

BIBLE READING NOTES FOR FEBRUARY 2023
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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.

February 1st John 8:1-11

In Jesus time there were two main views on divorce. One was very liberal and said that a man could divorce his wife if she was a gossip or if she burnt the tea! The other was conservative and would only permit divorce on the grounds of adultery. This woman had made a mistake. Was she to be forgiven or put to death as the law commanded? Jesus recognized that all of us make mistakes and therefore all are in need of forgiveness.

February 2nd John 8:12-20

We read of God creating light in the book of Genesis. Isaiah the prophet prophesized about the light being a light to the nations. John talks about the light coming into the world in his gospel. But it is Jesus who claimed to be that light- the very same as God created, Isaiah prophesized and John proclaimed.

February 3rd John 8:21-30

Jesus deliberately uses the words from the book of Exodus when Moses was confronted by God and asked what was the name of God (Ex 3:13). God's answer to Moses is exactly the same as Jesus answer to the Jewish authorities. In other words Jesus and God are the same. Here is the Son of God, the one who is of God and is God as John states in chapter 1 verse 1.

February 4th John 8:31-41

In the ancient world slaves were bought and sold with very little rights. The slave was treated as being less than human. Jesus expresses our relationship with God like the relationship between a master and his slave if our sin is not dealt with. It is God's plan that we should be his children, having the rights of blood sons and daughters. It is only God who can set us free from the bondage of sin in order that we can be free to become God's sons and daughters.

February 5th John 8:48-59

Jesus had severe critics. John describes his critics as speaking only in physical terms. They cannot understand how Jesus is so young but claims to have been before Abraham who had lived some 1200 years before. But Jesus speaks in spiritual terms that his accusers seem not to understand. Even today there are those who are blind to spiritual matters. Many deny the spirit and dismiss such concepts as meaningless and yet concepts of sin and guilt and death require spiritual solutions for they are spiritual matters.

February 6th

John 9:1-12

The book of Job is an attempt to portray the character of Job who is accused by his so-called friends of having done something against God because of the trouble that he finds himself in. It is common for someone who falls into bad times to reflect and ask *“What have I done to deserve this?”* For Jesus the reason is not what you have done, but to allow God’s power to be seen in any given situation. For the light still shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. (see John 1:5).

February 7th

John 9:13-19

The authorities try to discredit the work of Jesus claiming that the man might not be the same man who was once blind, or they claim he could not have been blind from birth. Some tried to discredit Jesus by breaking the Sabbath law by healing on the Holy Day. Wherever good is being done in the name of God there will be critics who have a different interpretation of what is being done. The forces of darkness are very inventive in trying to discredit the powers of good.

February 8th

John 9:20-34

In spite of the evidence presented to them the Jewish Authorities would not listen. Closed minds are not open to persuasion nor are they prepared to listen to the evidence. The jury in this situation already had their minds made up! We must always be open to change if we are being persuaded by truth. If we believe that it is true that Jesus was the Son of God then we have no need to fear the truth.

February 9th

John 9:35-41

Again we find John writing his gospel by interweaving the spiritual wisdom of Jesus with the physical ignorance of the Pharisees. Here were men who claimed to know God but did not recognize God’s Son. Their blindness was not a physical one but a spiritual blindness.

February 10th

John 10:1-6

A shepherd in olden times would have been with his sheep everyday from their birth. The sheep would have recognized their shepherd’s voice simply because of their time spent with him. They would follow the shepherd and trust him. (Rather like someone having a loyal pet dog). Here is the way we can discern between that which is truth from God and that, which is not. If we spend time with the great Shepherd on a daily basis then we too can easily recognize His voice.

February 11th

John 10:7-10

In John’s gospel the writer has Jesus describing himself in various ways. The great “I am” statements give us insight into the nature and ways of God. The *gate* protects the sheep are keeps away harmful predators. The *gate* keeps the sheep from scattering. It these sayings we have to think of ourselves as the sheep and Jesus as the *gate*.

February 12th

John 10:11-21

The Good Shepherd's commitment is such that he would be prepared to die for his sheep in order to protect them from wild animals. It is this sacrificial love that is the hallmark of Christian love. It is the ultimate sacrificial love that we find on the cross as Jesus was prepared to die for us.

February 13th

John 10:22-33

Solomon's Porch was part of the Temple complex where various teachers would have gathered and drew crowds to teach during religious festivals. Jesus was aware that to publicly declare that he was the Messiah would have given the Authorities enough evidence to convict him of blasphemy. Instead he wanted people to see him as the Messiah through their hearts and not just through their words.

February 14th

John 10:34-41

Some were asking for miracles so that they would believe and all the while around them miracle were happening and still they did not believe. *"If I could only see something float through the air, I would believe"* a Prisoner once said to the Chaplain at Castle Huntly. When shown the clouds floating through the air he still did not believe! Faith is about believing without having to see.

February 15th

John 11:1-16

Bethany is a little village about three kilometers outside of Jerusalem. We know that Jesus visited it often to see his friends Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus. In Bethany today the little church is dedicated to them but also a mosque is dedicated to Lazarus whom the Muslims consider to have been a prophet.

February 16th

John 11:17-27

It is clear that Martha recognized Jesus as the Son of God and therefore the Messiah. She also had a belief in the resurrection of the body on the last day. This was a belief held by only some of the Pharisees but not all. The common belief was in a spirit world of shadows. It was more important for your name to live on through your children.

February 17th

John 11:28-37

v35 is the shortest verse in the Bible and it contains the compassion of Jesus. Here Jesus reveals his humanity at the death of his friend. But even here in this time of grief are the critics who blame Jesus for allowing Lazarus to die.

February 18th

John 11:38-57

As Jesus' fame spread, the Pharisees became increasingly worried. Their concern was more a political one than a religious one. We see their concern that the occupying force of the Romans would take away their comfortable life style if there was trouble. They had negotiated with the Romans that as long as they paid their taxes then they would be allowed to continue their religious practices. This was now being placed in jeopardy because of the people wanted to follow Jesus as a challenge to their rule.

February 19th

John 12:1-8

Joshua 24:14-20

Looking over their history the people began to see God at work among them. Sometimes in the midst of a problem it can be difficult for us to see a way out or to see God's presence. Sometimes it is when we look back can we see God's hand at work in our everyday lives.

February 28th

Samuel 1:9-28

Hannah had a problem. She did not have any children. In those days infertility was considered a disgrace upon the individual. Hannah desperately wanted a child and was prepared to promise God that her child would be dedicated to God's service. She goes to the temple to pray and meets Eli the priest. Hannah was a faithful woman and did not forget the promise that she had made before God. She took Samuel to the temple to dedicate him into God's service.