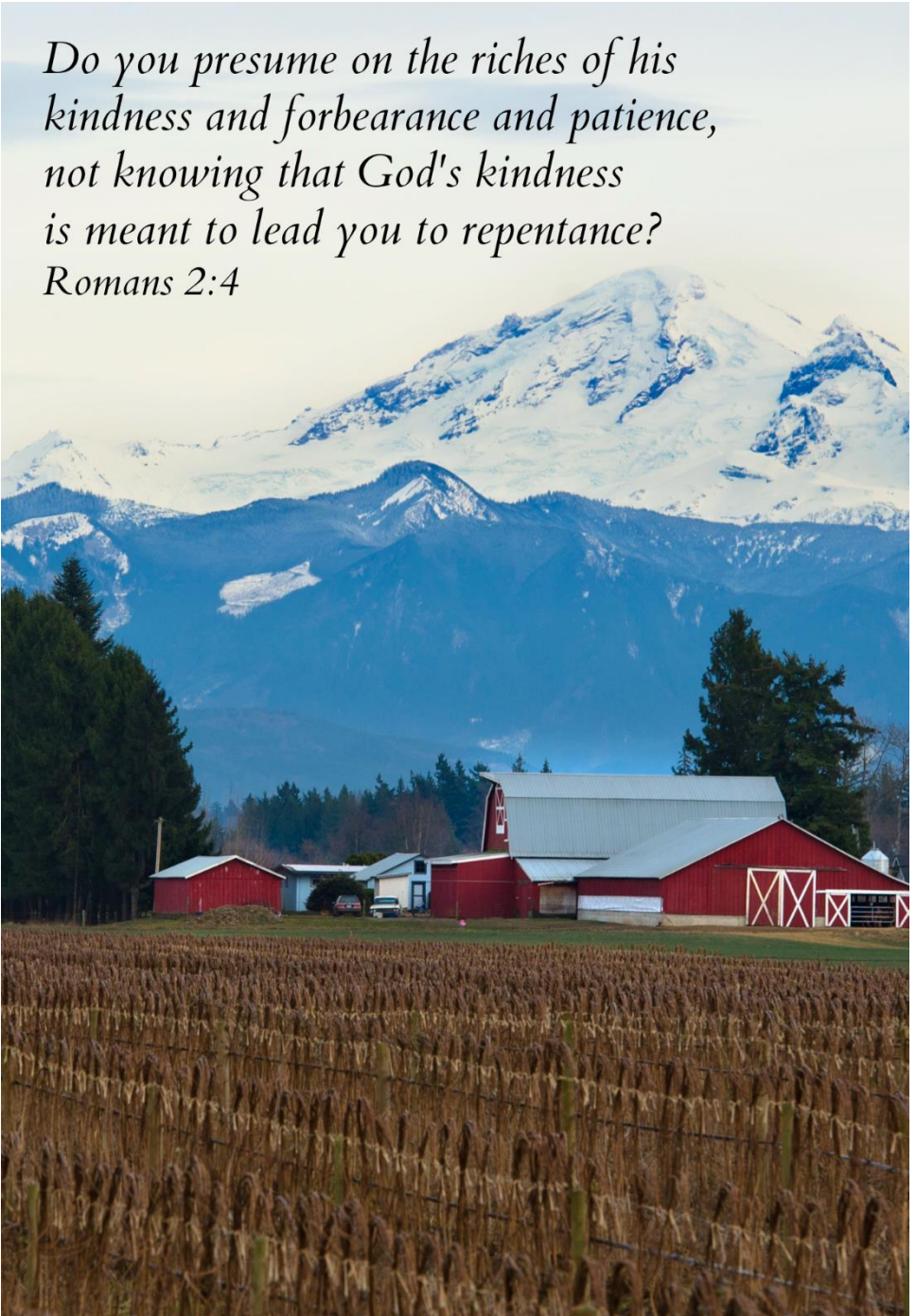


April 2023

Memory Verse and Bible Reading Plan

Do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?
Romans 2:4



Reading Joshua

In Joshua the story of God's faithfulness continues as He fulfills His promise to lead His people into the Promised Land. We can take God at His Word and trust His unchanging character. Numerous times the people will set up memorials to help them remember God's faithfulness.

The book of Joshua can be divided into four major sections.

Crossing into Promised Land (Joshua 1-5).

The great dramatic crossing of the Jordan is a reenactment of the Red Sea crossing. This reminds the people of God's absolute sovereignty, and of God's anointing of Joshua to replace Moses.

Conquest of Promised Land (Joshua 6-12).

This is the smiting of the -ites: the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. Critics of the Bible accuse God of genocide or ethnic cleansing. God's judgments are always moral and ethical, not ethnic or racial. God had told Abraham that he could not yet possess the promised land because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (Gen. 15:16). If God waited centuries so that His judgment of Canaan would be just, who are we to challenge Him and charge Him with injustice?

Conquered land allocated by tribe (Joshua 13-21).

Joshua 13–21 may seem like one of those boring parts of the Bible. Try to put yourself in the sandals of God's people and imagine the sense of wonder among God's people as each tribe was given a huge amount of territory in the Promised Land. Likely the people of each tribe would have looked at each other and said, "All of this for us?"

The allotment of territories to tribes in the land of Canaan gives us a preview of what it will be like when our greater Joshua, Jesus, leads us into the eternal Promised Land where we will inherit all that God has promised.

Covenant worship (Joshua 22-24).

Then comes rest and worship. This is a picture of the Sabbath rest we will enter into in heaven.

Joshua makes a solemn covenant with the people, that they should serve the Lord their God, and never forsake Him (Josh. 24:26-27). Read Hebrews 4 to get some NT perspective on this part of Joshua.

Reading Judges

The book of Joshua is linear. God supplied a faithful leader to Israel, and he took them into the land, and conquered it. The book of Judges is quite different—it is a book of six cycles, a book of ups and downs.

The cycle is simple. Each generation is characterized by eventual rebellion, followed by God’s judgment, their crying out to the Lord, the Lord raising up a deliverer, the actual deliverance, and a subsequent return to obedience for a period of time until the cycle repeats.

A tagline for the book of Judges could be “when every man did what was right in his own eyes.” Judges may be the worst book in the Old Testament. It’s saturated with toxic events: genocide, holy war, slavery, murder and the oppression.

The history of Judges gives us an account of six periods of oppression, each raised up by God to discipline his people and bring them to repentance after which he rescued and redeemed them.

The first was from the Hittites (Judg. 3:7-11).

The second was from Moab, under their king Eglon (Judg. 3:12-31).

The third was from Canaanites, from which Deborah and Barak delivered them (Judg. 4:1-5:31).

The fourth was from the Midianites, and Gideon was their deliverer (Judg. 6:1-8:32).

The fifth was a home-grown oppression, that of Abimelech (Judg. 8:33-10:5).

The sixth round came from the Ammonites and the Philistines, and the people were delivered by Jephthah (Judg. 10:6-16:31). Samson was also used to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

As you read Judges, be mindful of three fundamental realities. First, God judges sin (Judg. 2:11,14). Second, God is extraordinarily merciful to people who do not deserve it (Judg. 2:16). Third, sinfulness and ingratitude fill the human heart. After each deliverance, once the judge in question was dead, they veered back and behaved more corruptly than their fathers had done (Judg. 2:19).

Christ has died and risen in such a way as to deal with the treacherous hearts of men forever. We can therefore concentrate on His mercy. As all human heroes are flawed, God is the real hero.

(with credit to R.C. Sproul and Doug Wilson)

Bible Reading Plan – April

1	Joshua 1-2	Psalm 74
2	Joshua 3-4	Psalm 75
3	Joshua 5-6	Psalm 76
4	Joshua 7-8	Psalm 77
5	Joshua 9-10	Psalm 78:1-39
6	Joshua 11-12	Psalm 78:40-72
7	Joshua 13-14	Psalm 79
8	Joshua 15-16	Psalm 80
9	Joshua 17-18	Psalm 81
10	Joshua 19-20	Psalm 82
11	Joshua 21-22	Psalm 83
12	Joshua 23-24	Psalm 84
13	Judges 1	Psalm 85
14	Judges 2-3	Psalm 86
15	Judges 4-5	Psalm 87
16	Judges 6-7	Psalm 88
17	Judges 8-9	Psalm 89:1-18
18	Judges 10-11	Psalm 89:19-52
19	Judges 12-13	Psalm 90
20	Judges 14-15	Psalm 91
21	Judges 16-17	Psalm 92
22	Judges 18-19	Psalm 93
23	Judges 20-21	Psalm 94
24	Ruth 1-2	Psalm 95
25	Ruth 3-4	Psalm 96