

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 66 OF 104

One More Year

Week 66 of 104 · 63% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Isaiah 11-17
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 78
Gospels	Luke 13
General New Testament	1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:16

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

God is patient, and His patience has an edge to it. This week a gardener talks an owner out of cutting down a fruitless tree: give it one more year, and I will dig around it. That sentence hangs over all four readings. Isaiah watches a green shoot come up out of a dead stump, and sings a mocking song over a king who said he would climb above the stars and ended up with worms for a mattress. Asaph tells the whole story of Israel to the children, because their fathers saw the sea split and forgot it by the next campsite. Jesus says that unless you repent you will perish, and weeps over a city that would not be gathered. And a young church in Thessalonica turns from its idols and starts waiting for the Son from heaven.

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 Isaiah 11-17

A Shoot from a Dead Stump

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A shoot comes up out of the stump of Jesse, and the Spirit of the Lord rests on Him; He judges the poor with righteousness, and wolf and lamb lie down together. Chapter 12 is a short song for rescued people. Then the burdens begin. Babylon falls, and a taunt song mocks a king who said he would set his throne above the stars and instead wakes up in the pit. Assyria is broken, Philistia is warned, Moab is wept over, and Damascus becomes a heap.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

- Isaiah 11:1 shows a shoot growing out of a cut-down stump. Why does God give that picture to people who are about to be felled themselves, and what does hope look like when the tree is already down?
- Isaiah 11:6-9 pictures the wolf with the lamb and a child playing over a viper's hole. How is that picture being fulfilled, and what changes if we say it describes the reign of Christ right now rather than a future age?

3. Isaiah 14:4 introduces the famous passage in 14:12–15 as a proverb against the king of Babylon. Read it as the taunt song it is, and talk about what happens to anyone whose life sentence begins with “I will ascend.”

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List what Isaiah 11:2–5 says about the Spirit resting on the Branch and about how He judges. Compare Matthew 3:16–17 and John 3:34.
2. Isaiah 11:10 says the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples and that the Gentiles will seek Him. Read Romans 15:8–12 and write down how Paul uses that verse and what he concludes from it.
3. Trace who is being addressed in Isaiah 14 from verse 4 through verse 22. Write down every detail the passage gives about him, including verses 16 through 20, and say whom the text is describing.
4. Isaiah 13:9–13 speaks of the sun darkened, the stars withholding light, and the heavens shaken. Compare Isaiah 34:4 and Ezekiel 32:7–8 and describe how the prophets use this kind of language.
5. Isaiah 12 is a short song for people God has rescued. Write four lines of your own in that style, naming what God has actually done for you, and say them out loud this week.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 78

Tell the Next Generation

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Asaph calls this a parable and a dark saying, then tells Israel’s story from Egypt to David so the children will not turn out like their fathers. The sea splits, water comes out of a rock, bread falls from the sky, and quail come down like sand. And after every miracle, the same sentence: they sinned yet more, they forgot His works. God is repeatedly compassionate and the wilderness fills with graves. At the end Shiloh is abandoned, Judah is chosen, and a shepherd boy is taken from the sheepfold.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The psalm exists for a stated reason: so that the generation to come would know, and would not be like their fathers (78:5–8). What is a congregation actually supposed to do with that, and how are we doing at it right now?

2. The refrain of this psalm is that they forgot His works. How does a person who has personally watched God act manage to forget it, and what safeguards have you built into your own life?
3. Psalm 78:38–39 says God, full of compassion, forgave them again and again and remembered that they were only flesh. Talk about how this psalm holds together that patience and the fact that a whole generation still died in the wilderness.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the cycle running through the psalm: what God did, what the people did in response, and what God did next. Identify at least four complete rounds of it.
2. List the miracles named in 78:12–16 and 78:23–29. Mark the ones that should have been impossible for an eyewitness to forget.
3. Psalm 78:2 is quoted in Matthew 13:34–35. Read both passages and explain what Matthew is claiming by applying this line to the teaching of Jesus.
4. Compare 78:9–11 about the sons of Ephraim with 78:67–72 about Judah and David. Why does a psalm about the wilderness end with a shepherd boy?
5. Name the specific person in the next generation you are responsible for telling, and this week tell them one story about something God has actually done.

GOSPELS Luke 13

Unless You Repent

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Someone brings Jesus a news story about Galileans killed by Pilate while they were sacrificing, and He refuses to let the crowd conclude that those men were worse sinners. Twice He says the same thing: unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Then a fig tree that has failed three years running is given one more, at the gardener's request. A woman bent double for eighteen years is straightened on a sabbath, a ruler objects, a narrow door is described, a fox is named, and a city is wept over.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus is handed a piece of terrible news and turns it into a call to repent (13:1–5). Why does He refuse to answer the question they were really asking, and what assumption is He dismantling?
2. The fig tree gets one more year because the gardener asks for it (13:6–9). Talk about what that parable says about the patience of God, and about the fact that the extension had a number attached to it.
3. Someone asks whether only a few will be saved, and Jesus answers, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate” (13:23–24). Discuss the difference between curiosity about other people’s salvation and the urgency He places on the man asking.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Jesus does and says in the synagogue in 13:10–17. State the ruler’s objection precisely, and then state Jesus’ answer precisely.
2. Compare the mustard seed and the leaven (13:18–21) with Daniel 2:44 and Acts 2:41–47. Write down what the two parables are claiming about how the kingdom grows.
3. Read 13:24–30 carefully. Write down what the people outside the shut door say and what the master says back to them. What kind of relationship with Him were they claiming?
4. Trace Jesus’ words about Jerusalem in 13:31–35. Note what He says He wanted to do, what He says prevented it, and who is held responsible.
5. If the gardener were pleading for one more year over your life, what would need to be growing by next spring? Name one thing you will change this week so that it is.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT 1 Thessalonians 1:1–2:16

Turned from Idols

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul remembers a young church by three things: work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope. The gospel came not in word only but in power, and they became imitators of Paul and examples to everyone else, until the word rang out so loudly that Paul no longer had to say anything. They turned to God from idols, to serve the living God

and to wait for His Son from heaven. Then Paul defends his conduct among them: no flattery, no greed, no pretense, gentle as a nursing mother.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul pairs faith with work, love with labor, and hope with patience (1:3). Talk about what each of those pairings means in practice, and which of the three is thinnest in you right now.
2. 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 describes a conversion in one sentence: they turned, to serve, to wait. Walk through those three parts and ask what is missing from a Christian life when any one of them drops out.
3. In 2:1–12 Paul describes exactly how he conducted himself among them. Which single detail of that description would most change this congregation if we actually took it seriously?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Paul says the Thessalonians did and became in chapter 1. Then read Acts 17:1–10 and estimate how long they had been Christians when he wrote it.
2. 1 Thessalonians 1:5 says the gospel came in word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance. Compare Mark 16:20 and Hebrews 2:3–4, and describe how the word was confirmed when it was first preached.
3. Trace the denials in 2:3–6: not from error, not from uncleanness, not in deceit, not pleasing men, not flattering words, not a cloak for covetousness, not seeking glory from men. What was Paul evidently being accused of, and how does he answer it?
4. Paul uses two family pictures in 2:7 and 2:11, a nursing mother and a father exhorting his children. Compare the two, and name a person who has been each of those to you.
5. 1 Thessalonians 1:8 says the word of the Lord sounded out from them. Name one person who would hear the gospel if it sounded out from you, and take the first step this month.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Isaiah 18–26 · Psalm 79–80 · Luke 14 · 1 Thessalonians 2:17–4:18

More studies available on ChurchOfChristBibleStudies.com