

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Read the Bible in a Year Challenge**

Week 52

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<b>Monday</b>	Zechariah 12	Psalm 141	Luke 3
<b>Tuesday</b>	Zechariah 13	Psalm 142	Luke 4
<b>Wednesday</b>	Zechariah 14	Psalm 143	Luke 5
<b>Thursday</b>	Malachi 1	Psalm 144	Luke 6
<b>Friday</b>	Malachi 2	Psalm 145-146	Luke 7
<b>Saturday</b>	Malachi 3	Psalm 147-148	Luke 8
<b>Sunday</b> (Day 365)	Malachi 4	Psalm 149-150	Luke 9

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**The readings from Zechariah:**

1. See the study summary for week 50 for an introduction to Zechariah.
2. Chs. 12-14 comprise a second collection of oracles of the future. God again promises victory, but a note of rivalry enters between Jerusalem and the “clans of Judah”. This may reflect an editor’s reserve about the degree to which the Davidic lineage is illustrious.
  - a. Cleansing of Jerusalem follows mourning (12.10-13.1).
    - i. God will take the initiative in bringing about a conversion in the spirit of His people.
    - ii. The attitude must flow, however, from repentance. Once the people turn to God, he will bring about healing.
  - b. Verse 12.10 is quoted at John 19.7 (*cf.* Rev. 1.7). The spirit of God is poured out upon those who turn to Him, that they may look upon “him whom they have pierced”.
    - i. The inhabitants of Jerusalem turn to God, and it is because of this turning that they mourn the one whom they have pierced.
      1. The Hebrew grammar is unclear. The people *may* be mourning for God or for the one whom they have pierced. A Christological reading, of course, equates the two.
  - c. All prophets who have spoken falsely will be pierced! (13.2-6) and idols removed.
  - d. The shepherd addressed at 13.7-9 may be the one who has been pierced, in which case the address of God to the sword is ironic.
    - i. From a Christological perspective, this form of address makes sense, for at vv. 8-9 it is seen that when the shepherd is struck the people whom he (He) shepherds will be stricken, as well.
      1. The people will be sifted, and those remaining after this eschatological sifting will acknowledge God as God acknowledges them.
  - e. Jerusalem will undergo trial and be exalted (14.1-21). The trial of Jerusalem is an the eschatological “day of the LORD,” as warfare. The people will be sifted, with a righteous remnant found.
    - i. Following trial God will establish a new age in which His rule is acknowledged universally.
      1. The sifting process will extend to all peoples, with a righteous remnant identified as belonging to God.

2. The holiness proper to the Temple will now extend to all.

### **The readings from Malachi:**

1. The name Malachi means “my messenger,” and is not thought to refer to a person bearing that name. The prophet is identified as a future, eschatological figure of the returning prophet Elijah (4.5).
  - a. In addition to not knowing the author’s true name, we know nothing of his life.
    - i. He is dedicated to the cult and the levitical priesthood (2.4-7), but condemns the corruption in priests (1.6-2.4).
    - ii. He is concerned with the welfare of the unfortunate (2.14-16), and that they wonder whether God loves them (1.2-5).
    - iii. He prophesies that those who abuse the defenseless will be judged by God (3.5).
    - iv. He is dedicated to God’s honor (1.6-14) and transcendence (1.5).
2. The book is later than the rebuilding of the Temple (completed 515 B.C.), but date is otherwise unsure. The Persian governor of Jerusalem is mentioned (1.8), and so the book likely dates from the late 6<sup>th</sup> or early fifth century B.C.
  - a. Like Zechariah 9-11 and Zechariah 12-14, Malachi is prefaced by the heading “burden”. This is a reference to the oracle that the prophet is burdened to deliver.
    - i. Six oracles are found:
      1. God’s preferential love for Israel (1.2-5).
      2. Concerning cultic offenses (1.6-2.9).
      3. Concerning mixed marriages and divorce (2.10-16).
      4. God will purify, and will judge justly (2.17-3.5).
      5. Tithes for God and blessings for His people are linked (3.6-12)
      6. Those who fear God will be blessed (3.13-4.3).
    - ii. Two appendices are included, referring to the need to recall the teachings of Moses and the Law (4.4) and a declaration of God’s intention to send Elijah, that Elijah may prepare for the Day of the LORD.
3. God’s preference for one people over another is God’s sovereign choice (1.2-3). This section is quoted at Rom. 9.13.
  - a. The reference at 3.16 to a book of remembrance, of those who are destined for salvation, is an image found also at Exod. 32.32-33; Ps. 69.30; Isa. 4.3; Dan. 12.1; and Rev. 20.12 and 15.

**The psalms: N.B.** *In The Bible Challenge the Psalter is read twice (once in each half year). We may all be led into new insights, particularly in focusing on praying each psalm (preferably aloud). See the summary for week 1 for a general introduction.*

1. See the study summaries for weeks 25, 26 and 27 for a review of the psalms.

### **The Gospel according to St. Luke:**

1. See the study summary for weeks 9 and 10 for a discussion of the readings from Luke.