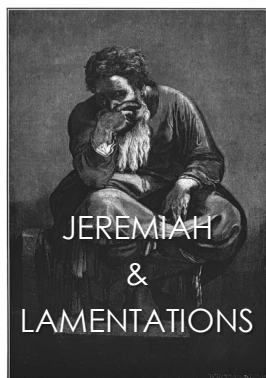


While Joshua was a book of grand success for God's people, Judges is a book of dismal failure. Within roughly a generation of Joshua's passing, the Israelites began to turn away from God, influenced by the evil that was around them. They began a cycle that would repeat many times over—they would wander off in idolatry and immorality, thus incurring the wrath of God. God would punish them, typically with foreign invasion and oppression. After a while, the people would repent and turn back to God. God

would raise up a "judge" to deliver the people, and for a while they would be obedient to God. Sadly, after a time the people would return to their wicked ways, and the cycle would begin anew. The final verse of Judges sums up the problem of the Judges era: *"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* (Judges 21:25)

While the era of the Judges was filled with failure, there were those who proved that even in the worst of times, it's possible to follow God. Throughout the story we see faithfulness, purity, and integrity on full display. All of these are unique characteristics during the time of the Judges! A story that begins with the makings of a tragedy ends as one of the most joyful books in all the Bible! A true love story, Ruth is not only a touching tale, but one that teaches Christians important lessons. Like Ruth, we may live in a time of spiritual darkness and depravity, but that doesn't mean we can't shine the light of the Lord. If we'll be faithful and pure like Ruth, we too can be saved by our Kinsmen-Redeemer—Jesus Christ!



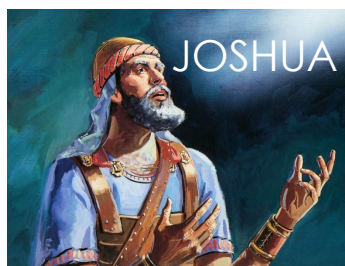
Jeremiah, often called "the weeping prophet," had a difficult job. For nearly four decades he warned the kings and people of Judah of impending doom. They needed to repent, but they refused to listen to God's prophet. Jeremiah preached a message of doom and gloom because of the people's rebellion, and he poured out his heart in an effort to warn his countrymen of their peril. For his words of warning, Jeremiah was often persecuted and belittled. Despite the ill treatment, Jeremiah persisted in preaching the truth. Ultimately, the people paid the price for their sins, and Jeremiah was left to lament the destruction of Jerusalem and God's temple.

Jeremiah's books remind us of the awful consequences of sin, the importance of being true to God no matter the cost, and they remind us that God wants us to be saved, but He will allow us to choose destruction if we persist in rejecting His word. We should heed His Word and warnings now, and turn our hearts to fully follow Him.

Fourth Quarter Review

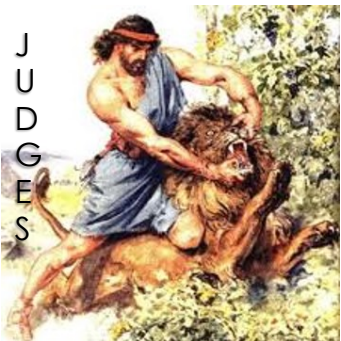
Congratulations! You've completed a full year of reading through the Bible, and are halfway through the reading plan! You've read 19 books of the Bible, including some of the longest books (like Psalms, Jeremiah, and Genesis). Over the past twelve weeks you read Paul's second letter to the Corinthians; three books of history (Joshua, Judges, and Ruth); Jeremiah's prophecy along with his book "Lamentations," and you finished the final two sections of Psalms. As with previous quarters, this week is designed to be a review week. This will give you a chance to catch up on any reading you missed or fell behind on, and it will give you a chance to re-read and review any sections you might like to revisit. Below and on the back are brief recaps of the books you've read this quarter.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians had addressed a plethora of problems plaguing the congregation. Sometime afterwards, Paul travelled to Troas then Macedonia in search of Titus and news about the Corinthians. To his relief, most of the congregation had accepted his letter, but there was a dangerous element still opposing Paul and questioning his authority as an apostle. Thus, Paul penned a second inspired letter, one in which he spends a great deal of time defending his apostleship, and calling the Corinthians to recognize his love and service for them in the gospel, while severely rebuking those that continued to fight against him, and more important, against the Gospel.



After reading the Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy), we find the book of Joshua. This book is the first of 12 historical books which tell the history of the Hebrew people from the conquering of Canaan until their return from Babylonian captivity. Of all the books of history, Joshua is the most successful. Joshua had learned at the feet of Moses, and had proven himself to be a faithful servant of God. Upon Moses' death, Joshua became the

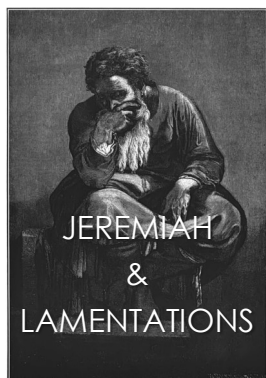
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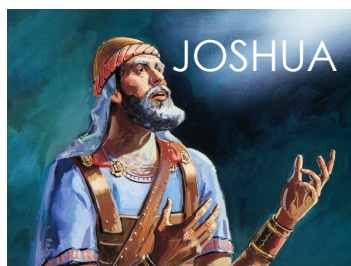
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