

Bible Reading Guide 2020



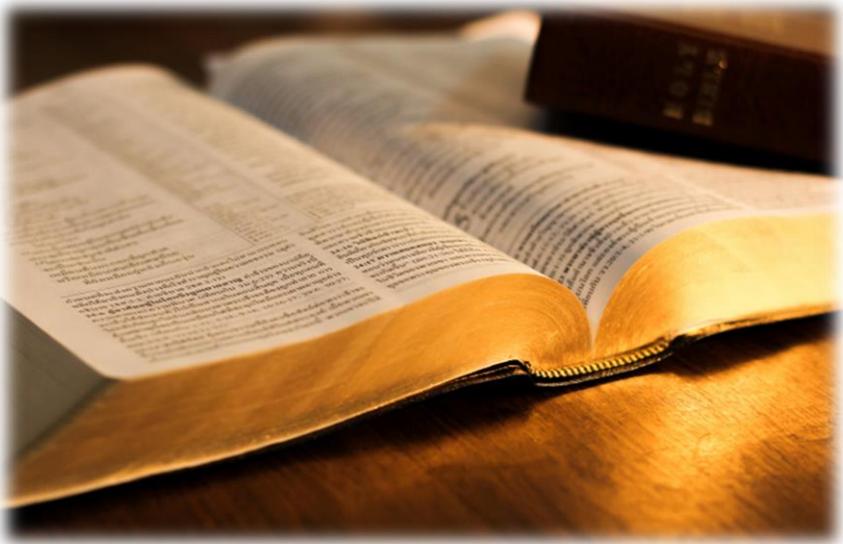
Week 8
February 16-22, 2020

Written by Rev. William F. Hill, Jr.

~Instructions~

1. Pray
2. Read the assigned text of Scripture.
3. Answer the discussion questions as offered. Keep a notebook of your thoughts and answers.

Each chapter is a summary. It is not meant to be overly educational or intellectual. It is meant to give the reader a good thumbnail sketch of each chapter.



~Lord's Day, February 16, 2020 ~

Reading: Psalm 13-14

PSALM 13

Psalm 13 opens with a series of questions – four of them. The Psalm is penned from the perspective of an individual. The circumstances that prompt these questions are unclear. It may be an issue related to warfare, or it may be a health crisis. Whatever the issue, the writer appeals to Jehovah for relief.

The Psalm can be divided into two sections. The first (13:1-2) contains a series of questions. Note that each of these questions begins with “how long.” That may indicate that the concern facing the writer has been raging for a significant period. It may also mean that the issue is of such weight that the writer has reached his wit's end. Note, also, that the questions are directed towards Jehovah. Finally, note that the questions are rooted in language that makes it appear that Jehovah has forgotten his servant (13:1, “forget;” “hide”), or he will not answer his servant (13:2, “take counsel in MY soul.”).

The second section (13:3-6) implores Jehovah to hear the cries of the writer. There is a sense of great urgency (“Consider and answer me.”) as well as a sense of impending doom if the LORD refuses to act. Finally, the writer confesses that he has no one else to turn to, regardless of the silence of the LORD. He confesses his trust in him, his desire to rejoice in him, and his remembrance that the LORD does deal bountifully with his servants. The final verse gives the impression that whatever prompted the Psalm has now been resolved.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever felt like this writer? To whom did you turn. What is especially important is the frank honesty the writer offers in his prayer to Jehovah. You are to cast your cares on the LORD. A lament of this nature is not sinful. The LORD wants his children to cry out to him.
2. What is your attitude upon hearing the LORD's response? Perhaps he does not answer the matter as you think he should. It could be an illness that he doesn't remove. It could be a loved one who has drifted from the Lord or is not a believer. Whatever the case, answered as you hope or not, do you rejoice in him?

PSALM 14

This Psalm is one that frankly declares the foolishness of those who state that there is no God. The opening verse frames the entire Psalm. This is one of the old Testament passages that the apostle Paul uses in the book of Romans (cp. Rom. 3:10-18).

The Psalm also describes the condition of fallen humanity. Note the statements: "they are corrupt;" "there is none who does good;" "they have become corrupt;" "there is not even one who does good." There is a sense in which David piles on the terrible condition of fallen humanity. In the eyes of a holy God, there are none righteous.

While arrogant men may boast and parade their seemingly great knowledge, God has the final word, and he shames the self-righteous. Those who deny him are in great danger (14:5).

The Psalm closes with a prayer of hope for the people of God. Though we live in a sinful and wicked generation, the LORD sees, and he knows and he will vindicate his people.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the apostle Paul use this Psalm in his argument in Rom. 3:10-18? What point is he making in that passage, and why does he use Psa. 14 to do so?
2. God's opinion of people who deny God's existence is rather frank and blunt. Yet, according to Paul, they know that God exists (Rom. 1). How do they know that, and why do they proudly assert that there is no God?
3. Why are men corrupt? Consider the awful nature of sin in this world and what it has done to the human condition.

~Monday, February 17, 2020 ~

Reading: Genesis 41; John 13

GENESIS 41

Genesis 41 is the cousin of Genesis 40. Recall that in chapter 40, Joseph interprets two dreams for his fellow prisoners. It was due to his ability to do so, through the work of the Spirit of God, that brought him to a place where he would stand before Pharaoh. The chapter opens with this loud crashing, jarring statement: "After two whole years." The chief cupbearer had forgotten Joseph for a lengthy period. It was after Pharaoh dreamed a series of dreams that he remembered him and brought him to the attention of the King (41:9).

Through a remarkable series of events, God, in his providence, worked to bring Joseph to a place of great honor and significance. This begins how God worked to preserve a people.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is providence?

2. Reflect on the numerous ways in which God has worked through providence to bring you where you are today.

JOHN 13

John 13 finds the Savior very close to the cross and laboring to teach his disciples about the nature of his kingdom. He does this through a powerful example of service in 13:1-20.

Of all the acts a Christian can perform in this life, being a humble servant mirrors the Savior most of all. The church of Christ must take these verses seriously and seek to live them daily.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be a “servant”?
2. How are you serving others in the local church? Are you serving others? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the many ways in which you can use your gifts and talents to serve the church. Suggestions: Inviting people over to your home for a meal, sending a note or card, praying with and for others, etc.
4. How does Jesus exemplify the attitude of serving in John 13? How has he done that for you throughout your life? Is he still serving his church? How?

~Tuesday, February 18, 2020 ~

Reading: Genesis 42; John 14

GENESIS 42

This chapter begins the culmination of the dreams that Joseph had previously regarding his status and his brother's relationship with him. Due to the great famine in the land, Jacob sends his sons to the land of Egypt, where they encounter their brother, though they

do not know it at the time. Thus, Joseph puts them through a series of tests and tricks them all to learn about his father.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does this chapter begin the culmination of the initial dreams of Joseph?
2. What are the tests Joseph puts in front of his brothers?
3. Why do you think the brothers do not recognize Joseph?

JOHN 14

Two main subjects are present in this chapter. The first (14:1-14) contains a few subordinate items to the main point. First, Jesus desires to comfort his troubled disciples. The chapter opens with words of comfort and hope to all who will follow him. Second, Jesus proclaims that he alone is the only way to peace with God. Third, the disciples have a desire to see the Father, and Jesus proclaims that he and the Father are one. Fourth, Jesus declares a word on the subject of prayer. The main point is the centrality of the Son in salvation, union with the Father, and the hope we have for the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Second (14:15-31) is a discourse on the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus offers another word of comfort to the disciples that he will not leave them alone. He is always present with his people through the third person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are the disciples troubled?
2. In what tangible ways does Jesus comfort them?
3. Does Jesus make a blanket statement regarding prayer at 14:14? That is, will he give you whatever you want whenever you want it? Why or why not?
4. 4. What does Jesus mean in 14:15 regarding love for him?

5. How is the Holy Spirit “another” comforter in this life?

~Wednesday, February 19, 2020 ~

Reading: Genesis 43; John 15

GENESIS 43

This chapter should be read along with the previous one as it continues the narrative of testing from Joseph to his brothers. Here, in this chapter, we find an important theme when we witness Judah offering himself as a “surety” (a pledge) for his brother (see 43:9). This theme is culminated in the work of Christ, from the tribe of Judah, who offers himself as a pledge for his people.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do the brothers need to return to Egypt?
2. What is the issue that troubles Jacob?
3. How is the theme of Judah as surety for his brother pointing to Christ?
4. Why do you think Joseph shows great favoritism for Benjamin? That will be a theme that will unfold in the historical books.

JOHN 15

John 15 contains the discourse of the “vine and the branches.” We cannot do anything as God’s people unless we are united to Christ, the vine. Many people in the church are united to the visible body of Christ, who are not united to the vine. They do not bear fruit (14:5) and are eventually cast off. Thus, union with Christ is proven in the fruit of the one who says they know him.

Another aspect of this chapter centers on the subject of love (14:12-17). Biblical love proves that one is united to the Savior.

Finally, Jesus warns that if you desire to follow Christ, you will be hated by the world. God's people should never be surprised by that fact.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Jesus use the metaphor of a “vine” in this discourse?
2. Who is the vine? Who is the vinedresser? What does that imply regarding salvation and sanctification?
3. What naturally happens to one who is connected really and truly to the vine?
4. Why is love the quintessential Christian virtue? What is love? See 1 Cor. 13.

~Thursday, February 20, 2020 ~

Reading: Genesis 44, John 16

GENESIS 44

This chapter continues the string of tests within the narrative that ultimately fulfills Joseph's dreams that his brothers would bow before him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What verse presents the fulfillment of the dream?
2. Who pleads for the brothers? Why is that significant?

JOHN 16

This chapter can be divided into three sections. The first (16:4-15) highlights the work of the Holy Spirit. The second (16:16-24) contains the effort of Christ to comfort his disciples. The third

(16:25-33) shows that Christ, through his work, will overcome the world.

The first section is vitally important, as we consider the work of the Holy Spirit. In a remarkable statement to the disciples, Jesus states that it is to their benefit that he go away (16:7). Jesus then explains the reason in 16:7b-11). Within this explanation, Jesus begins to teach them something about the work of the Holy Spirit.

The second section is natural, given the first section. The disciples are anxious about the departure of the Savior. They were still confused as to the nature and work of Christ. He tells them that through this work, their sorrow will turn to joy.

The third section contains the triumphal statement that Jesus has overcome the world. As God's people, we should draw comfort from this truth. The world may oppose us, but we have a great Savior who has overcome. Thus, we, too, will overcome.

Discussion Questions:

1. List the things that Jesus teaches regarding the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. What illustration does Jesus use to teach regarding "sorrow and joy" as it relates to the disciples?

~Friday, February 21, 2020 ~

Reading: Genesis 45, John 17

GENESIS 45

This chapter culminates the narrative that started in chapter 42. One commentator notes that "in this narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation, Joseph presents a model of submission to God's eternal and benevolent purpose. All the evil done to him by his

brothers was only part of God’s secret plan designed for the good, not only of Joseph but of his wicked brothers as well.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Joseph seek to comfort his brothers in 45:5-8? What repeated words are used?
2. How does Joseph demonstrate the Savior’s words to “love your enemies”? Matt. 5:44

JOHN 17

This chapter is known as the high priestly prayer of Christ. Moments before the cross, the Lord Jesus enters into an intimate time of prayer before his Father, praying for his own needs as well as the needs of his people. The chapter can be divided into two sections. The first (17:1-5) contains the prayer the Savior offered for himself. The second (17:6-26).

In the first section, the Lord Jesus prays that the Father would restore to him the glory he shared with his Father before all worlds (17:5). He prays that the Father would glorify him as he enters into the work he is about to perform on behalf of his people. Two items are important to note. First, he mentions that he has done the work the Father has given him to do (17:4, 6). This refers to his active obedience – performing all the righteous demands of the Law for his people. Second, he mentions his passive obedience – that is, the work he will perform on the cross.

In the second section, the Lord Jesus prays for his people who are the benefactors of the cross-work that he will perform. He mentions that he has taught them all that the Father gave him to say. He asks for the Father to protect his people and sanctify them in truth.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you consider the high priestly prayer of Christ, how does it fulfill the work of the high priest of the Old Testament?
2. This prayer is for you if you know the Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of great significance for the church. Mediate on the numerous items that are mentioned in this chapter.

~Saturday, February 22, 2020 ~

Reading: Genesis 46, John 18

GENESIS 46

Genesis 46 contains the narrative of Joseph's family moving to Egypt with a list of the people that migrated there to be reunited with Joseph and be saved from the famine that is in the land.

Discussion Questions:

1. How many people came out of Canaan and moved to Egypt?
2. Why do you think a shepherd is an abomination in the sight of the Egyptians?
3. How does this chapter prove the promise of God to be to them their God and they his people?

JOHN 18

John 18 can be divided into four sections. The first (18:1-11) contains the betrayal of Judas, one of the twelve, and subsequent arrest of the Savior. The second (18:12-14, 19-24) contains the trial of Christ before the Sanhedrin. The third (18:15-18, 25-27) contains the denial of Peter. The fourth (18:28-40) contains the

trial before Pilate, the interrogation and eventual handing over of the Savior for crucifixion.

In the first section, we read of the awful act of one of the twelve to betray Christ into the hands of sinners. This act fulfills prophecy. The location of this betrayal is outside the Garden of Gethsemane. During this act, Peter, zealous in defending the Savior, cuts off the ear of Malchus and Jesus rebukes him and heals the servant. Note the zeal of Peter carefully to defend Christ as compared to his eventual denial of Christ a few verses later.

The second section highlights the denial of Christ by Peter. Peter, one of the twelve, proudly boasted that he would never do such a thing, yet here, under threat and fear, he denies the Lord whom he loves. In striking contrast to Judas, however, Peter mourns his act and is later restored. Judas commits suicide.

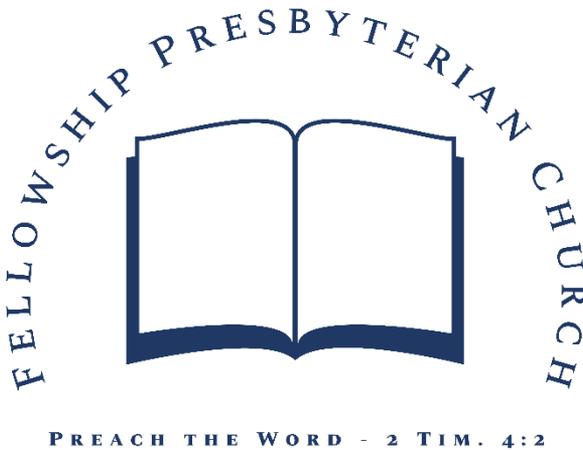
The third section contains the events that occurred before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the highest religious court of the Jews. The trial was a mockery (see Mark 14).

The fourth section contains the events of Jesus before the Roman governor. Pilate finds no fault in Christ, yet, swayed by the opinion of the mob, turns him over to be crucified. In what is one of the grossest miscarriages of justice, Jesus is exchanged for a known criminal.

Discussion Questions:

1. What motivated Judas to betray Christ?
2. What words does Christ use in rebuking Peter at 18:11? What does that mean?
3. Why did Peter deny knowing the Savior? What lesson does that teach you regarding your public demonstration of allegiance and loyalty to Christ?

4. Why did Pilate ask Jesus, “what is truth?” Did Jesus answer him? Why or why not?



~Notes ~

