

*Want to read the Bible but don't know
where to start?*

*Need a little help sticking to your commitment
to read more Scripture this year?*

*Want to read the greatest hits of the
Greatest Story Ever Told?*

*Looking for a way to approach the Word
that is guided but not rigid?*

*The National Bible Association's
2008-2009 Weekly Bible Reading Guide
can help you read the Bible for the first time –
or for the 50th time.*

*And for more information about the Bible
and for other Bible reading aids,
visit our web site: www.nationalbible.org*

2008-09 Bible Reading

Guide

PRESENTED BY THE
NATIONAL BIBLE ASSOCIATION

National  Bible
association

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National  Bible
association

*Encouraging Everyone to
Read the Bible!*

CELEBRATE THE 67TH ANNUAL

National Bible Week 2008

NOVEMBER 23 TO 30, 2008

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Annual National Bible Week Dinner
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH, 2008
ESSEX HOUSE, NEW YORK, NY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK 2009

National Bible Week Dinner, November 19th, 2009
National Bible Week: November 22-29, 2009

READING THE BIBLE

There are many ways to approach reading the Bible.

- 1.) **Cover to cover:** If you could read *Moby Dick* straight through without a problem, this approach might work for you.
- 2.) **Read the Bible In a Year:** It can be done, but be sure you don't read the Bible just to get through it. What really matters is that the Bible gets through to you!
- 3.) **Open and Read:** Opening the Bible at random is not a bad way to get a general idea of what is in the Bible, but it will never reveal the riches of this great text.

OUR APPROACH is all about reading the most important stories in the Bible in the context of your own life, on your own schedule. This Bible Reading Guide *presents you with weekly suggestions* for Bible reading that follow the traditional holidays and seasons of the year.

BEGINNING WITH NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK IN NOVEMBER 2008 THROUGH NOVEMBER 2009 in just one year, you will read the greatest hits of the Greatest Story Ever Told. And you can do it at your own pace!

- **Daily Reader?** The weekly suggested readings present between five and eight chapters per week, giving you about 5 to 10 minutes of daily reading.
- **Weekday Reader?** If you decide it's best to read the Bible in the structure of the work week, then you'll find the suggested readings give about 10 to 15 minutes of reading five days a week.
- **Weekend Reader?** If you can only make time one or two days a week or on the weekend, you can read all of the week's readings in about an hour.

IN THIS YEAR'S WEEKLY BIBLE READING GUIDE

If you used our reading Guide from last year, you will notice that some of the readings are repeated this year – mainly during Christmas and Easter to illuminate the "reason for the season." But there are other completely new readings for 2008-09, such as the Book of Esther, brand new readings from the Gospel of John, and an emphasis on the History of Israel and the Gospel of Matthew.

Readings for Thanksgiving: *The Psalms of Thanksgiving*

The book of Psalms is at the heart of the Bible, both literally and figuratively. The Psalms are in many ways a key to understanding the entire Bible, as these poems express elegantly and forcefully all of the essential themes of the Bible using the whole range of human emotions. The Psalms for this week focus on thankfulness for God's love.

Esther: *The Need for a Savior*

The history of Israel shows the many struggles of the Jewish people who seem constantly beset with enemies and oppressors. Though time and again, God sends help, as we see in the story of Esther, still the Jewish people longed for a savior who would free them from their trials. These longings come out forcefully in the prophecies of Isaiah.

Readings for Advent: *The Prophecies of Isaiah*

Despite the very different circumstances surrounding the writings of the Old and New Testament, they have an amazing interplay, particularly in the notion of prophecy – the idea that many Old Testament texts point to Jesus and the events of his life. The Readings from Isaiah regarding the promise of a savior are particularly striking.

Readings for Christmas: *The Infancy Narratives*

There are actually four accounts of Jesus' life in the Bible; these are called the four gospels. They are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Only two of these gospels say anything about the birth of Jesus. These two accounts are called the Infancy Narratives. The first two chapters of Luke are the longest section in the Bible that discuss the preparation and birth of Jesus. Matthew addresses the birth of Christ in the first two chapters of his gospel as well, although with different details and emphases, for example, the wisemen are mentioned in Matthew but not in Luke's account.

THE TRADITION OF HANUKKAH: DECEMBER 21 TO 28, 2008

Hanukkah is also called "The Feast of Lights." This Jewish holiday commemorates the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem in the second century BC. According to tradition, there was only one day's supply of oil found for the rededication of the Temple, but that supply burned miraculously for eight days. The miraculously burning oil does not appear in the Bible, but is a tradition recounted in both the Apocrypha and the Talmud. This year, Hanukkah coincides with Christmas, but only by chance. In 2010, for example, Hanukkah begins on December 1st.

Readings for

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2008

NOVEMBER 23 - 30, 2008

National Bible Week 2008!

Psalm 47 / Psalm 65 / Psalm 98 / Psalm 103 /
Psalm 111 / Luke 1: 46-55 / Luke 1: 68-79

DECEMBER 1 - 7, 2008

Esther, Chapters 1 through 9

DECEMBER 8 - 14, 2008

Isaiah 42: 1-9 / Isaiah 52: 7-10 / Isaiah 55: 1-13 / Isaiah
65: 17-25

DECEMBER 15 - 21, 2008

Isaiah 7: 10-17 / Isaiah 9: 6-7 / Isaiah 11: 1-9 / Isaiah
26: 7-18 / Isaiah 35: 1-10

DECEMBER 22 - 28, 2008 CHRISTMAS

Luke, Chapters 1 through 3

DECEMBER 29 – JANUARY 4, 2009

Matthew, Chapters 1 through 3

CELEBRATE NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK IN YOUR TOWN!

Since 1941, the National Bible Association has sponsored National Bible Week, urging all Americans to rededicate themselves to the reading of Sacred Scripture. There are many ways to celebrate National Bible Week, and we can help! Visit our web site at www.nationalbible.org to learn more about National Bible Week and to order your National Bible Week promotional materials.

Readings for January and February: Genesis

January is a time of beginnings, and Genesis means in the beginning. It is fitting, therefore, to begin the year with this most spectacular of Biblical books. Genesis contains many of the best known and beloved stories in the Bible: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel, Jacob's Ladder, Joseph and his coat of many colors.

Genesis 1 to 11: Creation and Prehistory

As you read some of the most beautiful and powerful stories of the ancient world, notice how many of these images still permeate our culture today. Also, take a moment to see a connection with the New Testament by reading the first chapter of the Gospel of John which parallels the first chapter of Genesis in many ways.

Genesis 12 to 24: The Story of Abraham

God calls Abraham from a nomadic to a settled life, from childlessness to fatherhood, from fear to faith, from superstition to religion. In these chapters the Judeo-Christian heritage that has shaped Western Civilization for 3000 years is born.

Genesis 25 to 36: Isaac and Jacob

Many of the stories in Genesis are shocking and hard to understand by today's standards. This underscores the tremendous distance that stands between us and the world of Genesis, and yet, the same God is at work in both, not controlling humanity, but working in us and in spite of us.

Genesis 37 to 50: Joseph and Egypt

With the story of Joseph we see the basic trajectory of humanity revealed: rise, fall, redemption. Born a favorite son, he is betrayed by his own brothers, sold into slavery, but then rises to govern all Egypt and in this role saves his family from death. Joseph's fall and rise models the path of human salvation, and can be seen as a Christ figure who is betrayed and forsaken before rising unexpectedly as savior.

Readings for

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2009

JANUARY 5 - 11, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 1 through 5

JANUARY 12 - 18, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 6 through 11

JANUARY 19 - 25, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 12 through 17

JANUARY 26 - FEBRUARY 1, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 18 through 24

FEBRUARY 2 - FEBRUARY 8, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 25 through 36

FEBRUARY 9 - 15, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 39 through 43

FEBRUARY 16 - 22, 2009

Genesis, Chapters 44 through 50

WHY DO YOU READ THE BIBLE?

Visit our web site www.nationalbible.org to activate your free National Bible Association Membership and join the discussion on why it is important for our nation to Read the Bible. We want to know why you read the Bible and how you encourage others to read the Bible. While you're there, you can read our National Bible Blog in which scholars and celebrities track their Bible reading experience for your inspiration, edification and enjoyment.

CAPITOL HILL AWARDS

Each Spring the National Bible Association bestows its Capitol Hill Awards on one Senator and one Representative in our nation's Capitol for "an exemplary commitment to Bible Reading by a National Leader." These are men and women who set an example for us as they seek first to rightly govern themselves through regular Bible reading. To learn more about these awards and other programs of the National Bible Association, visit our web site at www.nationalbible.org.

Readings for February and March: Exodus

Picking up the story of Abraham's descendents where Genesis left off, the second book of the Bible is called Exodus from the Greek word for "departure" and it tells the story of the departure, or deliverance of the Chosen People from the oppression of the Egyptians. This story is deeply ingrained in our culture both from the Biblical narrative as well as from the excellent retelling of this story in Cecil B. DeMille's "The Ten Commandments."

Celebrating Lent

Lent is a time of preparation to enter the "promised land" of the Easter season. Traditionally, the Christian Church has seen a connection between the Exodus of Israel and this season of penance. Just as the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and their entry into the promised land required 40 years of sacrifice, patience, and testing, in the same way the Christian deliverance from evil in the victory of Easter is preceded by 40 days of sacrifice, patience and testing in the season of Lent.

Celebrating Holy Week

Jesus was a Jewish man who celebrated Passover in Jerusalem each year. It was during the celebration of Passover that Jesus was betrayed and executed. Christians from the earliest times interpreted the death of Christ as a sort of new Passover, for now "the angel of death" could not claim those washed in Christ's blood.

Celebrating Easter: Resurrection Stories

The four Gospels each tell the story of Jesus' life slightly differently. And although the Gospels differ from time to time on Jesus' words and actions, they all agree very closely on how his life ended. His passion, death and resurrection are the central focus of all the gospels.

Readings for

FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2009 LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 1, 2009

Exodus, Chapters 1 through 6

Readings for February 25th - Ash Wednesday

Joel 2: 12-18 and Matthew 6: 1-18

MARCH 2 - 8, 2009

Exodus, Chapters 7 through 12

MARCH 9 - 15, 2009

Exodus, Chapters 13 through 20

MARCH 16 - 22, 2009

Exodus, Chapter 24 / Exodus, Chapters 32 through 34 / Numbers, Chapters 10 through 13

MARCH 23 - 29, 2009

Numbers, Chapter 14 / Numbers, Chapter 21 / Deuteronomy, Chapters 29 through 34

Readings for Holy Week: March 30 - April 5, 2009

<i>Palm Sunday:</i>	Luke, Chapter 19
<i>Monday of Holy Week:</i>	Luke, Chapter 20
<i>Tuesday of Holy Week:</i>	Luke, Chapter 21
<i>Wednesday of Holy Week:</i>	Mark, Chapter 13
<i>Holy Thursday:</i>	Matthew, Chapter 26
<i>Good Friday:</i>	John, Chapters 18-19

Readings for Easter Week: April 6-12, 2009

John, Chapters 20 and 21 / Luke, Chapter 24 / Mark, Chapter 16 / Matthew, Chapter 28

CALCULATING THE DATE OF EASTER

The Christian celebration of Easter still coincides with Passover from time to time. However, the exact calculation of Easter is based upon an ancient Christian formula, whereby Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox. The Vernal Equinox usually falls on March 21st and is the first day of Spring.

IT'S GREEK TO ME!

The Bible was written in two ancient languages – Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). To better understand how this fact influences the words you are reading in your Bible today, see the article, "What difference does a version or translation make?" on our web site. Log on to [www.nationalbible.org today!](http://www.nationalbible.org.today!)

Readings for April and May 2008: The Gospels

Unlike most ancient accounts of divine beings, the Gospels do not read like myths or legends. More than anything, they sound like eyewitness news reporting. Details about the odor in the room, what they had to eat, and how far they walked are set calmly alongside the sober recounting of amazing miracles – including Jesus' rising from the dead. The Gospels are truly unique among the written records of humanity.

The Gospel of Mark

Written in the common tongue and in a very simple style, many scholars believe that Mark's gospel was the first to be written, capturing the Apostle Peter's memories of life with Jesus. Most of what is contained in Mark is also found in Matthew and Luke.

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew's Gospel is clearly addressed to the Jewish community. Its style, language and organization present a Jewish argument for Jesus as the Messiah who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies.

The Gospel of John

The last gospel to be written, John seems to assume that his audience has read the other gospels as he introduces new stories into the tradition. He presents the story of Jesus in a more sublime and theological way, emphasizing the love of God and the divinity of Jesus.

Gospel of Luke and Acts of Apostles

Luke presents himself as a careful researcher of all that has happened in Jesus' life. (Luke 1:1-4) For example, at the end of Chapter 2 he comments that Jesus' mother Mary "treasured all these things in her heart" as if to say that she was his source for the events of Jesus' infancy. And, Luke was an eyewitness for at least some of what he recounts in his second book, "Acts of the Apostles" as his use of the first person plural "we" in the later chapters indicates.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The first three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the "Synoptic" gospels from the Greek word for "seen together." The reason for this is that when you place those three gospels side by side, you see many similarities. As stated above, most of what is in Mark is found in Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke also share other material that is not found in Mark. Finally, Matthew and Luke each have some unique material that is not found in any other gospel but their own.

Readings for

APRIL AND MAY 2009

APRIL 13 - 19, 2009

Matthew, Chapters 4 through 9

APRIL 13 - 19, 2009

Matthew, Chapters 10 through 15

APRIL 20 - 26, 2009

Luke, Chapters 3 through 9

APRIL 27 - MAY 3, 2009

Matthew, Chapters 16 through 20

MAY 4 - 10, 2009

Matthew, Chapters 21 through 26

MAY 11 - 17, 2009

John, Chapters 1 through 6

MAY 18 - 24, 2009

John, Chapters 7 through 12

MAY 25 - MAY 31, 2009

John, Chapters 13 through 17

Readings for Passover, April 9 - 16, 2009

Exodus, Chapters 1 through 15

PASSOVER

Among the many Jewish holidays, Passover, or Pesach, is arguably the most commonly celebrated even among otherwise non-observant Jews. At the center of the Passover Celebration is the Seder Meal which commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from their slavery in Egypt as described in Chapter 12 of the book of Exodus.

Readings for Summer: *The History of Israel*

The Jewish people were amazing historians. Five hundred years before the Greek historian Herodotus, the Jewish writers were recounting their people's history in a style that still captures our imagination in a powerful way. In the following readings you will find some of the most famous and moving stories in the entire history of the human race.

Judges

Up until this time, Israel was a theocracy. God was their leader and they were "His" people. But as Israel settled in the promised land, they began to long for a human leader like the nations around them. The book of Judges tells of Israel's struggle to find leadership while remaining "the people of God." You will recognize the famous stories of Deborah – the only woman to rule over Israel, Gideon, and the tragic tale of Samson and Delilah.

1 Samuel

The book of Samuel is divided into two parts because it was too long to fit on a single scroll. In this first book, we find God finally giving into Israel's desire for a human leader when Samuel anoints Saul as the first king of Israel. But then David appears, and is anointed to be Israel's greatest leader, but not without a long and bitter struggle with Saul. The story of David and Goliath is just one of the many great stories you'll find in this fascinating and gripping account.

2 Samuel

The Second book of Samuel is an account of David's reign. This is the rise of Israel as a powerful nation, and yet, the story of David's kingdom is full of royal intrigue and the corruption that power brings: adultery, drunkenness, rape and murder are woven into the thread of God's will being carried out by a man "after his own heart."

1 Kings

David dies and his son Solomon takes the throne. As the wisest man who ever lived, Solomon brings peace and prosperity and builds the Temple in Jerusalem. This is the height of Israel's power and wealth, so great even the Queen of Sheba is amazed.

Readings for

SUMMER 2009

JUNE 1 - 7, 2009

Judges, Chapters 4 through 9

JUNE 8 - 14, 2009

Judges, Chapters 13 through 16; 19

JUNE 15 - 21, 2009

1 Samuel, Chapters 3 through 8

JUNE 22 - 28, 2009

1 Samuel, Chapters 9 through 14

JUNE 29 - JULY 5, 2009

1 Samuel, Chapters 15 through 20

JULY 6 - 12, 2009

1 Samuel, Chapters 21 through 26

JULY 13 - JULY 19, 2009

1 Samuel, Chapters 27 through 31

JULY 20 - 26, 2009

2 Samuel, Chapters 1 through 6

JULY 27 -

AUGUST 2, 2009

2 Samuel, Chapters 7 through 12

AUGUST 3 - 9, 2009

2 Samuel, Chapters 13 through 18

AUGUST 10 -16, 2009

2 Samuel, Chapters 19 through 24

AUGUST 17 - 23, 2009

1 Kings, Chapters 1 through 6

AUGUST 24 - 31, 2009

1 Kings, Chapters 7 through 11

THE STORY OF THE NATIONAL BIBLE ASSOCIATION

*National Bible has a fascinating history going all the way back to 1941. To read our story, go to our web site at www.nationalbible.org. This guide and all of our materials are available free of charge because of the generosity of our many supporters. Won't you join us? To make a donation, visit our web site and click on the "donate now" link under **Support National Bible** on our home page.*

Readings for Fall: Epistles and Revelation

The first half of the NT is Jesus' life and words in the Gospels. The rest of the New Testament concerns the first Christians, mainly Paul, sorting it all out and applying the Gospel to their lives. The Epistles record the first application of the life of Christ to human beings. The book of Revelation ends the New Testament on a dramatic note.

The Letters of Paul, Part I

Paul is the single most prolific author of Sacred Scripture. He wrote half the New Testament. Unlike Peter and the other fishermen Jesus chose, Paul was a learned man, well educated in Jewish law and familiar with Greco-Roman philosophy. Ironically, he is one of the few NT leaders who was not an eyewitness to Jesus' life, but this fact is important as it underlines the spread of the Gospel beyond those first eyewitnesses.

The Letters of Paul, Part II

Paul's letters are laid out in descending order of length, but many have noted the primacy of Romans for reasons other than its size. It presents the theological understanding of how Judaism and Christianity are connected. Corinthians and Galatians are more focused on the practical application of Christianity to the average person's life. Paul's corpus ends with Pastoral letters outlining duties of a Christian leader.

Catholic Letters

The letters of James, Peter, John and Jude are called catholic or "universal" letters because they address the whole church rather than one community or person. They speak of Christian living, true and false doctrine and the love of God.

Revelation

Written in the style of Jewish Apocalyptic Literature, Revelation has much in common with OT books of Daniel and Ezekiel. Most scholars agree that the author was speaking allegorically of the persecution of first century Christians by the Roman Emperor, but this hasn't stopped people of every generation from seeing Revelation as a dire prediction of the end of the world in their own lifetime.

Readings for **FALL 2009**

SEPTEMBER 1 - 6, 2009

Romans, Chapters 1 through 8

SEPTEMBER 7 - 13, 2009

Romans, Chapters 9 through 16

SEPTEMBER 14 - 20, 2009

1 Corinthians, Chapters 1 through 7

SEPTEMBER 21 - 27, 2009

1 Corinthians, Chapters 8 through 16

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 4, 2009

2 Corinthians, Chapters 1 through 7

OCTOBER 5 - 11, 2009

2 Corinthians, Chapters 8 through 13

OCTOBER 12 - 18, 2009

Galatians, Chapters 1 through 6
Ephesians, Chapters 1 through 6

OCTOBER 19 - 25, 2009

Philippians, Chapters 1 through 4 / Colossians, Chapters 1 through 4 / 1 Timothy, Chapters 1 through 6

OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 1, 2009

James, Chapters 1 through 5 / Peter, Chapters 1 through 5 / 2 Peter, Chapters 1 through 3

NOVEMBER 2 - 8, 2009

1 John, Chapters 1 to 5 / 2 John / 3 John / Jude

NOVEMBER 9 - 15, 2009

Revelation, Chapters 1 through 10

NOVEMBER 16 - 21, 2009

Revelation, Chapters 16 through 22