



Esther, Ruth

Lamentations, Daniel



## Reading the Bible Together

April 2016

### What is 'In Sync' Bible Reading?

'In Sync' encourages us to read together through the Bible, and then reflect together on what we have read from God's Word. We consider the main message and the key themes of a whole book (or books) of the Bible, and then we can share with others what we have learnt through our Bible reading.

*'I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.'* (Psalm 119:16)

### Questions to consider

Reading the Bible does not have to be an intellectual study. Anyone can read the Bible and by God's grace understand it. The main thing is that we pray for God's help as we read.

Here are some questions to help you think through what you are reading:

1. What have I learnt about God and about Jesus?
2. What does this teach me about humanity and myself?
3. What has most encouraged me from this book?
4. How does this teach me to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
5. How does this teach me to love my neighbour as myself? (Matt 22:37-40)
6. Is there anything else I should learn here to be 'equipped for every good work' (2 Tim 3:17)

### Esther (10 chapters)

This is an unusual book in the Old Testament because God is not mentioned nor is there any mention of worshipping God. The events of the book are set in the reign of Xerxes (486-465BC), king of Persia, and describe the saving of the exiled Israelites from persecution through the actions of the Jewish Queen Esther – celebrated in the Jewish festival of Purim. We learn about God's sovereignty exercised through providence.

### Ruth (4 chapters)

This is a dramatic love story which takes place during the days of the Judges. Boaz, the great grandfather of David, acts as a kinsman redeemer to marry a young widow, Ruth, who is originally from Moab. Ruth demonstrates great loyalty to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and brings her much joy after experiencing great sorrow. God's hand guides Ruth and Boaz, with Boaz as a type of Christ.

### Lamentations (5 chapters)

This book of poetry records the anguish and utter despair felt as a result of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587BC. Tradition identifies Jeremiah as the book's author. It is similar to the laments found in Psalms, as it grapples with the issue of suffering. Chapter 3 contains a statement of hope in the midst of destruction.

### Daniel (12 chapters)

The accounts found in the first 6 chapters of the book are often taught to children in Sunday School e.g. Daniel in the lions' den, the young men surviving the furnace. The apocalyptic visions of Chapters 7-12 are much harder to interpret. The book is a powerful witness to God's power over evil, and teaches God's people how to live under oppression.

**In-Sync for May**  
**Ezra and Nehemiah**



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