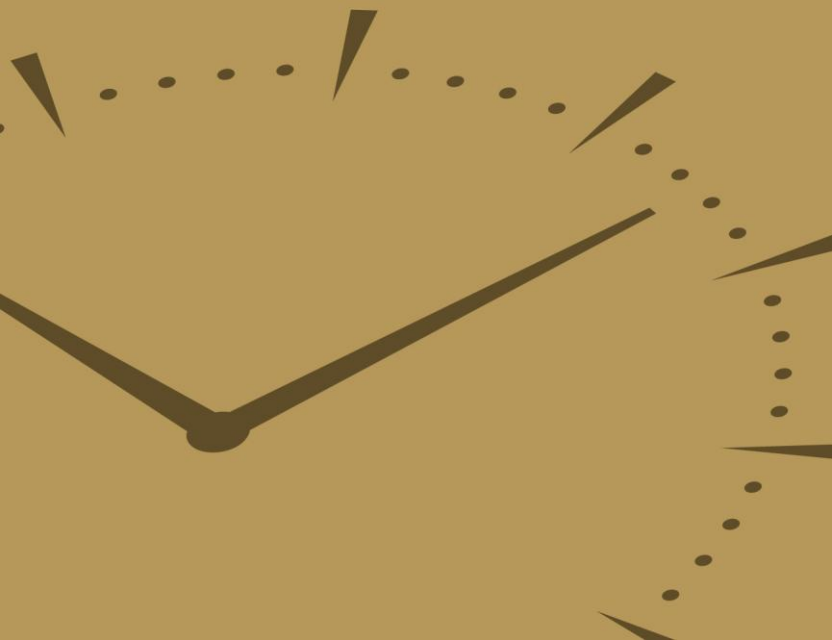


AN INTRODUCTORY WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

YOUR FIRST
100
DAYS IN
THE BIBLE

dr matthew jacoby



Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (MSG)

thrive

thrive

Matthew Jacoby (B.Th. B.Litt. Hons, Ph.D.) is the senior pastor at OneHope Church in Geelong, Victoria. He is Lecturer in Christian Thought at the Melbourne School of Theology and he is the lead member of the acclaimed psalms-project band, Sons of Korah.

Matthew is also the author of the **Thrive Daily Bible Reading Guide** and ***Deeper Places*** (Baker, 2013), a book that explores the spirituality of the psalms.



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BOOKS IN THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT (39 BOOKS)

Genesis	2 Chronicles	Daniel
Exodus	Ezra	Hosea
Leviticus	Nehemiah	Joel
Numbers	Esther	Amos
Deuteronomy	Job	Obadiah
Joshua	Psalms	Jonah
Judges	Proverbs	Micah
Ruth	Ecclesiastes	Nahum
1 Samuel	Song of Songs	Habakkuk
2 Samuel	Isaiah	Zephaniah
1 Kings	Jeremiah	Haggai
2 Kings	Lamentations	Zechariah
1 Chronicles	Ezekiel	Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT (27 BOOKS)

Matthew	Ephesians	Hebrews
Mark	Philippians	James
Luke	Colossians	1 Peter
John	1 Thessalonians	2 Peter
Acts	2 Thessalonians	1 John
Romans	1 Timothy	2 John
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy	3 John
2 Corinthians	Titus	Jude
Galatians	Philemon	Revelation

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY

The Bible is the foundation of the Christian faith and life. It shows us who God is, who we are, and what the meaning of life is. God created us for relationship with him; he has a purpose for us, and he wants us to walk with him in the path of that purpose. The Bible is like a map for that path. It shows us the way by telling us the stories of particular people whose role it was to pave the way. We can learn from their example (whether good or bad) and their stories help us navigate our own lives. The ultimate expression of God's character and will, however, is found in Jesus. Jesus shows us who God is, who we are and what our purpose is. That's why Jesus described himself as "the way, the truth and the life."

The Bible is the story of how things went wrong with us and the world, and how God is making things right. We each have a crucial part to play in that purpose, so it is vital that we understand what we are part of. That's why, if you want to walk with God in the path of his purpose, you must read and understand the Bible.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

The Bible, however, is a difficult book to read without some guidance. It was written thousands of years ago in a completely different culture. This is part of the value of the Bible: it maps an ancient pathway that has been trod by billions of people over millennia and found to be reliable and true. But these gaps in time and culture can also make it difficult for us understand.

This resource is designed to guide you through the story of the Bible, in manageable steps, by focusing on essential sections. This will help you see the big picture and grasp the main message, without getting too bogged down in the details. This is the best way to start; it will set you up to read through the whole Bible as a regular and rewarding spiritual practice. I encourage you to set aside around half an hour each day to read the selected passages, reflect on the comments, and pray. As you do, your understanding of God—and of your own story—will deepen in ways that will surprise and encourage you.

Welcome to the journey!

BIBLE VERSIONS

To start reading the Bible you first need a good and easy-to-understand translation. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek and there are many different translations available.

Some translations take a more literal word-for-word approach and, while this is good for in depth study, it does not read smoothly and is much harder to understand if you're starting out. There are also some translations in old English and these too can be hard to understand.

The most popular translation these days is the New International Version (NIV). This is a good balanced translation. Another is the New Living Translation (NLT) which is designed to be easy to understand and is another good one to start with. *Other easy-to-follow translations are the Contemporary English Version (CEV) and the New Century Version (NCV).*

Ask a church leader for guidance if you need it.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

TESTAMENTS, BOOKS, CHAPTERS AND VERSES

The Bible is not one book, but a collection of books written over thousands of years by various authors under the inspiration of God. It contains different kinds of literature (narrative, poetry, wisdom sayings, letters etc.).

The Bible is divided into two parts: The Old Testament and New Testament. A 'testament' is a covenant, essentially a statement of how someone, in this case, God, wants things to be.

The New Testament was not intended to make the Old Testament redundant. Rather, the New Testament builds on the Old.

It is called 'New' because it was such a key development, and in some cases, a marked change in the way God was doing things.

Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters and verses. The chapters are usually in a bold print, and the verses generally appear in superscript in the text. Most verses consist of just a couple of sentences.

The standard way of referring to a part of the Bible is like this: John 3:16-18. This refers to the book of John, chapter 3, verse 16 through to verse 18.

JOHN 3:16

Book

Chapter

Verse

Some books have two or three separate parts like 1 and 2 Kings or 1, 2 and 3 John.

2 KINGS 22:19

Second Part

Book

Chapter

Verse

GLOSSARY OF COMMON BIBLE TERMS

Angels: Spiritual beings that serve God and implement His will.

Baptism: A ceremony that uses water to symbolise the washing away of sin.

Call/Calling: God's compelling invitation to live in relationship with him and serve his purpose

Christ: The Greek word for the Hebrew title 'Messiah' which literally means 'anointed one'. It basically means 'King'.

Covenant: A solemn commitment God makes to accomplish his purpose.

Faith: Depending on God and trusting Him. ('Belief,' 'trust' and 'faith' mean the same thing.)

Gentile: A non-Jewish person.

Gospel: The good news about what Jesus did for us. Also used to refer to the four accounts of Jesus' life and teaching, that is, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Grace: Undeserved and unmerited favour. Justice is getting what you deserve; grace is getting the blessing and favour that you did nothing to deserve.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is God indwelling, transforming and empowering people.

Israel: The people to whom God originally committed himself. They are also referred to as Judah or the Jews.

Jerusalem: The Israelite/Jewish capital and the place where the temple of God was. It is referred to also as 'Zion', 'the Holy City' and the 'Holy Mountain'.

Justified/Justification: To be made right with God by having one's guilt taken away.

Kingdom of God/Heaven: The realm where God's authority is recognised and applied and where His will is done.

The Law: Can refer to the first five books of the Bible collectively or to the actual directives of God on how we should live (such as 'the ten commandments').

Pharisees and Sadducees: Jewish religious leaders in the time of Jesus.

Parable: An illustration or a story with a spiritual message. Jesus' parables were often very cryptic to the original hearers.

Prophet/Prophetic: A prophet is someone chosen by God to speak his message to people. Prophetic messages were not always about the future. They simply declared what God wanted to say.

Redemption: God rescuing us from sin and its consequences

Repentance: Turning away from sin and back to God.

Righteousness: Being in a right relationship with God.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON BIBLE TERMS

Sabbath: The seventh day of the week. It was instituted as a day of rest.

Sanhedrin: The Jewish court and ruling council in Jesus' time.

Satan and Demons: Angelic beings that are in rebellion against God. Satan or the Devil is the head demon. He is sometimes referred to just as 'the evil one' or 'the deceiver'. He was also portrayed as a snake or serpent.

Sin: Living independently of God and against his will and purpose.

Son of Man: A term that Jesus often used when referring to himself.

The Temple: In Jerusalem. Contained the symbolic 'throne room' of God. It was where the Jews would come and meet with God and sacrifice offerings to him.

GOD CREATES HUMANS TO WALK WITH HIM



THE CREATION

Genesis 1:1-2:3

The opening chapter of the Bible tells us the two things we most need to know: Who God is, and who we are. Genesis 1:1-2:3 is a highly condensed and intricately constructed literary block which is rich in meaning. People in ancient times believed in many gods and even believed that natural phenomenon like the sun and moon were themselves gods. This chapter, in deliberate contrast, introduces the one true sovereign God who created all things. Note how the sun and moon are simply referred to here as ‘light bearers’ whose role is to mark seasons of worship to the true God. The climax of the creation account is God’s more deliberate and intimate act of creating human beings. While everything else is created “according to their kinds,” human beings are created in ‘God’s image.’ In other words, we are God’s children, created with unique relational capacities to love God, each other and, to care for God’s creation. The whole creation account is structured around ten divine commands (“And God said”) which bring perfect order to the world. The idea of order is central to this chapter. As things are put in order God declares them ‘good.’ Order is life, stability, harmony and blessing. The culmination of all this ordering, moreover, is rest and peace. That is the significance of the seventh day of divine rest. Human beings are commissioned here to be the stewards of God’s order. To rightly order our lives we must put God first and prioritise his purpose. When we do this, we also can have rest and peace with God.

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3

Ask God to order your life according to his purpose.

Genesis 1 depicts God building a beautiful home for his children. Now, in Genesis 2, we zoom in on the relationships in that home. Humans are depicted here as the caretakers of a sacred garden who participate in the process of ordering things (i.e. the naming of the animals). The man and the woman are like two halves of a whole. The creation of the woman from the side/rib of the man is meant to convey equality. That she is called Adam's "helper" (the term denotes partnership) is meant to convey the fact that they share a common dignity and purpose. It is a wonderful picture of order and harmony. But God does not force his purpose nor even himself on human beings. He created us for relationship with himself and therefore he gives us a choice: Will we live in loving relationship with him, or will we reject him and his purpose? This choice is symbolised by the two trees in the garden: The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The latter denotes the decision to determine for oneself what is right and good. In other words, this means ordering your life your *own* way. The problem with this is that it upsets God's order, leading to chaos and discord. But most tragically this puts us in enmity with God. This is a kind of death, as we shall see. This is what the first humans chose. But don't despair, for the Bible is a story of redemption. God now gives each one of us the opportunity to remake this crucial choice.

Read Genesis 2:4-25.

Commit yourself fully to God. Ask him to lead you in his purpose for your life.

There is no higher view of human beings than that depicted in the first two chapters of Genesis. In the ancient world, while kings claimed some level of divine kinship, humans generally were seen as lowly servants of the gods at best. In Genesis however, God is telling us who we really are: We are his beloved children. This means that every human life is sacred from the lowest slave to the most powerful king. This biblical view of humanity is the basis for our modern concepts of equality, human rights and the sanctity of human life. It's also the basis for the unique biblical notion of *love*. The only appropriate response to God's love is to love him in return, and also, to love those whom he loves. This notion of unconditional love is, again, unique to the biblical perspective. We must love each other unconditionally because God loves us unconditionally. Even though we have all rejected God in some sense, God does not reject us. In fact, he came to us in Jesus Christ to pay the price for our rebellion against him. This is the greatest expression of God's love for us. We can all now return to God if we are willing. The original choice given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 is before each of us. Jesus is like the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. God is calling you to live in his love and care. He is offering you eternal life in Jesus. Will you step up into your God-given identity and become the person he created you to be?

Read Psalm 8 and 1 John 4:7-21.

Ask God to help you become the person he wants you to be.