

# **11.**

## **THE BIBLE IS YOUR SPIRITUAL FOOD**

### **COMMENTS ON LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN**

This lesson shows why it is important to be reading the Bible. It also encourages everyone to become a daily Bible reader.

### **EXPLANATION OF TERMS**

**CHILDREN OF ISRAEL:** the descendants of Jacob the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham. An angel changed Jacob's name to "Israel" (Genesis 32:28).

**MESSIAH:** "the anointed one." (Jesus is the Messiah. He was anointed to be King.)

**NAZARETH:** a village in the area west of the Sea of Galilee.

**HOLY SCRIPTURES:** the Bible.

**DEUTERONOMY:** the fifth book of the Old Testament. It contains a repetition of many of the laws in the previous books of the Old Testament.

**MOSES:** the leader, who lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

**JOSHUA:** the leader who replaced Moses after Moses died.

**PSALMS:** a book containing religious songs, most of which were written by King David

**ROMANS:** a letter written by the apostle Paul to the church at Rome.

**GALATIANS:** a letter written by the apostle Paul to churches in the area of Galatia in Asia Minor (Turkey).

**PHILIP THE EVANGELIST:** one of the earliest preachers of the gospel. At one time he was a servant of the church in Jerusalem.

**ACTS:** a historical record in the New Testament of the work done by the apostles Paul and Peter, and by others.

**PAUL:** an early convert to Christianity, who became a mighty apostle.

**SILAS:** one of Paul's traveling companions.

**COLOSSE:** a city in Asia Minor (Turkey), to which the apostle Paul wrote a letter.

**TIMOTHY:** a young friend and traveling companion of Paul, to whom Paul wrote two letters.

## **THE BIBLE IS YOUR SPIRITUAL FOOD**

The Bible has two parts: an Old Testament and a New Testament. The Old Testament tells about the creation of the world, about the selection of the children of Israel to be God's witnesses to mankind, and about their future king, who would be called "the Messiah."

The New Testament identifies Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. It contains Jesus' teaching and tells about His death and resurrection. The New Testament tells how belief in Jesus spread around the Mediterranean world. It also gives information about how people should live in the church.

## **THE BIBLE SHOULD BE READ**

Everyone should be reading the Bible. Moses gave instruction to the future rulers of the children of Israel that they should read the Holy Scriptures all the days of their lives. See Deuteronomy 17:18-20. The reason why rulers need to read the Scriptures is so they will learn to fear God. Reading the Scriptures will help them know how to obey God. They will also live longer if they read and follow the Scriptures. See what Moses said to Joshua in Joshua 1:8.

## **KING DAVID TOOK MOSES' ADVICE TO HEART**

Only a portion of the Bible had been written in King David's time. Yet, David read the Scriptures that were available to him, and he loved them very much. David wrote,

“Therefore I love Your commandments  
More than gold, yes, than fine gold!”  
Psalm 119:127

David himself composed many of the Psalms that are in the Bible. Here is what David thought about a person that reads and follows the Bible:

“Blessed is the man  
Who walks not  
in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners,  
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;  
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.  
He shall be like a tree  
Planted by the rivers of water,  
That brings forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
And whatever he does shall prosper.”  
Psalm 1:1-3

## READING THE OLD TESTAMENT PREPARES PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN JESUS

Jesus felt that if people would search the Old Testament with an open mind, they would come to the conclusion that He is truly the Messiah. Jesus Himself said,

“You search the Scriptures,

for in them you think you have eternal life;  
and these are they which testify of Me.”

John 5:39

## SOME GENTILES WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT

Many of the Gentile converts to Judaism, who heard the apostle Paul speak at the Jewish synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia paid close attention to Paul's message about Jesus (Acts 13:43). They were able to grasp the gospel message easily (Acts 13:48), partly because they had been listening to the Old Testament while it was being read in the synagogue (Acts 13:15).

## SOME BEREANS WERE FAIR-MINDED

When the apostle Paul and his companion Silas came to the town of Berea in northern Greece, they went into the synagogue, as was their custom. Luke wrote concerning the Bereans,

“These were more fair-minded  
than those in Thessalonica,  
in that they received the word  
with all readiness,  
and searched the Scriptures daily  
to find out whether these things were so.”

Acts 17:11

The Bereans demonstrated fair-mindedness by conducting a search of the Scriptures in order to see if Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. They found that Jesus did, indeed, fulfill the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

## READ BOTH TESTAMENTS

It is difficult to understand the New Testament without being somewhat familiar with the Old Testament, for the Old Testament describes the background from which Jesus came. Yet it is the New Testament that zeros in on what Jesus wants people to know and what He wants them to do.

Although it is good to read the Old Testament, Christian people are not under the legal code of the Old Testament. When people die (symbolically) with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:1-4), they also die to the Law, which God had given through Moses (Romans 7:6). As a result, they live under a new law, which is “the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

## THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL FOOD

Jesus recognized the value of food for the inner man. When He was tempted by the devil to turn stones into bread, He quoted a statement from Moses, which said,

“Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that proceeds from  
the mouth of God.”

Matthew 4:4

Christ knows, of course, that His people need spiritual food (1 Peter 2:2). For that reason, He feeds them through an arrangement, which He has carefully thought out and fully implemented.

## HOW CHRIST FEEDS THE CHURCH

Spiritual nourishment starts at the Head (Christ) and passes down through the parts of the body (the church) until it reaches each individual member. It is important, therefore, for each member to be connected with the Head, otherwise he will not receive the nourishment that he needs in order to grow. The apostle Paul spoke of some that were, tragically,

“not holding fast to the Head,  
from whom all the body,  
nourished and knit together  
by joints and ligaments,  
grows with the increase that is from God.”  
Colossians 2:19

It is the responsibility of the elders (bishops) of each individual local congregation to see to it that Christ's sheep, which are in their charge, are fed. The food which elders are supposed to feed the members of their congregation is the word of God (1 Peter 2:2).

## CHURCHES NEED TO HEAR THE BIBLE READ IN THE ASSEMBLY

The apostle Paul instructed the recipients of his letters to read them aloud to the congregation. To the brethren in Colosse Paul wrote,

“Now when this epistle is read among you,  
see that it is read also  
in the church of the Laodiceans,  
and that you likewise read  
the epistle from Laodicea.”

Colossians 4:16

## PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS NEED TO BE READING, TOO

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, a young evangelist,

“Till I come, give attention to reading,  
to exhortation, to doctrine.”

1 Timothy 4:13

As an evangelist, Timothy needed to be familiar with the Bible so that he could be a good worker for the Lord. Paul wrote to him,

“Be diligent to present yourself  
approved to God,  
a worker who does not need to be ashamed,  
rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15



The King James version of the Bible says “Study to show thyself approved unto God.” If a person makes a habit of studying the Bible, he will not have to be ashamed for his lack of Bible knowledge. He will be well equipped to teach the Bible to others (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If, however, he is not a Bible-reading person, he will not be a very effective teacher.

## READING THE BIBLE GIVES COMFORT

It may not be immediately clear how reading the Bible gives comfort, especially in view of the fact that there are so many wars and so much suffering depicted in it. Yet there is much more in the Bible than just wars and suffering. There are many stories of faith and courage. Words that give hope and encouragement are also to be found there. The apostle Paul wrote,

“For whatever things were written before  
were written for our learning,  
that we through the patience  
and comfort of the Scriptures  
might have hope.”

Romans 15:4

## READING THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament. If a person reads three or four chapters a day, he should be able to get through the whole Bible in a year.

## PRAY ABOUT READING

Whoever wants to become familiar with the Bible, can ask God to help him, as David did (Psalm 119:18). If anyone has trouble finding the time to read the Bible, he might ask God to help him rearrange his schedule. Or if anyone finds that reading the Bible is boring, he might stay away from television, books, and magazines for a few days in order to see if his interest in God's word will revive.

## WORKSHEETS

After you have read this lesson and have looked up all the references in the Bible, please read the following sentences. As you read, pay attention to whether or not these statements are true. If you decide a particular statement is true, please write “T” before it. If you decide a statement is false, write “F” before it.

- \_\_\_\_\_1. The Bible is the main source of information about Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_\_2. Rulers do not need to read the Bible.
- \_\_\_\_\_3. King David read the Holy Scriptures.
- \_\_\_\_\_4. The prophecies of the Old Testament show Jesus to be the Messiah.
- \_\_\_\_\_5. A Christian does not need to be reading the Old Testament, only the New Testament.
- \_\_\_\_\_6. Christians have to keep the Old Testament laws.
- \_\_\_\_\_7. The elders of a congregation are to see to it that the church receives spiritual food.
- \_\_\_\_\_8. The Bible teaches about God’s love.
- \_\_\_\_\_9. A person can be a good Christian without paying

attention to what the Bible says.

\_\_\_\_\_10. Reading the whole Bible in one year is impossible.

Please, complete the following scriptures with the help of the New King James Version of the Bible

Romans 7:6

“But now we have been \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_, having \_\_\_\_\_ to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the \_\_\_\_\_ and not in the oldness of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All \_\_\_\_\_ is given by inspiration of God, and is \_\_\_\_\_ for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be \_\_\_\_\_, thoroughly \_\_\_\_\_ for every good work.”

1 Peter 2:2

“As newborn babes, desire the pure \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, that you may \_\_\_\_\_ thereby.”

THOUGHT QUESTIONS: Please, think about the following questions and write a short paragraph about each.

1. Does reading the Bible help a person? If so, how?
2. What are some of the hindrances that keep people from reading the Bible? How can these hindrances be overcome?
3. What parts of the Bible do you like to read the best? Why?