

B.I.B.L.E.
“Interpretation and Insight, the Laws and Prophets”

The Bible is considered the basic tool for the Christian faith. Beginning with our Jewish heritage, we have a “book” that spans thousands of years. From its pages we sing, teach, and set our basic understandings of morals and ethics. We depend upon the Bible to make sense of an ever-changing world. Over the next few weeks, this study guide will look a little different. Instead of daily readings, there will be a series of readings from different books for us to choose from depending on the level of reading we are choosing to do for the B.I.B.L.E. reading challenge. You should have received the bookmark/tracking card, but if you have not, please contact the church and we can mail one or you can download one from our website. We also have extra bookmarks available for pick up at the church. There are three levels to our challenge, each level expects us to read six days a week. The challenge can be done by any age, if a child is not old enough to read, a parent or other adult or youth can read to them from a children’s bible. The Bronze Level is 10 minutes a day, the Silver is 30 minutes a day and the Gold is 45 minutes a day. Last week we did an overview of the whole people. This week we will dig deeper into the Torah/Law and the Prophets. If reading with children, I would concentrate on Days 1 and 2 as the prophets are harder for children, except for Jonah and the call of Jeremiah. The prophet’s purpose was to invite people or challenge them to return to God and to follow the law. While sometimes we see that as “work righteousness” the truth is that the law was gift so that people would be in right relationship with God and each other. During the week we will have an opportunity to read both versions of the ten commandments as well as some of the other instructive laws and then see what the prophets have to say. May your reading this week deepen your love of God and your love of the Word. Pastor Cindy

PRAYER

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

This week’s readings will concentrate on the Torah or the Law. These are the first five books of our Holy Bible. Then we will skip to the prophets and have multiple readings from both the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) and the minor prophets. All the prophets come during the time of kings. They were the spiritual advisors and gadflies. Even today, the prophets’ words can sting when their words are seen in light of our behavior.

Day One

Exodus 12: 1-28 (29-42)	Establishment of the Passover (plague of the death of the firstborn)
Exodus 16: 1-36, 17: 1-7	Complaints from the people: manna in the wilderness and water
Exodus 18: 1-27	Moses reunited with his wife, sons, and father-in-law; judges established
Exodus 20: 1-26	Ten Commandments
Deuteronomy 5: 1-33	Ten Commandments

If you want more information about the Passover, you can finish reading Exodus 12 and continue reading chapters 13 and 14 to learn about the journey into the wilderness and God’s saving the people at the Red Sea.

Day Two

Deuteronomy 6: 1-25	The instruction to teach children to keep the commandments
Deuteronomy 7: 7-9, 8:1-20	God’s love for the people of Israel and a reminder
Deuteronomy 12: 1-28	Purity of worship, sacrificial offerings
Deuteronomy 10:10-22; 11: 8-28	Reminder to keep the commandments
Deuteronomy 14: 3-29	Food laws
Deuteronomy 15: 1-18	Year of release; liberation of slaves and caring for those in need

The laws get very particular on how to harvest, what to plant, what to eat and what to wear. Many if not all have to do with what is just and right. They are a broadening of the ten commandments. In terms of more legal offerings check out Deuteronomy 19 which lays out understandings about homicide, assault, cheating and witnessing. Chapter 20 is about war, Chapter 21 deals with the treatment of women, wives, and children. If you want to get into the nitty gritty of all kinds of laws, please continue reading into chapters 22-31. Numbers and Leviticus contain the same kind of listing of laws.

Day Three

Isaiah 1: 1-31	Prophet Isaiah speaking against Israel's sins (northern Kingdom)
Hosea 1: 1-11, 4: 1-19	Call of Hosea, graphic imagery Israel as an unfaithful wife
Amos 2: 4-16, 5: 4-24	Amos prophesying God's displeasure with Israel, asks for justice
Micah 6: 1-16	What is required?
Isaiah 6: 1-13	Isaiah's call and vision of destruction

These four prophets are part of the literature we have from the cries of God through the prophets against the Northern Kingdom which fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E. Isaiah was actually a prophet of the Southern Kingdom (Judah), but part of Chapters 1-39 include words against the north and the wicked kings that lead. Hosea uses his call to marry an unfaithful woman as the example of God and the people of Israel. This vehicle speaks to God's anger and mercy. Amos is a hot head who lays out that the law is about justice and caring for the needy. Micah like Amos is an ordinary person who proclaim what is good and right. If you have time, I suggest reading all of Amos, Micah, and Hosea.

Day Four

Jeremiah 1: 1-19	call of Jeremiah, prophet to Southern Kingdom, Judah (Jerusalem)
Jeremiah 7: 1-34 (8:1-17)	First sermon calling out Judah and Jerusalem
Jeremiah 8: 18-9: 3	Lamentation and grief over the sin of Judah and Jerusalem
Joel 2: 1-32	Sounding the alarm over the coming disasters
Nahum 1: 1-15	Destruction of Nineveh (Assyrian kingdom)

These prophets were speaking after the destruction of the Northern Kingdom (when the Assyrians took the northern tribes into Assyria) They spoke to the Southern Kingdom Judah and Jerusalem that devastation was coming. Tomorrow's readings will include readings from the prophets during the Babylonian exile. For more in depth reading about the pre-exile prophets, please read Isaiah Chapters 7-13 and Jeremiah Chapters 11-14. Included in the Isaiah chapters are the promise of restoration in the midst of the destruction that will come. Ezekiel Chapters 1-2 has the prophet speaking in visions and images about the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah.

Day Five

Ezekiel 3: 1-27	The prophets call and anguish to speak to the exiles
Lamentations 1: 1-22	Jeremiah's grief over the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem
Ezekiel 37: 1-28	Dry Bone and the promise of restoration
Isaiah 40: 1-31	Promise of restoration and homecoming
Jeremiah 29: 1-14	Promise to the exiles

If you want to read more about the exile and the words to the people there read Jeremiah Chapters 30 and 31, Isaiah Chapters 42 through 45. All of Lamentations give voice to the grief felt by the people of God. Ezekiel is filled with literal rants against the priests and the prophets who have made false statements on behalf of God. Obadiah is the shortest of all the prophets and is worth a quick read.

Day Six

Jonah 1: 1-17	This delightful book is written post exile. Call of Jonah
Daniel 1: 1-21	Daniel and his friends stay true to God in the exile
Zephaniah 3: 8-20	Post exile, people rejoice in God's salvation
Zechariah 9: 9-17	Promise of a savior
Isaiah 65: 17-25	New heaven and a new earth

Read all of Jonah, Chapter 1-4 if you have time. This story is the story of God's challenge to those who would destroy their enemies. Placed during the time of the Assyrians, it is very different from any of the other prophets. Habakkuk, Malachi, and Haggai are also post exilic prophets which can be read quickly.