

Certificate in Bible Studies

Under the Fig Tree



Aim: To read the entire Bible in one year in a structured way, keeping notes in your prayer and study journal.

Resources: The only book that you need for this course is a copy of the Bible. You will read the daily notes as a guide to reading the Bible. Then you will read assigned chapters each day and keep your personal records in your notebook. Your notes will be monitored from time to time by your tutor.

Introduction: When Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) died on the Cross for us and ascended to be at the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to us to give new life and direct access to God our Father through faith in Him. The Holy Spirit revived us and is always with us to be our teacher.

When we read the Bible we should do so in a prayerful attitude. We should expect the Holy Spirit to give us inspiration and understanding. We can help one another to become confident to study the Bible in this way. This is the purpose of this course of structured daily readings. The brief comments are simply to help you to begin your studies. It is very important that you seek the Lord for yourself and not copy somebody else's ideas. This is not a test of what someone else has learned, but it is a special record of what God has said to you. We are not looking for new ideas, just something special brought to you from your stage of walking with God. In the coming years there will be new things to see as we grow in faith and maturity.

You must set aside regular times of the day when you can read the set portions, pray and seek inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Then write brief notes that are personal to you and can also be shown from time to time to your tutor, who will monitor your progress and encourage you.

Each day you will have assigned readings. For each of the readings **write in your notebook:**

1. **The Bible Verses you have read**
2. **Brief notes on what you read and how you thought about it**
3. **How you were inspired to pray**

In future years you will read these same passages and find new insights, so we do not expect to find everything in one reading, just what the Holy Spirit is inspiring for us today – our food for today.

Here is an example of what you might write for one study in your prayer and study journal:

This morning I read Genesis Chapter 1

It is the account of how God created the world in seven days

I noticed that we do not know how long the first days were. There were no clocks and the sun was not yet created. From the fourth day we know that the earth and sun were in place, so the days would be measured from evening to evening as we measure them today. By the time the first man came to the earth we can see how days and years are counted and the Bible shows us from then on that it was only about six thousand years until today – not very long. I also noticed that God did not speak of the Sabbath Day in the same way that He spoke of the other days. He did not say “evening and morning were the seventh day”. When He declared that all the work of Creation was finished and He rested, no special end was given to that day as if, in one sense, that day is still going on.

My prayer. Thank you Heavenly Father for creating this wonderful world for us and for giving us a place to learn about you.

Later in the day I read Genesis Chapter 2.

This contains a different account of the Creation where we learn about the first man and woman.

I noticed that it was not long before Adam and Eve sinned against God. This made me very sad, because this began the process of decline in God’s wonderful creation so that we, who are alive today, do not experience the innocence of our mother and father, Adam and Eve, but experience all the effects of a fallen race.

My prayer. We are born into a world that is imperfect because of sin and even though we inherit the tendency to sin, we thank you that you have not abandoned us and that through Yeshua’s great sacrifice we are restored to relationship with you.

This is just an example of what we intend you to write in your own diary from your personal study and prayers, day by day through the entire Bible over one year.

Please note that you may have more than one entry for a given day if you are inspired by more than one theme. You should pause after each chapter or main Bible portion to consider what you have read before you go on to the next chapter or portion. You should, if possible, allocate more than one time in the day to do these studies.

Before you start make sure that you are clear on what is expected. Decide how to structure your day to give good time for personal study and prayer. Resolve to seek the Lord daily using the notes as a guideline. If you do this you will find that the Holy Spirit will lead you and inspire you.

A note on the use of Hebrew in these Studies.

The course will be used in a number of countries and translated into a number of languages. This involves the translation of key words into these languages. Sometimes these key words are better left in their original Hebrew. There is a growing interest among Christians to retain the Hebrew original of these key words. There is also a fresh awakening to the Hebrew language following the

return of the Nation of Israel to their Land. We are days of prophetic fulfillment. Hebrew words often carry much fuller and more accurate meaning than the words into which they are translated. A few examples will serve to illustrate this.

- In English, we find the word *Law* in both the Old and New Testaments. Usually, this is a translation of the Hebrew word *Torah*. While *law* is often considered to be based on restrictions and rules that bring punishments, *Torah* means *instruction or teaching*. The purposes of God are better expressed through this Hebrew word than through some translations.
- The Bible is divided into what we call *Old Testament* and *New Testament*. These titles sometimes cause us to fail to see the continuity of all Scripture. In Hebrew the *Old Testament* is called the *Tanakh*, denoting the three sections, *Torah (teaching)*, *Neveiem (Prophets)* and *Ketuveem (Writings)*. These were the traditional classifications of the Bible in the days of Jesus. The use of the word *Tanakh* frees us from misconceptions relating to the word *Old*.
- In our English translations the Son of God is named *Jesus*. This name developed when the Greek language came to prominence. It is much more likely that His Name is *Yeshua*. The Name *Yeshua* means *Salvation*. It is the Name that Mary and Joseph were instructed to give Him. The letters that make up His Name are very meaningful. They are the Hebrew letters *yud, shin, vav, ayin*. These letters mean, *hand, tooth, nail, eyes*. Surely it is no coincidence that *Yeshua's* Name is constructed from two letters that represent the justice of God – eye for eye and tooth for tooth – and two letters represent the mercy of God – a nail and a hand, symbolic of His suffering on the Cross. We call the Lord, *Jesus Christ* and have become accustomed to this. In Hebrew it is *Yeshua HaMashiach*. *Mashiach* refers to His anointing. The word is also translated *The Messiah*. We will, therefore, use His Name according to the original Hebrew, *Yeshua HaMashiach*.
- There is a wonderfully rich Hebrew word for *peace*. It is the word *shalom*. *Shalom* conveys much more than one concept. It linked to *healing, wholeness, completion, rest, prosperity, favour* as well as *peace*.

It is good, therefore, to recover a little of the Hebrew, especially since people from several nations will be making use of these studies. Do not worry if at first it seems a little strange. When you are used to this it may open your interest in studying Hebrew, a little more, yourself. The result will be access to understanding that comes from this foundation language of the entire Bible.