

How to Read the Bible (Part 1)

by St. Justin Popovich

The Bible is in a sense a biography of God in this world. In it the Indescribable One has in a sense described Himself.

The Holy Scriptures of the New Testament are a biography of the incarnate God in this world. In them it is related how God, in order to reveal Himself to men, sent God the Logos, Who took on flesh and became man-and as man told men everything that God is, everything that God wants from this world and the people in it.

God the Logos revealed God's plan for the world and God's love for the world. God the Word spoke to men about God with the help of words insofar as human words can contain the uncontainable God.

All that is necessary for this world and the people in it--the Lord has stated in the Bible. In it He has given the answers to all questions. There is no question which can torment the human soul, and not find its answer, either directly or indirectly in the Bible.

Men cannot devise more questions than there are answers in the Bible. If you fail to find the answer to any of your questions in the Bible, it means that you have either posed a senseless question or did not know how to read the Bible and did not finish reading the answer in it.

What the Bible Contains

In the Bible God has made known:

- 1) what the world is; where it came from; why it exists; what it is heading for; how it will end;
- 2) what man is; where he comes from; where he is going; what he is made of; what his purpose is how he will end;
- 3) what animals and plants are; what their purpose is what they are used for;
- 4) what good is; where it comes from; what it leads to; what its purpose is; how it is attained;
- 5) what evil is; where it comes from; how it came to exist; why it exists--how it will come to an end;
- 6) what the righteous are and what sinners are; how a sinner becomes righteous and how an arrogant righteous man becomes a sinner; how a man serves God and how he serves satan; the whole path from good to evil, from God to satan;

7) everything--from the beginning to the end; man's entire path from the body to God, from his conception in the womb to his resurrection from the dead;

8) what the history of the world is, the history of heaven and earth, the history of mankind; what their path, purpose, and end are.

The Beauty of the Bible

In the Bible God has said absolutely everything that was necessary to be said to men. The biography of every man--everyone without exception--is found in the Bible.

In it each of us can find himself portrayed and thoroughly described in detail; all those virtues and vices which you have and can have and cannot have. You will find the paths on which your own soul and everyone else's journey from sin to sinlessness, and the entire path from man to God and from man to satan. You will find the means to free yourself from sin.

In short, you will find the complete history of sin and sinfulness, and the complete history of righteousness and the righteous.

If you are mournful, you will find consolation in the Bible; if you are sad, you will find joy; if you are angry--tranquility; if you are lustful--continence; if you are foolish--wisdom; if you are bad--goodness; if you are a criminal--mercy and righteousness; if you hate your fellow man-- love.

In it you will find a remedy for all your vices and weak points, and nourishment for all your virtues and accomplishments. If you are good, the Bible will teach you how to become better and best; if you are kind, it will teach you angelic tenderness; if you are intelligent, it will teach you wisdom.

If you appreciate the beauty and music of literary style, there is nothing more beautiful or more moving than what is contained in Job, Isaiah, Solomon, David, John the Theologian and the Apostle Paul. Here music--the angelic music of the eternal truth of God--is clothed in human words. The more one reads and studies the Bible, the more he finds reasons to study it as often and as frequently as he can. According to St. John Chrysostom, it is like an aromatic root, which produces more and more aroma the more it is rubbed.