

Read Through the Old Testament

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

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

MAY, YEAR B

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

☐ **May 1 Isaiah 49: 1-26**

Reflect: In serving God, Israel's ministry may seem futile, but its reward is in God. Through Israel, God's suffering Servant, people from all nations would come to know the Lord as their Deliverer. How are you spreading Christ's Gospel?

Prayer: O God, move us to do our best to share Your salvation with others. Amen.

☐ **May 2 Isaiah 50: 1-11**

Reflect: Israel is not divorced from God but is being punished for her unfaithfulness. Taught by God, the Servant Israel brings God's comfort to fellow-Israelites. Isaiah expresses unshakeable confidence that God will lead Israel safely through the darkness.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for Your love in pleading for us at God's throne. Amen.

☐ **May 3 Isaiah 51: 1-23**

Reflect: God will fulfil His promised salvation to the whole Church. The end time will be a return to the perfection of Eden. After a struggle between God and the devil symbolised by the dragon, Israel lies exhausted. Her oppressors must drink deeply of God's wrath.

Prayer: Father, we know that You will lead us to the place of no sorrow. Amen.

☐ **May 4 Isaiah 52: 1-15**

Reflect: The Lord directs His people to awake from their hopelessness. Israel's return from exile would be a vital step toward establishing a universal kingdom. From Israel would come the Redeemer of the world. What does this peace and salvation mean to you?

Prayer: O Jesus, may I awake from hopelessness and embrace Your peace. Amen.

☐ **May 5 Isaiah 53: 1-12**

Reflect: This beautiful chapter, often called the Golden Passional, points to the Messiah, the Suffering Servant. Like a leper He suffers painful loneliness and rejection. By the Servant's vicarious suffering, He restores all people to God. We are healed by His stripes. What difference does this chapter make to your faith and life?

Prayer: O Jesus our substitute, You suffered, to give us peace and healing. Amen.

☐ **May 6 Isaiah 54: 1-17**

Reflect: In this song of assurance, like a faithful husband God will not reject His Israel, His faithless "wife". God's everlasting love will create reconciliation. On the basis of His covenant of peace, He offers a restored Paradise. How will you apply these promises?

Prayer: Lord, help me to embrace Your steadfast love with the arms of faith. Amen.

☐ **May 7 Isaiah 55: 1-13**

Reflect: God calls everyone to a banquet of His unpurchaseable grace. He calls all to return to Him with repentant faith. His offer of pardon is far above what we would expect. His Word is like seed providing sustenance. What can you do to sow this seed?

Prayer: Father, thank You that the seed of the Word is bearing results. Amen

☐ **May 8 Isaiah 56: 1-12**

Reflect: Responding to God's undeserved goodness, God's people find joy in doing what is right toward other people and toward Him. God denounces His priests for neglect of their sacred duties. Are we praying for our pastors, and encouraging them in their work?

Prayer: Lord God, protect us and our pastors from complacency and pride. Amen.

☐ **May 9 Isaiah 57: 1-21**

Reflect: There was an absence of popular protest against unprincipled politicians because the people were as bad as their leaders. This reflected a deep-seated malady of their ruptured relationship with the Creator. Is your life a song of gladness for the peace with which God heals your broken, troubled life?

Prayer: O Jesus, make me grateful for all the peace given me by Your grace. Amen.

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☐ May 10 Isaiah 58: 1-14

Reflect: The way to glory is constructed on the solid roadbed of God's redemptive mercy. The Servant, His own Son, saved His fallen creatures by suffering and dying in their stead. The prophet is instructed to cry aloud against hypocritical observance of religious practices.. Do we realise we insult God by merely going through the outward motions of worship?

Prayer: O God, help us to prove the sincerity of our repentance by obeying. Amen.

☐ May 11 Isaiah 59: 1-21

Reflect: Jerusalem was destroyed and its inhabitants carried off into exile by a heathen king. The chastened survivors acknowledged their guilt. God renews His covenant with those who turn to Him. Are you striving hard to promote justice in your daily life?

Prayer: O God, forgive our disobedience. Give us Your abiding presence. Amen

☐ May 12 Isaiah 60: 1-22

Reflect: Jerusalem can arise out of the shadow of death only because the light of the Lord had come on them. After returning from exile, foreigners will rebuild the city of Jerusalem. God's people, the new Jerusalem, would attract uncounted throngs from every nation under the sun. . How are you spreading the Gospel of light to all nations?

Prayer: Lord God, make me to be a light, drawing others to Christ the light. Amen.

☐ May 13 Isaiah 61: 1-11

Reflect: The glory to be revealed is announced by a Messenger who proclaims the good news of the Lord's favour and its liberating effects. The beneficiaries are moved to exult over the robe of righteousness. How can you see here the Messiah identified in Jesus?

Prayer: Thank You Jesus, for clothing us in the robes of Your righteousness. Amen.

☐ May 14 Isaiah 62: 1-12

Reflect: The envisioned scene is a panoramic view of the new Jerusalem. Its walls of salvation encircle the entire globe. Adulterous and unfaithful, the daughter of Zion deserves to be called Forsaken and Desolate. But God will call her His Delight and Married to Him. The redeemed of the Lord will go through His gates of salvation. On what basis can God's watchmen, the pastors, assure you of entry into the new Jerusalem?

Prayer: O God, thank You for the joy of salvation in Christ our faithful Lord. Amen.

☐ May 15 Isaiah 63: 1-19

Reflect: In spite of their rebelliousness, God assures them of His continuing loyalty. The prophet begs God to deliver His forsaken people from their sins, and to restore their ruined sanctuary. To what response in your life does God's loyalty stir you?

Prayer: O True Friend, move me to a right response to Your steadfast love. Amen.

☐ May 16 Isaiah 64: 1-12

Reflect: The prophet on behalf of his people, confesses their sin. He pleads that the Lord would cool His anger and have compassion on desolate Jerusalem and the temple. Do you hold up the mirror of God's Law often to your soul to show you your need of forgiveness?

Prayer: Dear Father, You are the Potter, we are the clay. Mould and transform us daily by the power of Your Spirit, to be vessels pleasing to You. Amen.

☐ May 17 Isaiah 65: 1-25

Reflect: As good clusters of grapes are separated from the bad, so God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous. God will rejoice Jerusalem and her sorrow will be over. His people will live in security. How does the promise of heaven barrack you onwards?

Prayer: O God, keep me growing in faith that I may endure until the end. Amen.

☐ May 18 Isaiah 66: 1-24

Reflect: Jerusalem's rebirth is a divinely wrought miracle. The vision continues of Jerusalem's prosperity. God will destroy His enemies but will reveal His glory to all nations. God's people, like the new creation, will endure forever. When God's Law accuses you, how well are you applying the comfort of His grace and pardon?

Prayer: O God, You have delivered us from hell that we might go to heaven. Amen.

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☐ May 19 Jeremiah 1: 1-19

Reflect: Jeremiah discharged his prophetic duties with courage during the reign of Judah's five kings. He is charged with power to destroy whatever opposes the kingdom of God. How will you find help when you are fighting for a just cause against great opposition?

Prayer: Dear Father, make us strong and deliver us from the forces of evil. Amen.

☐ May 20 Jeremiah 2: 1-37

Reflect: Israel's devotion to God was like a short honeymoon. They soon forsook God, the fountain of living waters, whereas the heathen people remained true to their gods who were no gods. In the midst of faithlessness, how can you remain faithful to your faithful God?

Prayer: O Creator, surrounded by false gods, keep us ever faithful to You. Amen.

☐ May 21 Jeremiah 3: 1-25

Reflect: God likens the sins of His people to a profligate woman who commits harlotry with her many lovers. They assert God cannot be angry with them forever because they are His precious possession. God will forgive if they repent. Are we confessing our sins to God?

Prayer: O God, help us to hear You calling us daily to confess our sins to You. Amen.

☐ May 22 Jeremiah 4: 1-31

Reflect: God's judgement will sweep over the land like a hot desert wind! In a vision, the Prophet sees the terrifying results of God's irrevocable judgement. Like a victim, helpless before her murderer, Jerusalem stretches out her hand for help and suffers her death throes, alone! How well are we listening to God's warnings and His grace?

Prayer: Lord, help our nation to come to You before it is too late. Amen

☐ May 23 Jeremiah 5: 1-31

Reflect: God has no alternative in the face of rampant idolatry, but to unleash His punishment. He will bring upon them the ravages of a vicious invader. Judah must be punished for tolerating those who defraud the defenceless. How can we be voices for God?

Prayer: Father, we would plead for those who are godless, to repent. Amen.

☐ May 24 Jeremiah 6: 1-30

Reflect: God will pour out His wrath upon the unrepentant, especially on leaders for deceiving the people. For He gave them prophets to guide them. But they were ignored. As Jeremiah tests the people, like one testing ore for silver, he discovers there is no precious metal to be found. How well will our faith stand up to the furnace of God-sent affliction?

Prayer: O Jesus, nurture our faith on Your Word, and keep us ever loyal. Amen.

☐ May 25 Jeremiah 7: 1-34

Reflect: Jeremiah charges the people that the Temple's presence was wrongly seen by them as automatically assuring them of God's protection. A complete change of heart was required. No good was it to offer burnt offerings mechanically to try to force God to overlook their frightful disobedience. Do we see God's grace as our only hope of deliverance from His judgment?

Prayer: O God, over against Your wrath, help us to hold on to Your mercy. Amen

☐ May 26 Jeremiah 8: 1-22

Reflect: Israel so often forgets God's Law with complacent indifference. Instead of sympathy, Jeremiah has nothing but contempt for his untrustworthy nation. The stillness of death shrouds the land. Are we rightly applying Law and Gospel to our hearts for healing?

Prayer: Lord God, if guilt troubles our hearts, help us to turn to Your grace. Amen.

☐ May 27 Jeremiah 9: 1-26

Reflect: The complete corruption of the people is the basis for this lament. Our earthly goals are nothing compared with the glory of knowing God. Are we sometimes letting the outward observance of going to church take the place of true repentance?

Prayer: O God, a baptism certificate is not enough. Nourish baptismal faith. Amen.

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☐ May 28 Jeremiah 10: 1-25

Reflect: Because Israel was “uncircumcised in heart”, they were no better than their heathen neighbours. Here we have Jeremiah’s most scathing criticism of worshiping what is made by the craftsman’s hands. How can we fight against the temptation to worship things instead of the Creator?

Prayer: Father, renew us and help us to worship You in spirit and in truth. Amen.

☐ May 29 Jeremiah 11: 1-23

Reflect: Jeremiah now labels Israel’s fatal complacency as a revolt against God. God had made a pact with them that because He was their God and they His people they were to respond to Him with their obedience. Their hypocritical observances in God’s house could not avert doom. The people openly threatened Jeremiah with death if he continued to prophesy in God’s name. How can we overcome the perverseness of our old sinful self?

Prayer: O Living God, strengthen me to let the new nature overcome the old. Amen.

☐ May 30 Jeremiah 12: 1-17

Reflect: Jeremiah is told to trust the omniscient, omnipotent God to know how to deal with those who have dealt treacherously with Him. Even those who have ravished God's heritage will be included in the worldwide salvation to be mediated by Abraham’s offspring. Does our faith line up with our actions in regard to racism?

Prayer: O God, move us, to do our best to spread Your saving Gospel. Amen

☐ May 31 Jeremiah 13: 1-27

Reflect: A linen waistcloth, worn directly on a man’s loins, symbolised the close relationship God wanted but could no longer have with His chosen people. But it needs to be thrown on the rubbish heap. So this evil people had reached a point of spiritual decay where they were not worth saving. The Lord will not tolerate their abominations and he will send His judgements upon them. Do we truly value God’s grace?

Prayer: Lord, move us all to listen to You as You stretch out Your arms of mercy. Amen.