

**BIBLE READING NOTES FOR AUGUST 2022**  
**Compiled by Rev Dr J Jack for the Congregation of Duddingston Kirk**

You will find reading the Bible rewarding and encouraging,  
but reading the Bible is not always easy!

These guidelines may help you.

Before you read each passage, ask God to speak to you through His Word.

Set aside a special time each day to read the Bible, and stick to it!

Make use of your Bible index to find readings – every Bible has a contents page.

Pray that what you have read will help you live according to God's wishes.

**August 1<sup>st</sup>**                      Mark 10:35-45

Two of the disciples wanted privileged positions in heaven. This might seem a reasonable desire, but it distorted their whole spiritual outlook. As Jesus later revealed the spiritual life is not about privilege and ambition, even spiritual ambition, but about service.

**August 2<sup>nd</sup>**                      1Timothy.6:3-10

There is nothing inherently wrong with wealth and beauty as such. What can be wrong is the desire these may arouse within our hearts. It is not money that is the source of evil, but the LOVE of money – the greed that says, 'I must have that'. The love of money is a source of 'all kinds of evil'.

**August 3<sup>rd</sup>**                      Genesis.14:17-24

Having studied the nature and effect of evil, we turn to a study of those people who have overcome the assaults of Satan. Abram had helped in the recovery of prisoners and possessions captured by armed raiders. For this the King of Sodom was grateful and sought to repay him. Abram refused to accept anything, 'not even a sandal strap'! He realized that if he accepted anything he might well compromise his own position.

**August 4<sup>th</sup>**                      2Kings 5:11-16

Elisha had, by the power of God, cured Naaman of his leprosy. Naturally Naaman was delighted and wished to recompense the prophet, but his offer was refused. Elisha realised that the gift of healing had come from God and not from himself, and so it would be improper for him to profit by it.

**August 5<sup>th</sup>**                      Job 2:1-10

Disaster had all but destroyed Job. His possessions had been lost, his family perished in a storm, and his own body was wracked with a terrible disease. His wife, instead of comforting him, advised him to curse God who had allowed all this to happen, and Job refused. It is easy to praise God when all is going well, but very hard when disaster strikes. It is then that we are prone to complain, 'O God, why do you let this happen?' inferring that somehow God has lost control in His own universe. This ill-considered advice came from Job's own wife. In Timothees of crisis loved ones and special friends may not always be our best advisers.

**August 6<sup>th</sup>**                      Jeremiah.35:1-17

Rechabites were under oath not to drink wine. Jeremiah placed wine before them and invited them to drink. They refused. How easily they might have compromised and made an exception just once, especially when tempted by a prophet. But note how their steadfastness was used as a rebuke to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The Rechabites had remained faithful to the commands of their ancestor, but the people of Judah and Jerusalem have not

remained faithful to their God. Our reaction to temptation can often influence others around us in their times of temptation.

**August 7<sup>th</sup>** Daniel.1:1-16

There was nothing wrong with the food and wine as such, but Daniel realized that all this was an attempt to wean him away from his Jewish culture and background and *convert* him to the standards and customs of Babylon. He refused to comply because he recognised that this would be a denial of the God whom he served. His refusal placed him in a position of Daniel, and it also meant that he missed some of the good things in life. To remain loyal to God may often involve sacrifice of some kind.

**August 8<sup>th</sup>** Luke 4:1-13

Here is the classic example of overcoming temptation. Note the nature of the temptations – the easy provision of food with which to feed a crowd; the power and wealth of all the kingdoms of the world; guaranteed safety in a spectacular feat which would win the attention of the multitude. Christ meets each temptation with scripture. But the Devil can also quote scripture! We must be sure that our faith is based on knowledge of the whole Word of God and not merely isolated verses or phrases, which may be twisted out of context.

**August 9<sup>th</sup>** Luke 10:17-24

Christ has given promises to those who are tempted. He has given His followers authority to overcome satanic dangers. It is not a pious hope but a living reality. Christians cannot hope to avoid temptation, but they have the assured power to overcome it.

**August 10<sup>th</sup>** Luke 22:31-34

Satan has permission to test ALL the followers of Jesus. This testing is to separate those who trust Christ from those who trust their own strength. Christ is praying for us. We do not enter this spiritual battle alone, but we have Christ's constant prayer support.

**August 11<sup>th</sup>** Romans.16:17-27

Even within the Church there are many that Satan uses to create havoc among the faithful. Whatever may be Satan's successes in this life they are purely temporary. He will ultimately be crushed by the power of God.

**August 12<sup>th</sup>** 1 Corinthians.10:11-17

It is possible to have a false confidence. Temptation comes in many different forms. We are all tempted and must avoid the danger of feeling sorry for ourselves and thinking that we alone must bear temptation. God will not allow us to be tempted beyond breaking point. As we enter the turmoil of temptation God provides strength to endure.

**August 13<sup>th</sup>** Heb.2:14-18

One of the wonders of the Christian faith is that Christ, the Son of God, left heaven and shared our ordinary human life. Why did He do this? Here is one answer, 'so that through His death He might destroy the Devil'. Moreover, He sets free those who are enslaved by the fear of death. But, most of all, through His ordinary human life, He has shared our experience of temptation and suffering. At no point are we left to endure something our Lord has not Himself experienced.

**August 14<sup>th</sup>** James 4:1-10

As children we knew the comfort of running to our parents in times of danger or trouble. Dangers are not so threatening when dad or mum is close by to comfort. It is exactly the same

in the spiritual life. In times of spiritual danger we must seek protection in our Heavenly Father alone. By His side we see the Devil cut down to his proper size – one whose days are numbered!

**August 15<sup>th</sup>**                      Revelation.3:14-22

The implications of these words are utterly stupendous, but note that victory is possible. As we journey through life facing all the trials and temptations before us we can often feel so desolate, yet there will be those who ‘win the victory’. Those who do win the victory will be given the right to ‘sit beside me on my throne’. This is so breathtaking that it is simply unbelievable. Yet there it is written in God’s Word.

**August 16<sup>th</sup>**                      Matthew.6:16-23

All the physical treasures of this life will, one day, be destroyed. Works of art, precious jewels – they are all subject to destruction. With nuclear power, even the planet earth itself is now vulnerable. Christ speaks confidently of riches in heaven which are beyond the reach of these destroying forces. If we would think at all of eternal and enduring values then we must think in terms of heaven.

**August 17<sup>th</sup>**                      Luke 10:17-24

We must avoid the fatalistic view that everything we do is already written in a book and so we cannot avoid our fate. That is not what is intended here. What Jesus says is recorded in heaven is our very existence – God knows that we are here! We are not anonymous beings struggling on earth, but individuals known to, and watched over by, our loving heavenly Father. Already in heaven we are known. That is surely a tremendous encouragement in life’s trials.

**August 18<sup>th</sup>**                      John 14:1-14

We must avoid two dangers; a sense of spiritual arrogance and a sense of spiritual worthlessness. The first is obvious, but the second is less so. There are many who think I needn’t think of going to heaven because there are so many others so much more important than me. There won’t be room for the likes of me. Jesus assures us that in His Father’s house there are many rooms. However unimportant or worthless we may think ourselves, we mean something to God, and He wants to share His heavenly home with us. There is room!

**August 19<sup>th</sup>**                      Acts 7:54-60

Stephen was the first Christian to die for his faith. In the very moment of dying he ‘looked up to heaven and saw God’s glory and Jesus standing at the right hand side of God’. Was this merely a delusion brought on by his agonies, or did he really see this vision? He called out what he saw and his executioners attacked him even more savagely. Would they have acted like this if it had just been a delusion?

**August 20<sup>th</sup>**                      2 Corinthians.4:16 – 5:5

Paul contrasts our earthly life with our spiritual life. In v.16 the first is decaying while the latter is being renewed daily. In v.1 the former is described as a tent because it is temporary, while the latter is permanent and will last forever.

**August 21<sup>st</sup>**                      Revelation.7:9-17

When we think of heaven we tend to restrict our hopes to reunion with loved ones now dead. The community of heaven is far bigger, ‘an enormous crowd ... from every race, tribe, nation and language’. Their activity is praise and worship and they are now removed from all

‘hunger, thirst or scorching heat’. The tears, caused by their earthly ordeal, are wiped away. It is impossible for human, finite minds to grasp what heaven will be like.

**August 22<sup>nd</sup>** Phil.1:18-26

Paul had a problem. On the one hand he knew that it was God’s will that he should continue in this life a little longer doing the work he had been given to do. On the other hand, his own personal desire was to leave this earthly life and *be with Christ, which is a far better thing*. Many of us believe in heaven, but how many of us so look forward to the glories of heaven that we would welcome an early death in order to be in heaven that much sooner?

**August 23<sup>rd</sup>** 2 Timothy.2:1-13

The glory of heaven is eternal. All else is only temporary, even though some things may endure for thousands of years. This eternal glory is the result of *‘salvation that comes through Christ Jesus’*. Heaven is not the reward of good behavior or generous giving or even church attendance. Jesus said once ‘No one goes to the Father except by Me. I endure everything for the sake of God’s chosen people that they too may obtain the salvation’.

**August 24<sup>th</sup>** Colossians.2:20-3:4

This promise, of course, does not apply to all and sundry, but only to those who ‘have died with Christ and are set free from the ruling spirits of the universe’ i.e. Christians in the fullest sense of the word. But just look at what lies before them, appearing with Christ and sharing His glory!!!

**August 25<sup>th</sup>** 1 Corinthians.15:50-58

Heaven is not the result of our human efforts no matter how heroic or meritorious these efforts may be. Many people today fear death. Some will not even speak or think about it. For the Christian, death is no longer something to be feared, but the transition from this earthly life to the life of glory we will share with Christ.

**August 26<sup>th</sup>** Revelation.21:1-4

Heaven is described as a fellowship, a community, a city. This Holy City comes down from heaven, for there is absolutely nothing that may go up from earth, which will compare with it. Note especially that they will be His people; there will be no more tears; or death; or grief; or pain. All the bitter experiences of this earthly life have no place in heaven.

**August 27<sup>th</sup>** Matthew.10:40-42

These verses describe some who will receive a heavenly reward, those who welcome a messenger from God, or give even a cup of water to one of the least of Christ’s followers. It is not benevolence on its own which is rewarded in heaven, but welcoming God’s messenger. Here is a quality that rises above common humanity, a quality that is a sacrifice to God.

**August 28<sup>th</sup>** Matthew.25:14-21

Faithfulness in small Matters is also noted in heaven. We may not be able to conduct a great evangelical crusade, or go to some far off land to convert the heathen, but the quiet faithful witness in our own neighbourhood may be the very task God has given us to do and it will not go unrecorded.

**August 29<sup>th</sup>** Ephesians.6:1-9

Many of the first Christians were slaves. Because of their bondage they were unable to serve Christ as they would have wished. God will reward all for the good work they do irrespective

of their status or station in life. Some of us may be very conscious of our lack of natural talent or ability, but God will reward His children, not according to their ability, but according to how they use what ability they have.

**August 30<sup>th</sup>**

Matthew.5:1-12

Many of Christ's servants feel they can do nothing except absorb the blows and hardship life serves to them. Yet even how one reacts to hardship and suffering can be a service to, and a witness for, Christ. Down through the ages some of God's greatest saints have had to endure unspeakable sufferings.

**August 31<sup>st</sup>**

1 Peter.4:12-19

There are two types of suffering. There is the suffering that is a direct result of our own folly or wrongdoing. This must never be confused with the suffering borne by the saints of God as a result of this world's evil. A Christian has a responsibility so to live that he avoids the former, but has no guarantee that we will escape the latter.