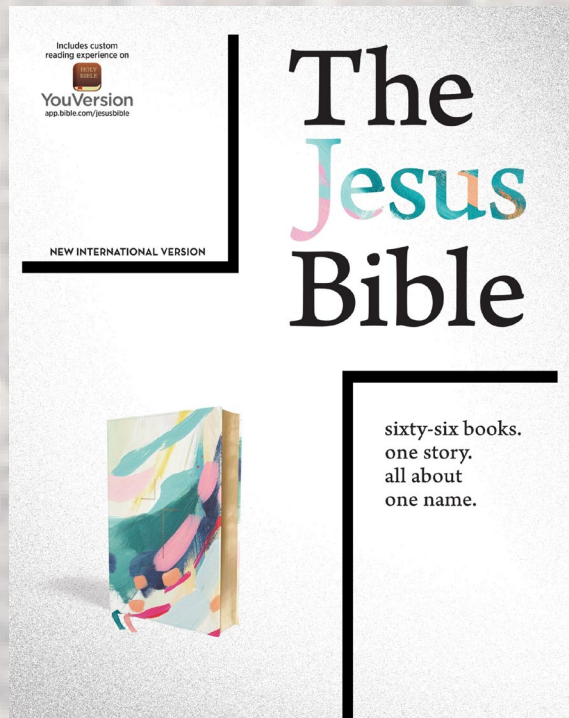


The Jesus Bible

15-Day Devotional Reading Plan

The Jesus Bible 15-Day Plan



This 15-day devotional reading plan features devotionals from *The Jesus Bible*, which explores how Jesus can be found in both the Old and New Testaments.

All devotions drawn from *The Jesus Bible*, NIV. Learn more at thejesusbible.com.

Day 1 *Made in God's Image*

Human beings are uniquely created in the image of God. When the rest of creation was being birthed, it was “good.” God created the birds, fish, plants and stars to display his splendor and oh, how amazing they are. God said these creations were good. However, when it came to humans, the tone changed. He said that the creation of humans was “very good.” Human beings are an extra-special creation for at least three reasons.

First, it is clear that humans have an identity that is rooted in God. When God said, “Let us make mankind in our image,” he reiterated the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the act of creation. . . .Humans are special because Jesus, as a part of the Trinity, created them in his image. Second, humans are special because they were created for a unique purpose. No two humans are the same. Other aspects of creation serve general functions, but only humans have a unique, individual purpose. Third, humans are designed to have a one-on-one relationship with God through Jesus, powered by the Holy Spirit. As a right of being created in the image of their Creator, humans can relate directly to him. It is through Jesus that this relationship is made possible. He came and tore down the dividing wall of hostility that separated his special creation from God (Ro 8:34 – 39).

Jesus, thank you for tearing down that dividing wall between my Creator and me. Show me my purpose in this life and help me to accomplish it, starting today. Amen.

Day 1 *Made in God's Image*

Romans 8:34-39

Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Day 2

The Promised One

God's judgment of sin is interrupted by a stunning picture of his grace. Because of human sin, there are vast implications — from men and women to the very creation itself. But God promises that sin will not have the final word. This first reference to the plan of God to save fallen sinners, sometimes referred to as the protoevangelium (the first gospel), declares God's commitment to his creation. He will not abandon it to destruction but will pursue it in love. His promise is clear — a descendant of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. The heel of this male heir of the first parents will be struck, though the child will emerge victorious by crushing the head of the evil one.

The exact nature of the plan is yet to be explained, but the plan is already in place. Jesus, the promised seed of the woman, would leave no doubt as to the fulfillment of this promise. It would appear that Satan had done far more than strike the heel of the Son of God as Jesus hung lifeless on a cross. But God would have the final word. Through Jesus' victorious resurrection, he would crush the head of Satan — permanently declaring victory over sin and death and fulfilling the promise made at the outset of the Bible.

Jesus, I thank you and praise you for your beautiful grace. Thank you for crushing Satan's head. Help me to live my life fully aware of your grace and victory. Amen.

Day 2 *The Promised One*

Genesis 3:15 - 3:17

And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you.”

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.

Day 3

Submitting to God's Will

Despite David's success as a warrior, he was truly humble. He never forgot his modest background as a shepherd and credited his victories to God rather than his own military prowess. In David's heart, there lived a strong desire to build a house for the Lord — a temple for his presence and name (1Ch 22:6 – 10; Ac 7:45 – 46). When God told David he would not get to build the temple but that the honor would fall to one of his sons, David remained humble and yielded to God's will. David trusted God's plan even though his dream was denied.

Jesus' human will remained perfectly submitted to the Father's will (Jn 6:38). When faced with drinking the cup of God's wrath — taking on the world's sin at the cross — Jesus remained surrendered, trusting the Father's plan. Though he could have claimed his right as God at any time, he “did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage” (Php 2:6).

Jesus, when I get distracted by my own plans, please interrupt me and redirect me according to your perfect plans for my life. I want to live each day completely surrendered to God's will. Amen.

Day 3 *Submitting to God's Will*

1 Chronicles 17:17 - 17:20

And as if this were not enough in your sight, my God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You, Lord God, have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men.

“What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant, 19 Lord. For the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made known all these great promises.

“There is no one like you, Lord, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

Philippians 2:6

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

Day 4 *Visitation from God*

Hagar, a slave, got caught up in Abram and Sarai's attempt to bear the son that God had promised them. Though Hagar became pregnant with a son, the conception was not according to the Lord's plan and she grew dismayed (Ge 16:4 – 5). After being mistreated by Sarai, Hagar ran away and was met by the angel of the Lord. The site and outcome of Hagar's visitation from the angel of the Lord are beautiful. She was found by a spring of water in the desert, which closely represents her situation — pregnant with a child, yet feeling abandoned and hopeless. She was comforted by this visitation (Ge 16:13) despite being told that her son, Ishmael, would not be the son of promise but would experience hostility in all of his relationships and that he would roam the desert like a wild donkey (Ge 16:11 – 12; Gal 4:22 – 23).

Jesus, even in my darkest times, I know that I am never alone and that you will always guide me and sustain me. Thank you for always being with me. Amen.

Day 4

Visitation from God

Genesis 16:15

So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.

Day 5

Striking the Rock

Despite Israel's faithlessness, God continued to provide for his people. In this particular instance, God sustained the people by having Moses strike the rock, from which water miraculously began to flow. While this provision was a startling way to provide water, the water itself was normal. The people of Israel would need water again in the future, and God would certainly provide.

In John 4:13 – 14, Jesus responded to a request for water by claiming that he could provide water that would cause a person never to be thirsty again. Jesus would indeed provide this water, but he was not speaking of literal water. Instead, Jesus was referencing the way in which God would provide salvation from sin. In the same way that Moses struck the rock to provide the life-saving water, Jesus was stricken and afflicted on the cross in order to provide the life-giving water of salvation. God struck one rock to provide for the temporary, physical needs of his people, but he struck the second Rock to provide for the spiritual needs of his people.

Jesus, thank you for sustaining me. You always provide, even when I am weak and doubting. Amen.

Day 5

Striking the Rock

Exodus 17:6

I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

John 4:13 - 4:14

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Day 6

Glory

Moses made an astounding request. He asked God to show him his glory. The word “glory” conveys the idea of weight, significance or importance. In short, God’s glory is the sum total of all the things that make him God. God, in an act of grace, agreed to Moses’ request and provided him a brief and passing glimpse of his eternal worth and majesty, demonstrating his power, his love to his chosen servant and his calling for Moses to lead Israel into the promised land.

One would think that this type of exposure to the glory of God would be reserved only for the great leaders of the Bible — people like Abraham, Joseph, Moses or David. Yet God actually provides all Christians with an ever-increasing display of his glory (2Co 4:6). But this glimpse of glory is not physically observable now. Instead, the Spirit of God captivates believers’ hearts with the glory of God, flooding them with the light of Christ and allowing them to see the majesty of God demonstrated in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This glimpse of glory is the basis for loving God, renouncing sin and serving in God’s mission in the world.

Jesus, thank you for making it possible for me to experience the glory of God on a daily basis. Help me to respond to this glory by loving and serving you every day. Amen.

Day 6 *Glory*

Exodus 33:18 - 33:23

Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Day 7 *A Knowable God*

God's tender affection for his people is shown by his willingness to reveal himself, often through his spoken word, to his people. It is clear that the people of God were stunned that God would even speak to them. They often stood at a distance, in fear and awe, at the revelation of God to his people (Ex 20:21). These appearances in the Old Testament find perfect fulfillment in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In his birth, Jesus willingly laid aside the glories of heaven to take the form of a servant in order to make a way for sinful people to come to the Father (Php 2:1 – 11). In his deity, Jesus demonstrated and declared to the world the nature and character of God in a way that allowed humanity to see not only a temporary glimpse of his glory but the exact imprint of God's glory in a permanent, ongoing fashion (Heb 1:3). Jesus made himself known so that fallen men and women can know God.

Jesus, thank you for giving me a glimpse of God's glory. Thank you for showing me who he is and for gifting me with a way to know him intimately. Amen.

Day 7 *A Knowable God*

Exodus 20:21

The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

Hebrews 1:3

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Day 8

The Consequences of Sin

The Israelites were often referred to as “stiff-necked” (2Ki 17:14). This title is an apt description of the consistent, deep-seated rebellion that plagued the people at every turn. Like an animal stiffens its neck in protest rather than submitting to its master’s guidance, so the nations of Israel and Judah refused to submit to God. They had been warned repeatedly that such insubordination would incur the judgment of God. Specifically, they had been told that if they would not obey, God would kick them out of the land in order to protect the honor of his name. God saw their continued rebellion, and he enacted his just judgment.

John the Baptist warned of the impending doom the people in his day too were sure to face. “Repent!” he cried (Mt 3:2). Jesus’ consistent call was for people to turn from their sin and to turn to him in faith. Those who are unwilling to turn from sin and toward him will face the sure judgment of God that sin deserves. The good news is that all who do repent will be spared the wrath of God, and by his grace they will be granted fellowship with him forever.

Jesus, forgive me for being stiff-necked. Give me a heavenly perspective of this life, so that when I do stumble, I immediately repent and turn back to you. Amen.

Day 8

The Consequences of Sin

2 Kings 17:14

But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the Lord their God.

Day 9

Judged Falsely By Others

It is impossible to know everything. But that does not stop many people from entering into conversations or casting accusations as if they do. That is exactly what Eliphaz did to Job. Eliphaz assumed that Job was suffering because Job was wicked — even though Job was suffering because God was in a contest with Satan. The Bible teaches as a general principle that the righteous will always experience God’s blessing and the wicked will always experience God’s judgment — the life of Job proves that this principle does not always hold true within the limited context of earthly life. Eliphaz accused Job of acquiring his wealth through greed and exploitation of the poor. Yet God’s own witness to Satan reveals to the reader that these charges were false (Job 1:8; 2:3). Eliphaz’s accusations were baseless; his only proof for Job’s alleged wickedness was Job’s suffering (Job 22:10 – 11).

All of this is a great reminder that people should hesitate to cast accusations — they may not have all the pertinent facts. Eliphaz’s approach to Job’s innocent sufferings foreshadows the manner in which the Pharisees would look at Jesus’ actions, even his miracles, and attribute them to Satan (Mt 12:22 – 28). On the surface, it looked like Eliphaz and the religious leaders could be right — but they did not know all the information. They judged, and they judged falsely. Jesus gave a warning that remains relevant today: “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Mt 7:1).

Jesus, when I am tempted to judge others, to presume to know things I don’t know, please redirect me immediately. I know I am in no position to throw stones. Amen.

Day 9

The Consequences of Sin

Job 22:6-11

You demanded security from your relatives for no reason;
you stripped people of their clothing, leaving them naked.

You gave no water to the weary
and you withheld food from the hungry,
though you were a powerful man, owning land—
an honored man, living on it.

And you sent widows away empty-handed
and broke the strength of the fatherless.

That is why snares are all around you,
why sudden peril terrifies you,
why it is so dark you cannot see,
and why a flood of water covers you.

Matthew 7:11

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Day 10

My Life for Their Lives

Moses begged God to forgive the sin of the people, offering to give his life as a substitute for theirs should God so desire. The inexcusable sin of making and worshiping the golden calf prompted the righteous judgment of God. How could a people who had so recently been the recipients of the might and power of God decide to do such a thing? The inexplicable nature of this sin highlights the foolishness of all sin and the necessity of God's judgment.

Yet, as always, God's grace shone through. He did not blot Israel from the face of the earth, though he would have been justified in doing so. He was faithful to his covenant and sustained the nation, though he judged those who sinned against him. In his request, Moses recognized that someone must die for these sins, and he asked God to allow a substitute. But what they needed was a perfect substitute — one who was without sin and capable of offering himself to God as an unblemished sacrifice. They needed Jesus, the one who could do what Moses could not — namely, offer himself for sin, not merely for Israel, but for all of God's people forever.

Jesus, how quickly I forget what you've rescued me from. Point out the golden calves in my life, and help me to get rid of them. Amen.

Day 10

My Life for Their Lives

Exodus 32:32

But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.”

Day 11

Closing the Gap

The walk toward the king's hall in the inner court must have been terrifying for Queen Esther. Approaching the king without being summoned could easily be punishable by death. In this moment there is a “gap” created — where action is taken in obedience before the result is known. Believers can find courage in Esther's actions. When steps are taken in obedience, this can leave a gap for the Holy Spirit to move and even exceed expectations.

Before Jesus' sacrifice, access to God was not available to everyone. Paul connected the pieces in Ephesians 2:18: “For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” In this gap, the Holy Spirit meets the believer's obedience and delivers God-sized results.

Ultimately the king replied to Esther, “What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted” (Est 5:6). Our heavenly Father has given us an even better response, “You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (Jn 14:14). Jesus stands in the gap for those who believe in him and follow him.

Jesus, help me to courageously obey you even when I don't understand. Help me to walk in faith and watch as my expectations are exceeded. Amen.

Day 11

Closing the Gap

Esther 5:1-2

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

John 14:14

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Day 12

The Spirit's Power

The Holy Spirit played an active role in the Old Testament. In the book of Judges, the Holy Spirit empowered numerous individuals. The Holy Spirit “came on Gideon” when Gideon fought against the Midianites and Amalekites (Jdg 6:34); the Spirit “came on Jephthah” (11:29) when he went to fight against the Ammonites; the Spirit also “came powerfully upon” Samson and enabled him to defeat his adversary (14:6). When the Holy Spirit moved, amazing things happened.

While the Holy Spirit used people in the Old Testament to perform mighty deeds, the Spirit is still doing great things today. Jesus told his disciples that it was to their benefit that he would leave them, for after he left, “the Advocate” would come (Jn 16:5 – 15). Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin and guide the disciples into all truth. Though Christians today may not have the physical strength to tear apart a lion like Samson did, they have an even greater power to stand against sin and take the gospel to the nations.

Jesus, thank you for the Holy Spirit. Give me the courage and humility to submit to him in all that I do, so he might do mighty things through me. Amen.

Day 12

The Spirit's Power

Judges 14:6

The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.

Judges 6:34

Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.

Judges 11:29

Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites.

Day 13

Waiting

Isaiah describes those who waited and remained faithful to the Lord. As God's judgment on Judah unfolded around them, many waited patiently while remaining steadfast in their love for and devotion to the Lord. Waiting reflects a relinquishing of power, a trust in someone else for the future, and that is exactly how the people of Judah are pictured here. They know that God is ultimately the one in control, and they are content to wait for the ultimate blessing that God had promised them. To those who wait, God's names and his renown were the desire of their hearts.

This kind of faith serves as an excellent example for how believers should continually carry themselves today. The people of God are waiting for Jesus to return and to bring justice to the earth. It is important to realize that there is nothing they can do to speed up his return. Instead, believers should ensure that God's name and his renown are the desire of their hearts, and in their waiting, remain patient in their praise and faithful to tell others about him.

Jesus, teach me to be joyous in the waiting. I want others to see you in my waiting. Amen.

Day 13

Waiting

Isaiah 26:8

Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws,
we wait for you;
your name and renown
are the desire of our hearts.

Day 14

The Hour of Christ

At first glance, Jesus' response to his mother at the wedding in Cana can be confusing or even troubling: "Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come." But then he proceeds to perform his first miracle, producing somewhere between 120 and 180 gallons of wine.

When considering Jesus' evident change of heart, it is important to remember the setting of this miracle: a wedding. Whenever people attend a wedding, they inevitably entertain thoughts about their own wedding. This is true for married people, but many single people as well long for their wedding day, when it will be their "hour" — when they will be the bride or groom, finally joined to the one they love.

So in this moment, as Jesus looked on at the bride and groom in Cana, perhaps he too was longing for his "hour," when he would be joined with his bride, his church. Perhaps he looked forward to the wedding banquet that is to come, when men and women from every tribe and language will be joined with him at the marriage supper of the Lamb in the new heavens and new earth (Rev 19:6 – 9). How utterly appropriate that Jesus' first sign pointed toward the ultimate celebration and the ultimate wedding: his own with his church.

Jesus, thank you for choosing the church to be your bride. Thank you for choosing me to be a member of your church. I can't wait to spend eternity with you. Amen.

Day 14

The Hour of Christ

John 2:1-10

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b]

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

Day 15 *Old Testament Connection*

People broke the relationship with God that he had established. The creation and the Creator were once tethered together by a life-giving relationship, and humanity broke the bond by sinning against their Creator. Since that moment, life has been filled with pain and frustration because it has not had the life-giving power of God flowing through it. But God loves people too much to leave them in this condition, so he made a series of promises to bring his people out of it.

The Bible speaks of a “new covenant” that God makes with his people. This covenant does not depend on people’s ability to fulfill it by loving and being faithful to God. Instead, this covenant depends on God. In this covenant, God promises to help his people obey his law (Jer 31:31 – 34). God also promises to bring his people from death to life and to care for them forever (Eze 37:24 – 26). The author of Hebrews declared that God has fulfilled and accomplished that covenant through Jesus. The sacrifice of the great high priest Jesus supersedes all Old Testament rituals. Jesus, therefore, fulfilled the Old Testament laws. He fulfilled the terms of the covenant by being the priest who presides over the covenant. He is the priest who brings his people into the presence of God (Heb 10:19).

Jesus, thank you for the new covenant. Thank you for bringing me out of death and into life. Amen.

Day 15 *Old Testament Connection*

Hebrews 8:1-2

Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

Hebrews 10:19

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,