

Clifton Bible project – read the Bible in a year
Readings and reflections for 19th – 25th February

Week 8

Sunday	19	Exodus 2	Luke 5	Job 19
Monday	20	Exodus 3	Luke 6	Job 20
Tuesday	21	Exodus 4	Luke 7	Job 21
Wednesday	22	Exodus 5	Luke 8	Job 22
Thursday	23	Exodus 6	Luke 9	Job 23
Friday	24	Exodus 7	Luke 10	Job 24
Saturday	25	Exodus 8	Luke 11	Job 25

Reflections for this week are written by a member of a homegroup

Sunday 19 February

Exodus 2, Job 19, Luke 5 (Redemption)

Today's Bible passages tell us about deliverance through God. We read about the examples of several Biblical characters, who all experience deep personal faith despite their suffering, and an interesting absence of fear. This enables them to actively put their trust in God, leading to amazing miracles and displays of God's power to save and redeem.

Moses' life was miraculously saved following his family's actions and he became a member of the family of the same man who ordered his killing. Hebrews 11:23 speaks of the faith of Moses' parents while they were hiding him and that they were not afraid.

Job pours out in drastic images his physical and mental suffering, but through his faith he is able to withstand these ordeals and he ends by beautifully proclaiming in v25: "I know that my Redeemer lives!"

In Luke's Gospel we are told about how the man with leprosy and the paralytic man are both miraculously healed by Jesus following an active expression of their faith.

We can't save ourselves. We need Jesus and we need fellowship with family, friends and fellow Christians to grow in our faith. With faith we will experience God's miracles!

Today, speak up with Job in your suffering and read out loud his confession:

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth! Amen.

(homegroup member)

Monday 20 February

Exodus 3, Job 20, Luke 6 (Calling)

Moses is called by God from within the burning bush and given the enormous but very clearly laid out task to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Despite Moses' initial reluctance we know that he will ultimately fulfill his role in God's plan, all the way supported by God.

Zophar, prompted as he says himself, by his troubled mind and guided by his own understanding, feels called to berate Job about human suffering being proof of God's anger towards them. Displaying false piety with a judgmental attitude, the result of his speech is additional distress and suffering for Job, rather than consolation or support.

In Luke 6 we read how Jesus chooses the twelve apostles from his disciples after spending the night praying to God. He makes his decision after evidently extensively consulting with God to ensure God's will is done and to fulfill his ultimate purpose.

How do we respond to God's calling? How do we discern what is our own fallible reasoning and what is a true calling or true wisdom from God? Are our decisions steeped in prayer?

Lord, give us discernment to seek and follow your calling for us and to do your will, rather than to rely on our own understanding. Amen.

(homegroup member)

Tuesday 21 February

Exodus 4, Job 21, Luke 7 (God is in control!)

God continues to graciously respond to Moses' reluctance, but eventually He does get angry and what does he do? Or rather, what has he already done? Aaron, Moses' brother, is already on his way to meet Moses and his heart will be glad when he sees him!

Job defends himself against the claim that his suffering is a measure of his guilt and of God's anger against him, by insisting that experience shows that wicked people flourish despite God being almighty and perfectly just. Job acknowledges that God is in control in this seeming injustice (v16), and he is left struggling to make sense of it.

Reconciling human suffering with a loving God is still a major challenge. Many people experiencing suffering may *feel* that God is angry with them and that they are being punished. However, Jesus taught that not all suffering is the result of sin (John 9:2-3).

It is likely that the woman who had lived a sinful life suffered herself before meeting Jesus. Contrasting her loving conduct towards him with that of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus explains: "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little". The woman is saved through faith and is able to experience God's peace, rather than his anger.

Thank you God, that although we were deserving of your anger, you have already provided everything to fulfill your ultimate redeeming purpose. Amen.

(homegroup member)

Wednesday 22 February

Exodus 5, Job 22, Luke 8 (Blame)

Moses and Aaron deliver God's message to Pharaoh, to let his people go. As a result Pharaoh increases the workload of the Israelites, who in return blame Moses and Aaron for this injustice. Moses then complains to God, claiming that instead of rescuing his people, he has brought trouble on them.

In Job 22 Eliphaz continues accusations that Job has committed many sins, without any other evidence than Job's present suffering. His advice to submit to God may seem sound in itself; however it is based on incorrect assumptions and therefore it is doing Job injustice.

The woman with the haemorrhage in Luke's Gospel had been ceremonially unclean for twelve years. She must have been physically very weak but it is possible that her ongoing ceremonial uncleanness was also a real source of grief for her. In Leviticus 15:25-30 we read that anything a woman in her situation lay or sat on would become ceremonially unclean and that anyone who touched these items would become unclean as well requiring ceremonial cleansing. She must have been terrified when Jesus asked who had touched him.

The reason, however, why Jesus calls her is not to blame but instead he wants to give her his blessing.

Thank you Jesus that you bless us and that through you we are free from blame. Help us to be like you, blessing, not blaming. Amen.

(homegroup member)

Thursday 23 February

Exodus 6, Job 23, Luke 9 (God reveals Himself)

In his suffering Job is desperately searching for God, but he can't find him. He is terrified, since he realises God's sovereignty to do whatever he pleases, whereas the counsellors try to make God predictable. Due to his faith and righteousness, however, Job remains confident in God's ultimate justice and he is not silenced by the darkness.

In response to Moses' complaint, God reveals his name to him: "I am the Lord, Yahweh". He repeats his promise to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, to free them from slavery, to redeem them as his people and to bring them to the promised land. The Israelites, however, still don't believe Moses because of their discouragement and cruel bondage (v9).

In Luke's Gospel we read Peter's confession of Christ. When Jesus asks his disciples: "Who do you say I am?" Peter replies: "The Christ of God". Jesus then warns them not to tell this to anyone. He reveals to them his coming suffering, rejection, death and resurrection, but the people needed to be taught further before Jesus could identify himself explicitly, due their false belief of the Messiah being a conquering king, rather than a suffering servant.

Thank you God, that you reveal yourself to us and that you want us to know you and love you. Help us to fully trust in you and your Word, whatever the circumstances. Amen.

(homegroup member)

Friday 24 February

Exodus 7, Job 24, Luke 10 (Judgement)

A righteous sufferer himself, Job describes many forms of injustice done to the vulnerable. He acknowledges that the perpetrators, although they may be exalted for a little while, will ultimately be judged; he asks God, however, why there is delay.

In Exodus, the forms of the miracles and plagues chosen by God spell judgement against Egypt in themselves. For example, pharaohs used to wear a cobra head-dress as a symbol of their sovereignty and, due to its life sustaining importance, the river Nile was worshipped as a god.

We read in Luke's gospel how Jesus prepares seventy-two disciples before sending them out. He warns that there will be more severe consequences on judgement day for those who reject Jesus despite hearing the gospel or seeing the miracles, compared to those who hadn't had the gospel of the kingdom preached to them. When they return with joy following their experience of demons submitting to them in Jesus' name, Jesus tells them that he gave them the authority to overcome all the power of the enemy. However, instead of rejoicing in spirits submitting to them he tells them they should rather rejoice that their names are written in heaven, since their salvation is more important.

Lord Jesus, thank you that because of you our names are written in heaven and we don't need to fear judgement. Amen.

(homegroup member)

Saturday 25 February

Exodus 8, Job 25, Luke 11 (The finger of God)

The plagues continue; however, the Egyptian magicians are not able to replicate the plague of the gnats and therefore warn Pharaoh (v19): “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh still doesn’t listen.

Jesus uses the same expression in Luke’s gospel when He defends Himself against the accusation that He is driving out demons by Beelzebub. He points out the logical flaw that Satan would be fighting himself if this were the case; therefore the logical conclusion is that Jesus is driving out demons by the finger of God (v20). He goes on to explain that it is not enough to drive out an evil spirit, since it will return with seven even more wicked spirits, if the void is not filled with God’s presence (by listening to the word of God and obeying it).

Thanks to Jesus we don’t have to be concerned, like Bildad in Job 25, about how we can be righteous before God. But God’s graciousness goes even further than that (Luke 11:8-13): Jesus encourages us to approach God with boldness and persistence since God answers prayers and will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Heavenly Father, thank You, that when we ask, we will receive, when we seek we will find and when we knock the door will be opened. Please fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

(homegroup member)