

# Bible reading

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## An introductory selection of important passages.

1 Creation (Genesis)	7 Jesus (Matthew)	13 Ruth (Ruth)	19 Jesus (Luke)
2 Noah (Genesis)	8 Joseph (Genesis)	14 The Acts of the Apostles	20 Psalms
3 Jesus (Matthew)	9 Jesus (Mark)	15 Samuel (1 Samuel)	21 Letters
4 Abraham (Genesis)	10 Moses (Exodus)	16 David (1 Samuel)	22 Jesus (John)
5 Isaac (Genesis)	11 Jesus (Mark)	17 Jesus (Luke)	23 Prophets
6 Jacob (Genesis)	12 Joshua (Joshua)	18 Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings)	24 Revelation

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## Why Read the Bible?

We live in an incredibly confused world. During the twentieth century there have been unbelievable advances in technology which are designed to make our lives easier and happier. Communication between one part of the world and another is literally at the fingertip. It takes no longer than 10 seconds to talk with people 20,000 kilometres away and only 24 hours to visit them. We have equipment in our homes that involves us in much less physical work, and the increasing prevalence of computers make mental work less exhausting. We can put people on the moon and into space for long periods of time, and the advances in medical technology enable astonishing achievements calculated to lengthen lives in general, and minimise pain and suffering in particular. Yet with all of these advantages we seem to have less and less regard for life and seem to shed our responsibilities to others too readily. Violence is unquestionably increasing. Moral laxity is resulting in the disintegration of family life and a breakdown of social relationships, and wars and terrorism in so many parts of the world indicate that society is becoming increasingly chaotic, unpredictable, and, for many people, fearsome.

It is inconceivable that countries having increasing difficulty in providing sufficient food for their people are spending vast amounts of money on armaments. It is against this background that Bible reading, the consistent meditation on the Word of God, assumes vital importance. It is not by coincidence that the Bible is the book that has survived and thrived over sixteen centuries with, of course, many of its books surviving a far longer time.

## The Bible has answers!

The Bible has the answer to the problems that face the world if only more people would read it consistently and pray for God's guidance in the understanding of it.

There was a time when most people would accept the teaching of the Bible if only on a superficial, moral basis. They would accept the moral teachings of Jesus - that one should be kind to one's neighbour, that stealing, killing and immoral behaviour were not socially acceptable. However,

modern society does not accept even some of these teachings, particularly as far as marriage is concerned. Marriage is now less respected, and for those who do marry, divorce regarded as something that ought to be easily obtained. There is less encouragement to work at building relationships and accepting commitment.

The general consequence of this free approach to society is the breakdown we are all witnessing. The Bible's answer to these difficulties is on two levels. The first and most immediate is that a commitment to reading the whole Bible and to living the principles contained in it will give an immediate guide to everyday living, a living that, if placed in God's hands, will help us to cope with the many difficulties we all inevitably face. A life in Christ will not mean an absence of life's problems but it will provide a way of coming to terms with them.

### **God's glory**

The more long-term answer is found in the Bible's insistence on a time when the earth will be filled with God's glory (Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk 2:14). So many passages tell of a world wide kingdom on earth over which Jesus Christ will be King and during which time peace will be established.

The truth of the Bible is unquestionable. Prophecies have been fulfilled and its historical authenticity vindicated. If it is so certain that the Bible contains God's answer to our life's many questions, it is of vital importance that we seek that answer.

This Web site has been written to encourage Bible reading. It is something that must be done as often as possible and preferably each day. The readings included are intended to enable families and individuals to regularly read the scriptures and cover a wide variety of readings.

The reward that can be gained through this consistent meditation is immeasurable for every day living and for eternal salvation.

### **Which Bible version should I read?**

Probably the oldest version of the Bible is the King James or "Authorised" version. Many people still use this because of its reverent language. Many people feel that they are honouring God by reading in a lofty language style. While this view can be easily respected, one of the drawbacks of the King James version is that the meaning can often be obscured by the less modern language.

A rule of thumb that might be used for determining an appropriate version is to choose a translation rather than a paraphrase. At the same time, an appropriate translation is one made by scholars and linguists coming from a variety of religious backgrounds. Frequently, translations by sects contain the doctrinal biases of those sects. Paraphrases attempt to make the Bible so readable they become too 'familiar' and can distort the concept of God and His purpose.

What version, then? You might try the following: King James or Authorised; the New King James; the Revised Standard Version; The New English Bible; the New International Bible.

### **About the readings**

The following provides a useful plan that covers many parts of the Bible. ALL of the Bible is important. God reveals His purpose from Genesis to Revelation. Try to read one passage every day. Think about what you read. Ask questions of yourself about it. Above all, PRAY about it. Always ask God's guidance when you are reading because He alone can give you the understanding that is needed. The plan is centred mostly around important Bible people because God has chosen to show Himself through these people. Many of the readings concern Jesus - it is through Jesus that God enables salvation. Other readings cover Creation, Letters to first century believers, Psalms and also the Revelation of Jesus Christ. There are 166 readings altogether which means that you can read all

passages twice in a year if you read every day. If you miss occasionally then there is still a few days to spare! Try not to get side-tracked!

Most important: These readings will help you gain an understanding of many vital principles of God's dealing with people. Here are some of them:

**He is a God of love.** He is merciful to those who try to serve Him, but serves justice on those who deny Him.

**He created a magnificent world.** Man spoilt it by being disobedient. It is God's intention that the world be restored to its former glory because of the righteousness of His Son Jesus.

**His future glory** will involve the establishment of His Kingdom on earth! (Yes, 'on earth' not in heaven!)

**Beside each set of readings is a brief description of the main aspects of that set to help you find your way.**

**Happy reading! May God guide you in your understanding.**

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## 1 Creation

1 Genesis 1:1 - 13

2 Genesis 1:14 - 31

3 Genesis 2:1 - 10, 15 - 25

4 Genesis 3:1 - 24

The record of Creation is a wonderful account of God's greatness and power. These readings also show man's first error that resulted in punishment - death. The remainder of the Bible shows the way God has provided for overcoming sin and death.

## 2 Noah

5 Genesis 6:5 - 22

6 Genesis 7:1 - 24

7 Genesis 8:1 - 22

8 Genesis 9:1 - 17

Noah was a remarkable man whose faith in God stood the test of considerable ridicule of his 'friends' and neighbours. His unwavering faith resulted in him being saved from the flood.

## 3 Jesus

9 Matthew 1:18 - 25; 2:1 - 15

10 Matthew 3:1 - 17

11 Matthew 4:17 - 25; 5:1 - 16

12 Matthew 5:33 - 48; 6:1 - 18

13 Matthew 6:19 - 34

14 Matthew 7:1 - 29

15 Matthew 8:1 - 27

16 Matthew 9:1 - 31

17 Matthew 9:32 - 38; 13:1 - 23

18 Matthew 13:24 - 32, 44 - 58

19 Matthew 14:13 - 26

20 Matthew 15:29 - 39; 16:21 - 28

The four accounts of Jesus' life and work should be seen in total. Each writer recording the events (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) received inspiration from God (2 Timothy 3:16). Whilst some events were recorded by more than one writer, there are many examples of single incidents being recorded by only one. This diversity enables a more complete record of Jesus' mission and character. His many activities include preaching - the spreading of the Gospel or good news of God's Kingdom, the telling of parables - stories with important messages, and the performing of miracles. All were designed to show the glory of God and the way of salvation.

#### 4 Abraham

- 21 Genesis 12:1 - 10; 13:1 - 4
- 22 Genesis 13:5 - 18
- 23 Genesis 17:1 - 8, 15 - 22; 18:1 - 16

#### 5 Isaac

- 24 Genesis 21:1 - 8; 22:1 - 19
- 25 Genesis 25:5 - 10, 19 - 34; 26:1 - 5

#### 6 Jacob

- 26 Genesis 28:1 - 22
- 27 Genesis 35:1 - 29

#### 7 Jesus

- 28 Matthew 18:1 - 22
- 29 Matthew 18:23 - 35; 19:13 - 26
- 30 Matthew 20:1 - 19
- 31 Matthew 21:1 - 22
- 32 Matthew 24:1 - 22
- 33 Matthew 25:1 - 13, 31 - 46
- 34 Matthew 26:1 - 16, 36 - 46
- 35 Matthew 26:47 - 75
- 36 Matthew 27:29 - 61
- 37 Matthew 27:29 - 61
- 38 Matthew 27:62 - 66; 28:1 - 20

#### 8 Joseph

- 39 Genesis 37:1 - 28
- 40 Genesis 37:29 - 36; 39:1 - 6
- 41 Genesis 46:1 - 7, 28 - 34; 49:28 - 33
- 42 Genesis 47:11 - 31
- 43 Genesis 48:1 - 4, 15 - 16; 49:28 - 33; 50:1 - 9, 22 - 26

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are important in God's provision for the way to overcoming eternal death, the result of man's sin. The promise of salvation was made to Abraham (Genesis 12:1 - 3, and 13:14 - 17).

The promise was repeated to Isaac (Genesis 26:1 - 5) and to Jacob (Genesis 28:13 - 15).

Paul states that the seed or offspring referred to in the promises was Jesus. Those who become disciples of Christ through baptism are also able to receive the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Galatians 3:16, 29)

These readings record the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. They show dramatically the opposition of the Jews, who could not accept that Jesus was the promised Messiah. They regarded him as a blasphemous impostor and had him put to death by the Romans. The proof that shows how wrong the Jews were is in Jesus' resurrection. Jesus was raised by God because he did not sin. He overcame all temptation, lived a perfect life and in this way put aside the sin of Adam that was the cause of death. His resurrection showed God's power and righteousness.

Joseph's life demonstrates the way God works through men to achieve His purpose. In this instance Joseph underwent considerable adversity through being sold as a slave, and being wrongfully put into prison. Yet he still maintained his trust in God and was eventually put in a position where he was able, with God's assistance, to help his family and the nation of Egypt.

## 9 Jesus

- 44 Mark 1:1 - 22
- 45 Mark 2:1 - 28
- 46 Mark 4:1 - 20
- 47 Mark 4:21 - 41
- 48 Mark 5:21 - 43
- 49 Mark 6:30 - 56
- 50 Mark 7:31 - 37; 8:1 - 21
- 51 Mark 8:22 - 38

## 10 Moses

- 52 Exodus 1:7 - 22
- 53 Exodus 2:1 - 25
- 54 Exodus 3:1 - 22
- 55 Exodus 4:1 - 23, 27 - 31
- 56 Exodus 5:1 - 23
- 57 Exodus 6:1 - 13, 28 - 30; 7:1 - 7
- 58 Exodus 7:8 - 25; 11:1 - 10
- 59 Exodus 12:1 - 17
- 60 Exodus 12:18 - 36
- 61 Exodus 13:1 - 22
- 62 Exodus 14:1 - 14
- 63 Exodus 14:15 - 31
- 64 Exodus 15:1 - 19

## 11 Jesus

- 65 Mark 10:13 - 34
- 66 Mark 11:1 - 26
- 67 Mark 14:1 - 26
- 68 Mark 14:27 - 52
- 69 Mark 14:53 - 72
- 70 Mark 15:1 - 25
- 71 Mark 15:26 - 47
- 72 Mark 16:1 - 20

## 12 Joshua

- 73 Joshua 1:1 - 18
- 74 Joshua 2:1 - 24

These passages deal with Jesus' early life and ministry. John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, prepared the way for Jesus' ministry by preaching baptism of repentance and telling of Jesus' mission. Jesus spent thirty years preparing himself and then preached and performed miracles for three and a half years before his crucifixion.

Moses was undoubtedly a great leader. He was chosen by God to lead His people out of the slavery of Egypt. He was chosen to have the memorial name of God revealed to him (Exodus 3:14). He had the strength, with God's undoubted help, to stand up to Pharaoh. He led the Israelites through the desert even though they were constantly complaining and turning their back on the God who freed them. He had, after an initial period of ambivalence, unwavering faith in God. It is this faith that will enable his reward in the Kingdom of God, spoken of in Hebrews 11:39.

These readings cover some of the events in Jesus' ministry. He draws attention to the importance of children, particularly their unaffectedness. Adults should be equally receptive about God's kingdom. His triumphant entry into Jerusalem is described, a forerunner of his second, triumphant advent to come. There are details of Peter's denial, leading to a great change in his life, and there is the account of Jesus' agony at his crucifixion, and the triumph of his resurrection. Finally, there are his words that cannot be ignored - that belief and baptism are essential for salvation (16:16).

Joshua had the task of leading the Israelites into the promised land after their time in the desert. It was through his faith, and that of others,

75 Joshua 3:1 - 17; 5:1, 10 - 15  
76 Joshua 6:1 - 27

that the walls of Jericho collapsed, a point also made in Hebrews 11 (30, 39 - 40). Joshua entered the promised land, but still hadn't received the greater promises. Keywords for Joshua? God said "Be strong and very courageous" (1:7). Wise words for everyone.

### 13 Ruth

77 Ruth 1:1 - 22  
78 Ruth 2:1 - 23  
79 Ruth 3:1 - 18  
80 Ruth 4:1 - 22

Ruth was a person of great warmth and love. She showed unswerving loyalty to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi was able to help Ruth find a husband and happiness after an early life of hardship and tragedy. They both placed trust and confidence in God. King David was a direct descendent of Ruth, and hence, Ruth is part of the ancestry of Jesus.

### 14 The Acts

81 Acts 1:1 - 12; 2:1 - 21  
82 Acts 9:1 - 22  
83 Acts 14:1 - 28  
84 Acts 17:16 - 34  
85 Acts 22:1 - 30  
86 Acts 26:1 - 32  
87 Acts 27:1 - 20  
88 Acts 27:21 - 44  
89 Acts 28:1 - 31

The book of Acts record the events of the apostles' attempts to preach the gospel in the first thirty or forty years after Jesus' ascension. The book tells of the triumphs and the difficulties that were faced. The apostles were shipwrecked, stoned, thrown into jail, falsely accused, and taken before Roman rulers. But still their faith did not diminish, rather was it strengthened. They used the Holy Spirit, given to them on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1 - 21) to heal and to speak in foreign languages, all to glorify God and to spread the message of the gospel.

### 15 Samuel

90 1 Samuel 1:1 - 23  
91 1 Samuel 1:24 - 28; 2:1 - 11  
92 1 Samuel 3:1 - 21  
93 1 Samuel 12:1 - 25  
94 1 Samuel 16:1 - 23

The first readings relate to the birth of Samuel. Of particular note is the quiet dedication to God of Samuel's parents, Elkanah and Hanna. Samuel was an answer to Hanna's heart-rending prayer. Of even more importance is Hanna's prayer of thanksgiving, likened to Mary's prayer of Luke 1:46 - 55. Something not to be overlooked - prayer for help, and thanks when the help is given. The later readings show the mature

Samuel with wise words " ... fear the Lord and serve him faithfully ...".

## 16 David

- 95 1 Samuel 17:1 - 27
- 96 1 Samuel 17:28 - 58
- 97 1 Samuel 18:1 - 16
- 98 1 Samuel 19:1 - 18
- 99 2 Samuel 1:1 - 12; 5:1 - 10
- 100 2 Samuel 7:1 - 17
- 101 2 Samuel 7:18 - 29; 1 Kings 2:1 - 12

David, the very human King, yet someone who is described as someone after God's own heart because he did God's will (Acts 13:22). This shows the willingness of God to overlook error provided there is a genuine attempt to be more correct. Of great importance in the last two readings is the reiteration, in more detail, of the promise made to Abraham, that David would have an offspring who would sit on his throne. This was referred to in Luke 1 when the angels appeared to Mary. This is another reinforcement of the thorough integration of Old and New Testaments.

## 17 Jesus

- 102 Luke 1:5 - 25
- 103 Luke 1:26 - 56
- 104 Luke 1:57 - 80
- 105 Luke 2:1 - 32
- 106 Luke 2:33 - 52
- 107 Luke 6:20 - 49
- 108 Luke 7:1 - 23
- 109 Luke 8:1 - 25
- 110 Luke 8:37 - 56

Obviously, the first few chapters of Luke focus on the birth of Jesus. But there are some wonderful thumbnail sketches here of people like Zechariah and Elizabeth who were the parents of John the Baptist. A link to the Old Testament is shown again through the angels citing O.T. verses. Jesus shows his desire to do the will of his Father, even at the early age of 12 years. Included in this set of readings is the Luke record of the Sermon on the Mount, and an account of some of the miracles that he performed, showing compassion for the recipients, and also demonstrating that he had the power of God.

## 18 Elijah & Elisha

- 111 1 Kings 17:1 - 24
- 112 1 Kings 18:17 - 40
- 113 1 Kings 19:1 - 21
- 114 2 Kings 2:1 - 22
- 115 2 Kings 4:1 - 17
- 116 2 Kings 4:18 - 37
- 117 2 Kings 5:1 - 27

Elijah showed his faith in God and dedication to His service. These readings include two specific episodes concerning firstly, the healing of the widow's son, showing Elijah's compassion and the power of God on an individual basis. In the second, he showed God's power on a more national scale through the destruction of the altar to Baal. One of Elisha's demonstrations of God's power was similar to Elijah's - the healing of a boy. Another showed a great truth that

continues to be important. In the healing of Naaman's leprosy it was shown that God doesn't require grand gestures of people, but obedience in the simple things.

## 19 Jesus

- 118 Luke 10:25 - 42
- 119 Luke 12:22- 48
- 120 Luke 15:11 - 32
- 121 Luke 19:1 - 23
- 122 Luke 22:39 - 71
- 123 Luke 23:1 - 26
- 124 Luke 23:27 - 56
- 125 Luke 24:1 - 32

Jesus used parables, simple stories that could be easily understood by the people of the day, to present great truths. For example, sheep were part of Israel's primary industry. Lost sheep meant lost revenue. The shepherd would go to no end of trouble to recover the loss. Men and women become lost through sin. God went to no end of trouble to recover that loss, even to the death of His Son. Jesus is also the shepherd who went to no end of trouble, the supreme sacrifice, death, for others.

## 20 Psalms

- 126 Psalm 1:1 - 6; 4:1 - 8
- 127 Psalm 9:1 - 20; Psalm 13:1 - 6;
- 128 Psalm 22:1 - 31
- 129 Psalm 23:1 - 6; 24:1 - 10
- 130 Psalm 46:1 - 11; 47:1 - 9
- 131 Psalm 61:1 - 8; 67:1 - 7; 93:1 - 5
- 132 Psalm 116:1 - 19; 117:1 - 2
- 133 Psalm 148:1 - 14; 149:1 - 9; 150:1 - 6

Where does one start in trying to introduce Psalms? Firstly many (about 73) were written by David. Some were collected from the sayings of Moses and others were written by Solomon. Two themes are prominent. The first concerns the emotional and spiritual aspects of humanity. Most, if not all, life's experiences are mentioned in the collection. The second relates to Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Many Psalms are prophetic. One such is Psalm 22. You will notice in this that the first words are those spoken by Jesus on the cross.

## 21 Letters

- 134 Romans 6:1 - 23
- 135 Romans 12:1 - 21
- 136 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 13
- 137 Philippians 4:1 - 23
- 138 2 Timothy 4:1 - 22
- 139 2 John 1 - 13; 3 John 1 - 14

Letters formed an important communication link between the apostles and the believers in various parts of early Christendom. Some were specifically pastoral (Timothy), some were aimed at expounding doctrine (Romans and Galatians), and others were more personal, Philippians, even though it was addressed to a group of Christians, and John. All letters in one way or another encouraged Christians to hold tenaciously to the hope of Jesus' return in the face of considerable adversity.

## 22 Jesus

- 140 John 2:1 - 17
- 141 John 3:1 - 21
- 142 John 5:1 - 23
- 143 John 6:1 - 24
- 144 John 10:1 - 18
- 145 John 11:1 - 29
- 146 John 11:30 - 46
- 147 John 18:1 - 18
- 148 John 18:28 - 40; 19:1 - 7
- 149 John 19:8 - 42
- 150 John 20:1 - 31
- 151 John 21:1 - 25

John, described as the disciple Jesus loved (20:2) presents wonderful insights into the relationship between Jesus and his Father. John revealed that Jesus categorically tried to do his Father's will at all times. Jesus also ensured that he tried to manifest the loving characteristics of his Father while still recognising that God was greater than he was - "My Father is greater than I" (14:28). The last two readings draw attention to the immovable, and irrefutable foundation of the Christian faith - Jesus' resurrection. If the resurrection is so real, cannot Jesus' return be equally as real?

## 23 Prophets

- 152 Isaiah 2:2 -5; 9:2 - 7; 11:1 - 9
- 153 Isaiah 35:1 - 10; 53:1 - 12
- 154 Daniel 2:24 - 45
- 155 Daniel 3:8 - 30
- 156 Daniel 6:4 - 38
- 157 Jonah 1:1 - 17; 2:1 - 10
- 158 Jonah 3:1 - 10; 4:1 - 11

Prophets had a vital role in Old Testament times. Frequently, they were required to preach to the Israelites, trying to convince them of the necessity to follow correct paths. Of the three sets of prophecies suggested for reading, the Isaiah verses draw attention to the role of Jesus, specifically his crucifixion (53). Daniel foretells the days of Christ's return, especially in 2:44, and Jonah had two prophetic roles. The first was to try to convince the people of Nineveh that they needed to change their ways and not try to destroy the Israelites, and the second was his three days in the fish (Matthew 12:39 - 41). Jesus referred to this event in relation to his death but also in relation to the need for repentance.

## 24 Revelation

- 159 Revelation 1:1 - 19
- 160 Revelation 2:1 - 29
- 161 Revelation 3:1 - 22
- 162 Revelation 4:1 - 11; 5:1 - 14
- 163 Revelation 19:1 - 21
- 164 Revelation 20:1 - 15
- 165 Revelation 21:1 - 27
- 166 Revelation 22:1 - 21

There are three important keys to understanding this book, frequently regarded as being too symbolic to worry about! The book IS vitally important; it is Jesus' last words for nearly 2,000 years. The first key is in 1:1 - everything in the book relates to events that would take place AFTER the time the revelation was made. The second is to recognise the reality of the promised Kingdom of God and that it will be on earth. The

third key is accepting that Jesus will return! John, who recorded the revelation said (22:20) " He who testifies to these things says 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

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