

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

*Worshipping Together* is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. [frankstonrp.org.au](http://frankstonrp.org.au) [bit.ly/WTrpcaf](http://bit.ly/WTrpcaf)

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. [airdrierpcs.org](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [bit.ly/WkBbl](http://bit.ly/WkBbl) or [bit.ly/3yrBbl](http://bit.ly/3yrBbl)

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are written by Henry Fang and are drawn in part from commentaries on Jeremiah by John Thompson, and John Guest, as well as notes from the Reformation Study Bible

# Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

*The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.*



*If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men\* should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father\* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

*Read, pray, repeat.*

\* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

**Reading** Jeremiah 50:1-2 Babylon's Judgment

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

The end of the book of Jeremiah (ch. 46-51) contains a series of prophetic judgments against the nations surrounding God's people. The final prophecy is that against Babylon (ch. 50-51). Almost as much space is devoted to Babylon alone, as to all the other nations combined. This gives some indication of the tremendous importance of Babylon to the whole of western Asia at that time (7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century BC). From Judah's point of view, this importance is heightened because Babylon was the nation which exiled them, and had removed the last Davidic king.

The central theme is the overthrow of Babylon and the restoration of the Jews to their homeland. Although the exile of Judah at the hands of Babylon was God's judgment, yet Babylon itself was far from being "not guilty" (v. 7).

Babylon's judgment begins with her false gods. The day will come when Babylon will be captured and her protective deities humiliated. *Bel* (lit. "lord") was the title of the storm-god Enlil, the chief god of Nippur. *Marduk* (Merodach) was the chief god of Babylon. Bel also became a title (synonymous) for Marduk.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did Babylon symbolise historically to God's people?
2. Why did God use Babylon?
3. Why did God judge and punish Babylon?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

Psalm 97c<sup>2</sup>

1. Pray that God's kingdom come
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

<sup>2</sup> Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

**Reading** Jeremiah 50:41-46 Babylon's Agony

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

This passage contains two interesting reapplications of earlier prophetic sayings by Jeremiah. This time however, they are used to denounce Babylon, and to demonstrate to her that her fate is no different to other sinful cities.

Verses 41-42 repeat 6:22-24 (directed at Jerusalem) with minor changes. The many kings (cf. 51:27) refer to vassal kings assisting their overlord. It was a normal part of a suzerain-vassal treaty, for the overlord kings of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, etc. to call on vassal kings to send contingents of troops to help them in their enterprises. It was Cyrus the Persian, whose army contained a variety of vassal contingents, that fulfilled verses 41-42. Small wonder that the Babylonian king, used to being the victor, is now petrified with fear as the potential victim.

Verses 44-46 repeat substantially 49:19-21 (directed against Edom). God is likened to a lion in search of food coming out of the jungle-like thickets in the region of the Jordan, to seize one of the sheep which were grazing in the evergreen pastures of the Jordan valley. God will be as unstoppable to shepherds and sheep alike as any jungle lion, with respect to the plans he has for the destruction of Babylon.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How did God denounce Jerusalem?
2. How did God denounce Edom?
3. Why were these two prophecies reused for Babylon?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

Psalm 97c

1. Pray for the cities of the world and their leaders to submit to King Jesus
2. Pray for your family
3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

**Reading** Jeremiah 50:21-40 Battle cries

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

This passage contains a further collection of prophecies against Babylon. Babylon is seen as the personification of insolence (v. 31). A sustained graphic description of the destruction of Babylon, its people, its leaders, its army, its wealth, is given.

The work of overthrowing Babylon was God's: "because it is a task of the Lord God of Hosts in the land of the Chaldeans" (v. 25b). The weapons of his wrath which he brought out from his armory were none other than those of the Persian conqueror Cyrus.

At the end of it all, Babylon would become a habitation of desert creatures (v. 39). No self-respecting creatures would live there, much less human beings. The description was designed to heighten the utter desolation of Babylon.

The ultimate picture of destruction was the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities (cf. 49:18). In that case the destruction was complete, for God rained brimstone and fire on the cities, obliterating them and all the valley around, the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground (Gen. 19:24-25). For a city that proudly boasted an ancient wonder, in its Hanging Gardens, what an overthrow awaited it for such a city to be turned into a desert!

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah?
2. Which middle-eastern country would the city of Babylon be located in today?
3. What remains of it today?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 97c
1. Pray for the advancement of God's kingdom in your locality
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Jeremiah 50:3-10 Out of the north!

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

The expression *nation from the north* is a favorite of Jeremiah (1:14; 4:6; 6:1; 13:30; 15:12; 46:20; 47:2; 50:41; 51:48). Although the meaning is obscure in earlier chapters, it is eventually defined as Babylon. Now Babylon itself would be attacked by a "nation from the north"! In Jer 51:11, 27-28 the enemy is specified as the Medes. It seems preferable to understand the "nation from the north" here as a general designation in order to express the great reversal: Babylon, the great enemy from the north, would experience the same fate she had dealt to others.

A total Israel (Israel and Judah) will seek Jehovah with weeping and come join themselves to Him. Although Israel had been exiled over 100 years earlier by the Assyrians, they too are included with Judah in this prophecy against Babylon (Babylon later defeated and ruled over Assyria between 605 - 539 BC). An everlasting covenant is in view, one which will not be broken again (cf. Jer 31:31-33; 32:40).

Jeremiah uses a pastoral image to explain the captive peoples breaking loose from their Babylonian exile to return home to Judah- once the sheepfold was opened, the male goats would rush to leave the enclosure first. This was fulfilled under King Cyrus of Medo-Persia.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Which nation fulfilled the prophecy against Babylon?
2. How did Israel and Judah return to God?
3. Are there movements in church history where covenant reformation or renewals have occurred?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 97c
1. Pray for your ongoing sanctification as believers, turning away from sinful ways and seeking after God.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Jeremiah 50:11-16 God's vengeance

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

This passage continues the note of vengeance and reversal running through the whole of chs. 50–51.

Again, Jeremiah uses pastoral images to represent the changes. He compares triumphant Babylon to young heifers running free in pastures and neighing stallions, showing her delight at the capture of Jerusalem and Judah. But this powerful Babylon, the chief of the nations will be reduced to a minor status, the least of the nations.

The “mother” referred to, is the city of Babylon, personified as the mother of the inhabitants. Babylon formerly destroyed other cities, turning them into a dry and barren wilderness, uninhabited, a complete waste which caused passers-by to be appalled and to whistle at the sight of their wounds (cf. 6:8; 9:10; 12:10–11; 18:16; 19:8; 34:22; 44:6; 49:17, 33; etc.). But in the day of Jehovah's wrath the same expressions would be used of Babylon.

Babylon had once breached the walls of other cities (2 K. 25:4, 10) and destroyed their defenses. Now her turn has come. Jeremiah notes that Babylon's defeat is Jehovah's *vengeance* on the proud and ruthless city, and cries out, *Take vengeance on her! Do to her as she has done!*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who was Babylon against? How about verse 14b?
2. Who was ultimately against Babylon?
3. Where else in the Bible is Babylon personified?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 97c
1. Pray for God's blessings on the meek
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Jeremiah 50:17-20 Israel's Return

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

This passage speaks of Israel, the unity of the Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom. It is introduced as a scattered flock chased by lions, that is, enemy nations, defined as Assyria and Babylon. Assyria first fed on Israel when they invaded and destroyed Northern Israel in 722 b.c. and took many into captivity (2 K. 17:1–6). Then more recently Babylon gnawed the bones of Israel by destroying the southern kingdom and taking many captive (2 K. 24).

God is pictured as a shepherd who will bring his flock Israel back to its pasture so that it grazes again on the rich pastures of Carmel and Bashan, and on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead.

God also brings about days of restoration in the sense of spiritual renewal and forgiveness. The forgiveness of the remnant will be such that their guilt and their sins will be completely obliterated (cf. 31:34; 33:8; 36:3). If the people carried in their memory a sense of guilt and despair such as that which is depicted in Ezek. 33:10–11 (“Our transgressions and our sins are upon us and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?”), they may be assured that the dark shadow of guilt that had dominated their thinking would be taken away, never to threaten them again.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is special about Carmel and Bashan?
2. What is amazing about the spiritual renewal in this passage?
3. How is the spiritual renewal truly accomplished (Cf. Heb 10)?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 97c
1. Pray for the forgiveness of sins and from the guilt of sins
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member