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# How to Study The Bible

**Using the Classical Trivium Method  
Applied to Bible Study  
To Establish a Biblical Foundation of Knowledge**

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## The Trivium - The Tools of Learning

The Trivium is a classical method of study developed in institutions of learning throughout medieval Europe. The principles of the Trivium<sup>1</sup> may be applied to any subject. The Trivium provides the student with the tools of learning necessary for further discipline and specialization in a particular subject. This is the Trivium of Bible study.

Stage One is the “Grammar”. The books delineated for this stage should be learned thoroughly first. They are God’s history record, the chronology divinely protected and preserved for our understanding. With it we can grasp the unveiling of God’s plan; without it we have no frame of reference to know where we came from or where we are going in God’s plan. It **MUST** be read and studied in **CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**, in the order of time as it happened.

Stage Two is the “Reasoning”. These books cover practical living instructions, as well as the poetry and music of the Bible.

Stage Three is the “Rhetoric”. It contains the body of Bible prophecy. These prophetic books seem hard to understand. Many scholars imaginatively tend to over-spiritualize these passages because they are not relating them to the chronology of the revelation up to the prophets’ own time periods. Many things in the prophecies become much more sensible once the foundation of historic chronology has been laid. Without the history, we are always reading out of context. God may speak to you any time through His Word. Yet, He has unveiled the panorama of His universal plan through the history of His dealings with His people.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Classical Method of education read [The Lost Tools of Learning](#) by Dorothy Sayers and [Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning](#) by Douglas Wilson. Both may be obtained through Veritas Press 1250 Belle Meade Drive Lancaster, PA 17601 or [www.veritaspress.com](http://www.veritaspress.com).

## Stage One: The Story

Read these books through in order three (3) times before going on to Stage Two

Read these books straight through as if they were a historical novel. You may use any true translation you choose. I caution against paraphrased versions as they sometimes take “artistic license” with the text. The importance here is for you to get a firm grip on the sequence of events and the relationships of the characters to each other.

Read through these books in the order in which they appear in the Bible. You should read through them three full times before going on to Stage Two. Read through these books at least three full times before going on to Stage Two. *There is no typo here.* Read through Stage One 3X before going on to the next stage.

This is the foundation of all other Bible study. You must have a clear picture of *the story* in your mind and spirit. It’s a wonderful novel of many generations of a family and how each character did well or suffered and, in the process, met God.

God has revealed intimate details of His character throughout Man’s history, generation by generation. We can trace this revelation chronologically. God says of Himself, “I am THE LORD. I change not.” The Christmas story was not the beginning of God’s revelation. In what context did Mary and Joseph understand their role in God’s plan? What did the angel’s words to John the Baptist’s parents-to-be mean to them? We can only get a feel for their experiences, if we know the scriptures that they knew and see the revelation of God that they had. This is the way He has shown Himself. We cannot start in the middle and expect to understand the whole picture. Chronology is the key!

This is the Grammar of Bible study. It should especially be taught to pre-school through eleven year olds and read thoroughly by everyone else who wants to be built upon a firm Biblical foundation. Stay in these books as long as necessary to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the History.

**Stage One: The Story**  
**Read in the Chronological Order Suggested**

Genesis	1 <sup>st</sup> Chronicles
Exodus chapters 1-20; 24; 32-35; 40	2 <sup>nd</sup> Chronicles
Numbers chapters 10; 31-33	Ezra
Deuteronomy	Nehemiah
Joshua	Esther
Judges	Jonah
Ruth	Matthew
1 <sup>st</sup> Samuel	Mark
2 <sup>nd</sup> Samuel	Luke
1 <sup>st</sup> Kings	John
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kings	Acts

**DID YOU KNOW THAT BY READING  
ONLY FIVE CHAPTERS A DAY  
YOU WILL READ THE ENTIRE BIBLE  
IN ABOUT ONE YEAR?**

## **Stage Two: Praise and Practical Living**

Read through at least two (2) times before going on to Stage Three

Chronology may seem less important at this stage, but it is still very helpful to understand the order in which God has revealed His own character to man. Remember, chronology keeps God's revelation in context.

The scriptures that the first Christians had were the sacred writings we now call the Old Testament. As you read this stage notice how often the Apostles quote from the Old Testament. The Apostles expected their readers to interpret their writings according to the previously revealed scripture, i.e. the Old Testament. Shouldn't we follow their example?

The books of the Law are also a revelation of God's character, His justice, and His mercy. Many Bible expositors complain that Bible Law is devoid of mercy. To this accusation I answer, "Read it!" God's Law is full of protection and justice for victims of all sorts; widows, orphans, and anyone in a position to be subject to abuse. There is even protection for one who commits a "crime" accidentally, as well as for one falsely accused.

We need a foundation of understanding God's heart in justice in order to fully appreciate the redemption Jesus Christ bought for us on the cross. Sin creates victims; victims often perpetrate upon others the acts committed against themselves, creating more victims; and on and on since our first parents were ejected from the Garden. All of us are victims; all are perpetrators in one degree or another. Repentance is not superficial when we know the justice we deserve from this God of Justice. Reading His history and His law produces saving faith in the Just God who proves His mercy is everlasting.

The books of praise and poetry continue to reveal the character qualities of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses, Job, and David. No one can assume that somewhere between Moses and David, God's standards changed. Nothing changed. Yet we find that David understood not only His justice, but His mercy upon sinners. The addition of these books to your study will enlarge your own heart with faith in our Just and Merciful God.

## Stage Two: Praise and Practical Living

Exodus -all chapters now	1 <sup>st</sup> Thessalonians
Leviticus	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians
Numbers -all chapters	1 <sup>st</sup> Timothy
Job	2 <sup>nd</sup> Timothy
Psalms	Titus
Proverbs	Philemon
Ecclesiastes	Hebrews
Song of Solomon	James
Romans	1 <sup>st</sup> Peter
1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians	2 <sup>nd</sup> Peter
2 <sup>nd</sup> Corinthians	1 <sup>st</sup> John
Galatians	2 <sup>nd</sup> John
Ephesians	3 <sup>rd</sup> John
Philippians	Jude
Colossians	

*(I know this is what you're really looking for, but no cheating. If you haven't yet read Stage One, go back now and start at the beginning. Then read Stage Two. I can't help you if you don't follow the program. This program works. By following properly you will gain more Bible knowledge than any seminary student who hasn't read the Bible chronologically.)*

## **Stage Three: The Prophets and Revelation**

Remember what I said in the introduction. *“These prophetic books seem hard to understand. Many scholars imaginatively tend to over-spiritualize these passages because they are not relating them to the chronology of the revelation up to the prophets' own time periods. Many things in the prophecies become much more sensible once the foundation of historic chronology has been laid. Without the history, we are always reading out of context. God may speak to you any time through His Word. Yet, He has unveiled the panorama of His universal plan through the history of His dealings with His people.”*

In reading the prophets, notice under which kings each prophet lived. Use your knowledge of the history of the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah to place each prophet in his time period. Keep your historic perspective as you read. Ask yourself, “To whom is the prophet speaking in his day?” “How did the original hearers perceive the prophet's words?”

Stage Three is “strong meat” for those who have “studied to show themselves approved unto God.” You have the foundation. Let the foundation under gird your mind and spirit as you add these books to your reading.

## Stage Three: The Prophets and Revelation

Isaiah	Micah
Jeremiah	Nahum
Lamentations	Habakkuk
Ezekiel	Zephaniah
Daniel	Haggai
Hosea	Zechariah
Joel	Malachi
Amos	Revelation
Obadiah	

## Let us Go On...

Hebrews 5:14 - 6:1

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,  
even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised  
to discern both good and evil.*

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,  
let us go on unto perfection.*

Diagrams with clear overlay sheets adding a new part over the first picture help us study things like the human body. The Bible is like an overlay diagram. God has hidden multiple layers of revelation in His Word. This Trivium of Bible study will give you the tools of learning as applied to the Bible. Your reading in this way will lay the foundation, the basic picture, for God to add His overlays before you.

There is no “Now you’ve got it!” moment. No diploma here. You have a lifetime to read and study the scriptures. Never forget the foundation of chronological history and the revelation of God’s character you have gained. Never again take the scriptures out of context.

2 Peter 1:19-20

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy;  
whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,  
as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,  
until the day dawn,  
and the day star arise in your hearts:*

*Knowing this first,  
that no prophecy of the scripture  
is of any private interpretation.*