

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 63 OF 104

Seeing God Himself

Week 63 of 104 • 61% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Job 38–42
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 73
Gospels	Luke 11:1–32
General New Testament	Philippians 3–4

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

After thirty-seven chapters of argument, God finally speaks to Job, and He never once explains the suffering. He asks questions instead, about stars and snow and wild goats and a horse that laughs at fear, until Job puts his hand over his mouth and says, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.” That is the week. Asaph almost threw his faith away over the fat, comfortable arrogance of men who mocked God, and what saved him was not an argument but a place: he went into the sanctuary. A disciple asks Jesus how to pray and is handed the word “Father.” And Paul takes the finest résumé in Judaism and calls it rubbish, for one reason: that I may know Him.

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 Job 38–42

The Voice from the Whirlwind

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

God answers Job out of a storm, and the answer is a flood of questions. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Have you entered the storehouses of the snow? Who provides for the raven, who loosed the wild donkey, who gave the horse his strength? Job covers his mouth. God presses again, describing Behemoth and Leviathan, creatures no man can control. Job repents in dust and ashes. Then the Lord rebukes the three friends, tells them to go to Job for prayer, and restores him.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. God never tells Job why any of it happened. He asks roughly sixty questions instead. Talk about what those questions do to Job, and why this counts as an answer rather than an evasion.
2. Job 42:5 says, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.” What changed for Job in that sentence, and what would the same change look like in a person sitting in this room?

3. In 42:7–10 God’s anger burns against the three friends and He sends them to Job to be prayed for. How should that reshape what we say to a suffering person, and what we say about God on their behalf?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Work through chapters 38 and 39 and group God’s questions by subject: the earth, the sea, light and darkness, weather, the stars, and the animals. What is the cumulative weight of them meant to do?
2. Twice God says, “Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me” (38:3; 40:7). Compare Job’s earlier demands for a hearing in 13:3, 13:22, and 31:35, and note who ends up doing the questioning.
3. Read Job 40:8 and write in your own words the difference between saying “I do not understand this” and saying “God has wronged me.” Which one has Job been drifting toward?
4. Trace what happens in 42:10–17. List what is returned, what is doubled, and what is not. What did Job never receive back, and what question did God never answer for him?
5. Somewhere in your life you are quietly demanding an explanation before you will trust God again. Name it this week, decide to trust Him without it, and tell one person that you have.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 73

Until I Went into the Sanctuary

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Asaph admits that his feet had almost slipped. He looked at arrogant men who prosper, healthy and untroubled, wearing pride like a necklace, setting their mouths against heaven and getting away with it, and he envied them. He concluded he had kept his heart clean for nothing. Then he went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end. The psalm turns, and the last verses become one of the great confessions in Scripture: whom have I in heaven but You?

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Asaph says his feet had almost stumbled (73:2). Read 73:3–14 and lay out his argument honestly, without softening it. Where have you made the same case inside your own head?

2. Everything changes in 73:16–17 when he goes into the sanctuary of God. What actually happened there, and what is the equivalent for a Christian on a Tuesday afternoon?
3. Verses 25–28 are what Asaph is left holding at the end. Could you say “whom have I in heaven but You” with a straight face this week, and what would have to be true of you for that to be honest?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List every advantage Asaph says the wicked enjoy in 73:4–12. Then mark the ones that are actually true of the comfortable and godless people you know.
2. Compare Psalm 73:17 with Psalm 37:35–38 and Malachi 3:13–18. Write down what all three passages do with the same problem.
3. In 73:21–22 Asaph describes himself as grieved, embittered, foolish, and like a beast before God. Trace that vocabulary and explain what envy had been doing to him.
4. Read 73:23–26 and count what he still has, item by item, after admitting he has nothing else. Which of those has been true through your hardest year?
5. Identify one way you have measured God’s goodness by your circumstances this year. Write one sentence you can say instead, and say it out loud the next time the thought comes.

GOSPELS Luke 11:1–32

Teach Us to Pray

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A disciple watches Jesus pray and asks to be taught. He answers with a short model prayer, then two pictures of persistence: a neighbor pounding on a door at midnight, and a father who would not hand his son a stone. Then He casts out a demon and is accused of working for Beelzebub, which He answers with a divided kingdom and a strong man overpowered. Finally the crowds demand a sign, and He offers only the sign of Jonah.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The disciples ask to be taught to pray, and Jesus answers with a very short prayer followed by two stories about persistence. Look at the shape of that answer and talk about what our praying is usually missing.

2. In 11:24–26 an evil spirit returns to a house that is swept and empty, and the man ends up worse. Discuss why getting rid of something bad is never enough, and what filling a house actually requires.
3. The crowd wants a sign and Jesus offers only Jonah (11:29–32). Why does He choose the resurrection as the one sign He will give, and what does that leave a person to do who has heard about it?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Write out the petitions of the model prayer in 11:2–4 and number them. How many concern God, how many concern us, and what do you make of the order?
2. Compare Luke 11:2–4 with Matthew 6:9–13, noting every difference. What do the differences suggest about whether Jesus gave a form to recite or a pattern to follow?
3. Luke 11:13 says the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. Read Acts 2:38 and Acts 5:32, and write down who receives the Spirit, on what terms, and when.
4. Trace the argument in 11:17–22: a kingdom divided, the finger of God, the strong man and the stronger one. State in one sentence what Jesus is claiming about Himself.
5. Jesus says a greater than Jonah and a greater than Solomon is here. Name one thing you have been waiting for God to prove before you will obey Him, and this week act on what He has already shown you.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT Philippians 3–4

Everything Else Is Loss

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul lays out the finest credentials in Judaism, circumcised the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, blameless concerning the righteousness of the law, and then calls the whole file rubbish for the sake of knowing Christ. He presses toward the goal like a runner. Chapter 4 brings it home: two women asked to agree, a command to rejoice, a cure for anxiety, a list of what to think about, and a man who has learned to be content in plenty and in hunger.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul lists his credentials in 3:4–6 and then calls them loss and rubbish. Why such violent language for things that were genuinely good, and what would be on your version of that list?

2. In 3:9 Paul refuses a righteousness of his own from law and wants the righteousness from God through faith. Talk carefully about what he is rejecting and what he is not rejecting, given that he also says to work out your salvation and to press toward the goal.
3. Philippians 4:6–7 tells anxious people to pray with thanksgiving and promises a peace that guards the heart. How is that different from simply feeling better, and what does that promise actually cover?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the seven items in Paul's résumé in 3:5–6. Mark which ones he inherited and which he earned, and note what that distinction says about religious pride.
2. Read 3:10–14 and write down every verb: know, attain, press, forget, reach forward. What kind of Christian life do those verbs describe, and what do they rule out?
3. Compare Philippians 3:20–21 with 1 Corinthians 15:42–49. Write down what happens to the body of a Christian, when it happens, and who does it.
4. Trace exactly what Paul asks in 4:2–3 about the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche. Who is addressed, what is requested of each party, and what does he say about the two women themselves?
5. Philippians 4:8 names what to think about. Write down what actually occupies your mind on the drive home, then make one specific substitution this week and see what changes.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Isaiah 1–5 • Psalm 74–76 • Luke 11:33–12:21 • Colossians 1:1–2:5

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