

A Joyous Blessing for Those Who Read

Maybe things have improved since then, but about 40 years ago, a troubled man did a study on why he was always tired. He wrote: 'For a couple years I've been blaming it on lack of sleep or too much pressure from my job, but now I've found out the real reason that I am always tired. I'm overworked. The population of this country is 237 million. 104 million are retired. That leaves 133 million to do the work. There are 85 million in school, which leaves 48 million to do the work. Of this there are 29 million employed by the federal government, leaving 19 million to do the work. 2.8 million are in the Armed Forces, which leaves 16.2 million to do the work. 14,800,000 people work for state and city governments. That leaves 1.4 million to do the work. At any given time there are 188,000 people in hospitals, leaving 1,212,000 to do the work. Given that there are 1,211,998 people in prisons, that leaves just two people to do the work, you and me. And you're sitting at your computer reading jokes!' And so that man found the reason for his constant fatigue!!

And if all we're doing these days is reading jokes on our computer phones, well, it seems like we're wasting a whole lot of our time! Not only aren't we living up to our potential, but we're missing out on unimagined benefits and blessings. For the Holy

Bible tells us exactly that. Problem is, too few of us truly grew up in Christian homes. For in a truly Christian home, the Holy Bible would be given not only pride of place, but pride of time. That is, it would have been read constantly by every member of the family. And accompanying the Bible would be a hymnbook. When the Bible wasn't being read, someone else would be singing hymns. Despite the many problems and trials of life, grief and storms and betrayals, the Christian home remained rock solid with the peace that passes understanding. For the Christian home relied on God's promises. They knew that come what may, God would always get them through it. And when the days of earthly life came to an end, they would be welcomed with great rejoicing into eternal life in Heaven. Did any of you grow up in a home like that? Where faith was as natural and as constant as breathing?

Truly, the more time people spend reading the Bible, the more blessed they are! That doesn't mean they will have easier lives, with fewer problems and difficulties along the way. We live in a fallen world, groaning under the now illegitimate regime of the devil and his unclean, rebelling evil spirits. Thus problems are inevitable. But true Christians are able to get up after being knocked down by one thing and then another, filled with an uncanny and otherwise inexplicable peace, shalom, that enables them to face whatever evils come their way. Consider what our Lord Jesus went through on His way to the cross to obtain this everlasting victory for us. He underwent a testing so extreme in

Gethsemane that no human could endure it. If it weren't for an angel of God sent to strengthen His physical body, He would have almost certainly died in the Garden. But after sweating blood, utterly drained from mental anguish and the internal war to accept the Father's will rather than His Own, the angel came and gave Him supernatural strength. What else can explain how He was then able to face the Sanhedrin's kangaroo trials, then Pilate, King Herod, back to Pilate again. This had gone on all night long!! And then Pilate, in an attempt to find a politically-expedient compromise, had the Lord scourged. Remember that many people didn't even survive a scourging. The stone and bone-tipped triple whips ripped out chunks of flesh with every stroke, eventually shredding the flesh exposing bone and internal organs. Some people's innards actually fell out in the process. And yet our Lord could endure that, all that physical pain and torture. All for us.

And yet, nowadays, most people, even those who claim to be Christians, can hardly devote to Him even a few minutes a day to read His word and offer Him prayers and praise. Indeed, reading the Bible is an immense blessing. Whether we realize it or not, doing so consistently, on a daily basis, changes the trajectory of our lives. Little by little, things begin to align ever more closely to God's plans and purposes for our lives. Why, we begin to live into our ultimate destiny. Spending disciplined time in the Bible does this. But there is one particular Bible book in which a special, joyous blessing comes upon those who read it. No other

Bible book is so singled out. It's the Book of Revelation. An older title for this book is The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Which means the unveiling, the revealing of Jesus Christ the Lord. While all the New Testament is specifically about Christ Jesus, indeed the whole of the Old Testament as well reveals Him in prophecies and foreshadowings on every page!, the final book of the Bible, the Revelation, reveals the Lord in all His glory, throwing wide open the curtains and veils which filter our vision and understanding of Him. Now here, to the Apostle John, the Lord reveals Himself like never before. He tells us through John what is to come. And thus, those who will immerse themselves in this book, will receive a special blessing. For those who study this book will know Christ more deeply and intimately than all others. This book is more focused on Him and Him alone than all the others. And when the Lord is our focus, our lives truly change.

But in order to read this book, we have to be able to read. There's a reason that Jews and Christians are known as people of The Book! Reading the Book, and reading the Revelation brings us so close to the Lord that it is all but inevitable that we will come to love The Savior, and receive everlasting life. Which is exactly what the devil most wants to steer us away from. So he will do everything in his power to keep people from reading. Of all the tricks he's employed over the centuries, the first and easiest is to keep people from learning to read in the first place. For it wasn't until the earliest Protestant reformers in the 1380s, who

began translating the Bible into English that ordinary people could learn to read by studying the Bible, that the great illiteracy of the masses of people began to be vanquished. Then what do you know? After the Bible became accessible to commoners, did not civilization flourish and prosper in ways not hitherto imagined? The Holy Bible was the sole textbook and primary teaching aid used in all of early America's schools! You went to school, you read the Bible. Simple as that. The Bible was the school!

So what began to happen? It wasn't long before otherwise well-meaning people began to think that supplements to the Bible were needed, for more in-depth, rational, scientific learning. What were only supplements at first, began to supplant the Bible. Until our schools totally divorced themselves from the ultimate source of all knowledge and wisdom, the Bible. Outlawed from schools at first, to be followed by prayer itself. The devil was getting his way. Yet, the Bible was still around. In many people's homes, in churches, even many libraries. And so it remained a tangible threat to the devil's plans to take over.

What better way to eliminate the threat than to so corrupt the schools that the very ability to read itself became secondary, even ignored. Such that a study done by our vaunted U.S. government, costing \$14 million, discovered, back in 1993(!), that 90 million Americans could not write a simple letter explaining a credit card bill error, figure out a departure time on a bus schedule, or even use a calculator to determine the difference between a sale

price and a regular price. Think such people could pick up a Bible and peruse it? The devil's trapped a whole bunch of folks. And things have only gotten worse. By 2023, 57% of adults are considered "partially illiterate". Does seem like it's time for the Department of Education to go the way of dinosaurs!

For true reformation to come to America, it'll need a lot of going back to school in the Bible. Talking about the Gospel is one thing. And so the Lord has raised up more and more Christian video, most notably *The Chosen*. These visual productions show people, many otherwise functionally illiterate, Who Lord Jesus is, and why they need Him. But to take the next steps, they'll need to learn to read and write proficiently. Then guess what? They'll be able to get better jobs, improve their lives, and start living ever more Godly. Even just that are blessings from God!

If we here who are all well educated, been already blessed with the ability to read and write well, yet we don't take the time to read the most important documents of all time, the documents authored by the very Creator of the Universe Himself, should not we be ashamed? Why are we so easily falling for this distraction after that distraction spreading forth from the devil's hands? With A.I. spewing forth exponentially ever more tantalizing garbage to "illuminate" our screens, little and big, it's far easier to be titillated than to spend any meaningful time in God's Word. Our physical lives are not getting any longer. Our earthly time to spend with the Lord is only getting shorter. High time to make a change!

