

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

5 Day Chronological Bible Reading Program WWW.FIVEDAYBIBLEREADING.COM

Week Twenty-seven: June 29-July 5

Day 1: 1 Kings 10-11; 2 Chronicles 9; 1 Timothy 6
Day 2: Ecclesiastes 1-3; Psalm 45; 2 Timothy 1
Day 3: Ecclesiastes 4-6; Psalm 125; 2 Timothy 2
Day 4: Ecclesiastes 7-9; Psalm 46; 2 Timothy 3
Day 5: Ecclesiastes 10-12; 2 Timothy 4

Week Twenty-nine: July 15-21

Day 1: 1 Kings 19-21; 2 Chr 17; Psalm 129; Matt 1
Day 2: 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18; Matthew 2
Day 3: 2 Chr 19-20; 2 Kings 1; Psalm 20; Matthew 3
Day 4: 2 Kings 2-3; Psalm 48; Matthew 4
Day 5: 2 Kings 4-6; Matthew 5

Week Twenty-eight: July 6-12

Day 1: 1 Kings 12; 2 Chronicles 10-11; Titus 1
Day 2: 1 Kings 13-14; ; 2 Chronicles 12; Psalm 47; Titus 2
Day 3: 1 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 13-14; Titus 3
Day 4: 2 Chronicles 15-16; 1 Kings 16; Philemon
Day 5: 1 Kings 17-18; Psalm 119; Jude

Week Thirty: July 22-28

Day 1: 2 Kings 7-8; 2 Chronicles 21; Matthew 6
Day 2: 2 Kings 9-10; Psalm 49; Matthew 7
Day 3: 2 Chronicles 22-23; 2 Kings 11; Psalm 131; Matt 8
Day 4: 2 Chronicles 24; 2 Kings 12; Psalm 50; Matthew 9
Day 5: Joel 1-3; Matthew 10

Freedom In Christ

The psalmist declared, “*Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day*” (Ps. 119:97). Why would anyone love the law of God? Why would we love that which constantly tells us what miserable wretches we are, daily points out all our shortcomings, relentlessly reminds us of all our death-deserving sins, and keeps knocking us down to our knees, leaving us crying out for help? The truth of the matter is that not just anyone loves the law of God but only those who have been set free by our law-giving, law-keeping, and law-liberating Savior. We love the law of God not because we possess some sort of inherent, self-inflicting, self-deprecating, sadistic disposition toward ourselves, but because, in His electing grace, God set His glorious and enduring love upon us, laid His eternal claim upon us, took hold of us and clutches

us in the palm of His strong and steadfast hand, and made us His dutiful bondslaves that we might be free to delight in His law in our inner being (Rom. 7:22–25) and strive to observe all the commands of Christ (Matt. 28:20), who by no means abolished the Law but fulfilled it perfectly on our behalf (Matt. 5:17). His death is our life. His fulfillment is our freedom. His duty is our delight. Our abundant life of freedom in Christ is not a freedom to do anything we want to do, but to have the uninterrupted, Spirit-sustaining power to do what we know we ought to do as the Holy Spirit changes our wants and daily makes all of our God-given duties delightful as we rest in the finished work of Christ (Rom. 8:3–4). The Holy Spirit sovereignly uses the law in several ways—to teach us about our Creator,

to give us a glimpse of His righteousness, holiness, and justice, to restrain sin, to give us a glimpse of the heinous nature of our sin, to drive us to our knees in liberating repentance, to prompt us to cry out daily for help, to guide us in our lives as we strive to die more and more unto sin and live unto righteousness, and to encourage us to lift our eyes to Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man, who alone is our righteousness, who alone fulfilled the law perfectly, in whom we rest by faith, and faith alone, and to whom we are eternally united because the Father has declared us righteous on account of the substitutionary righteousness of Christ that has been imputed to us, and our sin imputed to Him, fully and finally.

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First Baptist Family, We have all heard phrases like, ‘Freedom Isn’t Free’ and that is a solemn truth. This month we celebrate the birth of our nation and reflect on the freedoms we have been given as part of this wonderful country. So many freedoms we cherish that are not enjoyed by much of the world. We know these freedoms were not simply given to us but were paid for with a heavy price. Many lives have been lost to purchase and protect the liberties espoused by our forefathers. Across several wars, the ultimate price has been paid to keep our freedom secure. We owe debts of gratitude to countless people who willingly stood against tyranny and oppression to pay all that was necessary to keep our nation free. We dare not take these freedoms for granted or squander such a precious gift. We must also acknowledge another freedom far more precious than the right to speak openly, bear arms, or worship without fear. More devastating than a tyrant or other oppressive regime. We are held captive without any hope or means of escape. Freedom is not a distant dream or even a thought because we are so closed in and kept in darkness. This menace is the most powerful foe faced by any person.

With death as our adversary, we are held in its grip bound as slaves for all eternity. Nothing within us can overcome our curse. No human strength can stand against it. There is, however, a promise for all distraught by the lowly human condition. For all who labor against the cruelty of sin and death. As with all freedom, it does not come free. Over 2,000 years ago, God fulfilled His promise by sending His One and only Son into the world to be born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life and died on a cruel cross shedding His blood to buy freedom for all who believe. A willing sacrifice made by a Savior who paid a debt He did not owe for a people who did not deserve it. This is a freedom that unshackled us from the crushing power of sin and death. A freedom that has brought us life eternal. A freedom to serve our mighty God. Not a freedom held by a nation or even limited by this world. A freedom that surpasses all worldly pleasures and gets right to the heart of what we need more than anything. It too is a freedom that we dare not take for granted because of the unmatched price that was paid. Jesus gave all that we might have all in eternity with Him in heaven. We cannot overstate the importance of what we have been given, and we must not turn away or even look back at what held us. As Paul stated, “*For freedom Christ has set us free;*

stand first therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Gal. 5:1) We have been set free by Christ, and we are commanded to stand firm in that freedom not yielding anything to the life we lived before in slavery. We have a great many things to be thankful for, and I am overwhelmed at the price so many paid to grant us the freedoms we enjoy in this great country. However, no greater gratitude is owed than that to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He has given us the greatest freedom of all. May we never look back but forever keep our eyes on Jesus. I am reminded of the hymn by Rhea Miller that explains it so well: *I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I’d rather be His than have riches untold; I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I’d rather be led by his nail-pierced hand. Than to be the king of a vast domain Or be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.* For all who served our country and labored to retain our wonderful freedoms, we thank you. For our Lord and Savior, we are forever grateful for the greatest sacrifice that delivered the greatest freedom of all. Blessing everyone,

Bro. Jim Tennerly

The Christian’s Glorious Freedom

You may have been a Christian for some time and yet not grasped your new status in Christ. You may still be intimidated by the domineering character of the tyrant who once ruled over you.

Believers sometimes wrongly assume: “I have sinned; therefore, sin still has authority over me. I cannot possibly have ‘died’ to sin.” Paul unambiguously contradicts this thinking. Sin has no authority over anyone who is in Christ. You are no longer under its dominion. You have received a new identity. You have died out of that old kingdom. You have been raised through Christ into the new kingdom where He—not sin—reigns.

From this vantage point, you can look back to your former king and his kingdom, and say: “You once ruled over me, but no longer. I am a citizen of the kingdom of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He alone reigns over me now.” You may not yet be what one day you shall be; but thank God you are no longer what you once were (Rom. 6:17–18).

Paul asks the Roman Christians: “Don’t you know this? Was there a slip-up in the teaching you were given? Around the time you were baptized and came into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, did no one tell you that this is what it means to be a Christian?” Perhaps that was true in some of

the early churches. Believers did not always know these things. Perhaps no one told them. If so, it is all the more likely to be true in contemporary churches.

Perhaps no one has explained to you that no matter what Tyrant Sin, in all his various guises, may say, we are no longer under his dominion. He no longer has grounds for blackmail. He has no right to paralyze us into thinking that we can never make any real advance in the Christian life because we will never be free from this prevailing sin.

I enjoy reading crime novels and have frequently relaxed on long journeys by reading the novels of Margaret Perry. Many of them are set in nineteenth-century London. One of her central characters is a detective named William Monk (not to be confused with the American TV detective Adrian Monk). His life and adventures are made all the more intriguing by an event in his past. While a police officer in London, he was thrown from a horse-drawn cab driven at high speed. Monk survived but lost his memory. As a result, he finds himself in situations where he is at a great disadvantage because he has no memory of what happened to him in the past. He does not know who he really was, so he does not clearly understand who he really is. That is a basic problem for many Christians. We lose touch with the person Scripture says we really are.

Perhaps we never really understood that becoming a Christian meant receiving a new identity in Christ. Paul is saying: “Christians of Rome, you need to understand who you really are. You are people with a new citizenship. You are no longer under the dominion of sin. That makes a radical difference to the way you live the Christian life. It releases you from captivity.” It is easy to read this passage, and say: “Paul, you are not talking about me. I certainly don’t think of myself as someone who has died to sin.”

If that is true, a serious accident has taken place. You are like William Monk, constantly in situations you cannot handle properly because you suffer from spiritual amnesia. You do not clearly understand your identity in Christ. You are always trying to piece things together, but never getting the picture clearly.

But when you begin to understand that in Christ you died to sin and have now been delivered from the dominion of sin; that you are no longer under its bondage; that you no longer need to be a victim of its subtle paralysis—then you find yourself saying not only “Isn’t this amazing grace?” but “What glorious freedom Jesus Christ has bought for me on the cross.”

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Music Notes



The fourth of July is just ahead as we look to celebrate the 249th anniversary of our nation. The United States of America grew to become the most powerful nation in the world. It remains so today. To what can we attribute the meteoric rise of this nation to become the world leader? There is no one answer to that question. Some people would mention the wealth of natural resources. There is also the element of the hard work ethic and strong determination of those who crossed the ocean to carve out a new country in the wilderness. One of the most important factors in making our country strong was the genius and daring of those who declared independence from King George of England and framed a new government, the likes of which the world had never seen. Our nation is the first in history to have been established as a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” This phrase was included in Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address in 1863, but similar wording dates much earlier, as far back as the 14th-century in the writings of theologian, John Wycliffe, who penned, “*This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people.*”

As historian Rebecca Fraser wrote in her book *The Mayflower: The Families, the Voyage and the Founding of America*: “Plymouth Colony was the first experiment in consensual government in Western history between individuals with one another, and not with a monarch.”

The Mayflower Compact, as it came to be called, was a contract, drawn up and signed by most of those aboard the Mayflower, agreeing that everyone in the new colony would abide by the same laws. When 400 years earlier, the *Magna Carta* had established the idea of the rule of law, it was the king’s law. In the Mayflower Compact, the Pilgrims and strangers were pledging their loyalty to laws they would make themselves. Perhaps, the factor above all others that has led to the dominance of the U.S.A. in world history has been the providence of God and His blessings and favor upon our nation. Some deny the religious foundation of our nation. They are either ignorant of history or purposefully deceitful. From the very beginning, our nation’s founding documents give evidence of trust and reliance upon God and commitment to Christianity. The express purpose of the Pilgrims in coming to the new world aboard the Mayflower is stated in the Mayflower Compact: “*Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith*”. Read the original charters of most of the ivy-league universities, and you will find expressions of a commitment to Christianity. For example, Harvard University’s original mission statement focused on religious education, specifically “*to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life*”. This early emphasis was on Christian principles. The university’s first motto, “*In Christi Gloriam*” (For the glory of Christ), reflected this focus. Likewise, Yale’s mission was stated as follows: a place “*wherein Youth may be instructed in the Arts and Sciences [and] through the blessing of Almighty God may be fitted for Publick employment both in Church and Civil State.*”

Another example is Columbia University that has been very much in the news lately. As one writer states, “Columbia University’s Original Mission: Teach Students to Know God in Jesus Christ.” When Columbia University was founded as King’s College in 1754 on the grounds of Trinity Church in Manhattan, New York, no one could have imagined how it would devolve into a hotbed of antisemitic, anti-Israel protests in 2024”. There are those today who say that, if God exists, He does not favor one people group above another, or one nation above others. That thinking is contrary to what the Bible teaches us. We read in Psalm 33:12, the following: *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, . . . The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man. . . . Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.* Our nation has drifted far from the religious underpinnings that contributed to her greatness. The only hope for continued blessing on our nation is for God’s people, faithful Christians of today, to confess and repent of sin, seek God’s face, and be bold to share the truth of Christ with those around us who are unsaved and dead spiritually. May we each commit ourselves to that end.

Blessed to Serve,

Bro. Vernon