

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for April 30:

Judges 11:1-12:15:

Judges 11:1-3 continues to set the stage for the next judge (Jephthah, from the land east of the Jordan). Since Jephthah was an illegitimate son, his half-brothers drove him away and he teamed up with worthless men. Evidently Jephthah, a mighty warrior, and his band of men were a formidable fighting force because the elders of Gilead came to them for help against the Ammonites (11:4-11). The mighty warrior agreed to fight against the Ammonites on the condition he would become the head of Gilead (9). Judges 11:12-28 contains a speech by Jephthah to the Ammonites. In 11:29-40 Jephthah successfully fights against the enemy after rashly vowing to sacrifice the first thing which comes out of the door of his house upon his return home, if the Lord would give victory. His daughter came out of the door first. Rather than taking biblical steps (Leviticus 5:4-6) to back out of his vow in light of what it would mean, he carried it out and sacrificed his daughter, even though this was a heinous sin against God and His Word (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10).

After this terrible incident with Jephthah men from Ephraim came to him to complain that he did not call them to help with the battle against the Ammonites (12:1-7). This ended in a civil war in which the Ephraimites lost badly. Though God used Jephthah as a tool to deliver Israel, Jephthah was far from a model believer. His wicked life was typical of the entire nation. God was showing His grace to deliver them, even though evil and rebellion were widespread. As the book continues, we notice that Israel was spiraling downward morally at an ever quickening rate.

In 12:8-15 we learn of three more judges who are merely mentioned: Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Though the author does not believe detail about these judges would add to the overall purpose, he does include them so the reader gains a sense of the number of judges in Israel over a short period and the lack of stability. Truly Israel had become a mess and there was a need for godly leadership! If you feel as if your life is a mess, it may also be true that you are in need of following the King, the Lord Jesus Christ!

John 1:1-28:

Today's New Testament reading begins the fourth and final Gospel (life of Jesus Christ) in the New Testament. This one, John, does not share a similar format and approach as do the other three. It does share a large amount of material about Jesus not covered anywhere else. Though we are not told who wrote the book, the author was most likely a Jew who understood Jewish customs well and was an eyewitness of the events of the life of Jesus (19:35). What is more, the fact that John, son of Zebedee, is not mentioned in the entire work, the eyewitness who writes the book is the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 21:20-24), and the fact that the early Church attributed this Gospel to John, all argue in favor of John as the author.

Today's reading covers the Prologue (1:1-18) where we learn that Jesus is the ultimate communication from and about God, He is the word (1:1); Jesus, the Son of God, is distinct from God the Father, "the word was with God" (1:1); Jesus is God (1:1, "the

word was God” is similar to saying “the ocean is water”); the Son of God, existed before the beginning of time, space, and history, “in the beginning was the word” (1:1a); the Son of God became man and tabernacled among us (1:14); and Jesus reveals God and His glory (1:14, 18).

Today’s reading also takes us into the first major section of the book which covers the public ministry of Jesus (1:19-12:50). John not only covers events out of the life of Jesus (such as the witness of John the Baptist and the calling of the first disciples, 1:19-51), but intersperses seven signs (miracles) Jesus performs with seven discourses by Jesus. The miracles and the teaching loom large in the mind of John.

Psalm 101:1-8:

This psalm of David affirms that he as king will praise God and seek to live a life that is blameless, has integrity, and will not participate in the actions of the wicked (1-4); and what is more he will lead with justice in the land (5-8). What a great example for all us.

Proverbs 14:13-14:

Verse 13 reminds us that heart ache and grief can be such a part of our experience, they can even permeate times of laughter or emerge after times of joy. What a good reminder that we should not be surprised by difficulties. Verse 14 is another reminder that whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.