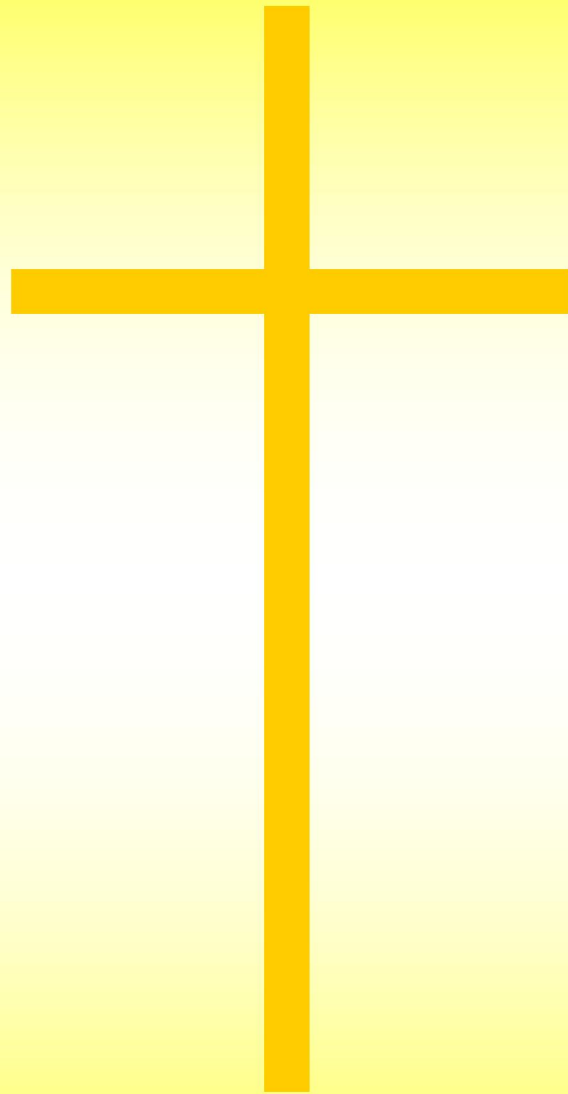




A Guide To Your BIBLE.



**The mini book to
learning about the
BIG book...The Bible.**

A Guide To Your Bible

As promised (in the 'second step'), we have prepared a short guide to help you understand more about Your Bible, how it was formed and the order of events from the very beginning, to the very end.

No doubt you will be aware of why having a Bible is so important and reading it regularly. Of course, The Word of God and knowing what pleases God and displeases Him is paramount in being able to live a good Christian life.

Why do we want to please God? He created us, He is our Father, He loves us and gave us His only Son to save us from our errors and ways (sins). More to the point, He wants to have a relationship with us and the main way we develop (and start) that relationship is by giving God the opportunity to speak to us through His Word, The Bible, as well as Prayer.

So let's get down to business!

The Bible is divided into **TWO** parts.

The first part is '**The Old Testament**'. The Old Testament (as the title suggests) is the oldest scripture in existence (wrote around 1500BC) i.e. how everything began.

Scientists have been speculating for many years and trying to prove that there was a 'Big Bang' and everything started from then. I don't know about you, but I have never known a 'big bang' or 'explosion' to create anything. Have you?

Basic common sense suggests that an explosion destroys and evaporates matter, not create matter. Of course the scientists have lots of 'theories' and 'explanations' but there IS a reason NO proof exists about the theory of the 'big bang' – it's in God's Word, which brings us to the first **book** you will come across in The Old Testament, 'Genesis'.

Genesis means 'origin' (the point at which something comes into existence).

In Genesis you will learn how the universe was really created (hence there was no 'big bang'), how we (humans) came into existence, and unfortunately where we went wrong as a human race (the start of sin and giving into human nature).

Genesis also shows how God deals with sin and humanity.

There are some key historical events in Genesis that you might be familiar with or heard something about.

For example, 'Noah' and the Ark, which was recently made into a modern day movie called 'Evan Almighty'.

Another example 'Joseph and His Technicolor Dream Coat', was a major musical which relates to the story of Joseph and why God chose Him which is also in Genesis.

Another key person first mentioned in Genesis as well as throughout the Bible is Abraham, as well as his family.

Genesis is the first book of the Bible and also one of the **39 books** which make up '**The Old Testament**'.

After Genesis, the next four books (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) tell about Israel's History (God's chosen city and people ~ The Israelites/Jews) and the key events that happened in Israel which include the birth of someone very significant, 'Moses'. God chose Moses to show and teach us about God's rules, more commonly known as 'The Ten Commandments'.

The Old Testament was wrote before Jesus was born, so the only way people could cleanse themselves or 'purify' themselves of breaking The Ten Commandments (i.e. their sins) was by following certain regulations that God set out in order for the individual to be forgiven of their sins, Exodus explains more about this.

'Numbers' goes on to explain how God's people turned away from Him and horrifically sinned against Him (something that is very common as you will read throughout The Old Testament), but the good news is God is always there trying to help His people come back to Him and turn away from their evil ways. Surprisingly things have not changed much, to this day we all carry on sinning and walking away from God at times, but He is always there waiting to see us come back.

The good news is that God loves us, and no matter how much we go wrong or terrible the sin we commit, He can and Will forgive us if we turn to Him and confess – God explains this in the Bible very clearly.

As you progress through The Old Testament, at the start of each book (Leviticus for example) there is a foreword explaining a little more about what you will read in that particular book. This helps paint the picture of what is happening in each book which helps us understand the content and detail of each one.

Also, most Bibles have maps of where the old towns and cities named throughout the Bible are located, baring in mind some of the towns and cities are named differently these days or no longer exist. The maps also show where key events happened, Jesus' birth for example.

The Old Testament is a BIG read, so it is best to work your way slowly through each book and also best to read each book through at least twice. Make notes as you go, and any questions that come to mind note them down also. I like to underline bits of the Bible that jump out to me, I urge you to do the same.

The last part of the Bible, is '**The New Testament**'.

This book can be summed up in one sentence, the life of Jesus and his disciples. It's because of Jesus' disciples (led by the Holy Spirit) that we are aware of Jesus and what He did for us a little over 2000 years ago. Four of the disciples Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all write their diary of events which they witnessed for themselves and these four books are the first you will read in the New Testament.

The accounts sometimes vary, mainly because like us, these four narrators will hear and interpret things differently which is why all four accounts are in the New Testament, to show all four witness accounts.

The New Testament in some ways rewrites how we should now live. What do I mean by that? For example, you will find in The Old Testament 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' which means if someone should wrong you, that you are allowed to get them back or bring justice to that person and repay them with 'punishment fits the crime' mentality.

The New Testament goes in a different direction and God/Jesus calls us to NOT repay 'evil with evil' i.e. if someone wrongs you let God deal with the things they do. Why? Simply put, God wants us to love one another, both friend and enemy. It is hard to love someone who wrongs or dislikes you, but as you/we progress in our Christian Faith and learning God's word, it becomes more possible.

I would like to share with you a recent example of this in practice.

Eric Smallridge, an American whom on May 11th 2002 got into his car whilst very drunk, drove off and had an accident which killed two young women both aged 20. One of those girls killed in the accident was 'Meagan Napier'.

Her Mum 'Renee Napier' found it hard to forgive Eric, but instead of holding on to anger against him, in time as a Christian she managed to not only forgive Eric, but also worked with him to help him get released from his prison sentence and subsequently got his sentence reduced by half.

Eric then came to know the Lord more than ever before and stated he 'found his eternal salvation (in Jesus) as a result' of Renee's act of forgiveness, love and compassion towards him and Renee's actions also helped the rest of Meagan's family towards forgiving Eric too.

Renee and Eric have both worked together since to educate young people on the dangers of drink driving.

Though a tragedy occurred and Eric went wrong, Renee repaid Eric's wrong doing with love, which is exactly what Jesus calls us to do in the New Testament – to 'love one another' and from that act of love, so much good has come out of Renee's decision to forgive, though of course forgiving Eric was no easy task, and did take time.

As you read through your Bible, you will find many ways of learning how to love those who wrong us. One way I try to love those who have wronged me is by remembering it's one of the FEW things God asks of us.

Therefore by showing love and ACTUALLY doing it, I show love for God - in theory those who wrong me are great opportunities to be used to help me come closer to God, by providing me with the perfect opportunity to do something great and show God that I love Him so much, that even those who wrong me I will forgive and love in return instead of doing EVERYTHING the evil one wants us to (i.e. hate, retaliate, seek revenge or even attack).

Human nature is described in your Bible as evil. That's because IT IS. Human nature dictates that we should hurt those who hurt us. By NOT giving in to that temptation of human nature, we dictate to the evil one we won't follow his methods and instead choose God's methods.

When Jesus was tempted by the evil one (which you will read in the start of The New Testament) Jesus tells the devil in no uncertain terms, to give up and get behind Him because the devil's plan and tactics won't work.

If you find yourself in a situation whereby you feel tempted to retaliate and do something you know is not really in your character, try to do what Jesus did by telling the devil to 'get on his bike' and that you will NOT give in to his tempting.

Easier said than done, but such a great feeling when achieved.

Further more, we learn how to follow this in practice by been encouraged to follow Jesus' example of loving both friend and enemy.

Big Events of the New Testament

There are some very significant and important events that take place in the New Testament, particularly the birth of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, and then the reappearance of Jesus to His disciples and followers.

After the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) we then learn of a man called 'Saul' who persecuted the Christian people, and how God chose Saul to not only believe, but to also preach on a big scale carrying out miracles on God's behalf. An unlikely choice, but God does work in interesting ways, hence using Saul.

God then changes Saul's name to **Paul** and a lot of the books in the New Testament are of Paul's letters written to both educate and encourage the early Church who were been persecuted at the time (some countries in the World are still persecuted). Saint Paul goes on to minister to people everywhere particularly the early Church (the first Christians) throughout the New Testament.

The New Testament consists of **27 books**, and one of the most notable main books you read in the New Testament (which is also the last book) is 'Revelation', wrote by one of Jesus' disciples 'John'.

Revelation is in some ways the opposite to the first book of the Bible (Genesis) because it describes how things are going to end, where as Genesis tells us of how things began.

The good news about 'Revelation' is that it explains to us as Christians that we are guaranteed a place in Heaven with the Lord, and that is **forever**.

Now that you have given your life to the Lord, you too are guaranteed a place in Heaven and will go on living, but instead of living on Earth as we do now, it will be up in Heaven instead.

Been a Christian means in many ways 'Living' and 'Alive' because as a Christian you 'Live' with God in your life, and are 'Alive' in Him and He in you. Basically what I'm saying is that because you accept God as **YOUR** God and **T-H-E** God, in Jesus' Name, you are saved from death and will go on living even after this world comes to an end.

Revelation explains how the end will come, what will happen to those who follow God (us) and how great our new home will be, as well as what happens to those who have chosen not to follow God.

This book is exciting to read because we learn of what is to come for us all as Christian's – followers of Jesus.

The Bible is an intense two part book to read, and will take you some time read and no matter how many times you read it, you will learn something new each time because there is so much, but I urge you to **enjoy** reading the Bible and take your time to read it. Look at your Bible as a book to continuously study, as often as possible.

It is also important that when you find the Christian Church that is right for you, that you get into a Bible study group – most Churches have Bible studies and they are very important to attend because you expand your understanding of the Bible in these groups where as you would struggle without them. Remember that the groups will normally be made up of some Christians that have been studying the Bible for most of their lives, Ministers too and will have a wealth of wisdom and knowledge to offer you.

Most Bible study groups are informal and are a great time of fellowship (i.e. informal chatting, socializing, conversation) and a typical study should normally last around 40-60 minutes but there are no rules on how long or little a study takes, it's up to the group.

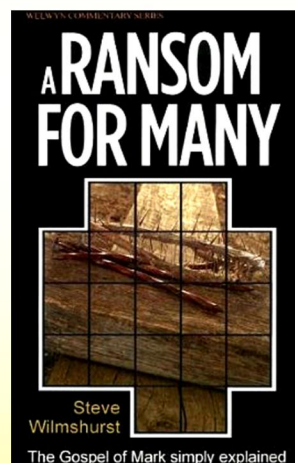
I remember when I first went to a Bible study thinking that it was not going to be for me. How wrong my perception was. I can honestly say that a big highlight of the week for me is going to my Bible study group, mainly because you get the opportunity to ask questions where as when you're in Church you tend to listen rather than ask and speak, though if you prefer to listen in a study group, this is also fine. My study group has some that prefer to just listen so whatever your preference, the choice is yours.

There are many good books which help you understand books of the Bible, two of which I have listed below.

Sometimes my attention can wander when reading the Bible (as wrong as that sounds) but reading one of the books outlined helps to 'open up' what is actually happening in that particular book of the Bible which helps set the background and the story to what's happening throughout your Bible.

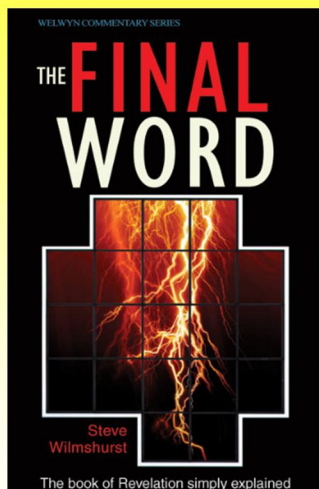
Most of these books can be purchased from Christian book shops, or online if you prefer.

·**A Ransom For Many**, wrote by Steve Wilmhurst, published in 2011, ISBN number 978 085234 744 7.



This is a great and hugely insightful book explaining Mark's Gospel (in the New Testament) in a simple and informative way.

• **The Final Word**, again wrote by Steve Wilmhurst, published in 2008, ISBN 978 085234 669 3.



This book explains the book of 'Revelation' and helps us understand the things John speaks of in Revelation.

There are many other books like these which can be bought from **www.epbooks.org**

A Final Thought ~ Remember to Pray to God to help you understand the Bible and also direct you in the way He wants you to live. There has been many a time when a dilemma about a job or decision to be made has come up, and after Praying for God's guidance and then reading His Word, the answer comes – the right one too. Trust in God that He will lead you through the Bible and give you the wisdom to learning what He wants you to know, and remember to give all glory and praise to God, in the Name of the **Father**, and of the **Son**, and of the **Holy Spirit**. Amen.



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