

# Through the Bible in 24 Months



## WEEK 30 OF 104

*What We Could Not Do*

Week 30 of 104 • 29% of the way through the Bible

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| General Old Testament | Judges 1-7          |
| Wisdom Literature     | Psalms 7-8          |
| Gospels               | Matthew 27:57-28:20 |
| General New Testament | Romans 7:1-8:11     |

### THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Nothing in this week's readings gets finished by human strength. Israel holds the land and cannot finish the job, and within one generation a whole nation has forgotten the God who gave it. Gideon is threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding, when God calls him a mighty man of valor and then takes away all but three hundred of his soldiers. David looks up at a night sky and asks why God bothers with us at all. A stone is rolled over a tomb, stamped with the governor's seal and watched by trained soldiers, and none of it holds for three days. And Paul, coming out of the hardest chapter he ever wrote, says it plainly: what the law could not do, God did by sending His own Son.

**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 Judges 1-7

### The Cycle Begins

#### WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Joshua is buried, and almost immediately the story turns. Tribe after tribe fails to drive out the people God told them to remove, and settles for coexistence. An angel meets Israel at Bochim and tells them what that will cost. Then a generation grows up that does not know the Lord, and the book falls into its terrible rhythm: sin, oppression, crying out, a deliverer, rest, and sin again. You will meet Othniel, Ehud with his hidden dagger, Deborah, Jael with her tent peg, and a frightened farmer named Gideon.

#### FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Judges 2:10 says a generation arose that did not know the Lord or the works He had done for Israel. Where exactly did the handoff break down, and where is the same break happening in our homes and congregations right now?

2. Gideon asks the angel, “If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?” (6:13). Look carefully at how the Lord responds, and discuss what He answers, what He refuses to answer, and what He tells Gideon to do instead.
3. God cuts Gideon’s army from thirty two thousand to three hundred and tells him exactly why (7:2). Where does God do that kind of reducing in our lives, and how do we usually interpret it while it is happening to us?

#### **EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY**

1. Write out the repeating cycle described in Judges 2:11–19 in four or five steps, then mark where each stage appears in the accounts of Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, and Gideon.
2. List the reasons Judges 1 gives for the tribes failing to drive out the inhabitants. How many of those reasons are about ability, and how many are about willingness?
3. Deborah, Barak, and Jael all act in Judges 4 and 5. Read Hebrews 11:32 to see who is named there, then describe what each of the three actually contributed to the victory.
4. Gideon asks for confirming signs more than once (6:17, 36–40). Read Judges 6:14–16 and Matthew 12:38–39, then work out when asking God for proof is weak faith being helped and when it is unbelief looking for an excuse.
5. Gideon’s first assignment was to tear down his own father’s altar, and he did it at night because he was afraid (6:25–32). Name the idol closest to home in your own life, set a date this month, and tear it down even if you have to do it afraid.

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## **WISDOM LITERATURE   Psalm 7–8**

### **The Judge and the Night Sky**

#### **WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE**

Two psalms that could not feel more different, side by side. Psalm 7 is a man under accusation, running to God as a righteous judge, asking to be examined, and describing the strange justice by which a man who digs a pit falls into it himself. Psalm 8 is the same man outdoors at night, looking at the moon and the stars, staggered that

the God who made all of it pays any attention to us at all, and then more staggered still by what He has entrusted to us.

#### FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. In Psalm 7:8 David asks God to judge him according to his righteousness and integrity. How can a man say that to God, and how is it different from claiming to be sinless?
2. Psalm 7:14–16 pictures a man conceiving trouble, digging a pit, and falling into the hole he made. Where have you watched that actually happen, and how should it reshape our appetite for getting even?
3. Psalm 8 asks what man is that God should be mindful of him, and then gives an answer that is larger than the question. Trace the answer, and discuss what Hebrews 2:6–9 adds that the psalm alone does not say.

#### EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List every picture Psalm 7 uses for God, from the one who saves to the judge to the warrior who sharpens His sword. Which of those images almost never appears in our prayers, and why?
2. Psalm 8 opens and closes with the same sentence. Write it out, and explain what that frame does to everything said in between.
3. Set Psalm 8:4–6 beside Genesis 1:26–28 and Hebrews 2:6–9. Who is this passage finally about, and how does the writer of Hebrews use it?
4. Psalm 8:2 says God has ordained strength out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants. Read Matthew 21:15–16 and describe how Jesus used that verse and against whom.
5. Go outside after dark one night this week, look up for ten uninterrupted minutes, and then read Psalm 8 aloud. Write one sentence about what it did to the size of the thing you have been worrying about.

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#### GOSPELS Matthew 27:57–28:20

#### He Is Not Here

#### WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A rich man named Joseph asks Pilate for the body and lays it in his own new tomb while two women sit watching. The chief priests, remembering what Jesus said, get a guard and a seal. Then an earthquake, an angel

who rolls the stone away and sits on it, terrified soldiers, and a message: He is risen, come see, go tell. Jesus meets the women on the road. The guards are paid to lie. And on a mountain in Galilee, eleven men receive the commission that made the church.

#### FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Matthew carefully records the sealed stone, the guard, and the bribe afterward (27:62–66; 28:11–15). Why does he include all of that, and how would you answer someone today who says the disciples stole the body?
2. The women are told to go quickly and tell, and it is on the way that Jesus meets them (28:8–10). What does that order of events suggest about how obedience and experience are related in the Christian life?
3. Jesus opens the commission with, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (28:18). Work through everything that authority covers, and discuss what it settles about how we worship, teach, and organize as the Lord’s church.

#### EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List every detail Matthew supplies about the burial and the tomb in 27:57–66. How many of them make the theory of a stolen body harder rather than easier to believe?
2. Copy out Matthew 28:19–20 and underline the verbs. Identify the one main command and the three participles that describe how it is to be carried out.
3. Set Matthew 28:19 beside Mark 16:15–16, Luke 24:46–47, and Acts 2:38. What is preached, what is required of the hearer, and in what order do these passages put it?
4. Matthew 28:17 says that when they saw Him they worshiped, but some doubted. Note where that sentence sits, what Jesus does about it, and compare John 20:24–29.
5. The commission ends with teaching people to observe all things Christ commanded. Write down the name of one person you will personally invite to study the Bible with you, or to worship, before this month ends, and then do it.

## **The Law Could Not, God Did**

### **WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE**

Paul explains with a marriage illustration why Christians are no longer bound to the law, then spends a chapter defending the law itself: it is holy, just, and good, and sin used that good thing to kill us. In the middle comes the most painfully honest paragraph in his letters, a man who wants what is right and does what he hates, ending in a cry for rescue. Then the answer arrives, and chapter 8 opens with the sentence every Christian should have by heart.

### **FOR CLASS DISCUSSION**

1. Paul uses marriage and death to explain our relation to the law (7:1–6). Trace the illustration carefully, and say what it settles about whether Christians today are under the Law of Moses.
2. Romans 7:14–25 is one of the most debated paragraphs in Scripture. Whatever you conclude about who is speaking, discuss what it teaches about the limits of willpower and about where deliverance actually comes from.
3. Romans 8:1 says there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Walk through how a person comes to be in Christ, and then look at what the rest of verse 1 and verse 4 add about how he goes on walking there.

### **EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY**

1. Paul insists the law is holy, just, and good (7:12) while also saying we died to it. Write out how both statements can be true at once, and compare Galatians 3:24–25.
  2. Count how many times the word “I” appears in Romans 7:14–25 and how many times the Holy Spirit is mentioned. Then count both in Romans 8:1–11, and describe what the contrast shows.
  3. Romans 8:3 says God did what the law could not do. Using 3:20, 7:7, and 8:3–4, list what the law could accomplish and what it never could.
  4. Read Colossians 2:14–17 and Hebrews 8:6–13 alongside Romans 7:4–6. What has happened to the Old Covenant, and what does that mean for questions about Sabbath keeping today?
  5. Romans 8:5 says those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. Name one habit of mind you feed every day, and replace it this week with something specific from Scripture that you will actually read.
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**NEXT WEEK'S READING:** Judges 8-15 · Psalm 9-10 · Mark 1:1-34 · Romans 8:12-39

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