



ENCOUNTER —WITH— GOD

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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.

Zechariah 1:1 – 2:13

1. In Zechariah's vision, God declared that he would dwell in Israel's midst. In what ways does his dwelling with His people differ today?

Psalms 141; Zechariah 3:1 - 8:23

- 1.** The Lord's words in Zechariah's vision: "Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" What analogies would God have us draw from the metaphor of a burnt or smoldering piece of wood taken from a fire?
- 2.** In Israel, priests were never crowned as kings and kings were never priests; God had mandated a separation of religious and civil leadership in Israel. Why, then would God command that Joshua, the high priest, be crowned king rather than Zerubbabel, a strong and Godly civil leader in Jerusalem?
- 3.** The law of Moses commanded only one fast day - the Day of Atonement. During the exile, the Jews added 4 more days of fasting to remember tragic dates in their defeat; God rebuked the remnant for what became self-indulgent attitudes and behavior. How can the church use its rituals in ways that focus on what God desires, on what brings Him glory?
- 4.** God's promises for Jerusalem's safety, prosperity, and peace have not yet been accomplished. Why? When can we expect them to be fulfilled?

Psalm 142; John 18:1 – 19:42

1. When the soldiers and officials came to arrest Jesus in the garden, he confirmed his identity twice. Why would his words “I am he” cause them to fall to the ground the first and not the second time?
2. Annas questioned Jesus first about his disciples and then about his teaching. Why would Jesus ignore the first question and answer only the second?
3. After appearing before Pilate, Jesus was found to be without fault. And yet, Pilate flogged him, tearing his back to shreds Why?
4. What reasons might Jesus have had in singling out only John when he said, “Woman, behold your son!” and “Behold your mother!”

John 20:1 - 21:25; Zechariah 9:1-17

1. Seeing the tomb empty apart from the folded grave cloths, John believed. What had been lacking in his understanding that moment?
2. The resurrected Christ could have gone anywhere, done anything he wanted; he chose to show himself to the disciples hiding behind locked doors, to stand among them bringing peace. Why?
3. Jesus prepared breakfast for 7 of his disciples who had caught nothing during their night fishing. He had fish cooking on a fire and bread waiting for them when he called them to shore. Why would he then invite the men to bring some of the fish they had just caught?
4. Zechariah prophesied about the coming conquests of Israel's enemies by the armies of Alexander the Great. Compare the triumphant entries into fallen cities by Alexander to what would be the victorious entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem.

Psalm 143; Zechariah 10:1 – 14:21; Romans 9:1-5

1. For lack of a shepherd, the Israelites wandered like sheep from God. To avoid going after false gods today, what safeguards should be in place for the church?
2. In what ways is it significant that Zechariah received his shepherd's wages (30 pieces of silver) and taking them to the temple, threw them to the potter? In what way was this a foretelling of what would happen in Matthew 27:3-10? What is symbolic about a potter's field for those purchased by Jesus blood?
3. Why would God choose to open a fountain for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem? What is significant about an open fountain as opposed to another source of water?
4. Grieving over his fellow Jews' rejection of Jesus, Paul listed gifts given to them by God. Which of those gifts have we all been given, so that our own hearts should break over the unbelief around us?

Psalm 119:153-176; Genesis 32:1 – 33:20; 35:1-29; 37:1-11

1. As we look at the history of Israel, both past and present, what evidence do we see of God's faithfulness and fulfillment of his promise to his children?
2. Without Christ, Jews continue to pursue the law of righteousness even today. How can those of us who pursue the righteousness of faith spoken of by Paul present Jesus as the way of salvation, to those for whom he may be a 'stumbling stone'?
3. What difference can be seen between the responses of Elijah in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament as they spoke of Israel's rejection of truth?
4. What evidences do we have that God has not rejected Israel?

Psalms 145; Romans 11:25 – 14:9

- 1.** Looking back to the offerings sacrificed on the altars of the Old Testament, what significance can we see in Paul's appeal to his brothers that they present their bodies as living sacrifices?
- 2.** In what ways are we tempted today to conform to this world? In what ways does the renewing of our minds lead to transformation?
- 3.** Both Jesus and Paul suffered under corrupt and unjust Roman rule and did not deny its authority. How can Christians best respect their governments and honor God?
- 4.** Paul spoke of the one weak in faith – what might be causes for that weakness? In what ways might those weak in faith consider themselves strong and others weak by comparison?

Psalms 146; Romans 14:10 – 15:33

1. Paul wrote that all Christians would stand before the judgment seat of God. To what end?
2. Are there things permitted in your Christian community that hinder its testimony and which might cause some to stumble? In what ways can those challenges be addressed?
3. Following Christ's example, in what ways can we as individuals, and as the church, not only bear with, but also build up those who are weak?
4. Paul asked that his Roman brethren strive together - literally meaning "agonize together" with him in prayer for his ministry. Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, used the same word root for "strive" when he agonized in prayer and asked his disciples to pray with him. What does this tell us about how Paul valued these brethren he had not even met? What does this tell us about the importance of our prayers for our pastors?

Psalm 147; Romans 16:1-27; Exodus 28:1 – 30:21

1. What is the mystery to which Paul referred in his closing remarks to the Roman church?

2. In Israel, the priesthood was inherited by birthright to perform sacrifices and lead worship. How then, in the New Testament, can believers in Jesus be called a royal priesthood? In what ways are the services of believers the same as those of the Old Testament priests?

3. As part of their consecration, why did God instruct Moses to wash Aaron and his sons outside – at the door of the tent of meeting? What parallels are there to God's cleansing of believers in the New Testament? Aaron was then dressed in the garments prescribed by God. In what ways can you compare his being clothed by Moses to the garments Christ provides for those who trust in him?

4. An altar was made in the tent of meeting for priests to burn sweet incense every morning and evening; once a year, atoning blood was applied to it. In Revelation 5, the prayers of the saints are called incense. How can prayer be likened to incense? Why was the atoning blood critical for the altar of incense and continues today for believers' prayers?

Psalm 148; Exodus 30:22 – 34:17

1. Why would God command that the holy anointing oil, a symbol for the Holy Spirit, be used to consecrate the tent of meeting and its contents, Aaron and his sons, throughout the generations, and forbid that it be poured on the body of an ordinary person?
2. Responding to the will of the Israelites, Aaron made a golden idol. Where in our culture is the pressure of the opinions of people or their perceived needs threatening to come against the will of God? Where are Christians tempted to rely on their own strength, their own feelings, their own needs, and forget or put aside their trust in him?
3. How would you reconcile God's relenting from the disaster he had spoken of bringing on his people in Exodus 23 with Numbers 23:19, where it is said that he does not lie or change his mind?
4. Why would Moses set up a temporary tent of meeting outside, even far off from the camp of the Israelites?

Acts 2:1-21; Exodus 34:18 – 38:31

1. When among the people, why would Moses put a veil on his face, but remove it when he went in before the Lord to speak with him?
2. What do you see as God's purposes for his people keeping the Sabbath?
3. Everyone in Israel who was willing, gave precious metals, jewels, goat's hair, the talents of artisans and women who could spin yarn or linen; all the men and women, whose hearts were moved, brought their gifts and talents freely. How can the church present the practice of giving to God in ways that move hearts and impress on its people that every gift, no matter how small, is valuable to God?
4. The laver in the tent of meeting was a reservoir of water used for ceremonial washing. It was made from the polished bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door. What would be significant about the offering of these women?

Psalm 149; Exodus 39:1 – 40:38; Matthew 8:1-22

1. Why would God require priests to wear the splendid holy garments made for them?
2. Everything was completed and ready for the erection of the Tabernacle and Tent of Meeting. However, Moses waited for God's command and was told to set it up it up on the first day of the first month. Why was that day significant?
3. In what ways was leprosy a picture of sin and its effects?
4. In what ways can we model our worship of Jesus after that of the leper who knelt before him?

Psalm 150; Matthew 8:23 – 9:26

1. Why might God want us to know that Jesus was asleep during the violent storm that raged while in a boat with his disciples? What does his sleeping in the middle of a storm tell us about him?
2. What time would the demons possessing the two men be referring to when they met Jesus? Why would that have concerned them?
3. Jesus responded to the faith of the paralytic man's friends by addressing, not his friends, but the man, forgiving his sins and healing him. In what ways can this account be an encouragement for believers' faith today?
4. The tax collector Matthew responded immediately to Jesus' invitation to follow him. Hated by his fellow man, but loved by Jesus, Matthew not only followed and served his savior throughout his lifetime, but his impact continues today through the gospel he wrote. What might be some practical ways that Christians can love the unlovely (or unlikeable) in our world today?

- 1.** What were expressions of faith the blind men exhibited that we should be challenged to see in our own lives?
- 2.** Job was described as being blameless, not sinless. What is the difference, and why is this distinction important even today?
- 3.** What was the significance of Job's friends sitting with him in silence for 7 days and nights? In what ways was this of value to him?