

Bible Challenge May 22 - 28, 2016

Advent's weekly Bible Challenge is based upon the readings assigned for each Sunday. The basic challenge is to re-read the texts that were read on Sunday morning and are included in the Sunday bulletin. The Adventure and Explorer challenges are suggestions of different ways to deepen your knowledge of the Bible. The challenge is organized as one reading for each of five days, but find a pace or style that fits your schedule.

INTRODUCTION

"O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" On May 22, we celebrate the name of God: holy blessed Trinity. There is no other day quite like this one in the church's year. There is no other god like ours. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

DAY ONE: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

In the Bible, wisdom has many faces. It is portrayed in terms sometimes human and sometimes divine. Often, it is personified as feminine. In this passage, Woman Wisdom is depicted not only as the first creation of God but also as God's helper, rejoicing in God's creation, especially in human beings.

¹Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
²On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
³beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
⁴"To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.
²²The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
²³Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
²⁴When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
²⁵Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
²⁶when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
²⁸when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
²⁹when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
³⁰then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race."

Adventure Challenge: Proverbs 8.

Explorer Challenge: *Option A:* Read an introduction to Proverbs to gain an overview of this book.

Option B: Compare the portrayal of Wisdom in Proverbs 8 with the "the adulteress" described in Proverbs 7.

DAY TWO: Psalm 8

A hymn of praise for God's creation and humanity's place in it.

¹O LORD our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!—
²you whose glory is chanted above the heavens
out of the mouths of infants and children;
 you have set up a fortress against your enemies,
 to silence the foe and avenger.
³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
⁴what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
 human beings that you should care for them?
⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine;
 with glory and honor you crown them.
⁶You have made them rule over the works of your hands;
 you have put all things under their feet:
⁷all flocks and cattle,
 even the wild beasts of the field,
⁸the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
 and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.
⁹O LORD our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Adventure Challenge: Psalm 8.

Explorer Challenge: Compare the question and answer in 8:4-5 with a similar question and but different answer in 144:3-4. Which of these statement-answers seem closest to your understanding? What other Biblical verses might you cite in support of either view?

DAY THREE: Romans 5:1-5

Paul describes the life of faith with reference to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Even now, we have peace with God through Jesus, and our hope for the future is grounded in the love of God that we experience through Christ's Holy Spirit.

¹Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Adventure Challenge: Romans 5.

Explorer Challenge: Explore Paul's attitude toward *boasting* as expressed in 2:17, 3:27, 5:2, 5:3 and 5:11. How does faith justify boasting?

DAY FOUR: John 16:12-15

Jesus' ongoing presence with the disciples will be borne by the coming Spirit, who will guide them and communicate to them Jesus' will and glory.

[Jesus said:] ¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine

and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

Adventure Challenge: John 16.

Explorer Challenge: Using whatever reference works are available to you, explore how "the trinity" has been understood, explained, and interpreted.

DAY FIVE:

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; God's glory fills the whole earth. (*Isaiah 6:3*)