

Reading the Bible Jesus' Way by Elder Jack Mock



Manuscripts/ papyrus scrolls

Before the **printed bible** of the 1400's there were only **manuscripts / papyrus scrolls**, etc

We read in Lk 4:16-17

"On the Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue as was his custom and he stood up to read. The **scroll** of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. **Unrolling it**, he found the place where it was written..... "

Jesus unrolled it a long way down as the scroll is has 66 chapters! Then Jesus claimed that this Scripture is being fulfilled in their hearing!

In my trip to Israel in the museum of Israel my group saw the 8 feet long scroll of Isaiah found in Qumran.

On closer inspection there are **NO chapters and verses**; our Lord Jesus knew where to look; he must have learnt it in the synagogue at Sabbath school. The same with earlier NT Greek documents. That is they must have read great chunks of it at a time and knew where the major divisions were.

The **Manuscript Reading method** encourages us to read it **from beginning to the end ignoring the chapter and verse sub divisions**; like seeing a 2 hour length movie, you don't walk out after 5 minutes and say you know all about the theme; its climax and ending of the movie.

What is the big deal that people make in reading the bible?

They can watch 2 to 3 hours of TV each night; spend another 1 to 2 hours on social media; yet it only takes about 15 minutes to read through the 5 chapters of 1 Thess. and then come back and read chapter 1 over a couple a times, to dwell and meditate on the text for another 15 to 20 minutes.



Reading the bible **one verse per day** from **different books** of the bible is not the way to go; as you will lose the continuity and flow of the letter / narrative / oracle / song / prayer / lament, etc. and more importantly you will miss the **BIG PICTURE/IDEAS** of that particular book.

A verse out of context can become a pretext!

The Hebrew Bible (Masoretic Text 'MT', Tanakh) is divided into **three main divisions**: the Torah, the Prophets and The Writings.

"Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Lk 24:44-46) that is the first book in the Hagiographa. see also Lk 24:25-27

BTW, the **Chronicles** is the **last book** in the Hebrew canon and not Malachi and it makes sense as it connects directly with Mt 1: 1 "a record of genealogy of Jesus Christ, the **son of David**, the son of Abraham" with its pro Davidic stance!

How did **Malachi** become the **last book** in our English bibles?

Well round about 300 to 200 BC, more and more Jews were unable to read Hebrew. They spoke Aramaic and Common Greek like Jesus and his disciples. Because of the Hellenisation of the ancient world; 70 scholars made a Greek translation around 285 BC in Alexandria. This is abbreviated "LXX" for the Roman numeral for 70.

This also provided the names of many of the books of our Old Testament canon e.g. the names of the 5 books of the Torah.

The **LXX** was the bible for Jesus and the apostles and quite often the New Testament writers such as Book of Hebrews quoted from it rather than the Masoretic Text, "MT" (which Paul mainly does).



There is a major side issue with the LXX in that it included some of the Apocryphal books which occurs in the Latin Vulgate edition which was the bible of our church for over a thousand years 350 AD to the Reformation of 1500's.

William Tyndale's bible, Prayer Book translation of the Gospels and Psalms, and other early translations, etc were a precursor to the KJV of 1611. The story of how we got the English Bible is a fascinating one.

The **organisation of the OT (MT)** scrolls are:

Torah (Pentateuch) better translated as "instructions" rather than the "law"; is mainly narrative. The first 'law' comes one and half books later in Ex chap 20- 23!

It is a misnomer to call it "Law". Better to use the Hebrew word "Torah" which means "instructions"

Prophets (which includes what we call **Historical books** as the Hebrews saw all history as prophetic; they had a wider view than we do of biblical prophecy) This is a clue how the Hebrews viewed Biblical Prophecy.

The Writings section (13 books) can be arranged in three parts:

1. **Poetic books:**

Psalms, Proverbs and Job.

2. **Five Festival Scrolls (also called the *Megilloth*):**

Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther.

3. **Historical books:** Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles.

You can see straightaway the **theme of the kingship of God or the Kingdom of God** through the LXX naming of these scrolls.

You can use the bible app below and scroll the LXX with any English version available! How good is technology these days!

<http://biblewebapp.com/study/>

Our current English Bibles and Jerome's Latin Vulgate follow the **order of the LXX** and we use terms like Historical books, Major and Minor prophets, etc

BTW this last group was often referred to as the **Book of the Twelve**.

