

INFORMATION FOR THIS MONTH'S READINGS

April 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Matt. 25:1-30 Numbers 30-31 Job 1	2 Matt. 25:31-46 Numbers 32-34 Job 2	3 Matt. 26:1-25 Numbers 35-36 Job 3	4 Matt. 26:26-46 Deuteronomy 1-2 Job 4	5 Matt. 26:47-75 Deut. 3-4 Job 5
6 Matt. 27:1-31 Deut. 5-6 Job 6	7 Matt. 27:32-66 Deut. 7-8 Job 7	8 Matt. 28 Deut. 9-10 Job 8	9 Acts 1 Deut. 11-12 Job 9	10 Acts 2:1-13 Deut. 13-14 Job. 10	11 Acts 2:14-47 Deut. 15-16 Job 11	12 Acts 3 Deut. 17-18 Job 12
13 Acts 4:1-22 Deut. 19-20 Job 13	14 Acts 4:23-37 Deut. 21-22 Job 14	15 Acts 5:1-15 Deut. 23-24 Job 15	16 Acts 5:17-42 Deut. 25-27 Job 16	17 Acts 6 Deut. 28 Job 17	18 Acts 7:1-22 Deut. 29-30 Job 18	19 Acts 7:23-8:1a Deut. 31-32 Job 19
20 Acts 8:1b-25 Deut. 33-34 Job 20	21 Acts 8:26-40 Josh. 1-2 Job 21	22 Acts 9:1-25 Josh. 3:1-5:1 Job 22	23 Acts 9:26-43 Josh. 5:2-6:27 Job 23	24 Acts 10:1-33 Josh. 7-8 Job 24	25 Acts 10:34-48 Josh. 9-10 Job 25	26 Acts 11:1-18 Josh. 11-12 Job 26
27 Acts 11:19-30 Josh. 13-14 Job 27	28 Acts 12 Josh. 15-17 Job 28	29 Acts 13:1-25 Josh. 18-19 Job 29	30 Acts 13:26-52 Josh. 20-21 Job 30	<p><u>A Prayer before Reading Scripture</u> Lord, you have promised to meet those who seek your face. Come now and reveal your presence to me as I make myself present to you. In the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. - Bishop Rueben Job</p>		

**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:
A CHURCH IS BORN**

From April 9 through May 24, we will be reading the book of Acts.

Acts is written by Luke and describes the beginnings of the Christian movement. Most scholars conclude that Acts was written between the years of 63 and 70 A.D. (between 30 and 40 years after Jesus' death and resurrection).

The first 8 chapters of Acts depict the ministries of Peter and the other remaining disciples. Highlights include the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (chapt. 2), the arrest of the apostles (chapt. 5), and the martyrdom of Stephen (chapt. 6-7).

In chapter 9, Saul's (Paul's) conversion marks an important point as his ministry dominates the rest of the book.

The purpose of Acts, like its Gospel counterparts, is far more than presenting an historical record. Acts seeks to model how people can accept Christ (8:26-40; 9:1-31) as well as present model "sermons" to Jews and Gentiles explaining the meaning and purpose of the Gospel (13:16-41; 17:22-31).

Overall, Acts is a testimony to the power and wisdom available to the church through the Holy Spirit.

THE BOOK OF JOB

We begin reading the Book of Job on April 1 and will conclude in mid-May. Job is often avoided by contemporary readers of the Bible because of its seemingly difficult and melancholy tone.

The book describes the life of an upright man, Job, and his suffering. The book is not so much an attempt to explain why 'bad things happen to good people,' as much as it describes the depths of faith God grants us in spite of suffering.

The Prologue (chs. 1-2) describe Job's losses. The following 35 chapters are dialogues between Job and his "friends" (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu). The reader must always be aware of who is speaking in these chapters because God later dismisses as half-truths the thoughts and theologies given by Job's friends.

The book concludes with God's divine discourse with Job. In it, we learn that faith, by definition, cannot be fully explained and neither can all of life's events. *(continued next column)*

(from previous column)

There are, God explains, times in life in which we must defer to and fully trust God's infinite superiority and sovereign rule over the universe.

Shall we attempt to question the strength of a God who "laid the foundations of the earth" (38:4)? Shall we second guess the power of One who controls the weather (38:25-37)? Can we devise a superior plan for nature, seasons and the many ways in which all creation serves humanity (ch. 39)?

The human sin revealed in Job is not the kind of sin revealed by a lack of morality. Rather, the sin revealed to us in Job is the human tendency toward a mindset of entitlement.

God's description of divine responsibility reveals a Creator who is anything but an impassive force. And it is to this source of infinite power, love and wisdom that Job surrenders his feelings of entitlement to explanations of "why" and replaces it with the mysteries of a faith that fully trusts and relies upon God in the midst of not knowing "why."

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CONSIDER ME AN EMERGENT, PURPOSE-DRIVEN META-SEEKER WITH A MODERATE, POSTMODERN, FREETHINKER-BASED WORLDVIEW ... I'M NOT SURE WHAT I BELIEVE YET, BUT I CERTAINLY NAILED MY LABEL