

Search the Scriptures

**A Survey of
The Holy Bible**

**Outlines & Summaries
Of All 66 Books**

**Selected Daily
Chapter Readings**

**Compiled & Edited by
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They received
the message with
great eagerness and
searched the Scriptures
every day ...

Acts 17:11

... the Holy Scriptures,
which are able to make you
wise for salvation
through faith in
Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:15

**Dedicated to My Wife,
Janet**

Old Testament

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Search the Scriptures – Week 1

Genesis

Chs. 1 – 11 Primeval History

Chs. 1 – 3	The Creation and Fall of Man
Chs. 6 – 9	Noah and the Flood
Ch. 11	The Tower of Babel

Chs. 12 – 50 Patriarchal History

Chs. 12 – 25	Abraham
Chs. 26 – 36	Isaac & Jacob
Chs. 37 – 50	Joseph

Genesis [the word means “Beginnings”] is the first book of the Bible, written by Moses about 1250 BC. Primeval and Patriarchal History are linked by the theme of Separation: God, who separates light from darkness and sky from seas at creation, also separates the Hebrews from the surrounding nations through the patriarch Abraham, from whom will come the Messiah, and through whom all nations on earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3)

Primeval History is covered in Chapters 1 – 11. With broad strokes, Moses paints the towering themes of the creation and fall of man, Noah and the flood, and the tower of Babel. Look for God’s judgment and God’s mercy – both are vividly portrayed here!

Patriarchal History is covered in Chapters 12 – 50. This larger section focuses on the lives of the great Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (with various minor characters interspersed). As you read about these men and their wives, realize that they are ordinary people like us, whom God in his gracious love chooses and uses for his own purposes. They are people who fail time and time again, and yet their unwavering faith in God’s promises ultimately prevails. Their lives are an exciting picture of how the Lord Jesus can use even ordinary people like us to achieve his own extraordinary purposes!

The Lord Jesus Christ is beautifully foreshadowed and prefigured for us in the life of the patriarch Joseph. As you read Chapters 37-50, consider how Joseph, like Jesus, went from being the “Beloved Son” to the “Rejected Servant” and thence to the “Exalted Savior.”

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Genesis

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Beginning
God created all things, even me!

Monday

Chapter 2: Adam and Eve
We are created in the image of God.

Tuesday

Chapter 3: The Fall of Man
Jesus (3:15) came to crush Satan and save us

Wednesday

Chapter 6: The Flood
God showed mercy to Noah in midst of judgment.

Thursday

Chapter 12: The Call of Abraham
Abraham believed God and obeyed him.

Friday

Chapter 15: God's Covenant with Abraham
God's promises cannot be broken.

Search the Scriptures – Week 2

Exodus

Chs. 1 – 18 Deliverance from Egypt

Chs. 19 – 24 Giving of the Law

Chs. 25 – 40 Construction of the Tabernacle

Exodus, a Greek word meaning “exit” or “departure,” is the Bible’s second book, authored by Moses about 1250 BC. As Moses continues the story of God’s chosen people, three major themes emerge.

First is the theme of Deliverance (Chs. 1 – 18). God raises up and prepared his servant Moses to lead his people out of their bondage to slavery in Egypt. God shows forth his power and his faithfulness at every stage: the confrontation with Pharaoh; the Ten Plagues, the Passover, the Exodus, the Crossing of the Red Sea; the provision of manna and water in the desert, etc. This theme of Deliverance is a wonderful foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to deliver us from our bondage to sin.

Second is the theme of the Law (Chs. 10 – 24). God meets with Moses on Mt. Sinai and gives his holy Law to his people. The essence of God’s Law is summarized for us in the Ten Commandments (20:1-17). These Commandments form the basis of God’s unchanging and perfect moral Law for his people. This section ultimately points us to Jesus Christ, who alone lived a sinless life and perfectly fulfilled all the demands of God’s Law and then died for our sins, and whom we can trust as our Redeemer and Savior.

Third is the theme of the Tabernacle (Chs. 25-40). God instructs his people to make a sanctuary for him so that he may dwell among them. The descriptions of the Tabernacle, which was like a portable tent, are long and detailed and may seem somewhat tedious to us, but every single detail has its purpose in shaping the Israelites’ worship of a holy God who has come to live in their midst. For example, can you identify how the six major pieces of furniture point us to Christ? Certainly the theme of God dwelling in the midst of his people is perfectly fulfilled by Jesus Christ: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt [literally, pitched his tent] among us ...” (John 1:14)

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Exodus

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Israelites Oppressed
God is with us even in the midst of suffering.

Monday

Chapter 2: The Birth of Moses
God was preparing a Deliverer for his people.

Tuesday

Chapter 3: Moses and the Burning Bush
Jesus claimed this name for himself: "I AM."

Wednesday

Chapter 12: The Passover
Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away our sin.

Thursday

Chapter 14: Crossing the Red Sea
Jesus stills the waves and walks on the water.

Friday

Chapter 20: The Ten Commandments
Jesus is the only One who has kept the Law.

Search the Scriptures – Week 3

Leviticus

Chs. 1-7	Instructions for Sacrificial Offerings
Chs. 8-10	Appointment of the Priesthood
Chs. 11-15	Laws of Cleanliness
Ch. 16	The Day of Atonement
Chs. 17-22	Practical Holiness for Everyday Life
Chs. 23-25	The Sabbath, Feasts, and Seasons
Chs. 26-27	Conditions for God's Blessings

Leviticus means “about the Levites.” The Levites, or descendants of Levi, were one of the twelve tribes of Israel. God set the Levites apart as his priests, and the book of Leviticus, authored by Moses about 1250 BC, focuses on the special duties of the priesthood.

In a sense, Leviticus is one of the Bible's most difficult books to read, and I want to encourage you to persevere. As we read through pages of regulations for the sacrifices, the priesthood, ceremonial cleanness, various moral laws, and schedules of holy days, Leviticus can indeed seem dry and monotonous – but a couple of exciting and highly relevant themes **do** emerge for the Christian living in today's world.

First is the theme of Holiness. Leviticus centers on the call to holy living in the presence of a holy God. Over and over this theme is sounded: “I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy.” (11:44-45, 19:2, etc.). Leviticus is a challenge to God's people to be holy in every practical detail of life – and in the midst of today's evil and wicked world, stained and contaminated by sin, that's no small challenge!

Second is the theme of Atonement. Because of our sin and inability to live in perfect holiness before God, we are dependent on an act of God's grace whereby he makes “at one” with himself those who were once alienated from him by sin. In the Old Testament, God works this “at-one-ment” through the shed blood of sacrificial offerings (Lev. 17:11), but these only serve to point the way to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who lived a perfect life and shed his blood on the Cross for our sins. (Romans 3:25).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Leviticus

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Burnt Offering for Sin
"In this way ... he will be forgiven." (4:35)

Monday

Chapter 9: The Priests Begin Their Ministry
offering sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins

Tuesday

Chapter 11: Clean and Unclean Food
"Be holy, because I am holy." (11:45)

Wednesday

Chapter 16: The Day of Atonement
"Christ was sacrificed to take away sins."

Thursday

Chapter 17: Eating Blood Forbidden
"It is the blood that makes atonement."

Friday

Chapter 23: The Appointed Feasts of the Lord
These Holy Days were set apart to the Lord.

Search the Scriptures – Week 4

Numbers

1:1-10:10	Instructions for Camping and Marching
10:11-12:16	Journey from Sinai to Kadesh
13:1-20:13	Rebellion and Delay at Kadesh
20:14-22:1	Journey from Kadesh to Moab
22:2-24:25	Balaam and Balak
25:1-26:13	Anticipation of the Promised Land

The English name of this book (**Numbers**) comes from the two accounts in chs. 1 & 26 of the people being numbered or counted in Israel. The Hebrew title of the book (**Bemidar**, or **In the Desert**) is more descriptive of its contents. The book of Numbers presents an account of the 38-year period of Israel's wanderings in the desert, after the issuing of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, and before the entrance into the Promised Land of Canaan. This book was written by Moses about 1250 BC.

The book of Numbers relates the story of Israel's journey from Mt. Sinai to the plains of Moab on the borders of Canaan. Two themes come together here: on the one hand, we see God's Faithfulness; and on the other hand, we see God's Judgment.

God's Faithfulness to his covenant chosen people is amply demonstrated across the pages of Numbers. God provides clear, active guidance for his people (ch. 9); in the midst of a barren desert he provides food (ch. 11) and water (ch. 20), health and salvation (ch. 20). Through the wonderful visions of Balaam (chs. 22-24), God promises his continued and unending faithfulness to his people.

On the other hand, Numbers shows the **Judgment of God** against a murmuring, unfaithful, rebellious people. By responding to God with unbelief, ingratitude and rebellion, the people forfeit their part in the promised land. They are condemned to live out their lives in the desert; only their children would enjoy the fulfillment of the promise that had originally been theirs (14:20-35; compare this with Hebrews 3:7-4:11 in the New Testament).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Numbers

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Census

603,550 men PLUS their families = 2 million total

Monday

Chapter 9: The Passover

Note the guidance of the cloud, day and night.

Tuesday

Chapter 11: Quail from the Lord

"Is the Lord's arm too short?" (11:22)

Wednesday

Chapter 16: The Day of Atonement

"Christ was sacrificed to take away sins."

Thursday

Chapter 22: Balaam and His Donkey

Even prophets need to be obedient to God!

Friday

Chapter 33: Stages in Israel's Journey

God was guiding them through the wilderness.

Search the Scriptures – Week 5

Deuteronomy

Chs. 1 – 4	Moses's First Address
Chs. 5 – 28	Moses's Second Address
Chs. 29 – 33	Moses's Third Address
Ch. 34	The Death of Moses

Deuteronomy means “**second law**” or “**repetition of the law**.” After forty years of wandering in the desert, the generation of Israel which had left Egypt had died off (except for Moses, Joshua and Caleb), and the next generation was finally about to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. But before they did, Moses wanted to remind them of their history, of all that God had done for them, and of the laws they had to continue to obey as God's chosen people. Hence, the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20:1-17 are here repeated at Deuteronomy 5:1-22.

Although the words of Moses are technically in the form of a covenant renewal, the book is sometimes more simply divided (as above) into three addresses. Authorship of the book (except the final chapter added later) is ascribed to Moses, about 1250 BC.

Deuteronomy is quoted or alluded to nearly one hundred times in the New Testament! Did you know, for example, that all three of Jesus's responses to the temptations of Satan are direct quotations from Deuteronomy? See Matthew 4:4,7,10 – and find all three of these quotations in Deuteronomy! Deuteronomy's spiritual emphasis and its call to total commitment to the Lord in worship and obedience inspired references to its message throughout the rest of Scripture.

Some of Deuteronomy is directly fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet from among your brothers” (Dt. 18:15) is quoted directly by Peter in Acts 3:22, 7:37. Also, “Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse” (Dt. 21:23) is quoted by Paul in Galatians 3:13. Some other great verses:

Dt. 6:5	Love the Lord your God with all your heart ...
Dt. 10:16	Circumcise your hearts ...
Dt. 30:19	I have set before you life and death ...
Dt. 31:16	Be strong and courageous ...
Dt. 33:27	The eternal God is your refuge ...

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Deuteronomy

Sunday

Chapter 5: The Ten Commandments

They need to be repeated for each generation!

Monday

Chapter 6: Love the Lord Your God

... with all your heart and soul and strength!

Tuesday

Chapter 8: Do Not Forget the Lord

Prosperity brings its own unique dangers

Wednesday

Chapter 26: Firstfruits and Tithes

The first and the best belong to God.

Thursday

Chapter 30: The offer of Life or Death

"Now choose life, so that you may live ..."

Friday

Chapter 34: The Death of Moses

"Jesus is greater than Moses." (Hebrews 3:3)

Search the Scriptures – Week 6

Joshua

Chs. 1 – 4	Entering Canaan, the Promised Land
Chs. 5 – 12	The Conquest of Canaan
Chs. 13 – 21	The Division of the Land by Tribes
Chs. 22 – 24	Farewell and Death of Joshua

The Book of Joshua is the story of both Joshua the man and Israel the nation as they, with God's help, enter, conquer and divide Canaan, the Promised Land. The action, occurring about 1240 BC, is marked by some beautiful reminders:

- 1:8 "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from you"
- 1:9 "Be strong and courageous; do not be discouraged"
- 24:15 "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"

Judges

The Book of Judges tells of Israel's history for the period between the death of Joshua and the ministry of Samuel (about 1240 – 1040 BC). These two centuries were known for their heroes – called judges – who ruled the tribes of Israel before the kings. The events in Judges follow a certain basic pattern, like a cycle repeating over and over:

1. The Israelites lived in peace while serving God;
2. The Israelites forgot God and worshiped idols;
3. God punished his people through an oppressor;
4. The Israelites cried out to God for forgiveness;
5. God saved his people through another conquering judge.

This pattern repeats itself many times during this period in Israel's history. A total of fifteen judges are listed; the best-known of these are Deborah (chs. 4-5), Gideon (chs. 6-8), and Samson (chs. 13-16). Judges looks forward to Jesus Christ, who is our perfect Deliverer from sin.

Ruth

The Book of Ruth is a tender short love story set in the time of the judges. It teaches us much about love and devotion (who can forget Ruth's beautiful words at 1:16-17?), and God's concerns for our everyday needs. God is also working out his plan for our salvation, as Ruth the Moabitess enters into the family tree of Jesus (Mt. 1:5).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Joshua - Judges - Ruth

Sunday

Joshua Chapter 3: Crossing the Jordan
-- and into the Promised Land at last!

Monday

Joshua Chapter 6: The Fall of Jericho
"For the Lord has given you the city!"

Tuesday

Joshua Chapter 24: The Covenant Renewed
"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"

Wednesday

Judges Chapters 6 & 7: The Story of Gideon
"For the Lord and for Gideon!"

Thursday

Judges Chapters 13 - 16: The Story of Samson
"... a Nazarite, set apart to God ..."

Friday

Ruth Chapters 1 - 4: A Love Story
Ruth enters the family tree of Jesus Christ!

Search the Scriptures – Week 7

I Samuel

Chs. 1 – 7	Samuel as the Leader of Israel
Chs. 8 – 10	Saul Becomes the First King of Israel
Chs. 11 – 25	Saul's Reign Degenerates
Ch. 16	David is Anointed as the New King
Chs. 17 – 30	Struggles Between Saul and David
Ch. 31	The Death of Saul

The Book of First Samuel covers the events of a turbulent century (from about 1100 BC to 1000 BC). It focuses on the lives of Samuel, Saul and David, and its basic purpose is to describe a critical time in Israel's history: the transition from the rule of the judges (1240-1040 BC) to the rule of the kings (1040-586 BC) – in other words, the establishment of the monarchy, or kingship, in Israel.

The figure of Samuel dominates this book, from the opening chapters' account of his birth, youth and calling by God. Samuel emerges as the last of Israel's judges, a man who effectively serves as the leader of Israel and who combines the roles of prophet and priest. But after the Hebrew people demand to have a king so that they can be like all the other nations (8:19-20), Samuel is led by God to anoint the first two kings of Israel – first Saul (10:1) and later David (16:13).

Saul is anointed and established as the first King of Israel (chs. 8-10). He rules from about 1050 to 1010 BC, but his reign degenerates due to the fact that he is disobedient to God (chs. 11-15). Subsequently God leads Samuel secretly to anoint David as Israel's new king (ch. 16). The remainder of this book describes the continuing struggles and conflicts between Saul and David, and the long road (starting with the mighty Goliath in ch. 17!) by which David is prepared for ascension to the throne at Saul's death (ch. 31). Some beautiful verses from First Samuel to memorize include:

2:2	There is no one holy like the Lord
15:22	To obey is better than sacrifice
16:7	but the Lord looks at the heart
17:45	but I come against you in the name of the Lord

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

First Samuel

Sunday

Chapter 1: the Birth of Samuel

"So now I give him to the Lord."

Monday

Chapter 3: The Lord calls Samuel

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

Tuesday

Chapter 10: Saul Becomes King

"Has not the Lord anointed you leader?"

Wednesday

Chapter 14: Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

"Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving"

Thursday

Chapter 16: Samuel Anoints David

"... but the Lord looks at the heart."

Friday

Chapter 17: David and Goliath

"... I come against you in the name of the Lord"

Search the Scriptures – Week 8

2 Samuel

Chs. 1 – 10	David's Kingship: Accomplishments and Glory
Chs. 11 – 20	David's Kingship: Weaknesses and Failures
Chs. 21 – 24	Final Reflections on David's Reign

Second Samuel spans the period of history between Saul and Solomon by focusing in its entirety upon the reign of David, Israel's greatest king (5:5). David's glorious reign (1010 – 970 BC) is presented here in remarkably candid fashion, viewed both positively and negatively.

Chapters 1 – 10 present David's kingship in its positive accomplishments and glory. Following the death of Saul, David becomes king over Judah (2:4) and subsequently king over all Israel (5:3). By way of establishing and fortifying his reign, David conquers Jerusalem and makes it his royal capital city (5:9); he defeats Israel's great enemy, the Philistines (5:25); and he brings the Ark of the Lord into Jerusalem, publicly acknowledging the Lord's kingship over Israel (6:17). The climax of this section occurs as God promises David an everlasting dynasty (7:16), which is perfectly fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, the "Son of David" (see Matthew 1:1, the first sentence of the New Testament!).

Chapters 11 – 20, on the other hand, show us David's kingship in its negative weaknesses and failures. The trouble begins with David's great double sin of committing adultery with Bathsheba (11:4) compounded by the murder of her husband Uriah (11:15). David's family and the nation never fully recovered from these events: the remaining chapters of this book reveal a continuing trail of intrigue, violence and bloodshed, both within David's own family and within the nation. Highlights (or rather, low lights!) include David's son Amnon's incestuous rape of his sister Tamar (13:14), David's son Absalom's revolt against his father's rule (15:10), Absalom's death at the hands of David's men (18:14) and Sheba's rebellion (20:1). It is sobering to watch the unfolding of God's judgment and to be reminded that all sin does have its consequences; but it is also wonderful to witness God's grace in the face of David's repentance (22:2-4, 47-51).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Second Samuel

Sunday

Chapter 5: David Becomes King

"... they anointed David king over Israel"

Monday

Chapter 7: God's Promise and David's Prayer

"... your throne will be established forever."

Tuesday

Chapter 11: David and Bathsheba

Adultery Leads to Murder

Wednesday

Chapter 12: Nathan Rebukes David

"You are the man!"

Thursday

Chapter 15: Absalom's Conspiracy

David's sin has many consequences!

Friday

Chapter 22: David's Song of Praise

"My God is my Rock"

Search the Scriptures – Week 9

1 Kings

Chs. 1 – 11 The United Kingdom (King Solomon)

Chs. 12 – 22 The Divided Kingdom (Various Kings)

First Kings covers the history of Israel from about 970 to 850 BC. The opening section (Chapters 1 – 11) focuses on the glorious reign of King Solomon, who rules from 970 to 930 BC and builds the temple and palace in Jerusalem. Then following the death of Solomon in 930 BC comes the critical moment when the United Kingdom of Israel splits into two kingdoms: “Israel” in the north with ten tribes, and “Judah” in the south with two tribes. Chapter 12 describes the revolt and split of the northern tribes from the southern tribes. The remainder of this book (Chapters 13 – 22) traces the reigns of the kings of both of these kingdoms from 930 down to about 850 BC. **Note:** You can find a comprehensive chronological listing of all the **Kings of Israel & Judah** in **Search the Scriptures – Week 10**.

Because the author of 1 Kings is interested in the people’s faithfulness to God and his covenant, he writes about each king showing how he was faithful or unfaithful to God. The author of this book sometimes uses the phrase, **“He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,”** or (much more often!) **“He did evil in the eyes of the Lord,”** to describe the goodness or wickedness of the king. Just as in the book of Judges, the author records that when the people were obedient, God brought peace to the land, but when the people were disobedient and turned to idolatry, the land suffered wars and other disasters.

Of particular interest in this book is the tremendous confrontation between the greatest of God’s prophets (Elijah) and the most evil of Israel’s kings (Ahab). This ongoing drama of **Elijah vs. Ahab** runs through chapters 16 – 22. The confrontation is highlighted by the dramatic scene on **Mt. Carmel** (ch. 18) with Elijah’s supreme challenge: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him ...” As I stood at the top of Mt. Carmel in 1990, I was reminded that Elijah’s challenge is also and especially for us today – not to waver and compromise with the world, but to commit our lives totally and fully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. What a challenge!

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

First Kings

Sunday

Chapter 3: Solomon Asks for Wisdom
Jesus is greater than Solomon! (Mt. 4:42)

Monday

Chapter 8: Solomon Dedicates the Temple
"But will God really dwell on earth?"

Tuesday

Chapter 9: The Lord Appears to Solomon
"I will establish your royal throne forever."

Wednesday

Chapter 10: King Solomon's Splendor
"greater than all the other kings of the earth"

Thursday

Chapter 11: Solomon's Downfall
"King Solomon loved many foreign women"

Friday

Chapter 18: Elijah on Mount Carmel
"If the Lord is God, follow him."

Search the Scriptures – Week 10 – 2 Kings

Kings of Israel, 930 – 722 BC

1	Jeroboam I	1 Kgs 12:25-14:20	930-909 BC	22 yrs
2	Nadab	1 Kgs 15:25-31	909-908 BC	2 yrs
3	Baasha	1 Kgs 15:32-16:7	908-886 BC	24 yrs
4	Elah	1 Kgs 16:8-14	886-885 BC	2 yrs
5	Zimri	1 Kgs 16:15-20	885 BC	7 days
6	Omri	1 Kgs 16:23-28	886-874 BC	12 yrs
7	Ahab	1 Kgs 16:29-22:40	874-853 BC	22 yrs
8	Ahaziah	1Kg 22:51-2Kg 1:18	853-852 BC	2 yrs
9	Joram	2 Kgs 3:1-8:15	852-841 BC	12 yrs
10	Jehu	2 Kgs 9:1-10:36	841-814 BC	28 yrs
11	Jehoahaz	2 Kgs 13:1-9	814-798 BC	17 yrs
12	Jehoash	2 Kgs 13:10-14:16	798-782 BC	16 yrs
13	Jeroboam II	2 Kgs 14:23-29	793-753 BC	41 yrs
14	Zechariah	2 Kgs 15:8-12	753 BC	6 mos
15	Shallum	2 Kgs 15:13-16	752 BC	1 mo
16	Menahem	2 Kgs 15:17-22	752-742 BC	10 yrs
17	Pekahiah	2 Kgs 15:23-26	742-740 BC	2 yrs
18	Pekah	2 Kgs 15:27-31	752-732 BC	20 yrs
19	Hoshea	2 Kgs 17:1-6	732-722 BC	10 yrs

Kings of Judah, 930 – 586 BC

1	Rehoboam	1 Kgs 11:43-14:31	930-913 BC	17 yrs
2	Abijah	1 Kgs 15:1-8	913-910 BC	3 yrs
3	Asa	1 Kgs 15:9-24	910-869 BC	41 yrs
4	Jehoshaphat	1 Kgs 22:41-50	872-848 BC	25 yrs
5	Jehoram	2 Kgs 8:16-24	848-841 BC	8 yrs
6	Ahaziah	2 Kgs 8:5-29	841 BC	1 yr
7	Athaliah	2 Kgs 11:1-20	841-835 BC	7 yrs
8	Joash	2 Kgs 11:21-12:21	835-796 BC	40 yrs
9	Amaziah	2 Kgs 14:1-22	796-767 BC	29 yrs
10	Azariah	2 Kgs 15:1-7	792-740 BC	52 yrs
11	Jotham	2 Kgs 15:32-38	750-732 BC	18 yrs
12	Ahaz	2 Kgs 16:1-20	732-715 BC	16 yrs
13	Hezekiah	2 Kgs 18:1-20:21	715-686 BC	29 yrs
14	Manasseh	2 Kgs 21:1-18	697-642 BC	55 yrs
15	Amon	2 Kgs 21:19-26	642-640 BC	2 yrs
16	Josiah	2 Kgs 22:1-23:30	640-609 BC	31 yrs
17	Jehoahaz	2 Kgs 23:31-34	609 BC	3 mos
18	Jehoiakim	2 Kgs 23:34-24:7	609-598 BC	11 yrs
19	Jehoiachin	2 Kgs 24:8-17	598-597 BC	3 mos
20	Zedekiah	2 Kgs 24:18-25:7	597-586 BC	11 yrs

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Second Kings

Sunday

Chapter 2: Elijah Taken Up to Heaven
"Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind"

Monday

Chapter 4: Miracles of Elisha
widow's oil, Shunamite's son, death in pot, feeding

Tuesday

Chapter 5: Naaman Healed of Leprosy
"There is no God except in Israel"

Wednesday

Chapter 17: Israel Exiled Because of Sin
"because they sinned against the Lord"

Thursday

Chapter 22: The Book of the Law is Found
"I have found the Book in the Temple"

Friday

Chapter 25: The Fall of Jerusalem
God's judgment against the sin of his people

Search the Scriptures – Week 11

1 Chronicles

- Chs. 1 – 9 Historical Genealogies and Records
- Chs. 10 – 29 The Reign of King David:
chs. 10-21, Achievements and Troubles
chs. 22-29, Preparations for Building Temple

The word “**Chronicles**” refers to the historical records or registers of facts or events, arranged in the order in which they happened. The traditional author of 1 & 2 Chronicles (sometimes referred to as the “Chronicler” or historian) is the priest Ezra, writing about 430 BC. Ezra drew heavily from Samuel and Kings, as well as from other O.T. books and sources. He did not invent, but he did select, arrange and integrate his sources to compile a narrative “sermon” for a specific purpose.

Ezra’s purpose in writing **1 & 2 Chronicles** was to offer a word of encouragement to the community of Israelites who had been in exile since the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC. These Jews had been restored to Jerusalem by the Persians in 539 BC, and had been working on and off since then to rebuild the walls and Temple. The burning issue for this restored community at the time of Ezra in 430 BC centered on questions of continuity with the past: Is God still interested in us? Are his covenant promises still in force? Should we keep going? Ezra’s answer is that Yes, God is still with us, still faithful to his covenant promises. He writes to encourage the Jews by stressing their continuity with the past, signified by:

* The historical genealogies and records extending back to creation (i.e., God is interested in us now, even as he always has been interested in us and faithful to us); this is the point of the detailed records of **Chapters 1-9**;

* God’s enduring promise of the Messiah, who would be the Son of David; this is the point of the idealized portrait of King David in **Chapters 10-21**;

*The Temple of the Lord in the ancient Holy City, and its rituals of worship – God’s supreme gifts to his people through David and Solomon, now about to be rebuilt and restored by the community; this is the point of **Chapters 22-29**.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

First Chronicles

Sunday

Chapter 3: The Kings of Judah
Jesus is the true King of Kings (Rev. 19:16)

Monday

Chapter 11: David Becomes King Over Israel
But Jesus is "great David's greater Son"

Tuesday

Chapter 16: David's Psalm of Thanks
Echoed in Psalms 105, 96, 106

Wednesday

Chapter 17: God's Promise to David
"his throne will be established forever" (v. 14)

Thursday

Chapter 22: Preparations for the Temple
"temple will be built for the name of the Lord"

Friday

Chapter 29: David's Prayer and Death
But see Acts 2:22-36, about Jesus!

Search the Scriptures – Week 12

2 Chronicles

Chs. 1 – 9	The Reign of King Solomon [Focus: the Building of the Temple]
Chs. 10 – 36	The Kings of Judah (930 BC to 586 BC)
Ch. 36	The Conquest, Exile and Restoration of Judah

It will be most helpful at this point for the reader to review the outline and summary of 1 Chronicles from Week 11. In point of fact, Chronicles was not divided into two books until around 200 BC when the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek (known as the Septuagint). See the summary of 1 Chronicles to review how the priest Ezra wrote Chronicles in 430 BC to offer a word of encouragement to the restored community, by emphasizing their continuity with the past, and God's continued faithfulness to his covenant promises.

In **2 Chronicles**, God's continuity and faithfulness are emphasized by a focus on two major themes.

First is **King Solomon** and his building of the **Temple (Chs. 1 – 9)**. Solomon himself is depicted ideally as the perfect son of David, in order to remind the people of God's enduring promise of the Messiah who would come from the line of David. Furthermore, the Temple of the Lord and its rituals of worship, now about to be rebuilt and restored by the community, had been God's greatest gift to his people, and were the chief legacy left to the restored community by the house of David.

Second is the **Royal Line**, the reigns of all the **Kings of Judah** from 930 down to 586 BC (**chs. 10 – 36**); see the summary from Week 10 for the complete chronological list. Ezra evaluates each king on the basis of his faithfulness to God's Law – evil kings' reigns are covered quickly, while good kings' reigns (especially Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah) are described in more detail. Ezra's point to the restored community here is that God's security and blessing are ultimately conditional on the people's faithfulness to God's Law:

“Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful.” (2 Chronicles 20:20).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Second Chronicles

Sunday

Chapter 1: Solomon Asks for Wisdom
See what Jesus says in Matthew 6:33

Monday

Chapter 3: Solomon Builds the Temple
See what Jesus says in John 2:19

Tuesday

Chapter 6: Solomon's Prayer of Dedication
"O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you"

Wednesday

Chapter 7: The Lord Appears to Solomon
Memorize Verse 14: "If my people ..."

Thursday

Chapters 29-30: Hezekiah's Reign
Purifies the Temple, Celebrates the Passover

Friday

Chapter 36: The Fall of Jerusalem
"The wrath of the Lord was aroused ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 13

Ezra

- Chs. 1 – 6 Return of the Exiles and Rebuilding of the Temple
Chs. 7 – 10 Ezra's Reforms: Confession & Repentance

The **Book of Ezra** tells about the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon, beginning in 539 BC with the decree of King Cyrus of Persia (1:1). The people enthusiastically began rebuilding the Temple and resuming the sacrifices in Jerusalem. Then they were delayed for 18 years by their enemies from the north (chs. 4-5), until a decree in 521 BC from King Darius let them finish. In 458 BC, Ezra the priest returned to Jerusalem. He taught the people the Law and reformed their religious life so the other nations around them could see that they were God's chosen nation.

Nehemiah

- Chs. 1 – 7 Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem
Chs. 8-13 Ezra's Reforms: Confession & Repentance

The **Book of Nehemiah** continues the story of the Jews who returned to Jerusalem from the Exile in Babylon. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem in 445 BC, and led the people in repairing the walls, and along with Ezra, he provided leadership for the people.

Esther

- Chs. 1 – 2 Esther is Made Queen
Chs. 3 – 5 Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews
Chs. 6 – 10 The Victory of the Jews

The **Book of Esther** is set in Susa, the Persian capital, during the reign of King Xerxes (486 – 435 BC). The book tells the story of a beautiful Jewish girl whom the King chose to be his queen. When Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews, Queen Esther's cousin Mordecai persuaded Esther to try to save her people. Risking her own life, Esther appealed to the King and rescued the Jews. Although the name of God does not appear anywhere in this book, his care for his chosen people is clearly shown. The exciting story of the rescue of the Jews is celebrated annually during the **Feast of Purim**, while the Book of Esther is read.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Ezra - Nehemiah - Esther

Sunday

Ezra Chapters 1 & 2: The Exiles Return
"in order to fulfill the word of the Lord" (1:1)

Monday

Ezra Chapters 3 & 4: Rebuilding Jerusalem
Despite great opposition, they persevered!

Tuesday

Nehemiah Chapters 8 & 9: Law & Confession
God's Word brings true repentance of sin

Wednesday

Esther Chapters 1 & 2: The Story Begins
set in Persia during the Exile

Thursday

Esther Chapters 3 - 6: The Story Continues
a coincidence: God's way of remaining anonymous

Friday

Esther Chapters 7 - 10: The Story Ends
God vindicates and delivers his people

Search the Scriptures – Week 14

Job

chs. 1 – 2	Prologue
chs. 3 – 14	Dialogue: First Cycle
chs. 22 – 31	Dialogue: Third Cycle
chs. 32 – 37	Elihu's Discourse
chs. 38 – 41	The Lord Speaks
ch. 42	Job's Response & Epilogue

The Book of Job, first of the Writings, has been most appropriately described as **“the oldest book asking the oldest question.”** Indeed the struggle of Job and his friends is as old as the human race and yet as modern as today: it is the struggle to understand human suffering, especially the suffering of people who love God and are “good.” Job’s friends insisted that he was suffering as punishment for his sin, but Job defended himself by proclaiming his innocence and his continued trust in his God.

The “solution” to the problem, to the extent that Job could be said to offer an explicit solution, is found in the book’s opening (prologue) and closing (epilogue) chapters. In the prologue we learn what is unknown to Job and his friends: that it is Satan who is seeking to drive a wedge between God and Job, but that even Satan’s great power is subject to God’s almighty control. And in the epilogue, following a powerful speech, God has transformed Job with a reminder of his unsearchable power and wisdom. Job is like an early commentary on the Christian’s affirmation: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him ...” (Romans 8:28)

One beautiful gem contained in this superbly-written poetic wisdom book is the towering theme of “a searching question and a triumphant answer.” For Job raises the ultimate question at 14:14, “If a man dies, will he live again?” and then he brings forth the glorious answer at 19:25, **“I know that my Redeemer lives ...”** The ancient testimony from Job four thousand years ago in the Bible’s oldest book in fact points forward to the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, and to the Christian Gospel’s promise of eternal life for those who trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Job

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Prologue: Job's First Test
This is the oldest book of the Bible!

Monday

Chapter 3: The Prologue: Job's Second Test
Even Satan is subject to God's control!

Tuesday

Chapter 19: Job's Affirmation
"I know that my Redeemer lives" (vv. 23-27)

Wednesday

Chapters 38-39: The Lord Speaks
"Then the Lord answered out of the storm" (v.1)

Thursday

Chapters 40 - 41: The Lord Speaks
--and Job cannot answer one single question!

Friday

Chapter 42: Job's Reply and the Epilogue
"... but now my eyes have seen you." (verse 5)

Search the Scriptures – Week 15

Psalms 1 – 50

The Book of Psalms is one of the most familiar and beloved sections of the Old Testament, and indeed of the entire Bible. The words of these enduring poems have sustained and encouraged countless generations of Christians. We truly feel a sense of identity and affinity with the Psalms, as though they had been written just for us, expressing so honestly and so clearly the depth of our own pain, repentance, forgiveness, praise and worship before God. We know almost instinctively as we read that these Psalms are the inspired Word of God to us and for us.

This week, as we begin the first of three assignments from the Book of Psalms, an important place to start is with the simple realization that the Psalms were written as poetry. **Hebrew Poetry** has as its dominant characteristic the tendency to be structured in pairs of lines. The poet typically uses these pairs or “**Couplets**” of Lines in one of three ways, as we notice after even a brief reading of the Psalms:

Often the second line of the pair **simply repeats the thought** of the first line, using different words but conveying the same idea, and thus emphasizing the truth being revealed. For example:

*O Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!*

Psalm 3:1

Less frequently, the second line of the pair **states the opposite** of the first line, creating a greater emphasis by making a distinct contrast:

*The Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.*

Psalm 1:6

Sometimes the second line of the pair **essentially completes** what has been started in the first line, bringing a statement to a conclusion:

*To the Lord I cry aloud,
And he answers me from his holy hill.*

Psalm 3:4

Psalm 23, the Shepherd’s Psalm, beautifully anticipates the Lord Jesus Christ, the “Good Shepherd” of the Gospel (John 10:10). Why not memorize this Psalm this week, if you have not already? It is only six verses long, but has brought untold comfort to countless numbers of Christians through the ages.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Psalms 1 - 50

Sunday

Psalms 1 & 8

"O Lord, how majestic is your name!"

Monday

Psalms 15 & 18

"Who is the Rock except our God?"

Tuesday

Psalms 19 & 22

God speaks in his Creation and at the Cross.

Wednesday

Psalms 23 & 27

We can trust the Lord at all times!

Thursday

Psalms 32 & 34

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted ..."

Friday

Psalms 42 & 46

"God is our refuge and strength ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 16

Psalms 51 – 100

Even the casual reader of the Book of Psalms can discern that the Psalms appear to have been written for a variety of purposes. The Psalms have in fact often been classified according to types. Some of the major types commonly included are as follows:

Festivals & Liturgies: These Psalms were designed for a setting of public corporate worship in which the community responded to the overtures of God. Examples: Psalms 48, 68, 81, 84, 87, 122, 132-134

Lament: Cries of complaint and prayers for help to God in the midst of a time of need, distress, anxiety, etc. Did you know that this is the most common type of Psalm? Examples: Psalms 3-6, 10, 12-14, 22, 25

Praise: Hymns which praise God in general terms for the majesty of his being – for his greatness as Creator and Lord of history.

Examples: Psalms 8, 33, 65-67, 100, 103, 111, 113, 117, 145-150

Royal Kingship: Psalms which focus in a special way on the Bible's rich theology of Kingship – the human kingship inaugurated by David, and the Divine kingship of the promised Messiah.

Examples: Psalms 2, 24, 47, 72, 89, 93-99 (Enthronement Psalms), 110

Salvation History: The central subject in these Psalms is the recitation of God's "mighty deeds" in Israel's history (at the Red Sea and Jordan River, etc.), showing God's continued faithfulness to his people.

Examples: Psalms 78, 105, 106, 114, 126, 135, 136

Thanksgiving: Prayers of joyful gratitude to God in the aftermath of being rescued or delivered from a difficult situation or even from death.

Examples: Psalms 9, 18, 30, 32, 40, 92, 107, 116, 118, 124, 129, 138

Trust: Confident testimonies of trust and assurance in God's protection and care, through all of the difficulties of life, and even in the face of death. Examples: Psalms 16, 23, 27, 46, 62, 90-91, 115, 121, 125

Wisdom: Echoing Proverbs and the Bible's other Wisdom books, these Psalms contrast wisdom and folly, the fear of the Lord vs. pride.

Examples: 1, 15, 19, 32, 34, 37, 49, 73, 75-76, 82, 119, 127-128

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Psalms 51 - 100

Sunday

Psalms 51 & 57

"Cleanse me from my sin ..."

Monday

Psalms 61 - 63

"Hear my cry, O God ..."

Tuesday

Psalms 65 - 67

"Praise awaits you, O God ..."

Wednesday

Psalms 69 - 71

"Save me, O God ..."

Thursday

Psalms 90 & 91

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place ..."

Friday

Psalms 95 - 100

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 17

Psalms 101 – 150

No one can read through the Book of Psalms without becoming aware that certain Psalms and verses have a deeper, future significance. Jesus Christ the Messiah is not mentioned by name, but his person and his work are foreshadowed, anticipated and predicted throughout the Psalms. The writers of the New Testament are quick to apply these verses to Jesus as the prophesied Messiah.

Some Psalms, particularly the Royal Kingship Psalms such as Psalms 2, 72, and 110, picture an ideal King/Priest/Judge who is never fully realized until the coming of Christ. Each one of these is a rich description of God's Anointed King, the Messiah.

Other Psalms depict human suffering in terms which proved to be an extraordinarily accurate description of the actual sufferings of Christ. Examples of these descriptions (and their fulfillments) are:

Psalm 22:1 (Matt. 27:46);

Psalm 22:16 (John 20:25);

Psalm 22:18 (Mark 15:24);

Psalm 69:21 (Matt. 27:34,38).

There are many other verses in the Psalms which the New Testament writers apply to Jesus the Christ. Some examples:

Psalm 2:7, "You are my Son," – Acts 13:33

Psalm 8:6, "all things under his feet," – Hebrews 2:6-10

Psalm 16:10, not give me up to the grave" – Acts 2:27, 13:35

Psalm 22:8, "let him deliver him" – Matt. 27:43

Psalm 40:7-8, "I delight to do your will" – Hebrews 10:7

Psalm 41:9, "my closest friend against me" – John 13:18

Psalm 45:6, "Your divine throne endures forever" – Heb. 1:8

Psalm 69:9, "zeal for your house consumes me" – Jn. 21:7

Psalm 118:22, "the stone the builders rejected" – Mt. 21:42

-- And there are more! Can you find them?

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Psalms 101 - 150

Sunday

Psalms 103 & 107

"Praise the Lord, O my soul ..."

Monday

Psalms 116 & 118

"I love the Lord, for he heard my voice ..."

Tuesday

Psalms 121 & 127

"My help comes from the Lord ..."

Wednesday

Psalms 138 & 139

"O Lord, you have searched me ..."

Thursday

Psalms 145 & 146

"I will exalt you, my God the King ..."

Friday

Psalms 147 - 150

"Praise the Lord!"

Search the Scriptures – Week 18

Proverbs

A “proverb” is a short, compact statement that expresses a truth about human behavior. The Book of Proverbs, authored primarily by King Solomon (c. 950 BC) is a collection of wise sayings and good advice for daily living. These short and powerful two-line sayings cover many practical subjects, including: wisdom and folly; the righteous and the wicked; words and the tongue; marriage and family; parents and children; laziness and hard work; and so forth. Although Proverbs is a practical and “earthy” book dealing with the art of living, it bases wisdom solidly upon the fear of the Lord. The book’s keynote is at 1:7, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Compare also 3:5 and 9:10 and 22:4 for this keynote theme of the Book of Proverbs.

Ecclesiastes

This book by King Solomon simply observes life “under the sun” (1:3, etc.), life as man sees it. Life as man lives it, without God, is “meaningless (1:2, etc.), futile, purposeless, empty, unsatisfying, unfulfilling. It is a bleak picture: there is nothing new; life is unfair; work is pointless; pleasure fails to satisfy; and good living and wise thinking are rendered futile by death. BUT this is not just cynicism and despair. The book’s point is that God never intended man to leave him out of the picture. When he is included, God can inject joy into every aspect of living, from food and work to home and marriage (2:24-26; 3:10-15; 5:18-20; 9:7-10). God intended for man to find ultimate satisfaction not in a self-centered life, but in a relationship with him. “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” (12:13)

Song of Songs

This short, tender love story can be read on two different levels. First, it is a collection of love poems between a lover and his beloved, giving a beautiful picture of ideal human love and marriage, celebrating God’s wonderful gift of sex. Second, it has been viewed as an allegory of the love relationship between Christ and the Church, or between Jesus and the soul of the Christian believer (My lover is mine and I am his, 2:16).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Proverbs - Ecclesiastes - Song of Songs

Sunday

Proverbs Chapter 1: Introduction

"The fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge"

Monday

Proverbs Chapter 3: Benefits of Wisdom

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart ..."

Tuesday

Proverbs Chapter 9: Wisdom and Folly

"knowledge of the Holy One is understanding"

Wednesday

Ecclesiastes Chapters 1 - 2

Life apart from God is meaningless

Thursday

Ecclesiastes Chapters 3 - 5

Stand in awe of God

Friday

Song of Songs Chapters 1 - 2

"My lover is mine and I am his ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 19

Isaiah (chs. 1 – 39)

Chs. 1 – 12	Warnings & Prophecies against Judah
Chs. 13 – 27	Prophecies Against the Nations
Chs. 28 – 35	Warnings of Judgment Against Judah
Chs. 36 – 39	[Historical Interlude: King Hezekiah]
Chs. 40 – 55	Promises of God's Deliverance and Salvation
Chs. 56 – 66	God's Final Kingdom is Established

The prophet **Isaiah** is widely regarded as the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets; in fact, he has often been referred to as the “**Prince of Prophets**.” From a variety of historical references (1:1, 6:1, etc.), the period of his ministry can be dated from about 740 to 680 BC. His book is towering and majestic, with powerful imagery and rich vocabulary encompassed in poetry whose beauty is virtually unsurpassed in all of the Old Testament.

More than simply a great work of literature, however, the Book of Isaiah is an integral part of the eternal Word of God. Dominating Isaiah's prophecy are the twin themes of **God's Judgment** and **God's Salvation**. In fact, Isaiah is a book which reveals more fully than perhaps any other Biblical book the wide and deep dimensions of God's judgment and God's salvation. The book as a whole is broadly structured around these two great themes, as follows:

Chs. 1 – 39	The Book of God's Judgment
Chs. 40 – 66	The Book of God's Salvation

Because of the often striking contrast in style and mood of these two sections, some scholars have argued that different authors from different time periods were involved. Yet the clear witness of the Bible and the strong record of tradition says that one Isaiah wrote the entire book. There are many striking verbal parallels between chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-66. These two themes certainly belong together in any full understanding of God: “Consider the kindness and sternness of God ...” (Romans 11:22). He is the God of Judgment (the Old Testament Law) AND the God of Salvation (the New testament Gospel), both together.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Isaiah 1 - 39

Sunday

Chapter 2: The Mountain of the Lord
-- and the Day of the Lord!

Monday

Chapter 5: The Song of the Vineyard
God's Judgment Against Unfaithfulness

Tuesday

Chapter 6: Isaiah's Commission
"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty"

Wednesday

Chapter 9: To Us a Son is Born
A wonderful prophecy of the Messiah

Thursday

Chapter 11: The Branch from Jesse
the line of Jesse brought forth Jesus

Friday

Chapter 35: The Joy of the Redeemed
A wonderful glimpse of heaven!

Search the Scriptures – Week 20

Isaiah (chs. 40 – 66)

The most glorious words in the Book of Isaiah are his **Prophecies** concerning the coming of the **Messiah, God's Anointed One**. The fact that Isaiah could predict the Lord Jesus Christ's person and work in such incredible detail over 700 years before his birth is a testimony to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Countless generations of Christians have found hope and assurance in the prophet's predictions, all of which were fulfilled when God sent his Son, in the fullness of time, to be our Savior. Some of Isaiah's more familiar Messianic prophecies are:

- 7:14 The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son,
and they will call him Emmanuel
- 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light
- 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given
- 9:7 And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
- 11:1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse
- 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him
- 11:10 The Root of Jesse will stand as a banner to all peoples
- 16:5 In love a throne will be established
- 32:1 See, a King will reign in righteousness
- 40:3 In the desert prepare the way for the Lord
- 40:5 And the glory of the Lord will be revealed
- 42:1 Here is my Servant, whom I uphold, my Chosen One
- 49:6 I will also make you a light for the Gentiles
- 49:7 Kings will see you and rise up
- 50:6 I offered my back to those who beat me
- 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering
- 53:5 He was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities
- 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted
- 53:12 Because he poured out his life unto death
- 59:20 The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those who repent
- 60:1 Arise, shine, for your light has come
- 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news
- 62:11 See, your Savior comes!

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Isaiah 40 - 66

Sunday

Chapter 40: Comfort for God's People
fulfilled by the coming of Jesus

Monday

Chapter 43: Israel's Only Savior
a picture of the love of Jesus

Tuesday

Chapter 49: The Servant of the Lord
fulfilled by the ministry of Jesus

Wednesday

Chapter 53: The Suffering Servant
an astonishing prediction of the death of Christ

Thursday

Chapter 55: Invitation to the Thirsty
"Come to the waters!"

Friday

Chapters 60 & 61: The Glory of Zion
Jesus quoted from Chapter 61

Search the Scriptures – Week 21

Jeremiah 1 – 30

ch. 1	The Call of the Prophet
chs. 2 – 35	Warnings & Exhortations to Judah
chs. 36 – 38	Suffering & Persecution of Jeremiah
chs. 39 – 45	Fall of Jerusalem & Its Aftermath
chs. 46 – 51	Judgment Against the Nations
ch. 52	Historical Appendix

The Book of Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible, containing more words than any other book. Although a number of chapters were written in prose, most sections of the book are predominantly poetic in form. Jeremiah's poetry is as lofty and lyrical as any found elsewhere in the Scriptures, with beautiful phrases and an abundance of memorable passages. Jeremiah was often instructed to use "**object lessons**" as symbolism to dramatize and highlight God's message: a ruined and useless belt (ch. 13); potter's clay (ch. 18); a smashed clay jar (ch. 19); two baskets of figs (ch. 24); a yoke of straps and crossbars (ch. 27); large stones in a brick pavement (ch.43); and so forth.

Jeremiah's ministry was from 620 to about 580 BC, starting halfway through the reign of King Josiah, extending through the last tragic days of Judah and through the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, and ending sometime after the exile to Babylon. It was a period of storm and stress when the doom of entire nations – including especially the nation of Judah itself – was being sealed. In holding forth God's Word of judgment during this traumatic time, Jeremiah not surprisingly experienced much opposition and persecution. Jeremiah revealed a great deal about his own character and personality – he often laid bare the deep struggles of his inmost being. So often marked by anguish of spirit, he has been called "**the Weeping Prophet**," and his name has given rise to the English word, "jeremiad."

Jeremiah's book is dominated by the classical themes found in the other Old Testament prophets: a warning of God's coming judgment; an invitation to repentance; and a promise of restoration. Jeremiah's God is absolutely sovereign over whole nations, and yet also able to hold individuals accountable for their sin.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Jeremiah 1 - 30

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Call of Jeremiah

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you"

Monday

Chapters 18 & 19: At the Potter's House
the potter's clay, the smashed jar

Tuesday

Chapters 24 & 25: Figs, Captivity, Wrath
"I will give them a heart to know me"

Wednesday

Chapter 27: Judah to Serve Nebuchadnezzar
"make a yoke and put it on your neck"

Thursday

Chapter 29: A Letter to the Exiles
"For I know the plans I have for you ..."

Friday

Chapter 30: Restoration of Israel
"I will bring my people back from captivity"

Search the Scriptures – Week 22

Jeremiah 31 – 52

As we complete the reading of the Bible's longest book this week, I would like to lift up a couple of passages which many Christians have found to be especially meaningful, and which many have found worthy of being committed to memory:

9:23-24 Let him who boasts, boast about this:
 that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord
29:11-13 **For I know the plans I have for you**, declares the Lord,
 plans to prosper you and not to harm you ...
 You will seek me and find me when you seek me
 with all your heart, I will be found by you ...

Lamentations

“**Lamentations**” literally means “funeral songs,” and this short book grieves over the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Although Lamentations is anonymous and we cannot be certain who wrote it, ancient Jewish and Christian tradition ascribes it to the prophet Jeremiah. This is partly because of the similarity of vocabulary and style between the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Also, since the prophet Jeremiah was an eyewitness to the divine judgment of Jerusalem in 586 BC, it is reasonable to assume that he was the author of the book that so vividly portrays this event.

The author of Lamentations understands clearly that the Babylonians who destroyed Jerusalem were merely the human agents of divine retribution, and that it was God himself who destroyed his city and temple. Nor was the Lord's action arbitrary; blatant, God-defying sin and covenant-breaking rebellion were the root causes of his people's woes. Although weeping is to be expected, and cries for redress against the enemy are understandable, the proper response in the wake of God's judgment of sin is sincere, heartfelt contrition. Thus the book that begins with lament (1:1-2) rightly ends in repentance (5:21-22).

In the middle of the book, the theology of Lamentations reaches its apex as it focuses on the goodness of God. He is the Lord of hope, of love, of faithfulness, of salvation. **“His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”** (3:22-23)

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Jeremiah 31 - Lamentations

Sunday

Chapter 31: Promises of Restoration
"I will make a new covenant with Israel"

Monday

Chapter 38: Jeremiah Thrown Into a Cistern
it's not always easy to speak the Lord's word!

Tuesday

Chapter 44: Disaster Because of Idolatry
"provoked to anger by worshipping other gods"

Wednesday

Chapter 52: The Fall of Jerusalem
God Brings Judgment Against Sin

Thursday

Lamentations 1: How Deserted Lies the City
"grief because of her many sins"

Friday

Lamentations 3: Compassions New Every Morning
"Great is Thy Faithfulness!"

Search the Scriptures – Week 23

Ezekiel

chs. 1 – 3	Ezekiel's Call to Prophecy
chs. 4 – 24	A Warning of Judgment vs. Israel's Sin
chs. 25 – 32	Prophecies of Judgment vs. Other Nations
chs. 33 – 39	The Promise of Restoration for Israel
chs. 40 – 43	A Vision of Renewed Worship in the Temple

The Book of Ezekiel (the name means “God is strong”) can be dated with considerable precision due to an abundance of calendar references. He was born in 623 BC, served as a priest, was included in the initial exile to Babylon in 597 BC, and was called by God to be a prophet in 593 BC. His first vision was received on July 31, 593 BC (1:1), and his last vision was received on April 28, 573 BC (40:1). It was a time of great international upheaval, dominated by the fall of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon in 586 BC.

Ezekiel is one of the Bible's most dramatic books. This is true partly because the prophecy is marked by a number of spectacular visions: the living creatures and the glory of the Lord (ch. 1); the glory of the Lord departing (19:18) and returning to (43:1-7) the temple; the valley of dry bones returning to life (37:1-14); etc. But even more, the book's dramatic nature stems from the fact that Ezekiel was so often directed by God to involve himself personally in the divine Word by acting it out in prophetic symbolism. Good examples of this are found in these Scriptures: 4:1-3 and 5:1-4 (the siege and destruction of Jerusalem); 12:1-20 (the exile to Babylon); 6:11; 21:6-7; and 24:15-19.

The message of Ezekiel is dominated by the three classical Old Testament prophetic themes we have noted many times previously:

First, a warning of God's judgment against sin:

5:5-13, 7:8-10, 11:10-12, 18:1-4, 22:17-22, 23:24

Second, God's gracious invitation to repentance:

14:6, 18:21-24, 18:30-32, 33:10-11

Third, God's promise of restoration and salvation:

34:23,31; 36:8-12,24-28; 37:1-14, 24-28; 39:7-8, 21-29

Note particularly here the predictions of the Shepherd from the House of David who would be King and Prince of God's people forever – none other than the Messiah, Jesus Christ!

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Ezekiel

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Living Creatures
-- and the glory of the Lord!

Monday

Chapters 4 & 5: Siege & Destruction
note the dramatic symbolism!

Tuesday

Chapter 10: The Temple
God's Glory Departs: Judgment!

Wednesday

Chapter 12: the Exile
note again the dramatic symbolism!

Thursday

Chapter 37: The Valley of the Dry Bones
from death back to life again!

Friday

Chapter 43: The Temple
God's Glory Returns: Restoration!

Search the Scriptures – Week 24

Daniel through Jonah

Daniel was taken hostage from Jerusalem in 605 BC to the Babylonian court, and died sometime after 530 BC. He wrote this book during Israel's captivity to encourage the people to trust in "the Most High God who is sovereign over the kingdoms of men" (5:21). The book is divided into two distinct sections: historical narrative (chs. 1-6) and apocalyptic end-times visions (chs. 7-12).

Hosea begins the "**Book of the Twelve**," the Twelve Old Testament "**Minor Prophets**," so-called because of the relative short length of their writings. Hosea lived and prophesied between 760 to 710 BC. The beautiful love story of Hosea and Gomer (chs. 1-3) is a prelude to God's judgment on the sins of the northern kingdom of Israel (chs. 4-14); Israel was in fact conquered and destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC, during Hosea's ministry.

Joel cannot be dated with certainty (850 BC? 500 BC?). Using gripping imagery which opens with a spectacular invasion of locusts throughout the land, Joel focuses on the classic prophetic themes: a warning of judgment against sin, an invitation to repentance, and a promise of salvation.

Amos prophesied from 760 to 750 BC. It was a paradoxical "best of times, worst of times" age. On the one hand, outwardly there was apparent wealth and prosperity, but on the other hand, inwardly there was great idolatry, selfishness, injustice and cruelty which God would judge – the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel came in 722 BC, soon after Hosea's ministry.

Obadiah (605-586 BC) is the shortest of the Minor Prophets and in fact the shortest of all the Old Testament books. Short as it is, however, this book zeroes in on the two great sins of mankind: Pride, which is the vertical sin of man vs. God (vv. 3-9), and Prejudice, which is the horizontal sin of man vs. man (vv. 10-14).

Jonah wrote perhaps 750-725 BC. This familiar and beloved book contains a number of great themes: the missionary God (1:2); the God who will not let go of Jonah (1:4); the God of the second chance (3:1); and most of all, the God of the resurrection (see Matthew 12:39-41).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Daniel through Jonah

Sunday

Daniel Chapter 6: Daniel in the Lions' Den
"My God sent his angel!"

Monday

Hosea Chapters 1-3: Hosea & Gomer
This story shows God's love for his people.

Tuesday

Joel Chapter 2: Invasion of Locusts
God's Judgment on the Day of the Lord

Wednesday

Amos Chapter 5: The Day of the Lord
-- and a call to repentance!

Thursday

Obadiah
judgment vs. the sins of pride and prejudice

Friday

Jonah Chapters 1 - 3
God gives Jonah another chance!

Search the Scriptures – Week 25 – Micah to Malachi

Micah, who prophesied around 750-700 BC, lived in the countryside of Judah, yet focused on the great capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem. He spoke of God's judgment and mercy. Micah asked some great questions (6:6, 7:18, etc.), and predicted the birth of the Messiah in the town of Bethlehem (5:2).

Nahum (620 BC) is a book of prophecy against Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. The theme of God's judgment against the sins of idolatry and cruelty is presented in spectacular language: "Stop! Stop! Plunder! Pillaged, plundered, stripped!" (2:8-10)

Habakkuk lived and prophesied about 600 BC, at the height of the power of the Babylonians. He is sometimes called the "Prophet of the Gospel" because of his words, "The righteous shall live by his faith" (2:4, and quoted at Romans 1:17). This verse was instrumental in the conversion to Christ of the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, John Wesley and many others (including the editor of this booklet!).

Zephaniah wrote about 630 BC as a sort of summary of the prophets who had come before him. He focused clearly on the three great prophetic themes: a warning of God's judgment against sin (1:14-18); God's gracious invitation to repentance (2:1-3); and God's promise of salvation (3:9-20).

Haggai prophesied in 520 BC, encouraging the returned exiles to rebuild the Lord's temple. He challenged the people to get their priorities in order (1:5) and to put God first in their lives (1:1-11). His great message might be summarized in the words, "First things first!"

Zechariah wrote from 520-518 BC. Through a series of eight night visions (chs. 1-8) and two oracles (chs. 9-14), Zechariah comforted and challenged the people by reminding them that God had a long-range plan for Israel, culminating in the Messiah (see 9:9-10 and 12:10).

Malachi (the name means "my messenger") was written perhaps about 430 BC to the post-exilic community in Jerusalem. Spiritual life was not in good condition, and Malachi's chief concern was that the Israelites' relationship with God was not as it should be, even as they awaited the coming of God's promised Messiah (see 3:1-2, 4:1-6).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Micah through Malachi

Sunday

Micah Chapter 5: A Prophecy of the Messiah
"O Little Town of Bethlehem" - see Matt. 2:1-11

Monday

Nahum & Habakkuk: Judgment vs. Enemies
See how Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted in Romans 1:17

Tuesday

Zephaniah: The Great Prophetical Themes
Judgment, Repentance, Salvation

Wednesday

Haggai: Encouragement to Rebuild the Temple
Get your priorities right, put first things first

Thursday

Zechariah 9: The Coming of Zion's King
Fulfilled by Jesus: see Matthew 21:1-11

Friday

Malachi Chapters 3 & 4: Preparing for Messiah
See Jesus' words in Matthew 11:11-15

Search the Scriptures – Week 26

Matthew

chs. 1 – 4	Preparation for Ministry
chs. 5 – 18	Ministry in Galilee
chs. 19-20	Journey to Jerusalem
chs. 21 – 27	The Last Week
ch. 28	The Resurrection

The Gospel of Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, the first of four Gospels (“Good News”) focusing on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was written about AD 70 by Matthew Levi, the tax collector whom Jesus called to be an Apostle (9:9-13).

Matthew’s Gospel is placed first of all the books in the New Testament because Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience, concerned to show **Jesus as the promised Messiah**, and the **perfect fulfillment** of the **Old Testament**. As a result of this goal, Matthew often says, “These things happened in order that the prophecy of the (Old Testament) Scriptures might be **fulfilled** ...” and then follows with the appropriate quotation from the Old Testament.

For some early examples of this pattern, see 1:22, 2:5, 2:15, 2:17, 2:23, 3:3, 4:14, etc. Matthew is therefore sometimes referred to as the “link” between the Old and New Testaments, or as the “Gospel to the Jews.” It’s no wonder that some have said that “fulfilled” is Matthew’s signature word.

Because words and teachings are of utmost importance for a Jewish audience, it is not surprising that Matthew presents Jesus as the great **Rabbi (Teacher)** who helps us understand the true meaning of God’s Law and God’s kingdom. In fact, Matthew’s Gospel is **carefully organized** around **five major teaching discourses** (perhaps to match the five books of the Old Testament Law or Pentateuch?), as follows:

1. chs. 5-7 The Sermon on the Mount
2. ch. 10 Christian Mission
3. ch. 13 Parables of the Kingdom
4. ch. 18 Christian Discipleship
5. chs. 24-25 The End Times

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Matthew

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Birth of Jesus Christ
the genealogy shows fulfillment of prophecies

Monday

Chapters 5 - 7: The Sermon on the Mount
note emphasis on the fulfillment of the Law

Tuesday

Chapter 10: Christian Mission
instructions for all Christian disciples

Wednesday

Chapter 13: Parables on the Kingdom of Heaven
There are seven parables in this collection!

Thursday

Chapter 18: Christian Discipleship
note emphasis on interpersonal relationships

Friday

Chapters 24 - 25: The End Times
"Keep watch; you must be ready!"

Search the Scriptures – Week 27

Mark

chs. 1 – 9	Ministry in Galilee
ch. 10	Journey to Jerusalem
chs. 11 – 15	The Last Week
ch. 16	The Resurrection

The Gospel of Mark is the earliest-written of the four Gospels. It was composed about AD 65 by John Mark, a man who was not one of the Apostles, but who was a member of the Christian community from the beginning, serving as a companion to both Peter (1 Peter 5:13) and Paul (Acts 12:25).

Unlike Matthew, who wrote his Gospel to a Jewish audience to show Jesus as the perfect fulfillment of the Old Testament, Mark addresses his account to a non-Jewish or Gentile, specifically **Roman audience**. This is why he must occasionally stop to explain Jewish customs (for example, see Mark 7:1-5).

Because he is presenting Jesus to a Roman audience, which would be impressed not by words or teachings, but rather by **power and results**, Mark is concerned to present Jesus as a man of **action**. Mark's Gospel is thus an exciting, high-speed, explosive account, with great emphasis on the **supernatural miracles** of Jesus. These miracles unfold in a virtually unceasing stream, as Jesus drives out demons, heals the sick, cures the deaf and blind, calms the storm, walks on water, feeds the thousands, and so forth. In fact, Mark is so eager to show Jesus as the man of action that he uses the Greek word for "**immediately**" a total of 41 times (ten times in the first chapter alone!)

Not only is the action fast-paced, but it is clear and vivid as well. Amazingly enough, although Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four, it also manages to be the **most detailed**. Here is clearly an eyewitness account with a tremendous sense of historical veracity. As one example of this "eyewitness" flavor, note how Jesus's words at the height of an action are often recorded not in Greek, but in the original Aramaic language spoken by Jesus (3:17, 5:41, 7:11, 7:34). And the Greek often switches to the "**historical present**" in recording the action; for example, "And immediately the Spirit *sends him out* into the desert." (1:12)

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Mark

Sunday

Chapter 1: Jesus Heals Many
He demonstrates his power and authority

Monday

Chapter 5: Heals Sick, Raises Dead
He is in complete control

Tuesday

Chapter 6: Feeds Multitude, Walks on Water
He rules all of the universe

Wednesday

Chapter 14: His Suffering for Us
He willingly gave himself up to save us

Thursday

Chapter 15: His Death and Burial
He died for our sins

Friday

Chapter 16: His Resurrection
He is raised from the dead by God's power

Search the Scriptures – Week 28

Luke

1:1 – 4:13	Preparation for Ministry
4:14 – 9:50	Ministry in Galilee
9:51 – 13:21	Ministry in Judea
13:22 – 19:27	Ministry in Perea
19:28 – 24:53	Final Week in Jerusalem

The Gospel of Luke is the longest of the four Gospels, offering the **fullest and most orderly account** of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The author's name does not appear in the book, but much unmistakable evidence points to Paul's "dear friend Luke, the physician" (Col. 1:14). Luke was a Gentile by birth – the only non-Jewish author found in the New Testament – and his writing shows him to be a highly educated man with a wide vocabulary, who wrote from a Greek background and standpoint. The probable date of writing is in the AD 70s.

The Gospel's introduction (1:1-4) shows that Luke directed his account to Theophilus ("Lover of God"), probably a Roman official of high position and wealth (Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles to Theophilus; see Acts 1:1). But the fact that this Gospel was initially addressed to one individual does not limit or narrow its purpose. It was in fact written to strengthen the faith of all Christian believers and to answer the attacks of unbelievers. It was presented as a "carefully investigated, orderly account" (1:3), to displace ill-founded and disconnected reports about Jesus.

Luke's Gospel focuses on a number of distinctive themes. Perhaps Luke's main interest, reflecting his Gentile background, was to show that **Jesus loved all kinds of people**. Luke's Jesus has a special concern for women, children, the poor, sinners, outcasts, etc. In the parables especially, Jesus lifts up the poor and the oppressed (e.g., the Good Samaritan, the tax collector, etc). And in Luke 15, Jesus presents three successive **parables of the lost**: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, pointing towards the Gospel's key verse: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (19:10) Luke also places strong emphasis on the role of prayer and the **theme of joy**; he wants to show that Jesus' coming brings joy as well as hope and salvation to a sinful, hurting world.

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Luke

Sunday

Chapter 1 & 2: The Birth of Jesus
many eyewitness details found only in Luke

Monday

Chapter 10: Ministry & Parable of Jesus
parable of Good Samaritan found only in Luke

Tuesday

Chapter 15: Three Parables of the Lost
parable of Prodigal Son found only in Luke

Wednesday

Chapter 16: More Parables & Teachings
this material is found only in Luke

Thursday

Chapters 18 & 19: More Parables & Ministry
widow, tax collector, Zaccheus: only in Luke

Friday

Chapter 24: Resurrection & Ascension
Emmaus encounter found only in Luke

Search the Scriptures – Week 29

John

ch. 1	Prologue and Introduction
chs. 2 – 12	Public Ministry: The Signs
chs. 13 – 17	Private Ministry: The Discourses
chs. 18 & 19	Trial, Death and Burial
ch. 21	Resurrection and Conclusion

The Gospel of John was composed by Jesus’s disciple John – “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:21, 19:26, 20:2, 21:20, 21:24). This Gospel and John’s other writings (1,2,3 John and Revelation) are regarded as the last of the New Testament books to have been written, probably between AD 90 and 100.

John’s Gospel starts and ends on majestic notes. The opening prologue (1:1-18) is clear and simple, and yet deep and profound. From the very beginning, this Gospel seems to give us a different “angle” on the person of Jesus. Whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke tend to focus on Jesus the Son of Man (his humanity), John tends to focus on Jesus the **Son of God (his divinity)**. And as he draws his Gospel to a close, John clearly states his purpose: “These are written **that you might believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)

On every page, John’s Gospel carries this evangelistic purpose of leading people to saving faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Some have described John 3:16 as “**the heart of the Christian Gospel**.” The miraculous signs and the great claims of Jesus are both simple and profound, inviting the faith of the most trusting child and engaging the mind of the most challenging adult.

Seven is the Biblical number of perfection. Note the seven public **Signs** of Jesus: changing water to wine (2:1-11), healing the official’s son (4:43-54); the healing at the pool (5:1-15); feeding the five thousand (6:1-15); walking on the water (6:16-24); healing the man born blind (9:1-7); raising Lazarus from the dead (11:38-44). And notice the seven great **I AM** claims of Jesus: the bread of life (6:35); the light of the world (8:12); the gate (10:9); the good shepherd (10:11); the resurrection and the life (11:25); the way, truth and life (14:6); the true vine (15:1).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

John

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Word Became Flesh
A different type of Christmas story!

Monday

Chapter 3: Jesus and Nicodemus
"For God so loved the world ..." (3:16)

Tuesday

Chapter 10: The Shepherd and His Flock
"I am the Gate ... I am the Good Shepherd ..."

Wednesday

Chapter 11: Jesus Raises Lazarus
"I am the resurrection and the life ..."

Thursday

Chapters 14 & 15: The Discourses Begun
"I am the way ... I am the vine ..."

Friday

Chapters 16 & 17: The Discourses Completed
"I pray that all of them may be one ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 30

Acts

chs. 1 – 7	The Church in Jerusalem
chs. 8 – 12	The Church in Judea and Samaria
chs. 13 – 28	The Church to the Ends of the Earth –
chs. 13 – 14	Paul’s 1 st Missionary Journey
chs. 15 – 18	Paul’s 2 nd Missionary Journey
chs. 19 – 21	Paul’s 3 rd Missionary Journey
chs. 22 – 28	Paul’s Journey to Rome

The Acts of the Apostles is the second part of Luke’s two-volume history, addressed (as his Gospel had been) to Theophilus, and picking up where his Gospel had left off. Acts was written so that we would have the true story of how the Christian Church began and grew over its first thirty years, starting on the Day of Pentecost (2:1). The book in general follows the expanding geographical outline of Jesus’s command in 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” You will find it helpful to use a basic map of the areas covered as you read this book.

This book especially tells us about the work of two of the Apostles – **Peter and Paul**. Peter is the central person involved in beginning the Church in Jerusalem among the Jews, and he dominates chapters 1-12. Paul becomes the focal person of chapters 13-28 as the missionary who goes out “to the ends of the earth” to tell the Gentiles about Christ.

Many Christians have observed that this book could also be called “**The Acts of the Holy Spirit**,” because it teaches about the coming and the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, to read Acts is to see the Spirit of Jesus, the third person of the Trinity, at work in exciting and dramatic ways. This history is alive, fast-paced, and gripping.

Notice the clarity and the challenge of the early church’s message, calling all men and women to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (2:38 and 4:12 are excellent examples of this salvation message). Notice how the Jews reject this message and how God sends the Apostles to the Gentiles, who accept the Gospel. Notice above all how **we too today** are called to receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit and to become **God’s witnesses**, sharing our faith in Jesus Christ with others!

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Acts

Sunday

Chapter 1: The Ascension of Jesus

"You will be my witnesses ..."

Monday

Chapter 2: The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit ..."

Tuesday

Chapters 6 & 7: The Stoning of Stephen

he becomes the first Christian martyr

Wednesday

Chapter 9: Saul's Conversion

"This man is my chosen instrument ..."

Thursday

Chapter 10: Peter and Cornelius

the first Gentile Christian convert

Friday

Chapters 13 & 14: First Missionary Journey

"The Word of the Lord spread ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 31 – Romans

1:1 – 17	Introduction and Theme
1:18 – 3:20	Man's Need of Salvation
3:21 – 8:39	God's Gift of Salvation
9:1 – 11:36	(Parenthesis: Israel in God's Plan)
12:1 – 15:13	Man's Response to God's Gift
15:14 – 16:27	Conclusion and Greetings

Paul's **Letter to the Romans** (written c. AD 55) is, in my considered opinion, among the most supreme of all the books of the Bible. It is the most thorough and comprehensive; the most clear and yet also the most challenging; in a word, the most inspirational of all the Bible's books. Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and countless others (including I myself!) down through the centuries have experienced conversion to Christ due in large part to the simplicity and clarity of the Gospel message in Romans.

The great and overriding theme throughout Romans is the classic issue of **Righteousness**, or how we may obtain a **Right Relationship** with a holy God (1:17). The Apostle Paul teaches us here:

Man's Need of Salvation: No human being is righteous or can make himself right with God; we are all sinners before God (1:18 – 3:20);

God's Gift of Salvation: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, alone is perfectly righteous – and if we have faith that Jesus died for our sins, then we are forgiven, freed from the power of sin, given a new life, and returned to a right relationship with God (3:21 – 8:39);

Man's Response to God's Gift: In response to what God has done for us in Christ, we ought to live Christian lives that are “holy and pleasing to God” in every practical detail (12:1 – 15:13).

The “**Romans Road to Heaven**” is wonderful to memorize and apply:

*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (3:23);

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:

while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (5:8);

*For the wages of sin is death,

but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (6:23);

*If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (10:9);

*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (10:13).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Romans

Sunday

Chapter 1: Introduction and Theme

"... a righteousness from God is revealed ..."

Monday

Chapter 3: Righteousness Through Faith

"For all have sinned ... and are justified freely ..."

Tuesday

Chapter 5: We Have Peace With God

"... through our Lord Jesus Christ"

Wednesday

Chapter 6: Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

"... offer yourselves to God ..."

Thursday

Chapter 8: Christian Assurances

"no condemnation, no defeat, no separation"

Friday

Chapter 12: Living Sacrifices

"... in view of God's mercy ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 32

1 Corinthians

chs. 1 – 6	Problems in the Church at Corinth:
chs. 1-4	Divisions and Conflicts
chs. 5-6	Immorality and Lawsuits
chs. 7 – 15	Answers to Questions from Corinth:
ch. 7	Christian Marriage
chs. 8-10	Christian Rights & Responsibilities
ch. 11	Christian Public Worship
chs. 12-14	Spiritual Gifts: Diversity & Unity
ch. 15	The Resurrection
ch. 16	Conclusion: Personal & Practical Matters

First Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul about AD 55 to the young church at Corinth, Greece. Corinth was a major center of commerce, culture – and pagan immorality. The new Christian Church there faced problems and questions which are still very much with us today. Paul wrote to address these problems and to answer their questions. In spite of this concentration on problems and questions, the letter contains some of the most familiar and beloved chapters in the Bible – for a couple of examples, Chapter 13 on Christian Love, and Chapter 15 on the Resurrection of Christ.

2 Corinthians

chs. 1 – 7	Paul's Rejoicing at Reconciliation
chs. 8 – 10	Generosity in Giving
chs. 10 – 13	Paul's Defense of His Ministry

Second Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul just a few months after First Corinthians, for three basic reasons. First, Paul conveys how happy and thankful he was when he heard that the Corinthian Christians were sorry for the way they had acted and were now trying to live the way God wanted them to live (chs. 1-7). Second, Paul urges the Corinthians to complete the collection for the needy in Jerusalem, instructing them to practice generosity in giving (chs. 8-9). Third, Paul writes to defend himself and his ministry against people who were angry at him and who were challenging his authority and integrity by saying untrue things about him (chs. 10-13).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

1 & 2 Corinthians

Sunday

1 Cor. 1: The Wisdom & Power of God
"... we preach Christ crucified ..."

Monday

1 Cor. 11 & 12: Worship & Gifts
"Now you are the body of Christ ..."

Tuesday

1 Cor. 13: The Love Chapter
"But the greatest of these is love."

Wednesday

1 Cor. 15: The Resurrection Chapter
"Christ has indeed been raised from the dead"

Thursday

2 Cor. 4 & 5: Earthly Clay, Heavenly Dwelling
"momentary troubles, eternal glory"

Friday

2 Cor. 8 & 9: Generosity Encouraged
"sowing and reaping generously"

Search the Scriptures – Week 33

Galatians

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter about AD 54 to the Christian Churches in the Roman province of Galatia (in modern-day Turkey). These churches were being confused by false teachers called “Judaizers,” who were teaching the Gentile Christians that they were not really saved unless they obeyed all the Jewish laws – such as circumcision, eating special foods, and celebrating the Jewish feast days. Paul’s great theme here is that we cannot be saved from our sins by obeying the Jewish law; rather, we are only saved “by faith in Jesus Christ” (see 2:15-16).

Ephesians

Paul wrote this letter around AD 61, during his Roman imprisonment, to the Christian Churches around Ephesus (on the western coast of modern-day Turkey). His central theme here is that of unity and God’s purpose “to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.” (1:10) Because of this unity in the body of Christ, all Christians are one family in Jesus, and should act with love toward each other. (see 2:22, 4:3, 4:15, etc.) Paul gives practical instructions on how to live as Christians. (5:1, 8, etc.)

Philippians

Paul writes here to thank the Christians at Philippi (in northern Greece) for their gift, sent to him in prison. (4:18) But he also uses the opportunity in this letter to appeal for unity among the church (1:27), and to encourage his friends in the midst of various sufferings. (1:18) This is the most personal and affectionate of all Paul’s letters, and contains a number of familiar and beloved verses which many Christians have committed to memory. (see 1:21; 2:6-11; 3:7,10; 4:7,13,19; etc.)

Colossians

Paul writes here to oppose false teachers who were saying that the Christian faith is incomplete. He says in this letter that Jesus is supreme over everything, that his death is all we need to be saved from our sins, and that through Christ we are free from man-made rules – see 1:15-20. “Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Galatians through Colossians

Sunday

Ga. 2 & 3: How to be Justified
"not by law, but by faith"

Monday

Eph. 1: Spiritual Blessings in Christ
"every spiritual blessing in Christ"

Tuesday

Eph. 2: Made Alive in Christ
"... it is by grace you have been saved ..."

Wednesday

Phil. 2: Imitating Christ
"he humbled himself ... God exalted him"

Thursday

Phil. 4: Great Promises
"My God will meet all your needs"

Friday

Col. 1: The Pre-Eminence of Christ
"He is the image of the invisible God ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 34
1 Thessalonians through Philemon

1 Thessalonians. Paul started the church at Thessalonica in northern Greece on his second missionary journey. He wrote this letter in AD 51 for a number of reasons: to express his gratitude for their continued faith (1:2-2:16); to encourage them in the face of great persecution and suffering (2:17-3:13); to instruct them in how to live in order to please God (4:1-12); and most importantly, to teach them about Jesus's second coming (4:13-5:11) – this is the major theme of this book.

2 Thessalonians. This letter came just a few months after the first one. Some people had misunderstood Paul's words about the second coming, and were sure that Jesus was coming very soon. In fact, they had even stopped working and were just waiting for Jesus's imminent return. Paul wrote to teach them what the second coming would be like, and to remind them to keep working hard until Jesus came, using their time wisely. (2:1-11, 3:6-15)

1 Timothy. Paul wrote to encourage and instruct his young friend Timothy, who was working as the teacher and leader of the church in Ephesus. Paul warned him of false teachers (ch. 1), and offered practical advice on the work of a pastor in caring for the congregation – public worship (ch. 2); church administration (ch. 3); doctrine and example (ch. 4); interpersonal relations (ch. 5); attitude toward money (ch. 6).

2 Timothy. Paul wrote Timothy again, this time with a sense of his own imminent death. (4:6-6-8) The heart of this letter has two major themes: first, encouragement to be faithful in ministry (1:3-2:13); and second, warnings against the dangers of false teachings (2:14-4:5).

Titus. Paul wrote Titus who pastored the church in Crete. He told Titus to watch out for false teachers (1:10), and to teach sound doctrine (2:1) and do what is good (3:1).

Philemon. Philemon was a leader of the church at Colossae and a friend of Paul's. Philemon's slave, Onesimus, had stolen money from his master and then run away to Rome. While there, he met Paul and became a Christian. Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this brief but touching letter, asking Philemon to forgive Onesimus and to treat him as a brother in Christ rather than as a runaway slave (v. 16).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

1 Thessalonians through Philemon

Sunday

1 Thes. 4 & 5: The Second Coming

"For the Lord himself will come down ..."

Monday

2 Thes. 3: Awaiting the Second Coming

"If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

Tuesday

1 Tim. 6: Warnings and Charges

"fight the good fight of the faith"

Wednesday

2 Tim. 1 & 2: Encouragement to be Faithful

"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Thursday

Titus 2 & 3: Instructions for a Pastor

Teach sound doctrine, do what is good

Friday

Philemon: A Plea for a Former Slave

"better than a slave, as a dear brother"

Search the Scriptures – Week 35

Hebrews

1:1-3	Introduction: The Superiority of Jesus
1:4 – 2:18	Superiority of Jesus Over Angels
3:1 – 4:13	Superiority of Jesus Over Moses
4:14 – 7:28	Superiority of His Priesthood
8:1 – 10:18	Superiority of His Covenant & Sacrifice
10:19 – 13:25	Practical Appeal and Application

The **Letter to the Hebrews** was written in the late AD 60s by an unidentified author (possibly Barnabas?). It is directed towards Jewish Christians who were ready to give up their Christian faith and return to the Jewish faith because of persecution. Hebrews is the Bible's longest sustained argument, teaching these Jewish Christians that the Christian faith is better in every way than the Jewish faith. Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of God, and he is superior to anything offered in the Old Testament. In fact, Jesus has completed the Jewish faith by making the final perfect sacrifice for sin. Chapter 11's great "roll call of faith" must have given these persecuted Christians great hope – and the book is a strong reminder and encouragement to Christians today, with its call to persevere in the Christian faith.

James

The seven New Testament books from James through Jude are called the "General Epistles" because they are addressed to all Christians, and not to a specific church. The **Letter of James** was written about AD 50 by James, the brother of Jesus (Mt. 13:55) and a leader in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13). James wrote this short practical letter to teach Christians the practice of Christianity. He insists that if we have real faith, we will show it by acting like Christians. 2:14-26 contains the central theme of faith and deeds, with the key verse being 2:17, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

Building on this theme, James gives practical advice on things like trials and temptations (1:2-18), listening and doing (1:19-27), favoritism (2:1-13), taming the tongue (3:1-12), godly wisdom (3:13-18), humility (4:1-12), boasting (4:13-17), justice (5:1-6), patience (5:7-12), and prayer (5:13-20).

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Hebrews - James

Sunday

Heb. 1: The Son is Superior

"... but now God has spoken by his Son ..."

Monday

Heb. 10: Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

"enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus"

Tuesday

Heb. 11: The Roll Call of Faith

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Wednesday

Heb. 13: Great Promises

"the same yesterday and today and forever"

Thursday

James 2: Faith and Deeds

"faith without action is dead"

Friday

James 3: Taming the Tongue

"The tongue also is a fire ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 36 – 1 Peter thru Jude

First Peter was written about AD 65 by Simon Peter, one of Jesus's twelve Apostles, to the Jewish Christians who lived in northern Asia Minor. These Christians were being persecuted for their faith, so Peter wrote to offer them hope and encouragement in the face of suffering and persecution. The Christian's response to suffering for the faith is related to the themes of salvation (1:7), trust (2:23), righteousness (3:14), rejoicing (4:13) and humility (5:6).

Second Peter was written about a year later to the same group of Christians. These Christians were not now in danger of persecution, but they were in danger of being confused by false teachers (2:1, etc.). Peter warns these Christians that God will certainly destroy these false teachers (2:3, etc.). He reminds them that because Jesus will certainly keep his promise to come again, they ought to live "holy and godly lives" (3:11). In fact, he tells them that the best way to resist false teachers is to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (3:18).

1, 2, 3 John

First John was written by the Apostle John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, and the author of the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, about AD 90. He wrote to warn Christians about dangerous false teachers who were trying to mislead them by teaching that the man Jesus was not the Christ, the Son of God, and that God did not truly become a man. John tells the Christians he is writing because it is very important to know and believe that Jesus is both God and man. John also encourages these Christians to keep their faith in Christ strong, and to continue loving one another. He says Christians can know they are God's children if they love one another and if they obey God's commands. **Second and Third John** again emphasize the importance of true doctrine and consistent example.

Jude

The Letter of Jude was written by a brother of Jesus, to warn Christians about the same false teachers mentioned in 2 Peter. Jude warns that God will punish and destroy false teachers, and urges Christians "to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints," (v. 3), concluding with a glorious doxology of praise to God. (vv. 24-25)

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

1 Peter through Jude

Sunday

1 Peter 1: Suffering for Our Faith
"... new birth into a living hope ..."

Monday

2 Peter 3: The Day of the Lord
"But the Day of the Lord will come ..."

Tuesday

1 John 3 & 4: God's Love and Ours
"We love because he first loved us."

Wednesday

2 John: Walk in Love
"... that we walk in obedience to his commands."

Thursday

3 John: Consistent Example
"Imitate what is good."

Friday

Jude: A Call to Persevere
"... contend for the faith ..."

Search the Scriptures – Week 37

Revelation

ch. 1	Introduction
chs. 2 – 3	The Seven Letters
chs. 4 – 7	The Seven Seals
chs. 8 – 11	The Seven Trumpets
chs. 12 – 14	The Seven Figures
chs. 15 – 16	The Seven Plagues/Bowls
chs. 17 – 18	Judgment on Babylon
chs. 19 – 22	The Final Triumph of Christ

The **Book of Revelation** is the last book of the Bible, and has been described as both the most complex and the most simple of all the Bible's books. It was written about AD 95 by the Apostle John during his exile on the island of Patmos (1:9).

The complexity of Revelation stems from the fact that it is a distinct kind of literature, not often well understood today. Revelation is in fact “**Apocalyptic**,” a kind of writing which focuses on the “**End Times**” in a highly symbolic way. The visions, imagery, numbers and symbols which splash dramatically across the pages of Revelation often seem completely bizarre at the most, or somewhat perplexing at the least. Fortunately, the book does provide a number of clues for its own interpretation – and even if the specific details remain unclear, the dominant message does not.

The simplicity of Revelation is found as we pull away from being caught up in the specific details and look for its overall themes. John's purpose in writing this book is to offer hope and encouragement to those Christians who are suffering severe persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ. The great message of Revelation is that, though Satan may persecute Christian believers, yet **Jesus Christ is Ruler and Lord** over everyone and everything – even powerful human governments (Rome, here described by the code-name Babylon). And in the end, when there will be a final showdown between Satan and Christ, Jesus will return to destroy Satan forever and bring the world into judgment. The wicked will be confined to hell, while Jesus will bring his people into an eternity of glory and blessedness in heaven. So simple and clear is this message that a young child once summarized it in two words: “**Jesus Wins!**”

Selected Daily Chapter Readings

Revelation

Sunday

Chapter 1: One Like a Son of Man

"I am the first and the last ..."

Monday

Chapters 4 & 5: The Throne in Heaven

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain ..."

Tuesday

Chapter 7: The Great Multitude

"from every nation, tribe, people, language"

Wednesday

Chapter 18: The Fall of Babylon

"In one hour your doom has come!"

Thursday

Chapters 19 & 20: Christ Defeats Satan

"Hallelujah! Amen, Hallelujah!"

Friday

Chapters 21 & 22: A Vision of Heaven

"I am making everything new!"