get using only those two tools (yes, a notebook is a tool for Bible study)?
  - We can establish the core doctrines of the Faith.
  - We can understand the character, attributes, and plan of God.
  - We can learn and perceive the flow of history according to God's perspective.
  - Evangelize Effectively
  - We can become wise in this life by being reminded of the truth of God in the whole counsel of God's Word
- Understand our Limitations – Most of us will use a Bible and a notebook
- Reduction of Presupposition - The student must eliminate as many presuppositions as possible
- Three Questions we seek to answer (Not every study will answer all three questions).
  - What does this passage teach me about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit?
  - Is there a universal principle that I can understand from this passage?
  - Does this challenge my theology? Do I need to change my mind?

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## LGH IN PRACTICE

We left off with a suggestion of studying the Hebrew Narrative. Let's give some guides and rules to read the Hebrew Narrative (Genesis – Esther), the first 17 books of the Old Testament.

Narrative study is not like an Epistle study but rules are similar. In keeping with the LGH the goal is to gain data and make third-person observations. The objective is **not to find application** but to make observations concerning the character and activity of God. We can also learn about the people in Scripture. Who they are, and we can make observations about their character, behavior, and choices.

Literal – This is written as history, we take it as history. One of the more challenging aspects for new believers and skeptics is reading about supernatural activities and understanding them as literal.

As we have demonstrated in our Apologetics class we believe that the creation account is literal and scientific observation reinforce the creation account, the relatively young age of the earth and universe, the uniqueness of each kind of life, and the extra special uniqueness of humanity (made in the image of God).

From there we have the account of amazingly long life spans, the worldwide universal flood account, the Tower of Babel, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus account (12 plagues and crossing of the sea on dry ground), the activity of God in the wilderness (manna, water from rocks, supernatural victory over powerful enemies), The account of the Judges, David and Goliath, amazing feats by prophets, and Jonah being swallowed by a great fish and surviving the ordeal to tell the tale.

Many people discount these accounts as children's stories, fables, or lore. Even some people who believe the Bible to be "the Word of God" do not believe these to be literal accounts.

The response is simple, if you can believe God created all things out of nothing, then any of these smaller accounts is easy for Him (Genesis 18:1-14).

In taking these events as literal, we do not apply them to ourselves thinking that we will do similar or fantastical things too. Our responsibility is to observe, understand them literally as indicated, and learn about the character and attributes of God. We are building theology.

There are events that took place, and the content is about the people and nations that are addressed. Some try to take these statements as universal, applying them to all people (or believers) at all times. Let's review some of these verses and interpret them literally.

Genesis 15:1 – This promise is made to Abraham, the context goes back to Genesis 12 and more recently in Genesis 14 where Abraham defeated the evil kings who raided Sodom and kidnapped Lot and many others. The chapter breaks are not native to the text and this is God's response to Abraham after the victory. God being a shield is repeated in the Hebrew Text (Deuteronomy 33:29; 2 Samuel 22:3,31,36; Psalm 115). This is about the protection of Israel.

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2 Chronicles 7:13-14 – As we study, we should have a greater context, and as we read and study the text, we are making observations. God is speaking to Solomon and this applies National Israel. If we back up to 7:11 and read through verse 22, the specificity of Israel and Jerusalem, and the Temple become clear. In fact, the warning in verses 19-22 come to fruition in the Babylonian captivity and in the judgment of 70 AD. This is not to the church, and it is not to America or any other nation.

**Grammatical** – The language used is Hebrew. It follows the same rules as all languages. Rules of consistency and understandability (Vocabulary, Syntax, Sentence Structure, Verb Tense (or Aspect), and Subject-Verb agreement).

**Verbs Tell the Style:** Hebrew (the original language of Genesis) has different ways of using verbs depending on the writing style.

**Narrative Verb Style:** This tells a sequence of events: "God created... then He said... then it happened." It uses a special verb chain called "waw-consecutive" (or "preterite" form), which connects actions in a timeline, like "and then" in English. This is common in historical accounts.

**Poetry Verb Style:** This focuses on rhythm, repetition, and ideas (like Psalms or songs), with fewer sequential verbs and more balanced phrases (parallelism, chiasm, etc.). Verbs here are often not chained in a timeline.

**Compare Known Examples:** Bible passages everyone agrees are either narrative (e.g., stories in Exodus or Judges) or poetry (e.g., songs in those same books).

Verbs in 522 Old Testament texts (about 10,000 verbs total).

In narratives: Around 52% of verbs are in that sequential "waw-consecutive" form.

In poetry: Only about 4% use it—much less chaining, more artistic flair.

If Genesis 1–11 was poetry, it would read more like a symbolic song. But its grammar matches history books in the Bible, it should be taken as literal events.

**Genesis:** In Genesis 1:1–2:3, the verbs are heavily sequential (like narratives counterparts).

Examples include repeated phrases like "And God said... And there was evening and morning..." which chain events day by day.

This pattern holds through Genesis 1–11, with over 300 waw-consecutive verbs in total, linking creation to the genealogies and Flood story.

Exodus 3:6 – I am the God of you father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Notice the present tense use of “am.” This indicates that God exists and that Moses’ Father, and his patriarchs are not dead but alive. Jesus quotes this passage to refute the Sadducees lack of understanding of the Resurrection (Matthew 22:31-32).

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Historical – This is the one area where exegetes seem to lack to most focus, or understanding of how to implement.

The Hebrew Narrative was not written to us, but it was written for us. This section was written **to Israel** in various stages of her development. The first five books were written to the Second Generation of Israelites after coming out of Egypt. This information must be understood to fully comprehend what is being recorded and instructed.

Our responsibility is to learn about God through the record of history. We are a fly on the wall of history; we are investigative reporters seeking to understand.

Read the selected section multiple times. Then we record Who, Where, When, What happened, Why did it happen, and What are the consequences?

We list the characters in the narrative and identify attributes. If there is dialogue, summarize the content. Do not infer consequences, condemnation, or condonement, it must be detailed in the greater context. Finally, we observe the historical arc of God's plan.

Judges 6-8 Gideon

**Who:** Primary characters include YHWH (God), Gideon (son of Joash, from tribe of Manasseh); Israelites; Midianites, Amalekites; Joash (Gideon's father); Men of Succoth and Penuel.

Attributes: YHWH is gracious, pitying, powerful, providing signs and victory; Gideon starts fearful but grows bold; Midianites are numerous and fearful via divine intervention.

**Where:** Land of Israel, including Ophrah (Gideon's home), Jezreel valley, Jordan River,

**When:** During the Judges period, after Israel's settlement in Canaan; Midianite oppression lasts 7 years before Gideon's call.

**What Happened:** Israel does evil by serving Baals and Ashtaroah, leading YHWH to deliver them to Midianites who ravage crops and livestock, forcing Israelites into caves. Israel cries out; YHWH sends a prophet rebuking idolatry, then the Angel of the Lord calls Gideon as deliverer. Gideon offers a meal consumed by fire (first sign), tears down Baal's altar and Asherah pole, builds YHWH's altar, rallying Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali. Gideon seeks fleece signs (dew on fleece only, then ground only) to confirm calling. YHWH reduces Gideon's 32,000 troops to 300 via fear dismissal and water-lapping test. The 300 surround Midianite camp at night, blow trumpets, break jars revealing torches, shout; Midianites panic and flee, slaying each other. Gideon summons Ephraim to seize Jordan fords, capturing princes Oreb and Zeeb. Ephraim confronts Gideon for not calling them initially; Gideon diplomatically praises their greater role, averting conflict. Gideon pursues remaining 15,000 Midianites with 300, denied bread by Succoth and Penuel; captures and kills Zebah/Zalmunna after they admit killing his brothers; punishes Succoth and Penuel.

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**Why It Happened:** Israel's idolatry and immorality provoke YHWH's discipline via Midianite oppression; upon their groaning, YHWH raises Gideon out of pity to deliver, ensuring victory reflects divine power, not human strength.

**Consequences:** Midian subdued; Gideon takes kings' crescent ornaments; Israel gains relief from oppression.

**Historical Arc of God's Plan:** This fits the recurring Judges cycle (2:11-23): Israel's idolatry, oppression, cry for help, deliverance via judge, temporary faithfulness, then relapse after judge's death—demonstrating YHWH's covenant loyalty to Abraham's descendants despite their stubborn ways, pointing toward need for a permanent king/deliverer.

**Teachings About God:** Reveals YHWH's grace in providing multiple signs (consumed offering, fleece, dream) to alleviate fear and confirm calling, even for doubtful servants; His sovereignty in granting victory through weakness (300 vs. 135,000) to prevent self-glory goes to Him; pity and compassion for groaning people, raising deliverers. Prefigures Jesus as ultimate Deliverer for Israel's sin cycle and Messiah King who will reign forever more, but we would be jumping ahead a little too much.