

Read Through the Old Testament

Daily Bible Reading Guide with Devotional Thoughts-and Prayer Starters © Pastor Frank Eckert

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

JANUARY, YEAR B

(Recommended: READ summary BEFORE reading the Bible verses!)

☐ **January 1** **Nehemiah 12: 27-47**

Reflect: In order to increase the population of Jerusalem, people were chosen to move into the walled city. The dedication of the walls, a ceremony of great joy, marked the peak of Governor Nehemiah's achievements. Offerings were gathered.

Prayer: Stir Your people, Father, to support the work of our pastors. Amen.

☐ **January 2** **Nehemiah 13: 1-31**

Reflect: Nehemiah takes renewed action against intermarriage with people of pagan nations. Such practice, contrary to God's command, could cause Israel to lose its national identity and make it unfit to be the bearer of God's promise to all nations.

Prayer: God, help us to oppose what's contrary to Your will and commands. Amen.

☐ **January 3** **Esther 1: 1-22**

Reflect: The Persian king, Ahasuerus ordered Queen Vashti to display her beauty to those in attendance. She refused to comply with his wishes. His guests advised him to depose Vashti. He sent out an edict that every man be lord in his own house.

Prayer: Lord God, teach all husbands never to be cruel, autocratic tyrants. Amen.

☐ **January 4** **Esther 2: 1-23**

Reflect: Esther rose to the king's side as his queen. Without knowing that she was Jewish, the king loved Esther more than any other woman. Mordecai, her cousin, saved the king's life by exposing a plot to assassinate him.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we thank You that Your guiding hand often influences us for good even through insignificant details that we may learn from others. Amen.

☐ **January 5** **Esther 3: 1-15**

Reflect: Mordecai refused to bow down before Haman, the king's highest official. Haman settled on a date to kill the Jews. He told lies to the king that the Jews were disloyal to him. Tricked by Mordecai, the king agreed for every Jew to be executed.

Prayer: Father, deliver Your Church from enemies who seek to destroy it. Amen.

☐ **January 6** **Esther 4: 1-17**

Reflect: Mordecai promptly set in motion a counterplot by enlisting Esther's cooperation. Reluctant at first, she agreed to risk her life to entreat the king for her people. The result was that the tables were turned on Haman.

Prayer: Lord Christ, give us courage to fight for the right at all costs. Amen.

☐ **January 7** **Esther 5: 1-14**

Reflect: Esther knew that the only hope of counteracting Haman's plot was to get through to the king. She found favour in his sight. So she invited the king and Haman to a banquet with only them present along with herself. Haman was confident of the queen's support. He had erected a gallows to execute Mordecai.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, in our battle for what is right, help us not to give up hope, but to realise that You can turn the tables just at the right moment. Amen.

☐ **January 8** **Esther 6: 1-14**

Reflect: Esther wisely took her time before bringing her problem to the king's attention. Circumstances developed, which made the king favourably, disposed toward her countryman, Mordecai. Haman came to the king to get Haman's death warrant. But the king had taken sides against him.

Prayer: Father Almighty, out of the midst of plans for evil that the Devil devises to destroy us, in Your mercy, make all things work together for our good. Amen.

Read Through the Old Testament

Daily Bible Reading Guide with Devotional Thoughts-and Prayer Starters © Pastor Frank Eckert



January 9

Esther 7: 1-10

Reflect: A dramatic, drastic reversal of fortunes occurred. Haman's plot would have included his Jewish queen! Not Mordecai but Haman was hanged on the gallows and his position of the highest office in the land given to Mordecai!

Prayer: Lord, we praise You for those times when we were hopelessly in trouble, and You in Your grace turned the tables to help us. Amen.



January 10

Esther 8: 1-17

Reflect: According to Persian law, once an edict was decided it could not be reversed. But Mordecai, the new grand vizier, issued a decree authorising the condemned people to defend their lives. Many accepted Judaism as proselytes.

Prayer: O Father, turn the hearts of many in faith toward You when Your justice and Your grace are demonstrated. Amen.



January 11

Esther 9 and 10

Reflect: As the tables were turned on Haman so the new edict by Mordecai reversed the fate of the Jews. After many of their enemies were slain, the Jews celebrated with joy the deliverance they had won. Mordecai called on all Jews to make their deliverance an annual celebration called the Festival of Purim, still celebrated today.

Prayer: O God, we thank You for special days on which we remember the great deliverance You have wrought for us, like Good Friday and Easter Day. Amen.



January 12

Job 1: 1-22

Reflect: Job suffers sudden and complete reversal of fortune. A blameless man, he is deprived of wealth, posterity and health. The drama of the Book of Job stems from Satan who challenges God saying: "Take away his good things and Job will actually curse God." God accepts his challenge.

Prayer: O Lord, though we cannot fully understand the mystery of "why" You allow us to suffer, help us to know that in Your love You will use it for our good. Amen.



January 13

Job 2: 1-13

Reflect: Satan now asks that the test be intensified. Reduced by disease, Job still uttered no recrimination against God, even when his wife became Satan's mouthpiece, urging him to curse God. His friends become Satan's allies. They said he was guilty of grievous sins.

Prayer: Lord God, help us to realise when we are trying to comfort someone whose loss is great, that our quiet presence maybe more helpful than many words. Amen



January 14

Job 3: 1-26

Reflect: Unrelieved agony of body and soul has now built up emotional pressure in Job to the point of explosion. He longs for relief in death. He is asking, Why should God prolong his life? With endless variations his friends contest that his suffering is a just reward for unconfessed guilt. Their attempt to answer Job's, "Why, Lord?" and his rebuttal of their explanations makes up the bulk of the Book.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, if we are experiencing great agony, give us patient endurance and a great faith to bear it without rebellion against You. Amen.



January 15

Job 4: 1-21

Reflect: The debate goes around in circles, but is very effective in the total impact it makes. Job is asking, Where is God's justice if he punishes the innocent the same as he punishes the guilty? And why is it so difficult to accept the fact of decay and death?

Prayer: O God, help us not to pretend that we by nature are free from guilt. Amen.



January 16

Job 5: 1-27

Reflect: Job should not be surprised if trouble would strike him as inevitably as the sparks fly upwards from a heated iron when struck. When the Almighty has achieved his disciplinary purpose, He blesses his penitent children.

Prayer: Holy Father, though You smite us, please heal us. Amen.



January 17

Job 6: 1-30

Reflect Job thinks his calamity exceeds all ordinary misfortunes. He reaffirms his desire that God should annihilate him. He is disappointed in his friends because they fail to give him even a kind word. He charges them with lovelessness

Prayer: O Lord, if we are at fault, give us a true friend who will rebuke us. Amen.

Read Through the Old Testament

Daily Bible Reading Guide with Devotional Thoughts-and Prayer Starters © Pastor Frank Eckert



January 18

Job 7: 1-21

Reflect: Job now turns from his friends to God, pleading for compassion because of the transitoriness of human life. Job as it were says: "Lord, why do You hurt me? I am not important to You." Yet he reaffirms his trust in a loving God.

Prayer: Father, help us so that, in Jesus, our death is our victory over death. Amen.



January 19

Job 8: 1-22

Reflect: Bildad now tries to convince Job that he must suffer as a consequence of his sin. He implies that if Job would seek God and repent of his alleged terrible sin, his tears would change to laughter as surely as God is God.

Prayer: O God, help us to see our afflictions as exercises drawing us to You. Amen.



January 20

Job 9: 1-35

Reflect: The accusation that Job is suffering what he deserves irritates him to the point that he denounces the fairness of the trial. How can puny man enter into a contest with Him who removes mountains and commands the sun and the stars?

Prayer: Lord God, we look not to self, but to Jesus for our Righteousness. Amen.



January 21

Job 10: 1-22

Reflect: Job continues to accuse God of dealing unfairly with him. He protests that God should hound him openly in search for sin, all the while knowing that he is "not guilty". He claims God tracks people down as if he were "lion" hunting.

Prayer: O Father, keep me from despair because of Your steadfast love. Amen.



January 22

Job 11: 1-20

Reflect: Zophar gives no words of sympathy but castigates Job for challenging God's providence. He declares that God's justice never lets the guilty escape retribution while rewarding those who set their "heart right" when chastised.

Prayer: Father, help us to accept Your will when You discipline us by suffering. Amen.



January 23

Job 12: 1-25

Reflect: Job rejects the claim to superior wisdom made by all three friends. He brushes aside their diagnosis of him. He concludes that the omnipotent God wields His power indiscriminately, destroying both the "blameless" as well as the "wicked."

Prayer: Lord, help us to know we walk not by sight, but by faith. Amen.



January 24

Job 13: 1-28

Reflect: Job wants to speak to God because His friends are of no help. He demands to know what he did to deserve being hounded to death. Job is confident he can prove his innocence.

Prayer: Help us to confess: God, even if You slay me, yet will I trust in You. Amen.



January 25

Job 14: 1-22

Reflect: Job is asking: How can God hold him to account for what he is by nature? Why does God make him suffer the consequences of sin in this life if in the life to come He is going to waive all punishment for penitent sinners?

Prayer: O Jesus, Your promise of heaven gives us comfort for heavy burdens. Amen.



January 26

Job 15: 1-35

Reflect: Eliphaz tries to convince Job that he is wrong: for concealing his guilt; for rejecting the comfort of his friends, for raging against God's holiness, and for making himself liable to the fate of those who rebel against God. Eliphaz wants to smash Job's impenitence.

Prayer: O God, guard us against judging other people unfairly, uncharitably. Amen.



January 27

Job 16: 1-22

Reflect: Job lets fly at his friends for their heartless kind of comfort in his dire predicament. His children are dead, his wife estranged and his friends against him and his illness will soon kill him.

Prayer: Lord, we plead not our own innocence, but the innocence of Jesus. Amen.

Read Through the Old Testament

Daily Bible Reading Guide with Devotional Thoughts-and Prayer Starters © Pastor Frank Eckert



January 28

Job 17: 1-16

Reflect: Job gives way to renewed laments as he faces the stark reality of his suffering, unrelieved by God's intervention. While God delays, Job's distress goes on unabated. His friends taunt him that relief is near only if he confesses his crime.

Prayer: God, help us ever to hold on to the hand of our Good Shepherd. Amen.



January 29

Job 18: 1-21

Reflect: Bildad declares that Job's rhetoric betrayed how puffed up he was in his own importance. Job must wake up to the fact that the wicked do not escape the punishment they deserve, and he is no exception.

Prayer: Lord Christ, prevent us from judging some people to be guilty of some great sin just because they are suffering great pain and affliction. Amen.



January 30

Job 19: 1-29

Reflect: Job regards his friends not as comforters but tireless tormentors. He confidently believes he will see God in the life beyond the grave. In the midst of doubt and despair, the dimly burning wick of Job's faith suddenly bursts into a bright flame. Job rejoices in the hope of full restoration after death.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we thank You for the promise that we shall rise with a glorified body, and be with You forever. Amen.



January 31

Job 20: 1-29

Reflect: Indignant at Job's insulting replies, Zophar vigorously defends his previous contention that when a man is wicked, God's punishment does not fail to overtake him. Zophar was utterly wrong in applying this to Job.

Prayer: Thank You, Father God, for delivering us from punishment for our sins, by giving us Jesus our great Redeemer and Liberator. Amen.