



Bible Reading Journey

Key Study Points by Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann

Each day, using the notes on this page:

- Pray for Spirit-filled insight as you read God's Word.
- Look for Law and Gospel themes that point us to Jesus.
- Apply the readings to your life.
- Pray to Jesus, as the readings inspire you, for yourself, your family, your church and your world.

Historical Context: Amos was likely written ~792-740 BC in the time when Israel was conquered and exiled by Assyria. Obadiah was likely written ~587-553 BC in the time just after Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. Jonah was likely written ~790 BC, before the fall of Israel.

Law & Gospel Themes: Amos ends its warning against Israel with a brief word of Messianic hope. Obadiah speaks the LORD's judgment on Edom, the descendants of Esau, for their evil treatment of Judah throughout history and esp. at the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon. God was patient with them as He is with all

people, but there is a limit, ultimately on Judgment Day (Oba. 15 & 21). God is gracious and merciful to all who repent, even those we, like Jonah, may deem unworthy (Jonah 4:2). God even acts with mercy to Jonah by saving him in the belly of the fish. God's will never changes, but His loving dealing with us may change depending on our response (Jonah 3:10).

Life Application Starters: When and how have you become impatient with God's patience? Have you ever gone in a direction directly away from where God was leading you? How did that work out? Is there

anyone you hope to NOT see in heaven? What does Jonah's story say about that? What could/should you do about that?

Prayer Starters: For obedience to the will of God in all of life. For courage to fulfill God's plans for us. In thanksgiving for God's patient love for us even though we regularly run away from Him. To be patient with the persistent sinners in our life. That we will show the mercy and grace of God to anyone, whenever we possibly can. For the salvation of ALL people, even those who seem to be too far gone.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Amos 7:1-17

Tuesday: Amos 8:1-14

Wednesday: Amos 9:1-15

Thursday: Obadiah 1-21

Friday: Jonah 1:1-2:10

Saturday: Jonah 3:1-4:11

May's Memory Verses:

Jonah 4:2, "...you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Micah 5:2, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, ...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

Micah 6:8, "...what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Habakkuk 2:4, "...the righteous shall live by his faith."

Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly...shout aloud...your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Author of Amos: Prophet Amos **Date:** ~792-740 BC **Author of Obadiah:** Prophet Obadiah **Date:** Likely ~587-553 BC
Author of Jonah: Prophet Jonah **Date:** ~790 BC

New Insights:

Questions to Pursue Further:

Insights from My Accountability Partners:

My Personal Prayers:

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Historical Context: Micah was likely written ~750-686 BC in the time when Israel was conquered and exiled by Assyria. Nahum was likely written ~663-612 BC to comfort Israel, now suffering under Assyrian power.

Law & Gospel Themes: Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and may have consulted with him, as many themes overlap (SEE 4:1-3 & Isa. 2:2-4). Micah indicts false shepherds over Israel who abuse and mislead them (Esp. Ch 3). Micah gives one of the most explicit "rectilinear" or direct prophecies (SEE LSB pg. 1493) of the coming of Jesus, stating He will be born in Bethlehem of Judea (5:2).

Micah says those who are redeemed by the LORD will be led by the Spirit to do justice, love kindness (grace) and walk humbly (mercy) with God (6:8). Nahum portrays the LORD as a mighty warrior who fights for His chosen Israel, destroying her enemies, esp. the oppressive Assyrian empire and its capital of Nineveh. Though righteous in the days of Jonah, it had become utterly wicked.

Life Application Starters: All Christians, esp. leaders in the church, are held to a high standard of showing justice, grace and mercy. How successful is this

today based on what you do and observe? What comfort do you receive from explicit prophecies such as Micah 5:2? What troubles and/or comforts you in Nahum's imagery of God as a mighty warrior? How do we balance our role as humble servants with our role as righteous warriors for the LORD?

Prayer Starters: That we would be able to stand for godly justice, share grace and act with mercy in our dealings with all people. For the courage to defend the disenfranchised with the zeal of a warrior. For all leaders of the church to live in the image of Christ.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Micah 1:1-2:13

Tuesday: Micah 3:1-4:13

Wednesday: Micah 5:1-15

Thursday: Micah 6:1-16

Friday: Micah 7:1-20

Saturday: Nahum 1:1-3:19

May's Memory Verses:

Jonah 4:2, "...you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Micah 5:2, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, ...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

Micah 6:8, "...what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Habakkuk 2:4, "...the righteous shall live by his faith."

Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly...shout aloud...your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Author of Micah: Prophet Micah **Date:** ~750-686 BC (at the same time that Isaiah was prophesying in Judah)

Author of Nahum: Prophet Nahum **Date:** ~663-612 BC

New Insights:

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Historical Context: Habakkuk was written ~605 BC as Judah is threatened by Assyria, but will fall to Babylon.

Zephaniah was written 640-609 BC against Judah. Haggai was written in a specific four month period in 520 BC as the people of Judah were to rebuild the temple. Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai, writing in 520-518BC.

Law & Gospel Themes:

Habakkuk laments the LORD's slowness to deliver Israel from evil, for although Assyria will not overcome Judah, Babylon will. Yet, he lives up to his name, meaning "embracer" (as one who hugs a child for comfort) as he speaks God's comfort (SEE

esp. 3:17-19). Like his contemporary, Jeremiah, Zephaniah prophesies God's coming judgment on faithless and impenitent Judah, along with the surrounding nations. This warning (and hope for the faithful) is for all people of all time as his lack of detail points clearly ahead to Jesus and Judgment Day. His closing song is vibrant with joy (3:14-20). Haggai chastises Judah for taking care of themselves rather than rebuilding the temple after the Babylonian exile. He also gives hope from the Word of God. Zechariah speaks a similar message to Haggai (more on him next week).

Life Application Starters:

What comfort do you receive from Habakkuk's assertion from the LORD that "the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4)? How does Zephaniah paint a vivid Law & Gospel picture of Judgment Day (for US too) in his three short chapters? What does Haggai teach us about our priorities?

Prayer Starters: To put our faith in Jesus as our highest priority and source of true life. To support the spread of the Gospel. That we will be ready for Judgment Day through true repentance and steadfast faith in the Word.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Habakkuk 1:1-2:20

Tuesday: Habakkuk 3:1-19

Wednesday: Zephaniah 1:1-2:15

Thursday: Zephaniah 3:1-20

Friday: Haggai 1:1-2:23

Saturday: Zechariah 1:1-2:13

May's Memory Verses:

Jonah 4:2, "...you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Micah 5:2, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, ...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

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Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly...shout aloud...your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Author of Habakkuk: Prophet Habakkuk **Date:** ~605 BC **... of Zephaniah:** Prophet Zephaniah **Date:** 640-609 BC
... of Haggai: Prophet Haggai **Date:** 520 BC **... of Zechariah:** Prophet Zechariah **Date:** 520-518 BC

New Insights:

Questions to Pursue Further:

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Faith Lutheran Church + Grand Blanc, MI + www.faihgb.org

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Historical Context: Zechariah was written by the prophet Zechariah in 520-518 BC, during which time the returned exiles of Judah obey God and begin to rebuild the temple, completing it in 516 BC.

Law & Gospel Themes: Zechariah brings great comfort to the remnant in Judah as they are rebuilding the temple. His many interesting visions (four horns, a measuring line, a golden lampstand, a flying scroll, a woman in a basket, four chariots, etc.) primarily point to God's mighty power that will destroy evil and bring hope, esp. at the coming of Jesus "in that

day" (the NT era ending on Judgment Day). Joshua the high priest has his filthy garments replaced with pure ones as a type of how we, even gentiles, passively receive absolution by grace through faith in Jesus (Ch 3). The Spirit (third person of the Trinity) is needed for Zerubbabel and us to do God's will (4:6). Though they are rebuilding the temple, the true temple of the LORD is Jesus, foretold in the crown imagery of 6:9-15.

Life Application Starters: How are we still building the temple of the LORD today? What opposition

and challenges do we face just as the Israelites did then? How is our practice of infant Baptism a beautiful fulfillment of the garment imagery in Ch 3? What role does the Holy Spirit continue to play in our work of building the body of Christ, the temple of the LORD?

Prayer Starters: That we will not focus on church buildings and programs but on Jesus, the temple of the LORD. To warn all sinners, but welcome them with free grace and holy absolution as Judgment Day draws near. That the Holy Spirit will fill and empower us for this work.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Zechariah 3:1-10

Tuesday: Zechariah 4:1-14

Wednesday: Zechariah 5:1-11

Thursday: Zechariah 6:1-15

Friday: Zechariah 7:1-14

Saturday: Zechariah 8:1-23

May's Memory Verses:

Jonah 4:2, "...you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Micah 5:2, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, ...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

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Habakkuk 2:4, "...the righteous shall live by his faith."

Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly...shout aloud...your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Author of Zechariah: The prophet Zechariah **Date:** 520-518 BC **Context:** Zechariah joined Haggai in calling the leaders and remnant of Judah to set their priorities in order, rebuild the temple, and heed God's Word.

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Historical Context: Zechariah was written by the prophet Zechariah in 520-518 BC. Malachi was written by the prophet Malachi ~430 BC, soon after the walls of Jerusalem have been restored.

Law & Gospel Themes: Amidst his words of comfort for oppressed Israel, Zechariah offers several clear Messianic prophecies: Jesus' Palm Sunday entry (9:9), Judas' betrayal (10:12f), Jesus' crucifixion (12:10), Jesus and his disciples in Gethsemane (13:7). All show that Jesus is our ultimate source of comfort and hope. Malachi, which means "my messenger," is a priest and

the final OT prophet, who faithfully speaks the LORD's call to repentance, esp. for the priests who have not spoken truth or loved their wives as they should (Ch 2:1-16). He foretells the coming of John the Baptist (3:1 & 4:5) to prepare the way for Jesus. He condemns the people for not giving proper tithes and offerings to Him...so He can lovingly bless them even more abundantly (3:6-10).

Life Application Starters: What comfort/hope do the clear prophecies of Jesus this week give to you? What high calling is placed upon priests/pastors/

teachers of God's Word? What expectations are placed upon those served by these messengers? In particular, what do we learn from Malachi about proper stewardship and the tremendous blessings that go with it? What destruction is John the Baptist calling us to avoid and how will we be spared?

Prayer Starters: That we will see Jesus in all the OT prophecies of the Messiah and receive His gift of salvation. To never turn from Jesus. To faithfully receive and share God's Word. To be wise stewards who are truly blessed.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Zechariah 9:1-10:12

Tuesday: Zechariah 11:1-12:14

Wednesday: Zechariah 13:1-9

Thursday: Zechariah 14:1-21

Friday: Malachi 1:1-2:17

Saturday: Malachi 3:1-4:6

May's Memory Verses:

Jonah 4:2, "...you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Micah 5:2, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, ...from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

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Author of Zechariah: The prophet Zechariah **Date:** 520-518 BC

Author of Malachi: The prophet Malachi **Date:** ~430 BC

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