

RON JONES

THE
Ultimate
ROAD TRIP
THROUGH THE BIBLE



OLD TESTAMENT

A survey of Old Testament books is not supposed to be fun or a particularly interesting read. But Dr. Ron Jones has dealt that perspective a death blow. This book is fun, interesting, informative, and insightful. I love it! Any expositor will be well served to consult it before diving into any Old Testament book. He or she will find this book to be well worth the read.

DR. DANIEL AKIN

President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible can serve as a read along companion as you read the Bible in your daily life. Ron combines his pastoral experience, Bible teaching skill, and theological knowledge with his down-to-earth communication style to take us on this journey of getting to know the people, places, and life-changing truth of the Old Testament.

DR. BRIAN AUTRY

Executive Director, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia

Not all preachers and teachers ever take the full Route 66 Tour of each book of the Bible in their study. Even fewer dare to preach their way through the whole council of God as contained in the whole Bible. Ron Jones has done both, and the fruit is an excellent guide to each book of the Bible.

DR. MARK BAILEY

Chancellor, Dallas Theological Seminary

We're all looking for direction for our lives. Ron Jones shows us how the Bible gives us just that. Whether you're just beginning your spiritual journey, or you are farther down the road, *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible* is an amazing guide for the trip of a lifetime.

DR. JEFF BARBER

Executive Director, Park Cities Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas

The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible is a wonderful introduction to the Old Testament and its core themes. It is crisp, clear, and full of suggested applications that allows someone not familiar with biblical content to get a frame for how the books of the Bible tell a full coherent story of what God is about. Comparing it to a trip on Route 66 in anticipation of the New Testament volume, I'd say fasten your seat belts for an enjoyable, informative ride.

DR. DARRELL BOCK

*Executive Director of Cultural Engagement and Senior Research
Professor of New Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary*

Fasten your seat belts! With Dr. Jones in the driver's seat, *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible* takes you on an amazing biblical sightseeing journey as you seek to reach your final destination, the heavenly home. I can hardly wait for the second volume on the New Testament.

DR. DAVID SEDACA

Vice President, Chosen People Ministries

Dr. Ron Jones invests great care to map out a route through the Old Testament with attention to detail, while setting our eyes on the great story, God's story, from Genesis to Malachi. This first volume of *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible* offers a wonderful picture of God's redemptive plan in an introductory fashion.

DR. TROY TEMPLE

Dean of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

THE
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ROAD TRIP
THROUGH THE BIBLE

R O N J O N E S





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THE ULTIMATE ROAD TRIP THROUGH THE BIBLE

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*I gratefully dedicated this book to my Lord Jesus Christ
and the sheep of His sheepfold who hunger for His word,
especially those at Atlantic Shores Baptist Church
in Virginia Beach, Virginia.*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ultimate road trip through the Bible would not have happened without the help of so many people, starting with my wife, Cathryn, and our adult children, Reagan and Caroline. The concept for what became a sixty-six-week sermon series—first delivered to my church family, then developed into the book you hold in your hands—began during a Jones family road trip in the middle of a global pandemic, following my daughter’s college graduation. The people who provide the greatest human joy in my life compelled me to give the series concept serious and prayerful consideration.

I had always wanted to preach through the Bible in a way that helped people grasp the whole of it. As a pastor and enthusiastic Bible teacher for nearly thirty years, I know the Bible’s sixty-six books tell one continuous story and have one main character from Genesis to Revelation—Jesus, who is the Christ! But how does it all fit together? Besides, could I really preach through one book of the Bible each week for sixty-six weeks? What was I thinking? Would people stay engaged? Would my mind and heart remain occupied by a series that took more than a year to complete? Was I setting myself up for a terrible crash along the biblical Route 66, somewhere near Leviticus?

Two months later, I shared the concept with my exemplary ministry staff and creative team. They, too, embraced it with excitement, and we quickly decided to align all ministries to the sixty-six-week biblical road trip. The entire church family would make the journey together, through all age groups—adults, children, and students.

Thus, we scheduled “Route 66: The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible” to begin the first Sunday in January 2021. One more affirmation surprised me. When we previewed the series to the congregation at Atlantic Shores Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where I serve as lead pastor, something happened that had never happened before. After the video trailer played, the church family broke out in spontaneous applause in all three Sunday worship gatherings. I knew then God was up to something good. I am blessed to serve a local church family that enthusiastically responds to the teaching of God’s word.

Along the way, others have been a huge help with flat tires and other maintenance issues during our sixty-six-week road trip. For example, Debbie Pound provided outstanding editorial services while also serving as our Director of Kids Ministry. Although we have different opinions about the use of the Oxford comma (I prefer it), her keen eye and love for proper grammar, spelling, and syntax always improved my writing.

Michael Rouleau, my pastoral assistant, read the entire manuscript and reviewed it theologically, keeping me in the center of the biblical freeway. Along the way, he earned another advanced degree from Liberty University. Congratulations, Michael! We now call him Dr. Rouleau.

Having served as a senior executive at a major Christian book publisher, Julie Tingstrom has been a constant source of literary encouragement and help since we met years ago in the Washington DC area. Julie also serves on the Something Good Radio board of trustees and is helping to kick start Something Good Publishing, all while moving to Colorado this year with her energetic and equally inspiring husband, Mick. The Joneses love doing life and ministry with the Tingstroms!

The Hibbard Group is another source of encouragement and strategic insight for me. For years, Jack Hibbard has served as the media agent for Something Good Radio (est. 2011) and helped us celebrate our tenth anniversary of broadcasting the Good News of

Jesus Christ and Bible teaching for everyday life during the global pandemic. Jack is more than an all-star media agent and board member; Cathryn and I consider Jack and his wife, Erin, great friends.

This ditty would not be complete without acknowledging the Something Good Radio board of trustees, who serve faithfully, pray regularly, give generously, and provide wise counsel for the ministry.

Finally, three cheers to Janet Carter and her team at Marketing nSight for the design and layout of the book cover and interior. It takes a creative village to publish a book that looks good and is enjoyable to read.

Preaching my way through the entire Bible, albeit from thirty-thousand feet, has been one of the most transformative experiences in my thirty years of ministry. My prayer is that God uses the book you hold in your hands and the team that helped put it together to introduce you to the Book of books, and its Author, in a way that changes your life, too.

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— INTRODUCTION —

W elcome to the ultimate road trip through the Bible. Whether you are a seasoned student of the Holy Scriptures or picking up this best-selling book of all time for the first time, get ready for the ride of your life. As your driver along the biblical Route 66, I promise to watch my speed and obey most traffic laws. However, be prepared. We will certainly encounter some road construction along the ancient paths.

The Bible is a collection of holy writ and divine books—sixty-six of them! There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament. However, the Book of books is one story with one main character, the Christ who was to come in the Old Testament and the Christ who came, Jesus, in the New Testament. Therefore, along the ultimate road trip through the Bible, I will make the Christ connection in each Old Testament book and point you to the Jesus juncture in each New Testament book. The Bible is all about Jesus Christ, God’s one and only Son and our Redeemer.

For a book written over the span of sixteen hundred years by forty different authors on three continents and in three different languages, the Bible possesses an amazing continuity. That continuity is one of the arguments made for the Bible’s divine inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21). The human authors God chose to pen the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments vary significantly in their background, culture,

education, occupation, social status, and ability. They were farmers, fishermen, priests, physicians, politicians, kings, and shepherds. God even used a tax collector to write a biography of His Son, Jesus.

If you enjoy literature, you will love the Bible. Holy Scripture contains every form of literature known in academia, including poetry, proverb, history, narrative, law, biography, parable, prophetic, apocalyptic, gospel, and letter. Many colleges and universities offer a literature course on the Bible. What other book on the planet inspires people to study it for its literary genius alone?

God used visions and dreams, angels, clay tablets, burning bushes, face-to-face encounters, the spoken and written word, and the jawbone of a donkey to communicate with those He created in His image. He did so because He loves us and desires a relationship with us.

How does one explain so many people over a long period of time writing about God, history, religious life, and more, and yet doing so in perfect editorial harmony, each adding to the overall story? There is only one plausible explanation. The superintending mind of God inspired the writing of these books across many centuries and pieced them together like a jigsaw puzzle.

A well-respected Bible scholar named Norman Geisler writes, “Note the amazing unity. These sixty-six books unfold one continuous drama of redemption, paradise lost to paradise regained, creation to the consummation of all things. There is one central theme, the person of Jesus Christ. . . . There is one message: Humankind’s problem is sin, and the solution is salvation through Christ.”¹

The Books of the Law

Our first road trip along the ultimate road trip through the Bible focuses on the first five books of the Bible, known as the

INTRODUCTION

Pentateuch, the books of the law. They include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Jews refer to them as the written Torah.

The best scholarship says Moses penned this robust library under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nearly thirty-five hundred years ago. These ancient writings have stood the test of time because they are God's holy word.

The Historical Books

Our second road trip along the biblical Route 66 focuses on twelve Old Testament Historical Books, which include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

In a 1948 speech to the House of Commons, Winston Churchill paraphrased George Santayana when he said, "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it." The adage certainly applies to Israel's spiritual history recorded in the Old Testament for our learning. Like the Books of the Law, these ancient writings have also stood the test of time because they are God's holy word.

The Wisdom Books

Our third road trip focuses on five Old Testament Wisdom Books, which include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. More than mere knowledge, wisdom is the ability to apply truth skillfully to life.

Thus, Job is God's wisdom during times of pain and suffering. Psalms is God's wisdom for our vertical relationship with God, while Proverbs is divine wisdom for the life we live horizontally. Ecclesiastes is God's wisdom about the ultimate meaning of life. Finally, the Song of Solomon is God's wisdom about love, marriage, sex, and romantic relationships. This small library of divine wisdom is a treasury worth reading repeatedly.

The Major Prophets

Our fourth road trip focuses on the Major Prophets and their writings: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These books are called “major” due to their length, compared to the shorter writings of the twelve Minor Prophets, which are equally impactful. The Old Testament prophets arose during the ministry of Samuel, who began the first school for prophets (1 Samuel 19:18-24). There were many more prophets who spoke into Israel’s national life than the sixteen who contributed to the canon of Scripture.

God sent prophets with messages that called Israel, His wayward bride, to repentance. The Old Testament prophets ministered before, during, and after Israel’s Babylonian exile. Of the Major Prophets, Isaiah is the only one who served God during the pre-exile period, warning the Israelites of coming judgment if they persisted in their idolatrous ways. The rest lived and delivered their stern messages during the exile, always inserting hope into the hearts of God’s chosen people. Prophets called by God delivered both forthtelling and foretelling messages. In a forthtelling manner, the spirit of the prophetic office is still active in the church today through the bold proclamation of God’s word (Ephesians 4:11).

The Minor Prophets

Completing the Old Testament, our fifth road trip along the ultimate road trip through the Bible focuses on the Minor Prophets and their writings: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These books are called “minor” due to their length, compared to the longer writings of the four Major Prophets. In various ways, these brave messengers of Yahweh faithfully delivered God’s word to ancient Israel by saying, “Return to the Lord your God!” Their

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powerful proclamations need to be heard by us today.

As useful as this travel guide might be, my words are no replacement for reading the Bible itself. My prayer is that you will fall in love with the Bible as much as I have. More so, I pray that you will deeply desire a relationship with its Author. He wrote you a love letter with more than six hundred thousand words because He loves you more than you can imagine.

Are you ready to begin traveling through the Old Testament? Climb in, buckle up, and enjoy the ride on the ultimate road trip through the Bible.

DR. RON JONES
Virginia Beach, Virginia
January 2022



—19—

Psalms

Ancient Songs that Shape the Heart

No book in the Bible is more beloved than Psalms, which is the largest book in God's word with one hundred and fifty chapters. When read with both the head and heart, Psalms helps us connect with the passion of God and our own human emotions. For example, when you do not know how to pray or express yourself to God, reach for a fitting psalm and pray it back to the Lord. Psalms is truly a rest stop on the ultimate road trip through the Bible and a place to fuel up your soul.

What is a psalm? A psalm is a prayer or poem put to music as a spiritual song or hymn. The sacred collection of psalms in the Old Testament is God's playlist of greatest hits. The first hymnal or songbook the Early Church ever used was the book of Psalms. It took nearly one thousand years of Israel's history to write and

**CHRIST
Connection**

*Many Messianic
psalms point to Christ,
our Savior and
Redeemer.*

BIG Idea

*Find Christ and
yourself in the psalms.*

**MEMORY
Verse**

*The Lord says to
my lord: "Sit at my
right hand until I
make your enemies a
footstool for
your feet."*

PSALM 110:1

**AUTHOR
and Date**

*David and Others
1410-430 B.C.*

compile the psalms (1410-430 B.C.), penned by numerous human authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Those authors include King David (73 psalms), a worship leader in Jerusalem named Asaph (12 psalms), other worship leaders known as the sons of Korah (12 psalms), and one psalm written by Moses, Ethan, and Heman. We do not know who wrote the remaining fifty psalms.

King David is the "sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1) and the most prolific. For that reason, Charles Hadden Spurgeon referred to Psalms as the treasury of David. A renaissance man, David was a shepherd, monarch, warrior, musician, and poet. If you think David was a softy because he wrote poems and put them to music, think again. This is the same David who slew a giant named Goliath with a sling and stone. David reminds us that psalms are not for sissies!

David wrote his psalms when embattled by his enemies and with his back up against the proverbial wall. He found his strength in the Lord, who sustained him through many dangers, toils, and snares. The psalms are poems put to music, but they are not for chicken-hearted yellow bellies. They are for anyone who wants to connect on a deeper level with God Almighty and more authentically with their own emotions. Warren Wiersbe says, "When you study the Psalms, you move into the holy of holies

where the heart communes with God.”⁶

Five groups make up the entire collection of psalms. King David penned most of the psalms in group one (1-41). David and the sons of Korah wrote the psalms in group two (42-72). Asaph gets credit for writing most of the sacred lyrics in group three (73-89). Group four is a collection of psalms written by anonymous authors (90-106). Finally, David and the anonymous authors contribute to group five (107-150). Why is the book of Psalms compiled in this manner? Perhaps because they parallel the Pentateuch, Genesis through Deuteronomy. The first five books of the Bible penned by Moses and the five groups of psalms cover similar themes of creation, deliverance, worship, Israel’s wilderness wanderings, and covenant commitment.

Types of Psalms

Let’s immerse our hearts and minds in the psalms categorically, starting with praise psalms, which is a way of shouting, “Yay, God!” For example, Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” Imagine David gazing into a starry sky at night and becoming so overwhelmed by what he saw that he breaks into spontaneous praise. At the other end of the psalter, David writes, “Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!” (Psalm 148:1-2).

Moreover, Psalm 100:4 tells us to “enter ... his courts with praise.” As a young boy, the church I attended took this to heart by singing the doxology at the start of each worship service:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

C.S. Lewis read Psalms and wondered why the God of the Bible required His people to praise Him. Does the Lord Almighty possess a big ego that requires constant affirmation? That did not

seem plausible to the Cambridge intellectual. Lewis concluded that God receives unfiltered praise without it making His head swell in pride and that He is truly worthy of all praise. Besides, directing our praise to God keeps us from thinking more highly of ourselves than we should (Romans 12:3). Thus, it should not surprise us that even the angels of heaven sing repeatedly, “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Revelation 5:12). If only Lucifer had remained content in the angelic choir.

Another category of psalms invites us to give thanks. For example, Psalm 100 says, “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (100:4). If our hearts are not full of praise and thanksgiving when we assemble to worship God, something is not right in us. Elsewhere, Psalm 75:1 says, “We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.”

President George Washington made sure America was a nation grateful to the Providence who cares for us. On October 3, 1789, Washington designated November 26 as “A Day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer.” For Christians, every day should be Thanksgiving Day. The psalms help us verbalize our gratitude to God.

Other psalms fill our hearts and minds with God’s wisdom. I call them “success in life” psalms. Generally speaking, Psalms is part of the Old Testament’s wisdom library, which also includes Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Examples of wisdom psalms include Psalm 1, which begins, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (1:1-2), and Psalm 128, which says, “Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you” (128:1-2). According to Psalms, fearing the Lord, walking in His

ways, and delighting in His word are three keys to the blessed or successful life.

Psalms also invites us to express our sorrows and regret through lament. A lament is a desperate cry or petition for help that rises from the depth of one's soul. Lament psalms give voice to the brokenness, loneliness, and grief within us. For example, David cries out in Psalm 13:1-2, "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" Likewise, the sons of Korah cry out, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar." (42:5-6).

Most of us do not grieve well. For that reason, lament is glaringly absent in our worship experiences. There is nothing wrong with claiming our victory in Christ, which we often do in worship, but sometimes we need to grieve over sin and give expression to our sorrows. For this reason, nearly one-third of the psalms are laments, allowing us to cry out to God in anguish, knowing that He is our healer, forgiver, comforter, and justifier. Even Solomon said there is "a time to weep" (Ecclesiastes 3:4), and Jesus said, "blessed are those who mourn" (Matthew 5:4).

Another category known as the imprecatory psalms raise more than a little concern. These are the sacred lyrics that invoke judgment and call down curses on God's enemies. It is best to just let one of these fly off the page and speak for itself. For example, in Psalm 140:8-11, David vents, "Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; do not further their evil plot, or they will be exalted! Selah As for the head of those who surround me, let the mischief of their lips overwhelm them! Let burning coals fall upon them! Let them be cast into fire, into miry pits, no more to rise! Let not the slanderer be established in the land; let evil hunt down the

violent man speedily!”

Is David expressing his inappropriate desire for vengeance upon his enemies? Are such imprecations beneath the dignity of God’s people? Should they even be considered prayers? Before you cast judgment on these soulful maledictions, consider Psalm 35:1-6. Before your head explodes by reading this psalm, consider that David is calling upon God to fight his battles for him, knowing that this is the only way to cast aside petty vengeance that might otherwise arise in his heart.

Elsewhere, the imprecatory psalms give voice to a hatred for evil as much as God’s abhors it. In other words, the psalmist takes God’s side against evildoers and calls upon the only One who can vindicate His righteousness and administer justice (Romans 12:19). Though disturbing at first, these unique psalms model for us a right disposition toward wickedness and invite us to see the world as God sees it.

There is more to the beautiful psalms. I love a group of ancient songs that Jewish pilgrims sang while traveling to Jerusalem for their annual religious festivals. We know them as the Songs of Ascent (120-134). They get their name from the elevation one must climb to get to the Holy City, which stands at 2,540 feet above sea level. Today, these fifteen hymns encourage spiritual travelers to climb higher with God through worship, perseverance, joy, family devotion, community, hope, and more.

Christ in the Psalms

I have saved the best of the ancient songs for last. One out of every six are Messianic psalms that point us to Christ. Psalms contains nearly seventy specific references to Christ, the Anointed One, that find their fulfillment in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels and Acts.⁷ Because these Messianic prophecies were written centuries before the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, they strongly support divine inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16).

Specifically, Psalms predicts that God will declare Messiah to be His beloved Son (2:7, Matthew 3:17) and forsake Christ in His darkest hour (22:1, Matthew 27:46). Messiah's enemies will pierce His hands and feet (22:16, John 20:25, 27), falsely accuse Him (35:11, Mark 14:57), scorn and mock Him (22:7-8, Luke 23:35), and gamble for His garments (22:18, Matthew 27:35). Christ will be hated without a cause (35:19, John 15:25) and betrayed by His close friend (41:9, Luke 22:47), whose office will be fulfilled by another (109:8, Acts 1:20).

Psalms also affirms that Messiah will rise from the dead (16:10). Before quoting Psalm 110 on the day of Pentecost, Peter quotes four verses from Psalm 16 and then affirms that the Scriptures speak "about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:31-32, 34-35, 13:35-36). From Psalms, Peter also affirms that "that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

The New Testament quotes and alludes to Psalm 110 more than any other, affirming the ascension and coronation of Jesus: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"⁸ Even Jesus quoted Psalm 110 during a prickly moment with the Pharisees when He asked them, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42-45). Of course, the Pharisees blundered the answer.

Psalms contains an endless supply of spiritual gold to mine, which is why you just have to read it for yourself. Read five psalms per day, and you can read through the entire book in one month. By doing so, you will learn to express your most heartfelt emotions to God, enjoy a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-19), find yourself in the psalms, and meet Jesus, who is the Christ. Add one chapter per day from the book of Proverbs (our next stop on the ultimate road trip through the Bible), and God's wisdom will shape your heart and mind to be like His.

Overview of **PSALMS**

OUTLINE	1-41	42-72	73-89	90-106	107-150
FOCUS	Creation <i>Genesis</i>	Redemption <i>Exodus</i>	Worship <i>Leviticus</i>	Wanderings <i>Numbers</i>	Covenant <i>Deuteronomy</i>
PSALMIST	David	David and Korah	Asaph	Others	David and Others
KEY VERSE	23	51	73	90	139

THE *Ultimate* ROAD TRIP THROUGH THE BIBLE

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, but it can also be intimidating to read because it contains more than six hundred thousand words divided into sixty-six distinct books written by forty authors in three languages over sixteen hundred years. But how does it all fit together? In *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible*, Dr. Ron Jones takes us on the biblical Route 66, pointing us to Jesus from Genesis to Revelation.

VOL. 1 OLD TESTAMENT

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ROAD TRIP 5: The Minor Prophets

"Fasten your seat belts for an enjoyable, informative ride."

DARRELL BOCK

"Fun, interesting, informative, and insightful. I love it!"

DANIEL AKIN

