

NEW TESTAMENT EDITION

*go deeper*  
**90 DAY**  
BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

OCTOBER 1 THRU DECEMBER 31, 2008

**NEW TESTAMENT  
READING PLAN &  
DEVOTIONALS**

Based on THE DAILY WALK BIBLE from WALK THRU THE BIBLE

CICERO CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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# Take the Challenge!

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We invite you to accept the *go deeper* 90-Day New Testament Bible Reading Challenge, where you will complete the New Testament by year's end.

For this fall 2008 challenge, we've decided to use the reading plan created by *Walk Thru the Bible* available as *the Daily Walk Bible* which can be purchased in several versions from Tyndale publishing or directly from Walk Thru the Bible at [www.walkthru.org](http://www.walkthru.org). The "Walk" numbers begin with 275 because that is the beginning of the New Testament in the published Bible.

**You don't have to use a special Bible to participate in this challenge!**

Use your favorite version. Make a change and try a new translation. Read online. Keep a journal devotional guide, or even a blog.

Thanks to the folks at Walk Thru the Bible, they've given us permission to duplicate the devotional readings that are part of the New Testament reading plan, and those devotionals are included in this booklet, which is also available on our church website, [www.CiceroChristianChurch.org](http://www.CiceroChristianChurch.org). Navigate through News&Notes→ Resources→ Forms&Policies.








Cicero Christian Church will launch an Old Testament Bible Reading Challenge in early 2009!

This booklet of devotionals is taken from *the Daily Walk Bible*, New International Version, published by Tyndale and Walk Thru the Bible, Inc. and is recreated with permission.

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 <b>Walk 275</b>	10/1/2008	go deeper day 1
<i>Matthew 1-4</i>		<i>Pedigree of the King</i>
 <b>Walk 276</b>	10/2/2008	go deeper day 2
<i>Matthew 5-7</i>		<i>Preaching of the King</i>
 <b>Walk 277</b>	10/3/2008	go deeper day 3
<i>Matthew 8-11</i>		<i>Power of the King</i>
 <b>Walk 278</b>	10/4/2008	go deeper day 4
<i>Matthew 12-15</i>		<i>Parables of the King</i>
 <b>Walk 279</b>	10/5/2008	go deeper day 5
<i>Matthew 16-19</i>		<i>Principles of the King</i>
 <b>Walk 280</b>	10/6/2008	go deeper day 6
<i>Matthew 20-23</i>		<i>More Parables of the King</i>
 <b>Walk 281</b>	10/7/2008	go deeper day 7
<i>Something Old, Something New</i>		

**LOOK BACK** “The Old is in the New revealed; the New is in the Old concealed.” With those words, one poet has attempted to explain the relationship between the two main sections of the Bible. The Old Testament prophets provided hundreds of details about the coming Messiah: where he would be born, how he would be born, how he would live, how he would die, and what would be accomplished by his death. Now as you read the book of Matthew, you will see predictions that were *concealed* in the Old Testament *revealed* in the New Testament.

Matthew, a Jewish tax collector, writes to a Jewish audience presenting Jesus as the promised King of the Jews. As with any king, his genealogy, upbringing, and demeanor come under intense scrutiny to determine

whether he has the qualifications to be king. By word and deed, through miracle and message, Jesus validates his credentials, setting the stage for the dramatic conclusion of his earthly life and mission.

**LOOK UP** Find the last verse in the Old Testament. Write its reference here:

Now find the first verse in the New Testament. Write its reference here:

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How far apart are those two verses in your Bible? In terms of inches, the answer may be as short as the thickness of one or two sheets of paper. But in terms of time, between Malachi 4:6 and Matthew 1:1 there is an “intermission” of no less than four hundred years. Four long centuries come and go before the silence that begins with the last verse of Malachi is broken by the first verse of Matthew.

Galatians 4:4 tells us why the long intermission was necessary between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament: “But

when the time had full come, God sent his Son...” Like a pregnant woman waiting the precise moment when her child is due to enter the world, so God was awaiting the precise moment when the world was uniquely prepared for the coming of his Son.

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WE ARE NEVER ALONE WHEN  
WE ARE ALONE WITH JESUS.  
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If the good news of his coming was to spread quickly around the world, there had to be a language common to all. And there was! It was called Koine Greek.

If the good news of his coming was to be carried to the farthest corners of the known world, there had to be an extensive network of roads. And there was! The Roman legions had seen to that.

**LOOK AHEAD** If Jesus were walking the earth in bodily form today instead of in the first century A.D., just think what a stir his presence would create. Imagine how many television cameras would follow his every move...how many talk shows would clamor for interviews...the crowds that would shadow his every step.

But God knew that the perfect moment for his Son to enter human history was not the twenty-first century but the first. As you continue to read about Jesus’ encounters with men and women, boys and girls, don’t overlook the fact that today he longs to welcome all who will come to him in childlike faith (Matthew 19:14). His arms are open.

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**Walk 282** 10/8/2008 go deeper day 8

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*Matthew 24-25* *Predictions of the King*

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**Walk 283** 10/9/2008 go deeper day 9

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*Matthew 26-28* *Passion of the King*

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**Walk 284** 10/10/2008 go deeper day 10

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*Mark 1-3* *Power of the Servant*

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**Walk 285** 10/11/2008 go deeper day 11

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*Mark 4-7* *Compassion of the Servant*

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**Walk 286** 10/12/2008 go deeper day 12

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*Mark 8-10* *Teaching of the Servant*

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**Walk 287** 10/13/2008 go deeper day 13

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*Mark 11-13* *Signs of the Servant*

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**Walk 288** 10/14/2008 go deeper day 14

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*Committed to the Task*

**LOOK BACK** The final week of Jesus' life is so important that about 40 percent of the verses in the four Gospel accounts focus on the "week that changed the world." This past week you have read Matthew's account, and tomorrow you will finish reading Mark's (and in the next three weeks you'll come to Luke's and John's record of that week). Notice which elements are repeated, which are omitted, and which are elaborated upon by the different Gospel writers. In each case, the author's intent is not to confuse you but to convince you that Jesus is indeed

- The King of the Jews (Matthew)
- The Selfless Servant (Mark)
- The Son of Man (Luke)
- The son of God (John)

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THOSE ON THE ROAD TO  
HEAVEN WILL NOT BE  
CONTENT TO GO THERE ALONE.  
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As you see the final days of Jesus' life through the eyes of a tax collector (Matthew), as missionary (Mark), a physician (Luke), and a fisherman (John), don't be surprised if your vision is sharpened to see his purpose in coming and his purpose for leaving you here on earth until his return.

**LOOK UP** *Last Words* have a tendency to be *lasting* words. And the final utterances of Jesus are no different.

The *Great Commission* is the name given to the final marching orders Jesus delivered to his disciples just before his death. You'll find the Great Commission in each to the four Gospel accounts and (for good measure) in the book of Acts. Take a few moments to look up each of the following verses, and on a separate sheet of paper write down in your own words what Jesus told his disciples to do while he was away preparing an eternal home for them:

- Matthew 28:19-20
- Mark 16:15
- Luke 24:47
- John 20:21
- Acts 1:8

**LOOK AHEAD** Coca-Cola...Honda...Microsoft....Why is it that a cola or car or computer software can become a household word in places most people can hardly find on a map, while the good news of Jesus Christ remains a mystery to millions nearly twenty centuries after the news first broke?

Is it because their "product" has a better name than ours? Not likely. After all, we're introducing people to the one whose name is so majestic that it fills the earth (Psalm 8:1).

Is it because their "product" is better for you than ours? Hardly. We have the privilege of introducing people to the bread of life and the living water.

Is it because their budget is bigger than ours? Maybe. And yet, more than two billion dollars are invested in world missions every year.

Or is it perhaps because they are simply more committed to *their* commission than we as Christians are committed to *ours*? It's well worth pondering and praying over.

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✚ **Walk 289** 10/15/2008 go deeper day 15

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*Mark 14-16*

*Suffering of the Servant*

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✚ **Walk 290** 10/16/2008 go deeper day 16

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*Luke 1-2*

*Advent of the Son of Man*

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✚ **Walk 291** 10/17/2008 go deeper day 17

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*Luke 3-6*

*Authority of the Son of Man*

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✚ **Walk 292** 10/18/2008 go deeper day 18

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*Luke 7-9*

*Activities of the Son of Man*

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✚ **Walk 293** 10/19/2008 go deeper day 19

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*Luke 10-12*

*Antagonism toward the Son of Man*

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✚ **Walk 294** 10/20/2008 go deeper day 20

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*Luke 13-15*

*Parables of the Son of Man*

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✚ **Walk 295** 10/21/2008 go deeper day 21

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*Going with the Gospel*

**LOOK BACK** Mark presents Jesus as the Selfless Servant, laying down his life for others; “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Luke presents Jesus as the Perfect Man, keenly interested in the human condition. “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Mark and Luke are two of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew being the third), so called because they recount many of the same events from the life and ministry of Jesus and so can be profitably studied side by side (*synoptic* comes from the root idea “to see side by side”).

**LOOK UP** Be careful where you get your information; your facts will be no more reliable than your source.

After reading the Christmas accounts in the Gospels, try this Christmas story trivia quiz. It may surprise you to learn how many of the “fact” that you thought you knew are merely the stuff of Christmas cards and carols.

- 1) How did Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem? (a) by donkey (b) by camel (c) on foot (d) the Bible doesn't say.
- 2) Which animals were present at Jesus' birth? (a) cows, sheep and goats (b) cows, donkeys and sheep (c) sheep and goats (d) the Bible doesn't say.
- 3) What did the angels sing? (a) “Joy to the World” (b) “Alleluia” (c) “For unto Us a Child Is Born” (d) “Glory to God in the Highest” (e) none of the above.
- 4) How many wise men came to see Jesus? (a) three (b) more than three (c) less than three (d) the Bible doesn't say.
- 5) Where did the wise men find Jesus? (a) in a manger (b) in a stable (c) in a house (d) in an inn.
- 6) What is frankincense? (a) a precious metal (b) a precious fabric (c) a precious perfume (d) an Eastern monster.
- 7) Where do we find the Christmas story in order to check up on all these facts? (a) Matthew (b) Mark (c) Luke (d) John (e) all of these (f) only a and b (g) only a and c (h) only a, b, and c (i) none of the above.

Answers: 1. d, 2. d, 3. e (the Bible doesn't say they sang), 4. d, 5. c, 6. c, 7. g

**LOOK AHEAD** Good news deserves to be shared. As you continue to read through the Gospels, notice how Jesus engages in conversations with those who need to know God's love firsthand. Some individuals come to him with questions and needs (Luke 8:41-42; 10:25); at other times, Jesus initiates the conversation (Luke 9:1-5).

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IT IS GOOD TO BE A CHRISTIAN  
AND KNOW IT; IT IS BETTER TO  
BE A CHRISTIAN AND SHOW IT.

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Today, you will likely experience both kinds of encounters: those you will initiate (such as shopping at a store or greeting a coworker) and those initiated by others (such as having your mail delivered or someone making an appointment to see you at work). In both cases, follow the advice of I Peter 3:15. “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

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🚶 **Walk 296** 10/22/2008 go deeper day 22

*Luke 16-18 Parables of the Son of Man Part Two*

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🚶 **Walk 297** 10/23/2008 go deeper day 23

*Luke 19-21 Praise for the Son of Man*

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🚶 **Walk 298** 10/24/2008 go deeper day 24

Luke 22-24 Passion of the Son of Man

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🚶 **Walk 299** 10/25/2008 go deeper day 25

*John 1-2 Manifestation of the Son of Man*

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🚶 **Walk 300** 10/26/2008 go deeper day 26

*John 3-5 Ministry to Individuals by God's Son*

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🚶 **Walk 301** 10/27/2008 go deeper day 27

*John 6-8 Ministry to the Multitudes by God's Son*

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🚶 **Walk 302** 10/28/2008 go deeper day 28

*Ready with an Answer*

**LOOK BACK** In contrast to the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), John's Gospel might well be called the *supplemental* Gospel; about ninety-three percent of his account is found nowhere else in the Gospel records. Such favorite characters as the woman at the well, Nicodemus, Jesus' dear friend Lazarus, and the nameless Good Samaritan are found in John's Gospel alone.

Luke writes with the precision of a careful historian as he documents the life and times of Jesus, for that is his purpose: "to write an orderly account for you,....so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:3-4). By contrast, John focuses on the miraculous signs Jesus performed (seven in the first twelve chapters

alone) “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

Many verses you have read this past week would make excellent memory work projects. Why not hide a bit of God’s Word in you heart this next week,

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YOUR MISSION FIELD  
IS THE NEXT UNSAVED  
PERSON YOU MEET.  
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beginning with one of the following

verses: Luke 16:13; 18:16; 19:10; 20:25; John 1:12; 14; 3:16, 36; 5:24; 8:32.

**LOOK UP** There is a knock at your door. It is late, and visitors at night are rare. But this visitor turns out to be your minister or religious leader. After a few minutes of polite conversation, the discussion takes a serious turn. He asks you, “How can I know I am a Christian?”

Would you be surprised? Of course you would. After all, spiritual leaders are supposed to know the answers to spiritual questions.

In John 3 you’ve read a true account that in many ways parallels the fictitious story about your minister. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a religious man. Trained in the Mosaic Law, he was an expert in the Old Testament Scriptures. Quite likely he taught children in the synagogue school. But here he was asking Jesus the very question he should have been prepared to answer himself: “How can a man be born when he is old? (John 3:4). In other words, how can a person experience the second birth?

Jesus’ answer has become the most familiar verse in the entire Bible—John 3:16. There you will find the best piece of good news ever broadcast to the world. Do you know what it is?

**LOOK AHEAD** Here is a handy way to remember what Jesus told Nicodemus during that evening encounter. By writing down the letters in the good *gospel*, you are ready not only to discover the Good News for yourself but also to share it with anyone who will listen to you for two minutes. Just fill in the words from the familiar verse below.

G \_\_\_\_\_ so loved the world that he gave his only and O \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_,  
that whoever believes in him shall not P \_\_\_\_\_ but have E  
\_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have put your confident trust in Jesus as the one who bears your sins, it means that you have experienced the second birth. Eternal life is God’s gift to all who acknowledge their need as a Savior and turn to Jesus in believing faith. Have you heard the Good News? Good! Now pass it on to someone else who has yet to hear.

<b>✚ Walk 303</b>	10/29/2008	go deeper day 29
<i>John 9-12</i>	<i>Mounting Anger Toward God's Son</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 304</b>	10/30/2008	go deeper day 30
<i>John 13-17</i>	<i>Ministry to the Disciples by God's Son</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 305</b>	10/31/2008	go deeper day 31
<i>John 18-21</i>	<i>The Resurrected Son of God</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 306</b>	11/1/2008	go deeper day 32
<i>Acts 1-4</i>	<i>Power of the Church</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 307</b>	11/2/2008	go deeper day 33
<i>Acts 5-7</i>	<i>Progress of the Church</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 308</b>	11/3/2008	go deeper day 34
<i>Acts 8-9</i>	<i>Persecution of the Church</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 309</b>	11/4/2008	go deeper day 35
<i>Acts 10-12</i>	<i>Propagation of the Church</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 310</b>	11/5/2008	go deeper day 36
<i>Acts 13-15</i>	<i>Paul's First Journey</i>	
<b>✚ Walk 311</b>	11/6/2008	go deeper day 37
<i>Acts 16-18</i>	<i>Paul's Second Journey</i>	

*Seeing and Hearing Is Believing*

**LOOK BACK** Jesus’ *miracles* were designed to validate his *message*. When he said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), he meant it. And to validate his claim that he was the source of life, he raised Lazarus from the grave.

DO NOT EXPECT GOD  
TO USE YOU AS A LIGHTHOUSE  
SOMEWHERE ELSE IF GOD  
CANNOT USE YOU AS A  
CANDLE RIGHT WHERE  
YOU ARE.

John’s account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is poignant and personal, as befitting the one who was nicknamed the disciple “whom Jesus love” (John 13:23). The final chapter of John’s Gospel tells of a breakfast

meeting between Jesus and seven of his disciples. The disciples came to that encounter discouraged and ready to quit; they left fortified with courage to follow their Lord even unto death.

The book of Acts continues the story of Jesus’ followers as they go forth in the power of the Spirit to broadcast the news about their risen Leader and Lord. First in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, and finally to the farthest corners of the known world, the new Testament church carries out its marching orders in spite of persecution from without and problems from within.

**LOOK UP** Two cars collide in the intersection in front of you. From the safety of your own car, you see the entire incident unfold. Now answer the following questions:

- Are you a witness to the accident?
- If yes, why are you a witness?
- What did you have to do to become a witness?
- How sure are you that you are a witness?
- Would you know what to say if called to the witness stand?
- What would you say?

Being a witness for your Lord is not different. Only those who have seen and heard something firsthand about Jesus Christ are eligible to be his witnesses. “That which...we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life. . . .We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us” (I John 1:1, 3). If you have seen the miracle of new birth in your own life, then you are a candidate to be a witness for your Lord.

**LOOK AHEAD** The book of Acts is the exciting account of men and women who bore testimony of the truth they had experienced firsthand. Most of them were not trained preachers or educated philosophers. They were simple people whose lives had been simply touched and transformed for eternity.

After they met Jesus in a life-changing way, he told them to “go and tell.” And so they went and told. And everywhere they went, the power of God was evident. They testified as much by the quality of their lives as by the testimony of their lips.

It’s the same today. People all around you may never visit a church or tune in to a Christian radio or television program. But they will listen to the gospel according to you—in your office...your home...your neighborhood...your school. Why? Because they know you, and they can see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears the difference Jesus had made in your life. They’ve seen the difference; now they need to know what (or rather, who) has made the difference.

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**✚ Walk 313** 11/8/2008 go deeper day 39

*Acts 19-20*

*Paul's Third Journey*

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**✚ Walk 314** 11/9/2008 go deeper day 40

*Acts 21-23*

*Paul's Arrest*

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**✚ Walk 315** 11/10/2008 go deeper day 41

*Acts 24-26*

*Paul's Three Trials*

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**✚ Walk 316** 11/11/2008 go deeper day 42

*Acts 27-28*

*Paul's Trip to Rome*

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**✚ Walk 317** 11/12/2008 go deeper day 43

*Romans 1-3*

*Humanity's Need of Righteousness*

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**✚ Walk 318** 11/13/2008 go deeper day 44

*Romans 4-5*

*God's Provision of Righteousness*

*Unreservedly Available*

**LOOK BACK** Saul the persecutor become Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. His travel diary reads like a modern-day adventure novel as he faces mobs and magistrates, stonings and shipwreck for the privilege of spreading the Good News from Antioch to Rome.

Paul's missionary journeys cover thousands of miles and more than a decade of his life. Following his trips to such areas as Galatia, Macedonia, and Asia, Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and faces a series of trials at the hands of Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. Failing to find justice in the courts, Paul declares, "I appeal to Caesar!" (Acts 25:11), and to Rome he goes. The journey by land and sea is fraught with peril but at last Paul arrives to await trial. During his imprisonment in Rome, he is not free to travel but is able to meet with his fellow believers and prepare them for the ministry that will soon be passed on to them.

The *epistles* (letters) of Paul correspond to the *expeditions* of Paul. On his first journey, he writes the book of Galatians. On his second journey, he writes the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. On the third journey, he writes the books of Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians. As you read these epistles in the coming weeks, turn back to the corresponding chapters in Acts to establish the settings for the letters.

**LOOK UP** Imagine that you are part of a military unit stationed on the edge of enemy territory. To make matters worse, the enemy is headed your way—fast.

You await orders to retreat, but instead you hear your commanding officer give these orders: "men, you are to stay right where you are and fight as hard as you can, as long as you can, until you are killed or captured."

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TRUE GREATNESS IS TO  
SERVE UNNOTICED AND TO  
WORK UNSEEN.

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How would you feel about such an assignment? It's definitely not a role for the fainthearted. But those willing to look death in the face and become "walking dead men" can wreck havoc on the enemy. Why? Because death holds no sway over them. They are fearless and focused. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain. They have already counted the cost of service. In short, They are a dangerous foe because they are expendable.


**LOOK AHEAD** The apostles and disciples in the book of Acts saw themselves as expendable in the service of their Lord. Self-preservation was the last thought on their minds. They were totally, unreservedly available to their Lord. You can see that attitude in the number of verses from Paul's Letters:

“I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself to me” (Galatians 2:20).

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).


If self-promotion or self-preservation is your goal in life, you have yet to discover the liberating power of expendability. But once you see your time, talents, and treasure as 100 percent available in the service of your Lord, then you'll be able to say with Paul: “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, If only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace” (Acts 20:24).

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 **Walk 320** 11/15/2008 go deeper day 46


*Romans 6-8* *God's Power for Righteous Living*

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 **Walk 321** 11/16/2008 go deeper day 47


*Romans 9-11* *God's Plan of Righteousness*

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 **Walk 322** 11/17/2008 go deeper day 48


*Romans 12-16* *Practical Outworking of Righteousness*

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 **Walk 323** 11/18/2008 go deeper day 49

*1 Corinthians 1-6* *Problems with Divisions*

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 **Walk 324** 11/19/2008 go deeper day 50

*1 Corinthians 7-10* *Problems with Daily Life*

*Questions and Answers*

**LOOK BACK** Romans has been called “the gospel according to Paul.” Writing like a trained lawyer, Paul probes the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection. All people stand condemned before a holy God. Jew and Gentile alike are without excuse.

But what the human race was powerless to do for itself, God did in the person of his Son, Jesus. Through his sinless life and sacrificial death we are declared “not guilty” before God—not because of anything we have done, but because of God’s love and grace. We had a debt we could not pay; Jesus paid a debt he did not owe. The result? Sin’s power was broken, freeing us to live a new life in him.

But that new life is not a problem-free life, as you’ll learn by reading Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. Here, a church that was “sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy” (1 Corinthians 1:2)

was nonetheless beset by a myriad of sins and excesses that needed Paul’s discipline and direction. Clearly, the wealth of the believer must be translated into a *worthy walk* by the believer.

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EVERY DAY YOU ARE HELD  
FAST BY THE INFALLIBLE LOVE  
OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST.  
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**LOOK UP** What is one of the most effective teaching methods? The use of question and answer.

Romans 8 is one of the richest “mother lodes” in the Bible. There you’ll discover nugget after nugget of truth for the Christian: the limitless boundaries of God’s love, the proven way to be an overcomer in any circumstance, the role of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Christian. There you’ll also find the answers to several important questions.

According to Romans 8:31-39,

- If God is for us, who can be against us?
- Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?
- Can anything ever separate us from the love of God in Christ?

In case you had trouble with the above exercise, the answer of all three questions is the same: no one!

**LOOK AHEAD** Often the challenge is to take what we know about God from the pages and his Word and apply it to real-live situations that have us baffled and anxious. For example:

- Who is seemingly against you and out to get you today? (Answer: my boss, my spouse, my rebellious teenager, the IRS, my business competitors—in short, everyone!)...But in reality, if God is for you, who can be against you?
- Who is accusing you falsely today of things you never did or said?...But in reality, who can bring any charge against God's chosen, and make it stick?
- Who or what is trying to drive a wedge between you and your Lord today?...But in reality, who or what can separate you from the love of Christ?

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**Walk 327** 11/22/2008 go deeper day 53

*1 Corinthians 15-16*      *Problems with Doctrinal Error*

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**Walk 328** 11/23/2008 go deeper day 54

*2 Corinthians 1-5*      *Paul's Understanding of Ministry*

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**Walk 329** 11/24/2008 go deeper day 55

*2 Corinthians 6-9*      *Paul's Motivation and Model*

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**Walk 330** 11/25/2008 go deeper day 56

*2 Corinthians 10-13*      *Paul's Authority in Ministry*

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**Walk 331** 11/26/2008 go deeper day 57

*Galatians 1-6*      *Unshackled in Christ*

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**Walk 332** 11/27/2008 go deeper day 58

*Ephesians 1-6*      *Blessings for Life*

*Eternal Riches*

**LOOK BACK** Everything you have read this past week was from the potent pen of the apostle Paul, the most prolific of the New Testament writers. At least thirteen letters (epistles) were written by Paul during the course of his three missionary journeys and numerous imprisonments.

In I Corinthians, Paul is confronting the saints at Corinth about their lifestyle of disobedience. Divisions, disorders, and difficulties abound in the Corinthian church. The reaction to Paul's first letter prompts him to write yet another (2 Corinthians) in which he sets forth the "anatomy of an apostle," defending and explaining the authority by which he wrote his earlier letter.

Galatians has been called the Christian's "Emancipation Proclamation." There Paul explains the liberty that comes through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We are neither saved nor sanctified by embracing the false gospel of works—a message directed to anyone willing to give up his or her freedom in Christ for slavery to the law.

In Christ Jesus we are "unshackled" from the law (Galatians) and indescribably rich in the family of God (Ephesians). Our heavenly inheritance includes adoption and redemption, power and position, citizenship in heaven and spiritual resources on earth to live out the love of Christ in our daily lives.

**LOOK UP** How rich are you in dollars and cents? That's what is often called your "net worth"—how much you *own* less how much you *owe*. How rich are you in family and friends? That's the circle of lives that have touched your life in such a way that would otherwise be impoverished for not having known them.

How rich are you in Christ? That's your spiritual inheritance as part of God's family of faith. Through faith in Christ you are a child of God and a fellow heir with Christ. Think of it—all the fullness

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A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO CONSULT A BANK BOOK TO SEE HOW WEALTHY HE OR SHE REALLY IS.

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of Christ is yours because you are in him. All the wealth in the world will not buy you a cup of coffee unless you *know* you are rich and you know how to *appropriate* those riches. Take it from a man in east Texas who died in abject poverty...and lived till his dying day in a house that sat just a few feet above the largest undiscovered oil reserve in the

world. Wealthy, yet living like a pauper. It's the sad condition of many Christians today as well.

**LOOK AHEAD** Take a few minutes to review the book of Ephesians and inventory all that you are and have because you are “in Christ.” It’s as simple as reviewing all the occurrences of the little phrase *in Christ or in Him*, which you located yesterday. Use what you have discovered to complete this sentence: “Because I am in Christ, I have \_\_\_\_\_, and to show it, today with God’s Help I will \_\_\_\_\_.” (Example from Ephesians 1:7—“Because I am in Christ, I have forgiveness of sins, and to show it, today with God’s help I will forgive someone else who doesn’t deserve my forgiveness but needs it nonetheless.”)


If you can find five “nuggets” in Ephesians, you are doing well; six to ten nuggets, you are a first-class prospector; eleven to fifteen nuggets, you are a super sleuth; more than fifteen, you deserve a gold medal.

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 **Walk 334** 11/29/2008 go deeper day 60


*Philippians 1-4* *Joy in Christ*

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 **Walk 335** 11/30/2008 go deeper day 61


*Colossians 1-4* *Christ, the Head of the Body*

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 **Walk 336** 12/1/2008 go deeper day 62


*1 Thessalonians 1-5* *Stay on Target*

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 **Walk 337** 12/2/2008 go deeper day 63


*2 Thessalonians 1-3* *Work While You Wait*

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 **Walk 338** 12/3/2008 go deeper day 64

*1 Timothy 1-3* *The Pastor and Church Leadership*

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 **Walk 339** 12/4/2008 go deeper day 65

*1 Timothy 4-6* *The Pastor and Personal Progress*

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**Walk 340** 12/5/2008 go deeper day 66

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*2 Timothy 1-4* *Paul's Combat Manual*

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**Walk 341** 12/6/2008 go deeper day 67

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*Titus 1-3* *Practicing the Faith*

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**Walk 342** 12/7/2008 go deeper day 68

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### *Happily Humble*

**LOOK BACK** The letters written by Paul have been the focus of your reading over the past couple of weeks. Here's a key to help you unlock and remember each book:

- *Philippians*: "Happily Humble" (The path of true happiness for the Christian is the path of genuine humility modeled by Jesus.)
- *Colossians*: "Commander in Chief" (Jesus is preeminent in everything and deserves first place in your life.)
- *1 Thessalonians*: "Stay on Target (Don't become distracted or discouraged as you seek to make faith, hope, and love the hallmarks of your faith.)"
- *2 Thessalonians*: "Work While You Wait" (There is work to be done in the harvest fields of the Lord as you await his return.)
- *1 Timothy*: "Leadership Manual" (How to know when you are ready to assume leadership responsibility in the household of faith.)
- *2 Timothy*: "Combat Manual" (How to do battle with the enemy as you live for Jesus.)
- *Titus*: "Conduct Manual" (How to behave as part of the household of faith.)

**LOOK UP** Find two glasses of differing shapes, and fill one with water. Now pour the full glass into the empty glass. What you now have is all the water from the first glass contained in a new "form."

In a crude way, that illustrates what happened when Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, took upon himself human form and became a man. Without in any way ceasing to be *divine* (his original nature), he took upon himself a new form—*flesh* (human nature). And the result? When Jesus walked the earth, in reality he was all of God in human body—the *Incarnation*. He was God

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TO GROW TALL SPIRITUALLY,  
A CHRISTIAN MUST FIRST  
LEARN TO KNEEL IN HUMILITY.

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come in the flesh, total divinity combined with perfect humanity. Jesus “emptied” himself of the use of many of his divine attributes (such as omnipotence and omnipresence) in order to dwell among the objects of his love: men and women, boys and girls (John 1:14).


And the result? A series of Glorious ironies. The Christ of creation (John 1:3) was laid in a manger made from one of the trees he created. The Carpenter from Nazareth is busy today preparing our eternal “condominium” (John 14:1-4).

**LOOK AHEAD** Philippians 2:5-11 describes Christ’s example of humility as he emptied himself of his divine rights and privileges (remember our illustration with the glasses?) and made himself of no reputation. By rights, Jesus could have demanded that every knee bow to his authority. Instead, he suffered and died at the hands of wicked men in order that our response to him would be out of love, not coercion. He was willing to renounce his followers to do just the opposite.

What price are you willing to pay today to follow in his footsteps? Are you willing to be inconvenienced by someone who calls or drops by unannounced, with a need for your time and attention? Are you willing to rearrange your priorities in order to serve the needs of someone else? Are you willing to use money you were saving for a personal purchase to meet someone else’s need?


Taking the form of a servant may not earn you any applause or fanfare, but it will demonstrate that you are serious about having the attitude of Christ (Philippians 2:5). And after you read Philippians 2:9, perhaps you will agree that that’s definitely the attitude to have.

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 **Walk 343**                      12/8/2008                      go deeper day 69


*Philemon 1*                                      *Forgiveness in the Church*

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 **Walk 344**                      12/9/2008                      go deeper day 70


*Hebrews 1-2*                                      *Christ, Superior to Angels*

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 **Walk 345**                      12/10/2008                      go deeper day 71

*Hebrews 3-4*                                      *Christ, Superior to Moses and Joshua*

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 **Walk 346**                      12/11/2008                      go deeper day 72

**Walk 347** 12/12/2008 go deeper day 73

*Hebrews 8-10 Christ, Superior to the Mosaic Law*

**Walk 348** 12/13/2008 go deeper day 74

*Hebrews 11-13 Christ, Supreme Example of Faith*

**Walk 349** 12/14/2008 go deeper day 75

*Enduring Faith*

**LOOK BACK** Though the authorship of Hebrews remains a mystery, the thrust of its message could not be clearer. Spiritual birth is only the beginning. It is imperative that Christians go on to maturity and develop a grown-up and growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Don't be tempted to return to your pre-Christian past, for the path of Jesus is better in every way. Jesus is better than the angels...better than Moses...better than Joshua...better than the priests. He offers a better way...a better sacrifice...a better work...a better rest. And because of that, the author is "confident of better things in [their] case" (6:9) as they press on to maturity in Christ.

The path is well trod by Old Testament models and martyrs, whose faith and perseverance can become a constant source of encouragement. In them we discover the liberating truth that "anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (11-6).

**LOOK UP** What is the longest distance you have ever run without stopping? And how did you feel when the run was finally over?

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FAITH IS THE DARING  
OF THE SOUL TO GO  
FARTHER THAN IT CAN SEE.  
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The Christian life would be a breeze if it were only a sprint—a hundred-yard dash of endurance, a quarter mile of patience, half a lap of steadfastness. Unfortunately, that's just not the case. The Christian life is more like a marathon. For Moses, it turned out to be a 120-year "hike" from Egypt to Midian, back to Egypt, and on to Moab. For Noah, it involved a century-long shipbuilding project under God's watchful eye. For Abraham, it meant a wait of twenty-five years for a


promised son. No sprint, to be sure, but an exercise in endurance. And it was enduring faith over the long haul that provided these heroes of the Old Testament with an enduring testimony that continues right up to the present.

**LOOK AHEAD** When you think of models of enduring faith from your own generation, who comes to mind? Here are some suggestions of worthy candidates:

- a minister who has faithfully preached the gospel for forty years
- a couple who has stayed married and worked through their problems, rather than allowing those problems to drive them apart
- a missionary who has labored in a harvest field of the world for thirty years
- the Sunday School teacher who has faithfully taught class after class of fifth graders (including the children of former students!)


Why not honor their faithfulness today with a special phone call or note of appreciation? Their lives are living examples of Hebrews 12:1-2 in action. And it would no doubt make their day to know that you are following in their footsteps.

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 **Walk 350** 12/15/2008 go deeper day 76


*James 1-5* *Doers of the Word*

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 **Walk 351** 12/16/2008 go deeper day 77


*1 Peter 1-5* *Courage in Suffering*

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 **Walk 352** 12/17/2008 go deeper day 78


*2 Peter 1-3* *Poison in the Pew*

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 **Walk 353** 12/18/2008 go deeper day 79

*1 John 1-5* *Fellowship Barometer*

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 **Walk 354** 12/19/2008 go deeper day 80

*2 John 1* *Fellowship with Enemies*

*Unscrambling the Truth*

**LOOK BACK** This week's selection of reading is from the General Epistles, so called because the letters are typically addressed to scattered Christians generally, rather than to a specific individual or church. In contrast to Paul's letters, where the name of the book tells you the *recipient* of the letter, these books have names that indicate the *writer* of the letter: James, Peter, John. Here are six big keys to help you unlock each book and remember its theme:

- *James*: "Faith Gauge" (How to know if you have a true and living faith in God.)
- *1 Peter*: "Pain with a Purpose" (How to face painful circumstances that invade your life)
- *2 Peter*: "Poison in the Pew" (How to deal with false teaching and false teachers that arise within your church.)
- *1 John*: "Fellowship Barometer" (How to know if you are walking in fellowship with God, and what to do if you aren't.)
- *2 John*: "Bolt the Door" (How to be discerning and wise about false teachers.)
- *3 John*: "Open the Door" (How to be hospitable and supportive toward genuine teachers.)

**LOOK UP** The General Epistles prompt us frequently to "look up" when we suffer, when we sin, when we need guidance, when we need hope, when we're sick, and when we're tempted. Read the following passages and identify the context for "looking up" to God. What need of the readers was the writer addressing in each passage?

James 1:5-6 \_\_\_\_\_

James 4:5-7 \_\_\_\_\_

James 5:16 \_\_\_\_\_

I Peter 1:13-16 \_\_\_\_\_

I Peter 2:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

II Peter 1:3 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 2:26-29 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 3:21-22 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 4:9-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Often in Scripture, God’s people are directed to look to him in the midst of a crisis. Our focus is very frequently the solution to the problem—or least the means to the solution. For more encouragement to redirect your eyes to God, read the following verses from Psalms and notice the benefits of a God-ward gaze: Psalm 18:30; 34:5; 57:1; 123:2; 145:15-16.

**LOOK AHEAD** The epistles you have read this past week may seem at first to have confusing and even contradictory messages.

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WE SHOULD HAVE  
REGULAR CHECKUPS TO  
AVOID TRUTH-DECAY.  
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“After all,” you might ask, “am I supposed to ‘Bolt the Door’ (2 John) or ‘Open the Door’ (3 John)? Am I supposed to give thanks for painful circumstances (1 Peter) or avoid the source of that pain (2 Peter)? If good works can’t save me (James), then what are good works really good for anyway?” The key is in the context.


You should bolt the door if someone is selling you poison (and certainly, false teaching is every bit as lethal as poison), but you should open the door to faithful teachers and preachers of the truth.

You should give thanks for circumstances you *cannot* change, but you should work hard to change things you *can* change—such as the presence of false teachers in your church.

You should remember that good works cannot save you, but that you are saved for the purpose of good works.


Take an epistle you have read this past week and make it your marching orders for the coming week. Don’t just read the truth—be a doer of it.

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 **Walk 357** 12/22/2008 go deeper day 83


*Jude 1* *Contending for the Faith*

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 **Walk 358** 12/23/2008 go deeper day 84


*Revelation 1-3* *Letters to the Seven Churches*

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 **Walk 359** 12/24/2008 go deeper day 85

*Revelation 4-5* *Opening of the Seven Seals*

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 **Walk 360** 12/25/2008 go deeper day 86

*Revelation 6-7* *The Original Christmas Present*

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**Walk 361** 12/26/2008 go deeper day 87

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*Revelation 8-9* *Blowing the Seven Trumpets*

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**Walk 362** 12/27/2008 go deeper day 88

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*Revelation 10-13* *Describing the Seven Signs*

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**Walk 363** 12/28/2008 go deeper day 89

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### *Alpha and Omega*

**LOOK BACK** The final two books of the New Testament are the “long and the short of it”—the powerful little book of Jude and the awe-inspiring book of Revelation. Jude challenges his readers to “contend for the faith” because it is a faith worth fighting for. False teachers threaten like dangerous reefs, waiting to shipwreck unsuspecting or careless ships. Christians dare not be naïve about the danger, for the Old Testament shows clearly what happened to the fallen angels and the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

One of God’s titles is “the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 1:8)—the Beginning and the End. What began in the book of Genesis now comes to completion in the book of Revelation recorded by John. This “disciple whom Jesus loved” is the same man who wrote the Gospel of John and the three Epistles of John. He now writes from his island exile, obeying the instruction to record “what you have seen [Revelation 1], what is now [Revelation 2-3] and what will take place later [Revelation 4-22].” Highlights of the book include seven letters to seven churches and three cycles of judgment upon the earth.

Revelation concludes with a final glimpse of God’s grandeur, an invitation to the reader, and warning to all who would attempt to add to or delete from the message of the book.

Though the story of the Bible has stretched over sixty-six books, one day the curtain on human history will drop and “The End” will come.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

**LOOK UP** Earlier in your journey through the New Testament, you read these words from the Apostle Paul: “[I am] confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

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WHERE THERE IS NO FAITH  
IN THE FUTURE, THERE IS NO  
POWER IN THE PRESENT.  
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In a word, God finishes what he starts. To see that more clearly, notice this startling series of contrasts between the first three chapters of the Bible (Genesis 1-3) and the final three chapters (Revelation 20-22):

### *In Genesis We Read...*

- “In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth” (1:1)
- “The darkness he called ‘night’” (1:5)
- “God made two great lights [the sun and moon]” (1:16)
- “You will surely die” (2:17)
  
- “I will greatly increase your pains” (3:16)
- “Cursed is the ground” (3:17)
  
- “God banished [them] from the Garden” (3:23)


### *In Revelation We Read...*

- “I saw a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1)
- “There will be no more night” (22:5)
- “the city does not need the sun or the moon” (21:23)
- “There will be no more death” (21:4)
- “There will be no more...pain” (21:4)
- “No longer will there be any curse” (22:3)
- “They will see his face” (22:4)

**LOOK AHEAD** Over the past [90 days], you’ve developed a new habit of holiness—the habit of consistently reading and obeying God’s Word. Congratulations! As the new year begins, why not [join us on a journey through the first 39 books of the Bible with our Go Deeper Old Testament Bible Reading Challenge? This time have questions in mind as you read: What does the Bible say about managing my money? Being a godly spouse and parent? Making wise decisions? Praying prayers God delights to answer?


Keep a journal of your discoveries, and expect God to meet you each day along your daily walk.

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 **Walk 364** 12/29/2008 go deeper day 90


*Revelation 14-16* *Pouring Out the Seven Bowls*

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 **Walk 365** 12/30/2008 go deeper day 91

*Revelation 17-19* *Destroying God's Enemies*

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 **Walk 366** 12/31/2008 go deeper day 92

*Revelation 20-22* *Making All Things New*



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