

# ENCOUNTER —WITH— GOD

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**EXTRA**

scriptureunion  
HELPING PEOPLE MEET GOD EVERY DAY

A GUIDE FOR MEETING GOD DAILY IN HIS WORD

# Welcome to *EXTRAS*

*EXTRAS* has been created as an additional resource to use with Scripture Union's daily devotional *Encounter with God*. 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.

**Acts 11:19-12:25**

1. What significant consequence followed the persecution of Christians after the stoning of Stephen? Why was this important for the Great Commission?
2. Herod had Peter imprisoned. Peter slept between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and with sentries before the door to guard the prison. What were possible reasons for Peter's being placed and sleeping under such heavy guard? What might that say about Herod, about Peter?

**PSALM 107; Song of Solomon 1:1-8:14**

- 1.** The bride and bridegroom were quite descriptive about one another's appearance. Regardless of our outward appearance, our past or current circumstances, how does Jesus, the great lover of our souls, see us? How do we know?
- 2.** The bride frantically sought but could not always find her beloved. What are God's promises to us when we seek Him? Look at passages like Psalm 145:18, Isaiah 65:24, Hebrews 4:16 and Romans 10:13.
- 3.** It seems that the bride's beloved was handsome beyond compare. Read the prophecy in Isaiah 53:2,3. Why would this prophecy about Jesus' appearance be important?
- 4.** Do you know of anyone desperately looking for love and belonging in the wrong places? What parts of Scripture can you use to share Christ's love with them?

**PSALM 108; Judges 2:6-23; 4:1-24; 6:1-7:24a**

- 1.** In the book of Judges, we read about Israel's abandoning the God of their fathers and turning to the gods of the people around them. What reasons might have driven them to do so? What kinds of gods are part of today's culture that would distract us from Him?
- 2.** When the Israelites were unfaithful and in resulting distress, God raised up judges to save them. But they continued to sin and were oppressed by Midian. They cried out for help, and He responded with a message through a prophet. Considering that message, what do you think their cry included? What would have gotten them a different response?
- 3.** We see throughout history that God has used flawed individuals like Gideon to accomplish His purposes – men and women plagued by self-doubt, depression, anxiety or physical infirmity – Martin Luther and Joni Erickson Tada, for example. Name others and consider how God enabled them to accomplish great things for His sake.
- 4.** Why did God winnow down the number of Israelites to fight the Midianites? What important principles can we learn from this part of Gideon's story in Scripture?

**PSALM 109; Judges 8:22-35; 13:1-16:31**

- 1.** Gideon humbly refused the Israelites' call for his rule and for that of his progeny, affirming that God would rule over them. What then, would have motivated Gideon to make an ephod from the spoils of Midian and put it in his city. Why was it a snare for him and his family?
- 2.** Manoah asked God to send the angel to tell him how to raise the child promised to his wife. God did send the angel - but to his wife; Manoah was not with her. How can Christians use this account for encouragement in their own lives when God does not answer prayers in the way they expect Him to?
- 3.** Despite his parents' hope that he would marry an Israelite, Samson insisted on marrying a Philistine woman. Imagine how they must have felt. Looking at the story of Samson, how might we counsel and encourage parents of rebellious children today?
- 4.** We really cannot know what motivated Delilah to betray Samson; there is more one possibility. One can only speculate about what she felt having been the facilitator of the brutal loss of his sight and his humiliation as he ground at the mill in prison. Can you think of other persons in the Bible about whom we are left to wonder? Why do you think the Bible allows us to have unanswered questions?

**PSALM 110; Ruth 1:1-4:22**

1. Out of love for Naomi, Ruth left Moab, embracing her mother-in-law's God and people. Consider the great cost she paid leaving her own family, friends and homeland. Consider the cost paid by those who embrace Jesus and His church in places of the world where conversion to Christianity is illegal; pray for them.
2. Ruth told Naomi that Boaz had instructed her to keep close to his young men; Naomi, concerned for Ruth's safety, contradicted Boaz and told her to go out with his young women. What things can we glean from this contradiction as we seek to serve vulnerable women and children in our churches and community?
3. Boaz told Ruth that all his fellow townsmen knew she was a worthy woman. How would they have known; how would he have been aware of their appraisal? What does that teach us about how we should conduct ourselves as Christians? In what ways does our conduct impact our testimony?
4. Naomi's faith in God became Ruth's. The women had found God faithful but could not have imagined His ultimate plan; Ruth would be included in the lineage of the Messiah! Pray for those new to faith in Christ – God may have plans for each of them that go far beyond your expectations!

**PSALM 111; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4:18**

- 1.** Note the many ways Paul was described in his ministry to the Thessalonians. How do you see his qualities of leadership imitated by that young church? What does that show us about mentoring in our own churches?
- 2.** What do you think Paul meant when he said that he and his companions not only shared the Gospel with the Thessalonians, but their lives as well? How did they do so? How did that make difference in their testimonies? How can believers today share their lives?
- 3.** We sense anguish in Paul's writing; he longed to revisit the Thessalonian church. In his absence, though, notice how he continued to teach, affirm and encourage its members. Where are circumstances in our own lives that necessitate distance, but where God would have us press in with loving affirmation and encouragement?
- 4.** As we look at the prayers Paul offered on behalf of the Thessalonian church, what can we take as examples for our own prayers for our church and for one another?



**PSALM 112; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28;  
2 Thessalonians 1:1-3:18**

- 1.** Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians' abundantly growing faith and for their increasing love for one another - especially considering the persecution and afflictions they were enduring. What measures for faith and love do you think Paul used, and how can they be used in your church today?
- 2.** The Thessalonians believed that Jesus would return but were confused about when. It has continued to be so for many Christians throughout the ages - and even today. What are things that contribute to the confusion? What did Paul teach the Thessalonians that helps us to be patient, ready and hopeful?
- 3.** Paul told the Thessalonians to stand firm and hold to the traditions they had been taught. What traditions would have continued to be meaningful and important for them to continue? To what traditions should we hold fast in order to stand firm as we wait for Jesus' return?
- 4.** Paul asked that God comfort the Thessalonians' hearts and establish them in every good word and deed. In this letter, how do we see God using Paul to do just those things? How can we see that request applied to our own lives and churches?

**PSALM 113; Obadiah 1-21; Habakkuk 1:1-3:19**

1. Edom had sided with Babylon against Israel, its kin, and thereby incurred God's destruction. And yet, Israel's defeat at the hand of Babylon was God's judgement on His people for their own sin. What conclusions might we draw from this seeming contradiction in these two actions of God?
2. Habakkuk offered God numerous complaints. In questioning God, was Habakkuk sinning? Why or why not? What do Habakkuk's complaints teach believers who want to complain when they pray?
3. God answered Habakkuk's complaints. When we question God, should we expect an answer? Why or why not? Can these prayers be helpful? What does Scripture tell us?
4. If we complain to God about our own nation and the world around us, what will make our prayers righteous and not sinful?

**PSALM 114; Nahum 1:1-2:13; Hebrews 1:1-2:18**

1. In what ways is God's revelation through Jesus far superior to that of the prophets, the angels and Moses?
2. How is Jesus referenced as prophet, priest and king in the early verses of Hebrews 1?
3. If angels are sent out to serve those who are in Christ, how does Scripture describe that service? How do angels minister to the household of faith?
4. Why was it important that Jesus suffer death? How was His death different from those for whom He died?

**PSALM 115; Hebrews 3:1-6:3**

- 1.** What is the heavenly calling that the Hebrew church shared? Who had called them? With whom did they share it?
- 2.** Considering their struggle under persecution, why do you think that Jesus' being called the apostle and high priest of their confession would be important for those Jewish believers?
- 3.** Moses was a servant in God's house; Jesus rules over His Father's house. What are some comparisons that you can make between Moses and Jesus that would encourage any reader of to have great hope and courage?
- 4.** What weaknesses or temptations did Jesus experience? Think beyond His time in the desert with Satan. How do moral and physical weaknesses undermine a believer's resistance to sin? In what ways can we be encouraged knowing that Jesus was tempted in every way?

**PSALM 116 & 117; Hebrews 6:4-8:13**

1. What are the two unchangeable things that give believers in Christ the strong encouragement that is a sure and steadfast anchor of their souls? When fears or temptations assault them, how do you see those things impacting their walks of faith?
2. Melchizedek is mentioned in two places in the Old Testament: Genesis 14:17-20 and Psalm 110:4. Reading those passages, how might Melchizedek's role of high priest have been the same of the high priesthood of Aaron in Exodus? How was it different?
3. Considering Melchizedek's role of priestly king, in what ways did it compare to the high priestly role of our king Jesus? In what way was it significantly different?
4. Why was comparing Melchizedek to Jesus at great length so important for the young Hebrew church? Why is it important for believers today?

**PSALM 119:1-24; Hebrews 9:1-10:25**

- 1.** We tend to put mementos or monuments on display to see and then remember important memories or events. Why would God have ordered that significant things of the exodus be put in the Holy of Holies where Only the High Priest went – and then only once a year?
- 2.** The tabernacle in Israel's history and then the temple with its traditions were revered by the Hebrew people. How do you think the young Hebrew church members might have felt about giving them up?
- 3.** In what ways were the Levitical sacrifices inadequate? What purpose did they serve for the Israelites – for the early Jewish Christians – what purpose does knowing about them today serve believers?
- 4.** The Christ said that He had come to do His Father's will. What was the Father's will for Him? How is the Father's will the same/different for believers?

**PSALM 119:25-48; Hebrews 10:26-13:25**

- 1.** What is the Most Holy Place that Jesus' blood has opened for us who trust in Him? Meditate on John 14:6; marvel in the truth that the way did not exist until He opened it, that He entered Himself to make a living way for us.
- 2.** John Wesley quoted a friend who said that the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion. If corporate action is indispensable, how can Christians be spurring one another on to love and good works? Why would this have been especially important for the Hebrew church to consider?
- 3.** What makes one a witness? Why is a witness' testimony important? To what were the heroes of the faith written about in Hebrews 11 witnesses? Why would the fact that they were called witnesses encourage us to run with perseverance the race that is set before us?
- 4.** When we fix our eyes on Jesus, what can we see? When temptations come, when things are hard, can our view of Him change? In what ways?

**PSALM 119:49-72; Genesis 12:10-20;  
Genesis 13:1-15:21**

1. Despite Abram's dishonesty about his wife Sarai, how did God remain faithful to His word to Abram? What does the account teach believers about God's commitment to His people?
2. In His covenant with Abram, God promised blessing but also predicted hardship for generations to come. Looking at the promises made to Abram what things can be learned about God when believers experience what they might see as delays in His promises?