

## How to Study Torah

By Rabbi Yehudah "Strong Bow" ben Shomeyr

Many people have asked, "Rabbi, how do I study and what should I study?" All I can tell them is what I do. It's really no big secret or radical study plan. Though it is, if you stick with it, revolutionary! I know it has been in my life!

The most important thing as far as study in the Scriptures is the weekly Torah portion, whether you study the annual or triennial track. I usually read the entire Torah portion and focus my commentary on the triennial portion of the Parashah. I usually spend Sunday through Tuesday on the Torah Portion. Then on Wednesday and Thursday I study the Haftarah portion and find how it correlates to the Torah portion at hand. Then Friday and Shabbat I study the Brit Chadashah portion which corresponds to the Torah and Haftarah Portion and I then see how it all ties together, finding the common thread; all the while taking notes and writing out my commentary.

I also follow the prescribed daily reading for the month for the book of Psalms. I also read one chapter in Proverbs a day corresponding to the day on the secular calendar. Because the most a month has is 31 days, and there are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs.

There are many other things I study daily such as a devotional or two, the Talmud, Tanya, and Perkei Avot during the summer months, but as far as a simple study for the Jewish believer that covers the essentials, I suggest what I have just prescribed above which will get you through the weekly Torah, Haftarah and Brit Chadasha Portions and a little bit of Psalms and a little bit of Proverbs during the week.

Also, before you even crack open the Torah, thank G-d for it and ask Him to allow His Holy Spirit to open up the Scriptures so you can understand them and apply them to you life.

If you are just beginning Torah study, at first you may just want to read the portions prescribed above and just think about them through the week, you don't have to start writing elaborate notes and such, although I would keep a pen and paper handy in case a verse or a theme really grabs you. The reading of the Scriptures itself, on a daily basis, usually only takes about 30 minutes or less. When you have established a good and faithful routine; expand your time and start taking notes and finding theme and write a commentary in your own words, just for you. No one else has to see. You want to log your studies so you can better retain what G-d has shown you through your studies, and so you can see how you have progressed. Then I would invest in, and keep handy a Concordance, Bible Dictionary and a Topical Bible so you can cross reference and develop the theme you have uncovered.

What I am about to say usually flies in the face of Nominal Christianity, but I say make this a routine, a tradition, a

"legalistic" thing! That's right. Why? Well, you go to work everyday and eat religiously don't you? Well, how much more so working for the L-rd and eating your spiritual food!? You will find so many excuses NOT to study, such as; "I don't feel like it." "I'd be a hypocrite if I studied today." "I don't want it to become a legalistic trap." Phooey! All tired old excuses from devils. It is what YOU make it. How much do you love G-d? How badly do you want to know Him? Look at it as your daily date with G-d, just you and Him. He talks to you through the Word, and You talk to him through prayer and questions.

30 minutes out of your day is nothing considering most of us watch an hour of news when we get home from work, and usually an hour or more with our favorite weekly shows. Not to mention we usually spend 30 minutes or more eating our meals!

Pick or create a time of the day, everyday when you will not be disturbed. I find early mornings best for me, everyone else is asleep and my mind is fresh. This also gives me something to meditate on during the day.

To find the reading schedule for the Torah, Haftarah and Brit Chadasha Portion can be found in the Complete Jewish Bible, and Hebrew Roots with Dean and Susan Whelock out of Wisconsin puts out an annual and triennial reading chart each year. For a reading schedule on the Psalms I suggest you visit [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org).

Sorry I can't make it more complicated for you. ;) You don't have to be a Rabbi or a Torah scholar to study Torah daily. It is so simple; it's the man who complicates the Torah and matters of Faith.