

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 93 OF 104

Known and Kept

Week 93 of 104 • 89% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Ezekiel 41–45
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 138–140
Gospels	John 10
General New Testament	2 John

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

This week is full of doors. Ezekiel watches the glory of God come back into the house through the east gate, and then watches that gate shut behind Him for good. David discovers that there is no door anywhere in the universe he could close on God, not in heaven, not in the grave, not in the dark. Jesus stands in Solomon's porch in winter and says that He Himself is the door of the sheep, and that His sheep know His voice the way a flock knows its own shepherd on a crowded hillside. Then John writes thirteen verses to a woman about which teachers she must not let past her front door. Doors opened, doors shut, and a God who knows exactly who belongs to 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 Ezekiel 41–45

The Glory Returns

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A man with a measuring rod walks Ezekiel through the sanctuary, the most holy place, the side chambers, the carved cherubim and palm trees, and the priests' rooms. Then the vision lifts: the glory of the Lord comes from the east, the sound of it like many waters, and fills the house He had abandoned. The altar is measured and consecrated, the east gate is shut behind the glory, the sons of Zadok are set apart to serve, and land is assigned for the sanctuary, the priests, and the prince.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. In Ezekiel 43:1–5 the glory of God returns by the same east gate through which it departed in chapter 10. Why does the vision make so much of that arrival, and what would it have meant to people who had watched God leave?

2. The vision includes an altar, sin offerings, and a working priesthood, and yet Hebrews 10:11–18 says Christ's one sacrifice ended those offerings for good. How should we read a vision whose details could never be reinstated without undoing the cross?
3. Ezekiel 44:23 makes it the priests' job to teach people the difference between the holy and the common. Where have those lines blurred in your own week, and what would it actually take to mark them again?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the movement of the glory of the Lord through Ezekiel 8:4, 9:3, 10:4, 10:18–19, 11:22–23, and 43:1–5. Write out the shape of that whole story in three sentences.
2. Read Ezekiel 43:10–11, where God states why Israel is being shown this house. Which effect was the vision supposed to have on the people who heard it described?
3. Set Ezekiel 43:7 beside 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 2:19–22. Where does God say He now dwells, and what is being built out of what materials?
4. Ezekiel 45:9–12 interrupts sanctuary measurements with honest scales and fair weights. Why would a vision about worship stop to talk about a man's business practices?
5. The sons of Zadok are honored because they kept charge of the sanctuary when everyone else drifted (44:15). Name one responsibility in the Lord's church you have quietly let slide, and take it back up before Sunday.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 138–140

Searched and Known

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Psalm 138 is thanksgiving offered with the whole heart, praising God for answering, for magnifying His word, and for finishing what He begins in a person. Psalm 139 is the great meditation on being fully known: God knows your sitting and rising, there is nowhere you could go to escape Him, He formed you in secret, and the psalm ends by asking Him to search and expose whatever is wrong. Psalm 140 is a cry for rescue from violent men whose tongues are sharpened like a serpent's.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 139:1–6 says God knows when you sit down and stand up and knows your words before you say them. Is that comforting to you, unsettling, or both, and what does your honest answer reveal?
2. Read Psalm 139:13–16 aloud, slowly. How does David describe God's involvement with a life before birth, and what bearing does that have on how we regard the unborn?
3. Psalm 139 prays fiercely against God's enemies and then immediately asks God to search the psalmist's own heart (139:19–24). Why might those two prayers belong side by side, and what happens when a person prays only the first one?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Psalm 139 falls into four movements (verses 1–6, 7–12, 13–18, and 19–24). Give each movement a title of your own, and note how the psalm builds from one to the next.
2. Psalm 138:2 says God has magnified His word above all His name. Compare Isaiah 55:10–11 and John 12:48, and write down the weight Scripture puts on God's spoken word.
3. Read Psalm 139:7–12 beside Jonah 1:3 and Jeremiah 23:23–24. Where did Jonah learn the same truth, and why did it feel so different to him than it does to David?
4. Trace every reference to speech and tongues in Psalm 140, then read James 3:5–10. Which things do the two passages agree on about the damage words can do?
5. Pray Psalm 139:23–24 slowly this week and write down the one wicked way God shows you. Then name the first concrete step out of it and take that step before the week ends.

GOSPELS John 10

One Flock, One Shepherd

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Jesus draws a picture every listener understood: a sheepfold, a door, a shepherd whose voice the sheep recognize, and thieves who come over the wall. He says He is the door, then the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, and that He has other sheep not of this fold who will become one flock with one shepherd.

Months later, at the Feast of Dedication in winter, the argument reaches its point: He tells them that He and the Father are one, and they pick up stones.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus calls Himself both the door of the sheep and the good shepherd (10:7, 11). What do the two pictures each say about how a person comes to God, and why does He need both of them?
2. In John 10:16 Jesus speaks of other sheep and promises one flock with one shepherd. Who are those other sheep, and what does that verse say to a religious world full of competing bodies?
3. Jesus says His sheep hear His voice and follow Him and will not follow a stranger (10:4–5, 27). How does a person actually learn to tell his Shepherd's voice from a stranger's, and what habit does that require of you this week?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything the good shepherd does for the sheep in John 10:1–18, and everything the thief and the hireling do. Where exactly is the dividing line between them?
2. Read Ezekiel 34:1–16, then read John 10:11–14 again. Which claim about Himself is Jesus making by taking up this particular image?
3. John 10:17–18 says no one takes His life from Him but He lays it down of Himself. How should that statement change the way you read the arrest, the trial, and the cross?
4. Trace the reasons Jesus gives in 10:25–38 for why they ought to believe Him. Which reason does He say should persuade even a man unwilling to trust His words?
5. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Name one member of the congregation for whom you will spend something real this week, time, money, or comfort, with no expectation of anything in return.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Thirteen verses, written by the elder to a lady and her children, and every paragraph binds truth and love together. He rejoices to find her children walking in truth, repeats the old commandment that we love one another, and then turns sharp: deceivers have gone out who will not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. Watch yourselves, he says, that you do not lose what you worked for. Anyone who runs ahead and abandons the doctrine of Christ is not to be received into the house or greeted.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Truth and love are laced through every paragraph of this short letter. Where have you watched a congregation emphasize one at the expense of the other, and what came of it?
2. Verses 10 and 11 forbid receiving a false teacher into the house or greeting him. Which specific thing is John forbidding, and which things is he not forbidding?
3. Verse 8 warns that a person can lose the things he worked for. Take that warning seriously for a moment: what would losing it look like in a life like yours, and what actually guards against it?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Count how many times the words truth and love appear in these thirteen verses, and note every place John ties one of them to the other.
2. Verse 7 describes deceivers who will not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. Read 1 John 4:2–3 and John 1:14, and explain why the incarnation is the one line John will not let anyone cross.
3. Verse 9 warns about going beyond the doctrine of Christ. Read Galatians 1:6–9 and Revelation 22:18–19, and write out the consistent warning these passages give about adding to what was delivered.
4. Who is the elect lady? Note the two main possibilities, a Christian woman with her family or a congregation with its members, and give the evidence for each from the letter itself.
5. John says his joy is full when he finds children walking in truth. Write a short note this week to someone whose faithfulness has strengthened you, and tell them specifically what you have watched them do.