

Inductive Bible Study – Part 2

Interpretation

What does the passage mean?

TASK 1 – Write your own interpretive questions.

Ask questions starting with the “5 W’s and an H”: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. Here are some examples:

WHO is...

... is this about?

...accomplishing the action?

...benefiting from the action?

WHAT is the...

...meaning of this word?

...significance of this phrase?

...main point of this passage?

...relationship between these phrases?

WHEN...

... will these events happen?

...did this happen?

WHERE...

...did or will this happen?

...was this said?

...was this person from?

WHY...

...did the author choose this word?

...did the author not say _____?

...this person?

...at this time?

...will this happen?

HOW...

...will this happen?

...is it to be done?

...was this accomplished?

TASK 2 – Answer those questions

Use the following methods to answer your interpretive questions:

1. **USE THE CONTEXT.** Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author’s flow of thought through the whole chapter or book. Research the author and the audience of the book and when and why it was written.

2. **LOOK UP KEY WORDS.** Using a Bible dictionary can be very helpful in understanding key words. You can find the *Int’l Standard Bible Dictionary (ISBE)* online for free at net.bible.org/dictionary.php. You can use this dictionary to look up key words and people and places. You can also look up the original Greek or Hebrew word used very easily online. Simply go to www.biblestudytools.com, and type in the book and chapter you are studying (for example “Ephesians 2”) in the “search for:” box. Change the translation to the “*New American Standard*” translation and check the box titled “*Strong’s Numbers*.” All of Ephesians 2 will appear on the screen with most of the words highlighted in blue. Click on any of these will bring up a new screen that will explain the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament. Click on any of the other New Testament books (under the title “NAS Verse Count”) and get a display of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word.

3. STUDY CROSS REFERENCES. Cross-references are simply other passages in the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as we seek to understand our passage. You can find a few cross references in the margins of your Bible. If you want more cross-references, you can find an extended list at **net.bible.org**. In the top left of the screen under “*Display Bible*,” choose the book and chapter you are interested in, and then click “*Go*.” A new screen will appear with the NET Bible translation of the chapter you requested. Click the “*XRef*” tab at the top of the screen, and this will take you to an extensive list of cross references for every verse in the chapter based on the classic book *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*.

4. LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION. You can do this through reading the commentary in your Bible or the introduction pages to that particular book in the Bible. Other ways to look up background information is through commentaries. A free online commentary by Dr. Constable can be found at **soniclight.com**. Click “*Study Notes*” and select the book you are studying. You can also find commentaries at **biblegateway.com** in “*Additional Resources*.”

5. USE REST OF THE BIBLE. Sometimes other passages of scripture can bring light to the section of scripture we are studying. Use your concordance to look up other passages to give you insight on certain topics and themes in the chapter you are studying. Or look up verses and passages you are already familiar with that can bring more understanding.

Ephesians 2:1-10

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2**in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3**All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. **4**But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6**And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7**in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9**not by works, so that no one can boast. **10**For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Interpretive Questions:

Verse 1

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 2

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 3

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 4

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 5

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 6

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 7

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 8

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 9

- 1.
- 2.

Verse 10

- 1.
- 2.

Answer 5 Interpretive Questions to the best of your ability:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.