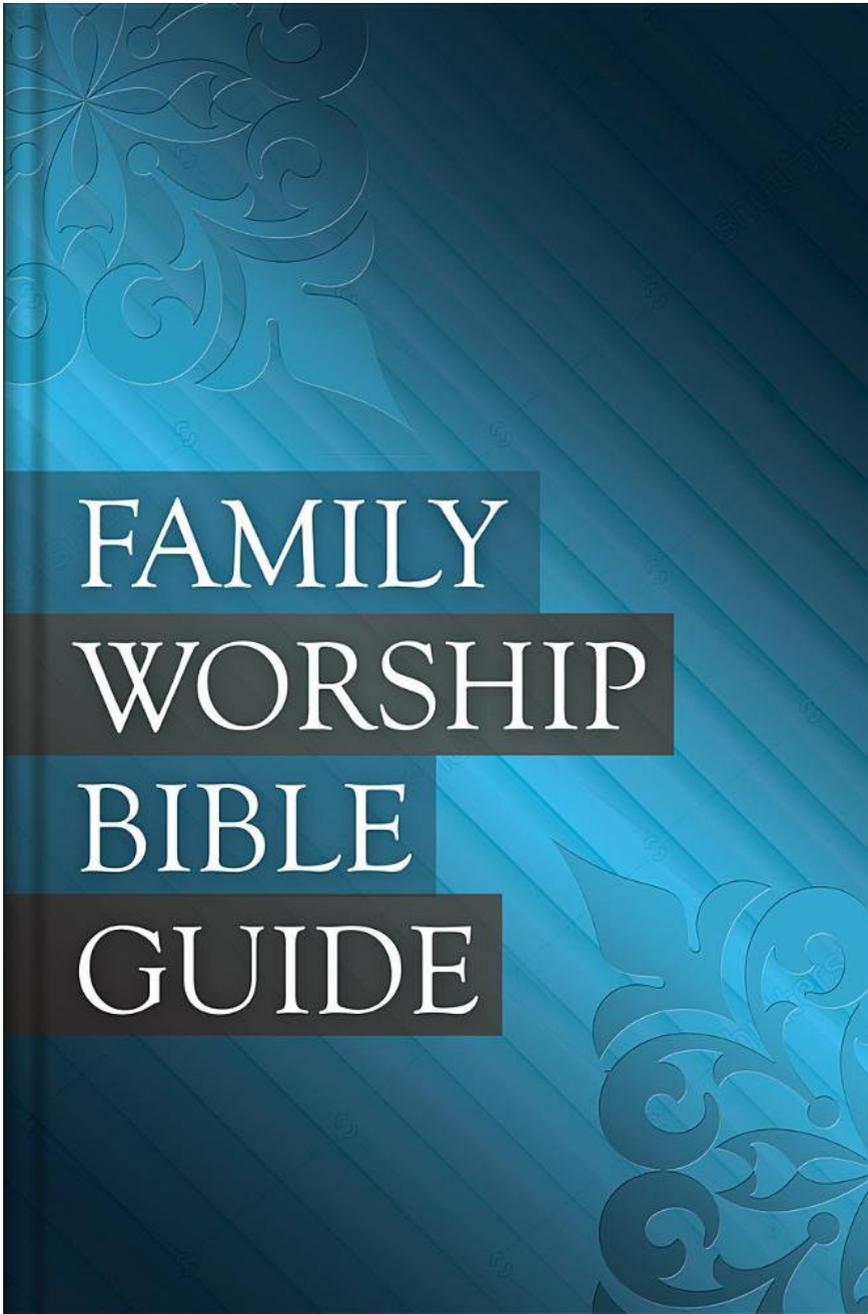


A CHAPTER A DAY

an Agape Bible Reading Plan

YEAR 3, QUARTER 4
(OCT - DEC 2022)

*Looking for a devotional guide to supplement your reading?
Pick up Joel Beeke's 'Family Worship Bible Guide'!*



FAMILY
WORSHIP
BIBLE
GUIDE

This booklet belongs to





WELCOME MESSAGE

by Pastor Johanan Justin (Editor)

Dear Agapian,

Can you believe it? We are almost at the end! 3 years. 36 months. 156 weeks. 1096 days... of reading the Scriptures a chapter a day. If you have managed this wondrous feat, give God the glory! Surely, He has enabled you.

This may be your first time reading the Bible in its entirety.

This may be your first time reading certain sections in the Bible.

This may be your first time experiencing joy, conviction, and connection with others, through the words of Scripture.

This may be your first time consciously striving to read the Bible each day.

There may be other firsts! Won't you celebrate them?

Where there has been effort, there must be rejoicing!

This is the final quarter's readings for the entire A Chapter A Day reading plan. And once again, I am deeply indebted to the contributions of Crystal Justin, Daniel Loke, Dinnie Ee, Mark Chan, Nick Chuan, & Shawn

Lee. Without them, this series of booklets would be far less enriching and beautiful.

But dear fellow-reader of Scripture, this booklet is not the end. The Scriptures must still be devoured daily – whether voraciously in chunks, whether carefully in tasteful morsels, whether tearfully amidst trials and afflictions – but always with faith.

So as you press on to read:

Would you trust God to incite a fresh fire for His word for the swiftly-approaching new year?

Would you look to Him to bring you to a place of commitment about reading His word daily?

Would you pray that in the coming years, Agape would become a truly remarkable church through the humble (yet widespread) devotion to His word?

For one last time,

May God always bless the reading of His word.

GOD OF THE PASSING HOUR,

*Another year has gone and I have been
preserved
in my going out,
in my coming in.*

*Yours has been the vigilance that has turned
threatening evils aside;
Yours the supplies that have nourished me;
Yours the comforts that have indulged me;
Yours the relations and friends that have
delighted me;
Yours the means of grace which have edified me;
Yours the Book, which, amidst all my enjoyments,
has told me that this is not my rest,
that in all successes one thing alone is needful,
to love my Saviour.*

*Nothing can equal the number of Your mercies
but my imperfections and sins.
These, O God, I will neither conceal nor justify,
but confess with a broken heart.
In what condition would a thorough review
of my life leave me
were it not for the assurance that with You
there is plenteous redemption,
that You are a forgiving God,
that You may be feared!*

*While I hope for pardon through the blood
of the cross,
I pray to be clothed with humility,*



*to be quickened in Your way,
to be more devoted to You,
to keep the end of my life in view,
to be cured of the folly of delay and indecision,
to know how frail I am,
to number my days and apply my heart
unto wisdom.*

Amen.



WELCOME TO 'A CHAPTER A DAY'

Congratulations on making it through to this final year's readings! This booklet you hold in your hands is designed to help you through this third year – so here's a quick tour of its features :)

1

IT'S YOURS!



This booklet is entirely, completely, and unreservedly **yours!** Personalize it. Set up your own system of using it. You could treasure it and keep it in the most pristine condition possible.

Or... you could scribble in, scrawl across, and scrounge up this booklet to your heart's delight.

But however you use it, make sure that you **do use** it!

2

CALENDAR



The goal is to read through the entire Bible in 3 years. This may seem like a really long process – but here's the thing: it's actually a day-by-day project. And to help and guide you – both in the daily project, and the 3-year process – we've included calendars.

These calendars help you **track** where you are, and what you've covered. So as you move through each day, cross it off on your calendar – and praise God for the grace He's granted you that day!

3

JOURNALING SPACE



In addition to the calendars, there is space provided for you to jot down a response to that day's reading(s). Is there a petition you want to make? Is there something you've learnt about God? Did God speak through His word

into your situation in a particular way? Or do you have a question that arose out of that text? Capture these things – and later, share them with someone else too!

4

RESOURCES



This booklet is not merely a tool to guide your Bible-reading – nor is it merely for journaling! This booklet comes with resources to deepen your journey of reading the Scriptures. You could:

- join with Christians throughout this past century through praying a historic prayer

- prepare yourself to read a particular book of the Bible by understanding its context

- be inspired and encouraged by the Bible-reading journeys of your pastors and leaders

Take heart! You are not alone on this journey of reading the word!

5

CREDITS



And at the end of this booklet, there is a list of resources provided for you. These resources helped shape this booklet, and the materials found in it. If you found the booklet helpful,

you might want to check out some of these books and articles. They will definitely enrich your reading even further!

6

JOIN THE BIBLE READING CHALLENGE!



Diligently keep up with the Bible reading plan for 365 days and get a special reward at the end of 2022!



Now, you're ready to go!
May God bless the reading of His word!

tips ON HOW TO read the Bible

What stuck out to you?

- DID YOU NOTICE SOMETHING NEW OR FRESH?
- WERE YOU REMINDED OF SOMETHING YOU HAD FORGOTTEN?



LAST YEAR WE LEARNT 4 STEPS TO GUIDE OUR READING OF THE BIBLE. THIS YEAR, WE LOOK AT 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN STUDYING THE BIBLE IN A GROUP.

Did the passage raise any questions for you?

- DID ANY PART OF THE PASSAGE SURPRISE OR TROUBLE YOU?
- WHICH PART(S) DO YOU FIND DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?



Where do we find Christ in this passage?

- WHAT IN THE PASSAGE HELPED YOU SEE MORE OF JESUS AND HIS CROSS?
- WHAT MOVED YOU TO LOVE JESUS MORE?



How can I apply this passage to my life?

- WHAT IS THE SPIRIT SPECIFICALLY LEADING YOU TO DO AS AN OBEDIENT RESPONSE?
- IS THERE SOMEONE YOU COULD HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE TO?



Who can I share this passage with?

- IS THERE A BELIEVER YOU CAN ENCOURAGE WITH WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT TODAY?
- IS THERE A NON-BELIEVER YOU CAN SHARE THE JOY & GLORY OF CHRIST WITH FROM TODAY'S PASSAGE?



OCTOBER



Epistles



Prophecy



Wisdom and Poetry

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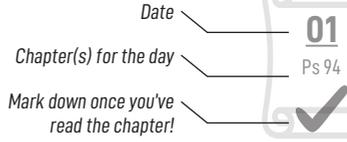
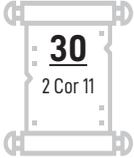
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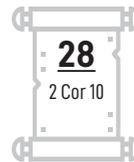
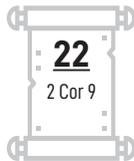
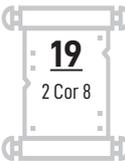
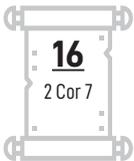
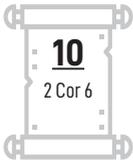
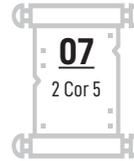
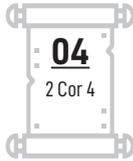
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Example





Do utilize this space by journaling down your thoughts and reflections!

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Prayer Items

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OCTOBER



THE HORROR OF WHOREDOM: Heartbroken Hosea

Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel before the Assyrian exile, when Israel had been arrogant and faithless.

How will Yahweh respond through His prophet?

Hesed Husband to a Whore

Hosea treats Yahweh's covenant with Israel as a marriage covenant. His own marriage with Gomer is used in chapters 1-3 as a parable to illustrate Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness (*hesed* in Hebrew) to Israel. While Israel had whored after other gods and other nations, Yahweh remained undyingly faithful as a husband.

Yahweh reveals His heart in deep, emotive language, particularly in 5:15-6:6, 11:1-11, and 14:1-9, though the metaphor for His relationship with Israel shifts at times to that between a father and a son.

Yahweh constantly calls His people to return to Him, and promises to save them after He disciplines and judges them by sending them into exile. In doing so, Yahweh shows His great love for the loveless, based on His covenantal faithfulness to them.

Hot Take on Hosea

- I **Hosea and Gomer: Yahweh's Love for Israel Exemplified (1:1-3:5)**
- II **Accusation: Failed Leadership in Israel (4:1-5:7)**
- III **National Calamity: Foolish Foreign Policy (5:8-14)**
- IV **Divine Longing: Unreciprocated Love (5:15-6:6)**
- V **National Calamity (cont.): Villainy, Futile Idolatry, False Worship (6:7-8:14)**
- VI **Judgment and Punishment: Exile as Divine Discipline (9:1-10:15)**
- VII **Divine Fatherhood: Yahweh the Compassionate Father (11:1-11)**
- VIII **Summary Charge and Judgment: Lies, Violence, Alliances (11:12-13:16)**
- IX **Divine Song: Return and be Restored (14:1-9)**

*The book closes with a call for the wise and discerning to understand and know Hosea's prophecy. **As God's people blessed with His word, may we heed the call and walk in repentance and uprightness!***

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THE CHORUS OF JUSTIFIED JUDGEMENT: 'THE DAY OF THE LORD!' Swarmed with Joel

*While there is much uncertainty as to when the book of Joel was written, the message in the book to the Israelites is clear: **return to the LORD your God, for divine judgement is coming!** Yet even amidst the call to repentance and returning to the LORD, God promises restoration to the land and the coming of a golden age. **Would the Israelites be able to sing the chorus of hope once more?***

God's Justified Judgement

The book of Joel focuses its prophetic judgement on the southern kingdom of Judah with frequent references to Zion and the temple worship (Joel 1:13-14; 2:23, 32; 3:6,21). The locust plague at the start of the book is a warning from God to His people to return to Him.

The concept of returning to God (referring to the covenant relationship between Yahweh and His people) underlies the whole of Joel's prophetic ministry.

The Purification and Restoration of God's People

The final part of the book is taken up with promises. Joel prophesied of the Kingdom of Christ, and showed that though at that point of time, all things seemed full of despair, God had not forgotten the covenant He had made with His people.

Christ would come to gather His scattered people and restore life to his lost and dead people. Christ would not just fulfil but complete the restoration of God's people. The Israelites could sing the great chorus of hope once more!

Outline

- I **Heading [1:1]**
- II **The Day of the Locust [1:2-14]**
 - a) **Divine Displeasure Expressed [1:1-5]**
 - b) **Divine Displeasure Expanded [1:6-14]**
- III **The Day of The Lord [1:15-3:21]**
 - a) **The Day of Assyria [1:15-2:32]**
 - b) **The Day of Antichrist [3:1-16]**
 - b) **The Day of Anticipation [3:17-21]**

*The vivid pictures of destruction in the book should serve to awaken us from our spiritual numbness. A strong dose of apocalyptic imagery like those we find in Joel might jolt us up and open our eyes to faithfully following after God every moment of our life. **Would you consider doing so, holding on to the hope that Christ will return once again?***

NOVEMBER



Epistles



Prophecy



Wisdom and
Poetry

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Am 8

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Am 9

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1 Pet 2

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1 Pet 3

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Jon 1, 2

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Jon 3, 4

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1 Pet 4

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Mic 1, 2

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Mic 5, 6, 7

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1 Pet 5

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Nah 1

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Nah 2

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Hab 1, 2, 3



Do utilize this space by journaling down your thoughts and reflections!

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Prayer Items

NOVEMBER



ARMED AND ABLE:

Arrested by Amos

Little is known about the prophet Amos. Amos reveals he is “no prophet... [but] a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs” (Amos 7:14). God raised him up from the southern kingdom of Judah to prophesy to the northern kingdom of Israel. *What was amiss?*

Appreciating Amos

Amos was situated in a very unique period in Israel's history. Here's some background to help you understand and receive Amos!

- Amos' ministry began during the reign of King Uzziah (Judah) and King Jeroboam (Israel)
- Israel (in particular) was experiencing unparalleled wealth and stability since King Solomon's days
- The Israelites interpreted their prosperity as God's approval of, and blessing upon, them
- But Amos unveils the truth: they were actually under the curse of God!
- Why? Reason #1: they had amassed their wealth through oppressing and exploiting the poor
- Reason #2: their worship of God had become transactional in nature; they sought to manipulate God through their rituals
- Israel's prosperity was not the dawn of a new 'Golden Era', but her final death throes
- In just around 50 years' time (from Amos' day), the northern kingdom of Israel would be no more – all according to the word of God spoken through Amos
- Unlike most other prophets, Amos does not intersperse his prophecies of doom with promises of hope; Amos saves this for the closing verses of the book



Accept & Apply

Here are two broad lessons you could take away from Amos!

- Observing worship routines and habits do not excuse unrighteousness! Amos teaches us that ignoring the plight of others for the “more spiritual” work of prayer & preaching is wrong in God's eyes. We are called both to relationship with God, and relationship with one another.
- The 'day of the LORD' is fearsome – but God will preserve! The day of the LORD means the destruction of the unrepentant & unjust. But God will preserve a faithful remnant! They will see God's glorious restoration and blessing.



Arresting Aimlessness

- I **Superscription (1:1)**
- II **Judgment on the Nations (1:3–2:16)**
- III **More Details About Israel's Sin and Fate (3:1–6:14)**
- IV **Five Visions of Israel's Future (7:1–9:15)**

*Amos rebukes our hypocrisy and calls us to a proper aligning with God, through proper relating with others. **Christ invites you to let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream!***

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Prayer Items

NOVEMBER



1 PETER:

Persevering in Persecution

1 Peter was written by Peter, the chief apostle. He was writing to the “elect exiles” who were far from home, in a time of suffering and persecution and he was encouraging them to wait for Christ's return, while persevering in doing good as our Lord did. What hope can outlast many years of suffering? *Read on to discover the living hope of the “elect exiles”.*

Persecution, Prescriptions, and Promises

1. Christ the Separator

The “elect exiles” were “elect” because God chose them in Christ to be his royal priesthood and a holy nation, and they were “exiles” because they were not in their geographical home nor in their spiritual home. They were separated from the world because they were in Christ and were called to holiness while they were in exile. They were in the world, but not of the world.

2. Christ the Sufferer

The “elect exiles” were experiencing persecution for the sake of Christ. When Peter exhorts them to persevere in doing good and in obedience, he continuously points them to Christ who suffered unjustly and bore their sins on his body on the cross. They are to follow in the footsteps of their Lord.

3. Christ the Savior

The “elect exiles” had been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. At the end of their suffering, they will attain an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Christ will come again, and that is the hope that the “elect exiles” have.

Profile

I Opening (1:1-2)

II Called to Salvation as Exiles (1:3-2:10)

III Living as Aliens to Bring Glory to God in a Hostile World (2:11-4:11)

IV Persevering in Suffering (4:12-5:11)

V Concluding Words (5:12-14)

*Did you know that if you are in Christ, you too are an “elect exile”? You too have been born again and have an inheritance when Christ returns. Don't get too comfortable in this world or attached to this life. **Persevere in suffering for Christ in holiness, and long for your true home.***

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AN OFFENCE AND AN OASIS: Operation Obadiah

The one-chapter prophecy of Obadiah is the shortest book in the OT. It is uniquely addressed to Edom, when she had celebrated the Babylonian invasion of Israel.

How would Yahweh display His justice to vindicate His people?

7⚔ Opposition from of Old

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, sons of Isaac and Rebekah, with a tortured relationship; Esau sold his birth right to Israel in a moment of desperate hunger (Gen. 25:23-34).

Though they later reconciled (Gen. 33:1-16), the nations that descended from them (Israel and Edom) continued in tension (Num. 20:14-21). But Yahweh instructed Israel to be gentle to Edom (Deut. 2:2-8).

👑 Opposite Sides of Justice

Obadiah helps us to understand biblical justice as comprising both retributive and restorative lenses.

1. **Retributive justice** refers to fair punishment for crime. Edom is judged in the same way that she had sinned against Israel (v. 15b). As she has drunk on Zion, she will drink the cup of God's wrath (v. 16). As Israel had been burnt, Edom will be burnt and consumed (v. 18).
2. **Restorative justice** refers to the vindication and regeneration of the oppressed. On the Day of Yahweh, Israel will return to rule over the land (vv. 17, 19-21). This is guaranteed by Yahweh's covenant with Israel, despite her failing which led to the Babylonian exile.

📖 Outline

This short but dense book follows a counterintuitive structure; punishment precedes the crime.

- I **Punishment: Yahweh's Coming Judgment on Edom (vv. 1-9)**
- II **Crime: Edom's Sins of Violence, Complicity, Sadism, and Participation (vv. 10-14)**
- III **Retribution and Restoration: The Day of Yahweh (vv. 15-21)**

*The New Testament shows us an even greater Day of Yahweh, when sin and evil will be truly judged, and the New Creation will be fully restored. Jesus will be the perfect Saviour who rules over not just Mount Zion and Mount Esau, but all of the New Creation. **Follower of Jesus, do you yearn for the Day of Yahweh to come?***



BIG FISH, SMALL FISH, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN: Jostling and Jamming with Jonah

The book of Jonah is not just a story about a prophet who, because of his disobedience, survived being swallowed by a fish, as interesting a story as that might be. Packed within its 4 chapters are many precious lessons about our hearts and God's character.

Suit up, take a deep breath, and let us dive into the book of Jonah!

At a glance...

What was so bad about the people and city of Nineveh? Surely the way Jonah reacted was extreme and overly dramatic!

It is important for us to understand the historical context Jonah was in to answer those questions. The city of Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, a successful and thriving nation then. Housed within her walls was great evil (1:2; 3:8) and their infamous reputation of aggression and atrocities. Jonah knew that Nineveh meant destruction, deportation, and doom. Yet, God had sent him there.

Jonah's Jostle

Throughout the book, we see Jonah struggling and jostling with his self-centered hatred and God's compassion. He bitterly resented the fact that God loves and cares for evil people. How could God want him to take a message of mercy to such people?

Yet through his flight to Tarshish, his shipwreck (and interaction with the seamen), and his time in the great fish, God was teaching Jonah that all salvation comes from the Lord (2:9). God is supremely powerful; only He can decide where to pour out His salvation and His mercy (4:11).

Outline

- I **Jonah's Rebellion at God' Call (1:1-3)**
- II **Jonah's Unsuccessful Fleeing (1:4-16)**
- III **Jonah's Gratitude to God for Saving His life (1:17 - 2:10)**
- IV **Jonah Obeys God's Call and Nineveh's Repentance (3:1-10)**
- V **Jonah's Ingratitude at God's Grace towards Nineveh (4:1-11)**

*Do you ever find yourself fighting God - your desires pulling you one way and God's desires pulling you another? While we might find our own desire won out over to God's for a time, His purposes will ultimately prevail, even if it means doling out a heavy dose of humility on a prideful and unwilling heart. **God doesn't just want our desires to align with His, but also our hearts. Would you give God your heart?***

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Prayer Items

NOVEMBER



THE MATCHLESS AND MERCIFUL MASTER: Marvelling with Micah

Micah's name, meaning 'who is like Yah[weh]', is a celebration of the incomparability of Yahweh, the covenantal God of Israel. The prophet from Moresheth Gath (1:1, 14), even added on to God's matchlessness by associating his name to God's incomparable forgiveness and fidelity (7:18-20) in his message; the main theme of the book of Micah.

Let us join Micah in marvelling at our Matchless God!

Exploring Micah

Unlike other prophetic books in the Bible (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) that describe the initial call to ministry, the book of Micah starts immediately with God's oracles of doom and hope upon God's people. The jerky nature of the book is due to the binding together of formerly independent oracles into one coherent whole. There are, however, 3 distinct series of prophecies and oracles that runs through the book of Micah.

The 3 Series

Each series begins with the command rendered either to 'hear' (1:2) or 'listen' (3:1; 6:1), and moves from doom to hope.

- #1 **The First Series (1:1 - 2:13)** - Israel is sent into exile and their holy land is dislocated due to their sins. However, a promise from the Lord is given at the end; He will gather His elect remnant into Jerusalem to survive the impending Assyrian siege.
- #2 **The Second Series (3:1 - 5:15)** - After the dismantling of Jerusalem because of its failed leadership, the Lord would reassemble the afflicted remnant and exalt Jerusalem high above the nations.
- #3 **The Third Series (6:1 - 7:20)** - From the spiritually depraved and disintegrated nation, an elect remnant of the chosen people will be forgiven and saved by God.

Outline

- I **The First Series of Prophecies - God gathers the elect remnant into Jerusalem (1:2 - 2:13)**
- II **The Second Series of Prophecies - God restores Jerusalem's former dominion (3:1 - 5:15)**
- III **The Third Series of Prophecies - God forgives the remnant of His sinful people (6:1 - 7:20)**

*Much of Micah's indictment against Israel and Judah involves these nations' injustice toward the lowly—unjust business dealings, robbery, mistreatment of women and children, and a government that lived in luxury off the hard work of its nation's people. Where does injustice dwell in your own life? Do you need a call toward repentance, like the people of Israel and Judah did? **Let us live as God desires—"to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8).***



NOT-ANOTHER-JONAH: Neutralised by Nahum

Less than a hundred years since Jonah preached at Nineveh, God raises up Nahum to prophesy Nineveh's complete destruction. *Now what...?*

Nahum's Nineveh

Here are some things to note about Nineveh during Nahum's time!

- Nineveh had become the capital city of the Assyrian Empire
- Assyria had been used by God to punish unfaithful Israel
- Yet Assyria had proven to be godless, idolatrous, lustful, greedy, and cruel
- Nineveh's repentance during Jonah's ministry had been short-lived
- God now promises to utterly destroy Nineveh for its blatant wickedness and cruelty
- Less than 50 years after Nahum's prophecies, Assyria and the Assyrians would vanish from human history

Nahum's God

Here are some truths of God's character that we can glean from Nahum!

- **A God of vengeance:** Nahum opens with a declaration of God's jealousy and wrath. The contents of Nahum's prophecies remind us that God is a God of vengeance!
- **A God of goodness:** To the humble and hurting, God is a refuge and slow to anger. He cares for those who trust in Him. The LORD is good!
- **A God active and powerful:** God is not a far-off spectator of human events. He oversees the affairs of the world, even controlling the forces of nature. A terror to His enemies, God's power is a comfort to His people!
- **A God of good news:** The destruction of Assyria is promised good news to all who have experienced Nineveh's cruelty. There will be clapping of hands (3:19). Messengers of bad news will no longer be heard (2:13) – only those proclaiming the good news of peace (1:15)!

Navigating Nahum

- I Introduction (1:1)
- II A Psalm Descriptively Praising the Lord (1:2-8)
- III The Lord's Coming Judgment on Nineveh and Deliverance of Judah (1:9-15)
- IV Focus on Nineveh: The Lord's Coming Judgment (2:1-13)
- V Focus on Nineveh: More concerning the Lord's Coming Judgment (3:1-19)

The destruction of Nineveh – the great enemy of Israel and the oppressor of the world – foreshadows the destruction of mankind's greatest oppressors: sin and death! Do you hear the whispers of the gospel?

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TUE

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WED

Prayer Items

NOVEMBER



“HEAR AND HELP!”

Humbled with Habakkuk

Habakkuk is an unusual prophetic book. Here Habakkuk converses with God and offers a prayer to Him – but never addresses the people of God directly! *What is Habakkuk so hung up about...?*

Holding Out For Answers

Habakkuk joins the ranks of Job and Jonah in baring his heart before God in flustered complaint. Here are some of the questions Habakkuk raises... Can you relate?

- Where is God in times of difficulty?
- Why doesn't God say anything when gross wrongdoings abound?
- How can God allow wickedness to go unpunished?
- How can a good God make use of an evil nation?
- Does God truly care for His people?

Hope in Helplessness

How does Habakkuk counsel us in times of helpless confusion? Here are two ways we can respond from Habakkuk:

- **Turn to God:** Do you doubt God? Do His ways perplex you? Has your trust in Him been rattled? Habakkuk encourages us to turn to God in complaint, in dialogue, and in prayer. Who could better address them? *Resist the urge to distance from God!*
- **“but the righteous shall live by faith”:** Ultimately, we recognise that God is God – and we are not. Submit to His ways! Double-down on His revealed character! Rejoice in His sovereignty! *Resist the urge to place yourself above God!*

Here You Go

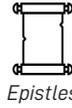
Unsure of how to read Habakkuk? Here's a simple guide!

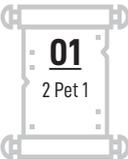
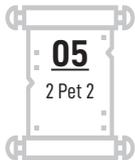
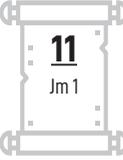
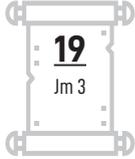
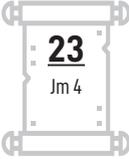
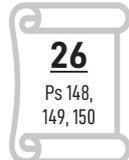
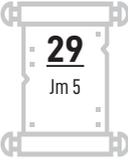
- I **Heading (1:1)**
- II **Habakkuk's First Complaint (1:2-4)**
- III **The Lord's Answer (1:5-11)**
- IV **Habakkuk's Second Complaint (1:12-2:1)**
- V **The Lord's Answer (2:2-20)**
- VI **Habakkuk's Prayer (3:1-19)**

God's replies to Habakkuk are in stark contrast with His deafening silence to Jesus' cry: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Christ calls you to draw near by faith today!

DECEMBER



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				 <p>01 2 Pet 1</p>	 <p>02 Zep 1</p>	 <p>03 Zep 2</p>
 <p>04 Zep 3</p>	 <p>05 2 Pet 2</p>	 <p>06 Hag 1, 2</p>	 <p>07 2 Pet 3</p>	 <p>08 Zec 1</p>	 <p>09 Zec 2</p>	 <p>10 Zec 3</p>
 <p>11 Jm 1</p>	 <p>12 Zec 4</p>	 <p>13 Zec 5</p>	 <p>14 Zec 6</p>	 <p>15 Jm 2</p>	 <p>16 Zec 7</p>	 <p>17 Zec 8</p>
 <p>18 Zec 9</p>	 <p>19 Jm 3</p>	 <p>20 Zec 10</p>	 <p>21 Zec 11</p>	 <p>22 Zec 12</p>	 <p>23 Jm 4</p>	 <p>24 Zec 13</p>
 <p>25 Zec 14</p>	 <p>26 Ps 148, 149, 150</p>	 <p>27 Mal 1</p>	 <p>28 Mal 2</p>	 <p>29 Jm 5</p>	 <p>30 Mal 3</p>	 <p>31 Mal 4</p>



Do utilize this space by journaling down your thoughts and reflections!

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Prayer Items

DECEMBER



2 PETER:

Purposeful Patience

When's the last time you meditated on Christ's second coming? Does it seem to take so long that it doesn't feel relevant in your day-to-day? False teachers had arisen from among the people during the time of 2 Peter and were teaching the denial of Christ's second coming and licentiousness (freedom to sin) as a result.

Read on to discover what the apostle writes in response.

Power to wait patiently and watch out for pretenders!

1. Pretenders in the church

The false prophets were not from outside the church but had arisen from among the people and denied the Master who bought them. They had once known the way of righteousness before turning back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

2. Patience of the Lord

The false prophets were scoffing at the promise of the Lord's coming but failed to see that with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. He is not slow in fulfilling his promise as some count slowness but is patient and wishing that none should perish but come to repentance.

3. Power to be holy

Because Christ is sure to return, his people should be diligent to be found by him without spot and blemish. Through God's divine power, we have been granted all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Profile

I Initial Greeting (1:1-2)

II God's Grace in Christ is the Source of Godly Living (1:3-11)

III Peter's Reminder to the Churches (1:12-21)

IV Evaluation of False Teachers (2:1-22)

V The Day of the Lord Will Surely Come (3:1-13)

VI Concluding Exhortations (3:14-18)

Christ is coming soon! Meditate on this often, and let it spur you to greater diligence in holiness. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and we can trust and find power in this promise.



ZEALOUS JUDGEMENT AND ZESTFUL LOVE:

The Zingings of Zephaniah

Despite King Josiah's effort to eradicate Judah's whoring and idolatry, the people were still spiraling into spiritual and religious decay. Zephaniah's warnings seemed to be in vain, and God's judgment upon His people was imminent. *Is this the end, or is there still hope for God's rebellious and idolatrous people?*

An Overlook

Zephaniah lived during the final decades of the southern kingdom of Israel (Judah), under King Josiah's reign (640-609 BC). He had seen the perversion of true worship because of the evil king Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-18) and his son Amon (2 Kings 21:19-26) which saw serious spiritual and religious decay amongst the Israelites.

Zephaniah's message was addressed to the people of Judah and God's impending judgement to Jerusalem and the surrounding nations, if they would not repent.

Zooming In

A theological theme that binds the book of Zephaniah is judgment. The book is a collection of the prophet's poetry and message that is designed to have 3 main parts:

#1 Judgement on Israel (1:2-2:3)

The strong poetic and apocalyptic images and language used here seem to be a reversal of Genesis 1; destruction. Jerusalem's world would come to an end through the means of an army that God would send. God is the orchestrator, which gives Zephaniah hope.

#2 Judgement on the Nations and Jerusalem (2:4-3:8)

Zephaniah expands his message of judgement to the surrounding nations; Ammonites, Philistines, Moabites and the Assyrians; they were all accused of violence and corruption. They would fall to the same army mentioned before: the Babylonians.

#3 Hope for the Nations and Jerusalem (3:9-20)

The book ends with God showing how His burning fire of divine judgement is not aimed at destroying His people, but for their purification. God will eventually restore them.

Outline

- I Judgement on Israel (1:2-2:3)
- II Judgement on Surrounding Nations and Jerusalem (2:4-3:8)
- III Hope for the Nations and Jerusalem [3:9-20]

*Much like the Israelites, we too struggle with idolatry and false worship. Let the message in the book of Zephaniah remind us how seriously God takes our life, relationship, and worship with and of Him. Even if you have failed, remember the message of Zephaniah 3 and let it encourage us. **God is always a God of restoration and hope.***

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HAGGAI: Haggard yet Hopeful

Haggai is a narrative-prophecy that details the remnant's return to build the temple. Despite early efforts, the building of the temple stopped.

How would God seek to dwell with His people?



Holy House

Haggai is concerned with the building of the temple, after it had been destroyed by the Babylonian invasion and exile in 587 BC. The people were brought back to the land by Cyrus in 538 BC (Ezra 1-2), and though initial work started, the people stopped when their neighbours opposed them (Ezra 3:1-4:5).

Haggai prophesies in this time, calling God's people to not be distracted by their economic and social security, but to obey God's call to rebuild His house, i.e., the temple, that He may dwell with them.



Hybrid Hopes

As the people obey God's command to build His house, God promises the blessings of His presence, provision, cleansing, and rescue. In tandem, He promises that the glory of the rebuilt will surpass that of the former.

This is ultimately fulfilled in the New Jerusalem, where the temple is superseded by the physical presence of the Father and the Lamb (Rev. 21:22-26).



Headlines

Haggai is structured around four messages, each indicated by the word of Yahweh coming to or by Haggai on a particular date (1:1, 2:1, 10, 20).

- I **1st Message: Stop Being Distracted, Build God's House (1:1-11)**
- II **Response: The People Build the Temple (1:12-15)**
- III **2nd Message: Be Strong, Fear Not; God is with You & Will Provide (2:1-9)**
- IV **3rd Message: God Will Bless (2:10-19)**
- V **4th Message: God Will Rescue (2:20-23)**

*On this side of the cross and before the return of Christ, God's temple is His church (1 Cor. 3:16-17). Paul tells us that this temple grows when we speak the truth in love to one another (Eph. 4:15-16). **Christian, will you build God's house today by speaking the truth in love to fellow church members?***

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ZION'S ZENITH:

Zealful with Zechariah

It's been almost 20 years since the people returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. Initially there had been great joy! But now, discouragement had set in. *Enter Zechariah...*

Zeroed, Zilched, & Zapped

The people were discouraged: difficulties faced in constructing the temple, rising taxes to the Persian empire, the city of Jerusalem still partially rebuilt, and Jerusalem herself losing her place and importance in the world.

Was God truly with them? Was God really going to fulfil His prophesied promises for Israel's restoration? Would Judah become her own nation – free of any subjection to foreign powers? Would God bring spiritual revival to the people?

So why bother? Why not try to make the most of things, and live their 'best life' now? *The people had lost hope and faith.*

Znap out of it!

This is how Zechariah addressed the people's discouragement:

- Reminded them that they were suffering the consequences of their forefathers' sins
- Exhorted them that God was still watching & His comfort would soon come
- Called them to heed God's word through His prophets
- Reinforced God's many promises for their restoration & triumph
- Foretold the coming of "the Branch", the Davidic ruler who would save, cleanse, and bring peace

Zoinks!

Need some support with Zechariah?... You're welcome!

- I **Introduction: A Call to Return to the Lord (1:1–6)**
- II **Eight Night Visions of Zechariah (1:7–6:8)**
- III **A Crown for Joshua (6:9–15)**
- IV **From Fasting to Feasting (7:1–8:23)**
- V **The Return of the King (9:1–14:21)**
 - a. **Oracle #1: the leaders and their people (9:1–11:17)**
 - B. **Oracle #2: the people and their leaders (12:1–14:21)**

*Zechariah features pervasively in the New Testament (about 54 passages in about 67 different places)! Why? Because the encouragement Zechariah offers is ultimately found in Christ. **Behold Him and be renewed!***



JAGGED, JARRING & JAM-PACKED: Jolted by James

Jewish Christian house churches were faced with division, worldliness, hypocrisy, and a host of other social issues. James “the Just”, brother of Jesus, and leader of the church in Jerusalem, writes this letter to address these issues.

Get ready for James to joust with your heart...

Jagged

The book of James begins with a greeting – like an epistle. Yet it is filled with urgent commands (also known as “imperatives”) – like wisdom literature. Out of the 108 verses in the book of James, more than 50 are imperatives! James even contains promises of future reward and warnings of future judgement – like an apocalyptic book.

James doesn't read very smoothly. But press on, and receive these words with a warm and humble heart!

Jarring

Martin Luther (in)famously said this of the book of James, “Therefore St James' epistle is really an epistle of straw, compared to these others, for it has nothing of the nature of the Gospel about it.” At first glance, James can sound legalistic, domineering, and as if it advocates “works-righteousness”. What's going on?

You see, James was writing to Christians who were living worldly, compromised lives. James was calling out a hollow, superficial idea of faith – a faith that lacked truth and substance. And so James clarifies, that faith must be lived out through works! Faith is not just being hearers of the word, but doers of it!

As Martin Luther also said so well, “We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.” Dear follower of Christ, read on!

Jam-Packed

James is just five, jam-packed chapters long. Here's a slightly detailed guide to help you along!

- I Greeting (1:1)**
- II The Testing of Faith (1:2-18)**
- III Hearing and Doing the Word (1:19-27)**
- IV The Sin of Partiality (2:1-13)**
- V Faith without Works is Dead (2:14-26)**
- VI The Sin of Dissension in the Community (3:1-4:12)**
- VII The Sins of the Wealthy (4:13-5:12)**
- VIII The Prayer of Faith (5:13-18)**
- IX Concluding Admonition (5:19-20)**

*James advocates a faith that is truly Christ-like. Is your faith bearing good fruit (Matt. 7:16-23)? Is your faith leading you to serve Christ through serving 'the least' (Matt. 25:31-46)? **Jesus is here to forgive, to humble, and to make strong – respond to Him!***

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MALACHI:

Messenger of the Messiah

Did you know that Malachi means “messenger”? Malachi was prophesying to Judah in a time when they had returned from exile and rebuilt the temple. Yet so much was still missing from the hope that was promised upon the return from exile. The people were complacent and though they offered sacrifices to God in the temple, their hearts were far from Him.

Read on to see how the Lord still calls his people back to himself.

📍 Map to Malachi

Malachi is highly structured into 6 disputations, or debates, which have parallels to each other. The disputations are like mirrors to each other, where 1 and 6, 2 and 5, 3 and 4, are pairs that mirror each other. Each disputation is introduced by an assertion from either the Lord or the prophet, followed by an anticipated challenge from the people “But you say”. Together these 6 pairs form a “sandwich” shape. Try to spot these structures in your readings, it may help you understand the book better!

- I Opening (1:1)**
- II First disputation:** Does God make a distinction between the good and the arrogantly wicked? (1:2-5)
- III Second disputation:** Israel’s begrudging offerings condemned (1:6-2:9)
- IV Third disputation:** Marriage to an idolator, and divorce based on aversion – condemned by the Lord, who is witness to the covenant of marriage (2:10-16)
- V Fourth disputation:** The Lord is a witness against adultery and other moral offenses (2:17-3:5)
- VI Fifth disputation:** Israel’s begrudging offerings condemned (3:6-12)
- VII Sixth disputation:** Does God make a distinction between the good and the arrogantly wicked? (3:13-4:3)
- VIII Conclusion (4:4-6)**



The Lord’s Multitude of Mighty Militia

Did you know that the title “Lord of Hosts (armies)” appears more frequently in Malachi than in any other OT book? In the post-exilic period of Malachi, the postage-stamp-sized Judah, as a tiny province within the vast Persian Empire, had no army of its own.

It is in such times when God’s people are painfully aware of how limited their resources are, and there is no greater comfort than the fact that the Lord has invincible heavenly armies standing at the ready.

Going into exile and coming back was not enough to purify the hearts of the people of God. The outward form of worship continued, but their hearts were far from God, and they were still covenant-breakers. Exile could not solve the problem, and only through the Messiah could hearts of stone be renewed into hearts of flesh. Has your heart grown cold towards our Lord?

Cast yourself upon His grace and be saved through Jesus Christ.

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Where do we go from here?

We've come through reading the Bible together, a chapter a day, for three years. What's next? Here are some suggestions!

1



Celebrate!

Take some time to give thanks for the effort that was put in! How?

- Pen down a page of gratitude in your journal
- Have a time of sharing with your family (if you read together)
- If you read as a couple, enjoy a celebratory meal together
- Again, celebrate effort more than just the outcomes!

2



Get A Plan

Reading the Bible is a lifelong activity. Get ready for next year with a Bible-reading plan! Some options include:

- Opting for a slightly more brisk 2-year plan
- Zooming ahead for a 1-year plan
- Reading the Bible chronologically
- Or of course, reusing the 3-year ACAD Bible reading plan!

3



Settle Logistics

The old adage goes, "Fail to plan, Plan to fail". Now that you've settled on a plan, look into the details – such as:

- What time will you schedule your Bible-reading?
- Where would be the best place to meaningfully engage with the Bible?
- Aside from your Bible, what other items should/should not be present at your Bible-reading? (hint: not your phone!)
- And don't forget to plan for when you fall behind in your Bible-reading!

4



Find People

Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." Get people involved! Here are some ways:

- Arrange to read together with your family
- Arrange to read together with a friend over the phone, or over Zoom
- Make a resolution with your cell group members
- At the very least, having someone hold you accountable would help tremendously!

5

Prayfully Commit

Proverbs 16:9 says, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." The process of Bible-reading is as much for God's glory, as it is for your good. So commit your Bible-reading plans to the Lord, and may He establish your steps with favour!

O MY GOD,

*You are fairest, greatest, first of all objects,
my heart admires, adores, loves You,
for my little vessel is as full as it can be,
and I would pour out all that fullness before You
in ceaseless flow.*

*When I think upon and converse with You
ten thousand delightful thoughts spring up,
ten thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed,
ten thousand refreshing joys spread over my heart,
crowding into every moment of happiness.*

*I bless You for this soul You have created,
for adorning it, sanctifying it,
for the body You have given me,
for preserving my strength and vigour,
for providing me senses to enjoy delights,
for the ease and freedom of my limbs,
for hands, eyes, ears that do Your bidding;
for Your royal bounty providing my daily support,
for a full table and overflowing cup,
for appetite, taste, sweetness,
for social joys of relatives and friends,
for ability to serve others,
for a heart that feels sorrows and necessities,
for a mind to care for my fellow-men,
for opportunities of spreading happiness around,
for loved ones in the joys of heaven,
for my own expectation of seeing You clearly.
I love You above the powers of language
to express,
for what You are to me, Your creature.*

*Increase my love, O my God, through time
and eternity.*

AMEN.

RESOURCES

Here are the resources that shaped this booklet – be encouraged to use them for yourself!

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Agape



BAPTIST CHURCH