

THE DAILY READING BIBLE

Volume 11

2 PETER

GENESIS 36-50

ECCLESIASTES

IN HIS IMAGE

The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 11)

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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 eleventh 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 eleventh volume includes:

- studies on 2 Peter (written by Kerry Nagel, senior minister at Narrabeen Anglican Church in Sydney)
- studies on Genesis 36-50 (written by Jason Ramsay, assistant minister at St James's Church in Croydon, Sydney, and Luke Darwall, a member of St James's)
- studies on Ecclesiastes (written by Phil Colgan, associate minister at St George North Anglican Church)
- studies on the image of God (written by Karen Beilharz).

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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:

2 PETER

INTRODUCTION

2 Peter is a letter concerned not so much with imparting new and wonderful truths as reminding its readers of what they already know to be true about God and Jesus Christ. Peter warns his readers of the reality of false teaching and false living, and urges them to wait with zeal for the coming of Christ.

You might like to use this prayer (or your own variation on it) before each of the next 13 studies:

*Heavenly Father,
Through your divine power, you give us everything we need through the Lord Jesus Christ,
your eternal word. Remind me now, through the words of Scripture, of the things I need to
know. Strengthen me to zealously put them into practice for the sake of Christ.
Amen.*

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

READING 1

2 PETER 1:1-4



Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

² May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

1. Read the passage and jot down all the things that God has already given to Christians.

2. 'Knowledge of God' is a central theme in these verses. What do you find out about God from these verses?

3. What “precious and very great promises” does God make to us (cf. 2 Pet 3:4¹, 13²)? What are we enabled to do as a result?

PONDER Do you ever feel as if God hasn't given you everything you need for life and godliness? If so, how can you develop a greater trust in God's promises?

PRAYER IDEAS Thank God for his wondrous character—his goodness and righteousness. Ask him to help you to go on escaping the corruption of the world.

POINTER v. 4: “partakers of the divine nature” does not refer to us becoming ‘gods’ as such, but to us sharing the character of God, which we now understand because of Christ's life, death and resurrection (vv. 2-3). The word often translated ‘goodness’ or ‘excellence’ which is used to describe Christ in verse 3 is also used in verse 5 where Peter encourages his readers to supplement faith with “virtue” (see Reading 2).

READING 2

2 PETER 1:3-7

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

1. In verses 3-4, what reason does Peter give for the “effort” he encourages us to make in verse 5?

2. Consider the list of qualities in verses 5-7. (You may want to list them below.) Do some of these qualities need particular attention in your life?

PONDER What practical steps can you take to cultivate at least one of these qualities?

PRAYER IDEAS Pray for God to help you “make every effort” in supplementing your faith with these qualities. Thank him for keeping his promises.

1. ... They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

2. But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practise these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. *If we share in the divine nature, adding the qualities listed in verses 5-7 in increasing measure, what results follow?*

2. *What does a lack of love, kindness and so on show about a person?*

3. *What assurance does God give here to every Christian (vv. 10-11)?*

PONDER How fruitful and productive are you in your knowledge of Jesus Christ?

PRAYER IDEAS Thank God for the great future he has guaranteed for you.

POINTER v. 5: we are to "make every effort to supplement ..." The same word is used in verse 11: "For in this way there will be richly provided for you ..."

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴ since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised

myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

1. At this stage in his life, why does Peter write this letter?

3. What basis does Peter give his readers for trusting his claims and message?

2. What is he eager to remind them of (vv. 16-18)?

PONDER How does this passage help you as you look forward to “an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 11; see Reading 3)?

PRAYER IDEAS Give thanks that God has preserved the testimony of eyewitnesses for you. Ask God the Father to help you to keep honouring Jesus as Lord.

POINTER vv. 16-18: Peter is referring to the event known as ‘the Transfiguration’. We will look at this in the next reading.

READING 5

MATTHEW 17:1-13

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised

from the dead.” ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” ¹¹ He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things.

¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

In our last reading, we saw the importance of Peter’s testimony as an eyewitness to what he writes in his letter. Now we look at the event he refers to in 2 Peter 1:16-18 (Reading 4).

1. From verses 1-6, why do you think Peter and the others were terrified?

2. *What do you think the words from God in verse 5 indicate about who Jesus is?*

3. *In verses 9-13, Jesus gives an explanation of the event to Peter and the others. When are they told to share this information with others?*

PONDER Who do you think Jesus Christ is, and what grounds or evidence do you have for this view?

PRAYER IDEAS Thank God for what he has revealed, and ask him to help you give Jesus rightful place in your life.

POINTER v. 5: The language of God's declaration about Jesus is based on Psalm 2, which we will look at in the next reading. His words are almost a 'commissioning' of Jesus for his task ahead.

READING 6

PSALM 2

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his
Anointed, saying,

³ "Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.

⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

⁶ "As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill."

⁷ I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations
your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's
vessel."

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,

for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Peter is conscious, as he writes in 2 Peter 1:19 (see Reading 7), that what he has seen is based on God's words through the 'prophets'. Psalm 2 is an example of the psalmist writing as a prophet.

1. *From verses 1-6, what does God do in response to the boasts of his enemies?*

2. *What does God say about:*

- *the person of his 'King' in verse 7?*

- *the future of this 'King' in verses 8-9?*