

## Readings for July 2019

### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July

#### 2 Kings 5:1-14

Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army. The LORD had helped him and his troops defeat their enemies, so the king of Syria respected Naaman very much. Naaman was a brave soldier, but he had leprosy.

One day while the Syrian troops were raiding Israel, they captured a girl, and she became a servant of Naaman's wife. Sometime later the girl said, "If your husband Naaman would go to the prophet in Samaria, he would be cured of his leprosy."

When Naaman told the king what the girl had said, the king replied, "Go ahead! I will give you a letter to take to the king of Israel."

Naaman left and took along seven hundred fifty pounds of silver, one hundred fifty pounds of gold, and ten new outfits. He also carried the letter to the king of Israel. It said, "I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Would you cure him of his leprosy?"

When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in fear and shouted, "That Syrian king believes I can cure this man of leprosy! Does he think I'm God with power over life and death? He must be trying to pick a fight with me."

As soon as Elisha the prophet heard what had happened, he sent the Israelite king this message: "Why are you so afraid? Send the man to me, so that he will know there is a prophet in Israel."

Naaman left with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. Elisha sent someone outside to say to him, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan River. Then you'll be completely cured."

But Naaman stormed off, grumbling, "Why couldn't he come out and talk to me? I thought for sure he would stand in front of me and pray to the LORD his God, then wave his hand over my skin and cure me. What about the Abana River or the Pharpar River? Those rivers in Damascus are just as good as any river in Israel. I could have washed in them and been cured."

His servants went over to him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would have done it. So why don't you do what he said? Go wash and be cured."

Naaman walked down to the Jordan; he waded out into the water and stooped down in it seven times, just as Elisha had told him. Right away, he was cured, and his skin became as smooth as a child's.

### **Galatians 6:7-16**

You cannot fool God, so don't make a fool of yourself! You will harvest what you plant. If you follow your selfish desires, you will harvest destruction, but if you follow the Spirit, you will harvest eternal life. Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up. We should help people whenever we can, especially if they are followers of the Lord.

You can see what big letters I make when I write with my own hand.

Those people who are telling you to get circumcised are only trying to show how important they are. And they don't want to get into trouble for preaching about the cross of Christ. They are circumcised, but they don't obey the Law of Moses. All they want is to brag about having you circumcised. But I will never brag about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his cross, the world is dead as far as I am concerned, and I am dead as far as the world is concerned.

It doesn't matter if you are circumcised or not. All that matters is that you are a new person.

If you follow this rule, you will belong to God's true people. God will treat you with undeserved kindness and will bless you with peace.

## **Luke 10:1-11 .16-20**

Later the Lord chose seventy-two other followers and sent them out two by two to every town and village where he was about to go. He said to them:

A large crop is in the fields, but there are only a few workers. Ask the Lord in charge of the harvest to send out workers to bring it in. Now go, but remember, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves. Don't take along a moneybag or a traveling bag or sandals. And don't waste time greeting people on the road. As soon as you enter a home, say, "God bless this home with peace." If the people living there are peace-loving, your prayer for peace will bless them. But if they are not peace-loving, your prayer will return to you. Stay with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they give you, because workers are worth what they earn. Don't move around from house to house.

If the people of a town welcome you, eat whatever they offer. Heal their sick and say, "God's kingdom will soon be here!"

But if the people of a town refuse to welcome you, go out into the street and say, "We are shaking the dust from our feet as a warning to you. And you can be sure that God's kingdom will soon be here!"

My followers, whoever listens to you is listening to me. Anyone who says "No" to you is saying "No" to me. And anyone who says "No" to me is really saying "No" to the one who sent me.

When the seventy-two followers returned, they were excited and said, "Lord, even the demons obeyed when we spoke in your name!"

Jesus told them:

I saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. I have given you the power to trample on snakes and scorpions and to defeat the power of your enemy Satan. Nothing can harm you. But don't be happy because evil spirits obey you. Be happy that your names are written in heaven!

## **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July**

### **Amos 7:7-17**

The LORD showed me a vision of himself standing beside a wall and holding a string with a weight tied to the end of it. The string and weight had been used to measure the straightness of the wall. Then he asked, "Amos, what do you see?"

"A measuring line," I answered.

The LORD said, "I'm using this measuring line to show that my people Israel don't measure up, and I won't forgive them any more. Their sacred places will be destroyed, and I will send war against the nation of King Jeroboam."

Amaziah the priest at Bethel sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel, "Amos is plotting against you in the very heart of Israel. Our nation cannot put up with his message for very long. Here is what he is saying:

'Jeroboam will be put to death,  
and the people will be taken  
to a foreign country.'

Then Amaziah told me, "Amos, take your visions and get out! Go back to Judah and earn your living there as a prophet. Don't do any more preaching at Bethel. The king worships here at our national temple."

I answered:

I'm not a prophet! And I wasn't trained to be a prophet. I am a shepherd, and I take care of fig trees. But the LORD told me to leave my herds and preach to the people of Israel. And here you are, telling me not to preach! Now, listen to what the LORD says about you:

Your wife will become  
a prostitute in the city,  
your sons and daughters

will be killed in war,  
and your land will be divided  
among others.  
You will die in a country  
of foreigners,  
and the people of Israel  
will be dragged

### **Colossians 1:1-14**

From Paul, chosen by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from Timothy, who is also a follower.

To God's people who live in Colossae and are faithful followers of Christ.

I pray that God our Father will be kind to you and will bless you with peace!

Each time we pray for you, we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have heard of your faith in Christ and of your love for all of God's people, because what you hope for is kept safe for you in heaven. You first heard about this hope when you believed the true message, which is the good news.

The good news is spreading all over the world with great success. It has spread in that same way among you, ever since the first day you learned the truth about God's wonderful kindness from our good friend Epaphras. He works together with us for Christ and is a faithful worker for you. He is also the one who told us about the love that God's Spirit has given you.

We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives. Then you will live a life that honors the Lord, and you will always please him by doing good deeds. You will come to know God even better. His glorious power will make you patient and strong enough to endure anything, and you will be truly happy.

I pray that you will be grateful to God for letting you have part in what he has promised his people in the kingdom of light. God rescued us from the

dark power of Satan and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who forgives our sins and sets us free.

### **Luke 10:25-37**

An expert in the Law of Moses stood up and asked Jesus a question to see what he would say. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What is written in the Scriptures? How do you understand them?"

The man replied, "The Scriptures say, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.' They also say, 'Love your neighbors as much as you love yourself.'"

Jesus said, "You have given the right answer. If you do this, you will have eternal life."

But the man wanted to show that he knew what he was talking about. So he asked Jesus, "Who are my neighbours?"

Jesus replied:

As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, robbers attacked him and grabbed everything he had. They beat him up and ran off, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down the same road. But when he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. Later a temple helper came to the same place. But when he saw the man who had been beaten up, he also went by on the other side.

A man from Samaria then came traveling along that road. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him and went over to him. He treated his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next morning he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, "Please

take care of the man. If you spend more than this on him, I will pay you when I return."

Then Jesus asked, "Which one of these three people was a real neighbour to the man who was beaten up by robbers?"

The teacher answered, "The one who showed pity."

Jesus said, "Go and do the same!"

## **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July**

### **Amos 8:1-12**

The LORD God showed me a basket of ripe fruit and asked, "Amos, what do you see?"

"A basket of ripe fruit," I replied.

Then he said,

"This is the end  
for my people Israel.

I won't forgive them again.

Instead of singing  
in the temple,

they will cry and weep.

Dead bodies will be everywhere.

So keep silent!  
I, the LORD, have spoken!"

*The LORD said:*

You people crush those in need  
and wipe out the poor.  
You say to yourselves,  
"How much longer before the end  
of the New Moon Festival?  
When will the Sabbath be over?  
Our wheat is ready,  
and we want to sell it now.  
We can't wait to cheat  
and charge high prices  
for the grain we sell.  
We will use dishonest scales  
and mix dust in the grain.  
Those who are needy and poor  
don't have any money.  
We will make them our slaves  
for the price  
of a pair of sandals."

I, the LORD, won't forget  
any of this,  
though you take great pride  
in your ancestor Jacob.  
Your country will tremble,  
and you will mourn.  
It will be like the Nile River  
that rises and overflows,  
then sinks back down.

On that day, I, the LORD God,  
will make the sun  
go down at noon,  
and I will turn daylight  
into darkness.  
Your festivals and joyful singing  
will turn into sorrow.



You will wear sackcloth  
and shave your heads,  
as you would at the death  
of your only son.

It will be a horrible day.

I, the LORD, also promise you  
a terrible shortage,  
but not of food and water.

You will hunger and thirst  
to hear my message.

You will search everywhere—  
from north to south,  
from east to west.

You will go all over the earth,  
seeking a message  
from me, the LORD.

But you won't find one.

### **Colossians 1:15-28**

Christ is exactly like God,  
who cannot be seen.

He is the first-born Son,  
superior to all creation.

Everything was created by him,  
everything in heaven

and on earth,  
everything seen and unseen,

including all forces  
and powers,

and all rulers  
and authorities.

All things were created  
by God's Son,

and everything was made  
for him.

God's Son was before all else,  
and by him everything  
is held together.

He is the head of his body,  
which is the church.

He is the very beginning,  
the first to be raised  
from death,  
so that he would be  
above all others.

God himself was pleased  
to live fully in his Son.

And God was pleased  
for him to make peace  
by sacrificing his blood  
on the cross,  
so that all beings in heaven  
and on earth  
would be brought back to God.

You used to be far from God. Your thoughts made you his enemies, and you did evil things. But his Son became a human and died. So God made peace with you, and now he lets you stand in his presence as people who are holy and faultless and innocent. But you must stay deeply rooted and firm in your faith. You must not give up the hope you received when you heard the good news. It was preached to everyone on earth, and I myself have become a servant of this message.

I am glad that I can suffer for you. I am pleased also that in my own body I can continue the suffering of Christ for his body, the church. God's plan was to make me a servant of his church and to send me to preach his complete message to you. For ages and ages this message was kept secret from everyone, but now it has been explained to God's people. God did this because he wanted you Gentiles to understand his wonderful and glorious mystery. And the mystery is that Christ lives in you, and he is your hope of sharing in God's glory.

We announce the message about Christ, and we use all our wisdom to warn and teach everyone, so that all of Christ's followers will grow and become mature.

### **Luke 10:38-42**

The Lord and his disciples were traveling along and came to a village. When they got there, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said. Martha was worried about all that had to be done. Finally, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

## **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July**

### **Hosea 1:2-10**

The LORD said, "Hosea, Israel has betrayed me like an unfaithful wife. Marry such a woman and have children by her." So I married Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and we had a son.

Then the LORD said, "Hosea, name your son Jezreel, because I will soon punish the descendants of King Jehu of Israel for the murders he committed in Jezreel Valley. I will destroy his kingdom, and in Jezreel Valley I will break the power of Israel."

Later, Gomer had a daughter, and the LORD said, "Name her Lo-Ruhamah, because I will no longer have mercy and forgive Israel. But I am the LORD God of Judah, and I will have mercy and save Judah by my own power—not by wars and arrows or swords and cavalry."

After Gomer had stopped nursing Lo-Ruhamah, she had another son. Then the LORD said, "Name him Lo-Ammi, because these people are not mine, and I am not their God."

Someday it will be impossible to count the people of Israel, because there will be as many of them as there are grains of sand along the seashore. They are now called "Not My People," but in the future they will be called "Children of the Living God."

### **Colossians 2:6-15**

You have accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord. Now keep on following him. Plant your roots in Christ and let him be the foundation for your life. Be strong in your faith, just as you were taught. And be grateful.

Don't let anyone fool you by using senseless arguments. These arguments may sound wise, but they are only human teachings. They come from the powers of this world and not from Christ.

God lives fully in Christ. And you are fully grown because you belong to Christ, who is over every power and authority. Christ has also taken away your selfish desires, just as circumcision removes flesh from the body. And when you were baptized, it was the same as being buried with Christ. Then you were raised to life because you had faith in the power of God, who raised Christ from death. You were dead, because you were sinful and were not God's people. But God let Christ make you alive, when he forgave all our sins.

God wiped out the charges that were against us for disobeying the Law of Moses. He took them away and nailed them to the cross. There Christ defeated all powers and forces. He let the whole world see them being led away as prisoners when he celebrated his victory.

### **Luke 11:1-13**

When Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray."

So Jesus told them, "Pray in this way:

'Father, help us  
to honour your name.  
Come and set up  
your kingdom.  
Give us each day  
the food we need.  
Forgive our sins,  
as we forgive everyone  
who has done wrong to us.  
And keep us  
from being tempted.'"

Then Jesus went on to say:

Suppose one of you goes to a friend in the middle of the night and says, "Let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine has dropped in, and I don't have a thing for him to eat." And suppose your friend answers, "Don't bother me! The door is bolted, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you something."

He may not get up and give you the bread, just because you are his friend. But he will get up and give you as much as you need, simply because you are not ashamed to keep on asking.

So I tell you to ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. Which one of you fathers would give your hungry child a snake if the child asked for a fish? Which one of you would give your child a scorpion if the child asked for an egg? As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.