



Week 3 Reading Plan

December 11- December 16, 2023

December 11	1 Peter 2:1-10
December 12	Luke 4:16-30
December 13	Ephesians 2:11-22
December 14	Matthew 15:1-28
December 15	Acts 10
December 16	Romans 15:8-21

3 Things to Look For in this Weeks Reading...

- How God has sought the outsiders, strangers, and those farthest away.
- How often the insiders are the ones who miss Jesus and God’s plan.
- How God’s plan in Christ includes BOTH Jews and gentiles.

December 11th

Look For: *How believing in the One who was rejected, we who are outsiders become his people.*

1 Peter 2:1-10

A Living Stone and a Holy People

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.
² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,

a cornerstone chosen and precious,

and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and

“A stone of stumbling,

and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

December 12th

Look For: *The reaction of Jesus' hometown folks when he claimed to be the Messiah, and when he told them he came not just for them.*

Luke 4:16-30

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives

and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” ²³ And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” ²⁴ And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶ and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸ When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought

him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. ³⁰But passing through their midst, he went away.

December 13th

Look For: *How the status of hopeless non-Jews (gentiles) radically changed.*

Ephesians 2:11-22

One in Christ

¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

December 14th

Look For: *The different way Jesus treated legalistic insiders vs. the way he did the Canaanite woman outsider who pursued him.*

Matthew 15:1-28

Traditions and Commandments

¹ Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ²“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” ³He answered them, “**And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?** ⁴For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ ⁵But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” ⁶he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. ⁷You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

⁸ “This people honors me with their lips,

but their heart is far from me;

⁹ in vain do they worship me,

teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

What Defiles a Person

¹⁰And he called the people to him and said to them, “**Hear and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.**” ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” ¹³He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

²¹ And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

December 15th

Look For: *The way God had to pound it into Peter's brain that no one, not even gentiles, are outsiders to God.*

Acts 10

Peter and Cornelius

¹At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ²a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. ³About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." ⁴And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, ⁸and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

⁹The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance ¹¹and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³And there came a voice to him: "**Rise, Peter; kill and eat.**" ¹⁴But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." ¹⁵And the voice came to him again a second time, "**What God has made clean, do not call common.**" ¹⁶This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

¹⁷Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate ¹⁸and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. ¹⁹And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." ²¹And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is

the reason for your coming?” ²²And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” ²³So he invited them in to be his guests.

The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” ²⁷And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. ²⁸And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”

³⁰And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing ³¹and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ ³³So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be bantized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked

December 16th

Look For: *Paul's realization that Christ came to the Jews to confirm God's promises to them, AND so the gentiles would glorify God for his mercy (for making them a part of his plan).*

Romans 15:8-21

Christ the Hope of Jews and Gentiles

⁸For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name."

¹⁰And again it is said,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

¹¹And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him."

¹²And again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope."

¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

¹⁴ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may

be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, ¹⁹by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, ²¹but as it is written,

“Those who have never been told of him will see,
and those who have never heard will understand.”
