

## *Lessons from the Daily Bible Readings*

Each Friday morning at 11 am the Bible Reading Club meets to discuss the Bible readings for that week. By meeting together it helps each of us to maintain the discipline of daily readings and helps us each gain more understanding of God's Word. We have learned to ask questions, pay attention to detail, and look for connections between the Old and New Testament. Here are some examples of things that we have learned in the last year.

### **Ask Questions:**

Everyone knows the story of the Exodus and the 10 plagues. About 1,500 years before the time of Christ, the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt. Moses was sent by God to free Israel from Egypt and from slavery. Before the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, allowed Israel to leave, God punished Egypt with 10 plagues or disasters on the land and the Egyptian people: the Nile River was turned to blood, a thick darkness covered the land, frogs, gnats, flies and locusts invaded the land, the cattle were sickened with disease, hail destroyed the crops, and finally, and worst of all, the firstborn of both man and animal died.

**Why** did God send these 10 dis-

asters? With all his power, **why** did He not just take Israel out of Egypt and bring them quickly to the Promised Land? **What** was his purpose in showing his power against Egypt?

The history of the miraculous exodus from Egypt is told in Exodus chapters 1 through 15. Pharaoh would not let his labor force go. He "hardened his heart" and after each plague refused to free them. At least for the first several plagues the record shows that Pharaoh hardened his heart but then in Exodus 10 we're told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let Israel go. So what is going on? Why was it so necessary that God show his power against the Egyptians through the 10 plagues? The answer comes in another book of the Bible:

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of the house of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, "I am the LORD your God." On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land

flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. And I said to them, **"Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."** (Ezekiel 20:5-7)

The Egyptians had thousands of "gods". They worshipped the Nile River, all sorts of animals, and the sun. Each of the disasters that God sent against Egypt showed the powerlessness of the Egyptian gods. Israel, while they were in the land of Egypt, had adopted and worshipped these Egyptian gods. They had to learn that there is only one God to whom belongs all power and might. They had to learn that the gods of Egypt could not and would not save them. In all his acts, God had the purpose of saving his people, not only from slavery but more importantly from idolatry.

### **Pay Attention to Details:**

The book of Daniel is a book of prophecy. It is also a book of the history of Daniel himself. In the first chapter he is a young man

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who is taken into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. By the time he is thrown into the lions' den by King Darius in chapter 6, Daniel is an old man, well over 80 years old. We know that because he was taken as a captive in the year 606 BC (see Daniel 1:1) and King Darius (Daniel 6:1) started his reign in 522 BC.

Is it a surprise to you that Daniel was an old man when he was thrown into the lions' den? Paying attention to the details gives us the whole picture. Here is another example from Daniel. In chapter 9 there is a beautiful prayer that Daniel prays on behalf of his people. Chapter 9 verse 1 begins "In the first year of Darius..." Why is this information given to us? The prayer of Daniel is a petition that God would forgive and remember his promise to the Jewish people of return from captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple:

**In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes** (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom --**in the first year of his reign**, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in

fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes...Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name." (Daniel 9:1-3,18-19)

We know from the end of chapter 9 that God heard his prayer but another detail in another book tells us that Daniel's prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem was answered quickly:

Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave this message of the LORD to the people: "I am with you," declares the LORD. So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of **the sixth month in the second year of King Darius**. (Haggai 1:13-15)

Daniel prayed in the first year of Darius. In the second year of Darius God stirred up the people to rebuild the Temple. In Ezra

chapters 3 through 6 we're told that Darius, himself, gave a decree that nothing should hinder the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. The details of Daniel, Haggai, and Ezra all tell the story of God's soon gracious answer to Daniel's prayer and petition.

### **The Old Testament gives Understanding to the New Testament**

There is a bit of a puzzle in some of the last words of Jesus when he was on the cross:

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Why would Jesus cry out that God had forsaken him? Had Jesus lost his faith in God? The Old Testament gives us an answer. He is reciting Psalm 22:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? (Verse 1)

Reading just this verse still does not answer the question why Jesus would say this. It's important to read the rest of the Psalm. The Psalm is a prophecy of what would happen to the Messiah. Jesus would remember through reciting this Psalm that all that was happening to him was part of

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the plan and purpose of God:

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: (Verses 6-7)

I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. (Verses 17-18)

The Psalm, however, does not just list what would be done to

the Messiah, but also that God would answer him. Jesus would take comfort from these words as he recited the Psalm:

For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. (Verse 24)

The last words of Psalm 22 echo the final words of Jesus on the cross:

They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn--for he has done it. (Verse 31)

Remember the final words of Jesus:

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

Jesus gave up his final breath knowing that the purpose of God had been completed. He had finished the work his Father had given him. Yes, as Psalm 22 tells us, he has done it.

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## *Daily Bible Reading - Make it a Habit*

Here are just a few helpful tips for getting the most from your daily Bible reading:

- Begin with prayer. We are just humans. We need God's help in understanding his thoughts.
- Remember the purpose for reading: to learn about God, his message to us, and to know him better.
- Approach the Bible with a teachable mind and heart. Don't decide beforehand what you think it says. Always read to find out what the Bible actually says—not what you think or want it to say. Also, remember to notice what it doesn't say.
- Be disciplined—make a time everyday to read.
- Read a little each day—all learning happens little by little. Spiritual food, just like natural food, is needed every day for healthy lives and spiritual growth.
- Read the entire Bible—not just parts of it. Read from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Remember, there's really one author of both and every part of the Bible is part of his message.
- Keep a journal with questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions but don't expect immediate answers.
- The Bible interprets itself. When there are questions, keep reading.
- Pay attention to details. Details help to answer many questions but also give much insight to understanding the message.
- Remember that only the Bible gives us the inspired word of God.
- Publisher Bible study notes, other reference works and commentaries can be helpful but are not the word of God. Every human, even the experts have biases and non-objective opinions. It's our job to search it out and not just trust what someone else has written.
- Reading and understanding the Bible is not easy—nothing worthwhile is—and there is nothing more worthwhile than knowing and understanding God's message. Searching, persistence, and diligence are needed.
- Don't be discouraged. Remember—God wants you to understand the Bible. That's why he gave it to each of us.
- End each reading with prayer and thankfulness.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thorn-bush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed." Isaiah 55:9-13

## *Do You Know ?*

In the Bible there are certain chapters that are all about certain important teachings. Everyone has heard of the “love chapter” found in 1 Corinthians 13. There are several other chapters that are essays or sermons on certain subjects. Here is a partial list:

1 Corinthians 13	Hebrews 11
Psalms 119	James 2
Romans 8	Romans 6
1 Corinthians 15	Isaiah 45

Can you match each of these themes and verses to a chapter above?

**Love:** And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (Verse 13)

**Resurrection:** For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. (Verse 21)

**Faith and Works:** You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. (Verse 24)

**Baptism:** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Verse 4)

**The Word of God:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Verse 105)

**One God:** ...that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things. (Verses 6-7)

**Faith:** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Verse 6)

**God works in our lives:** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Verse 28)

The answers? You'll find them in the Bible!

*This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. Isaiah 66:1-2*



*New Seminar*  
 “Catching the Vision”  
 See page 3 for details

## Daily Bible Readings for April, May and June

*Read the Entire Bible in One Year*

Day	APRIL		MAY		JUNE	
	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa
1	Deut 13,14	Mark 6	Judges 3,4	1 Corinth 11	Job 38,39	Psalm 59
2	Deut 15,16	Psalm 33,34	Judges 5,6	1 Corinth 12	Job 40-42	Luke 17
3	Deut 17,18	Mark 7	Judges 7,8	1 Corinth 13	I Sam 1. 2	Luke 18
4	Deut 19,20	Mark 8	Judges 9,10	Psalm 48	I Sam 3. 4	Psalm 60. 61
5	Deut 21,22	Mark 9	Judges 11,12	I Corinth 14	I Sam 5. 6	Luke 19
6	Deut 23,24	Psalm 35	Judges 13,14	I Carinth 15	I Sam 7. 8	Luke 20
7	Deut 25,26	Mark 10	Judges 15,16	Psalm 49	I Sam 9.10	Luke 21
8	Deut 27,28	Mark 11	Judges 17,18	I Corinth 16	I Sam 11. 12	Psalm 62. 63
9	Deut 29,30	Psalm 36,37	Judges 19,20	Psalm 50	I Sam 13. 14	Luke 22
10	Deut 31,32	Psalm 38,39	Judge 21 Ruth 1	Psalm 51. 52	I Sam 15. 16	Luke 23
11	Deut 33,34	Mark 12	Ruth 2-4	Luke 1	I Sam 17. 18	Luke 24
12	Provb 17,18	Mark 13	Provb 29,30	Luke 2	I Sam 19. 20	Psalm 64. 65
13	Provb 19,20	Mark 14	Provb 31	Luke 3	I Sam 21. 22	Psalm 66. 67
14	Provb 21,22	Mark 15	Job 1-3	Psalm 53	I Sam 23. 24	II Corinth 1
15	Joshua 1,2	Mark 16	Job 4,5	Luke 4	I Sam 25. 26	II Corinth 2
16	Joshua 3,4	Psalm 40,41	Job 6,7	Luke 5	I Sam 27. 28	II Corinth 3
17	Joshua 5,6	1 Corinth 1	Job 8,9	Luke 6	i Sam 29-31	Psalm 68
18	Joshua 7. 8	1 Corinth 2	Job 10,11	Psalm 54,55	Eccles 1. 2	Psalm 69
19	Joshua 9,10	1 Corinth 3	Job 12,13	Luke 7	Eccles 3. 4	II Corinth 4
20	Joshua 11,12	Psalm 42,43	Job 14,15	Luke 8	Eccles 5. 6	II Corinth 5
21	Joshua 13,14	1 Corinth 4	Job 16,17	Psalm 56	Eccles 7. 8	II Corinth 6
22	Joshua 15,16	1 Corinth 5	Job 18,19	Luke 9	Eccles 9.10	Psalm 70. 71
23	Joshua 17,18	Psalm 44	Job 20,21	Luke 10	Eccles 11. 12	II Corinth 7
24	Joshua 19,20	1 Corinth 6	Job 22,23	Luke 11	II Sam 1. 2	II Corinth 8
25	Joshua 21,22	1 Corinth 7	Job 24,25	Psalm 57	II Sam 3. 4	II Corinth 9
26	Joshua 23,24	1 Corinth 8	Job 26,27	Luke 12	II Sam 5. 6	II Corinth 10
27	Provb 23,24	Psalm 45	Job 28,29	Luke 13	II Sam 7. 8	Psalm 72
28	Provb 25,26	1 Corinth 9	Job 30,31	Psalm 58	II Sam 9. 10	Psalm 73
29	Provb 27,28	1 Corinth 10	Job 32,33	Luke 14	II Sam 11.12	II Corinth 11
30	Judges 1,2	Psalm 46. 47	Job 34,35	Luke 15	II Sam 13.14	II Corinth 12
31			Job 36,37	Luke 16		

See page 4 for some helpful tips when reading the Bible.

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