

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 49 OF 104

A Kingdom Without End

Week 49 of 104 • 47% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	1 Chronicles 12-19
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 45-46
Gospels	Luke 1:1-38
General New Testament	2 Corinthians 4:1-5:10

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

David wants to build God a house, and God interrupts him to say that He will build David a house instead, a throne that will still be standing when the cedar has rotted. A psalmist writes a wedding song for a king and says something no wedding song should be able to say: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." Centuries later an angel stands in a small house in Nazareth and tells a young woman that her son will have the throne of His father David and that of His kingdom there will be no end. And Paul, beaten and worn out and carrying that same kingdom around in a body he compares to a clay pot, says the plain thing: what we see is temporary. What we do not see is forever.

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 12-19

The Ark and the Promise

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Fighting men come to David from every tribe, including two hundred from Issachar who understood the times and knew what Israel should do. David tries to bring the ark home on a new cart, a man named Uzza reaches out to steady it and dies, and the whole plan stops for three months. The second attempt goes differently, and David explains exactly why. Then the ark comes up with singing, and when David proposes building God a house, God tells him through Nathan who is going to build whose house.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The ark is moved twice, once on a new cart with disastrous results and once by Levites on their shoulders with joy, and in 15:13 David says plainly what went wrong the first time. Read both accounts and discuss what he learned, and where the same principle applies to how we approach God today.

2. In 17:11–14 God tells David that He will raise up his descendant, establish his kingdom, and settle him in His house and kingdom forever. Read Luke 1:32–33 and Acts 2:29–36 beside it, and talk about where that promise landed and why it matters how we answer that question.
3. First Chronicles 12:32 describes two hundred men of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do. What would that kind of understanding look like in a congregation now, and how is it different from simply having opinions about what is going on?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Set chapter 13 and chapter 15 side by side and list every difference you can find: who carried the ark, how, who was consulted, what preparation was made, and what the outcome was.
2. Read the song in 16:8–36, then compare it with Psalm 105:1–15, Psalm 96, and Psalm 106:1, 47–48. Describe what David assembled and what he wanted the assembly singing that day.
3. Trace the reversal in 17:1–15. Write down what David proposed, what Nathan said first, what God said that night, and how the word “house” changes meaning between verse 1 and verse 10.
4. Note the two times David inquires of God before battle in 14:10 and 14:14, and what he does when the answer is different the second time. Then read 13:1–4 and see whether anyone asked God about the cart.
5. Name one good thing you are currently doing in a way you never checked against Scripture, because it works and everyone does it that way. Look up what God has actually said about it this week, and change what needs changing.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 45–46

Your Throne Is Forever

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Psalm 45 is a wedding song written for a king, and the poet says outright that his heart is overflowing and his tongue is the pen of a ready writer. He praises the king's beauty, his sword, his truth and meekness and righteousness, and then says a line that no ordinary wedding song could carry: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Psalm 46 answers a different mood entirely. Mountains fall into the sea, nations rage, kingdoms totter, and God says, be still, and know that I am God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 45:6–7 says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,” and Hebrews 1:8–9 quotes those very words as spoken by the Father to the Son. Discuss what the writer of Hebrews is proving with them, and what it means to have an Old Testament wedding song used that way.
2. In 45:10–11 the bride is told to listen, consider, incline her ear, forget her own people and her father’s house, and let the king desire her beauty. Talk about what leaving behind actually costs, and about where following Christ has required you to leave something that was genuinely yours.
3. Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still, and know that I am God,” and it is spoken in a psalm full of collapsing mountains, raging nations, and broken weapons. Read the whole psalm first and then discuss what that command actually means in its own setting, and how it differs from the way the verse is usually used.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Map Psalm 46 into its three sections, marking where the refrain of verses 7 and 11 falls. Write down what threat each section addresses and what the refrain says in response to all of them.
2. Read Psalm 45:6–7 and then Hebrews 1:1–9. List the Old Testament passages the writer of Hebrews strings together and state the single point he is making about the Son.
3. Psalm 46:4 speaks of a river whose streams make glad the city of God, though Jerusalem had no river. Compare John 7:37–39 and Revelation 22:1–2, and describe what the image is saying.
4. List everything God is said to do in 46:8–10: what He makes, what He causes, what He breaks, what He burns, and what He will be. Note how many of those verbs concern war.
5. Set aside twenty minutes of actual silence this week, with no screen, no music, and no task, and spend it reading Psalm 46 slowly and praying it back to God. Put it on the calendar now, because it will not happen otherwise.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Luke opens by telling us exactly what he is doing: many have written accounts, he has investigated everything carefully from the beginning, and he is setting it in order so that Theophilus may know the certainty of what he has been taught. Then an old priest named Zacharias, chosen by lot to burn incense, meets an angel and asks for proof and loses his voice. Six months later the same angel stands in front of a young woman in Nazareth with a far greater announcement, and she asks a question too.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Luke says he investigated everything carefully from the first and wrote an orderly account so that Theophilus might know the certainty of the things he had been taught (1:1–4). Discuss what that says about the kind of faith the New Testament expects, and why careful investigation and inspiration are not in competition.
2. Zacharias asks, “How shall I know this?” and is struck mute, while Mary asks, “How can this be?” and is answered kindly (1:18, 1:34). Compare the two questions word for word, and talk about the difference between a question that seeks understanding and a question that demands proof.
3. Gabriel tells Mary that her son will receive the throne of His father David, will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and that of His kingdom there will be no end (1:32–33). Read Acts 2:29–36 and Colossians 1:13, and discuss where and when that reign began.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Gabriel says about John in 1:13–17. Then read Malachi 4:5–6 and note which phrases Gabriel is quoting and what that told Zacharias about the moment he was standing in.
2. Write out Zacharias’s question in 1:18 and Mary’s in 1:34 side by side, along with what each says about their circumstances. Then note how Gabriel answers each one, and what he gives Mary that he did not give Zacharias.
3. Luke 1:6 says Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, and the very next verse says they had no child. Describe what that pairing rules out about the relationship between godliness and circumstances.
4. Compare Luke 1:32–33 with 2 Samuel 7:12–13 and Acts 2:29–36. Write down what was promised, who fulfilled it, and when Peter says the enthronement took place.
5. Mary answered, “Let it be to me according to your word,” knowing what it would cost her reputation and possibly her engagement. Name the word of God you have been negotiating with, and this week stop negotiating and obey it.

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul says three times in this passage that he does not lose heart, which tells you something about the pressure he was under. He describes a treasure carried around in clay pots, four pairs of hard words and their answers, an outward man wasting away while the inward man is renewed daily, and afflictions he calls light and momentary. Then he compares this body to a tent that will be taken down, says we walk by faith and not by sight, and ends at the judgment seat of Christ.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul says we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us (4:7). Discuss why God would deliberately choose fragile, ordinary carriers, and what that means for the person in this room who feels least qualified to be one.
2. In 4:17 Paul calls his affliction light and momentary. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 to see what he was actually carrying when he wrote that. How does a person get to the place where such a list can be called light without pretending it does not hurt?
3. Second Corinthians 5:10 says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body. Talk about who “all” includes, what is being examined, and how that verse should shape an ordinary Thursday.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Write out the four pairs in 4:8–9: hard-pressed but not crushed, and the three that follow. For each pair, name a real situation in which the first half is true and the second half is hard to believe.
2. Paul says in 4:4 that the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. Compare John 12:37–40 and 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12, and describe what those passages say about where the responsibility for such blindness lies.
3. In 5:1–4 Paul calls the body a tent that will be dissolved and speaks of a building from God. Compare 2 Peter 1:13–14 and 1 Corinthians 15:53, and list what the three passages say about the body we have now and the one we are promised.
4. Second Corinthians 5:7 says we walk by faith, not by sight. Read Hebrews 11:1 and then trace 4:16–18, and explain in your own words what it means to look at things that are not seen.

5. Paul says in 5:9 that we make it our aim to be well pleasing to Him, and gives the judgment seat as the reason. Name the one thing you would most want changed before you stand there, and take the first concrete step to change it this week.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: 1 Chronicles 20-29 · Psalm 47-48 · Luke 1:39-66 · 2 Corinthians 5:11-7:16

More studies available on ChurchOfChristBibleStudies.com