

# BIBLE CHALLENGE 2018

## WEEK 44

The Bible Challenge 2018 Intro and the reflections and notes for each week may be found at [biblechallenge.pendletonchurch.org](http://biblechallenge.pendletonchurch.org)

### Read 4 chapters per day

October 29-November 4: John 5-21; Ruth 1-4; Philemon; Song of Songs 1-6

The meaning of John's gospel is considered by many biblical scholars to be deep and elusive. One can study it for many years and still discover levels of thinking that one had not noticed before, even though in many ways it is simple and straight-forward. Chapters 1-12 are considered to be a "Book of Signs," describing the things Jesus did, the "signs" that show him to be who Christians believe he is. Chapters 13-20 is a "Book of Glory," dealing with the last weeks of Jesus' life, his becoming glorified as he fulfills his Father's will. Notice the connections Jesus makes with the Father as he teaches his disciples. "The Word (logos) became flesh" is a phrase at the beginning of chapter 1. Logos is a word in Greek philosophy that refers to ultimate truth or reason. The writer of John's gospel uses it referring to Jesus as the eternal divine One who has retained the identity of God but become fully human in Jesus Christ. The writer names Jesus the Way, Truth, Life, Bread of Life, Vine. How do each of these names help you understand who Jesus is to you? What does Jesus offer to the world through each of these facets of his being? What does this gospel tell us about love?

The events of Ruth take place at the same time as the earlier part of the book of Judges. It speaks of redemption. It is interesting to note that two characters in this story, Ruth and Boaz, are listed in the genealogy of Jesus found in Matthew chapter 1. Observe the idea of the human need of redemption, and that in the process of redemption there are expectations on both the part of the redeemer and the one redeemed that are clearly brought out in this story. Ruth was a Moabitess, a woman of Moab. According to Genesis 19, Moab came from the union of Lot and his eldest daughter. This was not a Godly union and there was constant fighting between Israel and Moab; as we have read in the historical and prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. God also commanded the men of Israel not to take wives from among the peoples that surrounded them. Yet Boaz is able to redeem Ruth because of her relationship to Naomi, and she was accepted by the elders. How does this situation compare and contrast with the situation described in Paul's letter to Philemon? Recall that in Paul's letter to Philemon he is making an appeal to Philemon on behalf of Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus. In Rome, Onesimus' crime of running away from his master was punishable by death. How does Paul intervene on behalf of Onesimus? How does Jesus intervene on behalf of all humanity? What is the expectation of us as redeemed people?

Song of Songs is exquisite poetry attributed to Solomon. It describes his marriage relationship with a Shulammitte woman, their responses to one another and the responses of those people who witness their love of one another. As the one who prayed to God for wisdom, what can Solomon's words teach us about the wonders of holy marital love? God is love, according to 1 John 4, and as we have seen in other books in the Bible, the analogy of human marriage is used in Scripture to represent the relationship between God and humanity both positively and negatively. What can this work of literature teach us about the relationship between God and His beloved people?