



“Reading the Bible Together”

Issue 7.

Book of Joshua (cont’d) and the Book of Judges:

God’s people get organised and form a common heritage.

August 2009.

Who spotted the deliberate mistake??

How did that old song go by the Boomtown Rats with Bob Geldolf, “I don’t like Mondays.” Well for me Tuesday the 14th July was not a good day. Some of you kindly drew my attention to the fact that I had missed out a whole chunk of Deuteronomy (Chapters 23:15-26:19) in my haste to get on. Apologies. My hope is that many of you had the common sense to carry on regardless and ignore my fallibility.

For those not there yet and wondering what Chapters 23-26 contain, herein lies many laws and guidance on such issues as what to do when fed up with your wife (or husband) – not to be followed, except in the Vicar’s wife’s case. Hence why we have bought a caravan. In addition there is much to say about how to live good and/or ‘healthy’ family life, much of which re-emerges in Jesus’ own teaching and was obviously common practice some eight hundred/ thousand years later. Chapter 26 is all about offering God not just a cut, a tithe of all the good things we receive at His hand, but the first fruits, the best of the fruit, as a sign of placing God and His Kingdom before ourselves. Being a Christian reminds us that, in one sense we can only offer to God all that we are, but do we offer Him our best bits, when we’re most awake, most alert, most willing to pray or to worship. Or, do we simply offer Him the dregs when all else and everything else has taken their fill, when we’ve got nothing else on this weekend, or when it doesn’t inconvenience the plans for the BBQ. Deuteronomy 26 helps vicars too to get their priorities right and to remember the story of my/our redemption.

What’s new this month?

This month we move into the next chapter of the forming story of a nation in the Land. Once established, Israel starts to form her own history around the characters and heroes of her walk with God. These are some the oldest recorded stories and history handed down to us in the Old Testament. We meet great characters such as Deborah, Gideon and, of course, Samson.

At the heart of the Book we begin to see develop a strong theme develop that will be with us throughout our journey through these great historical books of the Old Testament, that the fortunes of Israel depend on the faithfulness of her leader and people. When Israel and her leader are faithful, Israel prospers. When unfaithful, Israel falls from grace.

What leads Israel, and/or her leaders to fall from grace? Worship or trust in the Canaanite fertility god Baal. The overall god of the Canaanites was in fact the god El, Baal was simply a god invoked at the time of a storm. Baal became such a dominant focus of hostility for Israel for two reasons. Firstly, Baal was invoked by such characters as Goliath when going into battle against God’s people. So Baal became a god of war, but on the opposition side and hence not endearing to the Israelites. Secondly, outside of the war situation Baal, associated with storms became linked to being invoked to provide rain, rain waters the plants and so Baal became linked with nature and to fertility. A number of sexual and what we might call ‘bohemian’ practices grew up – pagan “New Age” practices we might call them. And given that the Jews, and we as Christians, see God Himself as the author and giver of life this puts us at odds who wish to attribute the gift and power of life elsewhere – whether it be to modern or ancient Baals, both of yesterday or today.

Bible Together Meetings:

There have been a faithful half dozen or so that have met either morning or evening to discuss how things are going and what God might be saying to them through their reading. Sometimes we have gone off on a tangent but mostly we have discussed and shared sometimes deeply personal reflections where God has clearly touched someone's life. Such times are greatly encouraging, especially when get beyond simply this theory or that theory, what I call 'headstuff,' and to when God clearly does speak into the human soul. Of course, we never quite know when this is going to be, nor that it will not be through the creativity of sharing together.

With this said, we will be taking a break from the Bible Study Meetings in August – due to holiday. But look out for these to resume in September, either on the first Wednesday @ 9.00am or third Wednesday in the evening @ 8.00pm.

September meetings will be:

Wednesday 2nd September 9.00am – 10.00am
Wednesday 16th September 8.00pm – 9.15pm

Read and enjoy.

Scheme of Reading for June:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>
Sat 1 st Aug	Josh 8:1 – 8:35	Sun 23 rd Aug	-----
Sun 2 nd Aug	-----	Mon 24 th Aug	Judg 7:1 – 7:25
Mon 3 rd Aug	Josh 9:1 – 9:27	Tues 25 th Aug	Judg 8:1 – 8:35
Tues 4 th Aug	Josh 10:1 – 10:28	Wed 26 th Aug	Judg 9:1 – 9:57
Wed 5th Aug	Josh 10:29 – 11:23	Thurs 27 th Aug	Judg 10:1 – 11:40
(Due to holidays there will be NO Morning Bible Meeting today)		Fri 28 th Aug	Judg 12:1 – 12:15
Fri 7 th Aug	Josh 14:1 – 15:63	Sat 29 th Aug	Judg 13:1 – 13:25
Sat 8 th Aug	Josh 16:1 – 17:18	Sun 30 th Aug	-----
Sun 9 th Aug	-----	Sat 31 st Aug	Judg 14:1 – 14:20
Mon 10 th Aug	Josh 18:1 – 19:51	Sun 1 st Sept	-----
Tues 11 th Aug	Josh 20:1 – 20:9	Mon 2 nd Sept	Judg 15:1 – 15:20
Wed 12 th Aug	Josh 21:1 – 21:45	Tues 3 rd Sept	Judg 16:1 – 16:31
Thurs 13 th Aug	Josh 22:1 – 22:34	Wed 4 th Sept	Judg 17:1 – 17:13
Fri 14 th Aug	Josh 23:1 – 23:16	Thurs 5 th Sept	Judg 18:1 – 18:31
Sat 15 th Aug	Josh 24:1 – 24:33	Fri 6 th Sept	Judg 19:1 – 19:30
Sun 16 th Aug	-----	Sat 7 th Sept	Judg 20:1 – 20:48
Mon 17 th Aug	Judg 1:1 – 1:36	Sun 8 th Sept	-----
Tues 18 th Aug	Judg 2:1 – 3:6	Mon 9 th Sept	Judg 21:1 – 21:25
Wed 19th Aug	Judg 3:7 – 3:31		
(Due to holidays there will be NO Evening Bible Meeting tonight)			
Thurs 20 th Aug	Judg 4:1 – 4:24		
Fri 21 st Aug	Judg 5:1 – 5:31		
Sat 22 nd Aug	Judg 6:1 – 6:40		