

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

5 Day Chronological Bible Reading Program WWW.FIVEDAYBIBLEREADING.COM

Week Forty One: *October 6-12*

- Day 1: Jeremiah 27, 28, 29, 24; James 4
- Day 2: Jeremiah 37, 21, 34; Psalm 79; James 5
- Day 3: Jeremiah 30-33; 1 Peter 1
- Day 4: Jeremiah 38, 39, 52; 1 Peter 2
- Day 5: 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chron 36; Psalm 126; 1 Peter 3

Week Forty Two: *October 13-19*

- Day 1: Lamentations 1-5; Psalm 137; 1 Peter 4
- Day 2: Obadiah; Jeremiah 40-42; Psalm 147; 1 Peter 5
- Day 3: Jeremiah 43, 44, 46; 2 Peter 1
- Day 4: Jeremiah 47, 48, 49; Psalm 80; 2 Peter 2
- Day 5: Jeremiah 50-51; 2 Peter 3

Week Forty Three: *October 20-26*

- Day 1: Ezekiel 1-3; John 1
- Day 2: Ezekiel 4-6; Psalm 82; John 2
- Day 3: Ezekiel 7-9; John 3
- Day 4: Ezekiel 10-12; Psalm 83; John 4
- Day 5: Ezekiel 13-15; Psalm 136; John 15

Week Forty Four: *October 27– November 2*

- Day 1: Ezekiel 16-18; John 6
- Day 2: Ezekiel 19-21; Psalm 84; John 7
- Day 3: Ezekiel 22-24; Psalm 134; John 8
- Day 4: Ezekiel 25-27; Psalm 85; John 9
- Day 5: Ezekiel 28-30; John 10

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It is an appalling truth. We rightly recoil at the thought of it. The doctrine of hell thus stands as a warning and a reminder of what a loathsome reality sin is. No reasonable or godly person delights in the reality of eternal damnation. God Himself says, *“As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezek.33:11).* Yet the severity of God’s wrath and the woes of hell are prominent in Scripture. The New Testament speaks more vividly and more frequently about hell than the Old Testament does. In fact, Jesus Himself had more to say about the subject than any other prophet or biblical writer. Far from smoothing over the difficulties that seem to embarrass so many evangelicals today, Jesus said: *Do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! (Luke 12:4-5)* *If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. (Matt. 18:8-9)* We do no one any favors by downplaying the truth of God’s wrath or neglecting to mention the severity of His judgement. We certainly don’t eliminate the threat of hell by refusing to speak or think of it. If we truly believe what the Bible teaches about the eternal fate of unbelievers, it is in no sense “loving” to remain silent and refuse to sound

the appropriate alarm. What, after all, is the good news we proclaim in the gospel? It is not an announcement that no one really needs to fear God or fret about the possibility of hell. As a matter of fact, there would be no glad tidings at all if God merely intended to capitulate to the stubborn will of man and forgo the demands of His perfect righteousness. The good news is even better than most unbelievers understand: God made a way for His righteousness and His love to be fully reconciled. In His incarnation, Christ fulfilled all righteousness (satisfying, not nullifying, the demands of His law). In His death on the cross, He paid the price of His people’s sin in full (assuring the triumph of perfect justice). And in His resurrection from the dead, He put a powerful exclamation mark on His own perfect, finished work of atonement (thus sealing the promise of justification forever for those who trust Him as Lord and Savior). That is the message we must declare to a worldly culture utterly lacking any real fear of God. We cannot do it faithfully or effectively if from the very outset we have omitted the harsh truth Scripture declares about *“the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty” (Rev. 19:15)* *This article was written by John McArthur and originally published January 25th, 2014 in Tabletalk Magazine*



Coming Soon!

We will start collecting mid October

Be thinking of what you would like to include in your boxes!

Cove is collecting Nov. 18th– Nov. 25th

OCTOBER 2024

VOLUME 297

Hello October

THE BROADCASTER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF FIRST BAPTIST MENA

Greetings FBC Family,

We have arrived at October once again. The weather is changing, and thoughts of holidays begin to enter our minds. It is a particularly busy time of year with family gatherings, church activities and community events all celebrating the notable parts of this season. It is a fun and festive time of year that tends to bring fond memories of years gone by. As I mentioned in a separate newsletter at this time last year, there is another day that often gets overlooked, but one that is critically important to Christianity. It is reformation day that occurs on October 31 each year. It was the start of the protestant reformation that led us to where we are today. It was the spark that led to brave men standing up against the false teachings of the Catholic church. They were threatened and intimidated while others were killed simply for standing on the truth of God’s Word and against teachings of a false church. If not for these valiant men and their stand for righteousness, we would likely all still be part of the Catholic church.

It wasn’t contemporary to their time, but a summary of what these men held to was later constructed to define what drove them to their beliefs. The summary is known as the Five Solas; literally, it means the five, ones. That in itself sounds strange because it raises the questions about how there can be five, ones. Shouldn’t there be one, one and the rest come behind it? I will attempt to explain below how each is of vital importance and deserves a first place. The first is Scripture Alone (also known in Latin as Sola Scriptura) and it means that our theology must be Scripturally grounded as God’s Word is the basis for all we do and believe, therefore, it must be of first importance. Without the Bible as our source, people can be led to believe anything and that is the danger and what the reformers fought against. Paul put it clearly in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 when he wrote, *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and*

profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” God’s Word is the foundation to our faith. Next is Christ Alone (Solus Christus) and obviously it refers to the fact that our theology must be Christ-centered. Jesus, after all, is the main point of the Bible and its entirety points to Him. Jesus’ own words make it clear, *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* John 14:6. It is because of Jesus that we have life and, He deserved preeminence in our lives. Third on the list is Faith Alone (Sola Fide) and this makes it clear that we must have a theology that is driven by faith. In fact, the Bible tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith. Again, from Scripture, we see this truth explained, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9.

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The Disappearance of Hell

According to recent polls (2014), some 81 percent of adult Americans believe in heaven, and fully 80 percent expect to go there when they die. By comparison, about 61 percent believe in hell, but less than 1 percent think it’s likely they will go there. In other words, a slight majority of Americans still believe hell exists, but genuine fear of hell is almost nonexistent. Even the most conservative evangelicals don’t seem to take hell very seriously anymore. For decades, many evangelicals have downplayed inconvenient biblical truths, neglecting any theme that seems to require somber reflection. Doctrines such as human depravity, divine wrath, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the reality of eternal judgement have disappeared from the evangelical message.

The trend has not escaped everyone’s attention. Thirty years ago, for example, Martin Marty, religious historian, professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, and critic of all things evangelical, delivered the Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality at Harvard Divinity School. The title of his message was “Hell Disappeared, No One Noticed.” Marty’s research had failed to turn up a single scholarly article dealing with the subject of hell in any significant theological journal over the previous century. Citing the dearth of attention being given to so large a topic, Marty suggested that if evangelicals really took seriously what Scripture says about eternal punishment, someone with a voice should notice.

Almost no one did. Eighteen years later, The Los Angeles Times featured a front-page article titled “Hold the Fire and Brimstone,” pointing out that many style-conscious evangelical church leaders were purposely omitting the theme of divine retribution:

In churches across America, hell is being frozen out as clergy find themselves increasingly hesitant to sermonize on... a story line that no longer resonates with churchgoers. (According to) Harvey Cox Jr., an eminent author, religious historian and professor at the Harvard Divinity School, “You can go to a whole lot of churches week after week, and you’d be startled even to hear a mention of hell.”

Hell’s fall from fashion indicates how key portions of Christian theology have been influenced by a secular society that stresses individualism over authority and the human psyche over moral absolutes. The rise of psychology, the philosophy of existentialism, and the consumer culture have all dumped buckets of water on hell.

The article profiled an evangelical pastor who said he believes in hell, but (according to the Times) “you’d never know it listening to him preach... He never mentions the topic; his flock shows little interest in it.” Asked why the doctrine of hell has gone missing, this pastor replied, “It isn’t sexy enough anymore.”

The article also quoted a well-known seminary professor who more or less agreed. Hell, he said, is “just too negative... Churches are under enormous pressure to be consumer-oriented. Churches today feel the need to be appealing rather than demanding.”

The article closed with a quote from Martin Marty, almost two decades after his famous lecture on the subject. He agreed that market-driven concerns are the main reason hell is being expunged from the evangelical message: Once pop evangelism went into market analysis, hell was just dropped. When churches go door to door and conduct a market analysis... they hear, “I want better parking spaces. I want guitars at services. I want to have my car greased while I’m in church.”

Years of indifference finally paved the way for open hostility. In the first decade of the new millennium, certain prominent figures in the “emergent church” declared war on the biblical doctrine of hell. The groundswell seemed to crest a couple years ago with the publication of Rob Bell’s bestselling book Love Wins.

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Continued from Pastor's Desk

We are saved by faith, and it must be kept in the forefront of all we believe. Now we look at Grace Alone (Sola Gratia) because our theology must be bound by grace. Since we are saved by faith and not works or merit, grace is key. It is God’s generous hand that has blessed us with grace to set us free and keep us from what we deserve as a result of our sin. In his letter to Titus, Paul describes this grace and how it brought salvation, *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.”* Titus 2:11

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Everything we receive from the food we eat to our very salvation is because of God’s grace and we should be thankful for all and maintain grace as primary in our lives.

Finally, all things for God’s Glory Alone (Soli Deo Gloria) because all our theology must be centered on God. God is very concerned about His glory, and we should be too since all things come from His hand. Our lives are meant to bring glory to God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 is abundantly clear regarding how we live our lives, *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*

God, of course, must be first in our lives. The five solas are merely a summary of biblical truth but they help to guard and clarify the gospel message. These do not contain everything that could be said about true theology, genuine faith and a God-honoring life but they can serve as guardrails to help us better understand what the Bible clearly teaches. Consider these yourself and how they might serve you as they have for Baptists across the centuries.

May God richly bless you,
Bro. Jim Tennery

Continued from The Disappearance of Hell

Bell argued that it’s absurd to think a loving God would ever damn anyone to eternal punishment. He portrayed God’s love as a force that clashes with and ultimately eliminates the demands of justice.

In the storyline Bell envisions, God requires no payment or punishment for sin. The divine response to evil is always remedial, never punitive. Furthermore, the wages of sin are mild, temporary, and reserved only for grossly malevolent villains– mass murderers, child rapists, tyrants who engineer genocide, and (one supposes) Christians who tell unbelievers they should fear God. When it’s all over, everyone will gather together in paradise.

In such a system, God’s righteousness is compromised, repentance is optional, atonement is unnecessary, and the truth of God’s Word is nullified. In other words, nothing of biblical Christianity is left. Once anyone sets out to tone down or tame the hard truths of Scripture, that’s where the process inevitably leads.

Only a few leading voices in the evangelical movement have lobbied boldly for a more orthodox approach to the doctrine of hell. They seem to be outnumbered by those who think the disappearance of hell is a positive development.

Some have proposed alternative ways to speak of sin and judgement in gentler, toned-down, and more refined and socially acceptable terminology than Scripture uses. Sin is deemed wrong not because it is an offense against the righteousness of God, but because of the hurt it causes others. Hell is described not as a place of eternal punishment but simply as a realm apart from God. In the reimagined eschatology of stylish evangelicals, no one is ever “sent” to hell; sinners actually choose to spend eternity apart from God– and the “hell” they suffer is merely an abundance of what they loved and desired most. Hell is necessary only because God is reluctant to overrule anyone’s free will. Therefore, with a more or less benign acquiescence, He ultimately defers to the sinner’s choice. God’s righteous indignation has no meaningful place in such a scenario. It is a serious mistake to imagine that we improve Scripture or enhance it’s effectiveness by blunting it’s sharp edges.

Scripture is a sword, not a cotton swab, and it needs to be fully unsheathed before it can be put to its intended use.

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

The gospel is supposed to be an affront to fleshly pride, offensive to human sensibilities, foolishness in the eyes of worldly wisdom, and contrary to all carnal judgements.

No Christian teaching exemplifies those characteristics more powerfully than the doctrine of hell.

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Music Notes

“Mind to muscle connection” is a phrase used in bodybuilding. It speaks of focusing mentally on the muscle being exercised rather than just going through the motions of pumping iron. Greater gains in muscle growth are accomplished by this intent focus.

The same principle can be applied in our corporate worship experiences. I would call it a “mind to message connection”.

What message is being conveyed through the hymns that are sung and through the words that are spoken?

We must keep our minds focused upon the message. Worship music should always focus upon truths from scripture. Music needs to have scriptural integrity. It is the truths of God’s Word brought to bear upon our lives by the Holy Spirit that moves us inwardly.

This inward experience is then expressed in outward action. We may get caught up in the catchy rhythm or melody of a song that has no scriptural message. Does the melody make me love the music too much and the message to little? Our music should exalt God, foster reverence, holiness, hope, love and other Christian graces.

In his 1761 hymnal, Select Hymns, John Wesley wrote the following:

Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

When we sit in our corporate worship services, remember to stay focused on the message of the songs and of the word spoken from the pulpit. Greater gains in our spiritual growth will happen when we truly worship in this manner.



Blessed to serve,
Bro. Vernon