

THE FORMAT OF THESE STUDIES

These studies follow a pattern, with the first four questions being much the same in each study. These questions are meant to help us really get into the details of the text: noticing the words, the context and the structure particularly.

Here is a little more information to hopefully help our understanding of what the questions are asking us to do.

1. What is meant by 'line by line'? Here's an example from the first study...the first couple of verses of Hebrews 12:18-24.

*18 For you have not come to what may be touched,
a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest*

19 and the sound of a trumpet

and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.

2. Look carefully at the words! Underline/circle/box or highlight (different colours may help) the words that are unclear, repeated or very important. Notice:

- words or phrases that are repetitions, or repetitions of ideas
- contrasting words or phrases: 'but, yet, or.'
- key ideas
- big Bible words (eg. Salvation, redemption, atonement)
- commands
- tone and feel: emotive words, poetic words, images
- things you don't understand or surprises

3. Understand the text in its setting...the Context.

Establish what came before, what follows, and how the text fits into the book as a whole.

4. Structure:

Look for ways to group together common ideas. Look for the natural breaks or sections. Look for patterns or the use of 'connecting' words. Look for repetition in words or ideas. Break the text into its sections, giving verse references. Try to give each section a heading.

In longer passages the structure will usually reveal an emphasis that the author is intending...try and see what that emphasis is.

THE GOD WHO WARNS AND WOOS
Study 1 – Ezekiel 33:1-33

In chapter 33 the third major section of Ezekiel begins. After the past eight chapters of God bringing judgment on the surrounding nations, the focus comes back to Israel as the Lord renews and expands Ezekiel's responsibilities as their watchman. Then in the midst of this chapter, the message of Ezekiel shifts from being predominantly one of judgment to one of hope...with the news that Jerusalem has fallen. This news authenticates his prophetic ministry and confirms the word that Ezekiel spoke more than 2 years earlier, and as his tongue is loosened (24:25-27).

1. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.

2. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (*eg. Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

3. Context: Note what came just before, and what follows this passage. How does the immediate context inform this passage? How does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses.

5. Paying attention to the responsibilities that God lays out for Ezekiel as Israel's watchman in v 1-9, what do we learn about God's character and his plans?

6. The question in v10, in the light of how seriously God takes our sin, is a big one 'How then can we live?' What is God's response? Is there a response God is calling you to make in a particular area of your life?

7. Re-read 33:21-22. Why is what happens in these verses so important? (read also 24:25-27)

8. Does this passage leave you with a sense of expectation? Is the gospel anticipated in any way?

THE GOD WHO IS OUR LOVER
Study 2 – Ezekiel 16: 1-43, 59-63

Ezekiel chooses the literary device of allegory in this chapter. The language is extremely shocking and symbolically represents Israel (whom he personifies as Jerusalem) as the adorned child become utterly faithless bride. The language of the judgment that God will bring (v35-43), serves to highlight the seriousness of our sin in God's eyes. Amazingly though, the chapter ends with our loving, faithful God declaring, "yet I will remember my covenant with you..."

1. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.

2. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (eg. *Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

3. Context: Note what came just before, and what follows this passage. How does the immediate context inform this passage? How does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Especially take note of the connecting words: therefore, but, yet*).

5. Chapter 16 begins with a shockingly unusual genealogy in v1-5 that is showing Israel's pagan roots. Why do you think Ezekiel does this and why is it important?

6. Notice the imagery and metaphors used. Think through what they indicate and try to briefly restate what Ezekiel is saying to Israel in v 1-43.

7. The root of Israel's sin is seen in v15, in making the gifts of God the object of trust...in total disregard for God himself. Thinking personally, how do you see yourself falling into the same trap in your own circumstances?

8. As shocking as the language is in this allegory, how does it help to shape your understanding of how our sin grieves God?

9. What is the huge surprise of v59-63? What do we learn about the character of God from these verses?

10. How do you see the gospel anticipated?

THE GOD WHO GRIEVES

Study 3 – Ezekiel 14:1-11

Chapter 14 is one of God's many judgment oracles against the elders and house of Israel. God's judgment comes to those who lead his people astray as well as his people who are deceived into sin and idolatry. In chapter 14:1-11 (and 6:8-10), we get a glimpse of God's broken and grieving heart as he relentlessly unmask the idols of his peoples' hearts.

Study 14:1-11, but also read 6:1-14

1. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.

2. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (*eg. Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

3. Context: Note what came before, and what follows this passage. How does the immediate context inform this passage? How does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words especially: therefore, for, that*).

5. Several times in this passage, the two phrases 'taken idols into their hearts' and 'set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces' are linked together. Why do you think that is?

6. From the words of Ezekiel, what evidence is there of how deeply the idolatry of the people affects God? (See also 6:9.) What does God say he will personally do about it, in v 7-8?

7. God's judgment has a purpose. What are the intended results or purposes of God's judgment? How do you see God's grace in this?

8. What are the idols you have taken into your own heart? Why are these idols so powerful and alluring for you? (It may be helpful to read the following page.)

9. God says, “Repent and turn away from your idols” (v.6). Spend time turning to Christ and bringing your idols to him. In prayer, entrust yourself to his forgiving and restoring grace.

In his book *Counterfeit Gods*, Pastor Tim Keller describes an idol as “anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living” (xvii). Using that description, he seeks to help us diagnose the idols of our hearts. Here are a few from his list. Read through the following list slowly and prayerfully, asking God to diagnose the idols of your heart.

Life only has meaning and I only have worth if...

1. I have power and influence over others. (Power Idolatry)
2. I am loved and respected by _____. (Approval Idolatry)
3. I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life. (Comfort idolatry)
4. I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____. (Control idolatry)
5. People are dependent on me and need me. (Helping Idolatry)
6. Someone is there to protect me and keep me safe. (Dependence idolatry)
7. I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone. (Independence idolatry)
8. I am highly productive and getting a lot done. (Work idolatry)
9. I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work. (Achievement idolatry)
10. I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and nice possessions. (Materialism idolatry)
11. I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities. (Religion idolatry)
12. Mr. or Ms. “Right” is in love with me. (Relationship Idolatry)
13. I am hurting or in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt. (Suffering idolatry)
14. I have a particular kind of look or body image. (Image idolatry)

THE GOD WHOSE NAME IS SACRED

Study 4 – Ezekiel 36:16-38

After the fall of Jerusalem, which we saw announced in chapter 33, Ezekiel changes the focus of his message and begins to outline the glorious plan that God has in store for his people. Chapters 34-39 consist of a series of distinct but related prophecies, each dealing with the various problems that God is promising to deal with as he brings Israel to full restoration forever. We see clearly in this passage that God is at the center of all he's doing.

1. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.

2. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (eg. *Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

3. Context: Note what came before, and what follows this passage. How does the immediate context inform this passage? How does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words especially: therefore, for, that*).

5. According to vv16-23, what have been the consequences of Israel's sin, and why does the final consequence concern God so much? Do you think about how your own life affects the holy name of God?

6. An amazing rescue of God's people by God himself is described in vv24-32. What details show us that this is a much more significant rescue than the original rescue from Egypt?

7. What is the difference between the promises in v25 and in vv26-27? Why are both needed? Specifically how is the gospel anticipated?

THE GOD WHO JUDGES JUSTLY
Study 5 – Ezekiel 11:1-24 (Read 8-11)

Read chapters 8-11 for context (they are short chapters!), but we will focus on 11:1-24 for this study.

Chapters 8-11 cover the second vision that God gives Ezekiel. It comes 14 months after the first vision that called him to this prophetic ministry, during the time that Ezekiel has been denouncing both Israel and Judah. In this vision, the Spirit of God transports him to Jerusalem to witness the vast extent of the corrupt worship, the excessive idolatry happening in the temple by those left behind and how God will judge it. Ezekiel has some credibility as a prophet by this time...we see the elders of Judah sitting before him as chapter 8 begins.

1. Context: Give a **very brief** summary of what the vision reveals in chapters 8-10.

2. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation, on a separate page.

3. Read through the passage (11:1-24) and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (eg. *Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

4. Structure: Break up the passage (11:1-24) into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words especially: therefore, for, but*).

5. How does Ezekiel describe God's departure throughout the whole vision? (8:3-4; 9:3; 10:3-4, 10:18-19; 11:22-23) What does this tell us about God? What would God's departure from Jerusalem have meant to Ezekiel?

6. Ezekiel cries the same question in v13, that he has cried in 9:8. It reveals that he believes the remnant of Israel are those left behind in Jerusalem.

a) What is God's answer in vv 16-20?

b) What is surprising about his answer?

7. Have there been times in your personal circumstance when you have felt 'in exile', but been very aware of God as a sanctuary?

8. How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Christ Jesus?

THE GOD WHO GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD

Study 6 – Ezekiel 37:1-14

This vision of the valley of the dry bones is perhaps one of the most well known passages in the book of Ezekiel. We are so familiar with this story that we may be immune to the devastating effect this valley of utter death would have had on Ezekiel. In this chapter we are in the midst of a series of related prophecies that God is promising in bringing Israel to full restoration, following God's promise in chapter 36 to cleanse his people and to give them new hearts and a new spirit. This vision illustrates the miracle that is required if his people are to be saved...that God himself will bring them from death to life.

1. Context: Note what came before, and what follows this passage. Where does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

2. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.

3. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (eg. *Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words especially: but, so, therefore*).

5. Specifically, how is this miracle performed? Can you think of another OT event that mirrors this? What do you think is significant about this?

6. In this passage God promises to restore Israel to 'life'. What do you think Ezekiel understood this to mean? Reading this with NT understanding, what does it mean to you?

7. God's explanation of the vision in v11-14 gives a deeper understanding. How does the resurrection of Jesus, fulfill this prophecy? See also John 20:19-22.

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the historical aspect of this structure...how God has shown his faithfulness at various time's through Israel's history.*)

5. In each of the sections of Israel's history seen in this passage [i.e. in Egypt (vv. 5-9), in the wilderness (vv. 10-17) etc.], Ezekiel lays out the same pattern of behaviour. What is it? Why does God withhold his judgment each time?

6. Why do you think it is so important to the Lord God that his name 'should not be profaned in the sight of the nations'?

7. How does the language of the text emphasize the contrast between the living, powerful God and the lifeless idols that Israel worships, especially in vv. 31-38?

8. How do you see God's grace in this passage? How have you experienced his grace in your own personal circumstances?

9. What does this passage teach us about God's character?

THE GOD WHO IS OVER THE NATIONS

Study 8 – Ezekiel 26:1- 28:26

These chapters, of prophecy against and lament over, Tyre and her king come in the midst of 8 chapters of prophecy against the nations surrounding Jerusalem. Tyre and Sidon (also judged in these chapters) were two great Phoenician trading cities on the Mediterranean coast. The Lord God says he will use Nebuchadnezzar to raze Tyre (26:7). This siege on Tyre actually began the year after Ezekiel's prophecy, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, and lasted for 13 years.

1. Context: Note what came before, and what follows this passage. Where does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

2. Write a very brief summary of chapters 26 to 28.

3. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (*eg. Make note of repetitions of words and phrases; note contrasts, note the tone of the passage*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words, in this passage especially repeated phrases*).

5. What reason does God give for this prophecy against Tyre and what is God's judgment? (26: 1-5)

6. In the lament over Tyre (ch 27), Ezekiel gives us an incredibly long and meticulous list of commodities traded by Tyre, and nations that she traded with. What do you think the purpose is of giving us such details?

7. What reason does God give for his prophecy against the ruler of Tyre in chapter 28? Notice the pronouns, especially in 28: 2-6.

8. Even as the people of God, we are often seduced and deceived by the material wealth of the world around us. How does this passage challenge you to change the way you live?

9. In your own words, briefly summarize the words of hope that God gives Israel in 28:24-26. What does this reveal about God's character?

THE GOD WHO SETS HIS GLORY AMONG THE NATIONS

Study 9 – Ezekiel 39:21-29

This passage follows directly after the seemingly bizarre account of Gog and Magog (Chapter 38 and 39) and before the vision of the restored temple, land and people that Ezekiel portrays in Chapters 40-48. Chapters 38 and 39 tell the story of the complete and final destruction of those who would attack God's restored people – through which God reveals his glory to the House of Israel and to the nations, and they are finally able to acknowledge who God really is. The section ends with these 9 verses: "And I will set my glory amongst the nations..."

1. Context: Note what came before, and what follows this passage. Where does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?
2. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.
3. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (eg. *Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

7. What are the things God says he will “now do” in vv. 25-29?

8. How would these promises have changed the perspective of God’s people in exile as they faced suffering and opposition?

9. In what ways has Israel’s future hope been realized now? In what ways are we still waiting? How does this hope change your perspective and challenge the way you make decisions?

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words especially: but, so, therefore*).

5. Who exactly are the shepherds referred to in vv. 1-10 and what is God's complaint against them? What have been the consequences of their failings?

6. What are the several things that God promises to do for his sheep in vv. 11-16? How does he expand on that in vv.17-24?

7. How can v.15 and v. 23 both be true? Why do you think it is important that both are, given our NT understanding? (See also John 10:11-16 and 27-30)

8. This chapter concludes, in vv. 25-31, with a wonderful picture of restored covenant relationship. In this context of blessing, Ezekiel says 'and they shall know that I am the Lord their God'. How have you experienced the result of the 'covenant of peace' in your own personal circumstances?

THE GOD WHO RESTORES
Study 11 – Ezekiel 36:1-15

Chapter 35 and this passage in 36 consist of prophecies, to Mt. Seir (in the land of Edom) and to the mountains of Israel. Edom had been a long time enemy of Israel and rejoiced at her suffering and loss believing that they have defeated Israel (35:10). Because of this God pronounces judgment on Edom. The land was an essential part of Israel's identity and even though God's people remain in exile, a promising future is being revealed. It is a future with God himself providing just shepherding, their enemies defeated, and prosperity in their own land.

1. Context: Note what came before, and what follows this passage. Where does this passage fit into the context of the whole book of Ezekiel?

2. The passage is quite long, but we encourage you to either write out, or copy and paste it line by line (one idea per line), or to the new point of punctuation...on a separate page.

3. Read through the passage and look carefully at the words. Underline, circle/box, or highlight key words. (eg. *Make note of repetitions of words or similar ideas; note contrasts*). Think about how the repetitions or contrasts help to make a particular point. Share your findings with the group.

4. Structure: Break up the passage into a simple outline, giving verses. (*Take note of the connecting words especially: but, because, therefore*).

5. What is the reason that God gives to Ezekiel to prophecy to the mountains of Israel? How will God deliver justice?

6. The land is given great prominence in this passage. Why do you think it is so important to God?

7. Notice the language of the vv. 8-15. Does it allude to other OT passages? Why is this significant?

8. How has this whole series of Ezekiel studies helped you to trust in God and his promises in Jesus?