

2023 BIBLE READING PLAN

May 2023

You will read from three sections of the Bible each day. The Old Testament, New Testament and Proverbs.
When you have read each section, place a checkmark in the area provided to keep track of your progress.

Date	Old Testament	✓	New Testament	✓	Proverbs	✓
1	Judges 1 - 2		Romans 15:23 - 16:27		1	
2	Judges 3 - 4		1 Corinthians 1 - 2		2	
3	Judges 5 - 6		1 Corinthians 3 - 5		3	
4	Judges 7 - 8		1 Corinthians 6 - 7		4	
5	Judges 9 - 10		1 Corinthians 8 - 9		5	
6	Judges 11 - 12		1 Corinthians 10 - 11		6	
7	Judges 13-14		1 Corinthians 12 - 13		7	
8	Judges 15-16		1 Corinthians 14		8	
9	Judges 17-18		1 Corinthians 15		9	
10	Judges 19-20		1 Corinthians 16		10	
11	Judges 21		2 Corinthians 1 - 2		11	
12	Ruth 1-2		2 Corinthians 3 - 4		12	
13	Ruth 3-4		2 Corinthians 5 - 6		13	
14	1 Samuel 1-2		2 Corinthians 7 - 8		14	
15	1 Samuel 3-4		2 Corinthians 9 - 10		15	
16	1 Samuel 5-6		2 Corinthians 11 - 12		16	
17	1 Sameule 7-8		2 Corinthians 13		17	
18	1 Samuel 9-10		Galatians 1 - 2		18	
19	1 Samuel 11-12		Galatians 3		19	
20	1 Samuel 13-14		Galatians 4		20	
21	1 Samuel 15-16		Galatians 5 - 6		21	
22	1 Samuel 17-18		Ephesians 1 - 2		22	
23	1 Samuel 19-20		Ephesians 3 - 4		23	
24	1 Samuel 21-22		Ephesians 5 - 6		24	
25	1 Samuel 23-24		Philippians 1 - 2		25	
26	1 Samuel 25-26		Philippians 3 - 4		26	
27	1 Samuel 27-28		Colossians 1 - 2		27	
28	1 Samuel 29-30		Colossians 3 - 4		28	
29	1 Samuel 31		1 Thessalonians 1 - 2		29	
30	2 Samuel 1 - 2		1 Thessalonians 3 - 5		30	
31	2 Samuel 3		2 Thessalonians 1 - 3		31	

Books in May

JUDGES

Before Israel had kings they had Judges! God was their King, and He worked with the Priests and Judges to bring order and leadership to the people of Israel. Although it's not certain who wrote the book of Judges, it is commonly believed that the most likely candidate is the prophet Samuel.

To set the state, Joshua, who had taken leadership of Israel after the death of Moses, has now also died, after years of leading Israel through the conquest of the promised land. Allotting land to each tribe, but the work was not completely finished, and the tribes, now no longer under the leadership of Joshua, were not fully removing the inhabitants of the land. This began to create problems, because with the people still there, their way of living was still there. Pagan gods, rituals and living were slowly impacting the people of Israel. Judges 1:21 says, "The children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem..." And soon enough the people of Israel were not only allowing the worship of pagan gods in their land, but they were joining in, forgetting what God, the one true God, had done for them. And thus started a cycle of turning away from God, turning back to him, and turning away again.

When was Judges written?

It is estimated that the book of Judges was written around 1050BC, but covers events that go as far back as 1375 BC.

Who was Judges written for?

Judges was written for the people of Israel, the ancestors of those who rebelled, to show the pattern and consequences of sin. To show the cycle of sin that Israel found itself trapped in.

Key scriptures in the book of Judges?

There are two very telling scriptures in the book of Judges that show why things happened the way they did.

Judges 21:25 says, *In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.*

We know that doing right without having guidance will surely fall. Without a compass it is hard to navigate the way you should. Without making the truth of God a priority, it is impossible to find our own way.

And Judges 2:12 says, *They abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brogue them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them...*

We need to remember to not be so influenced by our surroundings that we are led away from the Lord and His teaching. The bible is our guide, the Lord is our King!

Books in May

RUTH

Like Judges there is no author recorded for the book of Ruth, however, some believe it was written by the same author as the book of Judges, and therefore, quite possibly the prophet Samuel.

Ruth is the great-grandmother of King David. Not born Jewish, but what we call a Gentile, Ruth is married into a Jewish Family. The book of Ruth is a great story of commitment and family relationship.

When was Ruth written?

Ruth herself probably lived around 1100 BC, and the book was most likely written between 1025 and 1004 BC, between the time that David was anointed to be King, and when he captured Jerusalem.

Who was Ruth written for?

Ruth is a story that shares what Israel was going through at the time. Written for the Israelites after the time of judges to give them a view of what their ancestors dealt with. It's also a story of how God works. Ruth, a gentile from a pagan land, Moab, who marries a Jewish man and becomes the great-grandmother of Israel's greatest king, David, and also, an ancestor of Jesus Christ!

Are there any key verses in the book of Ruth?

Ruth says to her mother-in-law, Naomi, in Ruth 1:16, *"Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God."*

What truer commitment and loyalty could be expressed than this?

Books in May

1 & 2 Samuel

Samuel the prophet has an incredible story. His mother, Hannah, was unable to have a child. And she went to the temple, and prayed to God that he would hear her, and answer her prayer and give her a son, and if He did, she would bring him back to the temple and dedicate him to the Lord's service. And God did answer that prayer.

Samuel was born, and brought to the temple when he was old enough and was placed in the care of the priest, Eli. When Eli passes, Samuel becomes the judge of Israel, leading the people and even subduing the nations fears enemy, the Philistines.

Samuel's sons don't turn out to be godly men, and the people reject them as their next leader as Samuel grows old and approaches death. The people ask for a king, and although Samuel warns them that God is their king and a king of this earth will cause problems, God chooses to anoint Saul as the first King of Israel. He starts well, but soon is making poor choices, and in a moment of pride Saul offers a sacrifice to God, which was only meant to be done by the priest. In that moment God tells Samuel to let King Saul know he will be replaced. The man who would replace Saul as king is the greatest king of Israel, David. And the story of David is full of good choices, and bad choices alike. Saul doesn't like that David is to be king and does everything he can to kill him, but David continues to evade him, and chooses not to retaliate.

1 Samuel ends with the death of King Saul, making way for David to become his successor. Even though he did things that were not right, and as such, inexcusable, David's life is marked by his continued humility before God and desire to be made right in God's eyes. If we could learn anything from the life of David, it would be that, no matter what we do, no matter how far we feel we may have gone, we can return to the Lord!

When were 1 & 2 Samuel written?

The events in these books finish around 960BC, which means they were written most likely between that time and when Solomon died in 931 BC.

Who were 1 & 2 Samuel written for?

These two books were written for the people of Israel who lived under the reigns of David and Solomon. Both books would also be read by the following generations as historical guides.

What stories will we read in 1 & 2 Samuel?

In these books we will read of David and Goliath, the giant. King Saul attempting to kill David, throwing a spear at him while he plays the harp to help calm him. The friendship of David & Saul's son, Jonathan. The battles that made David famous. The stories that made him fall. His sins involving Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite. And much much more...

Books in May

1 & 2 CORINTHIANS

Paul the apostle wrote both 1 & 2 Corinthians. They are letters to the churches in Corinth. In the first letter in chapter 1 vs 1 it says, "This is a letter from Paul, ... and from our brother Sosthenes." And 2 Corinthians starts the exact same way, except this time, "This letter is from Paul, ... and from our brother Timothy."

Through the book of Acts, as well as his letters, we see that Paul often had a traveling companion. Someone whom he worked with and taught with. Whether that was Barnabas, Luke, Sosthenes or someone else, Paul did much of his traveling and teaching together with another leader in the early church.

When were 1 & 2 Corinthians written?

Both books were written relatively close together. It's believed within a year of each other. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians while he was in Ephesus most likely between AD 55 - 56, and 2 Corinthians less than a year later while he was in Philippi.

Who were 1 & 2 Corinthians written for?

These are both letters written to the church in Corinth, a church that Paul had actually been a part of starting, but had of course moved on as he traveled around encouraging other churches and sharing the gospel. These letters were later shared with other churches in the area, and eventually became recognized as important enough to become part of the Bible. Corinth at that time could be compared to Vegas today, a party city. A place people went and lived to satisfy their earthly indulgences. People who were there had a pretty narrow focus on self satisfaction, which meant they weren't an easy group of people to deal with, but Paul was great at communicating the gospel in a way that both challenged and encouraged them.

Paul wrote these letters in order to help the church work through some of the things they were dealing with based on reports that he heard from local church leaders and friends he knew. Church problems aren't really anything new! And just like Paul instructed the church in Corinth, purity, self-discipline, and love for others are vital in a church's success!

What kind of important scriptures are in 1 & 2 Corinthians?

I think one of the most important and well known passages of scriptures comes from the first letter Paul wrote to church in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 he gives his now famous "Love is..." writing. *Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance*

Books in May

GALATIANS

Galatians is another letter written by Paul as identified in the first verse of the book, “*This letter is from Paul, an apostle.*” It is also identified that it was written to multiple churches. In vs 2 it says, “this letter to the churches in Galatia.” Galatia was an area in the highlands of central Anatolia, which is now a part of modern day Turkey.

When was Galatians written?

There is a bit of debate about when Paul wrote this letter. Some believe it was written while he was at Antioch around AD 48, and others believe it was written a little later while he was in Ephesus around AD 55. Regardless of when the letter was written, there are deep truths and revelation in the book of Galatians.

Who was Galatians written for?

This letter was written to the churches in the area of Galatia. There were several churches in this region. The churches in this area had become confused with how “free” they were in Christ, and what salvation truly meant in regards to the Law they were so used to following. Imagine that, your whole life you’ve been told that the law of Moses is the absolutely standard that you must live by, and suddenly grace and mercy are the conversation, redemption through belief, not works, confession of sin and the need for a ‘savior’ rather than sacrifice and good deeds. Getting it right was no longer the rule, but the rule was love. Jesus Christ gave his life so we could be free from the burden of the law, but not so that we didn’t need to follow it’s ways, but so that we knew regardless of how well we did at it, our belief in him as our savior was what saved us, not our “good works”. This letter was to help the church set things straight in this regard.

What kind of teaching did Paul give to the Galatians?

The letters of Paul often have very well known scriptures. Galatians holds another one, and this time conveying the importance and availability of what we call the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says, *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Again, pointing to the law vs being free. The Holy Spirit was a gift given to believers in Jesus Christ. So now, with this gift active in our lives, the Spirit alive in us, we can now experience the fruit of that activity. The more we yield to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, the more our lives reflect the truth nature of God. These “gifts of the Spirit” become evident in us as we become more transformed by Him. And there is definitely NO law against that!

Books in May

EPHESIANS

Another letter to another church. Paul was so invested in these local churches as they grew and became this new church in the wake of Jesus Christ sacrifice. Ephesians, like his other letters, identifies in the first line who is writing it and to whom it is written. *“This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus...”*

When was Ephesians written?

If you remember in the book of Acts, it talks about a period of time where Paul was in a Roman Prison for more than 2 years. This, in AD 60-62 is most likely when he wrote the letter to the church in Ephesus. Because he was basically under “house arrest”, he was still able to preach the gospel, and his friends were allowed to visit him and look after him.

Who was Ephesians written for?

This letter was written to the Christians in the city of Ephesus, also a part of what is now modern day Turkey. At the time Ephesus was an important port city, considered the most important Greek city and the most important trading center in the Mediterranean region. Ephesus was important to Paul. In the book of Acts it says that Paul taught there daily for 2 years. Also, on his final journey to Jerusalem, he asked the church he was with to call for the leaders from Ephesus that he might talk to them one last time. Ephesus was a large city, with an estimated 250,000 people at the time of the early church.

What kind of teaching did Paul give to the Ephesians?

A major theme running through the book of Ephesus is our Identity in Christ Jesus. First learning what that means, second learning to walk it out. Learning to walk in our new identity is really a full time job as a Christian. To unlearn who we believed we were and take on the new nature given to us by Christ Jesus. This isn’t easy. And this is why this letter was written, to encourage the church and teach them about identity and to show them how to stand firm.

Through him [Jesus] you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

We also will read about the “armor of God” in Ephesians 6, an important reminder of what Christ has done for us, and what it means for us!

Books in May

PHILIPPIANS

Another letter written by Paul with the help of Timothy. The first verse says this is written, “to all of God’s holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons.”

Philippi was a Macedonian city in Northern Greece.

When was Philippians written?

This letter was also written during Paul’s Roman imprisonment around AD 61-62.

Who was Philippians written for?

The church in Philippi was a mostly Gentile audience. Paul, who had been there with Silas and Timothy many years prior had started the church. Unlike being in a city with a Jewish Synagogue, and preaching to Jewish people who believed in Jesus, this church was started outside of a religious building, and with the conversion and baptism of a woman named Lydia.

The letter is to warn the church about false teachings that were creeping into the church. Paul’s encouragement was to remain joyful in the Lord. With 16 references to “joy” and “rejoicing,” Philippians is one of the apostle Paul’s most “upbeat” letters - even though he wrote it while still in prison.

What kind of teaching did Paul give to the Philippians?

Philippians 4 has many memorable verses in it. You may have heard some of them before.

vs 4, Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!

vs 6, Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

vs 7 Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ.

vs 8 Fix your thoughts on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely and admirable. Thin about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

vs 13 I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

vs 19 This God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches...

Books in May

COLOSSIANS

Continuing through the letter of Paul, vs 1 of Colossians says again, "This letter is from Paul, ... and from our brother Timothy."

Written to the people of the city of Colosse, another city located in modern day Turkey. It is believed that Paul didn't actually ever visit the church in this town, but his influence as an apostle in the early church was well known. Not every letter that Paul wrote became a part of what we now consider the Bible. In Colossians 4:16 Paul writes, "After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea [which is only about 11 miles from Colosse] so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them." But we do not have a book of Laodiceans in the Bible, do we?

When was Colossians written?

This letter was also written in the time of Paul's Roman imprisonment around AD 61-62.

Who was Colossians written for?

The church in Colosse, which was another church made up mostly of gentile believers. Within this church there had become some false teachings that needed to be corrected. These teachings were distorting the view of Jesus, and this letter was meant to show them the full deity of Christ, and to show their fullness in Christ as their savior.

What kind of teaching did Paul give to the Colossians?

This little book packs a big punch and emphasizes this absolute truth, Jesus Christ is supreme - over everyone and everything!

For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. Colossians 2:9-10

Books in May

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

Both books start with the same line, *"This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give you grace and peace."*

When were 1 & 2 Thessalonians written?

Some of Paul's earliest letters, if not the very earliest, the letters to the church in Thessalonica were written while Paul was in Corinth around AD 50-51. They were written only a few months apart.

Who were 1 & 2 Thessalonians written for?

This is another church that Paul started while on his missionary journeys. But of course, as he continued to travel and bring the gospel to new areas, this young church went through some tumultuous times. The Thessalonians were a group of new believers who didn't get much formal training from Paul. They consisted of both Jewish & Gentile believers and had been brought up under pagan worship. And there were some things going on to try and sway the beliefs of the church there. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2 it says, *"Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us."* It seems someone was writing fake letters and claiming they were from Paul to try and persuade the believers to follow a different teaching!

That's why in these letters Paul is encouraging them to press on in their faith, to not listen to the false accusations against him and to keep working hard until the return of Jesus Christ.

What kind of teaching did Paul give to the Thessalonians?

A major theme in these books is the Second Coming of Christ, the future of the church and the importance of showing perseverance. There is also a good mix in those teachings. We should always be expectant for the return of Christ, and yet, at the same time be about the good works that He has for us today!