

The 30-Minute Bible *God's Story for Everyone*

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The 30-Minute Bible

Recent research provides the evidence for the need of this book. Studies conducted by Barna Group, Pew Research Center, and LifeWay Research provide the following:

1. 66% of Americans express strong to average curiosity about the Bible, with 15% more expressing a mild level of curiosity
2. 58% express a desire to read the Bible more often but cite time constraints and lack of understanding as top reasons for not doing so. Interestingly, of those wishing to read the Bible, 22% of skeptics and 21% of non-Christians express an interest.
3. A large and growing number of “nones,” individuals who have left organized religion but still cling to their faith, seek a connection with God and an understanding of their faith but find themselves without access to answers.

This small, approachable book offers a nonthreatening presentation of the Bible, written for Christians and non-Christians alike who seek a brief understanding of its overarching storyline. Readers are led through the magnificent unfolding drama of the biblical story interspersed with contemporary drawings and charts to enhance appeal and further understanding. Tidbits of cultural and historical information along with thought-provoking questions bring readers into grasping the threads of the storylines and their interconnections with greater clarity. The book ends by inviting readers to consider that this unfolding story, written over fifteen hundred years by over forty different authors, is one inspired by God and one in which they are invited to play their part.

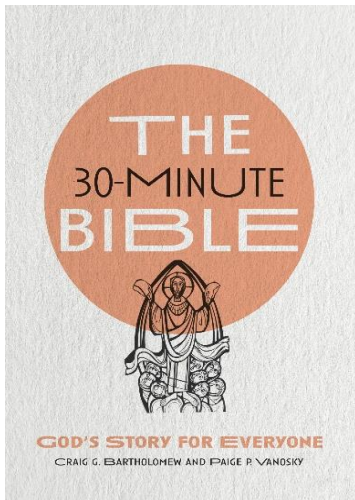
Craig G. Bartholomew is director of the Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology, Cambridge, England. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Drama of Scripture* (with Michael Goheen), *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition*, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, *God Who Acts in History: The Significance of Sinai and The Doctrine of Creation: A Constructive Kuyperian Approach* (with Bruce Ashford). He is currently working on a multi-volume project on The Old Testament and the Question of God.

Paige Peacock Vanosky grew up in San Antonio, Texas, as an active member of Trinity Baptist Church led by Dr. Buckner Fanning. Dr. Fanning was held in high regard by all faith communities, including the Jewish faith to whom he was often invited to speak. Under Dr. Fanning, Vanosky came to understand and embrace the importance of drawing circles rather than lines, as Dr. Fanning taught that aside from the essential elements of faith as stated in the Apostles' Creed, all other topics were an interesting conversation. This message became impactful in her life and ministry and is the message foundational to a chronological Bible study she wrote and taught to a small group of women. These women hold Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and skeptical perspectives yet have continued to meet together for over twelve years. The study became the basis for *The 30-Minute Bible*, the biblical story in brief, written for the many individuals like those in her study who seek an objective, approachable understanding of the Bible.



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EXCERPT



The 30-Minute Bible
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Can you tell the story of the Bible in thirty minutes?

The key to understanding the Bible is to see that it tells a story of the whole world, beginning with the creation of the world and ending with the wrapping up of history, with its plot unfolding between these two bookends. Getting to know the story of the Bible is what enables us to read it, seeing how the many pieces fit into an overarching whole.

We probably all know that Jesus is central to the Bible. What is easily missed, however, is that to understand Jesus, who we learn about mainly in the New Testament, we need to go all the way back to Adam and Eve, then trace the story forward to see how Jesus fits into it and fulfills it. The overarching story of the Bible is the large-scale map that enables us to see how it all fits together and how small, confusing passages make sense within the bigger story.

The good news is that this small book is designed precisely to provide you with such a large-scale map and with other cultural and historical information that will deepen your understanding of the story. Master this overview and you will be able to start to read the Bible with understanding and an awareness of how individual parts fit into the big picture. I (Paige) have been teaching the content of this book to Christians and non-Christians for years, and always the result has been transforming. The same can happen to you.

The 30-Minute Bible leads you through the major landmarks of the storyline of the Bible. We want to take you on the journey from the beginning of the world to its end, with the amazing story in between. The book is arranged in bite-size chunks so that if you set aside thirty minutes each day for thirty days—hence *The 30-Minute Bible*—you will become familiar with the entire story. At each stage, we suggest readings from the Bible so that you can start to experience that, yes, you can understand the Bible. These readings are optional, but we strongly encourage you to do them. Do get hold of a Bible in modern English. Many are available. For example, in this book when we quote from the Bible, we are using the New International Version, a very accessible version.

The Bible is a wonderfully bottomless well that one can continue to study and gain fresh insights for the whole of one's life. At the same time, its overarching story can be grasped quickly. Indeed, a good test of this book having achieved its goal is that by the end you should be able to tell the story of the Bible in about thirty minutes.

—Adapted from the introduction



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