

“It is so easy to fall into an over-familiar reading of the Bible after many years of Bible reading. Glen’s great gift is to show us what we are reading; to bring sparkle back to these wonderful Bible phrases. For those new to the Bible, Reading Between The Lines helps them to see how this book has shaped our daily language. For many people I know these studies helped them to venture out into new territory in the Bible, those parts that they didn’t usually read. This is an excellent book and a great gift.”

Paul Blackham, Vicar of St Crispin’s, Highbury
and author of *The Great Unknown*

“Glen Scrivener can be relied upon for brilliant insights into God’s Word, which he then turns into bang-up-to-the-minute applications. His writing is challenging, but always a pleasure, and his desire to honour Christ in all things is infectious and refreshing.”

James Cary, writer of *Death by Civilisation* and *The God Particle*

“Short, challenging and very applicable. Tremendous daily readings! Get this book, you will not be disappointed.”

Alistair Chalmers, Assistant Pastor of
Bruntsfield Evangelical Church, Edinburgh

“I love this book! Glen has a knack for looking at familiar biblical texts from unfamiliar angles, and he’s done it again here. Pithy yet profound, easy to read yet deeply challenging, Reading Between The Lines uncovers a multitude of surprising ways in which the Scriptures speak about Jesus.”

Steve Jeffery, Minister of Emmanuel Church, North London,
and co-author of *Pierced for Our Transgressions*

“Most books about the Bible leave you feeling that it is a difficult book. Glen’s book, however, leaves the reader feeling ‘I really must enjoy reading my Bible more so I can see the beauty and wisdom of Jesus Christ.’”

Steve Levy, Pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist, Swansea,
author of *Bible Overview*

“Give this book to the person you want to know Jesus better.”

Nate Morgan Locke, author of *Soul* and co-author of *Life Explored*

“Glen has the enviable gifting of simply and beautifully showing you Jesus in all the Scriptures. This book will adjust the focus lens of your heart to see more clearly the wonder of our Savior from beginning to end. It will make you happy in Jesus.”

Michael Luehrmann, Pastor of City Evangelical Church, Leeds

“This book stands out amidst the multitude of others in this genre because Glen actually believes that the Scriptures are about Jesus. Within a week you’ll forget that you used to think that seeing Christ on every page was a challenge, and you’ll be reading your Bible because you want more of Jesus and the life he brings.”

Rich Owen, Senior Pastor of Worthing Tabernacle

“Glen Scrivener has done it again. Reading Between the Lines: New Testament Daily Readings is, like its companion Old Testament volume, a treasury of digestible reflections that will reinvigorate your soul. Do you often feel cold toward the most important Book you own? This devotional—filled with on-ramps to insightful exegesis and off-ramps to everyday application—will continually warm your heart beside the fire of God’s Word.”

Matt Smethurst, author of *Before You Open Your Bible*
and Managing Editor of *The Gospel Coalition*

“Glen Scrivener has produced a book of daily devotions on the New Testament that is jam packed with insights that will warm your heart. Avoiding the danger of a daily ‘do this ...’ and taking us on a journey of a daily ‘done by Jesus’, Glen then leads us to a daily feast of ‘delighting in Christ’. Wonderfully refreshing.”

Jonathan Thomas, Minister of Cornerstone Evangelical Church,
Abergavenny and Pastoral Dean of Union School of Theology

“During a particularly difficult time of church ministry, these daily reflections kept me going. This book will strengthen you with gospel encouragement and keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.”

Tim Vasby-Burnie, Vicar of St George’s Church, Shrewsbury

“Glen combines a reverent focus on the Christ-filled meaning of all Scripture with his world-class skill of making things clear. That is what makes these precious daily studies so enlightening and nourishing.”

Joel Virgo, Senior Pastor, Emmanuel Church, Brighton

READING

BETWEEN

THE LINES

NEW TESTAMENT DAILY READINGS

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3 2 1: The Story of God, The World and You

Divine Comedy, Human Tragedy

Four Kinds of Christmas

Love Story

Reading Between The Lines Volume 1

VOLUME 2

READING

BETWEEN

THE LINES

NEW TESTAMENT DAILY READINGS

GLEN SCRIVENER

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To my mother,
whose prayers are priceless.

FOREWORD

Do you want to read the Bible, but struggle to? That's normal. Christians are people who have sensed something of the life and joy to be found in Scripture, but who often find it hard. Sometimes life feels too busy, sometimes the Bible just doesn't make sense to us, sometimes we think we know the gist and we're bored. This is a book for those times and for those who just want some fresh air in their lungs as they read. Fresh, insightful, and packed with lovely surprises, it draws you in and whets your appetite for more.

You might think there must be lots of books like this one. And yes, many have written notes to help Christians with their daily Bible reading. But, there is often a problem. Because they aim to give you some fresh application each day (which is no bad aim!) they can give you the impression that the Bible is a self-help manual. So we get into the habit of looking in the Bible for things about me: How can I do better today? How can God sort out my problems today?

If you know anything about Glen Scrivener, you won't be surprised: Glen doesn't fall for that sort of thing. Quite the opposite: these daily readings take your focus off yourself. Now that may not sound good to you, because we really like thinking about ourselves! But with Glen, you'll see, it's like taking your eyes off your feet and getting a good look at the Alps. For Glen takes your focus and fixes it on Jesus in all his grace and glory. And that, it turns out, is much more profoundly transformative than any self-help manual. So read on and you'll find that, as Glen points you to Jesus, you're drawn to marvel and rejoice

and treasure Christ more each day. For these things “are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31, ESV).

Michael Reeves,

President and Professor of Theology at Union School of Theology

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

VOLUME 2—NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus said, “The Scriptures ... testify about me” (John 5:39).

We are desperately needy. If we are deprived of air, food or water we are soon compost. We constantly need life to come to us from the outside. This is true physically and it's also true spiritually. Every day we need the living Bread, Jesus. And every day the Spirit offers him in the Word.

The Scriptures are God-breathed, written to give us the kiss of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17). They are rains to water our parched souls (Isaiah 55:10-11). They are food for the famished as they offer us Christ (Deuteronomy 8:3). Therefore we come to the Bible not as a spiritual offering but in desperate need of receiving. We read Scripture not to impress God, but that, through his gospel, he might impress us. We approach our daily devotions as beggars asking our gracious Father to feed us again with the Bread of life.

Through the ages the church has seen the Bible as, more than anything else, the Spirit's testimony to the Son. It is not mainly a roadmap or an instruction manual for life. It is a biography of Jesus: commissioned by the Father, authored by the Spirit and addressed to the church.

With this in mind, *Reading Between The Lines* is not a daily pep-talk to inspire you to greater deeds. I have no idea what you face today. Most of the time, neither do you. What I do know is this: whatever you face, you need Jesus. My prayer is that you will meet him as you read the Scriptures.

I have suggested readings for each day—sometimes a verse, sometimes whole chapters. Feel free to read more or less according to what you're able to. If you're pressed for time, read Scripture not Scrivener!

I haven't suggested any "set" prayers for you to pray, but I hope that hearing God's voice might start a conversation. Before shutting this book and continuing with your day, I'd urge you to pause, reflect and respond to God in prayer. Most of all I hope that my words won't distract you but, instead, get you deeper into God's Word.

As you read and as you pray I trust that this, your greatest need, would become your daily delight: to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16, ESV).

THE WORD MADE FLESH

Tom Torrance was an army chaplain in World War II. Acting as a stretcher-bearer he came across Private Phillips, a nineteen-year-old soldier bleeding out from his wounds. With only minutes to live, Phillips looked up to Torrance and asked, “Padre, is God really like Jesus?”

When you’re about to meet your Maker, you need to know what he’s like. John’s gospel begins by assuring us of the deepest truth: God is entirely and exactly like Jesus because Jesus is the eternal Word of the Father:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

Words communicate. They express. They reveal. Therefore God is revealed in a Person—a Person called “the Word.”

Who is this Word? Verse 14 declares:

The Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14).

The Word is the Christmas baby! Born of Mary and laid in a manger, the Word is Jesus. Or maybe it’s better to say that Jesus is the Word.

Jesus did not begin his existence in Mary’s womb. As he stood before the Jews of the first century he declared, “before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 8:58). He has always existed along with his Father and the Holy Spirit. He has always been God’s Word.

As we see Jesus drawing near, stooping to our level, loving, healing, touching, teaching, suffering, bleeding and dying for us, Jesus is

showing us God. In fact there's no other God to know except the God revealed in Jesus, the Word.

That's what Tom Torrance said to the dying soldier. "I assured him that [God was like Jesus]—the only God that there is, the God who had come to us in Jesus, shown his face to us, and poured out his love to us as our Savior. As I prayed and commended [Private Phillips] to the Lord Jesus, he passed away."¹

It is astonishing to think that, in those dying moments, the God to whom Private Phillips entrusted himself was the One who knows personally what it is to bleed out. The "flesh" which the Word became is flesh that could be bruised and cut and bleed—flesh that was bruised, was cut and did bleed for you and me.

Let's turn to examine now that little word "flesh." It really is shocking. It reveals just how low the Word has stooped.

In Latin translations it's the word "carnis"—the source of the word "incarnation," and, less impressively, the origin of chilli con carne (a.k.a. chilli with meat!). That's the sense of "flesh" here. The Word became meat.

Ask a biologist to describe humanity and they might use the phrase "homo sapiens."

Ask a philosopher to describe humanity and they might say, "a rational animal."

Ask a butcher to describe humanity and they might say, "carnis," "flesh," meat!

When Jesus came it was not in a dreamy visitation. He did not float six inches off the ground or don a halo. He didn't descend like a deep sea diver, wearing a man-suit. The Word did not "put on" flesh, "enter" flesh, "borrow" flesh, "hide behind" flesh, "get diluted" in flesh. The Word was made flesh.

¹ Cited in Robert Letham, *Union with Christ* (P&R Publishing, 2011), p. 37.

God has humanity. And his name is Jesus.

He became what we are, so that we might become what he is. He came into our situation to invite us into his situation. He entered our family—the human race—so that we can enter his Family—the Trinity! He, the Son of God, became flesh, so that we who are flesh might become sons and daughters of God. This is a God to whom we can entrust ourselves, in life and in death.