



**Reading the Bible
in a Year
—chronologically**

SEPTEMBER

WIND-DOWN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel continues with prophecies delivered *during* the siege of Jerusalem (ch 25-32) and ends with those delivered *after* it (ch 33-48). His *temple*-vision in the closing chapters portrays the great living temple which would be the *church*.

Joel is hard to date (some scholars put it much earlier in Judah's history), but it describes the devastation caused by an invading *plague of locusts*—a judgmental 'day of the Lord'. Unless the people of Judah repent they will face a far more severe invasion.

DANIEL		
A.	Chapters 1-6	Daniel's life
B.	Chapters 7-12	Daniel's visions

Daniel was the last of the *major prophets*. His life and ministry spanned the whole of the 70-year exile in Babylon. His visions referred primarily to events leading from his own day to the arrival on the scene of Jesus, the Messiah.

RETURN FROM EXILE

EZRA			
A.	Chapters 1-6	The first return under Zerubbabel	Restoration of the temple
B.	Chapters 7-10	The second return under Ezra	Reformation of the people

A 'remnant' of Jews returned from exile in three waves, under *Zerubbabel, Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. The last two of these have books named after them, describing

NEHEMIAH		
A.	Chapters 1-7	Restoration of Jerusalem's city walls
B.	Chapters 8-13	Restoration of the people morally and spiritually

events back in Jerusalem, where the rebuilding of the Temple was followed by the rebuilding of Jerusalem's city walls.

Esther, by contrast, describes events among the Jews who stayed in Babylon (now taken over by the *Persians*) rather than return to their homeland.

HAGGAI			
A.	Chapter 1	1st Message	Rebuke
B.	2:1-9	2nd Message	Encouragement
C.	2:10-19	3rd Message	Promise
D.	2:20-23	4th Message	Prophecy

'Restoration prophets' is the name given to *Haggai, Zechariah* and *Malachi*, because they prophesied after the return from exile, when the people were 'restored' to the land.

ZECHARIAH			
A.	1:1 - 6:15	Eight visions	Before the temple's completion
B.	7:1 - 8:23	Four messages	
C.	9:1 - 14:21	Two oracles	After the temple's completion

Haggai and *Zechariah* encouraged the people to persevere with the rebuilding of the Temple in spite of setbacks. *Malachi* came later, prophesying in Nehemiah's time, 100 years after the first wave had

MALACHI		
A.	1:1 - 2:16	Unfaithfulness rebuked
B.	2:17 - 4:6	The Lord's coming announced

returned. He urged the people to godliness at a period when Nehemiah—the governor of Judah on behalf of the Persian authorities—was back in Persia.

So ends the Old Testament—with better things to come!