

READ THE BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Weeks 40-52



Luke Powell

Introduction

This is **part 4** of *Bible in 2 years*. Head to [my website](#) to find the first 3 booklets.

Some tips!

- The three readings should take you about 15-30 minutes in all each day. Figure out what works best for you: all 3 readings at once, or different reading times throughout the day.
- If you fall behind, remember, you can catch up on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Pray a lot! Pray *before* you read and ask for His guidance and wisdom. Pray *as* you read, involving God in the process. Pray *after* you read and ask God to write His truth on your heart.
- Find someone to do this journey with. Someone who you can read with, or just someone you can talk to about the readings and what you are learning. This will really help you keep going on the days you don't feel like it.
- Feel free to [contact me](#) if you have any questions or comments on the readings.

Blessings as you read and pray, may God speak to you in a powerful way as you do.

Week 40:

What a blessing this week in God's Word will be! Read with an open heart and a focus on God's glory and love, and see what He does.

Week 40 Monday

1 Samuel 15: Saul's partial obedience keeps coming out. Here he fails to get rid of the king and the best of the spoils in his conquering of the Amalekites. Samuel has some harsh words for him, but they needed to be said. A very upsetting verse ends this chapter – God's regret at Saul's actions. Let us pray that we never give God a reason to regret what he has done in our lives.

Proverbs 11:16-31: V20 sums up the chapter – does God *delight* in us or *detest* us?

John 15: Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches – are we abiding in him? Take v6 seriously friends. The call to follow Jesus is not a light one. But it is a joyful one (v11)! We are shown just how great Jesus' death on the cross was in v13, and then we're reminded that we do not belong to the world, but to Jesus.

Week 40 Tuesday

1 Samuel 16: V7 shows the change in approach – instead of the one who *looked* most likely to be king, it was the one whose *heart* was aligned with God who would be given the role of king. Note the difference in v13 and v14 – the Spirit anoints David but leaves Saul. David's music soothes weary souls and chases out evil spirits – does the music you listen to do the same?

Proverbs 12:1-14: As we keep reading these 'good vs wicked' proverbs of Solomon, let us pray that God will cleanse our hearts and lead us in His ways in all we do.

John 16: Jesus again speaks of the Holy Spirit's role, and then comforts his disciples ahead of their grief in his death, promising them that joy will return. How spectacularly it did return! V27 *again* shows us the unity of Jesus and the Father, and then comes v33, a favourite, reminding us to take heart in tough times by remembering how Jesus conquered the world.

Week 40 Wednesday

1 Samuel 17: The favourite OT story of David conquering Goliath! I remember [preaching on this passage back in 2018](#), you're welcome to listen to the sermon to hear my thoughts.

Proverbs 12:15-28: V18 is a special one for me – I once preached [a whole series of sermons](#) with this as the key verse.

John 17: Jesus' high priestly prayer has much to teach us about glory, eternal life, God's protection of us, joy, sanctification, unity and more. As you read, imagine Jesus praying this over you!

Week 40 Thursday

1 Samuel 18: David and Jonathan share a deep love – how precious to have such people of God in our lives. But David and Saul become enemies, because of Saul's great jealousy and insecurity – how sad when people of God can't set aside their differences.

Proverbs 13:1-12: I'm sure by now you are seeing the same themes pop up in Solomon's short proverbs – the foolishness of laziness, greed, violence, mockery, rash words and so on. Are our lights shining brightly (v9)?

John 18: Judas betrays Jesus, who stops the disciples from fighting and gives himself up. Jesus is questioned and his replies are fascinating – read them slowly and thoughtfully. Note once more that he believes truth to reside with him (37). Peter denies Jesus, just as Jesus predicted.

Week 40 Friday

1 Samuel 19: Saul's jealousy keeps rising up, and he finally goes after David with murderous intent. But David escapes, thanks to help from Jonathan and Michal. Many of David's Psalms were written as he fled Saul. God can bring beauty out of the most awful situations.

Proverbs 13:13-25: V20 is important – who we associate with goes a long way in establishing us in either wisdom or foolishness.

John 19: John's account of our Saviour's death. He describes it as a triumphant moment, with Jesus finishing the work He was called to do (v30). I pray that you will read these words with fresh eyes and an open heart today. The death of our Saviour on the cross would mean so much more than anybody could have imagined.

How great is our God – leading us through an amazing journey in His word through these 40 weeks. We have a way to go still, and I know He is going to continue to bless us in a thousand ways as we spend this time with Him!

“The LORD
detests those
whose hearts are
perverse, but he
delights in those
whose ways are
blameless.”

Proverbs 11:20

Week 41:

Saul and David's tussle continues; Proverbs reveal more wisdom to us, and we finish John's Gospel and start another classic Paul letter.

Week 41 Monday

1 Samuel 20-21: Jonathan and David have such a special friendship, as we see in v14, 17 and 41-42. Saul's jealousy of David leads him to terrible evil – and David is forced to flee and live on the run. The incident in Ch21 is referred to by Jesus to show that saving a life is more important than following the law. But David's lie in 21:2 had dire consequences later on.

Proverbs 14: 1-18: V7-8 reminds us again of what Proverbs is all about – wisdom over foolishness.

John 20: Wonderful scenes as the tomb is found empty, and Jesus who died brutally is now risen and appearing to his disciples. Look for the word 'believe' in this passage. Have you believed? What blessing awaits if you do (v29).

Week 41 Tuesday

1 Samuel 22: David's family as well as a few hundred others join him in exile. Saul's murderous rage of jealousy continues. He has become obsessed with his enemy.

Proverbs 14:19-36: I think v21 and 30 are good reminders to us. Take note of v22 too – what are you planning? In v27 we see the phrase "fear of the LORD" again, and v30 warns of the harmful effects of envy. A full reading here!

John 21: The risen Christ performs another miracle, and also restores the fallen Peter.

John's gospel was all about faith in Christ as the divine Son of God! Did you enjoy reading it? Please feel free to send me your thoughts and reflections on this powerful gospel.

Week 41 Wednesday

1 Samuel 23-24: David and his men are victorious over the Philistines, and Saul comes after him. I love v16 – do you have friends who 'help you find strength in God'? The Ziphites tell Saul where David is, and Psalm 54 was written by David in this time. Then we see David sparing Saul's life when he had the chance to kill him. Saul's words in 24:20 are profound – he knew that David was the real king.

Proverbs 15:1-17: If we could remember v3 at all times, how differently we might live! We must be 'upright' and 'righteous' in light of God's watching eye. V15 is also a reminder to not be full of self-pity.

Philippians 1: Philippians is a classic! Possibly my favourite book in the NT. It is known as the Epistle of joy, and was written when Paul was in prison. Truly his words about joy in Christ are inspiring, and we can hardly read this letter without being touched by God's grace.

Chapter 1 is full of gems. V6 reminds us that God is at work in our lives. V7-8 show us the love of Paul, and 9-11 show his desire for his people to be righteous. V12-14 show his faith – that God was working in him even while in prison! V21-26 are his classic words on living and dying to the glory of Christ. And take note of the wonderful challenge he gives us in v27.

Week 41 Thursday

1 Samuel 25: The evil Nabal is shocked to death when his wife shows David and his men compassion. David ends up with a wonderful new wife. Here we see God humbling the proud, and exalting the humble.

Proverbs 15:18-33: Warnings about temper, laziness, pride and greed are strong in this reading. But the promise of joy and smooth paths for the wise are also there.

Philippians 2: Paul is worried about division in the church – and if he were around today, I think he'd still be worried. V3-4 are great reminders to not live selfishly, and then Paul uses a wonderful early church hymn to prove how Jesus lived selflessly. What wonderful words! A challenge comes in v12-18, where we see how grumbling and complaining keeps us from shining Christ's light. Then we read of two great people of faith – Timothy and Epaphroditus. Do we ever 'risk our lives' for the sake of the gospel?

1 Samuel 26: A second time, David spares Saul's life, and Saul seems to repent of his evil and bless David as the true king. David's actions teach us that forgiveness is better than revenge.

Proverbs 16:1-16: Think on v3 today. And think also on v4 and v9. God is in control! V5 promises punishment for sin, v6 shows the love and faithfulness of Christ who atoned for our sin. V11 and 13 uphold honesty as a virtue.

Philippians 3: Paul was worried that the church was falling for the 'works' theology of the false teachers. They were saying that the old Jewish rituals would make you right with God – but Paul says that if that were the case, he would be most qualified of all, but in the end it was all rubbish compared to Christ! He believed that faith in Christ was more precious than any religious ritual, BUT he also believed in striving for perfection as a Christian, as we see in v10-14. Let us be careful that v19 doesn't describe us.

I pray that God is speaking to you as you read His Word. What a precious way of life, meeting Him in this way day after day! Catch up this weekend if need be, and be ready for more blessings here on Monday.

“

“Though the doors were
locked, Jesus came and
stood among them and
said, “Peace be with
you!””

John 20:26

”

Week 42:

We finish 1 Samuel and start 2 Samuel. We also finish Philippians and get into another brilliant Paul letter. And we march on through Proverbs. Be much in prayer as you read – remember please, that this is not about ticking boxes to say you've read the Word, it's about meeting God deeply through His Word!

Week 42 Monday

1 Samuel 27: Weary of running from Saul, David makes a deal with a Philistine leader and moves to the city of Ziklag. From there David raids various cities which Joshua and his men were unable to conquer.

Proverbs 16:17-33: V18 is a classic warning against pride. V19 reminds me of a Billy Joel song that says "I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints" – Solomon is thinking the exact opposite here!

Philippians 4: What a brilliant chapter ends Paul's letter. V4's call to rejoicing reminds me of an old song "rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice!" V6-7 is a precious passage to hold in times of anxiety. Do you know His peace today? V8 is practical – set your mind on good things only. Then v9-20 is Paul at his best – showing us that contentment does not come from circumstances, but from Christ who gives strength (v13) and supplies our needs (v19). Wonderful words. Paul ends with typical words of loving greeting.

Week 42 Tuesday

1 Samuel 28-29: Afraid of the Philistines, Saul seeks God but gets no answers, and so he does a terrible thing – he tries finding wisdom through a medium, an act which God strictly forbids. The ghost of Samuel appears and predicts Saul's death, sending him into a state of depression. What a sad picture of a man who could have done great things for God! In ch29 we see David and his men excused from the battle – which meant he didn't have to fight against his own people.

Proverbs 17:1-14: Again we read one statement after the next stating that the righteous are blessed and the wicked are not. V3 causes us to pause – what will he see when testing our hearts? Take note of v14 – it's wise to be calm.

Colossians 1: Onto another special Paul letter, which he also wrote later in life, to a church which was looked after by a man named Epaphras. This is some profound writing on Jesus and the Christian life. Read it and be blessed!

Ch 1 is full – Paul's loving greeting contains a lovely prayer for his people, which [I preached a sermon on](#) in 2022. Then v13-23 is a wonderful passage which declares the majesty and divinity of Jesus – you can hear my thoughts on this passage [here](#).

Week 42 Wednesday

1 Samuel 30-31: David returns to his new home to a horrible scene – the city has been burned and all the people captured. In their grief, David's men consider turning against him, but note v6! David found strength in God, even in such an awful situation. David then leads a mighty victory in which he recovers all that was taken from Ziklag, and divides the spoils equally among the people.

1 Samuel ends with Ch31, in which Jonathan is killed and Saul's life comes to a morbid end. The righteous and unrighteous both lose their lives in war – tragic!

We have learned much from Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, David and Jonathan in this book.

Proverbs 17:15-28: One of my favourite verses in 17. How grateful I am for such people in my life! V22 seems to speak of the link between our spiritual and physical health. V27-28 show a common theme in Proverbs – the value of keeping quiet rather than arguing or complaining.

Colossians 2: Again we see Paul's great desire – for his people to be firm in their faith in Christ. He warns against other philosophies and theories which aren't of Christ, exalting Christ above all. Read v13-15 with seriousness and thankfulness, and then note v16-23: human rules and traditions can point us to Christ, but should not be seen as the most important thing.

Week 42 Thursday

2 Samuel 1: On we go to Second Samuel – which tells the story of David’s reign as the official King of Israel. We see David at his best and worst in this book. I pray that we will see the mercy of God as we read – restoring not only a broken man to wholeness, but a broken nation to unity.

The book begins with David and his men weeping and fasting at the death of Saul and Jonathan. Even after all that persecution, David still weeps for the death of his enemy. His lovely song proves his deep love for his friend Jonathan too.

Proverbs 18: V2 is worth thinking about – are we seeking understanding or just wanting to talk about our own views? V6, 7, 14, 20 and 21 again teach the power of our words – for good or bad. I’m blessed to know the truth of v22 and v24!

Colossians 3: Now Paul gets practical! I preached [‘Paul’s Way of Life’](#) from this passage. V17 and v23 are some of my all-time favourites – they sum up the Christian life so well! Take note of Paul’s words to Christian households at the end of the chapter. Our families should certainly see Christ in us.

Week 42 Friday

2 Samuel 2: David is anointed king of his own tribe only, while another is anointed the new king of the rest of Israel. A fight between the two sides ensues.

Proverbs 19:1-14: How true is v3 – we often blame God for the consequences of our own misdoings. Think on v11 today – are we forgiving people? Jesus taught us to do this.

Colossians 4: Paul’s final instructions are that the people devote themselves to prayer. Do you need to take that instruction to heart today? Paul then sends extended greetings to different people in the church – all who played a vital role in the community. I preached on [‘Paul’s People’](#) using this passage.

What a lovely book this has been – did it speak to you? Please feel free to share your thoughts with me.

Week after week God’s Word blows me away. I’m amazed at how often the words give me just what I need for this particular season of my life. I am certain you are finding this to be true too! Catch up this weekend if you need, and let’s start week 43 on Monday.

“

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6–7

”

Week 43:

Let's dig deep into God's Word this week, seeking treasure as we do! He is faithful and will provide much for us to enjoy in these readings.

Week 43 Monday

2 Samuel 3: Abner and David make peace, and then Joab kills Abner. David mourns Abner's death, and the people begin to see that David is a compassionate leader.

Proverbs 19:15-29: More useful reminders to avoid laziness, mocking and corruption, and to embrace kindness, discipline and fear of the Lord. Don't miss v21!

1 Timothy 1: Let's read a wonderful letter which Paul wrote to his young prodigy, Timothy!

In ch1, Paul warns Timothy of the false teachers that were infiltrating the church. They could be spotted by their useless talk (v3-7), motives (v7-8) and their sin (v8-11). Paul, on the other hand, knew God's mercy in a wonderful way, as we read in v12-17. All this leads him to encourage Timothy to be committed and faithful (v18-20).

Week 43 Tuesday

2 Samuel 4-5: Another murder takes place without David's approval, and he is quick to pay back the evildoers. The people of Israel recognize him as their shepherd and ruler at last! Immediately he gets to work and conquers Jerusalem, as well as defeating the Philistines. Note v10, and consider how the same is true for us *spiritually* when we are Spirit-filled.

Proverbs 20:1-15: V6 made me pause. I long to be faithful! V9 reminded me that all fall short, but this also led me to remember that there is cleansing through the blood of Christ.

1 Timothy 2: Paul calls us to real prayer in v1-2, which will lead us to lives of godliness and holiness. Note v4 – God desires that all people be saved! Paul's words on the role of women (v9-15) are hotly contested today. There are other places where Paul *does* seem to allow for women preachers (1 Cor 11:5 etc). The lesson seems to be that each person should be faithful, loving and holy (v15). If the last verse puzzles you, read [this helpful article](#).

Week 43 Wednesday

2 Samuel 6-7: David brings the ark into Jerusalem and the people worship "with all their might" in a very noisy procession. Like Michal, many people despise such outward acts of worship (6:19). Then chapter 7 is an outstanding passage in which God's covenant with David is made. Consider how God fulfilled this through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 20:16-30: We keep on reading these great little pieces of advice for wise living.

1 Timothy 3: Paul is clear that church leaders should be holy and God-fearing people, whether ministers/pastors/overseers/deacons (v1-15). And of course, all those in God's household should conduct themselves in a worthy and holy manner (v14-16).

Week 43 Thursday

2 Samuel 8-9: David did "what was just and right for all his people" (8:15). Oh for leaders like this today! In Ch9 we see David honouring his friend Jonathan by showing kindness to his son Mephibosheth.

Proverbs 21:1-16: V13 and v15 remind us that holy and wise living is not just personal – it includes doing good in the community.

1 Timothy 4: Practical words from Paul about how to live the Christian life! We must be nourished on the truth (v107), trained in godliness (v7-8), trusting in salvation (v10), setting the example (v12) and committed to the cause (v13-16).

Week 43 Friday

2 Samuel 10: The Israelites are insulted by the Ammonites, and war breaks out. I love v11-12 – Joab and Abishai pledge to help each other, and encourage each other mightily. We need people like this in our lives!

Proverbs 21:17-31: V21 sums up the chapter. And v30 is also profound – God is always victorious.

1 Timothy 5: Paul sees the church as a big family in v1-16, and encourages his readers to treat each other as such. Again there is teaching on the high call of church leaders – Paul wants to make sure that they are fairly treated (v17-25).

As the week closes, perhaps you'd like to take a moment to prayerfully thank God for the lessons learned in our readings this week. May the Spirit keep these truths in our hearts always!

“

**“NOW TO THE KING ETERNAL,
IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, THE
ONLY GOD, BE HONOUR AND
GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER.**

AMEN.”

1 TIMOTHY 1:17

”

Week 44:

David's story takes a bad turn this week. If only he had lived in the ways that the Proverbs advise. Paul's wisdom in his latter years is evident, and we get to read his last recorded words this week. God is going to do special things in us as we read!

Week 44 Monday

2 Samuel 11-12: David lounges at home while his men are out fighting, and temptation gets the better of him! He sleeps with a married woman, then tries to cover it up, and when he can't he has her husband killed. Not the actions of 'a man after God's own heart' - showing that *nobody* is unable to fall from grace. However, David repents and finds forgiveness (perhaps you want to read Psalm 51 today to go with this reading). But please note, the consequences of his sin remained. Note too, that in spite of his pain, *David goes to worship*.

Proverbs 22:1-16: V3 has meant a lot to me over the years. If you are on a bad path, don't keep going - take refuge and move off the path! Note the usual warnings against laziness, adultery, selfishness and more.

1 Timothy 6: Paul begins this chapter telling slaves to consider how their actions might glorify God. He then speaks a lot about money. V6-8 are worth our careful consideration today. V9-10 are stark warnings to us, while V11 is a great verse reminding us what to aim for in life, and v14 leaves no room for the straying we saw in David. Paul then has some words of advice for the rich, before encouraging Timothy once more as the letter ends.

Week 44 Tuesday

2 Samuel 13: An awful story of evil. We should never use our strength to hurt and abuse anybody. Is there a "Tamar" whom you can reach out to in love? Absalom takes revenge instead of 'leaving revenge to the Lord'. A terrible time in Israel, and all resulting from the sin of the people.

Proverbs 22:17-29: This begins a section of 30 proverbs with a bit of a different feel to the last few chapters.

2 Timothy 1: Paul's second letter to Timothy is a very heartfelt piece of writing. Paul is close to death and you can hear his desperation to have Timothy follow in the ways of the Lord. Read his words carefully and may they lead you to a stronger commitment to your calling.

In chapter 1 we learn that Timothy was raised in a Christian home, and 'ordained' to ministry by Paul by the laying on of hands. V7-8 are powerful, do we live this way? We also learn of some people who deserted Paul in his time of need, but one who refreshed and helped him with love. Which will we be to our Christian leaders?

Week 44 Wednesday

2 Samuel 14: David's family complications continue. Instead of dealing with Absalom's murder of Amnon, he withdraws. Eventually Absalom comes back to Israel and is reunited with David, but as we shall see, he is already scheming against his own father.

Proverbs 23:1-18: These "do not" statements from Solomon give us much to think about. V18 is a very powerful promise - maybe we need to hold to it today.

2 Timothy 2: V1 is one to keep in your mind always. Paul then uses the metaphors of soldiers, athletes and farmers to illustrate the attitude Christians should have. V11-13 could well have been an early Christian hymn. Paul warns against false teachers in v14-19, and spends the rest of the chapter giving practical advice for Christian living. Deep words to drink in today.

Week 44 Thursday

2 Samuel 15: The sneaky Absalom wins the heart of the Israelites, and David flees. The people weep in v23, and David joins them in v30 at the Mount of Olives. In a sense, this was a 'Gethsemane' moment for him. He seeks God's guidance in prayer, and sends Hushai as his informant into Absalom's camp.

Proverbs 23:19-35: Stark warnings about over-indulging in alcohol are found here. Solomon also warns of dishonouring parents and giving your heart to adulterers, and then warns again of the foolishness of drunkenness.

2 Timothy 3: Reading v1-9 makes us think - are we in the end days? I suspect every generation has thought the same thing reading those words. But surely they describe the godless world of today. Read carefully v14-17, in which Paul describes the trustworthiness of the Christian Scriptures. Are we not finding his words to be true, as we read His Word together each day?

Week 44 Friday 

2 Samuel 16: Ziba lies to David, and Shimei pelts him with stones, causing David to wonder if God is cursing him for his sin. Then a prophecy is fulfilled - Absalom sleeps with all of David's concubines in the full sight of Israel, as Nathan had predicted in 2 Samuel 12:11. A sordid time in the history of God's people.

Proverbs 24:1-22: Solomon's 30 sayings come to an end here. What helpful advice for living a godly life.

2 Timothy 4: Paul's final words to Timothy are moving. He charges him to stay faithful to the true gospel, unlike some others who had deserted the faith. In v6-8 we see how close Paul is to death. He knows his time is short! As he closes with his usual words of blessing, we realise that this is the last we will hear from this great man of God. Let me share the words of William MacDonald: *"Here he lays down his pen. The Letter is finished. His ministry is ended. But the fragrance of his life and testimony abides with us still, and we shall meet him again and talk with him about the grand themes of the gospel and the church."*

I pray that God is blessing you richly as you read His precious Word. Have a prayerful weekend my friends.

“ —

“Do not let your heart
envy sinners, but
always be zealous for
the fear of the LORD.
There is surely a
future hope for you,
and your hope will not
be cut off.”

Proverbs 23:17-18

— ”

Week 45:

This week is full - we continue reading of David's tough life, and of the wise ways we must follow in the Proverbs. Then in the New Testament we cover 3 short but powerful books. I pray that God will have much to say to you in His Word this week.

Week 45 Monday

2 Samuel 17: When Absalom is advised to kill David, Hushai David's informant manages to change Absalom's mind, giving him time to warn David of the coming attack. Now David is on the run again, like he was from Saul - but this time he is running from his own son.

Proverbs 24:23-34: Warnings against bad judgement, dishonesty, and laziness are found here. Let us take them to heart.

Titus 1: On we go to a short letter of Paul's, written around the time he wrote 1 Timothy. The great Martin Luther said that this letter "contains all that is needful for Christian knowledge and life". Let's read his words with an open heart.

Ch1 starts with the usual words of greeting where Paul explains who he is and why he does what he does. He then instructs Titus on the type of elders (or ministers) that should be appointed to local churches, before rebuking those who "claim to know God, but by their actions deny him" (v16). Do we live like the elders, or the Cretans?

Week 45 Tuesday

2 Samuel 18: David's men overlook his command and kill Absalom to save Israel from his tyranny. When David hears the news he doesn't kill the messenger (as he was known to do), but instead retreats in mourning.

Proverbs 25:1-14: A new section of Proverbs, which were compiled in the time of Hezekiah. A lot of these have to do with being king, and the right thing to do in court. If only we could do what v5 suggests today.

Titus 2: Titus is given different guidance for dealing with different types of people - older men, older women, younger men, younger women, slaves. But in the end, it is "all people" who need the saving grace of God (v11). Look closely at what v12-15 teaches on how God's saving grace should impact our lives.

Week 45 Wednesday

2 Samuel 19: A lesson in leadership - though you may be in pain yourself, "go out and encourage your people!" (v7). Much confusion fills the land as David returns to Jerusalem, and infighting between the tribes continues.

Proverbs 25:15-28: More Proverbs on various themes. Paul quotes v21-22 in Romans 12. Notice the two separate verses about over-indulging on honey, and v28 on self-control.

Titus 3: Paul gives some of his usual practical advice for Christian living. Read V3-7 carefully - this is a beautiful summary of God's salvation! A repeated phrase in v8 and v14 shows us what our lives should be devoted to. A lovely letter from Paul to Titus.

Week 45 Thursday

2 Samuel 20: Another sordid chapter of much violence. Joab tricks and kills Amasa, and before long we see the rebel Sheba beheaded.

Proverbs 26:1-16: We read of the "fool" or "folly" in almost every one of the first 12 verses, and then in v13 the attention turns to the lazy sluggard. V4-5 seems contradictory, but it provides us with wisdom - don't answer a fool in a foolish way, but answer a fool so that he sees his own foolishness.

Philemon 1: A short letter written from Paul to a fellow Christian man Philemon, whose slave Onesimus had run away. Paul encourages him to receive Onesimus back with grace. I [preached a series of 3 sermons on Philemon](#) in early 2023, you're welcome to watch them.

Week 45 Friday 📖

2 Samuel 21: David seeks God in a time of trouble - the first time we've seen him doing this in a while. Then follows a difficult passage - the Gibeonites request 7 of Saul's descendants to kill, and David hands them over. Why? Saul had broken the oath that Israel made in Joshua 9:19-20, and the drought was a curse because of this. Israel needed to make legal retribution for the breaking of their oath. Strange sounding to our New Testament ears, but this is how things were done when God's people were under law, not grace. Then we see the Israelites rising up to fight for David when he was too frail to fight. How we need our brothers and sisters in faith to fight for us when we are too weak.

Proverbs 26:17-28: The warnings about gossip must be carefully considered. Then the writer speaks 3 times (v23-26) of those who *sound* righteous, but their hearts are evil - much like Jesus' words about the Pharisees being 'whitewashed tombs', clean on the outside but dead inside.

Jude 1: This is a tough little letter! Jude the brother of Jesus says it like it is, and calls out those who use the grace of God as a license for sin. It's easy for us to point at others when reading this, but let's first check ourselves - are we falling into the ways he describes, especially in v16? Sadly, we are seeing v19 come true today, with divisions in the church taking place because many are following their desires. But the great last verse reminds us that God is able, and so we persevere in His strength day by day.

God's Word is alive and still penetrates our hearts today. I pray that He is convicting, challenging, comforting, and changing us as we read.

“Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.”

Titus 3:14

Week 46:

We're getting close to the halfway point of our reading plan. I pray that you have been blessed on this journey so far. This week we finish 2 Samuel and begin to look at David's descendants. We carry on through Proverbs and enjoy the wonderful book of James.

Week 46 Monday

2 Samuel 22: A beautiful song of praise from David, reminiscent of Psalm 18. Consider all the 8 different descriptions of God in the first 2 verses - do you know God in these ways? Verse 7 reminds us that God hears when we call - maybe we need this reminder today. V19 says that God is our support when our enemies confront us - another helpful reminder. How can David say what he did in v21-25? He was cleansed and forgiven and kept living for God after the sinful slip. There's much more in this chapter too, read it and take something from it!

Proverbs 27:1-14: Another assortment of proverbs showing us how to be wise. V6 stands out to me. Do you have a friend who you trust to wound with compassion?

James 1: Let's read the wonderful letter of another brother of Jesus - James. He emphasises *living out your faith* in practical ways. There are those who don't like this letter because of how strict James seems to be on moral issues. I feel it is such a worthwhile one to read - helping us to avoid a lifeless faith which isn't expressed in real ways.

Chapter 1 begins with famous words about facing trials with joy and perseverance. In v13-18 James shows us what temptation is, and how to avoid giving in to it, and then from v19 he talks about what real faith is: not just listening to the Word, but living it in practical ways.

Week 46 Tuesday

2 Samuel 23: The last song of David is found in the first 7 verses. Then we read of the "mighty men" who served David and Israel over the years. Christ also has many "mighty" men and women - these are the ones who serve him humbly in all they do.

Proverbs 27:15-27: V17 is an important one. We need each other! V23-27 has a pastoral application. Our pastors have a great responsibility to care for the flocks.

James 2: James warns against favouritism. We need to treat the rich and poor with equal love. Note v13 with seriousness today. Then James speaks about the necessity of good deeds to prove our faith. Be sure that James is not teaching salvation *by* works - that goes against Paul's clear teaching. But he is teaching that our good work *proves* that we have been saved by grace. Are we willing to truly live for Christ, since he saved us?

Week 46 Wednesday

2 Samuel 24: David's census was not done according the regulations laid out in the law, which is why he felt it was such a sin. Instead of it being an exercise of faith, while collecting temple tax in God's honour, he did it to see how great his army was. Notice David's heartfelt repentance - do we repent in this way? Also note v24 - David knows that sacrifice is important when making offerings to the Lord.

Proverbs 28:1-14: V6 shows us that the condition of our heart is more important than our bank balance. V9 stopped me in my tracks as I read it - am I turning a deaf ear to God? V13 is also important, showing us that we must confess *and* renounce our sins.

James 3: The tongue is a powerful thing, James says. It directs our life, and has a way of spreading things like a fire. V10 is key - praising and cursing should not come from the same tongue. Then in v13-18 James talks about the so-called wisdom of the world, versus the true wisdom of God that manifests in good living. Which do you follow?

Week 46 Thursday

1 Kings 1: King David is now very old, and his oldest surviving son Adonijah crowns himself king. However, Solomon was the one who had been called and set apart for the role, and so David fixes things and has Solomon officially crowned. A very *loud* procession follows.

Proverbs 28:15-25: Wicked and tyrannical rulers will not always have their way. Again the word 'blameless' is found in v18. There are a few warnings against being 'eager to get rich' which we should take to heart. V26 is clear that wisdom means not trusting in ourselves, but fearing and trusting in God.

James 4: Ponder v4 today. How easy for us to fall into a 'worldly' Christianity. Instead we should submit to God (v7), come near to Him (v8), and soberly humble ourselves (v9-10). V13-17 are why many people say 'God-willing' whenever they speak about something they are planning or hoping for.

Week 46 Friday

1 Kings 2: David dies and Solomon is established as King, but not before David gives Solomon a solemn charge - to protect the kingdom that God had entrusted to them. This meant eliminating those who threatened the kingdom, and so Adonijah, Joab and Shimei are killed. Perhaps Jesus' words "all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt 26:52) are seen to be true here.

Proverbs 29: 1-14: We have seen the truth of v4 here in South Africa, as have many other countries. V2 and v6 show the link between righteousness and joy and between sin and misery. V8 and v11 deal with anger. V12 and v14 speak more on the wisdom of rulers.

James 5: James begins this section with a stern warning to those who are rich. Don't skip over this too quickly - if you have running water and a mobile device, you are rich indeed. James then calls the people to patience in their suffering, noting in v11 that God compassionately helps us. V13-18 show us the power of faithful prayer. James comes to an end abruptly, prodding us to restore those who wander from the faith.

What a powerful and convicting letter from James! I am sure it has led you to consider your Christian life and ensure that good works are flowing out of your faith.

Powerful words from the Scriptures have blessed us this week. Have we taken them to heart? Pray that God would cement them in your mind and give you a deep reliance on Him through His Word.



“What good is it, my
brothers and sisters, if
someone claims to have
faith but has no deeds?
Can such faith save
them?”

James 2:14



Week 47:

We finish the Proverbs this week! And we read the great first letter of Peter. Much talk of wisdom and holiness fills our readings across the board. Let us read with open hearts and prayerful spirits.

Week 47 Monday

1 Kings 3: Solomon's dream appears to have been real, as his wise actions prove. What would you ask for if God offered you anything He could give? In Solomon we see, for much of the time, a 'somewhat committed' follower of God - v1 and v3 show his split loyalty, and he drifted away from v14 in years to come. Such decisions would come back to haunt him.

Proverbs 29:15-27: V15 and v17 speak of the importance of disciplining children. V20 and v22 remind us to be calm and not lash out or speak out too quickly. V23 is another call to humility.

1 Peter 1: Peter, the hot-headed disciple, was transformed into a wise and holy man when the Spirit touched him at Pentecost! We see evidence of this in his thoughtful writing. His first letter to the early churches contains loving encouragement and pastoral guidance. Take these words in and let them shape your faith. Chapter 1 is full of good things. Notice the Trinity in v2. V6-7 help us put our suffering in perspective, and v8-9 show us that *love* and *belief* are central to our faith. Take careful note of v13-16! We are called to *holiness*, and God who demands it enables us to live this way through the Spirit. V18-22 is an amazing passage praising Jesus as our Passover lamb, and the rest of the passage shows that this means loving like Him.

Week 47 Tuesday

1 Kings 4: V1-19 show what an organised operation King Solomon ran. Under Solomon, Israel thrived as never before. With a wise and godly leader, the people can eat, drink and be happy (v20).

Proverbs 30:1-17: This chapter contains the words of Agur, of whom we know nothing. He was a humble man, as we see in the first few verses. Do you believe his words in v5? How different would the world be if we all thought like him in v8-9?

1 Peter 2: Challenging words from Peter start this chapter, imploring us to be rid of sin and to crave the good things of God above all. He speaks about Jesus as the cornerstone, which [makes me think of this song](#). V9-10 contains some amazing promises of who we are in Christ, and Peter then calls us to live such good lives that even godless people commend us. The chapter closes with a look at Jesus' suffering for us, so that we may live holy lives.

Week 47 Wednesday

1 Kings 5: Solomon begins preparing to build the temple by enlisting the help of Hiram and the Sidonians, as well as conscripting the Israelite men for service. Later we see how the Jews resented Solomon for the heavy yoke he put on them.

Proverbs 30:18-33: Agur shares lists of four things that a) amaze him, b) cause trouble, c) are small yet powerful, and d) are stately in the way they move. A lesson here is to see God's ways and wisdom in all things.

1 Peter 3: Peter addresses husbands and wives, calling both to love and respect. He then addresses all people and shares wise words for Christian living (v8-13), and encouragement in face of suffering (14-18). The chapter ends with a new interpretation of the flood in Noah's time - it was a picture of baptism, which itself is a picture of the saving grace of Christ. Have you been baptized? If so, consider whether or not you are living with "the pledge of a clear conscience toward God" that it represented. If not, speak to a minister and take that step.

Week 47 Thursday

1 Kings 6: Solomon builds a glorious temple. Some would say that it was *too* fancy - that the money should have been spent on caring for the poor. Others would say that creating something beautiful to the glory of God is worth spending on. Another perspective is that in the New Testament, we see a lack of interest in grand material things and a new interest in grand spiritual things - and so the emphasis is on the *people* being temples of God themselves (1 Cor 3:16).

Proverbs 31:1-9: King Lemuel’s sayings, learned from his mother, have a different feel. There are warnings against spending energy on sexual pursuits, and against drinking too much. Instead, leaders should be focused on reaching out to the needy.

1 Peter 4: Hard hitting words from Peter again. He talks of suffering for the sake of Christ, and how suffering is effective in drawing us away from sinful ways. V7-11 calls us to clear-minded prayer, love and hospitality, and the use of our gifts in service, to God’s glory. Peter then talks of suffering for Christ with joy, because it is an honour to bear His name in this way.

Week 47 Friday 

1 Kings 7: Solomon also builds a palace for himself, and enlists the help of the skilful Hiram to work on the temple’s furnishings. [Here is a helpful video about Solomon’s temple.](#)

Proverbs 31:10-31: Proverbs comes to an end with the classic passage about a ‘wife of noble character’, who is “worth far more than rubies” (v10). A high ideal indeed, and we all strive - by the grace of God - to live such wise and worthy lives.

What a journey it’s been through Proverbs. I encourage you to take three or four of the verses that meant something to you and memorize them.

1 Peter 5: Peter’s words to the elders (pastors/ministers) should be read carefully by all clergy! Peter then calls us all to humility, and reminds us to cast our cares on Jesus who cares for us. More warnings against the devil’s schemes, and encouragement to stand firm against him in faith, are very helpful to us. Peter ends his letter with heartfelt greetings.

What a lovely and powerful letter Peter has written! I am certain that you have been challenged and encouraged by his words.

How God has been speaking to us through his living Word! Let us live its truth today and every day. Onto week 48 on Monday.

— “ —————

“Cast all your
anxiety on him
because he cares
for you.”

1 Peter 5:7

————— ” —

Week 48:

How fitting for us to begin Ecclesiastes while we are reading the life of Solomon in 1 Kings. This will give us a fuller perspective of this man of God. We finish the letters of the New Testament with 2 Peter, and then begin that daunting but wonderful book of Revelation. May God lead us to the truth as we read.

Week 48 Monday

1 Kings 8: A very long chapter in which the glory of God fills the new temple. Then we see Solomon's heart of pastoral leadership. He cares deeply for his people, blessing them and interceding before God for their forgiveness and growth in grace. May it be that our ministers and pastors today pray this way for the people under their care.

Ecclesiastes 1: A unique and fascinating book in the Bible. Many modern scholars claim that Solomon is *not* the author, while others believe it is clearly Solomon's work (I believe it is). The theme of the book is the futility of everything *under the sun*. It teaches us that it is pointless to view life without an eternal or heavenly perspective. Later in his life, Solomon drifted from God's ways, and we can see the frustration and confusion that resulted from this, in these writings.

Chapter 1 begins with Solomon's cry of 'meaningless!' Indeed, when you are only considering the things 'under the sun' and not the things of eternity, this is the logical conclusion. V8 says that humans never have their fill - and again, this is true when we look to satisfy ourselves on things 'under the sun', but when we seek our satisfaction in God, we 'never thirst again' as Jesus said in John 6.

2 Peter 1: This is yet another book where modern scholars doubt the authenticity of the claim of authorship. However, there are many who believe that Peter is clearly the author. Setting aside this controversy, let us look closely at the words revealed to the author by God - for they have much to teach us about the Christian life.

After a warm greeting, Peter encourages the people to *make every effort* to live out their faith (5-7). He even claims that without these values, we are ineffective and have forgotten the cleansing Jesus gave us (8-9). Peter then claims that the New and Old Testaments are inspired of the Holy Spirit, and that we would do well to read and listen to them over and over to remind us of God's truths, the foundation of our faith.

Week 48 Tuesday

1 Kings 9: God appears to Solomon again to renew their covenant - on condition of his obedience. Hiram is displeased with the gift that Solomon gives him for his hard work. We begin to get an idea of the great size of Solomon's kingdom - with palaces, cities, fleets of boats, royal visitors, great numbers of workers all at his disposal.

Ecclesiastes 2: But here we learn that all of this became meaningless to Solomon! Trying to find meaning in pleasure and projects came to nothing for him. V10 shows how he denied himself nothing, but his heart would not stay happy. He still found it better to live wisely than foolishly (v12-16), and at last he seems to realise at the end of the chapter that pleasing God is the one thing that can bring meaning and happiness.

2 Peter 2: Peter warns of false teachers, and uses examples from the Old Testament to show how God destroys the wicked but saves the righteous. We must be on our guard, and stand secure in the faith which was taught to us from the Apostles themselves.

Week 48 Wednesday

1 Kings 10: Solomon's riches are staggering. The queen of a sophisticated neighbouring land came to observe what she had heard of, and was amazed at Solomon's wealth and wisdom. Jesus spoke about this event in Matthew 12:39-42.

Ecclesiastes 3: Yet, even with all his wealth, Solomon still felt hopeless! His famous words in v11 always [make me think of this song](#) . Once again we see Solomon lacking an adequate view of eternal hope (v18-21) but we know through the words of Jesus that there *is* life with God in heaven after death, for the faithful.

2 Peter 3: Peter warns of the 'scoffers' who will come in the last days. He ensures the people that though the return of Jesus *seems* to be slow in coming, God is working things out in His time (how appropriate to

read that verse in Ecclesiastes today then!). He encourages his people to live holy and godly lives and to stand secure in their faith, holding to the Scriptures - which include Paul's writings in his mind. With this, we are done with the letters of the New Testament. How rich and powerful they have been!

Week 48 Thursday ☐

1 Kings 11: Here we learn of Solomon's straying from God. V6 and v10 say it all. Let us take this to heart today and determine to hold fast to God, not to our sin! Enemies rise up against him, and at the end of the chapter we see Solomon die and Rehoboam succeed him as king.

Ecclesiastes 4: Unlike his father David, Solomon lost sight of the comforting God, and began to see oppression and trials as 'meaningless'. V6 is a powerful saying worth pondering. And Solomon's famous words in v9-12 have been read at many marriage ceremonies. V13 sums up Solomon!

Revelation 1: Let's start the most controversial and debated book of the Bible. The same John who wrote the gospel and letters in the New Testament wrote this while exiled to the island of Patmos later in his life. It's a fascinating book which makes use of various symbols to express truth. Essentially John had a vision of things to come, right up to the end when Jesus returns and makes all things new. *Read this book very prayerfully, asking for the Spirit's guidance and help.*

Chapter 1:3 says that we will be blessed if we take these words to heart. I believe that! John says that this book is for the *seven* churches - seven being a number that symbolises completeness, which means we can take the message as being true for all churches. Wonderful pictures of Jesus fill v5-8. John's vision of the glorious Jesus always makes me [think of this message from my uncle Cockie](#), preached at my Gran's funeral.

Week 48 Friday ☐

1 Kings 12: Rehoboam foolishly takes the advice of his young peers rather than the wise and learned elders - and decides on cruelty rather than servant leadership. This causes a split in the kingdom, with Jeroboam and the northern tribes wanting no part in the house of David. Since Jerusalem and the temple were in the southern kingdom, Jeroboam tries to set up a new way of worship for his people, leading them into idolatry in the process.

Ecclesiastes 5: Warnings against rash words and rash vows fill the first few verses. V2 reminds me of [this powerful song](#). Then warnings against the love of money start in v10, and in v19 Solomon shares that the one who can 'accept their lot' is the one who finds happiness.

Revelation 2: Christ's letters to the churches of John's day are still convicting for us modern churches today. Ephesus was a church that did good but lost its love for God; Smyrna was a persecuted church called to faithfulness; Pergamum was tolerant of sins that God despised; and Thyatira was also morally compromised. Do you recognise our churches here? It is time to repent and faithfully stand for God and His ways.

God's Word has been convicting this week! My prayer is that we are going further than just reading the words. May it be that we are implementing these truths in our lives with the help of God's Holy Spirit.

“

He has made everything
beautiful in its time.

Ecclesiastes 3:9

”

Week 49:

Our journey through 1 Kings, Ecclesiastes and Revelation continues this week. Be much in prayer as you read, and look for God's wisdom and glory in each word.

Week 49 Monday

1 Kings 13: A prophet confronts Jeroboam and also predicts the rise of Josiah, who would come into power many years later. Then another man comes and deceives this prophet, who is punished by God for his lack of discernment - which seems harsh, but we must remember that teachers will be judged more strictly by God. Jeroboam's sin continues.

Ecclesiastes 6: Again Solomon laments the fact that people can amass wealth but never learn to enjoy it. We need to be sure that our contentment comes from God, and not worldly things.

Revelation 3: The church in Sardis seemed alive but was dead inside, because they had turned from the ways of God; Jesus calls them to awaken and repent. The church in Philadelphia was faithful, and so received a promise of protection when things get bad up ahead. The church in Laodicea is lukewarm, partly in God and partly in the world, and so God rejects them. What can we learn from these three churches? Jesus then gives that great invitation - he stands at the door and knocks, waiting for us to open and let him in.

Week 49 Tuesday

1 Kings 14: Jeroboam sends his wife in disguise to Ahijah, but the prophet isn't fooled! He shares God's harsh words for the unfaithful Jeroboam, including the promise of a terrible end in judgement. Then we see how Rehoboam, king of Judah the Southern part of Israel, also led his people astray.

Ecclesiastes 7: Solomon seems to say that misery is better than laughter, but Wiersbe believed he is "not presenting us with an either/or situation; he is asking for balance". We are warned of the danger of bribery, pride and anger, and v14 teaches us a valuable lesson on seeing God's hand over good and bad times. V16-18 is surely what got Solomon off-track in the first place - trying to hold onto both God and the world. The chapter ends with Solomon's awful male chauvinism - which is quite unlike the Christian values of equality for all.

Revelation 4: John's vision of the worship around God's throne is mesmerizing! Many songs are based on this amazing sight, including [this one](#) and [this one](#). I encourage you to let this passage lead you to worship on your knees today, as you consider the descriptions of God that the worshippers proclaim.

Week 49 Wednesday

1 Kings 15: Two kings of Judah - the evil King Abijah and the good King Asa are introduced. Are the words of v14 true of us? Then we meet two evil kings of Israel - Nadaab and Baasha. There is war between Judah and Israel how sad to see God's people split into two kingdoms like this.

Ecclesiastes 8: Solomon observes that it is wise for people to obey the king, who God placed in power. He also observed that sometimes the wicked live long lives, but it is still better to fear and obey God. V11 is certainly true - we see it here in South Africa on a grand scale. Again Solomon says that since life is so hard, you may as well enjoy it while you can. Of course, we have fuller understanding now that true, lasting joy comes from Jesus - not eating, drinking and being merry.

Revelation 5: What a picture of Jesus - the Lion of Judah who became the Lamb that was slain - and countless angels and creatures bowing before Him in praise as he opens the scroll. Wow! Again I am reminded of two amazing songs as I read these words: Andrew Peterson's "[Is He Worthy](#)" and "[Worthy the Lamb](#)" by the Gaither Vocal Band. May they lead you to deep worship of our precious Saviour today.

Week 49 Thursday

1 Kings 16: Israel's fall into moral decay is seen here, as we are introduced to one evil king after another. Let us not 'around God's anger by the things we do' (v7), 'consider it trivial to commit sin' (v31), but live holy lives through God's empowering Spirit.

Ecclesiastes 9: Solomon observes that there seems to be little difference between what happens to good and evil. Solomon can't picture any sort of life beyond the grave, and so he advises us to simply enjoy and

make the most out of a meaningless life. A godless viewpoint, considering the powerful truths taught by Jesus and the New Testament writers! The chapter ends with thoughtful words: wisdom is useful, but sin can undo its benefits - as the life of Solomon so clearly illustrates.

Revelation 6: The lamb opens the seven seals. Some believe that the first four have already fulfilled Jesus' prediction of 'wars and rumours of wars', while the martyrs we see with the fifth seal are those Jesus predicted would be 'handed over to be persecuted and put to death' - see Jesus' words in Matthew 24:6-9. Then the sixth seal represents events we are still awaiting. On the other hand, some believe that all of these seals are yet to be opened. Our lesson? *Stand firm til the end!*

Week 49 Friday

1 Kings 17: We meet the great prophet Elijah, an important figure who appears at the Transfiguration to talk with Jesus (Matthew 17:3). John the Baptist would be an Elijah figure (Luke 1:17). Here we read of Elijah's encounter with a woman and her son, who discover the power of God - to provide food in a miraculous way, and bring the dead to life. Praise our God as you read this today.

Ecclesiastes 10: Solomon contrasts wisdom and foolishness, much like he does in the book of Proverbs. Here we see foolish rulers, foolish workers, foolish talkers, and foolish princes. Let's note verse 1 especially, which says that a little foolishness will ruin much good.

Revelation 7: The 144000 seem to be Jewish believers, gathered from the 12 tribes of Israel, who are sealed and protected by God during the Great Tribulation in those days. Additionally, there is the multitude of Gentile believers, washed by the blood of the Lamb and robed in white, [singing these words](#). We ask ourselves: Will we be included in that number? Are washed in the blood and sealed in Christ?

Once again we have been blessed with powerful truths from God's Word. Praise Him for His greatness and His love!

“
Day and night they
never stop saying:
“Holy, holy, holy is
the Lord God
Almighty,” who was,
and is, and is to
come.”

Revelation 4:8

”

Week 50:

1 Kings comes to an end this week, as does Ecclesiastes. Pray much as you read! Perhaps you would like to use these words in prayer as you start the week:

*O Lord I need your help now as I settle down to read
Won't you please come help me focus and take care of every need
Lord without you this is pointless! It's a total waste of time
But with You to guide and lead me I'll be touched by the divine*

Week 50 Monday

1 Kings 18: Are we 'devout believers in the Lord' like Obadiah (v3)? Elijah calls Ahab out for leading God's people to idol worship, and then challenges the people to stop 'wavering between two opinions' (v21). Perhaps we need to hear this warning ourselves today and ensure we are fully committed to the LORD. Notice, in v36, that Elijah did this *at God's command*. You and I can't call fire down from the sky unless God has said he would do it!

Ecclesiastes 11-12: Solomon's sad book comes to an end with a warning - to fear God and live with an awareness of the judgment he will bring. For those in Christ, we need not fear judgement, for Jesus has taken our punishment on the cross. But we are still to live wise, holy and God-honouring lives out of love for our Creator. Life is not 'meaningless' when you know the Saviour and live for Him!

Revelation 8: The next seal is opened, and the praising we read of in earlier chapters ceases while a holy hush fills heaven. Four trumpet blasts bring awful judgements on the earth, and then an eagle announces that the next three trumpet blasts will bring even worse calamity.

Week 50 Tuesday

1 Kings 19: Burned out and depressed, Elijah is met by God under a tree. Bill Meaker's book [Coping With Stress, Burnout and Depression](#) gives useful insight into this passage. God then famously reveals himself to Elijah in the breeze! Rejuvenated, Elijah is sent on a new mission: to anoint new kings and a new prophet.

Song of Songs 1: Let's begin the trickiest book of the Old Testament. Is it a love story, encouraging readers to faithfulness in marriage? An allegory of God's love for Israel? A picture of Christ's love for His bride, the church? Is it all of these? In any case, it is a beautiful work of poetry. It is believed that Solomon wrote this as a young man, before he became mixed up with polygamy and concubines.

Chapter 1 introduces us to the young Shulamite lady and her friends (v1-8), as well as Solomon himself expressing his adoration for her (v9-17).

Revelation 9: Two frightening armies are released to wreak havoc on the earth; first, locust-like demons rise from the Abyss to torment evil people, followed by an army of unholy angels who kill a third of humankind. And yet, v20-21 shows that the remaining two-thirds *still* refuse to repent of their wickedness in spite of this.

Week 50 Wednesday

1 Kings 20: Ahab and Ben-Hadad go to war, and Israel defeats Aram twice. But Ahab makes a treaty with the enemy, causing a prophet to act out a little parable which underlined Ahab's mistake. Spiritually, we learn not to make friends with sin, but to be rid of it.

Song of Songs 2: Verse 7 is the crux of the book. It means a) do not force anyone into sexual acts when they are not ready, and b) wait until the right context to express sexual love - that is, marriage.

Revelation 10: John now sees a mighty angel, believed by many to be the Lord Jesus, declaring a message with the voice of seven thunders. John is told not to record this message, but rather to eat the little scroll in the angel's hand. Like most of God's Word, it is sweet tasting to the believers, but it also makes stomachs church as we realise the judgement that God will bring to those who don't believe.

Week 50 Thursday

1 Kings 21: When Ahab is refused Naboth's vineyard, he sulks! This causes his evil wife Jezebel to step in and hatch a plan to have Naboth killed. Elijah pronounces a terrible judgment on them both, in light of this, and Ahab seems to repent - but it turns out to be a shallow repentance.

Song of Songs 3: Again we hear in v5 that love must not be awakened until the time is right. The young lady then describes Solomon arriving in his glory to wed her - a picture, some say, of Christ coming back in glory to be united with his church.

Revelation 11: Two faithful witnesses stand like olive trees (filled with the Spirit) and lampstands (shining God's light) during this awful time. They will be killed but then raised to life again, and then comes the announcement of the third woe alongside the seventh angelic trumpet blast - but not before an assurance that Jesus reigns.

Week 50 Friday 

1 Kings 22: As predicted, Ahab dies and the dogs lick up his blood. We also meet Jehoshaphat, the good king of Judah (remember, the Jews are split into the Northern kingdom 'Israel' and the Southern kingdom 'Judah').

Song of Songs 4: An inspired description of married love.

Revelation 12: The woman in this passage is the nation of Israel - God's bride - who gives birth to a son - Jesus. The dragon - Satan - wishes to devour the child, but he ascends to heaven or is 'snatched up' (v5). The dragon is defeated, although he is still not destroyed forever - that comes later in the book. There are various interpretations of *when* these events take place; for us, let us again simply hold to the practical advice in v11 - to fight the dragon with faith in the blood of Christ, the word of our testimony, and the willingness to die for our faith.

We are so close to ending the first year of our journey! Keep reading, keep praying, keep worshipping.



**“Do not arouse or awaken
love until it so desires.”**

Song of Songs 3:5



Week 51:

Onto 2 Kings we go, and we finish up with Song of Songs. I hope Revelation isn't leaving you too confused and bewildered - don't lose sight of the overall message of the book which is to stay faithful to Christ until the end, even in times of great tribulation.

Week 51 Monday

2 Kings 1: King Ahaziah consults a false god and pays the ultimate price. Are we consulting the wrong authorities, instead of the one true God? Elijah is faithful to God's Word, and God works miracles through him.

Song of Songs 5: The Shulamite woman locks herself in her room, and when she opens the door for her lover he is gone! Perhaps there is an 'absence makes the heart grow fonder' message here.

Revelation 13: The dragon (Satan) raises up two beasts. The first is from the sea (representing Gentiles), who the people of earth begin to worship. Let us not fall for this anti-Christ's charms! Then another beast from the land (representing Israel - therefore, a Jew) rises up. Notice that he performs miracles, including calling fire down from heaven - the very thing we saw Elijah do in our OT reading today. Again, let us not be deceived, but be sure that our faith is in the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ.

There is much debate about the *mark of the beast*. We can't know for certain what the mark will be, but let us remember that those who have the seal of God - the Holy Spirit - need not fear being tricked into taking the mark.

As for the famous *number of the beast*, many have tried to figure out what 666 represents. Many believe it refers to Nero, the evil ruler of John's day, and that symbolically it represents evil, since 7 is the 'perfect' number in the Bible, which means that three 6s make up an 'unholy trinity'.

Week 51 Tuesday

2 Kings 2: Elijah shares a meaningful moment with his successor, Elisha, before being miraculously taken up into heaven without dying. Elisha's parting of the Jordan, the same way Elijah did, confirms his place as the new prophet of the Lord, and then two miracles further confirm this.

Song of Songs 6: The love song goes on. V3 is a lovely statement capturing the unity of the couple - and again, the unity of God and his bride, the church.

Revelation 14: The large crowd who are not marked by the beast but have the seal of God on their foreheads sing a new song of praise to the Lamb. Then three angels call out, proclaiming and warning of the judgement to come on those who follow the beast. Jesus is then seen with a sickle to judge the earth - a picture of him we don't often think about.

Week 51 Wednesday

2 Kings 3: Let us not 'cling to our sins' as Joram did in v3. The king of Moab backs out of his deal with Israel, and so Joram enlists the godly king Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom team up to attack Moab, with the blessing of the prophet. V15 shows us the power of music.

Song of Songs 7: A very expressive passage, where Solomon describes the beauty of his bride in vivid terms. She in turn invites him to enjoy the love she has 'stored up' for him (v13).

Revelation 15: Seven angels descend from a heavenly temple, and are handed bowls which we will learn more about in chapters to come. Listen to this rendition of the [Song of Moses](#) and worship today.

Week 51 Thursday

2 Kings 4: Elisha's words "don't ask for just a few" (v3) encourage us to greater faith in God's provision. The healing of the young child turned out to have further implications, which we will see in ch8. Then Elisha transforms 'death in a pot' into something life-giving, and feeds many with only a little. Do these miracles remind you of somebody else?

Song of Songs 8: The love song comes to an end with more vivid descriptions of this couple's passion.

Revelation 16: The seven bowls of God's wrath are emptied, and plagues comes upon the earth: great painful sores to the beast's followers; the sea turns to blood; rivers and springs turn to blood; the sun scorches the

earth; darkness falls; the Euphrates river dries up, setting the scene for a battle between the kings of the East and the dragon and his two beasts; and lastly a gigantic earthquake followed by 100-pound hailstones cause calamity on earth. In spite of all this, v15 gives up hope - the one who stays awake and committed to Christ will be blessed.

Week 51 Friday

2 Kings 5: Naaman's miraculous healing changes his heart. At first he was hard and unbelieving (v11-12), not wanting to put in the effort needed to be healed. But when he takes that leap of faith, it all changes - I wonder if your story is similar. While Elisha refuses Naaman's offer of gifts, Gehazi's greed gets the better of him and he lies in order to gain some treats. Elisha subsequently curses him with the leprosy that Naaman was cured of.

Lamentations 1: Now we jump ahead in Israelite history the 500s BC, where Jerusalem has been destroyed and God's people are living as exiles under pagan rule. The book consists of 5 poems lamenting the state of things. It was probably written by the prophet Jeremiah.

Ch1 begins with Jeremiah looking upon his fallen city and the fallen people of Israel with great sadness. It is their own sin (v8-9) that led them here. In v12-16 we hear the 'cry of Jerusalem', weeping over its own fate, and then asking God to deal with the enemy in the same way he dealt with his people.

Revelation 17: The prostitute represents the apostate church, who partnered with the beast instead of staying true to God. What an awful fate awaits her. She contrasts the pure and spotless bride of Christ - the faithful church. V14 is encouraging - Christ will conquer, and His people will reign with Him.

We are almost done with year 1! Catch up this weekend if needs be, and may His Word be in your heart as you rest.

“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”
Revelation 15:3-4

”

Week 52

Would you believe it, we've reached the last week of year 1. You've been faithful in reading His Word and I know you've been blessed! We finish the New Testament and the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, and we'll start them again next week.

Week 52 Monday

2 Kings 6: Elisha miraculously recovers an axe-head which sunk. God can recover the things we lose! Then we see how far the nation of Israel fell under the reign of Joram. As God had predicted (Deut 28:53-57), his people had strayed from His ways, and come under such siege from the enemy that they began eating their own children to survive. But Joram doesn't repent for his own lack of godly leadership - he tries to take his anger out on Elisha instead.

Lamentations 2: Stuck in exile, Jeremiah continues weeping over the state of his people. Take note of v14 - the spiritual leaders of the day gave false hope to the people by not exposing sin. Be careful to remember that God desires us to be holy. Also note v19 - we are to arise from our comforts and cry out to God in prayer. (P.S. how incredible that we would read v20 the same day we read 2 Kings 6. God is speaking to us here!)

Revelation 18: Babylon here represents the beast's world system - where spiritual adultery is rampant and there are excess riches (v3). God's people are usually '*in* the world but not *of* it', but at this time God calls his people to retreat from the world to escape coming judgement (v4). The kings of the earth all lament the fall of their great city - but note that they do not repent or lament for sin.

Week 52 Tuesday

2 Kings 7: In a time of famine, the lepers find a wealth of food, and gorge themselves. It takes them a while to decide to share their discovery with the rest of their people. How like us - we have good news to share with the spiritually starving, but so often we're content to keep it to ourselves!

Lamentations 3:1-39: Jeremiah laments some more before realising that God can still be trusted, because He cares for His people. You can't read this passage without hearing the words of [this great hymn](#).

Revelation 19: Shouts of "Hallelujah!" and "Amen" ring forth from heaven because God's enemies stand judged and the time for the wedding of the Lamb has come. We the church are the bride, dressed in fine linen because of our holy and righteous acts - think on this today and consider whether or not your life is matching this. Then we see a glorious picture of Christ returning on the white horse, crowned as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Praise Him today as you read!

Week 52 Wednesday

2 Kings 8: The woman whose son was raised to life by Elijah is blessed by the king, as a result of her obedience to God's ways. Elisha predicts the evil of Hazael, who became a pagan king. We also meet the evil kings of Judah, Jehoram and Ahaziah.

Lamentations 3:40-66: V40 is a good piece of advice - examining our ways to see that we are living faithful lives. What love Jeremiah has for his people (v48-51)! Do we care about people like this? V57-58 remind us that even in times of struggle, we have hope, for God is still good.

Revelation 20: Three views of the 'thousand years' are discussed thoroughly on [this excellent video](#). V5-6 talks of the resurrection we experience when we die and meet God immediately - those in Christ will be kept safe from the final judgement. V11-15 describes the judgement and final punishment of unbelievers who persisted in their sin.

Week 52 Thursday

2 Kings 9: Jehu is anointed king, and he immediately stamps out the evil influences in the land. In spiritual terms, are we 'stamping out' the evil in our lives?

Lamentations 4: Have we 'become heartless' (v3)? Jeremiah recognizes that the sins of the leaders led the people astray (v13) - be careful who you follow. The chapter ends with a glimpse of hope - the exile will not last forever (v22). We must trust in His timing.

Revelation 21: An amazing picture of the new heavens and new earth which will be free from death, pain and sin. I recently recorded two beautiful Nazarene hymns which talk of this wonderful place: "[Some Day](#)" and "[Home of the Soul](#)". We look forward to this place with joy - there will be no need for a temple, or for the sun, because God's presence is so powerful! But notice, in v7-8, who inherits this wonderful future and who doesn't.

Week 52 Friday ☐

2 Kings 10: King Jehu's zeal for removing sin from the land is admirable. Yet, in spite of this, his legacy ends with a note of unfaithfulness - though he got rid of Ahab and Jezebel's family line and the Baal worshippers, he still turned from God and followed other idols. We must be on our guard - the enemy always has another temptation for us!

Lamentations 5: Jeremiah's lament ends here, with more sadness at the state of things but a trust in God's ability to redeem his people. This has been a hard book to read, and it has taught us that sin has consequences, but God is still faithful to forgive and make new.

Revelation 22: Two more songs come straight to mind as I read the first few verses: "[There's a River](#)" and then this amazing song "[No More Night](#)" which is one of the best vocal performances you will ever hear. Again we are warned of our deeds being judged, and the book ends with an assurance that Jesus is coming soon! We wait for this day in hope, but in the meantime we trust that God's timing will be perfect, and we busy ourselves with living lives that honour him.

It's been a full year of immersing ourselves in God's Word. What a wonderful time it's been! Perhaps this weekend you'd like to reflect on how God has shaped you and helped you as you've spent time in Scripture each week.

We're halfway there - on Monday we begin the N.T. and Psalms again. God is surely going to bless as we revisit these passages, and as our march through the O.T. history and prophecy books continues.

I am compiling and distributing these notes free of charge - if you are able to contribute towards the online ministry I do, I would be grateful! (www.lukepowell.co.za/support-this-ministry)

I am the Alpha
and the Omega,
the First and the
Last, the
Beginning and the
End.

Revelation 22:13