

Rooted

THE WORD EDITION

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO:

Welcome to your Rooted Journal!

The Bible is God's gift to us. We read and listen to it because it tells us about him. The stories of Jesus are the stories we live by as Christians.

But it's a big, old and – let's face it – complicated book. We call it a book, but it's also a library. It was written by lots of different authors over a very long time – perhaps as much as a thousand years. Amazingly, it still speaks straight to our minds and hearts. Sometimes, though, we need a bit of help understanding it.

This first edition of the new Rooted journal is about the Bible. It's designed to help you understand the Bible's big themes and give you some useful information, while at the same time letting it speak into your life.

Trainee preachers are told to approach their text with the questions, 'What does it say?' 'What does it mean?' and 'What does it mean to me?' We've tried to do the same. And as usual, we've provided different ways for you to engage with the Bible and with Bible Society. There are stories, prayers, creative ideas and even a crossword, as well as daily readings and reflections. In this Rooted journal you'll learn about how the Bible works, and about how it can speak to you today.

We hope you'll be blessed by this journal. We suggest that you don't read it all the way through at once, but that you use it day by day. We believe that as the Bible is God's word to us, he speaks through it.

Emily Robinson, Rooted Editor





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bright hope for tomorrow

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**Blessed is the man who walks not
in the counsel of the wicked, nor
stands in the way of sinners, nor sits
in the seat of scoffers; but his delight
is in the law of the lord, and on his
law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams
of water that yields its fruit in its
season, and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.**

PSALM 1.1-3 (ESV)

How to use this journal

This Rooted journal has been created to take you on a journey that will encourage you in your faith and build your confidence in the Bible. You'll be encouraged to write, annotate, highlight and draw in this journal as you go, so that in the future you'll be able to reflect back on what stirred and challenged you.

The journal is designed to provide a variety of ways to engage with God's word. Whether you use it to create a Bible reading routine or fit it in with your existing habits, it's full of inspiration, opportunities and suggestions.

WHAT'S INSIDE?



Four weeks' worth of **themed devotionals** to encourage you to dive into Scripture and reflect on what it says



Creative contemplation prompts to give you space to meditate on a particular topic or passage from the Bible



Review pages to help you consider what God has been saying to you in his word and how you can respond



A **Bible reading plan** with suggested study questions for a more independent exploration of Scripture



Impact stories about the difference your Rooted subscription is making around the world

Alongside your journal, keep your eyes peeled for Rooted emails containing even more articles, resources and testimonies to encourage you.

You can use this journal on your own or with others. Why not encourage a friend, family member or group to journey with you and join you in discussion, prayer and mutual encouragement?

And you're welcome to join the conversation and community in our Rooted Facebook group. Scan the QR code to join the group.



Join the
Facebook
group



Chains fall off, hearts are set free

Your kind giving as a Rooted subscriber is enabling a dramatic spreading of the gospel in prisons throughout England and Wales. Here's prison chaplain Dominic Dring's message to you:

'I was on a prison wing in a high security prison in the South of England when a prisoner ran out shouting, "It's real, it's real!" He'd encountered Jesus – the face of Jesus – in his cell. This guy was not a Christian, but he was in crisis and thinking of taking his life. When he saw Jesus, all his fear and anxiety fell away.

'You'll hear stories like this in prisons right across England and Wales. God is moving powerfully – and the amazing generosity of

Bible Society supporters is key to lives being changed behind bars.

'I am a chaplain in two prisons: one high-security institution and one open prison. I want to thank Bible Society supporters for their committed giving, because you are helping to provide Bibles and run *The Bible Course* in these prisons. Thanks to this generosity, people are meeting Jesus in the pages of Scripture – and their growing faith is strengthened.'



Thank you for your generous support through Rooted. You really are changing lives for good. Read the rest of Dominic's inspiring story on our website by scanning the QR code or visit biblesociety.org.uk/YourImpact

Before you start



SET GOALS

What do you hope to get out of your journey through the Word edition of the Rooted journal?



MAKE SPACE

When would be the best time and where would be the best place to commit to using your journal? How can you make this a special and enjoyable moment to look forward to each day?



BLESS OTHERS

Who could you share this journey with? How could you use it to encourage your friends, family, or church?



PRAYER

You might want to use this prayer as you go through the journal:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your word. Please speak to me and help me to see who you are more clearly as I read the Bible.

Open my heart and mind and fill them with gratitude and praise as I reflect on your love for me and all that Jesus has done to cleanse me from my sin, rescue me and give me life in all its fullness.

Holy Spirit, help me to grow in understanding and wisdom. Increase my love for God and for others. Give me the desire to please and honour the Lord by obeying his word and putting my faith into practice. Help me to walk in step with you today.

Amen.



WORSHIP

We've put together a suggested playlist to accompany you on your journey through this journal.



Scan the QR code to listen to the playlist.

The Bible in a Nutshell

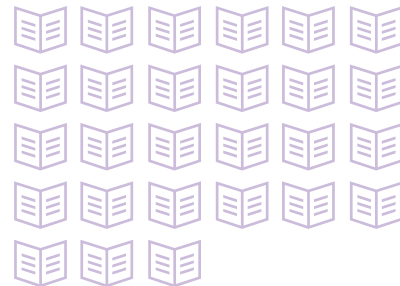
66

There are 66 books in the (Protestant) Bible – 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament

OLD TESTAMENT



NEW TESTAMENT



The shortest verse is John 11.35, 'Jesus wept'

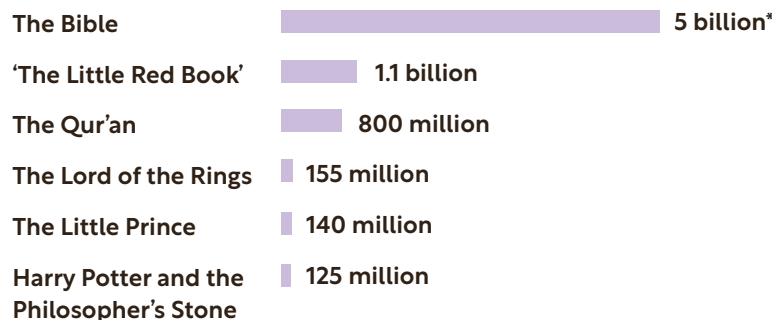
The shortest book by word count is 3 John, and the longest is Jeremiah

3 JOHN – 219 WORDS*

JEREMIAH – 33,002 WORDS*

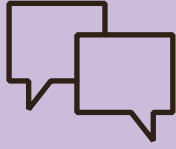
*in the original Hebrew and Greek languages

It's one of the world's most printed books



*approximate values

The longest chapter of the Bible is Psalm 119 with 176 verses.



At the start of 2022 the full Bible was available in 719 languages spoken by

5.8 billion people

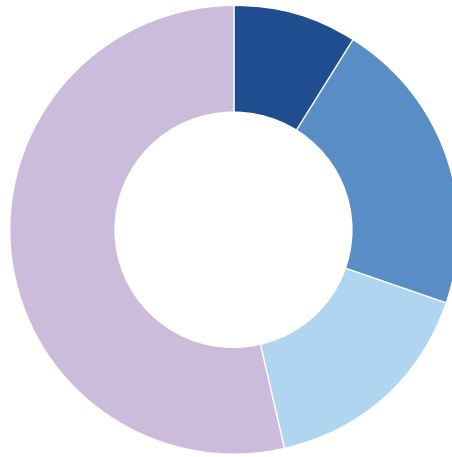
1.5 billion people

do not yet have the full Bible in their heart language

(UBS, Bible translation as a justice issue, 2022)

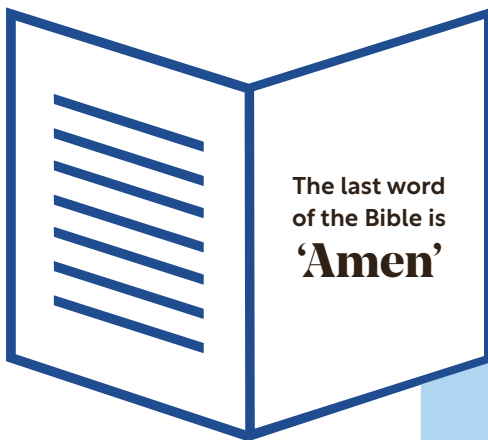
Almost 4,000 languages still don't have any Scriptures translated into them at all

More than half of the world's languages, used by 219 million people, still have no Scripture at all



	FULL BIBLE		NEW TESTAMENTS
	PARTIAL OR SECTIONS		NO SCRIPTURES

(UBS Bible translation statistics story, March 2022)



The last word of the Bible is **'Amen'**

Your Rooted subscription is helping support Bible translation projects around the world, so that more people can access God's word in their heart language.

Thank you!

God's character

WRITTEN BY DAI WOOLRIDGE



READ
Exodus
3.13–14



All by himself

DEVOTIONAL

Imagine physically meeting God. Moses doesn't have to imagine. One time God passed by and Moses got a glimpse of his maker from the back, as he was hidden in the cleft of a rock, because seeing God face to face was just too much glory for a mortal man to take and live to tell the tale.

But that wasn't the first time Moses encountered God. Moses was in the wilderness, and he saw a bush engulfed in flames, yet not burning up. Moses took off his sandals and God spoke, commissioning an ex-prince, now outlaw, to lead a nation out of shackles.

Moses doesn't feel up to the task. He might be an Israelite, but he walks and talks like an Egyptian. How do they know it's not some con to get back in Pharaoh's good books?

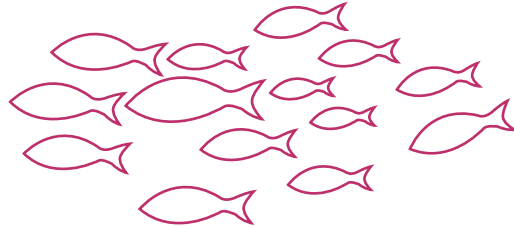
Maybe some outlandish story of a burning bush that speaks wasn't going to cut it? 'Who shall I say sent me?' asks Moses (or to paraphrase, 'Who are you?')

Then for the first time in history, the God of the cosmos, the maker of matter and all that matters, shares his name. 'God' is just a title, but his name is ... I AM. There's no past, present or future with God. Moses wasn't talking to someone bound by time, but by one who set off the stopwatch. God never ceases to be anything less than completely and utterly present in every single tense. It means there was never a time when he wasn't and there never will be. He is quite simply the God who is.

ACTIVITY

Light a candle and watch it flicker. Consider Moses' encounter with God and imagine how Moses must have felt. If you feel comfortable, step into the shoes of Moses by taking your shoes off. Read the passage again and reflect on who God is. The I AM.

READ

Jonah
4.2

Fish guts of mercy

DEVOTIONAL

I feel for Jonah. Have you heard the part of the story where he's fuming with God, because a plant that was giving him shade had withered up and died? Given the heatwaves we've been having, I would have given anything for shade!

But Jonah's not really kicking off about a withered plant; there's a deeper root to his frustration. Here's the backdrop – it's more than 700 years before the nativity scene. Judges have come and gone and there's been a succession of kings since. Rehoboam got the gig but botched it up and God's people split into two teams – Israel north, Judah south. Zoom in on the northerners and there's growing tension between them and the Assyrians that's way beyond neighbourhood rivalry. To sum up, Assyria are pretty much the bad guys.

This is where we meet Jonah. God calls him to spread the word that Nineveh's evil has not gone unnoticed – they're getting their comeuppance. Jonah legs it but one big fish later, Jonah delivers. As the story unfolds, the people of Nineveh listen, do a full 180, turn from their evil and plead for mercy. God sees their remorse and, in his mercy, drops the charges. So why's Jonah upset? Because Nineveh is the headquarters of Assyria. In Jonah's eyes they don't deserve mercy, they deserve judgement, both barrels!

But God relents. God confronts Jonah: 'you cared for a plant; how do you expect me not to care for a city of people?' (Jonah 4.10–11). Maybe God's mercy is tough to stomach when it's not deserved. But isn't that exactly what mercy is? Undeserved? I'm grateful that God shows this undeserving saint his abundant mercy.

NOTES, REFLECTIONS & DOODLES

A large grid of small dots for writing notes, reflections, or doodles.

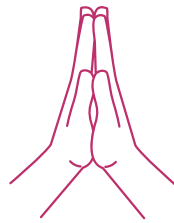
PRAYER

Father God, thank you that you are just. You are the holy judge who holds crimes to account, but thank you for reminding me afresh that you're a God of mercy too. Thank you for showing mercy to me when I don't live up to your perfect standards. As I reflect on your unmerited mercy, help me to display mercy to others who don't deserve it, even when it's tough. Amen.

Bible Q&A:
Why did Jonah not go to Nineveh?

WWW.BIBLESOCIETY.ORG.UK/JONAH

READ

Isaiah
6.1-5

Holy doesn't cover it

DEVOTIONAL

If you were to ask me if I liked Nutella, I could say 'yes', but I'd feel a bit flat about it (cue pancake pun). You see, a simple 'yes' just wouldn't convey my sheer joy as I scoop out that little treasure of hazelnut heaven. I need more words to really capture the extent of my salivating affections. If there was a Nutella appreciation society, I'd campaign to be chief taster (just think of the open buffets)!

I probably wouldn't even respond with a 'yes'. I'd feel the need to add further superlatives ... absolutely, completely, unashamedly. Or YES, YES, YES, followed by three exclamation marks!!!

It's 700 years pre Jesus' birth and Isaiah has an encounter with God. He sees the sheer glory of his maker – seated on a throne, high and lifted

up – and it's a moment that takes his breath away. His first reaction isn't to praise God; he's far too aware of his broken morality, as he looks on in sheer awe of God's complete majesty. 'Woe is me' he cries. And while Isaiah cries 'Woe', the seraphim sing one word on repeat – holy ... holy ... holy, is the Lord Almighty.

To say God is holy once is to say he is set apart, all on his own and completely deserving of our complete devotion. To say holy twice – you'll be hard pressed to miss the holy echo. To say it three times – to sing 'holy' with all-out abandon – forces us to stop in our tracks. 'Are we getting it yet?' Even the greatest superlative falls short when it comes to describing God. We cannot exaggerate his goodness, or fully comprehend just how holy he is. It's impossible.

NOTES, REFLECTIONS & DOODLES

A large rectangular area filled with a grid of small dots, intended for notes, reflections, or doodles.

PRAYER

Father God, you are set apart, all on your own – completely and utterly holy. Though I may have unclean lips and an unclean heart, thank you that you still wholeheartedly care for me. Help me rest in your company and may I join in with the seraphim and declare that you are 'holy, holy, holy, Lord Almighty; and the whole earth is full of your glory.' Amen.

READ

John
1.1-18

Maker became man

DEVOTIONAL

God reveals himself to us in many wonderful ways. I love how psalm-singer David pens lyrics of affection to his maker in Psalm 8. 'When I consider the works of your hands, what is man that you are mindful of him?' Maybe you've had that experience? I have. Getting lost in constellation wonder on a clear night, seeing the sea lick the cliffs of Cardigan, taking panoramic pics of Paris ... though we live in a world with cracks, God's left his thumbprint everywhere. We just have to look long enough to see it.

The greatest thumbprint God left for us was sending his son, Jesus. He is the greatest reflection of God's perfection. In one of the most poetic and profound accounts in all of Scripture, John introduces Jesus. He's riffing the creation account in Genesis 1, while inviting

us to look again and spot someone we may have missed at first glance – 'the Word', a.k.a Jesus – John says 'he was there in the beginning'.

If that wasn't ground-breaking enough, John goes further. He was not only 'with' God, he 'was' God. He didn't just have a front row seat at the show, he was the star of it. The one who spoke creation into being, who has never not been, 'became flesh' – became one of us, human.

It's a challenge to get our heads around this, but it's a dead cert in Christianity. When we look at Jesus, we see God. We see God loving his creation to the point of stepping into it to save it. Though our brokenness was a barrier, he became the bridge. We cannot exaggerate his goodness, or fully comprehend just how holy he is. It's impossible.

NOTES, REFLECTIONS & DOODLES

A large rectangular area filled with a grid of small dots, intended for notes, reflections, or doodles.

PRAYER

Lord God, the same God who created the cosmos by speaking it into being, who called Noah to build a boat, met Moses at a bush and went fishing for Jonah, thank you that you dwelt among us with hands, arms, legs and feet. Jesus, you are 'word become flesh'. Only you could bridge the gap of my brokenness. Thank you for dwelling amongst us to do just that. May we be captivated by your creativity and in awe of your character.

READ

Luke
4.16–21

The greatest escape

DEVOTIONAL

It's roughly AD30, in the northern region of Israel, in a 'has been' town called Nazareth. It's Sabbath Saturday, as in rest day. God's people (Israel) meet up in God's house (the synagogue), to meditate on God's word (the Torah), made up of the law and the prophets. For the last 400 years, it's felt like God's not really been saying very much. People try to hold fast to the law, but still long for the one the law wrote about. Look close enough and you see that the Rescuer is etched into every scroll and page.

Enter Jesus. He would have been known to most locals as the carpenter, Joseph's boy. Every Sabbath he'd go to the temple, but this time was different. He gets up; they hand him the scroll with Isaiah's words, spoken 700 years earlier. He unrolls it and reads

out the opening paragraph of chapter 61:

'The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me.'

There's not an eye in the house that's not glued to Jesus. Then he lands the punchline: 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' (verse 21), or to paraphrase: 'Isaiah took the words right out of my mouth. That's why I'm here.'

Jesus didn't just come to show us a better way to live, or to be an example we can follow.

He came to do what we couldn't. Without God, we are prisoners in poverty, blind and broken-hearted by our own brokenness.

Jesus came to give us sight, to unlock us from the shackles of our own brokenness, to lead us out of the prison cell to his riches of freedom and forgiveness. It's the greatest escape and the ultimate redemption.

NOTES, REFLECTIONS & DOODLES

A large grid of small dots for writing notes, reflections, or doodles.

ACTIVITY



Listen to John Newton's famous song 'Amazing Grace'. Imagine you are saying these words yourself, or perhaps you'd like to join in and sing along. Why not take some time to thank Jesus, for coming to fulfil what Isaiah said, for being our Rescuer?

You can find 'Amazing Grace' on our Spotify Playlist.

CREATIVE CONTEMPLATIONS

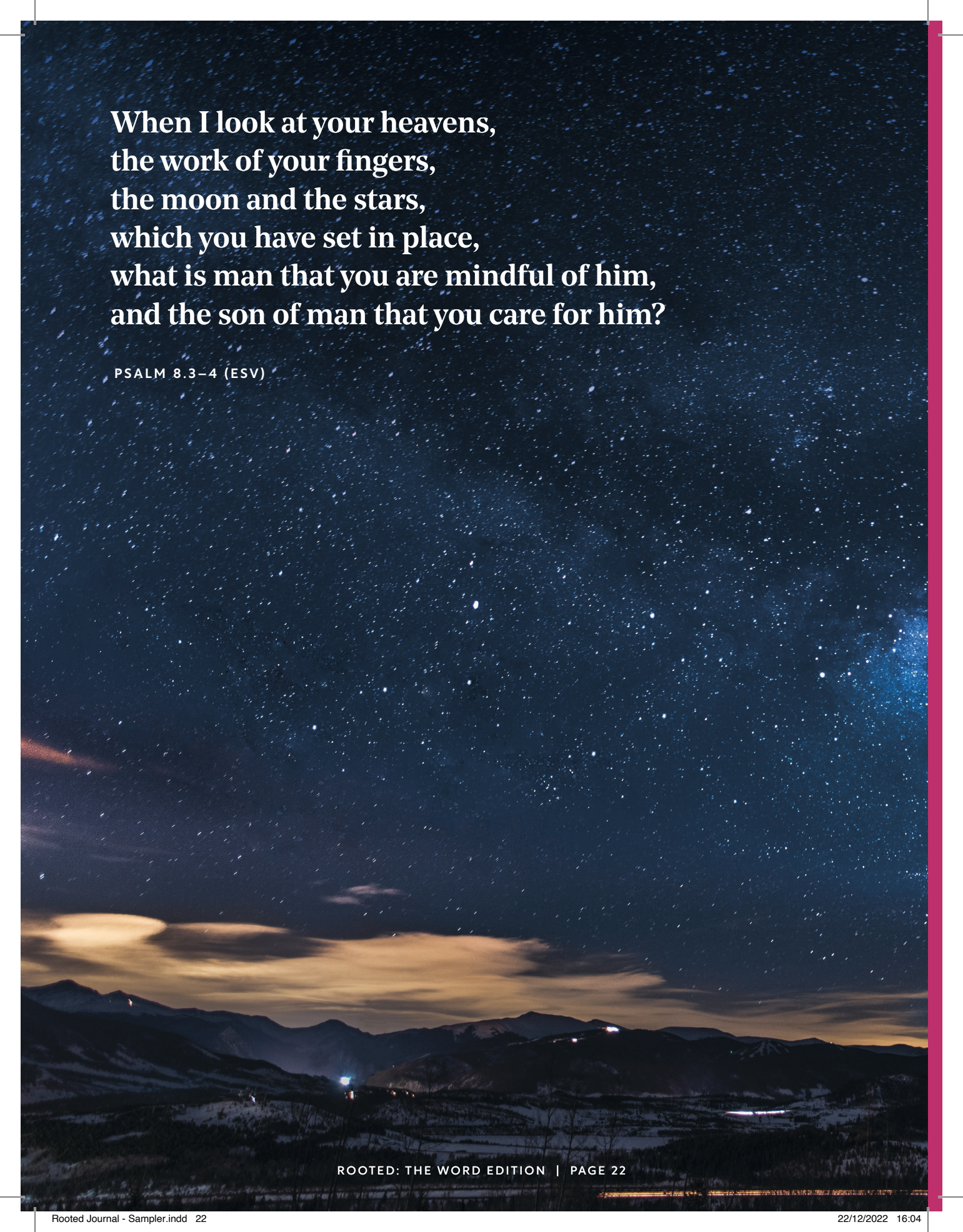
Look back on the last five devotionals. Consider the character of God.

Use the space on these pages to either:

- Draw or paint something that expresses one aspect of God's character
- Write a song or poem about the attributes of God that we've considered
- Write out a list of the characteristics of God we've explored together. You can write the words artistically or in a simple list. Which aspect of God's character do you want to know more about and why?

A large grid of small dots for creative contemplations, consisting of 20 rows and 20 columns of dots.

A large rectangular area containing a grid of small, light gray dots, intended for journaling or writing. The grid consists of 20 columns and 30 rows of dots.

A night sky filled with stars and a mountain range in the foreground. The sky is dark blue with many small white stars. A bright orange and yellow glow is visible on the horizon, likely from the setting or rising sun. The mountains are dark and silhouetted against the sky. The foreground shows some snow and trees.

**When I look at your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?**

PSALM 8.3-4 (ESV)

Reflect

What stood out to you the most?

Note down three things to praise God for

1.

2.

3.

What do you want to bring before God in prayer in the light of what you have read?

Note down one action you are going to take in the next week to live out Scripture

Write out a verse to memorise and meditate on

Explore Psalm 119

BIBLE READING PLAN

**‘My soul
longs for your
salvation; I hope
in your word.’**

PSALM 119.81 (ESV)

This psalm is a beautiful celebration of God’s word.

We’re not told who the author is, but the psalmist’s love for God, complete reliance on him, and desire to live in a way that honours him is displayed in every verse. We’re encouraged in reading it to follow his example and make his attitudes and efforts our own, so that God’s word will shape our character and our actions in life.

Some of this is a bit lost in translation, but this is a highly crafted psalm. In Hebrew, you can see that it’s an acrostic poem with 22 stanzas following the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Not only that, but each verse within each stanza begins with that same letter.

Although the psalmist uses several different words to refer to God’s Torah, they are all focused on the role of God’s word as the perfect moral instruction for his people.

PSALM 119 READING PLAN:



READ

Read the day’s verses



REFLECT

Reflect using some of the suggested questions



PRAY

Turn the passage into a prayer from your heart to God



MEMORISE

Pick a ‘verse of the day’ and keep coming back to it

<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 1: PSALM 119.1–8	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 12: PSALM 119.89–96
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 2: PSALM 119.9–16	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 13: PSALM 119.97–104
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 3: PSALM 119.17–24	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 14: PSALM 119.105–112
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 4: PSALM 119.25–32	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 15: PSALM 119.113–120
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 5: PSALM 119.33–40	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 16: PSALM 119.121–128
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 6: PSALM 119.41–48	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 17: PSALM 119.129–136
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 7: PSALM 119.49–56	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 18: PSALM 119.137–144
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 8: PSALM 119.57–64	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 19: PSALM 119.145–152
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 9: PSALM 119.65–72	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 20: PSALM 119.153–160
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 10: PSALM 119.73–80	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 21: PSALM 119.161–168
<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 11: PSALM 119.81–88	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDY 22: PSALM 119.169–176

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How is God described in this passage and how does the psalmist encourage us to value God's word?

How does the psalmist approach/appeal to God in this passage?

How does this passage encourage you to grow in your love for God, putting him, and a desire to live in a way that pleases him, first?

What has God promised his people in his word and how does the psalmist display their trust in his faithfulness?

How does the psalmist view the wickedness they see in the world and the opposition and persecution they experience because they keep God's law? How do they persevere?

How does the psalmist relate to other believers and how do they want to encourage them?

Jesus perfectly fulfilled God's law on our behalf (see Romans 8.3–4). How does our trust in Jesus as our Lord and Saviour encourage us and spur us on as we read this psalm?



Your questions about the Bible

In each issue of Rooted, we take a look at a big question and do our best to respond.

Question

Given that the Bible is, by definition, a library of books about God and his people, why does it stop at the book of Revelation? Surely that story is a continuing one which in the present canon of Scripture already goes beyond Jesus' time?

RESPONSE

In a sense it's quite true that the story goes on. But in the first centuries of the Church, it was decided that what we call the New Testament should be closed. The decision was made on the basis of which books were believed to have been written by the Apostles, and what was actually being used and regarded as authoritative in Christian churches – and there was a large amount of agreement about that. The 27 books of the New Testament were first listed by St Athanasius in AD 367, and officially confirmed in Church councils in 393 and 397.

The word 'canon' is important here. It comes from a Greek word meaning 'measuring stick'. The idea is that the Bible provides a yardstick against which theological ideas could be tested. If they don't agree with the Bible, the Church should not accept them.

Different Churches use the Bible in different ways. However, all agree that it has authority over doctrine. If we were to keep adding to it over the centuries, it's hard to see how it would have that authority as we could drift further and further away from our faith's foundations.

This article was written Mark Woods, Head of Communications at Bible Society

Note: This article represents the author's personal view. It accords with Bible Society's values, but is not intended to express our position as an organisation.



Have you got a question about the Bible?

Let us know by scanning the QR code and we may respond to it in the next issue of Rooted!
