


BE101- Bible Study Methods

SESSION 3 : INDUCTIVE METHOD- OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS AND
OBSERVATION PART 1



Inductive Method- Three Step Approach

- Observation
 - What do I see?
 - Gathering of information
- Interpretation
 - What does it mean?
 - Understanding the information compiled during observation
- Application
 - What does it mean for me?
 - Adjusting how I live my life to be better in line with Scripture

Observation – Roadmap

- Determine the genre (style of writing)
- Ask questions: who, what, when, where, and why?
- Things to look for:
 - Building blocks
 - Terms (key words)
 - Names: people and places
 - Structure
 - Grammatical structure
 - Literary structure
 - Atmosphere
 - Feeling or tone of the passage
 - Setting
 - Historical or cultural backgrounds
- How do I know what's important?

Literary Genres

- A literary genre is a writing style (narrative, poetry, exposition, etc.)
- Knowing what genre you are in is...
 - Helpful for asking the right types of questions
 - Necessary for correct interpretation

Literary Genres in the Bible

- Narrative
 - Stories: About events or people
 - Genesis through Ezra, Matthew through Acts
- Parable
 - A brief story that illustrates a moral principle
 - Often used by Jesus in the Gospels, but also seen elsewhere (2 Samuel 12:1-6)
- Exposition
 - Straightforward argument or explanation of a body of objective truth
 - Romans through Jude
- Poetry
 - Appeal to emotions
 - Typically use figurative language
 - Psalms, Song of Solomon, Job

Literary Genres in the Bible

- Wisdom Literature
 - Impart wisdom or instruction
 - Not always guarantees
 - Not always from God's perspective
 - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job
- Prophecy
 - God's message to a particular person or group
 - Typically calls out sin and warns about impending judgement
 - Often looks ahead to future events
 - Isaiah through Malachi
- Apocalyptic
 - Can be considered a subset of prophecy
 - Deals with cataclysmic events involving the end of the world
 - Revelation and portions of Daniel

What genre is this?

- What is the genre of the book as a whole?
- What is the genre of the specific passage?
 - Exposition within narrative (Paul's speech in Athens in Acts 17:22-31)
 - Narrative within narrative (Stephen's speech in Acts 7)
 - Parables
 - Poetry within narrative (Exodus 15:1-19)
 - And so on...

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Asking Questions – Who?

- Who to identify?
 - Who is mentioned in the text?
 - Who is the author?
 - Who is the audience?
- What does the text say about this person?
 - Titles – (e.g. Rahab, the harlot)
 - Associations – (e.g. Andrew, Peter's brother)
 - Descriptions- (David, a man after God's own heart)
- What does this person say?
- How does this person react to things?
- How do other people react to this person?
- Where else have we seen this person in the Bible?

Asking Questions- What?

- Narrative
 - What happens?
- Poetry
 - What's the subject?
 - What does the author say about the subject?
 - What metaphors are being used?
 - What emotions are evoked?
- Exposition:
 - What argument is the author trying to make?
 - What is the premise ("because", "since", "if this", etc.)?
 - What is the inference ("therefore", "then this")?
 - What is the conclusion ("therefore", "so then")
- Parable:
 - What is the moral of the story?

Asking Questions – When?

- For narrative: When did the events take place?
 - What time of day?
 - What comes before?
 - What comes after?
 - Word of caution: not all Scripture is ordered chronologically.
 - Look for temporal connecting words: immediately, the next day,
 - When does this happen, compared to other events in Scripture?
- When was the author writing?
 - Psalms- 1&2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles
 - Pauline Epistles – Acts
 - Prophets – 1&2 Kings, 2 Chronicles

Asking Questions- Where?

- For narrative: Where did the events take place?
 - What do we know about the culture or history of that place?
 - What is the geography like?
 - Which direction are the characters travelling?
 - How far away are locations?
- Where was the author writing from?
- Where is the audience located?

Asking Questions- Why?

- Why did the author include (or not include)...
 - Narrative: this story, this detail (Gospels)
 - Poetry: this metaphor,
 - Exposition: this statement
- Why is it ordered this way?
- Why does this person say (or not say) that?
- Why is this written in this genre? (Jesus' parables)
- "I don't fully understand this."

Final Things

- Homework:
 - Go through your passage and ask questions (who, what, when, where, why). Write down a list of things you observe about the text.
 - Brainstorming.
 - Email me your observations. Example saved on website.

- Next Class: Observation part 2