

PART ONE

GENESIS - DEUTERONOMY



THE WHOLE  
Story  
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IN THE BEGINNING:  
CREATION, CONFLICT, & COVENANT



# THE WHOLE Story

## The Bible in a Year

Upstate Church, welcome to our journey through the Word of God. Our goal is simple. We want to encourage as many people in our church as possible to read through the entire Bible in a year. We want to encourage people to engage with the Bible because, as a church, we believe that no other Christian discipline has the potential to impact our spiritual walk like daily Bible reading.

## The Reading Plan

This resource is one of the multiple guides that will be made available to you throughout the course of the year. Each resource will include weekly sermon introductions for the Sunday morning service at Upstate Church. Between each sermon introduction, there will be a week's worth of daily readings.

The daily readings are dated, include selections from the Old and New Testaments, and will be for each weekday. This format will take you through the whole Bible in a year with readings 5 days per week with 2 days open for catching up or getting ahead.

## The Format

We not only want to encourage you to read the Bible, we want to teach you how to read the Bible. To help Upstate Church members learn to read the Bible we use the HEAR Journal method in each of the daily readings. Each day, you will see the HEAR acrostic going down the page. The HEAR journal is meant to guide your reading and help you interact with the text.

H - H stands for highlight. As you read through the text, note or highlight something that stands out to you. Don't just read the Word. Interact with it. Ask questions about it. Highlight what stands out. Highlighting is about determining what the Bible says.

E - E stands for explain. In your own words, seek to explain what you highlighted. It may take some investigation if the passage is a little ambiguous. You may need to look at the notes in your study Bible or consult a good commentary if you need to clarify something. Most of the time, you will know exactly what the highlight means, but explaining it in your own words helps you internalize the message God has for you. Explanation is about determining what the Bible means.

A - A stands for apply. After you interact with the Word and understand it, you need to determine how it applies to your life. Reading the Bible is about more than gaining information. Reading the Bible is about transformation, which comes from beholding the Lord and hearing from Him. Application is about determining what the Bible means for me.

R - R stands for respond. Encountering God in the Bible does not stop when we determine what the Bible says, what the Bible means, or what the Bible means to me. We have not encountered God through the Word until we respond to God accordingly. We respond to God in prayer according to what He reveals to us in the Word. We respond to God in prayer with praise for who He is, confession where we have failed, and repentance as we run back to God!

## The Challenge

We go to the Bible to hear from God. The challenge before our church this year is to learn to go to the Bible to hear from God again and again. Will you embrace this challenge in 2025? Will you read the Bible with us? Will you go to the Word again and again? Will you do all you can to hear from God this year? We cannot wait to see how God works as we run toward His Word.

WEEK 1

January 1, 2025  
Read: Genesis 1-2; Psalm 19; Mark 1

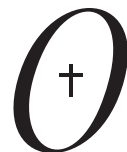
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# January 2, 2025

Read: Genesis 3-5; Mark 2

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# January 3, 2025

Read: Genesis 6-8; Psalm 104; Mark 3

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January 5, 2025

Luke 24:13-35

WEEK 2

Welcome to the first Sunday in our year in the Bible.

We are starting in a place many might find odd: Luke's account of Jesus' resurrection. In a journey through the Bible, you might have expected that we would start at a more logical place, like the beginning. You were probably expecting us to begin in Genesis 1. Don't worry; we will get there. Today, we are looking at a text that will help us understand the Bible better as we read it and walk through it together on Sunday morning.

Luke 24 finds two men walking home after a horrible weekend in Jerusalem. These two men were Jesus's followers, but all their hopes had been dashed over the weekend as they saw Christ arrested, tried, and ultimately crucified on the cross. Jesus was dead. The hope of a better day was dead, too, or so they thought.

As these men walk home, the resurrected Savior shows up and begins a conversation with them about the events that had unfolded in Jerusalem. These men have no idea who they are talking to and begin to let their despondency show. Their Savior had suffered and died, and now they are sulking. In this conversation, Jesus begins to reveal himself to show the disciples that things aren't quite what they seem. Yes, He suffered. Yes, He died. However, now He is alive, and all that happened to Him was necessary according to the plan of God.

To explain how His arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection were necessary, Jesus turns to the Old Testament to show how everything previously written pointed to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus's explanation of the Bible in Luke 24 tells us that if we read the Bible correctly, we see that the Bible, every verse, every chapter, and every book is a book about Jesus.

We start our year in the Bible in Luke 24 because the goal is not just to read the Bible this year but to understand the Bible this year. To understand the Bible, you don't need to start with Genesis 1:1; you need to start with Jesus. When we start with Jesus, we find the one who was already there in the beginning and created all things. When we start with Jesus, we find the key to understanding the whole Bible.

Read the Bible with Upstate Church this year, but remember, start where we are starting this Sunday, with Jesus.

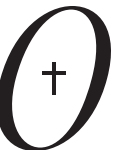
**Bottom Line:** We read the Bible to encounter Jesus!

Scripture Reveals Who Jesus Is

Scripture Reveals Who We Are

Scripture Reveals Our Need for Community

THE WHOLE  
Story  
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# January 6, 2025

Read: Genesis 9-11; Mark 4

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# January 7, 2025

Read: Genesis 12-15; Psalm 148; Mark 5

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# January 8, 2025

Read: Genesis 16-18; Mark 6

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# January 9, 2025

Read: Genesis 19-20; Psalm 1; Mark 7

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January 10, 2025

Read: Genesis 21-23; Psalm 107; Mark 8

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The beginning... The place where all good stories start. Genesis 1:1 talks about the beginning of all things, all things except for one thing, God. In the beginning we find God, the God who already was when all other things were not. In Genesis 1, the eternal God begins to create. God creates all things. He orders all things. He sets all things in motion. When all His work in creating comes to completion, He surveys the whole of His work and makes a summary statement, "It is very good."

E

That very good status lasts about one page in most Bibles. When we turn the page to leave chapters one and two and begin chapter three, everything begins to fall apart. A talking snake, later identified as Satan himself (Revelation 12:1), enters into the garden and begins to wreak havoc. Satan causes Adam and Eve to question God's word and doubt God's goodness. Ultimately, Adam and Eve made the most consequential decision in human history; they determined they would be better off if they were in charge and rebelled against God's command. In short, Adam and Eve sinned. In their sin, Adam and Eve introduced sin into the world, and we've all been sinning ever since.

This is a truly catastrophic scene. God's perfect design reflected in His creation is defaced in a moment of the creature's self-exaltation instigated by creation's greatest enemy, Satan. All is lost, or so it would seem. However, there is hope even in this scene of damage. God is not done with humanity despite their rebellion and sin. God promises a Savior who will crush humanity's enemy even as he explains the curse and consequences of humanity's sin. God foreshadows a Savior who covers our sins and shame. This is evident as God refused to let Adam and Eve leave the garden naked until He clothed them with skins. Jesus is here, even at the beginning of the book.

A

**Bottom Line:** God alone can redeem what we have broken.

God's Design

Satan's Deception

R

Man's Deliverance



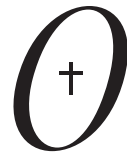
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January 14, 2025  
Read: Genesis 26-27; Mark 10

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January 15, 2025  
Read: Genesis 28-29; Mark 11

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# January 16, 2025

Read: Genesis 30-31; Psalm 11; Mark 12

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# January 17, 2025

Read: Genesis 32-34; Psalm 145; Mark 13

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January 19, 2025

Genesis 6-9

WEEK 4

Six chapters into the Bible, things have completely come off the rails. Adam's descendants have not fared much better than he and Eve. Cain was overcome with jealousy and killed his brother, Abel, when God rejected his offering but looked with favor upon Abel's offering (Genesis 3:1-8). Read on, and you'll find that Cain's great-grandson, Lamech, thinks Cain is too soft (Genesis 3:24). This dysfunctional family leads us directly to the time of Noah.

By the time we are introduced to Noah, we are told that God has some serious "regrets" about creating mankind. That God is "sorry" to have created man presents a series of deep theological questions. However, rather than introduce theological speculation, the author of Genesis intends to show just how far creation has fallen. In Genesis 1, God surveyed his creation and saw that it was "very good." Now, sin has so broken things, so corrupted God's design, that God looks upon the creation and feels not pride but heartbreak.

A reset is needed. God's sorrow moves Him to hit the restart button. God's plan for reset comes through judgment. In Genesis 6, we are told of God's intention to start again by destroying and repopulating the Earth through one righteous person, Noah. Yes, God's plan includes judgment, but amid judgment, there is salvation. Noah is given instructions to build a boat, a big boat, and fill it with the animals that populate the earth. Judgment and salvation. The story of Noah. The story of the Bible.

The story of Noah is a familiar one. Despite the familiarity, read closely, listen closely, and look closely; you'll see more than Noah, the ark, and the animals. You'll see Jesus. Jesus is here even when it seems like all is lost.

**Bottom Line:** God alone can redeem what we have broken. God will do whatever it takes to make things right.

God Uses the Righteous

God Delivers Through Judgment

God Remembers His Promise

# THE WHOLE Story



# January 20, 2025

Read: Genesis 35-37; Psalm 12; Mark 14

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# January 21, 2025

Read: Genesis 38-40; Mark 15

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January 22, 2025

Read: Genesis 41-42; Mark 16

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January 23, 2025

Read: Genesis 43-44; Psalm 24; Galatians 1

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January 24, 2025

Read: Genesis 45-46; Psalm 108; Galatians 2

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“Father Abraham had many sons  
Many sons had Father Abraham  
I am one of them, and so are you  
So let’s all praise the Lord.”

The old song reminds us of Abraham’s story and God’s faithfulness. We meet Abraham 12 chapters into the Bible when God promises to bless the whole world through him. This is a massive promise and one of the most important moments in all of scripture. Though things have gone terribly wrong in the world, when we meet Abraham, we see God’s plan of redemption begin to take shape.

E

God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to give him many sons, but it was a long, winding road to arrive at God’s promise. Abraham received a call and promise from God when he was seventy-five years old. God came to Abraham and called him to leave all he had ever known. In return, God promised to make Abraham a blessing to all nations. From there, his story only got wilder.

At various points in his life, Abraham showed very little faith. On several occasions, he allowed other men to date his wife. Another time, he took his wife’s advice and slept with their maid when constant infertility seemed to prevent them from ever obtaining God’s promise. Side note: Abraham and Sarah may have been good candidates for marriage counseling.

A

At other times in Abraham’s life, he was a man of extreme faith. One time, he led a military campaign to recapture his captive nephew. In Genesis 15, he displayed extraordinary faith when God promised him a child despite his exceptional age and having no heir in his household. In Genesis 18, he modeled faithfulness when interceding on behalf of Lot, Lot’s family, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham’s faith in who God was and what God had promised him was put to the test over and over again. However, at no point in Abraham’s life was his faith more tested than when God called him to do something completely unexpected: sacrifice Isaac, the child of the promise.

The sacrifice of Isaac is a confusing story. Why would God call Abraham to sacrifice his son? While it may seem insane that God would ask Abraham for his son, as we see Isaac ascending the mountain to the place of sacrifice carrying the wood for the sacrifice on his back, we see past Abraham and Isaac. We see all the way to another Son who would climb the mountain to the place of sacrifice carrying the wooden cross on His back. We see past Isaac. We see Jesus. Jesus is here, even in Abraham’s toughest hours.

R

**Bottom Line:** God saves through sacrifice.

God Saves Through Sacrifice - Willingly

God Saves Through Sacrifice - Providentially

God Saves Through Sacrifice - Ultimately.

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THE WHOLE  
Story





*January 28, 2025*  
Read: Genesis 49-50; Galatians 4

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*January 29, 2025*  
Read: Exodus 1-3; Galatians 5

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*January 30, 2025*  
Read: Exodus 4-6; Galatians 6

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*January 31, 2025*  
Read: Exodus 7-9; Psalm 105; Ephesians 1

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February 2, 2025

Genesis 50

WEEK 6

God's plan to bless the world through Abraham's descendants brings us to Joseph, Abraham's great-grandson. Joseph has quite the testimony. You could say that Joseph's story goes from prison to the palace, but even that wouldn't entirely cover all that God did in Joseph's life.

Joseph started life as the favorite son of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. Joseph's favored status led to him being quite the obnoxious little brother. One time, around the family breakfast table, Joseph told his entire family how God intended to make all of them bow down to him one day. Talk about a way to ensure sibling rivalry takes hold. Of course, Joseph's brothers didn't take kindly to Joseph's favored status or his willingness to assert himself as their superior. So what did they do? They sold him into slavery!

Slave traders sold Joseph into a high-ranking official's house in Egypt. There, Joseph flourished because God was with him. Eventually, Joseph became the chief official in Potiphar's house. That lasted until Potiphar's wife lied and told everyone that Joseph had tried to sleep with her. After that, Joseph found himself kicked back down into chains. In an Egyptian prison, Joseph again flourished because God was with him. In due time, Joseph rose to become the chief official of the prison. Through God's timing, he eventually made his way before Pharaoh and showed himself to be a man of exceptional wisdom. Joseph rose and flourished in Pharaoh's court because God was with him. Joseph became the highest-ranking official in all of Egypt.

When Joseph reached the palace, his brothers came to Egypt looking for food. Through the providential hand of God, the book of Genesis closes with Joseph's dream coming to fruition, his whole family bowing at his feet, honoring him.

Joseph's testimony is a powerful reminder of the sovereignty of God, but if you read it closely, you might see that God's faithfulness is even greater than you can imagine. If you look hard enough, you might see the story of a favored son who, through trial and tribulation, went ahead of his sinful brothers so that he might save them. If you look closely, you might see Joseph pointing us to Jesus.

**Bottom Line:** Trust in God's providence leads to a life of conviction.

God's Plan Always Includes:

Forgiveness

Trust

Redemption

THE WHOLE  
Story +



**February 3, 2025**  
Read: Exodus 10-12; Ephesians 2

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**February 4, 2025**  
Read: Exodus 13-15; Psalm 114; Ephesians 3

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# February 5, 2025

Read: Exodus 16-18; Ephesians 4

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# February 6, 2025

Read: Exodus 19-21; Psalm 33; Ephesians 5

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# February 7, 2025

Read: Exodus 22-24; Psalm 109; Ephesians 6

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God's plan never works quite like we think it should. When Genesis closes, you might think God's plan to bless the world through the descendants of Abraham is right on track, with Joseph in the palace calling the shots. However, when the book of Exodus opens, it seems God has taken his hands off the wheel. Though Joseph was well respected, and his family was protected while he was alive everything began to fall apart as soon as Joseph died.

E

After Joseph's death, a new Pharaoh arose who did not know Joseph and did not show any favor to Joseph's descendants. As Joseph's descendants, the Hebrew people grew in number, the new Pharaoh saw the people as a threat and decided that they could not be allowed to dwell freely in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrews and forced them to become laborers for his kingdom. As if slavery were not bad enough, Pharaoh takes the oppression to the next level. He begins to try to stem the population growth of the Hebrews by killing the newborn male babies. The Egyptian midwives were ordered to take the newborn Hebrew babies and throw them into the Nile River. Whenever a society finds itself in opposition to God, oppression and murder of the most vulnerable is always the result.

A

Though it seems God's plan for redemption is falling apart, God is actually just getting started. When God's people call out from their oppression, God hears their cries. God hears His people's cries. God sees His people's pain. God knows His people's troubles. The great I AM is always working for His people, even when things seem to be falling apart. God's movement toward His people in the oppression and slavery of Egypt draws our hearts and minds to another time when God moved toward His people in the oppression and slavery of sin and death. God sent Moses to rescue His people in Egypt. God sent Christ to rescue His people in sin. Jesus is here, even in Exodus, even when God's plan isn't playing out how we thought it would.

**Bottom Line:** God redeems his people when they cry out.

He Hears Us

R

He Reveals Himself

He Moves

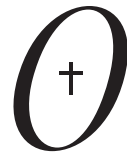
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February 11, 2025  
Read: Exodus 28-31; Philippians 2

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February 12, 2025  
Read: Exodus 32-34; Philippians 3

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# February 13, 2025

Read: Exodus 35-37; Psalm 26; Philippians 4

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# February 14, 2025

Read: Exodus 35-37; Psalm 26; Philippians 4

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February 16, 2025

Exodus 14-15

WEEK 8

The people of Israel needed God to deliver them from their oppression and slavery, and God has done just that. Exodus 14 finds the people of Israel on the march out of Egypt. Over the past ten chapters, God has done for them what they could never do for themselves. God waged an all-out war on Egypt and Pharaoh through 10 plagues. These plagues decimated the Egyptian government, economy, and religious sectors. With the tenth and final plague, the people of Egypt were set free and told to leave Egypt behind.

Israel's exit took them to the banks of the Red Sea. As the people of God arrive on the shores of the sea, they turn back and see the armies of Egypt pursuing them. In an all-out panic, they call out to God for deliverance. Once more, God's plan has led to an unexpected and difficult place. It's in the unexpected and difficult places that God does His best work.

God's deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt and His subsequent miraculous salvation on the shores of the Red Sea reminds us that there is no enemy we face that God cannot save us from. There is no circumstance we face that God cannot conquer. When the Red Sea stood before the Hebrews, God parted the sea and destroyed their enemies. When the sea of sin separated us from God, Christ parted the waters for us to cross and destroyed sin, death, and hell. The Red Sea crossing was a miracle, but it's just a miracle that pointed to a bigger miracle: the cross of Christ. Jesus is here, even at the Red Sea.

**Bottom Line:** God is glorified in the deliverance of his people.

Man's Dilemma

God's Deliverance

THE WHOLE  
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# February 17, 2025

Read: Exodus 38-40; Hebrews 1

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# February 18, 2025

Read: Leviticus 1-3; Psalm 27; Hebrews 2

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February 19, 2025  
Read: Leviticus 4-7; Hebrews 3

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February 20, 2025  
Read: Leviticus 8-11; Psalm 110; Hebrews 4

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# February 21, 2025

Read: Leviticus 12-14; Psalm 111; Hebrews 5

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The people of Israel have come a long way since the Red Sea. After God delivered the people from Egypt, God began bringing them to their new home, the promised land. On their way there, God begins to give the people a new way to live in relationship with Him.

The problem is that the people of God can't seem to stop messing things up. Right after God delivers them from Egypt, the people start grumbling and complaining. A few chapters later, the people build an idol in the form of a golden calf. Over and over again, the people of God show one default tendency: rebellion against God.

E

A holy God, a perfect God, a sinless God cannot tolerate continual rebellion. Since God is infinitely good, each and every sin against Him is infinitely heinous. Someone has to pay for this kind of treachery. God cannot overlook this kind of injustice. There must be blood. Nevertheless, God, in His grace and love toward us, doesn't want to make us pay for our sins with our own blood. So, God makes another way.

The Old Testament sacrificial system was established in the book of Leviticus as a way for sinful humans to be able to live in and maintain a relationship with a holy God. God understands that human beings are continually sinful. So, God established a system of continual payment for sin. Sin would be paid for with the blood of a sacrifice. Over and over and over again, a sacrifice would be offered, and the blood of the sacrificed animal would forgive the sins of the people.

A

The height of the Old Testament sacrificial system was the Day of Atonement. This day came once a year, and the day was defined by the Great High Priest offering a sacrifice on behalf of all the people. This day was so significant for the people of Israel because it was the day on which their forgiveness from God and relationship with God depended. The sad part is that the ritual had to be repeated every year, year after year, because the blood of an animal was not sufficient to save the people from their sins. The Old Testament Day of Atonement is a reminder that we needed something more than the Day of Atonement. We need Jesus. Jesus is here, even in the Old Testament Sacrificial system.

**Bottom Line:** Sin Requires a Perfect Sacrifice.

R

God is Holy

Sin is Serious

Atonement is Necessary

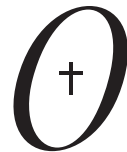
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February 25, 2025  
Read: Leviticus 19-20; Hebrews 7

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R

February 26, 2025  
Read: Leviticus 21-23; Hebrews 8

H

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A

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# February 27, 2025

Read: Leviticus 24-25; Psalm 81; Hebrews 9

H

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# February 28, 2025

Read: Leviticus 26-27; Psalm 112; Hebrews 10

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March 2, 2025

Deuteronomy 5

WEEK 10

When many people think about the Bible, they think about a book full of rules, a bunch of thou shalls and thou shall nots. Most don't realize that the Bible is much more than that. The Bible is the story of how God is always working for the salvation and redemption of His people. However, God, in His grace, doesn't leave us without any clue how to live.

In the Ten Commandments, we have God's rules for how to live in a relationship with Him. Many people see these rules as restrictive. God intends them to be anything but restrictive. God actually intends the Ten Commandments to be freeing. When we walk in accordance with the Ten Commandments, we experience the freedom of life in God's way. The Ten Commandments function as boundaries that provide a safe space for us to run. The Ten Commandments function as guard rails that keep us from catastrophe.

The problem with the Ten Commandments is that we don't have any power, in and of ourselves, to keep those rules. We know the commandments, but so often, our hearts long for things outside of the commandments, things the commandments forbid. The Christian does not just need a list of rules, we need a Savior who can forgive us when we break the rules. We need a Savior who can give us a new heart, a heart that wants to follow the rules. Jesus does both things. Jesus forgives our sins when we break His law. Then, Jesus gives us a heart that obeys the law because it loves the law. Jesus is here, even in the Ten Commandments.

**Bottom Line:** Our relationship with God leads to our obedience to His commands.

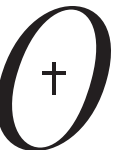
Love God

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Love Others

- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

THE WHOLE  
Story+



# March 3, 2025

Read: Numbers 1-2; Psalm 64; Hebrews 11

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E

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R

# March 4, 2025

Read: Numbers 3-5; Hebrews 12

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March 5, 2025  
Read: Numbers 6-7; Hebrews 13

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E

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March 6, 2025  
Read: Numbers 8-11; Colossians 1

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March 7, 2025

Read: Numbers 12-14; Psalm 28; Colossians 2

H

We live in a culture that tells many lies about what faith should be. One prevailing lie about faith in our time is that faith should be kept private. The culture tells us that faith should be kept to yourself. It's not something that should impact our lives. God has a different idea of what faith should look like. Our relationship with God should impact every single part of our lives. Faith should be at the center of our lives, determining what the rest of life looks like. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses instructs how faith should be dominant in our lives.

Moses clarifies that what we believe is the most important thing about us. Thus, he delivers the "Shema," the cornerstone of the Old Testament theology. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The declaration, though simple, is earth-shattering in its theological implications. Moses clarifies that there is only one God, the Lord over all things.

E

What is the response to such a serious theological statement? As the people of God, we should love the Lord with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Later, a Jewish Rabbi will teach His followers that this is the greatest commandment in the faith. Believers should have a faith that is so serious that they love the Lord more than they love anything else in the entire world. That Rabbi's name was Jesus. Listen today as we hear the long-established words of our faith. Look at the Shema, and you will see that Jesus is here, even in the Shema.

A

**Bottom Line:** Your love for God determines your life for God.

Remember the Lord Your God

R

Raise Up the Next Generation

March 10, 2025

Read: Numbers 15-18; Psalm 113; Colossians 3

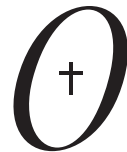
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THE WHOLE  
Story



March 11, 2025

Read: Numbers 19-21; Colossians 4

H

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A

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March 12, 2025

Read: Numbers 22-25; Luke 1

H

E

A

R

# March 13, 2025

Read: Numbers 26-29; Luke 2

H

E

A

R

# March 14, 2025

Read: Numbers 30-33; Psalm 35; Luke 3

H

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