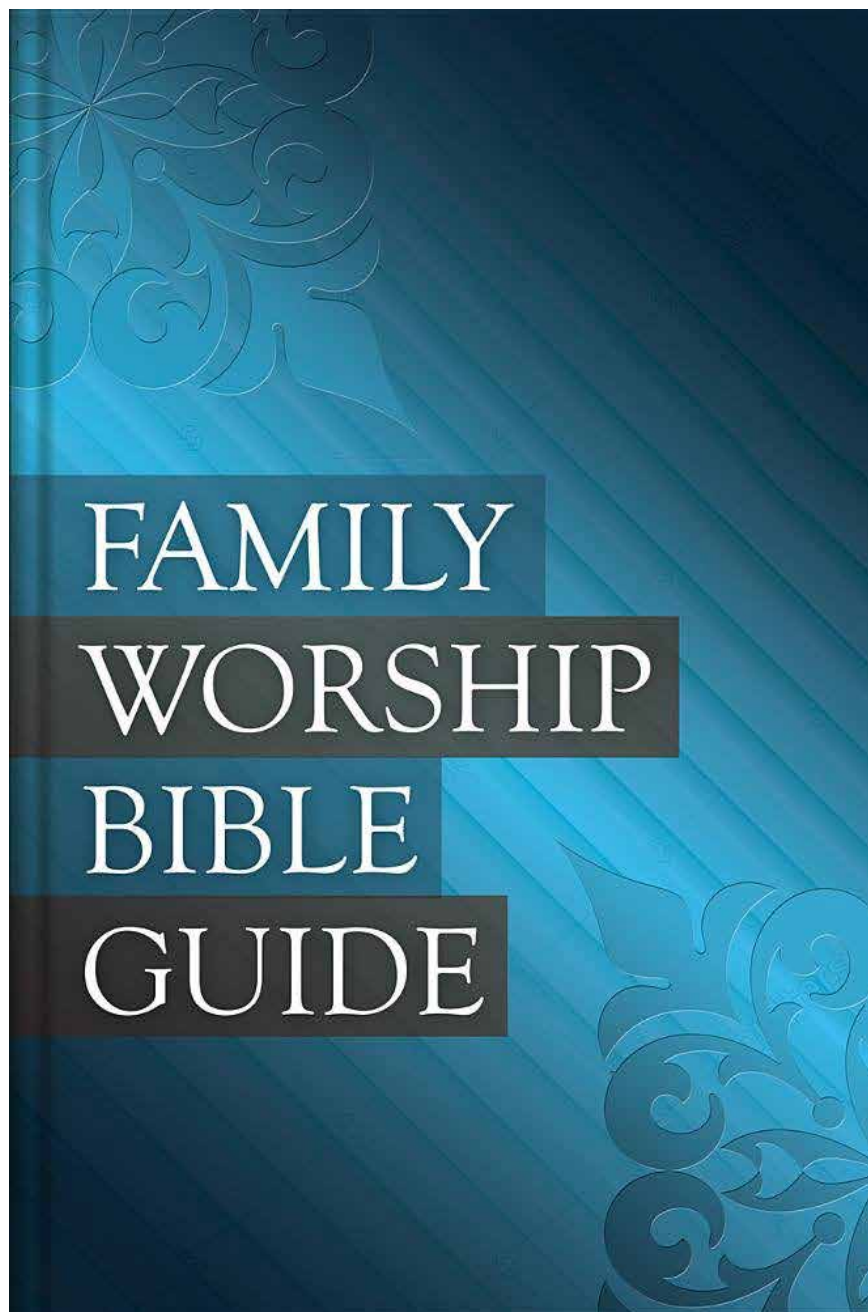


A CHAPTER A DAY

an Agape Bible Reading Plan

YEAR 3, QUARTER 1
(JAN - MAR 2022)

***Looking for a devotional guide to supplement your reading?
Pick up Joel Beeke's 'Family Worship Bible Guide'!***



This booklet belongs to



WELCOME MESSAGE

by Pastor Johanan Justin (Editor)

Dear Agapian,

Greetings once again in Christ! Welcome to Year 3 of 'A Chapter A Day'. This is the FINAL year of our 3-year ACAD Bible-reading plan. If you have been following thus far – *well done!* And if you have attentively read more of the Bible in these past 2 years than in previous years – **WELL DONE!**

This is a new year! It's a fresh chance to embark upon the exciting journey of getting into God's word daily. But here's a **warning!** This is the final year of our 3-year Bible reading journey. This means that our readings for 2022 will lead us to some of the *least familiar* portions of Scripture: the Prophets, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and of course, Revelation!

Well, the good news is that God has not left us to figure out His word alone. He's given us His Spirit (*the Spirit of truth who leads us into all truth*). And He's given us each other! So here are a couple of practical tips to get the most out of this third year:

1) Order the physical ACAD booklets! We often overestimate our memory and our resolve. Having a physical copy (*and putting it in a prominent place*) reminds us to regularly come back to God's word. (*Also referring*

to the ACAD booklet on our devices opens us to a world of distraction!)

2) Make use of the book overviews in your ACAD booklet! Sometimes having a sense of what a particular book in the Bible is about beforehand, helps us make better sense of what we read. Before starting a new book – read through the appropriate overview! And take a second glance whenever you feel stuck.

3) Don't read alone! There is power in numbers. Get a buddy! Or gather a small group! Find ways to read together – whether in person or online. Keep your reading going during the hardest stretches! And have a place to ask your questions! Feel free to change things to better suit your group (*e.g. you might want to cover one entire book at a stretch rather than following the irregular assigned readings*).

Oh we need God's word so, so much! May this year be better than even the past two. May God always bless the reading of His word.

CREATOR, UPHOLDER AND POSSESSOR OF ALL THINGS,

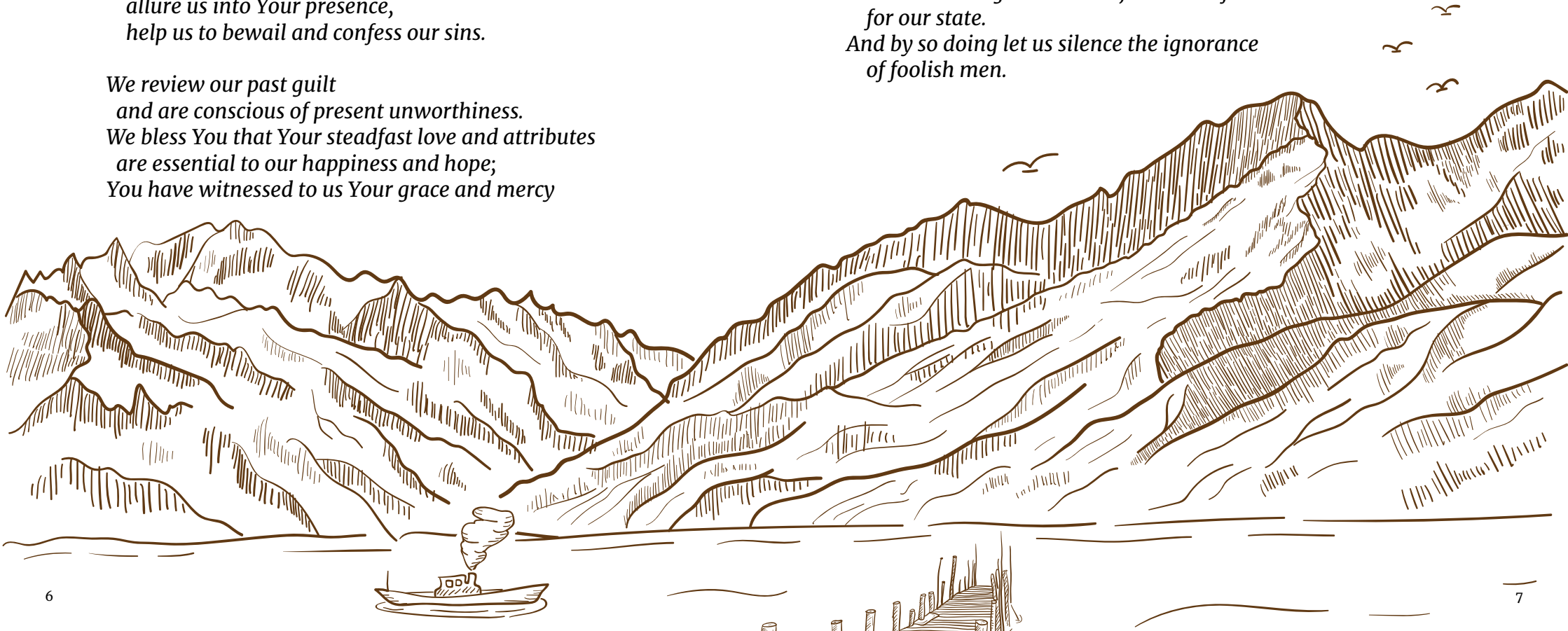
*We cannot escape from Your presence
and control,
nor do we desire to do so.
Our privilege is to be under the agency
of Your omnipotence,
righteousness, wisdom, patience, mercy and grace;
For You are Love with more than parental affection.*

*We admire Your goodness,
stand in awe of Your power,
abase ourselves before Your purity.
It is the discovery of Your goodness alone that
can banish our fear
allure us into Your presence,
help us to bewail and confess our sins.*

*We review our past guilt
and are conscious of present unworthiness.
We bless You that Your steadfast love and attributes
are essential to our happiness and hope;
You have witnessed to us Your grace and mercy*

*in the bounties of nature,
in the fullness of Your providence,
in the revelations of Scripture,
in the gift of Your Son,
in the proclamation of the gospel.
Make us willing to be saved in Your own way,
perceiving nothing in ourselves but all in Jesus.*

*Help us not only to receive him but to
walk in Him,
depend upon Him,
commune with Him,
follow Him as dear children,
imperfect, but still pressing forward,
not complaining of labour, but valuing rest,
not murmuring under trials, but thankful
for our state.
And by so doing let us silence the ignorance
of foolish men.*



WELCOME TO 'A CHAPTER A DAY'

Congratulations on making it through to this final year's readings! This booklet you hold in your hands is designed to help you through this third year – so here's a quick tour of its features :)

1

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!

2

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!

3

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!

4

RESOURCES

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 Bible-reading journeys of your pastors and leaders

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

4

RESOURCES

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 found the booklet helpful, you might want to check out some of these books and articles. They will definitely enrich your reading even further!

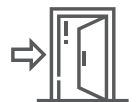
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CREDITS

Diligently keep up with the Bible reading plan for 365 days and get a special reward at the end of 2022!

6

JOIN THE BIBLE READING CHALLENGE!



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

tips ON HOW TO read the Bible

What stuck out to you?

- DID YOU NOTICE SOMETHING NEW OR FRESH?
- WERE YOU REMINDED OF SOMETHING YOU HAD FORGOTTEN?



LAST YEAR WE LEARNT 4 STEPS TO GUIDE OUR READING OF THE BIBLE. THIS YEAR, WE LOOK AT 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN STUDYING THE BIBLE IN A GROUP.

Did the passage raise any questions for you?

- DID ANY PART OF THE PASSAGE SURPRISE OR TROUBLE YOU?
- WHICH PART(S) DO YOU FIND DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?



Where do we find Christ in this passage?

- WHAT IN THE PASSAGE HELPED YOU SEE MORE OF CHRIST?
- WHERE DO YOU SEE HIM?



Look out for a new tip that will be released with each booklet throughout the year! In the meantime, practice the available steps in community :)

How can I share this passage with?

- WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO AS A BELIEVER TO SHARE THE GLORY OF CHRIST?
- IS THERE A BELIEVER YOU CAN ENCOURAGE WITH WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT TODAY?
- IS THERE A NON-BELIEVER YOU CAN SHARE THE JOY & GLORY OF CHRIST FROM TODAY'S PASSAGE?

JANUARY



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<div>30</div> <div>Isa 62</div> <div></div>	<div>31</div> <div>Dan 10</div> <div></div>		<div>Date</div> <div>Chapter(s) for the day</div> <div>Mark down once you've read the chapter!</div>	<div>01</div> <div>Ps 94</div> <div></div> <div>Example</div>	<div>01</div> <div>Isa 42; Ps 107</div> <div></div>	
<div>02</div> <div>Isa 43</div> <div></div>	<div>03</div> <div>Ps 106</div> <div></div>	<div>04</div> <div>Isa 44</div> <div></div>	<div>05</div> <div>Isa 45</div> <div></div>	<div>06</div> <div>Dan 4</div> <div></div>	<div>07</div> <div>Isa 46</div> <div></div>	<div>08</div> <div>Isa 47</div> <div></div>
<div>09</div> <div>Dan 5</div> <div></div>	<div>10</div> <div>Isa 48</div> <div></div>	<div>11</div> <div>Isa 49</div> <div></div>	<div>12</div> <div>Isa 50</div> <div></div>	<div>13</div> <div>Pr 20</div> <div></div>	<div>14</div> <div>Isa 51</div> <div></div>	<div>15</div> <div>Isa 52</div> <div></div>
<div>16</div> <div>Dan 6</div> <div></div>	<div>17</div> <div>Isa 53</div> <div></div>	<div>18</div> <div>Isa 54</div> <div></div>	<div>19</div> <div>Dan 7</div> <div></div>	<div>20</div> <div>Isa 55; Ps 109</div> <div></div>	<div>21</div> <div>Isa 56</div> <div></div>	<div>22</div> <div>Ps 108</div> <div></div>
<div>23</div> <div>Isa 57</div> <div></div>	<div>24</div> <div>Isa 58</div> <div></div>	<div>25</div> <div>Dan 8</div> <div></div>	<div>26</div> <div>Isa 59</div> <div></div>	<div>27</div> <div>Isa 60</div> <div></div>	<div>28</div> <div>Dan 9</div> <div></div>	<div>29</div> <div>Isa 61</div> <div></div>

<div>01 SAT</div> <div>Do utilize this space by journaling down your thoughts and reflections!</div>	<div>02 SUN</div>
<div>03 MON</div>	<div>04 TUE</div>
<div>05 WED</div>	<div>06 THU</div>
<div>07 FRI</div>	<div>Prayer Items</div> <div>JANUARY</div>



"LONG LIVE THE KING!": The Psalms of Salute (Book 5)

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 5)

- Psalm 107 to 150 form 'Book 5' of the Psalms
- Book 5 responds to the closing cry of Book 4 (Psalm 106:42)
- Book 5 features the longest psalm – Psalm 119 – celebrating the value of the Law
- Book 5 includes 15 psalms of ascent used by pilgrims travelling up to Jerusalem
- A special theme celebrated in Book 5 is the return of the King
- The tone of Book 5 is one of certainty and triumph

*The Psalms declares:
"Let the 'Amen!' sound from God's people again! May they gladly forever adore Him."*

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 Prayer!** Book 5 of the Psalms is an encouragement to all of us, that God hears – and answers – prayer! His commitment to His promise unto His people, is unwavering. Enmity, injustice, suffering will all surely come to an end. *Let us humble ourselves in the sight of the LORD!*
- Respond with Longing!** One of the prominent yearnings of the Psalms, is to once again have the Anointed King upon His rightful throne. The Psalms lead us to realise that all the brokenness, pain, and wickedness will only come to an end when the King returns. *Let the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"*
- Raise your Hallelujah!** The Psalms is filled with all kinds. Psalms of praise and psalms of lament. Psalms of thanksgiving and psalms of petition. Psalms that we can clap along to – and psalms that bring us to tears. But consistent throughout the Psalms, is the call to give God praise. A declaration of praise closes each of Books 1 to 4. And the final Book resounds with 5 Hallelujah ("praise the LORD!") psalms. *Let everything that has breath, praise the LORD!*

*Jesus said that the psalms are about Him (Luke 24:44).
Jesus is the truly, perfectly Anointed One. He is the King of Kings!
Do you see Him in these psalms?*

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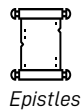
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FEBRUARY



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		01 Isa 63 	02 Isa 64 	03 Dan 11 	04 Isa 65 	05 Isa 66; Ps 111
06 Dan 12 	07 Ps 110 	08 SOS 1 	09 SOS 2 	10 1 Th 1 	11 SOS 3 	12 SOS 4
13 1 Th 2 	14 SOS 5 	15 SOS 6 	16 1 Th 3 	17 SOS 7 	18 SOS 8 	19 Pr 21
20 Job 5 	21 Job 2 	22 1 Th 4 	23 Job 3 	24 Job 4; Ps 113, 114 	25 1 Th 5 	26 Ps 112
27 Job 5 	28 Job 6 					



Do utilize this space by journaling down your thoughts and reflections!

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SWEET SPOUSAL SIZZLE:

Savouring the Song of Solomon

The Song is yet another piece of wisdom literature that takes us away from Israel's ongoing drama. Here, we are reminded of love. *Soak it in...*

Saving Sex

The Song reminds us that the Bible has much to say about the topic of sex:

-  In Genesis, God creates man and woman for one another in the exclusive committed relationship of marriage
-  Moses' Law condemns deviant forms of sex to preserve the sanctity of sex-in-marriage
-  The Prophets often compare idolatry to adultery
-  Proverbs warns against sexual temptation
-  Jesus and Paul remind us that the Kingdom of God is worth abstaining from sex for

The Song reminds us that romantic love is one of God's good gifts to us. The Song depicts sex as a powerful gift that must be protected; a garden of delights that must be fenced in by marriage.

Strange Symbolism

The Song is filled with unique metaphors (like comparing the woman to a horse, or her hair to a flock of goats). Here are some rules to keep in mind when dealing with them!

- 1 Don't think visually:** don't approach the metaphor based on what it looks like
- 2 Think 'quality':** what is the 'quality' that the metaphor communicates? (often it is the quality of 'excellence' – being the best of its kind)
- 3 Apply the quality to the character:** in 1:9, e.g., the woman is *like* a horse among Pharaoh's chariots because she (like Pharaoh's horses) is of the most excellent calibre

Signposts

Here are some directions to keep you from getting lost among the lyrics of this Song!

- I Title: The Best of Songs (1:1)**
- II The Lovers Yearn for Each Other (1:2–2:17)**
- III The Shepherdess Dreams (3:1–6:3)**
- IV The Lovers Yearn for Each Other Again (6:4–8:4)**
- V The Lovers Join in Marriage (8:5–14)**

Romantic love is not an end in itself. The Song urges us to see that even sexual love at its best points toward the much greater love that God now gives to us in Christ.

Let the Song be the metaphor, the signpost, that leads you to Christ!

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TREMBLE AT TRUTH:

Trained by 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians is the apostle Paul's second epistle (or 'letter') to the church in Thessalonica.

Tragedy!

When Paul first proclaimed the gospel in Thessalonica, he had to leave prematurely due to persecution (Acts 17:1-9). Concerned for the Thessalonian Christians, Paul sent Timothy to them (Acts 18:5). Timothy returns to Paul with a report. **Some of the Thessalonian Christians had died – and this alarmed the other Christians.**

Where were these deceased believers now? What would happen to them till Christ returns?

Since they could not be alive at Jesus' return, would that mean that these deceased believers had forfeited paradise!? The remaining Christians in Thessalonica were trembling in despair.

Track Along!

Use this easy guide to help you along in your reading of 1 Thessalonians!

/ Opening (1:1)

// Thanksgiving and Encouragement (1:2-3:13)

/// Instruction and Exhortation

- A. On pleasing God (4:1-12)
- B. On the second coming of Jesus (4:13-5:11)
- C. On community conduct (5:12-22)
- D. Prayer, assurance, and conclusion (5:23-28)

Take Aim!

One of the key themes of 1 Thessalonians is Jesus' return. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is featured in *every chapter!* Here are some ways in which Jesus' future return gives us focus for our present journeys:

👉 **Jesus' impending return is a call to hope-filled patience (1:10)!** *What is this hope that we are called to await expectantly?*

👉 **Jesus' Second Coming is a call to value and invest into people (2:19-20)!** *Why does Christ's return make investing in people the logical (& glorious) choice?*

👉 **Christ's Coming is a call to holiness (3:13)!** *Why would it matter if we are found living unholy, sinful lives upon Jesus' return?*

👉 **Jesus' future coming is a call to soothe our grief (4:13-18)!** *How can Christ's coming help us grieve with hope?*

👉 **Christ's return is a call to rest-filled courage (5:1-11, 23-24)!** *The 'day of the Lord' will come full of significance and destiny. How can we face it without paralyzing fear?*

Does your gospel end with Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension?

Come to 1 Thessalonians, to recapture the wonder of Christ's return!

*Find fuel to live passionately in light of eternity. **Soon comes the Day of the Lord Jesus!***

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JEOPARDY AND JOY: Jostled by Job

Job takes us out of the story of Israel – for just a moment – to address the issue of suffering. The problem of suffering is universal. Suffering itself can seem both warranted yet pointless. How do we make sense of it? And how do we make sense of suffering as God's people? Job uses one man's story to make sense of ours. Join in and judge for yourself...



Jam-Packed and Jolting!

The book of Job is filled with crucial lessons for living as God's people in a broken, crushing world.

Here are some key takeaways!

- 1 **God's presence in pain:** In his suffering, Job declares that God is both too near and too far. God seems to be Himself the One inflicting each dose of suffering (thus "too near"). On the other hand, God seems impossible to find (thus "too far"). *How can we make sense of God's presence in our suffering?*
- 2 **Undeserved suffering:** Job takes us from heaven to earth, revealing the ongoing drama behind our pain. Sadly, Job is himself unaware as suffering pounces upon him without warning. *How do we make sense of sudden, unexpected pain?*
- 3 **How not to comfort a friend:** Job mainly revolves around the dialogue between Job and his 3 "friends". Their initial sympathies turn into blatant attacks on Job's character. *How do we deal with our impatience and self-righteousness towards sufferers?*
- 4 **Painful theology:** Faith that sounds "orthodox" and "correct", can still be one-dimensionally over-simplified. Job shows that faith without careful nuance, can be crushing and punishing for sufferers. *Can our theology handle the heart-breaking complexities of suffering?*
- 5 **Right and wrong:** Job's friends – though self-righteous – share many useful insights. Job – though correct – at times communicates an embittered self-justification. Despite the mix of good and bad in all their speeches, God declares Job "right" and his friends "wrong". *What truly matters to God in our suffering?*



Jarring?

Reading Job can be difficult – especially if we are close to the experience of suffering. "What's the point of this book!?", we might ask. Job's many questions (which we ask too) remain unanswered. God's justice remains un-vindicated. But as you hear humanity's best efforts to reason pain (through the words of Job's "friends"), Job's own pain-filled musings, and God's final declaration – you may very well find an unexpected answer to pain.



Jimmying the Lock

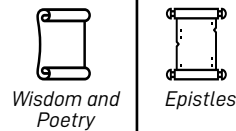
Here's a simple guide to help you dig into the treasures of Job:

- I The Prologue (1:1–2:13)
- II Job's Lament (3:1–26)
- III The Dialogue (4:1–27:23)
- IV Job's Two Monologues (28:1–31:40)
- V The Elihu Speeches (32:1–37:24)
- VI God's Speeches and Job's Responses (38:1–42:6)
- VII The Epilogue (42:7–17)

In this world, we will have trouble and suffering. Consider the greater Job who voluntarily embraced suffering for the good of man and for the glory of God!

Read on with hope.

MARCH



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		01 2 Th 1	02 Job 7; Ps 116	03 Job 8	04 Ps 115	05 Job 9
06 Job 10	07 2 Th 2	08 Job 11	09 Pr 22	10 Job 12	11 2 Th 3	12 Job 13
13 Job 14	14 Ti 1	15 Job 15; Ps 118	16 Job 16	17 Ps 117	18 Job 17	19 Job 18
20 Ti 2	21 Job 19	22 Job 20	23 Ti 3	24 Job 21	25 Job 22	26 Jd 1
27 Job 23	28 Job 24	29 Pm 1	30 Job 25	31 Job 26		

Ps - Psalms | Pr - Proverbs | 2 Th - 2 Thessalonians | Ti - Titus | Jd - Jude | Pm - Philemon



THIRSTY FOR TRUTH:

Trained by 2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians is the apostle Paul's second epistle (or 'letter') to the church in Thessalonica.

Too Soon?

Paul probably wrote 2 Thessalonians only a few months after writing 1 Thessalonians. Paul had likely received an updated report on the church of Thessalonica shortly after delivering his first letter – and things *were not good*.

The Thessalonian Christians were likely:

- (1) terrified; they thought the day of the Lord had come
- (2) weakened; they had faced unrelenting persecution
- (3) frustrated; there were idle Christians refusing to earn their own living

No, this letter couldn't have arrived soon enough!



Tracing the Thought-flow

Use this easy guide to help you along in your reading of 2 Thessalonians!

I Opening (1:1-2)

II Thanksgiving and Comfort for the Persecuted Thessalonians (1:3-12)

III Refuting the False Claim about the Day of the Lord (2:1-17)

IV Transition (3:1-5)

V The Problem of the Idlers (3:6-15)

VI Conclusion (3:16-18)

'Stamping Eternity On our Eyeballs'

As in 1 Thessalonians, one key theme in 2 Thessalonians is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. How does this letter challenge us to live in light of eternity?

Live with Perseverance: *Jesus' coming will mean 'relief' for those suffering for the Kingdom, but 'vengeance' for those who afflict the Church. Christ's coming will be 'marvel'-ous.*

Live in Peace: *Jesus' coming will be preceded with clear markers. Do not be 'shaken in mind' or 'alarmed' at the prospect of His coming! 'Stand firm'. 'Hold to the traditions that you were taught'.*

Live in Prayer: *Pray that 'the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honoured'. Pray to be 'delivered from evil and wicked men'. Ask that God would 'direct your heart to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ'.*

Do you struggle with purposelessness and aimlessness in your Christian life? Are you idle? Do you oscillate between boredom at the Christian life and alarm at the thought of the antichrist or Jesus' return? Get your bearings and stand firm! Soon the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire!



Do utilize this space by journaling down your thoughts and reflections!

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A GOSPEL TUNE-UP:

Transformed by Titus

Titus is the last of Paul's three "Pastoral Epistles". As the title indicates, this letter was written by Paul to an individual named Titus.



Tackling Leadership

What do you think is most vital when you think about good church leadership? *Personality? Gift-set? Training? Capacity? Planning abilities? Charisma? The "get-it-done"-ability?*

Paul gives his take on this question in Titus 1:5-9. *How does Paul's view challenge or affirm what you value in your church leadership? How can you pray for your elders? How can you encourage them?*



Travel-ready

Here's a simple outline to guide you through this letter!

- I **Greeting with Reminders About God (1:1-4)**
- II **Reason for Writing and Instructions for Titus (1:5-2:15)**
- III **Saved in Order to Do Good: Instructions for the Church (3:1-11)**
- IV **Final Remarks (3:12-15)**



Just for Pastors?

As a "Pastoral Epistle" (or letter to pastors), Titus is often misunderstood as a book just for pastors or church leaders. In reality, Paul has a lot to say to the larger church through this letter to Titus! It addresses:



Christian living: How should the gospel we believe, shape the life we live?



Identifying potential elders: What you need to know before voting in the next pastor!



Interacting with different groups within the church: Should age or gender affect the way we interact and treat one another?



Discerning false teaching: How can you tell what is true from what seems true?



Dealing with controversy: How should we handle strong yet unusual opinions?

*And there's still much more!
Titus is a book for you!*

*The gospel changes everything! The way we think. The way we choose leaders. The way we interact. The way we behave. The way we respond. The things we value. **The gospel of Christ must produce the godliness of Christ! Is this the gospel we believe in?***

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DON'T BE A JUDAS:

Javelined by Jude

Jude is a short, single-chaptered book. As the title indicates, this letter was written by Jude.



Hey Jude!

Not much is known about Jude. Jude was one of Jesus' disciples (*also called 'Judas' in the gospels; a different 'Judas' from Judas Iscariot*). Jude was also the brother of Jesus and James. Jude's many references to the Old Testament tells us that he was probably addressing *Jewish Christians* in this letter.



Journeying Jude

Here's a simple outline to guide you through this letter!

- I Greeting (1-2)
- II The Sin and Doom of Ungodly People (3-16)
- III A Call to Persevere (17-23)
- IV Doxology (24-25)



Jude: A Judgy Jerk?

You may have noticed the harsh tone, the strong judgemental language, and the unrestrained pronouncement of doom, in Jude's writing. Why so serious? Here are some things we can learn:

- **Jude's Crisis:** False teachers. Yes, they exist.
- **Jude's Concern:** False teaching is both attractive and dangerous. A fatal combination.
- **Jude's Confidence:** False teachers will be condemned. There is no escape for these blasphemous apostates.
- **Jude's Call:** Defend doctrine! Save the saints! Persevere by God's grace.
- **Jude's Closure:** Look out for one of the most beautiful benedictions at the end!

Some things are surely worth being riled up about. Maybe there's something to learn from Jude's pastoral wrath...

The Old Testament is replete with stories of false teachers and leaders. Jesus warned about "wolves dressed as sheep" that would come to destroy the flock. The truth of the gospel must be treasured and protected!
How are you growing as a defender of God's gospel?



PERSONALLY PROTECTED:

Persuaded by Philemon

Philemon is an epistle (or 'letter') written by the apostle Paul. As the title indicates, Philemon was written to an individual named Philemon.

Why So Personal?

While in prison, Paul had gotten acquainted with a runaway slave, Onesimus.

And along the way, Onesimus had become a beloved brother in the Lord! Runaway slaves could be severely prosecuted under Roman law. So Paul appeals *personally* to Philemon (Onesimus' master) to welcome his slave back with love and brotherly acceptance.

Prompts Provided

Philemon is a simple read – but here is a proposed outline to keep you on the straight and narrow:

I Paul's Greetings (1–3)

II Paul's Prayer and Thanksgiving (4–7)

III Paul's Appeal (8–22)

IV Paul's Final Greeting and Blessing of Grace (23–25)

Paul Supports Slavery?!

It might horrify us to read Paul addressing a *Christian* slaveowner to receive his slave – but not to *release* him. Does Paul support or condone the practice of slavery!? Here are some helpful perspectives to keep in mind!

1 Personal, yet Public (1-2): Paul speaks primarily to Philemon, yet addresses his letter to the larger church. Paul's personal words to Philemon, were publicly delivered. Paul is not content to leave the fate of Onesimus to the subjective desires and whims of one man! *Rather, Paul empowers the church to discern the holy will of God for Philemon, in this matter.*

2 Appeal, not Command (8-9): Paul has every right to lay a command upon Philemon to release his slave. Yet Paul chooses not to. Instead he *appeals* to Philemon... Why? *Because Paul is not primarily addressing the issue of slavery here!* Instead, he is seeking the true, sincere reconciliation between two brothers-in-Christ.

3 Family, not Property (10, 12, 16): Paul describes Onesimus as his son, his "very heart", and "a beloved brother". He even calls Philemon to receive Onesimus back "no longer as a slave"! Paul elevates the status of slaves from simply being the property of their masters, to being equal in worth with all men everywhere – *even with an apostle of Christ!*

Paul's letter was revolutionary in its original context in its dignifying treatment of slaves. Nevertheless, Paul's letter remains revolutionary in *our context today* in how it is so devoid of self-righteousness and in its appeal to the heart.

*The message of Philemon is the message of **reconciliation!** Who took on the form of a slave and bondservant to redeem a host of sinners in bondage to sin, Satan, and death? **None other than the Christ, Jesus our Lord!***

29
TUE

30
WED

31
THU

Prayer Items

MARCH

RESOURCES

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

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