

1, 2, 3, D; A Deductive Bible Study Paradigm

One, if not the most severe deficiencies in Christianity and in the world today, is Bible illiteracy. In the developed world virtually everyone has a Bible somewhere gathering dust. In Christian homes there may be a number of translations obtaining that same fate. There are also, for the price of a decent Study Bible, numerous mp3 Bible versions read by great orators.

Depending on how a particular Bible is edited, it may contain from a thousand to fifteen hundred pages. How should one begin to understand and study such a daunting and complex task?

One of the assets of western culture that sets it apart from all other civilizations on this earth, now and throughout history, is the constructive use of deductive reasoning. Basically that means that from great principles, underlying specific applications can be logically obtained. This basically means, with a picture of the house you want to build, you can develop a set of plans to build it.

The other approach is similarly called inductive reasoning. This means that you start with the construction materials and as you build, either in fact or on paper, the vision of the finished house slowly emerges.

In the absolute sense, neither method is right or wrong they are just different, and have different applications and different strengths. One may take you through a pilgrimage where you don't know where you are headed, the other says you know where you are going, you just need to figure out the route of your travel.

When successfully combined, on the journey by looking at the way ahead you may decide to take one path or the other, believing that it will speed or improve your journey. Deciding only from the information you currently have available, you make your choice. The consequences of making a wrong decision truly rest upon whether you are taking a stroll in the woods, just to gaze at creation's tremendous wonder, knowing that you will not get lost and can return home before sundown. Or knowing that you need to be to Grandma's house for supper.

There are a number of inductive ways to study the Bible, some of them good, some of them can get you lost in the forest of many trees if you stray from the well worn path. However, if you start with a basic deductive Bible paradigm, you can quickly understand that this path is leading in the wrong direction, and you can quickly return to your pilgrimage fork in the trail.

This brings us to the **1,2,3 D; Bible Study Paradigm**.

Essentially what that means: One Bible, divided into two parts, three ways, that always leads you to make a sound decision. This is your best traveling compass, or modern GPS for studying the Bible.

One Bible: The Bible is a specific revelation of God Almighty for humanity in this time, space, and matter world. As such it must ultimately be dealt with by individuals within that real paradigm. Even though it contains some emotional and deep wisdom, that wisdom is specifically revealed within the natural continuum of time and reality. In that reality, the Bible is a specific revelation of Jesus the Christ, the Word of God. All the pages point to Him and what He accomplished on the cross and through His resurrection from the dead, to restore God's communion with sinful mankind. The out growth of those acts (His death and resurrection) will allow you to wear a **CAP** for God's glory. That **CAP** stands for the revealed construct of **C**ondemnation for transgressing the law of God, **A**doption through the work of Christ, and **P**raise for that unmerited grace. That **CAP** has restored man with God, again in true reality.

Two parts, Three ways: The first of those two part ways is the Old and the New Testaments. The second is the distinction between Law and Gospel. The third between the Indicative and the Imperative.

The Old & New Testaments. To our thinking the Old Testament precedes the New, therefore we use the Old intuitively, to interpret the New. Here is where our intuitive ways depart from true logical deduction. The central theme of the Bible is the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah, on the cross for the sins of all mankind and His subsequent resurrection from the dead for our justification and adoption. From this vantage point, our analysis of the rest of scripture must begin. Simply, because they are the focus of God's Bible lens. The rest of scripture either points to or away from that event. However, the Bible teaches that wisdom is to come to the cross for grace, life, and freedom, to walk away from the cross is a path to sin, and vanity, ultimately hell and judgment.

Law & Gospel. Just as the Bible is divided into Old and New Testaments it is also divided into Law and Gospel. Again, if we look intuitively at the Bible as Old Testament Law and the New Testament Gospel, we miss the focus of the Bible on the Cross of Calvary and Christ's ensuing resurrection. Briefly stated, law is a statement of something we should not do and because of God's holiness will be judged for its transgression. The gospel is a statement of God's unmerited grace that shows the way that God understands man's sinful condition and has provided a remedy. That law and grace remedy should be stated in the context of a passage studied, if not the passage should become inclusive of both. That true context always points to the coming Messiah, or to the historical fact that the Messiah has come.

Indicative & Imperative. Probably more foreign to most Christians is the construction of Indicatives and Imperatives. Hence, their confusion leads to people trying to achieve the impossible, but not attempting to live by those precepts that they can achieve through their redemption and living in the present reality of being chosen as a child of God. Simply put, Indicatives are a statement of true facts. Imperatives are exhortations to live up to a standard or to improve through God's grace, to more consistently grow in sanctification or the image of Christ. Again that power comes through the central focus of the Bible, what Jesus did, not what you can or attempt to do.

D: Decide. So it is up to you, created in the image of God, as a religious eternal personality, how you will study the Bible. In Deductive reasoning you must take into account the Bible's historical context and the person and the finished work of Jesus Christ, but also those who have gone before. The Bible was written by God for all mankind and as such its revelations have been and are available to all humanity. At the same time, the present context you find yourself, is truly unique physically in your circumstance, but is not generally unique to others alive at this time, nor those who lived in the past, or who will live in the future.

As said at the onset, the wise use of deductive reasoning is what sets western culture apart from all the world's other civilizations. By definition, deduction begins outside the individual but leads through logic to the individual. Properly utilized it leads to the tremendous joy of knowing that all humanity did not evolve from some primordial swamp struck by lightning, but you were designed by and created in the image of God and therefore have a present and eternal purpose and destiny.

Furthermore, in time in space we must be concerned more with what Jesus did, instead of what would Jesus do. What Jesus did is an Indicative, our efforts to live like Jesus are imperative intentions or duties you attempt because of that time and place event. As you learn to live in that grace, that your sins are truly forgiven by God, in past, present, and future tense, only then can you receive the power to overcome sins' and death's control over your life.