

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 86 OF 104

When Glory Departs

Week 86 of 104 • 83% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Ezekiel 6-11
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 119:57-96
Gospels	John 5:18-47
General New Testament	1 Peter 1:1-2:12

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

You can lose something precious so gradually that nobody notices the day it left. This week Ezekiel is carried in a vision into the temple and shown what the worshipers had quietly made of God's house, and then he watches the glory of God move, slowly and reluctantly, toward the door. The psalmist is awake at midnight in a season of trouble and finds that the one thing holding him is a word settled forever in heaven. Jesus stands before men who searched the Scriptures every week of their lives and still would not come to Him. And Peter tells scattered Christians they have been born again by a living word and built into a house God actually inhabits. Where does God's presence rest? Never where we assume.

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 Ezekiel 6-11

The Glory Leaves the Temple

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Ezekiel preaches to the mountains of Israel and announces that the end has come. Then the hand of God lifts him in a vision to Jerusalem, and he is walked through the temple room by room: an idol at the gate, seventy elders with censers in a dark chamber, women weeping for Tammuz, men bowing east to the sun. Judgment falls on the city, and the glory of the Lord rises from the cherubim, pauses at the threshold, moves to the east gate, and finally leaves over the mountain.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Ezekiel 8 walks the prophet through four scenes of idolatry, each one further inside God's house than the last. Describe what he is shown at each stop, and talk about how worship goes wrong so quietly that the worshipers themselves never notice.

2. In Ezekiel 9:4 a mark is set on the foreheads of the people who sigh and cry over the abominations done in the city. What is God commending in those people, and what would that kind of grief look like in a Christian this year?
3. The glory of God moves out of the temple in stages across chapters 10 and 11, never all at once. Why do you think the departure is described so slowly, and where have you seen God show that same patience with you?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the movement of the glory of the Lord through 8:4, 9:3, 10:4, 10:18–19, and 11:22–23. Write down where it rests at each point and how far it has gone by the end.
2. Ezekiel 11:16 says that God Himself became a little sanctuary to the exiles in the countries where they had gone. Set that beside what Jesus tells the woman in John 4:21–24 about where real worship happens.
3. List the slogans the leaders of Jerusalem are quoting in 8:12, 11:3, and 11:15. Underneath each one, write the thing it actually says about God.
4. Read Ezekiel 11:19–20 alongside Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 8:10. What is God promising to do that the people had proved they could not do for themselves?
5. Ezekiel 9 singles out people who still grieved over sin instead of growing used to it. Name one sin you have quietly stopped grieving over, and decide before Sunday what you are going to do about it.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 119:57–96

A Portion Better Than Gold

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Five stanzas, forty verses, one man in trouble. He calls the Lord his portion, gets up at midnight to give thanks, and says something almost nobody says out loud: that it was good for him to be afflicted. Proud men have forged lies against him and his eyes fail from looking for God's promise. Then the ground shifts under the whole psalm at verse 89, where he lifts his eyes off his own situation and says that God's word is settled forever in heaven.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Verse 71 says it is good that the psalmist was afflicted. Nobody says that in the middle of the trouble. What had to happen inside this man before he could write that line, and where would you honestly place yourself in that process right now?
2. Read 119:81–88 out loud as a class. Describe the kind of week this man is having, and then notice how he prays. What is missing from his prayer that you might have expected to find?
3. Verse 89 says God’s word is settled forever in heaven, and verse 96 says every other perfection has a limit. Talk about what changes on an ordinary Monday morning if you actually believe verse 89.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Work through verses 57 to 96 and list every different term the psalmist uses for God’s revelation. Why do you think he keeps reaching for another word instead of repeating one?
2. Verse 57 calls the Lord “my portion.” Look up Numbers 18:20 and Lamentations 3:24, and explain what a Levite would have heard in that phrase.
3. Compare verse 67, verse 71, and verse 75. Trace the three different things this man says his affliction accomplished.
4. Verse 92 says he would have perished in his affliction if God’s law had not been his delight. Read Romans 15:4 and describe what Scripture is designed to do for a suffering Christian.
5. Choose an actual time this week, before the week starts, when you will read one stanza of this psalm slowly and out loud. Write the time down now, and tell one person you are going to do it.

GOSPELS John 5:18–47

Four Witnesses to the Son

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A healing on the Sabbath has turned into something far larger. The leaders understand that Jesus has called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God, and instead of softening the claim Jesus expands it. He does what the Father does, gives life as the Father does, and has been given all judgment. Then He calls His witnesses:

John the Baptist, the works He is doing, the Father Himself, and the Scriptures that these men search every day of their lives.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. In 5:18 the leaders understand exactly what Jesus has claimed, and He does not correct them. Read verses 19 through 23 and describe the relationship He lays out with the Father. According to verse 23, what is at stake in how a person honors the Son?
2. Jesus names four witnesses in verses 31 through 47. Identify them as a class, and then talk about why God stacks up evidence this way instead of simply demanding that people believe.
3. Verse 39 describes people who searched the Scriptures diligently and still would not come to Christ. Where does Bible study go wrong like that, and what keeps yours from ending in the same place?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Write out the four witnesses Jesus calls in 5:32–47, with the verse where each one appears, and note which of them He says is greater than John.
2. Compare 5:24 with 5:28–29. One speaks of the dead hearing His voice now and one of all in the graves hearing it later. Explain the difference in your own words.
3. Verse 44 says they could not believe because they received honor from one another. Read John 12:42–43 and name what that trade actually cost those men.
4. Jesus says in 5:46 that Moses wrote of Him. Find at least two places in the first five books where that is so, beginning with Genesis 3:15 and Deuteronomy 18:15–19.
5. Answer this one on paper and keep it: is there something God's word has told you about your own life that you have now read past more than once? Name it, and do something about it before this week is out.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Peter writes to Christians scattered across five Roman provinces, people who are strangers where they live and are beginning to suffer for it. He opens not with advice but with facts: a new birth, a living hope, an inheritance kept in heaven, a faith being tested like gold in fire. He calls them to holiness, reminds them what their redemption cost, and then shows them what they have become, living stones in a house God inhabits, a people who once were not a people.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Peter is writing to people under pressure, and his first move is to tell them who they already are (1:1-5). List what he says is true of them before he asks anything of them. Why begin there instead of with instructions?
2. According to 1:22-25, how does a person come to be born again? Work carefully through what Peter says the word of God does, and talk about what that means for the place of Scripture in anyone's conversion.
3. In 2:9 Peter hands the church every title God once gave Israel at Sinai. Read Exodus 19:5-6 beside it. What practical difference should it make on an ordinary Tuesday that you belong to a royal priesthood?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything in 1:3-5 that God has already done, and mark which of those things depends on your performance.
2. 1:18-19 sets silver and gold against the precious blood of Christ. Read Isaiah 53:7 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, then write out what redemption cost and what it purchased.
3. Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 in 1:24-25. Trace his argument: why does the permanence of God's word matter so much to people whose own lives feel temporary?
4. In 2:4-8 Christ is a living stone, precious to some and a stumbling stone to others. Look up Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16, and explain how one stone can be both.
5. 1:22 calls for fervent love from a pure heart. Pick the member of your congregation you find hardest to love, and do one specific, inconvenient thing for that person before next Sunday.