

# HISTORICAL BIBLE READING PLAN

November 2023

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to read the Old Testament in ancient Israel or the New Testament as the books were written? This year's Bible reading plan follows the way the Jewish people organized their Bible, what we often call the "Old Testament." Even though debated, this plan also arranges the New Testament readings in a way that follows the consensus about their composition dates.

## Introduction

While the writing and organization of the Hebrew Bible took nearly 1,000 years, the New Testament writings were composed and collected in less than 100 years. However, the material in the New Testament builds on the writings of the Hebrew Bible. Its authors assumed their readers' familiarity with and understanding of the Hebrew scriptures. By some counts, the New Testament includes nearly 200 direct quotes from the Hebrew Bible, which rises to almost 1,000 when one includes indirect quotes and allusions. The combined direct and indirect references to the Hebrew Bible occupy an estimated 10% of the New Testament.

### GOSPELS

Matthew  
Mark  
Luke  
John

### EPISTLES

Paul – 13 letters  
Peter – 2 letters  
John – 3 letters  
James – 1 letter  
Jude – 1 letter  
Anonymous - Hebrews

### ACTS

### REVELATION

The New Testament divides into four groups: the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation.

- The Gospels include four books that narrate selective, overlapping accounts of Jesus' ministry. The four books occupy about half of the New Testament and devote about half of their contents to the last week of Jesus' life, focusing on his death and resurrection.
- Acts (a partner letter to Luke's gospel) recounts the first couple of decades of the church, describing how it represented Jesus' ongoing mission in the world and benefited from his guidance and protection.



- Twenty-one letters comprise the epistles, which apply Jesus' life and teachings to the lives of individuals and groups of Christians living throughout the ancient Roman world of the first century.
- The final book of the New Testament, Revelation, contains a vision depicting the persecution the church would face in its immediate future in a way that revealed the more significant spiritual conflicts playing out in the world and the ultimate victory Jesus would have over evil.

This month's readings conclude the Hebrew Bible and move into the New Testament writings.

## October reading schedule

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| <input type="checkbox"/> November 1, Mark 15-16     | <input type="checkbox"/> November 17, Luke 8-9             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 2, Matthew 1-4    | <input type="checkbox"/> November 18, Luke 10-11           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 3, Matthew 5-7    | <input type="checkbox"/> November 19, Luke 12-13           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 4, Matthew 8-9    | <input type="checkbox"/> November 20, Luke 14-16           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 5, Matthew 10-12  | <input type="checkbox"/> November 21, Luke 17-18           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 6, Matthew 13-14  | <input type="checkbox"/> November 22, Luke 19-20           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 7, Matthew 15-17  | <input type="checkbox"/> November 23, Luke 21-22           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 8, Matthew 18-20  | <input type="checkbox"/> November 24, Luke 23-24           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 9, Matthew 21-22  | <input type="checkbox"/> November 25, Ephesians 1-3        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 10, Matthew 23-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> November 26, Ephesians 4-6        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 11, Matthew 25-26 | <input type="checkbox"/> November 27, Colossians, Philemon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 12, Matthew 27-28 | <input type="checkbox"/> November 28, Philippians          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 13, Luke 1        | <input type="checkbox"/> November 29, Acts 1-3             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 14, Luke 2-3      | <input type="checkbox"/> November 30, Acts 4-6             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 15, Luke 4-5      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> November 16, Luke 6-7      |  |

## Meditation

What repeated themes, images, and quotes from the Hebrew Bible do you find Matthew and Luke's gospels?

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How does Jesus' interpretation of the Hebrew Bible compare to the way contemporaries like the Pharisees interpreted it?

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What distinctive features define the way Jesus talked about the Hebrew Bible? How do you think those features should shape the way we think about it?

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What additional applications can you make from this month's readings?

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