

PART TWO: THE STUDY OF THE LITERATURE OF ISRAEL

HOW TO STUDY LITERATURE

In any specialized field of study, there are definite objectives to be accomplished, and definite ways of reaching these objectives. Read below about the rules which can help you in your study of literature:

A. Objectives for the Study of Literature: Many times in the study of literature, the story is uppermost in our thoughts. But there is much more that we can learn from literature in addition to the story it tells. The most important lessons can be classified under two great headings:

1. Lessons About the Nation Which Produced the Literature: Watch for:

- a. A reflection of *the nature of the people*: their fundamental instincts and emotions, their character, and the subjects which occupied their minds.
- b. A revelation of *the innermost thoughts of the people*: their reactions to their fellowmen, and to the world of nature; their hopes and fears.
- c. A reflection of *the trend of national life*. Each piece of literature is an expression of the life of the age in which it was written. Watch as the study progresses from one period of history to another for the changing reflection which is given.
- d. *The effect of the literature upon the life of the nation*. It is possible for literature to change the course of a nation's history.

2. Lessons for Your Own Life: Literature can do several things for you:

- a. *It Can Give You an Outlet*: It can express for you your innermost thoughts, and teach you how to express your thoughts for yourself.
- b. *It Can Keep Before You the Vision of the Ideal*: In a world in which most things are not as they should be, it can help you imagine what things would be like if they *were* as they should be; and arouse in you a desire for changes that can help make things as they should be.
- c. *It Can Give You a Better Knowledge of Human Nature*: As it reflects consciously the nature of those about whom it is written, and unconsciously the nature of the writer, it can help you to know others and yourself much better - to understand why we think and act as we do.
- d. *It Can Restore the Past to You*: This will make your life much more rich and full, and accomplish the purpose expressed in I Corinthians 10:11.
- e. *It Can Show You the Glory of the Commonplace*: Although only a small part of life is made up of really *great* moments, all of it can be and should be enjoyed.
- f. *It Can Give You the Mastery of Your Own Language*: As in your reading you come into contact with words correctly used, you can be influenced to speak more correctly. New

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words can also increase your vocabulary.

B. How to Accomplish These Objectives: As you read, remember three simple rules:

1. *See* what is going on in the story. Keep your imagination alert.

2. *Feel* what the writer feels. Allow your emotions to be moved by his words.

3. *Think!* Be sure you know *what* the writer says; seek to discover *why*.

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Why can the Bible, more than any other literature, help me in my own life?
