

**A GUIDE FOR
THE PERPLEXED**

Part IV:

**THE BIBLE AS
GREAT
LITERATURE**

INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying the Bible is the Sacred Word of God. However, the Bible also contains some of the greatest works of literature ever written, and some of the greatest stories that have ever been told. For instance, the Gospel of Luke has been called the greatest book ever written. In this article, I have listed some of my favorites, and the reasons why I think you should take a look at them. Some of these are not encountered in our liturgical services very often, and I think some of the selections will surprise you. The Wisdom literature, such as Psalms, Proverbs, etc. will not be discussed here, as that will be another article!

SOME REALLY GREAT READING

The Book of Judges

This book recounts the decline of Israel after Moses and Joshua. Israel is ruled by Judges, charismatic leaders who arise when Israel is threatened. In this book we read about the famous Judge Samson, Jephthah who foolishly sacrificed his own daughter, Gideon, who with a small band of men repelled an invasion, and Jael, who dispatched an enemy in a very unique way. I don't want to describe it here, since it would be giving away a secret.

The Book of Ruth

A very short book that tells the story of an ancestor of David and Jesus. It poignantly recounts how Ruth, who is not an Israelite will not abandon her Israelite mother-in-law after the mother-in-law, Ruth and her sister are all widowed. A truly great story.

The Book of Esther

Again, a very short book that interestingly enough, does not mention God! With extraordinary courage, Esther takes action to save the Israelites from the evil Mordecai. This book is the core of the Jewish celebration of Purim. On that day, this book is read in the synagogue, and the children make a ruckus each time the name Mordecai is named.

I and II Maccabees

A great history of the Jewish people during the persecutions by Greek overlords and the Jewish revolt against these overlords. On August 1 we celebrate the heroism of the Seven Maccabees and their Mother, who died rather than abandon their faith.

The Book of Daniel

This book has some wonderful stories such as Bel and the Dragon, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Susannah, and the Youths put into the furnace. But you have to be especially careful here! If you don't have a Catholic Bible, you might miss a lot of these good stories as they are not included in Protestant Bibles.

The Book of Job

A very intense book that deals with the problem of evil. If God is good, then why is there evil in the world? This book has to be read slowly and with thought. If you are in a hurry though, skip to the end and read God's theophany to Job.

The Book of Jonah

How can any list of great biblical reading not include this one? This is a story of a prophet literally dragged kicking and screaming to his ministry. And we all know what happens then!

I and II Samuel

Saul, David, Bathsheba, and Samuel. Need I say more?

GOOD LUCK, AND I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE READING!

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