

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 77 OF 104

Hearts Under Pressure

Week 77 of 104 • 74% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Jeremiah 16-22
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 104
Gospels	Luke 22:31-71
General New Testament	Hebrews 1-3

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Squeeze anything hard enough and you find out what is inside it. That is what this week does. Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful above all things and then proves it by showing us kings, priests, and crowds who all believed their own press. He also shows us his own heart, cursing the day he was born on one page and unable to keep quiet on the next because God's word burns in his bones. A psalm looks at a world full of springs and lions and bread and says the only fitting response is to bless the Lord. Peter warms his hands at a fire and hears himself say three times that he never knew the man. And Hebrews says it plainly: take heed, brothers, that none of you has an unbelieving heart.

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 Jeremiah 16-22

Fire Shut Up in the Bones

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

God tells Jeremiah not to marry or attend funerals, because the coming judgment will leave no one to bury the dead. Then come two of the most quoted passages in the prophets: the man who trusts in flesh is a shrub in the desert, the man who trusts in the Lord is a tree by water, and the heart is deceitful above all. Jeremiah watches a potter rework a spoiled lump, smashes a clay flask, and spends a night in the stocks.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

- Jeremiah 17:5-8 sets a desert shrub beside a tree planted by the water. Describe what each one looks like in a real life today, and what makes the difference between them so hard to see in good weather.
- Jeremiah 17:9 says the heart is deceitful above all things. Talk about the ways we actually deceive ourselves, and be careful to say what this verse is claiming and what it is not.

3. At the potter's house God says He will relent from planned judgment if a nation repents, and relent from promised good if it turns to evil (18:7–10). How should that shape the way we pray and the way we think about a situation that looks settled?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Read Jeremiah 16:1–9 and list what God forbids the prophet to do. What is God trying to say to Judah through a man's empty house?
2. Trace the swings in Jeremiah 20:7–18, verse by verse. How many times does he move between praise and despair, and where does the passage leave him?
3. Jeremiah 20:9 says God's word was like a fire shut up in his bones so that he could not hold it in. Compare Acts 4:19–20 and 1 Corinthians 9:16. What do these three men have in common?
4. Read Jeremiah 22:1–5 and 22:13–17. List what God required of a king, and pay close attention to the question at the end of verse 16.
5. Name one place where you have been leaning on an arm of flesh: a person, a paycheck, an insurance policy, a reputation. What is one specific step this week that would move you from the shrub to the tree?

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 104

The Creator Keeps House

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

This psalm walks you through a world and shows you God running it. He wraps Himself in light, stretches out the heavens like a tent, sets the mountains and the boundaries of the sea, sends springs into the valleys so the wild donkeys can drink, grows grass for cattle and bread for man, plants trees where storks nest, feeds the young lions at night and sends men to work in the morning. Then it says every living thing waits on Him for food.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 104 is not only about God making the world but about God keeping it running (104:27–30). How would believing that change an ordinary Monday at work?
2. In this psalm human beings get a single verse, tucked between lions and the sea (104:23). Why is it healthy for us to see ourselves that way, and what does it protect us from?

3. The psalm ends with the writer saying his meditation of God will be sweet and that he will sing as long as he has any being (104:33–34). Describe honestly what actually fills your thoughts in an unoccupied ten minutes.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Read Psalm 104 next to Genesis 1 and note how closely the psalm follows the order of the creation days. Where does it match, and where does it move freely?
2. List every creature named in this psalm and what God is said to provide for each. What does the list say about how detailed God's care is?
3. Psalm 104:29–30 says that when God takes away their breath they die, and when He sends His Spirit they are created. Compare Job 34:14–15 and Acts 17:25–28. What claim are these passages making about every breath you take?
4. The psalm's last verse asks that sinners be consumed from the earth. Why would a hymn about hummingbirds and mountain goats end that way, and how should a Christian pray about evil (Romans 12:19; Revelation 6:10)?
5. Take a twenty minute walk this week with no phone and name ten things God made and sustains. Write them down afterward, and tell someone in your household what you saw.

GOSPELS Luke 22:31–71

Sifted Like Wheat

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Jesus tells Peter that Satan has asked to sift him like wheat, that He has prayed for him, and that when he has turned back he must strengthen his brothers. Peter says he is ready for prison and death. Then Jesus goes out to the Mount of Olives and prays until His sweat falls like drops of blood, while the disciples sleep. Judas arrives with a kiss. And in a courtyard, warming himself at a fire, Peter says three times that he does not know Him.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus tells Peter that Satan asked for him, that He has prayed for him, and that when he has returned he should strengthen his brothers (22:31–32). What does this passage teach about failure, restoration, and what a restored person owes the church?
2. In Gethsemane Jesus prays that the cup be removed if the Father is willing, and then says nevertheless not My will but Yours (22:42). What has it cost you to pray that second sentence, and what makes it so hard?
3. Luke alone records that the Lord turned and looked at Peter (22:61). What do you think was in that look, and why did it break him when the rooster alone had not?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace Peter's fall backward from the third denial to his boast in 22:33. List every step, including where he was standing and who he was standing with.
2. Read 22:36–38 about the two swords beside 22:49–51, John 18:36, and Matthew 26:52. What was Jesus teaching, and what was He clearly not authorizing?
3. Compare Luke 22:41–44 with Hebrews 5:7–9. What does the writer of Hebrews say Jesus learned, and how could a sinless Son learn anything?
4. In 22:69 Jesus tells the council that from now on the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of the power of God. Read Psalm 110:1 and Acts 7:55–56. What was He claiming, and did it come true?
5. Peter denied Jesus where it was warm and crowded and nobody expected a confession. Name the specific room or conversation this week where you are most likely to go quiet, and decide now what you will say.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT Hebrews 1–3

God Has Spoken by His Son

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Hebrews opens without a greeting and goes straight to the point: God spoke in many ways through the prophets, and in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, who made the worlds and sits at His right hand. Seven Old Testament quotations follow, all arguing that the Son is far above angels. Then comes the first

warning: how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Chapter 2 explains why He took flesh, and chapter 3 sets Him above Moses.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Hebrews 1:1–3 and 1:8 make extraordinary claims about the Son. Work through them phrase by phrase and state what the writer is saying about who Jesus is.
2. Hebrews 2:3–4 says the salvation first spoken by the Lord was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, with God bearing witness through signs, wonders, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Discuss what those miracles were for, and what follows once the confirming work is finished.
3. Hebrews 3:12–14 warns against an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God and says to exhort one another daily. Who is doing that for you right now, and who have you taken responsibility for?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Find the seven Old Testament quotations in Hebrews 1:5–13. Write down what each one proves about the Son over against angels.
2. List the reasons Hebrews 2:9–18 gives for why the Son had to share in flesh and blood. How many of them concern us directly?
3. Read Hebrews 2:3–4 with Mark 16:20 and 1 Corinthians 13:8–10. What purpose is assigned to miraculous signs, and what does that imply about their duration?
4. Hebrews 3:1–6 compares Moses and Christ using the picture of a house. Trace the comparison, and note carefully the difference between a servant in a house and a son over it.
5. Hebrews 3:13 says to exhort one another daily, while it is called today. Name one brother or sister you will contact each week for the next month, and decide today what day of the week you will do it.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Jeremiah 23–27 · Psalm 105 · Luke 23:1–43 · Hebrews 4:1–6:12

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