



How to Study the Bible

The Study of a Chapter

- I. APPLY THE EARLIER PRINCIPLES
- II. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE CHAPTER
 - A. Read the Chapter Several Times
 - B. Write a One-Paragraph Summary
- III. BREAKDOWN OF THE CHAPTER
 - A. Organize the Chapter
 1. Divide the chapter into paragraphs and give each paragraph a title.
 - a. Determine paragraphs according to content. This involves subjective decisions and you need not worry about being perfectly correct.
 - b. If one title is a phrase, they should all be phrases. If one is a sentence, that should be the form of all.
 - c. Make the titles parallel in thought so that when read together they make sense. They need to logically take you through the chapter.
 2. Give the chapter a title. Make it one that points to the main theme of the chapter and ties in to the paragraph titles.
 - a. It is important that the chapter title ties in with the paragraph titles. This brings the entire chapter together.
 - b. Some chapters change subjects quite a bit and cause great difficulty when assigning a title. Some of the chapters in the gospels are like this. In these cases, it is best to keep the title very general, for instance, *Christ's Further Work in Galilee*.
 3. Write out the theme of this chapter. This should be one sentence that describes the main idea of the chapter and its relationship to the parts.
 4. Look for natural divisions in the text.
 - a. This can be shown by repeated words or phrases (Psalm 107; Amos 1-2; Genesis 1).
 - b. This can be done by variation in wording (Psalm 62).
 - (1) *My soul waiteth upon God* (Psalm 62:1) versus *My soul, wait thou only upon God* (Psalm 62:5).
 - (2) *I shall not be greatly moved* (Psalm 62:2) versus *I shall not be moved* (Psalm 62:6).
 - c. This can be shown by a change of subject (Mark 5).
 - d. This can be done by change in people, places or chronology.
 - (1) Genesis 19
 - a) At even (Genesis 19:1)
 - b) Before they lay down (Genesis 19:4)
 - c) When the morning arose (Genesis 19:15)



- (2) Numbers 28-29
 - a) Day by day (Numbers 28:3)
 - b) Sabbath day (Numbers 28:9)
 - c) Beginnings of your months (Numbers 28:11)
 - d) First month (Numbers 28:16-17)
 - e) Seventh month
 - i) First day (Numbers 29:1)
 - ii) Tenth day (Numbers 29:7)
 - iii) Fifteenth day (Numbers 29:12)
5. Look for natural unity in the text.
 - a. This can be shown by repetition of words or phrases (Psalm 29).
 - (1) The voice of the Lord is upon the waters (Psalm 29:3).
 - (2) The voice of the Lord is powerful (Psalm 29:4).
 - (3) The voice of the Lord is full of majesty (Psalm 29:4).
 - (4) The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars (Psalm 29:5).
 - (5) The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire (Psalm 29:7).
 - (6) The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness (Psalm 29:8).
 - (7) The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve (Psalm 29:9).
 - b. Are the divisions part of a larger unity (Mark 5)?
 - (1) A man without hope because of devils (Mark 5:1-20)
 - (2) A woman without hope because of disease (Mark 5:25-34)
 - (3) A family without hope because of death (Mark 5:22-24; 35-43)
 - c. Look for a stated purpose (Psalm 107).
6. Look at the surrounding chapter(s) to see if there is a significance for the chapter's location (Isaiah 28-31).
7. In the case of an event, check the parallel passages for variations of the text (Mark 5:1-5; Matthew 8:28; Luke 8:26-27).

B. List Important Items in the Chapter

1. List the people who play roles and describe the part each plays. If there are long lists of names in a chapter, only list those who play a major role.
2. List the places found. Briefly describe their significance in the chapter. If there are long lists of places, limit your listing to those most important.
3. What objects play a special part? Comment on their importance.
4. What are the major relationships? They may be sequential, logical, chronological, cause-effect, etc. Describe each major relationship and comment on its importance to the theme and content of the chapter.
5. What types or figures are found? Explain their importance.

C. List the Keys to the Chapter.

1. Choose one or two verses that you believe to be the key verse(s). Defend your choice. Why do you believe this verse(s) to be the key verse(s)?
2. List key words or phrases. These are words or phrases that play a key role in the development of the chapter. Usually, they occur more than once in the chapter.



IV. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE STUDY OF A CHAPTER

A. What Does It Say

1. Interpretation must take into account the actual words of the passage including vocabulary, grammar and immediate context.
2. Define any unfamiliar words or words that are often misunderstood.

B. What Does It Mean

1. Doctrinal application
 - a. Any doctrinal passage must be studied as it relates to those same doctrines as taught throughout the entire Bible.
 - b. This involves scriptural comparison, doctrinal development and dispensational differences.
 - c. What titles or descriptions of God are found in this chapter? What does this chapter teach you about God?
 - d. The entire Bible points to Christ. Show how this chapter points to Him.
 - e. What are the major doctrinal teachings found in this chapter?
 - f. Does this chapter contain any prophecies? If so, describe them.
2. Historical application
 - a. Scripture must be studied in the context of its relationship to history, geography, and customs.
 - b. Does the chapter deal with the history of a person, nation, or place?
 - c. Does the passage teach about a custom during Bible times?

C. What Does It Mean to Me

1. What actions taken by people in this chapter can be used as good examples? How and in what ways should we follow them?
2. What bad examples can be found in this chapter? In what ways should we avoid following their example?
3. How can we apply the doctrinal lessons from the chapter to make changes in our practice?

V. PUTTING IT TO USE

A. Outline the Chapter

1. Include verse references with your points.
2. Go to at least the third level of subdivision (i.e., Roman Numerals, Capital Letters and Arabic Numerals).

B. Sermon or Lesson Ideas

1. Find at least three sermon or lesson ideas in the chapter.
2. Write a paragraph describing each idea.