

This week's reading:

March 26: Judges 6 – 8

March 27: Joshua 9 – 11

March 28: Joshua 12 – 14

March 29: Joshua 15 – 17

March 30: Joshua 18 – 21

March 31: Ruth 1 – 2

April 1: Ruth 3 – 4

April 2: Luke 1 – 3

Summary:

March 26: Judges 6 – 8

These chapters give us the account of Gideon as deliverer of Israel. Despite Gideon's failings and weakness, God uses him to defend and bring peace to Israel. **(Note:** Each Judge demonstrates a part of Israel's problem. Ultimately the nations' problem is a lack of faith in God; but that lack manifests itself in different ways. Israel's shows the heart of people enslaved by sin in action.)

March 27: Judges 9 – 11

Judges 9 shows the continued idolatry and hatred within the nation.

Judges 10 brings more judgment for apostasy as Israel is oppressed.

Judges 11 brings a new judge and salvation in spite of the continued failings of all of Israel, including her leadership.

March 28: Judges 12 – 14

These chapters continue the cycle of apostasy and deliverance leading to the most famous Judge Samson.

March 29: Judges 15 – 17

Judges 15 – 16 display the sinfulness of Samson and God's use of him. **(Note:** Samson's strength did not come from his hair, but rather from the Spirit of God. The strength was taken finally as Samson broke every part of his Nazirite vow; and was restored after a period of cleansing and repentance.)

Judges 17 begins the trek into idolatry once more and kicks off a sad chapter in Israel's history.

March 30: Judges 18 – 21

These chapters tell the story of idolatry, revenge, judgment, and regret. All culminating in continued sin and sorrow for the nation of God's people. **(Note:** Even Israel's "good" plans and preservation of a tribe are replete with sin and idolatry. The postscript of verse 25 is an apt description of this nation which began as the delivered, holy people of God and end this book miserable wretches in need of salvation at every turn.)

March 31: Ruth 1 – 2

Ruth 1 introduces an Israelite family living abroad and the tragedy that befalls them.

(Note: An Israelite family, leaving the Promised Land, intermarrying with foreign women, and losing faith; the story of the book of Ruth starts with every possible thing going wrong. It also shows the only true faith in the book is that of the Moabite woman Ruth when it should be the Israelite Naomi.)

Ruth 2 shows the providence of God's blessing to Ruth & Naomi. **(Note:** The reason

Naomi should have had faith is because there is a God who is faithful to His people. That faithfulness is shown in Boaz's interaction with Ruth.)

April 1: Ruth 3 – 4

Ruth 3 shows the holiness of Ruth & Boaz and their concern for rightness in the process of redemption. **(Note:** An odd event in our modern minds, this evening encounter shows Ruth's willingness to marry Boaz, and Boaz's righteousness in not taking advantage of Ruth and following the Law by giving the first redeemer choice.)

Ruth 4 concludes the story and moves us toward an understanding of its purpose.

(Note: Like Tamar and Rahab before her, Ruth joins the family line that will produce the Messiah as a Gentile convert.)