

DISCOVERY

THE DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE FROM SCRIPTURE UNION

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HELPING PEOPLE MEET GOD EVERY DAY

QUARTERLY

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Welcome

EXTRAS has been created as an additional resource to use with Scripture Union's daily devotional *Discovery*. It is an excellent tool for small group Bible study and can also enhance your own individual Bible reading. These questions will encourage you to dig deeper into the meaning of the Scripture passages you have read during the week.

1. What is the identity of Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17? Is it a city? A religious system? Ancient or modern? Are there subtle clues within the passage that can help? What do you think?
2. Revelation 18 is one of the most difficult chapters in all of the Bible to satisfactorily explain. Just what is Babylon? Ancient Babylon rebuilt? A commercial system? A commercial system wedded to a religious system (v.24)? What do you think?

1. In Revelation 19 we are introduced to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and v.7 proclaims that the bride has made herself ready. What do you understand by this? What actions would be required to perform this? What constitutes “ready”?
2. What do you understand by the language of the final sentence in 19:10? That Jesus is to be found in Bible prophecy? That the testimony of Jesus comes from the same Spirit responsible for prophecy? What do you think?
3. Revelation 20:4 reinforces the prediction of 13:16 – a mark on the forehead or the hand. As outlandish as this has seemed throughout the centuries, how outlandish does it seem now? What features of our day & age corroborate this?
4. Jesus says in 21:5 that he makes all things new. What in your experience has the Lord renewed for you? How about those around you?

Week Three

Psalm 73; Proverbs 19; 22:17-23:28; 24:1-22; 25; 27:1-17

1. Why the wicked prosper is a prominent theme of Psalm 73. Discuss the proposed reasons for this. Why do you think God allows His people to suffer while their oppressors live large?
2. Proverbs 19:3 is here for a reason, namely, that this phenomenon is fairly common. Discuss some examples of this from your personal universe.
3. Discuss the wisdom of 23:4-5 when measured against the backdrop of Ecclesiastes 5:10-17. Apparently, the same hand wrote both passages. Do you think Solomon is being a little autobiographical here?
4. Discuss the wisdom of 25:28. People with no self control become vulnerable, but to what? Which categories of human activity qualify here?

1. Given the set of God's contemporary enemies, how would you pray Psalm 74:18? Who would you have in mind here? And how do they blaspheme the name of God? Do you think hatred of the Jew is a form of this?
2. Discuss hypocrisy as set forth in Luke 12:1-3. Why do you think hypocrisy gives Jesus such high blood pressure? What does this verse say about how God will deal with hypocrites? And just how are the Pharisees involved (see Matt. 23:3ff)?
3. What real life examples can you cite for someone who qualifies for the rich fool in 12:15-21? A relative, a good friend, someone in the news?
4. Identify the key word in 12:35. In the Greek, it's the word "your." How does this bear on the idea of individual responsibility before God? And how does it play into the language of v.36?

1. See Luke 13:20-21. Scholars for centuries have been evenly divided over what the leaven is supposed to represent. Do you think it figures something good or bad? Either way, can you cite an example? Why do you feel this way?
2. The only political insult ever made by Jesus lies in 13:32. Why do you think he characterized the murderer of his first cousin as a fox? What traits does a fox bring to mind? Do you think Jesus was under any illusions about his character?
3. If we pair 13:34-35 with 23:28-31, we get the hint of a forthcoming catastrophe. To what cataclysmic event do you think Jesus might be referring? For further elucidation, read 19:41-44. Now identify the forthcoming catastrophe. Why did God allow this?
4. The Parable of the Great Supper (14:15-24) is a favorite for sermons. What excuse did you offer when you were first told about God's offer of salvation? Or, did you resist at all? What finally made you accept?

1. Luke 14:33 is a rather troubling verse for western Christians. Do we take this literally, and at face value? Or is it to be tempered by some of the admonitions in the epistles? Discuss how to merge this verse with I Timothy 6:17.
2. The idea that those in heaven are still privy to the activity of earth has intrigued Christians for centuries. See 15:7. Do you feel this sheds light on the subject? Does Hebrews 12:1 help? If we accept the premise that heaven's citizenry does know what goes on here, how interested do think they are?
3. The final sentence in 16:15 is a time-honored principle. What do we highly esteem that God finds abhorrent? The Oscars? The NFL? The World Cup Soccer match? Documentaries featuring most extravagant yachts to be found? What candidates would you nominate?
4. Discuss the reason for 16:19-31. Why did Jesus issue this account? What are we to carry away as we read this? What would a reasonable person deduce after reading this, taking the language at face value?

1. The only grateful, healed leper in Luke 17:11-19 was the hated Samaritan, v.16. Interestingly, Jesus refers to him as a foreigner, v.18. What does this bit of information say about Jesus? What does it say about the Samaritan?
2. Assuming that “days” in 17:26 refer to the days immediately preceding the return of Jesus, can you cite some parallels between the days of Noah and our present time? If the wickedness of Noah’s day warranted drowning the world, what will God do to the wicked in our present age?
3. Expound upon the time honored principle articulated by the Master at the end of 18:14. What examples of this can you cite, both within and outside of the church?
4. There may be method to the seeming madness of Jesus’ question to the blind man in 18:41. Why do you think the Lord asked this question? Given that this account is also for our benefit, do you think it might bear on how we should pray?

Week Eight

Psalm 78:1-39; Luke 19-20:19

1. See Psalm 78:1-4. Obviously, God wants the parents to pass on to the children the knowledge of God. In what ways have you followed this example with your children?

2. Many a lesson is found in Luke 19:1-10. Which salient lessons can you identify?

3. In 19:48 we ascertain that the back and forth between Jesus and the authorities was observed by throngs of fervent “fans” of Jesus. Had you been one among the crowd, what is it about this unusual rabbi that would have fascinated you?

4. See 20:2. What do you think is meant by “these things?” What things?

Week Nine

Psalm 78:40-72;
Luke 20:20-Luke 21:38

1. Think carefully as you review Luke 20:41-44. Do you think this “trick” question could be viewed as an act of mercy on the part of Jesus? Why?
2. Discuss how 21:3 could possibly be a reality. What does this tell us about how God thinks?
3. Can you recall a time when you were on the spot having to answer to someone else about your faith and 21:15 kicked in for you? How did the Lord come through for you?
4. Consider 21:29-31. What buds on the world’s fig tree can you identify as indicative of the soon return of the Lord?

1. The sentiment expressed in Psalm 79:10 finds its New Testament counterpart in Revelation 6:10. What are your thoughts along these lines?
2. The Gordian knot of predestination vs. individual responsibility is often found side-by-side in one verse. An example is Luke 22:22. What are your thoughts along these lines?
3. Consider the curious statement in 23:12. Jesus can heal relationships when neither party is willing to go first. What relationships has Jesus helped you deal with? Could a favorable result have been possible apart from divine intervention?
4. See 23:43. Did the thief die under the old covenant or the new? Stated another way, was the new in place when he died? Why or why not? For some assistance, see v.45.

Week Eleven

Psalms 80; Luke 24:13-53;
Haggai 1:2-23; Zechariah 1:1-6

1. It seems that nobody can sleep after the resurrection. The two Emmaus disciples make the ten mile hike to Jerusalem (24:13) after their evening meal (v.33), arriving after midnight (imagine how long it takes to walk ten miles), only to find everybody else still up. Would you have been able to sleep?
2. Consider 24:36-39. Assuming you were there and were given the opportunity to ask the first question, what would it have been?
3. Compare Haggai 1:5-11 with Malachi 3:8-11. What was the common cause of each problem? Do you think that this problem is repeated in today's church?
4. Consider Zechariah 1:3 and pair it with the first sentence in James 4:8. This is an eternal principle. Have you ever had recourse to a verse like this? Did you give God a reason to appear distant? How did the Lord respond?

Week Twelve

Psalm 81; Zechariah 2-3:10;
Zechariah 6:9-15; Zechariah
7-8:23; Zechariah 9:9-17

1. Consider Psalm 81:13. Do you think God says this of his church today? If so, what might provoke such a sentiment from God?
2. What do you think of Satan in Zechariah 3:1? Is this a nameless adversary or it is the New Testament devil? Support your answer.
3. Consider 7:5-7. Has God changed over the centuries regarding the motives of his people? What motives for what activities might God challenge his people over today?
4. We know that 9:9 was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Can you identify additional specific prophecies about Jesus that he fulfilled?

Week Thirteen

Psalm 82; Zechariah 10;
Zechariah 14:1-11, 20, 21;
Matthew 1-2:23

1. Obviously, God has a problem with judges showing partiality, Psalm 82:1-4. What contemporary examples of this can you cite, especially well connected people committing crimes with virtual impunity, v.2?
2. Which worldwide event could Zechariah 10:8-9 be predicting? When do you think this took place? Why might you consider it past just a miracle but a sign from heaven?
3. Describe the turmoil you think Joseph went through prior to the visitation of the angel in a dream, Matthew 1:18-20. Cancel the wedding? Cancel the limousine service? Try to recover the deposit for the reception hall? Explain anything to her parents? What about his parents? Tell close friends about this?
4. Matthew 2:3 is curious. Why would all Jerusalem be troubled? Do you think this verse might bear on the degree of Herod's wickedness?

Week Fourteen

Psalm 83;
Malachi 1:1-5; 2:10-3:18;
Malachi 4

1. The time honored tendency of older men to want to trade in the wife of their youth for a newer model is found in Malachi 2:14. The key word is the final word in the verse. Discuss your thoughts on this.
2. One of the reasons God hates divorce (2:16) is found in v.15. Can you identify that reason? What are your thoughts? What might this say of same sex marriages?
3. Malachi 3:8-10 has long been a favorite of preachers over the subject of money. Do you think the tithe principle is valid for New Testament believers? Why or why not?