

Read Through the Old Testament

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

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

MARCH, YEAR B

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

☐ **March 1 Ecclesiastes 8:1-17**

Reflect: God will finally punish the wicked unless they repent. Go ahead, says the Preacher, you may as well enjoy God's gifts in a way that pleases Him. Don't be worried that you can't find out the answer to all the mysteries that this life presents.

Prayer: Father, when You don't give us the answers, help us to trust in Your love. Amen.

☐ **March 2 Ecclesiastes 9:1-18**

Reflect: The Preacher gives advice on how God wants us to enjoy life. It's important to apply ourselves to our appointed task with enthusiasm. Use the energy God gives us while it is still day. Death may come suddenly, trapping us like a fish in a net.

Prayer: O God, defeat our pessimism. Give us optimism to enjoy life to Your glory. Amen.

☐ **March 3 Ecclesiastes 10: 1-20**

Reflect: It does make a difference, the Preacher insists, how a person reacts to circumstances. He points out the effects of wise words. Avoid foolishness. Wisdom helps us to succeed in doing a job without getting hurt and without wasting energy.

Prayer: O Holy Spirit, grant us the wisdom we need and the good sense to use it. Amen.

☐ **March 4 Ecclesiastes 11: 1-10**

Reflect: "Cast your bread upon the waters" means: Share your blessings! A storm could sink a merchant's ships and ruin his fortune. But this possibility must not stop him from investing. Invest in deeds of mercy! Youth need to apply their energies to good purposes.

Prayer: O Father, empower us to invest our time and talents wisely, in serving You. Amen.

☐ **March 5 Ecclesiastes 12: 1-14**

Reflect: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth," the Preacher warns. All too soon we must leave our fleeting earthly abode and our soul returns to God. Life has true meaning when we allow the light of Jesus to shine upon us. Always respect and trust God.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, help us to find the only true satisfaction in life by knowing You. Amen.

☐ **March 6 Song of Solomon 1:1-17**

Reflect: Christian tradition says the shepherd and the maiden mean Christ and his Bride, the Church. The drama opens with the outcry of a maiden brought to the king's chambers. In her thoughts, she makes an appeal to her faraway shepherd lover to help her.

Prayer: O Creator God, thank You for the beautiful gift of love between a man and a woman: a reflection of the true love between Jesus and His believers. Amen

☐ **March 7 Song of Solomon 2: 1-17**

Reflect: Countering the king's proposal, the maiden regards herself as a wild flower not to be transplanted. The lily reminds how her shepherd lover had said in comparison with her, all other maidens were brambles. To her, he is like an apple tree, excelling all other trees.

Prayer: O Jesus, make us loyal and strong to resist all enticements away from You. Amen.

☐ **March 8 Song of Solomon 3: 1-11**

Reflect: Distress over her separation from her lover disturbs the young woman's sleep. She dreams she must search for him on the streets of Jerusalem. She finds him and will not let him go. The king entices her to forget her troth to her impoverished shepherd.

Prayer: Lord, help us not to be led away from You. But keep us ever faithful to You. Amen.

☐ **March 9 Song of Solomon 4: 1-16**

Reflect: The maiden tries hard to resist the king's advances. She imagines she hears her shepherd lover assuring her that she has captured him by her ravishing beauty. Resolved to keep her virginity intact for him, she is deliriously anticipating the rapture of marital union.

Prayer: O Creator, give us a greater respect for love within the bounds of marriage. Amen.

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☐ March 10 Song of Solomon 5: 1-16

Reflect: In agreeing to meet his beloved, her shepherd lover visualises their wedding festivities in full swing. In her feverish dreams she hears him knocking at her door at night. But when she opened the door he has vanished. Her search for him in the city was futile.

Prayer: O Lord, keep our eyes focused on You, until the marriage feast in heaven. Amen.

☐ March 11 Song of Solomon 6: 1-13

Reflect: The king heaps excessive praise on her beauty, hoping to break down her resistance. However, the royal suitor discovered in this comely maiden a strength of character as formidable as an army.

Prayer: O Saviour, thank You for the beauty of Your love and grace, beyond word. Amen.

☐ March 12 Song of Solomon 7: 1-13

Reflect: Her flowing locks are thought of by the king as strands enmeshing a man in a net of love. They hold even a king captive. But the maiden wins the victory. She repeats her declaration of commitment to her shepherd lover. She longs to give herself fully to him.

Prayer: Heavenly Bridegroom, may we give ourselves in total commitment to You. Amen.

☐ March 13 Song of Solomon 8: 1-14

Reflect: The maiden speaks of her yearning to surrender herself into her shepherd lover's embrace. She longs to assure her brothers she has retained her chastity and to make her beloved proud of her victory. She calls to her beloved to make her dreams come true.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, make our love invincible, reflecting Your undying love to us. Amen.

☐ March 14 Isaiah 1: 1-31

Reflect: The people had sunk to a low level of rebellion against God. Isaiah had the hard job of prophesying doom and destruction. But God in His mercy stood ready to be reconciled to them, if they would demonstrate true repentance.

Prayer: O God, make the scarlet of our sins as white as snow in Lamb's blood. Amen.

☐ March 15 Isaiah 2: 1-22

Reflect: Isaiah envisions the spiritual Jerusalem that God promises as built on the foundation of Christ. He foretells the restoration of the bliss and harmony of the Garden of Eden. Isaiah urges people not to trust in man because it is better to trust in God.

Prayer: O Father, help us to place our highest trust not in human beings but in You. Amen.

☐ March 16 Isaiah 3: 1-26

Reflect: God gives Isaiah a further oracle. Law and order will collapse like a building deprived of its supporting pillars. Corrupt officials will produce civic chaos. Princes will fatten themselves with the spoil of the poor. Debased women will mourn in sackcloth.

Prayer: Great Judge, forgive us our injustices! Spare us and give us Your peace. Amen.

☐ March 17 Isaiah 4: 1-6

Reflect: We have here a vision of a Jerusalem where the presence of God will be evident. "The Branch of the Lord," refers to a restored David's line. As God has led the ancestors of the nation through the desert, so now His presence will guide and bless them again.

Prayer: Lord Christ, we thank You for Your gracious presence guiding Your Church. Amen.

☐ March 18 Isaiah 5: 1-30

Reflect: The Lord, the Owner of the vineyard, tells what kind of fruit He had a right to expect from the inhabitants of Jerusalem in return for the blessings He had bestowed on them. Israel's root-sin had been their ungrateful rejection of God's goodness. Isaiah lists six major indictments against them God will summon a far off nation to devour them.

Prayer: O Righteous Judge, turn us in daily repentance to You and to Your grace. Amen.

☐ March 19 Isaiah 6: 1-13

Reflect: Isaiah is given a glimpse of the glory of the King, in whose name he is to speak. Only after Isaiah's guilt is taken away by a burning coal from the altar can he offer his services as God's ambassador. Because the people refuse to heed his call to repentance, only a stump will remain after they are punished. But God will preserve a nucleus.

Prayer: O God, send us out as Your ambassadors to share Your saving Gospel. Amen.

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☐ **March 20** **Isaiah 7: 1-25**

Reflect: The people would not repent and be healed. If King Ahaziah of Judah does not repent he will be struck down by the combined attack of Israel and Syria. He refuses. But in His mercy the Lord gave the house of David the sign of Immanuel. Though the Syrian and Israelite campaign would fail, God would send the Assyrians to devastate the land.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your beloved Son, born of the Virgin Mary, to be our Immanuel, God with us, our Saviour. Amen.

☐ **March 21** **Isaiah 8: 1-22**

Reflect: The name given Isaiah's older son foretold the failure of the enemies to conquer Jerusalem. The younger son's name foretold that the Assyrian king would overcome Syria and Israel. This would really happen. To listen to the soothsayers would bring despair.

Prayer: O God, our God, in all our troubles turn us daily to You, our great Refuge. Amen.

☐ **March 22** **Isaiah 9: 1-21**

Reflect: To establish God's kingdom a child is to be born to the throne of David. The Messiah's reign of justice, righteousness and peace began when angelic hosts announced the birth of a son. It will reach its climax when He finally comes in glory. But Isaiah also predicts doom because unrestrained indulgence in sin would end in chaos and civil war.

Prayer: Father, thank You for sending the Child born to be King, our Saviour. Amen.

☐ **March 23** **Isaiah 10: 1-34**

Reflect: The wealth accumulated with the help of unjust judges will vanish on the day of punishment. God called on Assyria to punish them for their godlessness. But He spared Jerusalem and then soon mowed down the Assyrians like a forest before a terrifying storm.

Prayer: King of kings, even as of old You brought a remnant of Your people through, so You will bring Your Church Militant through to be the Church Triumphant. Amen.

☐ **March 24** **Isaiah 11: 1-16**

Reflect: Isaiah, with prophetic eye, beholds a King growing out of Davidic stock, whose rule was to affect human history to the end of time. He is the promised Messiah, permanently endowed by the Spirit of the Lord with perfect personal qualities. He dispenses justice with absolute righteousness. He makes it possible for His subjects to enjoy complete inner peace. A dramatic change takes place in their lives.

Prayer: O God, our Healer, thank You for sending Your Son the Messiah on whom rested the Spirit of the Lord, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might. Amen.

☐ **March 25** **Isaiah 12: 1-6**

Reflect: Isaiah foretells further of the blissful, universal reign of "the Root of Jesse" to be established. The subjects of the Messianic kingdom have every reason to be grateful. Though they have deserved the wrath of God, He is no longer angry with them.

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, with joy we draw living water from the wells of salvation as in Your Word and Sacraments centred in Jesus Christ, our King. Amen.

☐ **March 26** **Isaiah 13: 1-22**

Reflect: The doom to be proclaimed specifically on Babylon is first seen in the larger perspective of the Day of Judgement. God gathers His army. Recruits come in uncounted numbers. In the day of His fierce anger He will "punish the world for its evil."

Prayer: Lord of Mercy, the destruction of ancient nations gives us a glimpse of Your fierce wrath over godlessness. We humbly praise You for Your grace in delivering us. Amen.

☐ **March 27** **Isaiah 14: 1-32**

Reflect: Jubilant over the termination of hard service under the king of Babylon, the redeemed burst into a song of defiance, addressed to their oppressor. They ridicule Babylon for their silly attempt to dethrone the Creator of the universe.

Prayer: O Lord, Eternal God, because we believe in You, we find protection against all our enemies, for at all times You are our Refuge and Strength. Amen.

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☐ **March 28** **Isaiah 15: 1-9**

Reflect: A further oracle pronounces doom especially on Moab. When the Israelites were on their long journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, they were denied passage through Moabite territory. The Lord on this unbrotherly tribe decrees destruction.

Prayer: Lord God, let us heed Your warning: Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Give us Your guidance and grace to walk in Your ways of helpfulness to others. Amen.

☐ **March 29** **Isaiah 16: 1-14**

Reflect: But there is hope for the outcasts of Moab, if they seek refuge on “the mount of the daughter of Zion” where justice and righteousness would rule. But divine judgement will overtake Moab, he says, because it is guilty of “pride and insolence.”

Prayer: Awesome, Cosmic Creator, protect us, we pray, from the sin of pride which means rebellion against You. Give us a spirit of daily repentance and humility. Amen.

☐ **March 30** **Isaiah 17: 1-14**

Reflect: The Assyrians captured Damascus (capital of Syria), and ten years later Samaria (capital of Israel), and caused great desolation. This was Syria’s and Israel’s doom, a warning of the judgement awaiting all rebels against God’s kingdom.

Prayer: Lord of our lives, help us always to turn to You in faith, for You alone are the God of our salvation and the Rock of our refuge. Amen.

☐ **March 31** **Isaiah 18: 1-7**

Reflect: Isaiah warns against making a defensive pact with the Ethiopians. The Ethiopians controlled the land of the Pharaohs for 60 years. All people must hear when God calls them to account. Mount Zion represents the rule He exercises over His worldwide church.

Prayer: Great God, draw Your people to worship You with joy in Your Church. Amen.