

THE BIBLE CHALLENGE

Summary: Take a great journey through the Bible, a year-long reading adventure, with The Bible Challenge. Each day you will be accompanied by a meditation written by a church leader or biblical scholar. More than 100 archbishops, bishops, deans, priests, and scholars have contributed essays. Marek P. Zabriskie, founder of The Bible Challenge and editor of this volume, believes that our lives of faith will be enlivened and expanded by a sustained encounter with God's Word. If you never thought you could read the whole Bible, The Bible Challenge is a wonderful way to embark on a holy pilgrimage joined by others from around the world!

Features: Available in Kindle and Paperback versions

Approach Used – Similar to Forward Day by Day:

Day 1

The Rev. Scott Gunn
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Genesis 1–3, Psalm 1, Matthew 1

Today is all about beginnings. It's the start of our great adventure reading the Bible. Even the texts set beginnings before us. Genesis famously opens with "In the beginning. ..."
Chapters 1–2 tell the story of creation. Here we encounter a God who brings into being a world that is wholly good.

But humanity as we know it comes into being in Genesis 3. In the sixth verse, the newly created woman and man both eat forbidden fruit. The rest of the Bible is the story of God's relentless love for a people who never quite manage to live as God intended. As you read the sweeping narrative of the Bible, it's startling how many times and how many ways God reaches out to humanity in love.

Many Christians will regret what we now call "the Fall," that time when humanity first sinned against God. But there is a medieval English carol about the Fall, which ends, "Blessed be the time / That apple taken was. / Therefore, we moun singen / Deo gratias!" Why would we bless this disobedience? Because it is precisely our disobedience that brought about the need for our redemption through Jesus Christ. No apple, no Jesus.

And this brings us to Matthew. Chapter 1 is the genealogy of Jesus and his birth. It would be tempting to skip past the genealogy, but then we would miss an important point. Even a casual glance at the list of names reveals what is for me an inspiring picture. The

Incarnation of Jesus Christ was brought about through a rogue's gallery of imperfect people. While Jesus himself did not sin, his forbearers certainly did.

If God can work through ordinary, flawed people to bring about extraordinary things, then God can work through us.

QUESTIONS As you read the Bible, where do you see yourself in this vast, sweeping story of God's love for humanity? Look up a few people in the Matthew 1 genealogy (e.g., "the wife of Uriah"). What does it say about God and about us that God could use ordinary people to bring about the salvation of us all?

PRAYER God of light and life, open my mind and my heart to your gracious love, and use me for your saving purposes, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Zabriskie, Marek. The Bible Challenge. Canterbury Press Norwich. Kindle Edition.*

THE PATH

Summary: Walk in the footsteps of faithful men and women who have done their best to follow God's call. The Path is the story of the Bible, excerpted from the New Revised Standard Version, so that it is clear and easy to understand. Follow the path of God's love all the way from the beginning to the end, from Adam's creation to John's revelation. With informative trail signs to help you see how each piece of the narrative fits together, The Path is an experience unlike any other: an amazing 360-degree overview of the vast, sweeping story of God's extraordinary love for ordinary people. Join us on this epic adventure, a journey through the Bible to grow closer to God. ©2016 Forward Movement (P)2019 Forward Movement

Features: Available in Kindle, Audiobook, and Paperback versions.

Approach Used – Excerpts from the Bible, covers the "great landmarks" from the Bible's story:

All of the regular text in this book is directly from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. On very rare occasions, we substituted a noun for a pronoun for the sake of clarity; these are noted in brackets. But, of course, The Path is not the entire Bible. Instead, it is excerpts from the Bible, selected texts that cover most of the "great landmarks" from the Bible's story. You might notice another difference between The Path and the Bible: There are no verse numbers. At the end of each chapter, there is a list of citations, so that you will know exactly which parts of the Bible you have been reading. In between the long

selections of the Bible, you will see small paragraphs that are written in italics. The italicized text in this book is summary, written by the editors. We use these paragraphs to give you an overview of what is happening in the biblical text that was omitted. "Point of Interest" boxes explain a word or a term that might be confusing or highlight an important element that might be easy to miss. "Scenic View" boxes give a bit of history or background, so that you can better see the big picture of the Bible's story. "You Are Here" boxes invite readers to find themselves in the story, to connect the ancient scripture to modern life. "Trail Crossing" boxes point out connections to other parts of the biblical story. At the end of each chapter, a list of questions presents an opportunity to wrestle with the biblical text and see what it is saying to you. If you are reading this book as part of a class or small group, you can use the questions for group discussion. If you are reading this book on your own, you can use them as a starting point for prayer, reflection, or journaling. The questions and next steps are an important part of continuing your journey of faith beyond the pages of the Bible, so that you can follow Jesus more closely in your daily life. *Movement, Forward. The Path: A Journey Through the Bible (p. 13). Forward Movement. Kindle Edition.*

THE STORY

Summary: "The greatest story ever told" is more than just a cliché. God goes to great lengths to rescue lost and hurting people, and that is what The Story is all about: the story of the Bible, God's great love affair with humanity. Filled with intrigue, drama, conflict, and redemption, this dramatized edition sweeps you into the stories, poems, and teachings of the Bible. Public Domain (P)2011 Zondervan

Features:

- Available in Kindle, Hardcover, and Audiobook versions
- Multiple voices, professional narration, music, and sound effects bring this dramatic recording to life
- Audio foreword from Max Lucado
- New International Version (NIV) Bible text, with short transitions to connect the listener to the continuing story

Approach Used – Portions of Scripture that were thoughtfully and carefully excerpted and then placed in chronological order to provide a storyline and a "big picture" of the Bible

THE STORY, THROUGH ITS UNIQUE and easy-to-read format, opens a door to God's truth. It's a door that every person is consciously or unconsciously searching for. A door that leads to freedom, hope and God himself! The Bible is filled with exciting and intense stories

of love, war, birth, death and miracles. There's poetry, culture, history and theology. It's a suspense novel, a book of sociology, a history lesson — all woven around one eternal conflict: good versus evil. This story offers a glimpse of people in different times and places who are yet very much like us today.

As you read *The Story* you will encounter not only the story of humankind but also the story of who God is and what he has done for us — for you. This story makes the insistent claim that a loving God has sought you and provided a way of redemption — a way for you to enter a relationship with him.

The Story includes the actual, God-breathed words of the Bible. The 31 chapters that comprise *The Story* contain portions of Scripture that were thoughtfully and carefully excerpted and then placed in chronological order. Transitions, which appear in *Italic*, were written to summarize omitted Scripture text in order to help the storyline read smoothly. The texts were chosen to retain the overall flow of the narrative, so that when you read this story, you will get a sense of the “big picture” of the Bible. Line spaces were added when text was omitted, and a chart at the back of this book will let you know what portions of Scripture were included.

Other helpful material placed at the end of *The Story* include an epilogue that gives you an idea of the global impact this story has had on the world, a discussion guide with questions for you to reflect on personally or with a group and a cast of characters with brief descriptions so that you can tell who's who at a glance.

The Scripture text used in *The Story* is taken from the New International Version (NIV). Our goal was to make the Bible read smoothly and easily, so that you can read it just like you'd read a novel. But *The Story* you're reading isn't any ordinary story. You are reading a story that has the power to change who you are, what you think and how you view life. You are exposing yourself to deep, transforming truth. So, sit back and enjoy the truest, greatest story ever written. *Zondervan. The Story: The Bible as One Continuing Story of God and His People (pp. ix-x). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.*