

This...Is A Bible. Where Do I Start???

The Bible is an amazing book! I think we all agree on that. It really is God's Word – wow! The Bible was written by 40 men during a period of over 1,500 years. Most of these writers were not alive at the same time. They could not work together in any direct way. Yet the Bible has one continuing story flowing through it. But let's face it – the Bible is a big book, and to someone who is just beginning to read and study it, it can be a bit, well, overwhelming. Thus the question: "Where do I start?"

If you will give me a couple of moments, I would like to think about that question with you, and maybe come up with a few small suggestions.

Someone might say: "I will just start at the beginning and read the Bible all the way through." That is a great idea – but for the right time. To be honest, there are a few places in the Bible, mainly in the Old Testament, that can be basically, well – tedious. It is easy to get bogged down and discouraged and stop reading completely. So, am I saying for you not to read the Bible all the way through? Not at all! All of the Bible is God's Word and needs to be read and studied. But a person doesn't have to read and understand the whole Bible before they become a Christian. Actually, there are some parts that relate more directly to our lives today than others. Let me explain what I mean.

Please allow me to take a few lines here to do a quick overview of the Bible. Genesis is an incredible book! It talks about how God created everything. I suggest you read the first few chapters. The next few books tell how God dealt with and took care of His people back then. There are some terrific stories here, but put them on hold for a while.

Now we have the wonderful wisdom books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. These are full of comfort, encouragement and life lessons to help with everyday problems. Read a little from these every day. (Psalm 119 is an amazing chapter. With 176 verses, it is the longest chapter in the Bible. Each verse mentions the Word of God, using various terms and phrases. Read this chapter for sure to fall in love with the Bible!)

Then comes prophets such as Habbakuk, Haggai, Malachai and other fun names. This is important reading, but put them on the back burner for now.

The New Testament begins with four Gospels. ("Gospel" means good news.) They tell the story of the good news of Jesus; how He lived, how He died because He loved us, and how God brought Him back to life again. Jesus is the Son of God, and He is God. (Try to figure that one out!)

Acts has some exciting stories of shipwrecks, snake bites, and dramatic escapes over city walls in baskets. But, even more important, it tells about how people who loved Jesus went all over the world telling others about Him.

The next several books are letters written by inspired men to other groups of Christians and preachers to encourage them and teach them more about God's will. ("Inspired" just means that God told them what to write.)

The last book in the Bible is the Book of Revelation. It is a powerful book, but it is also...difficult! Should you read it? You absolutely should, but at the right time. A small suggestion, if I may: the first time that you read the Book of Revelation, don't try to analyze it or "figure it out." Just read it to experience the power, majesty, grandeur and glory of God! (Don't forget the throne scene in chapters 4 and 5...beautiful!)

If you have read all the way to here, I want to thank you. I didn't intend for this to be so long, but there is so much that can be said about the Bible. If you will give me just a moment more, I will finish this up.

So, back to the question: "Where do I start?" Of course it is your Bible, and it is all God's Word, so you can read anywhere you want to. But if I may give a little suggestion: start with the book of Luke and then Acts. These two books are part of the same story, written by the same man (Luke). He was a doctor. This will tell you about Jesus and how His love can change our lives...now and forever.

How would I sum up the story of the Bible? Like this: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!"