

Read Through the Old Testament

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

GET INTO IT ANYWAY YOU CAN!

SEPTEMBER, YEAR B

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

☐ **September 1 Daniel 1: 1-21**

Reflect: Daniel was a member of the foremost Jewish families, partly of kingly descent. In Babylon, under the name of Belteshazzar, he was surrounded by temptations of every kind, but he remained true to the living God. God endowed him with a large measure of courage and wisdom. How much are withstanding anti-God aspects of modern culture?

Prayer: Father, amid the pressures of life, keep us ever loyal to You and Your Word. Amen.

☐ **September 2 Daniel 2: 1-49**

Reflect: A giant statue of the king was erected to demonstrate his power. It was gold-plated, about 100 feet high and 9 feet wide. The five parts of the statue symbolise the succession of empires that would rule Judea prior to the coming of God's kingdom. What can you do to be supportive to Christians in responsible positions in our country?

Prayer: O God, make us strong to stand up for You on ethical issues in our nation. Amen.

☐ **September 3 Daniel 3: 1-30**

Reflect: For Daniel's associates to bow down and worship the golden image of the king would be an act of idolatry. Because they refused, they were thrown into a fiery furnace. When the king saw the miracle he granted the men the right to worship their own God. Do we have the courage to do right no matter what the consequence?

Prayer: Lord God, thank You for Your protection when we are faithful to You. Amen.

☐ **September 4 Daniel 4: 1-37**

Reflect: Nebuchadnezzar's dream, interpreted by Daniel, is a warning against pride. God inflicted on him a terrible illness because he ignored the warning. The king was reduced to the status of a beast but is miraculously restored and praises the Most High God! How do you handle temptations to sinful pride?

Prayer: Father God, deliver me from sinful pride, through the humility of Jesus. Amen.

☐ **September 5 Daniel 5: 1-31**

Reflect: Belshazzar, the Babylonian ruler, was taking part in a wild banquet at which the sacred vessels were desecrated. Asked to solve the writing on the wall, Daniel said it meant: "The time allotted to Belshazzar's kingdom has run out. He is weighed in the scales of God's balances and found wanting." Are we heeding God's warnings in our lives?

Prayer: Father, we plead with You that evil doers would turn to You and repent. Amen.

☐ **September 6 Daniel 6: 1-28**

Reflect: Daniel was appointed as one of the three presidents over the whole of the realm. Because his work was excellent his rivals sought to topple him. He was thrown into the lion's den for disobedience to a new law, which disallowed prayers to any god except the king. Daniel was delivered. Conspirators were executed. The king was impressed by Daniel's God. Does this story inspire you to trust in God even if it gets you into trouble?

Prayer: Father, send Your Angels to deliver me from the lion's den of difficulties. Amen.

☐ **September 7 Daniel 7: 1-28**

Reflect: The winged lion represents Babylonia; the bear, the Medes; the four headed winged leopard, the Persians; the dragon-like beast, the Greeks, whose ten horns represent ten rulers who succeeded Alexander the Great. God will give the messianic king an eternal kingdom.

Does this prophecy give us hope: that Christ and His kingdom will prevail?

Prayer: Eternal God, we adore You for the permanence of Your Kingdom in Christ. Amen.

☐ **September 8 Daniel 8: 1-27**

Reflect: The two-horned ram is the Medo-Persian Empire. The he-goat is Alexander the Great. Two of his leaders were Seleucis and Ptolemy. From the Seleucids sprang the ruthless Antiochus Epiphanes. He violated the sanctuary and prohibited worship therein. Over against the evil in our world, are we remembering Christ will be victorious at the end?

Prayer: Lord of Life, break Satan's power and let Your love prevail for us and in us. Amen.

☐ **September 9 Daniel 9: 1-27**

Reflect: Daniel freely admitted his own guilt but also confessed his nation's abuse. The Angel Gabriel appeared to him and showed and promised God's redemption. The fulfilment of the promise is portrayed by the use of numbers as symbols meaning completeness. God can be trusted to do what He says. Do we find hope for our souls in God's sure promises?

Prayer: O Father, thank You for Your great promises of salvation in Christ. Amen.

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☐ September 10 Daniel 10: 1-21

Reflect: Daniel is given a glimpse into the future. The Promised Land would become a battlefield. This was to be a hard time of testing for Israel. The forces of evil were trying to eradicate true religion. The Lord said that Michael the Archangel would be sent to defeat Persia. Are we using these prophecies in our agonies of fighting the forces of evil?

Prayer: O God, help us while the gold of our faith is refined in the fires of affliction. Amen.

☐ September 11 Daniel 11: 1-45

Reflect: The Persian Empire was to give way to the kingdom of Greece, formed by the mighty king whom we know as Alexander the Great. His vast domain was divided among his generals. At the end time, God's final enemy would rage as the Antichrist until God's appointed time comes. Do we draw comfort from these promises of God, that as the battle between good and evil becomes fiercer, the Lord will give final victory to His people?

Prayer: Eternal God, in the fierceness of the battle, help us keep fighting the Old Evil foe with the weapons of Your powerful Word. Amen.

☐ September 12 Daniel 12: 1-13

Reflect: Daniel's fellow-citizens in the spiritual Israel will be permanently delivered from evil. For they shall awaken from the earth to everlasting life. When will this happen? The symbolic figures given signify that God's complete time has to run before it will happen and it is a source of comfort that the time will eventually come for final delivery. How do we handle it when afflictions and trials seem to last an infinite amount of time?

Prayer: Thank You, Lord Jesus our troubles will end when You give us victory. Amen.

☐ September 13 Hosea 1: 1-11

Reflect: Hosea spoke to his own people who were suffering from war. At the heart of Hosea's preaching is a gospel of redemption. He pleads with Israel to return to God. God is pictured as a faithful husband and Israel as His faithless, promiscuous wife. Aren't we amazed at God's extraordinary mercy in restoring penitent Israel to His covenant of grace?

Prayer: God, we return to You with heartfelt sorrow over our sins. Grant us mercy. Amen.

☐ September 14 Hosea 2: 1-23

Reflect: The judgement that God visits on the spouse and on the children is not the blind fury of an outraged man. Israel will be given a new and faithful heart. God will make with Israel a new covenant, a new betrothal. Her life will be sound and secure for she shall know the Lord. Do we truly appreciate the new life, the transformation the Lord plants within us?

Prayer: O God, thank You for betrothing Yourself anew to us in steadfast love. Amen.

☐ September 15 Hosea 3: 1-5

Reflect: Hosea buys back his adulterous wife, disciplines her and affirms his devotion. Divine love necessitates both Israel's temporary chastisement and her ultimate redemption. If we have been unfaithful to God, will we always remember that He is like a wounded lover, waiting for us to return to Him?

Prayer: O Lord Christ, thank for redeeming us with the great price of Your very life. Amen.

☐ September 16 Hosea 4: 1-19

Reflect: Israel is like a stubborn heifer. The responsibility for the corruption is laid at the door of the irreverent, neglectful priests. Are we praying often for our pastors and encouraging them to remain faithful to the Lord and to lead us in the way of the Lord?

Prayer: Lord of the Church, give our pastors courage to be ever faithful to You. Amen.

☐ September 17 Hosea 5: 1-15

Reflect: The priests are obsessed and proud of their sins, cutting off their own hope of escape through repentance. They seek the Lord with their offerings, but not with their hearts which have become faithless through worship of false gods. How well are we spreading the word against the godlessness of our nation's modern idolatries?

Prayer: O Lord Jesus, we turn to You, for only You can heal our sin- sickness. Amen.

☐ September 18 Hosea 6: 1-11

Reflect: The Lord is deeply disappointed with Israel and Judah, for their love to Him is like the dew that goes early away. Their corruption seems incurable. Even the priests are guilty of murder. The prophet gives a powerful appeal to repent and accept God's mercy. Is our worship mainly outward motions or is it from hearts communing lovingly with God?

Prayer: Father, give us daily repentance and a close friendship with You. Amen.

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☐ September 19 Hosea 7: 1-16

Reflect: False dealings, thievery, and robbery corrupt private life in Israel. Life at the royal court is corrupted by treachery, adultery, drunkenness and intrigue which leads to the assassination of their kings. If Israel is to be healed; it can be only by radical surgery of divine judgement. Do we see God's judgements are meant to turn people to repentance?

Prayer: God, turn us to human resources for help, but above all, always to You. Amen.

☐ September 20 Hosea 8: 1-14

Reflect: The people confess to know God, yet spurn the good, which a genuine confession produces. Golden calves are their gods and not the Maker of Israel. They have forgotten their Maker and put their trust in political power. The judgement of God hangs over them. Are we sometimes guilty of trusting in earthly power and what we own instead of in God?

Prayer: Lord God, You rightly deserve our highest worship and You we adore. Amen.

☐ September 21 Hosea 9: 1-17

Reflect: Because Israel has rejected the Lord, it must undergo punishment that will bring loss of king, children, places of worship and country. Israel had consecrated herself to the fertility god Baal. Therefore the Lord will make her barren. Do we fully realise that disobedience to God's revealed Word is the chief transgression?

Prayer: O God, keep us the relationship that You created in us through our Baptism. Amen.

☐ September 22 Hosea 10: 1-15

Reflect: Israel is now a degenerating vine yielding degenerate fruit. Royalty fosters idolatry. Israel is guilty of gross, unheard-of immoralities. Like a heifer that does the threshing, she receives the good gifts of the Lord but refuses to accept the obligations of the covenant. Are we fighting against complacency, sowing seeds of steadfast love to God?

Prayer: God, You are our Hiding Place. Help us daily to trust in You. Amen.

☐ September 23 Hosea 11: 1-12

Reflect: Here we see God's unquenchable love to His child. However, as a loving and patient father, He must now chastise His wilful and disobedient son, Israel. He will afflict Israel, yet in His compassion, He will not destroy them. Do we sometimes take unfair advantage that God's heart of love is larger than His law and His fierce anger?

Prayer: O God, thank You for Your love in bringing us back home to You. Amen.

☐ September 24 Hosea 12: 1-14

Reflect: Needed is an absolute and radical honesty that calls sin by its name confesses it from the heart to God, a genuine renunciation of idolatry. But the prophet woos them to repentance. Are we exercising radical honesty in admitting our sins, both known and unknown to God, and also truly accepting His absolution and living under His grace?

Prayer: Lord God, help us to return daily to You and to walk humbly with You. Amen.

☐ September 25 Hosea 13: 1-16

Reflect: Israel became dead in their sin of increasing idolatry. They "kissed calves" by paying religious homage to Baal. They sought life in the fertility cult - and found death. God's irrevocable will is to grant new life by deliverance from death. Do we confess to God that our independence of Him has been wrong and we repent of this?

Prayer: Awesome, Cosmic Creator, we thank You that over against our many sins You do not desire our eternal death, but that it is Your will of grace to save and rescue us. Amen.

☐ September 26 Hosea 14: 1-9

Reflect: To sincere repentance, God will not be a blasting east wind to His people, but dew and shade and perpetual fruit to sustain them. But God loves with a love that is also jealous for their total commitment. The book closes with warnings about life and death. Are we willing to follow the wisdom of this book and turn to the Lord in daily repentance and faith?

Prayer: O Eternal Trinity, forgive our faithlessness. Make us faithful until our end. Amen.

☐ September 27 Joel 1: 1-20

Reflect: The plague of locusts has put an end to the blessings of grain, oil and wine. But also to worship in the temple. Wearing sackcloth garments of repentance, the people cry out with sorrow over their broken relationship with God. Are we looking often to the mirror of God's commandments to see and confess to God our sins?

Prayer: O God, to You we cry for mercy. Forgive us all our sin, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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☐ September 28 Joel 2: 1-32

Reflect: The Lord's own army coming from the north convulses the very cosmos, ushering in God's day of judgement. Hope of escape is only in repentance, in a returning to Him with all one's heart. The Lord of life wants to bestow fullness of life upon all. Can we see this prophecy fulfilled in the great outpouring of God's Holy Spirit at Pentecost?

Prayer: Father, pour out Your Spirit upon us. Prepare us for the Day of the Lord. Amen.

☐ September 29 Joel 3: 1-21

Reflect: The Lord sits to judge in quiet sovereign majesty. Judgement is a harvest and ultimate decision and division. The nations are gathered in the Valley of Decision. The voice of the Lord shakes the universe pronouncing doom on His enemies but for His people it is everlasting peace. Doesn't the promise of eternal peace urge us onwards to heaven?

Prayer: Lord God, thank You for being our refuge now and our stronghold forever. Amen.

☐ September 30 Amos 1: 1-15

Reflect: Amos denounced Israel for grave injustice in social dealings, for abhorrent immorality and for meaningless piety. He spoke of Israel's coming doom. In a panorama of condemnation for their brutality and cruelty the Lord pronounces doom on the surrounding nations. Do you see how man's inhumanity to man will finally be punished by a just God?

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, may we live in daily repentance and under Your grace. Amen.