

Day 1: Mark 1-4  
Day 2: Mark 5-8  
Day 3: Mark 9-12  
Day 4: Mark 13-16  
Day 5: 1 John 1-3  
Day 6: 1 John 4-5  
Day 7: Genesis 1-3  
Day 8: Genesis 4-5  
Day 9: Genesis 6-8  
Day 10: Genesis 9-11  
Day 11: Romans 1-4  
Day 12: Romans 5-8  
Day 13: Romans 9-12  
Day 14: Romans 13-16

**Week 1:**

The Basics

## Reading schedule

**Week 3**

Dig Deeper

*Dig Deeper*

*Dig Deeper (continued)*

**Week 6**

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**Week 7**

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**Week 8**

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**Week 16**

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However, this often leads to frustration because a linear reading approach does not readily facilitate an understanding of the Bible ***as you are reading it***. This course takes a different approach by taking you through books of the Bible in a **non-sequential** order. As such, this facilitates a **greater understanding** of the big picture of the Bible as you are reading it—that is, as you progress through the daily reading schedule, you will understand more and more what the Bible is saying.

### Dig Deeper

The ***Dig Deeper*** study continues building on the readings from *The Basics* study. Again, the emphasis is on selected books from the Greek Scriptures and you will also finish the book of Genesis from the Hebrew Scriptures:

**Luke**   **Acts**   **Ephesians**   **Genesis 12-50**   **Gospel of John**   **Matthew 28**

## Dig Deeper: Big Picture Summary

**Luke**: the most detailed account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Noted for numerous historical references and attention to detail. Written by Luke, a Greek physician and co-worker of Paul.

**Acts**: also written by Luke, which chronicles the work of the first apostles after Jesus gave them His *Great Commission* (see below). The work of many apostles and co-workers are detailed, but particular emphasis is paid to the missionary work of Peter and Paul. **Ephesians**: a succinct letter from Paul to the believers in Ephesus explaining the victorious life that we can have as followers of Jesus. **Genesis 12-50**: detailed account of the Creator God’s special relationship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the forbearers of the nation of Israel. **Gospel of John**: like 1<sup>st</sup> John, an eloquent and profoundly moving account of the life, death and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ).

**Week 5**

*Dig Deeper*

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### Week 6: Genesis

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**Week 21**

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**Week 22**

*Dig Deeper*

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## Next Steps (abridged)

**Congratulations!** You now have a basic understanding of the Bible and what it means to be a **follower of Jesus**. You now should also have more confidence in your ability to read, interpret and understand the Scriptures and feel **empowered** to continue your study of the Bible. This is exciting because, for the rest of your life, as you continue to read and re-read the Bible, you will likewise continue to gain a deeper and deeper understanding of the Bible and as a result, grow closer and closer in **your relationship with Him**.

The remainder of the study guide provides you with a proposed reading order to complete the rest of the Bible. Depending on your reading speed and the amount of time you commit each day, you can expect to finish the **entire Bible** between 3-12 months. The important thing is not how fast you read but **what you learn** during the process—speed reading through the Bible for the sake of finishing it does little good if you miss the message.

Like *The Basics* and *Dig Deeper* lessons, the following plans also take you through the Bible in a non-sequential order, again to facilitate better understanding of the Bible *as you are reading it*. **Continue your daily prayer** that God give you His Holy Spirit to help you understand what you are about to read—and expect that you will be wonderfully rewarded!

### The structure of the OT

**The Law:** known as *Torah* in Hebrew, which means “instruction”; the Law is the first five books of the Bible. **Historical books and Prophets:** known as *nevi-im* in Hebrew, these are the books that contain detailed historical accounts of the leaders and rulers of the Israelite people. **The Writings:** known as *ketuvim*, these are books of poetry and wisdom.

#### The structure of the NT

**Historical books:** consisting of the four Gospels and Acts. The Gospels are named according to the author: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Matthew and John were two of the twelve disciples of Jesus during His earthly life and ministry. Mark was likely a young man who was among the larger band of disciples that followed Jesus. Luke was a Greek physician who came to believe in Jesus through Paul’s missionary work. He also authored Acts. **Letters:** as implied, these are letters written by the apostles, who were the leaders of the group of believers that emerged immediately following the resurrection of Jesus.

**Prophecy:** the only prophetic book of the NT is Revelation, which tells of the return of Jesus to finalize His Kingdom after there has been sufficient time for all the nations to have a chance to hear and to respond to the message of salvation by believing in Him.

### Proposed reading plans

The remainder of the Bible can be read and studied by breaking up into the following subjects:

- The Law**
- Prophecy and end times**
- Life in the “Body of Christ”**
- Warnings against false teachers**
- OT History: Conquest – Judges**
- OT History: Monarchy period**
- The writings of David and Solomon**
- Refresher: David and Solomon**
- OT History: Divided Kingdoms**
- OT Prophets to Israel**
- Detailed study on Judy**
- OT History: Exile and Restoration**
- Post-Exile Prophets**
- Special books**

#### 1. The Law

The books of the Law describe how the Creator God called a nation of special servants, the Israelites, and gave them the task of **telling the whole world about Him**. You will quickly discover that the Israelites failed in this task time and again. Yet God never abandoned the people of Israel, even to this day and He will still fulfill the promise He made to Abraham in Genesis 12. The books of the Law lay the foundation for understanding all the historical and prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures and even more importantly, for understanding how **Yeshua the Messiah** (Jesus Christ) perfectly and completely fulfills the requirements of the Law *on our behalf*. If He hadn’t, we wouldn’t be able to have a **relationship** with our Creator and would remain His enemy (through our own doing, not His).

**The Law begins with the book of Genesis**, but since you’ve just completed reading that book, there is no need to repeat it in this study. Then, after reading Exodus through Deuteronomy, the study is “framed” by another explanatory book on the Law—the letter by Paul to the Galatians, which provides a wonderful way to “stop and look back.” **Hebrews:** a detailed description of how Jesus perfectly fulfills the requirements of the Law on our behalf. **Exodus:** the account of the rescue of the descendants of Jacob from slavery in Egypt and the formation of the nation of Israel. The first time the Creator God makes Himself widely known to the nations.

**Leviticus:** detailed regulations for the Israelite people and their leaders. **Numbers:** account of how the Israelites didn’t trust God and as a result had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before entering the Promised Land. **Deuteronomy:** after the unbelieving generation died, the new generation had to be re-instructed. **Galatians:** letter by Paul that gives a summary of the Law and how through Jesus, we are released from bondage of the Law to live Spirit-filled lives.

#### 2. Prophecy and end times

The Bible speaks considerably about **future events**—in both OT and NT. Some events described in both testaments **have been fulfilled**, whereas others events have yet to take place. Some prophecies are obvious in their fulfillment, such as the *Suffering Servant* of Isaiah 53, whereas it is not as clear in other cases. As we read through the Bible, we should not *overly* focus on determining if a certain prophecy has been fulfilled or not, but rather try to **learn** what God is telling us through the words of the prophets. Here, we take a closer look at the books of the Bible that speak directly about end times. **Matthew:** one of the 12 disciples of Jesus. He wrote his gospel to a Jewish audience, emphasizing how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and Law of the Hebrew Scriptures. **1-2 Thessalonians:** letter by Paul to the believers in Thessalonica, who had some anxieties about the end times. **Isaiah:** the prophet that wrote the most about the coming Messiah. **Joel:** visions of the coming judgment and of an age when God’s Spirit will be poured out upon many people. **Zechariah:** visions of the coming Messiah and His new kingdom. **Daniel 7-12:** visions given to the Hebrew named Daniel during the Exile period (6<sup>th</sup> century BC) that are a prelude to the visions given to John in the book of Revelation. **Revelation:** visions of the end of the age, when Jesus returns to finalize His Kingdom.

#### 3. Life in the Body of Christ

The Bible and Paul in particular, speaks frequently of life in the “**body of Christ**”—the gathering together of **local believers** for the purpose of enlarging the Kingdom of Jesus and to encourage, help and support one another. This study takes us through the books in the Bible that speak most directly on the “**body life**” of the believer—that is, how we should live our lives as followers of Jesus.

**1-2 Corinthians:** perhaps the definitive books on life in the body of Christ. **Philippians:** the joy of having a new life through Jesus Christ. **Colossians:** how Jesus is everything that we need. **James:** character traits of a disciple that truly believes and follows Jesus. **1 Peter:** hope for the believer that is facing trials and suffering. **Titus:** the virtue of self-control in the life of a believer. **Philemon:** an example showing what true “body life” behavior looks like.

#### 4. Warnings against false teachers

Four of the New Testament authors, Paul, Peter, John and Jude give specific and detailed warnings about **false teachers** that try to **lead believers astray**. When something is repeated so often by so many different writers, we should take special note, thus the reason why we have a specific study on this subject. The letters are brief, but packed with powerful lessons. **1-2 Timothy:** Paul’s instructional letters to Timothy, a young leader in the church in Ephesus. **2 Peter:** a letter cautioning believers to be ready for the forthcoming day when rejecting God is common. **2-3 John:** warnings against false teachers and those that would hinder believers in their work for the Kingdom. **Jude:** warnings about false teachers that had infiltrated the community of believers and were already leaders.

#### 5. Conquest to Judges

After the death of Moses, Joshua led the people into the **Promised Land** to establish the nation of **Israel**. Following the settlement, there was a long period where Israel was ruled by decentralized leaders called Judges. **Joshua:** account of the Israelites entering the land promised to them by God **Judges:** a period of approximately 400 years when Israel was ruled by Judges. **Ruth:** the account of the family line of King David. **1 Samuel 1-7:** introduction to the Kings period of Israel’s history.

#### 6. Monarchy Period

After the Judges period, three monarchs or kings ruled over Israel. This period lasted **120 years** during which time Israel’s wealth and prominence among the surrounding nations greatly increased. This lesson takes us through the so-called **United Kingdom** period of Israel’s history, so named because all 12 tribes were united under the rule of a single king.

The first king, Saul, had great potential but his heart did not follow God. The second king, **David**, was a “**man after God’s own heart**” and is still today considered the one of the greatest figures in all of Israel’s history. His son, **Solomon**, was the third and final king of the United Kingdom period. He started off with a heart for God, but over time, he drifted away, which set in motion the events that led to the **division of Israel** into two nations. **1 Samuel 8-31:** the first king Saul and the rise of David. **2 Samuel:** the rule of David after the death of Saul. **1 Kings 1-11:** the passing of David, the reign of Solomon, his wisdom and the temple that he built to honor God.

#### 7. Writings of David and Solomon

In this section, we take a break from the historical books to read through the literary and poetry books attributed to David and Solomon. **Psalms:** considered the most beautiful portions of the whole Bible. They are worship songs (note that the English word *song* is derived from the Hebrew word *psalm*) and many contain instructions on what instruments are to be played or what tune is to be used. Thus it is no wonder that believers of God throughout the ages have used the Psalms as their source of inspiration for the worship music of their generation. **Proverbs:** a compilation of wisdom sayings, most attributed to Solomon.

#### 8. Refresher: David and Solomon

Whenever anything is **repeated** in the Bible, whether it is the repetition of a single word, phrase or verse, or whether it is entire narratives, this is God’s ways of saying to us: “**pay very close attention!**” The historical account given in the book of Chronicles is very similar—oftentimes identical—to the accounts we recently read in the books of 1-2 Samuel and 1 Kings. However, the Chronicler makes a special point of highlighting and commenting on the rule of King David. Recall that it is from the line of David that the Messiah (Savior) is to come, thus the importance that God has placed on this period of Israel’s history. Don’t think of it as boring repetition, but instead look at the **special emphasis** that God wants you to pay very close attention to—having this mindset as you read through Chronicles will allow the Holy Spirit to teach you more about God.

**1 Chronicles:** a commentary on the life of King David. **2 Chronicles 1-9:** a commentary on the life of King Solomon.

#### 9. Divided Kingdoms

Among the most exciting and epic writings in all of the Bible. The remainder of 1-2 Kings tells how Israel became divided: the **Southern Kingdom of Judah**, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and the **Northern Kingdom of Israel**, consisting of the remaining ten tribes. Immediately, the first king of Israel adopted the Egyptian idolatrous practice of bull worship and as a result, there never was a ruler out of the 19 kings in Israel that did what was right in the sight of the Lord. The **Northern Kingdom** was **conquered** around 722 bc by **Assyria** and the people scattered throughout the Assyrian empire, never to return. Non-Hebrews (i.e., foreigners) inhabited the land and it became known ever-after as a defiled land full of idolatrous mixed-bred people. This region would come to be called **Samaria** in Jesus’ day. The **Southern Kingdom** of Judah fared only a little better. Out of 20 kings, there were eight that did what was right in the sight of the Lord. Nevertheless, Judah too was punished and was **conquered by the Babylonians** around 586 bc. The people were taken into captivity and it is here that the Hebrew people became known as “Jews” which is a shortened version of *Judah*. **1 Kings 12-22:** account of the kings of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. **2 Kings:** the continuing account, including the fall of both kingdoms.

#### 10. Prophets to Israel

Two prophets spoke against the idolatries and wickedness in Israel. **Hosea:** a stinging indictment against the Northern Kingdom of Israel. **Amos:** judgment of Israel is at hand.

#### 11. Detailed study on Judah

As mentioned earlier, **repetition** in the Bible speaks volumes. Here, we **revisit the demise of Judah** and take a closer look at what the prophets of that day were saying against Judah. **2 Chronicles 10-36:** the remainder of the Chronicler’s commentary on the kings of the Southern Kingdom. **Micah:** mainly directed against the evil kings of Judah, he also speaks of the destruction of both Israel and Judah. **Nahum:** actually directed against Nineveh (Assyrians), but is included here since the events were relevant at the time when only Judah remained. **Habakkuk:** warning to Judah of the coming Babylonian invasion.

**Zephaniah:** warnings against Judah that doom is at hand. **Jeremiah:** know as the “weeping prophet,” he warns hard-hearted people of Jerusalem’s eminent destruction. **Lamentations:** a poetical lament over the destruction of Jerusalem.

#### 12. Exile and the Restoration

The day that the prophets had **warned** of had finally arrived—the **kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians**. Unlike the Assyrians that completely destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel nearly two centuries earlier, the Babylonians were different kinds of victors. They allowed the people of Judah to retain their cultural identity even though many were **deported** from Jerusalem to Babylon (modern day Iraq). It was here that the Hebrew people became known as the “Jews” (short for Judah)—from which we get the modern term “Jewish” when referring to someone descended from the 12 tribes of Israel.

Exile was the most **humiliating** thing that could possibly happen to the descendents of Abraham—it seemed that God abandoned His people. But God **did not abandon** His people and moved in amazing and miraculous ways to restore a remnant of the people to the capital city of Jerusalem and rebuild it. The **Exile** lasted **70 years**. **Ezekiel:** some of the most amazing and horrifying visions in all of the Bible. **Daniel 1-6:** account of 4 young Hebrews drafted into the Babylonian court during the Exile; and the conquest of the Babylonians by the Persians. **Ezra 1-6:** the first phase of the Restoration, where the Persian king allows Zerubbabel to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. **Esther:** account of a Hebrew girl that was chosen to marry the Persian king just in time to prevent a plan to annihilate the Jewish exiles. If it weren’t for Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah would not have lived to lead the remainder of the Restoration process. **Ezra 7-10:** the second phase of the Restoration, where Ezra returns to Jerusalem to rally the people. **Nehemiah:** final phase of the Restoration by Nehemiah who oversees the rebuilding of the Jerusalem’s walls.

#### 13. Post-Exile Prophets

There are **three prophets** to Judah after the Restoration: **Haggai**, **Zechariah**, and **Malachi**. We read Zechariah earlier in the study, so we won’t repeat the reading here. Here, we also include **Obadiah**, even though his message was against the neighboring kingdom of Edom (distant relatives of Israelites, descended not of Jacob’s line, but of his twin brother Esau). The two groups had always been at war, just as Jacob and Esau were. **Obadiah:** punishment of Edom for their participation in the plundering of Jerusalem (recorded in 2 Chronicles). **Haggai:** rebuilding of the temple after the return from Exile. **Malachi:** a final warning to the disobedient Israelites.

#### 14. Special books

There are **four books** that complete our study of the Bible. These books are last because they are the most difficult or the **most widely misunderstood**. Saving them for last hopefully helps us understand them better than if we had attempted to read them earlier. **Job:** a profoundly enigmatic (much like the subject) analysis of the issue of suffering. It is almost entirely a work of poetry, making interpretation on this difficult subject even more challenging. **Ecclesiastes:** a commentary on the futility of living without making the Creator God a central part of your life. **Song of Solomon:** beautiful poetry with sensual imagery that speaks about love on many levels—between a husband and wife, and between the loving Creator God and His people. **Jonah:** well-known account of the prophet swallowed by a whale, but one in which most readers completely miss the point. This book is all about the grace of God and how we as depraved humans, much like Jonah, don’t understand what God is trying to do. Today, we are no different than Jonah was in his day.