

How to Study The Bible

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

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Introduction

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 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 instructions for practical living, as well as the poetry and songs 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 stretch and re-form these passages because they are not relating them to the chronology of revelation up to the prophets' own time periods. Without the history, we are always

reading out of context. Many things in the prophecies become much more sensible once the foundation of historic chronology has been laid.

God's Spirit 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.

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.

Stage One: The Story

Read these books through in order three 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. For a thorough grasp you should read them through 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 3 times 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. Think of it as a wonderful novel of many generations in 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 mean to John the Baptist’s parents-

to-be? 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.

Read in the Chronological Order Suggested

Genesis

Exodus chapters 1-20; 24; 32-35; 40

Numbers chapters 10; 31-33

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1st Samuel

2nd Samuel

1st Kings

2nd Kings

1st Chronicles

2nd Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

Jonah

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

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

Stage One: The Story

Date begun: _____

Check off one box to the left each time this set of chapters
 is read.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Genesis	1-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		6-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		11-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		16-20
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		36-40
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		41-45
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		46-50
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exodus	1-5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		6-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		11-15

				16-20
				24, 31:18, 32-35, 40:33-38
			Numbers	10:33 -Chapter 15
				16-20
			Numbers	21-25:18
			Numbers 31-33	Deuteronomy 1-2
			Deuteronomy	3-7
				8-13
				14-19
				20-24
				25-29
				30-34
			Joshua	1-5
				6-10
				11-15
				16-20
			Joshua 21-24	Judges 1
			Judges	2-6
				7-11
				12-16
				17-21

		Ruth 1-4	I Samuel 1
		I Samuel	2-6
			7-11
			12-16
			17-21
			22-26
			27-31
		II Samuel	1-5
			6-10
			11-15
		II Samuel	16-20
		II Samuel 21-24	I Kings 1
		I Kings	2-6
			7-11
			12-16
			17-21
		I Kings 22	II Kings 1-4
		II Kings	5-9
			10-14
			15-19
			20-24

			II Kings 25	I Chronicles 1-4
			I Chronicles	5-9
				10-14
				15-19
				20-24
				25-29
			II Chronicles	1-5
				6-10
				11-15
				16-20
				21-25
				26-30
				31-35
			II Chronicles 36	Ezra 1-4
			Ezra	5-9
			Ezra 10	Nehemiah 1-4
			Nehemiah	5-9
			Nehemiah 10-13	Esther 1
			Esther	2-6
			Esther 7-10	Matthew 1
			Matthew	2-6

		Matthew	7-11
			12-16
			17-21
			22-26
		Matthew 27-28	Mark 1-3
			4-8
			9-13
		Mark 14-16	Luke 1-2
		Luke	3-7
			8-12
			13-17
			18-22
		Luke 23-24	John 1-3
		John	4-8
			9-13
			14-18
		John 19-21	Acts 1-2
		Acts	3-7
			8-12
			13-17
			18-22

				23-27
			Acts	28

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 known by the Early Church 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 who is 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 rightfully 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

Leviticus

Numbers -all chapters

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

Romans

1st Corinthians

2nd Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1st Thessalonians

2nd Thessalonians

1st Timothy

2nd Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Hebrews

James

1st Peter

2nd Peter

1st John

2nd John

3rd John

Jude

Stage Three: The Prophets and Revelation

(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.)

Remember what I said in the introduction. *Many scholars imaginatively tend to stretch and re-form these passages because they are not relating them to the chronology of the revelation up to the prophets' own time periods. Without the history, we are always reading out of context. Many things in the prophecies become much more sensible once the foundation of historic chronology has been laid.*

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 historical perspective as you read.

Ask yourself, "To whom is the prophet speaking in his day?" and, "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
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi
Revelation

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.*

The Bible is like an overlay diagram. You have probably seen overlay diagrams with clear overlay sheets adding a new part over the first picture to help us study things like the human body or a car engine. 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 your eyes.

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 that 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 stars arise in your hearts:*

*Knowing this first, that
NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE
is of any private interpretation.*

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