Jesus

and the

Bible?

Discovering the Word

Where do I start?

This is written to help those who are not familiar with the Bible but are eager to read it and find out more about Jesus.

It gives something that can be skimmed through in 5 mins before starting, and then provides an ongoing resource.

The Bible contains four eye witness accounts about Jesus. These are **Matthew**, **Mark**, **Luke** and **John**. They are called 'gospels' which means 'good news'. Reading any of these would be a good place to start.

(The index at the beginning of the Bible will show that these books are in the second half of it.)

Of these writers, **Luke** was a medical doctor and the only non-Jewish writer in the whole bible. He set out to write an accurate account of Jesus' life, death and resurrection from what he had learned from people who had seen the events themselves. He went on to write another book, **Acts,** which told the story of the first believers in Jesus, the church, after He went back to Heaven

Luke and **Acts** may therefore be a good place to start in reading the Bible.

(Later you might like to read the whole Bible through from the beginning!)

As you begin to read these accounts, there may be some other questions that you have . Here are a few that other people have asked –

Who is God?

God exists beyond time. He created the world by His **Holy Spirit** (Genesis chapter 1 verse 2) (written as 'Gen 1:2')

He revealed Himself to a man called Abraham and His descendants ,the Israelites (Genesis chapter 12) .

He later entered His creation as a human being, Jesus, His **Son**.

Christians believe in this **one God** who has revealed Himself to us as t**hree persons** – **Father**, **Son** and **Holy Spirit**. (It is impossible for anyone to understand but it is possible for us to trust and believe in Him!)

Who is Jesus?

John begins his Gospel by calling Jesus 'the Word of God'. He says, ***."In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*** ***(***John 1:1)

He goes on to say ***'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.'*** *(*John 1:14)

These verses point to the fact that God spoke and speaks through His Son who, 2000 years ago, was born into His creation as a human being, Jesus of Nazareth.

This is what Jesus told one of His followers, "***He who has seen Me has seen the Father .....Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me.***" (John 14:10)

Why did Jesus come into the world?

The best known verse, which sums up the message of the Bible, is -
'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life'
(John 3:16)

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us that God made people to have a relationship with Him and to enjoy His company. However, they rejected His rule and failed to live up to His perfect standard. (This is called **'sin'**). The result of this was that death came into the whole of God's creation.

However, by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross, God made it possible for people to be forgiven for their rejection of Him and to re-enter into a relationship with Him.

After Jesus' death, resurrection and return to Heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to live within those who believed and trusted in Him.

Why do we have the Bible?

The whole Bible is about Jesus! In speaking to the Jewish religious leaders of the day about their Bible, Jesus said,
'These are the Scriptures that testify about me' . (John 5:39).

After His death and resurrection, Jesus appeared to two disciples who at first did not recognise Him. Luke records that

'Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself'. (Luke 24:27)

This shows that the main purpose of the Bible is to reveal to us what God is like; He does this supremely through Jesus.

What's in the Bible?

It is divided into two parts:-

1) The Old Testament.

These are the **Jewish** Scriptures which record events from the time of God's creation of the world until the of the birth of **Jesus**. In it, God gradually reveals Himself to the Jewish people, promising that He would send someone who would save them from their enemies. (The greatest of these is the sin that separates people from God)

He would be the **Messiah,** ('anointed one' or king). Despite many prophets speaking about this in the Old Testament, very few people recognised Jesus when He was born on earth.

2) The New Testament

Christians believe that the promises of the Old Testament have been fulfilled by **Jesus**. They have added a 'New Testament' which consists of: -

a) **The Gospels** - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These give accounts of Jesus ministry, aged 30 -33. (Matthew and Luke record briefly events surrounding his birth and Luke, one incident aged 12)

b) **The Acts** of the Apostles which record the life of early church, ('apostle' means 'sent one'). These are the 12 people that Jesus chose to be with Him in His Work.

To start with **Jesus**, and all his followers were **Jews.** However, Jesus commanded his disciples, before He went back to heaven, to ***'Go and make disciples of all nations*** (Matthew 28:18). The Apostle **Paul** led in this mission to the non-Jews, the gentiles.

c) **The letters** of the Apostles to the early church.
d**)** **Revelation** – a prophecy about Heaven and earth and the future

How was the Bible given to mankind?

The Bible / God's Word was given: -

a) through a variety of writers – a shepherd, a king, prophets, a fisherman, a tax collector, a doctor, etc
b) over a period of c **1500** years
c) with a variety of types of writing – Law, Poetry, History, Wisdom, Prophecy, Letter, Vison, Parable

(We usually approach different types of reading material in different ways: we don't read Shakespeare, a newspaper report, a car manual, a rule book, a poem and a 'txt msg' in the same way. In approaching the Bible, we need to take into account why each was written and how it uses words.)

Why do we believe the Bible is from God?

1) The Old Testament

Certain individual books were generally agreed by the Jewish people at the time of Jesus, to be of God,

Jesus, Himself, accepted these books as 'the Word of God' – He challenged the Devil's temptations of Him by quoting the Bible saying *"It is written…."*, i.e. 'It is from God' (Luke 4)

2) In the New Testament

After the time of Jesus, there were a number of documents that were claimed to be written by Jesus' Apostles or under their authority.

The early church, all round the Mediterranean, gradually recognised some of these documents as genuinely from God. Sometime later, they met in a 'council' and agreed which ones these were. These became 'the New Testament'.
The Old and New Testaments, together, gives the church the whole Bible

What is the Bible Story?

God gradually revealed Himself and His purposes in the Bible.

From all eternity, God decided to create a people for Himself who would join Him in a loving relationship, and bring Him glory. They were to be a 'bride' for His Son: He would love them and they would love Him. The Bible describes how this relationship came about and so may be seen as a 'love story'.

It begins in Genesis when God made people, male and female, in His image, and their reflection of it in human marriage. It concludes in Revelation with The Marriage in Heaven of Jesus and His People, 'The Church'.

The story of the Bible is in fact, ***the*** Love Story from which all our 'classic' love stories get their pattern - Jane Austen, Mills and Boon, Walt Disney and all! The plot-development in these human love stories mirrors that of the one described in the Bible:

i) **The introduction** - the characters

Human: The lovers are introduced. All is well. What can go wrong?

Bible:*God created man (male & female) in His own image & they are happy together in the Garden of Eden* with God **(Genesis 1, 2)**

ii) **The problem** – separation

Human: The path of true love seldom runs smooth! There's an obstacle: a 'baddy' threatens to separate the lovers forever.

Bible:*The Devil tempts man to sin (disobey God). Their rejection of God, not living up to God's perfect standard separates mankind from God. Death results*. **(Genesis 3)**

iii) **The hope** – rescue

Human: One day, somehow, someone will bring the lovers together.

Bible:*God calls an individual, promises and preserves a nation (Abraham, Isaac etc) from whom would come the rescuer.*

(**Genesis 12-50, Exodus, Joshua)**

iv) **The need** – reconciliation

Human:A means is presented which *could* enable the lovers to come together again.

Bible:*The Law is given to Moses. Fulfilment of this will bring reconciliation and peace between God and mankind.* **(Leviticus, Deuteronomy)**

v) **The emotions** – extreme!

Human: The passions of the lovers, their hearts , are made known.

Bible: *The thoughts and feelings of God and man are expressed.* **(**Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of *Solomon*
(i.e. **The 'Wisdom' Literature**)

vi) **The attempts** - thwarted

Human:Efforts to overcome the obstacle are thwarted. The love seems doomed.

Bible:*God's people are unfaithful to Him; they do not / cannot keep the law. The problem seems insurmountable.*
(Judges to 2 Kings, Isaiah to Malachi) (**The 'Prophets')**

vii) **The solution** – surprising!

Human: The obstacle is overcome. The 'baddy' is defeated - As an expression of love, the lover makes a great sacrifice.

Bible:*Jesus fulfils the law and pays the price of sin for the church he loves, by dying on the cross.* **(The Gospels)**

Had the Bible ended here it would be tragic, but it is no tragedy!

viii) **The resolution** – effective

Human: The solution is effective, the obstacle removed and the lovers may marry. The Kiss is delivered and the proposal is made!

Bible:*Jesus rises from the dead, demonstrating that the barrier has been removed. God's 'proposal' is given to all nations, who are invited to respond in faith to His love.* **(Acts, Letters)**

ix) **The finish** – marriage

Human: The lovers marry and live happily ever after.

Bible: *God and those who have received and believed in Him are united forever.* **(Revelation)**

What were the dates of Bible events (approx.)?

Christians mark Jesus' birth as the central point in History. We do this by recording time **BC** (Before Christ) and **AD** (Anno Domini - in the year of the Lord).

Some approximate dates in the Bible are set out below: -

BC

2100 God calls **Abraham** and promises to make his descendants into a great nation which will be given the land Canaan in 400 years' time

2000 Abraham's grandson, **Jacob,** is given the name of '**Israel'** by God. He and his twelve sons moved to Egypt to escape a famine.

The 12 sons' families grow into 'the twelve tribes of Israel'

The Israelites are enslaved in Egypt.

1440 **Moses** is sent by God to deliver the **Israelites** from captivity in Egypt

On the way to the land God promised them, the people grumble and God commits them to 40 years wandering in the wilderness

1400 Israel enters the promised land of **Canaan**

1000 **David**, of the tribe of **Judah**, an ancestor of Jesus, becomes King

970 **Solomon,** David's son, becomes king. The kingdom of Israel is at its largest and most prosperous.

930 Solomon dies

The Kingdom splits into 10 tribes **'Israel'** in the north with **'Judah'** (and the tribe of Benjamin) in the south with its capital of **Jerusalem**

722 The northern kingdom, Israel, rejects God and was taken into exile and split up through the **Assyrian** Empire

586 The Southern Kingdom of Judah rejects God and is taken into exile in Babylon (the **Babylonian** empire has succeeded the Assyrian one)

537 The exiles of **Judah** return from Babylon and rebuild the Temple and the walls of **Jerusalem**.

430 The last prophet, **Malach**i, speaks.

SILENCE

(God does not speak through fresh scriptures)

AD

0 **Jesus** is born

30 **Jesus** begins his ministry

33 **Jesus** is crucified

Jesus rises form the dead

Jesus returns to the Father

The **Holy Spirit** is poured out at Pentecost

The followers of Jesus, the church, increase

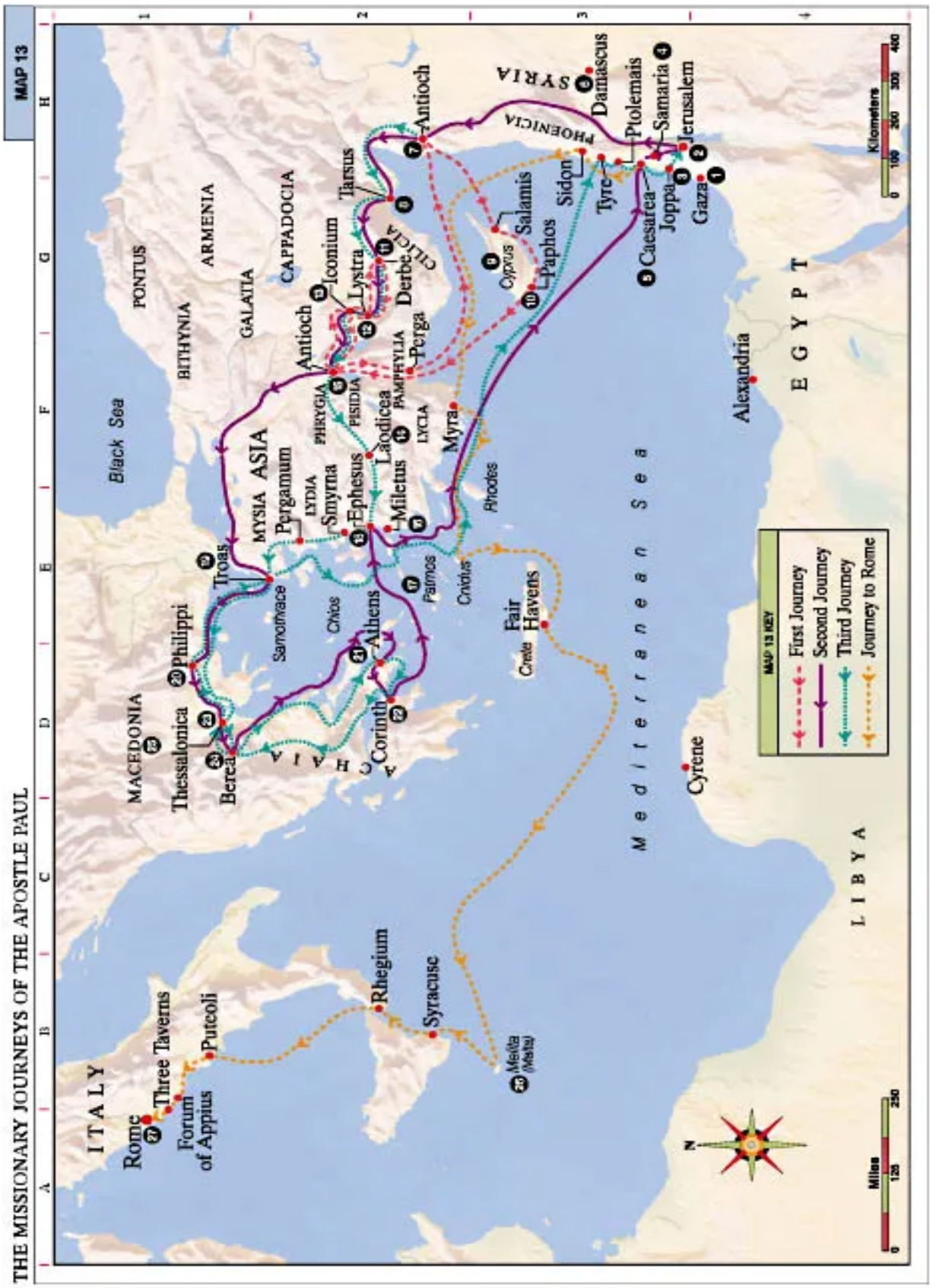
48 The Apostle **Paul's** first missionary journey

67 Paul writes his last letter to his 'son' **Timothy.**

95 J**ohn**, the last remaining Apostle wrote **Revelation**, the last book in the Bible, when exiled in the Greek island, **Patmos**


MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SYRO-PHOENICIA
Lake Huleh
GAULANITIS
Chorazin
Acco (Ptolemais)
Capernaum
Bethsaida
Magdala
GALILEE
Sea Galilee
Gennesaret
Tiberias
Cana
Nazareth
Nain
DECAPOLIS
PLAIN OF SHARON
Caesarea
Pella
Aenon (Salim)
SAMARIA
Sebaste
Sychor
Antipatris
Alexandrium
Joppa (Japho)
Arimathaea
PERAEA
Philadelphia
Lydda
Ephraim
Jericho
Bethany (Beyond Jordan)
Emmaus
Jamnia
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Qumran
Bethany
Bethlehem
JUDAEA
Ashkelon
Herodium
Dead Sea (Salt Sea)
Machaerus
Hebron
Gaza
0 Miles 20
Masada
Roads
N
Beersheba
IDUMAEA
Map of Israel in the New Testament
Bible History Online

Missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul



Words from Luke

1:3	Theophilus	'lover of God', a person or a general address
5	Judea	the area around Jerusalem
	Temple of the Lord	the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem
11	altar of incense	in Temple incense burned, symbol of prayer
17	Elijah	leading Old Testament (OT) Prophet
26	Nazareth	remote village in mountains of Galilee
28	House of David	descendants of King David
	House of Jacob	descendants of Jacob & his 12 sons
54	Israel	descendants of Abrahams
55	Abraham	Abraham, the father of the Jewish race
59	circumcise	remove male foreskin as a sign of faith
69	a horn	a symbol of strength
77	sins	rejecting God not keeping His perfect standard
2:1	Caesar Augustus	Roman Emperor
4	Bethlehem	'city of David' where David was from
8	shepherds	outsiders, unable to attend Temple
11	Christ	the Messiah, the all-conquering king to come
22	days of purification	excluded from temple 40 days after son born
25	consolation of Israel	hope of comfort / peace brought by Messiah
32	gentile	one not belonging to people of Israel
38	redemption of Israel	God's promise to free Isreal from bondage
41	feast of Passover	feast of God's freeing from Egyptian slavery
51	Nazareth	(see 1:28)
3:1	tetrarch	a ruler of a fourth of the country
3	baptism	immersion in water = symbol of new start
	Sins	(see 1:77)
8	Abraham	(see 1:25)
22	dove	symbol of sacrifice (see 1:24)

4:8	Satan	the devil
15	synagogue	meeting place for Jews outside Jerusalem
16	sabbath	the 7th day of the week; a day of rest
31	Capernaum	town in n. Galilee with Roman garrison
34	the Holy One of God	a recognition of being God and the Messiah
41	the Christ	(see 2:11)
5:1	Lake Gennesaret	name of Lake Galilee (northern fertile plain)
14	as Moses commanded	the Law / 1st 5 books of Old Testament (OT)
21	Pharisees	'separate ones', strict Jewish religious sect
	blasphemy	acting in a way contemptuous of God
24	son of man	phrase with human and divine meaning in OT
30	pharisees	(see 5:21)
32	righteous	people right with God
	sinners	people not right with God
6: 4	showbread	12 loaves of unleavened bread in Temple
13	12	in OT there were 12 tribes of Israel
	apostles	'sent ones', chosen by Jesus to be with Him
17	Tyre and Sidon	ports - n. of Israel, promiscuous & idolatrous
35	Most High	God, Supreme and Transcendent
7: 2	centurion	roman soldier over 100 men
5	synagogue	(see 4:5)
11	Nain	means 'beauty' – small village in Galilee
28	Kingdom of God	God's undisputed rule is acknowledged
37	alabaster	soft translucent stone used for carving
39	sinner	(see 5:32)
8: 1	Kingdom of God	(see 7:28)
11	Devil/ Satan	(see 4:8)
26	Gadarene	a non Jewish region south east of Galilee
30	Legion	1000 in roman army
42	12 years of age	the age of changing form child to adulthood
44	bleeding woman	unclean, unable to enter the Temple

9:11	12 apostles	(see 6:13)
8	Elijah	(see 1:17)
10	Bethsaida	home of 1st disciples Andrew, Peter, Philip
20	Christ	(see 2:11)
21	Son of Man	(see 5:24)
23	cross	roman execution
30	Moses	the giver on the Law of God
52	Samaritan	of Samaria, Jewish heritage but idolatrous
10:31	Priest	involved in sacrifices of Temple
	Levite	general service in Temple
	Samaritan	(see 9:52)
11:2	hallowed	holy, sacred
15	Beelzebub (4:8; 8:11)	Devil
24	unclean spirit	demon, evil spirit
29	sign of Jonah	3 days 'dead' (inside the whale)
32	men of Nineveh	wicked but repented after Jonahs message
31	queen of the south	Queen of Sheba visited Solomon for wisdom
45	lawyers	those who studied the Jewish Law
16:11	Mammon	the god of money
17:26	Noah	built an ark to be saved from death / flood
28	Lot	Abrahams nephew - saved from Sodom
18:20	commandments	10 given to Moses at Mt Sinai in wilderness
28	Bethphage, Bethany, Olivet - villages around Jerusalem	
37	mount of Olives	hill overlooking Jerusalem
19:35	colt	young, untried horse
20:1	Chief priest, Scribes, Elders – ruling Jewish council, 'the Sanhedrin'	
17	cornerstone	first stone laid setting house alignment
22	Caesar	(see 2:1)
27	Sadducees	aristocratic party, no resurrection or spirits
37	Abraham, Isaac and Jacob	founding fathers of Israel
39	Scribes	read ,copied and interpreted the scriptures

21:24 gentile (see 2:22)

37 Olivet (see 18:20)

22:1 feast of unleavened bread no yeast(see 2:41)

2 unleavened bread / Passover (see 2:41)

22 Son of Man (see 5:24)

23:1 Pilate Roman governor of Judea

6 Herod (Antipas) ruler of Galilee & Perea

43 Paradise eternal heavenly dwelling with God

47 righteous (see 5:32)

54 day of preparation cooking & cleaning before the Sabbath rest

24: 27 Moses and the Prophets the total Hebrew scriptures

44 Moses and the Prophets (see 24:27)

50 Bethany (see1 8:29)

(Words that repeat are only cited twice; the 2nd referencing the first)

What next?

If you want to know more about Jesus and His church, here are a few suggestions: -

1) Read on!

Having read through Luke's Gospel and Acts, you might be eager to continue reading. If so, the following might be a good place to start.

a) John's Gospel

This was written by one of Jesus' disciples, John. It is in a different style from the other 3 Gospels but is designed to be for people enquiring about Jesus - ***'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name'*** (John 21:31)

b) Genesis and Exodus

The first two books in the Bible tell the story of God's creation of the world and His calling of a man, Abraham, and his descendants, the 12 tribes of Israel.

2) Look for company

If you want to know more, It is very beneficial to find a person, who believes in Jesus and who you respect, to join you in reading and talking about the Bible

If you would be interested in this, I would be happy to help. Drop me a line

Email _____

3) Find a church

The word for 'church' in the Bible means *'those who are called out'*. They are people who believe in Jesus, who calls them, from all parts of society, to be together.

If you believe in Jesus or are seeking Him, being together with the followers of Jesus is where God wants you to be!