

BIBLE READING NOTES FOR MAY 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.

THE PSALMS

May 1st Psalm 86:1-17

The marks of true prayer are (a) awareness of one's weakness (verses 1-2) (b) a plea for God's mercy (verses 3-7) (c) acknowledgment that there is "No God like You O Lord" (verses 8-10) (d) a willingness to follow in God's ways (verses 11-14) (e) a sense of trust and reliance on Almighty God (verses 15-17).

May 2nd Psalm 108:1-13

The very first words of this Psalm sum it up. The Christian is not spared the pains, sorrows and trials of this earthy life as some quite wrongly suppose. There is a sense in which the believer is more aware than others the pains and sorrows and trials of this life. But those who believe have a great advantage- because they know that through these tribulations they will be supported and can trust in the One who will not fail them. They can walk through the dark shadow of this life serene in the light of God's love.

May 3rd Psalm 91

The theme of this Psalm is the same as yesterday's, but there is one difference. Psalm 108 was about what might be called the difficulties of life whereas this Psalm is about the one who is engaged in a real spiritual warfare. It does us well to remember that these Psalms were written, not by someone in a sitting in a study, but by who had in their own lives the spiritual struggle in all its pain and all its danger.

May 4th Psalm 34

How many people have stopped worshipping in church because they say "I got nothing out of it"? In worship the emphasis must always be on the one who is worshipped and never on the one who worships. God is the focus of our spiritual life – not self. In this Psalm we see clearly how God is placed at the center. When God is at the center of our lives then and only then will we begin to understand and enjoy the glory of God's blessing.

May 5th Psalm 112

This Psalm describes some of the blessings a God-honouring believer may enjoy. How many blessings can you count in this Psalm?

May 6th Psalm 147

One of the wonders of our God is that God created the vast Universe and yet God also cares for the least important of us. God heals the broken-hearted and also God decided the number of stars in the sky! God raises the humble; but God also spreads clouds over the sky. Our God is the creator of all yet God's ear is open to every cry of the vilest sinner.

May 7th Psalm 130 and Psalm 131

Perhaps Verses 3-4 of Psalm 130 sums up the whole of our Christian life. If we could understand fully what these two verses mean then so much else of our faith would become clear to us.

DAVID THE SHEPHERD KING

May 8th 1 Samuel 17:1-11

How many today are stricken because there is a "Goliath" somewhere in their lives? It may be the memory of some dreadful mistake in the past; or the fear of some unknown danger in the future; or some temptation or weaknesses, which threatens to ruin the whole of life. Whatever it is, it dominates the whole of life and we can be afraid of our own private "Goliath".

May 9th 1 Samuel 17:12-27

Into the situation of terror comes a young shepherd boy who had been sent by his father with provisions for his brothers serving in the army. To the fearful soldiers the young visitor is no more than a minor distraction – even an irritation. They did not recognize him as a deliverer sent by God. Sometimes God's help comes in unexpected ways!

May 10th 1 Samuel 17:28-32

The innocence of youth! David was as sincere as he could be but his brothers saw him as a brat whilst the others laughed at him. Children have great imaginations and sometime we too need to allow ourselves to be open to simple possibilities that our adult minds can often dismiss as irrelevant. The limits of our faith are often our lack of belief in what God can really do.

May 11th 1 Samuel 17:33-40

It is a measure of the fear which gripped the army that the King was willing to entrust his own life, and the lives of his soldiers, to the outcome of a most unequal contest between a mere boy and a giant. No doubt many regarded David's claim that "The Lord will save me from the Philistine" as the idle boast of an immature, but they really had no alternative. David at least was willing to go at a time when no one else was.

May 12th 1 Samuel 17:41-45

The impossible happened! The unarmed boy slew the mighty giant. Those of faith know that the impossible does sometimes happen. When Jesus was nailed to the Cross no one thought the resurrection possible—yet it happened. That feared 'Goliath' in our own private lives—the memory, the fear, the temptation—can also be slain if we but put our trust in God.

May 13th 1Samuel 17:55-18.5

What an emotional meeting that must have been! Saul at once relieved and overjoyed that his nation was once again safe from the threat of conquest; David Flushed with pride that he was so suddenly the hero of the entire army; and Jonathan, the king's son, fascinated by this new friend for whom he had developed such an admiration. It was one of those rare moments in life when life seems one long summer and there is no cloud on the horizon!

May 14th 1Samuel 18:6-16

The joy of yesterday's passage didn't last long. David went from success to success and became the hero of the entire nation. Saul feared this new national hero and was jealous of him. His jealousy even led to a fit of rage. Notice how v.10 speaks of "an evil spirit taking control of him".

May 15th 1Samuel 19:1-10

The rage becomes more than a passing fit. Now it is an almost continual obsession. Even Jonathan is torn between loyalty to his father and love for his friend. These chapters give us a moving insight into the onset of madness. Perhaps the pressure of kingship was too great for him. It is so easy to criticise those called to high office in any society. They may enjoy certain privileges, but they are also under pressures the majority of us know nothing about.

May 16th 1Samuel 20:1-8, 27-33

Jealousy, rage, violence towards a suspected enemy and now there is violence towards his own son. What a change from the fine young man in the prime of life we read about in Chapter 9!

May 17th 1Samuel 22:1-8

The time had come for David to flee, but he is not alone in his plight. He becomes the leader of 400 dissidents who had all suffered at the hands of Saul. In this strange way David is being prepared for the great task of leadership that will one day be laid upon him. The chosen people of God are in sore straits under a mad king, but already God is preparing a new ruler. We may often grumble when God seems to have withdrawn from the affairs of this life; God is never idle.

May 18th 1Samuel 23:14-29

Saul's madness will not give him peace until he has destroyed David, and so he hunts the fugitive. Saul's men are closing in and it seems David's fate is sealed, when suddenly an urgent message that the Philistines, that ancient enemy, are attacking Israel forces Saul to call off the chase and hurry home. As we have seen so often before, God has strange ways of working! Only God's divine intervention saved David.

May 19th 1Samuel 24:1-22

What a strange chapter! Saul resumes the hunt, and unwittingly goes into a cave where David is hiding. How easily David could have slain his attacker, removed the threat from

his life, and assumed the leadership of the army and the nation. It was his golden opportunity, but he refused to take it - so strong was his loyalty to, and respect for, the man whom God had placed on the throne, even though that man was hunting his life. This chapter raises a very interesting question—ought a Christian ever engage in civil disobedience?

May 20th 1Samuel 26:1-17

A second time God places Saul at David's mercy, and again David refuses to allow personal ambition to lead him into a sin against God's chosen servant.

May 21st 1Samuel 28:3-25

Saul is now desperate. The Philistine army is gathering on his borders; David is still alive and the object of all the King's maniacal hatred; and Samuel, the wise old prophet and man of God, has died. Saul is both defenceless and threatened. In his mental condition he is almost at breaking point. If only he could go to Samuel, the man of God, for counsel and advice. Saul takes his fatal step - he consults a medium. We may not understand all there is to know about spiritism and the occult, but of two things we may be absolutely certain; first, it is real, and second, it is horribly dangerous. No one, and least of all a Christian, should have anything at all to do with witchcraft, mediums, seances or magic of any kind. It is an evil power.

May 22nd 1Samuel 31:1-13

Saul's struggle with life is over, and it was anything but a heroic end. The story of Saul is a tragedy. His life began so full of promise and potential, but it ended in ruins, and the ruin encompassed his sons as well. It seems to be one of the rules of life that a foolish man never suffers alone; in his foolishness he destroys others, the innocent, along with himself. We think we are free to please ourselves, but whatever we choose inevitably involves others as well, for good or for ill. We cannot avoid it.

May 23rd 2Samuel 1:17-27

In spite of all that David had suffered at the hands of Saul, he still honoured him as the king whom God had appointed. Nor could David ever forget the loyalty of Jonathan. When he heard of their deaths, his grief was genuine. A lesser man might have rejoiced at the death of his enemy, but David was truly a man whom God had chosen and prepared for a greater task.

May 24th 2Samuel 2:1-11

David's preparation in the wilderness is now over and his march to power has begun. He is now king of the relatively small country of Judah where he reigns for seven years until he is ready for the next stage. Have you ever thought of how often God uses the wilderness as a period of preparation. There was Jesus in the wilderness after His baptism and before His ministry began; there was Paul, the apostle, who 'disappeared' for a time before he was ready for the great task to which God had called him; there was the journey through the wilderness by the whole people of Israel before they eventually settled in the land of promise. Don't grumble if you feel left in the backwater of life. God may be preparing you for something which God has called you, and you alone, to do.

May 25th 2Samuel 5:1-12

David is now king of both Israel and Judah and has established Jerusalem as his capital. The former fugitive and outlaw is now in control. Notice how David realised that God had established him and was making the kingdom prosperous “for the sake of his people”. If God chooses to bestow upon us any special gift, or places us in some position of special responsibility, then it is never for our own personal benefit or pleasure but always for the good of God’s own people.

THE ASCENSION

May 26th Acts 1:6-11

To the person who prefers to rely on human wisdom and human experience, this passage is sheer nonsense, but to the spiritually mature man or woman of faith it is full of precious truth. Here we find the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit (verse 8); here is the commission for us to be witnesses throughout the entire world (verse 8); it is here that our Lord returns to the Father’s Heavenly Presence (verse 9) and here is the promise that Christ will one day return (verse 11).

May 27th Hebrews 8:1-6

Two great doctrines of the Christian faith are the Resurrection and the Ascension. If Christ rose from the dead it means that he is alive now at this very moment. If Christ rose to the presence of his Father in Heaven it means that He is there now at this very moment. To put it crudely, we have, at the very throne of God, one who is aware of all human life – its pain and its fear.

May 28th Hebrews 7:23-28

Today we read of some of the great statements of the Faith (a) Jesus lives for-ever (b) Jesus does not pass on his work to someone else (c) He is able to save those who come to God through Him (d) He lives ever to plead with God for us (e) He is Holy (f) the sacrifice he offered was Himself (g) He has been made perfect forever.

May 29th Hebrews 4:14-16

The Ascension means that the risen Christ is now in the eternal presence of the living God. If we look to Christ as our Lord and Saviour, then it means the living God. If we look to Christ as our Lord and Saviour, then it means that the one who is the Lord of our life is continually in God’s presence. This fundamentally influences the relationship between God and the individual believer.

May 30th Hebrews 1:1-3

Today we see Jesus being portrayed as the one who came from God and the one who has returned to God. There is difficulty in understanding this passage. It usually stems because we think only of Jesus as blessing little children and telling parables but here is the **risen** Christ.

May 31st

Hebrews 10:19-25

In Jewish thinking God was always shrouded in mystery. It is as though a curtain was placed so that God was always shielded from the eyes of the believer. At the Ascension of Christ a new way had been opened through that barrier. This gives an added assurance to all who believe through faith. A Christian believes all of history is moving towards the day of Jesus' return, and that that moment may not be far away!