

Morning Watch Readings

2018

DECEMBER



This Morning Watch Calendar follows the

Believe
His Prophets

Daily Bible Reading Guide.

Each chapter has a study verse to be used as the Youth
Morning Watch verse of the day.

Daily chapter summary statements are provided.

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December 1

Chapter: Genesis 50

Theme: Final Peace

Study Verse: Genesis 50:19-21

Statement: Remember when we considered whether the brothers had fully forgiven themselves? Here we learn that they had not. They still felt guilty, and their ongoing fear of Joseph made him cry. He gives them a beautiful speech. List all the points of reassurance and forgiveness you find in it.

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, I also have things I still regret. Help me to believe in the fulness of Your forgiveness and let go of them once and for all.*



December 2

Chapter: Exodus 1

Theme: The Peace is Over

Study Verse: Exodus 1:20

Statement: A long time passes between Gen. 50 and Ex. 1. New Pharaohs have arisen, and Joseph's memory is forgotten. This particular Pharaoh must be insecure, because he sees threats where there are none. He looks on the prosperity of the Hebrews in Goshen and is afraid they will overthrow him. Why would the Hebrews want to do that? Nevertheless, the Pharaoh begins a new and frightening regime. What are the steps he takes against the Hebrews? Do they work?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord of history, You knew all along what would happen, and You are working on Your plans already. No doubt there were faithful Hebrews who knew You and did not fear.*



December 3

Chapter: Exodus 2

Theme: Baby Moses

Study Verse: Exodus 2:6

Statement: Here begins the amazing story of one of the greatest leaders who ever lived. Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a land where the ruler has decreed that all baby boys should die? (Some people even today live under circumstances almost like that.) How frightening would it be for the families? How did Jochebed find the faith to set her child in a basket on the Nile? How would she have felt to be paid to care—safely—for her own son?

Response:

Prayer: *Faithful God, You love each and every baby ever born. Show me ways that I can spread Your love and care to those who may be seen as unimportant or even as worthy only to be thrown away.*



December 4

Chapter: Exodus 3

Theme: Moses Argues with God

Study Verse: Exodus 3:12

Statement: When Moses saw the burning bush, he knew his life was about to change forever. Forty more years had passed; Moses was 80, and no doubt believed he would be a shepherd for the rest of his life. God has other plans, but Moses does not give in easily! How many arguments does he make to try and convince God to call someone else? God also gives His personal name here—usually spelled Yahweh. “I AM” is only God—all times, past, present, and future, are as one to God, the source of all being.

Response:

Prayer: *Master, make me willing to go wherever You call me. I don't want to argue or delay, once I am sure it's really You calling me. Thank You for Your patience with all of us.*



December 5

Chapter: Exodus 4

Theme: Still Arguing

Study Verse: Exodus 4:15

Statement: Moses is still not through trying to convince God that He has the wrong idea. Have you ever done this? God remains patient, but eventually loses His patience. He promises to send Aaron to speak for Moses. What promise did God make to them? Who was really speaking?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Lord, call me where You will. If You also give me a partner in ministry, which You usually do, I thank You.*



December 6

Chapter: Exodus 5
Theme: A Hard Heart
Study Verse: Exodus 5:23

Statement: Have you ever left something out in the sun and forgotten it? If you leave wax crayons or candles out in the sun, what will happen? If you leave clay out in the sun, what will happen? It's the same sun—why the difference? God's acts of power eventually brought not only the Hebrews but many of the Egyptians to believe in Him, though even Moses doubted at first. But Pharaoh (and many more) refused, and only got harder-hearted. How do you think God felt about that?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Lord, make my heart soft! I want to believe in You, and I want the problems that happen in my life to only make me trust You more, not shake my faith.*



December 7

Chapter: Exodus 6

Theme: God's Name

Study Verse: Exodus 6:2, 3

Statement: We saw a little about God's name in chapter 4. Here He makes more of a point to it: to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the generations in between, God only called Himself "your God." Now He says to Moses, "I'm drawing even nearer to you and your people. I AM your all-in-all. I AM everything to you, in all times and in all places. I want to be the center of your lives. And you will know it because I AM the One who will rescue you from all your burdens, and even from your sin."

Response:

Prayer: *Yahweh, they clearly didn't get it. Even Moses didn't get it right away. Today we know that You didn't just mean rescue from Egypt, but from the devil himself, when Jesus died for us. And we still don't really get it. But help me to live it anyway!*



December 8

Chapter: Exodus 7

Theme: The First Plagues

Study Verse: Exodus 7:4

Statement: God made it clear from the beginning that He already knew Pharaoh would harden his heart and refuse to listen, no matter what God said or did. But God also promised that even the Egyptians would know that He was God. But it was going to be a long, hard path first. What are the first two signs, in this chapter?

Response:

Prayer: *O Lord, how You must have grieved over Your children who remained stubborn! Please help me to be obedient and not have to face such hard lessons.*



December 9

Chapter: Exodus 8

Theme: Two More Plagues

Study Verse: Exodus 8:19

Statement: Frogs and gnats! It must have been pretty unpleasant in Egypt for a while there. It's interesting that even the magicians started telling Pharaoh, "That's God! You should pay attention!" Pharaoh just keeps on building bricks of rebellion in his heart. He could give in. Imagine how the story would have been different! But he doesn't.

Response:

Prayer: *Mighty God, You are greater than all the false gods the world flings up to catch our eyes. Keep my eyes trained on You alone.*



December 10

Chapter: Exodus 9

Theme: Pharaoh Weakens

Study Verse: Exodus 9:27

Statement: Even the cattle are dying. You would think Pharaoh would have some compassion. It must have hurt God. But not Pharaoh. Boils are worse, but still he holds. It seems strange that it's the thunder and hail that makes him weaken. "Make it stop! I'll let you go!" God makes it stop...and Pharaoh hardens his heart again.

Response:

Prayer: *God, this is hard to keep reading. It must have been much harder for You to do. Help me to see that You will go to any lengths to turn as many hearts as You can toward life. Pharaoh may not have paid attention, but many of his subjects were by now.*



December 11

Chapter: Exodus 10

Theme: Pharaoh's Servants Beg

Study Verse: Exodus 10:7

Statement: If you had any doubts that it's the heart which decides whether to harden or soften, notice that in verse 1 God says He will harden both Pharaoh's and his servants' hearts, but see in verse 7 that in fact, his servants have begun to submit to God. This must have brought God and His angels joy. Locusts and terrifying darkness make Pharaoh weaken again, and he begins to say he'll let them go under conditions, but he really won't.

Response:

Prayer: *Lord of light and mercy, I know that it is only as a last resort that You turn to harsh judgments to try to get people's attention. If I must survive some of that while You try to gain others' attention, I will remember that many others have had to do that in this world, and I will cling to You always.*



December 12

Chapter: Exodus 11

Theme: The Final Consequence

Study Verse: Exodus 11:3

Statement: It must be with great sorrow that God finally sends the last and most horrible plague upon the unrepentant people of Egypt. The only cause for rejoicing is that, among all those people who now “greatly esteem” Moses and Aaron, surely most if not all of them did put the blood on their doorposts. (Take note of verse 2. We will come back to that in a few weeks.)

Response:

Prayer: *O Lord, we know that we are coming up fast on the last days, when once again, dire plagues will fall on those who knowingly refuse You and Your way of love. Like Moses and Aaron, may I be a witness for finding safety in You.*



December 13

Chapter: Exodus 12

Theme: The Great Passover

Study Verse: Exodus 12:14

Statement: What a night! Great horror and sorrow, and great relief and redemption! It's something like the end of time, isn't it? As Pharaoh comes to the limit of his rebellion and lets the people leave, God also institutes one of the great feasts of all time, the Passover. Jesus was our Passover Lamb. Do you have His blood on the doorposts of your heart?

Response:

Prayer: *Father, I look forward eagerly to the day of Your Coming. But I also look with fear and anxiety on those who may be lost. I'm glad I can leave it in Your hands and know You will be merciful.*



December 14

Chapter: Exodus 13
Theme: Signs for the Future
Study Verse: Exodus 13:9

Statement: And so they go. God uses it as a teaching moment. The instructions He gives Moses to pass on to the people are beautiful—a relief to read after the last few chapters. Two major signs are given to remind them forever of God’s power: unleavened bread once a year to commemorate the exodus, and the sanctification of firstborns. Are you a firstborn?

Response:

Prayer: *Son of God, You are the “Firstborn of all creation,” as it says in Hebrews. You are sanctified to God in a way that no human ever can be. Whether I am firstborn or not, You are my only Savior. I worship and thank You!*



December 15

Chapter: Exodus 14

Theme: Victory

Study Verse: Exodus 14:13, 14

Statement: Pharaoh let them go, but he didn't repent. He was angrier than ever, and promptly set off after the Hebrews with his army. Notice how Moses tells them to fight: "Stand by and see." Often that is the instruction God gives us, and we mess things up when we try to do His work for Him.

Response:

Prayer: *Mighty God, You are my victory! You fight off all the evils that beset me, and you place my feet on higher ground. How can I thank You?*



December 16

Chapter: Exodus 15

Theme: The Song of Moses and Israel

Study Verse: Exodus 15:2

Statement: No one who has not been held their whole life in slavery and then miraculously, after long trauma, been set free, can possibly understand the depths of joy in this song. But all of us have been held in slavery to the devil and sin, and all of us can be set free. Then, in heaven, we will sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb—an expanded and glorified version of this song of joy. Perhaps Miriam will lead us in dancing again on that Day!

Response:

Prayer: *My God, there is none like You, and You have brought me out of slavery! I sing and dance to You in gratitude and joy.*



December 17

Chapter: Exodus 16
Theme: Manna and Sabbath
Study Verse: Exodus 16:29, 30

Statement: Six weeks, the people have traveled. The food they brought, no doubt supplemented at least somewhat by what they can find or hunt, is running scarce. So are their tempers. In the first of what will become long, wearying habit, they promptly blame God and Moses. So God sends manna. And reminds them of the nearly-forgotten Sabbath while He's at it. The giving of the law at Mt. Sinai is another month away, so clearly the Sabbath was instituted long before that. (Hint: at Creation!)

Response:

Prayer: *God who provides, You have kept me alive to this day, providing for my needs even if sometimes it's seemed like not enough. I know You have a plan. And if I have more than enough, I pledge to share it with those who do not have.*



December 18

Chapter: Exodus 17
Theme: Water from the Rock
Study Verse: Exodus 17:5

Statement: Here, for the first of many times, God miraculously provides for the people even though all they seem to do is grumble. There are two stories in this chapter—the Rock, which represents Christ, and the battle during which the sun stands still. Have you ever experienced a time when it seemed time was stretched so you could get something important done? Did you thank God for that?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord, I know that You work miracles in my life every day, most of which I don't even know about. Help me, when reading of big miracles like those in this chapter, to remember that You are still active in my life, too.*



December 19

Chapter: Exodus 18
Theme: Family Reunion
Study Verse: Exodus 18:9

Statement: All this time, months at least, Moses' wife and sons have been back in Midian with her father. Now, Jethro brings them to him. What joy they must have felt! They listened eagerly as Moses and Aaron told them the amazing things that had happened, and praised God together. Jethro also has some good advice for Moses. What is it? Have you seen this principle at work in your community?

Response:

Prayer: *Father, thank You for the wisdom of older folks. I have been greatly helped by them. Help me to also be a helper in my home, school, church, and community, lifting burdens from others who bear too many.*



December 20

Chapter: Exodus 19

Theme: On Eagles' Wings

Study Verse: Exodus 19:5-6a

Statement: Three months from Egypt, the people come to Sinai. Little do they know the earth-changing event that will happen here. From Eden, God's people have known His law of love, but it's become very tangled in falsehood and ungodly ideas. Here, God will state that law in a new way. First, He assures Israel that they are His own, precious to Him just as they are. Then He asks them to consecrate themselves, and to be sure not to come too close. Sinful beings would be killed by the full, unveiled presence of God—He doesn't want that to happen!

Response:

Prayer: *Holy One, it is amazing to me that You are willing to come so close to us, and to love us, despite our faults and grumbings. Help me to be more like You.*



December 21

Chapter: Exodus 20

Theme: The Law of God Made Clear

Study Verse: Exodus 20:2-17

Statement: Yes, the whole thing! If you have not already done so, take the time and learn the entire Ten Commandments. The one and only Law of God is Love. Here, that is divided into two: love for God and love for others. Then it is further subdivided into 4 ways we show love for God, and 6 ways we show love for people. Pay special attention to one fact—God stated and showed His love for us first! “I am your God...I have delivered you”! If you get it backwards, thinking you must keep the commandments to get God to love you, you are in trouble!

Response:

Prayer: *Great Deliverer, I bow humbly before You. I ask that You give me Your love, making it possible for me to love You and my sisters and brothers on the earth. Thank You for making it so plain.*



December 22

Chapter: Exodus 21

Theme: Lesser Ordinances

Study Verse: Exodus 21:1

Statement: Now we are beginning a long list of “ordinances”; that is, less than laws. These ordinances were only the beginning of God delivering His children from the lifestyles of the nations around them. They are much better than most of the rules the people are used to. But they are not where God wants His people to be eventually. We can know that because of what Jesus said about them. So, as you read, don’t fear that God really thinks slavery or oppression of women, or multiple wives, and so on, are good. These are first steps for a people who have forgotten how to follow the one true God.

Response:

Prayer: *Lord, You are so patient! You take us step by step from where we were to where You want us to be. I know that even now, three thousand years later, we have not attained the godliness You desire for us.*



December 23

Chapter: Exodus 22
Theme: Property Rights
Study Verse: Exodus 22:5, 25

Statement: As we read these ordinances, we can be on the lookout for principles that are universal. Two show up in our study verses: being responsible for what your animals do to another’s land, and not charging interest to poor people. Do you think people obey these ordinances where you live? Can you find other principles in this chapter?

Response:

Prayer: *God, it is clear that the smallest of our needs matters to You. I will be sure to be responsible for my own animals if I have any, and to be kind and generous to those who have less than I do.*



December 24

Chapter: Exodus 23

Theme: Various Laws

Study Verse: Exodus 23:2

Statement: There are quite a few things covered in this chapter. How many can you count that have to do with treatment of the poor? They seem pretty important to God, don't they? Verse 2 and 3 seem quite relevant to our times. Many people are doing evil and calling it good, and many others are "going along for the sake of peace," but does that follow the spirit of God's instruction here?

Response:

Prayer: *King of the universe, I want to follow Your laws. I will obey any earthly laws that go along with Your laws, but give me courage to refuse to obey those that violate Yours.*



December 25

Chapter: Exodus 24

Theme: Promises

Study Verse: Exodus 24:3, 7

Statement: Twice, the people promise earnestly to obey. “Everything God tells us, we will do! Oh, yes!” As you read over the coming weeks, you will see whether they do or not. Do you keep the promises you make to God? Remember, you can only do it in His strength! This chapter contains an awesome little story. Did you know Moses, Aaron, the high priests, and 70 elders of Israel saw at least part of God, plus the sapphire-appearing pavement under His feet? That must have been wonderful!

Response:

Prayer: *Most high God, I do want to do everything You say to do. Live in me, and do Your works, to make it possible. Help me to cooperate and not fight You.*



December 26

Chapter: Exodus 25
Theme: Offerings
Study Verse: Exodus 25:1

Statement: Almost the entire rest of the book of Exodus will be all about the building of the tabernacle and its furnishings. Why do you think that was so important to God, to put so much about it in the Bible? Here, we see God asking for offerings from the heart, plus the instructions for the first of the furnishings. “Ark” just means “box.” Today, God lives in the “box” of your heart. But these furnishings represented the actual throne of God, where He sits between real archangels. How does reading about it make you feel?

Response:

Prayer: *Father, I am so glad You created this symbolic lesson about You and heaven for Your people in the wilderness. Help me to learn all I can about You while I read about it.*



December 27

Chapter: Exodus 26

Theme: The Tent

Study Verse: Exodus 26:1, 31

Statement: Because the people are still going to be traveling for a long time, their temple must be portable. Like their homes, it is made of curtains. But these must be the best and most beautiful of their work. God gives detailed instructions, both for the tabernacle itself and for the Holy Place and Most Holy Place inside. Don't you wish you could have helped to build it?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord, I know I can help build Your tabernacle here and now, among the people where I live. Let my life be as pure as white curtains, as bright as the blue of heaven, and overshadowed by Your angels, just like the wilderness tabernacle.*



December 28

Chapter: Exodus 27

Theme: Burning Continually

Study Verse: Exodus 27:21

Statement: The furniture inside the tabernacle is vitally important, representing heaven. But the altar outside in the court is as important in its way, because that is how we are made fit to enter. Something (or Someone) innocent is given to God in place of us, who are not innocent. At the time we are reading about, the sacrifice was an animal, but that was only meant to be a shadow, pointing to the Messiah. Mostly, the people missed it...

Response:

Prayer: *Jesus, how can I possibly thank You enough for coming to die in my place? I don't even understand what You did, entirely! But I am SO GRATEFUL!!*



December 29

Chapter: Exodus 28
Theme: For Glory and for Beauty
Study Verse: Exodus 28:2

Statement: There is a great deal of detail on what the priests are to wear. As you read, try to think of spiritual truths and attitudes that might be represented by the various articles. For instance, the white robes represent the purity of Christ’s righteousness, covering us from head to toe. Perhaps the gold is the “gold of obedience.” What can you think of?

Response:

Prayer: *High Priest of my soul, make my life shine for You as the garments of Your priests shone in the old days.*



December 30

Chapter: Exodus 29

Theme: Consecrating the Priests

Study Verse: Exodus 29:44

Statement: Here is a long and holy ceremony setting aside Aaron, his sons, and his future lineage as priests of God. It seems that God wants to make a very clear point of how important it is to be chosen for that task. There are a lot of details. Here is something many people don't realize—the sacrifices were not all burned up; they provided food for the priests. See vs. 32, 33. Perhaps it will help if you make a list that is kind of like an outline: 1-holy clothing. 2...

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, if you call me to ministry, please make it very clear to me. If I am not called to ministry, I still dedicate myself, body and soul, to You to be used as You will.*



December 31

Chapter: Exodus 30

Theme: Final Furnishings

Study Verse: Exodus 30:6-8

Statement: As we stand at the end of a year, it is good to give some thought to the altar of incense. We know from other passages in the Bible that the incense represents the prayers of the people rising to God day and night forever. No matter what has ever happened or will ever happen, no matter how sinful or evil people become, there has never been one day of earth's history when there were not also faithful people raising their holy prayers and praises and petitions to the one true God.

Response:

Prayer: *Lord of time, I look back on my year and thank You for Your care and leading. I look forward to the year that is invisible to me and know that You will care and lead me still. I commit myself to be one of the faithful ones, sending up incense of prayer day and night.*

