



JULY 2026 | DAY 19

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

With Fellowship of the Rockies

SCRIPTURE

Haggai 1
Haggai 2
Psalms 14

Most prophets from the Book of the Twelve we've seen so far were prophesying before the exile, urging the people to repent before it was too late. That didn't happen.

Israel was so used to corruption and evil that people assumed it was normal, even profitable. They were so disconnected from the sweetness of God's loyal love and faithful blessing that even the bitterness of evil seemed like honey. Why change what we're doing if it's working so well? The book of Haggai picks up when the exile is ending, some 70 years after Judah's collapse. At this point, another superpower nation, Persia, has blasted Babylon and assumed dominance over the entire region. Under the Persian king, Cyrus, Israelites are granted safe passage and the supplies needed to return home. Good news, right? Well, not exactly. Seven decades spent living in exile may have humbled the people, but it has not cured their problems of hard-heartedness and self-centeredness. The returned exiles are supposed to rebuild Jerusalem's temple. Shortly after beginning construction, they stop restoring God's house and devote their time to renovating their own houses.

The predictable result: Sour grapes droop on the people's shriveled vines, blight scorching the leaves on their fig trees. Wheat seeds fail to sprout in dry, cracked fields. It's death and dying all around.

So Haggai, like Moses had done long before, confronts his generation with a choice: Will they follow Yahweh and experience blessing in the land? Or will they wander back down the road to ruin?

Watch the video to learn about Yahweh's call to choose life in the book of Haggai.



JULY 2026 | DAY 20

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SCRIPTURE

Zechariah 1
Zechariah 2
Zechariah 3
Zechariah 4
Psalms 15

Sometimes, powerful messages are best communicated from surprising angles. As the American poet Emily Dickinson once wrote, “Tell all the truth, but tell it slant.”

The “slant,” or angle, in today’s reading invites us into a wild ride through the prophet Zechariah’s visions. Buckle up: These dreams are anything but ordinary. Heavenly horsemen? Pipes pouring out golden oil from olive trees that fuels a lamp, and then the lamp’s light nourishes the oil-producing trees? A woman getting a flying basket ride from stork-winged chauffeurs? Even Zechariah is scratching his head.

As you’ll learn in the video, there is method to this madness. Behind the bizarre symbols lies a clear and urgent message that Zechariah’s audience desperately needs to hear. Like Haggai, Zechariah prophesied to the people returning from exile, exhausted after 70 years of oppression and discouraged by the war-torn state of their homeland. Their high hopes about God’s Kingdom are grinding down into sullen cynicism. Zechariah steps in to remind this disillusioned community about their calling and Yahweh’s trustworthy promise to help them live into that mission.

Watch the video to learn more about Yahweh’s surprising, zigzag way of telling the truth in the book of Zechariah.



JULY 2026 | DAY 21

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Zechariah 5
Zechariah 6
Zechariah 7
Zechariah 8
Psalms 16

Be warned: Fasting from food while continuing to treat people unjustly might get you carried away by flying stork women.

In today's reading, the Israelites ask if they should keep fasting—a practice they kept up every year during the exile as a way to express their grief. Zechariah says they're missing the whole point of fasting. They've been mourning the exile, which makes sense, but they have not stopped doing the things that led to their exile in the first place.

Before the exile, they were selfishly feasting on the spoils of their oppressive treatment of the vulnerable and poor. Now, they're selfishly fasting, not out of humble or repentant hearts, but out of a desire to achieve a better life.

God wants nothing to do with pretend humility and hollow religious ritual. Instead, Yahweh calls his people to feast on doing what's right. Whet your appetite for integrity, says the prophet. Be gluttons for justice. Turn up your nose at bribery and corruption in the courts. Crave your neighbors' good instead of salivating over their downfall. Make sure the poor and vulnerable always have a seat at your table.

Yahweh promises that the Israelites who hunger for justice will finally arrive at a banquet of blessing. Clusters of grapes will hang heavy and sweet on their vines. Dew will sparkle on the glossy crowns of their fig trees. Stalks of wheat will shoot up from their fields in thick, golden rows.



JULY 2026 | DAY 21 - CONTINUED

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Zechariah 5
Zechariah 6
Zechariah 7
Zechariah 8
Psalms 16

The exiles who remain scattered among the nations will stream back home. Grey-haired women will soak up the sun on their front porches, watching their great-grandchildren play in the streets.

The people want to know: Is Yahweh's Kingdom ready for us? But Zechariah tells them they have it all backwards. The real question is, are you ready to embrace the ways of Yahweh's Kingdom and, by doing so, enter into its beauty and life?



JULY 2026 | DAY 22

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Zechariah 9
Zechariah 10
Zechariah 11
Zechariah 12
Zechariah 13
Zechariah 14
Psalms 17

After a rollercoaster reading journey through horns, horsemen, and holy laundry, you've reached the end of Zechariah's dramatic and disorienting dreams. But don't unbuckle your seatbelt yet.

In today's reading, Zechariah concludes his prophetic message with more symbolic imagery, this time envisioning a future messianic kingdom.

The conclusion to the book of Zechariah has two major parts. In the first, Zechariah describes the coming messianic king. This ruler is both familiar and unexpected. He rides into Jerusalem like a triumphant conqueror, but he's riding a humble donkey, not a majestic warhorse. He leads the people of Israel like a good shepherd would, only to be rejected by his own disgruntled sheep. So Yahweh gives his stubborn flock what they want: to trade their good shepherd's tender care for the leadership of ravenous rivals.

In the second half of today's reading, Zechariah appeals to the Day of the Lord, when Yahweh will flood the land with a spirit of repentance that guides his people back to him. It will be a mighty fountain that washes away the land's crusted layers of injustice and impurity. It will be a fire that refines the people into gleaming gold, with justice that reveals and confronts evil at every turn.

Watch the video to learn more about the end of the world as we know it on the Day of the Lord.



JULY 2026 | DAY 23

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

With Fellowship of the Rockies

SCRIPTURE

Malachi 1
Malachi 2
Psalms 18

The prophets constantly try to shake the Israelites out of their stupor so they can see the truth of their rebellion and the harm it's bringing. They have tried warning, pleading, praying, and shocking Israel's community with bizarre sign acts.

They tried describing the impending Day of the Lord in a kaleidoscopic array of intense, apocalyptic images. Hosea exposed Israel's unfaithfulness to God by marrying a prostitute who repeatedly gave herself to other lovers. Ezekiel tried baking food with dung. Jeremiah tried smashing pottery. Isaiah tried public nudity. Joel warned about destruction so severe that it would be like suffering a ravenous locust invasion. Amos tried fury and fiery language. Zechariah spoke of intricate, symbolic, sometimes horrifying dreams.

Israel rejects every message. The results unfold exactly as the prophets foretell. Babylon marches the Israelites off in chains, Jerusalem a smoking heap in their rearview mirror. Their infamous exodus out of darkness has become an exile out of the good land of promise, back into darkness. In Malachi, the final prophetic book of the Hebrew Bible, we learn that even after all their grinding years in exile, the people's hard hearts remain cold and calloused. The Israelites, who from the beginning were called to reflect Yahweh's character by blessing every nation on Earth, have spiraled into what looks like selfishness so chronic that hope seems unrealistic. None of the prophecies changed their minds or hearts. All of the loss and destruction, plus seven decades of exile, didn't compel them to change course.



JULY 2026 | DAY 23

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Malachi 1
Malachi 2
Psalms 18

Watch the video to see how Yahweh takes his people to task one last time in the book of Malachi.



JULY 2026 | DAY 24

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Malachi 3
Malachi 4
Psalms 19

Today, we complete the book of Malachi, which concludes the prophets section of the Hebrew Bible. Congratulations! You have now read two-thirds of the Hebrew Bible. In other words, you've read through the Torah, "T," and Nevi'im, "N," of the TaNaK.

The first half of Malachi exposed an all-too-familiar problem. Today's reading picks up a major thread woven through the prophetic books: the prophets' resilient hope for the Day of the Lord, when Yahweh would one day show up to confront evil and restore his people.

For those who cling to injustice and idolatry, Malachi warns that the day will come like blazing fire, incinerating every trace of evil. For the faithful remnant, the Day of the Lord will rise like the spring sun, its gentle warmth soaking the world with joy and life.

The conclusion of Malachi points forward to a time when God will send a new Moses and a new Elijah to restore God's people and heal their hard hearts. But as the people anticipate this day, Malachi encourages them to keep in mind the past—to remember God's character, actions, and promises, and never to stop meditating on the unified story of the Scriptures.

Which brings us to the third and final section of the TaNaK, the "K," Ketuvim—the writings.



JULY 2026 | DAY 25

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Psalms 1
Psalms 2
Psalms 20

Welcome to the home stretch of the Old Testament! Today, we begin the final section of the TaNaK: the Ketuvim, or writings. These scrolls develop and expand key themes from the Torah (instruction or law) and Nevi'im (prophets) through an elaborate web of hyperlinks.

The first two psalms repeatedly refer to the rest of the TaNaK to answer one question: What does it look like to be “blessed”—that is, to live the good life?

Psalms 1 describes the good life as the experience people have when rightly relating to one another. Those who prosper not through selfish or unjust gain, but by meditating on God's instruction day and night, live this way. Yahweh gave Joshua similar counsel at the beginning of the Nevi'im (Josh. 1:8). Psalm 1 also links back to the start of the Torah. Anyone who meditates on God's words will become like a fruitful tree planted in a well-watered garden land (Gen. 2).

From Psalm 2, we learn that the good life of right relating happens when people take refuge in Yahweh's anointed king. The description of this king echoes key promises from the prophets (2 Sam. 7; Isa. 9, 11). He's the messiah from the line of David who will defeat evil among the nations and restore God's blessing to the world.

These two poems suggest that the authors designed the book of Psalms to be a prayer book for God's people. They will read, memorize, and sing these prayers as they strive to be faithful to the commands of the Torah and wait for the messianic Kingdom.

Watch the video to learn about the literary design of the rest of this poetic collection of prayers.