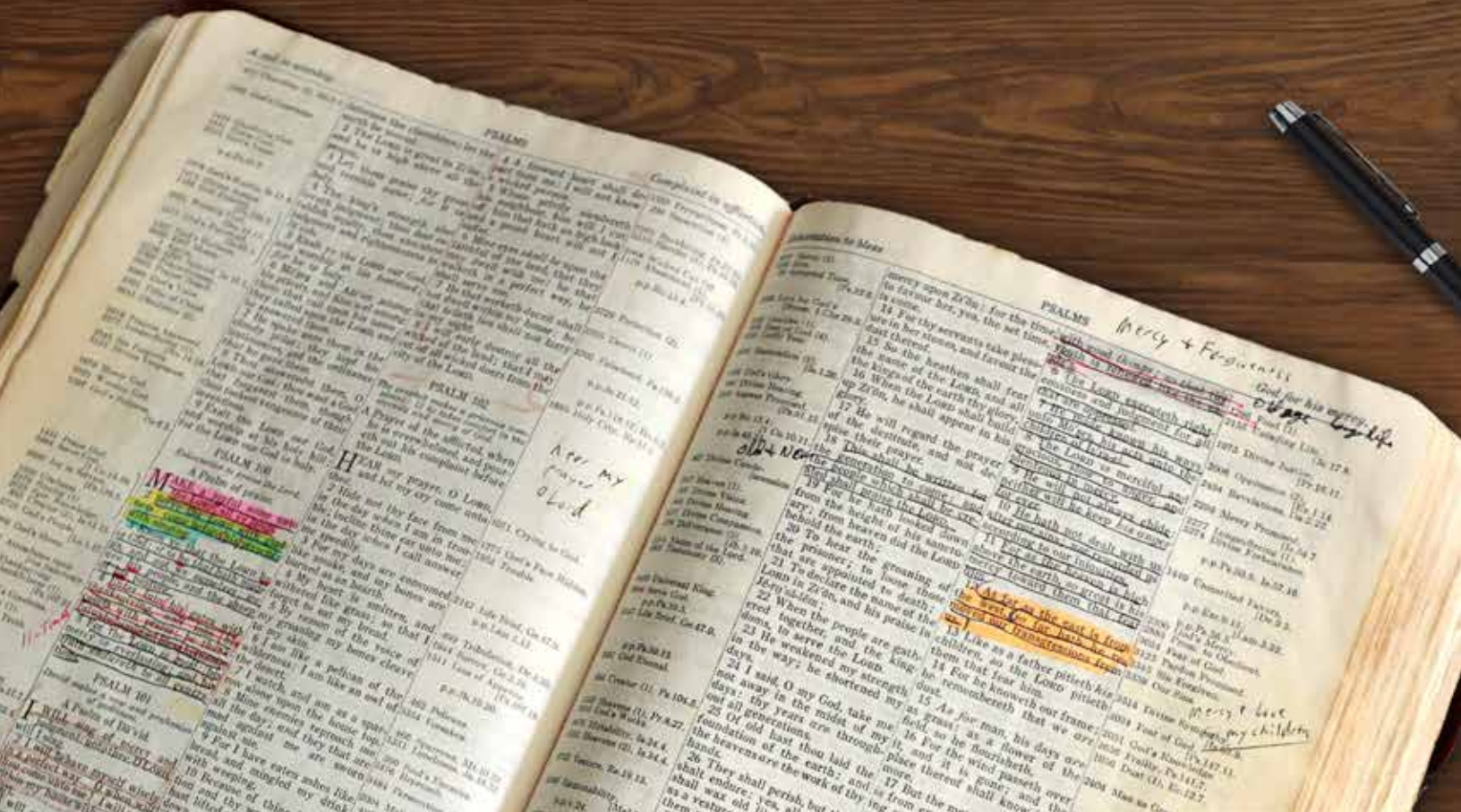


A YEAR IN THE BIBLE

MARCH



March

This month's readings promise a bit more action than last month. Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges offer some of the best examples of faith from our spiritual ancestors - and some of the worst. The memory verse is found early in Deuteronomy and is called the Shema. It is named after the first Hebrew word of the passage, which is a command to listen. The book of Joshua has some of the most inspirational passages of the Old Testament, but then there is a sharp turn of events in the book of Judges. Reading the ups and

downs of the people of God is beneficial during the season of Lent, for we all have our own highs and lows in our faith journey. The courage and faith of Joshua might seem unattainable; the brutality and evil of the book of Judges might seem unrelatable. However, read the passages with two questions in mind: What was God's message for the original audience and what is God's message for us today? When you start reading some of the violent passages of the book of Judges - remember that Easter is coming!

Memory Verse

And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

Helpful Hints:

We encourage you to begin your Bible reading time by reciting the month's memory verse and then the daily Bible reading. Reflect on the reading - did it raise questions or confusion; did it inspire you or warm your heart? Then, to live in a spirit of gratitude, write down three things for which you're grateful. Finally, close your devotional time in prayer. While you might not feel the same way each day, the ongoing discipline of having a daily devotional time will have lasting impact on your life and certainly deepen your relationship with God.

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
March 1 Numbers 33-36 Psalms 56		

Deuteronomy Synopsis

The book of Deuteronomy is traditionally ascribed to Moses. It may be best understood as a description of the laws and the exposition of the laws given to Moses for the people. It is an important message emphasizing the monotheistic nature of God. “The Lord our God is one...” That might seem like an unnecessary message since we live in a time and place where the monotheism of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) covers the vast majority of the world. However, in the time that it was written, it was a major struggle for the Hebrew people. Throughout the ancient world, polytheism was the norm. It certainly was far more visible because there were idols, statues, and temples dedicated to the numerous gods. God commanded the Hebrew people that they were not to create any graven images; they were to trust the “unseen” presence of the God of their fathers who had brought them out of slavery.

While it might seem that the scripture does not apply to people today, it is helpful to consider what the “gods” of today look like. The people of the ancient near east would often put their trust in different gods to bring blessing and protection to their lives. What are some of the things that we trust to provide for us? Perhaps we put too much faith in having money in the bank (but how much is enough?), or our health (who could have imagined a global pandemic?), or having a nice home (in Oklahoma we understand the unpredictable nature of tornados, wildfires, and ice storms). Making sure that we have these things is not a bad thing by any means, the problem occurs when our identity is found in anything except for God.

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I’m thankful.
March 2 Deuteronomy 1 Psalms 57		
March 3 Deuteronomy 2-3 Psalms 58		
March 4 Deuteronomy 4-5 Psalms 59		
March 5 Deuteronomy 6-8 Psalms 60		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
March 6 Deuteronomy 9-10 Psalms 61		
March 7 Deuteronomy 11-12 Psalms 62		
March 8 Deuteronomy 13-15 Psalms 63		
March 9 Deuteronomy 16-18 Psalms 64		
March 10 Deuteronomy 19-21 Psalms 65		
March 11 Deuteronomy 22-24 Psalms 66		
March 12 Deuteronomy 25-27 Psalms 67		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
March 13 Deuteronomy 28-29 Psalms 68		
March 14 Deuteronomy 30-32 Psalms 68		
March 15 Deuteronomy 33-34 Psalms 69		

Joshua Synopsis

The Book of Joshua marks the end of the Torah and the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Israelites. Deuteronomy left off with Moses passing away and the people on the eastern side of the Jordan River waiting to enter the Promised Land. Now, with Moses gone, Joshua takes over the mantle of leadership to bring God's promises to fruition for the people.

Reading through Joshua can sometimes challenge readers today as we read stories of death and destruction as they begin to take over the Promised Land by destroying the tribes and cities that were already living there. It is important to note that there is no archaeological evidence to support the complete destruction of cities and populations during that time period. Rather than reading this book as a historical account of what happened and how God wants us to treat our neighbors, read this book as a reminder of a God who fulfills promises, leads His people, and calls the people to live in a covenant relationship.

The second half of the book details how the land was to be distributed to the various tribes. You will notice themes of justice continually appearing as they make sure to look out for one another, care for the weak and the outcasts, and live peaceably with one another. The book ends with Joshua saying goodbye to the people and offering final instructions. In the end, what God desires more than anything is for us to love God and love one another.

March 16 Joshua 1-2 Psalms 69		
--	--	--

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
March 17 Joshua 3-5 Psalms 70		
March 18 Joshua 6-7 Psalms 71		
March 19 Joshua 8-9 Psalms 72		
March 20 Joshua 10-12 Psalms 73		
March 21 Joshua 13-15 Psalms 74		
March 22 Joshua 16-18 Psalms 75		
March 23 Joshua 19-20 Psalms 76		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
March 24 Joshua 21-22 Psalms 77		
March 25 Joshua 23-24 Psalms 78		

Judges Synopsis

The date and authorship of the book of Judges are not known, though it is believed to be connected to the time of the monarchy - perhaps the author was writing to remind the people that the troubles they were experiencing with kings (taxation, wars, etc.) came about because their ancestors had not fully trusted God to rule them.

The book of Judges begins with the Hebrew people in the Promised Land. They were governed by judges appointed to rule and settle matters between them. Time and again, the people of God went against Him. Instead of tearing down the pagan altars and idols of the previous inhabitants, they joined in on the worship of the local gods. In addition to wanting to be like the people around them in their faith practices, they also wanted to be governed like the people around them - to have kings. Clamoring to be like the world around them came at a great cost.

The book of Judges recounts the moral and social decline of the Hebrew people. One example of the downward spiral is the representation of women in Judges. At the beginning of the book, you have two women, Deborah and Jael, who were named for their leadership, bravery, and wisdom. Interestingly, both are Yahwistic names, paying tribute to the holy name of God within the name. By the end of the book of Judges, there is an unnamed woman who is either a wife or concubine of someone from the Levite tribe; she ends up being brutalized and discarded. Perhaps it shows the overall lesson in the book of Judges: in the beginning, people were paying tribute to God, but by the end, they wanted to pay tribute to a king - and turning away from God led them away from being the people they were created to be.

March 26 Judges 1-3 Psalms 78		
--	--	--

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
March 27 Judges 4-5 Psalms 78		
March 28 Judges 6-7 Psalms 78		
March 29 Judges 8-10 Psalms 78		
March 30 Judges 11-13 Psalms 78		
March 31 Judges 14-15 Psalms 79		



ONE CHURCH WITH MULTIPLE CAMPUSES

Downtown Campus
 222 NW 15th Street
 Oklahoma City, OK 73103
 (405) 232-1371
stlukesokc.org

Edmond Campus
 900 N. Sooner Road
 Edmond, OK 73034
 (405) 285-2002
stlukesedmond.org