

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

JOHN 1-12

HOSEA

WORDS

60 daily readings with full Bible text

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THE DAILY READING BIBLE

Volume 8

JOHN 1-12

HOSEA

WORDS

The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 8)

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Matthias Media

(St Matthias Press Ltd ACN 067 558 365)

PO Box 225

Kingsford NSW 2032

Australia

Ph: (02) 9663 1478; Int. +61-2-9663-1478

Fax: (02) 9663 3265; Int. +61-2-9663-3265

Email: info@matthiasmedia.com.au

Internet: www.matthiasmedia.com.au

Matthias Media (USA)

Ph: 724 964 8152; Int. +1-724-964-8152

Fax: 724 964 8166; Int. +1-724-964-8166

Email: sales@matthiasmedia.com

Internet: www.matthiasmedia.com

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INTRODUCTION

Reading 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 eighth volume contains 60 readings, all designed to be done in 15–20 minutes. These short 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 eighth volume includes:

- studies on John 1–12 (written by Peter Lin, senior minister at St Barnabas Anglican Church, Fairfield)
- studies on Hosea (written by Jane Tooher, women's worker with the church at St Peter's Barge, Canary Wharf, London)
- studies on words and the power of what, how and why we speak (written by Gordon Cheng).

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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:

JOHN 1-12

INTRODUCTION

It has been said that the Gospel of John is shallow enough for a child to play in and deep enough for an elephant to swim in; there's so much that can be learnt at all different levels. We'll be looking through the first half of the gospel (chapters 1-12). These chapters are sometimes referred to as 'The Book of Signs' because they narrate a series of signs (miracles) that point to the identity and mission of Jesus, beginning with the turning of the water into wine at Cana, and culminating in the raising of Lazarus.

There are other aspects of these chapters that make them a special part of Scripture. We read about Jesus' private conversations with people like Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria. We witness Jesus in vigorous debate with the religious authorities. We see him weeping with his friends over the death of a loved one. John 1-12 is truly an intimate and surprising portrayal of our Lord.

John gives us a massive clue at the end of his book as to what he was trying to achieve:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

As you read through some of the signs Jesus did, don't forget why John wrote this: so that you may believe and continue to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and have life in his name. Enjoy!

You might like to use this prayer (or your own variation on it) before each of the next 20 studies:

Father,

I thank you for the life I have been given in Jesus' name. Help me as I read your word to deepen my trust in Jesus—the Christ, the Son of God—and know the life I have in him.

Amen.

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

READING 1

JOHN 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him,

yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

1. Who was the "Word" and what did he do?

2. What is the significance of Jesus being identified as the "Word"?

3. How should you treat Jesus, given what this passage says about him?

PONDER What does it mean that "grace and truth" came through Jesus (vv. 14-17)?

PRAYER IDEAS Thank God that, in the Word, he was pleased to dwell with you.

READING 2

JOHN 1:19-34

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²² So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

²⁴ (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵ They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'

³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

1. What was John the Baptist's role in relation to the coming of Jesus?

2. *Who does John the Baptist declare Jesus to be, and how can he be so sure?*

3. *What does he say that Jesus will do (v. 29)?*

PONDER Why is Jesus referred to as the "Lamb of God"? What is the significance of this (v. 29)?

PRAYER IDEAS In John 10:41-42, John the Baptist's ministry is summed up: "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man [Jesus] was true.' And many believed in him there." Pray that, like John, your testimony to Jesus will be true, and that through your testimony, many will believe.

READING 3

JOHN 1:35-51

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"³⁹ He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no

deceit!"⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."⁵¹ And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

1. *How did these first disciples respond to Jesus? Does this surprise you in any way? Why?*
2. *Why did they follow Jesus?*
3. *What titles are given for Jesus in this passage? What does each of them mean?*