



## DAILY BIBLE READING

**Reading:** Psalm 119:89-112

### The Bible – different from all other books

The Bible is like a deep well of clear water – a well so deep that you can never reach the bottom of it. The more you read, the more you find. You will never come to the time when you feel you know it all, and do not need to read it any more. Look how people received the Word of God:

ACTS 17:11,12	1 THESSALONIANS 2:13
... they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.	... when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

### Why should we read the Bible?

- How can we know about God unless we read His inspired Word?
- God's ways are so different from ours. How can we find out what is right and wrong in life and what God wants us to do unless we read the guide book He has given us?
- How can we follow the example of the Lord Jesus unless we read about his life?
- God does not hear the prayer of the person who despises His Word (Proverbs 28:9), so we should make sure we respect and read it.
- Faith is essential for salvation. Daily Bible reading increases faith and builds us up spiritually. We need to "*grow in the **grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18).
- Bible reading helps us to recognise how sinful we are and that we need to fight against our wrong desires.
- Our reading will remind us of all that God and the Lord Jesus have done for us. This should help us to show love to others.
- It brings us a hope of life through the Gospel.
- It helps us to fill our minds with things that are good and spiritually profitable and will bring us closer to God (Philippians 4:8,9).

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 shows that Scripture should be part of our lives every day. You will see from the section quoted opposite that God's words were to be with His people at all times. They were to talk about them throughout the day and make sure that their children were taught them. These verses show us that wherever we are, whatever we do, we need godly wisdom to guide us. It will help us to be separate from the evil world around us. If we trust in our own judgement we will fail:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil"* (Proverbs 3:5-7).

Paul tells us how vital the reading of God's Word is to our lives:





*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16,17).*

So Scripture teaches us, tells us off, corrects us and trains us in righteousness.

Even Jesus needed a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures (of course, he only had the Old Testament). But how well he knew it! The Word of God provided answers to all his problems. Jesus read the Old Testament; we must read it too.

### **Reading the whole of Scripture**

From the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation, the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Parts of the Bible, like the Psalms and the Gospels, are a joy to read. Some people find that they cannot put their Bibles down until they have finished reading books like Ruth and Esther. The life of David is full of adventure. But other parts describe wickedness and warfare, and we do not enjoy reading them so much. Other chapters have long lists of people and places. If we were to choose for ourselves, we would only read the pleasant chapters. Some of us would only read the New Testament. We might never come to understand some of the most important teachings of the Bible – such as the wickedness that is in all of us, God’s great holiness and the respect and obedience He demands from us.

2 Timothy 3:16 says that **all** Scripture is profitable. People have many different needs, moods, circumstances and experiences, and the Scriptures satisfy them all.

We cannot understand much of the New Testament without the Old. The very first verse of the New Testament speaks about *“Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”*. It is the Old Testament that gives details of the promises made to Abraham and David, and the New Testament often refers to these promises and shows how they relate to the Lord Jesus and to us.

### **We need to read the Bible every day**

God provides us with the food that our bodies need day by day. But our minds also need food – spiritual food, the Word of God – every day because otherwise they will readily feed on the things of the world. If we prayerfully read and meditate (think about) the Bible message, it will build up our understanding of God’s ways, and we will grow more pleasing to God. The Psalmist said,

*“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).*

To make sure we read the whole of Scripture, we need to plan our reading. The Christadelphian Bible Companion is a reading plan which will take you through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice each year. Christadelphians all over the world use this plan and read the Bible every day. But if you have not yet started to read regularly, then the Christadelphian Bible Planner will introduce you to daily Bible reading.

### **The wonders of the Word of God**

There are some amazing discoveries to be made when you read the Scriptures. Here are a few examples:

1. When Abraham was asked to offer his son Isaac (Genesis 22), it pointed forward to the Lord God offering his only Son. Just as Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice, so Jesus carried his own cross. Jesus was the Lamb of God that was sacrificed for us, and in the end it was a ram that Abraham sacrificed. There are other links if you look for them! We can understand how difficult it was for Abraham to offer his son and this helps us to understand how hard it was for the Lord God to see His Son die.
2. Isaac was offered on Mount Moriah which later became part of Jerusalem, where the great temple was built in King Solomon’s time (2 Chronicles 3:1).
3. There are many similarities between the life of Joseph and the life of the Lord Jesus, so we say that Joseph is a type of Christ. For example, both were





righteous sons and both forgave their brothers who rejected them. Joseph was placed in prison, Jesus in the tomb. Afterwards Joseph was a great saviour for his brothers as well as for peoples from other lands who came to Egypt for food. Without him they would have died. The Lord Jesus is the Saviour of both Jews and Gentiles.

4. Just as Elijah was followed by the great prophet Elisha, so John the Baptist was followed by Jesus Christ. Elijah and John were very similar in appearance and way of life, and both prepared the way for the greater prophet who followed them (Matthew 11:14). Elisha was a type of Christ because he performed great miracles including feeding many people and raising a dead boy.
5. It took thousands of years for people to realise the need for simple hygiene, but the Law that God gave to Moses for His people contained many important hygiene rules. It kept them healthier than other nations (Deuteronomy 7:15).
6. Lists of names can provide information to help us in our understanding. For example, the long lists of names in Matthew 1 shows us how the Lord Jesus is descended from various women, including Rahab (a Gentile who was a prostitute), Ruth (another Gentile) and Bathsheba with whom David committed adultery. Would we have chosen such people to be in the line of our precious son? God, in His wisdom, is showing us that the faith of the Gentile women was more important than their background. The list in Luke 3 traces the family of Jesus all the way back to Adam, showing that Adam was a real person.
7. 2 Samuel 12:13 records David's adultery with Bathsheba and how he arranged the death of her husband. It is difficult to understand why David seems to have been so easily forgiven, but Psalms 32 and 51 show how sorry David was.

### Lessons for living

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul refers back to the time of Moses when the people of Israel were in the Wilderness. God's presence was with them and He wanted to lead them to the Promised Land. But concerning the people he says,

*"Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. **Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did**" (1 Corinthians 10:5,6).*

So we are meant to learn from these examples. We must not:

- desire evil (verse 6)
- be idolaters (verse 7)
- indulge in sexual immorality (verse 8)
- put Christ to the test – question God's wisdom (verse 9)
- grumble (verse 10).

It is easy to think that we will never worship gods of wood and stone but the New Testament describes covetousness as idolatry – anything which fills our lives rather than God can be an idol to us.

The apostle repeats the point:

*"Now these things happened to them as an example, but **they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall**" (1 Corinthians 10:11,12).*

There are plenty of other lessons we can learn from the poor behaviour of Israel in the time of Moses. But the record of how God wanted them to worship Him at this time contains fascinating details which point forward to the life of Jesus which was still 1,500 years away. There are many more lessons like this in the Bible.

### Some practical points to help Bible reading

**1. Punctuation and capital letters** – When the Scriptures were first written they did not contain any punctuation or capital letters. Occasionally the translators have been unhelpful. Luke 23:43 is an example. It contains the words that Jesus spoke to the thief





crucified with him. Because the man showed such an understanding of the Gospel, Jesus told him that he would be in paradise with him, meaning that he would be in God's kingdom on earth. This verse has caused much misunderstanding because the translators thought the thief would go to heaven. For this reason it reads:

*“And he (Jesus) said to him (the thief) ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise’ ”.*

But by putting the comma after the word ‘today’ the sense is completely changed. Jesus could not have been promising that he would go to heaven that day with this man because he knew he was going to the grave for three days. The translators have also misled people by putting a capital letter for ‘paradise’. The word simply means ‘garden’. We know that Jesus promises a future life on this earth which will be like the Garden of Eden before Adam sinned.

**2. Look at the context** – It is always a good idea to look at the context (or surrounding verses) of the passage you are reading. This can provide clues to help you understand, for example, why Jesus told a particular parable.

### 3. Margin references

Some Bibles have margin references. They have a small letter or number by a word: and that letter or number can be found in the margin or the bottom of the page. Here it will give a chapter and verse which is connected with what you have just read.

### 4. Use your maps

Some Bibles have maps. If you find places on your map as you read, then you will come to know the land of Israel better and it may help you to understand the story better, too.

## How to read your Bible

- **Read your Bible prayerfully**

We need God's help in understanding His Word, and He is always ready to give it – so do not forget to ask!

- **Hearing and doing.** God will teach us through His Word. But reading it is not enough. James tells us we must be *“doers of the word, and not hearers only”* (James 1:22). Jesus speaks of some who called him ‘Lord’, but they did not do what he said. Read Matthew 25:31-46.

- **Read the Bible with a humble mind**

God will teach the man who comes to Him with a lowly mind, ready to learn: He will have nothing to do with the person who thinks he knows it all!

*“But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word”* (Isaiah 66:2).

God has written to us. How dare we ignore Him?

### Summary

Read the Bible...

- Prayerfully, asking God to help you to understand what you read and put its lessons into practice.
- Every day, making sure your reading covers all the books of the Bible.
- With an open mind, letting it teach you.
- Carefully, thinking over each verse and making sure you understand it.
- With a humble mind, trying to find out how God wants you to live.

**Verse to learn: Psalm 119:18**

*Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*

**Passages to read: Psalm 19; Psalm 119:1-40; Mark 8:34-38**

