

Bible reading plans

Plan 1: An introduction to the Bible

Time needed: Four weeks

If you're new to the Bible, then this is a great place to begin! This four-week reading plan will take you through some basics of the Christian message, showing you who God is, what he has done for you, and how he wants you to respond.

The Old Testament (7 days)

The Old Testament shows us how God carefully prepared for the coming of Jesus.

- Genesis 1–2** *Creation: how God created everything perfectly*
- Genesis 3** *Sin: human disobedience and its consequences*
- Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6** *Faith: God puts people back into relationship with him through our faith*
- Exodus 20:1-20** *The Ten Commandments: instructions for godly living*
- Exodus 32:1–34:8** *Knowing God: Moses discovers what God is really like*
- Psalm 23** *The God who cares: King David's experience of God's provision and protection*
- Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7** *Salvation: More than seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, God promises to send a Savior*

The Gospels (7 days)

The four Gospels tell us about the coming, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God's promised Savior.

- Luke 2** *The Savior's arrival: Jesus' birth and early years*
- Matthew 3:1–4:11** *Baptism and beginnings: Jesus obeys his Father and overcomes the devil*
- John 1:35-51** *Disciples: Jesus calls his first followers*
- Matthew 5–7** *A new way of living: the Sermon on the Mount, the heart of Jesus' teaching*
- Matthew 8:1-17; 11:1-6** *Miracles: a sign that God's Kingdom is breaking into this world through Jesus*
- Mark 14:1-52** *The time has come: preparations for Jesus' death*
- Mark 14:53–16:20** *Defeat and victory: Jesus is tried and crucified, but rises again*

The first Christians (7 days)

The book of Acts shows us how the church was born and how the first Christians lived and witnessed.

- Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-21** *A new season: Jesus leaves, but the Holy Spirit comes*

- Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 5:12-16** *A new way of living: life in the early church*
- Acts 5:17-42; 7:54–8:3** *Opposition: Not everyone is happy with the message of the gospel*
- Acts 9:1-31** *New beginnings: the conversion of Saul (who becomes the apostle Paul)*
- Acts 10** *A gospel for everyone: Peter sees that Christianity is for all peoples and nations*
- Acts 15:1-35** *A gospel of grace: The church agrees that we are saved by Jesus' grace alone and not by what we do*
- Acts 27–28** *The unstoppable gospel: no matter what happens, the gospel's power cannot be stopped*

New Testament letters (7 days)

The letters, written by apostles or those closely associated with them, show Christians what they should believe and how they should live.

- Romans 3:21–4:8** *The foundation of faith: Faith, not works, is what makes us right with God and keeps us in relationship with him*
- Romans 8:1-39** *Conquered and conquering: the blessing of living life in the power of the Holy Spirit*
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 John 3:11-20** *The power of love: Christ's love changes the way we relate to others*
- Galatians 5:1-26** *Free and fruitful: Christ has freed us to bear good fruit for him*
- Ephesians 1:15-23; 4:1-16** *The body of Christ: the importance of the church*
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11** *He's coming again! Living in light of Christ's promised return*
- Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-5** *Hope for the future: the assurance that we will be with God forever*

Plan 2: An overview of the Bible's story

Time needed: Six months

This Bible reading plan provides readings for 180 days. If you follow it in order, it will take you through the whole Bible, helping you to understand the flow of its overall story and to see its key themes. If you want more variety in your reading, however, you can alternate between sections of the Old Testament and sections of the New Testament.

The Old Testament (90 days)

Creation and the Fall

- Genesis 1–2** *The creation of the world and humanity*
- Genesis 3** *The origins of sin*

- ☐ **Genesis 6:9–7:24; 9:1-17** God punishes human sin through a great flood

God begins to build a family through whom his plan will be worked out

- ☐ **Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-20; 17:1-27** God calls Abraham and promises to give him descendants and the land of Canaan

- ☐ **Genesis 21:1-7; 22:1-19** God gives Abraham a son but then tests his faith

- ☐ **Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1–28:5** Abraham's son Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau, who quarrel

- ☐ **Genesis 29:1–30:24; 35:16-18** Jacob flees Canaan but finds a wife and has twelve sons

- ☐ **Genesis 32:1–33:20** Jacob returns home and is reconciled to his brother

- ☐ **Genesis 37** How Jacob's son Joseph ended up in Egypt

- ☐ **Genesis 41:1-57; 46:1-7; 50:15-21** Joseph gains prominence in Egypt and brings his family there to avoid famine in Canaan

God calls Moses to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt

- ☐ **Exodus 1–2** How the Israelites ended up in slavery, and the birth of Moses

- ☐ **Exodus 3–4** Moses' encounter with the living God

- ☐ **Exodus 12:1-40; 13:17–14:31** God's judgment on wicked Egypt and Israel's miraculous escape

- ☐ **Exodus 19:1–20:21** God makes the Israelites his holy nation and gives them his commandments at Mount Sinai

- ☐ **Exodus 33:1–34:8** God reveals what he is really like to Moses

- ☐ **Leviticus 9** The priests begin their work of offering sacrifices to God

- ☐ **Numbers 13:25–14:45** Grumbling and unbelief lead to forty years in the wilderness

- ☐ **Deuteronomy 31:1-8; 34:1-12** Moses dies and is succeeded by Joshua

God's people enter the Promised Land of Canaan

- ☐ **Joshua 3–4** The Israelites cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land

- ☐ **Joshua 5:13–6:27** The miraculous conquest of Jericho

- ☐ **Joshua 24** God renews the covenant with his people, and Joshua dies

- ☐ **Judges 6–7** Gideon learns to trust God and defeats the Midianites

- ☐ **Judges 16** Samson, one of Israel's leaders, is undermined by his own weaknesses

- ☐ **Ruth 1** Ruth, a foreigner, finds a home among God's people

God gives his people a king

- ☐ **1 Samuel 1; 3** God gives his people a prophet, Samuel

- ☐ **1 Samuel 9–10** Samuel anoints Saul as Israel's first king

- ☐ **1 Samuel 13; 15** Saul is rejected as king because of his disobedience to God

- ☐ **1 Samuel 16** Samuel anoints David as king

- 1 Samuel 17** *David shows his trust in God as he defeats Goliath*
- 1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 2:1-7; 5:1-4** *Saul dies in battle, and David replaces him as king*
- 2 Samuel 7** *God promises David that one of his descendants will always be on the throne*
- 2 Samuel 11–12** *David's sin and restoration*
- 1 Chronicles 29** *David encourages people to bring their gifts for building God's Temple*
- 1 Kings 2–3** *David's son Solomon succeeds him as king and asks God for wisdom*
- 1 Kings 8** *Solomon dedicates the great Temple he built*
- 2 Chronicles 7** *God appears to Solomon*
- 1 Kings 11** *Solomon's foolishness and death*

The nation divides in two (Israel in the north, Judah in the south)

- 1 Kings 12** *The nation divides because of the foolishness of Solomon's son*
- 1 Kings 18** *The prophet Elijah challenges Ahab, king of Israel, and the prophets of Baal*
- 2 Kings 2** *Elijah is succeeded as prophet by Elisha*
- 2 Kings 4–5** *Elisha demonstrates God's power by performing miracles*
- 2 Chronicles 20:1-30** *King Jehoshaphat of Judah discovers the power of praise*
- 2 Kings 17** *Assyria conquers the wicked northern kingdom of Israel—the judgment of God*
- 2 Kings 19** *God spares Jerusalem because of King Hezekiah's faith*
- 2 Kings 22:1–23:3** *The young King Josiah renews the covenant with God*
- 2 Kings 25** *Jerusalem is conquered by Babylon because of disobedience and is exiled*

Life after the Exile

- Ezra 1:1-8; 2:68–3:13** *God's people return to Judah after a seventy-year exile and rebuild the Temple*
- Ezra 7** *Ezra returns to Jerusalem*
- Nehemiah 1–2** *Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and rebuilds its walls*
- Nehemiah 5** *Nehemiah's concern for the poor*
- Nehemiah 8** *Ezra teaches the word of God*
- Esther 3–4; 7** *A plot to wipe out God's people is foiled in Persia*

Readings from Israel's poetry and wisdom literature

Many of the psalms and "wisdom books" were written during the reigns of Israel's and Judah's kings

- Job 1** *Trusting God when things go wrong*
- Psalms 1:1-6; 119:1-16** *The benefits of reading God's word*

- Psalm 23; 46** *Trust in God's provision and protection*
- Psalm 51** *David's prayer of confession*
- Psalm 103** *Praise for God's love and compassion*
- Psalm 139** *God's perfect knowledge of us*
- Proverbs 3–4** *The value of growing in God's wisdom*
- Ecclesiastes 3** *Trusting in God's timing*
- Song of Songs 2** *A love song*

Readings from the prophets

- Isaiah 6** *Isaiah is called to be a prophet in Judah*
- Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-9** *Prophecies of the coming of the Messiah*
- Isaiah 30** *Encouragements to trust in God alone as Judah is being attacked by Assyria*
- Isaiah 40** *Isaiah foresees God's coming to rescue his people in the future*
- Isaiah 53** *Isaiah foresees the crucifixion of Christ*
- Isaiah 61** *The coming of God's anointed servant*
- Jeremiah 1** *Jeremiah's call to be a prophet*
- Jeremiah 7** *The worthlessness of the false religion that was practiced by many in Jeremiah's day*
- Jeremiah 29:1-14** *Encouragement to the exiles to seek blessing on the place where God had put them*
- Jeremiah 31:23-37** *God promises a new covenant to his people*
- Lamentations 3:1-33** *Despite his sufferings, the poet declares his confidence in God's faithfulness*
- Ezekiel 34** *Ezekiel, a prophet in exile, prophesies that God will come as the Good Shepherd*
- Ezekiel 37** *God's promise to restore and renew his people*
- Daniel 1** *Daniel learns how to succeed in exile under foreign rulers*
- Daniel 3** *Daniel's friends put their trust in God*
- Daniel 6** *Daniel experiences God's protection*
- Daniel 7** *Daniel sees a vision of the coming of God's Kingdom in Jesus*
- Hosea 1–2** *Hosea's experience of unfaithfulness mirrors that experienced by God with his people Israel*
- Joel 2:12-32** *An appeal to return to God and a prophecy about the Holy Spirit*
- Amos 5** *Amos denounces empty religion among God's people*
- Obadiah 1** *Judgment is proclaimed on the nation of Edom for the way it opposed God's people*
- Jonah 1–4** *Jonah struggles with the fact that God loves people of every nation*

- Micah 4:1–5:5** *God promises to restore his people and give them favor among the nations*
- Nahum 1** *God promises to judge Nineveh, Assyria's capital, for its treatment of his people*
- Habakkuk 3** *Habakkuk's trust in God*
- Zephaniah 3** *God's promise of judgment on his people is followed by a promise of restoration*
- Haggai 1:1–2:9** *A challenge to God's people to put him first in their lives*
- Zechariah 3–4** *Jeshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor symbolize God's coming Servant, Jesus*
- Malachi 3** *A call for God's people to honor him, for his coming is close*

The New Testament (90 days)

The life of Jesus

- Luke 1** *The births of John the Baptist and Jesus are foretold*
- Luke 2** *The birth and childhood of Jesus (1)*
- Matthew 1:18–2:23** *The birth and childhood of Jesus (2)*
- John 1:1-18** *The miracle of Jesus' coming*
- Matthew 3** *John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus*
- Luke 4:1-13** *Jesus overcomes the devil's temptations*
- Luke 4:14-44** *Jesus is rejected by his hometown and begins his ministry*
- Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-11** *Jesus calls his first disciples*
- John 2:1-12** *Jesus' first miracle*
- Mark 1:21–2:12** *A summary of Jesus' early miracles, showing his power over everything*
- John 3:1-21** *Jesus teaches about the need to be born again*
- Matthew 5** *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (1)*
- Matthew 6** *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (2)*
- Matthew 7** *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (3)*
- Matthew 10** *Jesus sends out his twelve disciples*
- Matthew 13** *Parables about God's Kingdom*
- Mark 6:30-56** *Jesus demonstrates his power by feeding five thousand and walking on water*
- John 6:25-70** *Jesus, the bread of life*
- Luke 15** *Three parables on God's love for the lost*
- Matthew 18:15-35** *Jesus' teaching about forgiveness*
- Luke 19:1-10; John 4:1-42** *Jesus welcomes outsiders*
- John 11** *The raising of Lazarus from the dead and its consequences*
- Matthew 16:13-28** *Jesus predicts his death*

- Matthew 21** *Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and conflicts with the religious leaders*
- Mark 12:28-34** *The greatest commandment*
- Matthew 24** *Jesus teaches about troubles to come and his return at the end of the age*
- Matthew 25** *Jesus teaches about the importance of always being ready for his return*
- John 13:1-30** *Jesus washes his disciples' feet and predicts his betrayal*
- Mark 14:12-31** *The Last Supper and Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial*
- John 14** *Jesus warns the disciples he is leaving but promises that the Holy Spirit will come in his place*
- John 17** *Jesus prays*
- Mark 14:32-72** *Jesus is arrested, and Peter denies knowing him*
- Matthew 27** *Jesus is put on trial, crucified, and buried*
- Luke 24** *The risen Jesus appears to his followers*
- John 20:19–21:25** *More resurrection appearances*
- Acts 1:1-11** *Jesus returns to his Father in heaven*

The story of the early church

- Acts 2** *The coming of the Spirit and the birth of the church*
- Acts 4** *Despite opposition, the church continues to be blessed*
- Acts 6:8–7:60** *The church's first martyr*
- Acts 8** *The gospel begins to spread*
- Acts 9:1-31** *The conversion of Saul (Paul)*
- Acts 10** *Peter realizes that the gospel is for people of all nations and backgrounds*
- Acts 12** *Peter's miraculous escape from prison*
- Acts 15** *The apostles and elders affirm that following the Jewish Law is not necessary for salvation*
- Acts 16:6-40** *Paul takes the gospel to Europe*
- Acts 19** *Paul's preaching provokes severe opposition*
- Acts 21–22** *Paul's arrest is prophesied and takes place*
- Acts 27–28** *Paul is taken as a prisoner to Rome but still keeps preaching about Jesus*

Letters from early church leaders

- Romans 3:21–4:25** *Getting right with God through faith*
- Romans 5–6** *The blessing of being right with God*
- Romans 8** *Life in the Holy Spirit*
- Romans 14:1–15:13** *Learning to accept other Christians who do things differently from us*
- 1 Corinthians 3** *The foolishness of divisions in the church*

- church
- 1 Corinthians 12** *Using God's gifts for the good of one another in the church*
 - 1 Corinthians 13** *The importance of love*
 - 1 Corinthians 15** *Teaching about the resurrection*
 - 2 Corinthians 4:1–5:10** *God's treasure in clay jars*
 - 2 Corinthians 8–9** *Teaching about generous giving*
 - 2 Corinthians 11:1–12:10** *Suffering: the mark of a true servant of Jesus*
 - Galatians 3:1–4:7** *Living by the Spirit and not by the Law*
 - Galatians 5** *Freedom and fruit*
 - Ephesians 2** *Reconciled to God and one another through Christ*
 - Ephesians 4:17–5:20** *The importance of living a holy life*
 - Ephesians 6:10-20** *Putting on all of God's armor*
 - Philippians 2:1-18** *A call to imitate Christ*
 - Philippians 3:1–4:1** *A call to press on in our walk with Jesus*
 - Colossians 1:9-23** *The supremacy of Christ*
 - Colossians 3:1–4:6** *A call to holy living*
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:24** *Living in light of Christ's return*
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18** *A challenge not to be idle*
 - 1 Timothy 4** *The value of spiritual training*
 - 2 Timothy 1:1–2:13** *Encouragements to be faithful*
 - Titus 2:1–3:11** *Teaching about godly Christian living*
 - Philemon 1** *Paul appeals for mercy on behalf of a runaway slave*
 - Hebrews 4:14–5:10; 7:1–8:2** *Jesus, our great High Priest, gives us free access to God*
- access to God
- Hebrews 11:1–12:3** *Examples of faith that encourage us*
 - James 2:1-13** *There is no room for favoritism in the church*
 - James 3** *Learning to control our words*
 - 1 Peter 1:3–2:3** *Christians should be characterized by hope and holiness*
 - 1 Peter 3:8–4:19** *Christians should be ready to suffer for their faith*
 - 2 Peter 3** *Teaching about the return of Jesus*
 - 1 John 1:5–2:17** *Walking in the light*
 - 1 John 4:7-21** *Since we are loved, we should be loving*
 - 2 John 1** *Living in truth and love*
 - 3 John 1** *A call to stay faithful even in the face of difficulties and opposition*
- opposition
- Jude 1** *The importance of standing firm in your faith*
 - Revelation 2–3** *Jesus both encourages and challenges the church*
 - Revelation 4–5** *A vision of heaven*
 - Revelation 19:11–20:15** *Jesus' final victory over evil*
 - Revelation 21:1–22:6** *A vision of God's new creation*