

## Walking through Scripture: A resource for pilgrims today

*This is what the Lord says:*

*“Stand at the crossroads and look;*

*ask for the ancient paths,*

*ask where the good way is, and walk in it,*

*and you will find rest for your souls.”*

*Jeremiah 6:16*

### **This resource is a creative tool for anyone who is:**

- i) About to embark on a pilgrimage.
- ii) Walking from one church to another.
- iii) Visiting a shrine or sacred place.
- iv) Walking as an opportunity to pray, reflect and meditate in the open air.
- v) At home and wishing to make a spiritual walk with God.

### **What you will need:**

An open and prayerful heart.

Curiosity about the Bible.

A Bible app or a physical Bible to refer to different texts.

A notebook and pens to records your thoughts and reflections; your prayers for yourself, for people and the world; for any drawings and doodles if you like being creative.

Flexibility - whether you want to walk for miles or just a short journey you can adapt this resource to suit your needs.

### **Planning:**

Do you need a map of your intended route?

Are you visiting some key churches or places of spiritual interest?

How many miles will your walk or pilgrimage be?

Look here for preparation, information and guidance - [www.pilgrimways.org.uk/learning](http://www.pilgrimways.org.uk/learning)

### **What to look out for:**

Where is God most present to you in nature and the environment?

Where does God speak to you in buildings or built-up areas?

Where do you hear God most clearly?

Where do you see the Creator's hand most powerfully?

Where do you find peace?

Where do you struggle?

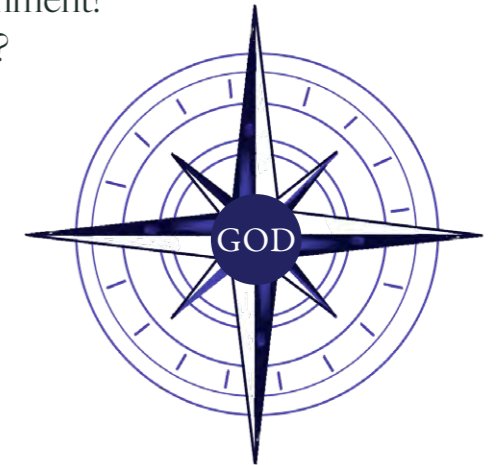
What kind of light guides you?

What do you hope for most?

When does Christ join you?

Where do you meet the Spirit?

What is your prayer for today?



### **How does this resource work?**

**1. This resource offers a reflective journey through the Bible and invites you to follow our Scriptural ancestors as you walk physically and spiritually to your chosen destination.**

It can be used for very short or much longer walks and pilgrimages.

It can be used at home for quiet prayer and contemplation.

You can use your own prayers to start and end your walk, or well-known prayers along the way or simply pray whenever it feels right for you.

### **2. It is divided into the following sections:**

i) An Introduction to walking in the Bible.

ii) Key people who made significant walks in the Old and New Testaments.

iii) Walking as a metaphor for spiritual growth.

### 3. When you know how long your walk or pilgrimage is, you might wish to plan how much of the time you can spend engaging with this resource.

For example -

#### You can choose a single Bible text or story to reflect on throughout your journey.

*Let these dwell in your heart as you are walking – you might like to repeat key words, phrases or emerging ideas in silence or out loud - slowly letting them guide your thoughts.*

*By finding a rhythm of walking and reflecting you can go deeper into listening to God and what he is saying to you at this time.*

#### You can use different Bible texts or stories at key points on your journey.

*You might wish to stop at specific points along your journey and read your chosen text or story. If you have time, you could see what comes before and after these texts in the Bible?*

*This allows you to understand their Scriptural contexts in a little more depth.*

*Or you might wish to stop for a break, take a single event and imagine being there using the Scriptures to immerse you in that time and place.*

*This allows you to connect with Scripture very directly.*

#### Or you can be open to the Holy Spirit guiding you to various Scripture texts as and when you feel ready.

*This allows you flexibility and freedom to choose a text or story when prompted by the Holy Spirit and to see where it takes you and your faith, trusting that God knows your needs.*

There is no right or wrong way to use this resource.

Let it show you the way.

Just make time for the journey whether indoors or outside, near or far from home.



### An Introduction to walking in the Bible.

In the Bible there are many people who made significant journeys by foot, horse, boat or ship. They journeyed in all weathers and without any of the basic tools and kit that so many serious travellers use today. This was a common experience for men, women, children and slaves.

#### Walking had many purposes but here are some significant reasons:

a) **For trade and commerce.** As new routes opened up people migrated in search of better land, housing and community building, and profitable work.

b) **To escape from war, slavery and oppression.** Nowhere are we reminded of this more vividly than with the Exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery in a journey of 40 years to achieve deliverance. While in the New Testament, Mary and Joseph travelled as refugees into Egypt soon after Jesus was born to prevent his early death, only returning to Nazareth when the political situation had settled.

c) **Enforced exile.** The Old Testament describes two major exiles:

- the Assyrian exile of the northern kingdom of Israel in about 722 BCE.

- the Babylonian exile of the southern kingdom of Judah in about 587 BCE.

The Assyrians deported many people from the northern kingdom of Israel to various parts of Mesopotamia and a large part of the land of Israel became separated and known as Samaria.

The Babylonians exiled a large portion of the population of Judah, including Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, and they destroyed the first Temple of Jerusalem. This exile lasted until 539 BCE when Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple in approximately 515 BCE. It stood until 70 CE, was extended, remodelled and embellished by Herod the Great but was destroyed during the First Jewish-Roman War when the Roman legions besieged Jerusalem. The Western Wall is the only part of the Second Temple that remains standing and to which thousands of people make a pilgrimage every year.

d) **As a direct call from God.** God called people to walk to a particular place and instructed them as to what they should do next. He chose all types of people to serve in many different ways, from children and teenagers to women and grandparents, patriarchs and prophets to shepherds and fishermen, from tax collectors and carpenters to writers and lawyers.

e) **As a spiritual metaphor.** As well as the many physical examples of walking in the Bible, the word 'walk' and its various forms in Hebrew and Greek are frequently used as a metaphor for living in a certain way or engaging in a particular life path. Throughout Scripture, to 'walk' often refers to a person's spiritual or moral conduct.

## Key People who made significant walks in the Bible.

### *The Old Testament*

In Genesis 3:8, God walks among his creation in the cool of the day. Although Adam and Eve had already been exploring the Garden of Eden, the Creator also has a stroll, and they hear him coming. It is during this encounter that Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, forced to move on and create a new way of life. God ordered a Cherubim with a flashing sword to guard the Garden of Eden and the way to the Tree of Life. So from the beginning our biblical brothers and sisters rarely stayed in one place. Noah's descendants migrated from Mount Ararat to Babel in Genesis 11:1-9.

Abraham is called "Abraham the Hebrew" in Genesis 14:13, which is the first time that the word Hebrew is used in the Bible. The root letters mean to cross over or pass through. Abraham came from the other side of the river. He and his family had travelled from close to the river Euphrates, crossed over into Haran, and then God called him back over the river again to the land which we now call Israel. Next God commanded Abraham and Sarah to move from Ur to Canaan, down to Egypt and back again in Genesis 12. While Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob moved to and from Beersheba, Haran, Bethel and the Transjordan in Genesis 24. Jacob's son Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery and taken into Egypt in Genesis 37. This journey would have momentous future consequences.

The word 'Hebrew' means a person who travels, and the emerging group of Hebrews later called the 'Israelites' travelled for 40 years before they were finally liberated. Moses himself was a traveller, abandoned as a baby and left to drift along the river where he is rescued by Pharaoh's daughter. Then when Moses obeys God's order and leads the people through the Red Sea onto dry land, he again travels through water to safety. The word 'Moses' in Hebrew means to be 'drawn out' so Moses fulfils his own name as a child and as an adult.

The prophet Jonah ends up travelling to Nineveh in a big fish because he disobeyed God by trying to board a ship in the opposite direction. While Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, leave Moab for Bethlehem due to the death of Ruth's husband and a famine. As widows and migrants, they earn their keep gleaning on the edge of fields owned by Boaz, a wealthy landowner before whom these two women found favour and sanctuary. Saul, David and Solomon travel as part of their divine commission usually to start or avoid yet another battle.

The Queen of Sheba travels to Jerusalem with a large caravan of camels carrying gold, spices, and precious stones to test King Solomon's wisdom. Yet Solomon's wisdom does not always extend to human justice. The conscripted army and trafficked slave labour that he uses to build the Temple were predominantly made up of people who were forced to travel for work and were underpaid to sustain and maximise his wealth.

The Bible emphasises the importance of companionship and divine guidance during travels to protect those who have a role in God's plan. This is beautifully evident in the Book of Tobit. The young Tobias is accompanied by the Archangel Raphael in disguise throughout his journey. Together they must retrieve his father's money safely, marry his kinswoman Sarah, hopefully reconcile their family lines and restore his father's eyesight.

Most of the major and minor prophets travelled to preach what the Lord had commanded them. Even to escape death such as when Elijah flees from Jezebel, wife of Ahab and climbs up Mount Horeb where God protects him in 1 Kings 17-19. Then later he runs to Beersheba when his life is still in danger. In 2 Kings 5, Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, travels from Syria to Samaria to be healed by the God of Israel.

So people from outside of Israel also come to faith in the Hebrew God becoming witnesses to the universal nature of the faith, anticipating the long journey of the wise men from the East to worship the newborn Christ.



## Passages for Reflection as you Walk

### Genesis 11:1-9

Noah's descendants migrate from Mount Ararat to Babel.

### Genesis 12: 1-9

Abraham and Sarah trust God and travel from Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Canaan.

### Genesis 24

Rebekah leaves her homeland of Haran to be Isaac's wife in Canaan.

### Genesis 32-35

Jacob wrestles with God and his promises as he goes from Haran to Bethel.

### Genesis 37 and 42

Joseph is sold by his brothers from Canaan to Egypt and later saves them.

### Exodus 2 – 5

God's people are enslaved in Egypt and Moses flees from Egypt to Midian.

Moses encounters God's presence in the Burning Bush and other powerful signs.

### Ruth

Famine and widowhood call Ruth and Naomi back to Bethlehem to start a new life.

### 1 Kings 17-19

Elijah the prophet flees Jezebel, the wife of Ahab and queen of Israel and goes up to Mount Horeb where God reveals himself in some unusual ways.

### 2 Kings 5

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, travels from Syria to Samaria to be healed by the God of Israel.

### Tobit

Tobias, son of Tobit is accompanied by the Archangel Raphael in disguise, on a journey to retrieve his father's money, marry his kinswoman Sarah and restore his father's eyesight.

### Jeremiah 18:1-7

God invites Jeremiah to visit a potter's studio and watch the potter working with clay, so that the prophet will hear God's words more clearly.

### Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel sees a valley filled with dry bones which becomes a symbol of Israel's desolation and exile. So God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy over these bones, calling them back to life.

### Jonah

Jonah travels to Nineveh in a big fish because he disobeys God by trying to board a ship in the opposite direction.

## *The New Testament*

So we see how journeys shape the Old Testament and how it later deals with the Israelites in Exile and return from Exile at two different times long before Jesus is born.

In the New Testament we know that Mary makes her first important journey to see her cousin Elizabeth when they are both pregnant, recounted in Luke's Gospel. The Magnificat song that emerges out of this family catch up becomes a prophetic poem focusing on the physical and spiritual journey from suffering to deliverance that takes place in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Also in Luke's gospel, Mary and Joseph have to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem while Mary is heavily pregnant because Caesar Augustus decreed that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. After Mary gives birth, they are soon on the move again and forced to flee to Egypt to avoid Jesus being killed. Although they will eventually settle down again in Nazareth, the beginning of Jesus' journey to the cross has already begun.

Luke is the only New Testament writer to structure his gospel in three parts using a travel narrative:

Jesus' extended journey from Galilee.

The central journey Jesus takes and his arrival in Jerusalem and onto God after his death.

The emerging church journeys from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth in Acts 1:8.

This journey symbolism allows us to prepare for the journey to Emmaus and to appreciate its wider implications beyond the revelation at the fellowship meal as the beginning of the Eucharist among all believers. It also enables us to travel alongside Jesus while he is underway, to keep up with the movement and pace of the narrative (literally and figuratively) and to understand the theological significance of Christ's mission and destiny. For Luke, God's revelation to us through his son Jesus is the purpose of the journey in which all travellers are called to witness along the way.

Once the Great Commission has been given in Matthew 28:16-20, Acts is the account of those earliest missionary journeys. God's Word is to be spread to all nations and all peoples, and Philip follows this command by going to Samaria in Acts 8:5. Saul is converted on the road to Damascus where he had travelled from Jerusalem to attack the Jesus movement in Acts 9. In Acts 11:19-26 Barnabas goes out from Jerusalem to plant a church in Antioch, but Stephen is killed travelling to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch preaching the Good News.

In Acts 16:13 Paul and his companions sought places of prayer by the river, showing travel as an opportunity for spiritual reflection and bonding with fellow believers. In Acts 8:26-40 - Philip has a profound encounter with an Ethiopian Eunuch under the authority of Queen Candace while travelling for work. The Eunuch is so determined to understand the Scriptures and express his faith, that as soon as he sees water along the road, he asks Philip to baptise him, and continues rejoicing in his new-found faith.

The Apostle Paul's travels are among the most documented and significant journeys in the New Testament. He made four major journeys in his lifetime and walked some 10,000 miles across what are now Turkey and Greece, before finally arriving in Rome.

Our brief exploration of travel in the Scriptures highlights the hardships and perils that come with fulfilling the divine mission and the need for faith, persistence and resilience in the face of adversity. Yet all these people embarked upon unexpected but transformative journeys leading them to a new relationship with God and to a new freedom.



## New Testament Passages for Reflection as you Walk

### Matthew 2:13-23

An angel appears to Joseph in a dream telling him to flee to Egypt with Mary and the baby Jesus since King Herod wants to kill him.

### Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus walks to the top of a mountain and waits for the disciples and crowds to join him. He preaches the 'Sermon on the Mount' also known as 'The Beatitudes' to them all.

### Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus travels to Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asks his disciples who do people say he is? Peter's profound act of faith leads Jesus to bless him and make him the head of the church.

### Luke 1:39-45

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant. When Mary greets Elizabeth, she feels her baby move within her. Mary sings the 'Magnificat' in praise of God.

### Luke 10:1-12

Jesus sends out 72 disciples to prepare the way for him. He asks them to take very little with them, to trust in him wherever they go and not to be deterred whenever they are rejected.

### Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan's journey told by Jesus explores the importance of compassion and of helping anyone in need regardless of their background.

### Luke 10:38-42

Jesus visits the house of Martha and Mary in Bethany and shows them what is important to focus on in life.

### Luke 15:11-32

In the story of the Prodigal Son a young man leaves his home and squanders his inheritance on a life of pleasure before returning to his father, who welcomes him with open arms.

### Luke 24:13-35

This post-resurrection story accompanies two people who while mourning Jesus' death, travel to Emmaus when a stranger joins them and talks about the Scriptures. They recognise him as Jesus only when he breaks bread with them and their hearts are filled with joy.

### Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-13 and Luke 9:28-36

On Mount Tabor, Jesus is gloriously transfigured with Moses and Elijah beside him. Peter, James, and John witness the event and are filled with awe and fear.

### John 4:4-30

Jesus talks with the Samaritan woman at the well while collecting water. She is an outcast in her community but is restored to new life in Jesus. She immediately shares the Good News.

### John 20: 1-18

Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus at the empty tomb and becomes the Apostle to the Apostles.

### Hebrews 11:1-31

A picture of the faith of our ancestors who walked with God as inspiration for our faith today.

## Walking as a Metaphor:

The Bible uses the phrases ‘walking in the Spirit’ and ‘walking by’ or ‘in faith’ to mean living according to the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, as opposed to the desires of the world. This includes following the Law and Commandments of God, the Teachings of Jesus and the guidelines laid down by Paul and the other New Testament writers.

This type of walking requires integrity, trust in God’s purposes even when they are not obvious or clear, honesty and faithfulness at all times. It implies a deep reverence for God as the creator of all things and whose will we are to follow throughout our lives. To walk in this way, we are invited to cultivate a relationship with God. This takes time, in fact, our whole lifetime. We need to get to know him, to listen to his voice in our daily prayers, our worship and service, and in the needs of the world around us.

The Bible promises blessings for anyone who chooses to walk in God’s ways: *‘Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways!’* says Psalm 128:1. This is a core theme of the book of Psalms.

The Israelites were called to ‘walk in obedience’ to God and when they disobeyed him, there were always consequences. Moses led the people through the wilderness and berated them when they refused to comply. This idea of walking spiritually is also a dominant theme with the prophets, who drawing on the laws in the Pentateuch develop these further in their demand for greater social justice. Walking then has both a spiritual purpose – to become closer to God, and an ethical purpose - to be more like God in his love and compassion.

Once the prophets start reminding their people that acting justly and loving mercy are more important aspects of faith than superficial worship and sacrifice, the ancient rules take on a new level of engagement. And this sets the scene for the Wisdom literature in which the details of daily life truly matter – how we relate to each other and to the world shapes our understanding of God. Uniting these basic principles of justice in the heart as well as in the home, at work and in the public square draws the Law, the Prophets and what Jesus will model in his life, death and resurrection, together into a richer way of walking with God.

So the Bible is the definitive roadmap for all believers. It illuminates the path ahead of us, it provides us with a compass to walk with God and with other people, and it guides us towards the truth of Christ in this world and the next.

Yet there will always be a cost to this walking, as Jesus says in Luke 9:23: *‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’*

Walking in the ways of God therefore has several dimensions:

It is a lifelong journey: it is a continual process of growth, maturity and conversion.

It is a personal and communal journey: it involves individual prayer and reflection and active participation in the Church’s life and community.

It is a journey of real, lived experience: it includes both times of joy and times of suffering that ask us to trust in God’s plans even when we cannot see a clear road ahead.

It is a journey of transformation: it leads to a deeper relationship with God and each other, and to a more meaningful life which will also prepare us for the next life.

## Short Texts for Reflection as you Walk

### *The Old Testament*

#### Deuteronomy 10:12-13

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?

#### Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

#### Psalm 119:1

“Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

#### Psalm 143:8

Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,  
for in you I trust.  
Make me know the way I should go,  
for to you I lift up my soul.

**Proverbs 13:20**

Walk with the wise and become wise,  
for a companion of fools suffers harm.

**Isaiah 40:31**

... but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.

**Jeremiah 6:16**

This is what the Lord says:  
“Stand at the crossroads and look;  
ask for the ancient paths,  
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your souls.”

**Hosca 14:9**

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things;  
whoever is discerning, let him know them;  
for the ways of the Lord are right,  
and the upright walk in them,  
but transgressors stumble in them.

**Micah 6:8**

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

*The New Testament*

**Matthew 26:38-39**

Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

**John 8:12**

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

**Romans 8:24-28**

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**2 Corinthians 5:6-9**

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

**2 Corinthians 10:3**

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

**Galatians 5:16**

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

**Galatians 5:25**

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

**Colossians 1:9-12**

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

**Colossians 2:6-7**

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

**1 John 2:5-6**

... but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.



## Resources for Further Reading and Reflection

## Do it yourself Retreat: A Time for Everything

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/a-time-for-everything-do-it-yourself-retreat/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/a-time-for-everything-do-it-yourself-retreat/)

## Who am I? Finding my Identity in Scripture

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/who-am-i-finding-identity-in-scripture/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/who-am-i-finding-identity-in-scripture/)

## Labyrinth Prayer and Reflection Resource

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/labyrinth-prayer-resource/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/labyrinth-prayer-resource/)

## Jesus and the Power of Place Posters

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#jpp](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#jpp)

## Bible Timelines and Paul's life and travels Posters

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#bibletimeline](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#bibletimeline)

## Travelling around the Gospels Posters:

## Matthew's Gospel

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#j](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#j)

## Mark's Gospel

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#mg](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#mg)

## Luke's Gospel

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#lg](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#lg)

## John's Gospel

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#jg](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#jg)

## Scripture and Churches

[www.godwhospeaks.uk/scripture-and-churches/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/scripture-and-churches/)

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