

90 Days Through the Story of Scripture – Introduction

City Reformed Church will start the new year by reading a large section of the Bible together. Starting on Monday January 4, and concluding on Good Friday (April 2), we will read through much of Biblical history. While the Bible is comprised of many types and styles of writing, we will focus on reading through the historical or narrative sections. Together these historical records will elucidate a story of “redemptive history. This is a summary of the story that we call “redemptive history.”

God created a good world, and formed humans to have a special role in it and to have a special relationship with him. But, humanity was plunged into sin and rebellion and would have had no hope, if God had not intervened to bring redemption. Nearly all of the Bible is a description of how God works to bring forgiveness and renewal to fallen humanity. This redemption is predicted throughout the Old Testament in the sacrifices, laws, and prophecies. It is brought to fulfillment through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Now, Jesus is working through the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring people from every tribe, and tongue, and nation into the redeemed community. One day Jesus will return and bring a final judgment. All things will be renewed and his redeemed people will celebrate in eternal worship.

Those who believe in Jesus and become his disciples are brought into this story. It is meant to be the defining story of our lives. It tells us where we have come from, who we are, what we are doing and where we are going.

It will take a significant commitment to participate in this reading project. The main reading plan requires each reader to work through 3 chapters of history and one smaller reading from another part of the Bible. This will likely require between 8-12 minutes if you read it quietly, and as much as 15 minutes if you read it out loud. Furthermore, we will provide daily readings in the psalms, in which they are used to guide our prayers of confession and renewal. Each reading will have an accompanied blog post that will give a brief summary of the readings for the day.

This is not an easy thing to do. It is not necessarily hard to read three chapters in one sitting, but it is much harder to maintain that pattern over a period of time. Here are some pointers that can help you:

- Remember, this is not an exercise in earning spiritual merit. The goal is to grow closer to God. If you have to skim a section or if you miss a day, just keep going. Don't let a rigid or legalistic approach to your reading plan make this an unbearable burden.
- While, we will not cover the entire history of the Bible, we will still be reading an awful lot, and we will move through all of the parts of the story. (Some sections will need to be abbreviated.) If reading three chapters a day is too much, there will be an optional reading list that is shorter. Do what you can, and do what fits your schedule.
- It can be very helpful to have access to a study Bible or a Bible commentary. I would particularly recommend the ESV Study Bible as a great resource, but there are many other study Bibles that are very useful.
- The ESV is a fairly readable translation, but it tries to preserve as much of the flavor of the original languages as possible. Some people find it easier to read the narrative sections in another translation. The NIV translation can be a little easier to read for long sections of history, even though it is slightly less tied to the original language structure. Other translations like the Living Bible or the Message are technically called a paraphrase and not a translation because they work so hard to make the words fit into modern English structures. These paraphrases can be helpful for some people to access the stories of the Bible and as long as we recognize that there is a little more room for interpretation by those making the paraphrase they can still be helpful tools.
- In summary, reading the Bible is good. God promises to use his word to shape us and change us. It is also good to be challenged. During a difficult time (like winter 2020-2021), it is important to invest energy into things that bring life and help us to grow spiritually. We should challenge ourselves to try hard things. But, don't let this project become a burden. If your life is too busy to read three chapters, then do less. Any serious Bible reading will be a benefit!