

JANUARY 1

I've written the Reading Notes as a help and supplement to leaders leading discipleship cells. I am not suggesting that everyone read these, although that might be helpful. The main goal is to have everyone reading The One Year Bible each day. The Holy Spirit will work with that. For each person who desires to go deeper and to lead others, answering questions and adding perspective and detail to the Bible passages, the Reading Notes might be a help.

I'm doing this with discipleship in mind, meaning, I'm writing out thoughts that will keep discipleship and our growth as disciples applied to what we are reading. This would mean that if we were to meet in a cell on any given evening, we could discuss the Bible reading up to and including that day, regarding our walk as disciples. The important thing is that people are in the Word. The leader doesn't need to be a teacher. He just needs to see that people are in the Word, are interacting and then, when necessary, he can add some perspective or clarification.

When the year is done, I'm hoping, with your ideas and mine together, we will have a guide for discipleship to lead a group through one year of using The One Year Bible as a discipleship tool. Every year I read like this, I glean more from the reading. The Spirit uses our growth and our life situation to put His finger on words and thoughts that take on importance as we follow Christ. So, reading the Word each year will always be new because of our changing walk and the lives of the new people who will be in these groups.

In doing this, going through the Bible like this, we are modeling, for others, the importance of reading the Word and learning from the Lord. We are also equipping them and helping them become disciples who will feed themselves from the Word and be able to reproduce this in the lives of others. What a great privilege.

I'd encourage you to get The One Year Bible, ESV. I like to have a book in hand, old school, to mark up and make lines all over. If you don't have one or prefer something online, this link will take you to the day's reading, <http://www.esvbible.org/devotions/every-day-in-the-word>. If you prefer to have a hard copy of the Reading Notes (I do), you can find documents for each month at www.sites.google.com/site/dlkachikis.

Genesis 1-2:25

In reading the creation account, a disciple is faced with a challenge of faith and trust. How big will we allow God to be in our lives?

The creation account is very "matter of fact." God doesn't present Himself figuratively. The account is simple and descriptive. Nothing suggests that this account of creation is not literal. Our rationality or fear of seeming irrational sneaks in and says, "But God could have made all of this over millions of years and the seven days could be figurative." True. But is saying this really necessary to help God, or ourselves out? If God is God, could He have done things just this way? Can we put total trust in God even when things don't "appear" to follow what everyone says? How big will we allow God to be?

Some examples: The angels that came to Abraham later were in human form. They made the bodies from the spiritual, without effort. These were full, normal-looking human bodies, with teeth and tongues and fingerprints, made immediately, not requiring a billion-year process.

When Jesus raised the young man in Nain, or Lazarus, both men had decayed. Their bodies and every cell had died. They weren't somehow in suspended animation. They were dead and decaying. For Jesus to have raised them, it not only meant calling back the spirit, but their bodies had to be made new and able to sustain life. To call the spirit into a decayed body couldn't work. For Jesus to have made the body new, it would have been on the level of a creation...a re-creation of the body. And it happened in a second and Jesus didn't break a sweat.

The point being, the spiritual is infinitely more powerful than the physical. God creates out of nothing, without exertion, instantly. Also, the fact that the sun, moon and stars were made on the 4th day does not hint to the fact that the "primitive" writers got mixed up, but simply that the almighty God called them into existence, in a moment, at the right time, in His planning.

This all-powerful, sovereign Creator is the Lord we follow. All things were made through Him and without Him was nothing made that was made. Surely there are reasons He doesn't answer every prayer the way we ask, but for the disciple, there is never a doubt to the greatness of our Lord and Savior, or His ability, at any time, to do what is amazing and to do far more abundantly than we can ask or think. We serve and follow with confidence in His power.

Genesis 1

V. 1 What a way to begin a book. If you were reading last year, this verse should sound familiar since it is just like Revelation 21:1.

V. 2 This is very different from Revelation 21. Some see the Spirit brooding in judgment here. It was probably more like an artist walking around a piece of marble, visualizing what it was to become.

Vs. 3-5 Day One-Light was given from God Himself. The darkness was already there.

Vs. 6-8 Day Two - The waters above and below have suggested that there was a thick layer of moisture in the atmosphere surrounding the entire earth, limiting the rays of the sun and giving the earth a uniform tropical atmosphere. This layer of water in the atmosphere would explain the waters of the flood and the changes that came after the flood. Actually, only God and His power can account for all of the changes.

Vs. 9-13 Day Three - This was a big day. Not only do you have dry land and seas separated, but God planted and grew everything. Again, if we have faith in the Lord, this shouldn't be any problem. We have plenty of examples of what God can do in an instant, but the most deciding thing is our faith. *And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.* (Luke 17:6)

Vs. 14-19 Day Four - All of the days up to now are pretty straightforward, but there are some questions about this day. First, it comes after God made the plants. Second, it has a specific purpose, to separate and to be for signs and seasons and for days and years.

This would mean that the sun, moon, other planets and galaxies were made on the fourth day and they were made for us. Their purpose was to give a "natural" day and night and for counting time. Of course there were other reasons God made these, but these are the said reasons. We'll see in Revelation, that life can exist without them; in fact, it will. It seems that these things were made only for this time during the history of the earth.

Vs. 20-23 Day Five - One interesting thought here is that although the plants were fine before the sun was made to provide energy and heat, the animals needed the universe to be there even more than the plants. Birds and insects, (bees, for example) need the angle of the sun and the other "signs" for guidance. Probably all of the animals are much more instinctively aware of the sun, moon and stars than we know.

Vs. 24-31 Day Six - This is the creation of the animals first and then us as the finishing of God's work.

V. 26 Notice that this is the climax of creation. Nothing else has been created in the image of God. Man then is to rule over, guide and shepherd all that God had made. In so much of what we see with God, He always creates with a purpose and with a sense of giving purpose and responsibility. Being made in God's image, and being able to talk personally with God, would have given mankind purpose, fulfillment and responsibility. It would have been cool, and

eventually we would have known and built and developed more than we have at present. Sin ruined a lot of things.

V. 27 This is a huge verse. Every person on this planet fails to thank God for His image. It is the thing we take for granted. It is the thing we twist so we can sin intelligently and deny His existence. Cool. When God pulled the "image" from Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel, chapter 4, he didn't think it was cool; in fact, he didn't think. Nebuchadnezzar just moaned.

The second part of this verse is also to be respected and revered. God made them male and female. Men take the gifts of God and twist them to their own destruction. Read Mark 10:6-7 where this is quoted by Jesus. Jesus had no other view of marriage than a man and a woman, who, by the way, did not divorce.

Vs. 28-31 This is a fuller description of man's rule of the planet. This authority and power that Adam was given was lost to Satan when Adam sinned. Man came under the condemnation of sin and was no longer fit to rule the planet. Satan apparently went from being an assistant to mankind, to being a restricting guardian.

With all of these blessings, and before the Fall, it was a very good day.

Note that the real division between chapters 1 and 2 is between 2:3 and 2:4. This is a good time to learn or be reminded that the verse and chapter divisions were made by Stephen Langton in 1205. He did an amazing job, but the divisions are not inspired and many of them are not accurate. The general creation of chapter 1 is revisited in, and focused upon, in chapter 2, giving some specific detail to the creation of man and woman.

Regarding the creation of woman: As followers of Christ we know that our world and society is "sex" saturated. We also know that we, like King David (and countless Christians and ministers), can fall prey to sexually related malfunctions. What I'm about to say might not have applied to Paul or to 1% of the population, but I believe it applies to everyone else.

This account, true and literal, shows that "sex" is not the issue with "sex." The issue is completeness. There is a huge difference. Generally speaking, sexual urge is something we "think" we can harness, but the human need for completeness is an irresistible human need built into us from creation. Ignore it, and it will run you over. Deny it, and it will find a way of expression that will create dysfunction and pain. Completeness may be expressed as sexual, but the real driving power is the *spiritual* need to be complete as man and woman, as God made us. This is the reason God later grants a concession for remarriage. The need He built into us is a part of us. On this earth and especially with our spiritual sickness (sin) it will not be denied.

All this is to say that in the world of discipleship, this reality has to be faced. Many couples are ruined and many men maimed in their walk with Christ, because they don't take their need for being complete seriously. It becomes spiritualized or put in the category of scratching an itch. Sexually, they end up wounded and sidelined. Much more should be said on this subject in the context of discipleship, but suffice it to say that this passage is an important one every day in our world.

Genesis 2

Vs. 1-3 These verses really end the general description of creation from chapter 1.

V. 4 This verse is huge. In a sense, it is telling us that the Bible will be an account of the fallen history of man until this history is ended. Remember, God had Moses begin writing this well after the Fall. The purpose of the book is to record the redemptive history of God's working with man to save man. The conclusion of this book will be in Revelation when God does away with these heavens (sky, space, galaxies) and earth and creates the new heavens, new earth and the eternal world.

Vs. 5-9 Now, the account of creation will be retold with the focus on the creation of man.

Vs. 5-6 Notice how the order is given again, but relative to man. The earth was planted and God watered the earth from a mist that went up. Apparently there was no rain until the flood. This would have been complete, including the garden, before man would have something to eat. Just like a baby, once it's out of mom, it has to have air to breath and food to eat.

Vs. 7-9 The focus here is the garden and the provision. God planted the garden, but Adam would have been the landscape architect.

V. 9 Here are the two trees. What a solemn verse. Death and life were both present. *The tree of the knowledge of good and evil* was not magic. The decision made there would give that knowledge regardless of whether Adam and Eve had obeyed or disobeyed. The decision was a spiritual action, which would either break their relationship to God, or it would prove their love for Him. Had they made the right decision, God would have led them to *the tree of life*, where they would have received eternal life and their "innocent" nature would have been transformed into a mature, sinless "spiritual" nature. God could have then turned around and judged Satan and the entire sad tragedy never would have been.

Vs. 10-14 This geography shouldn't make too much sense to us. Moses and God are giving the people some general bearings. The creation of man and the garden was between these rivers. However, the earth changed after the flood. In those generations after the flood it is supposed that the continents drifted, creating the continents and thereby distributing mankind all over the place. Some of the continental drift theories make the Persian Gulf the center of a flower that spread out east and west. Also, there would have been people in Moses' day who would have still known about this event as history. (Remember, Moses was well educated, meaning that nations back then had recorded historical events.) Today it would be the same as telling children that Germany used to be divided. They'll find that hard to believe.

Vs. 15-17 Notice that "work" was not the curse. Adam would have been smart and energetic and creative. I'll bet he had all sorts of ideas on what to do. And then of course, the tree of the test. Imagine, Adam had hundreds of square miles and every imaginable tree to eat from. I'm sure that staying away from one tree couldn't have been that big of a deal, right?

Vs. 18-25 Notice that in the creation of Eve, God was very intentional. He made Adam feel his need. Notice that God made Adam so that even in a perfect environment, with all his needs met, with a sense of fulfillment in being able to make his mark on God's creation, and with being able to walk daily with God in the cool of the evening, according to God's plan, Adam was not complete without Eve.

V. 20 In naming the animals there wasn't just the idea of "lordship," but rather connection. Adam would have felt personally responsible for all of this creation that was given to him to protect and develop.

Adam eventually probably felt lonely.

V. 22 I wonder if Adam thought it was Christmas! God brought her. This was the first wedding and I'll bet it was God the Son who was officiating.

V. 23 What an amazing declaration. Again, the naming of woman is connection. She would now be under his care, figuratively speaking, casting his garment over her (Ruth 3:9 vs. Malachi 2:16) although they were both naked.

V. 24 Don't let the simplicity of this verse fool you. God is saying through Moses that this is what began that feeling in man, that force of nature, that event of life that is so close to us and is still so unexplainable. God did it and it will be an irresistible part of human history until the end. Our need is not sex; it is completion.

Also notice the order in this verse: a man leaves, joins to his *WIFE* (not girlfriend), and then the two become one flesh.

These were good days on the earth. Redemption was not yet needed, but tomorrow it will be a bad day and the beginning of all bad days on earth. It will show us why God has left us here as disciples to follow our Lord in the harvest.

Matthew 1-2:12

Now, the beginning of the redemptive work of our Lord.

Matthew 1

Vs. 1-17 Notice that Matthew not only uses the lineage of Joseph, but Matthew only records God speaking to Joseph, the son of David. Matthew is doing this for his very Jewish audience. In emphasizing David here, there is an emphasis on grace. It was God's grace that made the covenant with Abraham. It was God's grace that chose David and promised the Christ would be born in his lineage. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ in its full revelation. Although ages changed and the object of saving faith was different for Abraham, for David under the law, and for the believer in Christ, it has always been by grace, through faith. Note later that Paul mentions both Christ and His resurrection and descent from David as a part of his gospel....grace and fulfillment. And in all of that grace, the salvation of man has been the goal. As disciples we have received grace, and it is now our mission to tell those around us that this grace is fulfilled in Christ.

V. 11 Notice that Jechoniah (also called Jehoiachin or Coniah) was part of Joseph's genealogy. God spoke through Jeremiah (Jere. 22:30) that Jehoiachin would never have a descendant who was king of Israel. This is why Jesus is a physical descendant of Mary, not Joseph. In terms of human lineage, Joseph was Jesus' legal father, but Jesus was Mary's physical son. Jesus' claim to the human throne of David is through Mary. In Luke 3:31 it says that Mary was descended from David through Nathan, Solomon's brother (1Chr. 3:5).

Vs. 18-25 Matthew is being led by the Spirit to focus on those events of Jesus' birth that fulfilled the predictions of the law and the prophets. Again, notice that everything is being directed through Joseph.

V. 18 In Luke we know that Mary was with Elizabeth, south in Judah, for three months, helping Elizabeth during the birth of John. When Mary returned home she was three months pregnant and showing, and I'm sure her explanation sounded great.

Vs. 20-25 I think this is kind and very encouraging of the angel to address Joseph as "son of David." Joe must have felt down, thinking Mary had been unfaithful. Notice that the angel tells Joseph to name the baby in v. 21 and v. 25. That would have been a great honor for Joseph knowing that this baby was the coming Savior in the line of David.

Vs. 22-23 This is Matthew's and the Spirit's commentary on this event. God was not just fulfilling Scripture; He was fulfilling His promises of redemption.

Vs. 24-25 Joe was quite a guy and a man of faith. He named Jesus. Oddly enough, what we find in Matthew regarding the times the angels spoke to Joseph is all we know of Joe. He served God in a very quiet, obscure way.

Matthew 2

Vs. 1-2 Notice that Matthew skips the shepherds and the manger. The wise men have no names. They came from the east, probably the area around Babylon. It is thought that the inspiration for their waiting and observing came from the influence of Daniel. We don't know how many wise men there were, only that they brought three gifts.

Vs. 3-4 Herod was evil and religious. What a combination. He believed enough to be very dangerous. He claimed to have some Jewish connection to Israel and to have the right to claim the throne, thus being a king. If the Messiah was to have been found, it would have been a major threat to Herod. Sin is pretty irrational.

Vs. 5-6 This is Micah 5:2. Again, Matthew is proving to the Jewish mind, that Jesus fulfills these prophecies.

Vs. 7-8 Wait until you see what comes of this. Herod was really an evil genius.

Vs. 9-12 It will be fun one day to meet these guys. I remember the first time I read this as a disciple of the Lord and realized that they found Jesus in a house, not the stable and manger. I just kept reading this, stunned. I'm happy to say I got over it.

Tomorrow, Joseph & family are really going to need those gifts. Stay tuned.

One of the benefits of reading The One Year Bible is to keep the perspective of what all this history is working toward. The OT is going to get hard to read, but in the Gospels and Acts, we stay focused on the unfolding of God's mission to reach a lost world. Having the New Testament along with the Old Testament will help us see the very wise and subtle way God uses those people in the OT to lay the foundation for our salvation.

Psalm 1

What a tremendous promise of the power of the Word in our lives. Yet, for the disciple, it begins with the *delight* in Christ and the saving plan of God. The appreciation of salvation, of His grace to us, draws us to His Word; and in these our lives are rooted. This is the strength of abiding in Christ as a disciple.

V. 1 The Lord wants us to be separated unto Him. This reminds me of John 17:17, *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

V. 2 Does God really mean this? Every year I believe this more.

Vs. 3-4 This has nothing to do with outward success. It is the life of following Christ.

Vs. 5-6 The decisions we make now not only affect the kind of life we lead on earth, but they determine where we stand on the day of judgment when this tragic time on earth is concluded. Will we stand in the redemption that Jesus brings or will we stand under God's judgment?

It is easy to read this psalm and enjoy the imagery and say, "Amen!" But how many of us will really believe that we need to be in the Bible every single day, drawing our life from Him? If you believe that, do it. Make time and do it. No excuses. Just do it. It has been the best time of my life for the past 20 years and I don't know where I'd be without it.

Proverbs 1:1-6

It is always sad for me to begin Proverbs, knowing that the wisest man in the world stopped loving God, began to love everything else and died a bitter fool. If it could happen to him, are we any better, even with the Spirit? No, the strength of a disciple is to love and follow Christ and abide in His Word. The *wise and understanding* (Matt. 11:25) don't get to see what *little children* see if they simply and humbly hear God's Word and do it.