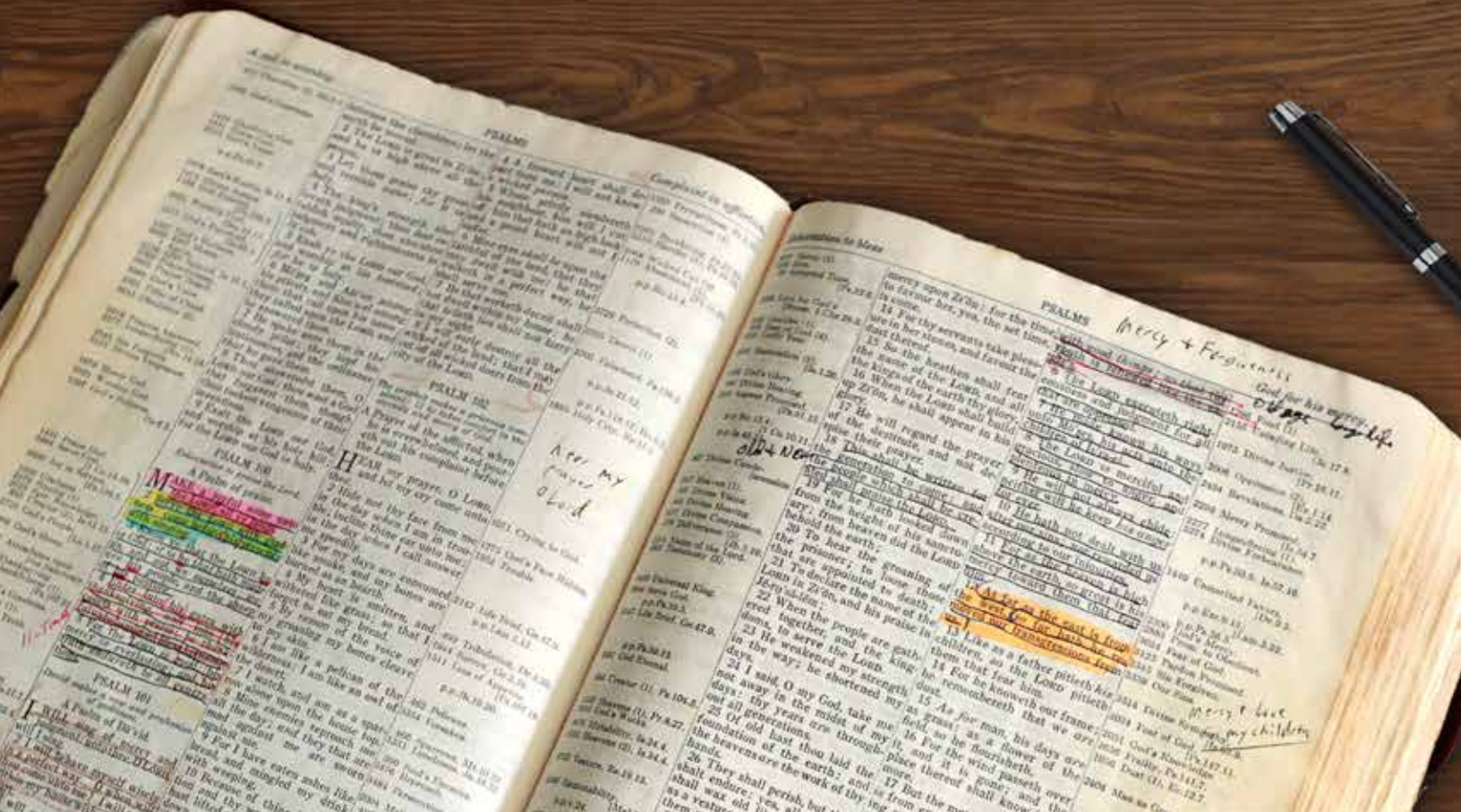


A YEAR IN THE BIBLE

APRIL



April

As we complete our time with the judges of Israel, we move to new stories that highlight both the character of God and the ongoing work of God with the nation of Israel. The book of Ruth is a family drama that reflects the character God desires for His people. Our memory verse for the month comes from Ruth. It is Ruth's promise to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Through Ruth, we see the blessing of faithfulness. Ruth cares deeply for her family. As Ruth was a blessing to her family, we will learn that her great-grandson, David, will be a blessing to all of Israel.

Ruth's and Naomi's struggles are everyday problems. The books of I and II Samuel deal with the political problems of leadership. The people of Israel want a king. They are no longer happy with God as their leader. They want to be like other nations. However, the kings are far from perfect. In the month of April, we will learn from two widows and two kings. In each story, we will experience the love, faithfulness, and guiding hand of God.

Memory Verse

But Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if even death parts me from you." (Ruth 1:16-17)

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.
April 1 Judges 16-18 Psalms 80		
April 2 Judges 19-21 Psalms 81		

Ruth Synopsis

At times, the story of our faith is told through epic moments among nations. Other stories focus on a few faithful people who demonstrate the deeper things of life and faith. The story of Ruth is the latter. Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law, is loyal, loving, and selfless in her devotion. After the death of their husbands, Naomi and Ruth find themselves poor and powerless. Despite their desolate condition, they treat one another with love and kindness; a true reflection of how God loves us.

The faithfulness and kindness of Ruth led her to a new husband and family for both her and Naomi. Boaz takes Ruth to be his wife and redeems her. The Hebrew word for the loving relationships we read about in Ruth is *chesed*. *Chesed* reflects how God cares for us, His children. Through the story of Ruth, we see how God's people are called into right relationship with one another and with God. By living out these virtues, Ruth finds the richest of blessings. Her faithfulness, kindness, and dedication bring about new life and new hope for the kingdom of Israel.

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 3 Ruth 1-2 Psalms 82		
April 4 Ruth 3-4 Psalms 83		

I and II Samuel

We yearn for leaders who will solve all our problems, but we are often disappointed when they fall short of our expectations. Such is the case of ancient Israel in I and II Samuel. The people who did not have a king other than God now clamor for an earthly king. The kings are often strong leaders but are also flawed. Tradition says the prophet Samuel wrote these books of the Bible. Initially, they were one book, but when they were translated into Greek around the 3rd century B.C., they were separated because of length. I and II Samuel are history lessons that reveal how the prophet Samuel came to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. They take us through Saul's downfall and the rise of David, who will replace Saul. David is a natural-born leader who unifies Israel, but his shortcomings are on display for all to see. The lesson for us here, perhaps, is to beware of putting too much faith in any leader other than God, our king.

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 5 I Samuel 1-3 Psalms 84		
April 6 I Samuel 4-6 Psalms 85		
April 7 I Samuel 7-9 Psalms 86		
April 8 I Samuel 10-12 Psalms 87		
April 9 I Samuel 13-14 Psalms 88		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 10 I Samuel 15-16 Psalms 89		
April 11 I Samuel 17-18 Psalms 89		
April 12 I Samuel 19-20 Psalms 89		
April 13 I Samuel 21-23 Psalms 89		
April 14 I Samuel 24-25 Psalms 90		
April 15 I Samuel 26-28 Psalms 91		
April 16 I Samuel 29-31 Psalms 92		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 17 II Samuel 1-3 Psalms 93		
April 18 II Samuel 4-6 Psalms 94		
April 19 II Samuel 7-9 Psalms 95		
April 20 II Samuel 10-12 Psalms 96		
April 21 II Samuel 13-14 Psalms 97		
April 22 II Samuel 15-16 Psalms 98		
April 23 II Samuel 17-18 Psalms 99		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 24 II Samuel 19 Psalms 100		
April 25 II Samuel 20-22 Psalms 101		
April 26 II Samuel 23-24 Psalms 102		

I Kings Synopsis

The reign of King David is known as the “Golden Era” of Israel. During this time, the nation was unified and prosperous. Although David was by no means perfect, he was “A man after His (God’s) own heart.” (I Samuel 13:14) At the opening of I Kings, we find David in his old age. He is preparing to hand over the reign of the kingdom to his son, Solomon. I Kings is a book of transition. The kingdom of Israel will experience great success and tremendous failure as David passes and his children and grandchildren come to power.

I Kings is not simply a historical book, but it is also a prophetic book. Within the story of the kings is the constant reminder that we are called to be faithful to God. God desires His people to be more than political. God wants His people to be committed to His purpose and His commandments. I Kings is a reminder that, regardless of the transitions we face, God is constant, and we can trust in Him.

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 27 I Kings 1-2 Psalms 103		

Date Scripture	Reflections on the Scripture What surprised or inspired you? What questions do you have?	Three things for which I'm thankful.
April 28 I Kings 3-4 Psalms 104		
April 29 I Kings 5-6 Psalms 104		
April 30 I Kings 7 Psalms 105		



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