



THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

THE ULTIMATE FIRST-TIMERS
GUIDE TO THE SCRIPTURES

KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES

Congratulations! You're diving into the book that has impacted the world for thousands of years. You will soon know:

- ✓ Who it says God is,
- ✓ Whether pastors, priests, the media, and teachers are representing faith accurately,
- ✓ Keys to healing, brokenness, and victorious faith.

The following pages will break down this iconic book into easy to understand sections and give you tips for diving in to the most important book you'll ever read.



The Breath & Word Of God

What The Bible Claims About Itself



A Cozy Corner

Getting Started Comfortably



God Of The Created World

Guide to The Old Testament



Redeeming The Broken

Guide to The New Testament

Bringing Scripture To Life

Getting The Most Out of What You Read

Forevermore

Bringing heaven to earth today, tomorrow, and forever



SECTION ONE:

THE BREATH & WORD OF GOD

What The Bible
Says About Itself

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ITSELF

You may be arriving to this book with belief or without. Please keep in mind that everything that is described in the Bible is done so in the context of an eternal existence with an eternal God. A God beyond our finite comprehension can only be described by things we already understand. Scripture uses the things of this world to describe God, Heaven, and even the Scriptures themselves.

The Scriptures are defined in many ways—two of the most famous are “The Breath of God,” and “The Word of God.”

THE BREATH OF GOD

“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” -Genesis 2:7

What all of humanity and Science can't do, God did. He breathed a life into the molecules of carbon, minerals, and water; he breathed life into the cells that make up your body. You are a life infused with passion and vision—from cells rushing to do their jobs to a guiding sense of justice and love.

With the same life he breathes into our lives when we read the Bible. When we say, “Scripture is God-breathed,” it's because it holds keys to life beyond our understanding, and that reading it does something alive in the heart of the reader that doesn't happen with any other book.



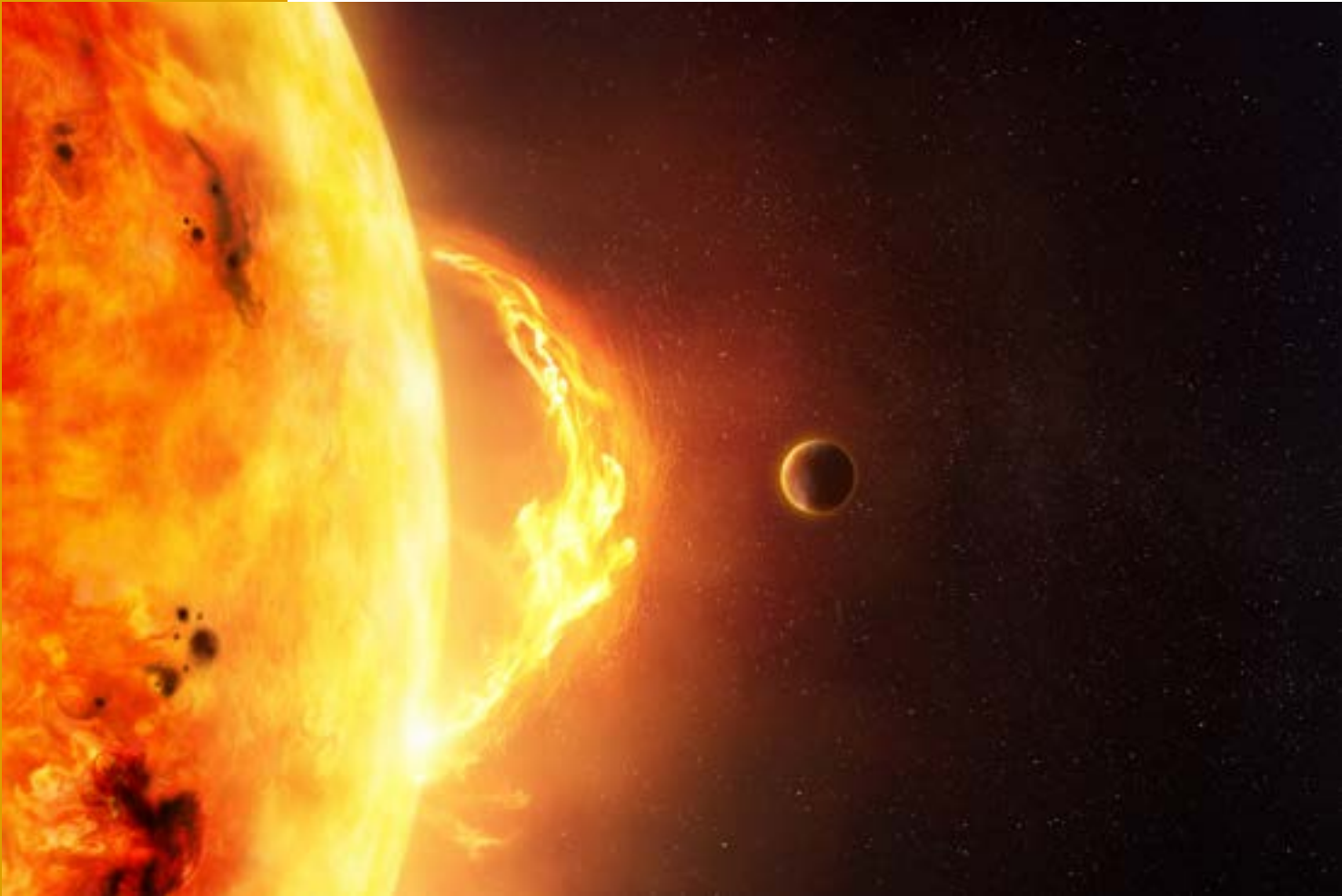
THE BREATH OF GOD



All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

AND GOD SAID...



And God said, "Let there be light,"
and there was light. God saw that the light was good...

GENESIS 1:3,4

THE WORD OF GOD

When God speaks, things happen.

We look across a city skyline, and we know without thinking that architects and builders are behind what we see. The structures inspire awe as they stretch up to the sky. The earth in all its complexity and the universe beyond—it's Creator is utterly unfathomable. We rely on the descriptions given to us, each description adding a taste of wonder to the one who conceived us. When God spoke, the world was created. And when he speaks to us, life springs afresh in our hearts.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

JOHN 1:1-5





THE WORD OF GOD

THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

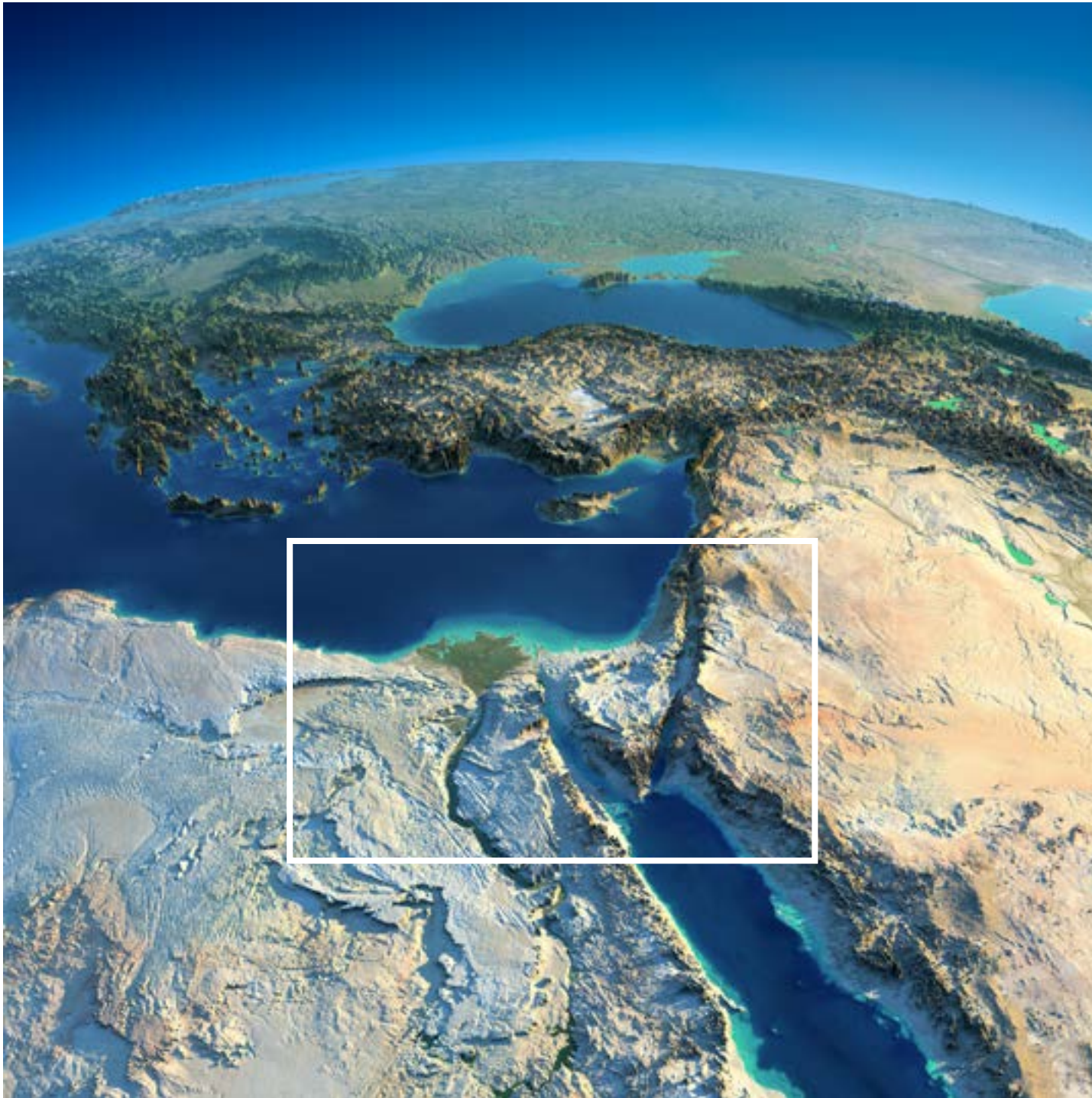
The Bible is a compilation of Scriptures—of sacred writings. It's a record of what God has said and done since the beginning of time.

Knowing what God has done is important to understanding who God is and what God is doing now.

THE LIVING WORD OF GOD

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

Throughout Scripture God spoke. How people responded altered history. God still lives, and we can listen for his voice.



66 BOOKS
40+ AUTHORS
1,000s OF YEARS
1 CORNER OF
THE WORLD.

These words, the breath and word of God, were written in an organic partnership between God and man, the pages of Scripture were penned by over 40 authors. Archaeology places the first people in Africa. The Bible tells the story of God through the writings of many people—from a location of origins—one little corner of the world.

This is what the Bible claims to be—and as you dive in, you'll be able to see for yourself.



SECTION TWO:

A COZY CORNER

There are ways to make reading the Bible easier, and one of those is to get comfortable. There's more to that than just where you sit.



FIND YOUR SPOT.

Choose a place and time that you can commit to daily. Start with just 10 or 15 minutes. That's enough to read one chapter a day.

Get comfortable, grab a drink, and it's nice to pose a simple question to God: "Who are you, and what do you have for me here today?"

A COZY CORNER

CHOOSE YOUR BOOK.

There are a few ways to read:

- 1) [A printed book](#)
- 2) [Read online](#) or [on your phone](#)
- 3) Listen to an audio version



TAKE AN INVENTORY OF BELIEF.

As you read consider, what have you read? What do you know to be true? What do you believe? What doesn't sit right? Honesty of belief is critical to your integrity. While you can receive input from people and teachers; don't let others—friends, family members, counselors, or even pastors or the media—push you into what they think you should believe, especially when it doesn't sit right with you. Set your belief on what you know to be true, and be honest about what you don't know.



SECTION THREE:

GOD OF THE CREATED WORLD

Guide to the Old Testament

THE BEGINNING TO THE END

The Bible has two "Parts" —the Old and New Testament. Each part has a number of "Books." The Old Testament has 39 books. It opens with the creation of heaven, earth, and humanity and follows humanity as families and nations grow. Soon after creation the need of a Savior for the human soul became apparent. God's promise of salvation is revealed in spiritual and physical ways throughout the Old Testament which concludes around 150 B.C.. The New Testament which has 27 books, opening with the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The books were all written by 100 A.D., the final book describes the last days of the earth as eternity is ushered in.



THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Below are all the books of the Old Testament and New Testament, and whether you're reading digitally, listening to an

audio version, or reading a physical book, you'll find that the Bible is always organized in the same way. Next we'll break these

books into sections because this will help you understand the whole thing better.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	2 Chronicles	Daniel
Exodus	Ezra	Hosea
Leviticus	Nehemiah	Joel
Numbers	Esther	Amos
Deuteronomy	Job	Obadiah
Joshua	Psalms	Jonah
Judges	Proverbs	Micah
Ruth	Ecclesiastes	Nahum
1 Samuel	Song of Songs	Habakkuk
2 Samuel	Isaiah	Zephaniah
1 Kings	Jeremiah	Haggai
2 Kings	Lamentations	Zechariah
1 Chronicles	Ezekiel	Malachi

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	1 Timothy
Mark	2 Timothy
Luke	Titus
John	Philemon
Acts	Hebrews
Romans	James
1 Corinthians	1 Peter
2 Corinthians	2 Peter
Galatians	1 John
Ephesians	2 John
Phillippians	3 John
Colossians	Jude
1 Thessalonians	Revelation
2 Thessalonians	

In the beginning...



"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." - Genesis 1:1

GENESIS: THE FIRST BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

When we wrote, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” we followed it with “Genesis 1:1.” All quotes from the Bible are noted like this, with the book name first. Each book has a number

of chapters: Genesis has 50 chapters. Each chapter is broken into verses. A verse is about one sentence long; sometimes it can be just a part of a sentence or sometime two sentences. The verses are marked with

little numbers that you’ll see throughout the chapters. Our quote is from the first verse of the first chapter: **Genesis** Chapter **One**: Verse **One**, Genesis 1:1.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW:

Humanity gets its start and civilization is established.

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

THE NEW TESTAMENT



And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, *and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

GENESIS 2:8,9

INTENDED FOR ABUNDANCE

“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden,” God said. Any tree except one. The riches of the earth were given to humanity, as well as dominion over the earth. Even the tree of eternal life was free for the taking. We were intended for good. Lifelong love and abundance belonged to us. But when tempted astray, humanity fixated on the one fruit that was not ours to have—the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS: THE BOOKS OF THE LAW

Humanity took its first step on earth, married, and children were born. Parents became grandparents and the descendents of the earth grew. In the first five books, people became nations, and one family in particular has a heart to follow God. The Bible follows this one family through the turbulence of life

as it grows into national status. The nation buckles under the oppression of slavery, and then in Exodus escapes in triumph. A new independent nation, having been subjected to the victimization of slavery, needed fresh direction and structure. God coached and instructed his people out of the law they'd

been subject to for generations in slavery and into the law that would sustain them in a land surrounded by tribal warfare and challenging terrain. When reading these books, keep in mind the vast difference in society, technology, communication, and culture between then and now.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW:

Humanity gets its start and civilization is established.

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy



Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”

GENESIS 22:8

A BROKEN WORLD AND ITS THEME OF REDEMPTION

“You shall not eat of it or you will surely die.” Eat of it they did, that forbidden fruit. Eternal keys cannot be handed over to those who can’t even follow simple instructions—so die we did. Cut off from the tree of life, we hold eternity in our heart; but it is ever elusive. But...despite our first trespass; from that moment forward God whispered a plan for life. “Trust in the slain lamb,” he called in so many words to Cain, Noah, and Abraham.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

The next twelve books read like an epic novel. God walks with humanity as nomadic tribes become nations. Kings rise and fall, some following God and some not. Battles are fought and families struggle. God is faithful and attentive through it all. In these books we see the

patience of our etherial parent, his wrath, and his generosity; as he sets the stage for the rest of history. While humanity carves out images to worship, trying to manipulate gods of its own making with dances and ceremonies, and then with child sacrifice and sexual offerings, God

jealously pursues his peoples, instructing those who will listen: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself—and for the persuasion of God, simply ask—no human sacrifice allowed.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW:

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

HISTORICAL BOOKS:

God walks with humanity as nomadic tribes become nations

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

THE NEW TESTAMENT



“...and burn the whole ram on the altar. *It is a burnt offering to the Lord. It is a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the Lord.*

EXODUS 29:18

**OUR MODERN LIVES AND GROCERY STORES
LEAVE US FAR REMOVED FROM THE FACT
THAT ANIMALS DIE FOR US EVERY DAY.**

The slain lamb, cow, or bird is a daily reminder of our need for God’s eternal life. This was very real to early peoples. Earthly death foreshadowed a lamb to come. Every person who walked in the light of the holiness of God arrived at the same conclusion: that they were in need of redemption; and always, God reassured them that their redeemer was coming—and mysteriously, the slain lamb was the picture of redemption..

THE BOOKS OF THE HEART

In love and war, wealth and disaster— The “Books of the Heart” are written by kings and people as they pour out their hearts on a page. What all of these books have in common is the authentic cry of their hearts—

seeking God and seeking wisdom. Their inclusion reveals that what God really wants from his people is integrity of spirit, raw honesty between ourselves and God. These books are grouped on their subject matter,

not exactly their timeline. Job actually lands in time way back in Genesis. Many of the Psalms (songs of prayer and praise) were written by King David in the time of 2 Samuel.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE BOOKS OF THE LAW:

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

HISTORICAL BOOKS:

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Books of the Heart:

Poetic and philosophical books explore life, love, wisdom, and prayer from a perspective of faith.

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

THE MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS

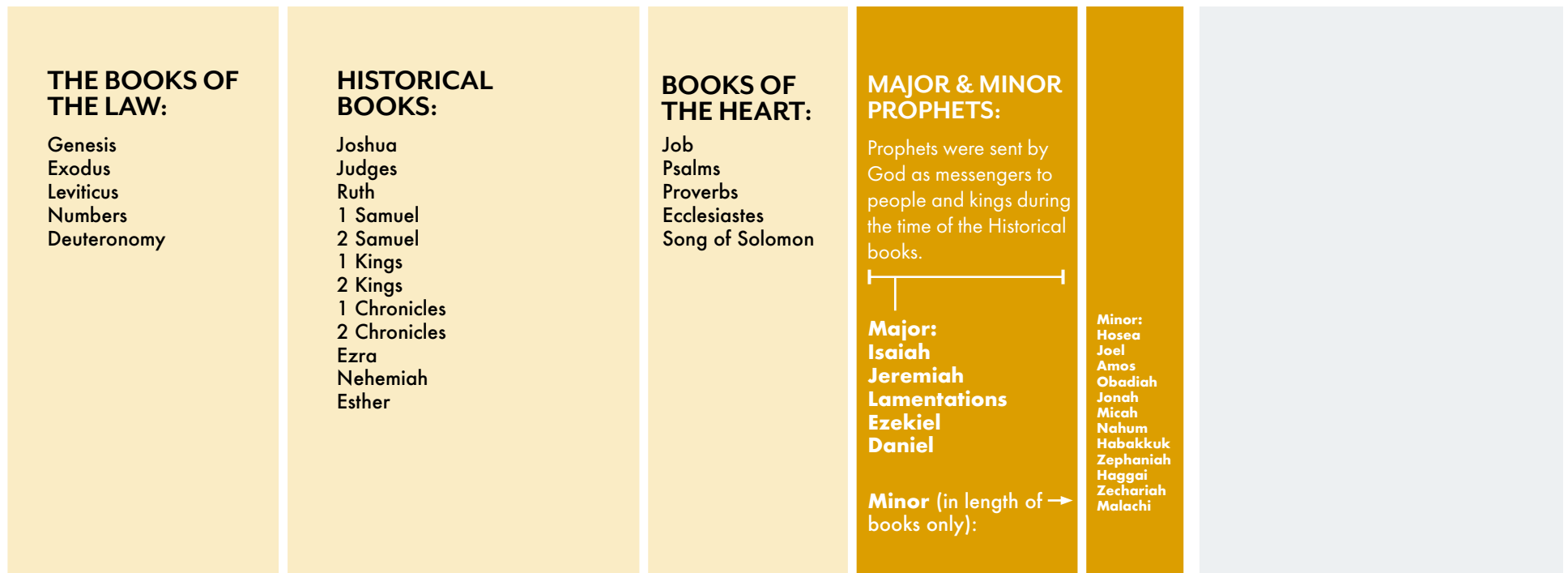
God's messengers speak—God speaks. His prophets listen and act. As intervention specialists, God's prophets were willing to listen to God even in the toughest of times. They heard the truth and rose to the occasion to even say the hardest things

to people in power. Being committed to speaking the truth is not an easy job when people, leaders, and kings are determined to take their own path. The prophets of God were messengers of truth to God's people. On a timeline, these books

overlap the era recorded in the Historical Section, focussing on what the prophets were going through during that time. The terms "Major" and "Minor" for the prophets only refers to length of their books; not prominence or significance.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT





“...and burn the whole ram on the altar. *It is a burnt offering to the Lord. It is a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the Lord.*

EXODUS 29:18

AS HISTORY UNFOLDED, GOD CONTINUED TO REVEAL THE PLAN FOR FOR HIS PEOPLE

The Ten Commandments were a law that provided a reset to a distorted justice system taught by slavery in Egypt. e taught early nomads to build altars of simplicity. He specified that lambs, bulls, and livestock were to be used as offerings; standing in direct opposition to religions which resorted to offerings of people or even children in an effort to bribe the gods. What those people didn't understand was that sacrifice wasn't actually sufficient payment; it only pointed to and painted a picture of the One who would pay the final price—and the only thing necessary to win the heart of God was to trust that his purposes were good and that the price would be paid. The temple exemplified this, providing a picture

SECTION FOUR:

REDEEMING THE BROKEN

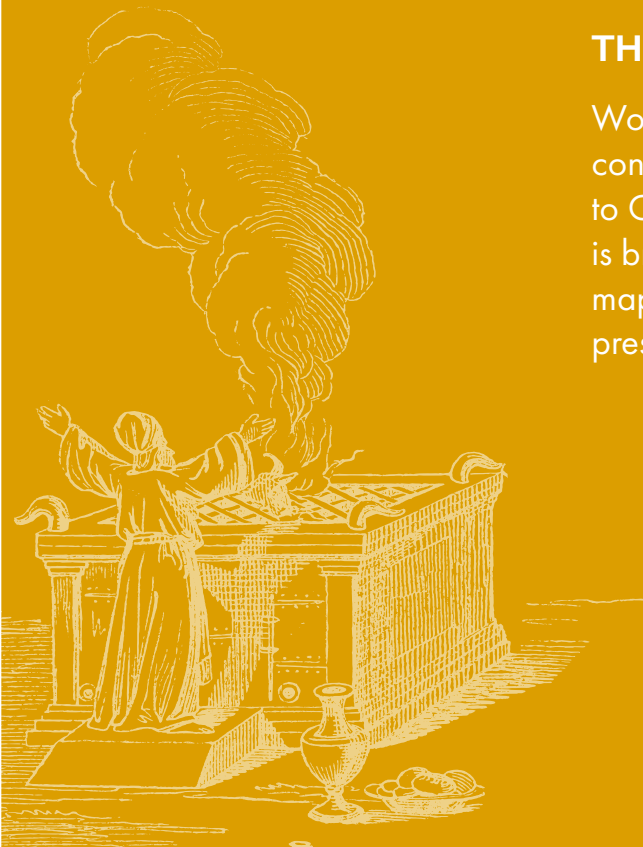
Guide to the New Testament



THE NEW TESTAMENT SPRINGS FROM THE OLD

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Woven throughout the pages of scripture are a continuing revelation of what it takes to be close to God and live in the fullness he intended. This is brought to life in God's temple—a physical map of a holy experience—the route into the presence of God.



THE NEW TESTAMENT

The presence of God came to earth as the Son of God was born to live among us; and the promise of the temple was fulfilled in his death and resurrection.





If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things

that are above, *where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

FINALLY, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE TEMPLE WAS FULFILLED.

The Word of God, the One who created the heavens and the earth, became flesh and lived among us. The New Testament tells the story of Jesus Christ—God with us—and his unparalleled life of service and teaching. As foreshadowed since the beginning of Creation, he became the lamb of God, taking on our penalty of death in his crucifixion. And as the author of life itself, the death that plagues all of us couldn't conquer him. The resurrected Christ rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of God where he governs humanity forevermore.

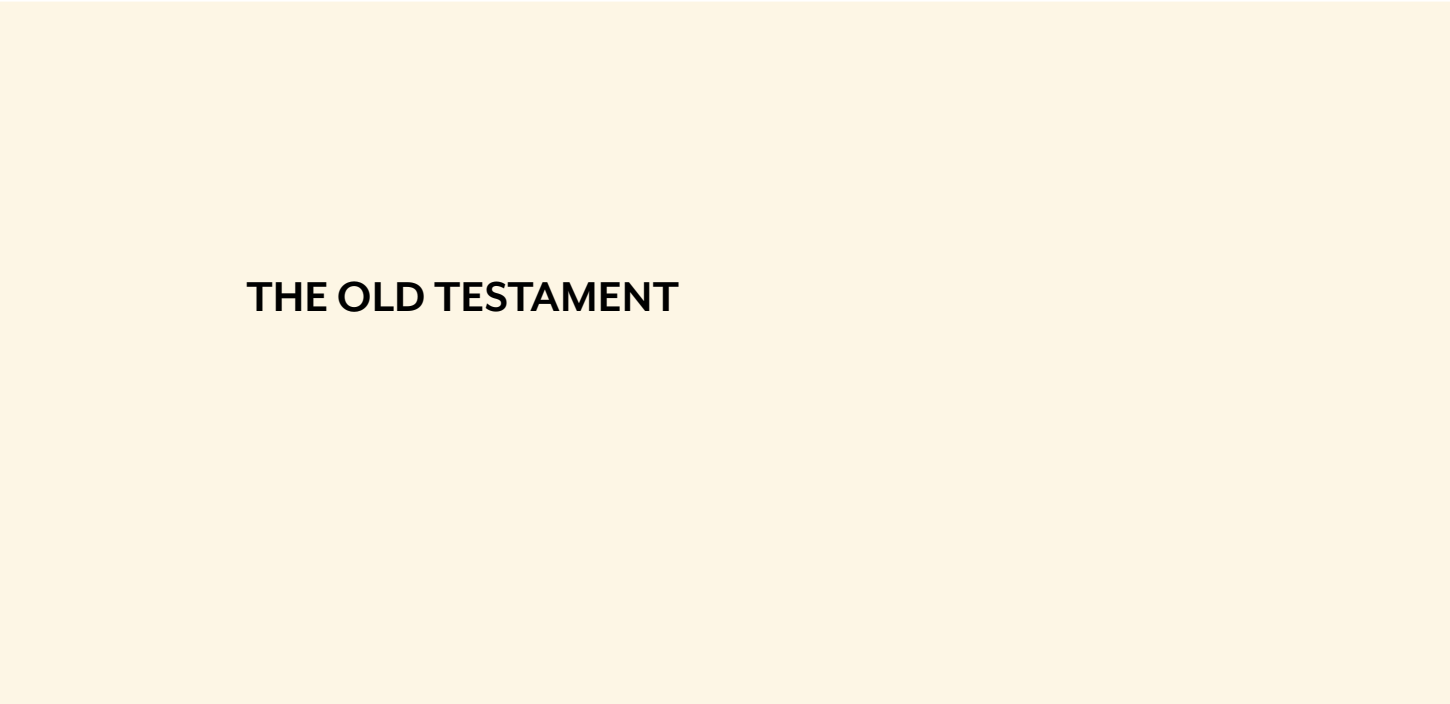
FOUR GOSPELS: FOUR TELLINGS

The gospels tell the story of Jesus over and over and over again—four times. This is a necessary exercise, as witnesses establish evidence. These four gospels were written by four different authors—some eyewitness accounts and

one was written as documentation. Just like witnesses in any court case, each writer had his own personality, interests, and focus to his writing. Matthew was a friend of Jesus. Mark was a companion of one of Jesus’ disciples—

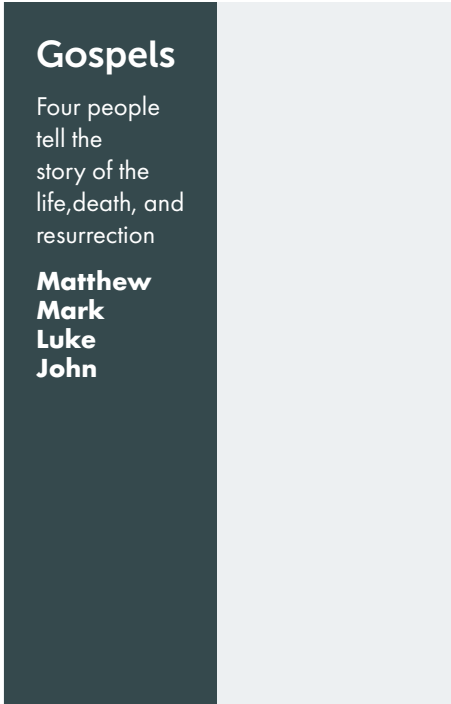
student/friends. Luke was a doctor who endeavored to record what he had learned from people around. And John was an apostle who knew Jesus; and wrote his gospel with a more spiritual perspective than the others.

THE OLD TESTAMENT



THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT



Gospels

Four people tell the story of the life, death, and resurrection

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

THE EPISTLES: LETTERS OF THE APOSTLES

The surrounding community scrambled to make sense of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ—as the early church grew. From the first meeting after the resurrection to the tens of years that followed, revelations of understanding poured out of the apostles' mouths. They spoke

and wrote letters to one another as they pieced together the teachings and happenings of Christ with age-old teachings they'd always known. The Epistles of the New Testament is a compilation of accounts of what happened, speeches that were made, and letters written

in response to the life of Christ. Jesus Christ was a model of life. In his death he was the final sacrificial lamb. And in his resurrection he conquered death. What that meant for the people that followed was incredibly controversial.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gospels

Four people tell the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

Epistles:

The newly formed church responds and grows as news of Jesus spreads.

Acts
Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Christ taught radical things. When loving your neighbor infringes on profit and power, it becomes a rebellion. He taught that all people were equally loved in the sight of God. That God looks at the heart, and not at wealth, beauty, or status. Raising the regard of the downtrodden can be dangerous to a market that builds its profit on the back of

oppression and slavery. Not only that, but his message of life attracted crowds of people and threatened the powers both political and religious. He called people to a life of holiness that was unfathomably pure. This message of Love that Christ brought to the world incited his own crucifixion. Despite this, the Christian movement saw the truth

in his teachings. As they began to follow what they believe, the Roman government sought to squash this radical movement. Early Christians faced persecution and death. Christ's revelation to John was a great source of encouragement and reassurance to stay faithful—because eternity is greater than life, and even in death there's a future.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Gospels

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1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

Revelation of John: ↑

A resurrected Jesus brings comfort and instruction to a church facing intense adversity.



We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, *a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain [into the presence of God], where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*

HEBREWS 6:19:20

HIS PROMISE IS ABUNDANT LIFE—BOTH FOR NOW AND INTO ETERNITY.

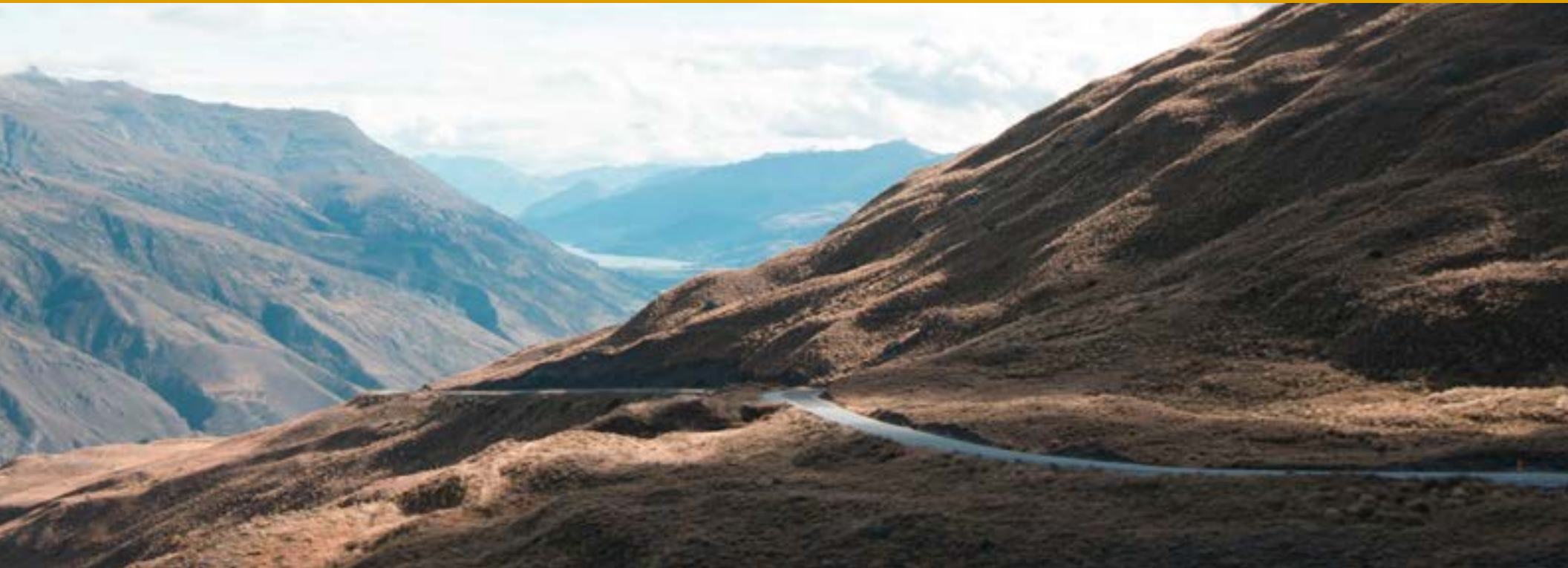
Those who trust in him receive a cleansing redemption that washes away the old; offering a new birth into a fresh life. The cleansing continues as hands are washed in confession to Jesus the high priest—the only one capable of forgiving sin and the only mediator between us and God. And he is a trustworthy guide, providing a counselor in the Holy Spirit to all who receive—a guiding light leading the way to the abundant life.



SECTION FIVE:

HEAVEN TO EARTH

How to Get the Most Out of The Bible





QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Who does the passage involve?

What happens?

Where does it take place?

When is this placed in time,
and how do technology, society,
and political forces affect what
happens?

Why do those involved respond
they way they do?

How does this impact their lives?

Grounded In Knowledge

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

**Opinions about who God is
and what the Bible teaches are
widespread.**

Interestingly enough, though, According to a study done by [The Barna Group](#), only one in five of American adults have read the Bible from start to finish, and only 61% of evangelical Christians have done so. One in 11 who profess no faith have read the Bible. What does this mean? It means that 80% of Americans have formed solid opinions on something they've never read.

**Knowing the facts—what the Bible
says—sets you apart. It equips
you to form an educated belief,
grounded in knowledge.**



WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

An attribute is a quality or characteristic of someone or something. Bringing the facts that you've just learned together with the attributes of the people involved is a great way to derive meaning from the text.



Observe the character of God in the text to learn who God is.



Observe the character of the people in the text, and consider how they relate to God.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

Take your inventory of belief, considering the impact of the character of God on your life. What does this mean to you in the 21st century? If you pray about it, what sits most peacefully with you? Do you relate to the people involved in the passage—their motivations, difficulties, or decisions? How does this change how you see God in relationship to what you're going through?

What is one thing you can adjust today in response to this passage? In belief or action?

THREE MAJOR THEMES



**GOD
SPEAKS.**

God speaks. How people respond shapes history. Consider each time you read, pray, or hear wisdom; how you will respond.



**GOD
LOVES.**

What does true love look like? The people of God went through horrific things. And they didn't always respond well. In fact, often they didn't. God's love is persistently patient and kind towards the smallest to the greatest.



**GOD
SAVES.**

Since the beginning, God has offered a clear solution to the brokenness of this life. While every other religion in the world concocts exchanges that people must do to earn favor, The Bible teaches about the Creator of all the earth who has continually offered acceptance freely.



SECTION SIX:

FOREVERMORE

Bringing heaven to earth today,
tomorrow, and forever

“YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. ”

The abundance God planned for humanity was only forsaken by humanity’s own decision to walk outside of it. Throughout history God has walked with his people—and we are all his people—and called us back to a law which only serves to benefit us. Lifelong love, work that makes the world around us a better place, and keys to eternal life are for those who receive the grace and forgiveness of Christ and step forward into a new day, which starts right now.

So as you read the words of Scripture consider, how is God bringing heaven to earth through me today?



OUR PRAYER OVER YOU.

Lord, we revere your name. Your kingdom is beautiful and your will is perfect. We pray over our fellow sojourner in the Scriptures that you would bring heaven into their life. Please continue to feed their soul with your life-giving Word, and we trust in your provision for their physical needs. And please wash them afresh each day with your grace and love, so they can face a new day with a clean slate and a clear heart, and start anew as they take their next step.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

ROMANS 10:15

SHARE THIS GIFT WITH OTHERS.

We have been called to proclaim Scripture so that people can learn the truth about what the Bible says and who it says God is. If you would like to join us in that endeavor, and make this guide available to more people, please consider sharing a gift with us to help us continue to do make this message known to a wider audience. Every amount helps.