

Ninety Day Old Testament Overview Reading Scheme

This ninety-day reading scheme has been designed to help the reader grasp the order and overall message of the Old Testament by reading around one fifth of it. The readings have been ordered chronologically according to the unfolding narrative, with poetry and prophecy interspersed at relevant points. Where there is a break in the narrative because of passages that are not read the missing material has been summarised in italics. The reader is encouraged to read the whole of the Old Testament in due time, but this reading scheme should serve as a useful introduction for the reader who wants to have a basic understanding of the overarching message of the Old Testament.

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| 1. Genesis 1-2 | Creation |
| 2. Genesis 3-4 | The Fall |
| 3. Genesis 6-9 | The Flood |
| 4. Genesis 11:1-9, 11:27-12:9 | Babel and call of Abraham |
| 5. Genesis 15-17 | God's covenant with Abraham |
| 6. Genesis 21:1-22:19 | Isaac born and offered |

The remainder of Genesis tells the story of Abraham's family through the next three generations (his son Isaac, grandsons Jacob and Esau and great-grandson Joseph).

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| 7. Exodus 1-2 | Israelites in Egypt and Moses |
| 8. Exodus 3-4 | The call of Moses |
| 9. Exodus 5:1-6:12; 6:28-7:13 | Aaron to speak for Moses – Pharaoh confronted |

The next 3 ½ chapters of Exodus tell how God sent nine plagues on the Egyptians to show His power to punish them, but Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go.

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| 10. Exodus 11-12 | The plague on the firstborn and the Exodus |
| 11. Exodus 13-14 | Consecration of the firstborn and the crossing of the Red Sea |
| 12. Exodus 15-17 | Miriam's song – the people grumble but God provides |

Chapter 18 of Exodus tells how Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, helped to teach him how to administer the nation by appointing judges to help him.

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| 13. Exodus 19-20 | Sinai and the ten commandments |
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Chapters 21,22 and 23:1-19 of Exodus contain additional laws given to Israel through Moses.

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| 14. Exodus 23:10-24:18 | God's promises and the covenant confirmed with the people |
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Chapters 25-31 of Exodus contain laws about the Tabernacle, the priesthood and sacrifices to be made by them and also about the Sabbath day. These laws were received by Moses during his 40 days on the mountain.

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| 15. Exodus 32-34 | The golden calf – God's punishment and His grace |
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Chapters 35-40 of Exodus contain further details about the Tabernacle, the priesthood and the sacrifices. Exodus ends with God's presence resting on the Tabernacle – a cloud covering it and His glory within it. Leviticus 1-7 contains details of 5 different types of sacrifice given by God to the Israelites.

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| 16. Leviticus 8-10 | The appointment of Aaron and his sons as priests |
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Chapters 11-15 contain regulations about foods that the Israelites were not to eat and about personal hygiene and the hygiene of their homes.

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| 17. Leviticus 16-17 | The Day of Atonement |
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Chapters 18-22 contain further laws for the people including sexual morality, appropriate punishments for crimes, and rules for the priesthood.

18. Leviticus 23 and 25 Festivals for the people and social justice

The remainder of Leviticus contain promises of blessing for faithfulness to God and punishment for disobedience and rules for redeeming things that had been devoted to God. Numbers 1:1-10:10 contain details of a census of the Israelites, details of the order the tribes were to camp in and details of the Levites who were to serve in the Tabernacle and other regulations.

19. Numbers 10:11-12:16 Journey onwards from Sinai and Moses God's prophet

20. Numbers 13-14 Spying in Canaan and the people's rebellion

Chapters 15-19 of Numbers contain further laws and the record of a rebellion led by a Levite called Korah.

21. Numbers 20-21 Moses excluded from Canaan, the bronze snake, conquests.

Chapters 22-33 of Numbers contain further details of Israel's journeys in the desert.

22. Numbers 34-36 The division of Canaan and the cities of refuge.

Deuteronomy 1-5 recaps some of the events recorded in Numbers.

23. Deuteronomy 6-8 Descriptions of Israel's duty in her relationship with God.

Chapters 9-27 of Deuteronomy contain additional laws and commands for Israel. Chapters 32-33 contain Moses' song and his blessings to the tribes of Israel.

24. Deuteronomy 28-29 The covenant renewed with the new generation.

25. Deuteronomy 30-31, 34 Moses' last days and Joshua's succession as leader.

26. Joshua 1-2 Joshua's beginning as leader and Rahab in Jericho.

27. Joshua 3-4 Israel crosses the Jordan into Canaan.

28. Joshua 5-6 Circumcision and the conquest of Jericho.

Joshua 7-22 records details of the conquest of Canaan.

29. Joshua 21:43-45, 23-24 Joshua's final challenge to the nation of Israel.

30. Judges 1:1-3:6 Introduction to and summary of the period of the Judges.

The remainder of Judges details the stories of the various judges and other events in Israel during this period.

31. Ruth 1-2 The first half of the story of Naomi and Ruth.

32. Ruth 3-4 Conclusion of Ruth's story and the hope of David.

33. I Samuel 1-2 Eli and Samuel contrasted; Hannah's prayer

34. I Samuel 3-4 Samuel's call and Eli's fall

I Samuel 5-6 tells how the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant but later returned it to Israel.

35. I Samuel 7-8 Samuel's victory and weakness; Israel asks for a King

36. I Samuel 9-10 Saul becomes king

I Samuel 11 records Saul's rescue of the city of Jabesh and his confirmation as king.

37. I Samuel 12-13 Samuel's "retirement" speech and Saul's failure

I Samuel 14 focuses on the victories of Saul's son Jonathan.

38. I Samuel 15-16 Saul rejected; David anointed.
39. I Samuel 17 David kills Goliath

I Samuel 19-23 details Saul's pursuit of David and Jonathan's friendship with David.

40. I Samuel 18, 24 Saul's jealousy of David; David spares Saul's life

At this point we will turn to some of David's greatest psalms.

41. Psalm 22-24 Three great psalms of David.
42. Psalm 18-19 Two more of David's psalms.
43. Psalm 62-63 Another two psalms by David.

I Samuel 26-29 continues the story of Saul and David towards its conclusion.

44. I Samuel 30-31 David's victory over the Amalekites; Saul's tragic death

At this point we will turn to I Chronicles, which recounts much of the same material as II Samuel but often more concisely. The passages we will read parallel II Samuel 1-6.

45. I Chronicles 11, 15:1-16:6 David becomes King, conquers Jerusalem and brings the ark there.

We will now return to II Samuel to continue the story.

46. II Samuel 7-8 God's covenant with David.

Again we will turn to some of David's psalms.

47. Psalm 8-9 Two further psalms of David.

II Samuel 9-10 tells of David's kindness to Saul's grandson Mephibosheth and his defeat of the Ammonites.

48. II Samuel 11-12 David and Bathsheba.

We will take a final detour to the psalms to see David's response to his own sin.

49. Psalm 32, 51 Two psalms about sin.
50. Psalm 139 A final great psalm of David.

II Samuel 13-21 details the later years of David's reign including rebellions led by his son Absalom and a man called Sheba.

51. II Samuel 22:1-23:7 David's prayer and last words.

The remainder of II Samuel speaks of David's warriors and his purchase of the land where the Temple would later be built. I and II Chronicles detail the same events recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings. The next reading from Chronicles has been selected to include these books in the scheme and because it is more succinct than the corresponding part of II Kings.

52. I Chronicles 29:21-II Chronicles 1:17 Solomon's reign begins and his request for wisdom.

From this point some of Solomon's wisdom writings from Proverbs are included to illustrate the wisdom God gave him in response to his request.

53. Proverbs 1-3 Wisdom described.
54. Proverbs 10-11 Examples of Solomon's proverbs.

I Kings 1-5 detail the beginning of Solomon's reign, which has already been described in the earlier reading from Chronicles, and his preparation to build the Temple. Chapter 7 contains details about Solomon's palace and the furnishings for the Temple.

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| 55. I Kings 6, 8 | Temple built and dedicated. |
| 56. I Kings 9-10 | Solomon's glory days. |
| 57. I Kings 11-12 | The fall of Solomon. |

At this point selections from Solomon's book, Ecclesiastes, are included as it was probably written during the later stages of his life after he had realised his foolishness in departing from God.

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| 58. Ecclesiastes 1-3 | The problem – life seems meaningless. |
| 59. Ecclesiastes 11-12 | The solution – remember your creator. |

We will now return to the narrative in I Kings.

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| 60. I Kings 13-14 | Jeroboam's failure and God's judgement. |
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I Kings 15-16:28 detail kings of Judah and Israel from the time of Rehoboam and Jeroboam until Ahab.

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| 61. I Kings 16:29-18:15 | Ahab and Elijah. |
| 62. I Kings 18:16-19:18 | Elijah's depression and God's perspective. |

The remainder of I Kings and II Kings 1-16 continue the story of the Kings of Judah and Israel. The story of Elijah is also concluded, and the actions of his successor Elisha are detailed. At this point we turn to some of the writing prophets who spoke to Israel (Hosea) and Judah (Joel and Micah) in the 9th and 8th Centuries.

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| 63. Joel 2 | A call to Judah to return to God in the face of coming judgement. |
| 64. Hosea 13-14 | God's anger with Israel and a call to return to Him. |
| 65. Micah 6-7 | God's compassion in the face of Israel's failure. |

Here we pick up the narrative again at the end of the existence of the kingdom of Israel.

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| 66. II Kings 17-18 | Fall of Israel, Judah threatened by Assyria. |
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We now turn to selected readings from Isaiah, whose career in Judah spanned the period around the end of the kingdom of Israel.

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| 67. Isaiah 1, 6 | God's disappointment with Judah and Isaiah's call. |
| 68. Isaiah 7:1-9:7 | God's judgement on Israel through Assyria; hope for a coming King. |
| 69. Isaiah 10:20-12:6 | A remnant from Israel and a future great King from David's line. |
| 70. Isaiah 42-43 | God's servant, Israel's only hope. |
| 71. Isaiah 52-53 | The servant will suffer for the sins of the people. |
| 72. Isaiah 54-55 | A glorious future for Jerusalem and a call to come to God. |

At this point we continue the narrative at the point where we broke off.

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| 73. II Kings 19-20 | Hezekiah and God's protection of Judah. |
| 74. II Kings 21-22 | Evil kings and Josiah. |
| 75. II Kings 23 | Josiah's reforms. |

Zephaniah's career coincided with Josiah's reign, hence we will read part of his book.

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| 76. Zephaniah 1, 3 | Warnings to Judah and God's plan to purify Judah. |
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Again we return to the narrative where we broke off.

77. II Kings 24-25 Decline of Judah.

The next section of readings is taken from the prophets Jeremiah, who spoke to Judah in Jerusalem in the years leading up to the Exile to Babylon, Ezekiel, who spoke to the people of Judah in Exile in Babylon, and Daniel, whose life spanned around 70 years in Exile.

78. Jeremiah 2-3 Unfaithful Israel has forsaken God.
 79. Jeremiah 25, 29 The Exile will only last for 70 years then a remnant will return.
 80. Jeremiah 30-31 Israel's restoration and hope of a new covenant.
 81. Ezekiel 33-34 The reasons for Jerusalem's fall and hope for a true shepherd.
 82. Ezekiel 36-37 Future hope for a new covenant based on real spiritual life.
 83. Daniel 1-2 Daniel, God's faithful servant in Babylon.
 84. Daniel 7, 9 God's timetable for the future and His glorious Kingdom.

We have omitted the book of Esther, which is located during the Persian period, and resume the narrative here with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah which speak about the return from Exile. We have also interspersed sections from two of the prophets who spoke to the people of Judah during this period.

85. Ezra 1, 3 The first return under Zerubbabel and the Temple rebuilt.
 86. Haggai 1-2 Haggai's encouragement to rebuild the Temple.
 87. Ezra 7-8 The second return under Ezra.
 88. Nehemiah 1-2 The third return under Nehemiah.
 89. Nehemiah 8-9 The Law and the covenant renewed under Ezra.
 90. Malachi 2:17-4:6 God's day of judgement and hope for a Messiah preceded by Elijah.

New Testament Introductory Reading Scheme

After completing this scheme the reader is encouraged to continue to the New Testament. A possible approach based on reading around 2 chapters per day follows. In total there are 260 chapters in the New Testament, so this scheme covers almost half of the material (124 chapters) in a little over two months (64 days):

John's Gospel	21 chapters	11 days
Luke's Gospel	24 chapters	12 days
Acts	28 chapters	14 days
Romans	16 chapters	8 days
Ephesians	6 chapters	3 days
James	5 chapters	3 days
I Peter	5 chapters	3 days
II Peter	3 chapters	2 days
I Thessalonians	5 chapters	3 days
II Thessalonians	3 chapters	2 days
Revelation 4-5, 19-22	6 chapters	3 days

After this the reader could continue to read the remaining books of the New Testament in any order. These readings have been selected to give the reader a basic grasp of the New Testament's message.