

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 94 OF 104

Cut Without Hands

Week 94 of 104 • 90% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Ezekiel 46–48; Daniel 1–2
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 141–143
Gospels	John 11:1–27
General New Testament	3 John–Jude

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Watch what nobody builds this week. A trickle of water slips out from under a doorway, and a mile later it is a river no man can wade. A stone nobody quarried comes loose from a mountain, smashes an empire made of gold and iron, and grows until it fills the whole earth. A teenage captive in a Babylonian palace decides what he will not eat before anyone offers him anything. A man four days in a tomb hears his name called. And Jude tells frightened Christians to contend for a faith that was handed over once, finished, needing no additions from anyone. Human hands build things that fall. This week is about what God builds, and how long it lasts.

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 46–48; Daniel 1–2**

The River and the Stone

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Ezekiel’s vision closes with offerings, then with water running out from under the temple threshold, ankle deep, then knee deep, then too deep to cross, healing everything it touches. The land is divided, and the city receives a new name: The Lord Is There. Then Daniel opens in a Babylonian palace, where four young captives refuse the king’s food and are found ten times better than everyone else, and where a terrifying dream about a statue of four metals is broken by a stone cut without hands.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Ezekiel 47:1–12 begins with water trickling under a threshold and ends with a river nobody can cross. Follow the man with the measuring line through the four measurements, and discuss what this picture claims about whatever flows out from where God dwells.
2. Daniel 2:44 says God would set up a kingdom “in the days of these kings” that would never be destroyed. Work out from the dream itself which kings are in view, and discuss what that timing settles and what it rules out.

3. Daniel 1:8 says he purposed in his heart before the king's food was ever set in front of him. Which decision are you currently making in the moment, over and over, that you should have settled once in advance?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the four metals of Daniel 2:31–45 and the kingdoms they represent. Use Daniel 2:37–38, 5:28, and 8:20–21 to identify the first three by name from Scripture rather than from a chart.
2. Read Daniel 2:44 alongside Mark 9:1, Acts 2:1–4, and Colossians 1:13. When was the kingdom established, where is its King now, and who is already in it?
3. Ezekiel 48:35 gives the city a name: The Lord Is There. Compare Revelation 21:3 and 22:1–2, and list the images the two visions have in common.
4. List everything that happens to what the river touches in Ezekiel 47:7–12. Why does it matter that even the salt sea is healed and that the leaves do not wither?
5. Daniel's resolve cost him the easy path in a place where nobody back home would ever have known. Name one small compromise that everyone around you accepts, and decide now, in advance, what you will do the next time it is offered.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 141–143

Prayers Under Pressure

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Three prayers from a man with enemies close by. In Psalm 141 David asks God to guard his mouth and keep his heart from evil, and calls the rebuke of a righteous man a kindness. Psalm 142 is labeled a prayer from the cave, and it contains the loneliest line in the Psalter: no one cares for my soul. Psalm 143 pleads with God not to enter into judgment with him, because no one living is righteous before Him, and asks to hear God's lovingkindness in the morning.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 141:3 asks God to set a guard over the door of his lips. Why would a man pray about his speech rather than simply resolve to be more careful, and where would that prayer have changed your last seven days?

2. Psalm 141:5 calls the striking of a righteous man a kindness and oil on the head. Who has standing to do that in your life, and what happened the last time somebody actually used it?
3. Psalm 143:2 asks God not to bring His servant into judgment, since no one living is righteous in His sight. How does an honest man pray that and still ask God to vindicate him, and what does that combination teach us about prayer?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. The title of Psalm 142 places David in a cave. Read 1 Samuel 22:1–2 and 24:1–7, and note carefully what David had, and what he did not have, when he prayed this.
2. List every request David makes in Psalm 143. Count how many concern his circumstances and how many concern his own heart, and see which list is longer.
3. Psalm 143:2 says no one living is righteous before God. Read Romans 3:20–24, and write down how Paul answers the exact problem David names.
4. Psalm 141:2 asks that prayer rise like incense and lifted hands be as the evening sacrifice. Read Revelation 5:8 and Hebrews 13:15, and describe what sacrifice has become for a Christian.
5. Psalm 143:8 asks to hear God’s lovingkindness in the morning. Set your alarm ten minutes early for the next six days, read one psalm before anything else touches your eyes, and write one sentence each day about what you heard.

GOSPELS John 11:1–27

I Am the Resurrection

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A message reaches Jesus that His friend is sick, and Jesus stays where He is for two more days. When He finally proposes going back to Judea, the disciples remind Him that the last visit nearly ended in stoning, and Thomas grimly volunteers to die with Him. By the time they arrive, Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. Martha comes out to meet Him with the sentence she has clearly been rehearsing, and Jesus answers her with the greatest claim He has made yet.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus waits two full days after hearing Lazarus is sick. Verse 5 says He loved the family, and verse 6 begins with the word “so.” How do you hold love and delay together, and where have you had to hold them together yourself?
2. Martha states her faith twice, in verses 22 and 24, and both times Jesus presses past it. Which difference is He driving at between believing a doctrine about resurrection and believing in a Person, and why will He not settle for the first?
3. Thomas says, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him” (11:16). Is that faith, fatalism, or some of both, and what would loyalty like that actually cost in a life like yours?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Jesus says about the purpose of this sickness in 11:4 and 11:15. Who does He say the delay and the outcome are for?
2. Compare what Martha says in 11:21 with what Mary says in 11:32. Which words are identical, and what does that tell you the two sisters had been saying to each other all week?
3. Read John 11:25–26 alongside John 5:28–29 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. Which promise is Jesus making to Martha, and which promises is He not making?
4. Trace what the disciples are worried about in 11:8–16 and how Jesus answers them. Why would John include their fear in the middle of a chapter about life?
5. Martha’s confession in 11:27 is the exact confession John wrote his whole Gospel to produce (John 20:31). Say it out loud to God this week, then name one specific area of your life that has not yet caught up with it.

Once for All Delivered

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Third John is a note about three men: Gaius, whose hospitality to traveling preachers John praises; Diotrephes, who loves to be first, talks maliciously about John, and throws out anyone who receives the brethren; and Demetrius, who has a good report from everyone. Jude sets out to write about our common salvation and finds

he must write something harder. Certain men have slipped in. He piles up examples of judgment, describes the men in blistering images, and then tells Christians how to keep themselves and how to rescue others.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Third John gives us three men in fourteen verses. Describe Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius from what John actually says, and be honest about which of the three your own reputation currently resembles.
2. Jude says the faith was “once for all delivered to the saints.” Which claims about God’s word does that phrase make, and what does it rule out for anyone who says God is still revealing new things?
3. Jude 22–23 says to have compassion on some and to save others with fear, snatching them out of the fire. How do you tell which approach the person in front of you needs, and what makes that judgment so difficult?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything 3 John says about Diotrephes and everything he does. Which one of his faults appears to be the root of all the others?
2. Set 3 John 5–8 beside 2 John 10–11 from last week. Whom are Christians told to receive, whom are they told not to receive, and what exactly makes the difference?
3. Jude 5–7 gives three examples of judgment. Read Numbers 14:26–35, 2 Peter 2:4, and Genesis 19:24–25, and state in one sentence the point Jude draws from all three together.
4. Jude 20–21 lists four things a Christian does to keep himself in the love of God. Write them out, and mark honestly which ones you are actually doing right now.
5. Jude says to snatch some out of the fire. Name one person you know who is drifting away from the Lord, decide when you will contact him this week, and write down the first sentence you intend to say.

NEXT WEEK’S READING: Daniel 3–6 · Psalm 144–146 · John 11:28–12:8 · Revelation 1–2

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