



2017 April Bible Reading
by Pastor Mike Barris

This month we conclude the story of the spread of the Gospel as told in the Book of Acts and in these chapters how the Apostle Paul proclaimed boldly God's salvation and grace in Jesus.

Next, as the season of Lent comes to a close, we hear words of hope from the major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and we read Joel's call to repentance and prophecy of God's Spirit being poured out, a prophecy fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the Church was born (see Acts 2).

✓	Day	Read	✓	Day	Read
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Acts 26	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	Isaiah 55
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Acts 27	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Jer. 31
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Acts 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Ezek. 37
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	Isaiah 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Joel 2

Starting April 9 (which is Palm Sunday in the Christian year), we take time for a special daily reading leading up to Easter Sunday when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. I pray that God will speak in personal and deep ways to you through each of these readings. In the events of the last days of Jesus's life including his teaching, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, there is an opportunity for you to meditate on the truth that your story, your life, your sin, and your need are covered by his atoning work on the cross. Consider in these days the depth of love Jesus has for you. And of course, allow the declaration "He is risen!" to fill you with fresh waves of assurance and joy - because he lives, we will too.

Following Easter Sunday, we turn in depth to the prophets of God. Selected readings from the prophet Isaiah, who lived during the rise of the Assyrian Empire and the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel (722-721 BC) proclaim God's judgment and exile of the Jews to Babylon. Isaiah warns the southern kingdom of Judah that captivity would also be her experience as a result of her unfaithfulness and sin. Interwoven throughout are God's promises of restoration and the redemption of the people from captivity in Babylon (fulfilled under Cyrus the Persian in 538/537 BC).

✓	Day	Read	✓	Day	Read
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	Mark 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	Is. 40
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	Heb. 9	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	Is. 41
<input type="checkbox"/>	11	Mark 13	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	Is. 42
<input type="checkbox"/>	12	Heb. 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	Is. 43
<input type="checkbox"/>	13	Mark 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	Is. 44
<input type="checkbox"/>	14	John 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	25	Is. 45
<input type="checkbox"/>	15	Rom. 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	Is. 51
<input type="checkbox"/>	16	John 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	27	Is. 52
<input type="checkbox"/>	17	Is. 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	28	Is. 53
<input type="checkbox"/>	18	Is. 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	29	Is. 54
<input type="checkbox"/>	19	Is. 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	Is. 56

As previously shared, the focus of our reading is on *depth* and not *distance*. As you read just one chapter per day (easily done in 5 minutes), you are encouraged to take a greater amount of time allowing your heart and mind to be the good soil in which God's Word takes root.

For 2017 Bible readings, 365 chapters have been selected from across the entire Bible that I believe God wants to use to strengthen your faith and life. I have grouped the readings by book of the Bible so that the flow of the book is retained even though chapters are skipped. Additionally, readings cycle through the New Testament, Old Testament's history, wisdom, and prophetic literature so that the breadth of the Bible can be appreciated. Lastly, the four Gospels are interspersed through the year so that the story of Jesus remains at the center of our reading.

As you read, consider these practical ways to hide God's Word in your heart:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding and wisdom as you read. Take your time - its depth not speed you are after. Underline or highlight key words or phrases.
- Note the context - who, what, why, when, where, how - and ask questions like "How can my life be changed by the truth of this passage?" or, "What is welling up in my soul as a result of this text (assurance, conviction, encouragement)?"
- Note key principles, promises of God, or life lesson takeaways. Linger on any phrase or sentence that stands out to you. And this is key, be open and invite the Word to do its transforming work in you through your discoveries.
- Finally, thank God for what you received through the text. Tell him what you learned and how you desire to live as a result. Ask that his word be made alive in you.

May God richly bless you and cause you to flourish as you enjoy His Word.

Pastor Mike