

***Chronological
Bible Reading
Plan and Small
Group Discussion***

***Through the Bible in
120 Days***

Compiled by Tim Gibson (www.revtimothygibson.com)

What is Chronological Bible Reading?

All of God's word is inspired (2 Tim. 3:16), but the order of books in the Bible is not. The order of the books in the Bible is man-made. There is no divinely inspired order of Bible books. In fact, the order of Bible books differs between the Bible of the Hebrew, the Catholic, the Protestant, and the Eastern Orthodox. If one were to use a standard Bible and start reading in Genesis and read book-by-book in order to Revelation, he would be reading the Bible in canonical order.

The Bible not being in chronological order can sometimes make studying the Bible more difficult than is necessary. The standard order of books in most Bibles today is the canonical order: Genesis to Malachi and Matthew to Revelation. The canonical order of books does not follow a chronological order all the way through the Bible. Rather, it follows the order of books found in the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate translated by Jerome in the 4th century A.D. The "*canonical order*" groups books together according to their type of literature: law, history, poetry, and prophecy in the Old Testament; gospel, history, and epistle in the New Testament. The "*chronological order*" groups books or portions of books together according to their historical content (not necessarily when they were written but what time they were written about).

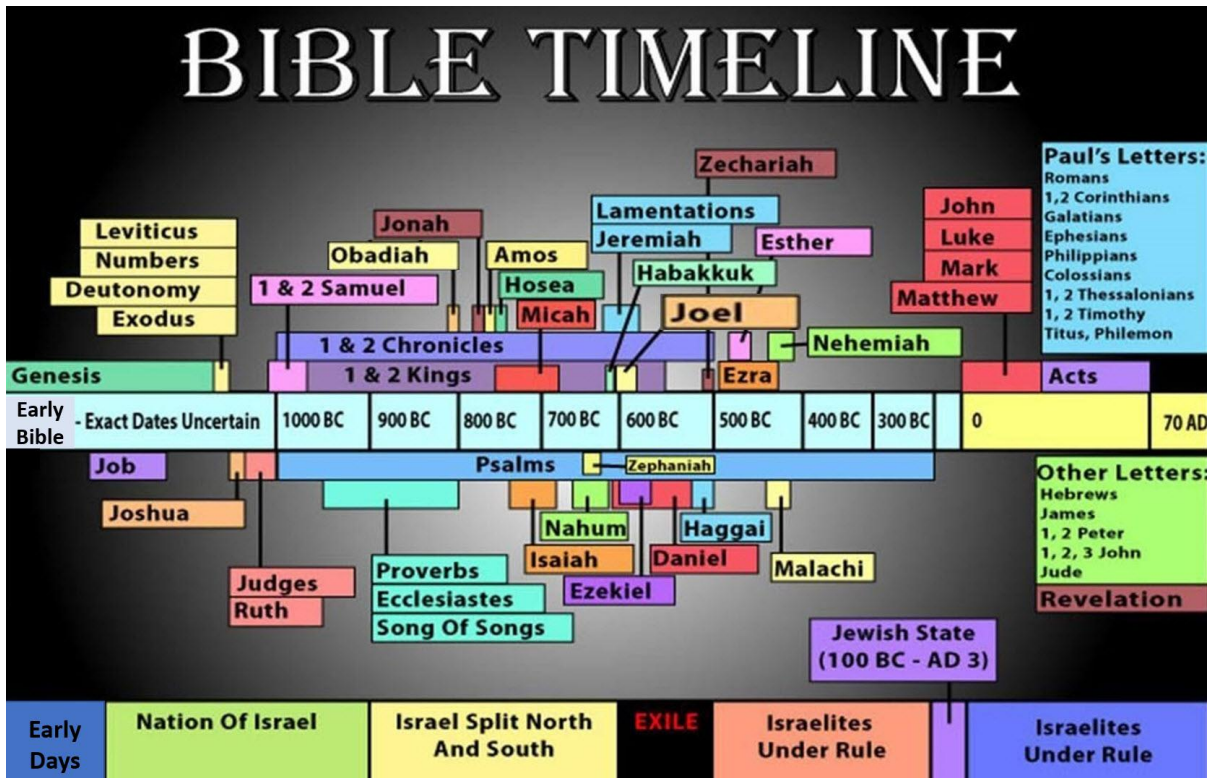
Benefits of Chronological Bible Reading

1. **We understand the story better.** It gives us a better sense of the overall flow of Bible history from beginning to end. Taking time to work through the Bible in the order the events happened is both wise and helpful in that connects all those stories and helps us avoid gaps in our understanding of God's plan for mankind.
2. **It allows the reader to put together the historical events with the doctrinal lessons attached to them.** For example, in the Old Testament, one can read about the tumultuous events of the life of David in 1 Samuel, followed by the God honouring feelings of his life in the book of Psalms.
3. **God's character is revealed progressively throughout the story of the Bible.** Just as we do not fully know someone upon meeting them for the first time, nor do we fully understand the Lord when we only read bits and pieces of His story. Studying or reading the Bible chronologically will help bring clarity to His character and provide a fuller comprehension of who God is.
4. **It provides an engaging structure for prayer altar Bible reading.** If you're overwhelmed by choosing a reading plan for your prayer altar, a chronological plan may be a good fit. You will read through the whole Bible, but you'll be moving through different books, sometimes reading in more than one book in a day giving a refreshing variety.

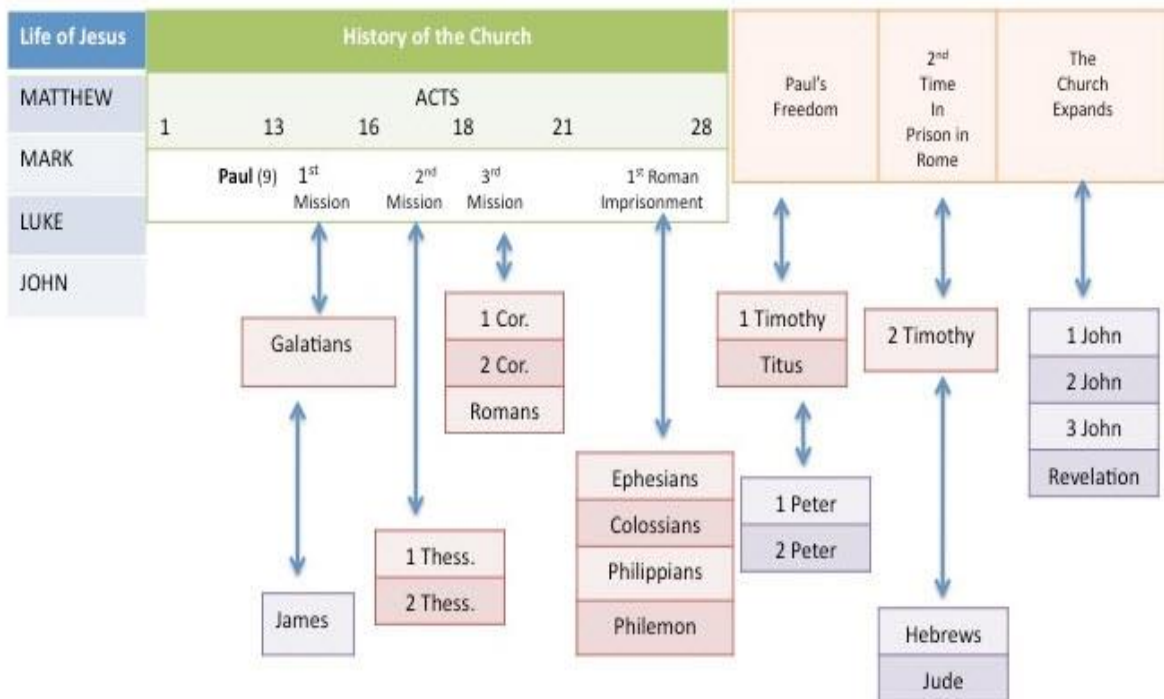
The Chronological reading plan we are using is from the Blue Letter Bible. They say, "*These readings are compiled according to recent historical research, taking into account the order in which the recorded events actually occurred.*" However, there are some books that are very hard to place chronologically so the best educated guesses are made. The following page shows how the books can fit chronologically (there may be a few minor differences from the reading). These charts give a good visual understanding of this method of Bible reading.

The chronological method does have a problem in that it often splits and divides up the inspired books of the Bible and thus loses the intended inspired flow of thought in that book. That is why this method should not be continually used in exclusion of the Canonical one.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDERING OF THE BIBLE



MORE SPECIFIC ORDERING FOR NEW TESTAMENT



Chronological Bible Reading 120 Day Plan

Day

1	Genesis 1 - 11
2	Job 1 - 10
3	Job 11 - 20
4	Job 21 - 30
5	Job 31 - 40
6	Job 41-42; Genesis 12-20
7	Genesis 21 - 30
8	Genesis 31 - 40
9	Genesis 41 - 50
10	Exodus 1 - 10
11	Exodus 11 - 20
12	Exodus 21 - 30
13	Exodus 31 - 40
14	Leviticus 1 - 10
15	Leviticus 11 - 20
16	Leviticus 21 - Numbers 3
17	Numbers 4 - 13
18	Numbers 14 - 15; Psalms 90; Numbers 16 - 22
19	Numbers 23 - 32
20	Numbers 33 - Deuteronomy 6
21	Deuteronomy 7 - 16
22	Deuteronomy 17 - 26
23	Deuteronomy 27 - 34; Psalms 91
24	Joshua 1 - 10
25	Joshua 11 - 20
26	Joshua 21 - Judges 6
27	Judges 7 - 16
28	Judges 17 - Ruth 4
29	1 Samuel 1 - 10
30	1 Samuel 11 - 20
31	Psalms 11; 59; 1 Samuel 21 - 24; Psalms 7; 27; 31; 34
32	Psalms 52; 56; 120; 140 - 142; 1 Samuel 25 - 27; Psalms 17
33	Psalms 35; 54; 63; 1 Samuel 28 - 31; Psalms 18; 121
34	Psalms 123 - 125; 128 - 130; 2 Samuel 1 - 4
35	Psalms 6; 8 - 10; 14; 16; 19; 21; 1 Chronicles 1 - 2
36	Psalms 43 - 45; 49; 84 - 85; 87; 1 Chronicles 3 - 5
37	Psalms 73; 77 - 78; 1 Chronicles 6; Psalms 81; 88; 92 - 93; 1 Chronicles 7 - 8
38	1 Chronicles 9 - 10; Psalms 102 - 104; 2 Samuel 5; 1 Chronicles 11 - 12; Psalms 133; 106 - 107
39	1 Chronicles 13 - 16; Psalms 1 - 2; 15; 22 - 24
40	Psalms 47; 68; 89; 96; 100 - 101; 105; 132; 2 Samuel 6 - 7
41	1 Chronicles 17; Psalms 25; 29; 33; 36; 39; 2 Samuel 8 - 9; 1 Chronicles 18
42	Psalms 50; 53; 60; 75; 2 Samuel 10; 1 Chronicles 19; Psalms 20; 65 - 67
43	Psalms 69 - 70; 2 Samuel 11 - 12; 1 Chronicles 20; Psalms 32; 51; 86; 122
44	2 Samuel 13 - 15; Psalms 3 - 4; 12 - 13; 28; 55; 2 Samuel 16
45	2 Samuel 17 - 18; Psalms 26; 40; 58; 61 - 62; 64; 2 Samuel 19 - 21;
46	Psalms 5; 38; 41 - 42; 2 Samuel 22 - 23; Psalms 57; 95; 97 - 99
47	2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21 - 22; Psalms 30; 108 - 110; 1 Chronicles 23 - 25
48	Psalms 131; 138 - 139; 143 - 145; 1 Chronicles 26 - 29
49	Psalms 127; 111 - 118
50	1 Kings 1 - 2; Psalms 37; 71; 94
51	Psalms 119
52	1 Kings 3 - 4; 2 Chronicles 1; Psalms 72; Songs of Solomon 1 - 8
53	Proverbs 1 - 10
54	Proverbs 11 - 20
55	Proverbs 21 - 24; 1 Kings 5 - 6; 2 Chronicles 2 - 3; 1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 4
56	1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 5 - 7; Psalms 136; 134; 146 - 150
57	1 Kings 9; 2 Chronicles 8; Proverbs 25 - 29; Ecclesiastes 1 - 3
58	Ecclesiastes 4 - 12
59	1 Kings 10 - 11; 2 Chronicles 9; Proverbs 30 - 31; 1 Kings 12 - 14; 2 Chronicles 10 - 12
60	1 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 13 - 16; 1 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 17; 1 Kings 17 - 19
61	1 Kings 20 - 22; 2 Chronicles 18 - 23; Obadiah 1
62	Psalms 82 - 83; 2 Kings 1 - 8;
63	2 Kings 9 - 13; 2 Chronicles 24; 2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 25; Jonah 1 - 2;

64	Jonah 3 - 4; 2 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 26; Isaiah 1 - 6
65	Isaiah 7 - 8; Amos 1 - 9;
66	2 Chronicles 27; Isaiah 9 - 12; Micah 1 - 5
67	Micah 6 - 7; 2 Chronicles 28; 2 Kings 16 - 17; Isaiah 13 - 17
68	Isaiah 18 - 27;
69	2 Kings 18; 2 Chronicles 29 - 31; Psalms 48; Hosea 1 - 5
70	Hosea 6 - 14
71	Isaiah 28 - 37
72	Isaiah 38 - 39; Psalms 76; Isaiah 40 - 46
73	Isaiah 47 - 48; 2 Kings 19; Psalms 46; 80; 135; Isaiah 49 - 52
74	Isaiah 53 - 62
75	Isaiah 63 - 66; 2 Kings 20 - 21; 2 Chronicles 32 - 33; Nahum 1 - 3
76	2 Kings 22 - 23; 2 Chronicles 34 - 35; Zephaniah 1 - 3; Jeremiah 1 - 3
77	Jeremiah 4 - 13
78	Jeremiah 14 - 23
79	Jeremiah 24 - 33
80	Jeremiah 34 - 40; Psalms 74; 79; 2 Kings 24 - 25
81	2 Chronicles 36; Habakkuk 1 - 3; Jeremiah 41 - 46
82	Jeremiah 47 - 52; Lamentations 1-5
83	Ezekiel 1 - 10
84	Ezekiel 11 - 20
85	Ezekiel 21 - 30
86	Ezekiel 31 - 40
87	Ezekiel 41 - 48; Joel 1 - 3
88	Daniel 1 - 10
89	Daniel 11 - 12; Ezra 1 - 6; Psalms 137; Haggai 1 - 2
90	Zechariah 1 - 10
91	Zechariah 11 - 14; Esther 1 - 6
92	Esther 7 - 10; Ezra 7 - 10; Nehemiah 1 - 2
93	Nehemiah 3 - 13; Psalms 126
94	Malachi 1 - 4; Luke 1; John 1; Matthew 1; Luke 2; Matthew 2 - 3
95	Mark 1; Luke 3; Matthew 4; Luke 4 - 5; John 2 - 4; Matthew 8; Mark 2
96	John 5; Matthew 12; Mark 3; Luke 6; Matthew 5 - 7; Matthew 9; Luke 7; Matthew 11
97	Luke 11; Matthew 13; Luke 8; Mark 4 - 5; Matthew 10; 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6
98	Matthew 15; Mark 7; Matthew 16; Mark 8; Matthew 17; Mark 9; Matthew 18; John 7 - 10
99	Luke 10; 12 - 17; John 11; Luke 18; Matthew 19
100	Mark 10; Matthew 20 - 21; Luke 19; Mark 11; John 12; Matthew 22; Mark 12; Matthew 23; Luke 20 - 21
101	Mark 13; Matthew 24 - 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 13 - 17
102	Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 18 - 19; Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20 - 21
103	Acts 1 - 10
104	Acts 11 - 14; James 1 - 5; Acts 15 - 16
105	Galatians 1 - 6; Acts 17; 1 Thessalonians 1 - 3
106	1 Thessalonians 4 - 5; 2 Thessalonians 1 - 3; Acts 18 - 19; 1 Corinthians 1 - 3
107	1 Corinthians 4 - 13
108	1 Corinthians 14 - 16; 2 Corinthians 1 - 7
109	2 Corinthians 8 - 13; Romans 1 - 4
110	Romans 5 - 14
111	Romans 15 - 16; Acts 20 - 28
112	Colossians 1 - 4; Philemon 1; Ephesians 1 - 6
113	Philippians 1 - 4; 1 Timothy 1 - 6
114	Titus 1 - 3; 1 Peter 1 - 5
115	Hebrews 1 - 10
116	Hebrews 11 - 13; 2 Timothy 1 - 4; 2 Peter 1 - 3; Jude 1;
117	1 John 1 - 5; 2 John 1; 3 John 1
118	Revelation 1 - 10
119	Revelation 11 - 20
120	Revelation 21 - 22

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - HOW TO USE

1. Create a WhatsApp group for your small group.
2. Print (or send eBook to WhatsApp group) this booklet and give to all participants in advance.
3. Meet first to go through the introduction – *What is Chronological Bible Reading?* At this first meeting ask all to read through the first week (Week 1 on next page) to prepare themselves for the reading and for things they are to look out for in their reading. Remind them to memorize and meditate on the week's memory verse. Brief the group about this time and pray for each other to get the most out of it.
4. Meet weekly thereafter to go through the weekly discussion questions that each person should have prepared for. At these meetings you should
 - a. *Welcome everyone, introduce each other if necessary.*
 - b. *Have a short icebreaker (no more than 15 Mins)*
 - c. *Have a short time of praise and worship (2 or 3 songs) (15 mins)*
 - d. *Recite the week's Bible Memory verse together (without looking at it).*
 - e. *Summarize reading for the week and then read through the text, pausing after each question for group discussion. Set a time limit for each question – no more than 10 minutes per question – agree on how to enforce this time limit. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak (60 - 90 Mins)*
 - f. *End the time with the suggested prayer/activity.*
 - g. *Remind people to read text for next week's reading before reading through according to the bible reading plan and to come the next week.*
 - h. *Close with food and fellowship.*
5. Keep going until you reach the last week. You can have a celebration time together to celebrate finishing your Chronological reading of the Bible in four months!

Week 1: Days 1-7 – Genesis 1-30, Job 1-42. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Genesis 22:17

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

Genesis

Genesis is the book of beginnings and sets the stage for everything that follows in the Bible. It establishes God as the creator of all that is — in heaven, on earth, and beyond. Genesis focuses on the essential relationship of humanity, the one that exists between God and the people he created and introduces us to the way God makes covenants with them. In Genesis we witness Satan entice Adam and Eve to disobey God, which establishes the central conflict of human history. The remainder of the Bible is the story of how God resolves that loss of relationship. Historically, Jews and Christians have held that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible, writing to God's chosen people, the Israelites, around 1446 to 1406 BC.

2. *Adam and Eve's sin resulted in the loss of God's presence in their lives. What were the consequences of that loss? How has it affected us to this day?*
3. *In Noah's time why did God judge humanity and what does the life of Noah teach us?*
4. *Why did the people want to build the tower of Babel (see Genesis 11:1 – 9)? How did God feel about their efforts? What do we learn from this?*
5. *God took the initiative to reveal himself to his people by making a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What are some ways God reveals himself to people today? How can this affect our relationship with him?*

Job

Job is the first book in what is known as the “*books of poetry*.” The books vary in literary form and cover a wide range of functions, from wisdom literature to personal prayers and hymns of worship. As you read Job, pay close attention to the scenario set up in this book, which probably took place during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Also reflect on the insights into the nature of suffering and faith, who God is and how deeply he values righteousness, and the unseen spiritual conflicts between God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom.

6. *What kinds of questions did Job ask God (see Job 12 – 13)? What kind of answer did God provide him (see Job 38:2 – 5)? What do we learn from this?*
7. *What did God's answer communicate to Job about his circumstances (see Job 38:36 – 37; 40:1 – 14)? How did Job's attitude toward God change as he dialogued with God and heard the Lord's response (see Job 42:1 – 3)?*
8. *What was wrong with the counsel of Job's friends? How do they show us how not to counsel someone going through suffering?*
9. *What does Job teach us about suffering and the part that God, Satan and we play in it? Pray for one another, especially those going through times of suffering.*

Week 2: Days 8-14 – Genesis 31 – Leviticus 10. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Exodus 13:17

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*
2. *Like Joseph, sometimes we can experience obstacles in our lives that make it difficult to see God's purpose. What can you learn from Joseph about handling situations in which God seems distant? How does this change your perspective of obstacles you may encounter?*

Exodus

The word *Exodus* means “exit” or “departure,” and the book describes the Israelite’s journey from slavery in Egypt to the threshold of the Promised Land in Canaan. Yet Exodus is not only the story of Israel’s departure from the land of Egypt but also the story of Israel’s departure from the lifestyle of Egypt. It is not merely a journey of time and distance but also a journey of the heart, as a holy God prepares His chosen people to live the life that He offers in the land he has provided. In Exodus he reveals His name, His attributes, His redemption, His Law, and how He is to be worshiped, and then He invites his people into relationship with Him.

3. *What was God trying to show Moses and the Egyptians through both the miraculous signs he performed and the plagues (see Exodus 7:5 and 14:4)? What is He showing us?*
4. *What message does God give Moses in Exodus 19:4 – 6? How does God show His presence among the Israelites while they are in the desert? How does He show His presence to you?*
5. *Briefly list the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20). What was God’s purpose in giving his people these laws (see verse 20)? Are they relevant to us today? If so, in what way?*
6. *Why did God instruct the Israelites to build the tabernacle (see Exodus 25:8)? What pattern does the Tabernacle and priesthood give for us today?*

Leviticus

Leviticus is essentially the rulebook for Israel’s priests (the “Levites”). All the laws spring from God’s covenant with his chosen people. The Hebrews had grown up in slavery, so these laws were part of the process God used to mould them into the people they needed to be before they entered the Promised Land. These laws were about relationships — those they were to have with one another and the one they were to have with their God. As you read, notice the unchanging character of God and our human need for forgiveness and a restored relationship with him. Leviticus helps us understand why we need to be holy and why it was necessary for Jesus to stand in our place and die for our sins.

6. *What sacrifices did God make provision for in the Old Testament? What sacrifices are we to offer today? (See Leviticus 1-5). Discuss.*
7. *Leviticus 10:8 – 11 gives us a glimpse of God’s requirements for his people to be holy — especially the priests who served in the tabernacle. What does God’s standard of holiness tell us about his character?*
8. *Cry out together to be qualified priests who can minister before Him.*

Week 3: Days 15 – 21 – Leviticus 11 – Deuteronomy 16, Psalm 90. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Deuteronomy 11:8

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*
2. *How did God enable the people of the Old Testament to be holy? Why should we be concerned about personal and corporate holiness today? (see Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7)*
3. *How does sin affect our relationship with God? What choices do we have in dealing with sin?*

Numbers

The English name of the book comes from the census lists found in chapters 1 and 26, but the Hebrew name of the book, meaning “*in the desert*,” is more descriptive of what it is about. As the Israelites approached the Promised Land of Canaan, moving from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab, they had to choose whether to trust their God or not. As you read, notice what happens when they focus on their circumstances and feelings rather than on what God has promised to do for them. Also note how after denying God’s character and promises, they must face his judgment — thirty-eight more years in the wilderness.

4. *Despite all that God had done for them, the Israelites repeatedly disobeyed, complained, and turned away from him. What kinds of temptations drew the Israelites away from God? How different are these from our temptations and complaints?*
5. *Numbers 22 – 24 reveals God bringing a new blessing to his people — to the generation who would enter the Promised Land. What did Balak ask Balaam to do to the Israelites? How did God use Balaam to bless his people? Summarize the blessings Balaam pronounced over Israel (see especially 23:21 – 24; 24:3 – 9). Take time to bless Israel!*
6. *God named Joshua to succeed Moses and lead the new generation into the Promised Land (see Numbers 27:12 – 22). Why was Moses not allowed to enter the land? What do we learn from this for us today?*

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the last of the five “*Books of Moses*,” also known as the Torah or Pentateuch, delivered by Moses before transferring leadership of the people to Joshua. Within its pages, you’ll experience your first dose of extended repetition in the Bible. While this can make for tedious reading, the repetition can help you order biblical events more firmly in your mind. Deuteronomy is important because it greatly influenced Judah and Israel’s prophets, who in turn influenced key New Testament figures. As you read, notice the emphasis on worshiping God and God alone. Also note how often Moses mentions that God will fulfil his promise to Abraham and give the Israelites the Promised Land and pay attention to the predictions God instructs Moses to give concerning Israel. Imagine what it would have been like to be camped on the east side of the Jordan River, poised to enter Canaan, and to hear these words from Moses.

7. *In Deuteronomy 1:19 – 46, Moses provided the Israelites with a look back at their rebellious history as they travelled from Egypt to the Promised Land. What was different about Caleb and Joshua? How did God describe them? What does this tell you about what pleases God? What qualities are those possessing the land to have? Pray for these qualities.*

Week 4: Days 22 – 28 – Deuteronomy 17 – Ruth 4, Psalm 91. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 24:14

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*
2. *Moses and Joshua were responsible for presenting God’s Law to the people, guiding them in obedience to the Law, and correcting them in their disobedience as God directed. How do we exert this same influence today? What impact can we have on others?*
3. *Despite the Israelites’ repeated disobedience, God renewed his covenant with them. What was required of the people to keep their part of the covenant (see Deuteronomy 29:12 – 13; 30:11 – 20; 32:44–47)? How did Moses prepare the people to enter the Promised Land and not fail a second time?*

Joshua

After many years of slavery in Egypt and forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God finally brought the Israelites into Canaan and began to fulfil the promises he made to the patriarchs. Take note of Joshua’s faithfulness to God as he leads Israel in conquering the Canaanites, which is one of the high points of Israel’s history. Joshua’s faithful leadership brings great reward to the nation, but even so, Israel is not entirely faithful in obeying God’s commands. The book was written by an unknown author around 1390 BC, though some sections may derive from Joshua himself.

4. *Read Joshua 1:7-10. How is God the hero of the story of Joshua? What do the stories of the conquest of Canaan tell us about the people God wants to use to accomplish his purpose? How can we become such a people?*
5. *What consequences did the Israelites experience for not destroying the Canaanites and removing their gods from the land? (See Joshua 23:12-13; Judges 2:2-3) What does this reveal about how sin works in our lives?*

Judges

The title of this book refers to the leaders (Hebrew *shophet*) God raised at certain times to rid the Israelites of foreign invaders. The invaders came into the land as a result of the people’s disobedience to God and rejection of his kingship — a theme that occurs early in the book and repeats throughout. Note the strengths and weaknesses of the various judges — including Deborah, Gideon, and Samson — whom God sent to assist Israel. Consider also the cycle that begins during this period: Israel breaks its covenant with God; God sends oppressors to punish them; they cry out for help; he delivers them; and then they disobey again. Judges was written by an unknown author around 1000 BC, though some sections may have been penned by the prophet Samuel.

6. *In the book of Judges we find a repeating cycle in which the people sinned, God raised up a judge, the people turned toward obedience, and then they fell away as soon as that judge died. How is this cycle seen in our lives today? How can we break out of this cycle?*

Ruth

The book of Ruth is set during the time of the judges, which explains its placement in our modern Bibles (in the Hebrew Bible it appears after the Song of Solomon or Song of Songs). In many ways the book, which reads like a short story, portrays the promise of a life far beyond our expectations. As you read, take note of the themes of faithful love and redemption that prevail as events unfold for an Israelite family.

7. *What does Judges 21:25 tell us about the condition of the hearts of God’s people during the time of the judges? How does the story of Ruth give us a glimmer of hope for them? Who was part of Ruth’s family line (see Ruth 4:17)?*
8. *What does the story of Ruth tell us about God’s sovereign will and how he enables his promises to be fulfilled? How have you seen God do this today? What else does the story of Ruth show us? What qualities of Ruth do you want to have in your life? Pray for each other to have these qualities.*

Week 5: Days 29 – 35 – 1 Samuel 1-31; 2 Samuel 1-4; 1 Chronicles 1-2 and corresponding Psalms.

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 16:5-6

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

1 Samuel

The book of 1 Samuel is named after the prophet and judge whom God used to establish the monarchy in Israel. The events in the book take place during a time of national political, social, and spiritual turmoil. Observe how the people refuse to listen to God and make the rough transition from the time of the judges to the reign of Saul, whom God calls Samuel to anoint as Israel's first earthly king. Also notice the ups and downs that David — the shepherd boy, psalmist, and great warrior — faces before he is anointed as Israel's next king.

2. *How would you describe Samuel's relationship with God? In what ways did God use him from an early age to minister to the Israelites? What were his strengths and weaknesses and what do we learn from him?*
3. *Why did the Israelites want Samuel to choose a king for them (see 1 Samuel 8:19 – 22)? What was God's response? In what ways were they rejecting him? In what ways can we do this?*
4. *Why was David God's choice for king? What does the story of Goliath tell us about David's relationship with God (see 1 Samuel 17:37)? What can we learn about God from this story?*
5. *What is the difference between being an instrument of God (David) and being an obstacle to God's working in our lives and in the lives of people we influence (Saul)? How can you be more like David and less like Saul? (Read 1 Samuel 16:1,7).*
6. *What characterized David's faith and relationship with God at this point in his life? What was it about David that God was looking for in a leader? What is God looking for in his people today?*

Psalms

The title "*Psalms*" refers to songs that were sung to the accompaniment of instruments such as the harp, lyre, and lute. The book is a collection of songs that were written across several centuries, with the earliest written about the time of Moses (1440 BC) and the time following the Babylonian exile (after 538 BC). The psalms are organized into separate books: (1) Psalms 1 – 41, (2) Psalms 42 – 72, (3) Psalms 73 – 89, (4) Psalms 90 – 106, and (5) Psalms 107 – 150. Many of the Psalms were originally written by David, many in response to real life situations.

While reading the poetic prayers and hymns in this book, note those that especially connect with you. You'll want to return to them for further reading later. Pay close attention to what the psalms reveal about faith, godliness, hope, justice, and God being at the centre of life.

7. *What did the reading of the related Psalms this week add to the reading of the life of David in the latter part of 1 Samuel? Give examples and say what you learn from David's response in the Psalm. (If you cannot remember any you can use Psalm 59 which was written by David after the events of 1 Samuel 19:10-18).*
8. *Pray for each other for a heart more like David and less like Saul.*

Week 6: Days 36-42 — 1 Chronicles 3-19; 2 Samuel 5-10 and corresponding Psalms.

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 2:8

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

1 Chronicles

The book of 1 Chronicles was written for the exiles who had returned to rebuild Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah. In this book, the author (possibly Ezra) traced the genealogy and interpreted the history of God's people (primarily from 1 – 2 Samuel and 1 – 2 Kings). As you read, notice an emphasis on the spiritual events of David's reign and the covenant promises God was keeping by establishing David as Israel's king.

2. *1 Chronicles 1-9 gives a big picture of Israel's history – it's identity as a people. What's your identity as God's person in the world? What is your spiritual heritage? Thank God for those who have blazed the trail of commitment for you.*
3. *2 Samuel 5:1-10; 1 Chronicles 11-12 and Psalm 133 were written about the same events. Notice the unity of Israel under David and the place of covenant. How are these accounts similar? How do they differ? What admirable qualities are celebrated in the description of David's warriors? Which of these qualities do you need today as you approach your tasks?*
4. *2 Samuel 5:11-6:23 and 1 Chronicles 13-16 show how worship of the Lord finally took centre place among the people of Israel as he moved the Ark to Jerusalem. What was wrong with the first attempt at moving the Ark? How can we make the same mistake today in our worship? How central in your life is worship?*
5. *In 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17 we see God promised David an enduring kingdom. Is this promise still relevant? How? Read Psalm 2 that was written about the king from David's line and comment on how it speaks to us today.*
6. *In 2 Samuel 8-9 and 1 Chronicles 18 we see David cry out for revenge on his enemies and yet he shows kindness to Mephibosheth. His loyalty to Jonathan overrode a thirst for revenge. How does your life exhibit loyalty to God? How does your loyalty to God's ways override other less noble emotions you might experience?*
7. *2 Samuel 10 and 1 Chronicles 19 recount David's war with the Ammonites whom he reached out in friendship to, but his motives were misunderstood, leading to war. In what ways are you tempted to misjudge the motives of others? What must you do to avoid such a situation?*
9. *What did the reading of the related Psalms this week add to the reading? We have looked at some of these Psalms that David wrote but many of the Psalms for this section are by the 'sons of Korah' who were an important branch of the singers of the Kohathite division who David appointed for worship before the Ark (2 Chronicles 20:19). Read Psalms 42-43 (originally one Psalm) written by the sons of Korah. What qualities of a worshipper do you see? Pray for more of these qualities in your life.*

Week 7: Days 43-49 — 2 Samuel 11-24; 1 Chronicles 20-29 and corresponding Psalms.

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: 1 Chronicles 29:11

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

2 Samuel

The book of 2 Samuel continues the story of Israel as they transitioned from the time of the judges to the monarchy, beginning with the death of King Saul and David's ascension to the throne. The book depicts the most magnificent high points of David's forty-year reign, as well as the low points of his life and that of his family. David's affair with Bathsheba — an ugly story of lust, abuse of power, deceit, and murder — was but a preview of what would follow. In fulfilment of Nathan's prophecy that David's sin with Bathsheba would split the house of David, we see the consequences unfold, bringing division and suffering not only to David's household but to the entire nation of Israel.

2. *2 Samuel 11-12 and 1 Chronicles 20 outline David's sin. How do they differ in their accounts? Why do you think this is? David's sin affected not only his own family and the people close to him but also the entire nation. How does our sin affect people beyond ourselves? How does it affect their relationships with God? Read Psalm 51 together, David's Psalm of repentance, and list out the essential elements of repentance.*
3. *In 2 Samuel 13-18 we see the consequences of David's sin. What were they? Are there areas in your life you need to shore up your integrity to avoid terrible consequences?*
4. *2 Samuel 19-21 describe the restoration and success David's kingdom after his repentance even with the pain of Absalom's revolt. Read one of Psalms 5 or 38 written at this time and note David's longing. For what are you longing in your relationship with God?*
5. *2 Samuel 22-23 exalt God as the source of David's success in life which was also due to the people surrounding him. What success have you had in life? Who has God place in your life to help in these successes? Thank God for His grace and provision of other to help you.*
6. *What was the sin of David in 2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21-22? Why was what he did so bad and what was the result? Read Psalm 30 that was written about this event. What can we learn from this Psalm?*
7. *1 Chronicles 23-26 outlines David's preparations for building the temple. What were they? Today Christian are the temple of the Holy Spirit. What has God done to prepare us for worship? What can you do to prepare for worship?*
8. *1 Chronicles 27-29 show how David put things in order as he prepared for Solomon to take over as king. For what transitions in life do you need to make preparations for at this time? What is God's role in these transitions? Is He at the centre of your plans? Is His glory your goal?*
9. *Close by reading Psalm 68 aloud together. Use this Psalm to pray for each other and for others who the Lord puts on your heart.*

Week 8: Days 50-56 — 1 Kings 1-8; 2 Chronicles 1-7; Songs 1-8; Proverbs 1-24 and corresponding Psalms. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 13:22

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

The two passages in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles look at Solomon's reign until the completion of the Temple.

2. *1 Kings 1-2 show that the "kingdom was established in Solomon's hand" (2:46) as Solomon followed his father's advice in following the Lord faithfully. What role does God's covenant play in this part of the story? What role does it play in your life?*
3. *What did Solomon ask for at the Altar according to 1 Kings 3-4; 2 Chronicles 1? What do you learn from this? The Proverbs of Solomon are a direct result of this! Read Psalm 72 written about this event and use it to pray for a leader in your church or government.*
4. *1 Kings 5-6; 2 Chronicles 2-3 talk about Solomon crafting the temple out of the finest quality materials and with the greatest care. How might you relate to others in the body of Christ (God's Temple) in a way that expresses care and quality this week?*
5. *1 Kings 7 talks about Solomon's interruption of building the temple to build his own house and the house of one of his wives, Pharaoh's daughter, showing he had a divided heart. What relationships, projects, or goals threaten to divide your heart spiritually, diverting your attention from God's cause in the world?*
6. *1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 4-7 shows how the glory of God came down at the dedication of the temple at the Altar. What did Solomon do that caused the fire and glory of God to come? What must we do?*

Song of Songs

The Hebrew title for this book is "*Solomon's Song of Songs*," the greatest of Solomon's songs to his greatest love. From this we derive two titles for this book: "*Song of Solomon*," as in the *New King James Version*; and "*Song of Songs*," as in the *New International Version*. The book's celebration of love has often been interpreted in several ways — as an allegory or type of God's love for His people (Israel and the Church), as wisdom literature, as a love song, or as a combination of these. As you read, reflect on the images of love, marital fidelity in both human marital relationships and our covenant relationship with God. The book was probably authored by Solomon, who is referenced seven times, and might have been written as early as 1000 BC.

7. *What do you see as the dominant theme of the Song of Songs? What power do love and sex exert in our lives? How can bringing the power of love and sex under God's control allow us to experience its goodness?*
8. *Why is it important that Song of Songs is part of Scripture? What wisdom from this book do you need to incorporate in your life? What impact would you like it to have? Pray for each other accordingly.*

Week 9: Days 57-63— 1 Kings 9-22; 2 Chronicles 8-25; 2 Kings 1-14; Proverbs 25-31; Ecclesiastes 1-12; Obadiah 1; Jonah 1-2; Psalms 82-83. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Ecclesiastes 3:11

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

Ecclesiastes

The “Teacher” of this work (Solomon) sets the tone with these memorable words: “*Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless*” (Ecclesiastes 1:2). From there, he meanders into an exploration of the meaning and futility of life. As you read, don’t miss the subtle theme that somehow — despite the confusion, uncertainty, and pain — there is a God who has placed eternity in our hearts, who desires our love and reverence, and who offers us hope in himself.

2. *What do you think the writer is advising us to let go of in Ecclesiastes 1:2? What, according to Ecclesiastes 7:15, does he say we should accept?*
3. *In Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 8, the writer describes the way life is. How is this different from our concept of a normal life? How is this view more realistic? How should we live in the light of this? (see 3:11-13; 12:13).*

1 & 2 Kings; 2 Chronicles

The books of 1 and 2 Kings picks up where 2 Samuel left off and provides a history of the kingship in the light of God’s covenants. Note the brutal causes and effects of the rebellion after Solomon’s death that splits Israel into two kingdoms. At times this parallel structure can make it a bit challenging to keep it all straight, as you witness the succession of kings from both Israel (the kingdom in the north) and Judah (the kingdom in the south). Pay attention to which kings do “*right in the eyes of the LORD*” and which ones don’t and notice how God responds. 2 Chronicles covers the time of 1 and 2 Kings but looking only at the southern kingdom of Judah as it is written from the priestly perspective.

4. *What happened to David’s kingdom after Solomon’s death? Who were some of the kings who did right in the eyes of the Lord? What did they do that pleased God? What was the primary sin of the kings who did evil? What do you personally learn from this?*
5. *How did God encourage the prophet Elijah in his faith? How would you describe Elijah’s relationship with God? How would you describe his courage to obey God? How can you be more like Elijah?*

Obadiah

Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament, is only 21 verses long. Obadiah is a prophet of God who used an opportunity to condemn Edom for sins against both God and Israel. The Edomites are descendants of Esau and the Israelites are descendants of his twin brother, Jacob. A quarrel between the brothers affected their descendants for over 1,000 years. This division caused the Edomites to forbid Israel to cross their land during the Israelites’ Exodus from Egypt. Edom’s sins of pride required a strong word of judgment from the Lord. Some scholars think this was the earliest writing prophet at the time of Jehoram, king of Judah.

7. *What did Esau do that led to this generational curse on Esau? Are there any generational curses that need to be broken over your family line? Take time to pray for one another for cleansing of the bloodline.*

Week 10: Days 64-70 — 2 Kings 15-18; 2 Chronicles 26-31; Jonah 3-4; Isaiah 1-27; Amos 1-9; Micah 1-7; Hosea 1-14; Psalm 48. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Amos 9:11-12

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

This section shows the final doom of the northern kingdom (Israel) that was conquered by the Assyrians in King Hoshea's rule 723 BC. It also charts the ups and downs of the southern kingdom of Judah before its destruction. Note that ALL Israel's kings were 'wicked', and Judah's kings were a mixture of 'wicked' and 'good'.

2. *Why was Israel judged first and Judah much later? What happened to the northern tribes? What do we learn from this?*

Jonah

Jonah is believed to have prophesied from 793 – 753 BC to the northern kingdom of Israel, though the book was likely written down after the exile, perhaps between 750 – 725 BC. The focus of this entertaining and well-known story is not only on God's mercy to the people of Assyria but also on the Israelites' reluctance to accept that compassion to their enemies.

3. *The book of Jonah isn't about the prophet Jonah but about what God is seeking when people are confronted with their sin. What was Jonah's basic message? How did the people of Nineveh respond? How did God feel about their response? What is a message for us from this story?*

Isaiah

Isaiah, whose name means "the LORD is salvation," began his ministry in 740 BC, the year King Uzziah of Judah died (see 6:1). Most of the events in Isaiah 1 – 39 occurred during his ministry, so it is likely he recorded them not long after 701 BC. As you read, notice the strong themes of destruction and redemption that occur within the context of the spiritual turmoil of Judah and other nations. (Watch for allusions to events you have already read about, such as Sodom and Gomorrah (see Isaiah 1:9).

4. *Isaiah gives us a picture of God's ideal king (see Isaiah 9 and 11) — qualities that were lacking in most of the kings of Judah. What do these qualities tell you about God? These qualities also describe a future king — the root of Jesse (King David's father), the ancestor of Jesus. How do you think the words of Isaiah gave hope to the people when all seemed lost? How do they give you hope?*

Amos

Amos was a shepherd and keeper of a sycamore-fig grove who likely prophesied from 760 – 750 BC. Although he lived in Judah, his book was targeted to the idolatrous people of the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos's dominant theme is a call for social justice (see 5:24). He also speaks of God's judgment of all nations and the Lord's love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. He refers to God as the Great King who rules the universe (see 9:5 – 6).

5. *How is Amos 5:24 relevant today? Discuss.*

Micah

Micah lived in southern Judah and prophesied from 750 – 686 BC. The theme of his book is God's judgment and deliverance. He stresses that God hates idolatry, injustice, rebellion, and empty ritualism but delights in pardoning the repentant.

6. *See Micah 7:14 – 19. What do we learn about God's kingdom? What does this mean for you?*

Hosea

Hosea lived during the final days of the northern kingdom of Israel and likely wrote the book after that kingdom's fall to Assyria in 722 – 721 BC. Hosea stands out because God used his life — not just his words — as a symbol of his love for his people.

7. *What prophetic act was Hosea asked to do? What message did this convey to Israel? What does it speak to you today? Intercede for your nation to be delivered of spiritual adultery.*

Week 11: Days 71-77 — Isaiah 28-66; 2 Kings 19-23; 2 Chronicles 32-35; Nahum 1-3; Zephaniah 1-3; Jeremiah 1-13 and related Psalms. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 61:7

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

Isaiah

In this reading of Isaiah, we are taken from messages of judgement to the story of the deliverance of Judah from the Assyrian forces under King Hezekiah. Isaiah is a mini Bible. Chapters 1-39 are mainly of judgment like the Old Testament's 39 book and Isaiah 40-66 largely offer a message of comfort, encouragement, and a future hope like the 27 books of the New testament. Pay attention to the praise Isaiah offers to God, the beautiful poetry in chapters 36 – 39, the powerful imagery Isaiah uses, and his words about the coming Messiah.

2. *Isaiah spoke to King Hezekiah when Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was threatening Jerusalem (see Isaiah 36 – 37). How was Hezekiah's response different from Ahaz's? Refer to 2 Kings 18 – 19 and 2 Chronicles 32 for background on these events. What message do these events give us about placing our trust in God?*

This section of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles shows the final chances for salvation from destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah.

3. *Josiah is a standout king who led the people into revival but the sins of King Manasseh were too great and judgment eventually fell. What do we learn from Josiah that we can emulate? (see especially 2 Kings 22:19-20).*

Nahum

Little is known of Nahum, who prophesied between 663 – 612 BC to the people of Judah. The focus of his book is on the Lord's judgment of Nineveh (Assyria) for the people's oppression, idolatry, and wickedness. Nahum points out God's sovereignty as the Lord of history and all the nations.

Zephaniah

Zephaniah was a man of social standing in Judah who was related to the royal line (he was a fourth-generation descendant of King Hezekiah). He ministered during the time of King Josiah from 640 – 609 BC. His theme focuses on the coming "Day of the Lord" — a time when God will punish the nations for their sin, including the nation of Judah. However, like other prophets, he ends his pronouncement of doom on the positive note that Judah will one day be restored.

4. *Read Zephaniah 3:9 – 17. What do you feel when you read this passage? How should this affect the way you live?*

Jeremiah

Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry in 626 BC, during the time of King Josiah of Judah, and he railed against the sin of God's people for forty years. The book that bears his name was actually recorded by Baruch, his faithful secretary, who wrote down his words sometime between 626 and Jeremiah's death in 586 BC. While the prophet was not popular among his contemporaries, he is the one whom Jesus most often quoted. As you read, notice how often Jeremiah warns the people to stop committing adultery, using perverted worship practices, and turning away from God in general. Jeremiah's persecution and suffering increases as God's judgment approaches

5. *Jeremiah lived about a hundred years after Isaiah, as Babylon was coming into power over the Assyrians. In Jeremiah 7:1 – 15, what warning does the prophet give to the people in Jerusalem about their worship practices? What efforts had God made to help them correct their ways? What was the most devastating consequence of their unfaithfulness? What do we learn from this?*

6. *What does Jeremiah say will happen to Jerusalem because of their persistence in sin (see Jeremiah 9:11)? How does God feel about their sin? How does he feel about the destruction they will experience? How does God feel about your sin? What must you do? Spend time in repentance as the Lord leads.*

Week 12: Days 78-84 — Jeremiah 14-52; 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chronicles 36; Habakkuk 1-3; Lamentations 1-5; Ezekiel 1-20; Psalm 74. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Jeremiah 30:3

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

This section of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles records the fall of Jerusalem. The southern kingdom (Judah) was taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 587BC. This is also recorded in Jeremiah 39.

2. *Did Judah's destruction mean an end of God's people and the promised line of David? Discuss.*

Jeremiah

At the end of Jeremiah, we see he is actually in chains when the Babylonians take over Jerusalem but is released and treated favourably by the Babylonians. Take special notice of Jeremiah's role as God's messenger to the remnant who are not taken away to Babylon. Consider what happens to them and how God responds to nations that have battled his people.

3. *Read Jeremiah 31:31-40. How is the new covenant different from the old? How does God put His Law in His children now? How do we seek the power of the Holy Spirit?*
4. *Read Jeremiah 33:14-16 – What parts of this prophecy have been fulfilled? What parts have not? When will they be fulfilled? How does this make you feel and how should it change your outlook on life?*

Habakkuk

Habakkuk likely lived in Judah during Jehoiakim's reign from 609 – 598 BC with Babylonia growing stronger and become a great threat. His message is unique in that it is a dialogue between himself and God — a sort of wrestling match with the Creator over his unfathomable ways. He is confused that God is going to use the Babylonians, a wicked people, to judge Judah. Yet the prophet's dialogue results in a new confession of faith as he learns to trust in God and work with him in a spirit of worship.

5. *Meditate deeply on Habakkuk 3:17-19. What are the difficult circumstances you face today? Speak out a prayer of praise God in spite of those circumstances.*

Lamentations

As you read this poetic book written by Jeremiah, try to imagine the Jewish people's loss over the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC at the hands of the Babylonians. Not only have the people's city and temple been destroyed, but they have also been exiled from the homeland God had given them. Although God ordained their punishment, notice the hope, love, faithfulness, and salvation he continues to offer.

6. *Lamentations 1 and 4 were written to mourn the destruction in Jerusalem and the exile of many of the people. However, read 3:22-23, 37-42 and see the mercy that God extends to His lamenting people. What are you lamenting over? What hope do these verses give you? What must you do?*

Ezekiel

This book was written between 593 – 571 BC to the Jews who had been taken captive to Babylon. Ezekiel was a priest taken into captivity in Babylon where he ministered as a prophet to the exiles.

7. *What do the visions of Ezekiel 1 and 8-10 teach us about God? Pray out your response!*

Week 13: Days 85-91 — Ezekiel 21-48; Joel 1-3; Daniel 1-12; Ezra 1-6; Psalm 137; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 1-14; Esther 1-6. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Daniel 7:18

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

Ezekiel

This latter part of Ezekiel concentrates on visions of hope for the future after the temple has been destroyed. He gives the exiles hope of a future return.

2. *What does Ezekiel's visions of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) and the new temple and river (Ezekiel 47) speak of historically and prophetically? What hope do these visions give you?*

Joel

Little is known about the prophet Joel, but it is likely he lived at the time of Judah's exile to Babylon. His message was that God's restoration and blessing would come only after the Lord's judgment (the "Day of the Lord") and the people's repentance. Peter would later quote from the prophet during his sermon on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:16 – 21).

3. *Read Joel 2:28-32. When did this come to pass? Have you experienced this? What must you do to walk in this experience?*

Daniel

Daniel was a young man of Judah who was taken into captivity by the Babylonians. From the first pages of the book, he stands out as a leader — both spiritually and politically. Take note of the qualities of his relationship with God, including his faithfulness, his trust in God, and his commitment to prayer. Consider also the repeating theme of God's sovereignty over all people. The book was written around 530 BC and contains two separate parts: a historical narrative (Daniel 1 – 6) and prophetic literature (Daniel 7 – 12), which would have served as an encouragement to the people of God in exile and also speak prophetically of the end times. His ministry spanned the Babylonian captivity until the Persian empire overthrew the Babylonians. From a teen to old age Daniel served God faithfully.

4. *Which of Daniel's personal characteristics stand out to you? Why? What can we learn from Daniel's example about faithfully following and serving God in a hostile culture?*

Ezra

Ezra 1-6 show how Persian King Cyrus issued a decree for the Jews to return to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem. The first return was under Zerubbabel (an ancestor of Jesus on Joseph's side (Matt 1:13)).

5. *What challenges did the people face during Ezra's day in their attempt to rebuild the temple (see Ezra 4)? What did they do in the face of these obstacles? How did God use these situations to help them rebuild (see Ezra 5 – 6)? What do you learn from this?*

Haggai

Haggai ministered to the exiled Jews who had returned to the land of Israel. It is possible that he witnessed the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586 BC and was in his seventies at the time of his ministry. His writing can be precisely dated at 520 BC, during the second year of King Darius of Persia. Haggai's primary message was on the consequences of disobedience and obedience and the blessings the people would receive if they gave priority to God and rebuilding his house, the temple.

Zechariah

Zechariah, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, was a member of a priestly family. He was born in Babylon and was among the exiles who returned to Judah in 538/537 BC. Like Haggai, his main purpose for writing to the post-exilic Jews is to compel them to complete the rebuilding of the temple (see Ezra 5:1). Zechariah also foretells Christ's coming and emphasizes that God will be faithful to his people if they choose to return to him.

6. *What future for God's kingdom do you see in these prophetic Scriptures? In light of the destruction and suffering the people experienced because of their sin, what did this message of a future tell them about God (see Haggai 2 and Zechariah 8:1 – 13)? Praise God together for future hope!*

Week 14: Days 92-98 — Esther 7-10; Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah 1-13; Psalm 126; Malachi 1-4; Luke 1-9; John 1-10; Matthew 1-18; Mark 1-9. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Mark 5:5

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

Esther

The book of Esther is named after its principle character, a young Jewish exile who married the Persian king Xerxes. As you read the story, try putting yourself in her position. Watch her faith in God grow and notice how God uses her courageous actions and those of Mordecai to save the Jews from annihilation. Consider, too, that Esther lived in Persia about thirty years before the events recorded in Nehemiah. The author of Esther is unknown, but his knowledge of Persian customs and lack of references to conditions in Judah indicate he was a resident of a Persian city. The book was likely written sometime after 460 BC

2. *Even though the word God never appears in Esther, what does the book show us about how God often works in our lives? How does this affect your view of “coincidences” in your life?*

Nehemiah

The book of Nehemiah describes the events that transpired after the first waves of Israelites returned to the land. In particular, it shows how God used Nehemiah — a cupbearer for the Persian king Artaxerxes I — to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and protect it from enemies. As you read, you will see how God used Nehemiah’s prayers, plans, and passion to accomplish great things. In the end, Nehemiah not only led the people to reconstruct the wall around Jerusalem but also helped restore Jewish tradition and faithfulness to God in the community.

3. *In what ways did Nehemiah demonstrate his reliance on God and his deep commitment to prayer? What does a life bathed in prayer look like today?*
4. *How did Nehemiah encourage the people when they experienced opposition from enemies such as Sanballat (see Nehemiah 4:11 – 15)? When the wall was finished, what did Ezra and the people do (see Nehemiah 8 – 10)? What do we learn from this?*

Malachi

Malachi ministered to the exiles in Judah during the time of Nehemiah and likely wrote his book during Nehemiah’s return to Persia in 433 BC or during his second period as governor. His aim is to rebuke the people for doubting God’s love and to call them to return to honouring the Lord. He states God is coming not only to judge his people but also to bless and restore them.

7. *In Malachi 3:6, God talks about his commitment to his covenant with Jacob. In other prophetic Scriptures, the authors recount God’s faithfulness throughout the history of his people. Why was it important for the people to be reminded of the covenant and God’s sovereign hand in history? How was this covenant fulfilled just over 400 years later when the Gospel stories happened? What do we learn from this?*

The Gospels

The first four books of the New Testament are known as the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each book tells us about the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The passages in this week’s reading deal with the birth, baptism, anointing and early ministry of Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke were written by heir namesakes and are called ‘*The Synoptic Gospels*’ as they are very similar to each other and would have been written quite close together. John wrote his gospel much later.

8. *Why are there four accounts of the life of Jesus and not one? What does this reveal to us? From your reading what do you see each Gospel writer emphasizing more than the others? (Matthew: Jesus as the King of the Jews; Mark: Jesus as a suffering servant; Luke: Jesus as the Saviour for lost people everywhere; John: Jesus as The Son of God).*
9. *Share one event in the reading of the Gospels this week that has become clearer to you as you read the gospels together.*
10. *Pray that you will become more like Jesus.*

Week 15: Days 99-106 — Luke 10-24; John 11-21; Matthew 19-28; Mark 10-16; Acts 1-17; James 1-5; Galatians 1-6; 1 Thessalonians 1-3. WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: James 1:21-22

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*

The Gospels

The reading this week takes us through the final days of Jesus' ministry until his death and resurrection.

2. *Why is it important to understand the suffering that Jesus experienced on our behalf? What does his suffering say about his sacrifice? How does Jesus' attitude toward his suffering encourage us when life gets hard? What does it say about the cost of discipleship?*
3. *Which of Jesus' "I am" statements in John's gospel means the most to you? What do they tell you about Jesus' desire for you?*

Acts

Written by Luke, the book of Acts begins with the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples and then fast-forwards to his dramatic ascension to heaven. The first eight chapters in Acts focus primarily on the work of Peter and the other disciples in the early church as it took root and began to expand in the region. Notable accounts include the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter and John's arrest (Acts 4), Stephen's arrest and execution (Acts 6 – 7), and Philip's ministry to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). In Acts 7 we are introduced to a new character who will come to occupy most of the remaining chapters in Acts. This young man is named Saul, but after he meets the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, his name will be changed to Paul. This week's reading takes us towards to end of Paul's second missionary journey.

4. *The dwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers represents God's presence in the world. How does the Holy Spirit help believers spread the message of Christ? How is the work of the Spirit seen throughout your reading in Acts? How has the Holy Spirit brought about change in your life? In what ways are you participating in Jesus' plan for spreading the gospel that is given in Acts 1:8?*

James

The author of this letter identifies himself as James, whom most believe was the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem council (see Acts 15). Interestingly, at first James did not believe Jesus was the Messiah and even challenged him (see John 7:2 – 5). However, after Jesus appeared to him (see 1 Corinthians 15:7), he became a pillar of the church. James's central theme is the need for believers to put their faith into action through good works. He also includes instruction on resisting temptation, maintaining faith, taming the tongue, and dealing with worldliness and oppression. James might have been written as early as AD 48.

Galatians

Paul wrote this letter sometime around AD 48 to churches in the province of Galatia that he had helped to found. The occasion was the appearance of false teachers who were telling believers that in order to follow Christ they also had to become Jews. Paul pointed out the familiar trap into which these religious Jews had fallen — the temptation to teach that works, and not grace alone, was necessary to receive God's salvation.

5. *Read Galatians 2:16 and James 2:24. How do you explain this apparent contradiction? (look at the context of each). What is Paul saying in Galatians and what is James saying in his letter? What do we learn from this to apply in our lives?*

1 Thessalonians

Paul and Silas founded the church in Thessalonica, a bustling seaport city in Macedonia, during their second missionary journey (see Acts 17:1 – 10). After having to leave the city abruptly, he penned this letter to them around AD 51 to encourage the believers who were now facing trials for their faith. He praises them for their perseverance, instructs them in godly living, and answers questions they have about the return of Christ.

6. *Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and comment on the three qualities mentioned. How can you develop them in your life and ministry? Pray for each other using 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13.*

Week 16: Days 107-113 — 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thessalonians 1-3; Acts 18-28; 1 Corinthians 1-16; 2 Corinthians 1-13; Romans 1-16; Colossians 1-4; Philemon 1; Ephesians 1-6.

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 1:12

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*
2. *Today you will do something different. Read out the key verse from each of these books and talk about its meaning to the believers then and to you right now. Read the book overview first then discuss the verse and pray for one another as the Lord leads.*

Acts

In this week's passage Luke goes on to relate the events of Paul's final missionary journeys as he takes the gospel "to the ends of the earth" also his journey to Rome (Acts 27:1 – 28:16). As you read, notice the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christ's followers as they fulfil Christ's command to be his witnesses – *Key verse: Acts 28:31*

2 Thessalonians

Paul's purpose in writing this letter, which he penned in AD 51 or 52, was to again encourage the believers and correct misunderstandings that had arisen concerning Jesus' return. He also urges the believers to be steadfast and work for a living – *Key Verse: 2 Thessalonians 1:7*

1 Corinthians

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Corinth, a thriving city in Greece, around AD 55 in response to information he received about divisions and deteriorating spiritual conditions in the church. The theme of the letter revolves around these problems and stresses the need for believers in Christ to continually develop holy character – *Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 3:16*

2 Corinthians

After writing 1 Corinthians, Paul apparently made a "painful visit" to the church in Corinth and wrote a "severe letter" (now lost) to correct the abuses he found. When he heard that letter had achieved its desired effect, he drafted this letter to express his joy, explain the troubles he had experienced for the gospel, and educate them on living the Christian life – *Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 12:9*

Romans

Paul likely wrote Romans in AD 57 to the church in Rome (which he did not found) to provide an overview of his theology, and it is widely regarded as his greatest letter. As you read his words, pay attention to how often he emphasizes the fundamentals of Christian belief — especially that faith in Christ's death and resurrection is the only ground for salvation by God - *Key Verse: Romans 10:9*

Colossians

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Colossae, a former leading city in Asia Minor, sometime around AD 60. Paul's purpose appears to be to refute some false teachings and heresies that had taken hold in the community. The heresies are diverse in nature and seem to be a mixture of extreme forms of Judaism and Gnosticism — reliance on human wisdom and tradition. Paul refutes them by exalting the fullness of Christ as contrasted with the emptiness of philosophy - *Key Verse: Colossians 2:20*

Ephesians

Paul likely wrote this letter in AD 60 to believers in the church at Ephesus and in western Asia Minor. Paul had made Ephesus his base of operations for more than two years, during which he had proclaimed the gospel throughout the region (see Acts 19:10). Unlike his other letters, Paul does not address any particular errors or heresies in the church. Rather, he seeks to help believers better understand God's purpose and grace to them and to appreciate the high goals God has established for the church. Paul notes in Ephesians 3:1 that he is "a prisoner of Christ," and this imprisonment most likely occurred when he was placed under house arrest in Rome (see Acts 28:16 – 31). For this reason, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are known as the "prison epistles." - *Key Verse: Ephesians 5:2*

Philemon

Paul wrote this letter to a believer named Philemon in Colossae sometime around AD 60. Philemon was a slave owner, and one of those slaves (named Onesimus) had stolen from him, escaped, and then become a Christian. This was an offense deserving of death under Roman law, but in this letter, Paul appeals to Philemon to accept Onesimus as a Christian brother - *Key Verse: Philemon 16*

Week 17: Days 114-120 — Philippians 1-4; 1 Timothy 1-6; Titus 1-3; 1 Peter 1-5; Hebrews 1-13; 2 Timothy 1-4; 2 Peter 1-3; Jude 1; 1 John 1-5; 2 John 1; 3 John 1; Revelation 1-22.

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE: 1 Peter 1:3-4

1. *What are some of the highlights — knowledge gained, puzzling questions, moments of insight — you experienced during your reading this week?*
2. *Like last week we will take the key verse from each of these books and talk about its meaning to the believers then and to you right now. Read each book overview together and then look at the verse.*

Philippians

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Philippi, a prosperous Roman colony, sometime around AD 61 to encourage the believers to be unified and not allow divisions to come between them. He also exhorted them to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of their circumstances. Philippians is Paul's most joyful epistle, and he uses the word joy (in its various Greek forms) some sixteen times in the letter - *Key Verse: Philippians 4:4*

1 Timothy

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, his younger assistant who had been overseeing the church in Ephesus, sometime around AD 64. This letter, 2 Timothy, and Titus are known as the "pastoral epistles," or letters from Paul to encourage his two close co-workers in their ministry. In this letter Paul gives Timothy instructions for supervising the church, refutes false teachings, and guides Timothy in dealing with different groups of people in the congregation - *Key Verse: 1 Timothy 4:12*

Titus

Paul wrote this letter to Titus, a Gentile convert who was a trusted partner in ministry, sometime around AD 63 – 65. He had left Titus on the island of Crete to organize the new church and complete some needed work there. In this letter, he gives Titus guidance on how to meet opposition, instruct the community in faith and conduct, and combat false teachings - *Key Verse: Titus 1:1*

1 Peter

Written around AD 60 – 64 — after Paul's prison letters (with which the author shows familiarity) but before Peter's death in AD 67 or 68. The main theme of the letter is an exhortation for believers to stand firm in the face of suffering and persecution. As you read, look for what God reveals to you about living wholeheartedly for him, particularly in the areas of personal holiness, submission to authority, and humility. Consider, too, Peter's warnings about false teachers and being prepared for the second coming of Christ - *Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:13*

Hebrews

The letter was likely penned from AD 67 – 70 by Paul or another Jewish writer. As you read Hebrews, which some view as a condensation of the entire Bible, pay close attention to the themes relating to Jesus' identity and accomplishments. Note his position as our "great high priest," the new covenant he established, and the call to follow him faithfully. Also, carefully observe the many Old Testament references the writer employs - *Key Verse: Hebrews 8:13*

2 Timothy

After Paul's release from prison in Rome in AD 62, he was again imprisoned in AD 66. This time he was placed in a dungeon and put in chains like a common criminal. Paul knew his life was nearing an end, so he wrote this final letter to charge Timothy to guard the gospel, persevere in the face of the mounting persecution, and keep on spreading the good news of Christ - *Key Verse: 2 Timothy 4:7*

2 Peter

In Peter's second letter, he gives advice on how believers can deal with the rise of false teachers and evildoers who were appearing in the church. He also encourages believers to grow in Christ, reject false teaching, and watch for the Lord's return. Because 2 Peter and Jude are very similar, it is believed one borrowed from the other or that they drew from a common source - *Key Verse: 2 Peter 3:2*

Jude

Most believe Jude (Greek Judas) was another brother of Christ (see Matthew 13:55). In this short book, Jude encourages believers everywhere to persevere in faith and guard against false teachers in the church. These false teachers were perverting the gospel by saying that grace meant the freedom to sin. Jude could have been written as early as late as AD 80 - *Key Verse: Jude 3*

1, 2, 3 John

Church tradition held that John, the beloved disciple and author of the gospel that bears his name, was not martyred but lived to an advanced age. Evidence suggests a date from AD 85 – 95. In John's first letter, he writes to assure believers of the certainty of their salvation and to refute heretical teachings that Jesus was not fully human and fully divine. The letters of 2 and 3 John are more personal in nature and respectively addressed to "*the lady chosen by God*" and "my dear friend Gaius." Within them, John encourages Christians to walk in love and show hospitality to those who bring Jesus' teaching and proclaim the truth - *Key Verse: 1 John 4:9*

Revelation

The letter was likely written by the Apostle John at the time Christians were suffering persecution under the Roman emperor Domitian in AD 95. The book is typically difficult for modern readers because it was written in a form of literature known as apocalyptic, which is highly symbolic, and combines elements common to epistles and prophetic literature. One item that is clear is that the book looks forward to the triumph to come at the return of Christ, when he will deliver the righteous who are suffering and judge the wicked for their deeds. Notice the author's call for believers to remain true to what they were taught regardless of what the world says to the contrary - *Key Verse: Revelation 22:12*

3. *Commit this time of having read through the whole Bible to the Lord. Is it anyone's first time reading through the whole Bible? Share your feeling of having read through the Bible chronologically. Pray for strength to continue reading 10 chapters a day.*

- *Book overview descriptions and some questions adapted from "A Brief Survey of the Bible" by John Walton and Mark Straus, Zondervan, 2015.*
- *Other questions adapted from "Reader's Guide to the Bible: Chronological Reading Plan" by George H. Guthrie, Lifeway Press, 2011.*