What to Expect

Before you begin, let me address several frequently asked questions.

How Does This Work?

The *Daily Reflections* are devotions. At the top left are the date and the assigned passage(s) to read. At the top right are the day number (out of 365) and the number of days left to go. In the left column is a summary or explanation of the passage(s). In the right column are a challenge or encouragement and introspective questions with space for you to respond.

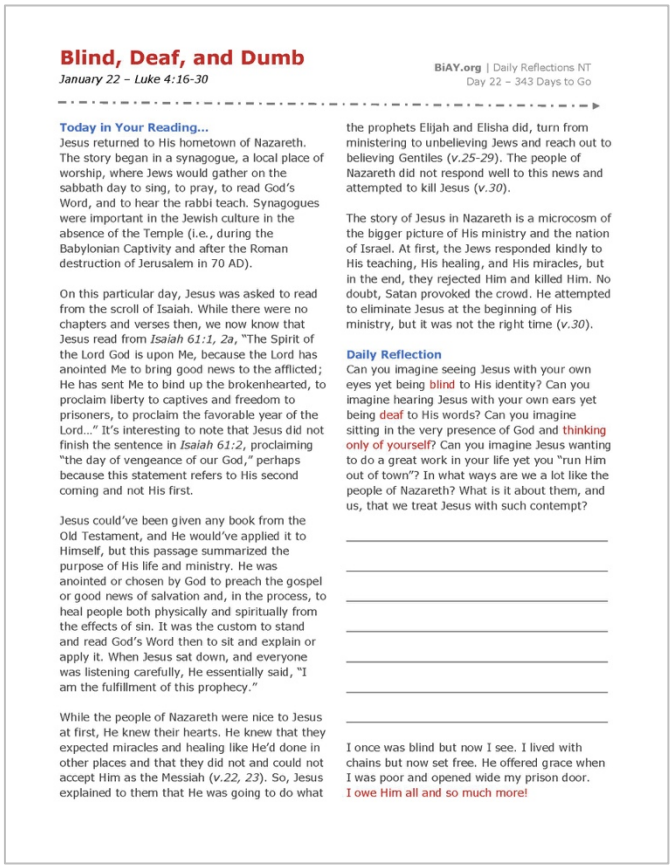
How Much Time Will It Take?

There are 27 books in the New Testament, with 260 chapters and 7956 verses. Divided by 365 days, the New Testament can be completed by reading 22 verses a day. Compared to the Bible in a year, in which you read 3-5 chapters a day, 22 verses don't sound like much. Of course, there will be days when you read more and days when you will read less. To be successful, you should allot 15-20 minutes a day to read your Bible, ponder the daily reflection, and respond to the questions. Of course, you can always spend more time studying if you prefer.

Regarding the year, the four gospels comprise 47% of the New Testament verses, which means you will complete the story of Jesus near the end of May. The history of the church and the letters of Paul comprise 38% of the New Testament, which means you will complete them near the end of October. All that's left is 15%, which is comprised of the other letters and the book of *Revelation.*

Which Bible Should I Use?

The reading schedule corresponds to the *One Year Chronological Bible NLT* (2000) by Tyndale Publishing. The New Testament begins in that Bible on September 24. You can use this version and read along even though the dates will not match. If you do not have that Bible, that's okay. You can use the translation of your choice. Just follow the assigned passages at the top of the devotions.



Blind, Deaf, and Dumb

January 22 – Luke 4:16-30

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Day 22 – 343 Days to Go

Today in Your Reading...
Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth. The story began in a synagogue, a local place of worship, where Jews would gather on the sabbath day to sing, to pray, to read God's Word, and to hear the rabbi teach. Synagogues were important in the Jewish culture in the absence of the Temple (i.e., during the Babylonian Captivity and after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD).

On this particular day, Jesus was asked to read from the scroll of Isaiah. While there were no chapters and verses then, we now know that Jesus read from *Isaiah 61:1, 2a*, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord..." It's interesting to note that Jesus did not finish the sentence in *Isaiah 61:2*, proclaiming "the day of vengeance of our God," perhaps because this statement refers to His second coming and not His first.

Jesus could've been given any book from the Old Testament, and He would've applied it to Himself, but this passage summarized the purpose of His life and ministry. He was anointed or chosen by God to preach the gospel or good news of salvation and, in the process, to heal people both physically and spiritually from the effects of sin. It was the custom to stand and read God's Word then to sit and explain or apply it. When Jesus sat down, and everyone was listening carefully, He essentially said, "I am the fulfillment of this prophecy."

While the people of Nazareth were nice to Jesus at first, He knew their hearts. He knew that they expected miracles and healing like He'd done in other places and that they did not and could not accept Him as the Messiah (*v.22, 23*). So, Jesus explained to them that He was going to do what the prophets Elijah and Elisha did, turn from ministering to unbelieving Jews and reach out to believing Gentiles (*v.25-29*). The people of Nazareth did not respond well to this news and attempted to kill Jesus (*v.30*).

The story of Jesus in Nazareth is a microcosm of the bigger picture of His ministry and the nation of Israel. At first, the Jews responded kindly to His teaching, His healing, and His miracles, but in the end, they rejected Him and killed Him. No doubt, Satan provoked the crowd. He attempted to eliminate Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, but it was not the right time (*v.30*).

Daily Reflection
Can you imagine seeing Jesus with your own eyes yet being blind to His identity? Can you imagine hearing Jesus with your own ears yet being deaf to His words? Can you imagine sitting in the very presence of God and thinking only of yourself? Can you imagine Jesus wanting to do a great work in your life yet you "run Him out of town"? In what ways are we a lot like the people of Nazareth? What is it about them, and us, that we treat Jesus with such contempt?

I once was blind but now I see. I lived with chains but now set free. He offered grace when I was poor and opened wide my prison door.
I owe Him all and so much more!

Do I Have to Start in January?

While the Daily Reflections are designed to begin January 1, you may begin whenever you prefer. Though the date is at the top left of each devotion, the day number is at the top right, so you can easily keep track of your progress no matter what day you begin.

What If It Takes Me Longer Than a Year?

God does not keep score. The time it takes for you to complete the New Testament is not important. What's important is that you are reading and studying God's Word. Don't quit!

What If I Have a Question?

If you have a question or comment at any point during the year, please don't hesitate to email me at aferguson@biay.org.

God bless you on your journey. See you at the end!