

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 9 OF 104

The Line God Draws

Week 9 of 104 • 9% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Exodus 9–16
Wisdom Literature	Proverbs 11
Gospels	Matthew 10
General New Testament	Acts 10:1–33

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

God has always drawn lines, and this week you watch Him draw them. In Egypt the line runs down a doorframe: lamb's blood on the lintel, and the destroyer passes over that house and no other. Proverbs 11 draws it through thirty one verses of contrast, the crooked and the upright, the man who hoards and the man who scatters. Jesus draws it when He sends twelve men out with no money and tells them plainly that a gospel of peace will split some households down the middle. And then, on a rooftop in Joppa, God erases a line He Himself had drawn, telling Peter to stop calling common what God has cleansed. Read them together and you begin to see which line God has always cared about, and it is usually not the one we are busy guarding.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the "Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study" questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT Exodus 9–16

The Lamb and the Sea

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The plagues escalate: boils, a hailstorm unlike anything in Egypt's history, locusts that eat what the hail left, and three days of darkness that can be felt. Then God announces the tenth blow, and He tells Israel exactly how to survive it: a lamb without blemish, its blood on the doorposts, the meal eaten in haste. Egypt wakes to a nation of funerals, and Israel walks out. They cross the sea on dry ground, sing, and are hungry and complaining within a month.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. In Exodus 12 the lamb must be without blemish, kept four days, killed at twilight, its blood applied to the door, and not one of its bones broken. Read 1 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:18–19, and John 19:36, and talk through what those details teach us about the cross.

2. Israel walks through the sea on dry ground and sings in chapter 15, and by 15:24 they are grumbling about the water. Three days. What happened in those three days, and where do you see that same three day pattern in yourself?
3. God gave manna one day at a time and forbade storing it overnight (16:19–20). Why would God deliberately design a provision that could not be stockpiled, and what would it actually cost you to live on that arrangement?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the plagues in chapters 9 and 10 and mark every place where God makes a distinction between Israel and Egypt (9:4, 9:26, 10:23; then 11:7). What is God teaching by the distinction itself?
2. Read John 1:29 and 1 Corinthians 5:7 alongside Exodus 12. List every point at which the Passover lamb corresponds to Christ, and then find one point where the correspondence stops.
3. Exodus 12:38 mentions that a mixed multitude went up with Israel. Who were they, and what does that small detail tell you about who was welcome under the blood?
4. Set Israel's words in 14:11–12 next to their song in 15:1–18. Describe what changed, and be honest about how long the change lasted.
5. Israel gathered manna every morning before the sun grew hot (16:21). Choose a time and a place this week for gathering from God's word daily, then tell one person so that somebody will ask you about it.

WISDOM LITERATURE Proverbs 11

The Weight of Integrity

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The chapter opens on a merchant's scale with the thumb on it, and God calls that an abomination. From there Solomon runs a long series of two line contrasts: integrity that guides and perversity that destroys, riches that fail on the day of wrath, a city that rejoices when the righteous prosper, a gossip who betrays a confidence, safety in many counselors, and the strange arithmetic of a man who scatters and ends up with more. It closes with a tree of life.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The chapter opens with dishonest scales, and God calls them an abomination (11:1). Why would God use such strong language about a rigged measurement, and where do respectable people still keep two sets of scales?
2. Verses 24 through 26 describe a man who scatters and yet increases, and another who withholds and comes to poverty. How does that arithmetic work, and what is it in us that refuses to believe it?
3. Proverbs 11:30 says the one who wins souls is wise, and verses 9, 12, and 13 describe how people use their mouths. How is a person's ordinary, everyday speech connected to whether he ever wins anyone to Christ?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List every verse in this chapter that deals with money or possessions. What single conviction ties all of them together?
2. Proverbs 11:4 says riches do not profit in the day of wrath. Read Luke 12:16–21 and note how Jesus tells the same truth in the form of a story rather than a proverb.
3. Trace what this chapter says about the tongue in verses 9, 11, 12, and 13. Which of those four describes your own particular weakness most accurately?
4. Proverbs 11:14 says that in a multitude of counselors there is safety. Name the two or three people you actually let speak into your decisions, and be honest about whether you chose them because they tell you the truth or because they agree with you.
5. Verse 25 promises that the generous soul will be made rich. Settle on one specific act of generosity this week, one you will actually feel in your budget or your calendar, and do it without telling anyone but God.

GOSPELS Matthew 10

Sheep Among Wolves

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Jesus names twelve men, gives them authority, and sends them out with instructions that get harder as they go. Take no money, stay with worthy people, heal freely, and shake the dust off your feet where you are not received. Then the tone shifts. You are sheep among wolves. You will be flogged in synagogues and hauled

before governors. Families will divide. Do not fear the man who can kill the body. Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. And a cup of cold water will not be forgotten.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus sends the Twelve only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and specifically not to Gentiles or Samaritans (10:5–6). Why that limitation at this moment, and how do you square it with what He says in Matthew 28:19?
2. Three times in this chapter Jesus says do not fear (10:26, 28, 31), and in between He describes floggings, betrayal, and death. How can both of those be true at once, and which fear is He actually going after?
3. Matthew 10:34–39 is among the hardest things Jesus ever said. Read it aloud, slowly. Whom in your own family would putting Christ first cost you something with, and what have you been doing to avoid that cost?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Write out the list of the Twelve in 10:2–4 with whatever you know about each man. What sort of group did Jesus assemble, and what is missing from it that you might have expected?
2. List everything Jesus tells the Twelve to take and everything He tells them not to take (10:9–10). Then read Luke 22:35–36, where He reverses the instruction, and explain what changed.
3. Read Matthew 10:19–20 together with John 14:26 and 2 Peter 1:20–21. To whom was that promise of given words made, and what did it accomplish?
4. Trace the chain of receiving in 10:40–42, from the one sent, to Christ, to the Father. Note what Jesus says a cup of cold water is worth and to whom it must be given.
5. Jesus says, “Freely you have received, freely give” (10:8). Name one thing you have received from God without earning it that you are currently rationing out to others, and give some of it away this week.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

In Caesarea a Roman centurion named Cornelius prays, gives generously, and is respected by everyone, and an angel tells him to send thirty miles down the coast for a fisherman named Peter. The next day, on a rooftop in Joppa, Peter gets hungry and sees a sheet full of animals no observant Jew would touch, with a voice telling him to kill and eat. Three times. While he is still puzzling over it, three men knock at the gate, and Peter walks into a Gentile house.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Cornelius is devout, generous, and prays to God continually (10:2), and an angel still sends him thirty miles to fetch a preacher. What does that tell us about the value of sincerity and about what even a good man still lacks?
2. Peter answers the voice with “Not so, Lord” (10:14), which is a sentence that cannot actually hold together. Where are we most likely to say those same words, and how does God normally go about changing a mind that made up long ago?
3. Peter tells Cornelius it had been unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with a foreigner (10:28). Which people would our congregation find it hardest to sit down and eat with, and what is really underneath that difficulty?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Acts 10:1–8 tells you about Cornelius before he had ever heard the gospel. Then read Acts 11:14 and note what he still needed.
 2. The angel did not preach to Cornelius; he sent him after a man. Compare Acts 8:26–35 and Acts 9:6, and state the pattern God follows in getting the gospel to people who want it.
 3. Trace the movements of both men from 10:1 to 10:33 and count the separate steps God arranged to bring these two into the same room.
 4. Read Ephesians 2:11–22 alongside this chapter. Which wall was being taken down, when was it taken down, and what was put in its place?
 5. Cornelius gathered his relatives and close friends to hear whatever Peter would say (10:24). Write down who would actually come if you invited them, and settle on what it will take for you to ask one of them this week.
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NEXT WEEK'S READING: Exodus 17-23 • Proverbs 12 • Matthew 11:1-12:8 • Acts 10:34-11:18

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