

Sunday Bible College

Chapter 17 pt2

EXCURSUS:
How to read the Bible
and understand it

Holy Trinity
Anglican Church
Fernandina Beach, Florida

IGNATIUS
Catholic Study Bible

The Gospel of MATTHEW

IB



Commentary, Notes, & Study Questions

Revised Standard Version
Second Catholic Edition

Excursus #5

How to Read the Bible and understand it.

In the past three weeks I have had a number of parishioners ask for clarification on how to read the Bible. Therefore, today we will take a brief refresher course on how the Bible is to be read.

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

#1. Read the Bible often and deliberately to become familiar with its content.

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**How to Read the Bible
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#1. Read the Bible often and deliberately to become familiar with its content.

a. Read it once from beginning to end, in chronological order.

(Chronological study Bibles can help. There are also lists of Bible books in order available on the internet.)

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

#1. Read the Bible often and deliberately to become familiar with its content.

b. Review the most important books of the Bible annually.

Genesis, Job, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, Psalms*, Proverbs*, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Matthew, John, Acts, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, 1John

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**How to Read the Bible
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#1. Read the Bible often and deliberately to become familiar with its content.

c. Always engage yourself in the study of the New Testament.

We are Christians, the New Testament is the record of the Covenant God has made with us. We can not overstate the need to cherish the New Testament, our covenant with God.

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**How to Read the Bible
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#1. Read the Bible often and deliberately to become familiar with its content.

d. First and foremost, read from the Gospels every day.

The Gospels are our most immediate source of knowledge about our great God and Savior Jesus Christ - every Christian ought to know the Gospels.

St. Jerome (the great Bible translator) wrote, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

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#1. Read the Bible often and deliberately to become familiar with its content.

e. Finally, the Church has always maintained, as a matter of utmost importance, that all Christians should read, sing and pray the Psalms every day.

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**How to Read the Bible
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A Practical Note:

It isn't necessary to do all this at once. Start by reading the whole Bible; then reread the most important books; then settle into the habit of weekly New Testament Bible study and daily reading of the Gospels and Psalms.

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

#2. Know the 4 Senses of Scripture

Excursus #5

How to Read the Bible
and understand it

The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture

First: The Literal Sense

The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture

First: The Literal Sense

Some rules of sound interpretation:

- What is the genre of the text (Historical, theological, Epistle, Novel, Poetry, Etc)
- "The Analogy of Faith" - The Bible is the work of the H.G. and never contradicts itself. It is a seamless whole and all parts must be interpreted in light of the whole.

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture

Second: The Analogical Sense

We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ;

Thus, the literal OT Egyptian slavery of the Israelites is, in the NT an analogy of slavery to sin and bondage in this world.

& Thus the OT crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory over sin and also of Christian Baptism.

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
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The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture

Third: The Moral Sense

The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction".

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
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The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture

Fourth: The Anagogical Sense

Scripture is leading us somewhere. We can view realities and events recorded in Scripture in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland:

Thus the OT City of Jerusalem and the NT Church on earth are signs of the heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal City of God.

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture in Matthew's Transfiguration of the Christ

Literal:

On a particular day in history, Jesus and three of his disciples climbed a particular mountain; Jesus' clothes turned super-white; two "ghosts" appeared (Moses and Elijah) and spoke with Jesus; the voice of God spoke to all present; Jesus and the disciples came down from the mountain.

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The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture
in Matthew's Transfiguration of the Christ

Analogical:

The OT Mount Sinai (Horeb) was a type or symbol of the Holy Mountain on which Jesus stood, and both Moses (the Law Giver) and Elijah (the great Prophet) were types or signs of the coming Christ who is the greater Law Giver and Prophet. The OT glory cloud was a type or sign of the glory of Jesus revealed in his transfiguration.

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The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture
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The Moral Sense:

The Voice of God tells us how we ought to react to the Transfiguration: Jesus is the Son of God, listen to him!

The Apostles also demonstrate both negatively and positively how we ought to act - with great humility, reverence, awe, and anticipation for the fulfillment of all things in Christ.

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The 4 Senses of Sacred Scripture
in Matthew's Transfiguration of the Christ

The Anagogical Sense:

Just as the Apostles were enraptured by the vision of Christ in his glory, so the end of all believers is to live in that enraptured state, forever beholding the unmasked glory of the holy Trinity. Thus, the Mount of the Transfiguration is a foretaste of our ultimate destiny - the Beatific Vision.

Excursus #5

**How to Read the Bible
and understand it**

1. Read the Bible
2. Interpret the Scriptures
according to sound principles
3. Always consider the 4 Senses
of Sacred Scripture

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Next Week:
Matthew 17:14-21

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