

Background

Reading through the Bible is a great opportunity to get to know God's Word. Doing it together provides accountability and support. The important thing is that we begin where we are and keep going. This year I would like to offer an abbreviated, abridged approach in reading the Old Testament. A couple of things need to be kept in mind. Spiritual formation, transformation, and growth come from being in God's Word. The goal is not just to read it, but to allow its truth to penetrate our lives, to change us and mold us. That is what I mean by "Getting into God's Word, so His Word gets into us."

One, all of the Old Testament is God's Word. Every part is important, meaningful and significant.

Second, the goal is to read about 2 chapters a day, about 10-15 minutes. Keeping it short and getting it done is better than long passages and long time and not making it through.

Third, when we read it is good to look for principles God taught His people to live by, expectation, and times of success and failure. What does God want us to learn, understand, realize or apply to our lives are themes we should be looking for.

Fourth, my goal is to provide some brief commentary and context at the beginning of each book so we can keep the story in perspective.

Fifth, it is good to have a reading partner to keep us focused, accountable and perhaps to discuss parts we do not understand.

Enjoy your reading and time with God.

Dr. Ralph Gibson, Pastor

December

READING

PLAN



**"Getting into God's Word,
so God's Word gets into us."**

Daily Reading for December

This month we finish the Old Testament. The Minor Prophets, as they are called, are minor because they are shorter, not because they are less important. They are some of the most interesting reading of the Old Testament. They move quickly and have a contemporary feel to them. They address Israel's disobedience, sin, rebellion against God and the prophets are calling Israel back to God as the preachers/teachers are and/or should be calling us individually and collectively as a nation back to God today.

Side note, Haggai and Malachi are among my favorites.

I found it interesting in preparing this outline that as the OT ends with a call to return to God, the chapter heading of Zechariah 1 is a call to repentance. A timely message for today and a preparation for the coming of Jesus. The chapter heading of Malachi speak of God's love for Israel and the promise of a coming messenger. One might keep in mind that from Malachi to Matthew there are 400 years of silence meaning no notable prophets spoke on God's behalf. Then suddenly Jesus shows up. And the rest is history.

I found it really interesting that as we have been reading through the Bible, basically at 2 chapters a day, the timing of beginning the reading of Matthew and the story of Jesus on December 24. Who but God could or would have planned that. I certainly could not have. He just did it. So be sure to enjoy the reading of Jesus birth as we celebrate His birth as well.

My goal is to keep the readings short and fit them into our lives. It is never too late to start. So begin today where we are and join the journey through the Scriptures. They apply to the time period of approximately 400 BC in general except as we begin the New Testament which is obviously 0.

As we read look for what is God trying to emphasis in this passage? In what ways does this apply to me? What principles do I need to take from this? What is God trying to say to me and my life?

December 1	Amos 1-2	Judgment on nations
2	3-4	Authority of the Prophets message
3	5-6	The Lament for Israel
4	7-9	Vision of the Locust
5	Obadiah	Coming judgment on Edom
6	Jonah 1-2	Jonah's disobedience
7	3-4	Jonah Preaches at Nineveh
8	Micah 1-2	Coming judgment on Israel
9	3-4	Wicked rulers and prophets
10	5-7	The coming Messiah
11	Nahum 1-3	God's wrath on his enemies
12	Habakkuk 1-3	Prophet's Questions
13	Zephaniah 1-3	Great day of the Lord
14	Haggai 1-2	Command to build God's house
15	Zechariah 1-2	Call to Repentance
16	3-4	Vision of the High Priest
17	5-6	Vision of the Flying Scroll
18	7-8	Obedience better than fasting
19	9-10	Israel defended against enemies
20	11-12	Coming deliverance of Judah
21	13-14	Idolatry cut off
22	Malachi 1-2	Israel beloved by God
23	3-4	The coming messenger
24	Matthew 1-2	Genealogy of Jesus
25	3-4	John the Baptist prepares the way
26	5-6	The Beatitudes
27	7-8	Do not judge
28	9-10	Jesus forgives & heals paralytic
29	11-12	John the Baptist sends messengers
30	13-14	The parable of the sower
31	15-16	Defilement comes from within

