

FOCUS ON THE BIBLE

In this issue of our quarterly newsletter we have focused on the Bible itself, giving you a few facts about the Bible that you may not be aware of and sharing some tips and thoughts that may help you come to a greater appreciation for the real treasures we have available to us in its pages.

The Bible is very unique amongst all other books in a number of ways. In our article *There Is No Other Like It* we take a closer look at the uniqueness and specialness of the Bible and the variety of characters and experiences it encompasses.

Many Bibles in circulation today contain only the New Testament, or perhaps the new Testament and the collection of Psalms. Many today will teach only from the New Testament saying that the Old Testament is irrelevant to our lives today and some will even say contradictory to New Testament teaching. The article on page 2 entitled *Why Should We Read the Old Testament?* of-

fers a fresh perspective on the importance of the Old Testament in God's plan and purpose with this earth.

The Bible is probably the most un-read best-seller that ever existed. In the article *Warning – Read With Care – Read It All* we offer some tips to help you “make it a habit” whether you choose to read it daily from a website on your personal computer, tablet or mobile device or your own treasured leather-bound. Whatever you choose, you will be richly rewarded by taking a small amount of time each day reading God's Word.

In *Keys to the Bible – The Promises of God* we take a quick look at the numerous promises or covenants that God has made with his people. They are found or referred to in nearly every book of the Bible and most have an application to our lives today and the future kingdom of God coming to this earth when Jesus returns and claims his rightful

kingship. Are you ready to claim these promises and make them a part of your life?

Perhaps you've been getting this newsletter for some time; maybe as a result of attending a Learn to Read the Bible Effectively seminar, responding to an advertisement in the newspaper or even having taken a study course we have advertised in Valpak. We would like to make known to you all of the resources that we offer and have done so in an article entitled *Who Are We?* on page 7. Please take a look and see if there are any resources that can help you in your own individual Bible study.

Thank you for continuing to read this newsletter. We hope that it has inspired you to *dig in* and become a “*daily bible reader.*” You will be richly rewarded by doing so.

THERE IS NO OTHER LIKE IT

The Bible is a completely unique, one-of-a-kind book. There is no other book like it in the world. Why do we say this? The Bible consists of 66 different books. It's actually a library of books. It was written over a period of more than 1500 years by more than 40 different authors and yet its message and teachings are consistent. The earliest parts have been preserved for more than 3500 years. It contains history going back to the beginning of civilization. It has the most beautiful poetry, the wisest proverbs, extensive predictions for the future, numerous

biographies, and dire warnings and judgments against peoples and nations. It was written in several original languages including Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Chaldean. The earliest manuscripts that have been persevered for any writings are manuscripts of the Biblical texts. It has been translated into hundreds of languages throughout the world and has been on the best seller lists for decades. It is probably the most unread bestseller ever!

All these things make it very unusual but what makes it com-

pletely unique? The Bible claims to be “inspired” by the Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth. The one and only God caused this book to be written in order to tell us about himself, about what plans he has for his creation, and about what he wants us to do.

Paul, a disciple of Jesus Christ, wrote these words about the Bible in his 2nd letter to Timothy:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” NKJV
Over and over again, in fact at least 233 times, it is written in the

There Is No Other Like It

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Bible that “the word of LORD” came to the prophets and apostles of old. God caused to be written what the servants of God wrote in these books of the Bible. Ezekiel, one of the prophets who wrote about 600 years before the birth of Christ wrote this in his third chapter, verses 16 and 18:

At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me."

Later, after Jesus had ascended into heaven his disciple, Peter wrote these words:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20-21

God has a purpose with his creation and he has clearly stated that

purpose in the words of the Bible, his Bible. He has told us this through Isaiah his prophet:

For this is what the Lord says — he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited — he says:

"I am the Lord, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob's descendants, 'Seek me in vain.' I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right." Isaiah 45:18-19 NIV

“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.” Isaiah 55:10-11 NIV

Yes, the Bible is very unique. It makes the claim that it is the word of the Almighty God. It is either the word of God or it is a complete fraud. The question is, can you take the chance of it actually being the word of the one and only God, the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe and you have not bothered to even read it? Do you know what promises God has made? Do you know the evidence that he has given in the Bible that he exists and is real. Do you depend on someone else to tell you what's in it even though your life depends on understanding what is written in these pages? The Bible is not to be taken lightly or left on a shelf gathering dust. God will not be ignored. He will do what he has said he will do. Do you know what that is? Are you ready?

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. Revelation 1:3 NIV

WHY SHOULD WE READ THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Bible has two main sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament is the shorter one with 27 of the 66 books and covers a period of about 100 years—the first century A.D. It is the history of the life of Jesus before he ascended to his Father in heaven. The first four books are called the Gospels and are four separate accounts of the life of Jesus told by four of his followers. The rest of the New Testament contains the “Acts of the Apostles”, a book about the spread of the teaching concerning Jesus Christ to the early Christian believers, and let-

ters written to the believers during the first century. The last book is a prophetic book concerning events to come including the second coming of Jesus to the earth. The original documents were written in Greek and were later translated to Latin and then to the common languages. Many Christians identify the New Testament as the Bible for Christians. Why should Christians read or want to understand the Old Testament?

The Old Testament was written over a period of about 1500 years although the history that is told

covers from the time of the creation all the way to about 400 years before the birth of Jesus. This includes thousands of years. Most of it was originally written in Hebrew and was preserved by Jewish scribes. The Old Testament includes the history of the creation, Noah and the destruction of his world by the flood, the descendants of Noah and the ancient tribes of the earth. Early in the first book, Genesis, one man is identified as being called by God to leave his home and family to go to a land that God promised to give to him and his descend-

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Why Should We Read the Old Testament

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ants. That man was Abraham and much of the rest of the Old Testament traces the history of Abraham's descendants, the tribes of Israel. In fact, all of the books of the Old Testament were written by the descendants of Abraham. Currently these descendants are identified as Israelis or Jews. Their language is Hebrew. The Old Testament gives the history of Israel and records the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets. The books of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon are poetical books which complete Old Testament canon.

The question remains. Why should Christians consider the Old Testament as being relevant to their Christian faith? Consider these facts: Jesus was a Jew. He was a descendant of Abraham and the foremost king of Israel, David. The entire history and all the prophecies in the Old Testament traces the plan and purpose of God to bring salvation to the world through this descendant of Abraham. The prophecies and the Psalms all foretold, through promises given by God, the coming of this Messiah. The Old Testament is the foundation of the New. In fact, considering that the New Testament has 855 direct quotes from the Old Testament, it is difficult to truly understand the New Testament without the Old Testament foundation. Basic teachings concerning God, his plan and purpose for his creation to bring salvation, his character,

and basic understandings of human beings and the deadly consequence of their rebellion against their creator are concepts all defined in the Old Testament.

In addition to this, writers in the New Testament verify the necessity of the Old Testament when writing to Christian believers. All these quotes are from the New Testament and, keep in mind, when these apostles of Jesus Christ wrote about the "scriptures" they were referring to the Old Testament. The New Testament had not yet come into existence:

2 Timothy 3:13-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. NIV

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. NIV

1 Corinthians 10:11-13

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! NIV

2 Peter 1:19-21 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. NIV

Yes, the Old Testament is the word of God. It is able to make us wise unto salvation. It is inspired by God, or as the New International Version translates the original it is "God-breathed". Even as Christians, how can we ignore this gift that God has given us in all the rich history, the examples of God's faithful people, the prophecies and warnings of things to come, the promises that God has given to all his people, and, most of all, the revelation of himself, his character, and his awesomeness in this Old Testament record that has been preserved for thousands of years?

Free Booklet Offer - "The Bible Hope"

We would like to send you a very helpful booklet entitled "The Bible Hope." This little booklet consists of fourteen essays, each essay looking at Bible Hope from differing perspectives Strengthen your hope for eternal salvation with these powerful writings.

To receive a free copy of this book send your name and address to DailyBibleReader, P.O. Box 16070, Newport News, VA 23608 or e-mail info@dailybiblereader.com.

WARNING—READ WITH CARE—READ IT ALL

The Bible is probably the most unread bestseller that has ever existed. It is talked about by millions of people and quoted more than any other writing. Teachers through the centuries have used its text for classes and sermons. Religious leaders and theology students have used it to prove their teachings. Many, many people have received comfort from some of the Psalms and other writings. Yet how many people have actually read the Bible from beginning to end? How many have searched the whole Bible to find out what God has revealed? How many are willing to lay aside their own thoughts and beliefs and to humbly read and meditate on this word to find out God's whole message, to find God's truth in its pages?

Here then are some suggestions when reading God's word:

1. Make a commitment to read all of what God has revealed in the Bible.
2. Use a schedule to read a portion of the Bible each day so that over a period of time, for example, one year, the entire Bible has been read.
3. Take time while reading to think and meditate.
4. Write down questions in a journal. There will be questions that may not have immediate answers. Search for those answers as you go forward in your reading each day.
5. Use helps such as concordances, commentaries, charts, and atlases. However, keep in mind always that these reference works are authored by humans and are subject to human biases, opinions and limitations. They are not God's word.
6. Always approach the Bible with humility, searching for what God is saying in this writing.
7. Be careful to notice what the Bible actually says or not say and not what you think it says.
8. Always, always consider each verse in its context. No verse should be taken by itself but rather in context with the verses and chapters surrounding it. It also must be taken in context of the original culture, historical setting, and language that it was written in.
9. Look for connections. These may be direct quotes from one part of the Bible in another part or these may be themes or teachings. The connections may also be prophecies fulfilled.
10. Always remember that this is the word of the Almighty God. His perspective and thoughts are high above ours. We need his help to understand. Always pray for help in understanding, in appreciation, and in perseverance.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees.

With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. Psalm 119:9-16 NIV

Are you currently attending a weekly Bible Class?

If not, why not join us on Thursday evening or Friday morning for a stimulating look at God's Word and an opportunity to capture the vision! Let his Holy Scripture open your eyes and heart to the wonderful things he has in store for this earth.

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Ps 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. KJV

KEYS TO THE BIBLE – THE PROMISES OF GOD

In the first century A.D., one of Jesus' followers named Paul found the opportunity to teach the Greek philosophers of his time about God, about God's purpose in Christ Jesus, and about the future. Very succinctly Paul states who God is, what is purpose is, and why he created the world:

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. **God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.** 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 'Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.'" Acts 17:24-31 NIV

Notice that Paul states that God

wants us to seek him, reach out for him and find him. God wants us to know him and to have a relationship with him. The Bible helps us in our search for God. It helps us to understand the relationship that God wants us to have with him. One of the amazing themes of the Bible, one of the keys to understanding the Bible, is the teaching concerning covenants. Throughout the Bible the relationship between God and man is defined by a covenant, that is an agreement between God and man. There are several covenants in the Bible, some are conditional, that is certain things must be done by the persons involved before God fulfills the covenant with the promises he has made. Other covenants are eternal, that is God has made promises to those have already trusted in him and they await the fulfillment of those promises. In fact, one of the important connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament are covenants that God made through his prophets to his people in the Old Testament. Here are some of the important covenants in the Bible:

Abraham: In the early chapters of Genesis God made several promises to Abraham because of his belief and trust in God. These promises, this covenant, is to Abraham and to his descendants and it is eternal. It also includes blessings for all nations on the earth:

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and

make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." Genesis 22:15-18

The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." Genesis 13:14-17 NIV

Israel: After the time of Abraham, God made a covenant with some of Abraham's offspring. When they were slaves in Egypt he rescued them and brought them to the same land that he had promised to Abraham. This covenant that God made with the nation of Israel was conditional. They would be blessed and be able to remain in the land as long as they obeyed God and were faithful to him:

Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you

Keys to the Bible - The Promises of God

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to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." Exodus 19:3-6

Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, and so that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your forefathers to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. Deuteronomy 11:8-10 NIV

David: About 500 years after Abraham and 1000 years before Jesus was born, King David ruled over the nation of Israel. God made a promise to him that one of his descendants would be king over his kingdom forever. This is a forever promise or covenant. There is no condition stated. Later Mary is told by an angel that the child that she would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit would be that descendant promised to David:

"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and

with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." 2 Samuel 7:12-16NKJV

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Luke 1:30-33 NIV

Confirmed in Jesus: The forever promises made to Abraham and his offspring and to David are confirmed in Jesus. In Jesus these promises will be fulfilled. All nations are blessed in Jesus, all those who trust in Jesus become heirs with Abraham of the promises God made to him. It is through Jesus that forgiveness and righteousness are given and so the eternal promises and blessings will belong eternally to those who belong to him:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-29 NIV

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ... Romans 1:1-6 ESV

The God of the Old Testament is also the God of the New Testament. The promises and covenants that he made to the faithful of old are renewed and confirmed in Christ Jesus in the New Testament. The writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament writes about many of the faithful of the Old Testament. He includes Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and many others. He states that they have not yet received what was promised but a time is coming when they and those faithful in Christ Jesus will together receive what was promised:

And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Hebrews 11:39-40 ESV

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WHO ARE WE?

We are a group of Bible students that believe that the only source of truth is found in the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament. Our purpose is to encourage everyone to read the entire Bible for themselves and learn about God and about His Son, Jesus the Messiah. God has spoken to many people over the years of history telling them of his love for them and of His plans for them and for us. Only by reading what God has caused to be written and by listening to God's truth through the pages of His writings can we find out about His plans for us and for the future.

In order to encourage everyone to read the entire Bible we provide several resources and activities.

Fifteen years ago the DAILY BIBLE READER website www.dailybiblereader.com was launched. This website includes:

- A daily Bible reading schedule that covers the Bible in one year.

- Each day's scheduled readings with a choice of four different Bible versions.
- A daily focus verse from the readings for daily meditation.
- Questions on each reading to further individual study.
- Daily Bible background information on who, what, where, and when.

Check it out for yourself. See if this would help you read and study the Bible every day.

In addition to the website and this quarterly newsletter, we offer a correspondence ten-lesson Bible study course entitled "To Be A Disciple". This course helps the student learn about Jesus and about being his disciple by readings from the Bible. It covers all the main teachings in the Bible.

Two Bible classes are currently held in Newport News, Virginia at the Hampton Inn & Suites across from the Patrick Henry Mall.

Thursday evenings from 7 to 8:30. This class is studying many of the faithful people from the Old and New Testament and is entitled "Their Names are Written in God's Book of Life".

Friday mornings from 11 to noon we meet to discuss the Bible readings for the previous week.

The DAILY BIBLE READER also provides many pamphlets and booklets on many Bible subject. All these resources are provided free of charge to everyone and there are no requests for donations.

All these activities are sponsored by the Christadelphians of the Virginia Peninsula.

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Daily Bible Readings for October, November, December
Read the Entire Bible in One Year

Day	October		November		December	
	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa
1	Hosea 11,12	Titus 1	Jerm 19-21	James 3	Eze 12-14	Psalm 139
2	Hosea 13,14	Titus 2	Jerm 22,23	James 4	Eze 15, 16	Rev 1
3	II Chron 1,2	Titus 3	Jerm 24-26	James 5	Eze 17, 18	Rev 2
4	II Chron 3,4	Philemon	Jerm 27-29	I Peter 1	Eze 19,20	Rev 3
5	II Chron 5,6	Psalm 110, 111	Jerm 30, 31	I Peter 2	Eze 21, 22	Rev 4
6	II Chron 7, 8	Psalm 112, 113	Jerm 32, 33	I Peter 3	Eze 23, 24	Rev 5
7	II Chron 9,10	Hebrews 1	Jerm 34-36	I Peter 4	Eze 25, 26	Psalm 140
8	II Chron 11,12	Hebrews 2	Jerm 37,38	I Peter 5	Eze 27, 28	Psalm 141
9	II Chron 13,14	Hebrews 3	Jerm 39-41	Psalm 120, 121	Eze 29-31	Rev 6
10	II Chron 15,16	Psalm 114, 115	Jerm 42,43	Psalm 122, 123	Eze 32, 33	Psalm 142- 143
11	II Chron 17,18	Hebrews 4	Jerm 44-46	Psalm 124, 125	Eze 34, 35	Rev 7
12	II Chron 19,20	Hebrews 5	Jerm 47,48	II Peter 1	Eze 36, 37	Rev 8
13	II Chron 21,22	Psalm 116, 117	Jerm 49,50	II Peter 2	Eze 38, 39	Rev 9
14	II Chron 23,24	Hebrews 6	Jerm 51,52	II Peter 3	Eze 40, 41	Psalm 144
15	II Chron 25,26	Hebrews 7	Ezr 1, 2, 3	Psalm 126, 127	Eze 42-44	Rev 10
16	II Chron 27,28	Hebrews 8	Ezr 4, 5, 6	Psalm 128, 129	Eze 45, 46	Rev 11
17	II Chron 29,30	Psalm 118	Ezr 7, 8, 9	I John 1	Eze 47, 48	Psalm 145
18	II Chron 31,32	Hebrews 9	Ezr 10 Neh 1	I John 2	Dan 1,2	Rev 12
19	II Chron 33,34	Hebrews 10	Neh 2,3,4	I John 3	Dan 3,4,5	Rev 13
20	II Chron 35,36	Psa 119: 1-24	Neh 5,6, 7	I John 4	Dan 6,7,8	Rev 14
21	Lam 1,2	Hebrews 11	Neh 8,9	I John 5	Dan 9,10	Psalm 146
22	Lam 3,4,5	Hebrews 12	Neh 10,11	Psalm 130, 131	Dan 11,12	Rev 15
23	Jerm 1,2	Hebrews 13	Neh 12,13	Psalm 132, 133	Habakkuk 1-3	Rev 16
24	Jerm 3,4	Psa 119: 25-48	Esth 1,2,3	Psalm 134, 135	Zephaniah 1-3	Psalm 147
25	Jerm 5,6	Psa 119: 49-74	Esth 4, 5, 6	II John	Haggai 1, 2	Rev 17
26	Jerm 7,8	Psa 119: 75-96	Esth 7-10	III John	Zechariah 1-3	Rev 18
27	Jerm 9,10	Ps 119: 97- 120	Eze 1, 2, 3	Psalm 136	Zechariah 4-6	Rev 19
28	Jerm 11, 12	Ps 119: 121-144	Eze 4, 5, 6	Psalm 137	Zechariah 7-9	Psalm 148
29	Jerm 13, 14	Ps 119: 145-176	Eze 7,8,9	Psalm 138	Zechar 10-12	Psalm 149, 150
30	Jerm 15, 16	James 1	Eze 10,11	Jude	Zechar 13,14	Rev 20, 21
31	Jerm 17, 18	James 2			Malachi 1-4	Rev 22