

Read Through the Old Testament

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

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

AUGUST, YEAR B

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

☐ **August 1 Ezekiel 18:1-32**

Reflect: Ezekiel refutes the popular belief that either the righteousness or the iniquities of a previous generation are transferable to the next. Yet some mortals shall not die. This gift of life forever is theirs by faith in Christ. How do we prove the sincerity of our repentance?

Prayer: Father, thank You for the gift of unbroken fellowship with You forever. Amen.

☐ **August 2 Ezekiel 19: 1-14**

Reflect: Ezekiel laments the demise of the Davidic monarchy. The first king to be mourned by him was Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, who had been taken captive to Egypt. The second was Jehoiachin, who had been taken a prisoner. The third, Zedekiah, was the last to hold a ruler's sceptre in Judah. Do we appreciate the reality of God's warnings before too late?

Prayer: O Jesus, give us true wisdom that we may by Your grace have eternal life. Amen.

☐ **August 3 Ezekiel 20: 1-49**

Reflect: Over against Israel's frequent faithlessness God wanted to demonstrate that He is faithful to His word, and He alone is God. Israel would be preserved as God's people. Do we sincerely appreciate God's faithfulness to us over against our sins of faithlessness?

Prayer: Father, thank You for giving us Your patience over against our disloyalty. Amen.

☐ **August 4 Ezekiel 21: 1-32**

Reflect: Nebuchadnezzar stands at the fork of a road. Shall he go to Jerusalem or to the Ammonites? He decides to go up against fortified Jerusalem. He is divinely commissioned to punish them for their guilt. Do we see how God uses the sword of His wrath as a two edged instrument to destroy His enemies and to draw His people closer to Himself in faith?

Prayer: Father, may we use afflictions to draw us closer to You in faith and trust. Amen.

☐ **August 5 Ezekiel 22: 1-31**

Reflect: The catalogue of sins against Israel includes idolatry, injustice, violence, slander, adultery, fornication, extortion. This must be punished. Because eternal punishment is real are we doing our best to spread His saving Gospel into our world today?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in compassion to our perishing world, move us to do our maximum to spread Your Gospel of grace to others today. Amen.

☐ **August 6 Ezekiel 23: 1-49**

Reflect: Oholibah represents Jerusalem and Oholah, Samaria. The name Oholah alludes to the presence of God who dwells in a tent, meaning the tabernacle. Oholibah refers to God's approved place of meeting with His people in Jerusalem. The sisters both played the harlot, meaning unfaithfulness to God. How can we be faithful until our end?

Prayer: Father, keep us always true to You in repentance and faith. Amen.

☐ **August 7 Ezekiel 24: 1-27**

Reflect: Jerusalem is like a big cauldron. Its inhabitants are held helplessly within it and cooked through and through. Its surviving inhabitants are taken into exile. At the death of his beloved wife Ezekiel was asked to remain silent about his grief. When news of Jerusalem's fall would reach Ezekiel, he would be able to speak and would proclaim a new message. Do we realise God is using catastrophes in our day, to warn believers and unbelievers alike?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, move us to live under Your grace through daily repentance. Amen.

☐ **August 8 Ezekiel 25: 1-17**

Reflect: No nation will be able to thwart God's plan of using Abraham's descendants to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Israel, purified and redeemed, will once again play its assigned role in establishing Messiah's kingdom. Some of God's enemies will be led to salvation. Do we underestimate the power and grace of God to win people for Christ?

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for calling us to be part of Your eternal household. Amen.

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☐ August 9 Ezekiel 26: 1-21

Reflect: Ezekiel's oracles are now directed against Tyre, a wealthy maritime city, because of its inordinate pride. Nebuchadnezzar even in his 13-year siege of Tyre, did not conquer the city, but the sea did later. Pride goes before a fall. How are we cultivating humility?

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, help us with the sword of the Spirit to slay our sinful pride. Amen.

☐ August 10 Ezekiel 27: 1-36

Reflect: Ezekiel laments Tyre's destruction.. The city is compared to a magnificent ship, perfect in beauty, excellently equipped, lavishly arranged. But suddenly it was wrecked by an east wind. The proud ship sank with the loss of all cargo and all men on board.

Prayer: O God, give us humility over Your gifts. May we use them for Your glory. Amen.

☐ August 11 Ezekiel 28: 1-26

Reflect: The Prince of Tyre set himself up as a god. He had enormous wealth. But he will be invaded by Babylon and will be defeated. The proud Prince will share in the fate of all that rise up against their Maker. Is pride only a small fault or a radical rebelliousness?

Prayer: O Father, thank You for gathering us into a spiritual Israel under Jesus. Amen.

☐ August 12 Ezekiel 29: 1-21

Reflect: Ezekiel announces the forth-coming downfall of Egypt. Like a dragon, Egypt could not obstruct God's plan of salvation through His servant Israel. The Babylonian king would punish Egypt on God's behalf. Are we resolutely holding to our Lord's promises?

Prayer: O God, help Your spiritual Israel under David's Son to see their full glory. Amen.

☐ August 13 Ezekiel 30: 1-26

Reflect: Egypt's doom foretells the "day of the Lord" which will overtake not only Israel but also all nations. Pharaoh was defenceless before the king of Babylon. Do we fully acknowledge the fearful judgement of God's almighty arm to carry out His punishments?

Prayer: O God, we stand in awe of Your power, but we accept Your amazing grace. Amen.

☐ August 14 Ezekiel 31: 1-18

Reflect: The allegory of the cedar tree emphasises Egypt's fall due to pride. God will cut the great cedar tree down, because it refused to acknowledge it was God who made it beautiful. Are we taking to heart the reality of God's warning about pride?

Prayer: Father, by the humble sufferings of Jesus, grant us true humility of heart. Amen.

☐ August 15 Ezekiel 32: 1-32

Reflect: The Lord asked Ezekiel to compose a lamentation about Pharaoh. He was not to express pity concerning him but to mock Pharaoh's pretension of being a lion among the nations. Rather he was a dragon that the beasts of the earth would devour. Aren't we deeply impressed that not even the mightiest on earth can deflect God from His plans?

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, help us spread Your Gospel to rescue those in darkness. Amen.

☐ August 16 Ezekiel 33: 1-33

Reflect: The Lord asks Ezekiel to sound a clear calling the people to accept God's offer in faith, otherwise they do not have salvation. God wants all to be saved. This is His will of grace. Do we realise clearly that repentance means not only godly sorrow but also strong determination to amend our ways?

Prayer: Father, we ask for Your pardon and the will to produce fruits of repentance. Amen.

☐ August 17 Ezekiel 34: 1-31

Reflect: Over against black pessimism, Ezekiel promises that the redeemed of God are safe under the Messiah prince. All suffering will be left behind when the King says: "Come, inherit My kingdom." Are we deeply convinced that only God can break the reign of despair by the gift of His Son sent into the world?

Prayer: O Human-Divine Shepherd, feed us with the true Bread of Life. Amen

☐ August 18 Ezekiel 35: 1-15

Reflect: God declared that Edom, who harboured perpetual enmity against His chosen people, would not be able to prevent the restoration of Israel. Will God not smash every evil plan that would hinder the coming of His kingdom?

Prayer: God of all Goodness, even if it may seem at times that You have abandoned us, enable us to hold on to Your promises of deliverance. Amen.

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☐ August 19 Ezekiel 36: 1-38

Reflect: God will reserve and preserve the Promised Land, repopulate it and shower blessings on it. He will turn the tables on the greedy, malicious predator. When His people come home from exile, the Holy Land will again be their inheritance. What is the only way that we can become inhabitants of Paradise Regained?

Prayer: Father, give us a new heart so we can be sure of entering Your kingdom. Amen.

☐ August 20 Ezekiel 37: 1-28

Reflect: If in the Valley of Dry Bones, God can put flesh on a skeleton and call it back to life, He can also resuscitate the kingdom of Israel. Do we realise how we need the Holy Spirit to sustain us in the new life and give us daily spiritual renewal?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, sustain us in the new life, until the day of our resurrection. Amen.

☐ August 21 Ezekiel 38: 1-23

Reflect: The Gog and Magog stand for the fierce foe coming from the north. After a cataclysmic battle the aggressor would be defeated. God would be acknowledged by all the nations as the undisputed victor. Are we fighting strongly the good fight of faith against Gog and Magog in our world today?

Prayer: O God, help us to use Your powerful Word to conquer the forces of evil. Amen.

☐ August 22 Ezekiel 39: 1-29

Reflect: Israel would have been destroyed had not the Lord come to their rescue. The army of Gog had vast numbers. Their discarded weapons provided Israel with firewood for seven years. Their corpses filled a valley. It took seven months to bury the entire enemy dead. Do we realise the vast variety of forms that Satan uses to attack us?

Prayer: O God, by Your Spirit, empower Your Church to fight and overcome Satan. Amen.

☐ August 23 Ezekiel 40: 1-49

Reflect: Ezekiel's vision of the rebuilt Temple gives us a picture of His spiritual temple in His people's hearts. There is balance and beauty in all sections of the building. Do we regard our own church as a symbol of God's presence among us?

Prayer: O God, Father of All, thank You for the orderliness and beauty of our churches and our worship services reflecting Your holiness and grace. Amen.

☐ August 24 Ezekiel 41: 1-26

Reflect: The ornamental feature of the Temple consisted of carved and engraved cherubim and palm trees. Very likely there was an altar set with the Bread of the Presence. Do we need to cultivate a greater spirit of reverence and honour for our sacred places?

Prayer: King of kings, we praise You for the reassurance of Your presence in our lives through Your Word and Holy Sacraments dispensed to us in our House of God. Amen.

☐ August 25 Ezekiel 42: 1-20

Reflect: The four sides of the Temple form a perfect square. If the Holy God is to dwell here with His special presence, it must be devoid of anything uneven, or inharmonious. Do we appreciate the symbolism of our church buildings, reflecting the glory of God?

Prayer: O God of love and beauty, thank You for the care and devotion shown by many of our members toward their church, as they thereby express their love and gratitude. Amen.

☐ August 26 Ezekiel 43: 1-27

Reflect: The Lord comes to His new Temple, shining with His glory. The purpose of God's restored presence in His temple was to receive the worship of His redeemed people. Ezekiel envisioned worshippers in the New Testament temple. Do we truly cherish the privilege that we can come direct into God our Father's presence?

Prayer: Lord, enable us to become a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You. Amen

☐ August 27 Ezekiel 44: 1-31

Reflect: Ezekiel found the Temple gate was shut. This was to signify that only Christ can open the way that leads to communion with His Father. Do we fully realise that true repentance is the one and only way we can have and retain entrance into God's kingdom?

Prayer: O Saviour Christ, give us a humble and holy awe toward the place where You dispense Your Word and Sacrament, as well as appreciation for our pastors. Amen.

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☐ **August 28 Ezekiel 45: 1-25**

Reflect: Disorderly operations around the Temple were not allowed. For that reason a portion of land was set aside as a holy district. The sacrifices were provided for and three annual festivals: the Passover, New Year's Day, and the Festival of the Tabernacles.

Prayer: O Great God, help us joyfully to make good use of the wonderful opportunity we have to go to Your house and to worship You. Amen.

☐ **August 29 Ezekiel 46: 1-24**

Reflect: Ordinances were made governing the Sabbaths, New Moons and the Daily Offerings, as well as for regular worship. The Prince personified the privilege of a reconciled people to commune with God. Do we truly accept that there is value in orderliness and regularity regarding our worship life?

Prayer: Lord of Grace, as members of Your spiritual Israel of the New Testament, move us often to praise, extol and glorify You for the redemption from Satan's dominion. Amen.

☐ **August 30 Ezekiel 47: 1-23**

Reflect: Even the Dead Sea was able to sustain life when the river of life flowing from the Temple flowed into it. Water is the symbol of life-giving blessings flowing in the channels of divine grace. Do we properly appreciate how the regenerating water of Holy Baptism transforms us from being dead in our sins to being alive for God?

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, we praise You for making us alive again through Him who died and is alive forevermore, producing in us the Holy Spirit's fruits. Amen.

☐ **August 31 Ezekiel 48: 1-35**

Reflect: Revered in His sanctuary, God's presence will hallow the lives of all redeemed sinners. Isn't there comfort to know God's presence will always be among us until we reach the New Jerusalem above and then for evermore?

Prayer: O Jesus, while passing through the things temporal, help us ever to hold on to the things eternal until pain and death will be replaced by perfect life forever. Amen.