

citylight | church

Bible Reading Plan Supplemental Content

WEEK 1 (Genesis; Matthew)

Welcome to Citylight's Bible reading plan! We begin our journey in the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of Matthew.

Following are two videos from thebibleproject.com - these videos are short, high quality, and incredibly helpful to orient you toward the text. The first one gives an overview of Genesis chs. 1-11:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQI72THyO5I>

Here's one on Matthew chs. 1-13:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dv4-n6OYGI>

Each week we'll be including links to Bible Project videos or similar content.

Happy reading!

- Mark Giacobbe
Associate Pastor of Community Life

WEEK 2 (Genesis 12-50)

This week we continue in the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of Matthew. For Genesis, we shift toward the second major section of the book (chapters 12-50), which is about how God begins to reverse the tragic conditions we saw in Genesis chs. 3-11 by instituting a covenant relationship with Abraham and his children. Here's a video that will get you oriented.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4isSyennFo>

WEEK 3 (Psalms)

This week we keep working through Genesis and Matthew. You've noticed we're also reading from the Psalms and Proverbs every day. Here's a video that helps explain what the Book of Psalms is all about:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9phNEaPrv8>

WEEK 4 (Matthew 14-28)

This week we finish up Genesis, and keep working through Matthew. This video will orient you toward Matthew chs. 14–28:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGCF3OPWN14>

WEEK 5 (Exodus 1-19)

Last week we began the Book of Exodus - the great Old Testament story of how God delivers his people from bondage and makes them into a kingdom of priests. Here's a video to orient you toward the first half of the book.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH_aojNJM3E

WEEK 6 (Exodus 20-39)

This week we nearly finish the Gospel of Matthew. We also continue reading through Exodus. Here's a video on Exodus chs. 20–39, which tells how God forms a covenant relationship with his people and dwells in their midst in the tabernacle as they move toward the Promised Land.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNpTha80yyE&t=26s>

WEEK 7 (Leviticus)

This week we begin what, for some people, is the hardest book of the Bible to get through: Leviticus. But when you understand that Leviticus really boils down to how God graciously provides a way for sinful people to live in His holy presence, not only does the book start to make more sense, but we also start to see connections to what God has done in Jesus: sending his Son to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. Here's a great video on Leviticus.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ-FekWUZzE>

WEEK 8 (Mark)

Last week we began the Gospel of Mark—the earliest, shortest, and, in some ways, most action-packed of the Gospels. This video will help you to appreciate some of the specific things we learn about Jesus through Mark's Gospel, especially how Mark subtly indicates Jesus's identity as the divine Son of God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGHqu9-DtXk>

WEEK 9 (Historical Narrative; The Story of the Bible)

For this week, we have something a little different. Much of the Old Testament material we've been reading through so far is known as "historical narrative." But did you know that there are some unique ways that Hebrew narratives work, as distinct from modern ones? Check out this short video on how "character" works in Hebrew narrative.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EQDGax19xk>

Also, if you're struggling right now trying to get through Leviticus, press on!! Numbers is coming up which, despite the name, has some pretty amazing moments! To encourage you along the way, here's a video that gives you the big picture on the story of the Bible:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CGP-12AE0

WEEK 10 (Numbers)

This week we start the Old Testament book of Numbers, even as we finish up the Gospel of Mark. While many people have the impression that Numbers is, well, just a lot of numbers, in fact most of it contains some really amazing historical narratives. As Israel sets out toward the promised land, we continue to see God's faithfulness to his people, despite their rebellion and unfaithfulness. There's even a prophecy of a coming messianic deliverer that became very important later on in the history of Israel and the Church. Here's a video to orient you toward the Book of Numbers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tp5MlrMZFqo>

WEEK 11 (Luke)

This week we begin the Gospel of Luke. There are several unique things about Luke. It contains accounts of the early life of Jesus, including some of the best-loved "Christmas" passages. It has some memorable stories and parables, including the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. Luke also has a special focus on the poor and the marginalized, as well as some very subtle and sophisticated ways of showing how Jesus fulfills the stories and hopes of the Old Testament. Many of the videos we will look at in the coming weeks focus on Luke. For this week, we present two videos. The first gives you a great overview of the whole Gospel, with a special focus on chapters 1–9. The second focuses just on Luke chapters 1–2, Luke's "infancy narrative." Enjoy!

Luke chapters 1–9:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIb_dClxzo

Luke 1–2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLezoUvOEQ>

WEEK 12 (Luke 3-9)

This week we continue in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Numbers. Here's a short video that explains what's going on in Luke chapters 3–9.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k4GbvZUPuo>

WEEK 13 (Deuteronomy)

A few days ago we began the Book of Deuteronomy, which means “second law.” In Deuteronomy, Moses addresses the people of Israel as they are on the verge of finally entering the promised land. Because this is forty years after the Exodus, Moses repeats the law to a new generation of God's people, emphasizing both the blessings and the curses of the covenant. In Deuteronomy, not only do we clearly see God's radical call for his people to love and obey him, but we also hear of a prophet like Moses who is to come (Deuteronomy 18:18; compare with Acts 3:22-26), as well as a day when the Lord will circumcise the hearts of his people, so that they will love him from their hearts (Deut 30:6; compare with Colossians 2:11-14).

Here is a Bible Project video that can help you get oriented toward Deuteronomy. If you haven't been checking these out, I highly recommend them! These excellent videos can help to give you the big picture of how the individual books of the Bible fit into the whole story, as well as answering proactively some of the questions that may come up as you read.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5QEH9bH8AU>

WEEK 14 (Luke 10-24; Deuteronomy)

This week we begin the second major section of the Gospel of Luke (chapters 10-24). This video will give you an overview of Luke chapters 10–24:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26z_KhwNdD8

If you want to go a little deeper, this video focuses just on Luke chapters 9-19:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUCCUHurV0I>

Also, as we're right about in the middle of Deuteronomy, here's a different video than the one from last week that will catch you up on what Deuteronomy is all about:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMhmDPWefw>

Hope these are helpful!

WEEK 15 (Joshua)

This week we begin the Old Testament Book of Joshua, which describes how Israel takes possession of the Promised Land under Moses's successor, Joshua. Here we see the partial fulfillment of promises spoken centuries earlier to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We also learn about the importance of obedience and covenant faithfulness. Through it all, we see how God remains faithful to his promises and his people, and we see a foreshadowing of a coming "Joshua" (that is, Jesus, which is the same name in Hebrew), who will lead His people into an even greater promised land (see Hebrews 11).

For our video this week, we have something different. Rather than the Bible Project, here's a video from the "The BIBLE is Awesome" series that will orient you toward the Book of Joshua:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrhwi097ppg>

WEEK 16 (Luke 19-23; Joshua)

This week we continue in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Joshua. For Luke, here is a video on chs. 19–23.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unHmAf7lNK>

For Joshua, some of you may be wondering how God commanding his people to kill the Canaanites squares with what we know about God's character, not to mention what we see in the New Testament. I will address this in an upcoming video, but for now, here is a short answer from pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer church in New York:

Question: The Israelite conquest of Canaan appears to give warrant for imperialism, holy war, and genocide. How can enlightened modern people take a book like Judges seriously?

Answer: "Yes, in teaching the book of Judges [and Joshua as well - MG] you simply have to deal with this issue—you can't ignore it. And in this brief space I can't even list the issues and the various objections and answers. Maybe the most fundamental thing to say is that if you believe the rest of what the whole Bible teaches—that there's only one true God, that for a period of time he spoke directly to Israel through prophets and through the Urim and Thummim in the priest's breastplate, but that now, since Christ, he speaks to us through his inscripturated Word—then the conquest of Canaan makes sense.

"Why? First, God alone has the right to judge people—only he knows what they deserve and what they will do if not stopped. He alone has the right to take a life. Second, in "holy war" Israel did not seek to imperialistically expand its wealth and power but acted as an instrument of God's judgment on a particular set of people. Third, if you believe in the authority of the Bible as the only infallible way to know God's will for us—then holy war today is impossible. God gives no warrant for it. That's what we see when reading the Bible is read as a whole, with the New Testament completing and fulfilling the Old. Jesus specifically forbids Christians to take up the sword in his name, to spread the Christian faith by force. In short, if you believe the rest of the things the Bible teaches, the period of holy war makes sense. Holy war is not, therefore, a reason to reject what the rest of the Bible says about God."

Here is the entire interview from which this answer is taken (on the Book of Judges):

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/why-you-need-judges-tim-keller-on-a-provocative-pivotal-pertinent-book/>

I hope this helps. May your reading of God's Word continue to be a blessing!

WEEK 17 (Luke 24; Judges)

This week we have a lot of videos for you! First, we are finishing the Gospel of Luke. Here is a video on Luke chapter 24:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vb24Lk1Oh5M>

We are also starting the Old Testament Book of Judges. If you've never read Judges before, be forewarned: it is very disturbing. But that's partly the point. I highly recommend this Bible Project video on Judges to help explain what's going on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOYy8iCfIJ4&t=6s>

I've also prepared a video in which I explain a bit about what's going on with "Holy War" in the Bible (especially Joshua):

<https://youtu.be/CYjfo3zUXM4>

Finally, here is a fantastic video on how "plot" works in biblical narrative. It's included this week, because the main example is taken from Judges (Gideon's "fleece"; Judges 6).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLFCE8z_hw

I hope and pray that these videos, and, more importantly, your reading of God's Word, is blessing you richly!

WEEK 18 (John; Ruth)

This week we begin the Gospel of John, the last of the four Gospels. John, you'll notice, is very different from the other three Gospels. John gives us an entirely different perspective on Jesus, emphasizing in a more direct way his divinity. It also includes some of the best-known and loved Bible passages, including the many "I am" passages, as well as the ubiquitous John 3:16. Here's a Bible Project video on John chs. 1-12:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-2e9mMf7E8>

We will also be reading the Book of Ruth, a short and incredibly moving narrative that emphasizes God's gracious provision as well as setting the stage for King David. I'll link to a Bible Project video on Ruth next week; for this week, I recommend just reading it. Get your tissues ready!

Also, if you've fallen behind on your Bible reading, here's a suggestion: jump back in this week with John and Ruth. While we hope you'll eventually circle back and read the stuff you've missed, this would be a great entry point if you'd like to keep up with the plan.

WEEK 19 (Ruth; 1 Samuel)

As promised, here's the Bible Project video on the Book of Ruth:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h1eoBeR4Jk>

We also start the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel, which begins a new phase in Israel's story. Up to this point, we've seen how God desires to bless the world by forming a people for himself, calling them out of slavery in Egypt and bringing them to the Promised Land to be a light to the nations. But as we saw in Judges, there is trouble in paradise! "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Israel is a mess, and the reason seems to be that they have no king.

Over the course of the next four books (1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings), we will learn about the rise and fall of the kingdom in Israel. In 1 and 2 Samuel (originally one book in Hebrew), we will hear about the people's desire for a king, and the initial fulfillment of this desire in King Saul, a deeply flawed leader.

But the person to whom everything is pointing is King David, "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14). We will hear about David's tumultuous rise to the throne, God's covenant with him (2 Sam 7), and his long and storied reign. But we will also learn that David, too, is flawed! And so we will see, all throughout, that the narrative asks us to look *beyond* David: for a son of David who will be fully faithful to God and can reign on David's throne, bringing blessing to the world.

Here is a video to get you oriented toward 1 Samuel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJOju5Dw0V0>

WEEK 20 (1 Samuel)

For this week, we have something completely different. Early this week we'll be reading the classic story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17). I'd bet many of us have heard a sermon or two on this passage where the main point has something to do with "facing your giants." But Christian hip hop artist Timothy Brindle, on his recently released track "Headcrusher," reminds us that the point of David and Goliath isn't to inspire us to be like David, but to point forward to David's greater Son, Jesus, who would crush a far greater giant (Satan, sin and death) through his death on the cross on our behalf. You can check out Headcrusher at the links below. The entire album is fantastic and highly recommended!

Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/0T9B9ZVzMPmgNZB0KgoV60?si=P3qjf7GdTrqkAui8oPrWdQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulpHVgTyzT8>

Here's the lyrics:

<https://genius.com/Timothy-brindle-headcrusher-lyrics>

WEEK 21 (2 Samuel; John 13-21)

This week we segue into 2 Samuel. As you read, pay particular attention to ch. 7, where God makes a covenant with David. This is one of those key chapters in the Bible, because the promise God makes to David echoes throughout the whole Old and New Testaments, and is ultimately fulfilled only in Jesus and his followers. (If you want to see just a few places the New Testament interacts with 2 Sam 7, check out Luke 1:32, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Hebrews 1:5, and Revelation 21:7.)

Here's the Bible Project video on 2 Samuel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvoWDXNDJgs>

We also begin the second half of the Gospel of John (you'll notice we've been reading this slowly). Here's a video to orient you toward chs. 13-21 in John.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUFh_wOsauk

WEEK 22 (Literary Styles in the Bible)

For this week, there is no video that matches up exactly with what we're reading. So here's an interesting video on the various literary styles we encounter in the Bible. Hope you enjoy it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUXJ8Owes8E>

WEEK 23 (1 Kings; Acts)

This week we begin the Old Testament book of 1 Kings and the New Testament Book of Acts.

The Book of 1 Kings continues where 2 Samuel left off. Several weeks ago, we said that Samuel and Kings, together, are a two-part story about the rise and fall of the kingdom in Israel. Samuel was about the rise; now in Kings we'll read about the fall.

Although 1 Kings starts out hopefully, with the kingdom getting passed on to Solomon and the building of the temple, this doesn't last. Instead, the rest of 1 and 2 Kings (which were originally one book in Hebrew) is about a sad succession of mostly ungodly kings who drive the kingdom into the ground. The thing to pay attention to in 1 and 2 Kings is how the focus shifts from one king to the next, often comparing them to David's example. It's as if the author is asking, "Who is the king who will be a true son of David?" As you might guess, it's a question that is only answered hundreds of years later when a baby is born in a manger in David's city (see Luke 2:11). Here is the Bible Project video on 1 Kings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVFW3wbi9pk>

The Book of Acts is also the second part of a two part story. The author is Luke, the same author as the Gospel of Luke. Luke did something that no other Gospel writer did: he continued the story of Jesus into the life of the early church. The Book of Acts is incredibly exciting reading as we learn about how the

apostles and disciples, co-heirs with the risen Jesus, proclaim the kingdom of God in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Here's the Bible Project video on Acts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGbNw855ksw>

As you read Acts in parallel with 1 and 2 Kings, one thing to think about is how the apostles and disciples do what the Old Testament kings were not able to do: be faithful to the example of their king (David in the Old Testament; Jesus in the New). The major difference is the Holy Spirit: unlike the kings of old, we who receive the promise of the Spirit also receive power to be faithful witnesses of Jesus and the kingdom of God (Acts 1:8; 28:31).

Happy reading - and if you're behind, don't worry; just keep making progress!

WEEK 24 (Proverbs)

This week we continue reading 1 Kings and Acts. As you know, we're also reading through Psalms and Proverbs every day. Wherever you are in the Bible reading plan, you're reading some Proverbs. So here's a great video that explains how to read and understand this important Old Testament book.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzmYV8GNAIM&t=182s>

WEEK 25 (Acts 13-28)

This week we begin the book of 2 Kings, as well as the second half of the Book of Acts. Here's a video to orient you toward Acts chs. 13–28.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-17KxpjL0Q>

WEEK 26 (Kings)

We've now been in the Book of Kings for quite a while. Press on; we're almost there! Just as a recap of where we've been going in this book, here's a great video by Landon MacDonald on the Book of Kings. (It's the first of three if you want to look up the other two.) His videos are a little bit different from the Bible Project videos; just as theologically tight, but really hilarious. Enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEQ4FJuvt5U>

WEEK 27 (Chronicles)

You're halfway through our Bible reading plan! Congratulations for making it this far! (And if you're not there yet, keep pressing on! These emails will be in your inbox waiting for you when you catch up.)

This week we finish the Book of Acts. We also begin the Old Testament books of 1 and 2 Chronicles. These books, originally one in Hebrew, basically tell the same story as Samuel and Kings, just with a different perspective (1 Chronicles corresponds to Samuel; 2 Chronicles to Kings).

Like Samuel and Kings, Chronicles tells the story of the kingdom's rise and fall. But it really amplifies the importance of David and the temple. It probably does this because the writer, who was writing long after David was dead and the first temple had been destroyed and rebuilt, were looking forward more than ever to a true son of David to come on the scene, and a true, glorious, and permanent temple to be established where all the nations could come and worship God. In other words, as this Bible Project video points out, Chronicles is a "story in search of an ending."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR7xaHv3las>

WEEK 28 (Romans)

This week we start the Book of Romans. We're done with narrative in the New Testament, and for the rest of the year we'll be reading letters that Paul and other early Christian leaders wrote to Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

The Book of Romans is arguably the most important letter ever written. In it, the Apostle Paul, writing to a diverse urban church, takes the time to explain in patient detail the Gospel of God's righteousness: The good news that God, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, has been faithful to his character and his ancient promises, counting us righteous in his sight and reconciling us to himself and to one another.

In addition to intense theological articulation, Paul also explains God's purposes for his people Israel, and encourages his readers—including us—to persevere in faith and get along with one another. Some of the most famous and precious Bible promises are found in Romans, and I trust and pray you'll be encouraged as you dive deep into the "depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom 11:33). Here's the Bible Project video on Romans chapters 1-4:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ej_6dVdJSIU

WEEK 29 (2 Chronicles)

This week we continue in Romans as we start 2 Chronicles. Second Chronicles retells the story of the Book of Kings from a different angle. For the next couple of weeks, you'll be reading about King Solomon; the dedication of the Jerusalem temple; the kings that followed Solomon (mostly bad; some good), and Judah's exile due to sin. All the time, you'll be reminded of David's example, and compelled to think about when a true Son of David might arise to rule over God's worldwide kingdom.

To help refresh your memory on where this is all going, I highly recommend this short video by Landon MacDonald:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-U9GfIPM>

WEEK 30 (Romans 5-16)

This week we continue in 2 Chronicles and Romans. Here's a Bible Project video on Romans chapters 5-16:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SVTI4Xa5fY>

WEEK 31 (1 Corinthians)

Do you remember a few weeks back when we were in the Book of Acts? Did you ever feel like the bar was set so high for what church ought to look like that you wondered if there was a place for an "ordinary" Christian like you? Well, Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is the answer to that.

The Church in Corinth was a mess; it was "Christians gone wild" behaving in some massively inappropriate ways. In this letter Paul, who helped plant the church in Corinth (see Acts 18), by no means gives the Corinthians a pass for their behavior, but instead points them to Jesus while laying down some clear guidelines to meet some practical concerns.

Among other things, we learn in 1 Corinthians about singleness, marriage, church unity, spiritual gifts, worship, the Lord's Supper, and the resurrection (Jesus's and ours). Oh, and the famous "love" passage ("Love is patient, love is kind...") is here too, in 1 Corinthians 13. Through it all, we'll read of Paul's passion to see Christ exalted in our hearts and lives.

Here's the Bible Project video on 1 Corinthians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiHf8kICCc4>

WEEK 32 (Ezra; Nehemiah)

This week we read the Old Testament books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These short books basically pick up where 2 Chronicles leaves off: they describe the initial return of Israel from Babylonian exile. They are the last historical books we will read in the Old Testament.

In this amazing Bible Project video, you can learn about how Ezra and Nehemiah together tell a story of *rebuilding*: of the temple, of community, and of Jerusalem. But while this all sounds very hopeful, we'll learn that the story is sad and incomplete: without new hearts, the people's best efforts fall short.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkETkRv9tG8>

As God's redeemed people, with new hearts in Christ, may we be inspired through these books to rebuild a heart of worship, rebuild true community, and rebuild cities and nations, all while looking to our Messiah and empowered by His Spirit.

WEEK 33 (Esther)

This week we continue in 1 Corinthians. We also read the Old Testament Book of Esther. Like one other short Old Testament book we've read (Ruth), I recommend just reading the story first. It is a gripping, intricately crafted story of God's providential work in the lives of his people, with some amazing twists and turns.

After reading it, here's a Bible Project video that can help you learn more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JydNSlufRIs>

WEEK 34 (Job)

This week we start the Old Testament Book of Job, and with it, we begin a journey through the "wisdom literature" of the Old Testament. Wisdom literature (including Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs) is just what it sounds like: books that give us practical guidance for living our lives well to the glory of God.

To get the best handle on how Job fits into the wisdom literature, it's actually best to think for a moment about the selections from Proverbs we've been reading all year. Do you notice how Proverbs can make it sound like "If you do X, God will bless you"? While there's *some* truth to that kind of thinking, it's vastly incomplete. Proverbs, in fact, doesn't give us *promises*, but rather *principles* for wise living. And this means that *God's blessing is never automatic*. That's where the Book of Job comes in.

In Job, we read of a man who was super righteous--he was a living embodiment of Proverbs--yet things don't work out so well for him, at least in the short term. He loses basically everything. And so Job is an incredibly important story about suffering, and the mysterious ways of God. It has some of the most beautiful poetry in the Bible, and some crucial insights into God's character, the nature of justice, and our response to trials. We'll be in Job for several weeks and I hope and pray that it blesses you richly.

This Bible Project video is a masterful introduction to the book.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQwnH8th_fs

WEEK 35 (2 Corinthians)

This week we start Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians in the New Testament, while we continue in the book of Job in the Old Testament. Here's the Bible Project video on 2 Corinthians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lfPK2vfC54>

WEEK 36 (Ecclesiastes; Song of Songs)

This week we encounter two of the most unique and interesting books in the Bible: Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Both are both part of the “wisdom literature” of the Old Testament. In Ecclesiastes, we learn about how to live wisely in light of the "mistiness" (or meaninglessness) of a fallen world. In Song of Songs, we learn about the mystery of romantic love and how that points us to God. As a suggestion, even if you've been lagging in your reading plan, perhaps you could take time this week to read these short books before continuing where you left off.

Here are the Bible Project videos on them:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrsQ1tc-2wk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KC7xE4fgOw>

WEEK 37 (Isaiah; Galatians)

This week we begin the Old Testament Book of Isaiah and the New Testament Book of Galatians.

With Isaiah, we leave the wisdom literature behind and enter the final major section of the Old Testament: The Prophets.* The books of The Prophets record the words of men called by God to deliver messages to his people, generally message of judgment because His people had broken His covenant. But it seems that, in the Bible, judgment always goes hand-in-hand with salvation: at the same time that the prophets speak of coming judgment, they also hold out hope for deliverance, sometimes in really big, over-the-top ways. This means that sometimes these prophecies look far ahead into the future to a time when God would ultimately save his people from enemies, exile, and sin, and with and through them, all the nations of the earth.

The Prophet Isaiah is perhaps the best known of these major writing prophets. He wrote c. 700 B.C., but many of his prophecies (especially in the latter chapters) look ahead to what would happen hundreds of years later after the Babylonian exile. Perhaps the most striking (and well-known) of these prophecies is found in 52:13-53:12, which speaks of a terrible judgment on God’s Servant, who would be crushed for the sins of his people, and the great salvation that would result from His humble sacrifice (see 1 Peter 2:24).

Here’s the Bible Project video on Isaiah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0A6Uchb1F8>

As for Galatians, with this book we turn to the shorter letters of the Apostle Paul. Each one of these is unique, with its own occasion and purpose. In Galatians, we see Paul angry! He is writing, with some of his most forceful rhetoric, against people who have seriously distorted the Gospel. Instead of making it simply about faith in Jesus, they have tried to make it about obeying certain Old Testament laws (especially circumcision), and in the process they’ve introduced ethnic divisions into the body of Christ. Paul has no patience for this and wants to set things straight. Here’s the Bible Project video on Galatians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmx4UjRFp0M>

* Technically, from the Jewish perspective, the category of “The Prophets” also includes Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings - books that we would consider “historical books.” What we call the Prophets, the Jewish tradition would label the *Latter* Prophets, with the others being the *Former* Prophets. Question: How does thinking of those historically-oriented books as the work of “prophets” change the way you think about them?

WEEK 38 (Ephesians)

Toward the end of this week we will begin reading Paul’s letter to the Ephesians in the New Testament. In it, we learn how the glorious Gospel story intersects with *our* story as God’s people. Here’s the Bible Project video on Ephesians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y71r-T98E2Q>

WEEK 39 (Philippians)

Toward the end of this week we will begin reading Paul’s letter to the Philippians. In it, Paul is writing to a church he helped plant to thank them for their generous support and for their partnership in spreading the Gospel. One distinctive theme of this letter is the supremacy of Christ in our lives (see 1:21 and 3:7-14). Another is the joy that is ours in the Gospel (see, e.g., 1:18; 1:25; 2:2, 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:4). In addition, in chapter 2 we read one of the most beautiful descriptions of Christ’s incarnation, focusing on his appalling humility when he became man to die on our behalf (2:5-11).

Here’s the Bible Project video on Philippians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE9qqW1-BkU1>

WEEK 40 (Jeremiah; Colossians)

This week we begin the Old Testament Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is known as “the weeping prophet,” and for good reason. He had a hard life and a hard calling. Throughout this book, we see Jeremiah warning Judah that judgment is definitely coming at the hands of Babylon (the world’s major superpower). As you might imagine, this is not exactly good for morale, and Jeremiah suffers for his faithfulness. Yet it’s not all doom and gloom. Jeremiah includes some startling notes of hope, including the incredible promise of a new covenant in which the Lord would one day write His law directly on the hearts of his people (Jer 31:34; cf. Hebrew 8). Here’s the Bible Project video on Jeremiah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSK36cHbrk0>

In the New Testament we will start Paul’s letter to the Colossians. In Colossians, we see an approach that is found in several of his letters: solid theology toward the beginning; practical application toward the end; and all throughout, a pastor’s heart shining through. Here’s the Bible Project video on Colossians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXTXIDxQsvc>

WEEK 41 (1-2 Thessalonians)

This week we continue in Jeremiah, and read Paul's First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians. Here are the Bible Project videos on them:

First Thessalonians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=No7Nq6IX23c>

Second Thessalonians:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbPBDKOn1cc>

WEEK 42 (1 Timothy)

This week, besides continuing in Jeremiah, we read Paul's First Letter to Timothy, a young developing leader in the early church. Here is the Bible Project video on 1 Timothy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RoqnGcEjcs>

Besides the Bible Project video on 1 Timothy, we have an additional resource this week. The book of 1 Timothy contains a series of verses that are central to the discussion of the role of women in the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church. Unfortunately, the Bible Project video, which is otherwise excellent, doesn't really do justice to these verses, and the view of our church (and churches like ours) is not adequately represented on the video. So, for those of you who are interested in reading further on this topic, we include a position paper from Acts 29 (the church planting network that Citylight is part of) that explains our position in detail.

https://cdn.subsplash.com/documents/7P5VTD/_source/e4687c11-b1f2-494e-ac4f-17ae14ea03b1/document.pdf

Note - we cannot guarantee that this link will always have the appropriate content. If the link doesn't work, try a google search for "Acts 29 Position Paper Complementarianism."

Hope this helps, and hope your reading of God's word continues to bless you!

WEEK 43 (2 Timothy; Titus)

This week we read the remaining two "Pastoral Epistles" - 2 Timothy and Titus. In them, Paul writes to two developing leaders, giving them direction for the churches where they minister, with plenty of application for us as well.

Bible Project video on 2 Timothy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urlvnxCaL00>

Bible Project video on Titus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUEYCVXJM3k>

WEEK 44 (Lamentations; Philemon; Hebrews)

This week we read the Old Testament book of Lamentations and the New Testament books of Philemon and Hebrews.

The short Book of Lamentations contains a series of poems about the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BC. The imagery is vivid and raw, and through Lamentations we can learn to process our emotions before God. The book also contains some powerful verses of hope:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
(Lam 3:22-23 ESV)

Here's the Bible Project Video on Lamentations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8GDFPdaQZQ>

In the New Testament, we finish up the letters of Paul with the short letter to Philemon, in which he urges a Christian slave owner to accept a former slave back as a brother in Christ. In this, we see the subversive way that the Gospel transforms culture one heart at a time.

Philemon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW9Q3Jt6Yvk>

As for Hebrews, this anonymous letter is one of the most theologically rich books in the New Testament. In it, we read about how the Old Testament, especially the sacrificial system, points beautifully to Jesus the exalted Son of God and perfect sacrifice for our sins. There is also the stirring "faith chapter" (ch. 11), as well as plenty of warnings and exhortations to persevere faithfully in the midst of persecution.

Here's the Bible Project video on Hebrews:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fNWTZZwgbs>

WEEK 45 (Ezekiel)

Late last week we began reading Ezekiel, the last of the major Old Testament writing prophets. Some of what we read in Ezekiel may strike us as very strange, and so I highly recommend this Bible Project video to get you oriented!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-CIPu1nko8>

WEEK 46 (Ezekiel 34-48; James)

This week we continue in the Book of Ezekiel, and later in the week we'll begin the New Testament Book of James. Here's the Bible Project video on Ezekiel chs. 34-48:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDeCWW_Bnyw

As for James, this short, dense letter by Jesus's half brother was originally written to the the first century Jewish-Christian community. It is, in the words of the Bible Project video, a "beautifully crafted punch in the gut" for followers of Jesus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn-hLHWwRYY>

WEEK 47 (1 Peter)

This week we read the New Testament book of 1 Peter. This letter, the first of two written by one of Jesus's closest disciples, is packed with encouragement for God's exiled people throughout the world, backed by profound biblical theology. May it encourage you to persevere through suffering this week. Here's the Bible Project video on 1 Peter:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhP7AZQIzCg>

WEEK 48 (Daniel; 2 Peter; 1-3 John)

We have lots of new books this week! In the Old Testament, we begin the Book of Daniel, which contains the story and writings of a young Hebrew man sent in exile to Babylon. In it, we read of the courage of Daniel and his friends, the corruption of kingdoms opposed to God, and fantastic visions of the future when God will put away sin and evil through a glorious "Son of Man" (Dan 7:13-14). Daniel has encouraged generations of believers to trust in God's unending promise and purpose.

Bible Project video on Daniel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cSC9uobtPM>

In the New Testament, we read the letters of 2 Peter and 1 John. Second Peter contains Peter's final words to the Church, as he answers some common objections to Christianity, warns against false teachers, and reassures future generations of the certainty of God's promises. In 1 John, the apostle John writes to encourage Christians to live in God's light, love, and truth.

Bible Project video on 2 Peter:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWLv_ITyKYc

Bible Project video on 1-3 John:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3QkE6nKyIM>

WEEK 49 (Hosea; Joel; Jude)

This week, we begin the “Minor Prophets” - the twelve remaining books of the Old Testament. These books are called “minor” because they’re shorter than the other prophetic books, not less important. All of the minor prophets contain warnings of judgment to Israel or Judah for breaking God’s covenant, and promises of hope and salvation because God never gives up on His people. They also contain some beautiful poetry, as well as some striking prophetic passages.

The Book of Hosea is a perfect example of this. It was written to the northern kingdom of Israel in the late 8th c. B.C. and contains a really poignant story: the prophet Hosea was commanded to remain faithful to an adulterous wife, as a sort of parable for Israel. The point was to show Israel how, even though they had betrayed God, God would never abandon them:

“How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? ... My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender...” (Hos 11:8).

And, consider these words, which stir us all to repentance while speaking of a third-day resurrection:

“Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him” (Hos 6:1-2).

Bible Project video on Hosea:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE6SZ1ogOVU>

As for Joel, this short book focuses on a coming “Day of the LORD,” and the restoration that will follow. The book includes a startling promise that God would one day pour out His Holy Spirit on His people - a promise that began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2).

Bible Project video on Joel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQLazbgz90c>

As for the New Testament, we read the short Book of Jude, packed with references to the Old Testament and other Jewish literature. This Bible Project video will really help you to get oriented:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UoCmakZmys>

WEEK 50 (Revelation; Amos; Obadiah; Jonah; Micah)

This week we continue our journey through the Minor Prophets, reading the books of Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. The Bible Project videos on them are found below. In the New Testament, we begin Revelation - the final book in the Bible!

Revelation is best understood through a wide-angle lens. Rather than getting caught up in all the details, laying out prophecy charts and figuring out what each piece of the puzzle means, it’s best to let the main message shine into our hearts: God is in total control of human history, and he will bring it to completion in Jesus Christ!* Here’s the Bible Project video on Revelation chs. 1-11:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nvVVcYD-0w>

And here are the videos for the Minor Prophets:

Amos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGgWaPGpGz4>

Obadiah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4ogCrEoG5s>

Jonah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLlabZc0O4c>

Micah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFEUEcylwLc>

*This summary of the message of Revelation is from [*The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation*](#), by Vern S. Poythress (p. 40). This is a great, short book to get you oriented to the Book of Revelation!

WEEK 51 (Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai)

We are almost there! This week, besides continuing in Revelation, we move through the Minor Prophets, reading Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai. These short, beautiful books shine a light on our hearts and on God's gracious, loving character:

“Though the fig tree should not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD;
I will take joy in the God of my salvation.”
- Habakkuk 3:17-18

“The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.”
- Zephaniah 3:17

Here are the Bible project videos on them:

Nahum:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y30DanA5EhU>

Habakkuk:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPMaRqGJPUU>

Zephaniah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFZknKPNvz8>

Haggai:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juPvv_xcX-U

WEEK 52 (Zechariah; Malachi; Revelation 12-22; Proverbs; Psalms)

At long last, we have come to the end of our Bible reading plan! This week, we read the last two books of the Old Testament (Zechariah; Malachi), the rest of Revelation, and the end of Proverbs and Psalms. Here are the Bible project videos on these books, followed by some concluding thoughts.

Zechariah:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_106IfO6Kc0

Malachi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPGShWZ4Jvk>

Revelation 12-22:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpnIrbq2bKo&t=611s>

And, once again, here are Proverbs and Psalms:

Proverbs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzmYV8GNAIM&t=182s>

Psalms:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9phNEaPrv8>

Whether you've done this reading plan all in a year or whether it took you longer, you have made a wise choice to engage deeply with God's word! Through all the different books, genres, epochs, and styles, you have had an encounter with the living God, growing deeper in knowledge of Him and ourselves. Perhaps at times it was a wonder and a delight; perhaps at other times it was a slog. Kind of like life. But through every season, one thing we can be sure of: His word has not left us unchanged, but has accomplished what He has purposed for us (Isaiah 55:11).

Going forward, how can we continue to engage with God through His word? My biggest prayer is simply that we would *do something*; that reading or listening to God's word regularly, thoroughly, and deeply would become a regular part of our life in Christ. Here are a few practical suggestions for how to do this:

- **Do it again!** Continue to read the Bible through in a year, perhaps with a different plan or with a different Bible version. A chronological plan (one that goes through the Bible in time order rather than book order) can be a great option. Here are a couple we recommend:

[ESV Study Bible One Year Plan](#)

[Reading God's Story Chronological Plan](#)

- **Change the tempo:** Rather than read the whole Bible in a year, take two years. Or, read the New Testament through in a year, but take two years for the Old Testament (my personal preference).
- **Go deep:** There were probably several Bible books along the way that you thought you'd like to look into more deeply. Do that! Go slowly through some books of the Bible, perhaps using a study Bible or commentary. Here are two we recommend:

[The ESV Study Bible](#)

[The New Bible Commentary](#)

Again, whether you choose one of these options or something else, the important thing is to stay engaged with Scripture.

As we say goodbye to the Bible reading plan, I leave you with a few Scriptures that, I hope, sum up what this year of engaging with Scripture was all about:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:1-2)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105)

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8)

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27)

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (John 6:68)

Seek, and you will find (Matthew 7:7b).

May God richly bless you.

- Mark Giacobbe

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