



Set aside the next four months to join us on a journey through the life of Christ. From birth to death and resurrection, the story of His life teaches us love, hope, and eternal life.

Here's how this reading plan works: Read three times per week, just one chapter each time. Here's the best part: If you fall behind, you can simply jump back in at any time! Whether you finish this reading plan in 18 weeks or if you need all 12 months to complete it, your time in Scripture is never a waste.

For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. {Hebrews 4:12}



WEEK 1

Birth of Christ

- ☐ DAY ONE: LUKE 1
- ☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 1
- ☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 2

Long-Awaited Messiah

Finally, we get to the story of Jesus, and the New Testament opens with a genealogy? BORING!! But wait... There's something incredible about this genealogy: it includes women! This was unheard of in the 1st century. And these aren't just any women. The family tree that gave us Jesus includes Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Four women who are all involved in scandal. Why? Because God uses all kinds of people. The hope of Jesus has arrived, and it's for *everyone*.

WEEK 2

Early Days of Jesus' Life

- ☐ DAY ONE: MATTHEW 2
- ☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 3
- ☐ DAY THREE: JOHN 1



What Was Nazareth Like When Jesus Was a Child?

The word that best describes Nazareth in the 1st century may be "ordinary." It's so ordinary that the Gospel writers first refer to it as "Nazareth, a town in Galilee" – since very few people had even heard of it. Archaeology has revealed no major structures, no synagogue, and no paved roads. The entire town was likely not more than about ten acres. The only reason people settled in Nazareth at all was because there was a well there. So, what was life like for a young Jesus? Probably included playing with friends and cousins, doing schoolwork, and going to work with His dad. Pretty simple. Pretty ordinary.



WEEK 3

Jesus' Temptations | Beginnings of Ministry

☐ DAY ONE: MATTHEW 4

☐ DAY TWO: LUKE 4

☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 5

Wilderness

Throughout the Bible, this theme of wilderness appears. And the wilderness is a sign that something important is about to happen – the wilderness is God's training ground. Joseph was cast out by his brothers into the wilderness, before he ascended to power in Egypt. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness, tending to his father-in-law's sheep before God asked him to go to Egypt and save His people. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, before God gave them the Promised Land. So, when God's Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, it could only mean one thing. Something big, something only God could do, was about to happen.

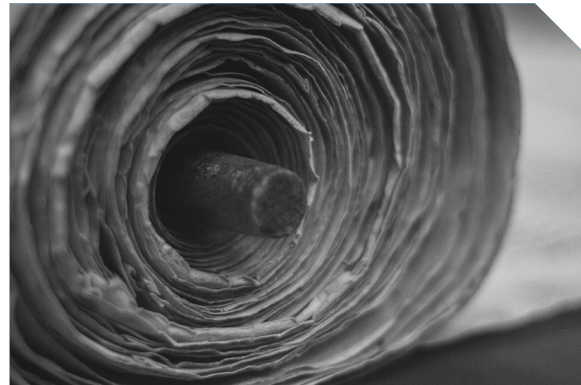
WEEK 4

Jesus' First Miracle | "You Must Be Born Again"

☐ DAY ONE: JOHN 2

☐ DAY TWO: JOHN 3

☐ DAY THREE: JOHN 4



What's a Pharisee?

The Pharisees were a group of highly-educated Jewish leaders who took their religion very seriously. From their youth, they studied the Old Testament meticulously. They memorized the first five books of the Bible, and they followed God's Law carefully. But that's where they got stuck. They became masters of rules, instead of trying to understand God's heart. And that's why we see Jesus at odds with the Pharisees so often.



WEEK 5

Sermon on the Mount

- ☐ DAY ONE: MATTHEW 5
- ☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 6
- ☐ DAY THREE: MATTHEW 7

Sermon on the Mount – Sea of Galilee

Fields of lilies, swooping sparrows – the illustrations Jesus uses in the Sermon on the Mount are not random, but common things seen on the hillside above Galilee. In fact, when Jesus tells His disciples to build their houses on rock, not on sand, He's likely referring to an area around the Sea of Galilee where homes that were built on sand, rather than dug into the bedrock, had been destroyed.

WEEK 6

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

- ☐ DAY ONE: MARK 2
- ☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 11
- ☐ DAY THREE: MARK 3



Does the Sabbath Still Apply?

Believe it or not, the idea of rest was God's idea. Like a good Dad, He knows that His children need to rest. So, He instructed His people to take one day each week away from work. While we may not be expected to apply this "law" to our lives today, its wisdom remains. We all need rest. The Sabbath is God's invitation to rest in Him and trust that the world won't fall apart without us.



WEEK 7

Jesus' Authority | Jesus Calms a Storm

- ☐ DAY ONE: JOHN 5
- ☐ DAY TWO: LUKE 7:1-17, 36-50
- ☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 8

Healing Water

Could the pool at Bethesda heal people? John's Gospel includes a footnote that says the locals believed that, occasionally, an angel from heaven came and stirred up the water in the pool, and the first person who entered that water would be healed. Exactly how this worked, no one really knows, but there were absolutely people who had been healed in this pool. That's what drove a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, and many others like him, to show up at the pool each day.

WEEK 8

Jesus Walks on Water | John the Baptist's Death

- ☐ DAY ONE: MARK 6
- ☐ DAY TWO: JOHN 6:25-71
- ☐ DAY THREE: MATTHEW 15



Name That Herod

Herod the Great, Herod II, Herod Philip I & II, Herodias, and Herod Antipas. There's a lot of Herods! So, who is who? Herod, who was the king when Jesus was born and who ordered the murder of all the young boys, was Herod the Great. He died shortly after the birth of Jesus. The Herod who murdered John the Baptist, and eventually condemned Jesus, is his son, Herod Antipas. He married his brother's wife, Herodias.



WEEK 9

Peter Proclaims Christ | Transfiguration

- ☐ DAY ONE: MATTHEW 16
- ☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 17
- ☐ DAY THREE: MATTHEW 18

Caesarea Philippi

When Jesus spoke of the future of His church, He and His disciples were sitting on a hillside in Caesarea Philippi, opposite a famous temple. Behind that temple, there was a cavern that was so deep, it couldn't be measured. Warm water bubbled in a pool of water, and steam came from inside the cavern. People believed that this mysterious cave was the gate to Hell. It terrified the locals. Imagine Jesus standing above that cave declaring, "What I'm building, even the gates of Hell cannot defeat."

WEEK 10

Jesus' Teaching

- ☐ DAY ONE: JOHN 7
- ☐ DAY TWO: JOHN 8
- ☐ DAY THREE: JOHN 9



Does This Belong?

You may notice that John 7:53-8:11 is written in italics or in parentheses in your Bible. What's that all about? Well, it's pretty complicated, but basically there's some question about whether this story was written in John's original gospel. There are some early manuscripts of the New Testament that don't include this story. Then again, it was preserved in the early church as an actual interaction Jesus had with this woman. Whether John originally included this story or not, you'll want to read it for yourself, and you'll quickly see the depth of the love of Jesus Christ.



WEEK 11

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd | Sending the 72

- ☐ DAY ONE: JOHN 10
- ☐ DAY TWO: LUKE 10
- ☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 11

Why a Shepherd?

Shepherds are among the hardest working people in the world. It's a 24/7 job, and there's no days off. Why? Because sheep are basically incapable of doing anything for themselves. Do you understand why Jesus is our Shepherd? Because He feeds us, He protects us, He cares for us when we're sick, He disciplines us when we act out, and He even chases us down when we run away. He's the ultimate Shepherd.

WEEK 12

Jesus' Teachings

- ☐ DAY ONE: LUKE 12
- ☐ DAY TWO: LUKE 13
- ☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 14



Farming in a Desert

Why is Jesus always using agricultural terms as metaphors? Fields, yokes, harvests, etc. Though much of Israel is a dry, desert climate, by Jesus' time, God's people had become expert farmers in this terrain. Grains, grapes, and olives were a few of their specialties. Crop growing was a major part of their economy, and even their religious festivals were scheduled around the local farming cycles.



WEEK 13

Kingdom Parables

☐ DAY ONE: LUKE 15

☐ DAY TWO: LUKE 16

☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 17

Who Are the Samaritans?

It's hard to know exactly where the Samaritan people originated. They claim they are descendants of the Jewish tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. But most Jewish people don't consider them countrymen. They argue that the Samaritans are outsiders who adopted Judaism during the Assyrian exile. Either way, it's fair to say that Jews and Samaritans aren't always friendly with one another. This is part of why it's so shocking when Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman or when He uses a Samaritan as the hero of His parable.

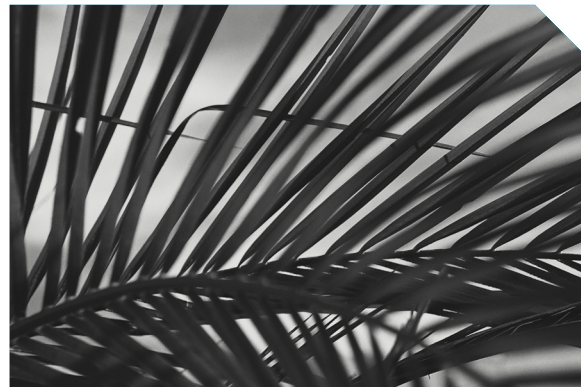
WEEK 14

Death of Lazarus | Triumphal Entry

☐ DAY ONE: JOHN 11

☐ DAY TWO: LUKE 18

☐ DAY THREE: LUKE 19



Coats and Branches

The crowd who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem waved palm branches and threw their coats on the ground before Jesus. What's happening here? Simply, they are recognizing Jesus as King. The only other time this coat thing happens in the Bible is in 2 Kings 9, when people spread out their cloaks for the new king of Israel, Jehu. And this palm branch thing? Consider Revelation 7, where John says that before the throne is a crowd, waving palm branches. Perhaps this little scene between Bethany and Jerusalem was a little glimpse of Heaven.



WEEK 15

Great Commandment | Parables at the Temple

- ☐ DAY ONE: MARK 12
- ☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 24
- ☐ DAY THREE: MATTHEW 25

Which Temple?

A temple serves two functions. (1) It's where God is worshipped. (2) It's where God dwells to meet with His people. God's first 'temple' wasn't really a temple at all. It was actually a tent called the tabernacle. King Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, and it stood more than 400 years until the Babylonians destroyed it. It was rebuilt by Ezra and Nehemiah after the Babylonian exile. What they built was a much humbler structure. That's the temple Jesus visited when He was on earth. It stood for nearly 600 years until it was destroyed by Rome in 70AD.

WEEK 16

Jesus Anointed at Bethany | Lord's Supper

- ☐ DAY ONE: MATTHEW 26:1-16
- ☐ DAY TWO: JOHN 13
- ☐ DAY THREE: JOHN 14



Waste or Worship?

The oil that was poured on Jesus was very expensive. John says it was pure nard. Nard, or spikenard, was one of the most expensive perfumes at the time. It was made when the juices from a particular grass in Northern India were collected and bottled. It was then transported around the world and sold for top dollar. In a hot, dry, dusty desert, hygiene products were highly valued, and this bottle of nard poured on Jesus would've sold for quite a large amount.



WEEK 17

Holy Spirit | Jesus' Prayer

☐ DAY ONE: JOHN 15

☐ DAY TWO: JOHN 16

☐ DAY THREE: JOHN 17

Garden of Gethsemane

Where did Jesus spend His final hours? In one of His favorite places, an olive tree grove called the Garden of Gethsemane. Located on the Mount of Olives, this garden means “oil press” and was a place Jesus regularly frequented with His disciples. Why did Jesus love that place so much? Maybe because of its rich history. Olive trees are among the longest living trees in the world, living thousands of years. The oldest olive tree living today is the Al Badawi tree, which is possibly 4,000 years old. It’s possible that the same trees Jesus prayed under that night still stand today.

WEEK 18

Jesus' Dies and Rises | Great Commission

☐ DAY ONE: MATTHEW 26:47-75

☐ DAY TWO: MATTHEW 27

☐ DAY THREE: MATTHEW 28



Meant to Shame

While the Romans didn’t invent crucifixion, they ‘perfected’ it. They aimed to make it the most painful, most shameful way to die. Romans considered crucifixion so disgraceful, they wouldn’t crucify their own citizens. So, when Jesus was crucified, it was all about showing power and embarrassing Him. That makes His resurrection all the more powerful. Rome threw everything they had at Jesus to not only end Him, but embarrass Him. But they couldn’t hold Him down. Two thousand years later, His kingdom still reigns, and Rome is nothing but history.