

# Fleet Methodist Church

## 365

### Bible Reading Challenge

The book of Judges introduces us to some of the heroes from Jewish history, and demonstrates their dependence on God and obedience to His commands. In sharp contrast it describes Israel's downward spiral into sin, refusing to learn from history and living only for the moment. It reveals God's awesome mercy, love and patience as He delivers His people over and over again.

#### **Key Verse:**

"In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes", (17:6).

#### **Stephen's Book Recommendations:**

The Bible Jesus Read - Philip Yancey  
Disappointment with God - Philip Yancey  
Reaching the Invisible God - Philip Yancey  
The Shack - William Young  
Finding God in the Shack - Roger E Olsen

#### **The Learning and Growing Team**

Tony Ellis, Revd. Stephen Robinson, Lindsey Brewerton,  
Sharon Evans, Tracey Pugsley & Rachel Banks

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## WHAT IS IN THE BIBLE READINGS FOR JANUARY?

#### **JOSHUA**

The people of Israel have been journeying through the wilderness for forty years because they had failed to be obedient to God and to conquer Canaan. Now, as God had promised, the new generation were ready to cross the Jordan and possess the land.

Joshua is chosen by God to be Moses' successor and this book describes his leadership. Joshua proves to be a brilliant military leader and to have a strong spiritual influence. His key to success was his submission to God. When God spoke – Joshua listened and obeyed. He became a 'role model' to Israel who remained faithful to God throughout his lifetime – quite an achievement!

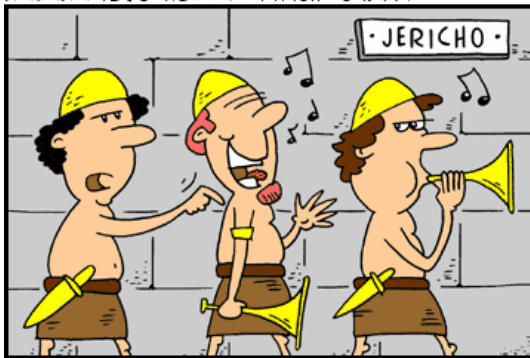
Perhaps the most familiar story is the conquest of Jericho, as the people of Israel followed God's command to march around the city thirteen times, blowing trumpets and shouting.

The first half (chapters 1 to 12) describes the events surrounding the conquest of Canaan whilst the second half (chapters 13 – 22) describes the assignment and settlement of the captured territory. The book finishes with Joshua's farewell address and death (chapters 23 – 24) in which he underscores the importance of obeying God.

"So be very careful to love the Lord your God" (23:11) and "choose today whom you will serve... but as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord" (24:15)

January is a time for renewing our promises to God during the Covenant Service, Joshua reminds us to make a regular commitment to obey God throughout our lives. May we, like Joshua, decide to follow Him wherever He leads and whatever it costs.

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(See Joshua 6)

HEY BUDDY ... LESS SINGIN', MORE TRUMPETIN'

## JUDGES

The book of Joshua ends with the nation taking a stand for God, ready to experience all the blessings of the Promised Land. It shows what can happen when people are obedient to the will of God.

After settling in Canaan however the Israelites lost their spiritual commitment and motivation. When Joshua and the elders died, the nation experienced a leadership vacuum, there was no-one to take his place. Instead of enjoying freedom and prosperity in the Promised Land, Israel entered the dark ages of its history.

The first step away from the Lord was quite subtle; by refusing to eliminate the enemy they were being disobedient. They were then tempted to intermarry and to worship idols and before long they became captive. Out of their desperation they begged God to rescue them.

In faithfulness to His promise and out of his loving kindness, God appointed a judge to deliver His people, and for a time there was peace. When that judge died a new cycle of disobedience and restoration would begin and a new judge would be appointed.