

GETTING  
TO KNOW  
YOUR  
BIBLE

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# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BIBLE

## **You have a new Bible. Congratulations!**

But don't let its size frighten you. When you get to know your Bible you'll find it's filled with stories of adventure and romance, heroes and villains, courage and cowardice, powerful leaders and ordinary people - just like you.

And the Bible has the answers to life's most important questions.

The word Bible comes from a Greek word meaning "books." Holy means "to set apart for a purpose," especially a purpose related to God. So, the title Holy Bible really means "special books that have been set apart because they tell us about God." Sometimes the Bible is referred to as the Scriptures or Holy Scriptures. Scripture simply means "writing," so the Holy Scriptures are "holy writings."

Now, let's turn to the Table of Contents. As its Greek name implies, the Bible is actually a collection of books. Those books are divided into two major sections: The Old Testament and The New Testament.

The Old Testament contains the 39 holy books of the ancient people of Israel. The first of these books was written about 1,400 years before Jesus was born. The last was written about 400 years before his birth. For convenience, these books are arranged by the subjects they cover, not in the order they were written or by their importance. Sometimes they are divided into four smaller groups. More than 25 different authors contributed to the Old Testament, writing in the Hebrew language.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

<b>Law</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Wisdom Literature and Poetry</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Joel
Exodus	2 Kings	Ecclesiastes	Amos
Leviticus	Judges	Psalms	Obadiah
Numbers	1Chronicles	Proverbs	Jonah
Deuteronomy	Ruth	Song of Songs	Micah
Isaiah	2Chronicles		Nahum
Jeremiah	1 Samuel		Habakkuk
Lamentations	Ezra		Zephaniah
Ezekiel	2 Samuel		Haggai
Daniel	Nehemiah		Zechariah
Hosea	1 Kings		Malachi
	Esther		

The Old Testament tells how God worked among the people of Israel and contains many of the best known Bible characters and Bible stories - Noah and the ark, Moses and the Ten Commandments, David and Goliath, and many more. It also contains many of God's promises, including his promise to send a special messenger to the human race - The Anointed One - called Messiah in Hebrew.

The New Testament contains 27 books written by followers of Jesus. Many of these books are actually letters written to help Christians understand who Jesus was, what he taught, and how his followers ought to live. Eight, or possibly nine, authors contributed to the New Testament, writing in the Greek language. As in the Old Testament, these books and letters are arranged by subject or author and not by importance or by the order in which they were written.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

<b>The Gospels (or Good News about Jesus)</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>The Letters of Paul</b>
Matthew	Acts	Romans
Mark	<b>Prophecy</b>	1 Thessalonians
Luke	Revelation	2 Thessalonians
John		1 Corinthians
<b>General Letters</b>		2 Corinthians
Hebrews		1 Timothy
James		2 Timothy
1 Peter		Galatians
2 Peter		Ephesians
1 John		Titus
2 John		Philippians
3 John		Philemon
Jude		Colossians

The New Testament tells about the life and teachings of Jesus and his followers. It shows us that Jesus is the special messenger God promised in the Old Testament. He is The Anointed One, the Messiah. The New Testament even calls him God's Son. In Greek The Anointed One, or Messiah, is called Christ.

Christians believe both the Old Testament and New Testament are holy. They believe God inspired the writers in a special way so that the words they wrote were God's words. That's why for many centuries the followers of Jesus have referred to the Bible as the Word of God.

Every book in the Bible is also divided into smaller sections called chapters and verses. These divisions were added many centuries after the Bible was completed to make it easier for us to

find our way around in such a big book, but they were not originally a part of the Bible.

Let's see how these smaller divisions work. Suppose you see the following Bible reference: (Acts 20:1). The information you are looking for is in the book of Acts, in chapter 20, beginning in verse 1. Turn in your Bible to Acts. (Use the Table of Contents to help find this.) Turn through the pages of Acts until you find the beginning of chapter 20. It should look something like this:

*Through Macedonia and Greece*

**20** When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said and set out for Macedonia. 2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, Where he stayed three months.

The large number marks the beginning of the new chapter. The smaller numbers show the beginning of each verse. Notice that verse 3 begins in the middle of a sentence. Remember, the chapter and verse divisions were added many years later. They are helpful, but they are not always perfect. Also notice the heading: *Through Macedonia and Greece* above the beginning of the chapter. Like the chapter and verse markings, these headings were added many years after the Bible was complete. They are helpful, but they are not actually a part of the Bible text.

Now let's practice. Look up and read the following Bible references: 2 Timothy 3:16,17; John 3:16; Hebrews 4:12 Romans 6:23

Once you understand how to locate references in the Bible, you are ready to begin reading. Here is a selection of readings from the Bible for the next 30 days. Read one each day. It should not take more than 15 minutes. You may also find it helps to pray, either before or after you read, asking God to help you understand what you are reading. At the end of thirty days you will have read samples from the life and teachings of Jesus and his followers.

DAY	TOPIC	REFERENCE
1.	The story of Jesus' birth	Luke 2:1-40
2.	The Word becomes flesh	John 1:1-51
3.	Jesus begins his work	Mark 1:1-45
4.	He teaches on a mountain	Matthew 5:1—6:4
5.	He teaches on a mountain	Matthew 6:5—7:29
6.	A secret meeting	John 3:1-36
7.	Teaching in parables	Matthew 13:1-52
8.	Teaching in parables	Luke 15:1-32
9.	A dead man lives again	John 11:1-57
10.	Jesus' final instructions	John 14:1-31
11.	Betrayed by a friend	Matthew 26:1-56
12.	The trial of Jesus	Matthew 26:57- 27:26
13.	Executed on a Cross	Matthew 27:27-66
14.	He rises from the dead	John 20:1-31
15.	He appears to his friends	Luke 24:1-53
16.	A promise and a challenge	Acts 1:1-26
17.	A new source of power	Acts 2:1-47
18.	Life among the Christians	Acts 3:1-26
19.	Life among the Christians	Acts 4:1-37
20.	Suffering for their faith	Acts 8:1-40
21.	An enemy is converted	Acts 9:1-31
22.	Peter escapes from prison	Acts 12:1-19
23.	A vision and a jailbreak	Acts 16:1-40
24.	Teaching others about Jesus	Acts 17:1-34
25.	Paul tells his story	Acts 26:1-32
26.	Shipwreck	Acts 27:1-44
27.	Paul arrives in Rome	Acts 28:1-31
28.	Love is the greatest	1 Corinthians 13:1-13
29.	What happens after death?	I Corinthians 15:1-58
30.	Alive in Christ	Ephesians 2:1-22

## **The Greatest Themes in the Bible**

### **God's Love**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

*John 3:16*

### **Sin and it's Penalty**

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Romans 3:23; 6:23*

### **God's Remedy for Sin**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us...If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

*Romans 5:6-8; 10:9*

## NOTES

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