

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 48 OF 104

The Veil Torn

Week 48 of 104 • 46% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	1 Chronicles 6-11
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 42-44
Gospels	Mark 15:21-16:20
General New Testament	2 Corinthians 2:5-3:18

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

For fifteen hundred years there was a curtain, and behind it was a room almost nobody entered. This week you meet the men who kept that system running, gatekeepers and bakers and singers on duty day and night, most of whose names you will never hear again. You hear a psalmist so shut out from the house of God that his tears have become his food, asking himself the question all of us eventually ask: why are you cast down, O my soul? Then a man dies on a hill outside the city, and the curtain rips from top to bottom, and a Roman officer who has watched hundreds die says the one true thing. And Paul tells us the veil comes off our faces too.

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 1 Chronicles 6-11

Singers, Gatekeepers, and a King

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The Levites get a chapter of their own, including the men David appointed over the service of song and the cities where the priests lived. Then Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher, with a story of raided cattle and a father who mourned many days. Chapter 9 lists the people who came back from exile and the jobs they did, down to who baked the showbread. Then Saul dies on Gilboa with a two-verse verdict on his whole life, David is made king over all Israel, and three men risk everything for a cup of water.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

- Chapter 9 names gatekeepers, men in charge of the utensils, the keepers of the keys who opened the house every morning, and singers who were on duty day and night. Talk about the dignity of an assignment nobody applauds, and name the people in our own congregation doing that kind of work right now.
- First Chronicles 10:13-14 sums up Saul's entire reign in two sentences and names two reasons he died. Read them carefully. Why does the Chronicler single out those two things, and what would it be like to have your life summarized that way?

3. Three of David's men broke through a Philistine garrison to bring him a drink from the well at Bethlehem, and David poured it out on the ground (11:15–19). Discuss what he was saying by refusing it, and whether you would have understood if you had been one of the three.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Read 6:31–48 and 9:33 on the singers. Write down who appointed them, what they were appointed to do, where they did it, and what 9:33 says about their schedule and their other responsibilities.
2. List the specific duties described in 9:17–32. Count how many of them involve doors, keys, furniture, flour, spices, and counting. Then write a sentence about what God apparently considers worth recording.
3. Read 1 Chronicles 10:13–14 next to 1 Samuel 15:22–23 and 1 Samuel 28:5–7. Explain what Saul did, what he failed to do, and how the two failures are connected.
4. Go through the mighty men in chapter 11 and list the individual deeds recorded: a spear against three hundred, a field of barley defended, a lion killed in a pit on a snowy day. Note how many of these men you had never heard of before this week.
5. Find out who does one of the unnoticed jobs in your congregation, the building, the bulletin, the communion preparation, the nursery, the ride given to someone who cannot drive. Thank that person by name this week, and then take one such job yourself for the next month.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 42–44

Why Are You Cast Down

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A man cut off from the house of God writes down what it feels like: a deer panting for water, tears that have become his food, and neighbors asking all day long where his God is. Three times he turns and preaches to himself, asking his own soul why it is cast down and telling it to hope in God. Psalm 43 continues the same poem and asks God to send out His light. Then Psalm 44 shifts to the whole nation, remembering the old victories and then saying, without softening it, that God has cast them off.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Three times the psalmist stops and asks his own soul why it is cast down, and then tells it to hope in God (42:5, 42:11, 43:5). Talk about the difference between listening to yourself and preaching to yourself, and about what a person actually says in that conversation.
2. In 42:3 and 42:10 his enemies say to him all day long, “Where is your God?” while his tears are his food. Discuss why that particular taunt cuts so deeply when a believer is already low, and how a person answers it when he has no evidence to show.
3. Psalm 44 insists that all this has come upon the nation although they had not forgotten God or dealt falsely with His covenant (44:17–19), and it ends by asking God to wake up. How should a class handle a prayer like that, and what does it protect us from believing about suffering?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Find the refrain in 42:5, 42:11, and 43:5. Write out what is identical in all three and what comes immediately before and after each one, and describe what the repetition does over the course of the poem.
2. In 42:4 the writer remembers going with the multitude to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise. List everything he says he remembers, and note what he is doing with memory in the middle of a hard season.
3. Psalm 43:3 asks God to send out His light and His truth to lead him. Compare Psalm 119:105 and John 8:12, and write down where Scripture says that light actually comes from.
4. Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 in Romans 8:36, in the middle of the most triumphant passage he ever wrote. Read Romans 8:35–39 and explain what he does with the verse and why it strengthens rather than weakens his argument.
5. Somebody you know is living in Psalm 42 right now, and probably has not said so. Identify that person, and this week do the one thing that helps most, which is to sit with them without trying to fix it, and then keep showing up.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A man walking in from the country is pressed into carrying the cross. At the third hour they crucify Him between two robbers, divide His clothing, and mock Him from the road and from the crosses beside Him. At noon darkness covers the land for three hours. He cries out in the words of Psalm 22, gives a loud cry, and dies, and the temple veil rips from top to bottom. A centurion says the truest sentence in the Gospel. Then a borrowed tomb, three women with spices, a stone rolled away, and a man in white saying He is risen.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. At the moment Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (15:38). Read Hebrews 10:19–22 and Hebrews 9:6–12, and talk about what that curtain had meant for fifteen centuries and what its tearing announced.
2. Jesus cries out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me” (15:34), the opening line of Psalm 22. Read that psalm through to its end, and discuss why He would quote it and what a person hearing it should have understood.
3. In 16:15–16 Jesus tells them to go into all the world and preach the gospel, and says that he who believes and is baptized will be saved. Walk through that sentence carefully, and then set it beside Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:3–4 and discuss what all three passages say together.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the mockery in 15:29–32. Write down what the passersby said, what the chief priests and scribes said among themselves, and what those crucified with Him said. Note what all three groups had in common.
2. Read Psalm 22 beside Mark 15. List every correspondence you can find: the words, the mockery, the hands and feet, the clothing, the thirst, and how the psalm ends.
3. The centurion had watched many men die, and he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God” (15:39). Identify from the text what he had just seen and heard, and describe what made this death different from every other one he had supervised.
4. Set Mark 16:16 beside Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3–4, Galatians 3:26–27, and 1 Peter 3:21. Write down what each passage says baptism is for and what it puts a person into.
5. Jesus said to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Name one person in your world who has never heard you say plainly what you believe and why, and have that conversation before the month ends.

Unveiled Faces

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul urges the church to forgive and comfort a man who has repented, so that Satan does not get an advantage over them. Then he describes ministry with two striking pictures: a Roman victory parade, and a fragrance that smells like life to some and like death to others. Then he says the Corinthians themselves are his letter of recommendation, written on hearts. That leads into a comparison of two covenants, one engraved on stone and fading, one written by the Spirit, and a veil that finally comes off.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul tells the church to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm love to a man who had caused real grief, lest he be swallowed up with too much sorrow, and he says Satan gains an advantage when we do not (2:5–11). Talk about how a congregation can be right about a sin and still be outmaneuvered on the far side of repentance.
2. In 3:2–3 Paul says the Corinthians are his epistle, known and read by all men, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God on tablets of flesh. Who is reading your life this week, and what has it been saying?
3. In 3:7–11 Paul calls the law written and engraved on stones a ministry of death that was nevertheless glorious, and says its glory was passing away. Read that with Colossians 2:14–17 and Hebrews 8:13, and discuss what a Christian's relationship to the Old Testament actually is.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Read 2:14–16 and trace the two responses to the same aroma. Write down who smells death and who smells life, and note what that says about why the same gospel produces such different reactions.
2. Paul says in 2:17 that he does not peddle the word of God. Look up 1 Thessalonians 2:3–6 and 1 Peter 5:2, and list the motives all three passages rule out for anyone who handles Scripture publicly.
3. Make a two-column list of everything 3:6–11 says about the first ministry and the second: what each was written on, what each produces, and what happened to the glory of each.
4. In 3:14–16 Paul says a veil lies on the heart when Moses is read, and that it is taken away in Christ. Read Romans 10:1–4 and describe what Paul says was missing in his countrymen and what removes the veil.

5. Second Corinthians 3:18 says we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory as we behold the Lord. Set a specific daily time and place this week to behold Him in the Scriptures, write it on your calendar, and keep it every day, not most days.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: 1 Chronicles 12-19 · Psalm 45-46 · Luke 1:1-38 · 2 Corinthians 4:1-5:10

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