

"As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

LUKE 7-9

MICAH

GALATIANS

60 daily readings with full Bible text

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

An all-in-one, take-anywhere package to help you feed regularly from God's word.

Time to get back into regular Bible reading? *The Daily Reading Bible* has everything you need to get started, and in one compact, portable package.

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- *some questions to get you thinking*
- *some 'points to ponder'*
- *some ideas to get you started in prayer.*

It's all here in one booklet that you can take with you anywhere—on the train, on the bus, to the park at lunchtime, or to your favourite armchair.



THE DAILY READING BIBLE

Volume 14

LUKE 7-9

MICAH

GALATIANS

The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 14)

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INTRODUCTION

Readng our Bibles regularly is getting harder. That, at least, seems to be the common experience of many Christians. We could waste lots of ink speculating on the reasons for this: is it the frenetic pace of life these days? Is it spiritual laziness? Is it the impact of postmodernism on our culture and the lack of certainty when it comes to interpreting the written word?

But a better option than speculating on the reasons, we thought, was to provide a new resource for Christians to help them get back into a more regular habit of reflecting daily on God's word. So back in June 2001, we decided to start including a section called 'Bible Brief' in our monthly magazine, *The Briefing* (see www.matthiasmedia.com.au for more information about *The Briefing*). The 'Bible Brief' provided 20 short readings each month—acknowledging that there will be days we miss or days when we want to do something a bit different—with questions, thoughts to ponder, and suggestions to get started in prayer.

Now, several years later, we have a good collection of 'Bible Briefs', and it's time to offer them to a wider audience in a format that will, we hope, be even more convenient and useful.

This fourteenth volume contains 60 readings, all designed to be done in 15–20 minutes. These daily Bible readings are designed to

help you feed regularly from God's word. They won't cover every issue in each passage, nor even every passage from each Bible book. In other words, *they are no substitute for the in-depth study of the Scriptures* that you may undertake personally, in small groups or through listening to sermons.

With the kind permission of our friends at Crossway Bibles, we've been able to make this a complete package to take with you—we've included the English Standard Version Bible text with each daily study. So you can take this one book with you and have everything you need—on the train, on the bus, or to the park at lunchtime—wherever and whenever you can get 20 minutes to yourself.

How to use these readings

- *With a penitent heart*, the true prerequisite for all Bible reading. Open with prayer (perhaps using the prayer suggested at the beginning of each set of studies).
- *With 15–20 minutes* of peace and quiet. If you can take longer, and want to read and pray further—great! But we have designed the readings to be done in a fairly short space of time.
- *With an accurate modern translation*. We recommend and have included the new ESV translation. The writers of the studies refer to this translation. Contact us for further details about the ESV or visit www.matthiasmedia.com.au/ESV

- *With a pen.* Even if you only jot down brief ideas, writing focuses the mind.
- *As a guide and help, not a straitjacket.* Feel free to dig further into the passage, to notice and ponder things that the questions don't point to.
- *As a launch-pad for prayer.* Use the prayer ideas at the end of each reading as a starting point for your daily prayer. Many of the points that will arise from the readings will be things you can pray for yourself, and also for others (family, friends, neighbours, etc.). Why not compile a list of people you want to pray for (you can write them in the blank space below), and use the prayer ideas from each reading to pray for the next person on your list?

This fourteenth volume includes:

- studies on Luke 7-9 (written by Stephen Cree, pastor at Southern Cross Presbyterian Church, Lismore)
- studies on Micah (written by Andrew Barry, assistant minister at Jannali Anglican church)
- studies on Galatians (written by David Martin who works in university ministry in regional Victoria).

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Please note: the main section of Scripture for each study is reproduced before the questions. Other Scripture references are reproduced as footnotes at the bottom of the page, or, where the passages are too long to be included as footnotes, in the Appendix.

PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR:

LUKE 7-9

INTRODUCTION

The question that has already been building in Luke 1-6 is "Who is Jesus?" We the readers have already been told the answer by angels (2:11) and by God himself (3:2). But people in the story are still working out their own answers to the question. They are amazed by Jesus (4:36, 5:26), and ask who he is (5:21), but no-one has come up with a clear answer yet.

In Luke 7-9, the section we are reading through in these set of studies, we see more of people's reactions to Jesus, with various answers starting to be offered. As we wrestle with the question of who Jesus is, perhaps the more important question to ask is, "Who does Jesus think he is?" Luke, as he tells Jesus' story, has made it clear that the story of Jesus is a story of fulfilment (1:1). So we need to read Luke with the Old Testament in mind—especially promises like Genesis 12:1-3¹ and Isaiah 61:1-2.² We need to see what Jesus' ministry means for Israel, and therefore for the whole world.

*Dear heavenly Father,
Thank you for sending Jesus to fulfil all your promises. Thank you that he came to offer cleanness to the unclean, and life to the dead. Thank you that he did this through dying for our sins and rising to new life. As I live with him as my Saviour and Lord, help me to follow him sacrificially with my whole life.
Amen.*

NB: Tick the box when you've completed each study ✓

READING 1

LUKE 7:1-10



After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. ³ When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and

heal his servant. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵ for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." ⁶ And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying

1. Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

2. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,

because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn ...

to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof." ⁷ Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸ For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹ When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

1. *How would you describe the centurion and the way he approached Jesus?*

2. *By this point in Luke, we're used to Jesus*

astonishing others (e.g. 4:36,³ 5:26⁴). Why is Jesus astonished by this centurion?

3. *What is so significant about this event? (See Simeon's praise to God in 2:28-32⁵ and 23:47.⁶)*

PONDER Notice that the centurion doesn't actually meet Jesus. He hears about Jesus and he obeys Jesus. How is he a model of faith for Christians?

PRAYER IDEAS Pray that you, like this centurion, will relate to Jesus as your 'commanding officer' as you seek to obey him in all things.

READING 2

LUKE 7:11-17

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. ¹² As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and

they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" ¹⁷ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

1. *In raising this widow's son, what is Jesus demonstrating about the significance of his ministry? (See 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 4:8-37 in the Appendix, pp. 67-69.)*

3. And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!"

4. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

5. ... he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation

³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and for glory to your people Israel."

6. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"

2. In verse 16, what picture do the people have of Jesus? Is it adequate?

3. In touching the dead man's coffin, Jesus should have been made ritually unclean. Where does Jesus' mission to deal with death, disease and uncleanness ultimately take him?

PONDER Jesus took your uncleanness on himself in his death, and rose to give you life. What will this mean for your every day life if you have faith in such a Saviour?

PRAYER IDEAS Ask God to fill your heart with thankfulness for his Son. Ask him to enable you to turn away from the uncleanness that Jesus died for.

READING 3

LUKE 7:18-23

The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John,¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"²⁰ And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"²¹ In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.²² And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."²³ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

1. John hears in verse 18 that Jesus is doing Elijah-type things (cf. 7:16).⁷ How might

John's question about who Jesus is also be a question about who he—i.e. John—is?

2. John had preached that the Messiah would bring judgement (3:15-18)⁸—especially against Israel's false leaders. Why do you think John, who is now sitting in prison, asks this question?

3. What does Jesus point to for evidence that he is the Messiah (cf. 4:18-19)?⁹

7. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"
8. As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ,¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.

9. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."