

The Condensed Bible

Old and New Testaments

Condensed by David Coory

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PUBLISHERS NOTE

No particular denominational or doctrinal viewpoint is intended in this Condensed Bible. The sole aim is to convey biblical truth clearly and succinctly while retaining the intent and style of the original inspired authors.

In the case of ambiguous or unclear passages, the overall biblical picture and wording of similar passages have been used as a guide along with common sense and prayer for divine guidance.

This Condensed Bible has not been published for profit. All surpluses are to be utilised in promoting further sales, translating the work into other languages, and maintaining a low selling price.

This book is dedicated with grateful thanks to the translators of the Bible versions listed below which have been used as a resource.

Main resource Bibles

Revised Standard Version
New International Version (NIV)
The New American Bible (Catholic)
King James Version.
New American Standard Version
New Revised Standard Version
Jerusalem Bible (Catholic)

Supplementary resource Bibles

Good News Bible
Knox Version (Catholic)
Living Bible
Contemporary English Version
New King James Version
New World Translation

Christian unity

By Thomas Scott, 1795 (abridged).

“I believe there are many things unscriptural among us all (referring to the different Christian denominations), things either redundant or erroneous, for human nature is very fallible.”

“There must therefore be differences of opinion.”

“The enemy will stir up our corrupt passions to magnify these differences into matters of importance, and urge us to contend about them. By his influence we are readily persuaded to think we are zealous for the Lord God and doing him service, whereas we are merely gratifying our pride.”

“If the different sects of Christians would but consider themselves as regiments in the same army, and stand up as it were, for the honour of their particular regiment, and only endeavour to outdo others in promoting the spread of true Christianity, thus fighting the common enemy, the divisions might be overruled for good.”

“But alas, too many say, *“We saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, for he is not one of us”* (Matt-Mark-Luke 18:28).

“Perhaps not one fourth of mankind profess Christianity, and alas perhaps not one in a hundred of those named Christians are really such.”

“Therefore let us enlarge our views, our desires, and our prayers beyond the limits of a creed, according to the extensive meaning of the first words of the Lord’s Prayer.”

To the reader

This Condensed Bible is just over half the length of a traditional Bible, yet every effort has been made to retain all the essential details, features, stories, parables, prophecies, power, and spiritual upliftment of the full length Bible, and to do so in the most interesting and edifying manner possible.

Long genealogies unless essential to the narrative have been omitted, along with repeated passages and repetitious figures of speech. Descriptive passages have also been shortened when this could be done without sacrificing detail.

In the book of Psalms only the best examples of each type of psalm have been retained. The three gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke have been combined into one comprehensive account.

The Condensed Bible has been compiled with the following readers in mind:

- The busy person with limited time for reading.
- The first-time Bible reader who wishes to understand the Bible quickly.
- The first-time reader who is daunted by the sheer length of the traditional Bible.
- The regular Bible reader who would like to experience reading the entire Bible cover to cover in a more readable, chronologically arranged, Genesis-like format, with additional features such as the Lord's words in bold, informative footnotes, and an approx running date on each page.
- The regular Bible reader who finds much of the traditional Old Testament obscure.
- The regular Bible reader who would like to read the life of Jesus in one vivid detailed account by the combining of the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

In trying to make this Condensed Bible as interesting and useful as possible the following innovations have been adopted:

Books in chronological order

In the traditional Bible the Old Testament 'prophet books' are located separately from the Israelite 'history books.' This makes it difficult to relate a prophet's words to what is happening historically and politically at the time.

To overcome this problem the 'prophet books' in this Condensed Bible have been arranged in chronological order and the Israelite history (mostly from the books of 1 and 2 Kings and Chronicles) has been inserted into the relevant places. This allows a prophet's message or prophecy to be more readily understood and for the eventual fulfilment of a prophecy to be clearly recognised.

Also in the traditional Bible, from the death of King Solomon, the histories of the divided Israelite kingdom – Northern Israel to the north and Judah to the south are combined in one narrative. This results in a continual see-sawing back and forth between the two kingdoms which can be highly confusing because of the differing kings and prophets. Therefore in this Condensed Bible the history of the short-lived kingdom of Northern Israel has been kept separate from that of the southern kingdom of Judah. In order to do this satisfactorily the accounts of the two great miracle-working prophets, Elijah and Elisha traditionally found in 1 and 2 Kings have been made into two separate books. Following biblical tradition these two additional books have been named after the prophets whose experiences they relate.

This chronological reordering of the Old Testament has been modelled after the book of Genesis which is strictly chronological and has always been one of the clearest, most readable and interesting books of the Old Testament.

Sub-headings, lists of contents and comprehensive concordance

Because of the condensing and restructuring of this Condensed Bible, traditional Bible chapter numbers and verses have necessarily been changed. To compensate for this and to speed up the locating of passages by the reader, there are numerous sub-headings throughout the text. In fact the Condensed Bible can be skim read using these sub-headings alone. However they are not intended to be read in normal reading

of the text. These sub-headings are also listed (sometimes in shortened form) in the contents section at the beginning of each book of the Bible.

There is also a comprehensive Concordance at the back of the Bible.

Commandments and Proverbs grouped by subject heading

For greater clarity, the approximately ninety commandments of God in the book of Exodus have been grouped under subject headings such as Marriage, Sexual Immorality, The Occult, etc.

The book of Proverbs has been treated in the same manner.

Words of God in bold

Whenever God or an angel speaks first hand, either directly or through a prophet, the words are written in **bold**. And whenever a prophet or prophetess speaks their own words, but under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the words are written in ***bold italics***.

Running date on each page

An approximate running date is printed at the foot of each page.

Footnotes for added insight

Short footnotes are found at the bottom of most pages explaining customs and giving additional insight or information from other parts of the Bible.

Power, dignity and readability

Great care has been taken in this Condensed Bible to retain the full spiritual power of the best traditional Bibles, and to produce an accurate text that has power, dignity, clarity, elegance, interest and readability. This has been done by using the world's finest English translations as a resource, including the dignified and poetical King James Version.

The name of God

The name/title of God, Yahweh, or as it is commonly Anglicised Jehovah, is found numerous times in the original Hebrew texts of the Old Testament. However Jewish Rabbis of later generations, fearing to speak the name of God too frequently, began substituting the word 'Lord' for Jehovah when reading the scriptures aloud in the synagogue.

This custom was noted by the early translators of the Old Testament (Greek Septuagint and later Latin Vulgate) and as a result when they made their translations they substituted the word 'Lord' in place of the original 'Jehovah' in almost every instance. Most modern translators in order to retain familiarity with past versions have continued this same tradition.

Unfortunately this creates a certain remoteness of God, and a lack of colour and personality quite out of keeping with the original texts, and occasionally a distortion of true meaning. There is no doubt that the Lord used his name freely in the numerous revelations and messages he gave to his prophets of old. The proper name is still found in Jewish bibles.

Therefore in this Condensed Bible the Lord's name/title has been reinstated in many instances, especially when it enhances or clarifies the meaning of a passage, and more particularly when God himself uses his name when speaking through a prophet.

The importance of daily Bible reading and prayer

Bible reading Christians throughout history have always testified to the dramatically enhanced understanding of the Bible that comes about when a fixed time is set aside every day for reading the Bible, and more especially when that reading is commenced with a humble prayer to God for enlightenment from his Holy Spirit. This daily habit of a fixed time for reading and a preliminary prayer cannot be recommended too highly.

Your comments are welcome

The publisher welcomes written comments, corrections and suggestions from readers that may further clarify and enhance future editions of this Condensed Bible.

Please address correspondence to: **Condensed Bible, Zealand Publishing House, Private Bag 12029, Tauranga, New Zealand**, or forward by email to **bible@zealandpublishing.co.nz**.

NAMES AND ORDER OF BOOKS

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