

# Through the Bible in 24 Months



## WEEK 101 OF 104

*What the Lord Requires*

Week 101 of 104 · 97% of the way through the Bible

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| General Old Testament | Micah 1-7; Nahum 1-3 |
| Wisdom Literature     | Ecclesiastes 9-12    |
| Gospels               | John 17:1-18:24      |
| General New Testament | Revelation 14-16     |

### THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Somewhere in your week there is a gap between what you say you believe and what you actually do with your money, your temper, and your Monday morning. All four readings stand in that gap. Micah listens to a worshiper offering thousands of rams and answers him in one sentence about justice, mercy, and a humble walk. Nahum watches a city that once repented go back to its cruelty, and fall. Ecclesiastes, after all its hard looking, lands on the same ground: fear God and keep His commandments, for God will bring every work into judgment. And in an upper room, hours from a garden and a cross, Jesus prays out loud for people He is about to die for. Revelation shows you where every bit of it ends.

**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 Micah 1-7; Nahum 1-3

### From Bethlehem to Nineveh

#### WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Micah preaches to farm towns and to capitals at the same time. He names the men who covet fields and seize them, judges who decide for a bribe, and prophets who cry peace when they are fed. He also sees the mountain of the Lord's house lifted above the hills, and a Ruler coming out of Bethlehem Ephrathah. Then Nahum takes up a single subject: Nineveh, the city Jonah preached to a century earlier, now ripe and falling.

#### FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Micah 6:6-8 puts an escalating list of offerings in a worshiper's mouth and then answers him with three requirements. Walk through the three in order, and name the places where we still try to settle with God by activity instead.
2. Micah 5:2 promises a Ruler out of a village too small to be counted. Read Matthew 2:3-6 beside it. Why would God stake the arrival of His King on a place like that, and how does it unsettle our habit of measuring by size?

3. Nineveh repented when Jonah preached, and Nahum announces its ruin roughly a hundred years later. Talk through what that says about the shelf life of somebody else's repentance, and about how a family or a congregation can lose in one generation what it gained in another.

#### EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the specific sins Micah names in chapters 2 and 3: what the landowners do, what the judges do, what the prophets do. Which of the three could you commit this month without noticing?
2. Micah 4:1–3 speaks of the mountain of the Lord's house established in the last days. Compare Isaiah 2:2–4, Acts 2:16–17, and Hebrews 1:1–2. When did the last days begin, and what was established in them?
3. Read Micah 7:18–20 and write out every word or phrase Micah uses for what God does with sin. Which of them is hardest for you to believe He does with yours?
4. Nahum 1:2–3 sets God's jealousy and vengeance beside His slowness to anger. How do those hold together, and what is lost if a person keeps only one of them? See Romans 11:22.
5. Micah 6:8 asks for justice, mercy, and a humble walk. Pick the one you are furthest from, name the person it touches most directly, and do something specific about it before next Sunday.

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## WISDOM LITERATURE Ecclesiastes 9–12

### Remember Now Your Creator

#### WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Solomon turns to the one fact nobody escapes: the same event comes to the righteous and the wicked, and the living know they will die. Out of that he draws counsel rather than despair. Eat your bread, do your work with your might, cast your bread on the waters, sow in the morning. He tells a young man to rejoice and to remember judgment in the same breath, paints old age as a house falling quiet, and then states the conclusion the whole book has been walking toward.

#### FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Ecclesiastes 9:5 says the dead know nothing, and people quote it to prove that death ends conscious existence. Read it inside Solomon's phrase "under the sun," then set it beside Luke 16:22–23 and 2 Corinthians 5:6–8. What is he actually claiming, and what is he not claiming?

2. Given everything Solomon has said about death leveling everyone, 9:10 could have concluded with a shrug. Instead it says to do whatever your hand finds with your might. Why is that the honest conclusion rather than despair?
3. Chapter 12 describes the body slowly closing down, dimming windows and silenced songs, and then says remember your Creator before all of it. Where do you see people waiting to get serious with God, and what would it cost you to stop waiting?

#### EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Read Ecclesiastes 9:1–6 and mark every phrase that limits Solomon’s claim to what a man can observe from ground level. How many times does the phrase “under the sun” occur in these four chapters?
2. Ecclesiastes 11:9 and 12:14 both end at judgment. Compare Acts 17:31 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. Who is judged, by whom, and on what basis?
3. List the small, ordinary counsels in chapters 10 and 11: a dead fly in the ointment, a broken hedge, a dull axe, watching the clouds, sowing morning and evening. What kind of life do they add up to when you put them together?
4. Ecclesiastes 12:11 calls the words of the wise goads and nails. A goad moves you and a nail holds you. Which sentence in these four chapters has functioned as a goad for you, and which as a nail?
5. Solomon says to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Name one young person in your family or your congregation, and this week give that person an unhurried hour and one honest sentence about why you serve God.

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## GOSPELS John 17:1–18:24

### The Prayer Before the Garden

#### WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Jesus lifts His eyes and prays out loud where His apostles can hear every word: for Himself, that the Father glorify Him; for the eleven, that they be kept and sanctified by the truth; and for everyone who would ever believe through their word, that they all be one. Then He crosses the brook Kidron into a garden, faces a

detachment of soldiers, stops Peter's sword, and is led away bound to Annas while Peter stands at a fire and says he is not one of them.

#### FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. John 17:3 defines eternal life as knowing the Father and the Son whom He sent. How is knowing a person different from knowing about Him, and how could a man tell honestly which one he has?
2. In 17:20–21 Jesus prays for those who would believe “through their word,” and asks that they all be one. On what basis does He ask for that oneness, and what does His basis say about how division actually gets healed?
3. Peter draws a sword in the dark and Jesus tells him to put it away, then speaks of the cup the Father has given Him. Where are we still swinging at something God has handed us to drink?

#### EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace every request Jesus makes in John 17 and note who each is for: Himself, the eleven, or later believers. How many of the requests are for their comfort, and how many for their mission?
2. Jesus says in 17:4 that He has finished the work the Father gave Him, before the cross has happened. Compare 19:30. What does that tell you about how He regarded what was coming?
3. Read 17:14–18. Jesus does not ask that His people be taken out of the world. List the four things He does ask instead, and what each one protects them from.
4. Set Peter's confidence in 13:36–38 beside his words at the fire in 18:17, and read 1 Corinthians 10:12. What happened in the hours between, and where does that sequence begin in a person?
5. Jesus prayed aloud so that His friends could hear what He was asking the Father for them. This week, pray out loud, by name, with someone who needs to hear you ask God for them.

## WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

John sees the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with a company who carry His name on their foreheads, and hears a song only they can learn. Three angels fly through heaven with an everlasting gospel, an announcement that Babylon has fallen, and a warning about the beast. A voice calls the dead who die in the Lord blessed. Then two harvests are reaped, a winepress is trodden, and seven angels empty seven bowls on a world that will not repent, until a voice from the throne says it is done.

## FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Revelation 14:12 describes the saints as those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. How do keeping and believing belong together here, and why would John put them side by side for people who were being killed for the name?
2. Three times in chapter 16 the plagues fall and men blaspheme rather than repent (16:9, 11, 21). What hardens a person to that point, and where does that hardening begin in an ordinary life?
3. Revelation 14:13 calls the dead who die in the Lord blessed and says their works follow them. Set that beside Ecclesiastes 9:5 from this week's other reading. How do the two fit together without forcing either one?

## EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Revelation 14:1–5 says about the company standing with the Lamb. Given how the book uses numbers elsewhere, what is the 144,000 describing?
2. Revelation 15:3 calls the song “the song of Moses and of the Lamb.” Read Exodus 15:1–18. What do the two songs have in common, and why would a persecuted church sing an old deliverance song?
3. Compare the bowls of chapter 16 with the plagues of Exodus 7–12 and write down the parallels you find. Why would John reach for Egypt to describe what God is doing to Rome?
4. The word Armageddon appears once in the Bible, at 16:16. Read the verses around it and note what actually happens there. Why is it dangerous to read it as a forecast of current events?
5. Revelation 14:13 says their works follow them. Name one work you are doing now that you would want following you into eternity, and one you would not. Stop the second one this week.

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**NEXT WEEK'S READING:** Habakkuk 1–3; Zephaniah 1–3; Haggai 1–2 · Song of Solomon 1–2 · John 18:25–19:27 · Revelation 17–18