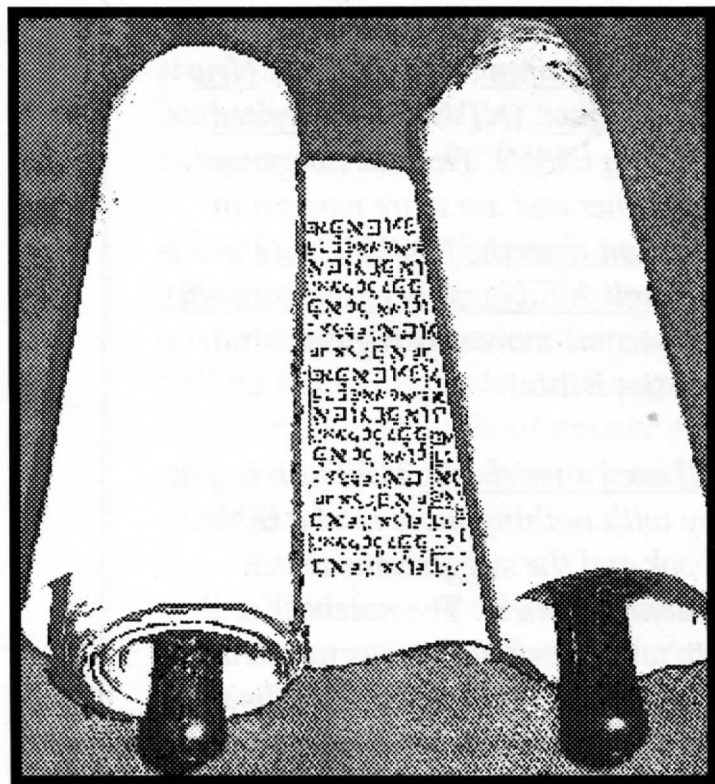


LISTENING TO GOD



AN APPROACH TO BIBLE STUDY

Part Two In A Series Of Seven

2. The Earnest Seekers

READ THE BIBLE !!!

TOOLS NEEDED FOR BIBLE STUDY

1. You'll need a Bible! Preferably one with big print so you won't tire so easily in your reading. Most serious Bible students have a favourite version. You might choose the English New King James (NKJV) or the New International Version (NIV) or the Revised Standard Version (RSV). The last two sound very like each other and are more modern in their presentation than the NKJV. Then there is The Simple English Bible. Any of these would do until you become more experienced. And listen: **Read the Bible!**
2. You'll need a notebook! The truth is you could get by with nothing more than a Bible but a notebook and the suggestions which follow will definitely help. The notebook will allow you to write down questions which arise as you read and to note interesting truths you come across. (Questions and truths you'll forget if you don't write them down.)
3. You'll need some basic books! You can get by with nothing more than a Bible but this makes the task more difficult. You might borrow or buy a concordance and a Bible Dictionary. The concordance will help you to

A HIGH-RANKING DIPLOMAT ASKED FOR HELP

locate verses from any part of the Bible. The dictionary will give you some basic information on almost any subject you read about in the Bible. In English, a Young's or Strong's concordance will do the job you want done. The New Bible Dictionary is perhaps the best single-volume dictionary available. (Ask the bookseller or the one you borrowed them from to show you how they work!)

4. You'll need a friend or acquaintance to give you some guidance! The very fact that you're reading this material says you are willing to receive guidance. You can read the Bible for yourself without anyone's help but experienced Bible students can make the task easier for you.
5. (There's always a danger in asking for help. The person who offers the help may hold really strange views. Views that are fundamentally bad. If the person you seek help from is part of a little group that is angry with everyone but themselves, look for assistance elsewhere! But, if what they say can easily be seen in the verses they show you, don't be afraid to ask for help. A high-ranking diplomat wasn't slow to ask for help when he felt he needed it—**Acts 8:30-31**. And you'll become more discerning as you study.)

SUCCESS BEFORE WORK—ONLY
IN THE DICTIONARY

SOME QUALITIES NEEDED
FOR BIBLE STUDY

6. You'll need commitment to the task! No one makes any progress at anything without commitment. If we're not willing to invest the time and energy, there's no point in complaining about lack of progress. You can't study the Bible (or Shakespeare or Math) with one eye trained on the TV or stretched out on a comfortable chair in front of the fire. And you can't spend five minutes a month (when you're "in the mood") and hope to make headway. Little boys and girls become swimming kings and queens, ordinary people become concert pianists or brilliant medical researchers, tradesmen become experts at their job but they all have one thing in common—they invested the time and energy! The only place 'success' comes before 'work' is in a dictionary.

7. You'll need patience! The Bible is a big book and it's complex. There is no magic to so learning it as to feel at home in it. You must be satisfied, in the beginning, to know a little and to follow good study procedures. You mustn't expect of yourself more than you are able to grasp. Each new and significant discovery will increase your awareness of your ignorance as

HE THREW A HORSESHOE INTO
THE WATER AND WATCHED IT SINK

well as your stock of good knowledge. The Bible is amazingly rich and each answer will raise more exciting questions. It isn't a "quick fix" book dealing with trivial concerns. You've joined in a quest with eternal consequences!

8. You'll need humility! But isn't this true in every pursuit of truth? We must come as students, willing pupils to the feet of Music if we wish to become accomplished musicians. We must allow the truths of Math to have influence with us if we are to enter into the mysteries and grandeur of numbers. And we must allow Shakespeare or Dickens or Hugo to be our guides if we are to be blessed by their literature. If we won't come to the Bible with a humble heart, seeking to hear its message, why then, we'll waste the time we invest. But since the Bible is like no other book in the world and in it God speaks to us, do give it a fair hearing.

9. In the days when people thought ships had to be made out of wood if they were to float, someone made the claim that ships made of iron could float. A certain blacksmith sneered at this and proved it wrong by throwing a horse-shoe into the water and watching it sink. He didn't really give the idea a fair hearing, did he?! If he had wanted to do that he would have open-

I REALLY DID GIVE THE BIBLE A FAIR HEARING!

heartedly tested the theory on its own terms. To open the Bible and fight it at every step, denying its every word before hearing the message as a whole, is sure to result in nothing gained. Don't suppress your intellect. The Bible doesn't require that from you. But try not to come filled with animosity or driven by prejudice. So conduct your study that whatever happens in the end, you will be able to say: "I really did listen!"

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

10. *The Bible was written by God! You'll come across hundreds of instances of "Hear the word of the Lord" or "This is what the Lord says" or "The Lord spoke unto me saying" or "What I'm telling you is the command of God" or "the word of the Lord came to me saying" or "the Lord spoke". On many occasions you'll come across sections in which God speaks in the 'first person', "I am God and besides me there is no saviour." Sometimes God just tells a man to "write this down in a book!" All over the Bible there are claims that God is its author.*

11. *The Bible was recorded by ancient people from many different walks of life! Doctors, priests, shepherds, fishermen, statesmen, kings,*

WE MUSTN'T MAKE DEMANDS OF GOD THAT ARE UNREASONABLE

tax-collectors, theologians. They all had one thing in common: they believed in the God they wrote about and in whose name they spoke! They believed in him because they had heard him and they had experienced him.

12. *It's true that there are large segments of the Bible where God doesn't expressly attach his name. But even in modern books we're satisfied with the author's name on the front of the book a time or two. We mustn't demand more from God in regard to his book!*

HOW CAN THIS BE?

13. *But how can a man's word be God's word also? It can be if God tells him what to write (as the Bible often says he did). It can be if the man's experience is something God wants us to hear. It can be if the man's historical narrative covers the material God wants covered. It can be if the wisdom the man has learned from God is the guidance God wants others to hear. It can be if the man's pain is like our own and God wants him to express it for us. It can be if, as the Bible claims, God superintends the writing of the material. Holy men wrote because they were moved by God (2 Pet 1:20-21). Hurting men protested and God had it written down, brave men lived well and God had others to record it.*

EVALUATION SHEET

Name: _____

Listening To God LESSON 2

Tick The Box When You Have Read The Entire Lesson

True Or False? (If the statement is true write T, if false write F.)

- ___ 1. The Bible was written by angels!
- ___ 2. Humility isn't necessary in studying!
- ___ 3. A high-ranking diplomat admitted he needed help to understand some scriptures!
- ___ 4. The Bible nowhere claims that God is its author!
- ___ 5. The Bible was written by unbelievers!
- ___ 6. To gain a good grasp on the Bible we must be willing to invest some time and energy!
- ___ 7. We can understand a book or a person without giving them a fair hearing!
- ___ 8. The Bible demands that we despise our rational capacity!
- ___ 9. The Bible was written by holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit!
- ___ 10. There is some risk in asking others to help us understand the Bible!

Tick The Box When You Have Read These Scriptures

- 1. Acts 8:26-31
- 2. 2 Peter 1:20-21
- 3. Haggai 1:13 and Jeremiah 36:2
- 4. Deuteronomy 27:1-8 and Revelation 1:19

Complete This Statement: (As found in the booklet.)

1. So conduct your study that whatever happens _____

2. We must come as students, willing pupils _____

3. It can be if the wisdom _____

4. A certain blacksmith sneered at this _____

5. But even in modern books _____

**What Three Qualities Needed For Bible Study
Did We Isolate?**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In Your Own Words Say Why They Are Needed

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
