

BIBLE READING NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER 2022
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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.

September 1st Daniel 1:1-7

The book of Daniel is a book that has much to teach us. It tells us of four young men who were caught up in the overthrow of their nation by the superior forces of Babylon. They were the cream of their nation's manhood. Though taken into exile, they were treated with extreme courtesy and favour. They were being prepared for a new life. They were even given new names to emphasize that a new way of life was beginning for them.

September 2nd Daniel 1:8-21

Daniel quickly realized that danger lay in their apparent good fortune. He saw that they were the victims of a deliberate attempt to destroy their old way of life and give them a new identity. Even the very food was a threat to their simple way of life. They had to choose whether to forget the past and accept the new life in its entirety, or remain loyal to the faith of their fathers even though it meant danger. Having made their decision, notice how God then came in to make it possible for them to adhere to their decision. Do we always show the same loyalty to the fundamentals of our faith?

September 3rd Daniel 2:1-13

It was believed that dreams were special messages given from God. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream one night, which worried him greatly. He wanted his wise men to tell him what it meant, but he also expected them to know what the dream was, without him having to tell them! Not surprisingly, they found this impossible, and so in anger the king ordered them all to be put to death - including Daniel and his friends. It is difficult for us to imagine such autocratic behaviour, yet still there are many who suffer simply on account of the whim of some tyrant.

September 4th Daniel 2:14-23

The mystery of the dream is revealed to Daniel, but notice what preceded and what followed the revelation. Daniel and his friends took their problem to God and sought His help and guidance. Is it not true that we generally try to rely on our own understanding and insight? When the mystery was revealed to them, they joined in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Do we always remember to give thanks?

September 5th Daniel 2:24-35

How easily Daniel could have used this situation to gain some special favours or privileges for himself! At the very least he could have enhanced his own reputation and basked in the glory of his own cleverness. Instead, he points out that it is God in heaven who reveals mysteries. For Daniel and his friends God's hand was to be seen in everything; God is in complete control.

September 6th Daniel 2:36-45

For many, God is only the God of the past; seldom is He the God of the present; and never the God of the future. Yet the king's dream was a revelation of what was to happen in the future. The future does indeed lie in the hands of God, and that events and circumstances of the present are but steps leading towards that future.

September 7th Daniel 2:46-49

The king accepted and believed the message revealed in the dream and prepared for the future by placing Daniel and his friends in high position. We may grumble and complain that God never reveals the future to us, but is that true? Our trouble is not that the future has not been revealed, but that we refuse to believe what has been shown to us.

September 8th Daniel 3:1-7

Daniel's reference to Nebuchadnezzar being the greatest of all kings may have given the king even greater illusions of grandeur. The king orders a huge golden statue to be erected, and that all his people are to fall down and worship it. How strange that he who had so recently acknowledged the greatness of Daniel's God should now forget all about that God and seek to worship a statue instead!

September 9th Daniel 3:8-18

Daniel and his friends cannot obey the king's ruling. Those who truly worship God cannot bow down before either a man or a statue in worship and adoration. This passage raises the whole matter of civil disobedience. Christians are clearly expected to obey the civil authorities. What if the civil authority demands something which is clearly against the Christian ethic?

September 10th Daniel 3:19-25

This passage needs no commentary – but look at the closing words – *and the fourth one looks like a god*. There is no such person as a lonely Christian. If he/she is a Christian then God is with him/her always.

September 11th Daniel 3:26-30

Some may find the safe deliverance of Daniel and the others impossible to believe. How then can they believe in the safe deliverance of Christ from death and the tomb? It is Nebuchadnezzar who answers this doubt, 'There is no other god who can rescue like this'. That is the simple answer, and the true answer.

September 12th Daniel 4:1-18

The king has another dream, and again he can find no explanation for it. He turns to Daniel (Belteshazzar) for the interpretation. He recognized that Daniel possessed some divine power which enabled him to reach beyond the limits of human knowledge and understanding. Isn't this something that all Christians may have by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them?

September 13th Daniel 4:19-27

The dream is strange, and its meaning even stranger. The king is to lose his sanity and live as an animal for seven years, after which time he will acknowledge the supremacy of God and his reason will be restored. The king had become so obsessed by his own wealth and power that he had lost his mental balance. This is what happens when we reject God and concentrate on our own human endeavours and achievements.

September 14th Daniel 4:28-33

Now we read of the dream's fulfillment, but look at the precise moment it was fulfilled – at the very moment when the king was most proud of all his achievements. We can only see the glory of God when we are most aware of our own utter unworthiness. *'I lay in dust life's glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red, Life that shall endless be'.*

September 15th Daniel 4:34-37

Think of Nebuchadnezzar's experience as being like a graph. His 'graph' soars to the ultimate peak in terms of power and wealth and prestige. Then it plunges to the very depths of madness and bestiality. Finally he rises again to give praise and honour and glory to the supreme God.

September 16th Daniel 5:1-9

Nebuchadnezzar has died and his son, Belshazzar, now reigns. A great banquet is arranged and the holy vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem are used for the common purposes of food and drink. One can easily imagine the scoffing remarks that could have been made about these sacred cups. In such an atmosphere the young king suddenly sees strange writing on the wall. He cannot read it, and none of his advisors can help him, but there is something so awesome in that writing that fills the king with dread. No one can profane that which is sacred and remain unpunished.

September 17th Daniel 5:10-17

Belshazzar is told of the man who had so dramatically interpreted his father's dreams, and so Daniel is brought into the royal presence. Notice Belshazzar's offer of honour and wealth if Daniel can decipher the writing.

September 18th Daniel 5:18-31

How plainly and bluntly Daniel speaks to the king! Belshazzar had before him his father's example and experience, yet he refused to learn from it. We cannot criticize the king. We have had 2000 years of Christian history from which to learn, yet pay but scant attention to it. It seems that each generation must make, and learn from, its own sins and mistakes. Notice the awful meaning of the strange writing – 'your days are numbered; you have been weighed in the balance and found to be too light'. What fear such words must strike into the hearts of those who reject God and His mercy.

September 19th Daniel 6:1-10

Another king is on the throne and Daniel's work excels that of his contemporaries. Those who are jealous of him cannot criticize him for his work or his personal integrity, but only for his religious views, and so they persuade the king to pass a decree, which, in effect, bans all religious practices. There are many who would like to see such a decree passed in this land! Daniel knows what this decree means for him, yet he continues his prayers and devotions, as he has always done.

September 20th Daniel 6:11-18

Too late the king realizes that his decree has endangered the life of one for whom he had the highest respect, but the law could be altered for no one. How often we make statements or commit acts without fully thinking out all the implications!

September 21st Daniel 6:19-28

Did the king really expect Daniel to answer when he called out to him in the lion's den? How many cry out to God in some dire emergency without really believing that God will hear? Yet God is able to protect his servants in their hour of need and to answer their prayers.

THE STORY OF JEROBOAM

September 22nd 1Kings 11:26-40

Here is the fall of Solomon and the subsequent rise of Jeroboam. People must worship something, whether it be the true God of Heaven, or some false idol. How sad it is when a man who has known the fullness of God's blessing, as Solomon had, lets it slip away because he himself has turned away from God. God knew that this was happening in Solomon's case, and so God is quietly preparing the next ruler of Israel. Notice Jeroboam's personal qualities and the promise given to him.

September 23rd 1Kings 12:20, 25-31

When Jeroboam became king, one of his first acts was to lead his people in the worship of golden bulls. Jeroboam established sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan so that his people would not look to Jerusalem. In other words, he was using religion for political ends. Still today there are those who would support the church simply because it 'does good work' and 'sets a good example'. The only reason we should have anything to do with the church is that God may be glorified and adored.

September 24th 1Kings 12:32-13:10

Those for whom religion is nothing but a sham and a man-made structure will very quickly know divine displeasure. Jeroboam had no one to blame but himself. Today there are many who know only too well life's hardships, and who are so quick to lay the blame anywhere except on themselves, where it is most appropriate.

September 25th 1Kings 13:33-34

In spite of the prophets warning, Jeroboam continued in his evil ways. Look at one particular sin which is mentioned here – 'he ordained as priest anyone who wanted to be one'. A church whose leaders are motivated by anything less than an urgent desire to serve God will surely fail.

September 26th 1Kings 14:1-20

Jeroboam ruled for 22 years, but it was a disastrous time for both him and his people, simply because he had led his people away from God. Perhaps we shall never fully assess the full effect a true or a false religion has on the life of a nation. There is something so fundamental about our spiritual life that it affects every other aspect of life, both personal and national.

BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS

September 27th Luke 18:35-43

Here is a man who desired to come to Jesus, but notice how there were those who tried to hold him back. What a terrible thing it is to hinder someone from coming to Jesus! And how simply it can be done! Jesus asked the man what he wanted. Notice that Jesus granted the man only that for which he asked – sight. Could he have asked for anything more? Ought he to have asked for spiritual perception? What answer ought we to give to Christ when He asks, *'What do you want me to do for you?'*

September 28th John 1:35-51

How many dream of doing great things for Jesus, if only they had the chance. What a compelling sermon they could preach, if only they had a pulpit and a vast congregation; or what great work they could do, if only they were in some far-off pagan land. If only!! The work of bringing men and women to Jesus begins right where we are at this very moment.

September 29th Matthew 9:32-38

Obviously they would not have regarded such a miracle possible if they had not seen it with their own eyes. Are there any situations in life that we do not 'bring' to Jesus because we regard them as 'impossible'? If so, then we are casting doubts on the power of Christ; we are, in effect, saying 'He couldn't do that'. Couldn't He?

September 30th John 8:1-11

What comfort these verses bring to those who have strayed from the straight and narrow path. Jesus in no way condones sin. What the woman had done was wrong, but her sense of shame was an acknowledgement that she also knew it was wrong. To such a person Christ always has a word of forgiveness.