

Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: June/July Notes

Monday June 23rd: Host David, Lead Brian: 2nd Letter of John: *I your pastor. Conduct your lives in love. Jesus Christ was truly human, a flesh and blood human being. Anyone who walks out on the teaching of Christ, walks out on God. I'd rather not use paper and ink.*

The Jewish people had put a lot of effort over a long period into picturing the ONE GOD, who really was very different from puny mortals; and in defending their faith against other religions which had gods who were all too human (just more powerful than humans). And they had had to deal with quite a lot of false prophets and false messiahs. You can see why a 30 something (in many ways) ordinary bloke saying "See me, see God" provoked a response of "You can be human, or you can be God – You can not be both".

This is (just!) the shortest New Testament book.

What is special about the familiar 3: grace, mercy and peace?

Why were churches "sisters"?

John challenges "Progressivism". Do we also need to challenge Conservatism?

Is dogma important? Should we squabble over how divine Jesus was? Is it enough to rank Him as very special; or does the whole thing fall apart if He is less than fully divine?

Monday June 30th: Host Andy, Lead David. 3rd Letter of John. Three individuals are named: two favourably, one unfavourably. Hospitality in the church is encouraged, but hospitality for the right sort of people. In days of itinerant missionaries, it was probably a bit tricky to sort out visitors who were challenging but not threatening from those who were likely to cause damage if given a hearing.

That your everyday affairs prosper as well as your soul. Continue diligently in the way of truth. When you extend hospitality you make the faith visible. The person who does good, does God. Companions in spreading the Truth. He throws them out. The Truth itself stands up for Demetrius.

Beware personality cults. I had visitors recently who said the Congo has a church in every street – as a way of making money and boosting egos.

How do we avoid factionalism?

Are we uncomfortable with missionaries...or are we trying to be missionaries?

Monday July 7th: Host Andy, Lead Evan. Letter of Jude. *Open your hearts: love is on the way. This life of salvation that we have in common. Fight with everything you have in you for this faith entrusted to us as a gift to guard and cherish. Their design is to replace the*

*sheer grace of God with sheer license. Burning and burning and never burning up. Glory dragged in the mud. These people are eyesores at your love feasts, Puffs of smoke pushed by gusts of wind. Lost stars in outer space, n the way to the black hole. Grabbing for the biggest piece of the pie. Make a religion of their own whims and lusts, **Go easy on those who hesitate in the faith.***

And now to him who can keep you on your feet, standing tall in his bright presence, fresh and celebrating – to our one God, our only Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Master, be glory, majesty, strength, and rule before all time, and now, and to the end of all time. Yes!

False beliefs leading to false living. Deviant views with right actions are not so much of a problem. This letter seems to have influenced 2 Peter 2. It is full of passion...that drowns the possible prejudice? Some of the OT references you will recognise; but the writer had clearly read the Book of Enoch and the Apocalypse of Moses, which were popular at that time, but did not make it into the Bible.

How do we distinguish new insights from new heresies?

Money-grubbing heretical pastors can be strangely popular – even to those they are fleecing!