

Marking Your Bible

By John S. Waldrip

At the outset, let me state that my preference is for as plain a Bible as possible. I want my devotional reading of God's Word to be a personal interaction with God without risking the intervention of a publishing house, however well-intentioned. Use of a study Bible as a help can be used occasionally. Still, I recommend that you do not read study Bibles devotionally, lest they interfere with your spiritual quest to discover Bible truths from your reading.

Why is marking your Bible indispensable to reading it?¹ First, it keeps you awake - not merely conscious, but wide awake. Second, reading your Bible, if you are *actively* reading, requires thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it usually does not know what he "thinks." Third, writing your reactions down or marking words, phrases, or verses that impress you as you read helps you to remember and reflect on God's Word later.

Reading the Word of God should be a conversation between you and the Author. Presumably, He knows more about the subject matter than you do; if that is not the attitude with which you approach the Bible, you are not receiving with meekness the engrafted Word, James 1.21, and you should address your attitude before continuing.

Understanding the Bible is a two-way operation on the human level; the learner (you, the reader) has to question himself, the human author, and ultimately, the Teacher (the Spirit of God). He even has to be willing to argue (which is to say reason, Isaiah 1.18) with the Teacher once he understands what the Teacher is saying. Of course, this must be done respectfully and humbly. Marking your Bible is an expression of your questions, wonders, curiosities, and agreements with the Author. It is the highest respect you can pay Him while reading His Word.

There are all kinds of methods for marking your Bible intelligently and fruitfully. Here are some devices that can be used, each of which will be illustrated:

1. UNDERLINING - of major points; of important or forceful statements.
2. VERTICAL LINES AT THE MARGIN - to emphasize a statement already underlined or to point to a passage too long to be underlined or highlighted.
3. STAR, ASTERISK, OR OTHER DOODAD AT THE MARGIN - to be used sparingly to emphasize the ten or

¹ Adapted from Inspectional Reading II; Superficial Reading, *How To Read A Book*, by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), pages 36-39.

dozen most essential statements or passages in the chapter, letter, or book of the Bible. Although some people dog-ear pages of their Bible, I shudder at the thought of that and prefer a bookmark, a Post-It, or a piece of paper to mark a page to remember where I left off reading. In any case, by such means, you will be able to pick up the Bible at any time and refresh your recollection by opening it to the indicated page.

4. **NUMBERS IN THE MARGIN** - to indicate a sequence of points made in developing an argument or the development of an idea.
5. **ADDRESSES OF OTHER PASSAGES IN THE MARGIN** - to indicate where else the same points or points relevant to or in seeming paradox of those here marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though many pages may separate them, belong together. Many readers use the symbol cf. to indicate the other page numbers; it means "compare" or "refer to."
6. **CIRCLING OF KEY WORDS OR PHRASES** - This serves much the same function as underlining.
7. **WRITING IN THE MARGIN, OR AT THE TOP OR BOTTOM OF THE PAGE** - to record questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raises in your mind; to reduce a complicated discussion to a simple statement; to record the sequence of major points right through the chapter, epistle, or book. The end papers at the back of the Bible can be used to make a personal index of points in the order of their appearance.
8. **HIGHLIGHTING** – This is self-evident, though there are highlighters that bleed through the Bible's pages, so you might want to obtain highlighters designed for minimal bleed through.

Example:

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for ^phe knew what was in man.

1000 CHAPTER 3

1 Christ teacheth Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration. 23 The baptism and witness of John concerning Christ.

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nic-ō-dē-mūs, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for ^ano man can do these miracles that thou doest, except ^bGod be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ^cExcept a man be born ¹again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic-ō-dē-mūs saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

2 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ^dExcept a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born ^eagain.

8 The ^fwind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nic-ō-dē-mūs answered and said unto him, ^gHow can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

3 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And ^hno man hath ascended

CHAP. 2.
p 1 Sam. 16. 7.
1 Chr. 28. 9.
Matt. 9. 4.
Mark. 2. 8.
ch. 6. 64.
Acts 1. 24.
Rev. 2. 23.

CHAP. 3.

a ch. 5. 36.
ch. 7. 31.
Acts 2. 22.
b Acts 10. 38.

c ch. 1. 13.
2 Cor. 5. 17.
Gal. 6. 15.
Eph. 2. 5. 10.
Titus 3. 5.
Jas. 1. 18.
1 Pet. 1. 23.
1 John 2. 29.
1 Or, from above.

d Isa. 44. 3. 4.
Matt. 3. 11.
Mark 16. 16.
Acts 2. 38.
Titus 3. 5.
1 Pet. 3. 21.

2 Or, from above.
e Eccl. 11. 5.
1 Cor. 2. 11.
f ch. 6. 52.
g Pro. 30. 4.
ch. 6. 33.
Acts 2. 34.
1 Cor. 15. 47.
Eph. 4. 9.

h Num. 21. 9.
ch. 8. 28.
i Luke 2. 14.
Rom. 5. 8.
Titus 3. 4.
j Luke 9. 56.
1 John 4. 14.
k Rom. 8. 1.
l Isa. 5. 20.
ch. 1. 4.

3 Or, discovered.
m ch. 4. 2.
n Gen. 14. 18.
1 Sam. 9. 4.
o Matt. 14. 3.
Luke 3. 19.
20.
p ch. 1. 34.
q Heb. 5. 4.
Jas. 1. 17.

up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 ¶ And ^has Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him ⁱshould not perish, but have ^jeternal life.

16 For ^kGod so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For ^lGod sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 ¶ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that ^mlight is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be ⁿreproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, ^oand baptized.

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Æ-nōn near to ^pSā-lim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For ^qJohn was not yet cast into prison.

25 ¶ Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, ^rto whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 John answered and said, ^sA

TEACHER