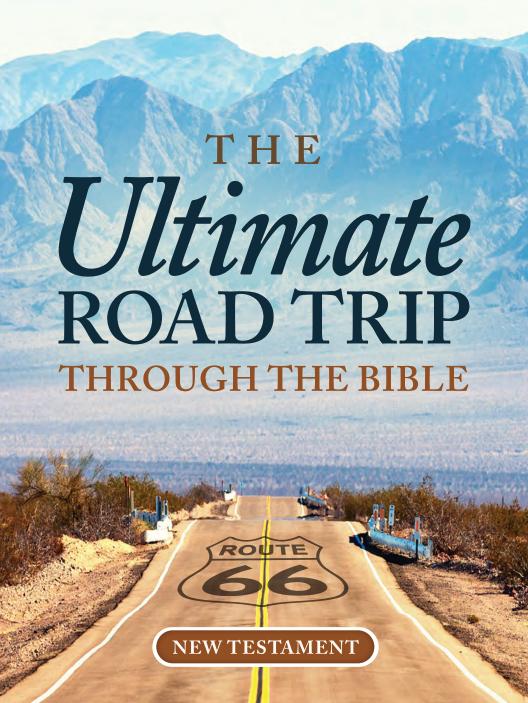
RON JONES



This second volume on the New Testament is the perfect complement to *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible (Vol. 1) Old Testament.* Both provide a concise, clear, and easy to read overview of all sixty-six books of the inerrant biblical text. Students of the Bible will be well served by both.

DR. DANIEL AKIN

President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

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DR. BRIAN AUTRY

Executive Director, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia

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Tim and Jeri Erdman Permanent Visiting Scholar, Hebrew University, Jerusalem Vice President, Chosen People Ministries

Dr. Ron Jones invests great care to map out a route through the New Testament with attention to detail, while setting our eyes on the great story, God's story, from Matthew to Revelation. This second volume of *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible* completes the 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

Dr. Ron Jones is a gifted Bible teacher. I am happy to enthusiastically recommend *The Ultimate Road Trip Through the Bible* to serious Bible students, those who are just beginning to read God's word, and everyone in between. This book is a tremendous road trip indeed.

CHRIS WILLARD

CEO and Cofounder of Elevate Group

THE Ultimate ROAD TRIP THROUGH THE BIBLE

RON JONES





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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 -

Welcome 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 Gospels and the Early Church

The New Testament begins with four portraits of Jesus Christ, followed by an anthology of the early church, known as the Acts

of the Apostles. Like four journalists reporting on the same story but from a different angle, Matthew Mark, Luke, and John present Jesus as the Christ to different audiences—Jews, Romans, Greeks, and the Church, respectively. Matthew presents Jesus as King of the Jews; Mark presents Jesus as Jehovah's Servant; Luke portrays Jesus as the perfect God-man, with an emphasis on His humanity; John gives us many reasons to believe "the Word was God" (John 1:2).

The first three books of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are known as the Synoptic Gospels due to their similarity in content, order, and statement. Some scholars raise the "Synoptic Problem." They try to explain the similarities and differences in Matthew, Mark, and Luke by introducing a supposed "source" document they call "Q," from the German word quell, which means "source."

The problem with the Synoptic Problem is that there is no evidence for the Q document, not even a scant scrap of a manuscript. So how do we explain the synopsis in the first three Gospels? Since the same Holy Spirit inspired each of the Gospels written about the same Jesus, we should expect consistency and continuity. Notwithstanding, Luke freely admits to using sources from eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4). If Mark wrote the first Gospel, even with the help of Peter, Matthew and Luke could have used portions of Mark in their writings.²

C.S. Lewis famously offered the following 'trilemma' about Jesus in response to the way the Gospels present Him. Because Jesus claimed to be God and the Messiah, He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. Modern critics of Christianity offer a fourth consideration, suggesting the Gospels are legends. This option puts forth the idea that the early Christians glorified Jesus by inflating the stories they wrote about him, making Him appear divine and messianic. The problem with the legend hypothesis is that people are not willing to suffer and die to simply perpetuate

a legend. Regarding the so-called legend about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which all four Gospel writers record, Chuck Colson famously quipped:

I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because twelve men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for forty years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned, and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled twelve of the most powerful men in the world, and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me twelve apostles could keep a lie for forty years? Absolutely impossible.

Though attacked vigorously by skeptics of the Christian faith, the Gospels have stood the test of time. They are the historically reliable sources of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ; likewise, it seems dubious to me that anyone who lived centuries later could offer a more accurate record. The nearness of the Gospel writings to the actual events makes them trustworthy. Also, Matthew and John were Jesus's disciples, making them eyewitnesses of His majesty, as Peter exclaims (2 Peter 1:16).

Furthermore, though Mark was not one of the Twelve, he apparently used Peter as his primary source, which adds apostolic authority to his writing. Think of Mark's gospel as Peter's memoirs. Luke, the physician and traveling companion of the apostle Paul, interviewed eyewitnesses, carefully researching his two-volume work (Luke-Acts) with the precision of a scientist.

The Pauline Epistles

Thirteen letters written by the Apostle Paul (also Saul of Tarsus) form a significant library in the New Testament known as the Pauline Epistles. The fact that these foundational documents of Christianity are letters, not catechisms or dry theological theses, is

significant and unique among the world religions.

Letter writing conveys warmth, passion, energy, and freshness that is missing in a theological textbook or formal statement of faith. The author's personality also emerges in an epistle. The fact that Paul writes most of his letters to a church or pastor means the Pauline Epistles deliver Christian doctrine in the context of real, life-giving congregations of people who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, love God and people, serve one another, enjoy biblical community, and live out their faith authentically. A personal epistle is the best way for a thoughtful and pastoral theologian to deliver the doctrines of our living faith in the living Lord Jesus Christ.

In the order in which they appear in the Bible's New Testament, the Pauline Epistles include Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Smaller collections within the Pauline Epistles include the Pastoral Epistles (First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus) and the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).

Pauline Theology (not to be confused with "Pauline Christianity"—the unbiblical idea that Paul's New Testament teaching conflicts with the Gospels) forms our understanding of justification by faith, sanctification, glorification, redemption, and reconciliation—all of it in perfect harmony with all Scripture, which is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Paul, the apostle of grace, also addresses thorny theological ideas like predestination, election, and foreknowledge. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul waxes eloquently on the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, judgement seat of Christ, and glorious two-stage return of Jesus Messiah at the end of the age, beginning with the Rapture of the Church. He writes plainly about salvation, the church, and the Christian life.

The General Epistles and Revelation

The General Epistles include the following eight books: Hebrews, James, First Peter, Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, and Jude. The book of Revelation follows Jude and concludes the New Testament cannon.

The General Epistles, which offer strong objections to false teachers, are called general because the writers—James, Peter, John, and Jude—address general or "catholic" audiences, unlike the Apostle Paul who wrote his letters to specific, recognizable people and churches. James writes "to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion" (James 1:1), and Peter writes "to those who are the elect exiles of the Dispersion" (First Peter 1:1). John writes his third epistle to Gaius, which makes Third John the exception to the general audience rule. Revelation stands alone because of its unique writing style and apocalyptic content, although John writes generally to seven first-century churches located in Asia Minor.

Two of the authors—James and Jude—were the half-brothers of Jesus. As two of Jesus's disciples who saw the risen Savior, Peter and John wrote with apostolic authority. The human author who penned Hebrews is not known emphatically.

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 New Testament? Climb in, buckle up, and enjoy the ride on the ultimate road trip through the Bible.

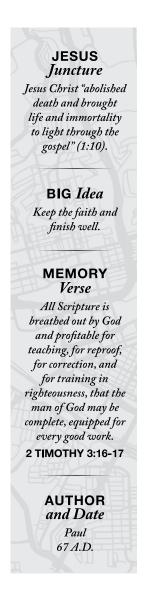
Dr. Ron Jones Virginia Beach, Virginia August 2022

2 Timothy

Keeping the Faith

y high school football coach taught his players how to finish well, which for a football team means playing hard on every down until the whistle blows and doing so through four full quarters. As players, how did we learn this important life lesson from our coach?

At the end of practice, the team ran conditioning sprints in groups according to our position—backs and receivers, offensive line, defensive line, defensive backs, and special teams. While we started on the goal line, our coach straddled the 40-yard line, leaning over with his hands on his knees to watch how we ran across the finish line. If anybody on the team slowed down before crossing the 40-yard line, the coach added to the number of sprints the entire team ran until everybody ran through the finish line at



full speed. Got the picture? You guessed it. Sometimes we ran sprints until sunset.

In the game of life, some people are good starters but poor finishers. Do you have any unfinished projects around the house? More importantly, what does finishing life well look like to you? Near the end of his life, the Apostle Paul wrote a second letter to a young pastor named Timothy. Chronologically, Second Timothy was also Paul's final New Testament epistle. In the final chapter of his final written communication, the aging apostle reflects upon his life and ministry.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. 4:6-8

I like to think of these words as Paul running his two-minute drill, something every football team practices so they know how to win inside the last

two minutes of the game. As his personal game clock was winding down, Paul anticipated finishing well. Without giving up and in full view of his eternal reward, the great apostle claimed his victory.

Guard the Deposit

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he continues the charge he began in First Timothy. In 1:14, he even repeats, "By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you" (compare 1 Timothy 6:20).

Paul begins by expressing his sincere thanksgiving for the spiritual heritage Timothy received from faithful members of his family, "a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well" (1:5). He encourages the young pastor to "fan into flame the gift of God." In other words, do not waste your upbringing in a home filled with faithful servants of God. Follow their good example as you follow Christ.

I can think of more than a few young people who grew up in a Christian home that need to heed those words. If God used your parents or grandparents to spark faith in you, now you must fan the spark into a flame.

Although Timothy personally embraced the faith in God that he saw modeled in his family, he must have been timid about it because Paul says to him, "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (1:7). Apparently, some felt embarrassed because of Paul's sufferings for the gospel. But the great apostle of Christ admonished Timothy not to be among those who were "ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner."

Paul goes on to admit that he suffered because God appointed him "a preacher and apostle and teacher" (1:11). Then, he declares with the same confidence he wants to see in Timothy, "But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me" (1:12).

Paul closes chapter 1 by mentioning those in Asia who abandoned him. The names Phygelus and Hermogenes pricked his

heart like a thorn bush. On a more positive note, he acknowledges Onesiphorus, "for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains" (1:16-18). Apparently, when others had turned away from Paul, Onesiphorus—whose name sounds like a cool, refreshing stream of water—arrived in Rome and did not stop until he located Paul and enjoyed fellowship with him. Do you have a friend like that? Better yet, like Onesiphorus do you look for ways to refresh others, especially when they are going through a tough time?

An Approved Workman

Paul begins chapter 2 with words that have inspired followers of Jesus Christ and committed disciple-makers for two thousand years. "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2:1-2).

The Great Commission echoes inside Paul's rhetoric. Can you hear Jesus saying to His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20)? The Savior's grand plan is for us to make disciples of Jesus Christ who go and make disciples. In other words, is your life in Christ creating a ripple effect? Are you replicating Jesus in you by making disciples who follow Him? According to Paul, it takes the tenacity of a soldier, discipline of an athlete, and hard work of a farmer to pull this off, even with the help of the Holy Spirit (2:3-7).

Paul goes on, encouraging Timothy to serve in a manner that God approves. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2:15). The King James translation of the Bible says, "Study to show thyself approved."

The Lord's approved worker must spend time studying God's word so that he can handle it well before the church family. Second Timothy 2:15 always reminds me of AWANA, which

is a fruitful disciple-making ministry to children and students. The ministry organization crafted its name from Paul's impactful words to Timothy; AWANA stands for "approved workmen are not ashamed."

The Lord's approved workman also avoids "irreverent babble," which swerves from the truth (2:16-18). Furthermore, the pastor who is an approved workman must rightly handle himself. Paul urges Timothy to "depart from iniquity" (2:19) and then launches into an illustration about honorable and dishonorable vessels inside a great house, concluding, "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work."

Ironically, the name Timothy comes from two Greek words, which together mean "God-honoring." Paul is telling Timothy to live up to his name!³¹ One way to live a God-honoring life is to "flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2:22-23).

Finally, an approved workman "must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness (2:24-25).

Equipped for Good Works

In chapter 3, Paul shifts his attention from the pastor and his present persecutions to the pastor and the "last days." His mind raced to the end of the age before the return of Jesus Christ (3:1-5).

Paul's sobering words read almost like today's headline news, putting the depravity of humankind on full display. The last three words in 3:5 are strong: "Avoid such people." This is a good time to examine the relationships in your life. Who do you hang out with? Who are you allowing to influence you? Paul makes it clear that such people in that deplorable list "will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all" (3:6-9).

Then, Paul pivots to the inspiration and profitability of the word of God (3:16-17). The world says, "Michelangelo was an inspired artist," but that is not how inspiration applies to the Holy Scriptures. The word translated "inspiration" literally means *Godbreathed*. It speaks of how the Holy Spirit supernaturally influenced the biblical writers so that what they wrote was true, accurate, and trustworthy.

Because all Scripture is "breathed out by God," the Bible is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." According to Warren Wiersbe, that means the Bible tells us what is right, what is wrong, how to get right, and how to stay right. Another athletic analogy works here, too. Think of the Bible as a teacher, umpire, coach, and personal trainer, all rolled into one book, which is God's holy word. By it, we grow in holiness, avoid falling into sin, and win the game of life.

Furthermore, like the equipment manager on a football team, the Bible makes the man of God "equipped for every good work." Can you imagine a football player stepping onto the gridiron without his helmet, shoulder pads, and cleats? He is hardly ready to face the battle on the field without the proper equipment. Likewise, the word of God equips us for the work God gives to us and the spiritual battles we will surely face.

No wonder Paul says to Timothy in 3:14-15, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Christian parents should use these verses to encourage their children who grew up in the faith like Timothy.

Preach the Word

Chapter 4 begins with Paul's final charge to Timothy, which includes the phrase "preach the word" (4:1-5). The seminary where

2 Timothy: Keeping the Faith

I earned my master's degree in theology chiseled that phrase into a stone monument on the front lawn. That visual and those words are burned into my memory, as is Paul's charge to Timothy. Are we not living in a time when people do not "endure sound doctrine" and have "itching ears"? However, now more than ever, the servant of God must preach the word of God, not his own opinion.

Paul closes this chapter and book with some of the most personal words found anywhere in his New Testament epistles (4:9-22). In his final days, the great apostle is alone and bids Timothy, "Do you best to come to me soon" (4:9) and "do your best to come before winter" (4:21).

Paul mentions the names of seventeen people associated with his ministry and friendship. He drops in greetings as easily as he does warnings, like the one about Alexander the coppersmith, who "did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message."

Absent bitterness and unforgiveness, Paul mentions those who deserted him during his first defense. He graciously lays the painful experience down by saying, "May it not be charged against them!" and quickly remembers how "the Lord stood by me and strengthened me."

The word respect comes to mind when I consider how the Apostle Paul finished his life and ministry. I picture him sprinting across the 40-yard line with his last burst of energy, while saying, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Overview of 2 TIMOTHY

OUTLINE	1	2	3	4
FOCUS	Guard the Deposit	An Approved Workman	Equipped for Good Works	Preach the Word
FOCUS	The Pastor and Persecutions Present		The Pastor and Prophecy Future	
KEY VERSE	1:14	2:15	3:16-17	4:7

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. 2 NEW TESTAMENT

ROAD TRIP 6: The Gospels and the Early Church

ROAD TRIP 7: The Pauline Epistles

ROAD TRIP 8: The General Epistles and Revelation

"An excellent guide to each book of the Bible."

MARK BAILEY

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

DANIEL AKIN

