



CHRISTOPHER D. HUDSON

SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF THE BIBLE

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Christians talk an awful lot about Jesus. But that's only because the Bible talks an awful lot about Jesus. His life and teachings are at the heart of the Bible and thus at the center of this *Self-Guided Tour of the Bible*.

Let's briefly review his incomparable life, remembering that we are only scratching the surface. As the apostle John said at the end of his Gospel: "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

Jesus is born.

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." —Luke 2:11

Of the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke provide accounts about the infancy of Christ. Both of these Gospels tell us that Jesus was miraculously conceived through the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin named Mary. This fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah would be born of a virgin and would be called *Immanuel*, which means "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (the "town of David") also fulfilled a prophecy made centuries earlier that the Messiah would be born in that small town (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1–6).

Luke paints for us the beautiful picture of Jesus' birth with details such as the manger Jesus sleeps in, the shepherds watching their flocks and rushing to see the newborn Savior, and the angels praising God.

Matthew focuses on the visit of the Magi (or wise men) who arrive to worship the newborn "king of the Jews" several days, weeks, or possibly even months after Jesus' birth, when Jesus and his parents are living in a "house" (Matthew 2:2, 11).

Read about this in Matthew 1:18–2:23; Luke 1:26–2:39.





Jesus grows up.

"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him." —Luke 2:40

We know only one story from Jesus' childhood—the incident of him at age twelve being accidentally left behind in Jerusalem. His parents find him three days later at the temple in Jerusalem, astounding the religious leaders with his deep questions and insight. Other than this childhood incident, Luke says only that Jesus grew strong and tall in wisdom and in favor with God and people.

Since Jesus is called "the carpenter," he must have spent his youth and young adulthood learning this trade from and working with his earthly father Joseph (Mark 6:3).

Read about this in Luke 2:40–52.



Jesus gets baptized.

"Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." —Mark 1:9

All four Gospels record Jesus being baptized at the age of thirty by John the Baptist. When Jesus comes out of the water of the Jordan River, God's Spirit descends on him like a dove and the Father in heaven declares, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Read about this in Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:32–34.



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Southern Israel

About

The southern region of Israel is roughly the area west and south of the Dead Sea. Unlike northern Israel, which features snow-capped mountains, the southern region is dominated by the Negev, a desert of some 6,100 square miles (about 15,799 sq km).

What Happened Here

- In 1406 BC the twelve tribes of Israel, under Joshua's leadership, invaded Canaan at Jericho. Three of the tribes settled southern Israel: Judah, the largest of the twelve tribes; Benjamin; and Simeon, the smallest.
- After the reign of King Solomon, the kingdom of Israel split (931 BC). The two large tribes in the south (Benjamin and Judah) took the name of the larger tribe, "Judah." The other tribes in the north took the name "Israel."
- The people of Judah were taken captive by the Babylonians (605–586 BC).
- Though Jesus spent most of his life in northern Israel, key events from his life—his birth, baptism, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension—happened in southern Israel, mostly in and around Jerusalem.



Jordan River

Biblical Significance

- The story of Mary and Joseph connects northern and southern Israel. Commanded to return to his hometown for a Roman census, Joseph took his pregnant wife and left their home in Nazareth, in the lush green north, and headed south to Bethlehem, with its more arid environment. This 80-mile (129 km) trip is a four- to five-day walk. Mary and Joseph may have followed the Jewish tradition of skirting Samaria on the east, going along the lush Jordan Valley and going through the historic city of Jericho. From Jericho, which lies at an extremely low elevation, travelers must endure a steep climb to reach Jerusalem. The ascent rises about 3,500 feet (1,067 m). This would be exhausting for anyone and would have been even more so for a woman

Factoid

Jerusalem is on the same latitude as El Paso, Texas.

in the latter part of her pregnancy. It is likely that from here, Mary and Joseph would have headed farther south to Bethlehem. Here, Jesus was born (Luke 2:1–21).

- The prophet Zechariah foretold about a significant event occurring in this region: “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” (Zechariah 14:4).

**“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”
—Matthew 2:6**

Next, let’s zero in on Jerusalem, the geographical epicenter of the biblical narrative.

Negev Desert



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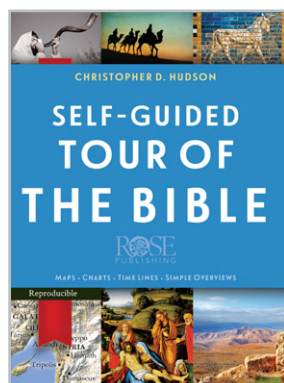
JESUS' CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF

In the Gospel of John, we find numerous claims by Jesus as to his true identity:

- » **I am** ... he (the Messiah) (John 4:26; 8:24; 13:19; 18:5, 8).
- » **I am** ... the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51).
- » **I am** ... from God (John 7:29).
- » **I am** ... the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).
- » **I am** ... from above (John 8:23).
- » **I am** ... the Son of Man (John 8:28).
- » **I am** ... I AM (the name by which God revealed himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14; John 8:58).
- » **I am** ... the gate/door (John 10:7, 9).
- » **I am** ... the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14).
- » **I am** ... the Son of God (John 10:36).
- » **I am** ... the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).
- » **I am** ... Teacher and Lord (John 13:13).
- » **I am** ... the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6).
- » **I am** ... in the Father (John 14:10–11, 20).
- » **I am** ... the true vine (John 15:1, 5).
- » **I am** ... not of the world (John 17:14, 16).
- » **I am** ... a king (John 18:37).

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." —John 14:6

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Self-Guided Tour of the Bible

This easy-to-read full color handbook gives you a big-picture view of the Bible to set you up for a lifetime of Bible learning. Quickly get a firm grasp of key Bible foundations that will give you a clearer understanding of God and his Word than ever before! Discover Bible history and culture, people and characters in the Bible, major themes of every book, seeing Jesus in the Old Testament, and applying biblical truths to today's world. Includes over 200 charts, time lines, maps, and pictures.

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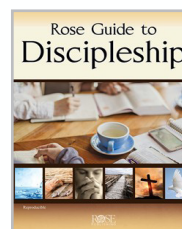
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Bible Overview

You know it's important to read God's Word—we read the Bible to get to know the Author himself, but it's an intimidating book! With 66 books written over 1600 years, by about 40 writers, and around 800,000 words, the Bible is massive and complicated with history, names, and events. Grasp each book quickly in this full-color handbook.

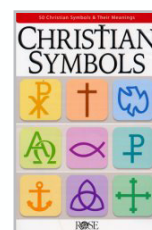
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