

Inductive Bible Study Method for Narratives

- **God has spoken to man in the Bible, which is His inspired, inerrant, understandable and authoritative word!**

Basic Principles of Bible Study

1. Literal Principle: **Read the Bible in its literal, normal and natural sense.**
2. Context Principle: **Read the Bible in context.**
3. Faith Principle: **Read the Bible with faith.**

Principles for Interpreting Narratives

- Narratives are stories that are descriptions of actual or fictional events.

1. **Scripture determines the factual nature of the narrative.** Biblical narratives describe actual events unless the author or the context indicates that the narrative is fictitious, that it is a parable, a fable or symbolism.
2. **Scripture determines the significance, teaching and truth taught in narratives.**
 - a. Historical narratives were written to serve as examples for our instruction, encouragement and admonition (Rom 15:4 & 1 Cor 10:11).
 - b. Historical narratives are descriptive rather than prescriptive in nature.
 - c. Historical narratives record what happened, often without any expression of approval or disapproval.
 - d. Historical narratives have significance as building blocks in God's progressive revelation.
 - e. Historical narratives often teach a single lesson or timeless truth.
3. **Scripture determines the timeless truths and points of comparison in parables and other fictitious stories.** Parables and fictitious stories usually illustrate a single point or teach a single time truth.

Study Outline for Narratives

I. **Observation**

- A. Read the whole narrative, story or parable.
- B. Look at the text and context of the narrative to determine whether it describes actual or fictional events. Remember the principle that Biblical stories describe actual events unless the author or the context indicates that the story is fictitious.
- C. Look for clues to the theme, purpose and central teaching of the narrative, story or parable.
 - 1) These clues often are seen in the repetition of key words or phrases, in pivotal questions or in comparisons of contrasting responses.
 - 2) Look at the context of the narrative. The central teaching or point is often stated in introductions, conclusions or surrounding passages.
 - 3) Ask questions about the narrative (like who, when, where, what and how) that help you understand the story and point of the narrative. Avoid curiosity questions about details of the narrative that are not significant to the purpose of the narrative.
- D. If it is a historical narrative, seek to identify the historical significance of the narrative.
- E. Seek to identify the primary lesson or timeless truth taught by the narrative or story.

II. **Interpretation**

- A. Summarize the significance of historical narrative.
- B. Summarize the central point or timeless truth taught by the narrative.
- C. Compare your summary to other Scriptures.

III. **Application**

- A. State the timeless truth or central point in the present tense and apply it to your life and situation.
- B. Look at the examples in the narrative and see how they apply to your life today.

Online Bible Study Sites

StudyLight.org; Bible.org; biblegateway.com; blueletterbible.org