

Redeeming the Time in Bible Reading

By John R. Gibson

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:15-16)

The admonition to make good use of our time is one we need to heed at all times, but this year we are seeking to put special emphasis on it with the hope of instilling within all of us an approach to life that will continue on long after “redeeming the time” has been replaced by a new theme or point of emphasis.

More time in the Scriptures is one of the lifelong habits we are seeking to encourage and to that end many of us are using the same Bible reading plan. And to encourage everyone to keep up and stay with it, each month I hope to do at least a couple of lessons that go along with the scheduled readings. This week I want to do something a little different and talk about some things to look for this week. I’m not intending to write a commentary on this week’s readings or cover every point, but I hope these things to watch for will make your reading more productive. (While all should be involved in Bible reading, some may choose a different plan or schedule and that’s okay, but this pertains to the one a majority are using.)

Exodus 1-15 and the Mighty Hand of God

Moses told Israel that by “strength of hand the LORD brought” them out of Egypt (Exodus 13:3) and I hope everyone will take note of that mighty hand on display in at least the following points:

- 1) The incredible growth of the Israelites despite the Egyptian king’s efforts to stifle it.
- 2) Be like Moses and stand in awe at the burning bush.
- 3) The LORD’s ability to see the future as He tells Moses exactly how Pharaoh will react.
- 4) The signs given to Moses to prove to Israel that he had been sent by God.
- 5) See the mighty hand of God send ten plagues on Egypt, plagues the gods of Egypt were powerless to stop.
- 6) And beginning with the fourth one, see the hand of God spare Israel from the plagues. Especially noteworthy is His passing over the children of Israel when He passed through the land of Egypt and struck their firstborn.
- 7) Be in awe of God as He parts the waters of the Red Sea.
- 8) Watch as His mighty hand make the bitter waters of Marah sweet.

As we see the mighty hand of God in Exodus the wonderful promises of the New Testament should become even more real to us. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

The Spiritual Life in Galatians 5, 6

This week's reading will conclude the book that began with a warning against changing the gospel message and exhorted the Galatians to reject the efforts to bind the Law of Moses on them. While there are many other things to take from chapters 5 and 6, here are a few of the key things to look for.

- 1) Justification comes by an active faith in Christ and not by observance of the Law of Moses.
- 2) Love one another.
- 3) Reject the life governed by the flesh and live a spiritually focused life.
- 4) Restore the erring.
- 5) Know that the harvest is coming and be sure you are planting a spiritual crop.
- 6) Do good for others.
- 7) Be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ.

Blessed in Christ. Ephesians 1-3

- 1) Take time to meditate on the spiritual blessings in Christ and realize that only in Him are these found.
- 2) Develop a deeper appreciation for the hope of His calling (1:18). A strengthened hope will sustain us in the difficult times.
- 3) The last five verses of chapter one should remind us of the mighty hand of God in Exodus. Know that the same power which raised Jesus and then exalted Him is His power on behalf of His people.
- 4) We were all guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23), but God displayed mercy, love, grace, and kindness toward us.
- 5) The Old Testament law, given to Israel, has been taken away and the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all.
- 6) As the Lord once dwelt among Israel in the tabernacle and temple, He is with us in His church.
- 7) We can read and understand God's will for us.
- 8) The more we understand about the love of Christ the more we will be moved to live for Him.
- 9) Be sure that all glory goes to God.

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