

Scripture quotations taken from the (NASB ©) New American Standard Bible©, Copyright ©1960, 1971, 1977 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
“www.lockman.org”

In Dedication

to

the *Nation of Israel* for those of you who are of the *Remnant*.

*“Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”
(Zechariah 1:3 NRSV)*

“Then those who revered the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the LORD and thought on his name. They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as parents spare their children who serve them.” (Malachi 3:16-17 NRSV)

Introduction

I first learned the inductive method of Bible study in 1978 at a conference I attended on the campus of Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, Colorado. However, I did not put this method into my own personal study of the Word of God until after many years of using only commentaries and books explaining what others interpreted Scripture to say. Now, I put the principles of inductive study: careful observation, interpretation, and application, not only into my study of His Word, but into everything I read and study. There is a great satisfaction that comes from knowing that I can learn this way and that the residing Holy Spirit of God in me uses this method to cause me to interact (struggle) with Him and the text of His word. I not only learn much, much more from time spent in the Scripture, but I also retain more, too.

Kay Arthur of Precept Ministries, International, probably has done more to get the word out on inductive Bible study than any other person in this past generation. I highly recommend her book on inductive study titled *How to Study Your Bible*. The method did not originate with her, but she and her staff, through the years, have developed it, edited it, and refined it.

This particular study on Isaiah was initially put together just by using the principles mentioned above. However, along the way, I did use some commentaries as well as other outside reference sources. Some of the thoughts, organization of the book, and theological understanding from these gifted scholars was just too good to pass up and I incorporated it into the text. Normally, outside, extra-Biblical sources are allowed in inductive Bible study only after the text alone has been exhausted.

So, what does it mean to study your Bible inductively? In simple terms, it means that you slow down your reading of the text so that you can really look at what you are reading. Has there ever been a time when you have read to the end of a paragraph and you can't remember a word of it? Inductive study teaches you to deal with what you are reading objectively, to look for the obvious. You interrogate the text using who, what, when, where, why and how questions. You identify key repeated words or phrases often giving clues as to what is the main point (or points) of the passage you are reading. You make lists from the passage. You mark references to time so that you can put order to what you are learning. You observe the texts for comparisons or contrasts. You look for cross references in your Bible, so that in doing this, you compare Scripture with Scripture. Sometimes, it will be necessary for you to find more out about a specific word or phrase or how it was meant to be interpreted in the context of its setting. This action may require outside help in the form of reference books, like Bible Concordances or Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries.¹ I personally use the *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* by Robert Thomas and *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* by M.F. Unger, W.E. Vine, and W. White, Jr., as well as *The Complete Word Study Dictionaries of the Old and New Testaments* by Spiros Zodhiates. In this study of Isaiah, by the questions I ask you, I will lead you through a very similar process, as the above, in making careful observations of the text.

¹ Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible*, Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, 1994, pp. 139-140.

After this, in inductive study, you take all of the observations that you have made and construct your own interpretations or conclusions from them. In order to be guided into proper interpretation requires the help of the resident teacher within us, namely, the Holy Spirit of God. Begin your time each session with prayer that God would open up your mind and your spirit to Him and His teaching. I cannot emphasize this enough. We need His help in assembling all the information properly into cohesive thought. There are many voices out there with the intent of confusing us. Pray that your ears would be attuned to hearing His voice alone.

Thirdly, in inductive study, you make application of what you have observed and interpreted, to your own life and the lives of others around you. This is probably the hardest part of inductive study for me personally. Sometimes, the application is so clear, and other times, I have to dig deep. Often times, I will come away from a passage of Scripture having to be satisfied with just learning the history or bare facts or whatever details from the text. It can be weeks, months, or years later, before I finally attach application to what I learn from a specific passage. Take heart and don't be discouraged by this. God still has something for you in the particular passage of Scripture, but it may be through time that you realize it, experience it, or see its application to someone else's life.

Finally, I would like to suggest to you, that for this and other inductive Bible studies, you use only one translation of the Bible: the New American Standard. From my own understanding, the NAS translation is an accurate word-for-word translation. Others may be accurate, but they also may be phrase-for-phrase in their translation. I've had students, throughout the years, who have insisted on using phrase-for-phrase translations instead and we never do seem to meet together on the same page. You will obtain more out of this study if you use the NAS. The entire book of Isaiah in the NAS has been provided for your use in the Appendix of this study (used by permission from the Lockman Foundation). Please use this to make your observations of the text. You can write on it and mark it up in any way that allows you to understand the text better. This is in the Appendix for you to interact with the text of God's word!

Have fun in this study of the Book of Isaiah. This book is truly a journey into the heart and mind of God for His people, Israel. The Gentiles will also find themselves in this book. God has had a plan from before the beginning of time, for the salvation of both the Jews and the Gentiles. If you don't know already, you will come to find out that He is a great and loving God!

Peggy Grinstead