

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 69 OF 104

Trust and Treasure

Week 69 of 104 • 66% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Isaiah 33-38
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 84-85
Gospels	Luke 16
General New Testament	2 Thessalonians 1-3

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

This week you will watch two men hold something in their hands. One is a king with a threatening letter from an empire, and he carries it up to the house of the Lord and spreads it open on the floor in front of God. The other is a rich man in one of Jesus' stories, holding everything he could want and stepping over a beggar to get to dinner. Between them stands a pilgrim song about a sparrow that found a nest near God's altar, and a letter from Paul to Christians under real pressure telling them to stand fast and hold on. Four readings, one question: when the thing you are holding is all you have, whose hands do you put it in?

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 33-38

The Letter Spread Before God

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Isaiah pronounces one more woe on a plunderer who will himself be plundered, asks who can live with a devouring fire, and describes judgment on the nations. Then the desert blooms and the ransomed come home on a road called the Way of Holiness. From chapter 36 the poetry stops and history begins: an Assyrian officer shouting insults at the wall of Jerusalem, Hezekiah in sackcloth, a letter spread out before God, an angel in the night, and a king given fifteen more years.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

- Isaiah 36:4-20 is a masterclass in intimidation. Which of the Assyrian officer's arguments would be hardest for you to hear shouted from the wall, and how does Hezekiah's prayer in 37:14-20 answer it?
- Hezekiah took the letter up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before God. What would it look like, concretely, for you to do that with the thing currently keeping you awake at two in the morning?
- Isaiah 33:14 asks who among us can dwell with devouring fire, and verses 15 and 16 give the answer. How does that answer compare with what we usually assume makes a person safe with God?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Isaiah 35 describes a road called the Way of Holiness. List everything the chapter says about the road and about who walks on it, then set it beside John 14:6 and Hebrews 10:19–22.
2. Compare Isaiah 36–37 with 2 Kings 18–19. Note where the wording matches almost exactly, and consider why God preserved this account in both a historical book and a prophetic one.
3. Trace Hezekiah's prayer in 37:14–20. How does he begin, what does he actually ask for, and what reason does he give God for answering him?
4. Read Hezekiah's written psalm in Isaiah 38:9–20. What does he say he learned in the sickroom that he had not learned on the throne?
5. Name the specific threat that frightens you most right now. Write it on a card this week, spread it open in prayer the way Hezekiah did, and at the end of the week write down what changed in you.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 84–85

A Day in Your Courts

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Psalm 84 is the song of someone far from the temple and aching to get back. He envies the sparrow that built a nest near God's altar, he blesses the pilgrims whose road passes through a dry valley that turns into springs, and he says one day in God's courts beats a thousand anywhere else. Psalm 85 is a congregation praying after God has already forgiven them once, asking Him to do it again, and hearing the answer: mercy and truth have met together.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 84:10 says a day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. Be honest with each other: what has to be true of a person before that line is a description of him rather than a sentiment he admires?
2. The pilgrims pass through the Valley of Baca and it becomes a spring (84:6). Where have you watched someone's hard stretch of road turn into a place where other people found water?
3. Psalm 85:10 pictures mercy and truth meeting, righteousness and peace kissing. How does a congregation hold mercy and truth together in the same room without quietly surrendering one of them?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Psalm 84 says about the people who dwell in God's house or travel toward it. Which of those descriptions do you most want to be true of you a year from now?
2. This psalm is by the sons of Korah. Read Numbers 16:31–33 and 26:9–11, then read Psalm 84:10 again. What is remarkable about Korah's descendants singing about being doorkeepers?
3. Map the movement of Psalm 85: what God has already done (vv. 1–3), what is asked (vv. 4–7), and what the psalmist hears God say (vv. 8–13). Where does the mood turn?
4. Set Psalm 84:11 beside James 1:17 and Romans 8:28. What is being claimed about God's character, and what qualifying phrase in Psalm 84:11 keeps it from becoming a promise of comfort?
5. Psalm 84:5 blesses the man whose heart is set on the highway to Zion. Name one habit that would let you arrive at Sunday's assembly prepared rather than merely present, and begin it this week.

GOSPELS Luke 16

The Steward and the Rich Man

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A manager about to be fired quickly makes friends by slashing what his master's debtors owe, and his master, of all people, admires his foresight. Jesus draws the lesson: use money now for what lasts, because no one can serve two masters. The Pharisees, who loved money, sneer at Him. Then Jesus tells of a rich man in purple and fine linen, a beggar named Lazarus at his gate, and what each of them found on the other side of death.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The master commends the unjust steward for acting shrewdly, not for stealing. What exactly is Jesus asking His disciples to imitate in 16:8–9, and what is He plainly not asking them to imitate?
2. Jesus says no servant can serve two masters (16:13). He does not say should not; He says cannot. Where does that tug of war actually show up in an ordinary week for people like us?
3. In 16:27–31 Abraham says that people who will not hear Moses and the prophets will not be persuaded even by a resurrection. Why would that be true, and what does it settle about how much we should expect a dramatic sign or experience to accomplish?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything the account in 16:19–31 actually says about the condition of the dead. Then, on a separate line, list the questions it does not answer. Hold the line between the two strictly.
2. Compare Luke 16:18 with Matthew 19:3–9. What does Jesus name as the single exception, and why might He raise the subject of marriage in the middle of a chapter about money?
3. Read 1 Timothy 6:17–19 beside Luke 16:9. How does Paul tell the rich to use what they have, and what does he say such use lays up for them?
4. Trace the argument of 16:10–12. Identify what Jesus calls “that which is least,” what He calls “true riches,” and what belongs to “another man.”
5. Lazarus lay at the gate, and the rich man walked past him every day without ever being cruel to him. Who is at your gate? Name him, and do one specific thing for him before this week ends.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT 2 Thessalonians 1–3

Stand Fast and Hold On

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul writes again to a church under pressure. He thanks God that their faith is growing under persecution, and he tells them the Lord will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire. Then he corrects a rumor that the day of the Lord had already come, describing a falling away and a man of sin who is being restrained for now. He closes by asking for prayer, warning against members who will not work, and telling the church how to handle them.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul tells persecuted Christians that their endurance is evidence of God’s righteous judgment (1:4–7). How does that reframe what they were suffering, and what comfort does it carefully not offer them?
2. Second Thessalonians 2 has fueled centuries of speculation. Paul reminds the readers that he told them these things in person and that they already knew what restrained the man of sin. What can we say responsibly from this text, and what should we refuse to say?

3. Paul devotes the end of the letter to members who would not work and had become busybodies (3:6–15). Why does he treat idleness as a matter for congregational action, and how does verse 15 govern the way it must be done?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List what 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10 says about the Lord's return: who comes with Him, in what manner, for whose benefit, and on what basis the judgment falls.
2. Second Thessalonians 2:13–14 says God chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, and adds that He called you by our gospel. Read 2:10 and Romans 10:17, then explain how a person comes to be among the chosen.
3. Trace everything chapter 2 says about the man of sin: what he does, where he sits, what is restraining him, how he works, and what finally happens to him.
4. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:15 with 1 Corinthians 11:2 and 2 Timothy 2:2. What kind of tradition is Paul telling them to hold, and how is it different from the traditions Jesus condemned in Mark 7:6–9?
5. Paul says not to grow weary in doing good (3:13). Name the good work you are closest to quitting, and decide right now what would keep you at it for one more month.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Isaiah 39–43 · Psalm 86–88 · Luke 17 · 1 Timothy 1–2

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