

Read Through the Old Testament

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

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

JULY, YEAR B

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



July 1

Jeremiah 44: 1-30

Reflect: A great assembly of Jews had fled to various parts of Egypt. Here they went on provoking God's anger because of their burning incense to other gods. Punishment awaited them because they refused to listen to God. Are we listening to God's warnings?

Prayer: Father, help all who oppose You that they may turn to You and be saved. Amen.



July 2

Jeremiah 45: 1-5

Reflect: Baruch, the faithful secretary of Jeremiah, survived the destruction of Jerusalem and was able to be with his mentor to the end. He owed his life as a prize of war to God's promise. Can you think of a time when God fulfilled His promise of special protection?

Prayer: God, thank You for the times You have fulfilled Your promises to deliver me. Amen.



July 3

Jeremiah 46: 1-28

Reflect: In these final chapters of Jeremiah, he gives us oracles similarly as in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Amos, against the foreign nations. Babylon defeats Egypt, who was grievously wounded, driven back and humiliated. How well do we realise that God's judgement on those who oppose Him is as real and powerful today as it ever was in ancient days?

Prayer: Lord God, thank You for saving all who trust in You with obedient hearts. Amen.



July 4

Jeremiah 47: 1-7

Reflect: The conquering forces out of the north would inundate Egypt like a torrent, leaving devastation in their wake. Are we spreading the message that in our nation those who rebel against God's authority make themselves subject to God's condemnation?

Prayer: O Father, stir us to send out Your Word of warning to all who oppose You. Amen.



July 5

Jeremiah 48: 1-47

Reflect: The storm of God's judgement moves to the ancestral territory of the Moabites, God's inveterate enemy. Moab, once so proud, is humiliated. But Moab will be restored. Do you think pride and ungodliness are the downfall of the nations to this very day?

Prayer: Lord of the Universe, give us and our nation a deeper humility, in Jesus. Amen.



July 6

Jeremiah 49: 1-39

Reflect: A dreadful fate awaiting the nations. The judge of all the earth determines the rise and fall of human power structures. Do we accept that though God loves the human race, yet because of His holiness He has the right to punish ungodliness?

Prayer: Lord Christ, we pray for Your Gospel to reach more fully into all nations. Amen.



July 7

Jeremiah 50: 1-46

Reflect: The downfall of Babylon is crucial in the history of redemption. Babylon, the punisher is punished, the destroyer is destroyed. For their idolatry, God like a lion in his fierce anger destroys Babylon and redeems Israel. Can we see how God used the enslavement of His exiled people to bring them to repentance?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for releasing us from Satan's captivity and giving us peace. Amen.



July 8

Jeremiah 51: 1-64

Reflect: God orders the exiles from Babylon to return to Zion. Out of nothing, God will create a future that will overturn systems of domination. Do we observe how worthless and perishing is the worship of idols, over against the power of the living God, our Creator?

Prayer: Father God, help us to proclaim Your Word to friend and foe alike. Amen.



July 9

Jeremiah 52: 1-34

Reflect: Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord. What he foretold became historic fact. This book has been about survival in the face of catastrophe. Aren't we impressed that if Jeremiah's words of judgement were fulfilled, then his words of hope will triumph as well?

Prayer: Almighty God, You humble proud transgressors and You lift those up who are afflicted and who turn to You in true faith. Amen.

Read Through the Old Testament

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

☐ July 10 Lamentations 1: 1-22

Reflect: Zion, the Holy City, now destroyed, is personified as a humiliated, deserted widow. Piteously, she mounts the poet's stage to bewail her widowhood. There is a solid attitude of resignation. If we are suffering sustained lamentation do we succumb to morbid self-pity?

Prayer: Holy Father, thank You for lifting the yoke of sin and punishment from us, and changing our lamentation into rejoicing. Amen.

☐ July 11 Lamentations 2: 1-22

Reflect: In His fierce anger, God dealt out a catastrophe, especially in destroying Jerusalem and the Temple. He thereby brought an end to their worship life and their theocracy. Infants dying of starvation demonstrate the severity of God's judgement. Do we realise sufficiently how the fury of God's wrath has been overcome for us by His grace?

Prayer: Father, we lament our sins. Deliver us from our agonies and give us peace! Amen.

☐ July 12 Lamentations 3: 1-66

Reflect: This lament rises like a wave over a sea of tears. The victim feels like being locked into a dark tightly sealed horror chamber. It's like being torn apart by a wild beast, or being shot at with arrows. Jeremiah pleads for relief from his pain and grief. He expresses a triumphant faith. In our afflictions are we determined to hold on to God in faith and hope?

Prayer: Lord, Your mercies are new every day. Your steadfast love never runs dry. Amen.

☐ July 13 Lamentations 4: 1-22

Reflect: Infants die of thirst because their mothers lack strength to suckle them. Robust men die a lingering death from hunger. Otherwise compassionate women try to defeat starvation by eating their own children. If she repents, Israel can again be an instrument of God's salvation. Are we complacent because we have been spared severe punishments?

Prayer: O Father, in the midst of misery we look to You for Your help and comfort. Amen.

☐ July 14 Lamentations 5: 1-22

Reflect: The people are devastated because their temple is in ruins. Has God rejected them? They count on God to restore their relationship with Him, so they can be His channels for His kingdom. When things are tough do you challenge God to be true to Himself?

Prayer: Creator God, we humbly praise You for restoring Your penitent children. Amen.

☐ July 15 Ezekiel 1: 1-28

Reflect: In a vision, Ezekiel saw a fiery storm cloud out of which emerged four unearthly creatures propelling a chariot with a celestial platform framing the glory of the Lord by a rainbow. God will judge the heathen and deliver His beloved people still held in shameful captivity. Are we willing to emulate the humility that Ezekiel demonstrated?

Prayer: Awesome, Cosmic Creator, give us a deep reverence for You and Your word. Amen.

☐ July 16 Ezekiel 2: 1-10

Reflect: Now fortified by God's Spirit, Ezekiel was equipped to speak again God's words to Israel. He was not to let the distasteful aspect of his work deter him. But he would have a deep inner satisfaction as if he had actually eaten the scroll and it tasted as sweet as honey. Can you remember a time when a difficult task when finished gave you deep satisfaction?

Prayer: O God, feed us on Christ the Bread of Life. Help us to speak Your Word. Amen.

☐ July 17 Ezekiel 3: 1-27

Reflect: Because of the people's stubbornness, God will equip Ezekiel with great mental and spiritual fortitude. No other prophet had received such an intensive orientation course. To fortify him further, God repeated the vision but this time the prophet was not bitter and unwilling. How do we handle it when we feel unwilling to follow God's direction?

Prayer: Eternal God, make me willing to obey Your will, trusting in You to help me. Amen.

☐ July 18 Ezekiel 4: 1-17

Reflect: Ezekiel was to play, symbolically, the part of an apostate nation. He was to lie on his right hand side for many days and on his left side as if bearing Israel's punishment. As well, he was to live on very little food baked on a fire fuelled with human dung. This would foreshadow they would be guilty of ritual uncleanness. But moved by Ezekiel's objection, God allowed him to use cow dung instead. Do you think God still uses famine and earthquake and other terrible disasters to turn our world to look to Him for help?

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, teach us from our afflictions, to turn to You all the more. Amen.

Read Through the Old Testament

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

☐ **July 19 Ezekiel 5: 1-17**

Reflect: Their abominations have kindled God's anger. The hair represents the people and what God will do to them. Some will perish during the siege. The enemy will slaughter some. Some would be scattered abroad in the exile. The prophet describes the disasters that will come. Are we telling others the warning that comes from disasters to our world?

Prayer: Father, we pray for our world to listen to the warnings against godlessness. Amen.

☐ **July 20 Ezekiel 6: 1-14**

Reflect: The people were defiling the sanctuary in Jerusalem. On the hilltops, they worshiped nature rather than the Creator. God would make the land desolate, as a warning even to the remnant. Do we take to heart God's warnings and stay close to God?

Prayer: Merciful Father, help us to call others to repent and to turn to You in faith. Amen.

☐ **July 21 Ezekiel 7: 1-27**

Reflect: So definite was the coming judgement that Ezekiel stands, as it were, in the midst of the nation's ruins and sobs uncontrollably like one mourning the death of a loved one. Their abominations will not go unpunished. The Lord is determined to smite in holy anger. Does God's punishment on all who refuse to repent call us to respect His sovereignty?

Prayer: Lord Christ, may the power of Your grace stir us to obedience toward You. Amen.

☐ **July 22 Ezekiel 8: 1-18**

Reflect: Ezekiel, as God's watchman, through words, symbols and visions was to send the alarm! The piercing light of God's glory is now to penetrate the dark recesses of His people's hearts. It laid bare their blatant idolatry as an abomination of the most heinous and revolting nature. Why doesn't God use visions so much to speak to us today?

Prayer: King of kings, give prophetic voices today to call people to repent. Amen.

☐ **July 23 Ezekiel 9: 1-11**

Reflect: Because Israel's guilt was exceedingly great, Ezekiel heard an order for a citywide massacre issued by God. A mark was put on the foreheads of those not guilty of abominations. These were not to be slain. How does the Lord first put His mark upon us?

Prayer: O Lord, spare us who have the sign of the Lamb of God upon our hearts. Amen.

☐ **July 24 Ezekiel 10: 1-22**

Reflect: The slaying of the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be followed by the city's burning. Filling his hand with fiery coals, he went out to scatter them over the city. The result would be disastrous. Are we afraid to spread the message that the fire of hell's punishments is just as real as the radiance of heaven's reward of grace?

Prayer: O Jesus, on the final day may we not be with the goats, but with the sheep. Amen.

☐ **July 25 Ezekiel 11: 1-25**

Reflect: Still in a vision, Ezekiel sees the city to be like a big cauldron filled with the slain victims of the leaders' crimes. God will execute judgment upon them. But the remnant of God's people will return from exile and be saved. What is it in God that He chooses you to be among His remnant people, the saved?

Prayer: Father, You are our God and we are Your people all because You gave us a heart transplant at our baptism. Amen.

☐ **July 26 Ezekiel 12: 1-28**

Reflect: Covering his face, Ezekiel impersonated the blinding of the king's eyes and his removal to Babylon where he would die without having seen the country. As well, the people would almost starve. Fear would seize them. But they rejected the prophet's message. How well do we take to heart the proclamations of our pastors?

Prayer: God, let us not say: Ours was a godly family, You owe us salvation. Amen.

☐ **July 27 Ezekiel 13: 1-23**

Reflect: God is against those prophets that announce "Peace" when there is no peace. Their message was like whitewash on a mud-brick wall, which provided no protection against the storm. Ezekiel also condemns the women who prophesy falsely and practise divination. Do you encourage your pastor to keep preaching in line with God's word?

Prayer: Jesus, protect Your Church from false teachings lest we lose Christ. Amen.

☐ **July 28 Ezekiel 14: 1-23**

Reflect: God wanted not just the people's lips but their hearts. He would destroy them for their hypocrisy. Their abominations meant national doom was inevitable. Are we doing our best to warn against the godlessness and complacency of our world today?

Prayer: God, our Hiding Place, strengthen our pastors to warn against hypocrisy.

Read Through the Old Testament

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

☐ July 29 Ezekiel 15: 1-8

Reflect: Using a parable, Ezekiel emphasises Israel's guilt and God's justice in punishing it.

God's chosen people were like a vine but when God looked for the fruits of repentance, He found none. Are we taking to heart our Lord's warning that He will burn dead branches?

Prayer: O Jesus, help us to remain ever joined to You, the Vine, our true life. Amen.

☐ July 30 Ezekiel 16: 1-63

Reflect: Israel deliberately abused God's goodness and played the harlot. But through a penitent Israel, God will fulfil His plan for worldwide salvation. Do we realise enough just how amazing is God's grace in that He forgives those who are truly penitent?

Prayer: Father, we thank You that in spite of all our sins, You still bind Yourself to us through Your everlasting covenant. Amen.

☐ July 31 Ezekiel 17: 1-24

Reflect: The great eagle is the king of Babylon. The cedar twig is the house of David. The other great eagle is Egypt. God's plan of universal redemption was not to fail when Jerusalem fell. Can you see how from David's line God established His eternal kingdom?

Prayer: We praise You, O Jesus our Messiah King, for coming to planet earth to die and rise again to establish Your eternal kingdom. Amen.