



The Prayer Room

Brought to you by the Good News Bearers
May 18-24, 2008

Listening to God in the Bible **Reading the Old Testament**

The Old Testament can be hard reading, especially to those who are not used to reading it. Suggesting a plan for reading it is equally tough, and we're working hard to find a suitable one. Please bear with us.

The following is an excerpt from "The Bible Guide" by Canon Andrew Knowles of Chelmsford Cathedral, England. We hope you will find it helpful.

The Old Testament Story

God's Story – The Old Testament is more than a history of Israel. It is the story of God's revelation of himself.

Far Off and Close – God is the supreme creator. He is holy, "above" and separate from his creation. And yet he is most intimately aware of and concerned about, every detail of life. He loves genuine worship. He is angered by injustice and corruption. He looks for faithful relationships, honest trading, protection of the weak and generosity to the poor.

Seen in Action – God cares deeply about how a nation and its individuals behave. He holds people responsible for their actions.

He promises to bless obedience and punish wickedness. The Old Testament stories show God in action: in compassion and rescue, anger and punishment, judgment, mercy and renewal. God is ultimately committed to forgiving, restoring and recreating all things.

Reigning Supreme – The Lord reigns over all. He is the creator of the universe and the Lord of history. Even Israel's formidable enemies and conquerors, the tyrants of Egypt, Babylon and Persia, are God's subjects. He uses them to fulfill his great purposes.

Faithful with the Faithful – God loves to work with humble and responsive people. Abraham, Moses and David are the great examples. Abraham dies without seeing the multitude of his descendants or possessing his land. Moses is not allowed to enter the Promised Land, nor David to build the temple. All leave 'unfinished business', yet their lives are completed by faith. God treated them as friends and gave them honored places in his plan.

And this story continues. The Old Testament promises that Abraham's 'seed' will bless the world; a prophet 'like Moses' will appear one day, and a king 'like David' will rule over everything in the end.

Please join us in this week in praying this prayer.

Dear Lord Jesus, in word and in action, you taught your disciples to lead a life full of prayer, to pray constantly and with trust. Help us, also, to lead prayerful lives, sharing what is in our hearts and listening for your answering voice.

Open our ears and eyes, our minds and hearts, to your Holy Spirit as we seek to grow in our knowledge and understanding of your word.

Lead all of us at St. John's to be awakened to and enriched by the Scriptures you know and love, these precious words we call the Old Testament. Write them in our minds and hearts as we seek to know you more fully.

Amen!