

How to Dispensationally Study Your Bible

There can be problems when someone who is unfamiliar with the Bible starts to read it like every other book, beginning with page one. The first 2 books, Genesis and Exodus, are very action-packed and in some cases, very familiar. Most people know the stories about Adam and Eve and the serpent. They know about Cain and Able. They know the story of Noah and the flood. Certainly, the miracle of the Jewish slaves' escape from Egypt and Moses' leading them through the Red Sea have been even been made into movies. Most people can quote this verse:

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

But the next 2 books, Leviticus—Israel's Law—and Numbers—the census of the nation of Israel—can become quite tedious for the beginning Bible student, because he has no understanding of how this information becomes important later on in the Old Testament.

Some people want to avoid getting bogged down in the books of Leviticus and Numbers in the Old

Testament, so they start reading the Bible with the New Testament. The first book in the New Testament, Matthew, starts with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, a new student does not have the understanding of how this list of difficult-to-pronounce names brings us to the place where prophecy is fulfilled (the promises God made to King David of a son to rule his eternal kingdom) and Jesus Christ presents Himself as the King and Redeemer of Israel.

It's really important, when setting up a schedule of studying the Bible, that you don't dive in the "deep end" right away, where you can get bogged down trying to figure out where you are in God's timeline, and feel like you are struggling to come up for air!

It helps if a Bible student not only has an understanding of each book dispensationally (past, present, and/or future information) but looks at each book as part of a whole, like each jigsaw puzzle piece is needed to complete the picture. Each book fits into God's timeline, but you may not find it right next to the books (pieces) on either side! You have to figure out where the

book fits in the timeline.

A better way for a new Bible student to start studying the Bible is to begin with the letters that the apostle Paul wrote to churches and pastors during his ministry. This is the information in the Bible that directly applies to us, who live after the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the “but now” period.

There is another, very practical reason to start with Paul’s epistles. The most important thing for any believer today, is to know for certain that he/she is saved, and to be able to tell others how they, too, can be saved. That information for today’s believers can only be found in Paul’s epistles.

To best way for anyone to read the Bible is to rightly divide it! For us, that is to start with all of the information the Lord Jesus Christ gave (dispensed) to Paul specifically for us! Begin with 1 Corinthians chapter 15. The first 4 verses will save your eternal life. To believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the gospel that saves us. Do you see how

important it is to know which dispensation (from God) you are in when you study the Bible?

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, **I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you**, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **By which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, **how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**

After chapter 15, you want to study, in order, the books of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. The believers in Corinth were an unruly bunch and made a lot of mistakes, so Paul has written a lot of information to help them.

Next, study the 2 letters that Paul wrote to Timothy and his letter to Titus. It is easy to read them like Paul is writing them to you. It also describes a lot about how churches are supposed to be run in the Church, the Body of Christ. If you

have been to church, even if it was not a good experience, you can relate to the letters Paul is sending to the pastors, Timothy and Titus.

Next, read the letter to Philemon. It is about a runaway slave that became important to Paul's ministry. It is an essay on forgiveness.

After the Paul's personal letters (and this is not in order,) read the short epistles of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians. Paul's letters to the Thessalonians introduce the Adoption, also known as the Rapture. Many churches deny this event is even in the Bible, but it is so important that Paul calls it "our hope!" You may not get this information from your church!

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and

purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Next, study the rest of Paul's shorter epistles—Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, and Colossians—in order. This should help reinforce the reading you have done so far.

After Paul's shorter epistles, you are ready to take on Romans. Romans is a comprehensive review of everything you have read in Paul's letters, plus the historical data on Israel's decline.

#5 The Rest of the Bible...

After you have read all of Paul's epistles, as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ, there is no more information from God that you need to know. Make sure you read the previous sentence again. In fact, if you are told that there is anything else (other than what is in Paul's epistles) you must do to be saved, or to please God, or any one of a number of things you might hear on a podcast, or in a church, or in a Bible study, you can go back to the 13 epistles that you have studied, to check it out. If you cannot find it in Paul's epistles, it doesn't apply to you—it's that simple.

For example: following the 10 Commandments, water baptism, tithing, confession of sins, Lenten observation, food restrictions, and required days of church attendance, are all part of many churches today. You will not be able to find these requirements anywhere in Paul's epistles. We are not under Law.

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

What you will find in Paul's epistles, is that anything you want to do to worship God, thank God, or praise God is lawful and you should do it. Anything you don't want to do to worship God, thank God, or praise God is lawful, and you should not do it! You have complete forgiveness and freedom.

Romans 14:5-6

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. **Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.**

When you feel that you have a grasp of your complete forgiveness and the freedom that comes from Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection

on our behalf, and you accept it and know that you are saved, only then should you venture out into the other parts of the Bible that were written for Israel. Keep Paul's epistles in mind when you read the rest of your Bible. Don't apply information that God gave to other people to yourself.

That being said, it is very important to know the history of the nation Israel, and why God is not working with them today. You can start by reading the entire chapter of Acts 7. A wonderful summary of the history of the nation Israel can be found when Stephen confronts the Jewish leadership and tells them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that they did always resist God. They stoned Stephen for saying what he did, and that was when God set Israel aside.

Acts 7:51-53, 58-60

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the

betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

⁵⁸**And cast him out of the city, and stoned him:** and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned **Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.** And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Next, read Acts chapter 13. Paul explains the diminishing of Israel, and the rising of the Gentiles as God's people.

Acts 13:46-48

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, **It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.** For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. **And when the Gentiles heard this, they**

were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Paul provides another great summary of the history of Israel in Acts 13:16-39.

After you read Acts chapters 7 and 13, and have an understanding of the history of Israel and its rise and its diminishing, you should start at the beginning of Acts, and read the entire book. Acts is the transition from God working with Israel, to God putting Israel aside and beginning the Church, the Body of Christ. Chapter 1 starts out with Jesus' ascension, and chapter 2 is Pentecost, with Israel very much on the rise. Chapter 7 is where Israel gets set aside for stoning Stephen. Chapter 13 is where Paul and Barnabas get their dispensation to the Gentiles, and by the last chapter, chapter 28, the focus is totally on the Gentiles and Paul's ministry.

Acts 28:27-29

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes,

and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. **Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.** And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

By this time, you have read all of the epistles of Paul written to the Church, the Body of Christ, and the book of Acts, that transitions from Jesus' ascension to the diminishing of Israel to the Church, the Body of Christ. Now, it is important that you read the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in order. This upsets a lot of people, but your studies will show you that Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies from "time past," that God would send Israel a King and a Redeemer. There is nothing for or about us, in the dispensation of "but now," in the Gospels.

Romans 15:8

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, **to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:**

Matthew 15:24

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So you need to think about the Gospels as history, (and prophecy) not something that applies to you today. If you are unsure, just check what you are reading in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, against Paul's epistles, to see if it applies to you. There is no doubt that Jesus' time on earth is unique in human history, and that His death, burial, and resurrection is the most important event in all of history, but Jesus was sent to fulfill all of the promises throughout the Old Testament, to Israel. Remember, His death, burial, and resurrection is God's New Testament with Israel first, and then all of mankind.

John 5:39

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Jesus' time on earth is so important that it is recorded in these 4 books called Gospels. Each one focuses on a particular aspect of our Lord

Jesus Christ. It increases your understanding of His earthly ministry if you know each one. Matthew focuses on Him as the King and Redeemer of Israel. Mark focuses on Him as the servant of all. Luke focuses on His credentials to be the Savior of all mankind. John focuses on Him as God in human form.

After reading the Gospels, you must continue to remind yourself that Jesus was under Law, and you are not.

Galatians 4:4

But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law,** that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Jesus' message throughout the Gospels was for those under the Law, Israel. Jesus gave His message for you, to the apostle Paul.

Ephesians 3:1-4

For this cause I **Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the**

dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, **Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ**)

Now, read the book of Acts again. You will see the transition from Israel to the Church, the Body of Christ much better. This is crucial to understanding where we are today on God's timeline.

Now you are ready to learn about the transition back to Israel. Paul explains that God has not cast them away. He will fulfil all of the promises and prophecies He gave to them.

Romans 11:1-3

I say then, **Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.** Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged

down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Hebrews is written to the Jews of the future, who are left on earth after the Church, the Body of Christ is taken in the Rapture. It transitions from the Church, the Body of Christ, back to God working with the nation Israel. Hebrews has so much information about who Jesus was, His purpose, and the prophecies that He fulfilled by His time on earth—from a Jewish perspective. Remember, Israel rejected Christ as King and Redeemer when He was on earth. Hebrews tells them what they missed at Jesus' first coming. There is no other book like it.

Study Hebrews 11 first because it gives another great review of the history of the Bible, all the way back to Adam. After chapter 11, start at the beginning of Hebrews and read it through, focusing on the great explanation of Jesus' fulfillment of all of the Old Testament prophecies and His right to be King and Redeemer of Israel.

Next, read the books of James, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, 1 Peter, 2 Peter and Jude. All of these

books are for the Jews who are left on the earth after the Rapture, who are facing the judgement of God for their unbelief. The very first verse of James clearly states that it is James writing to the 12 tribes (Israel) after Christ's earthly ministry (because he mentions the Lord Jesus Christ,) that have been scattered (by Assyria and by Rome) and encouraging them, because their faith is being tried and they are being tested.

James 1:1-3

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when **ye fall into divers temptations**; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Again, many of the verses in these books are used by today's churches, quite out of context. They are for Israel in the future.

Save Revelation for last: after reading everything else.

It's time to study the Old Testament. Start with

Genesis and Exodus. They have a lot of information that is familiar to most people. You can skim Leviticus and Numbers so you don't get bogged down. Leviticus is the Law and Numbers is the census.

Then, study the books in order to get a good flow of the history—Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges, skip Ruth as a stand-alone book to save for later. Read 1 Samuel, then after 2 Samuel, decide if you want to read 1 Kings and 2 Kings or 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles. The information in the books of Kings and Chronicles is very similar and sometimes, for the new reader, rather tedious. As a new Bible student, you want to have the very best experience possible, and you don't need to take in everything at once. You can read the other set of books the next time through the Bible!

Next are Ezra and Nehemiah, and save Esther and Job for later. Also save Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon for later to prevent interrupting the history storyline.

Then study Isaiah and Jeremiah, skip

Lamentations and then study Ezekiel through Obadiah, skip Jonah, then Micah through to Malachi.

The books that you skipped and saved for later include: Ruth, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Jonah, and Revelation.

- Ruth explains the kinsman redeemer.
- Esther saved the Jews from a world-wide slaughter.
- Job is reputed to be the first book written and has a lot of information about how God feels about His creation. It confirms that animals know God better than man, and that they have souls. It is one of my favorites!

Job 12:7-10

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

- Psalms. There are 150 Psalms. You should take your time and go through them like you are trying each one of them on to see how it fits. There are psalms for every situation. Some you will want to memorize and refer back to for comfort or inspiration. (Think Psalm 23.)
- Proverbs is a book of Solomon's wisdom. There are 31 chapters in Proverbs. It was recommended to me that a Bible student could read the Proverbs chapter each day that corresponds with the number of the day in the month. For example, read Proverbs 1 on the first day of the month, etc.
- Ecclesiastes is another book of Solomon's wisdom. Animal lovers will want to read this book, too, because it confirms that animals have a spirit.
- Song of Solomon is about marital love according to God's plan.
- Lamentations is about God's judgement of Judah, allowing Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and to take Judah out of their land.
- Jonah is the famous story of a reluctant prophet sent to save Ninevah, who was

himself saved by being swallowed by a great fish.

- Revelation. Before you start studying the book of Revelation, remember that, if you are a believer, you will be raptured before God's judgement in Revelation will be visited upon the earth. Most people find Revelation difficult to understand, so don't worry if you do, we will be saved from God's wrath because of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8-9

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, **being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**