

DEEPER

Daily Bible Study

2020, Quarter 2, Lesson 7

Language, Text, and Context

This study guide contains additional materials to accompany the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for the second quarter of 2020, titled How to Interpret Scripture. This Deeper Daily Bible Study develops the broad theme of studying and interpreting the Bible into some areas not covered by the Sabbath School Study Guide. While the general topic of each week's set of lessons corresponds to the Study Guide topic for that week, the daily focus will vary at times from that guide. We hope that you will find this approach to be a valuable added resource in your Bible study.

The "Digging Deeper" section probes into the day's topic, and illustrates the study principle or tool being discussed. Suggested answers, if included, are provided in parentheses. Sabbath School teachers will find this section especially helpful in the Sabbath School setting. The "Apply It" section gives the student an opportunity to apply the subject at hand to their own study of the Bible, and the "Share It" section provides an opportunity for those in group studies to discuss and share their response to the day's theme.

Sabbath (May 9, 2020): Scripture's Remnant Concept

The study and understanding of words is an important aspect of Bible study. In today's lesson we will conduct a brief study on Scripture's remnant theme, and the various Hebrew and Greek words that are used to communicate this concept.

Digging Deeper

The Hebrew word *she'ār* means "that which is left over, or remains," and in its various derivatives occurs 226 times in the Old Testament. In the book of Isaiah it frequently refers to the "remnant" of Israel (Isaiah 10:20) or "His people" (Isaiah 11:11, 16; 28:5). Another Hebrew word, *'achariyth*, often refers to contexts where a remnant does not survive (see Numbers 24:20; Amos 9:1; and Ezekiel 23:25). In the New Testament, the Greek word *liopós* can refer to those who refuse to repent, while *katáliopoi* is used for the "remnant according to the election of grace" in Romans 11:5.

Apply It

The remnant theme runs through Scripture, and can be categorized into three uses.

1. The historical remnant—those who remain because they survive, such as those described in Isaiah 1:4-9.
2. The faithful remnant—those who remain because of their faith in God. Examples include Noah (Genesis 7:23), Joseph (Genesis 45:7), and Daniel (Daniel 1:8).
3. The eschatological remnant—those who are saved by God through the tribulations of the end time (Joel 2:31,32; Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

Share It

- Have you ever had an experience when you were, or at least felt like you were, the only one left in a particular situation? How did that feel? What emotions did it evoke?

Sunday (May 10, 2020): Understanding the Scriptures

In John 7:17 Jesus explained one of the most important keys to understanding Scripture—our willingness and determination to obey God: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God,

or whether I speak of myself.” In today’s lesson we will continue our study of the Bible’s eschatological remnant, and see how prophecy reveals that they are determined to obey God no matter the cost.

Digging Deeper

- Read Revelation 12:17 and 14:12. What common characteristic do they both mention regarding the eschatological remnant? (They keep the commandments of God.) What commandments do these refer to? How do we know? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Revelation 11:19 and 15:5. What “setting” do both of these verses point to? (The sanctuary, or temple, in heaven.) What might this imply about the importance of the material included in between these verses? (It is very important! One scholar notes that these verses “form a kind of *inclusio* around chapters 12-14, with the intent of turning the reader’s attention to what was inside the inner compartment of the temple, more specifically, to the ark of the covenant” [Johannes Kovar, “The Remnant and God’s Commandments: Revelation 12:17,” in Rodriguez, *Toward a Theology of the Remnant*, 118; emphasis in the original].)
- Read Exodus 25:21. What was contained in the ark of the covenant in the earthly sanctuary? (The Ten Commandments.) What does this imply about what is connected with heaven’s Most Holy Place? (God’s Ten Commandment law.)

Apply It

- Read Daniel 7:25. What does the little horn attempt to do to God’s law in this verse? (Change it.) How does this contrast with the saints’ attitude toward God’s law in Revelation? (It’s the complete opposite!) What does this imply about the difficulty God’s people will face in keeping His law at the end of time? (It will be very difficult.)
- Read Revelation 14:6,7. In these verses, what commandment does the first angel refer to? (The fourth commandment.) What does this reveal about the importance of this commandment at the end of time? (Satan’s attack against God’s law will center around issues connected with the fourth commandment and the seventh-day Sabbath.)

Share It

- How have you found God’s law to be a blessing in your life?

Monday (May 11, 2020): Words and Their Meanings

In every language words carry deep meaning. This can make the process of translation and interpretation especially difficult. In today’s lesson we will continue our study of Revelation’s eschatological remnant by focusing on the various meanings of the word *Sabbath*.

Digging Deeper

- Read Exodus 16:23. In this first occurrence in the Bible of the word *Sabbath*, what does God instruct the people to do on that day? (Rest from their work.) What adjective is used in this verse to describe the Sabbath? (It is holy.) What makes it holy? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Exodus 20:8. (What does this verse say we should do on the Sabbath? (Keep it holy.)
- Read Exodus 20:11. How do we keep the Sabbath holy? (By resting from our work on that day.)
- Read Exodus 31:14. What connections do you see in this verse between resting on the Sabbath and keeping it holy? (We “keep” the Sabbath holy by not working on that day.)

Apply It

- Read Hebrews 4:4. What did God do on the seventh day of creation week? (He rested from His work.) What does this reveal about the purpose of our not working on the Sabbath? (The Sabbath is an opportunity for us to enter into God’s rest.)
- Read Hebrews 4:9,10. What does it mean to “enter into God’s rest”? (We cease from our own “works” of salvation and trust in God, claiming His promises of salvation.)
- Read Revelation 14:9-13. In the third angel’s message, what two groups of people are described? (Those who receive the mark of the beast, and those that do not. These groups can also be described as those that do not have rest [verse 11], and those that do [verse 13].)

Share It

- In what ways have you found spiritual rest in your relationship with God? In what ways are you looking for greater spiritual rest in Him?

Tuesday (May 12, 2020): Repetition, Word Patterns, and Meaning

The Hebrew language contains no punctuation, and as a result the language uses other methods of organizing and communicating ideas, such as repetition and word patterns. Today we will explore this aspect of communication with Scripture.

Digging Deeper

- Read Genesis 1:26,27. What action of God is repeated three times in these two verses? (The fact that God created humanity.) What else is repeated three times regarding humanity’s creation? (The fact that we are created in the image of God.) What does this repetition suggest about these two facts? (They are very important!)
- Read Isaiah 6:3. What does Isaiah hear the angels repeating three times in their worship of God? (“Holy, Holy, Holy.”) Again, what does this suggest about the One being worshipped? (He is holy beyond our comprehension. Also, many have seen a reference to the three Persons of the Godhead in the thrice-repeated cry of “holy.”)
- Read Daniel 3:1,2,3,5,7,12,14,15. What phrase, with variations, is repeated 10 times in these verses? (“The image which Nebuchadnezzar set up.”) What seems to be the emphasis in this repetition? (Nebuchadnezzar’s proud and conceited construction of an image in defiance of the image revealed to him by God in Daniel 2.)

Apply It

- Read Revelation 14:6-12. How many angels fly over the earth with a heavenly message at the end of time? (Three.) Why might this message be divided into three sections? (While there is a progression from the first angel’s message to the third angel’s message, in reality they are expressing the same truth three times, in three different ways.) Considering what we studied above about Scripture’s three-time repetition of important truths connected with God, what might the Three Angels’ Messages be communicating to us today? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Revelation 17:12,16. How many “horns” unite against God and the saints at the end of time? (Ten.) Considering our study above of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, what message does Revelation 17 seem to be trying to communicate? (At the end of time earthly powers will repeat Nebuchadnezzar’s attempt to enforce false worship.)

Share It

- What aspect of truth, or of God’s character, has God repeatedly impressed upon you recently? How has this impacted your relationship with God?

Wednesday (May 13, 2020): Texts and Contexts

Words can change meanings based on their context. For example, we might say, “It’s great to see you!” to a friend that we haven’t visited in a long time. On the other hand, when something goes wrong, we might say with frustration, “Oh, that’s just great!” Obviously, the meaning of the word *great* can change drastically given the context in which we use it. In today’s lesson we will look at the concept of the Sabbath in various historical and prophetic contexts throughout Scripture.

Digging Deeper

Read the following passages that refer to God or His work as perfect, and summarize what they reveal about God’s absolute perfection:

- Deuteronomy 32:4 (God’s work is perfect and without fault.)
- Isaiah 46:9,10 (God’s wisdom and foreknowledge is perfect.)
- Matthew 28:18 (God has all power and uses it perfectly.)
- James 1:13 (God cannot be tempted.)

Read the following passages that refer to God’s call to each of us, and summarize what they reveal about the possibility of human “perfection”:

- Genesis 17:1 (God calls Abram to trust Him and His promises to a much greater degree than he had before.)
- Matthew 5:48 (Jesus calls us to love our neighbors and enemies, just as God does.)
- Romans 12:1,2 (We are to surrender ourselves to God and receive the mind of Christ, which will enable us to understand God’s perfect will.)

Apply It

Revelation 14:5 describes the saints at the end of time as being “without fault before the throne of God,” even as they continue to live on earth. What kind of “perfection” is being described here? (Certainly not the absolute perfection of God. Instead, it must be perfection within the possibility of the human sphere—complete and total submission to God and trust in Him.)

Share It

- In what ways has God been working in your life to move you closer to Him?

Thursday (May 14, 2020): Books and Their Messages

The varying styles and emphases of the four gospels illustrate well the different messages contained in the books of the Bible. Matthew’s gospel contains numerous references to how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies, and seeks to show that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Mark’s is the shortest gospel, yet it is action-packed and contains numerous miracles that Jesus performed. Luke’s account of Christ’s life is written more as a historical narrative and reveals the writing style of an educated doctor and historian. John’s gospel has often been said to focus on the divinity of Christ. In today’s lesson we will take a closer look at the gospel of John and its connections with the sanctuary and its services.

Digging Deeper

Read the following passages and identify how each one connects Jesus Christ with some aspect of the sanctuary or its services:

- John 10:9 (Jesus is the door to God and salvation.)
- John 1:29 (Jesus is the Lamb slain at the altar of burnt offering.)
- John 4:10 (Jesus is the water of life.)
- John 6:35 (Jesus is the bread of life.)
- John 8:12 (Jesus is the light of the world.)
- John 17 (Jesus is the Intercessor praying before God's throne.)
- John 12:48-50 (Jesus is the Word upon which our salvation depends.)
- John 13:1-11 and 15:3 (Jesus is our great High Priest that washes us from sin.)

Apply It

In Revelation 11:19, "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." The chapters that follow (Revelation 12-14) describe the final conflict on earth between good and evil, and God's faithful people who are delivered through that experience. Considering John's gospel revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the sanctuary and its services, what kind of experience with Christ is the book of Revelation calling God's people to at the end of time? (Answers will vary.)

Friday (May 15, 2020): Chiastic Structure

Chiastic structure is another way that Scripture often organizes its message to us. In this structure, literary units are repeated and reflected around a central unique theme:

- A Idea A first presented
- B Idea B first presented
- C The central, unique, and most important idea
- B' Idea B repeated, often with variation
- A' Idea A repeated, often with variation

Scripture is filled with numerous chiastic structures of varying size and complexity. A simple example is Christ's promise in Matthew 11:28-30:

- A verse 28, if you are heavy laden, Christ will give you rest
- B verse 29a, take Christ's yoke on you
- C verse 29b, if you do this you will find rest for your soul
- B' verse 30a, Christ's yoke is easy
- A' verse 30b, Christ's burden is light

Digging Deeper

A much longer and more complex chiastic structure forms much of the last chapters of the gospel of Matthew, in chapters 21-25:

- A Matt. 21:18-22, parable of the fig tree (curse on those that pretend to be servants of God)
- B Matt. 21:33-46, parable of the husbandmen (judgment on God's servants)
- C Matt. 22:1-14, parable of the marriage dinner (preparation for the marriage)
- D Matt. 23, woes on the Pharisees (curses on unfaithful servants)
- E Matt. 24:1-42, signs of Christ's second coming
- D' Matt. 24:43-51, faithful and unfaithful servants (curses on unfaithful servants)
- C' Matt. 25:1-13, the ten virgins (preparation for the marriage)

B' Matt. 25:14-30, the ten talents (judgment on God's servants)

A' Matt. 25:31-46, the sheep and the goats (curse on those that pretend to be servants of God)

All of sacred history, as revealed in the Bible, may also be understood as forming a chiasm around the life of Jesus Christ. We don't have space in this study guide to explore this idea further, but a free one-hour video titled The Hinge of History is available on our website for those that would like to study this largest of all chiasms.