



Devotional

June 28 - Oct. 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Week One.....3
Week Two.....9
Week Three.....13
Week Four.....18
Week Five.....23
Week Six.....28
Week Seven.....33
Week Eight.....38
Week Nine.....43
Week Ten.....50
Week Eleven.....58
Week Twelve.....63
Week Thirteen.....68
Week Fourteen.....73

August 23–29, 2020: Weekly Devotional by Bernie Lieving

Congratulations! You did it! Regardless of whether you read The Bible Project 2020 Full Plan or the Abbreviated Plan you have worked your way from Genesis through Malachi. This week we completed the journey by reading the last four of the “minor prophets,” as Augustine wrote, “...only because of their length not that they were of minor importance.”

There are things that stand out in these four books. One of them is that God is the primary speaker and there is no question as to where God stands on what is happening in the prophets’ world. The prophetic writers do not hesitate to say what God’s response will be to the Judean people who violate the covenant relationship with God and who do not make just and faithful decisions, and show kindness and compassion to each other.

Neither are the prophets reluctant to tell of God’s blessings on God’s people when they are faithful to the covenant, seek the Lord, call on the name of the Lord, and rebuild the temple. “They will be my people, and I will be their God.” (Zech. 8:8)

A recurring theme in our reading this week has been “the day of the Lord” which will be a time of judgment, doom, purification, restoration, deliverance, and reunion. In spite of all Judah’s wrongdoings and failure to keep God’s covenant, “the sun of righteousness will rise on those revering my name; healing will be in its wings.” (Malachi 4:2) Such writing describes for many the beginning of the messianic age; the coming of the king who would fulfill the prophecies.

While these expectations have yet to be fulfilled for the Jewish community, as we begin our New Testament readings, Zechariah’s words echo each Palm Sunday as we Christians announce God’s Son, our Messiah, Jesus’, arrival in Jerusalem:

“Look, your king will come to you...he is humble and riding on an ass, on a colt, the offspring of a donkey.” (Zech 9:9)

Prayer: God, thank you for our Old Testament which reveals You as our Creator, our loving, faithful Lord. Amen.

WEEK TEN (AUGUST 30–SEPTEMBER 5)

Day 243: August 30, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 1:1–2:23

Abbreviated Plan: Malachi 4:1–6

Welcome to the New Testament. Out of the gate, Matthew asks, “What will you do with fear?” Will it lead to anger and paranoia? (Herod) Or will you trust God, even when it doesn’t make sense? (Joseph, Magi) When we are afraid, God calls us to trust and go.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 244: August 31, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 3:1–4:25

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 1:1–25

Matthew 3-4, the prophets are quoted 5 times, by John the Baptist, Jesus, and Matthew. The story of Jesus is rooted in a knowledge of the scriptures. May the story of our lives be anchored in the same way, so that we are living out the truth of the Bible.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 245: September 1, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 5:1–48

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 2:1–23

The five most important words in Matthew 5 are “but I say to you.” Each time Jesus says that, he tells us that righteous behavior is not enough, unless it is motivated by a pure heart. Ask yourself: “Is my heart fully in love with God and others today?”

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 246: September 2, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 6:1–34

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 5:1–48

Matthew 6: Your spiritual maturity is gauged by what you do in private, hidden from public view. Surrender your private life to God, and you can surrender your whole life to God. A way to do that is to release your worry about material things (v. 19-34).

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 247: September 3, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 7:1–8:34

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 6:1–34

In Matthew 8, Jesus shows mastery over physical illness. But before that, in chapter 7, he shows us how to have mastery over ourselves: don’t judge, seek God’s best, love others, choose the hard way to follow Jesus, bear fruit, and do what he commands.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 248: September 4, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 9:1–10:42

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 7:1–29

Often when Jesus healed someone in Matthew 9, the Pharisees criticized him. In their view, he could do no right. But he wasn't discouraged. He knew his mission wasn't to make everyone happy (10:14, 34), but to give everyone the choice to follow him (10:39). Jesus demonstrates for us how to stay focused on what God wants us to do.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 249: September 5, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 11:1–12:50

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 10:1–42

Matthew 11-12. Jesus goes on offense against the religious hypocrites, using the healing miracles in ch. 12 to call out their lack of compassion (v7), their heartless legalism (v12), their slander (v24), and their lack of belief (v39). Don't be a Pharisee.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**August 30–September 5, 2020: Weekly Devotional
by Glenn Simpson**

JUDGE: Counsel, please proceed with your case.

ATTORNEY: Thank you, your honor. May it please the court, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I believe there is ample evidence in the book of Matthew to establish Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior for all the world.

You will see, first, that the genealogy in Chapter 1 establishes Jesus' lineage back to Abraham and to David and confirms that Jesus was born to a virgin. The chapter fulfills prophecy that He would be the son of David and born to a virgin. The second chapter confirms the universal understanding of Jesus as Lord through the evidence that King Herod believed Jesus was the King of the Jews and, covertly, wished to be rid of Him. Although Jesus' childhood was antithetical to what is expected of a King, He was destined by God to save us from ourselves. Further, Matthew 2:13 tells us that an angel of the Lord directed Joseph to take Him to Egypt for His safety.

When you read the evidence in Chapter 3, you will see that John the Baptist told witnesses, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. This is He who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah." There is irrefutable evidence in Chapter 4 that confirms Jesus was led into the wilderness and tested by Satan just as you and I are tested. However, Jesus showed He was Lord by saying, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

The evidence before you, in Chapter 5 (the Beatitudes) confirms that Jesus' grace extended to all – especially those in need by telling us that Blessed are the Poor in Spirit (5:3), Blessed are those who mourn (5:4), Blessed are the meek (5:5), and Blessed are the merciful (5:7). Now I ask you, has there ever been a better message in your lifetime?

Furthermore, ladies and gentlemen, the evidence before you, following the Beatitudes and continuing through chapter 12, Jesus raises the bar for us by teaching us that not only shall we not commit adultery but shall not look lustfully at a woman (5:27-28), that an eye for an eye is insufficient and that we are to turn the other cheek (5:39), that we are to give to the needy (6:1-4), that we cannot serve God and money (6:24), and that we are not to judge others (7:1).

Prayer: Gracious Father in Heaven, thank you for loving the world so much that you gave us your only Son such that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Questions:

1. Are my actions consistent with the teachings of Jesus?
2. When I fall short, can I humble myself and admit my failings?
3. How can I select my favorite teaching of Jesus and apply it in my life?

WEEK ELEVEN (SEPTEMBER 6–12)

Day 250: September 6, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 13:1–58

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 13:3–43

There are seven parables in Matthew 13, with this common idea: God is at work in your life; it may seem small, but it's real. So you have a choice: let that work grow, or choke and hide it. Don't be like those who live their entire life and miss out (v 17).

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 251: September 7, 2020

Full Plan: Matthew 14:1–15:39

Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 14:1–36

Matthew 14 describes what may have been the longest 2 days of his ministry: grief over John's death, feeding the 5,000, walking on water, and arguing with the Pharisees, all in 48 hrs. But here's the model for us: twice in that period, he withdrew to pray.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life: