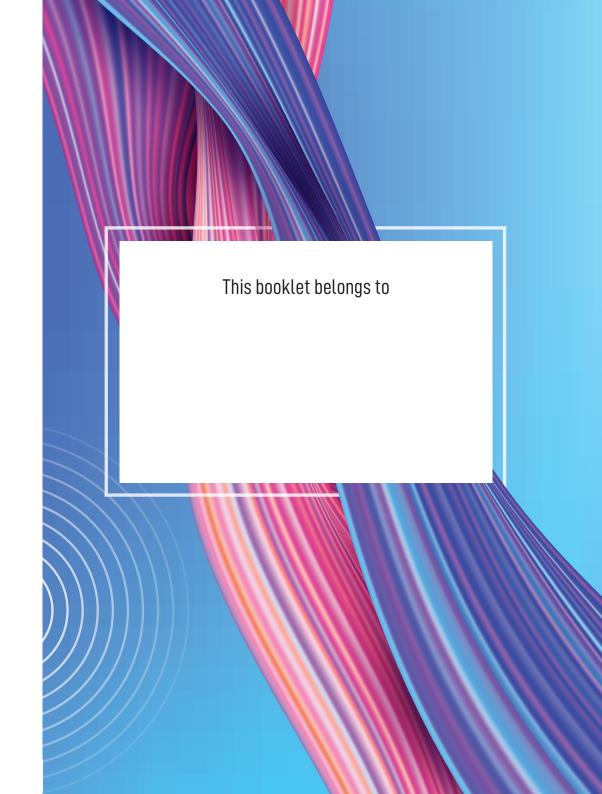
# A CHAPTER A DAY

an Agape Bible Reading Plan

YEAR 2, QUARTER 3 (JUL - SEP 2021) Looking for a devotional guide to supplement your reading? Pick up Joel Beeke's 'Family Worship Bible Guide'!

## FAMILY WORSHIP BIBLE GUIDE



## WELCOME MESSAGE

by Pastor Johanan Justin (Editor)

#### Dear Agapian,

You have already made it were doing all these things through half the year – well for. Three times, Jesus brings done! Welcome to the second this encouragement: "And your half of the year. I am confident Father who sees in secret will vou will make it.

Even as we have been reading So as you read the Bible in your God's word together, as a homes, with your cell groups, community – I want us to with members of the church... remember that reading the As you follow along with this word of God is an extremely Bible-reading plan... Don't personal privilege.

Perhaps, in the midst of reading the Bible together, you may have forgotten why we are actually doing this. Perhaps vou have become far more Your Father sees it. Your Father interested in 'checking off' the *delights* in it. Your Father will required chapters each day. rewards you for it. Perhaps reading the Bible has become far more mechanical and social in recent times.

So why are we doing this A Chapter A Day Bible-reading plan? We are doing this, to gain more of Christ. To revel in the love of the Father. And to fellowship daily through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, as He taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, warned them strongly against hypocrisy. Whether in giving, in praying, or in fasting – they

Greetings once again in Christ! were to be mindful who they reward vou."

> neglect getting alone, shutting the door behind you, and coming before the presence of Your Father with His word, in the secret.

May God bless the reading of His word.

#### O GOD MOST HIGH,

Creator of the ends of the earth, Governor of the universe, Judge of all men, Head of the church, Saviour of sinners; Your greatness is unsearchable, Your goodness infinite, Your compassions unfailing, Your providence boundless, Your mercies ever new.

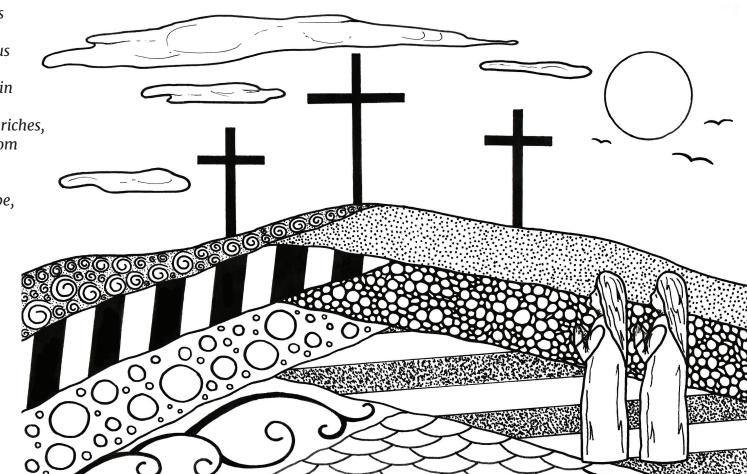
We bless You for the words of salvation.

Let us as Christians fill our various situations in life, escape the snares to which they expose us,

discharge the duties that arise from our circumstances,

enjoy with moderation their advantages, improve with diligence their usefulness, And may every place and company we are in be benefited by us.

Amen.



How important, suitable, encouraging are the doctrines, promises, and invitations of the gospel of peace! We are lost: but in it You have presented to us a full, free and eternal salvation; weak: but here we learn that help is found in One that is mighty, poor: but in him we discover unsearchable riches, blind: but we find he has treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We thank You for Your unspeakable gift. Your Son is our only refuge, foundation, hope, confidence; We depend upon his death, rest in his righteousness, desire to bear his image; May his glory fill our minds, his love reign in our affections, his cross inflame us with ardour.

### WELCOME TO **'A CHAPTER A DAY'**

#### It's Yours!

This booklet is entirely, completely, and unreservedly yours! Personalize it. Set up your own system of using it. You could treasure it and keep it in the most pristine condition possible. Or... you could

scribble in, scrawl across, and scrounge up this booklet to your heart's delight. But however you use it, make sure that you do use it!

#### Calendar

The goal is to read through the entire Bible in 3 years. This may seem like a really long process – but here's the thing: it's actually a day-by-day project. And to help and guide you – both in the daily project, and the 3-year process – we've included calendars. These calendars help you track where you are, and what you've covered. So as you move through each day, cross it off on your calendar – and praise God for the grace He's granted you that day!

#### Journaling Space

In addition to the calendars, there is space provided for you to jot down a response to that day's reading(s). Is there a petition you want to make? Is there something you've learnt about God? Did God speak through His word into your situation in a particular way? Or do you have a question that arose out of that text? Capture these things – and later, share them with someone else too!

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Congratulations on making it through the first year's readings! This booklet you hold in your hands is designed to help you through this second year.

#### Resources

Its

IN A

**NUTESHELL** 

features

This booklet is not merely a tool to guide your Bible-reading – nor is it merely for journaling! This booklet comes with resources to deepen your journey of reading the Scriptures. You could:

- join with Christians throughout this past century through praying a historic prayer
  - prepare yourself to read a particular book of the Bible by understanding its context
  - be inspired and encouraged by the Biblereading journeys of your pastors and leaders

Take heart! You are not alone on this journey of reading the word!

#### **Credits**

And at the end of this booklet, there is a list of resources provided for you. These resources helped shape this booklet, and the materials found in it. If you find the booklet helpful, you might want to check out some of these books and articles. They will definitely enrich your reading even further!

#### Join the Bible Reading Challenge!

Diligently keep up with the Bible reading plan for 365 days and get a special reward at the end of 2021!



Now, you're ready to go! May God bless the reading of His word!

#### TIPS ON HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Last year we learnt 8 questions to help us understand and apply the Bible. This year, we look at 4 steps to guide our reading of the Bible.

#### Investigate the **CONTEXT**

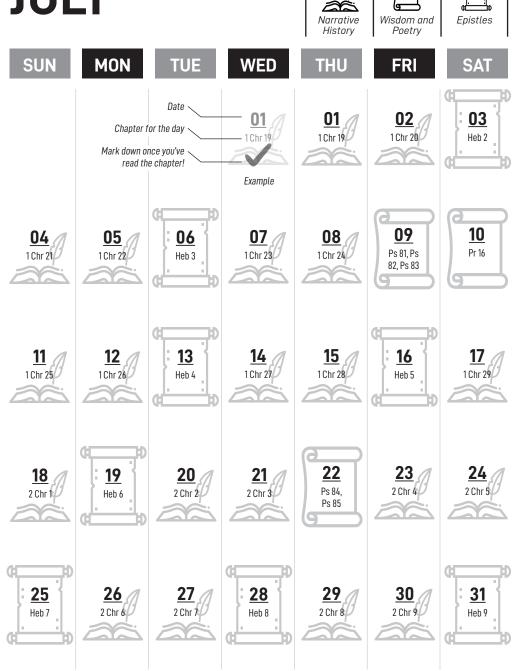
- > Who is writing this passage? Who is this passage written to?
- > Why was this passage written?
- > From the passage, can you tell what is going on in the lives of the author & the recipients?
- > What happened in the passage just before? What is the link to the current passage?

#### Make your **OBSERVATION**

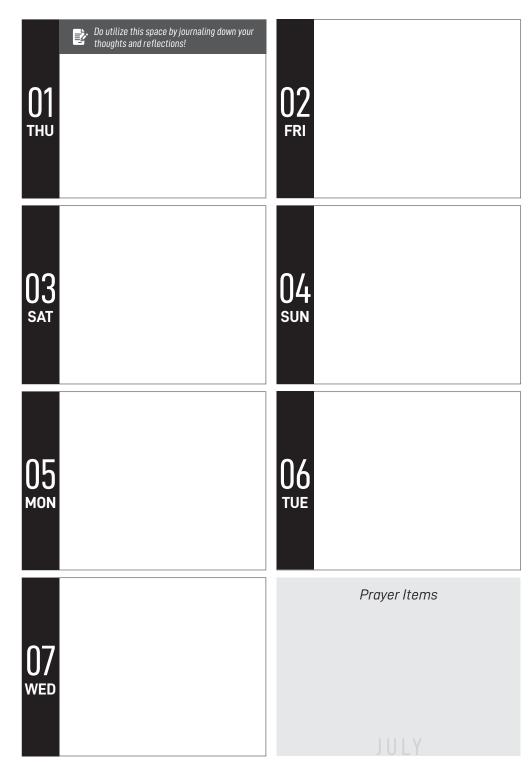
- > What "jumps out" at you from the passage? What interests or troubles you?
- Is something repeated (word, phrase, pattern, etc.)?
- What are the connecting words in the passage (therefore, for, but, because, etc.)?
- > What is the main point of the passage?

Look out for the last step that will be released in next quarter's booklet! In the meantime, continue practicing the available steps every day until it becomes natural :)

## JULY



- > Is there a character in the passage we can learn from?
- > How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
- > What can we learn about God and about life in the world?
- > How does this passage anticipate or illustrate the gospel?



#### HOLD ON: Heeding Hebrews

We do not know for sure who the author and the intended recipients were – they are never identified in this book. But traditionally, the book of Hebrews was believed to have been written to Jewish believers (or Gentile converts from the Jewish faith). What can we learn from this mysterious letter? *Read on...* 

#### 🗮 Hoist the Hope of Christ!

The intended recipients of this letter were suffering persecution and other trials. They had become less observant of Christian teaching. Some had stopped gathering for worship. How does Hebrews address such unfaithfulness? By exalting Christ!

- 7 Christ as the God-Man
- 2 Christ as the Son of God
- **3** Christ as the Revelation of God
- 4 Christ as the Agent & Sustainer of Creation
- 5 Christ as the Sympathetic High Priest
- 6 Christ as the Superior Sacrifice
- 7 Christ as Superior to Angels, Moses, and the Mosaic Law
- 8 Christ as Superior to the Tabernacle and the Priesthood
- 9 Christ as the Bringer of the Last Days

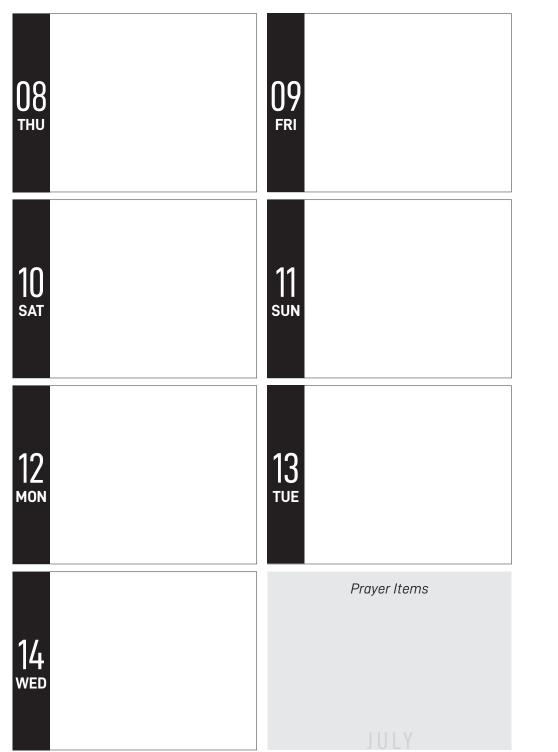
How would you deal with unfaithfulness in your own life? Rather than the fear of the Law – let the worship of Jesus transform you!

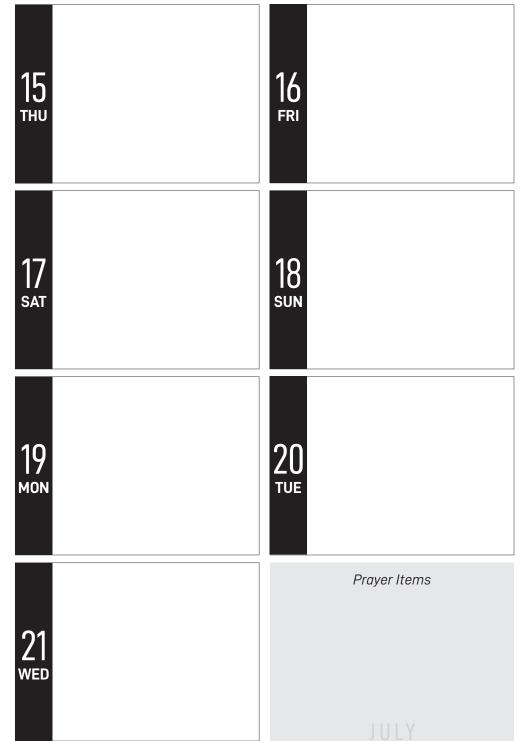
You hardly have to begin reading to see Christ wonderfully exalted! Adore Him! Worship Him! But above all, **lay hold of Jesus with persevering faith!** 

### Hindered? Here's Help!

Don't let anything hamper your reading! Here's help!

- / Jesus is Superior to Angelic Beings (1-2)
- // Jesus is Superior to the Law of Moses (3-9)
- /// Call to Faith and Endurance (10-12)
- IV Concluding Exhortations and Remarks (13)







1-2 Chronicles are two of the most misunderstood members of the Bible. It tends to be skimmed over due to its many lists and genealogies. and because of its similarities to 1-2 Kings. In fact, these books were once known as "the things omitted concerning the kings of Judah", giving a sense that 1-2 Chronicles were just complementary and had no message in itself. Prepare to experience the true Chronicles...

#### Christ-Bound!

Here are some insights to inspire you to cruise with Chronicles!

- **Original Placement:** 1-2 Chronicles were placed after 1-2 Kings in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, because Chronicles was merely seen as containing "the things omitted concerning the kings of Judah". However, 1-2 Chronicles were originally the last books of the Hebrew Old Testament. This means that at one point. 1-2 Chronicles was meant to prepare God's people for the arrival of Jesus!
- Linking Genealogies: The genealogies in 1 Chronicles narrows on two tribes: Judah (the line of kings) & Levi (the line of priests). These genealogies were meant to identify the rightful king and priest for God's people. This search finds its conclusion in the genealogies found in the gospel of Matthew and Luke. Jesus is the long searched-after. King and Priest!
- **War Longing Fulfilled:** 1-2 Chronicles presents us with the need for a King who would elevate and perpetuate the priority of worship (governed by the priests). We get a glimpse of this through the reigns of David and Solomon. But eventually, royal idolatry and unfaithfulness leads to the land of Israel being invaded, and the temple being destroyed. This paves the way for the New Testament, for Jesus - the true and better Priest-King!

#### "Theological History"

1-2 Chronicles are historical accounts. It features lists. genealogies, temple records, and other such documents. However, these sources are selectively and intentionally used to highlight certain God-related truths! Keep your eyes peeled!

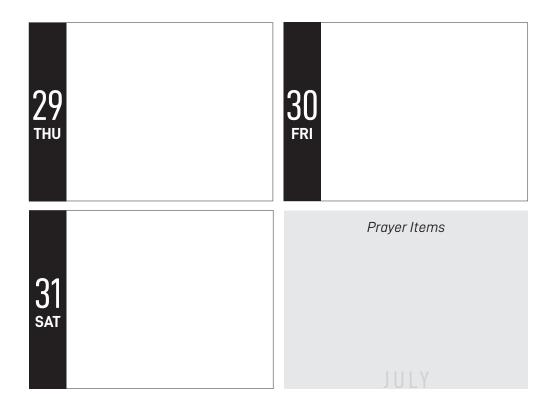
#### Chapters to the Chronicles

Here's an easy breakdown to keep you from getting marooned!

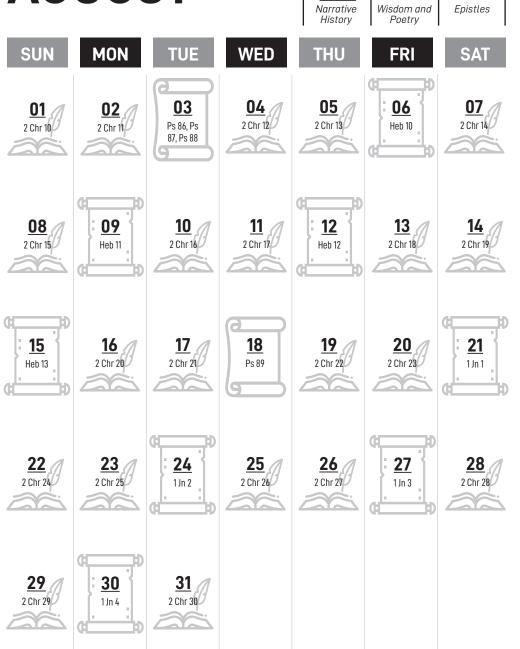
- / The Reign of Solomon and the Construction of the Temple (1-9)
- // The Divided Kingdom (10-36)

Have you a need for a Greater King and a more Permanent Priest? Turn to the words of the Chronicles and look forward to Jesus, the Coming Priest-King!





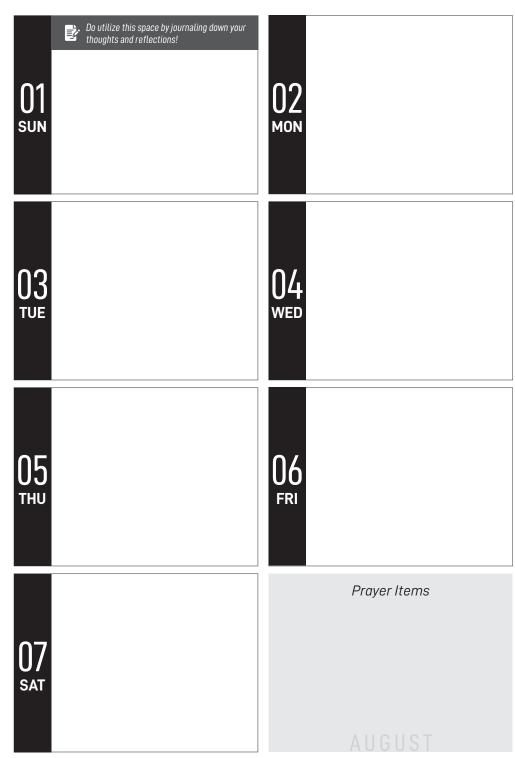
## **AUGUST**



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Epistles



#### A Bible Reading Journey by Wee Sok Hwee (Pastoral Staff)

I ended up seeking

God (in the Bible)

for me - my needs,

my struggles and

One year after becoming a believer, a mentor took me under her wing and taught me not just the basics of the Christian faith, but also the importance of having quiet time (QT) with God. Bible reading and prayer became a regular part of my life.

Having my QT regularly was not an issue for me. You see, I was deeply amazed by Christ who not only delivered me from demon possession, but

saved me eternally. Being touched in the depths of my being, I could not help but want to know Him more, so I could love Him more.

However, more often than not, I ended up seeking God (in the Bible) for *me* – *my* needs, *my* struggles and purpose – instead of seeking God for God.

After starting work, things changed... With one foot in God and one foot in the world, I floundered in my spiritual disciplines. Thankfully, something happened two years later which led to my repentance and renewal in God...

Being gripped by how God relentlessly pursues and loves me, I re-embarked on a journey of growing in God and His word. This time round there was no turning back... And from daily seeking God in the word for me, I grew to seek God for God.

Without any bible reading plans then, I went from one book to another in no

particular order. Each time, I read and reflected on half a chapter or the entire chapter. I struggled at times because while 'narrative books' were easier to digest, books like Leviticus and the prophets were hard to understand...

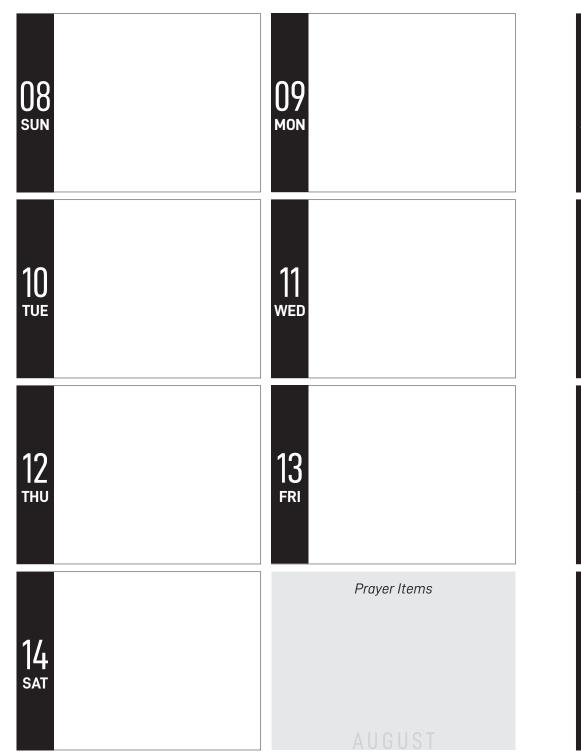
But over time, by His spirit and grace, my eyes were opened to behold Him as

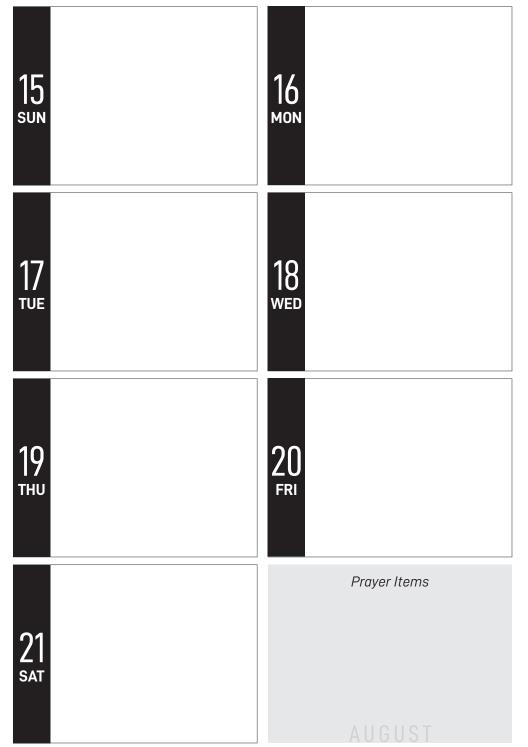
> He is. Also, I became more convicted of my sins and need of Him, as I saw myself in the light of who He is, what He has done, and all He is about! Being in the gospel journey further revealed how the bible is all about Jesus and His great salvation plan.

Far from having arrived, Ibelieve there is more treasure in God's word that I have vet

to discover! What keeps me going in this bible reading journey? It is Jesus who is the Word become flesh. Apart from Him, I can do nothing... His faithfulness toward me keeps me faithful.

Additionally, as God's powerful word endures forever, sanctifies us, and is a lamp unto our feet – we become better equipped in life, in good times and in bad. That way, we are being prepared to become *ready future citizens of heaven* called to rule with Christ one day! So join me and others in our spiritual community to press on in this journey. Let's continually encourage, pray for, and remind one another to stay faithful in doing this Christian ordinary.







1 John was written as a circular to be read by a circuit of churches. 2 John was written to one of those churches. 3 John was written to an individual (Gaius). Very different contexts, but very similar needs. Join in and judge for yourself...

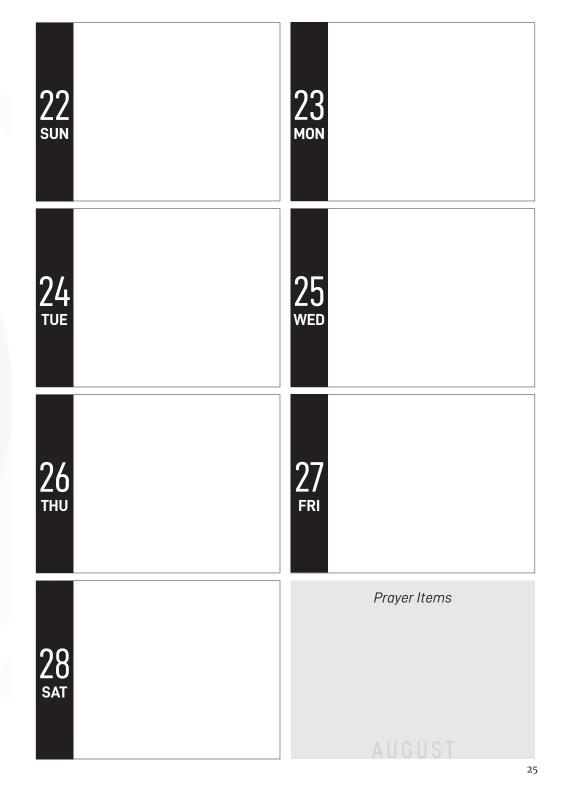
#### Jovial Jostling

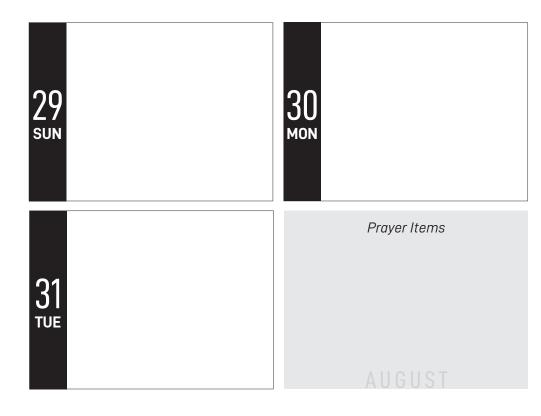
John's letters can be hard-hitting, but they are full of Christ-exalting joy! Here are some themes John uses to "complete our joy":

- Faith: Who is God? What is His nature? How has He revealed Himself to us? And how are we to respond to Him? John calls us to anchor our hope upon our Triune God!
- **Truth:** How can I know that I am truly a believer? Is there some hidden knowledge that is only available to a select few? How should I interact with all that is worldly? *John reminds us that true believers stand on the truth!*
- **Solution** Love: What does it mean to love God? Why should I love others around me? Can there be an "unloving" Christian? John clarifies that love is a necessity for all Christians!



John's letters take us into the gospel to deal with practical issues – issues of doubt, of assurance, and of behaviour. Though the word "gospel" is never mentioned in his letters, yet the message is clear: **When in doubt, come back to the gospel!** 





## Summoned by the Psalms (Book 4)

The Hebrew title for the book of Psalms means "Praises". Often the Psalms feature desolate cries for mercy and help, but sometimes these cries give way to songs of joyful adoration and thanksgiving!

#### An Overview (Book 4)

- Psalm 90 to 106 form 'Book 4' of the Psalms
- The tone of Book 4 is one of renewed hope and faith
- Book 4 may be seen as the first response to the problems raised in Book 3
- A special theme celebrated in Book 4 is the 'Kingship of Yahweh'
- Book 3 ended with doubt and despair, but Book 4 concludes with praise unto Yahweh – for He is good

Even in the dreariness of our lives, the Psalms lead us to declare: "The LORD reigns!"

#### How do I read the Psalms?

The Psalms are unlike any other book in the Bible. Here are some tips to help you appreciate the Psalms!

Respond with Praise and Thanksgiving!

Praise is often defined as exalting God for His character. However, thanksgiving is often about responding to God for the things He has done. Still, there is a mighty overlap between the two! Even the psalms of thanksgiving are packed with explosive praise to the covenantal God. *So praise Him*!

#### K Respond by Celebrating the Sovereignty of God!

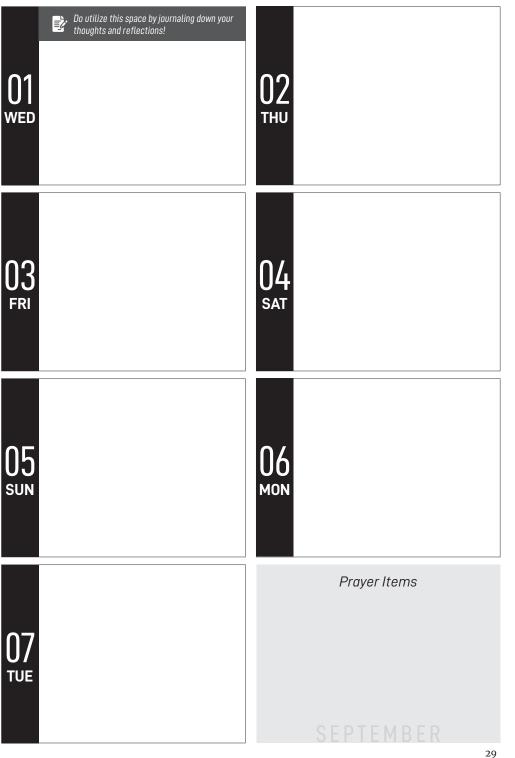
The big theme of the Psalms is God's sovereign rule as the Great King over all! God rules over all creation, over all nations, over all His people! God is good. God is just. And God is the great and powerful one – the Almighty! We see this all the more clearly in Book 4. So say this with me: "The LORD reigns!"

#### **g** Respond with Humility!

Sometimes the psalms we read may not match the season we are in. Sometimes we come across psalms of praise during seasons of doubt and indifference. How are we to respond? We must accept that these remain truths about God, and therefore, God must be worshipped and exalted – no matter how we feel! So when a psalm seems too lofty, humble yourself – God is near to the lowly!

Jesus said that the Psalms are about Him (Luke 24:44). As the great, covenantal King is exalted above all else in Book 4, **do you see Him there?** 







The people of God are defeated and in exile. The end of 2 Chronicles is resounded in the opening of the book of Ezra: Cyrus, the King of Persia, decrees for all worshippers to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of God. The story of Israel continues...

#### 🚊 Ezra's Easel

The book of Ezra mainly utilises two kinds of materials: **archives** (e.g. Cyrus' decree, inventory of temple items, letters to and from Persian kings, extended lists of names, etc.) and **personal recollections** (first-person narrative). Ezra is 'theological history' – an ordered collection of events to demonstrate truths about God!

#### 避 Emptying Ezra

Here's a guide to get the most out of Ezra!

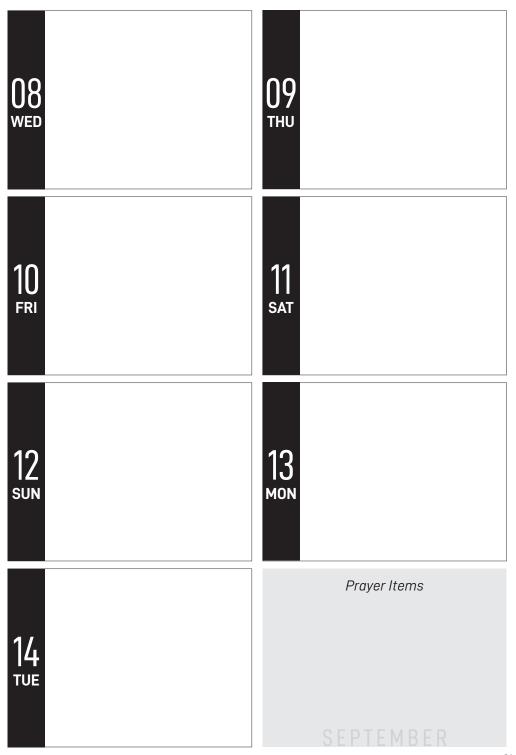
- / Cyrus' Decree and the Return of the Exiles (1-2)
- // The Rebuilding of the Temple
  (3-6)
- /// Ezra Establishes the Law (7-8)
- /V The Problem of Intermarriage (9-10)

#### Encouraging, Entrancing, Enterprising

There are so many ways to profit from this book! Here are some things we can learn:

- Who is God? God is supreme over kings, events, and history. He never abandons His purpose. He never gives up on His people. He is the God of covenant and continuity. Let your heart be enraptured by Him!
- How is God to be worshipped? The temple is the focus of this book. Before the construction of facilities and infrastructure – first is a sacrifice for sins and the construction of the temple. The word of God is the foundation of the worship of God. *True worship brings joy – engage in it!*
- How are God's people to be holy? They live by the word of God. They reject paganism, pragmatism, and idolatry. They are people of the covenant (e.g. Abraham's, Moses', David's) – they never see themselves as a separate people because of their particular context. *Be encouraged by your heritage! Be earnest in continuing it!*

We too are exiles under God! We are called to worship Him as His holy people. Yet for all our failings and weaknesses, how we long for the Coming King to finally gather us to His Kingdom!





### ລິະ ເວເເເການ: Laying the foundation with Luke

The gospel of Luke is not the first gospel account – but it nevertheless brings a unique flavour and emphasis to the life and journey of Jesus Christ! *Have a look...* 

#### 💧 Legendary Luke

What makes Luke so distinct from the other gospels? Here are some ways!

The Gospel is all-encompassing: Luke presents the gospel as being completely relevant – both spiritually and physically, internally and externally, for the present and future, in our horizontal and vertical relationships! Luke liberates the gospel from its labels!

Written to Jews and Gentiles: Israel rejecting Jesus is not accidental! It is all part of God's divine plan, so that the

Gentiles would also be included. Therefore. Christianity is

of the Patriarchs (Abaraham, Isaac, Jacob). *Luke gives you license to learn from Christianity's lasting heritage!* 

**Prayer:** Prayer features at major points in Luke's gospel:

**Vivid descriptions:** Luke includes various genres of

Let Luke's literary leaps lead your daily liturgy!

his litany! We should too!

at Jesus' baptism, His choosing of the Twelve, at Peter's confession, at Jesus' transfiguration, in His teaching of the

Lord's Prayer, before Peter's denial, and so on. Luke loves

writing: a prologue, hymns, Christmas carols, speeches,

prophecies, prayers, parables, and apocalyptic material.

genealogies, call accounts, miracles, proverbs or sayings,

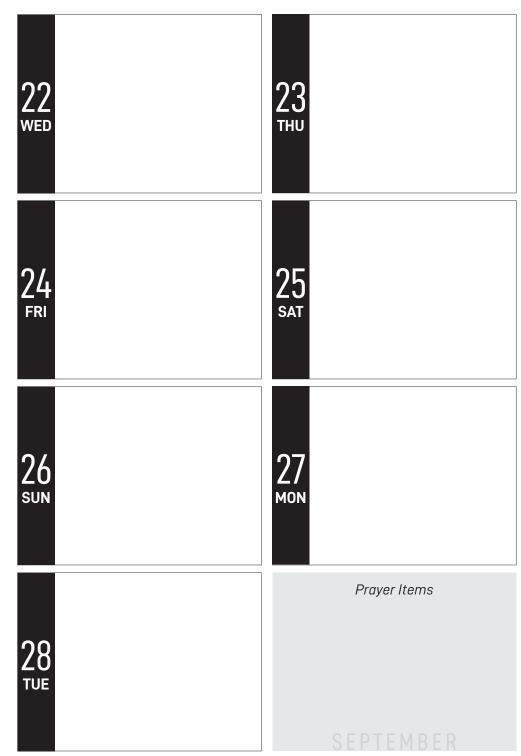
not a 'new' thing - but it is the fulfilment of the very religion

## Leadership for your Readership

Need some direction? Here you go!

- / Introduction (1:1-4)
- // Dawn of a New Era (1:5-2:52)
- /// Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (3:1-4:13)
- /V The Galilean Ministry (4:14-9:50)
- V Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:44)
- V/ Death and Vindication of Jesus (19:45-24:53)

Finding your faith in Christ irrelevant or insufficient for your journey through life? Let the Lord shine the light through Luke!



## Never say never:

It's been 13 years since Ezra returned to Jerusalem. The temple is rebuilt. The city of Jerusalem is slowly filling with returning Jews. But the city is vulnerable and in shame. In particular, the protective wall around Jerusalem is still in ruins. The story of Israel continues...

#### Xuggets for All!

The book of Nehemiah can be appreciated in a number of ways. It's a general's diary presented as a memoir. A governor's report presented as a documentary. It's a civil and management record – and so much more! There is something for just about anybody, in this book!

#### Navigating Nehemiah

Here's a guide to get all that's needed out of Nehemiah!

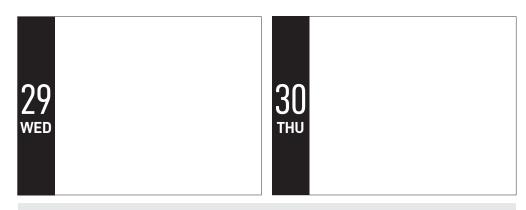
- / Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem (1:1-2:20)
- // The Wall is Rebuilt (3:1-7:4)
- /// A Record of those Returned (7:5-73)
- *IV* The Law Read, the Covenant Renewed (8:1-10:39)
- V The New Residents of Jerusalem (11:1-36)
- V/ Priests and Levites (12:1-26)
- VII Dedication of the Wall (12:27-47)
- VIII Nehemiah's Final Reforms (13:1-31)

#### **A Nudge in the Right Direction**

There are so many ways to profit from this book! Here are some things we can learn from:

- The Character of Nehemiah: Nehemiah is a lay person – yet he is used in priestly, prophetic, and kingly ways! He speaks prophetically. He is involved in the renewal of the Levitical priesthood. And he organises and challenges the Israelites with king-like authority. Take a leaf out of the life of Nehemiah, a godly and decisive leader!
- Two main issues: The book of Nehemiah is concerned with two main issues. The first is the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem. The second is the recommitment of the returned exiles to their covenant with God. Both are presented as vital to the future of the people of Israel. How can this instruct you during times of 'rebuilding' in your life?
- God's dealings with His people: God features prominently in this book! He hears prayer. He works providentially – even through powerful rulers. He protects His people. He mercifully keeps His promises, despite His people's unfaithfulness. He is the God whose worship is at the centre of the life of His people. This is the God who is in the midst of your life as well!

As exiles and sojourners, as people whom God is building up as the Temple and Kingdom upon the earth – how we need the true Nehemiah, the One who is truly our Prophet, Priest, and King! **Hunger for Jesus!** 



Prayer Items

#### SEPTEMBER

### **RESOURCES**

Here are the resources that shaped this booklet – be encouraged to use them for yourself!

*Bennett, Arthur. (2007).* **Valley of vision.** *Retrieved from <u>https://</u><u>banneroftruth.org/</u>* 

Helm, David. (2011). **One-to-one Bible reading. [Kindle iOS version].** Retrieved from <u>amazon.com</u>

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Family Worship Bible Guide. Digital Image. Amazon.com. 29 December 2016. https://www.amazon. com/Family-Worship-Bible-Guide-Beeke/dp/1601785003

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