

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

How to Read the Bible

[Part 1: How to Read the Bible](#)

Why don't we read the Bible?

- We don't understand it
- We don't know where to start
- We don't have the time
- We don't know how it applies to our lives
- It feels boring

Psalm 19:7–11 (NIV) - The law of the Lord is **perfect**, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are **trustworthy**, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are **right**, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are **radiant**, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is **pure**, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are **firm**, and all of them are **righteous**. They are more **precious** than gold, than much pure gold; they are **sweeter** than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. 11 By them your servant is **warned**; in keeping them there is great reward.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete**, equipped for **every** good work.

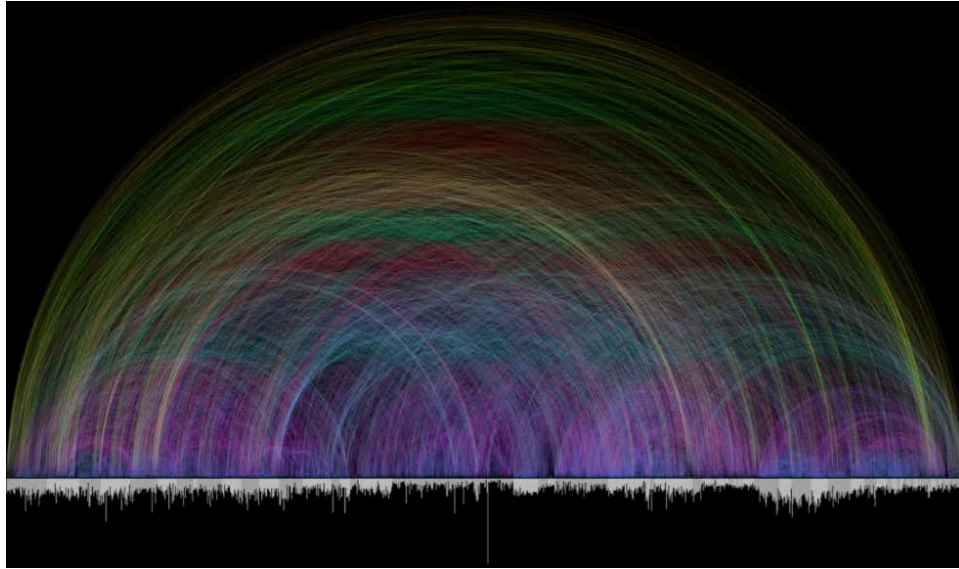
1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV) - The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are **discerned only through the Spirit**.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is a collection of writings (history, laws, prophecy, poetry, biographies, & letters) written by people, inspired by God, telling one unified story of our need for Jesus and shapes us to live like Him.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Bible Cross-references Visualized



The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written in three languages, across three continents, over 1,500 years, by 40 authors... all telling one story.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE?

1. Choose a translation you understand
2. Choose a time, place, and plan you'll keep
3. Choose the right approach

1. CHOOSE A TRANSLATION YOU UNDERSTAND

There are translations that are hard to understand:

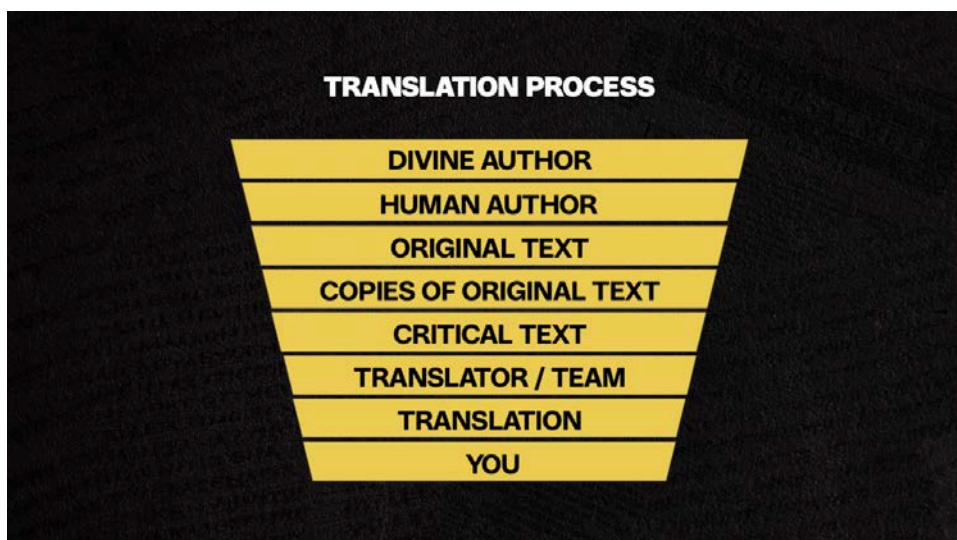
James 1:16–18 (KJV) - Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures...

There are translations that are easier to understand:

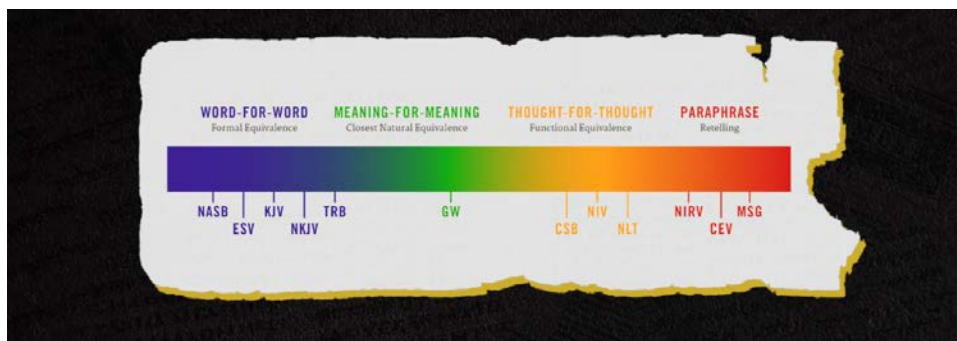
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James 1:16–18 (NLT) - So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

THE TRANSLATION PROCESS



THE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM



RECOMMENDED STARTING PLACE

- NIV
- NLT
- ESV

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

2. CHOOSE A TIME, PLACE, AND PLAN YOU'LL KEEP

PICK A PLAN

1. Study a book of the Bible
 - a. [Bible Project Old Testament Book Summaries](#)
 - b. [Bible Project New Testament Book Summaries](#)
 - c. [Best Commentaries](#)
2. Study a person in the Bible
3. Study a theme or topic in the Bible
4. Do a daily devotional
5. Read through the whole Bible
 - a. Blended Approach
Daily readings in New Testament, Old Testament, and Proverbs/Psalms
 - i. The One Year Bible ([NIV](#), [NLT](#), [ESV](#))
 - ii. [Bible in One Year](#)
 - b. Sequential
Chronological or book by book
 - i. [The Bible Recap](#)
 - ii. [The Bible Department](#)

3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT APPROACH



APPROACH	WHAT IT MEANS
Sensitive	What feels right?
Super-Spiritual	What's the deep, hidden meaning?
Selfishly-Pragmatic	What works best for me?
Superficial	What does this mean for me ?

THE SAFE APPROACH

1. **Observation:** What do I **see**?
2. **Understanding:** What does it **mean**?

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3. **Implication:** How does it **relate**?
4. **Application:** What do I **do**?

Imagine going on a mission trip to observe another culture. Reading the Bible is similar. In Bible reading, you are traveling back to an ancient culture, and you're trying to understand their culture. The safe approach can also be defined as follows:

1. **Observe their home:** What do I **see**?
2. **Understand their home:** What does it **mean**?
3. **Bring it back home:** How does it **relate**?
4. **Apply in your home:** What do I **do**?

EXAMPLE: VERSES THAT CAN'T BE APPLIED DIRECTLY

1 Corinthians 16:20 (NIV) - Greet one another with a holy **kiss**.

Leviticus 19:28 (NIV) - “ ‘Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put **tattoo marks on yourselves**. I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:19 (NIV) - Do not wear clothing woven of **two kinds of material**.

SAFE APPROACH APPLIED

Let's apply the **safe approach** to a commonly misunderstood verse.

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

1: OBSERVE THEIR HOME

- **Who...** Wrote it? Read it? Main character?
- **What...** Is happening? Author saying? Trying to solve?
- **When...** Is it happening?
- **Where...** Is it happening?
- **Why...** Was it written? Included in scripture? Did the author say that?

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“OBSERVE THEIR HOME” APPLIED

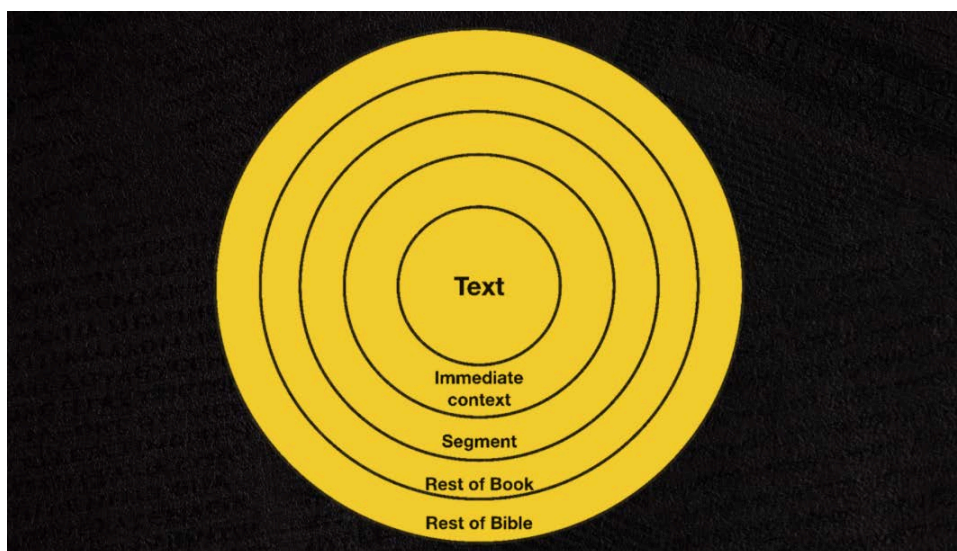
- **Who...** Written by Paul to the church in Philippi
- **Where...** Paul is writing from prison
- **Why...** Thanking them for their support in the Gospel...
Encourage joy in all circumstances (“Rejoice”)

2: UNDERSTAND THEIR HOME

TYPES OF CONTEXT

1. **Historical/Cultural/Situation Context** (Author, Audience, Geography Conditions, Social Conditions, Religious Conditions, Economic Conditions, Political Conditions)
[The Bible Project has a great video breakdown](#)
2. **Literary Context** (Genre, Purpose, Placement)
[The Bible Project has a great video breakdown](#)

Context Circle



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PRINCIPLES OF CONTEXT

1. Context is key
Never take something out of context
2. Scripture interprets scripture
Scripture never contradicts itself
3. Don't base doctrine on obscure passages
4. Interpret plainly
Use literal sense unless there's a good reason or a unique genre (i.e. Poetry)

“UNDERSTAND THEIR HOME” APPLIED

Paul's message is not about doing anything you put your mind to, but being content in all circumstances.

Philippians 4:11-12 (NIV) - I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be **content** whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in **need**, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) - I can do **all things** through Christ who strengthens me.

3: BRING IT BACK HOME

Goal = Timeless Truths

Look for principles that applied to them, that can apply to us.

“BRING IT BACK HOME” APPLIED

We use this verse for **achievement**.

Paul used it for **endurance**.

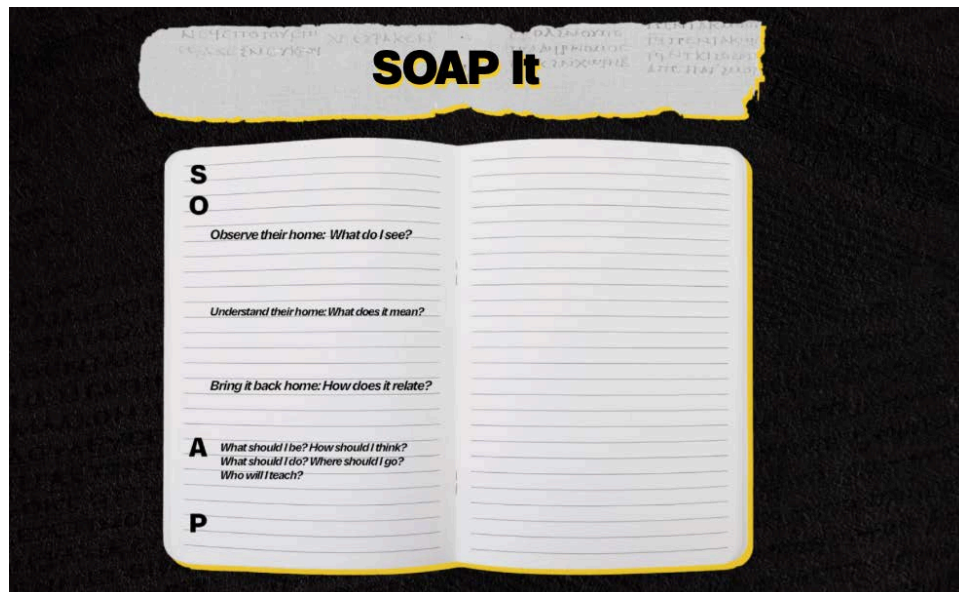
It's not: “God will help me do anything I **want**”

It is: “God can sustain me in anything I **face**”

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4: APPLY IT IN YOUR HOME

1. What should I **be**?
2. How should I **think**?
3. What should I **do**?
 - a. **S** - Is there a **SIN** to avoid?
 - b. **P** - Is there a **PROMISE** to claim?
 - c. **E** - Is there an **EXAMPLE** to follow?
 - d. **C** - Is there a **COMMAND** to obey?
 - e. **K** - Is there something to **KNOW** about God?
4. Where should I **go**?
5. Who will I **teach**?



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[Part 2: How to Read the Old Testament](#)

Last week, we talked about having the right approach because there are some things you can't apply directly.

Romans 16:16 (NIV) - Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Timothy 5:23 (NIV) - Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach

1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV) - I desire then that in **every place** the men should pray, lifting holy hands

We need to understand the word, so we can apply the word.

James 1:22 (NIV) - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NIV) - **All Scripture is God-breathed** and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting** and **training** in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for **every good work.**

Today, we're talking through the **Old Testament**. "Testament" means "Covenant."

Difference between a contract and a covenant

- **Contract:** "If you do your part, I'll do mine."
- **Covenant:** "I'm committed - even when you fail."

Types of Covenants in the Old Testament

- Abrahamic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

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Difference between Old Covenant and New Covenant

- The Old Testament tells the story about a **people**
The New Testament tells a story about a **Person**
- The Old Testament centers around **Abraham** and **Moses**
The New Testament centers around **Jesus** and the **Holy Spirit**
- The Old Testament centers around **Sinai** and **Israel**
The New Testament centers around the **Cross**
- The Old Testament shows **wrath** of God against sin
The New Testament shows God's **grace** toward sinners
- The Old Testament writes the law on **tablets**
The New Testament writes the law on our **hearts**

Jesus came to fulfill the Old Covenant.

Matthew 5:17 (NIV) - "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

- **LAW** (5 books): Genesis - Deuteronomy
- **HISTORY** (12 books): Joshua - Esther
 - **Pre-Monarchy**: Joshua - Ruth
 - **Monarchy**: 1 Samuel - 2 Chronicles
 - **Post-Monarchy**: Ezra - Esther
- **POETRY & WISDOM** (5 books): Job - Song of Solomon
- **PROPHETS** (17 books): Isaiah - Malachi
 - **Major Prophets** (5 books): Isaiah - Daniel
 - **Minor Prophets** (12 books): Hosea - Malachi

LAW: GENESIS - DEUTERONOMY

Genesis 12:3 (NIV) - I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

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Genesis 50:20 (NIV) - You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Genesis 3:15 (NIV) - And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Exodus 6:7 (NIV) - I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 12:12 (NIV) - I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:2 (NIV) - “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

Numbers 14:23 (NIV) - not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV) - Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

HISTORY: JOSHUA - ESTHER

Joshua 21:45 (NIV) - Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

Judges 21:25 (NIV) - In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

2 Kings 17:7 (NIV) - All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods

WISDOM LITERATURE: JOB - SONG OF SONGS

History Books = What happened

Wisdom Books = How to live through it

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MAJOR / MINOR PROPHETS: Isaiah - Malachi

History Books = What happened

Prophetic Books = What God was saying while it happened

JESUS BRINGS THE NEW COVENANT

Hebrews 8:7–8 (NLT) - If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But when God found fault with the people, he said: “The day is coming, says the Lord, when I will make a **new covenant** with the people of Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah 31:31–34 (NLT) - “The day is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a **new covenant** with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a **husband** loves his wife,” says the Lord. “But this is the **new covenant** I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the Lord. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their **hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will **know me already**,” says the Lord. “And I will **forgive** their wickedness, and I will **never again remember their sins**.”

Hebrews 10:1–5 (NLT) - The old system under the law of Moses was only a **shadow**, a **dim preview** of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were **repeated** again and again, year after year, but they were **never** able to provide **perfect cleansing** for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of **guilt** would have **disappeared**. But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is **not possible** for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, “You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer.

Hebrews 10:9–14 (NLT) - Then he said, “Look, I have come to do your will.” He **Cancels** the **first covenant** in order to put the **second** into effect. For God’s will was

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for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, **once for all time**. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one **sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by **one sacrifice** he has made **perfect** forever those who are being made holy.

MIRROR IMAGE

6 Jesus Christ	
5 12 Tribes / <u>Israel</u> God's holy people	7 12 Disciples / <u>Church</u> God's holy people
4 " <u>One World</u> " Government System	8 " <u>One World</u> " Government System
3 The world <u>judged</u> and <u>destroyed</u>	9 The world <u>judged</u> and <u>destroyed</u>
2 Satan and sin <u>enter</u>	10 Satan and sin <u>exit</u>
1 God and <u>righteous</u> people in Paradise	11 God and <u>redeemed</u> people in Paradise

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[Part 3: How to Read the Gospels](#)

Colossians 1:15 (NLT) - 15 Christ is the **visible image** of the **invisible God**. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation

John 20:8–9 (NLT) - 8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and **believed**—**9** for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.

GOSPEL DEFINITION

euangelion (Greek) — “good news”

The Gospel is the good news that through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God has made a way for us to be forgiven, restored, and brought back into relationship with Him.

WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

The four Gospel accounts give us a better picture of who Jesus truly is.

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS?

“If four witnesses should appear before a judge to give an account of a certain event, and each should tell exactly the same story in the same words, the judge would probably conclude not that their testimony was exceptionally valuable, but that the only event which was certain beyond a doubt was that they had agreed to tell the same story. But if each man had told what he had seen, as he had seen it, then the evidence would be credible. And when we read the four Gospels, is not that exactly what we find? The four men tell the same story **each in his own way**.” - Dr. Henry Van Dyke

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THE GOSPELS

MARK

PURPOSE: Jesus is the Son of God and the powerful Servant-King, who wins through suffering, not conquest.

KEY VERSE: Mark 10:45 (NLT) - 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served **but to serve** others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

AUTHOR: John Mark, a companion of the apostle Peter

AUDIENCE: The Romans

MATTHEW

PURPOSE: Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah, who fulfills everything God said.

KEY VERSE: Matthew 16:16 (NIV) - 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the **Messiah**, the **Son** of the living God.”

AUTHOR: The apostle Matthew

AUDIENCE: The Jewish people

LUKE

PURPOSE: Jesus is the Messiah and Lord, who came to save everyone, not just a select few.

KEY VERSE: Luke 5:31–32 (NIV) - 31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the **healthy** who need a doctor, but the **sick**. **32** I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Luke 19:10 (NIV) - 10 For the Son of Man came to **seek** and to save the **lost**.”

AUTHOR: Luke, a Gentile physician

AUDIENCE: Theophilus, the Greeks

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JOHN

PURPOSE: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing, you can have eternal life in His name.

KEY VERSE: John 20:31 (NIV) - 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by **believing** you may have **life** in his name.

John 3:16 (NIV) - 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes** in him shall not perish but have **eternal life**.

AUTHOR: The apostle John

AUDIENCE: The world (**All** who believe)

Matthew 11:28–30 (NIV) - 28 “**Come to me**, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my **burden is light.**”

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Part 4: How to Read the New Testament

Matthew 4:4 (NIV) - Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on **every word** that comes from the mouth of God.’”

NEW TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

The Gospels: 4 Books

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

The Book of Acts

Historical record of the first Church

Epistles: 21 Books

Romans through Jude

The Book of Revelation

Prophecy of the last days and eternity

New Testament letters were written at a **specific time**, by **specific authors**, to **specific audiences**, to address a **specific situation**.

Galatians 1:6 (NIV) - 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

LEVELS OF CONTEXT

Historical | Cultural | Situational

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

ACTS

Acts 1:8 (NIV) - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea and Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth**.”

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Acts 1:9–11 (NIV) - After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

ACTS: Jesus starts the movement - the church spreads the movement,

BABEL	ACTS 2
Pride	Humility
Humans reaching up	God coming down
Language divides	Language connects
Scattering	Gathering
“Make our name great.”	“Make Jesus’ name known.”

Acts 2:14–21 (NIV) - Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “ ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

Acts 2:32–33 (NIV) - God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:36–41 (NIV) - “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “**Repent** and be **baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with

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them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

Matthew 28:19 (NIV) - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mark 16:16 (NIV) - Whoever believes and is **baptized** will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 8:12 (NIV) - But when they **believed** Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were **baptized**, both men and women.

Acts 22:16 (NIV) - And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be **baptized** and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

Romans 6:3–4 (NIV) - Or don’t you know that all of us who were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into his death? We were therefore buried with him through **baptism** into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Galatians 3:27 (NIV) - for all of you who were **baptized** into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Acts 8:36–38 (NIV) - As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being **baptized**?”

Acts 16:31–33 (NIV) - They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then **immediately** he and all his household were **baptized**.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV) - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

James 1:22 (NIV) - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**

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LETTERS OF PAUL: ROMANS - PHILEMON

PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES

ROMANS

A church divided between Jews and Gentiles reveals humanity's universal sin problem, but Paul writes to unite God's people through righteousness by faith in Jesus.

Romans 1:16 (NIV) - For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who **believes**: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

1 CORINTHIANS

A divided and immature church full of sin and pride needs correction, and the solution is a gospel-shaped life marked by holiness, unity, and love.

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV) - I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

2 CORINTHIANS

A church questioning Paul's authority and fractured in relationship needs restoration, and God reveals His power through weakness and reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV) - But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

GALATIANS

A church drifting into legalism is abandoning the gospel, but true freedom comes through grace alone by faith in Christ.

Galatians 1:6 (NIV) - I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

EPHESIANS

A church needing clarity on identity and unity must understand who they are in Christ, then live it out together in love and obedience.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NIV) - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can

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boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

PHILIPPIANS

A church facing pressure and relational tension is called to rejoice, finding joy and unity through humility in Christ.

Philippians 4:4 (NIV) - Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!**

COLOSSIANS

A church influenced by false teaching is losing sight of Jesus, but Christ's supremacy and sufficiency anchor their faith.

Colossians 1:17 (NIV) - He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1 THESSALONIANS

A young church under persecution and unsure about Jesus' return is encouraged to remain faithful and live with hope.

2 THESSALONIANS

A church confused about the end times and growing idle needs clarity, and the solution is truth about Christ's return and disciplined living.

PAUL'S LETTERS TO INDIVIDUALS

1 TIMOTHY

A church struggling with false teaching and disorder needs structure, and godly leadership and sound doctrine bring health.

2 TIMOTHY

A young leader facing fear and pressure to compromise is urged to endure suffering and stay faithful to the gospel.

TITUS

A church in a corrupt culture lacking order needs leadership, and good works flowing from sound doctrine display the gospel.

PHILEMON

A slave named Onesimus has run away and created a broken relationship, but through the gospel Paul the Apostle calls Philemon to receive him back not as a slave, but as a beloved brother in Christ.

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GENERAL LETTERS: HEBREWS - JUDE

HEBREWS

A discouraged church tempted to drift away needs perseverance, and Jesus is shown as the superior Savior worth holding onto.

JAMES

A scattered church with shallow faith needs maturity, and genuine faith is proven through obedient action.

1 PETER

A persecuted church facing suffering needs hope, and their identity in Christ calls them to endure with holiness.

2 PETER

A church threatened by false teachers needs stability, and growth in truth and trust in Scripture guards them.

1 JOHN

A church shaken by false teaching and unsure of salvation needs assurance, and true faith is marked by right belief and love.

2 JOHN

A church at risk of welcoming false teachers must guard the truth by walking in love without compromising doctrine.

3 JOHN

A church dealing with poor leadership and division is called to support faithful leaders and walk in truth.

JUDE

A church infiltrated by false teachers must contend for the faith and remain grounded in God's truth.

REVELATION

Revelation 21:3–8 (NIV) - And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am

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making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

WHAT TO DO?

1: Surrender your life to Jesus

2: Be baptized in water

3: Build the church