

A God of Beginnings

In the beginning God. . . .
Genesis 1:1

Notice that the Bible begins with God, not with a philosophical argument for His existence. God always was, and God always will be. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The Bible says it, that settles it, and I believe it.

Although God had no beginning Himself, He is a God of beginnings. The entire creation began with God. All life begins with a miracle that only He can perform. We can list many things that God has begun.

God is present when one becomes a living soul and begins life on the earth. Consider the life of a Christian. Our Redeemer rejoices with the angels when a person commits his life to Him and begins his walk as a Christian. Those of us who are married probably began our wedded lives in a ceremony performed by the Lord's ministers, in the Lord's house, and with the Lord's blessing. God has been with us through various beginnings; but best of all, He will be there to hold our hand as we cross the river and begin eternity with Him.

Since God is so experienced in beginning things, perhaps we should allow Him to have more say when we begin something. Every day, week, month, or year; every project, plan, or ambition—all should begin with God.

Begin this year with God. Lay all your plans at the feet of Jesus and allow the Master of beginnings to take care of them for you.

Henry Yoder, Clarkson, KY

<p>Bible Reading: Genesis 1 One Year Bible Reading Plan: Matthew 1 Genesis 1, 2</p>

In the beginning God. . . .
. . . and, behold, it was very good.
Genesis 1:1, 31

Bread of Life

I am that bread of life.

John 6:48

We enjoy fresh whole wheat bread, right out of the oven. Ah-h-h, the aroma is so inviting, and the warm soft bread is so satisfying!

Bread is a widely eaten food. It provides a large share of many people's energy and protein, and is often called the "staff of life." Research shows that people who consume a reasonable amount of "daily bread" have less trouble with colon afflictions.

Bread is a complete food. Consider the manna that God gave the children of Israel. Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat" (Exodus 16:15). This manna was a complete food. It gave the people the nutrients they needed to face life in the desert. God was faithful to send the manna for forty years.

We need a daily portion of the Bread that comes from heaven. We are not satisfied to have only breakfast, skipping lunch and supper. Neither should we be satisfied to hastily read a portion of the Word of God and quickly scan a devotional booklet, and think that we have gathered all we need.

Do we have a good appetite for the Bread of Life? "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This is the Bread of God that will satisfy us and give us the spiritual strength we desperately need.

Merl Beiler, Abbeville, SC

<p>Bible Reading: John 6:26-51 One Year Bible Reading Plan: Matthew 2 Genesis 3-5</p>

Your spiritual health depends on your daily diet.

Who Is This?

*And when he was come into Jerusalem,
all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?*

Matthew 21:10

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, a multitude ran before him. There was excitement in the air. The whole city was moved. The question, “Who is this man?” caused perplexity and discussion.

To some, He was the son of a poor carpenter. To some, He was an interesting and charismatic teacher. To a few, He was an illegitimate son of a peasant girl. To others, He was a threat to their position and authority. Only a few loved Him and followed Him. Yet He was a person whom they could not ignore.

Two thousand years have passed. Jesus is still a person whom we cannot ignore. The many prophecies concerning His birth, life, death, and resurrection have been fulfilled in minute detail. Prophecies of events leading to His second coming are being fulfilled. This man’s impact on the world has been unmatched by any other. No one has influenced the course of history like this “carpenter’s son.”

He was born of an exclusive people, in a remote Jewish village.

Yet this person’s life and influence have crossed oceans, nationalities, and racial barriers, and changed the lives of those who let Him.

Who is Jesus to you? The Son of God? The Savior and Lord? Make Him that today!

Jim Yoder, Leitchfield, KY

Bible Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

One Year Bible Reading Plan:

Matthew 3

Genesis 6–8

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

—Acts 4:12

Hearing the Word

Take heed therefore how ye hear.

Luke 8:18

Because of my job, children often are thrilled to see me drive up. Their faces light up, and they smile big smiles as I unload and set up their swing set.

This summer I delivered a swing set to a home where the mother and an eight or nine-year-old son came out to meet me. The mother told me where she wanted the swing set up, and told me the boy had been deaf from birth. Because it was a very warm afternoon, the mother soon went back into the house, where it was cooler.

The boy stayed. He watched every move I made as I was assembling the set. As I was drilling holes and putting in bolts, I handed the boy some nuts and washers, and you should have seen his face. He raised his eyebrows, and a big smile came across his face. He got the message loud and clear, helping me whenever he could to set up the swing set.

When I had almost completed the job, the boy took off running toward the house. Because I could not communicate with him, I didn't know what I had done to offend him. (Maybe he had just grown weary of the sun's heat.) A little later he came out and handed me a large, cold drink, and I was very touched by his act of kindness.

On my way home, I had to think, "This little boy could not hear, yet he got the message." How do we respond to the voice of the Lord? Are we hearing the Lord, or are we so preoccupied with worldly things that we don't hear when He speaks to us? When we do hear the Lord, do we respond like the little boy, full of energy and ready to do the Master's will?

Only then can we carry out Luke 8:15: "... having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Menno Yoder, Monticello, KY

Bible Reading: Luke 8:1-18
One Year Bible Reading Plan:
Matthew 4
Genesis 9-11

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The Christian's Rest

Come unto me, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 11:28-29

Hard work, sweat, fatigue, tired muscles, and aching bones. After a strenuous day of exerting brain and brawn, how sweet are home, family, and rest. After we have rested, we can return to work. We work with rest in view.

Even Scripture tells us, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." Hebrews 4:3 says that not everyone will be able to enter the rest that God offers. Heaven will offer rest only to those who have labored faithfully. We look forward with anticipation to those mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love and obey Him.

Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest is the prerogative of all who come to Jesus. It is given to us here and now, while we labor and toil, in mission work or in carpentry. Jesus is our rest. He invites sinners and saints to come to Him and receive rest for their souls.

Eli Kauffman, Montezuma, GA

Bible Reading: Hebrews 4

One Year Bible Reading Plan:

Matthew 5:1-26

Genesis 12-14

The idle man does not know what it is to enjoy rest.