

The Daily Reader

Reading through the Bible together in March

BOOK Introductions

DEUTERONOMY is the farewell sermon of Moses. There is a contractual feel to the book. If the people are faithful to God by responding to His word, then their future in the land will be prosperous. But, if they rebel and are faithless, they will suffer and eventually be removed from the land. Moses reassures them that ultimately God will remain faithful even if they should fail: future captivity will be followed by restoration. Notice how Moses reviews their history and restates the Ten Commandments (ch.5), then follows up with an emphasis on the motives that should drive their obedience – they are to love God with every dimension of their being: heart, soul and might (ch.6). The refrain to love God wholeheartedly rings out regularly throughout the book. God is rich in love towards His nation and is jealous for the affection of His people. The book ends with the death of Moses and a transition of leadership to his long-term assistant, Joshua.

MARK was probably the first gospel written. Mark spent time with both Paul and Peter, and their influence shows up in his gospel (some even refer to it as Peter's gospel written by Mark!) It moves along at a fast pace, racing from event to event in Christ's ministry. Although shorter than the other gospels, don't dismiss Mark's writing genius! The reader is told clearly in the first verse who Jesus is, but the people in the book struggle to understand who He is. Once the disciples start to get it, then Jesus makes it clear that they can't have a Messiah who just does miracles, they also have to grasp that the Messiah has come to suffer and die – the suffering servant of the Lord. Faith in Christ without the cross is incomplete. They struggle to understand the reality of who Jesus is, or what it means to follow Him: not a glorious life, but a challenging life, following in His footsteps. Throughout the gospel Jesus' disciples are being taught by Him, not just through words, but then also through practical experience. The book moves quickly and ends abruptly (which later writers tried to remedy by offering their own extended endings).

Where we'll be in March: Numbers 5-36, Deuteronomy, Mark 1-14

For a reading plan see Andy Jack or the church website www.oakhallchurch.org.uk