

SELECTIVE BIBLE READING PLAN

Reading the Bible to Understand It's Overall Message and Stories

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*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,
so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

1 John 5:13

THE IDEA

People often wonder how to read and understand the Bible. This reading plan, along with the added commentary, should help give clear understanding and a simpler way to read the Bible. All scripture is beneficial to us but the order, selections, and portions in this plan, are to help the first time reader. It will also help anyone who wants to grasp its overall message and stories before studying every book of the Bible. Also take time to read through the following topics with their related scriptures. These short teachings will help you begin to round out your knowledge of the Word as well as provide a foundation for further study.

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➤ WHY CHRISTIANITY AND THE BIBLE ARE SUPREME

There are three ways in which Christianity differs from all other religions, making it supreme. These three facts establish why a person should give serious attention to Christianity well above any other thought, idea or religion created by man about God.

1. It is the only religion whose leader has come back from the dead.
 - a. Every other religious figure revered by man still lies in the grave.
 - b. Jesus said, ...

John 14:6 *Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

... And then rose from the dead to back up His claims.
2. It is the only religion where man doesn't have to "earn" his way to heaven. In Christianity God provides the way of salvation for man.
 - a. In Christianity, a loving God makes the repentant person righteous, through their faith.
 - b. All other religions say you must "work" for your salvation to earn righteousness.
3. It is the only religion with a book that can be proven to be written by God.
 - a. From it's unique origin, to the prophecy it contains, to its historic and scientific accuracy, and its accurate preservation through time, the Bible provides definitive proof of being of divine origin.
 - b. All other religious writings have no way to prove divine origin, but end up being the writings or thoughts men.

➤ **THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND FOLLOWING GOD'S WORD**

1. Just as your body needs oxygen to have physical life we need the word of God for our spirit to have life. The word of God is the "Oxygen of Heaven", which awakens your mind to a consciousness of spiritual life in Christ.

John 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."*

2. The growth of our salvation, and the building of our relationship with God as our Heavenly Father, is vitally connected to our reading and understanding of God's word.

1 Peter 2:2 (NASB)

² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

3. The word of God is your road map for this life and the life hereafter. It will show you where you are in Life (a lamp to our feet), and give you the direction and decisions you need to make in life (light to our path).

Psalms 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

4. God's whole purpose in giving us His word is so that our lives can be blessed now and hereafter in every way. God's heart is to share his life with you. By knowing Jesus and following His word, you will be able to navigate successfully through this life as you prepare for eternity.

Deuteronomy 5:29 *'Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!'*

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

➤ THE MAKEUP OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books which were written over a period of approximately 1,600 years. God used around forty different people, from all walks of life, to write His word. The books of the Bible are grouped into two sections, the Old and the New Testaments. The Old Testament contains 39 books and the New Testament contains 27 books. The Old Testament are the books written before Christ and the New Testament are the books written after Christ.

➤ THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible tells the complete story of man, the purpose and meaning of life, as well as what God is doing in the earth and throughout eternity. From the creation of man and his fall, to his restoration to God, the Bible covers it all. Below is a comparison of topics covered in the first and last books of the Bible. In the first book we see how things started out, and in the last book we see how things end up, as God prepares man for the ultimate eternity.

GENESIS

- Plan of God Begins
- Creation of heavens and earth
- The first Adam and his dominion
- First bride, (Eve)
- Satan appears
- Man loses:
 - Perfect fellowship with God
 - Paradise
 - His dominion
 - His purpose
 - Access to the Tree of Life
 - Access to the Garden River
- Story of first death
- Building of Babylon
- Beginning of the Story of Israel

REVELATION

- Plan of God is completed
- New heavens and New earth
- The last "Adam" and His dominion
- Last bride, (the church)
- Satan disappears
- Man regains;
 - Perfect fellowship with God
 - Paradise
 - His dominion
 - His purpose
 - Access to the Tree of Life
 - Access to the Garden River
- No more death
- Total destruction of Babylon
- Completion of the Story of Israel

➤ THE KEY VERSE TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Revelation 19:10 says, "...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

This verse is the Key Verse to the whole Bible. It tells us that the reason God gave forth His Word (prophecy) was to give us the story (testify to us) of Jesus.

Below we can see how the whole Bible revolves around the story of Jesus and how God used Him to bring salvation

We can look at the "Five Main" sections of the 66 books and see just how true this is.

1st THE OLD TESTAMENT - announced His coming to earth as a baby to live among us, teach us of God, and die on the cross for our sins. Therefore, the Old Testament declares, ***He's coming***

2nd THE GOSPELS - are four separate accounts of the life of Jesus on earth as seen through the eyes of those who knew Him. The gospels declare, ***He's here***

3rd ACTS - is the history of the early church and its efforts to evangelize the world. In Acts the early church proclaims, ***He has been here.***

4th LETTERS - (Romans through Jude), were written by the early church leaders who wrote concerning doctrine and how to live the Christian life. The letters explain, ***what He taught while here***

5th THE REVELATION - tells of the end times and the return of Jesus to the earth a second time to complete what he started. The Revelation tells us, ***He's coming back***

➤ THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT VS. THE NEW TESTAMENT

The word "testament" and its synonym "covenant" are words used in the Bible which mean the same as our more modern word "contract". In a contract there are promises made between two parties who decide to do something. For instance, someone may decide to buy a home someone is selling. When both agree on a price a contract is drawn up. The contract declares each person's responsibility to each other. The seller agrees to sell the house if the buyer agrees to pay a certain amount. When each performs their part, the sell happens and the contract has been satisfied.

The Old Testament and the New Testament both contain "contracts" through which man can be made righteous before God and have eternal life.

THE OLD TESTAMENT "CONTRACT":

- Man must "keep the laws" of God perfectly his whole life, from birth to death, and never ever sin, to be declared righteous.

Galatians 3:21 ... For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

- It is impossible for man to be made righteous by the law since he is born with a sin nature, and all sin, in one way or another.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

*(See the section below on "THE STORY OF TWO ADAMS")

- Even if man only sins once it would make him less than perfect before the law.

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

- Still many falsely believe that they can saved (made righteous) by keeping the law which is referred to as their "Good Work's" but no amount of good works can make up for any wrong.
 - That would be like a man who had robbed a bank and then entered his plea as to why he shouldn't go to jail. It's because there were 50 other banks he could have robbed and didn't. So for the "good" he did by not robbing the other banks, could he be let off for the one he did rob.
 - God is a loving God but he is also a just God, and therefore must judge sin. Even if we only committed one sin it would strip us of any hope of being righteous before the law.

- The Bible declares that the person who sins is under a sentence of death and man's effort to be righteous cannot save him.

Ezekiel 18:4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

THE NEW TESTAMENT "CONTRACT":

- The "New" contract God makes with us in the New Testament is the only way man can have any hope of being righteous.

- This contract is based on what Jesus did for us on the cross. The judgement of God fell on Him as he died for sin in our place.

Luke 22:20 *And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.*

- Jesus is the truth, the life, and the way to God. Jesus was God's perfect plan to bring us to Him.

John 14:6 *Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

- It is a contract of "faith". Man accepts God's offer of grace and is forgiven. He receives righteousness through the sacrifice of Christ.

Romans 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

Philippians 3:9 *and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,*

- Man is made righteous, not by any of his efforts, but through faith in what a loving God has done by giving His son to die on our behalf.

Ephesians 2:8,9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

➤ THE STORY OF TWO ADAMS

1. Two men are mentioned in the Bible as having an effect upon all mankind. One was from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament. The first came forth from the earth and the second came forth from heaven. The first brought us natural life the second brings us spiritual life.

1 Corinthians 15:47 *The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from*

1 Corinthians 15:45 *So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

2. Adam, the first man, was created with natural life and had innocence. Therefore, he was able to enjoy all the blessings and presence of God.

Genesis 1:26 *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;...*

Genesis 2:8 *The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.*

3. God created the first Adam with a will. He could choose whether to follow God or not. God gave Adam only one restriction, and that was to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man could either prove his trust and love for God, or disobey and follow his own desires.

Genesis 2:16-17 *The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."*

4. The first man chose to follow his own desires, ignoring God's command. Therefore, he rebelled against God and brought into existence the sin nature of man.

Genesis 3:6 *... she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*

5. The first man sinned through the act of defiance and died a "spiritual death". This caused separation from God and His eternal blessings.

Genesis 3:24 *So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.*

6. The first man's sin affected all mankind. Because of Adam's sin, all are now born with a sin nature. Man is separated from God, and under the sentence of a physical death.

Romans 5:19 *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. sinned—*

7. The second "Adam", Jesus, came to bring righteousness to man by taking away sin. To all who make Him savior and Lord. Through His death on the cross, Jesus brings us back to an eternal living relationship with our Heavenly father and all His blessings.

Romans 5:19 *... through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. sinned—*

John 17:3 *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

➤ ISRAEL AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament books below show the chronological history of Israel.

1. *GENESIS* – The nation of Israel begins with Abram in chapter twelve.
2. *EXODUS* – Israel was enslaved in Egypt, then delivered from Egypt, then given the law by God.
3. *LEVITICUS* – Israel learned how to worship.
4. *NUMBERS* – Israel set out to enter the promise land but failed.
5. *DEUTERONOMY* – Moses reviewed Israel's journey and failures, and gave them the law again.
6. *JOSHUA* – Moses died; Joshua takes over and lead Israel into the promise land.
7. *JUDGES* – Israel lived in the land but were mostly unfaithful to God.
8. *RUTH* – A story of a faithful woman during the times of the Judges.
9. *1 SAMUEL* – Stories of Samuel, King Saul, and King David.
10. *2 SAMUEL* – History of King David's reign.
11. *1 KINGS* – Reign of King Solomon (David's son), his death and the dividing of the kingdom.
12. *2 KINGS* – Decline and captivity of both Israel, the northern tribes, and Judah, the southern tribes.

*1 & 2 *Chronicles* – Written after the captivity – An overview of the History of Israel.
13. *EZRA* – The partial return of Israel from captivity.
14. *NEHEMIAH* – The rebuilding of the walls of the city Jerusalem.

➤ ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO BECOME GOD'S NATION TO THE WORLD

It is easy to see how central the story of Israel is to the Old Testament. God had made a unique promise to Abram (whose name was later change to Abraham). Gold told Abraham that through him would come a great nation, Israel. Through Israel all nations of the earth would be blessed.

Genesis 22:18 *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

Deuteronomy 15:6 *"For the LORD your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you."*

Deuteronomy 9:5 *"It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which, the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."*

From Abraham to his son Isaac, from Isaac to his son Jacob (whom God changed his name to Israel), came Israel's twelve sons known as the 12 tribes of Israel. The nation of Israel, after many years, moved to Egypt. While living in Egypt they became enslaved by the Egyptians, until God delivered them through Moses.

Moses lead them out of captivity from Egypt and his successor Joshua lead them into the "Promise Land". In the promise land they were ruled by their judges and finally their kings. Israel always struggled being faithful to God and His word. They would seek after false gods, worship idols, and persecute His prophets. Through internal strife the nation split into two kingdoms. The two kingdoms were the Northern kingdom with ten tribes which kept the name Israel and the Southern kingdom, called Judah, had two tribes. Because the nation of Israel had failed to honor God, both the northern and southern kingdoms were conquered by foreign nations.

➤ THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH

In the last book of the Bible, which is the book of the Revelation, God reveals His plan to remake the heavens and the earth.

Revelation 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.*

When this happens the “first things” will have passed away, and the new order for eternity will be set up. A new order where righteousness reigns and God’s plan is accomplished throughout the entire universe, and all creation.

Revelation 21:4 *and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*

*But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth,
in which righteousness dwells.*

2 Peter 3:13

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

- John ----- A story of Jesus' life as told by the Apostle John highlighting Jesus as God.
 Acts ----- Stories of the empowering and actions of the disciples after Jesus went back to heaven.
 Romans ----- The destroying of the sin nature.
 Galatians ----- Living in the true freedom of the Gospel – made righteous by faith not works.
 Ephesians ----- The mysteries of the "Church" the body of Christ, and our honoring of it.
 1 & 2 & 3 John ----- John's letters to all the churches with a strong emphasis to love everyone.
 James ----- A practical look at faith and how without action our faith is dead.
 Colossians ----- Paul's letter to the church at Colossae regarding the supremacy of Christ.
 1 & 2 Peter ----- Peter's letters to all the churches regarding trials and the ultimate return of Christ.
 Philippians ----- Paul's letter, while he was in jail, encouraging us to have Christ likeness and joy.
 1 & 2 Thessalonians --- Rapture and the "End Times".
 1 & 2 Corinthians ----- Paul's letters to the church at Corinth to correct their errors.
 Philemon ----- Paul's letter to a friend to forgive another.
 Hebrews ----- Paul's letter to the Hebrews regarding faith in the full work of Christ as our high priest.
 Jude ----- A prophetic letter from Jude regarding Christ return and judgement for all who live un-Godly.

DAY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
John	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17 18	19 20 21																				
Acts								1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17 18	19 20 21	22 23 24	25 26 27	28										
Ro.																	1 3	5 6 7	8 12 13	15 16							
Gal.																				1	2 3 4	5 6					
Eph.																						1	2 3 4	5 6			
1 John																								1	2 3 4	5	
2 John																											1
3 John																											1

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS CONTINUED

DAY	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51
James	1 2 3	4 5																							
Col.		1	2 3 4																						
1 Pet.				1 2 3	4 5																				
2 Pet.					1	2 3																			
Philip.						1	2 3 4																		
1 Thess.								1 2 3	4 5																
2 Thess.									1	2 3															
1 Cor.										1	2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10	11 12 13	14 15 16										
2 Cor.																1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12	13					
Phil.																				1					
Heb.																				1	2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10	11 12 13	
Jude																									1

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

The Old Testament contains a lot of books on prophecy and instructions for the nation of Israel in their worship of God. These books have their place in academic study, but not as the first books we read. Read first the stories of the lives of those God worked through in the Old Testament. This way, as the Bible says, we can learn from their failures or triumphs of faith.

1 Corinthians 10:6 *Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.*

Genesis ----- Story of creation, mankind and the nation of Israel.
 Exodus ----- Israel's slavery and deliverance by God through Moses.
 Leviticus ----- Instruction to Israel on How to worship God, treat each other and be His nation to the world.
 Numbers ----- Failure to trust God and enter the promise land.
 Deuteronomy -- A second time of receiving the law.
 Joshua ----- The story of God's people entering the promised land.
 Judges ----- Israel's unfaithfulness in the promised land.
 Ruth ----- Ruth's faithfulness during the time of the Judges.

1 Samuel ----- Stories of Samuel, Saul, and David.
 2 Samuel ----- History of King David's reign.
 1 Kings ----- Rule of King Solomon, his death and the dividing of the Kingdom.
 2 Kings ----- Decline and captivity of both Israel and Judah.
 Ezra ----- A return of the remnant from captivity.
 Nehemiah ----- Rebuilding the walls of the city of Jerusalem.
 Esther ----- God's salvation of Israel through Queen Esther.
 Daniel ----- Stories and prophecies during the time of captivity in Babylon.
 Job ----- Man's struggle to understand the ways of God.

DAY	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
Gen.	1	4	8	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36:1-8	39	42	45	48					
	2	6	9	13	16	19	22	25	28	31	34	37	40	43	46:1-7, 26-34	49					
	3	7	11:1-9, 27-32	14	17	20	23	26	29	32	35	38	41	44	47	50					
Ex.																	1	4	7	10	13
																	2	5	8	11	14
																	3	6:1-13, 26-30	9	12	15

DAY	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92
Ex.	16	19	23:20-33	33	36:1-7															
	17	20	24	34	40															
	18	21	32	35																
Lev.					1:1-11															
Num.						1:1-19, 47-54	10:1-13,33-36	13	17	22	25									
						3:1-13	11	14	20	23	26:1,2,63,65									
						9	12	16	21	24	27:15-23									
Deut.												1	4	7	10	28				
												2	5	8	11	30				
												3	6	9	27	34				
Josh.																	1	4	7	10
																	2	5	8	11
																	3	6	9	22

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS CONTINUED

DAY	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	
Josh.	23 24																								
Jud.	1	2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10	11 12 13	14 15 16	17 18 19	20 21																	
Ruth								1	2 3 4																
1 Sam.										1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17 18	19 20 21	22 23 24	25 26 27	28 29 31						
2 Sam.																				1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15	

DAY	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137			
2 Sam.	16 17 18	19 20 21	22 23 24																					
1 Kings				1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17 18	19 20 21	22													
2 Kings											1 2	3 4 5	6 7 8	9 10 11	12 13 14	15 16 17	18 19 20	21 22 23	24 25					
Dan.																			1		2 3 4		5 6	
Ezra																								1

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS CONTINUED

DAY	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
Ezra	2:1,64-70 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10										
Esth.				1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10						
Neh.							1 2	3 4 5	6 7:1-5, 66-73 8	9 12:27-47 13			
Job											1 2 3	23 38 39	40 41 42