

DAILY BIBLE READING (September)

By following this suggested schedule you will be able to read the entire Bible in one year. If you've missed previous months' installments, you may wish to begin with this one and finish at this time next year. Others in the congregation are reading the same material each day.

LAMENTATIONS

This is a very poetic book, usually ascribed to the prophet Jeremiah. Each chapter is a separate poem in the dirge, or lament form. In spite of its apparent somber tone, the book really presents a "theology of hope." As you read the book catch the following hopeful themes: 1) God hears prayer, 2) forgiveness follows repentance, 3) God is always just, 4) there is a disciplinary value in suffering, and 5) God's mercy is the basis for hope for the future.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sept 1	Lam 1-5	Zion is captive and she has deserved it (1:18, 3:34-36). But God's covenant love will restore the people and their city in mercy (3:21-24). Repentance is necessary (3:40-45), 5:21). <i>Comments & Questions:</i>

EZEKIEL

The people are in exile in Babylonia. But they still haven't learned their lesson. Many complained that their misfortune was a result of God's injustice (18:25). Ezekiel ("God is strong" or "God makes strong") was sent to assure the people of God's faithfulness. The phrase "you shall know that I am the Lord" is used 63 times. Much of the confusing imagery is a direct rebuke of Babylonian mythology.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sept 2	Ez 1-3	These chapters show us familiar marks of the calling and commissioning of a prophet. Note the awesome responsibility of Ezekiel's work (3:16 f). <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 3	Ez 4-6	Again, like other prophets, Ezekiel is called to symbolic action (e.g. 4:4-8). <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 4	Ez 7-9	Do you understand the nature and purpose of God's judgment and wrath? <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 5	Ez 10-12	11:18-21 is a striking message of grace to conclude the vision. In chapter 12 we get the impression that Jerusalem has not yet fallen. What do you make of this time change? <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 6	Ez 13-15	As we recall from Isaiah and Jeremiah, God's true prophets were in a minority. Most of the people were falsely consoling themselves. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 7	Ez 16-18	16 is a rich metaphor as God speaks of Israel as a bride (more like this in

Date **Reading** **Comments**

Hosea). The covenant is still the foundation of Israel's relationship to God (16:59 f). *Comments & Questions:*

- Sept 8 Ez 19-21 That repeated but beautiful promise keeps coming back: 22:42-44.
- Sept 9 Ez 22-24 In spite of the people's example, the prophet remains obedient and faithful, assured by God of his continuing, supportive presence (24:15 f). *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 10 Ez 25-27 Prophecies against the foreign nations. We've seen this form before in Isaiah. *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 11 Ez 28-30 Not only the Israelites, but also the heathen, foreign nations will be led to realize who the Lord is (28:25-26). *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 12 Ez 31-33 Some people have a hard time accepting the notion of God's wrath and judgment. 33:10-11 gives a need perspective. *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 13 Ez 34-36 34 depicts bad shepherds (national rulers). But verses 23-31 already make reference to a Good Shepherd someday. *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 14 Ez 37-39 You may have sung of heard the song based on 37; now you can read what it's about. Does verse 12 speak about the resurrection or the return from exile? 39:25-29 is beautiful! *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 15 Ez 40-42 Remember how much the people treasured the temple before its destruction? Think of how much the vision of its restoration must have meant to them.
- Sept 16 Ez 43-45 The priests shall serve again, the land divided by lot, and the sacred feasts will be observed. We've come full circle in our reading since the Pentateuch (first five books of the OT). *Comments & Questions:*
- Sept 17 Ez 46-48 Still a vision. Only a dream. But God will keep his promises!

DANIEL

In this book we encounter apocalyptic literature: the revelatory and highly figurative description of the cosmic conclusion of world history, when God calls everything to a halt and reclaims all that is his. the story of Daniel takes place in Babylon during the exile. Some of its themes are expanded in the inter-testamental Apocrypha.

The visions make use of Hebrew, Babylonian, Persian and Greek imagery, all of which leads to difficulty for the modern day interpreter.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sept 18	Dan 1-3	Daniel (“God is my judge”) is a servant in the royal Babylonian court. But the mighty king doesn’t have power to match the Lord’s. <i>Comments:</i>
Sept 19	Dan 4-6	God still proves to be the final judge: over the fate of Belshazzar (5:30) and over the fate of Daniel (6:22). <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 20	Dan 7-9	The historical section of the book dealing with Daniel’s life is now ended, and with these chapters we enter the apocalyptic section which deals with his vision. It is usually thought that the four beasts of the vision refer to the successive kingdoms of Babylonia, Persia, Media and Greece. Horns usually refer to individual rulers. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 21	Dan 10-12	Apocalyptic literature (such as in Revelation also) is very foreign to us. What do you think of it? Does it serve a purpose? <i>Comments & Questions:</i>

HOSEA

The name Hosea means “God saves.” The book is the story of a relationship which is a metaphor of God’s relationship with Israel. Hosea, unlike other prophets, has no inaugural vision; he was simply bidden “Go, take a wanton for your wife.” As Hosea married a harlot, so God chose an unworthy people to be his bride. Just as Hosea’s wife proved unfaithful, so God’s people were unfaithful because 1) they worshipped Baal instead of the Lord, 2) they allied themselves with Egypt and Assyria rather than with God, and 3) they placed their trust in earthly kings instead of in the divine King. Hosea is the first of the twelve “minor prophets.”

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sept 22	Hos 1-3	This is the story of an unfaithful wife and its theological application. Do you think it records a dream, parable, or something that really happened? Note that Gomer is expelled from the house but taken back and loved again (repentance and restoration). <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 23	Hos 4-6	Here begins the section of sermons against moral, spiritual, and political adultery. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 24	Hos 7-10	The sermons continue. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 25	Hos 11-14	11:1-4 is a beautiful image of God as father to the child Israel. Chapter 14 speaks of repentance and the final restoration of apostate Israel. The book ends in the promise of real love. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>

JOEL

Joel (“Yahweh is God”) is a call for repentance before the “day of the Lord” arrives. When God sends judgment in the form of a locust plague, the people pray for restoration, God hears and grants their request, and promises another day which will serve as judgment for the heathen and glorification for the Israelites.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sept 26	Joel 1-3	Do you think the locust plague is actual or symbolic? 2:28-29 is often used to depict the outpouring of the Holy Spirit beginning on Pentecost. <i>Comments:</i>

AMOS

Amos was a poor sheep farmer who became known as “the prophet of righteousness” in the Northern Kingdom of Israel before the fall and exile. Although the book is an announcement of God’s judgment, please note the following during your reading: 1) God’s judgment is righteous and universal in extent, 2) his judgment is not mechanical, but proportional and merciful (because warnings precede punishment and are conditional upon repentance), and 3) judgment cannot be averted by ritualism.

Sept 27	Amos 1-3	Prophecies against six nations, then Judah and Israel. <i>Comments:</i>
Sept 28	Amos 4-6	This section concludes the indictment and sentence against Israel. Despite past punishment, Israel did not turn to the Lord. The people’s stubborn impenitence spells imminent punishment. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
Sept 29	Amos 7-9	Five symbolic visions of the coming punishment. Probably the worst punishment of all is the “famine of the Word” (8:11-12). Yet this prophecy of doom also ends in hope with the promise of mercy (9:9-15). Note the Messianic overtones. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>

OBADIAH

Obadiah (“Servant of the Lord”) is an exilic book (written during captivity) whose theology, said St. Jerome, is as difficult as the book is short. The chapter-long book is concerned only with vengeance upon the Edomites. Unlike other prophets, Obadiah makes no mention of Israel’s sin as well. The cause of vengeance is the fact that Edom cooperated in the devastation of Jerusalem. When Jerusalem is restored, Edom will be destroyed.

Sept 20	Obadiah	Remember that the Edomites (family of Esau) and the Israelites (family of Jacob) were related. During the Exodus, the Edomites would not allow the Hebrews to pass through their land. The rivalry was long standing. One fact of history is worth noting: after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70AD the Edomites were never heard of again. <i>Comments & Questions:</i>
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Pick up next month’s schedule in the narthex