

The Layered Bible Journey

The Layered Bible Journey is a unique way to read the bible through in a year. Reading through the bible is one of the most rewarding journeys you can take. A year provides a good time frame because a year is a season of your life. A year is long enough to make reading the whole bible manageable. You will have enough time each day not only for the day's reading, but also for tracking your journey by recording your thoughts in a journal. A year is also short enough to keep what you read connected in your mind, which is important.

Connecting what you read helps you notice certain themes that keep repeating. So as you enter strange, new territory in your bible reading journey, the familiar themes you come across help you locate where you are. Yet, the new territory adds meaning to that familiar theme. The theme is like a path that runs along your journey. The path helps pull you along in your journey. It beckons you to move forward to see how this path develops and where it takes important turns. The more you can be pulled along while reading the bible, the less likely you will be to give up.

Many people set out to read the bible from cover to cover, but eventually give up when difficulties overwhelm them. If we expect the bible to be a neat and tidy list of rules or a catalogue of "life teachings" we will be disappointed. However, we should not be disappointed because the bible is actually much more amazing than that. After all, the bible is not just one book, but a rich collection of sixty-six books. It is the rich variety in scripture that makes the bible so amazing. There are laws, histories, sermons, teachings, poems, songs, proverbs, prophecies, stories, letters, parables, and, yes, some genealogies and census figures. What you have in all of this is the evidence of a real, continuing encounter between a people and their God. The most amazing thing of all is that these are "God-initiated" encounters.

When you find the themes and paths that run through the bible, you are discovering the larger story of God and His people that runs through all the biblical evidence. The Layered Bible Journey is designed to help you discover this larger story. People read long novels all the time and have no trouble finishing them, because the plot pulls them along. Most of the bible consists of stories. As you read the many, individual stories of God and His people, you see the major themes that connect these stories. As each generation of God's people lives their part of the story, a larger plot emerges. If you can get into the plot, the plot hooks you and pulls you along.

The hope is that not only will you complete your journey; the hope is that you will make a spiritual connection with God's people. You will feel like one of the characters in this larger story of God's redeeming love for us. You not only discover that your personal journey runs parallel to the biblical journey, you discover that the biblical journey, at times, intersects your own personal journey in miraculous ways and calls you to be a participant in the life of God's people.

The Layered Bible Journey helps this happen by arranging how you read the bible. Since the sixty-six books of the bible are not arranged in chronological order, it is often difficult to discover the larger plot. There are definite stages in this plot that engage the reader once the stages become apparent. This reading plan is designed to help you experience these stages. The stages are 1) Creation and Fall, 2) Covenant journey, 3) Nation under God's reign, 4) Warning and Captivity, 5) Hope and Return, 6) New Covenant in Jesus Christ, and 7) the Body of Christ, the Church. These stages not only help engage you, the reader, they help you know the context for what you are reading which provides an important clue for understanding.

The Layered Bible Journey is a unique reading plan because it doesn't make you wait until the end of the year to discover all these stages. In the first four months of the year, you will be taken through a cycle of readings that exposes you to the basic plot of the bible. This first "layer" of readings emphasizes the books of the bible that have to do with history. This is no ordinary history, but the story of God intervening in human history and graciously calling people into covenant with Him. God and His people make history together. You will spend the first three months moving through the stages of the Old Testament story, so that by the fourth month, you are able to see how these stages culminate in a new covenant or "testament." In the New Testament you will read Luke's exciting two-volume history which includes the story of Jesus Christ in Luke's Gospel and the story of the Church in the Book of Acts. When you complete this cycle, you will have read one-third of the Bible.

You will have the basic "skeleton" and be ready to add another layer of readings that helps "flesh out" the story. In the next four months, you will go through the same stages as the first cycle. Going through these stages again will reinforce your knowledge of the plot. In this layer, you will become more acquainted with God's laws, the wilderness journey of God's people, another history of David and the kings who followed him, and the message of the prophets. In the New Testament, you will read another gospel, the Gospel of Matthew, and get a view of the Church through letters written to actual churches

by Paul, whose ministry you came to know in the first layer of readings. At the end of this cycle, you will have read two-thirds of the Bible since the beginning of the year and be ready for the last third.

The third cycle of readings again goes through the same stages and follows the same plot as the first two cycles. This layer fleshes out the story even more. An emphasis in this layer is a collection of books in the Bible known as the "Writings." The Writings include the songs of Israel's faith, known as the psalms, and the wisdom books of the Bible, such as Ecclesiastes, Job, and Proverbs. These writings are known for their literary power. They are filled with the reflections of God's people. Some are reflections on Israel's history and some are reflections on life. This layer, therefore, does not attempt to place these writings chronologically according to the date of their origin. The dates are sometimes hard to pinpoint. Instead, these writings will be placed according to their ability to illuminate the various themes in each stage. As you read Israel's reflections, you will have an opportunity to be more reflective. When you get to the New Testament, you will read the two remaining gospels, Mark and John. You will also read the New Testament letters and the Revelation that share a lot in common with John in terms of style and themes. When you finish this cycle on December 31, you will have completed reading the Bible.

The Layered Bible Journey was conceived as a way to help people finish what they prayerfully set out to do. This is for the first-time reader, and even those who have read the bible from cover to cover before, but want to experience it a different way. When parallel accounts of the same phase in the life of God's people are separated out into different layers, it helps the reader not get bogged down in one stage of the story for too long. Hopefully, there will be a greater appreciation for having four gospels and two histories of David and the kings who followed him. Hopefully, there will be a greater recognition of how the historical books and the message of the prophets during the same time period illuminate one another, and how the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul reinforce one another. Being able to get into the New Testament by April, instead of waiting until September, will help a lot of readers. Yet the reader will still be able to live in that period of longing as they yearn for the old covenant to be fulfilled in the new. They will experience that movement three times in a year, every four months.

The Layered Bible Journey is intended to be of help to the reader, but it should not be seen as an improvement upon the canon. "Canon" refers to the Bible's present arrangement which has been set as the "canon" or "standard" for

God's people. The canon is divinely inspired as a holy teaching tool for God's people. It cannot be improved upon in that sense! Much can be learned from the bible's present arrangement about the way God's people are formed – then and now. It is hoped that the Layered Bible Journey will help readers get into the bible and, in time, gain a greater appreciation for the canon.

Get a translation of the Bible you can understand with some good study notes. As much as possible, you want the Bible to speak for itself. You will be given a brief note each day of your journey to help you understand what you are reading. There will be historical clues, clues about the writing styles that are used, and clues concerning the themes and stages you are experiencing as the plot unfolds. Below are the seven major stages you will encounter. Become familiar with them so they can help you connect what you are reading to the unfolding plot in God's Word. Remember to pray each time before you read for illumination by the Holy Spirit and that God will speak to you through what you are reading.

Creation, Fall, and the Human Condition: The stage is set as God makes a world to reflect His glory and makes Adam and Eve in His image with the capacity for love. When they sin against God, their choice of independence over relationship results in separation from God and exposes them to conflict, frustration, suffering, and the limitations of the human condition. The rest of the Bible is about God seeking to reclaim and redeem humanity.

The Covenant Journey: God seeks to reclaim humanity by blessing a people of His choosing through a covenant he forms with them, so they can model for the world what God offers. When God's people fall into slavery, we are able to see God's redemptive love and power. We also see the disobedient wanderings of God's people in the wilderness when they fail to trust God's leading. God helps shape the life of His people by giving them His laws.

A New Nation under God's Reign: As God's people settle into the land of promise, the fate of the fledgling nation hangs in the balance. They are either being harassed by their neighbors or influenced by their cultures and gods. The leadership for the nation is provided first by judges, then by kings. All must learn that their wellbeing depends on being faithful subjects under the reign of God. Unfortunately, the more prosperous and settled God's people become, the more they take their identity as God's people for granted.

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Dec 17 | John 20-21 | Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Jesus. He commissions the disciples, and Peter is forgiven |
| The Body of Christ, the Church: These letters, or epistles, to the Church were probably circulated among many congregations to encourage faithfulness. | | |
| Dec 18 | Hebrews 1-4 | Jesus is vastly superior to angels, yet made a little lower in order to minister to the human race. |
| Dec 19 | Hebrews 5-7 | Jesus is a faithful high priest and mediator between God and the human race. |
| Dec 20 | Hebrews 8-10 | The way is opened through the curtain that guarded the Holy Place through Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. |
| Dec 21 | Hebrews 11-13 | Those who labored in the faith, but didn't get to the finish line, are counting on us to carry the torch. |
| Dec 22 | James 1-2 | God calls us to be doers of the Word and make our faith real through works, without which faith is dead. |
| Dec 23 | James 3-5 | God calls us to watch our influence through our speech, humility, peaceable spirit, and patience. |
| Dec 24 | 1 John 1-5 | The themes in John's gospel are put here in letter form to encourage the church. |
| Dec 25 | 2 & 3 John Jude | These warn against false teachers and remind us to contend for the faith which was entrusted to the saints. |
| John's apocalyptic vision of the battle of good and evil encourages the church as it deals with persecution and pressure to conform from the pagan culture. | | |
| Dec 26 | Revelation 1-3 | Study the letters to the 7 churches, as they give the spiritual context for Christ's revelation given to John. |
| Dec 27 | Revelation 4-7 | In heaven, the Lamb is worthy to open the scrolls of history. The tears of martyrs have been wiped away. |
| Dec 28 | Revelation 8-11 | In the next cycle of events, there are again upheavals of history & a vision in heaven of God's reign fulfilled. |
| Dec 29 | Revelation 12-16 | The woman, before she gives birth to Christ, is Israel, after, she's the Church who's hunted by the dragon. |
| Dec 30 | Revelation 17-19 | Defeated is the world power (like Rome-Babylon) that is persecuting & corrupting the world of the Christian. |
| Dec 31 | Revelation 20-22 | Revelation ends with visions of the final defeat of Satan, the new heavens and new earth, new Jerusalem, God's throne, glory, and worship. |
| The Book of Revelation and thus the Bible itself ends with a reminder that Christ is coming soon to complete what he started when he came that first Christmas. Congratulations on the completion of your journey! May God bless you and strengthen you for the next journey God leads you to take. | | |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|------------|---|
| Dec 1 | Mark 1-8 | Mark (the "short gospel" and the basis for Matthew and Luke) should be read fast. Note how often "immediately" is used. |
| Dec 2 | Mark 9-16 | Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "synoptic" gospels because they share the "same view." |
| Jesus Christ, Our Savior: The gospel of John offers a fourth portrayal of Christ that describes his encounters with people. The readings in John will often cover one chapter so that you can study these multi-level conversations. | | |
| Dec 3 | John 1 | This prologue helps us see the life of the Word before He became flesh in Bethlehem. Jesus encounters John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel. |
| Dec 4 | John 2 | Jesus performs the first of His signs at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus "cleanses" the temple. |
| Dec 5 | John 3 | Jesus challenges the leader, Nicodemus, to be born again by the Spirit, & he encounters John's disciples. |
| Dec 6 | John 4 | As Jesus broke down barriers, he gave "living water" to the Samaritan woman who longed to be accepted by a God who longs for true worshipers. |
| Dec 7 | John 5 | Jesus' authority is challenged. He claims to have been given authority by God the Father to speak about life. |
| Dec 8 | John 6 | Jesus feeds 5,000: "I AM the bread of life." His sayings offer a preview of the Lord's supper, but they also offend many. |
| Dec 9 | John 7-8 | Jesus creates a stir. He shows compassion for the woman caught in adultery. The truth sets you free. |
| Dec 10 | John 9 | More than healing a blind man, Jesus talks about those who are able to see, but choose not to see. |
| Dec 11 | John 10 | Jesus is the good shepherd, who calls his sheep by name, leads them, and gives his life for them. |
| Dec 12 | John 11 | Jesus goes to Bethany, just 2 miles from Jerusalem, knowing that raising Lazarus will bring his final hour. |
| Dec 13 | John 12 | Mary anoints Jesus for his burial. He is the grain of wheat that falls to earth and rises to draw all men. |
| Dec 14 | John 13 | Jesus washes the disciples' feet at Passover & gives a new commandment: love one another as He loves. |
| Dec 15 | John 14-16 | Jesus shares about events that will take him back to heaven so He can send His Spirit in His place. |
| Dec 16 | John 17-19 | Jesus prays for his disciples, is arrested, put on trial, crucified, and buried. |

Warning and Captivity: The prophets are called and sent by God to wake God's people and warn them of their unfaithfulness. A coming crisis looms on the horizon in the form of a powerful nation which is taking over the Near East. The crisis will result in the destruction of the Holy City and the temple and expose the weakness of their faith. It is only through the discipline of exile that God's people will learn to rely upon God again.

Hope and Return: This phase, dominated by a message of hope, announces the end of captivity and the opportunity to return home and rebuild the holy city. Although God's people continue to lack status as an independent nation, they nevertheless have been given a new start as a people of faith. The longer David's throne remains vacant, the more people's hopes focus on the reign of God and the coming of His Anointed One.

The New Covenant in Jesus Christ: The deeper God's reach goes to reclaim and redeem humanity, the more human beings distance themselves, so God takes the initiative and intersects humanity by sending His Son, His Anointed One, as a human being into the scene of human rebellion. Jesus attracts followers and teaches them about living under the reign of God. When Jesus gives his life for his followers, his suffering love creates a force of new life that not only results in his own resurrection, but also results in the power of new life for Jesus' followers.

The Body of Christ, the Church: The followers of Jesus Christ are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the Church, Christ's Body on earth, and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. As His Body they seek to live under the reign of God and to work with Christ to make the Reign of God known.

These stages show how God works in His people. You will experience these stages each time you walk through a layer of readings. Each layer will add form and flesh to your journey with God. May God bless you in this exciting journey.

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Jan 1 | Genesis 1-2 Psalm 8 | Creation: At the beginning of this journey, take time to reflect on who we are – God made us in his image, set us in this world, cares for us, and is mindful of us. |
| Jan 2 | Genesis 3-5 | Fall: Adam and Eve ate the fruit so their eyes could be open, knowing good and evil. Knowing all the choices would free them from having to rely solely on God's leading. This separation from God's care brought the death-dealing effects of shame, blame, and conflict. |
| Jan 3 | Genesis 6-9 | The world became such a violent place that God had to start to over. He preserved a remnant of humanity in Noah's family. God promised it was the last time. |
| Jan 4 | Genesis 10-12 | The Tower of Babel was an attempt to rise to God's level and fame. God does something new with Abram. |
| Covenant Journey: the focus for the rest of January. God chooses Abram and Sarai, so they can model for others God's blessings. They step out in faith. | | |
| Jan 5 | Genesis 13-16 | God's covenant plan is for offspring as numerous as dust, but Abram's impatience produces Ishmael. |
| Jan 6 | Genesis 17-19 | Now it's "Abraham & Sarah". Circumcision becomes a sign of the covenant. Two wicked cities are destroyed. |
| Jan 7 | Genesis 20-22 | Willingness to sacrifice Isaac becomes a test of faith. God provides ram and prohibits child sacrifice. |
| Jan 8 | Genesis 23-25 | Death of Sarah. Isaac gets a wife from his homeland. Jacob cheats his brother Esau out of his birthright. |
| Jan 9 | Genesis 26-28 | When Jacob cheats Esau out of his blessing, he must flee. A dream shows he will be heir to the covenant. |
| Jan 10 | Genesis 29-32 | Jacob meets his match with uncle Laban, but it's wrestling with God that turns his life around. |
| Jan 11 | Genesis 33-36 | Jacob and Esau reconcile. Covenant with God is renewed. Jacob has twelve sons. Isaac dies. |
| Jan 12 | Genesis 37-39 | Joseph, the dreamer, seems destined for greatness, but that does not preserve him from trouble. |
| Jan 13 | Genesis 40-42 | Joseph continues to get in and out of trouble, but we see it is God guiding these events for the benefit of all. |
| Jan 14 | Genesis 43-46 | Joseph's family and his people reunite in Egypt as they migrate there to avoid famine. |
| Jan 15 | Genesis 47-50 | Joseph and brothers reconcile because although they meant it for evil, God meant it for good. |
| Jan 16 | Exodus 1-2 | During the 400+ years in Egypt, God's people are enslaved, but God hears the cry of the powerless. |

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|---|-------------------------|--|
| Nov 16 | Jonah 1-4 | This is the story of Jonah who has the problem of national pride that keeps him from witnessing to the people of Nineveh. God responds in grace to Nineveh's sincere acts of repentance. |
| Nov 17 | Haggai 1-2 | Haggai is a prophet whose mission was to encourage the exiles to rebuild the temple. God says He will fill His house with His splendor. |
| Nov 18 | Psalm 120-134 | These psalms form a collection called "Songs of Ascents" to be sung on pilgrimage "up" to the temple. |
| Nov 19 | Joel 1-3 | Joel sees a vision of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all flesh, men and women, people of all ages, and all classes. |
| Nov 20 | Malachi 1-4 | The temple has been rebuilt, but Malachi sees a day when God himself will come in to test the offering of His people. |
| Nov 21 | Isaiah 56-57 | Isaiah sees a day when those who were formerly banned from the temple are allowed, so God's house can become a house of prayer for all people. |
| Nov 22 | Isaiah 58-60 | The "fast" God chooses is the yoke of injustice being broken. God's glory will shine and draw the nations. |
| Nov 23 | Isaiah 61-63 | A beautiful vision of God's salvation and anointing that Jesus will later claim for Himself at his "inauguration." |
| Nov 24 | Isaiah 64-66 | A vision of God creating new heavens, a new earth, & a new Jerusalem where everyone comes to worship. |
| Nov 25 | Daniel 7-12 | Daniel sees apocalyptic, end-of-time visions of cosmic battles of good over evil. The future superpowers, the Greek and Roman empires, are foreseen. |
| Think back to when God's people wanted a king to be like other nations, in effect, casting God aside as king. These psalms proclaim God to be King. | | |
| Nov 26 | Psalm 9-12, 29 | These psalms are called "enthronement" psalms because they show the Lord himself on His throne. |
| Nov 27 | Psalm 46-48, 75-76 | "Songs of Zion" praise God for the gift of His presence in, & favor upon, Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, the city of God. |
| Nov 28 | Psalm 93-100 | Enthronement psalms & Songs of Zion remind us that God deserves our worship as King of the universe. |
| Nov 29 | Psalm 110-113 | These psalms not only remind us of the praise due Him, but also our humble submission to Him as Lord. |
| Nov 30 | Psalms 146-147, 149-150 | The last verse of the Psalms sums it up: "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord." |

| Date | | Notes/Reflections |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Nov 1 | Ezekiel 8-11 | God's glory, which was never confined to the temple, moves out before it's destroyed and goes toward the East into the place of exile with His people in Babylon. |
| Nov 2 | Ezekiel 12-16 | Ezekiel speaks against false prophets who whitewash the truth. Captives must stay faithful in a land of idols. |
| Nov 3 | Ezekiel 17-19 | God's people are being judged now, but they will be exalted afterward. Everyone will be judged for their own sins. |
| Nov 4 | Ezekiel 20-24 | The exiles are learning. The remnant in Judah will soon be disciplined by Babylon as Israel was disciplined by Assyria. |
| Nov 5 | Ezekiel 25-32 | The "superpowers" roll over the smaller nations and each other. The humiliation of each translates into judgment. |
| Hope and Return: This phase announces the end of captivity and the opportunity to return home and rebuild the holy city. Hopes focus increasingly on the reign of God and the hopeful memory of God's promise to David. | | |
| Nov 6 | Ezekiel 33-34 | God's people must respond to the messenger. God is the shepherd who gathers his scattered flock. |
| Nov 7 | Ezekiel 35-36 | For the sake of His name, God will put his Spirit and a new heart in His people, & bring them back home. |
| Nov 8 | Ezekiel 37-39 | God gives a vision of a valley of dry bones being brought back to life by His Spirit & returning home. |
| Nov 9 | Ezekiel 40-44 | The new temple is envisioned with God's glory moving back from Babylon to Jerusalem to the new temple. |
| Nov 10 | Ezekiel 45-48 | A vision of the worship life of God's people being restored after the return of the Exiles back home. |
| Nov 11 | Ps. 102, 85, 107-108, 30 | The time has come for God to favor Zion, to turn mourning into dancing, to restore Jacob's fortunes. |
| Nov 12 | Psalms 116-118 | Thanksgiving for being delivered from captivity and being vindicated. |
| Not everyone taken into exile returned home. More and more Jews lived outside of Israel as "diaspora" in other lands, including Daniel & Esther. | | |
| Nov 13 | Daniel 1-6 | God rewards the faithfulness of Daniel & friends while in Exile in both the Babylonian & Persian royal courts. |
| Nov 14 | Esther 1-4 | In Persia, Esther and Mordecai fear being persecuted for being Jews. Esther is in the right place to act. |
| Nov 15 | Esther 5-10 | Esther takes courage, uses great wisdom, and the praying and fasting of God's people pays off. |

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|---|-------------------|--|
| Jan 17 | Exodus 3-6 | God reveals himself as the great I AM and his plan for Moses to lead God's covenant people to freedom. |
| Jan 18 | Exodus 7-10 | The Egyptians believed their "gods" justified slavery. God uses plagues to defeat that idea. |
| Jan 19 | Exodus 11-13 | The Passover meal symbolizes God's covenant favor and redemption which both unfold before their eyes. |
| Jan 20 | Exodus 14-16 | God parts the sea and secures their freedom, but their complaining shows they are still like children. |
| Jan 21 | Exodus 17-20 | These ex-slaves need help understanding that they are the Covenant People. God gives the Ten Commandments and other laws to form them into a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. |
| Although God's laws are very important in the formation of God's people, this four-month cycle of readings skips over the bulk of the laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They will be covered in the next cycle. | | |
| Jan 22 | Exodus 24, 32-34 | God reveals his power and laws at Mt. Sinai, but his wrath burns when his people worship a golden calf. |
| Jan 23 | Exodus 35-37 | God tells how to make the tabernacle and furnishings to facilitate worship among God's covenant people. |
| Jan 24 | Exodus 38-40 | More furnishings and vestments are made and everything is consecrated for God's indwelling. |
| The wilderness phase, covered in the book of Numbers, is an important part of the Covenant journey of God's people. It will be covered in the next cycle, but Moses summarizes for the younger generation the lessons learned in the wilderness before they enter and take possession of the promised land. | | |
| Jan 25 | Deuteronomy 1-3 | Wilderness wandering extended to 40 years because the Exodus generation did not trust in God's power. |
| Jan 26 | Deuteronomy 4-5 | God renews the 10 Commandments with the next generation. No idols or rivals to God or exile will result. |
| Jan 27 | Deuteronomy 6-8 | God's people shall love the Lord with all heart, soul, might and remain loyal to the covenant relationship. |
| Jan 28 | Deuteronomy 9-11 | The experience in the wilderness teaches that faithfulness brings blessings, and unfaithfulness, curses. |
| Jan 29 | Deuteronomy 26-28 | God instructs the people in a covenant renewal service, and warns them of exile if they are unfaithful. |
| Jan 30 | Deuteronomy 29-31 | God sets before his people a choice: life or death. He encourages Joshua as he prepares to take the lead. |
| Jan 31 | Deuteronomy 32-34 | There's a summary of history, a foretelling of the future, a song to the 12 tribes, and Moses' obituary. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|----------------|--|
| A New Nation under God's Reign: The Book of Joshua, which appears in the next cycle, tells about Moses successor and the settlement of Canaan, the land of promise. The Book of Judges recaps this period in its first chapters. | | |
| Feb 1 | Joshua 24 | The covenant must be renewed before each goes to a new home. They must choose whom they'll serve. |
| Feb 2 | Judges 1-2 | The land's inhabitants who were not driven out became adversaries and their gods became a snare. |
| The pattern in Judges is that God's people follow after other gods. They suffer defeat until God raises up a variety of charismatic leaders, called "judges," who lead them victoriously until the judge dies, then the pattern repeats. | | |
| Feb 3 | Judges 3-5 | Focus is on the judge, Deborah, and her general, Barak, and their helper, the woman named Jael. |
| Feb 4 | Judges 6-8 | Focus: Gideon destroyed Baal altar and showed God's power by going into battle with a small force. |
| Feb 5 | Judges 9-12 | Focus is on Jephthah who made a foolish vow to the Lord and lost his daughter. |
| Feb 6 | Judges 13-16 | Focus is on Samson who lost his strength because he made compromises, but self-sacrifice wins the day. |
| Feb 7 | Judges 17-21 | Israel suffers from a leadership vacuum: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." |
| Feb 8 | 1 Samuel 1-3 | Samuel, dedicated to the Lord by his mother, Hannah, grows to become a trustworthy prophet of the Lord. |
| Samuel was an important transitional figure. He was the last "judge," but he would also become the first advisor to the next kind of leader of God's people. | | |
| Feb 9 | 1 Samuel 4-7 | We see the ark of the Lord as a destructive force to the Philistines but beneficial to God's faithful people. |
| Feb 10 | 1 Samuel 8-10 | Samuel's sons are not fit judges, so the people ask for a king. God anoints the charismatic leader, Saul. |
| To be like other nations, the people want a king. Samuel does not like it because it implies a rejection of God as King. God agrees with Samuel, but allows the people to make the decision. This is an example of God meeting His people where they are and making the best of the situation. | | |
| Feb 11 | 1 Samuel 11-13 | Saul is king, but Samuel acts as his prophet & advisor. Saul acted outside of his role and fell from favor. |
| Feb 12 | 1 Samuel 14-15 | Saul acted rashly, putting his son in jeopardy, & chose to perform a religious act instead of obeying God. |
| Feb 13 | 1 Samuel 16-17 | The next in line to be king is David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, who has a passionate heart as seen in his bravery and his music. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| Oct 17 | Isaiah 6-8 | The call of Isaiah. He reassures Ahaz that God-is-with-them (Emmanuel) to spare Judah when Assyria takes their northern neighbor, Israel, into exile. |
| Oct 18 | Isaiah 9-12 | God will judge Assyria and preserve Judah's faithful remnant for when He will send the righteous King. |
| Oct 19 | Isaiah 13-18 | The Mediterranean world's "superpowers" Assyria & Babylon will determine the fate of smaller nations. |
| Oct 20 | Isaiah 19-23 | The nations will be disciplined during this time, but in the end the oppressors themselves will face judgment. |
| Oct 21 | Isaiah 24-27 | This is Isaiah's apocalyptic vision of the end times, of justice being done, and then God raising up Zion, and drawing people to the holy city. |
| Oct 22 | Isaiah 28-29 | God's people give lip service but their hearts are far from Him. Judgment will be followed by future hope. |
| Oct 23 | Isaiah 30-32 | Alliances with Egypt will not help. People should trust in God who will cause Zion to turn back to Him. |
| Oct 24 | Isaiah 33-35 | God is the king, the ruler of all, who executes justice & makes a Holy Way for His people to return to the Lord. |
| Oct 25 | Isaiah 36-39 | As Assyria takes Israel & the fortified cities of Judah, it is not allowed to take Jerusalem, giving the city time. |
| Oct 26 | Ps. 50, 73, 81-82, 115 | These psalms are prophetic in nature, echoing the warning given to God's people. |
| Oct 27 | Psalms 137, 42-44, 77 | Psalms 137, and the others, describe what it is like in the Exile to try to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. |
| Oct 28 | Psalms 22, 31, 83, 109 | These psalms are communal laments that describe suffering and the godforsaken feeling of Exile. |
| Oct 29 | Psalms 74, 79-80, 88-89 | These are reflections on what it means for Jerusalem, the holy city, along with David's throne, and the temple to be destroyed. |
| The Babylonian Exile happened in three separate deportations. One before, one during, and one after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Ezekiel, who was taken into Exile with the first group, was called by God to be a prophet to God's people in Exile. | | |
| Oct 30 | Ezekiel 1-3 | This symbolic picture of God is intended to convey a dynamic, not stationary, picture of God. Wings, eyes, wheels, and four faces symbolize God's portable, omni-presence that can move with His people. |
| Oct 31 | Ezekiel 4-7 | Ezekiel is told of news back home that Jerusalem is under siege and going to suffer judgment. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Oct 1 | Psalms 66-71, 86, 91-92 | Under God's wings, David finds refuge. God helps him find meaning in life. |
| Oct 2 | Psalms 138, 140-145, 72 | Through David's troubles, God's promise to him still motivated him. Psalm 72 concerns his son, Solomon. |
| Oct 3 | <i>1 Kings 3, 8</i> | These scriptures remind us of Solomon's prayer for wisdom & prepare us to read his proverbs of wisdom. |
| Oct 4 | Proverbs 1-3 | Wisdom is to be desired like gold. Its beginning is the fear of the Lord. He disciplines those whom He loves. |
| Oct 5 | Proverbs 4-6 | Wisdom means being faithful. Temptations to be unfaithful to God are pictured as a beautiful prostitute who must be avoided. |
| Oct 6 | Proverbs 7-9 | The wisdom of God existed before the creation of the world and was God's "co-worker" during creation. |
| Oct 7 | Proverbs 10-13 | The rest of Proverbs contains miscellaneous wisdom sayings. The wise and foolish are contrasted. |
| Oct 8 | Proverbs 14-17 | Some ways seem to be right, but they're not. Commit your work to the Lord & your plans will be established. |
| Oct 9 | Proverbs 18-21 | To get wisdom is to love oneself; to keep it is to prosper. God's purposes will be established. |
| Oct 10 | Proverbs 22-25 | Look for counsel on speech, anger, humility, work ethic, helping the poor, and doing good to enemies. |
| Oct 11 | Proverbs 26-28 | Wisdom involves self-control and relational ability. As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another. |
| Oct 12 | Proverbs 29-31 | The wisdom of Agur, son of Jakeh, & the teachings of King Lemuel's mother concerning a virtuous woman. |
| Oct 13 | Song of Solomon 1-8 | This is a poem attributed to Solomon. Is this meant to praise love between a man and a woman? Between God and Israel? Between Christ and the Church? |
| Oct 14 | <i>1 Kings 11-14</i> | For all of Solomon's wisdom, his lack of faithfulness in the end caused division in the kingdom about 922BC. |
| Warning: In the 8 th century BC, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, in that order, warned God's people of impending judgment. Isaiah (chapters 1-39) has the most to say among this group of prophets, and also describes, more than any other, the coming Messiah who will reign on the throne of his ancestor, David. | | |
| Oct 15 | Isaiah 1-2 | Unfaithful Judah is in a state of moral and spiritual rebellion. When they offer sacrifices they are only going through the motions. Yet, God has high hopes. |
| Oct 16 | Isaiah 3-5 | The prosperous who ignore God's warnings will fall the hardest. God will restore Zion after it is cleansed. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|----------------|--|
| Feb 14 | 1 Samuel 18-20 | The friendship of David & Jonathan, Saul's son, offers protection for David from Saul's jealous rampages. |
| Feb 15 | 1 Samuel 21-23 | David flees from Saul. The priests of Nob are killed for helping David. The Philistines remain a constant foe. |
| Feb 16 | 1 Samuel 24-25 | When David had the opportunity to kill Saul, David chose not to. His habit of restraint also wooed Abigail. |
| Feb 17 | 1 Samuel 26-28 | David spared Saul's life a 2 nd time, then fled to a city of the Philistines. Saul is told of his imminent death. |
| Feb 18 | 1 Samuel 29-31 | The Philistines went to fight Israel, but David fought the Amalekites. The Philistines kill Saul and Jonathan. |
| David respected Saul because he was God's anointed. He sang tribute to Saul and Jonathan, and praised Jabesh-gilead for taking care of Saul's body. | | |
| Feb 19 | 2 Samuel 1-3 | The kingdom divided into Israel (north) led by Saul's son and Abner, and Judah in the south led by David. |
| Feb 20 | 2 Samuel 4-6 | Israel & Judah reunite under King David. Ark is taken to the new capital, Jerusalem, or Zion, City of David. |
| Feb 21 | 2 Samuel 7 | Instead of David making a "house" for God (a temple), God promises David a "house" (an eternal dynasty). |
| This is an important moment in the history of God's covenant relations with His people. The establishment of David's throne becomes a powerful sign of God's continuing favor on the Covenant people. It is through this sign that God will make known abroad His name and the blessings He offers. | | |
| Feb 22 | 2 Samuel 8-10 | God gave victory to David over enemies. David is able to show kindness to Jonathan's last remaining son. |
| Feb 23 | 2 Samuel 11-12 | David misused his power by committing adultery and murdering Bathsheba's husband to cover it up. |
| When David sinned, it was the responsibility of Nathan, the court prophet, to speak truth to power in God's name. David received this from Nathan. He repented and was forgiven, although he suffered consequences of his actions. | | |
| Feb 24 | 2 Samuel 13-15 | David's son, Amnon, raped Tamar, the sister of David's other son, Absalom. Absalom killed Amnon. |
| Feb 25 | 2 Samuel 16-18 | Though David forgave Absalom, Absalom conspired against him. David grieved when Absalom was killed. |
| Feb 26 | 2 Samuel 19-21 | Joab warns that David's grief affects morale. Unrest between Israel and Judah leads to rebellion by Sheba. |
| Feb 27 | 2 Samuel 22-24 | David looks back, reflects on God's favor, and praises his warriors. A census by David must be atoned for. |
| Feb 28 | 1 Kings 1-2 | David made sure Solomon succeeded him instead of Adonijah. Old scores settled to remove blood guilt. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|---------------|--|
| Mar 1 | 1 Kings 3-4 | When Solomon was granted a request from God, he asked for wisdom & it became the source of his fame. |
| Mar 2 | 1 Kings 5-7 | Solomon used his wisdom and peace-time reign to build the temple and centralize worship in Jerusalem. |
| Mar 3 | 1 Kings 8 | Solomon led the Prayer of Dedication for the temple, and led in a renewal of the covenant with God. |
| Mar 4 | 1 Kings 9-11 | Solomon's prosperity and fame excelled, yet for all his wisdom, he made concessions to the gods of his wives and became guilty of the sin of apostasy. |
| Warning & Captivity: Because Solomon worshiped other gods, God tore away the ten northern tribes (referred to as "Israel") and left to his son, Rehoboam, only the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin (known simply as "Judah"). | | |
| Mar 5 | 1 Kings 12-13 | Jeroboam, of Israel, set up pagan shrines in the "high places" to rival God's chosen place in Jerusalem. |
| Mar 6 | 1 Kings 14-16 | Judah's and Israel's kings (except Asa) bring in more Canaanite worship. Samaria becomes Israel's capital. |
| Mar 7 | 1 Kings 17-19 | The prophet Elijah opposed Ahab and Jezebel, and led a miraculous contest with the Baal prophets on Carmel. Elijah had to go into hiding. |
| Mar 8 | 1 Kings 20-22 | Ahab stole a vineyard and Elijah opposed him. Ahab was killed when he ignored advice on going to battle. |
| Mar 9 | 2 Kings 1-3 | After Elijah was taken up to heaven, Elisha took up his mantle and continued speaking truth to power. |
| Mar 10 | 2 Kings 4-5 | Elisha performs miracles so people like the Syrian, Naaman, might know there is a prophet in Israel |
| Mar 11 | 2 Kings 6-8 | Elisha prays that people's eyes will be opened to see God's forces surrounding them to help them. |
| Mar 12 | 2 Kings 9-11 | Ahab's sons, Jezebel, and Baal worship were wiped out of Israel. Later, Jehoiada, priest, renews covenant. |
| Mar 13 | 2 Kings 12-14 | Elisha died. Occasionally a good king would reign in Judah, but "high places" remained to distort the faith. |
| Unlike Samuel and Nathan, Elijah and Elisha were not part of the king's inner circle. During the 8 th century B.C., more of these critical messengers were called by God to speak to kings. Amos warned unfaithful Israel of exile. | | |
| Mar 14 | Amos 1-3 | Because Israel enjoyed God's favor, it will be judged to the same degree as other nations, if not more. |
| Mar 15 | Amos 4-6 | Instead of grieving over its sins and injustice, Israel fell into a false sense of security due to their affluence and outward performance of religious observances. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Sept 16 | Job 40-42 | Job realizes he has been able to know God personally through his suffering. His fortunes are restored. |
| Covenant Journey/A New Nation under God's reign: In these "writings," the stories are recalled of Abraham and Jacob, the deliverance story, the giving of the law, wanderings in the wilderness, and the establishment of God's people. | | |
| Sept 17 | Psalms 105, 114 | The psalmist celebrates God's covenant with Abraham and the deliverance of the covenant people. |
| Sept 18 | Psalms 1, 119 | God's covenant from Mt Sinai is recalled as the psalmist delights in God's laws. |
| Sept 19 | Psalms 135-136 | Celebrates Israel's deliverance, journey through the wilderness, and settlement in the land of promise. |
| Sept 20 | Psalms 78, 106 | Confesses the sins Israel committed in the wilderness and in their settlement in the land of promise. |
| Sept 21 | Ruth 1-4 | The Book of Ruth is often placed in the category called the "Writings." In the time of the Judges, Ruth's loyalty to Naomi wins her Boaz. She becomes the great-grandmother of David. |
| David and the Psalms: David is called "a man after God's own heart" and is thus thought of as the "spiritual father" of all Psalms, though many psalms are attributed to others. Notice how the psalmists lay their hearts bare in the Psalms – exploring the full range of human emotion. | | |
| Sept 22 | 1 Samuel 16-18 | When God's favor fell upon David, it stirred Saul's jealousy. David had to flee from Saul and Saul's men. |
| Sept 23 | Psalms 3-7, 13-14, 16-17 | A common type of psalm prays for deliverance from enemies – trusting God for protection and shelter. |
| Sept 24 | Psalms 23, 25-28, 34-37 | With enemies in constant pursuit, David must maintain his integrity, commit his way to the Lord & wait on him. |
| Sept 25 | Psalms 52-60 | More prayers of deliverance from enemies. What David is learning will prepare him for leadership. |
| Sept 26 | Psalms 18, 20-21, 2, 45 | These "royal psalms" commemorate when David had rest from his enemies and was free to take the throne. |
| Sept 27 | 2 Samuel 6-7 | David brings the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, & God makes a promise to bless David's house forever. |
| Sept 28 | Psalms 15, 24, 84, 87, 101 | "Pilgrimage songs" show David's zeal for the place where the ark, tabernacle, and God's glory is to dwell. |
| Sept 29 | Psalms 51, 32, 38, 103 | David's confessions, including his sin with Bathsheba, teach us how we remain connected to God's grace. |
| Sept 30 | Psalms 40-41, 61-64 | David still had heart-ache. Some of it was from his own children. These psalms express how he coped. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| The 3 rd cycle emphasizes "writings" (psalms, wisdom, stories) which stand out for their literary power. They are organized into this reading plan according to the theme they help illuminate rather than the date of authorship. | | |
| Sept 1 | <i>Genesis 1</i> Ps. 104, 148 | These Psalms (Ps.) complement Genesis 1 by putting our thoughts of the Creator into the form of praise. |
| Sept 2 | <i>Genesis 2</i> Ps. 65, 139 | The Creation Story in Genesis 2 and these psalms help us reflect on God creating us and sustaining us. |
| Human condition: We see our humanity through Creation and the Fall. Genesis 3 mentions three aspects of our condition: mortality, toil, & suffering. | | |
| Sept 3 | <i>Gen. 3,</i> Ps.39, 49, 90 | The Fall teaches us about our mortality – that we should number our days to get a heart full of wisdom. |
| Sept 4 | Ecclesiastes 1-4 | The Teacher reflects on the meaning of toil and its apparent lack of meaning without a knowledge of God |
| Sept 5 | Ecclesiastes 5-8 | We may question the way things are, but in the end we accept that God's ways are beyond understanding. |
| Sept 6 | Ecclesiastes 9-12 | We should take life as it comes. The end of the matter is this: Fear God and keep his commandments. |
| Sept 7 | Job 1-3 | Dire suffering comes, in this instance, not as a result of Job's sin, but to prove what is good in Job. |
| Sept 8 | Job 4-7 | A friend, Eliphaz, says Job must have sinned. Job believes his complaint in the face of suffering is just. |
| Sept 9 | Job 8-10 | Bildad says Job is calling divine justice into question. Job's questioning is not meant to accuse, but to help him cope and learn. |
| Sept 10 | Job 11-14 | Zophar weighs in too. Job claims that those who suffer are not less than those who stand aside and judge. |
| Sept 11 | Job 15-19 | Job is accused of arrogance and godlessness, but he believes that his Redeemer lives & will stand by him. |
| Sept 12 | Job 20-24 | Job realizes that the world's victims are often blamed for their plight and judged to be moral failures while the successful get a pass from judgment. |
| Sept 13 | Job 25-31 | Job finishes his defense. His "friends" bring guilt upon themselves for failing to care for Job in his suffering. |
| Sept 14 | Job 32-37 | A fourth friend rebukes the other friends and then Job, cautioning Job not to forget God's majesty in the midst of his complaints. |
| Sept 15 | Job 38-39 | The Lord reminds Job who is God, who created the universe, who alone has that kind of wisdom, and who is in control. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Mar 16 | Amos 7-9 | God's plumb line is final. Amos announces exile and is called a traitor – says Israel will be restored after exile. |
| Mar 17 | 2 Kings 15-17 | In 722/1BC, Assyria finished Israel, deposed the king, took captives, & assimilated other captives into Israel. |
| Mar 18 | 2 Kings 18-19 Nahum 1-3 | God tells King Hezekiah and the prophets, Isaiah and Nahum, that Jerusalem will be spared, and Assyria sent back north out of Judah. |
| Mar 19 | 2 Kings 20-22 | Manasseh led Judah to backslide, but Josiah finds in the lost book of the law the error of Judah's ways. |
| Mar 20 | Zephaniah 1-3 2 Kings 23 | Zephaniah warned Judah during Josiah's reign. Josiah's religious reforms were notable, but unfortunately they were short-lived. |
| Mar 21 | 2 Kings 24-25 | Babylon took exiles in 597BC and again in 586BC, this time destroying Jerusalem and the temple, and deposing the king, bringing an end to David's dynasty. |
| Mar 22 | Habakkuk 1-3 | The suffering brought on by the Babylonians provokes the questions "Why?" "How long?" & "Where is God?" |
| Mar 23 | Lamentations 1-2 | The exile created suffering, remorse over sin, shame before enemies, & the experience of being disciplined. |
| Mar 24 | Lamentations 3-5 | God's steadfast love & daily mercies give hope to His people that they will be restored when God is ready. |
| Hope and Return: With lessons learned from 70 years of exile, God's people will see God do a new thing as He stirs their hopes for a new life and their return home. This portion of Isaiah contains this amazing announcement as a way to call them forth from despair to renewed faithfulness! | | |
| Mar 25 | Isaiah 40-42 | Comfort! Jerusalem has served her term! God will prepare the way so they can return to their home. |
| Mar 26 | Isaiah 43-46 | God does a new thing to show his sovereignty, using a Persian, Cyrus, to free God's people from Babylon. |
| Mar 27 | Isaiah 47-49 | It's not just about the salvation of Israel, but being a light so that God's salvation may reach all nations. |
| Mar 28 | Isaiah 50-52 | This new exodus will spread God's fame, for it won't be in flight as the 1 st exodus. He'll go before & behind. |
| Mar 29 | Isaiah 53-55 | Israel identified with the Suffering Servant. Will they seek the Lord as His Word is accomplished in them? |
| Mar 30 | Zechariah 1-8 | Zechariah describes the return of exiles, the temple rebuilt, Joshua as priest and Zerubbabel as governor. |
| Mar 31 | Zechariah 9-14 | History's final conflict is foreseen which will refine God's people. The king will come and establish peace. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|------------|--|
| The New Covenant in Jesus Christ: The One anointed by God to fill the throne of David, is none other than God's Son, sent as a baby, wrapped in humanity, born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit. | | |
| April 1 | Luke 1-2 | Angels announce the birth of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, and the Messiah who was conceived by the Spirit. Jesus' humble birth attracted the attention of shepherds, angels, and prophets. |
| April 2 | Luke 3-4 | John's ministry and Jesus' baptism, his fasting and testing time in the wilderness, and his inaugural sermon launch his ministry at age 30. |
| April 3 | Luke 5-6 | His invitations, miracles, and wise teachings attracted disciples, crowds, critics, and kingdom followers. |
| April 4 | Luke 7-8 | Like a growing seed, the inclusive message of the kingdom presents grace, challenge, and healing. |
| April 5 | Luke 9-10 | Disciples are called to witness, follow him on the road of self-denial, and love like the Good Samaritan. |
| April 6 | Luke 11-12 | Jesus teaches on persistent prayer, hypocrisy, use of possessions, choosing loyalties, and being ready. |
| April 7 | Luke 13-14 | Those presuming they're first turn down the narrow way of the kingdom, but the last gladly accept. |
| April 8 | Luke 15-16 | Lost sheep, coins, and prodigal sons are recovered, but elder brothers and the rich find security in status. |
| April 9 | Luke 17-18 | We need to repent and become like children who do not carry the baggage of self-righteousness & riches. |
| April 10 | Luke 19-20 | Jesus becomes a target as he enters Jerusalem, confronts religious authorities, & gets tested by them. |
| April 11 | Luke 21-22 | Jesus' return will test the disciples. The disciples are tested as Jesus prepared to be sacrificed. |
| April 12 | Luke 23-24 | Jesus' suffering love and offer of forgiveness raised him from the dead and proved that he is the Messiah. |
| The Church – the Body of Christ: The story of Jesus in Luke continues in Acts with the story of the Holy Spirit, the acts of the apostles, and the church. | | |
| April 13 | Acts 1-2 | Jesus ascended to heaven, so the Holy Spirit could be sent to Christ's followers in order to be a resurrection community and embody Christ in their life together. |
| April 14 | Acts 3-5 | We see boldness given by the Spirit to the disciples to become apostles and fearless witnesses for Jesus. |
| April 15 | Acts 6-8 | Stephen, set apart for servant ministry, is martyred for his faith, which caused the Word to spread even more. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Aug 16 | Galatians 4-6 | Instead of being bound under the law or bound in a life of the flesh, one should produce the fruit of the Spirit. |
| We see, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul's ability to apply the message of Christ to the many problems of the church – bringing unity to the church in the themes of the Cross, Resurrection, and Christ's embodiment in the Church. | | |
| Aug 17 | 1 Corinthians 1-4 | The cross of Jesus Christ saves, unifies, and has a wisdom that often calls into question worldly wisdom. |
| Aug 18 | 1 Corinthians 5-11 | Paul advises to help Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, rich and poor, come together at the table. |
| Aug 19 | 1 Corinthians 12-14 | Paul talks about the gifts given to every believer for the work of ministry and ordering of the Body of Christ. |
| Aug 20 | 1 Corinthians 15-16 | The 15 th chapter is about the resurrection, and the 16 th chapter is about a benevolent, monetary collection. |
| Aug 21 | 2 Corinthians 1-3 | When a ministry bears fruit, no one has to commend it. The transformation into Christ's likeness is evident. |
| Aug 22 | 2 Corinthians 4-7 | Our outer nature is wasting away & the inner is being renewed everyday as we become new creations. |
| Aug 23 | 2 Corinthians 8-13 | More about the "collection" and a defense of Paul's ministry of God's power working through weakness. |
| In Paul's letters to the Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians, we are given a real gift in terms of Paul's maturity at this point and his vision of the Church. | | |
| Aug 24 | Romans 1-3 | We cannot be saved on our own merits through the law, so we must come to God through Christ. |
| Aug 25 | Romans 4-6 | Abraham shows us faith and trust apart from the law. We trust in the cross, dying with him to rise with him. |
| Aug 26 | Romans 7-8 | A war wages in us. Who will rescue? There is no condemnation in Christ. We're led by the Holy Spirit. |
| Aug 27 | Romans 9-11 | Salvation is being offered to all. We must confess Jesus as Lord with both our lips and in our hearts. |
| Aug 28 | Romans 12-16 | Our spiritual gifts, our service in the Body of Christ, and the way we work & worship together is described. |
| Aug 29 | Ephesians 1-3 | God has brought in those who were near (Jews) and those who were far (Gentiles) – both through Christ. |
| Aug 30 | Ephesians 4-6 | Paul describes how our faith is to mature in the Body of Christ & the importance of wearing "spiritual armor." |
| Aug 31 | Colossians 1-4 | Paul describes a life where Christ is the head of the Body so that He might have first place in everything. |
| As this 2 nd cycle ends, you're getting familiar with the progression of themes. The 3 rd cycle will repeat some chapters (in italics) to keep big events in mind. | | |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|----------------------|--|
| The New Covenant in Jesus Christ: Matthew shows that Jesus the Messiah, the Christ, is the fulfillment of the old covenant, the law, and the prophets. | | |
| Aug 1 | Matthew 1-2 | The story of Jesus' birth emphasizes continuity with the covenant story & disruption for the powers that be. |
| Aug 2 | Matthew 3-4 | At age 30, Jesus' ministry is launched by John's preaching, baptism, temptations, & calling of disciples. |
| Aug 3 | Matthew 5-7 | The Sermon on the Mount is the training manual for a people set apart for God's kingdom – God's reign. |
| Aug 4 | Matthew 8-10 | Jesus' authority – displayed in his teaching, healings, taming of storms, and power to forgive – is given to disciples as they're sent out to announce God's reign. |
| Aug 5 | Matthew 11-12 | John wants a sign, people ignore the signs given to them. Jesus decides to limit signs to "sign of Jonah." |
| Aug 6 | Matthew 13-14 | Parables, like seeds of the kingdom, grow in receptive folk who have nothing to lose, but confound the wise. |
| Aug 7 | Matthew 15-16 | Contrast the hypocrisy of the religious leaders and the church built on Peter's confession. |
| Aug 8 | Matthew 17-18 | Jesus experiences a divine moment before coming down the mountain that confirms his identity and mission. He teaches about conflict and forgiveness. |
| Aug 9 | Matthew 19-20 | It will be hard for the rich because they will think only of what they have to lose in joining God's reign. Thus, the first will be last, and the last will be first |
| Aug 10 | Matthew 21-22 | Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, staged a protest in the temple, & gave the great commandment. |
| Aug 11 | Matthew 23-25 | Jesus speaks against the religious leaders, speaks on the end times, future persecution, & future judgment. |
| Aug 12 | Matthew 26-28 | Crucifixion did not undo Jesus' ministry. It advanced the divine mission and led to the Great Commission. |
| The Church, the Body of Christ: We see Paul's ministry through the letters he wrote to encourage, advise, and teach the churches he helped plant. | | |
| Aug 13 | 1 Thessa-lonians 1-5 | This community of faith received the message of Christ and turned from idols. To remain faithful in the midst of persecution, they must encourage one another with the message of hope in Christ's return. |
| Aug 14 | 2 Thessa-lonians 1-3 | Paul warns against false teachers. He also warns them against remaining idle. |
| Aug 15 | Galatians 1-3 | The Galatians were slipping from a gospel of grace back to a religion of works based on the law of Moses. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|--------------------|---|
| April 16 | Acts 9-11 | The dramatic conversion of Saul (Paul) and the vision of Peter lead them to share the gospel among Gentiles who are very receptive. |
| April 17 | Acts 12-14 | Barnabas and Paul take their first missionary journey. Through these missions Christianity is being spread to the urban centers of the Roman Empire. |
| April 18 | Acts 15-16 | The Jerusalem council accepts Gentile Christians, keeping Christianity from merely being another Jewish sect. Paul's 2 nd missionary journey goes into Europe. |
| April 19 | Acts 17-19 | With the Jews, Paul has to break through tradition, & with the Gentiles, he has to break through the culture. |
| April 20 | Acts 20-22 | Paul gets into trouble back in Jerusalem, but not before stopping along the way to encourage believers. |
| April 21 | Acts 23-25 | Paul's life was in jeopardy in Jerusalem, but his Roman citizenship got him taken to his home district. |
| April 22 | Acts 26-28 | After prison and a difficult voyage, Paul got to take his case to Rome, where he was able to witness. |
| Paul and Peter would both eventually die for their faith in Rome. The following letters were sent near the end of their amazing ministries. They instruct new believers in their new "priesthood" and to persevere until Christ returns. | | |
| April 23 | Philippians 1-4 | Paul writes one of his most encouraging letters to the church in Philippi while in prison. |
| April 24 | 1 Timothy 1-3 | Paul writes to his spiritual son Timothy to instruct him in how to shepherd his congregation. |
| April 25 | 1 Timothy 4-6 | Paul tells Timothy to stand fast in the face of false teachings and to teach the true faith. |
| April 26 | Philemon Titus 1-3 | Philemon was also written while Paul was in prison. Paul instructed Titus as he did Timothy. |
| April 27 | 2 Timothy 1-4 | This 2 nd letter to Timothy is meant to encourage Timothy. As he nears the end, Paul gives a last word. |
| April 28 | 1 Peter 1-2 | The identity, life, and community of new believers are shaped by the resurrection and death of Jesus. |
| April 29 | 1 Peter 3-5 | Believers are warned that life will be hard for them, but their faithfulness and humility will be rewarded. |
| April 30 | 2 Peter 1-3 | The primary focus here is keeping believers' hope alive and being ready for Christ's second coming. |
| The first cycle is completed. In the second cycle, prepare to move again through the same stages that you just encountered, beginning with Creation. Look for the new emphases in the books you will read. | | |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| May 1 | <i>Genesis 1</i> Psalm 19, 33 | Creation: Notice the connection between God's creative Word and God's Word given in his laws. |
| May 2 | <i>Genesis 2-3, 12-17</i> | Fall and Covenant: Humankind can't go back to Eden the way it left. The way back is forward through God's offer of a covenant relationship and our participation. |
| May 3 | <i>Exodus 3, 19-20</i> | In this cycle, it is important to connect the deliverance of God's people with the giving of God's laws. |
| Covenant Journey: The Exodus freed God's people from slavery, but they are still very childlike and need formation. Without God's laws they will be in danger of falling into the bondage of sin, immaturity, and chaos. | | |
| May 4 | Exodus 21-23 | A variety of laws are often woven together including civil laws, laws of restitution, family regulations, religious laws, and laws against oppression. |
| May 5 | Exodus 25-27 | A portable tabernacle is to be built for worship along with an ark, table, lampstand, most holy place, & altar. |
| May 6 | Exodus 28-31 | Instructions are given for vestments, ordination, wash basin, anointing oil, incense, and atonement. |
| Covenant Journey: Leviticus is a guide for worship in the context of a powerful, holy, God. Through laws pertaining to worship, customs, and relationships, boundaries are set up in the way one approaches God and life. | | |
| May 7 | Leviticus 1-3 | God's people make offerings of well-being involving sacrifice, blood, fire, aroma, salt, oil, and incense. |
| May 8 | Leviticus 4-6 | Priests, rulers, and people atone for sin by confessing and making a blood sacrifice as restitution or penalty. |
| May 9 | Leviticus 7-10 | Moses leads in the inauguration of Aaron's priesthood. Two of Aaron's sons die because they weren't careful. |
| May 10 | Leviticus 11-15 | Rules are given on clean and unclean food, good hygiene, & what makes a person ceremonially clean. |
| May 11 | Leviticus 16-18 | Covered in the Law is the meaning of the scapegoat, the most holy place, Day of Atonement, blood, & sex. |
| May 12 | Leviticus 19-20 | These diverse laws define how to be holy as God is holy, to distinguish God's people from other cultures. |
| May 13 | Leviticus 21-22 | Both the priests and the offerings given by the people must be kept undefiled and without blemish. |
| May 14 | Leviticus 23-25 | Time is kept sacred by keeping the Sabbath, the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Booths, the Day of Atonement, and the Jubilee year. |
| May 15 | Leviticus 26-27 | Keeping life sacred by observing God's laws is our covenant responsibility and determines our well-being. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| July 16 | Jeremiah 27-29 | Jeremiah says that the yoke of Babylon will be worn for 70 long years to teach and discipline the exiles. The prophet Hananiah symbolically breaks the yoke and gives false hope of an early return. Jeremiah's advice to the Exiles is to accept where God has planted them and use the time to grow spiritually. |
| July 17 | Jeremiah 30-31 | Through the experience of exile, God will make a new covenant with His people – a covenant written on their hearts – and He will restore the fortunes of His people. |
| July 18 | Jeremiah 32-33 | At God's direction, while Jerusalem was under siege, Jeremiah bought a field to symbolize a hopeful future. |
| July 19 | Jeremiah 34-37 | Jehoiakim burned Jeremiah's message as a sign of his disdain. Zedekiah showed similar disregard. |
| July 20 | Jeremiah 38-41 | Jeremiah's thrown into a cistern for urging surrender. Zedekiah resisted and was taken to Babylon in fetters. |
| July 21 | Jeremiah 42-45 | Some of Judah's remnant determined to go to Egypt despite Jeremiah's warnings of further disaster. |
| July 22 | Jeremiah 46-49; Obadiah | God's judgment comes upon all the nations of the Near East through God's instrument, Babylon. |
| July 23 | Jeremiah 49-50 | Even though Babylon was God's instrument for a season, Babylon will not escape judgment. |
| July 24 | Jeremiah 51-52 | Babylon, a pagan nation, after serving her purpose, will be defeated by another super power, Persia. |
| Hope & Return: The hope Jeremiah had preached came true for the exiles. It is a story of homecoming, rebuilding, and an open door to return to the Lord. | | |
| July 25 | Ezra 1-3 | Cyrus, of Persia, allowed the exiles to return home to rebuild the temple. Offerings resume. Foundation laid. |
| July 26 | Ezra 4-6 | Resistance comes from the neighbors and they stop the work until leaders intervene with the Persians. |
| July 27 | Ezra 7-10 | Ezra sets out to study God's law, teach it to the people, and lead in a time of spiritual revival & reform. |
| July 28 | Nehemiah 1-3 | Nehemiah becomes an inspiring leader in the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. |
| July 29 | Nehemiah 4-7 | Resistance stops the work mid-way through. God's people are led to cooperate and they get the job done. |
| July 30 | Nehemiah 8-9 | Ezra led in a national confession & encouraged: "The joy of the Lord is your strength!" They remembered. |
| July 31 | Nehemiah 10-13 | They dedicated the wall and resumed the service of God through regular, corporate worship. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
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| July 1 | 2 Chronicles 24-28 | Notice the examples and the consequences in the stories of Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz. |
| Warning and Captivity: During the 8 th century, when Amos preached to Israel, the prophets, Hosea and Micah, warned Judah in light of Israel's plight. | | |
| July 2 | Hosea 1-4 | Hosea is taught what it's like for God, portrayed as a jilted lover, to keep loving a people who are unfaithful. |
| July 3 | Hosea 5-9 | Hosea warns Israel (also called Ephraim, Samaria) and Judah. He calls them to return to the Lord. |
| July 4 | Hosea 10-14 | God is a heart-sick father who disciplines a rebellious son but never stops loving and hoping for his return. |
| July 5 | Micah 1-7 | Micah preaches impending exile, future restoration, and God's requirement of justice, kindness, & humility. |
| July 6 | 2 Chronicles 29-32 | Hezekiah led a religious reform, and God kept the Assyrians from taking Jerusalem. |
| July 7 | 2 Chronicles 33-36 | Josiah recovered the lost book of the law but his reforms came too late to save Judah. |
| Warning & Captivity: Jeremiah's prophetic work in the 6 th century covers a long period. We see how he seeks to energize God's people – first, by urging God's people to grieve their unfaithfulness when they are being complacent, and then, by helping God's people hope during times of despair in the Exile. | | |
| July 8 | Jeremiah 1-2 | Jeremiah is called to warn God's people of destruction because their devotion to God no longer exists. |
| July 9 | Jeremiah 3-5 | Judah didn't learn from Israel. It's ignoring the alarm. Yet the Lord is calling Judah to repent & return. |
| July 10 | Jeremiah 6-9 | Judah's isn't treating its wound. The temple gives them a false security. They should be heart-sick and weeping, but they are not. They are urged to grieve. |
| July 11 | Jeremiah 10-13 | Idols are projections of man. God will expose Judah's shame for trusting in them and forsaking the covenant. |
| July 12 | Jeremiah 14-16 | The drought should alarm people, but they don't see their sin. "Prophets" speak lies people want to hear. |
| July 13 | Jeremiah 17-19 | Judah could have repented and been reshaped by the Potter. Continued defiance will end in brokenness. |
| July 14 | Jeremiah 20-23 | Jeremiah is put in stocks for speaking against the king. He'd rather not preach any more, but the Word is like a fire in his bones. He must warn people. |
| July 15 | Jeremiah 24-26 | Those taken into exile are not "bad figs", but really better off, for they will be the ones to learn faithfulness again through the experience and discipline of Exile. |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
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| May 16 | Numbers 1-2 | After a census is taken, the 12 tribes are stationed with Levites in the center surrounding the tabernacle. |
| May 17 | Numbers 3-4 | The Levites, led by Aaron, are stationed with specific responsibilities for the tabernacle given to each clan. |
| May 18 | Numbers 5-6 | Procedure for detecting adultery. The order of Nazirite and their vows. God teaches Aaron a blessing to give. |
| May 19 | Numbers 7-8 | Each tribe gives an offering of dedication for the altar. The Levites are set apart for their holy responsibilities. |
| May 20 | Numbers 9-12 | Through cloud and fire, God led them, fed them when they complained, and chastised them when needed. |
| May 21 | Numbers 13-14 | 12 spies are sent to Canaan, the land of promise. 10 lack the faith to believe they can successfully enter. |
| The people did not listen to Joshua and Caleb, but chose instead to listen to the ten. They were not putting their faith in God, so God caused them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until that generation died, and the next generation could enter. The wilderness journey will provide a unique context for important lessons of faith and trust to be learned. | | |
| May 22 | Numbers 15-16 | Unintentional sin can be atoned, but Korah shows that willful rebellion gets you cut off from God's people. |
| May 23 | Numbers 17-18 | In exchange for having no land, Levites enjoy sacred duties, donations, and closeness to God's sanctuary. |
| May 24 | Numbers 19-21 | Moses won't enter Canaan for garnering too much attention. Miriam and Aaron die. The bronze serpent. |
| May 25 | Numbers 22-24 | God uses Balaam (and his donkey) to report to Balak God's favor and protection for Israel over its enemies. |
| May 26 | Numbers 25-27 | Justice done, plague averted. A census is taken of the new generation. Joshua will be Moses' successor. |
| May 27 | Numbers 28-30 | Moses' reviews God's instructions for the 3 festivals to be observed at harvest, as well as rules for vows. |
| May 28 | Numbers 31-32 | Israel goes to war with Midian, followed by the division and conquest of the valley east of the Jordan river. |
| May 29 | Numbers 33-34 | Stages of the journey and land allotment for each tribe are reviewed. Inhabitants must be removed. |
| May 30 | Numbers 35-36 | Provisions are made for the Levites by giving them cities to live in, which include cities of refuge. |
| May 31 | <i>Deuteronomy</i> 5-7 | God is renewing the covenant with the new generation of God's people and reminding them of their purpose. |
| Deuteronomy literally means "second law." These laws restate and elaborate earlier laws for the purpose of preparing the next generation to enter Canaan. | | |

| Date | Scripture | Notes/Reflections |
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| June 1 | Deuteronomy 12-14 | All traces of the death-dealing pagan culture of Canaan must be removed, so as not to be a snare. |
| June 2 | Deuteronomy 15-17 | Take care of the needy, celebrate holy festivals, uphold justice. Kings are also subject to God's laws. |
| June 3 | Deuteronomy 18-20 | Know the difference between fortune tellers and true prophets. God gives victory IF his people are faithful. |
| June 4 | Deuteronomy 21-23 | Laws provide for justice, set you apart from the pagan culture, and admit you to God's presence. |
| June 5 | Deuteronomy 24-25 | Miscellaneous laws from divorce to marriage, care for the poor, and honest weights in commerce. |
| June 6 | <i>Deuteronomy 31-34</i> | Review of Moses' final words and his obituary, before we move to Joshua and the conquest of Canaan. |
| A New Nation Under God's Reign: The wilderness journey was preparation for settling in the land of promise and beginning the task of becoming a priestly nation. Joshua, as their leader, proves to be a worthy successor to Moses. | | |
| June 7 | Joshua 1-4 | After spying out Jericho, with Rahab's help, Israel prepared to cross the Jordan river and enter the land. Notice how the river parts for Joshua as the sea was parted for Moses. |
| June 8 | Joshua 5-7 | Jericho fell when encircled as God directed, but its spoils weren't destroyed, bringing about a later defeat. |
| June 9 | Joshua 8-10 | Israel learned its lesson and then won several victories, with God even causing the sun to stand still. |
| June 10 | Joshua 11-13 | A group of kings got together to take on Israel, but were defeated. The land is divided among the tribes. |
| June 11 | Joshua 14-16 | Caleb's faithfulness is remembered. The inhabitants not destroyed will be left to become a snare later on. |
| June 12 | Joshua 17-19 | The division of the land continued until each tribe had its allotment, including Joseph's two half-tribes. |
| June 13 | Joshua 20-22 | The cities of refuge & Levitical cities were set up. The eastern tribes return after helping the western tribes. |
| June 14 | Joshua 23-24 | Before the tribes go to their new homes, Joshua leads them in renewing their covenant to be faithful to God. |
| June 15 | <i>Judges 1-2</i> | These two chapters remind us of the pattern God's people fell into while they were led by the judges. |
| A transitional leader comes along in Samuel. He will be the last judge and a prophet to the first two kings. First and Second Chronicles tell the stories of these kings. They cover the same time period as 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. Look for the different lessons that are drawn out in the Chronicler's history. | | |

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| June 16 | 1 Chronicles 1-9 | Skim genealogies: look for origins of Israel's enemies, patriarchs, tribes, monarchies, and leaders after Exile. |
| June 17 | 1 Chronicles 10-12 | This history begins at the end of Saul's reign and David's consolidation of the kingdom under his reign. Tribute is given to David's mighty warriors. |
| June 18 | 1 Chronicles 14-16 | David takes care in bringing the ark to Jerusalem and makes music and song a vital part of that experience. |
| June 19 | 1 Chronicles 17-18 | Think about the initiative God is taking with David and the covenant people. Look at it through David's eyes. |
| June 20 | 1 Chronicles 19-22 | David took an unauthorized census, angered God, & repented. Then he gathered materials for the temple. |
| Chronicles does not mention David's affair with Bathsheba or his conflicts with his children. Chronicles is not interested simply in retelling what is already covered in 2 Samuel. Instead, it focuses on the themes of building a nation under God's reign, exile, and restoration. It asks God's people to locate themselves spiritually in these categories of experience. | | |
| June 21 | 1 Chronicles 23-27 | David organized leadership and workers to prepare for Solomon's reign. Notice the attention given to worship. |
| June 22 | 1 Chronicles 28-29 | Before David died, he led the people to give of their resources for building the temple to the praise of God. |
| June 23 | 2 Chronicles 1-4 | Solomon asks for wisdom, gets the craftsmen and remaining materials needed, and builds the temple. |
| June 24 | 2 Chronicles 5-7 | Though no house "contains" God, he dedicates the temple as the place where God will hear their prayers. |
| June 25 | 2 Chronicles 8-9 | Solomon's wealth and fame are reported, but there's no mention of following other gods as in 1 Kings 11. |
| Kingdom Divided: Chronicles says that the northern tribes split off because of oppression experienced under Solomon, and promised by his son Rehoboam. | | |
| June 26 | 2 Chronicles 10-13 | The kingdom divides with Rehoboam, Solomon's son, ruling Judah (south) & Rehoboam ruling Israel (north). |
| June 27 | 2 Chronicles 14-16 | Asa listened to Azariah and removed pagan altars, but ignored Hanani & trusted in alliances instead of God. |
| June 28 | 2 Chronicles 17-18 | Ahab died because he heard what he wanted to hear instead of Micaiah who wasn't afraid to tell the truth. |
| June 29 | 2 Chronicles 19-20 | Jehoshaphat learned from mistakes and led God's people to rely on the Lord and win a great victory. |
| June 30 | 2 Chronicles 21-23 | An alliance between Israel and Judah took place in the marriage between Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, and Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, bringing disaster. |