

Learn to Read the Bible Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Session 12



SESSION 12

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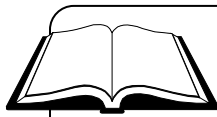
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Saint – A person set apart. Usually referring to those who obey God as opposed to those who don't.



Read Psalm 37 v 28
Acts 9 v 41; Romans 15 v 26

Satan – A Chaldean word carried across to Hebrew and Greek; literally an opponent, adversary, hater or accuser. The same original word is translated “adversary” or transliterated “satan” in different Bible passages.



Read 1 Kings 5 v 4; 11 v 14 and 23
Matthew 16 v 23

Devil – The Greek words daimon and daimonion are translated “devil” in the King James Version of the New Testament. These words are translated “demon” in most modern translations. This is the word used to describe the state of people who have what we would now recognise as mental illness or neurological diseases such as epilepsy.



Read Luke 9 v 42
Mark 5 v 15

The other word translated “devil” in most translations of the New Testament is the Greek word diabolos, which means “prone to slander, slanderous or accusing falsely”. It is often used of people and is sometimes translated “slanderer” or “false accuser”.



Read John 6 v 70; 2 Timothy 3 v 3
Titus 2 v 3

In many passages in the Bible the word diabolos is used to symbolise all that is opposed to God.

Lucifer – A title given to the king of Babylon in the prophecy of Isaiah.



Read Isaiah 14 v 4 to 12

Gentile – Originally a term meaning “nations”. In a wider sense it is a term used to mean any non-Jewish person.



Read Romans 2 v 10

Angel – A messenger, or one sent from God.



Read Luke 1 v 26

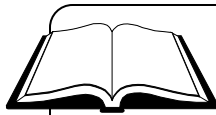
Section 2

The problem of suffering

We are including this section for a very important reason. The problem of suffering is a difficulty for many people. We should like to lead you to some Bible principles and passages that can help.

If you are tempted to ask, “Why doesn’t God stop all this evil going on in the world?”, remember that if He stopped other people doing what they want, He might also stop you doing what you want. God wants people to obey Him out of choice, not by compulsion. God could have created a race of robots if unthinking obedience was all that He wanted.

We see, right at the beginning of things, that God gave a command which He wanted to be obeyed.



Read Genesis 2 v 16 to 18

Having been given total freedom of choice, Adam and Eve chose to challenge God’s authority and they disobeyed. God then had to do something in response.



Read Genesis 3 v 16 to 19

Suffering and death are a result of rebellion against God.

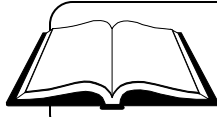
We all follow Adam and Eve’s example in generally wanting our own way rather than God’s.



Read Jeremiah 17 v 9
Mark 7 v 20 to 23

Suffering arises out of God’s response to sin. Some people find it difficult to accept that God causes evil things to happen. As we saw in Genesis 3 verses 17 and 18, the adverse conditions in agriculture were brought about by God.

God was instrumental in bringing disaster on Egypt in the time of Moses.



Read Exodus 10 v 13 to 19

God brought problems to the prophet Jonah.



Read Jonah 1 v 4

Job, an early Old Testament character, realised that God sometimes brought problems and suffering into people's lives.



Read Job 1 v 21; 2 v 10

But there is nothing in the Bible to suggest that when suffering occurs it is always attributable to a particular act by the sufferer. On one occasion Jesus was asked whether a man was born blind as a result of sin.



Read John 9 v 1 to 3

There is a similar example recorded in Luke's Gospel.



Read Luke 13 v 1 to 5

In this instance Jesus was saying that suffering was a reminder that everyone will eventually die. At that stage it will not matter whether we have lived to ninety-five in luxury, or died at fifteen in poverty. It will be our relationship to God that will then matter.

Suffering need not be regarded as all negative. God can use suffering as part of His remedy for rebellion against His authority. Suffering can often “stop us in our tracks” in life and make us think, more than we normally do, what life is all about.



Read Hebrews 12 v 7 to 11

This verse also shows that suffering helps our characters to mature and become more like God's. If we will allow it, it prepares us for the time when there will be no more suffering.



Read Revelation 21 v 4

The apostle Paul reminds his readers that problems are to be expected if they try to live a Godly life:



Read Acts 14 v 22

Summary

- x God asks us to choose to obey Him.
- x Disobedience to God is the cause of suffering.
- x God uses suffering to remind people of their rebellious nature.
- x There is not necessarily a link between particular sins and particular sufferings.
- x God uses suffering to help people develop God-like characters.

Reading the Bible effectively

As you have now reached the end of this course it may be helpful to remind you of what you have learned about effective Bible reading.

Basic Bible study skills

Preparation

- x Allow time
- x Be comfortable
- x Select a good translation

How to read

- x Aloud
- x Listen for “echoes”
- x Ask yourself questions

When you don't understand

- x Be patient
- x Look at cross-references
- x Use concordances and lexicons
- x Use other translations

- x **LET THE BIBLE ANSWER ITS OWN QUESTIONS**

Principles and helps for effective Bible reading

Session 1

- x The Bible is God's message for us, giving real hope for the future
- x It gives direction for living, and ignoring its message can be fatal

Session 2

- x Genesis is the foundation of the rest of the Bible
- x We cannot hope to understand the New Testament without the Old Testament

Session 3

- x God has made agreements which are the basis of His plan with mankind
- x Prophecy is given to help us put our trust in God

Session 4

- x When we read the Bible, we must let it teach us
- x Genesis to Judges overview showed us the early development of the Jews

Session 5

- x How concordances can help us understand words used in the Bible
- x A look at some words that are sometimes misunderstood

Session 6

- x Overview of the period when kings ruled over the Jewish nation
- x A look at some more Bible words

Session 7

- x How cross-references can help us find “echoes”
- x Evidence which shows that the Bible cannot be of human origin

Session 8

- x God’s real purpose in creating the earth
- x Overview of the Jewish nation from the kings up to the time of Christ

Session 9

- x The differences between the various Bible translations
- x A look at some more Bible words

Session 10

- x The place of the Jews in God’s plan
- x The balance of God’s mercy and judgement

Session 11

- x Motivation to read the Bible
- x Overview of the New Testament period

Session 12

- x A final look at some Bible words that can be misunderstood
- x A few Bible passages that help when considering suffering

We hope that you are now better equipped to understand the Bible for yourself than you were when you started the course. All these topics are designed to let the Bible speak for itself and give you its message, which we believe is of vital importance to us all. As it talks of matters relating to our life and death it is crucial that we understand what it is telling us.

Conclusion

We hope that this course has helped you to read your Bible more effectively.

Your tutor will always be pleased to hear from you and discuss anything relating to either this course or any Bible-related topic.

We hope, God willing, to produce other Distance Learning Courses based on other seminars held in various centres around Britain. The aim of these courses will be to help you to understand various books of the Bible, building on the information from this course.

The enclosed letter gives details of the courses currently available. You can apply for the courses using the form on the bottom of the letter.

Your tutor will give you details of new Distance Learning Courses as they become available.

Please let your tutor know if you have any specific topic you would like to study.

Finally, remember that the Bible contains God's plan for us. Life is to be found in the Bible, and we have attempted to put you on the path to obtaining it. As you move forward, you have a choice: endless life or endless death. We encourage you to choose life, for both you and your family.

THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

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