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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1



Allen Webster

The devil is a liar (John 8:44). He lies about God (He's not there; doesn't care). He lies about Jesus (He never lived; still in the grave). He lies about you (insignificant; in control). He lies about the Bible.

THE BIBLE IS TOO BIG TO BOTHER

Most Bibles are over 1,000 pages, which can be intimidating. Those pages contain

- 66 books (double the 30 in most personal libraries);
- 1,189 chapters (more than all the verses of all 305 Beatles' songs combined);
- 31,102 verses (24,866 more than the Quran);
- 773,746 words (more than the 717,020 in the first five Harry Potter books combined).

Yet the Bible is about the same size as most books on a library shelf. Unless it is a tabletop or large print edition, it easily fits in a backpack or purse.

Most read the equivalent of the Bible each year. The average American reads four books a year plus 3,000 forms/notices, 100 newspapers/RSS feeds, and 36 magazines/blogs.

The Bible fits with modern reading habits. Many spread reading over different formats, including e-books and audiobooks. The Bible is available in these formats. Many read in small doses. The Bible is divided into books, chapters, and verses. Thirty-four of its books can be read in less than 45 minutes; 29 in under 20; 17 in under twelve; and, five in five minutes or less. Its 32 longer books are divided into chapters that average only 26 verses.

Since the Bible is too big to be mastered in one reading (it takes 70 hours to read all of it), the solution is to read a little at a time, for the rest of life. The "sum" of God's word is truth (Psalm 119:160), so one should add a little knowledge each day (2 Peter 1:5).

Start by reading the foundational chapters in Genesis 1-12 and the early chapter of Exodus 1-20. Then move on to the story of Jesus' life as told in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. These narratives will give you the background to understand Acts. This will equip you to be better able to understand the teaching given in the rest of the New Testament.



One can read at whatever pace fits his/her learning style. Here is one plan:

- Listen 12 minutes/day, for 12 months to complete the whole Bible in a year.
- Four chapters/day finishes Bible in 298 days.
- Nine chapters/day finishes New Testament in 29 days.
- Three chapters/day finishes Old Testament in 310 days.

If you are ambitious, read twelve chapters a day (three OT and nine NT) and finish the whole Bible once a year and the New Testament once a month.

THE BIBLE IS TOO OLD TO MATTER

Some pass judgment on the Bible as an outdated document with superstitious bias. Atheist John Loftus wrote, “Let’s just face it. The Bible and the people who produced it were barbaric and superstitious. The only redeeming qualities about the Bible or the Christian tradition are those things that civilized people agree with them about, and hence they are irrelevant to modern scientifically literate people.” Ian McKellen said, “I have often thought the Bible should have a disclaimer in the front saying that it is fiction.”

Others see the Bible as an old map. If you were driving your grandfather’s old pickup truck and found a map under the seat, you would not use it on a vacation to Florida. If it was printed before 1960, then it would not even have most interstate highways. Some see the Bible like

that. The Old Testament is about 3,000 years old; the New Testament about 2,000. The world has changed since Moses parted the Red Sea, David took down Goliath, and Jesus died on the cross. How could a book written before computers, moon-landings, terrorism, automobiles, evolutionary theory, airplanes, nuclear bombs, and cloning still be relevant?

The French philosopher Voltaire (1694–1778) boasted that the Bible would soon disappear from public life. Abraham Lincoln said, “In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book.” In the 1960s liberal theologians said God was dead. Voltaire thought it irrelevant in the eighteenth century. Lincoln thought it relevant in the nineteenth. Loftus, McKellen, and the theologians thought it obsolete in the twentieth.

In the twenty-first century, the Bible is still around, the God-is-dead movement died, and the influence of Voltaire, Loftus, and McClellan is small in comparison to Lincoln and the Bible.

Why is the Bible still relevant? Because God wrote it (2 Peter 1:20–21). It was written in ancient times, but the ever-present I AM designed it for all generations (Matthew 24:35; Exodus 3:14). It is “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). It gives man all he needs in every generation till the end of time (2 Timothy 3:16–17; Revelation 22:18–19).

Its continual freshness is evidence of its inspiration. Truth does not change. It reads the same today as it did yesterday, and as it will tomorrow. Without God behind it, the Bible surely would have become hopelessly obsolete long ago. Yet it has not. If the earth is still here two thousand years from now, current science books will be antiquated, but the Bible will still be in use. “The word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25).

All of God’s works are timeless. The food God created thousands of years ago still satisfies today. Air still goes in and out of our lungs twenty times a minute. Sexual intercourse still makes babies (Genesis 4:1). Fire still keeps man warm and water still quenches thirst. Likewise, the Bible is the soul’s food (Matthew 4:4); what air is to lungs Scripture is to souls (Psalm 119:97); its message keeps us warm and satisfied (Jeremiah 23:29). It is the only weapon Satan fears (Matthew 4:1–11), the only remedy for sin’s disease (Psalm 103:3), and the only map to heaven’s treasure (John 14:6).

The Bible is relevant because it works. Its message fills the void in every heart, regardless of status (2 Timothy 3:17). Its power changes lives and translates people from the power of darkness (Romans 1:16; 12:1–2; Colossians 1:13). In a world full of anger, anxiety, discord, and disillusionment, the Bible’s message of hope, peace, respect, and forgiveness resonates.

THE BIBLE IS TOO BORING TO ENJOY

An old man finished a history book. He disliked it so much that he taped a note to it, saying: “In case of famine eat this book, it’s full of baloney. In case of flood; stand on this book, it’s dry.” Some see the Bible like that—a boring list of names, a dry laundry list of church rules, a bunch of thou-shalt-nots.

To the contrary, God stocked His library with something for all tastes. It has biography, narrative, letters, poetry, history, and prophecy. Those who like

- romance, should read Ruth.
- adventure, have the story of Jonah.
- wise sayings, can delve into Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and James.
- conflict, war, and conquest, should read Joshua, Judges, and 1 Chronicles.

- scandal and suspense enjoy the stories of David/Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) and Ananias/Sapphira (Acts 5).
- feel-good-stories are inspired by reading that a murderer became a leader (Exodus 1–3), a prostitute the ancestor of the Savior (Joshua 2; Matthew 1), a dishonest tax collector a generous host (Luke 19), an introvert an instructor (1 Timothy 1), and a callous religious zealot a self-sacrificing gospel preacher (Acts 9, 22, 26).
- underdogs thrill to read of a barren woman becoming the mother of a famous child (Genesis 21); cowardly fishermen becoming spokesmen for reformation (Matthew 26; Acts 2); and people with pronounced disadvantages becoming God’s messengers (Acts 4:12–13). While Bible characters are not whitewashed, they often receive second chances.

THE BIBLE IS TOO CONFUSING TO CARE

Looked at as a whole, the Bible can feel like a massive jigsaw puzzle. Not knowing where to start, some fail to launch and others soon crash.

Since “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33), His word is not hard to understand. It was not written for the intellectually elite or the highly educated. The common people heard Jesus gladly while He was here (Mark 12:37), and common people find no trouble enjoying His words today.

Since the Bible is written on a fourth-grade level, the past generation’s farmers, merchants, shopkeepers, railroad workers, and factory employees had no problem deciphering Scripture although they generally had less education than people today.

If one were putting together a puzzle, she would look at the picture on the box and assemble the edge pieces first. Then she would find colors that match and straight lines that connect. Then she could fit the remaining pieces fairly easily. Studying Scripture is like this. It helps to get the overall picture first and then the easy-to-grasp parts. After that, it is easier to follow the message from book to book, chap-

ter to chapter, and verse to verse. Do not get bogged down with names and places. Those can come later. Just get the meaning.

The overall message is simple. The Bible has one

- villain—Satan. He comes early (Genesis 3), often (Matthew 4; 1 Peter 5:8), and late (Revelation 20).
- problem—sin. It starts with Adam and Eve and is on every page.
- hero—the Savior Jesus Christ. He is featured in the 89 chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (John 20:30–31). The whole Bible is about Him: He is coming (Old Testament); He is here (Matthew–John); He is coming back (Acts–Revelation).
- purpose—salvation. The Bible is not just for learning or even for living. It is for saving (Acts 2:21, 38, 41; 4:12; 16:30–34).

Beginning readers can start with easily understood verses: “God is love” (1 John 4:8); “Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8); “sin separates” (Isaiah 59:2); “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23); “love the Lord your God with all your heart” (Matthew 22:37); “whoever believes in Him should not perish” (John 3:16); “repent, and let every one of you be baptized for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38); “the gift of God is eternal life” (Roman 6:23); “love one another” (1 John 3:11); “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19); “be faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10); and “enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21).

Next, begin reading the New Testament. Write down things you learn in each chapter and questions you have. In time, you will find answers to the questions (often in a subsequent readings). Think about what you learn. Live by it. Follow this by reading the Old Testament.

Do not believe Satan’s lies about the Bible. His goal is to keep you away from it—unimpressed, uninformed, unconverted. Someone said, “The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

Even When He Is Silent

A young girl whose name may never be known died in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, but her faith will never be forgotten. On the wall of the cell she occupied until her death, an Allied soldier found these words she had written:

I believe in the sun
Even when it is not shining;
I believe in love
Even when feeling it not.
I believe in God,
Even when He is silent.

*“To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock:
Do not be silent to me lest, if You
are silent to me, I become like
those who go down to the pit.”*

PSALM 28:1

God’s Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16
God’s Grace: Ephesians 2:8
Christ’s Blood: Romans 5:9
Holy Spirit’s Word: Romans 1:16
Sinner’s Faith: Acts 16:31
Sinner’s Repentance: Luke 13:3
Sinner’s Confession: Romans 10:10
Sinner’s Baptism: Acts 22:16
Christian’s Love: Matthew 22:37
Christian’s Work: James 2:24
Christian’s Hope: Romans 8:24
Christian’s Endurance: Revelation 2:10



An Anonymous Letter

From a Parent to a Child

I cannot buy you a set of morals; I cannot build you a sense of responsibility; I cannot hand you appreciation of beauty; I cannot manufacture for you concern and compassion; I cannot make yours a compelling, faithful, loyal spirit; I cannot give you the ability to love.

I have no fortune to will you with which to gain popularity; make you a philanthropist; or help you leave memorials for charity.

I own no secret formula for success or any new philosophy. I've never written a book of wisdom.

I cannot send you away into the world on your own with only beautiful pictures in your memory, for you have seen me cry faithless tears of despair; you have seen me shake my fist in anger; you have witnessed ugliness in my time of weakness.

These things which I cannot give you are all yours in Christ Jesus.

As you leave your home, you step into new relations with parents, friends, and the world. The 'apron strings' that have been lengthened as you matured must soon be cut. You have earned more than freedom from high school. You have proven yourself trustworthy, dependable, and mature enough to try your own wings, but I will be 'on call' throughout my life.

You are fully accountable to God, your heavenly Father who loves you far more than I, who has riches in store beyond your comprehension, but who expects much, punishes, sees and knows—also beyond your comprehension.

I commit you to His care as the fire of the world tests the gold of your character—but I will be always in prayer.

—Author Unknown

"A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother."

PROVERBS 15:20

Good Teacher

A man took his son fishing one day.

After a few hours in the boat with not much to do, the son started asking his father some questions.

"How does the boat float?" he asked.

The man thought about the question, then said, "I don't really know, son."

"Well, how do fish breathe underwater?"

The father scratched his head.

"I guess I don't know the answer to that one either."

"Why is the sky blue?" the boy persisted.

The father replied, "I really don't know, son."

The boy started to worry that his father was getting upset at all the questions.

"Do you mind me asking questions, Dad?"

His father immediately reassured him. "No, of course not, son! If you don't ask questions, you'll never learn anything."

—Author unknown

"A merry heart does good"

PROVERBS 17:22



A Great Man's Secret

Only one member of the church of Christ has ever been elected President of the United States, James A. Garfield. When he was a young man, an aged friend gave him a slip of paper containing a list of rules. It is said that Garfield cherished and practiced these rules throughout his life. They are reproduced here in brief:

Make few promises.

Always speak the truth.

Never speak evil of anyone.

Keep good company or none.

Drink no intoxicating liquors.

Good character is above everything else.

Be honest if you would be happy.

When you speak to a person, look into his eyes.

Live within your income.

Never run into debt unless you see your way out.

Good company and good conversation are the essentials of virtue.

Good character can be injured by our own acts.

If evil is spoken of you, let your life refute the falsehood.

If your hands cannot be employed, attend to the cultivation of your mind.

—Author Unknown

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

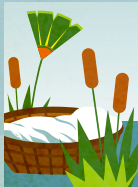
The Life of Moses

0-40 YEARS

PRESERVED AND PREPARED FOR SERVICE TO GOD



Born in Egypt under a Pharaoh who "did not know Joseph" (**Exodus 1:8**)



Saved by Pharaoh's daughter and taught the wisdom of the Egyptians (**Acts 7:22**)



Killed an Egyptian for beating a Hebrew and fled to Midian (**Exodus 2:11-15**)

40-80 YEARS

SHEPHERD



In Midian, Moses married Zipporah and took care of sheep for his father-in-law (**Exodus 2:16-3:1**)



Called by God from the burning bush (**Exodus 3:2-4:17**)



In Egypt, before Pharaoh, Moses demanded that Pharaoh let the people go (**Exodus 5:1**)



The ten plagues of Egypt (**Exodus 7:14-12:36**)



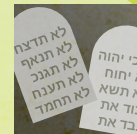
The departure from Egypt and destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (**Exodus 12:31; 14:27-28**)

80-120 YEARS

WANDERING AND DELIVERANCE



Journey to Mount Sinai (**Exodus 12:37-19:2**)



The Ten Commandments (**Exodus 20:1-26**)



Instructions on the Tabernacle and priesthood (**Exodus 25:1-31:11**)



Moses' death after looking into the promised land (**Deuteronomy 34:1-6**)

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 24:1

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Chapter to Chapter - Romans" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

Answers to the previous issues

V. 23:11, Joy in Christ: Questions from Philippians: 1. Timothy (Philippians 1:1); 2. Prison (1:7, 14); 3. Epaphroditus (2:25, 30); 4. Suffer (1:29); 5. Christ's (2:5); 6. Be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind (2:2); 7. Heaven (3:20); 8. Dogs (3:2); 9. Gentleness/moderation (4:5); 10. Through Christ (4:13); 11. Benjamin (3:5); 12. Christ Jesus (2:9); 13. Saints, bishops, deacons (1:1); 14. Timothy (2:19)

V. 23:12, Houses of Worship: 1. Saul's head (1 Chronicles 10:10); 2. Diana (or Artemis) (Acts 19:27-28); 3. God and the Lamb are the temple (Revelation 21:22); 4. The temple of the god Berith (Judges 9:46-49); 5. Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1, 40-42); 6. All believers (1 Corinthians 6:19); 7. Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:36-37); 8. John (Revelation 1:4; 11:1-2); 9. Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:7, 22-23); 10. His body (John 2:19-21); 11. Solomon (1 Kings 6); 12. Ahab (1 Kings 16:29-32); 13. Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5:17-18); 14. Cyrus (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

Cities, Deserts, and Rivers

Find your answers in these verses: Genesis 2:10-14; 41:30; 45:10; Exodus 2:1-10; 7:17; Deuteronomy 2:14; Joshua 3:13; 1 Samuel 12:9; 1 Kings 5:6; 8:1; 9:11; 16:24; 17:1-6; 2 Kings 5:9-14; Hosea 7:16; 9:3; Amos 5:24; Matthew 3:13; Luke 3:4; Revelation 16:12.

- When Solomon was gathering materials to build the temple, what sort of trees did he desire from Lebanon? _____
- Where was the ark of the covenant housed before Solomon brought it to the temple? _____
- What did Moses change the water into? _____
- How many years of famine does Joseph predict will strike Egypt? _____
- Where in Egypt did Joseph relocate his father and brothers? _____
- In Hosea 7, the rage of the princes' tongue will be their derision in what land? _____
- How many cities did Solomon award Hiram of Tyre? _____
- After whom is the city of Samaria named? _____
- Sisera was captain of what host? _____
- In Hosea 9 it is said that Ephraim shall return to what land? _____
- Who brought bread and meat to Elijah while he was hiding from Ahab? _____
- From the land of Kadeshbarnea until the Hebrews arrived at the brook Zered was how many years? _____
- Who is described as the voice of one calling in the desert? _____
- Jesus was baptized in what river? _____
- What river stood in a heap? _____
- What rivers watered Eden? _____
- How many times did Naaman wash in the river Jordan? _____
- Whose mother cast her son into a river? _____
- In Revelation, what river dries up to prepare for the kings of the East? _____
- What prophet prophesied, "But let justice roll down like a river, and righteousness like a mighty stream." _____

Still the BOOK of BOOKS

It is estimated that there have been more than 5 billion copies of this book printed.

Twenty million copies of this book are sold in the United States each year (almost 55,000 copies a day).

That is double the number sold in 1950. I mention this because some think there is less interest in this book now than in years past.

In 1995, one version of this book sold 18 million copies.

This book is and has remained a best seller for decades.

More than 168,000 copies of this book are sold or given to others in the United States each day.

A single international group distributes almost 60 million copies of this book each year. That's more than a 100 copies per minute.

This book is sought all over the world. As an example, today sixty percent of its readers live in the developing world. In 1900, eighty percent lived in Europe and the United States.

Yes, we are talking about the Bible.

Have you read the greatest book ever written? —Dick Brant

"Incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding."

PROVERBS 2:2



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

I would like:



☐ A Bible Correspondence Course



☐ A DVD Bible Study



☐ An In-Home Bible Study

New Tracts!

- ☐ Three Lessons from a Persecuted Church
- ☐ Of Hidden Treasure and Found Pearls
- ☐ A Procession of Cross Bearers
- ☐ Why Do People Lie?



More subjects:



☐ The Restoration Plea



☐ What Will We Leave Behind?



☐ Your House is on Fire!



☐ Is the Church Jesus Built on the Earth Today?



☐ Learning to Listen May Save Your Marriage



☐ Simple Directions to Heaven



☐ What the Disciples Learned about Giving



☐ Things My Dad Taught Me



☐ Advice to the Grieving

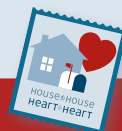


☐ God's Financial Goals for Your Family

Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.

VOLUME 24:1

All materials are completely FREE of charge (including shipping in the U.S. or Canada).



NAMING THE DEVIL IN YOUR WILL

A man was cleaning out his desk and found a shoe repair ticket that was ten years old. He figured he had nothing to lose to try to collect his shoes.

He presented it to the repairman, who was gone for several minutes. He returned and gave the ticket back to the man, who asked, "Couldn't you find my shoes?"

The repair man replied, "Oh, I found them; they'll be ready next Friday."

Procrastination is not the result of lack of time to complete a task, but an attitude.

A story is told of an infidel who died and left his estate, a farm, to the devil. This was no small matter of deliberation for the court. They handed down the following decision: "It is decided that the best way to carry out the wish of the deceased is to allow the farm to grow weeds, the soil to erode, and the house and barn to rot. In our opinion, the best way to leave something to the devil is to do nothing."

We may not be infidels, but when we procrastinate and postpone the great decisions of life, we end up having willed our soul to the devil.

Thomas Huxley in *Technical Education* wrote, "Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not. It is the first lesson that ought to be learned; and however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that he learns thoroughly."

Edward Young (1683–1765) wrote, "Procrastination is the thief of time." Gordon McDonald emphasized the seriousness of wasting time by titling two chapters of his book *Ordering Your Private World* respectively, "Has Anyone Seen My Time? I've Misplaced It!" (chapter 6) and "Recapturing My Time" (chapter 7). How certain can we be that it can be recaptured or reclaimed?

Solomon wrote that there is "a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Hosea said, "Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you" (Hosea 10:12).

Is procrastination stealing our time on earth from doing God's will (Proverbs 15:23)? We must not be like those who were saying there are yet four months until the harvest. Jesus said,

"Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35).

—Glenn Hitchcock

You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

—Christopher Columbus



The Most Influential Life

Tacitus, perhaps the greatest Roman historian born in the first century, speaks of Jesus. Josephus, a Jewish historian born AD 37, tells of the crucifixion.

Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette said, "As the centuries pass, the evidence is accumulating that, measured by His effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet."

A contemporary Bible scholar said that "the *Encyclopedia Britannica* uses 20,000 words in describing this person, Jesus. His description took more space than was given to Aristotle, Cicero, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, or Napoleon Bonaparte."

Ernest Renan said, "Jesus was the greatest religious genius that ever lived. His beauty is eternal, and his reign shall never end. Jesus is in every respect unique, and nothing can be compared with him. All history is incomprehensible without Jesus Christ."



THE HISTORICAL JESUS

There is more evidence for the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth (c. 4 BC–AD 30) than any other person of antiquity.

There are more than 5,500 Greek manuscripts and thousands of copies of the New Testament, some dating as early as AD 130, that attest to the fact that Jesus was a man who lived on the earth and was the Son of God.

The New Testament was written by eight inspired writers who combined make reference to Jesus over 1500 times.

Some of these writers were with Jesus during most of His public ministry (Matthew, John, Peter), or had close association with Him or His followers (Mark, James, Jude, and Luke). They wrote about Him as early as fifteen years after His resurrection. James (Jesus' brother and perhaps the earliest New Testament writer) was considered a historical person not only by the New Testament but also by the first century AD Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (c. AD 37–100). James wrote the following around AD 45: "James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings" (James 1:1).

The New Testament evidence is more than adequate to establish the undeniable fact that Jesus existed and was and is the Son of God. —David Ray Fanning



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1/19

A close-up photograph of a man in a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie. His hands are clasped together in a prayer position, and he is looking down with a serious expression. A watch is visible on his left wrist.

MAY WE PRAY FOR YOU?

Send your requests to the congregation on the front page or contact us on housetohouse.com.