

Chapter Six

PASSAGE STUDIES

A. DEFINITION

WORD studies lead to TOPICAL studies. Word and Topical Studies can lead one to PASSAGE or Chapter studies.

Passage studies are the selecting of a certain Passage (sometimes chapters) of a Bible Book and exegeting it as to its theme and content, verse by verse. Passage study is expositional study. Passage studies lead ultimately to Book studies.

B. IMPORTANCE

The more the student does Word studies and Topical studies, the better skilled he becomes when it comes to Passage studies. Passage studies require the skill of the interpreter and expositor. Passage studies include in themselves Word, Textual, and sometimes Place and Character studies, depending on the content of the passage or chapter under consideration.

In this method of study, the student needs to be sound in Biblical Theology, and sound in Biblical Hermeneutics. The result of these will be sound and wholesome Biblical exegesis or exposition.

C. METHODS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Following are some general guidelines that may be used in Passage studies.

1. Choose an appropriate passage or chapter you desire to exegete.
2. The student should make sure that the complete passage is selected, knowing where the passage begins and ends. Many times passages flow from one into the other, but, generally speaking, there are certain themes being dealt with and one can find where these themes begin and end.

Greek New Testaments, such as Nestle-Arland Text, or George Ricker-Berry's Greek New Testament, show the beginning and ending of certain passages. These can be of great help. However, if one is not knowledgeable of Greek, generally speaking, the change of themes can be discovered by (a) a careful reading of the chapter/book in which the passage is found, and (b) by noting in many translations a paragraph sign, showing generally where a passage begins.

(Note — These may not always be exactly correct, but generally speaking they are a safe guide).

Examples:—

- * The major theme of Hebrews 11 is FAITH. However, the PASSAGE CONTEXT (using The Context Group of Principles) dealing with the subject of faith would begin in Hebrews 10:19-12:2 inclusive to Hebrews 12:2. This includes all the references to faith, not just Chapter 11.

- * James Chapter 3 has two major themes, these being, the TONGUE and WISDOM. The tongue is dealt with in 3:1-12. This is a complete passage in itself and would therefore constitute “the passage study”. Wisdom is dealt with in 3:13-18. This also is a complete passage in itself to be studied.

Thus it is important to know where a passage begins and ends.

3. After selecting the Passage, look for a KEY WORD (or words), for this key word generally becomes the “key” to open the passage or chapter.

Examples:—

- * Psalm 150. The “key word” in this chapter is “PRAISE” — used 13 times in this Psalm.
 - * James 3:1-12. The “key word” in this passage is “TONGUE”.
 - * James 3:13-18. The “key word” in this passage is “WISDOM”.
 - * Hebrews 10:19-12:2. the “key word” in this whole section (complete passage) is “FAITH”.
4. Once the key word has been discovered (or key thought), this may be used as a suitable Sermon Title. With the above passages as examples we could use the following titles:—
 - * Psalm 150 — “A Psalm of Praise.”
 - * James 3:1-12 — “The Control of the Tongue.”
 - * James 3:13-18 — “Two Kinds of Wisdom.”
 - * Hebrews 10:19-12:2 — “Jesus, The Author and Finisher of Faith.”
 5. The student should seek to formulate a suitable outline. The use of alliteration is a challenging and creative way of doing this. It helps to make the presentation and reception by the hearers more effective and is very rewarding to the student.
(Note — Alliteration is “the repetition of the same sound, usually of a consonant, at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other, or at short intervals”. (Websters).
e.g., The Problem of Sin
The Power of Sin
The Presence of Sin
The Prevention of Sin.

The student is referred to OUTLINING AND OUTLINING WORKSHOP in Bible Research for help in this area.

Outlining a passage for presentation is a very important part of Homiletics, for the speaker “to bring his hearers along with him” in his preaching and teaching and communicating the Word.

6. The outline then becomes “the framework” or “skeleton” which has to be built upon. The exposition of the passage, the supplying of additional and suitable Scriptures, comments, illustrations, etc., then become “the body of sinews and flesh” on the skeletal outline. Congregations do not just want a “bone skeleton” but “flesh and sinews and life of the blood” in the message!

7. The student should follow the steps outlined in “Methods and Principles of Study”.

- * Observation — “What does the verse/passage say?”
- * Interpretation — “What does the passage mean?”
- * Organization — “How can I suitably outline it?”
- * Presentation — “How can I best communicate it?”
- * Application — “How can the passage/message be applied practically to the people’s life-styles?”
- * Evaluation — “How well did I communicate? Where can I improve?”

D. STEPS OF PROCEDURE IN PASSAGE STUDIES

Following are seven recommended steps in doing a passage study in Scripture.

1. The Passage.
2. The Key Word(s).
3. Message Title (from key word(s) or thoughts in passage).
4. Outline of Passage or Outline of Message from the passage.
5. Exegesis of Verses/Passage.
6. Additional Scriptures, Illustrations, etc.
7. Practical Application and Conclusion.

PASSAGE STUDIES

WORKSHOP #1

TOOLS NEEDED: Strong's Concordance, KJV of the Bible, and any other recommended "Tools for Research" as required.

ASSIGNMENT: Do a passage study of James 3:13-18 following the recommended steps and suggested outline format as provided here.

1. Make sure the passage is complete in itself.
2. Find the key word or words.
3. Make a suitable Message Title from the key word(s) of theme of the passage.
4. Formulate a suitable Outline for the Message.
5. Exegete the verses in the passage. This may involve Word Studies or other Methods of Study as previously done.
6. Supply additional and suitable Scriptures, comments, and illustrations as required (e.g., character studies etc.)
7. What is the practical application and conclusion of your passage study?

Note: The student may develop the message from the passage study as fully as desired using additional paper.

1. The Passage —

2. The Key Word(s) —

3. Message Title — “ _____ ”

4. Outline of Message —

5. Exegesis of Verses/Passage (only in brief here)

A. Characteristics of

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

B. Characteristics of

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

6. Additional Scriptures/Illustrations, etc.,

- * **Illustration** in personal lives, Character Studies.
- * **Additional Scriptures** added where suitable.

7. Practical Application and Conclusion

PASSAGE STUDIES

WORKSHOP #2

TOOLS NEEDED: Strong's Concordance, KJV of the Bible, and any other recommended "Tools for Research" as required.

ASSIGNMENT: Do a passage study on Galatians 5:16-26 following the recommended steps as on Workshop Assignment #1.

The student will again note the need for word definitions, also supply additional suitable Scripture references, and may be able to think of character studies for illustrations.

Note: The student may develop this passage study as fully as desired.

1. The Passage —
2. The Key Word(s) —
3. Message Title —
4. Outline of Message —
5. Exegesis of Verses/Passage —

A. Characteristics of

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

B. Characteristics of

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

6. Additional Scriptures, Illustrations, etc —**7. Practical Application and Conclusion —**