

Read The Gospel First

The **Bible** contains dozens of different texts about Jesus specifically categorized by literary genre: prophecy, history, etc. In this library style format, it is not an easy book to read left to right. The Gospels describe the climax of The Story and as such they stand at the forefront of Sacred Scripture as that which should be known best. All the rest of the Bible prepares for, reflects upon, or further deepens comprehension of Jesus' Incarnation, Death, and Defeat of Death. Thus, the entire Bible will be easier to study once the words and deeds of Jesus are solidly understood.

Matthew is written by an Apostle to explain to Jews that Jesus is the fulfillment of dozens of Old Testament prophecies and the Messiah for whom they had waited so long. It chronologically covers His entire life to include familiar nativity stories, the Sermon on the Mount, and the granting of the keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter.

Mark is also written chronologically, but it is more succinct and begins with His Baptism by John. Mark was but a boy during Jesus' ministry, but he grew to travel with Paul, Barnabas, and eventually Peter. He was Peter's Scribe and his Gospel is considered to be the words of Peter written from Rome.

Luke is the third chronologic narrative written by the Greek physician who traveled with Paul. He includes a great deal of the infancy narratives and all we have about the Annunciation, Visitation, and Presentation-as well as the post Resurrection Road to Emmaus discourse. His *Acts of the Apostles* is a continuation of his Gospel and the only historical narrative in scripture about the adventures of Peter and Paul.

John writes his Gospel in a different style, instead of a chronology of his life or ministry he simply describes Seven Signs of escalating impact that prove Jesus is who He says He Is. The culmination being the Crucifixion-where he stood at the foot of the Cross with the three Marys-and the Resurrection, where he outran Peter to the Empty Tomb. As our only eyewitness account of the two most important things that ever happened, we hear a great deal of his Gospel each year during Holy Week.

You can read the entire **Bible**, but it will be easier if you start here with a Gospel or four before delving into the foundational settings of *Genesis* and *Exodus*. The dramatic setting set before us in *Genesis*, and the first steps towards Jesus that are taken by Moses, will mean a great deal more when the rich connectivity between the Gospel, the Beginning, and the End are seen. The Bible has rich descriptions of each of these steps, and countless ways to bring you closer to your Maker, but only if you start...and don't stop. Our hope is that you use this or any Bible Study Plan to accomplish these two fundamental objectives with what time you have remaining: start and don't stop. It might take months, or a year, or even the three years the Church uses to teach the Gospel, but it will most beautifully be worth the effort, and best prepare you for your "Life in the World to Come".