

# March

The seasonal canticle for March is part of Isaiah's praise and prayer for divine deliverance. Though it was likely that at that time the gracious presence of God had been withdrawn from Israel, this lamentation recalls God's history of righteously dealing with His faithful people; it confesses the people's sin, including that of neglecting God; and it pleads for God's mercy. There is an implied summons for all to join in the praise and prayer.

In the beginning of March we continue the book of Numbers that we began in February, which book continues the historical narrative of the Old Testament, with the census lists in chapters 1 and 26 giving the book its name. The chapters we read in March pick up the story with the people of Israel at Kadesh, beginning with their rebellion. There are various pictures of Jesus in Numbers, especially the faith in the one lifted up on the pole (21:4-9), and Numbers includes a very strong prophecy of Jesus, the Messiah (24:17). See how Jesus in St. John's Gospel account explains His fulfillment of the prophecy of the "lifting up" episode (John 3:14-15; 8:28). An interesting aspect of the strong prophecy of Jesus is that God spoke it through the lips of a pagan prophet, whose donkey God also enabled to speak!

The eighth of March we begin the final book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy presents Moses' farewell sermon to the people of Israel as they stand in Moab at the Jordan River preparing to enter the Promised Land. The sermon is part of God and the people renewing the covenant, and thus it repeats much of the law given earlier. In this sense, Deuteronomy is a repetition or copy of the law, as its name suggests. Pay special attention to the similarities between Moses and Jesus, and likewise note in chapter 18 Moses' direct prophecy of Jesus, "The Prophet" raised up from among His brothers, and notice how in the New Testament some apply that passage to Jesus (for example, John 7:40).

The latter third of March we read from St. Luke's Gospel account, what may be a welcome New Testament break after reading through the entire Pentateuch in the preceding two months. Luke helps us see the completeness and universal availability of God's grace and the table fellowship that believing sinners have with Jesus. St. Luke's account includes more detail about Jesus' birth than the other Gospel accounts, and it is thought that perhaps the Holy Spirit used the Virgin Mary herself as one of St. Luke's sources for those details. The timing of the reading of the latter chapters of the Gospel comes close to the annual observance of Holy Week.

We know from Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 that a doctor named Luke was a friend and coworker of St. Paul's, and early Christian writings identify Luke as the author of both the Gospel account that bears his name and its companion volume, the book of Acts (note its "we" portions: Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). Born a Gentile and serving as a doctor, Luke was likely well-educated, skills the Holy Spirit put to good use.

A word is in order about the four different accounts of the one Gospel of Jesus Christ. While there are various higher critical theories about the similarities and differences between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the simplest explanation is that the Holy Spirit inspired four different men to write different accounts.

1	Isaiah 64:1-9
	Numbers 16-18
2	Psalm 85
	Numbers 19-21
3	Psalm 86
	Numbers 22-24
4	Psalm 87
	Numbers 25-27
5	Psalm 88
	Numbers 28-30
6	Psalm 89
	Numbers 31-33
7	Psalm 90
	Numbers 34-36
8	Psalm 91
	Deuteronomy 1-3
9	Psalm 92
	Deuteronomy 4-6
10	Psalm 93
	Deuteronomy 7-9
11	Psalm 94
	Deuteronomy 10-12
12	Psalm 95
	Deuteronomy 13-15
13	Psalm 96
	Deuteronomy 16-18
14	Psalm 97
	Deuteronomy 19-21
15	Psalm 98
	Deuteronomy 22-24
16	Psalm 99
	Deuteronomy 25-27
17	Psalm 100
	Deuteronomy 28-30
18	Psalm 101
	Deuteronomy 31-34
19	Psalm 102
	Luke 1
20	Psalm 103
	Luke 2-3
21	Psalm 104
	Luke 4-5
22	Psalm 105
	Luke 6-7
23	Psalm 106
	Luke 8-9
24	Psalm 107
	Luke 10-11
25	Psalm 108
	Luke 12-13
26	Psalm 109
	Luke 14-15
27	Psalm 110
	Luke 16-17
28	Psalm 111
	Luke 18-19
29	Psalm 112
	Luke 20-21
30	Psalm 113
	Luke 22
31	Isaiah 64:1-9
	Luke 23-24