

# Tips for a Bible Study

*Do you know how to do your own study?*

*Here's a basic framework you can use for practically any study.*

There are a few steps that apply to almost any study, below. Make note of what questions come up during each step and of what you find out during each step.

- Locate the story in scripture, and look through about 10 chapters before it to gain a wider context (you don't necessarily have to study these, but familiarize yourself with what's going on).
- Then look at 2-4 chapters before the story begins in more detail to get the immediate context (read these carefully and make sure you follow the story or the reasoning that is being laid out).
- Now begin your study by getting an overview of the whole story or chapter. Read the chapter through so that you know what is being presented, start-to-finish. Also look through the next few chapters to see how the reasoning and events end.
- Next, we'll begin back at the beginning of the chapter or story and look at it in-depth.
  - Try to think of passages from other places in the Bible that are related to each verse. Read and study them as well.
  - Use your cross-references from verses in the chapter you're studying to find other parts of scripture that relate to it. Read and study these cross-references. Understand how they relate to the chapter you're studying.
  - Investigate any parts of the chapter that seem unusual, or that remind you of something else in scripture. Look into the details - what do people's names mean and why? Where are the places that things are happening? What is their history? Why is this or that detail important? How does this relate to our Hope? What do we learn from this person's example or teaching? etc.
  - Have you answered all your original questions from reading?
- Now re-read the chapter or story. Check your conclusions against the whole chapter or story. Make sure they fit with what else is being said. Make sure they agree with other parts of scripture that relate to the same subject. Imagine the story as it is happening.

This is a basic framework for any study.

*\*\*For some study topics (e.g. the atonement, or roles of brothers/sisters, or angels, etc.) there will be several shorter passages that we must go through this process with, but the process is still basically the same.*

*Once you've looked at a section in detail, and developed a conclusion on it, it's a good idea to check that conclusion against what other people have found, particularly well-studied individuals who understand the gospel correctly.*

*Often, their conclusions may differ from yours based on details of a different study on a different topic altogether. At first glance, the two topics are unrelated; only if you've done the other study will you see how it relates to this one.*

*An example of this is Nimrod. Studying Genesis 10 seems obvious, but a study of Daniel or Revelations will give us a much, much better idea of the system of things that Nimrod developed - this is the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, and the basis for "Babylon the great" in Revelations.*

*This underscores the importance of being a well-rounded scholar of the Bible. You can never fully understand one story or one topic without the rest. It's why the daily readings are so important, and it's why we should try not to pick and choose our favourite topics and leave the other ones to other people to study. Everything's related.*

*\*\*Once you've looked at a section in detail, it's always a good idea to **re-read** that section, with what you've learned in mind. This is where you make connections, and the story comes alive. It's also usually when all the little facts you've found out combine to make the lessons of the story much deeper and more powerful. It's the lessons of the story that are really valuable.*

*Often as you're re-reading a section, you'll find several more things you need to look into, or perhaps a problem with a conclusion you've come to. That's alright. It's great, actually. It means that re-reading the section has added significantly to what you've gained from the study.*

*\*\*The expression "He/she can't see the forest for the trees" is used to describe someone who's lost in the small details and isn't seeing the big picture. They've missed the point because they're only view of the topic is through a microscope. It's important to keep the big picture in mind all through a study. How do the details that we're looking at closely fit with the whole story. Much of the error related to scriptures comes from people who are studying in-depth, but not keeping the big picture in mind (the rest of scriptures).*

*Reading the whole story before looking at sections in-depth helps with this. Re-reading after looking at the details also helps.*