

Read Through the Old Testament

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

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

DECEMBER, YEAR A

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

☐ **December 1**

2 Chronicles 24: 1-27

Reflect: Joash repairs the Temple. Jehoiada, the high priest restores worship to the Temple. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada warned the people if they forsook God, He would abandon them. For this message he was murdered. Joash's reign ends in disaster.

Prayer: Father, in Your grace, help us never to forsake You, but to trust in You. Amen.

☐ **December 2**

2 Chronicles 25: 1-28

Reflect: Amaziah's son, Uzziah, succeeded him on the throne. At the beginning of his reign he did what was right according to God's law. Later he rejected censure for his idolatry, threatening God's prophet with death, but himself was assassinated.

Prayer: God, help us always to heed Your warning against pride. Amen.

☐ **December 3**

2 Chronicles 26: 1-23

Reflect: Uzziah wrongly takes to himself the prerogatives of the priesthood, but has military and economic success. His anger at the priests was really anger at God. Being struck with leprosy he was ritually unclean, and was not buried with the other kings.

Prayer: Holy Father, cleanse us from the leprosy of sin, especially of pride. Amen.

☐ **December 4**

2 Chronicles 27 1-9

Reflect: Jotham was a totally good king.. He continued his father's building program, adding to the fortifications of Jerusalem. But even a ruler's piety cannot keep the punishment of God from an idolatrous people if they persist in their wickedness.

Prayer: Help us, O God, to follow the example of good leaders. Amen.

☐ **December 5**

2 Chronicles 28: 1-27

Reflect: The totally good reign of Jotham is followed by the totally bad reign of Ahaz. Both Israel and Syria defeat Judah with tremendous slaughter. The evil Ahaz committed was too terrible for him even to be buried in a royal tomb.

Prayer: Lord of the nations, turn our leaders and our people in repentance and trust toward You, that peace and justice may rule supreme. Amen.

☐ **December 6**

2 Chronicles 29: 1-36

Reflect: Under Hezekiah, the great worshiping assemblies were restored . He set the Temple service back on its proper course. Idolatrous worship was removed. Temple sacrifices and choral praise to God were recommenced.

Prayer: Lord God, help the church to lead our nation and world to reject all forms of idolatry and godlessness and to pursue worship of You, the true God. Amen.

☐ **December 7**

2 Chronicles 30: 1-27

Reflect: Hezekiah restored the observance of Israel's great festivals, the first being the Passover. This re-established Israel's covenant relations with God, reconstituting the nation as God's chosen people. Hopes for greater unity were expressed.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, making us willing to serve You with joyful patience. Amen.

☐ **December 8**

2 Chronicles 31: 1-21

Reflect: Hezekiah's eradication of idolatry spread from the Temple to the whole region. He put priests and Levites back on duty in the Temple. The people supported them so they could pursue their studies and the teaching of God's Word.

Prayer: O Father, thank You for leaders who encourage us to seek You. Amen.

☐ **December 9**

2 Chronicles 32: 1-33

Reflect: Sennacherib came against Judah because Hezekiah had ceased to pay the annual tribute to Assyria. He reminded his people that the enemy was no match for the Lord. Struck by a deadly illness, he prayed the Lord for help and he recovered.

Prayer: Lord God, help us to fight our battles, and to gain the victory. Amen.

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December 10

2 Chronicles 33: 1-25

Reflect: Mannasseh reigned longer than any other king of Judah or Israel but also set a record period of apostasy. But Mannaseh humbled himself greatly before the Lord. Brought to Babylon in chains, the reprobate king found forgiveness with God.

Prayer: Heavenly King, guide our government to strive for peace and justice. We pray that You would protect our leaders from corruption. Amen.



December 11

2 Chronicles 34: 1-13

Reflect: Josiah was the best king since David and Solomon. In the process of repairing the Temple, the high priest Hilkiah found the book of the law and read to the people. They rededicated themselves to God, celebrating the Passover.

Prayer: Lord of the Church, enable us by Your grace to obey Your will. Amen.



December 12

2 Chronicles 35: 1-27

Reflect: The priests and Levites carried out Josiah's orders. The Passover was observed on a grand scale. The Ark was returned to the Lord's house. Neco of Babylonia mounted a campaign against Judah. Josiah died in battle.

Prayer: O God Almighty, we thank You for faithful, responsible rulers. Bless our leaders in church and state with Your wisdom and guidance. Amen.



December 13

2 Chronicles 36: 1-23

Reflect: The apostate nation was doomed. Neco, the Babylonian deposed Jehoahaz. The next king Zedekiah and his people were guilty of shocking abominations. God punished them with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile to Babylon.

Prayer: Lord God, help us to heed the warnings of Your Word. Amen.



December 14

Ezra 1: 1-11

Reflect: Ezra, the priest, records the story of the people's return to Palestine. From the returnees led by Sheshbazzar a new community of temple builders came to life in Judah. Sheshbazzar was appointed governor by King Cyrus to rebuild the Temple.

Prayer: Father Almighty, help us to work hard to turn dreams into reality. Amen.



December 15

Ezra 2: 1—2a; 3: 1-13

Reflect: About 30,000 came out of the Babylonian Exile. Zerubbabel, the new governor of Judah and the high priest Jeshua pressed on to build the Temple. The laying of the foundation was celebrated with tears and shouts of joy.

Prayer: O God, move us to support generously the spread of Your kingdom. Amen.



December 16

Ezra 4: 1-24

Reflect: Opposition arose from surrounding people to the rebuilding of the Temple.

The people of Judah refused help from neighbouring peoples. Due to the opposition, the work of building was stopped for about twenty years.

Prayer: Lord, when enemies hinder Your work, give us courage to keep on. Amen.



December 17

Ezra 5: 1-17

Reflect: The prophets Haggai and Zechariah roused the people to continue rebuilding the Temple. Zerubbabel and Jeshua again directed the project. The community responded with great commitment to rebuilding the house of God. This time they were successful.

Prayer: Father Almighty, because You hold the earthly powers in Your hand, please cause them to grant freedoms that will help to spread Your Gospel. Amen.



December 18

Ezra 6: 1-22

Reflect: This, the second Temple was finally completed about seventy years after destruction of the first one. It was dedicated with joy. The entire worship was once more instituted in accordance with the Law of God and ancient usage. The Passover celebration was resumed.

Prayer: Thank You, O Holy Spirit, for the opportunity to gather often with fellow-believers to receive Your faith-strengthening Word and Sacrament. Amen.

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☐ December 19

Ezra 7: 1-24

Reflect: Ezra was an expert in the Law of the Lord. He was allowed by King Ataxerxes to return to Jerusalem and to re-establish the Judah community on the basis of the Law of God. Ezra also observed God's Law in his everyday life and was a good example to the people.

Prayer: Gracious Father, may we recognise Your guiding hand in our lives. Amen.

☐ December 20

Ezra 8: 1-36

Reflect: Ezra left Babylon with about 5000 men, women and children. Before setting out, he prayed for God's protection. He made a complete inventory, the total value amounting to millions of dollars. The emigrants arrived safely, and thanked God for His protection. *Prayer: Gracious God, we pray that You would enable us to guard well our spiritual treasures of grace and faith until our journey's end. Amen.*

☐ December 21

Ezra 9: 1-15

Reflect: Ezra soon discovered some even in high position had intermarried with people of surrounding nations. God wanted to shield his people from idolatry. Ezra was distressed at their disobedience and wept bitterly before the people. He interceded for them.

Prayer: Holy Father, give us a godly sorrow over our sins, and move us to repentance and obedience, through Your Son our Redeemer. Amen.

☐ December 22

Ezra 10: 1-19

Reflect: Many men, women and children gathered around Ezra and they too wept bitterly. Making a covenant, they called for action to remove the foreign wives from the community. In order that punishment be averted, the people agreed that the evil be rooted out.

Prayer: Move us, Lord God, to admit our sins to You, and do whatever is fitting and right to rectify the situation with whomever we have hurt, through Jesus. Amen.

☐ December 23

Nehemiah 1: 1-11

Reflect: Nehemiah, as governor of Judah, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and instituted important reforms. His religious life was a model for the people especially his dependence on God and his frequent prayers to God. He also makes confession for the people.

Prayer: Father, we confess to You our sins and ask for Your forgiveness. Amen

☐ December 24

Nehemiah 2: 1-20

Reflect: Nehemiah dared to ask the King's permission for him to go to Jerusalem, where he planned to rebuild the city walls. In Jerusalem, going on foot by night, Nehemiah did a full circuit of the city to inspect the wrecked condition of the walls, to help him plan to rebuild.

Prayer: Lord of the Church, let us rise up and build Your eternal Kingdom. Amen.

☐ December 25

Nehemiah 3: 1-22

Reflect: We observe the systematic manner in which the project was organised by Nehemiah. We see how he did not hesitate to put his talents to work. He led by example. He moved the people to accept their assignments gladly.

Prayer: Loving Father, help us to use our gifts in spreading into all the world the Good News of our Saviour's birth, with enthusiasm and joy. Amen.

☐ December 26

Nehemiah 4: 1-23

Reflect: Nehemiah's courage against odds and his zeal for God's cause are an inspiration to the Church of today! He also bolstered the sagging faith of the people, reminding them that if they put their faith in God they could meet every challenge.

Prayer: Lord of the Church, move us to use the sword of Your Word and the trowel of prayer, to fight the Old Evil Foe as we build Your kingdom. Amen

☐ December 27

Nehemiah 5: 1-19

Reflect: Building the wall caused a great hardship for the people, to the point of mutiny. Exorbitant interest rates charged by the officials forced the borrowers to sell their children into slavery. They were on the brink of starvation. Nehemiah acted resolutely. He made the wealthy culprits restore what they had unjustly got.

Prayer: O God, the Great Giver, You have so richly blessed us, and we pray that You would make us generous to those in need. Amen.

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December 28

Nehemiah 6: 1-19

Reflect: Nehemiah frustrated attempts of foreigners to sabotage the building project. Nor did he let internal conflict cause a breakdown of operations. The speedy completion of the wall was a tribute to Nehemiah's resourceful management and to the devotion of the people. Behind it all, it was God who enabled them to succeed.

Prayer: Almighty God, strengthen us to continue with the tasks You have set before us and not to be discouraged by difficulties from completing the work. Amen.



December 29

Nehemiah 7: 1-5; 8:1-18

Reflect: Nehemiah realised safe-guards would have to be placed at the gates, and the population needed to be increased to gain more defenders. . Ezra led his people to reaffirm their allegiance to God.

Prayer: Lord God, help us ever to have the true security that is in You. Amen



December 30

Nehemiah 9: 1-38

Reflect: The people felt deeply aware of their sins and penitently sought forgiveness and renewal. Ezra praised God's acts of mercy to Abraham and his descendants. He confessed the nation's sins from its very beginning to the Babylonian captivity.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, near the close of the old year, we turn to You with heartfelt repentance, pleading for Your forgiveness, through Jesus' Name. Amen.



December 31

Nehemiah 10: 28-39

Reflect: The people responded to God's grace with total consecration. A written pledge by those listed was made to observe the Law of God. The rest of the people gave a solemn oath for total commitment to the house of God.

Prayer: Lord of time and eternity, as we look back, we repent of our many sins of commission and omission, in thought and word and deed. We pledge ourselves anew, like the people of old, that we will not neglect the house of our God. Amen.