



Welcome to the
ANCIENT CHRISTIAN
DEVOTIONAL

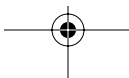
*For if the days of a person should be as many
as all the days of the world from Adam to the end of the ages
and he should sit and meditate on the holy Scriptures, he would not
comprehend all the force of the depth of the words.*

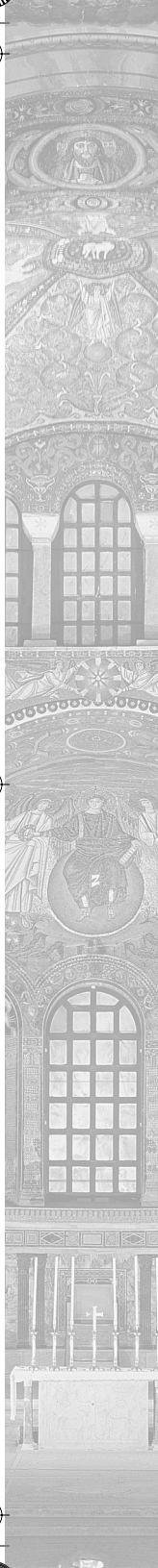
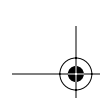
APHRAHAT, DEMONSTRATIONS 22:26



Many Christians today lack grounding in the riches of church history. We may find ourselves “rootless and drifting in a barren secular and ecclesiastical landscape.”* The church fathers offer us context and tradition that will help us establish the roots we need. They do so by taking us deeper into the rich resources of Scripture, helping us to read holy writings with ancient eyes.

This devotional combines excerpts from the writings of the church fathers as found in *The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* with a simple structure of daily reading and prayer. It is designed to allow you to work through the material at your own pace. You can read a little each day, or, if you like to have a longer time of prayer once a week, it would work nicely in that format as well.





ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL ✦

There are fifty-two weeks of readings, which follow the liturgical year. The year begins with the readings for the first Sunday in Advent, four Sundays before Christmas. Depending on where Easter falls in a given year, you may need to adjust your reading. The readings for the first Sunday of Lent begin in Week 13 and go through Week 18. Easter is in Week 19. Six weeks of Easter readings then follow. If Easter was early and you skipped some readings, you might at this point go back and pick them up. Pentecost is in Week 26. In Week 27 we then pick up the dating of the entries. You will also find a special week of readings in Week 48 for All Saints' Day—which is celebrated November first or the first Sunday in November.

Each week you will find the following elements.

THEME

An overview of the week's theme, drawing together the texts of the week. (The texts generally follow Lectionary Cycle A.)

OPENING PRAYER

A simple prayer taken from early church sources, which you can pray daily.

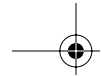
READINGS

Each week you will find an Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel reading, in keeping with the long tradition of the church lectionary cycles (depending on the liturgical cycle, some readings may differ slightly).

PSALM OF RESPONSE

The psalm can be used for prayer and meditation. It is there to help you offer words of petition and praise to God. You may want to pray through it daily.





WELCOME TO THE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

These quotes offer insight on the Scripture passage. Read a few of these quotes each day, and stop when you feel stirred to pray or ponder. Give yourself time to reflect before God on what you are learning. You may want to journal your thoughts.

CLOSING PRAYER

This simple prayer drawn from ancient sources is designed to be used daily to close your time with God.

If you want to spend ten or fifteen minutes with this material each day, a suggested structure for your time would be to read the opening prayer, the psalm, one of the Scripture texts, two or three of the reflections from the church fathers, and the closing prayer. Feel free to write in the book to note the sections you have completed as you go.

Don't worry about getting through the material on any particular schedule. Allow God to speak to you. Listen. Rest. This book should not be a source of guilt but a resource of grace. May your reading draw you to dig deep into the riches of God's Word.

To search the sacred Scripture is very good and most profitable for the soul. For "like a tree which is planted near the running waters," so does the soul watered by sacred Scripture also grow hearty and bear fruit in due season. This is the orthodox faith. It is adorned with its evergreen leaves, with actions pleasing to God. (John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith* 4.17)

*Robert Wilken, as quoted in Christopher Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

