A YEAR OF BIBLE STUDY

A Journey Through God's Story

From Genesis to Revelation

STUDY QUESTIONS
WEEKLY GUIDES
MONTHLY THEMES

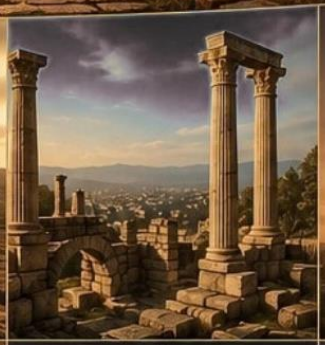
REFLECTION.
APPLICATION.
TRANSFORMATION.



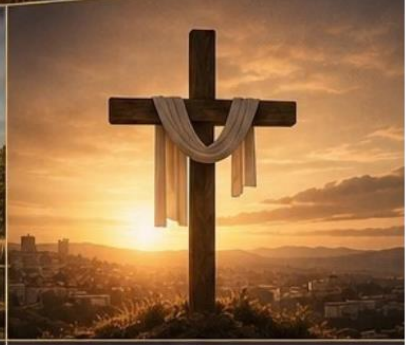
FOUNDATION
Design, Rebellion and Blessing
January



FORMATION
Deliverance, Covenant and Kingdom
February–April



FAITHFULNESS
Judgment, Mercy and Longing
May–September



FULFILLMENT
Christ, Church and Kingdom
October–December

READ | REFLECT | LIVE

One Story. One God. One Year.

365 DAYS ◆ 52 WEEKS ◆ A LIFETIME OF IMPACT

A YEAR OF BIBLE STUDY

A Journey Through God's Story

(From Genesis to Revelation)

This Guide Belongs To: _____

My Bible Study Group: _____

Our Meeting Schedule: _____

Meeting Location: _____

Date Commenced: _____

"I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word."

— Psalm 119:15–16

This resource is provided as a gift from:

Paul and Ellie Madsen
and comes out of their ongoing study of God's Word
as they strive to teach it and live it out in their community.

Read more about their life and ministry at journeyofjoy.org

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May you be blessed by the beauty, power and truth of God's Word in the days ahead!

Introduction

Regular and effective Bible reading is a challenge for many Christians, even some who are active in ministry. There are many reasons for this, some of which are probably excuses and others may be more valid. What is clear is that neither shame nor making excuses for ourselves will actually get us reading. We need at least three essential things: real conviction from the Holy Spirit that our time in the Word is a necessary part of spiritual maturity, a heartfelt desire to engage at deeper levels with God and His Word, and a workable plan that accounts for our current schedule and interest.

Three Study Tools

In order to 'fix my eyes' on what God's Word has for me each day, it is important to take notes on what I read. This can be done in many ways, but there are three tools that are particularly helpful:

- A Wide-Margin Bible: A space to take notes alongside Scripture as you engage with its truths.
- A Personal Study Journal: A dedicated journal to outline the passage, summarize the core message, and make direct personal applications.
- Structured Key Questions: An analytical framework to examine the text and extract deep theological truths rather than skimming the surface.

Four Guiding Themes

As you read, utilize the following core questions to analyze each day's passage. Remember that the Bible is never a story about me or my ideas, but rather a story about God and His interaction with His creation:

- What do we learn about God and about mankind? Examine His holy character, His sovereign actions, and what is revealed about His nature as He engages with His creation throughout history.
- What does God reveal about His design for creation and mankind? Look for the patterns of beauty, truth, goodness, order, and covenant relationships that God establishes with individuals and communities for the care of His world through His people.
- What does God do as judgment on sin and evil? Notice how God reacts to human rebellion, corruption, and injustice, maintaining His holy justice and honoring His sovereign purposes and promises.
- How is God working to restore His purpose and design in partnership with His people? Trace the unfolding promises, covenants, and redemptive movements that point to their perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ and ongoing activity through people.

How Should We Read Different Parts of the Bible?

Understanding Literary Styles

Before we get started, it is important to consider what kind of literature we are reading. Different types of literature communicate truth in different ways, and understanding the literary form can help us know what to look for, how to evaluate what we are reading, and how to put it in context with the rest of God's Big Story.

Historical Narrative: This describes real people, places, events, and God's work in history, but these accounts are carefully shaped by the biblical authors to communicate what those events mean. Even historical narrative contains poetry and other literary devices. When Jesus says, "I am the door of the sheep,"[1] for example, we understand that He is using a metaphor, yet the metaphor communicates something very real about His role and authority. When Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life," the language is figurative but makes objective claims about who He is. The key question is not simply, "Is this literal?" but "What is the author communicating through this language and literary form?"

Poetry and Wisdom Literature: Hebrew poetry is rich in imagery and literary structure (parallelism, contrast, and personification). Proverbs, for example, personifies Wisdom and Folly as women who invite people into their homes and offer them food. The imagery helps us see that we are continually choosing between competing paths of wisdom and foolishness. Pay attention not only to individual statements, but also to the relationships, contrasts, and images that develop the larger ideas.

Prophecy and Apocalyptic Literature: Prophecy is God's revealed message delivered through His prophets to particular people and circumstances. Prophets call God's people to repentance, expose sin, announce judgment, and offer hope. At the same time, prophetic language can look beyond the immediate circumstances toward God's future purposes, sometimes bringing together several timeframes or horizons of fulfillment. It is therefore important to follow the text carefully and look for its own clues concerning time, place, audience and purpose rather than assuming we already know exactly what a prophecy means. Apocalyptic literature, such as portions of Daniel and Revelation, shares some characteristics with prophecy but uses visions, symbols and highly imaginative imagery in distinctive ways.

The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection from four complementary perspectives. They are not simply copies of one story; together they provide a rich, multi-faceted picture of the King, His kingdom, and His mission.

Letters: These were written to real communities facing specific theological or behavioral challenges. The writers draw together Old Testament themes, the teaching of Jesus, and the circumstances of the early Church to build an argument about how Christians should think and live.

We are not the original audience, but we are still invited to hear God's Word and respond accordingly. Our goal is to understand what the biblical writer was communicating to the first readers before deciding how that truth applies to us today, always paying attention to the historical context, literary context, author's purpose, and its place in God's unfolding story.

[1] Scripture references from the ESV, John 10:7 and John 14:6.

The Four Pillars of the Journey

The reading plan covers the whole Bible in a modified chronological-thematic approach, averaging about 3 to 4 chapters per day. Readings are laid out by theme or week instead of by day, since the point of reading is not completing a task but establishing a practice of reading, contemplating, discussing, and being transformed by Scripture. This approach blends historical narratives with the corresponding Prophets and Wisdom literature, helping form a cohesive view of the entire biblical narrative. Monthly themes are further divided into weekly themes with a short concluding theme for the remaining days of each month. The journey is structured into four major movements:

PILLAR I: FOUNDATION (JANUARY)

Focus: Design, Rebellion, and Blessing

Genesis and Job provide the cornerstone of Scripture. We witness God's perfect design, the tragic entry of rebellion and suffering into the world, and the first beautiful rays of God's blessing through Abraham's family line.

PILLAR II: FORMATION (FEBRUARY – APRIL)

Focus: Deliverance, Covenant, and Kingdom

We follow Israel's journey from a family to a nation. God delivers His people from Egypt, establishes a covenant at Sinai, guides them through the wilderness, grants the Promised Land, and establishes Israel as a kingdom under David.

PILLAR III: FAITHFULNESS (MAY – SEPTEMBER)

Focus: Judgment, Mercy, and Longing

We witness the glory of Solomon's temple give way to division, unfaithfulness, and ruin. Through the prophets, God calls His people to return. Even as exile and judgment fall, a persistent longing builds for a new covenant and the true King.

PILLAR IV: FULFILLMENT (OCTOBER – DECEMBER)

Focus: Christ, Church, and Kingdom

That longing is answered! The Gospels announce that the true King has come. Christ establishes His kingdom through His life, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church to extend this kingdom to the ends of the earth, pointing to final victory in Christ and the fulfillment of His purposes.

Annual Reading Plan (# = total chapters that week, readings plus wisdom)

Month	Week	Readings	Focus Theme / Connection	Wisdom Lit.	#
January	Week 1	Genesis 1-11	God's design and man's rebellion	Job 1-11	22
	Week 2	—	Suffering and God's sovereignty	Job 12-33	22
	Week 3	Genesis 12-23	Abraham and God's purposes	Job 34-42	21
	Week 4	Genesis 24-45	The Patriarchs and God's blessing	—	22
	Closing Days	Genesis 46-50; Exodus 1-3	Israel in Egypt	—	8
February	Week 1	Exodus 4-24	Deliverance and Covenant	—	21
	Week 2	Exodus 25-40; Leviticus 1-5	The place and manner of worship	—	21
	Week 3	Leviticus 6-27	The Holy God and His people	—	22
	Week 4	Numbers 1-21	Rebellion and wilderness wanderings	—	21
March	Week 1	Numbers 22-36; Deuteronomy 1-7	East of Jordan	—	22
	Week 2	Deuteronomy 8-29	Lest you forget	—	22
	Week 3	Deuteronomy 30-34; Joshua 1-17	Moses' final words and conquest of Canaan	—	22
	Week 4	Joshua 18-24; Judges 1-16	Division of land & cycles of sin	—	23
	Closing Days	Judges 17-21; Ruth 1-4	Accounts of Depravity and Redemption	—	9
April	Week 1	1 Chron. 1-4; 1 Samuel 1-15	Samuel's call & early kingdom	Psalms 1-9	28
	Week 2	1 Samuel 16-31; 1 Chron. 5-10	David's rise to Saul's death	Psalms 10-15	28
	Week 3	2 Samuel 1-10; 1 Chron. 11-19	David's line, reign and covenant	Psalms 16-24	28
	Week 4	1 Chron. 20; 2 Samuel 11-23	David's failures & Absalom's rebellion	Psalms 25-38	28
	Closing Days	2 Samuel 24; 1 Chron. 21-29	David's later years	—	10
May	Week 1	1 Kings 1-10; 2 Chronicles 1-9	Solomon's reign, Temple built	Psalms 39-47	28
	Week 2	2 Chronicles 10-16; 1 Kings 11-19	Division of the kingdom	Psalms 48-59	28
	Week 3	1 Kings 20-22; 2 Chronicles 17-20	Kings of Judah and Israel	Psalms 60-80	28
	Week 4	2 Kings 1-17; Obadiah	Elisha and the fall of Israel	Psalms 81-90	28
	Closing Days	2 Chronicles 21-28	Judah's kings	Psalms 91-94	12
June	Week 1	2 Kings 18-25; 2 Chron. 29-36; Jonah	Hezekiah, Josiah & Judah's fall	Psalms 95-100; Song of Songs 1-4	30
	Week 2	Joel; Amos; Hosea	Calls to repentance and covenant love	Song of Songs 5-8	30
	Week 3	Isaiah 1-23	Prophecies of judgment and hope	Psalms 101-105	28
	Week 4	Isaiah 24-39	God's character and judgment	Psalms 106-115	26
	Closing Days	Micah	God's justice and mercy	Psalms 116-118	10

Month	Week	Readings	Focus Theme / Connection	Wisdom Lit.	#
July	Week 1	Isaiah 40-57	Salvation and restoration foretold	Psalm 119	19
	Week 2	Isaiah 58-66; Nahum	Comfort and God's vengeance	Psalms 120-134	27
	Week 3	Zephaniah; Habakkuk; Jeremiah 1-10	Faith in dark times	Psalms 135-141	23
	Week 4	Jeremiah 11-24	Warning and Lament	Psalms 142-150	23
	Closing Days	Lamentations	Wisdom calls	Proverbs 1-3	8
August	Week 1	Jeremiah 25-38	New Covenant hope	Prov. 4-10	21
	Week 2	Jeremiah 39-52	Fall of Jerusalem	Prov. 11-17	21
	Week 3	Daniel 1-4; Ezekiel 1-10	Faithfulness in exile	Prov. 18-24	21
	Week 4	Ezekiel 11-24	God's glory and justice	Prov. 25-31	21
	Closing Days	Ezekiel 25-32	Judgment on nations	Eccl. 1	9
September	Week 1	Ezekiel 33-48	Longing for God's Presence	Eccl. 2-5	20
	Week 2	Daniel 5-12; Ezra 1-6	Longing for God's Kingdom	Eccl. 6-12	21
	Week 3	Haggai; Zechariah; Esther 1-5	Longing for God's Finished Work	—	21
	Week 4	Esther 6-10; Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah 1-11	Longing for God's Word	—	20
	Closing Days	Nehemiah 12-13; Malachi	Longing for the Messiah	—	6
October	Week 1	Luke 1-8; Matthew 1-9; Mark 1-4	The Birth of the King	—	21
	Week 2	Mark 5-10; John 1-4; Luke 9-10; Matthew 10-18	The Word of the King	—	21
	Week 3	Matthew 19-23; John 5-11; Luke 11-19	The Touch of the King	—	21
	Week 4	Luke 20-23; Matthew 24-27; John 12-19; Mark 11-15	The Love of the King	—	21
	Closing Days	Mark 16; Matthew 28; John 20-21; Luke 24	The Victory of the King	—	5
November	Week 1	Acts 1-14; James	The Spirit Comes and the Kingdom Expands	—	19
	Week 2	Acts 15-20; 1-2 Thess.; Galatians	The Kingdom Extends to the Gentiles	—	20
	Week 3	Acts 21-25; 1 Corinthians	The Kingdom on Trial	—	21
	Week 4	Acts 26-28; 2 Corinthians; Philippians	The Kingdom Enters Rome	—	20
	Closing Days	Colossians	Reconciled in Christ	—	4
December	Week 1	Romans	Life in the Spirit	—	16
	Week 2	Philemon; Ephesians; 1-2 Timothy; Titus	Faithful Kingdom Leaders	—	20
	Week 3	Hebrews; 1-2 Peter	Faith in the Fire	—	21
	Week 4	Revelation	Victory in Christ	—	22
	Closing Days	1-3 John; Jude	Walking in Love and Truth	—	8

Daily Study & Reflection Journal

Use this template page as a model for your daily writing in your notebook, or copy this sheet to compile your personal reflection binder. This pattern trains your eyes to observe the text theologically, focusing first on God and His story.

Date: _____ Reading Passage: _____

Core Theme: _____

1. Observation: What do we learn about God, His world and about humanity here?

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2. Story Development (Creation / Fall / Redemption / Restoration): What does God say, ask or do?

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3. Response & Prayer: How should I respond?

Group & Church Application Options

Bible study flourishes in community. This curriculum is designed to support collaborative learning across multiple community networks. Below are suggestions for implementing this plan in various ministry and relational environments:

1. Personal Study & Devotion

Set aside 30 minutes each morning. Read the daily portion sequentially. Keep a wide-margin Bible or physical notebook close. Practice taking notes each day, tracking how the narrative points to Christ and the bigger story of God's world.

2. Family Study Networks

Gather weekly with family members. Read the weekly focus theme together. Simplify the guiding questions for children, emphasizing God's character and how He keeps His promises. Close each session by praying through what you have learned together.

3. Small Group & Classroom Study

Facilitators should lead by prompting members to share their observations from the week. Use the guiding questions to spur open discussion rather than lecturing. Encourage group accountability in maintaining the daily reading pattern.

4. Church-Wide Sermon Alignment

Pastors may want to align weekly Scripture readings with their sermon texts. This would allow congregations to study the text deeply in personal devotion before hearing it proclaimed from the pulpit, building a shared vocabulary and a complete picture of the Bible from cover to cover.

About the Footnotes:

Some weekly pages include a short note. **For Group Leaders & Teachers** notes offer discussion prompts and connections worth making. **Reading Honestly** notes address difficult passages that are sometimes skipped or softened, encouraging you to read them at whatever level fits your context. Both are optional and meant for everyone.

MONTH 1 — JANUARY

GOD'S DESIGN AND PURPOSES

FOUNDATION — GENESIS AND JOB

Genesis and Job together provide a cornerstone for understanding who God is, who we are, and why this world is both a beautiful and painful place to live. The story begins with a declaration: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.' This is God's story, but it is also the story into which we have been placed—the story of reality itself. From its opening words, Scripture establishes God as Creator and everything else as His creation, setting the stage for everything that follows. Genesis and Job then begin to unfold the great questions that will run throughout Scripture: What is God's design and purpose? What has gone wrong with His creation? Why do people rebel against Him? How should we understand suffering and justice? And how does God remain faithful to His purposes in the midst of human sin and suffering? As we begin this year, these questions will help us see not only the individual stories we are reading, but the larger story that connects them all.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Setting the Stage — The Primary Themes of the Big Story — 22 chapters
- Week 2: Perspectives on Suffering and God's Sovereignty — 22 chapters
- Week 3: God's Purposes Revealed Through Abraham's Story — 21 chapters
- Week 4: God's Blessing in the Lives of the Patriarchs — 22 chapters
- Closing Days: God's Purposes Continue — From Family to Nation — 8 chapters

JANUARY — WEEK 1

SETTING THE STAGE: THE PRIMARY THEMES OF THE BIG STORY

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Genesis 1–11	Job 1–11	God's design and man's rebellion

Theological Context:

This first week introduces many of the foundational themes that run throughout all of Scripture. As you read Genesis 1–11 alongside Job 1–11, pay attention to the big-picture ideas that surface repeatedly.

Guiding Questions:

1. What recurring themes do you notice across these chapters (e.g., creation, order and chaos, blessing, rebellion, judgment, mercy, faithfulness, suffering)? Try to identify at least one key theme each day. (This may feel more challenging in Job — note why that might be.)
2. What do these themes suggest about what God values most and what He is ultimately working toward?
3. Jesus tells His disciples that all Scripture ultimately points to Him (read Luke 24:25–27). How does viewing these passages through the lens of Christ help clarify or deepen the themes you identified?
4. In what ways do Genesis and Job already raise questions that find their answer in the person and work of Jesus?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

JANUARY — WEEK 2

PERSPECTIVES ON SUFFERING AND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
—	Job 12–33	Suffering and God's sovereignty

Theological Context:

The theme of sin and its consequences continues this week, especially through the dialogue between Job and his friends. Their debate reveals competing assumptions about God's justice, human righteousness, and the meaning of suffering.[2]

Guiding Questions:

1. Reflect first on Job 10:15–17 and Job 11:13–15. How do Job and Zophar differ in their understanding of God's justice and human suffering, and what assumptions does each make about the relationship between sin, suffering, and God's favor?
2. As the discussion unfolds, does the ongoing debate shed further light on these contrasting perspectives? Can Job be righteous before God (Job 9:2), and what does Job's question reveal about his understanding of God and himself?
3. Is it ever appropriate to ask God to explain His purposes or His approach to justice? Under what conditions?
4. Looking ahead through a Christ-centered lens: How does Job's suffering anticipate the suffering of Christ described in Isaiah 53, and what does this week reveal about God's character and His larger redemptive plan?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[2] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Job's friends assume suffering always signals sin — watch for that same assumption surfacing in your own life, and consider pairing this week with the question, 'What benefit might suffering produce in my life?'*

JANUARY — WEEK 3

GOD'S PURPOSES REVEALED THROUGH ABRAHAM'S STORY

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Genesis 12–23	Job 34–42	Abraham and God's purposes

Theological Context:

This week places God's dealings with Job alongside His calling of Abraham. In both stories, God reveals Himself through words, promises, commands, and covenant faithfulness. These stories provide deep insight into God's character even in the midst of difficult or unclear circumstances.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does God describe Himself in His interactions with Job and with Abraham? What actions does God take, and what responses does He call for?
2. How would you describe Abraham's faith based on how he responds to God's promises and commands?
3. Abraham's story becomes foundational for understanding the rest of Scripture. What clues does his life provide about God's purposes for His people, and how does his story help move the Big Story forward?
4. Read Romans 4 alongside Genesis 12–23. How does Paul describe Abraham's faith and its results (Rom. 4:16–25), and how does faith enable God's people to live within His purposes, even when outcomes are uncertain?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

JANUARY — WEEK 4

GOD'S BLESSING IN THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Genesis 24–45	—	The Patriarchs and God's blessing

Theological Context:

The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and his growing family continue to unfold God's purposes for Abraham and his descendants, even as human sin, conflict, deception, and broken relationships complicate that calling. We see the continuing struggle to understand and live within God's blessing, yet God remains faithful to His promises despite the failures of His people.[3]

Guiding Questions:

1. How do these stories reflect the ongoing fulfillment of God's blessing to Abraham and his descendants? Who seems to understand and live in light of God's blessing, and in what circumstances?
2. What challenges and consequences arise when God's blessing is misunderstood, manipulated, or resisted?
3. Despite sin, conflict, and brokenness, God remains faithful. Where do you see God's faithfulness clearly displayed, and where do you see signs of beauty, truth, and goodness beginning to emerge through imperfect people?
4. Consider Luke 15 (the parable of the two sons). How do themes from Genesis echo in Jesus' teaching about lostness, repentance, and grace?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[3] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *It is particularly powerful to contrast the descriptions of Isaac's two sons along with their words, actions and understanding of "blessing." Take time to discuss this and where each son realizes the true value of their father's (and God's) blessing.*

JANUARY — CLOSING DAYS

GOD'S PURPOSES CONTINUE: FROM FAMILY TO NATION

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Genesis 46–50; Exodus 1–3	—	Israel in Egypt

Theological Context:

These final days for January mark a major transition in the Big Story. What began with God's promises to one man and his family now moves toward the formation of a people, even through unexpected and painful circumstances.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does God use suffering, displacement, and injustice to accomplish His purposes for Jacob's family? In what ways does Joseph's story demonstrate God's sovereignty working through human sin and hardship?
2. How does God's promise to Abraham continue to unfold as Israel settles in Egypt?
3. As Exodus begins, what changes do you notice in Israel's situation from Genesis to Exodus, and how does God reveal His concern for His people in Exodus 1–3?
4. How does this transition prepare the way for God's work of deliverance, reinforcing that God's purposes are larger than any one generation and always faithful to His promises?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 2 — FEBRUARY

A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

FORMATION — DELIVERANCE, COVENANT AND KINGDOM

This month reveals that covenant is not merely about rescue or rules, but about relationship—a relationship marked by God's faithfulness, human weakness, and the persistent need for grace. God commits Himself fully to His people, even as they struggle to live faithfully in return. One of many key moments this month is God's revelation of Himself to Moses and His self-description in Exodus 34:6–7.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Deliverance and Covenant — 21 chapters
- Week 2: The Place and Manner of Worship — 21 chapters
- Week 3: A Holy God and His People — 22 chapters
- Week 4: Rebellion and Wilderness Wanderings — 21 chapters

FEBRUARY — WEEK 1

DELIVERANCE AND COVENANT

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Exodus 4–24	—	Deliverance and Covenant

Theological Context:

In many ways, this week's reading resembles a familiar story: a powerful rescuer defeats the enemy, claims His bride, and brings her into freedom. But unlike a fairy tale, this story is grounded in history, real suffering, and binding promises. At the heart of the Exodus story is covenant. The identity of the Deliverer and the vows He makes with His people reveal what kind of relationship God intends to establish.[4]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does this story resemble a rescue-and-marriage narrative, and where does the comparison break down?
2. Why does God begin the covenant by reminding Israel of who He is and what He has already done (read Exodus 20:1–17)?
3. How does this story feel more 'real' than a fairy tale, and why does that matter for understanding God's Big Story?
4. What do the covenant commands reveal about God's character and His design for human flourishing within a proper framing of freedom and accountability?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[4] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *If discussion stalls on the "rescue and marriage" comparison, ask what is missing in a purely political reading of the Exodus that the covenant language supplies. How might this shape a better understanding of personal responsibility within a faithful nation or community? How does this contribute to a biblical understanding of "freedom"?*

FEBRUARY — WEEK 2

THE PLACE AND MANNER OF WORSHIP

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Exodus 25–40; Leviticus 1–5	—	The place and manner of worship

Theological Context:

With the covenant established, attention turns to how God will dwell among His people. Where will God live? How will His people approach Him? What will their relationship require? The detailed instructions for the tabernacle describe not only a structure, but a way of life shaped by God's holiness and grace.

Guiding Questions:

1. What do the design and details of the tabernacle teach us about God's desire to be near His people?
2. How do worship, obedience, and God's provision fit together in this covenant relationship?
3. Even at this early stage, what relational problems or tensions can you see emerging?
4. Are there hints in these chapters of how God intends to address future failures within the covenant?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

FEBRUARY — WEEK 3

A HOLY GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Leviticus 6–27	—	The Holy God and His people

Theological Context:

This week focuses on holiness and mediation. God appoints the Levitical priests to care for the worship system, teach the covenant, and intercede on behalf of the people, highlighting both God's holiness and the people's need for guidance and restoration.[5]

Guiding Questions:

1. Why was a priesthood necessary for maintaining the covenant relationship, and what problems did this system help address?
2. How did sacrifices, rituals, and laws teach Israel about sin, forgiveness, and nearness to God?
3. Why couldn't this system fully solve the deeper issue of the human heart?
4. How does this system and priesthood prepare the way for later developments in God's redemptive plan?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[5] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *The temptation with Leviticus is to rush past it — resist that with older students by asking what it teaches about the cost of approaching a holy God, a question the New Testament assumes readers already understand.*

FEBRUARY — WEEK 4

REBELLION AND WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Numbers 1–21	—	Rebellion and wilderness wanderings

Theological Context:

The covenant relationship now comes under serious strain. Despite God's presence, provision, and guidance, Israel repeatedly resists trust and obedience.

Guiding Questions:

1. What specific forms of rebellion do you see in these chapters, and how do these failures echo patterns already seen in Genesis?
2. Why do these stories confirm the ongoing need for both God's judgment and God's grace?
3. What do Israel's struggles reveal about the challenges of living in a covenant relationship with a holy God, and how do they expose the limits of law alone?
4. Numbers 11 tells a unique account of the Spirit of God resting on 70 elders. Why does this happen, and how does it relate to Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28–29) and the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 3 — MARCH

PROMISES KEPT AND BROKEN

FORMATION — DELIVERANCE, COVENANT AND KINGDOM

Our study this month assures us that God is always faithful to His promises even as His people struggle to live faithfully in response. Through seasons of moral failure and chaos, God continues to work toward redemption, pointing forward to the ultimate fulfillment of all His promises in Christ.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: East of Jordan — 22 chapters
- Week 2: Lest You Forget — 22 chapters
- Week 3: Moses' Final Words and the Conquest of Canaan — 22 chapters
- Week 4: Division of Land, Cycles of Sin and Repentance — 23 chapters
- Closing Days: Accounts of Depravity and Redemption — 9 chapters

MARCH — WEEK 1

EAST OF JORDAN

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Numbers 22–36; Deuteronomy 1–7	—	East of Jordan

Theological Context:

Before Israel enters the Promised Land, God prepares them spiritually, morally, and practically for what will come. These chapters focus on leadership, inheritance, obedience, remembrance, and boundaries for living in right relationship with God and others. Balaam's prophecy reminds Israel that God's purposes cannot be undone.

Guiding Questions:

1. What stands out as significant elements in these preparations before entering the land of promise?
2. How does Balaam's prophecy (Num. 22–24) reveal God's sovereignty, justice, and faithfulness to His promises?
3. Why are remembrance, vows, and inheritance emphasized so strongly through these chapters?
4. How does Deuteronomy 4–7 clarify what it means to live faithfully within God's promises? (Connection: read Genesis 12:1–3 as a reminder of God's original promise to Abraham.)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MARCH — WEEK 2

LEST YOU FORGET

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Deuteronomy 8–29	—	Lest you forget

Theological Context:

Moses repeatedly warns Israel not to forget the Lord once they experience prosperity and security. Thankfulness and obedience are closely connected, but so are forgetfulness and rebellion. These chapters show the tension between God's faithfulness and human forgetfulness, and they trace the consequences for communities and nations that either live within God's design or reject it.[6]

Guiding Questions:

1. Why does Moses emphasize remembrance so strongly in this retelling of Israel's story?
2. What does forgetting God look like practically for individuals and for communities, according to these chapters?
3. How are blessing and obedience described as relational rather than merely transactional?
4. How do these warnings remain relevant for God's people throughout history? (Connection: read Psalm 106 as both a poetic and historical reminder.)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[6] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *A useful discussion starter for any age: what does our household or community do, intentionally, to remember God's faithfulness — and what has quietly stopped that might be restarted?*

MARCH — WEEK 3

MOSES' FINAL WORDS AND THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Deuteronomy 30–34; Joshua 1–17	—	Moses' final words and conquest of Canaan

Theological Context:

As Moses' leadership comes to an end, he charges Israel to choose life through faithfulness to God's Law. Joshua steps into leadership and God begins to fulfill His promises through the conquest of Canaan.[7]

Guiding Questions:

1. What themes dominate Moses' final words to Israel?
2. Why is the call to 'choose life' (Deut. 30) so central at this point of transition for Israel as a nation?
3. How does God establish Joshua as the new leader, and what does this process reveal about leadership from God's perspective?
4. Where do you see God keeping His promises and where do you see human weakness emerging? (Connection: read Hebrews 11:23–34 as an insight into acts of faith.)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[7] **Reading Honestly:** *The destruction of Jericho and the other Canaanite cities is among the hardest material in the Old Testament. Let the hard questions be asked aloud and follow the text's own answers, remembering that this is judgment after centuries of patience (Gen. 15:16; Deut. 9:4-5), not proof of Israel's righteousness. Note who is spared, why they are spared, and which Israelites face God's judgment. This is a window into God's holiness and the seriousness of sin, a seriousness the cross answers when Christ himself bears the judgment our sin deserves. It is not a pattern for violence today.*

MARCH — WEEK 4

DIVISION OF LAND, CYCLES OF SIN AND REPENTANCE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Joshua 18–24; Judges 1–16	—	Division of land & cycles of sin

Theological Context:

The land is divided and Israel formally renews the covenant. Yet quickly, a pattern of compromise and disobedience emerges. Judges introduces a recurring cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance, revealing the consequences of partial obedience to their covenant with God.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why does Israel struggle to fully trust and obey God after entering the land?
2. What particular patterns of sin and deliverance repeat throughout Judges, and what variations show up?
3. How do these cycles expose deeper spiritual problems in Israel's leaders and as a nation?
4. What do these stories teach us about the danger of forgetting God's promises and living outside His covenant? (Connection: Judges 2:6–23 is a concise explanation of this cycle.)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MARCH — CLOSING DAYS

ACCOUNTS OF DEPRAVITY AND REDEMPTION

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Judges 17–21; Ruth 1–4	—	Accounts of Depravity and Redemption

Theological Context:

The book of Judges ends in moral chaos: 'Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.' In contrast, Ruth offers a quiet, faithful story of loyalty, kindness, and redemption, revealing God's ongoing work behind the scenes even within a culture that has largely forgotten Him.[8]

Guiding Questions:

1. How do the final chapters of Judges reveal the consequences of life apart from God's rule?
2. What contrasts stand out between Samson's life and the faithfulness seen in Ruth?
3. How does the story of Ruth point toward God's larger plan of redemption? (Connection: Matthew 1:1–6 outlines how Ruth is grafted into the lineage of David.)
4. Why is this contrast an important conclusion to the period of Israel's Judges?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

[8] **Reading Honestly:** *Judges grows genuinely dark by its final chapters — resist trimming the account to its "moral lesson" and let the horror register. Scripture doesn't flinch from showing what a people look like with no king and no fear of God; softening it blunts the very contrast the book is building toward Ruth and, eventually, David.*

MONTH 4 — APRIL

A FIRST KINGDOM

FORMATION — DELIVERANCE, COVENANT AND KINGDOM

God has established a covenant with His people, but they prove unable to live within it. The result is a fractured society with little moral center and little remembrance of God's life-giving law. Into this disorder, God does something new. Through Samuel, God initiates a transition from chaos to kingship, establishing a line through which His purposes continue to unfold.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Samuel's Call, Early Kingdom — 28 chapters
- Week 2: David's Rise to Saul's Death — 28 chapters
- Week 3: David's Line, Reign and Covenant — 28 chapters
- Week 4: David's Failures, Absalom's Rebellion — 28 chapters
- Closing Days: David's Later Years — 10 chapters

APRIL — WEEK 1

SAMUEL'S CALL, EARLY KINGDOM

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
1 Chr 1–4; 1 Samuel 1–15	Psalms 1–9	Samuel's call & early kingdom

Theological Context:

Israel's demand for a king marks a turning point. What seems like a political request reveals a deeper spiritual struggle: trust in God versus trust in human strength. Saul's rise shows both God's accommodation of Israel's desire and the dangers of leadership detached from faithful obedience.[9]

Guiding Questions:

1. Why does Israel want a king, and what does this reveal about their fears and desires?
2. How does God describe Israel's request; what is ultimately being rejected?
3. What strengths and weaknesses emerge early in Saul's leadership? (Connected reading: Deuteronomy 17:14–20)
4. How does partial obedience undermine Saul's kingship?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[9] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Israel's demand for a king is a request to trust something visible over something unseen — a live temptation worth naming plainly for teens and adults alike.*

APRIL — WEEK 2

DAVID'S RISE TO SAUL'S DEATH

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
1 Samuel 16–31; 1 Chr 5–10	Psalms 10–15	David's rise to Saul's death

Theological Context:

God raises up David, not for his outward strength but for his heart. As Saul's rule deteriorates, David learns leadership through suffering, patience, and trust in God's timing, highlighting humility over self-preservation.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does God mean when He says He looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7)?
2. How does David respond to injustice, danger, and opportunity?
3. Why does David refuse to seize the throne by force?
4. How do these chapters redefine what godly leadership looks like? (Connected reading: Psalm 23)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

APRIL — WEEK 3

DAVID'S LINE, REIGN AND COVENANT

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
2 Samuel 1–10; 1 Chr 11–19	Psalms 16–24	David's line, reign and covenant

Theological Context:

David's rise to kingship marks a new stage in God's purposes. His reign brings unity, victory, and the establishment of Jerusalem as the center of worship. Most significantly, God makes a covenant with David, promising a lasting kingdom through his line and pointing forward to something still greater.[10]

Guiding Questions:

1. What stands out about David's leadership as he becomes king?
2. Why is God's covenant with David (2 Sam. 7) so central to the Big Story of Scripture?
3. How does David respond to God's promises, and what does this reveal about his heart?
4. In what ways does this covenant create both hope and expectation for the future? (Connected reading: Psalm 26)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

[10] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *2 Samuel 7 is one of the hinge points of the whole Bible — if a group only has time for one in-depth discussion this week, make it this one.*

APRIL — WEEK 4

DAVID'S FAILURES, ABSALOM'S REBELLION

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
1 Chr 20; 2 Samuel 11–23	Psalms 25–38	David's failures & Absalom's rebellion

Theological Context:

David's reign reaches a turning point as his sin leads to deep personal and national consequences. Though God's promises remain and David's repentance is met with mercy and forgiveness, the consequences unfold as conflict, division, and rebellion, most painfully within David's own family.[11]

Guiding Questions:

1. What do David's actions reveal about the dangers of power, complacency, and hidden sin?
2. How do the consequences of his sin unfold in both his family and the kingdom?
3. What do these chapters show about God's justice and mercy working together?
4. Why is even a 'man after God's own heart' unable to fully lead God's people as they need? (Connected reading: Psalm 51)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[11] **Reading Honestly:** *David's sin with Bathsheba is frequently summarized in a single euphemistic sentence for younger listeners. Consider instead naming what actually happened — abuse of power, adultery, murder — at whatever level of directness fits your context. The consequences Nathan foretells (2 Sam. 12:10-11) begin to arrive in 2 Samuel 13, where Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar and David's anger produces no justice. Tamar's protest and her ruin demonstrate the true weight of sin. A "man after God's own heart" who commits real evil, fails those he should protect, and is still met with real mercy is a truer picture of God's grace than a sanitized version could offer us.*

APRIL — CLOSING DAYS

DAVID'S LATER YEARS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
2 Samuel 24; 1 Chr 21–29	—	David's later years

Theological Context:

David's later years reveal both restoration and lingering consequences. Pride, census-taking, and loss expose the cost of self-centered leadership, yet God's mercy continues to frame the story.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why is David's census such a serious offense?
2. What does this episode reveal about misplaced trust?
3. How does God's mercy appear even in judgment?
4. How does David's story prepare us to look for a better King? (Connected reading: Hebrews 1:1–4)

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 5 — MAY

FROM GLORY TO RUIN

FAITHFULNESS — JUDGMENT, MERCY AND LONGING

Here we begin with the glory of Solomon's kingdom, but quickly see it move toward division and decline. Despite moments of reform, the deeper problem remains unchanged – a failure of the heart. This month's study reveals that no human king can sustain God's kingdom or bring it to its full fruition, pointing us toward the need for a greater and more faithful King.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Solomon's Wisdom, Kingdom, and Glory — 28 chapters
- Week 2: The Division of the Kingdom — 28 chapters
- Week 3: The Kings of Israel and Judah — 28 chapters
- Week 4: Elisha and the Fall of Israel — 28 chapters
- Closing Days: Judah's Kings — 12 chapters

MAY — WEEK 1

SOLOMON'S WISDOM, KINGDOM, AND GLORY

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
1 Kings 1–10; 2 Chronicles 1–9	Psalms 39–47	Solomon's reign, Temple built

Theological Context:

Solomon inherits the kingdom from David, and under God's provision his reign reaches a high point of wisdom, wealth, and glory. His leadership is marked by God-given insight and the central act of building the temple – a visible sign of God's presence among His people.[12]

Guiding Questions:

1. What stands out in Solomon's prayers, especially at the dedication of the temple?
2. How does Solomon's wisdom strengthen his leadership and reflect his early trust in God?
3. Why is the building of the temple such a significant moment in Israel's history?
4. How does the glory of Solomon's kingdom point to a greater reality in the biblical story?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[12] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *It is worth noting that wisdom and faithfulness are not the same gift — Solomon's story will test whether your group already assumes they are.*

MAY — WEEK 2

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
2 Chronicles 10–16; 1 Kings 11–19	Psalms 48–59	Division of the kingdom

Theological Context:

After Solomon's death, the kingdom divides into Israel (north) and Judah (south). This division shapes the rest of the Old Testament, revealing the consequences of unfaithfulness while maintaining a complex and connected story between the two kingdoms.

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the root causes of the kingdom's division — spiritually, politically, and relationally?
2. How does the division unfold, and what does it reveal about leadership and responsibility?
3. How is God at work in these events, and what does this reveal about His character?
4. Why does God allow this division in light of His promises to Abraham and David?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MAY — WEEK 3

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
1 Kings 20–22; 2 Chronicles 17–20	Psalms 60–80	Kings of Judah and Israel

Theological Context:

The narratives of Israel and Judah unfold side by side, marked by cycles of faithfulness and failure. Kings are evaluated by their obedience to God, while the prophet Elijah emerges as a powerful voice calling the people back to covenant faithfulness.

Guiding Questions:

1. What repeated phrases describe each king's reign, and what do they reveal about this period?
2. Which kings follow in the ways of their predecessors, and why does this matter?
3. Who is Elijah, and why is his role so significant in both the Old and New Testaments?
4. How do miracles confirm God's authority and message during this time?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MAY — WEEK 4

ELISHA AND THE FALL OF ISRAEL

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
2 Kings 1–17; Obadiah	Psalms 81–90	Elisha and the fall of Israel

Theological Context:

The Northern Kingdom of Israel declines steadily and ultimately falls into exile. Through the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, God continues to call His people to repentance, demonstrating both His power and His patience in the face of persistent rebellion.[13]

Guiding Questions:

1. What is significant about the transfer of responsibility from Elijah to Elisha?
2. How does God show grace and mercy even as judgment approaches?
3. Why are the prophets' voices so critical during this period?
4. What do these events teach about the consequences of rejecting God?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[13] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Elisha's miracles are accessible entry points, but the more important question is why the miracles didn't produce lasting repentance or change in those he served. There are also difficult passages here that deserve to be read rather than skipped.*

MAY — CLOSING DAYS

JUDAH'S KINGS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
2 Chronicles 21–28	Psalms 91–94	Judah's kings

Theological Context:

Judah continues after Israel's fall, but with a mixture of corruption and renewal. Even among unfaithful kings, God raises up moments of reform, showing His continued commitment to His covenant and His people.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why is there such contrast between successive kings, even within the same family?
2. What does this reveal about the importance of spiritual formation and instruction?
3. How does God continue to speak to His people during this time?
4. What do these patterns reveal about God's patience and faithfulness?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 6 — JUNE

CALLS TO RETURN

FAITHFULNESS — JUDGMENT, MERCY AND LONGING

The reading this month reveals that God continually calls His people to return to Him. Through kings, prophets, and even judgment itself, He exposes sin and invites repentance. Yet again and again, the deeper issue remains: a heart unwilling to fully trust and obey. Even so, God's justice is never separated from His mercy, and His purposes continue to move His people and all creation toward restoration.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Hezekiah, Josiah, Judah's Fall — 30 chapters
- Week 2: Calls to Repentance and Covenant Love — 30 chapters
- Week 3: Prophecies of Judgment and Hope — 28 chapters
- Week 4: God's Character and Judgment — 26 chapters
- Closing Days: God's Justice and Mercy — 10 chapters

JUNE — WEEK 1

HEZEKIAH, JOSIAH, AND JUDAH'S FALL

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
2 Kings 18–25; 2 Chron. 29–36; Jonah	Psalms 95–100; Song of Songs 1–4	Hezekiah, Josiah & Judah's fall

Theological Context:

The stories of Hezekiah and Josiah, who receive significant attention compared to many of Judah's kings, give us deeper insight into the particular types of attitudes and actions that could lead to restoration. Yet outward reform cannot guarantee inward transformation.

This week's reading runs a little longer than usual, pairing the historical narrative with the accompanying Psalms and the opening of Song of Songs.[14]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Hezekiah's command to the Levites set a good foundation for his leadership?
2. Why does the messenger of Sennacherib focus on a spiritual message to the inhabitants of Jerusalem during the Assyrian attack?
3. How does Josiah restore proper worship of God in Jerusalem and why does this restoration ultimately fail?
4. How does the story of Jonah, a contemporary of these kings, give further insight to God's judgment and mercy?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[14] **Reading Honestly:** *Song of Songs is frequently skipped altogether in family reading, but its candid celebration of marital love within a covenant relationship is itself a corrective to shame — consider reading it openly rather than around it, framing it at whatever level fits your children as Scripture's own witness that God designed desire, delight, and the body as good.*

JUNE — WEEK 2

CALLS TO REPENTANCE AND COVENANT LOVE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Joel; Amos; Hosea	Song of Songs 5–8	Calls to repentance and covenant love

Theological Context:

The prophets act as God's messengers, calling His people back to covenant faithfulness, exposing sin, and warning of judgment while holding out the hope of restoration.

Like last week, this week's reading runs a little longer than usual, combining three shorter prophetic books with the conclusion of Song of Songs.[15]

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the common themes that we see in the words of these prophets?
2. How does the Song of Solomon give us deeper insight into God's faithfulness and covenant love?
3. How does the story of Hosea illustrate the lengths to which God has gone and will go for those who have rejected His love and grace?
4. In Christ, we see the fullest expression of God's covenant love — pursuing His people not only with words, but by entering into their brokenness to redeem them. How does this shape the way you read Hosea's marriage as a picture of the gospel?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[15] **Reading Honestly:** *Hosea's marriage is often quietly edited for children, but the harder details are the point — God commands a faithful man to love an unfaithful wife as a picture of His own love for us. Consider walking through the whole story with your children at their level of understanding, rather than skipping it; softening Hosea's betrayal now may leave them without the categories to receive its full weight later, including when they meet the cross.*

JUNE — WEEK 3

PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND HOPE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Isaiah 1–23	Psalms 101–105	Prophecies of judgment and hope

Theological Context:

The prophecies of Isaiah are for both Israel and Judah and focus more than any other on the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah has much to say also about God's character and His impending judgment on the nations, including Israel and Judah. These chapters emphasize God's holiness and the sin of the nations, while pointing toward future redemption in Christ.

Guiding Questions:

1. What do you find about the progression of events in the historical narratives of Isaiah?
2. How does Isaiah respond to the death of King Uzziah and how does this contrast God's response?
3. What rhetorical tools does Isaiah use to communicate God's message?
4. How should we respond to a deeper understanding of God's holiness?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

JUNE — WEEK 4

GOD'S CHARACTER AND JUDGMENT

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Isaiah 24–39	Psalms 106–115	God's character and judgment

Theological Context:

These chapters expand the focus from Israel and Judah to all nations. God is revealed not only as the covenant Lord of His people, but as the sovereign ruler over all the earth. His judgment is universal, yet always purposeful, calling people back to Himself. Even in the midst of judgment, there are glimpses of hope, restoration, and the promise of a future King who will reign in righteousness.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Isaiah describe God's authority over all nations, not just Israel and Judah?
2. What is the purpose of God's judgment? Is it only punishment, or something more?
3. How do the historical events (such as Hezekiah's story) illustrate trust in God or misplaced trust?
4. Where do you see hints of future hope and restoration in the midst of judgment?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

JUNE — CLOSING DAYS

GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Micah	Psalms 116–118	God's justice and mercy

Theological Context:

Micah brings together the central message of the prophets: God's judgment against sin and His deep commitment to mercy. Micah exposes injustice, false worship, and empty religion, while calling God's people back to a life shaped by humility, justice, and faithful love.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Micah identify as the core failures of God's people?
2. How does Micah 6:8 summarize what God requires, and how does this relate to covenant faithfulness?
3. How are justice and mercy held together in God's character?
4. What hope does Micah offer for the future, and how does it point beyond Israel's immediate situation?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 7 — JULY

WARNING, LAMENT AND HOPE

FAITHFULNESS — JUDGMENT, MERCY AND LONGING

Isaiah and Jeremiah reveal both the tragedy of human rebellion and the faithfulness of God. As judgment approaches, God continues to speak through His prophets, calling His people to repentance, faith, and renewed worship. Their messages combine warning, lament, and hope, revealing that God's purposes are never defeated by human sin and that a right fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Salvation and Restoration Foretold — 19 chapters
- Week 2: Comfort and God's Vengeance — 27 chapters
- Week 3: Faith in Dark Times — 23 chapters
- Week 4: Warning and Lament — 23 chapters
- Closing Days: Wisdom Calls — 8 chapters

JULY — WEEK 1

SALVATION AND RESTORATION FORETOLD

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Isaiah 40–57	Psalm 119 (Option: about 3 of its 22 sections per day)	Salvation and restoration foretold

Theological Context:

Isaiah frequently draws attention to God's character through names and titles like Redeemer and The Holy One of Israel. Among these, The Lord of Hosts is especially significant. Often transliterated as 'Lord Sabaoth,' it is the title famously used in Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." As God reveals His names, He is also revealing Himself. These titles help us understand His authority, holiness, faithfulness, and His ongoing work to redeem His people.[16]

Guiding Questions:

1. What do the references to 'The Lord of Hosts' reveal about God's sovereignty, power, and purposes, and how do these chapters begin to connect those themes to the person and work of Christ?
2. How is God's name 'Redeemer' displayed throughout these chapters? Who is being redeemed, who accomplishes that redemption, and what are its results?
3. Redemption often refers to the recovery of something that has been lost. Why is this image particularly appropriate for God's relationship with His people in these chapters?
4. The term 'servant' becomes increasingly important in this section. Who is the servant, and what does Isaiah reveal about the servant's identity, mission, and relationship to God's plan of redemption?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[16] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *"Servant" language builds across these chapters — if your group is tracking one thread all month, this is it.*

JULY — WEEK 2

COMFORT AND GOD'S VENGEANCE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Isaiah 58–66; Nahum	Psalms 120–134	Comfort and God's vengeance

Theological Context:

These chapters bring together two themes that often seem difficult to reconcile: God's comfort for His people and His judgment against evil. Isaiah describes a future restoration that extends beyond Israel to all nations, while Nahum demonstrates that God does not ignore injustice forever. Together they reveal a God whose mercy and justice are perfectly united.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why does the focus shift from the singular 'servant' to God's 'servants' in these chapters, and what might this reveal about God's future work through His people?
2. What does true worship and fasting look like according to Isaiah 58, and how does it differ from mere religious activity?
3. How do these chapters expand the vision of God's salvation beyond Israel, and what do they reveal about God's ultimate purposes for the nations and His eternal kingdom?
4. Why is God's judgment against Nineveh a source of comfort for God's people? How does this judgment reveal both God's justice and His mercy?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

JULY — WEEK 3

FAITH IN DARK TIMES

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Zephaniah; Habakkuk; Jeremiah 1–10	Psalms 135–141	Faith in dark times

Theological Context:

The darkness surrounding Judah continues to deepen, yet God raises up prophets who call His people to trust Him even when circumstances seem hopeless. Zephaniah announces the coming day of the Lord as "a day of darkness and gloom" (Zeph. 1:15) while still calling the humble to seek Him, Habakkuk wrestles openly with God's purposes, and Jeremiah begins a difficult ministry of warning. Together these books demonstrate that faith is not the absence of questions but confidence in God's character despite uncertainty.[17]

Guiding Questions:

1. How do Zephaniah and Jeremiah connect the worship of God's people with the condition of their hearts?
2. What questions does Habakkuk bring to God, and how might these questions mirror our own doubts and struggles in trying to understand how and when God responds?
3. What does it mean that 'the righteous shall live by faith,' and how might this phrase summarize God's relationship with His people throughout Scripture?
4. How do these prophets model honesty before God while striving to grow their own trust in His purposes?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[17] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Habakkuk's questions to God are not resolved by answers so much as by a change in Habakkuk himself, which is worth recognizing before the group tries to "solve" his complaint.*

JULY — WEEK 4

WARNING AND LAMENT

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Jeremiah 11–24	Psalms 142–150	Warning and Lament

Theological Context:

Jeremiah's ministry grows increasingly difficult as he confronts false prophets, corrupt leaders, and a people unwilling to listen. Jeremiah's messages reveal God's grief over persistent rebellion while also announcing the certainty of coming judgment. Yet even amid these warnings, God continues to promise restoration for those who return to Him.[18]

Guiding Questions:

1. Two themes emerge more clearly throughout these chapters — one of judgment and one of hope. How do they relate to Jeremiah's original commission 'to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant' (Jer. 1:10)?
2. Why do so many people reject Jeremiah's message, and how is that rejection expressed by the people, leaders, and prophets of Judah?
3. How are false prophets distinguished from true prophets in these chapters, and what lessons can we apply when evaluating truth claims in our own day?
4. Where do you find evidence of hope in the midst of Jeremiah's warnings and God's judgment?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[18] **Reading Honestly:** *"People rejected Jeremiah" often becomes the whole story, but the text shows him beaten, put in stocks, and later (in Jer. 38) thrown into a cistern to die for telling the truth. Let that cost register — it's what it actually looks like to speak for God in a culture that doesn't want to hear it, then or now.*

JULY — CLOSING DAYS

WISDOM CALLS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Lamentations	Proverbs 1–3	Wisdom calls

Theological Context:

Lamentations gives voice to the sorrow of a people experiencing the consequences of generations of rebellion. Yet even in grief, there are profound declarations of hope in God's steadfast love and faithfulness. Proverbs provides an important contrast, reminding us that wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord and calling us to walk in His ways.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Lamentations teach us about responding to suffering and loss in a way that truly honors the moment we live in and the scope of God's purposes?
2. Why is hope still possible in the midst of devastation, and where is that hope found?
3. How does God's faithfulness become the foundation for honest lament and faithful worship?
4. How do the opening chapters of Proverbs provide a fitting conclusion to this month's readings about warning, suffering, faithfulness, and hope?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 8 — AUGUST

IMAGES OF JUSTICE

FAITHFULNESS — JUDGMENT, MERCY AND LONGING

Throughout Scripture, God's justice and His love are never in conflict but are inseparable expressions of His holy character. Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel reveal this through vivid images, symbolic actions, historical events, and prophetic visions. These books show both God's righteous judgment against sin and His unwavering commitment to redeem a people for Himself. Even in exile, God remains present, faithful, and sovereign, preparing the way for the ultimate restoration of His people.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: New Covenant Hope — 21 chapters
- Week 2: The Fall of Jerusalem — 21 chapters
- Week 3: Faithfulness in Exile — 21 chapters
- Week 4: God's Glory and Justice — 21 chapters
- Closing Days: Judgment on the Nations — 9 chapters

AUGUST — WEEK 1

NEW COVENANT HOPE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Jeremiah 25–38	Prov. 4–10	New Covenant hope

Theological Context:

Jeremiah's warnings now become reality as Judah moves steadily toward exile. Yet in the midst of judgment, God gives some of Scripture's clearest promises of future restoration through the New Covenant.[19]

Guiding Questions:

1. Jeremiah frequently uses vivid images — such as the baskets of figs, the yoke, and the potter's vessel — to describe God's people and His purposes. What do these images reveal about God's justice, mercy, and desire for repentance?
2. Why does God specify seventy years of captivity? How does this demonstrate both His sovereign control over history and His faithfulness to His promises?
3. Jeremiah 31 describes the New Covenant. How does it differ from the covenant made at Sinai, and what does it reveal about God's ultimate solution to humanity's deepest problem?
4. How do Judah's kings, priests, prophets, and people respond to Jeremiah's message, and what warnings and encouragements does their response provide for God's people today?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[19] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Jeremiah 31 is worth reading slowly and more than once this week — it is one of the clearest Old Testament statements of what Christ later accomplishes.*

AUGUST — WEEK 2

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Jeremiah 39–52	Prov. 11–17	Fall of Jerusalem

Theological Context:

Jerusalem finally falls exactly as God had warned. As Jeremiah also pronounces judgment on surrounding nations, we discover that God rules over every kingdom with perfect justice while remaining faithful to His covenant.[20]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does the fall of Jerusalem demonstrate both the seriousness of sin and the faithfulness of God's word?
2. Jeremiah records judgments against many surrounding nations. What similarities and differences do you observe between God's dealings with Judah and with the other nations?
3. Even amid destruction, where do you see evidence of God's mercy, compassion, and faithfulness?
4. How do the themes of wisdom found in Proverbs help us understand why Jerusalem fell and how God's people should respond to His discipline?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[20] **Reading Honestly:** *The siege and fall of Jerusalem include real horror — starvation, violence, the blinding of Zedekiah. This is not incidental detail; it's the cost of persistent unfaithfulness made concrete, and it earns the hope of the New Covenant expounded in last week's reading.*

AUGUST — WEEK 3

FAITHFULNESS IN EXILE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Daniel 1–4; Ezekiel 1–10	Prov. 18–24	Faithfulness in exile

Theological Context:

Exile changes God's people's circumstances but not God's presence or His purposes. Daniel and his friends demonstrate faithful obedience, while Ezekiel receives extraordinary visions of God's holiness and glory.[21]

Guiding Questions:

1. What do Daniel and his friends teach us about living faithfully in a culture that does not share our beliefs, and what practices strengthen their faith?
2. Ezekiel is appointed as a watchman for Israel. What responsibilities does this role carry, and what can we learn from it about faithfully communicating God's truth?
3. What do Ezekiel's opening visions reveal about God's holiness, glory, and sovereign rule over all nations?
4. How do Daniel and Ezekiel encourage God's people to remain faithful when obedience is costly and God's purposes are not yet fully visible?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[21] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Daniel and his friends never demand a different culture around them — only faithfulness within it. That distinction is worth making explicit for older students navigating similar tension.*

AUGUST — WEEK 4

GOD'S GLORY AND JUSTICE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Ezekiel 11–24	Prov. 25–31	God's glory and justice

Theological Context:

Ezekiel continues to communicate God's message through dramatic signs and symbolic actions. The departure of God's glory from the temple reveals the devastating consequences of persistent rebellion, yet God's promises of a new heart and the coming Spirit provide hope in the midst of exile.[22]

Guiding Questions:

1. What images and symbolic actions does Ezekiel use to communicate God's judgment, and why are these images so memorable and effective?
2. Why is the departure of God's glory from the temple such a significant moment in Israel's history?
3. How do God's promises of a new heart and renewed Spirit provide hope in the midst of judgment?
4. How does the wisdom of Proverbs help us understand the relationship between fearing the Lord, righteous living, and God's justice?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[22] **Reading Honestly:** *Ezekiel 16 and 23 are among the most graphic chapters in Scripture, portraying the unfaithfulness of Jerusalem (and Samaria) as an adulterous wife in language meant to shock. This bluntness reveals both how seriously a covenant of love was betrayed and the power of God to restore and atone even for this sin (16:60-63). The imagery depicts covenant betrayal, not a pattern for any human marriage.*

AUGUST — CLOSING DAYS

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Ezekiel 25–32	Ecclesiastes 1	Judgment on nations

Theological Context:

God's justice extends far beyond Israel. The surrounding nations are judged for pride, violence, and opposition to God's purposes. Ecclesiastes opens by asking what lasting value can be found in life apart from God.

Guiding Questions:

1. What reasons are given for God's judgments against the surrounding nations? Which sins appear repeatedly?
2. How do the judgments against these nations reveal both God's justice and His impartiality?
3. What do these chapters teach about pride, power, and the temporary nature of earthly kingdoms?
4. How does the opening chapter of Ecclesiastes help us interpret these prophecies and point us toward what truly endures?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 9 — SEPTEMBER

LONGING FOR THE KING

FAITHFULNESS — JUDGMENT, MERCY AND LONGING

This month provides a dramatic conclusion to the cycles of sin, judgment, and restoration throughout the Old Testament. We have seen God's faithfulness established through several stages of covenant, often met by the unfaithful and rebellious response of His people. The restoration from Babylonian captivity provides the final example of this cycle, but with an increasing sense that something more is needed — a restoration of true worship that comes from the heart and a King who can ultimately fulfill God's promises.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Longing for God's Presence — 20 chapters
- Week 2: Longing for God's Kingdom — 21 chapters
- Week 3: Longing for God's Finished Work — 21 chapters
- Week 4: Longing for God's Word — 20 chapters
- Closing Days: Longing for the Messiah — 6 chapters

SEPTEMBER — WEEK 1

LONGING FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Ezekiel 33–48	Ecclesiastes 2–5	Longing for God's Presence

Theological Context:

Ezekiel's message turns increasingly from judgment toward restoration. God promises to gather His scattered people, give them a new heart and spirit, and restore His presence among them.

Guiding Questions:

1. What changes in Ezekiel's message as he moves from announcing judgment to proclaiming restoration?
2. What does God promise to do for the hearts of His people in Ezekiel 36–37, and why is this necessary for genuine restoration?
3. What is the significance of God's glory returning to the temple, and how does this compare with its departure earlier in Ezekiel?
4. How does 'the Preacher' and his search for meaning 'under the sun' (in Ecclesiastes) help us understand why restored circumstances alone cannot provide lasting fulfillment?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

SEPTEMBER — WEEK 2

LONGING FOR GOD'S KINGDOM

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Daniel 5–12; Ezra 1–6	Ecclesiastes 6–12	Longing for God's Kingdom

Theological Context:

Daniel's visions lift our eyes beyond the immediate circumstances of exile to God's larger purposes. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, but God's kingdom will endure forever. Ezra records the first steps toward restoration as exiles return to Jerusalem.[23]

Guiding Questions:

1. What do Daniel's visions reveal about the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms and the sovereignty of God over all of them?
2. What do Daniel 7–12 reveal about the coming kingdom, its King, and the ultimate destiny of God's people?
3. Why is rebuilding the temple such an important first step in Ezra's account of restoration, and what does this reveal about the priorities of the returning exiles?
4. How does the Preacher's conclusion in Ecclesiastes — 'Fear God and keep his commandments' — help us understand what ultimately matters in a world where everything else is temporary?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[23] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Daniel's visions can be difficult to follow or comprehend for younger readers, but a historical study of the events predicted here (beginning with Daniel 8) can be a powerful way to demonstrate God's sovereignty and purpose.*

SEPTEMBER — WEEK 3

LONGING FOR GOD'S FINISHED WORK

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Haggai; Zechariah; Esther 1–5	—	Longing for God's Finished Work

Theological Context:

The returning exiles face the difficult work of rebuilding, but discouragement and misplaced priorities threaten their progress. Haggai and Zechariah call the people to renewed faithfulness, while Esther shows God's providential care.[24]

Guiding Questions:

1. Why had the people stopped rebuilding the temple, and what does Haggai reveal about their priorities and their hearts?
2. What encouragement and hope does Zechariah give to a discouraged people, and how does his vision extend beyond the immediate restoration of Jerusalem?
3. What are the key differences between Daniel and Esther in how they live within and respond to the culture around them? Why might we see God's providence at work even when He is not named or the relationship to Him not clarified?
4. How do Haggai, Zechariah, and Esther together present a challenge to recognize God's purposes even when circumstances seem insignificant, discouraging, or unclear?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[24] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Esther never mentions God's name — a good moment to ask the group where we might be hiding our own identity as His people or choosing to identify with those who will not bow to a culture that dishonors God.*

SEPTEMBER — WEEK 4

LONGING FOR GOD'S WORD

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Esther 6–10; Ezra 7–10; Nehemiah 1–11	—	Longing for God's Word

Theological Context:

God's providence becomes increasingly visible as Esther's story reaches its dramatic conclusion. Ezra and Nehemiah lead a renewed effort to restore God's people, accompanied by renewed attention to God's Word, confession, and worship.[25]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does God's providence become evident in the resolution of Esther's story, and what does this reveal about His care for His people, even in exile?
2. What does Ezra do to restore God's Word to the center of the community, and why is this essential to genuine reform?
3. How do confession, covenant renewal, worship, and obedience shape Nehemiah's reforms?
4. Why do these reforms still fail to provide a lasting solution to Israel's recurring problem of unfaithfulness? What is still missing?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[25] **Reading Honestly:** *Ezra 10's account of sending away foreign wives and children is difficult and rarely read aloud, but avoiding it also avoids an essential question: how do God's people pursue holiness without becoming harsh? Wrestle with the tension rather than skip the chapter — Scripture doesn't resolve every hard question for us, and that's worth modeling too.*

SEPTEMBER — CLOSING DAYS

LONGING FOR THE MESSIAH

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Nehemiah 12–13; Malachi	—	Longing for the Messiah

Theological Context:

The walls have been rebuilt, the temple restored, and the law read, but Nehemiah's final chapters reveal the same patterns of disobedience. Malachi confronts empty worship while pointing toward a coming messenger and the Lord Himself.

Guiding Questions:

1. What do Nehemiah's final reforms reveal about the continuing spiritual condition of God's people even after the restoration?
2. What does Malachi reveal about the difference between outward religious activity and genuine worship of God?
3. Who is the messenger promised in Malachi, and what does his coming prepare us for?
4. At the close of the Old Testament, what remains unresolved in the story, and how does this explain the beliefs and practices of those waiting for the Messiah?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 10 — OCTOBER

THE NEW KINGDOM AND ITS KING

FULFILLMENT — CHRIST, CHURCH AND KINGDOM

The Old Testament ends with God's people longing for the true King who will finally accomplish what they have been unable to accomplish themselves. The four Gospels announce that this King has come! Jesus now enters the story as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the Word made flesh. He announces a new kingdom, calls people to follow Him, demonstrates the character and power of the King, and ultimately gives His life to establish His kingdom. His resurrection reveals that the King has conquered sin and death and that His kingdom will never end.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: The Birth of the King — 21 chapters
- Week 2: The Word of the King — 21 chapters
- Week 3: The Touch of the King — 21 chapters
- Week 4: The Love of the King — 21 chapters
- Closing Days: The Victory of the King — 5 chapters

Note the following parallels between September and October:

September — The Longing	October — The Fulfillment
Longing for God's Presence	Immanuel: God with us
Longing for God's Kingdom	The King announces His Kingdom
Longing for God's Finished Work	The Servant accomplishes our redemption
Longing for God's Word	The Word made flesh speaks God's truth
Longing for the Messiah	The victorious King conquers death

OCTOBER — WEEK 1

THE BIRTH OF THE KING

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Luke 1–8; Matthew 1–9; Mark 1–4	—	The Birth of the King

Theological Context:

The long-awaited King has finally come. Matthew and Luke connect Jesus directly to the promises and expectations of the Old Testament, while Mark immediately presents Him exercising the authority of the King.[26]

Guiding Questions:

1. How do Matthew and Luke connect Jesus' birth and family line to the promises and expectations of the Old Testament?
2. What is the significance of each announcement to the person and work of this new King? Note the people, place, timing, and mode of each announcement.
3. What do Jesus' early life, teaching, and miracles reveal about His authority and identity, and what seems to distinguish this new kingdom from the kingdoms and leaders we have seen throughout Israel's history?
4. Why do some people recognize Jesus as the King while others question, reject, or fear Him?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[26] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *If a group is short on time, the four Gospel announcement scenes (to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds) reward deeper comparison more than any other passage this week.*

OCTOBER — WEEK 2

THE WORD OF THE KING

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Mark 5–10; John 1–4; Luke 9–10; Matthew 10–18	—	The Word of the King

Theological Context:

Jesus' words reveal both the authority of the King and the nature of His kingdom. John identifies Him as the eternal Word who became flesh, while the other Gospels show Him teaching and calling disciples, confronting religious leaders, and announcing the priorities of His kingdom. His words do more than inform — they call people to repentance, faith, obedience, and a radically different way of life.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does John 1 reveal about Jesus as the Word, and how does this connect Him to God's revelation and activity throughout the Old Testament?
2. What does Jesus teach about the character and priorities of His kingdom?
3. How does Jesus' authority over sickness, nature, demons, sin, and death demonstrate that He is more than merely a teacher or prophet?
4. What does Jesus require of those who hear His Word and want to become His disciples?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

OCTOBER — WEEK 3

THE TOUCH OF THE KING

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Matthew 19–23; John 5–11; Luke 11–19	—	The Touch of the King

Theological Context:

The King does not remain distant from the people He has come to save. Jesus touches the lives of individuals and communities through healing, forgiveness, compassion, confrontation, and invitation, calling them to see God's kingdom differently.

Guiding Questions:

1. What do Jesus' interactions with individuals reveal about His compassion, holiness, and intimate understanding of the human heart?
2. Why does Jesus respond to people's physical needs while always addressing a deeper spiritual need?
3. How does Jesus challenge the religious leaders of His day, and what does this reveal about the difference between outward religion and transformed hearts?
4. What do the parables and encounters in these chapters reveal about who belongs in God's kingdom and how they enter it?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

OCTOBER — WEEK 4

THE LOVE OF THE KING

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Luke 20–23; Matthew 24–27; John 12–19; Mark 11–15	—	The Love of the King

Theological Context:

The King enters Jerusalem knowing that His kingdom will be established through suffering and sacrifice, willingly submitting to arrest and death. The cross reveals the depth of the King's love while demonstrating God's justice and the seriousness of human sin.[27]

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and His confrontations in the temple reveal about the kind of king He is?
2. How does Jesus prepare His disciples for His suffering and death, and why do they struggle to understand what He is telling them?
3. How do the events surrounding the cross reveal the depth of both God's justice and God's love, and how does this fulfill the law and prophetic messages of the Old Testament?
4. Why is Jesus' willing sacrifice necessary to accomplish the redemption promised throughout the Old Testament?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[27] **Reading Honestly:** *This week is often the one families instinctively don't soften — the trial, the mockery, the physical brutality are told plainly, and rightly so. Let that same instinct guide the harder passages earlier in the year (David and Bathsheba, Hosea, Song of Songs); the crucifixion only carries its full weight against the real severity of what it atones for.*

OCTOBER — CLOSING DAYS

THE VICTORY OF THE KING

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Mark 16; Matthew 28; John 20–21; Luke 24	—	The Victory of the King

Theological Context:

The King who appeared to be defeated has conquered death. The resurrection confirms Jesus' identity, validates His teaching, and transforms His frightened followers into bold witnesses who are sent to proclaim the good news. The victory of the King demonstrates that sin and death do not have the final word, igniting a movement that will reshape history.

Guiding Questions:

1. What evidence do the Gospels give for the reality of Jesus' resurrection, and why is this essential to the Christian faith?
2. How does the resurrection change the disciples' understanding of Jesus and His kingdom?
3. What does Jesus commission His followers to do, and what does this reveal about the continuing purposes of His kingdom?
4. How does the victory of the King answer the longing that has been building throughout the Old Testament?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 11 — NOVEMBER

THE KINGDOM EXTENDED

FULFILLMENT — CHRIST, CHURCH AND KINGDOM

The victorious King has conquered sin and death and commissioned His followers to take the good news of His kingdom to the ends of the earth. In Acts, we see this mission carried forward through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. What began in Jerusalem among Jesus' Jewish followers extends to Samaria, to the Gentiles, and eventually throughout the Roman Empire and to Rome itself. The apostles and early churches become instruments of God's continuing work, calling all people to receive forgiveness and be reconciled to Him. The letters written alongside this story help us understand what this new community of God's kingdom is becoming.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: The Spirit Comes and the Kingdom Expands — 19 chapters
- Week 2: The Kingdom Extends to the Gentiles — 20 chapters
- Week 3: The Kingdom on Trial — 21 chapters
- Week 4: The Kingdom Enters Rome — 20 chapters
- Closing Days: Reconciled in Christ — 4 chapters

NOVEMBER — WEEK 1

THE SPIRIT COMES AND THE KINGDOM EXPANDS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Acts 1–14; James	—	The Spirit Comes and the Kingdom Expands

Theological Context:

Jesus ascends, and the Holy Spirit comes upon His followers at Pentecost, empowering them as His witnesses. As the apostles proclaim the resurrection, face opposition, and demonstrate the transforming power of the Gospel, the early church grows rapidly, and Jesus' followers carry the Gospel from Jerusalem into Judea, Samaria, and beyond. Alongside this story, James writes to Jewish believers scattered among the nations, reminding them that genuine faith produces a transformed life.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Pentecost reveal about the role of the Holy Spirit in continuing the work of Jesus and advancing God's kingdom?
2. How does the Gospel move from Jerusalem toward Samaria and the nations, and what barriers does God overcome along the way?
3. What do the lives of Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul reveal about the kind of people God uses to advance His kingdom?
4. How does James help us understand what authentic faith should look like in the lives of people who belong to this new kingdom?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

NOVEMBER — WEEK 2

THE KINGDOM EXTENDS TO THE GENTILES

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Acts 15–20; 1–2 Thessalonians; Galatians	—	The Kingdom Extends to the Gentiles

Theological Context:

The Gospel moves decisively into the Gentile world, crossing ethnic, cultural, political, and religious boundaries. The Jerusalem Council wrestles with which Mosaic laws Gentile believers in Christ must follow, while Paul's missionary journeys establish churches across the Roman world. Galatians makes clear that salvation comes through faith in Christ rather than by the works of the law, and the Thessalonian letters show what this new faith looks like in communities waiting for the return of their King.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why was the inclusion of Gentiles such a significant challenge for the early church, and how does the Jerusalem Council resolve the question?
2. What does Paul mean when he insists that people are justified by faith rather than by works of the law?
3. How do Paul's missionary methods reveal both the opportunities and the opposition involved in advancing God's kingdom?
4. How does the expectation of Christ's return shape the way the Thessalonian believers are called to live?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

NOVEMBER — WEEK 3

THE KINGDOM ON TRIAL

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Acts 21–25; 1 Corinthians	—	The Kingdom on Trial

Theological Context:

Paul's return to Jerusalem leads to arrest and defense before religious and political authorities, showing how apparent setbacks can become opportunities for growth in God's kingdom. 1 Corinthians gives us a window into the challenges faced by the church in Corinth, a key city of the Roman Empire, and shows the need for God's people to live differently from the surrounding culture.[28]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Paul respond when obedience to God brings suffering, accusation, and imprisonment?
2. How does Paul's defense before earthly authorities demonstrate the difference between God's kingdom and the kingdoms of this world?
3. What problems in Corinth reveal the difficulty of forming a distinctly Christian community within a pagan culture?
4. What does 1 Corinthians teach about the church as Christ's body and the role of spiritual gifts in carrying out His mission?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[28] **Reading Honestly:** *Paul names the Corinthians' sin specifically and without euphemism (1 Cor. 5) before calling the church to holiness — a model worth following in how we talk about sin in our own communities: named plainly, addressed directly, restored fully.*

NOVEMBER — WEEK 4

THE KINGDOM ENTERS ROME

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Acts 26–28; 2 Corinthians; Philippians	—	The Kingdom Enters Rome

Theological Context:

Paul's journey ends in Rome, yet Acts closes without a tidy conclusion: Paul is under guard, and the Gospel goes forward unhindered. The kingdom enters the heart of the Roman Empire, not through military power, but through a suffering apostle. In 2 Corinthians and Philippians, Paul gives us a deeper picture of a servant of Christ: weak in himself, yet strengthened by God; suffering, yet rejoicing; imprisoned, yet faithfully proclaiming the Gospel.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Paul's journey to Rome demonstrate God's sovereignty over circumstances that appear to obstruct the Gospel?
2. What does Paul's suffering reveal about the way God's kingdom advances?
3. How do 2 Corinthians and Philippians challenge our understanding of strength, success, leadership, and service?
4. Why does Acts end with Paul in Rome rather than with a clear conclusion? What does this suggest about the continuing mission of the Church?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

NOVEMBER — CLOSING DAYS

RECONCILED IN CHRIST

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Colossians	—	Reconciled in Christ

Theological Context:

Colossians brings the story back to the King Himself. The Gospel that has moved from Jerusalem to Rome is ultimately not about the apostles but about Christ, through whom all things were created and through whom God reconciles all things to Himself. He is supreme over every power and authority, and His people have been transferred into His kingdom, which grounds the Church's mission.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Colossians reveal about the identity, authority, and supremacy of Christ?
2. How does Paul describe the reconciliation accomplished through Christ, and what does this mean for God's kingdom?
3. What does it mean that believers have been 'transferred' into the kingdom of God's beloved Son?
4. How should the supremacy of Christ shape the way believers live, worship, serve, and participate in His continuing mission?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

MONTH 12 — DECEMBER

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM

FULFILLMENT — CHRIST, CHURCH AND KINGDOM

The King has come, conquered sin and death, and extended His kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit and the witness of His people. But what does it mean to actually live as citizens of this new kingdom? The final books of the New Testament call God's people to live by faith, empowered by the Spirit, shaped by Christ, faithful through suffering, and committed to truth and love.

Monthly Study Milestones

- Week 1: Life in the Spirit — 16 chapters
- Week 2: Faithful Kingdom Leaders — 20 chapters
- Week 3: Faith in the Fire — 21 chapters
- Week 4: Victory in Christ — 22 chapters
- Closing Days: Walking in Love and Truth — 8 chapters

DECEMBER — WEEK 1

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Romans	—	Life in the Spirit

Theological Context:

Romans provides a comprehensive explanation of the Gospel and its implications for believers. All people stand under sin, but through faith we are justified, reconciled to God, and given new life through the Holy Spirit. This new life changes our identity, our relationship with God, our relationship with one another, and our understanding of God's purposes for His people.[29]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Paul describe the human condition apart from Christ, and why is the Gospel necessary for everyone?
2. What does it mean to be justified by faith, and how does this change our relationship with God?
3. What does Romans 8 reveal about life in the Spirit and the identity and position of those who belong to Christ?
4. How should the Gospel transform the way Christ-followers live together as God's people and fulfill His purposes?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[29] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Romans 8 is the emotional and theological peak of the whole letter — if a group can only study one chapter this week, this is the one to slow down for.*

DECEMBER — WEEK 2

FAITHFUL KINGDOM LEADERS

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Philemon; Ephesians; 1–2 Timothy; Titus	—	Faithful Kingdom Leaders

Theological Context:

The new kingdom requires leaders and servants whose lives reflect the character of its King. Ephesians describes the Church as Christ's body, with each believer a part of the whole, and calls believers to live in a manner worthy of their calling. Timothy and Titus are charged with developing faithful leaders and communities, including the qualifications that mark them, while Philemon demonstrates how the Gospel transforms relationships at the most personal level.[30]

Guiding Questions:

1. What characteristics define leaders and servants who are faithful to Christ and His kingdom?
2. How does Ephesians describe the relationship between individual believers and the larger body of Christ?
3. Why does Paul place such strong emphasis on character and example when describing Christian leadership?
4. How does Philemon demonstrate the Gospel's power to transform relationships, status, authority, and responsibility?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[30] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Philemon is one chapter long and easy to skip past — don't. Paul asking a slave-owner to receive back a slave "no longer as a slave, but… as a brother" is the Gospel applied to one of the hardest relationships possible.*

DECEMBER — WEEK 3

FAITH IN THE FIRE

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Hebrews; 1–2 Peter	—	Faith in the Fire

Theological Context:

Following Christ does not remove suffering. Hebrews calls believers to persevere by fixing their eyes on Jesus, our great High Priest and the founder and perfecter of our faith. Peter reminds suffering Christians that their identity and hope are secure in Christ, even when they face rejection and persecution.[31]

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Hebrews present Jesus as greater than the people, institutions, and practices of the Old Covenant?
2. What does it mean to 'run with endurance' by fixing our eyes on Jesus?
3. How do Peter's letters help us understand suffering as citizens of God's kingdom?
4. What reasons do Hebrews and Peter give for remaining faithful when following Christ becomes costly?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[31] **Reading Honestly:** *1 Peter is written to Christians facing real persecution, not abstract hardship — resist flattening "suffering" into generic difficulty. Naming what kind of suffering the text actually describes (slander, social hostility, and unjust suffering) keeps the letter's comfort from becoming generic as well.*

DECEMBER — WEEK 4

VICTORY IN CHRIST

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
Revelation	—	Victory in Christ

Theological Context:

Revelation pulls back the curtain on the ultimate reality of God's kingdom. Though the Church may seem weak and the powers of this world victorious, Christ is reigning now and will defeat every power that opposes Him. Through judgment, perseverance, worship, and final restoration, Revelation calls God's people to remain faithful, because the victory of the King is certain and His kingdom will renew all things.[32]

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Revelation reveal about the identity, authority, and present reign of Christ?
2. How are God's people called to respond when earthly powers appear stronger than the Church and its King?
3. What role do worship and perseverance play in the life of God's people as they await Christ's return?
4. How does the final vision of God's kingdom answer the longing for restoration that has been present throughout the entire biblical story?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[32] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Revelation's imagery is often either avoided entirely or mined for prediction — try a third perspective: ask what the vision reveals about who is actually in control, right now, regardless of how things look.*

DECEMBER — CLOSING DAYS

WALKING IN LOVE AND TRUTH

Scripture Readings	Wisdom / Poetic Focus	Focus Connection Theme
1–3 John; Jude	—	Walking in Love and Truth

Theological Context:

The final letters of the New Testament provide a simple but profound call: remain faithful to the truth and walk in love. John's letters remind believers that genuine fellowship with God produces obedience, love for others, and discernment concerning false teaching. Jude likewise calls God's people to contend for the faith while extending mercy to those who doubt or stray. The closing call is not simply to know the truth, but to live it out in the community of God's people as we await His kingdom's full arrival.[33]

Guiding Questions:

1. How do John and Jude describe the relationship between truth, obedience, and love?
2. Why is discernment and faithfulness to the truth so important for God's people?
3. How can we 'contend for the faith' while still showing mercy and love?
4. What does it mean to remain faithful to Christ while waiting for the fulfillment of His kingdom?

Personal Notes & Reflection:

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[33] **For Group Leaders & Teachers:** *Jude's admonition to "contend for the faith" paired with 2 John's warnings about false teachers is a fitting final note to the year: truth and love are not in tension in Scripture, whatever our culture assumes.*