



THE DAILY READING BIBLE

GENESIS 1-11

2 THESSALONIANS

HEBREWS 1-7

JESUS

55 daily readings with full Bible text

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

Volume 3

GENESIS 1-11 2 THESSALONIANS HEBREWS 1-7 JESUS

The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 3)

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CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 5
Genesis 1-11 & 2 Thessalonians	Page 7
Hebrews 1-7	Page 31
Jesus, The Coming One	Page 51

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, some four 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 third volume contains 55 readings, mostly designed to be done in 15–20 minutes with five slightly longer readings you might like to do over a couple of days. 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 third volume includes:

- studies on Genesis 1-11 (written by Tony Payne)
- studies on the book of 2 Thessalonians (written by Ken Simpson, a member of the ministry team at the University of New South Wales)
- studies on Hebrews 1-7 (written by Tony Payne and Greg Clarke, Director of the Centre for Apologetic Scholarship and Education at New College, UNSW)
- some theme studies on 'Jesus, The Coming One' (written by Greg Clarke) and four of the great 'I am' passages in John's gospel (written by Chris Edwards, a member of the staff team at Holy Trinity Church in Adelaide).

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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.

PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR:

GENESIS 1-11 & 2 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

This set of studies features readings from either end of God's revelation: from Genesis 1-11 and from 2 Thessalonians. In one, we see the beginning of everything, the foundations for world history, and the opening scenes of the biblical story; in the other, we read of the end of the world, of Christ's coming, and of the dangers and temptations that we must watch out for as we wait for it.

Here's an opening prayer you might like to use before each of the next 20 studies:

Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth,

At your powerful word all things were created and blessed. By your word, the world was judged, and by your word its salvation was promised. Lord, help me to listen now to your word, not to doubt it or distort it, but to obey it with a grateful heart, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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

READING 1

GENESIS 1:1-25

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And

God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and

there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.

¹⁶ And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

1. At the very beginning of creation, the earth is "without form and void." It is without order and shape, and it is empty.

Look through the passage, and note down:

- *how God gives form and shape to the earth;*

- *the way in which God 'fills' the earth with life.*

2. How does the whole passage emphasize God bringing order to what was initially chaotic?

3. Many ancient civilizations worshipped the sun and moon as gods, or thought that the stars determined human events (astrology). By contrast, what does this passage say about the sun, moon and stars?

PONDER 1. What do you think this passage reveals about the character of God? How might this affect your response or attitude to God?

2. What does this passage reveal about the character of the creation itself? How might this affect your attitude to the creation?

PRAYER IDEAS Give thanks for the goodness and fruitful diversity of God's wonderful creation.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh

day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

1. *How is man like the rest of creation? (Compare verse 22 in the previous reading.) How is man different?*
2. *What is it about man, do you think, that constitutes him being in God's likeness and image? What clues does the passage itself contain about this?*
3. *What is different about the seventh day? Why is it special?*

PONDER These verses introduce concepts (such as the 'image of God' and the 'sabbath') that will echo throughout the rest of the Bible. If you have time, read the following verses about the 'image of God', and how it relates to us as Christians: Rom 8:29,¹ Col 1:15,² Col 3:10.³

PRAYER IDEAS Give thanks for God's good creation of mankind, and the ultimate fulfillment of his plan for us in Christ.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the

earth and the heavens.

⁵ When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused

1. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

3. ... and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush.

¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was

not found a helper fit for him.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- 1. What is the connection between the ground (or earth) and the various things that God creates in this chapter?*
- 2. Which trees is the man allowed to eat from, and which is he not?*
- 3. What is the man's purpose or reason for being created? What is the woman's?*

PONDER What does this passage reveal about God's purposes in creating men and women and other creatures? What is 'good' and 'not good' in this passage?

PRAYER IDEAS Give thanks to God who "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (as Acts 17:25 puts it). Pray for your own marriage (and/or the marriages of other people you know), for the deep unity that this passage speaks of.