One Year Bible Challenge, Week 20



Week 20

May 14 – 20, 2011[1. The notes, summaries and points on this page are intended as bookmarks of important matters which are covered in this week's readings. They are not intended as complete summaries of readings. Please forgive me if some of my summaries are not 100% on point. Read the manual—i.e. Bible—so that you will get a more clear understanding of the material. Thank you.
—*Tom Truex*]

This is the *"One Year Bible Challenge:"* to read the entire Bible in one year. Assuming a normal reading level, this can be done by spending about 10-15 minutes per day, each and every day. It is **NOT TOO LATE to join the Challenge!** Start with today's reading and keep reading with us through the end of this year. You'll have to read a bit more at the beginning of next year to finish. See **ReadTheWholeBible.COM** for more information. If you would like details so you can join us, or if you have any other questions, please call Tom Truex. Or send an email by using the CONTACT form on K-Line.ORG.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS: 1 Samuel 15:1 – 28:25
Themes and stories: Samuel told Saul to slaughter the people of Amalek. Kill every man, woman, child, infant, livestock, (and presumably cats and dogs.) Saul mustered an army and

killed the Amalekites. However, Saul spared their king, Agag, as well as some of the sheep and cattle. God does not like it when people do not follow his instructions. Samuel went to Saul to make inquiry. Saul told Samuel that he had saved some of the cattle to sacrifice to God. Samuel responded, “Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice.” 1 Samuel 15:22 (NRSV). By way of emphasizing the point, Samuel had King Agag, King of the Amalekites brought before him. Samuel hacked Agag to death with his sword.

God told Samuel to anoint, as the next king of Israel, one of Jesse’s sons. God did not tell Samuel which one of Jesse’s son was to be king, so Samuel went to interview them. But the LORD said to Samuel, *“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”* 1 Samuel 16:7 (RSV).

Samuel passed over Jesse’s first 7 sons and anointed the youngest, David; “and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward.” 1 Samuel 16:13 (RSV).

After David was anointed, “the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.” 1 Samuel 16:14 (NRSV). David entered service with Saul to play the lyre to sooth Saul when the evil spirit from the Lord was upon him. David was also Saul’s armor-bearer.



David with Goliaths Head,
by Michelangelo Caravaggio

Next is the story of David and Goliath, most of which is well known to even small children. Goliath was a giant in the Philistine's army. He stood over 9 feet tall. As the Philistine's army drew near the Israelite's army, Goliath went out to taunt his adversaries, twice every day. He proposed that rather than a battle between the armies, that he (Goliath) would fight one of the Israelite's soldiers. And to the victor of this mortal combat, would go the spoils for battle as if the entire armies had fought. Apparently, this was a common arrangement. Goliath made this challenge for more than 40 days. None of the Israelite's had the courage to take the giant's challenge. Finally David, who was still a shepherd boy, offered to fight Goliath. David realized what others had overlooked—that he would not be fighting alone. God would be fighting with him. David said, *"The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."* 1 Samuel 17:37 (RSV). Saul offered David his armor to use in battle against Goliath. But the armor was too heavy for the boy. David took only his staff, five smooth stones and a sling. David and Goliath approached each other for battle. They traded insults. David slung a single stone from his sling to Goliath's forehead. Goliath dropped dead. By way of insuring Goliath's death, David drew out the giant's sword and cut his head off. Instead of submitting to the Israelite's as their conquerors, the Philistines ran away. So much for a deal. The Israelite's slaughtered the Philistines as they fled.

As they were returning home from their victory, women came out to greet the Israelite's army, playing musical instruments and singing,

> *"Saul has slain his thousands,*
> *And David his ten thousands."*



Saul Attacking David, by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1591 – 1666)

Saul felt slighted by the numerical comparison. The next day, an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul. David was summoned to play his lyre. Saul tried to stab David with a spear, but David escaped twice. Saul made David commander over 1,000 men in his army. David had great military success, and all the Israelite's loved him. Well, not quite all—Saul hated David.

Saul told David he would give him his eldest daughter, Merab, in marriage. But then he gave Merab to Adriel the Meholathite, to be married. Saul promised David another one of his daughters, Michal, as his wife. But as a wedding present, Saul demanded that David kill 100 Philistines, and bring Saul their foreskins as proof. Saul hoped the Philistines would kill David. But David complied with Saul's demand, and married Michal. In fact, David's troops continued to defeat the Philistines, every time they met on the battle field.

Saul spoke to his son, Jonathan, and his servants about killing David. Jonathan reported the death threat to David. The two were friends. Saul developed a plan to murder David. David's wife (Saul's daughter), Michal, helped David escape. Saul concocted another scheme to kill David, at a banquet. Saul's son, Jonathan, helped David escape this time.

David fled to Gath. If this town sounds familiar, it was the hometown of Goliath, who David killed years earlier. One can presume that the current inhabitants of Gath must have

forgotten the matter; although David must have slept with one eye open, given his history with one of Gath's favorite sons. David pretended to be crazy so that the King of Gath wouldn't punish him.

Saul pursued David so that he could kill him. David was on the run. Samuel killed priests of the Lord who had assisted David in his escape. One day as Saul was pursuing David, Saul went into a cave to use it as a restroom. Little did Saul suspect that David and his men were hiding in that cave. David had a perfect chance to kill Saul in the dark, but he would not do so. David was loyal to Saul, even though Saul was trying to kill David. Saul gave up his pursuit of David when he found out that David had passed up a chance to kill him.

Later, Saul again decided to kill David. So, he again set out with his men to find and kill David. David sneaked up on Saul's encampment at night. He had another chance to kill Saul, but did not do so. Saul gave up this plan to murder David, when he realized his life had again been spared.

David continued his raids on the Philistines, killing everyone as he went. The Philistines assembled as great army. Saul was very worried, but God gave him no direction. Although Saul had expelled almost all of the mediums and wizards, Saul decided to consult one now. His servants located a medium who had been overlooked. God was always clear in his condemnation of dabbling in the occult. You may recall the following examples:

- Leviticus 19:31 (NASB)– "Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God."
- Leviticus 20:6 (NASB)- "As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people."
- Leviticus 20:27 (NASB)- "Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They

shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

- Deuteronomy 18:9-15 (NASB) – Spiritism Forbidden . [9] "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. [10] "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, [11] or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. [12] "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. [13] "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. [14] "For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so. [15] "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

The medium to whom Saul went for advice suspected a trap. Saul assured her he would do her no harm. As directed by Saul, the medium brought up the spirit of Samuel. The "ghost of Samuel" did not have good news for Saul:

> ***1 Samuel 28:15-10 (RSV)***
> *[15] Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress; for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do." [16] And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? [17] The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me; for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor,*

> *David. [18] Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Am'alek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. [19] Moreover the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."*

Or, to put it another way, the "ghost of Samuel" assured Saul that Saul would be dead by the next day.

Discussion points: A medium consulted Samuel as demanded by Saul. Is this story proof that ghosts (i.e. the disembodied spirits of the dead) really do exist?
Psalms: Psalm 110:1 – 117:2
Proverbs: Proverbs 15:8 – 15:23

NEW TESTAMENT READINGS: John 8:1 – 11:54
Themes and stories: The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus who'd been caught in the act of adultery. They asked Jesus what he thought they should do with her. If Jesus said to not stone her, they'd accuse him of violating Moses' law. But if he said to stone her to death, they could report him to the Romans, who did not permit the Jews to carry out their own executions. Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." John 8:7 (KJV). The accusers went away one by one, until only Jesus and the woman were left. John 8:10-11 (KJV). "[10] When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? [11] She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." John 8:10-11 (KJV).

Jesus told his followers, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 (RSV). The Pharisees objected to his statement. Jesus retorted that God supported his views on the

matter. Jesus also told the Jews who believed in him, “[31] …If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32 (ESV).

Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth. When the religious leaders asked the formerly blind man what had happened, he told them how Jesus had given him sight. The leaders condemned Jesus for giving the man sight on the Sabbath. They called Jesus a sinner. But some of the bystanders wondered how a “sinner” could perform such a miracle. The leaders thought they could prove the man hadn’t been blind to begin with. They brought in the man’s parents. The parents acknowledged that their son was born blind, and that he could see now. But they were afraid to admit that Jesus had given him sight, lest they be expelled from the synagogue. The parents told the leaders to ask their son for themselves. He was an adult. So the son told them a second time that Jesus had given him sight. The formerly blind man told the leaders that God did not listen to sinners, and that Jesus must be working under the authority of God to have performed such a miracle. The religious leaders finally dismissed the man, saying he shouldn’t be lecturing them, since he was obviously “born entirely in sins.” John9:34 (NRSV). Jesus continued in his teaching about spiritual blindness and about “the good shepherd.” The religious leaders said Jesus blasphemed when he spoke of his relationship to his Father, God. Jesus left as they were at the point of arresting him.



The Raising of Lazarus, 1857, by Léon Bonnat (1833 - 1922)

Jesus received word that his friend Lazarus (brother of Mary and Martha) was sick to the point of death. When Jesus received the news he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." John 11:4 (RSV.) After hearing that Lazarus was ill, Jesus waited 2 more days before going to him. The disciples cautioned Jesus against going to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Jesus had only just escaped with his life, the last time he was in their neighborhood. But Jesus returned, finding that Lazarus had been dead and in his tomb for 4 days. Both Mary and Martha, felt that their brother, Lazarus, would not have died if Jesus had been there. Everyone was greatly distressed at the death of Lazarus. Jesus wept.

Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus. He told the bystanders to take away the stone that sealed the entrance to Lazarus' tomb. Martha protested that there would be a stench, 4 days after Lazarus' death. But they obeyed Jesus' instructions and moved the stone away from the entrance. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." John 11:43 (KJV.) "The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'" John 11:44 (RSV).

Many more of the Jews believed in Jesus after they saw or heard how Lazarus had been raised from the dead. But the

religious leaders were afraid that if Jesus became too popular it would result in the Romans destroying them.

> *John 11:49-53 – [49] But one of them, Ca'iaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; [50] you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." [51] He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, [52] and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. [53] So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death.*

And ironically, Caiaphas was correct in that Jesus did come to die for his people. Actually he came to die for the sins of the entire world.

Discussion points: The story of Lazarus is the second story in this week's readings about a dead man being brought back from the grave. But how is the story of Lazarus DIFFERENT than the story of the medium who established contact with Samuel?

REVIEW / STUDY QUESTIONS:

Old Testament

- Why didn't David become king as soon as he was anointed?
- Did either the Israelites or the Philistines intend to honor the agreement to let one combatant decide the fate of the entire army?
- What was the evil spirit that tormented Saul?
- Why did Saul consult a medium? Did he *really* talk to the ghost of Samuel?

New Testament

- Why didn't the religious leaders bring the man who had committed adultery to Jesus, as well as the woman.

- Was Jesus breaking the 10 Commandments when he gave a man sight on the Sabbath?

DISCUSSION POINTS AND VERSES – Christian Men's Breakfast only[2. Subject to change.]
The discussion notes (PDF / TEXT) for breakfast on Saturday, May 21, 2011 are now online – *"Dead Men Talking"*. This week we discuss two stories of dead men who are brought back to life from the grave. Or so it would *seem*. *Discussion verses:* 1 Samuel 28:15-19; John 11:1-44

WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP
A women's study group meets in Davie, FL on the 2nd Friday morning of the month. Contact Janet Truex, or use the Contact tab at CONTACT form on **ReadTheWholeBible.COM**.

FOOTNOTES