

Synthetic Method - a Bible Study Outline
The broad, overall study of a book of the Bible.

Step One

Read through the entire book to get the overall flow of the text.

Step Two

Read through the entire book a second time listing observations, problems, cross references & possible applications as you read.

Observations: Include key thoughts, main arguments, important words, etc. - Who, What, When, Where, Why & How

Problems - list out what you don't understand that you want to explore more in depth later - words to look up, questions, etc.

Cross References - Not important events that are recorded in other scriptures; quotes of other scriptures, other scriptures dealing with the same subject.

Observations

Set the Context: What is the context & how does that effect my understanding of this passage

Who: _____

What: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

Lexical: Word Definitions _____

Syntactical /Grammatical insights _____

Linking words: _____

Cause & Effect statements: _____

Commands: _____

Relevant information about history, geography, and culture: _____

Problems / Questions: _____

Cross References _____

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Step Four

Use the key thoughts / main themes from Step Three to Outline the book. Put together a theme (summary) statement of the book.

OUTLINE

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THEME STATEMENT

Step 5 - Summarize the historical background

Who, what, when, where, why, how

Author _____

Date of writing: _____

Location of writing _____

Circumstances of the author _____

To Whom was it Written? _____

Where are they? What is like there? _____

What are the circumstances of the recipients? _____

Why was the book written? What is the purpose of the author? _____

ADVANCED

Step 6 - What kind of literature is the book: History / Narrative? Poetic? Wisdom? Prophetic? Topical? Logical? Interrogative? Corrective? Apocalyptic? Etc. _____

Step 7 - Chart the Book

NOTE: A synthetic book study (overview/ survey) should be done prior to analytical studies (chapter or verse analysis) to set context. Without this it is very easy to take a passage out of context and interpret incorrectly. A synthetic study should also follow analytical studies to correct / add to the initial synthetic study. This will actually continue throughout life as greater in depth analysis of passages makes corrections to the overall understanding of a book.

Step 8

APPLICATION - pick out the most important applications in the book for you.

What commands do I need to fulfill? _____

Are there promises I should claim? _____

Are there sins I should avoid? _____

Are there examples I should follow? _____

Are there problems I need to solve? _____

What will I do now to obey what God is teaching me in this book ? _____
