



Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does not obey them is like a man who builds a house on sand. And when the flood arose, the stream broke against that house and it fell, and the ruin of that house was great. But the one who hears my words and does not obey them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

LUKE 1-6

AMOS

2 CORINTHIANS

60 daily readings with full Bible text

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

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- *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 13

LUKE 1-6 AMOS 2 CORINTHIANS

The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 13)

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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/briefing 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 thirteenth 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.crossway.org.

- *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 thirteenth volume includes:

- studies on Luke 1-6 (written by Andrew Richardson, senior minister at Scots Presbyterian Church, Brisbane)
- studies on Amos (written by Simon Flinders, assistant minister at St Thomas' Anglican Church, North Sydney)
- studies on 2 Corinthians (written by James Warren, senior pastor of the 7fifteen congregation and Ministry Training Strategy coordinator at St Paul's Carlingford).

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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 1-6

INTRODUCTION

There are always rumours and legends that spring up around any famous person. The supposed sightings of Elvis Presley after his death are a classic example. Luke's aim in writing his Gospel is to cut through any rumours and legends about the life of Jesus Christ, and to give his friend Theophilus certainty about who Jesus really is. God-willing, as you read through the first six chapters of Luke, you too will become more certain about Jesus Christ, and grow more confident in your faith in him.

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

*God my Saviour,
Help me to read Luke humbly. Help me to be hungry to be fed by your word. Please make me more certain about your son Jesus Christ so that I may serve him and trust him as my lord and king.
Amen.*

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

READING 1

LUKE 1:1-4

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

1. *What kind of account does Luke want to write about the things he's heard?*

2. *Where is Luke's information coming from?*

3. *What is Luke's aim in writing?*

PONDER How certain are you about who Jesus is? What kind of confidence does Luke inspire as a historian and biographer?

PRAYER IDEAS Thank God for Luke's careful work in recording Jesus' life. Ask him to make you more certain about Jesus' work and identity as you read through Luke 1-6.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸ Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

¹⁸ And Zechariah said to the angel, "How

shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹ And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³ And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴ After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, ²⁵ "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

1. Which Old Testament events and people are brought to mind by Zechariah's and Elizabeth's experiences? (Hint: See Genesis 17:15-21,¹ and Judges 13:2-24 in the appendix, pp. 67-68.)

1. And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" ¹⁹ God said, "No, but Sarah your wife

shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

2. *In the light of these Old Testament experiences, why should Zechariah have known better than to doubt the angel's promise?*

3. *How does this account emphasize God's faithfulness to his promises?*

PONDER How does this account give you greater confidence in God's faithfulness to his plans? What expectations about Jesus does this passage raise?

PRAYER IDEAS Ask God to help you trust in his promises, even when they seem outlandish.

READING 3

LUKE 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."³⁸ And

Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

1. *How is the announcement to Mary connected to the announcement to Zechariah? What expectations does this connection raise?*
2. *What are the key things the angel announces about Jesus?*
3. *How does Mary respond to the angel's announcement?*