

READ THE BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Weeks 66-78



Luke Powell

Introduction

This is **part 6** of *Bible in 2 years*. You can find the first 5 booklets on [my website](#).

As you continue to read each day, remember:

- Soak your reading time in prayer. Pray before you read. Pray as you read. Pray when you finish reading. The more you pray, the more you connect with God in reading.
- Don't simply try to "tick" the readings off. The point of the plan is not just to say you've read the Bible, but to meet with God. Look for Him through it all.
- Consider reading the same passages again during the day. This was a powerful change for me – I read the three passages in the morning, then I reread them with commentaries, then when I climb in to bed at night I read them *again*. In doing this, I feel I am truly immersing myself in God's Word, and getting to know it better than ever. Try it!
- Feel free to [contact me](#) if you have any questions or comments on the readings.

I pray that this will be a fruitful time for you, and that you will meet God in a special way as you read.

Week 66

As we read the harsh words of prophets Amos and Hosea, let's remember the depths of sin to which Israel and Judah sank – as we read in Chronicles and Kings. The words of the prophets were much needed to bring them back to God.

It's great to see Jesus in action again in the gospels, and of course the Psalms continue to give expression to our emotions. Read with joy!

Week 66 Monday

Amos 7-8: Amos intercedes and God relents – a good lesson for us in the power of intercession. But notice that the time *does* come when it is too late (7:8, 8:2). So many of us don't want to hear the words of the prophets, like Amaziah (7:10-13). But we must hear God's call to repentance and holiness, or face the consequences.

Psalms 63: A wonderful Psalm which shows us that God's "love is better than life" (v3), and in Him we can be "fully satisfied as which the richest of foods" (v5). Drink in these words today!

Matthew 2: Magi come to see the newborn king of the Jews, causing some distress for King Herod. When they see him, they are overjoyed and worship (v10-11). Let us also bow before Jesus today! Herod orders all male children under two years old be killed, and so Joseph to flee to Nazareth with his family to and saves Jesus' life.

Week 66 Tuesday

Amos 9: God's anger at the sin we've been reading of culminates here in His promise to hand the Israelites over to evil (v1-4). But then comes the promise of restoration – that a remnant of Israelites will repair, restore and rebuild the nation and enjoy new wine (11-15). Some believe this is only about the Jews returning from exile; some think it has to do with the church as the 'repaired' kingdom of God, some think it looks ahead to Israel and the Gentiles living together at the end times. Whichever it is, we know that God has offered salvation to the faithful remnant of believers.

Psalms 64: David is again in a tight spot, and he voices his complaint to God (v1). But before long he is voicing his faith (v7) and rejoicing in God's powerful works (v9-10). This is a good model for prayer – get your complaint out, but turn it into worship and joy.

Matthew 3: John the Baptist [dared to be different!](#) He calls the Pharisees and Sadducees out and points to Jesus. Maybe we need to hear v8 today? John baptises Jesus in the Jordan – not as a show of forgiveness for sin (for Jesus was sinless) but as a moment of anointing and equipping as Jesus began his earthly ministry.

Week 66 Wednesday

Hosea 1: Hosea was a prophet in last days of the kingdom of Israel, around the same time as Amos. His book foretells the Assyrian invasion of Israel, and his marriage to the unfaithful woman Gomer is a picture of God's faithfulness to the unfaithful people of Israel. God's great mercy is the theme of the book.

In ch1, the three children of Hosea and Gomer receive meaningful names which foretell what God will do to Israel. God promises that Israel and Judah will be reunited under one leader again – at the coming of Christ.

Psalms 65: A lovely Psalm which first reflects on God's great love and riches, and then on his faithfulness in caring for the land.

Matthew 4: Jesus' temptation in the wilderness teaches us a lot – pay careful attention to his words that counter the devil's temptations, and join him in victory over Satan today. Jesus begins to preach, and his message is repentance (v17). Soon he has called a group of disciples to follow him, and before long great crowds are following him everywhere to receive healing and hear him speak.

Week 66 Thursday

Hosea 2-3: In ch2, we see a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness (v2-13), followed by God's promise to restore Israel (v14-23). How loving and kind He is. In ch3, God instructs Hosea to buy back his unfaithful wife – a picture of how God bought back his unfaithful people in love.

Psalms 66: The Psalmist calls on the people of earth to come and see (5) and hear (16) what God has done – how great and mighty He is, and how loving and faithful He is. Let's praise him as we read these words today.

Matthew 5: Jesus' famous sermon on the mount is full of practical teaching for the Christian like. There is much to take in here – read it slowly and apply these lessons to your own life.

Week 66 Friday

Hosea 4-5: God sees Israel's rejection of him as a kind of spiritual adultery or prostitution. We must never take sin lightly – God certainly doesn't. Notice how even the spiritual leaders are full of sin in ch5, which in turn leads the people far from God.

Psalms 67: I can't read this Psalm without [singing this song!](#)

Matthew 6: Jesus talks a lot about rewards here – we must not do spiritual things to try and attract attention to ourselves, but rather to glorify God. Jesus teaches us [a great model for prayer](#), and has much to say about money and worry. These are powerful words to live by.

Another blessed week in His precious Word! Give Him grateful thanks for what you have read this week, and think much of Him this weekend.

“On my bed I
remember you; I think
of you through the
watches of the night.
Because you are my
help, I sing in the
shadow of your wings.”

Psalm 63:6–7

Week 67

A prayer-poem to guide our Bible reading this week:
*Come oh Lord, oh Bread of Life, with every word I read
Come satisfy me wholly as my soul begins to feed
The Scripture is my nourishment, my fill, my portion, yes!
I trust that as I take it in, You'll love, You'll help, You'll bless*

Week 67 Monday

Hosea 6-7: Israel seemingly wants to return to God in the first few verses, but notice that there is no repentance, just a desire for blessing. God sees through their shallowness, and though he longs to redeem them (7:13), their love for him is “like the early dew that disappears” (6:4). Friends, we must remain consistent in our commitment to him!

Psalms 68: Much joy and praise fill this Psalm. V3 calls us to rejoice and be happy in God – may it be so! He cares for us deeply (v5-6) and daily bears our burdens (v19). He gives us power and strength (35). We have many reasons to praise.

Matthew 7: Jesus shares much wisdom here – teaching us to be careful of judging others (1-6); to go deep in prayer (7-12); to know that the Christian life is hard to truly find (13-14); to beware of false prophets and false disciples (15-23), and to build our lives on his words (24-28). Which teaching do you need to hold onto today?

Week 67 Tuesday

Hosea 8-9: Again Israel tries to ‘acknowledge’ God but without repentance (8:2). Their idolatry and godlessness put a barrier between them and God, and this has dire consequences (see 9:15).

Psalms 69:1-18: Some see in this Psalm a picture of Jesus – suffering for us (v1-4, 7-8); bearing our sins (v5) and our insults (v9b); with zeal for God’s house (v9a) and being delivered from death (v13-18). Praise Him for His sacrifice.

Matthew 8: We now go back to Jesus’ travelling and healing ministry, and read of Jesus healing a leper, a centurion’s servant, and Peter’s mother-in-law. We also read Jesus’ words about the high cost of following him, before seeing him calm a storm and then drive out demons. What a life he lived.

Week 67 Wednesday

Hosea 10-11: Despite the sin of Israel, God promises his love and the relenting of his judgement – provided his people aren’t “determined to turn” from Him (11:7). Again we see the importance of repentance here.

Psalms 69:19-36: We see Jesus in verses like v29-36. But v19-28 are not like Jesus – he prayed for the forgiveness of those who hurt him on the cross.

Matthew 9: More healing moments with Jesus and also a few teachings of his. Jesus’ words about his calling (v12-13), his newness (v16-17), and the importance of workers in the harvest field (v37-38) are worth thinking about carefully.

Week 67 Thursday

Hosea 12-13: Hosea continues with proclamations of judgement because Israel sins “more and more” (13:2) instead of returning to God. Even though God was the one who “cared” for them (13:5) and “satisfied” them (13:6), they continued in their sin. Let us not make the same mistake.

Psalms 70: David asks God to confuse his enemies and help him to rejoice. This whole Psalm is a powerful prayer for us today.

Matthew 10: Jesus sends out the twelve with a special power and anointing. His long monologue has much wisdom for the Christian life. Pay special attention to v37-40, and remember what a serious call it is to be a Christ-Follower!

Week 67 Friday

Hosea 14: Once again there is the promise of God to heal and love his people if they return to Him. Hosea ends with a reminder that walking in God’s ways is the right way to live.

A sobering book reminding us that God is gracious, but we must return to God and not live in sin.

Psalms 71: Another prayer in times of trouble, counting on God to be the rock and fortress that keeps us safe. Notice how many times the Psalmist promises to have the praise of God in his mouth! We too should be committed to praising Him at all times.

Matthew 11: Jesus’ words on John the Baptist culminate in the sentence “wisdom is proved right by her deeds” (v19). Then we read his harsh words to local towns in that time – one wonders what words Jesus might have to say to the towns and countries of the world in the 21st century! Lastly we read the comforting words of Jesus, that we may come to him and find rest. I always think of [this song which my friend Richard wrote](#) when reading these words.

The prophets' warnings are balanced out by the Psalmists' love for God! Jesus, of course, sounds a lot like the old prophets at times, while still showing God's love and compassion. Let us dwell on the words we have read this week, and stay close to God this weekend.

“

“I will heal their
waywardness and love
them freely, for my anger
has turned away from
them.”

Hosea 14:4

”

Week 68

This week we'll work through another minor prophet, and then start on one of the most significant prophets in the Old Testament. We'll read another selection of Psalms and get closer to the end of Jesus' time on earth. We'll be blessed and encouraged as we read, if we read seeking God's face!

Week 68 Monday

Micah 1-2: Micah was a prophet who predicted the fall on the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. He was active around 740-687 BC, and his message was one of judgement on the people of Israel and Judah who had become greedy, materialistic and cruel to the poor.

Micah says it plainly in chapter 1 – that Israel was to be conquered and sent into exile because of their sinful ways. Chapter 2 warns of false prophets who talk down the seriousness of the people's sin, and then Micah gives some good news: a remnant will be saved (2:12-13).

Psalms 72: A Psalm that seems to point clearly to Jesus. Consider how these words describe our Lord, and worship Him as you read. But also, consider how you might pray for your country's leaders to reflect God in this way.

Matthew 12: Jesus clashes with the Jews over his views on the Sabbath – claiming that serving God and doing acts of mercy were never meant to be set aside on Sabbath days. Matthew then applies some great words from Isaiah 41 and 42 to Jesus. Indeed our hope is in Jesus' name (v21)! The Pharisees, however, accuse Jesus of healing through the devil's power. Jesus refutes them and claims that it is by God's Spirit that he does what he does; and then he gets harsh with the Pharisees for their religiosity that lacked fruit. Jesus goes on to proclaim himself as greater than Solomon, before showing that devotion to God must be above devotion to family.

Week 68 Tuesday

Micah 3-4: The prophet condemns the leaders of Israel for their unrighteous and callous ways – unlike the false prophets who keep proclaiming peace. He then describes the last days in which peace and security will abound and God's people will be blessed – though in the meantime they must suffer in exile.

Psalms 73: A famous Psalm in which a godly man struggles to understand the wealth and prosperity of godless people. But in the end he realises that God will take care of it all.

Matthew 13: Jesus tells a series of profound parables that describe the kingdom of God. Which one resonates with you today? His teachings amaze the people, but some "took offense at him" (v57).

Week 68 Wednesday

Micah 5-6: Micah's two most famous statements are found here: his prophecy of Jesus in 5:2, and his description of a godly life in 6:8.

Psalms 74: A stirring Psalm which describes the Babylonian invasion of Judah, and pleads with God to remember his people.

Matthew 14: Here we learn the unfortunate fate of John the Baptist. We see Jesus feeding many people with a small amount of food, followed by the famous account of Jesus walking on the water and calling Peter to do the same. Peter doubts and begins to sink when he focuses on the wind and waves instead of Jesus. Crossing over the lake, many people are healed by Jesus.

Week 68 Thursday

Micah 7: Though calamity has come, Micah still trusts in God (v7). He knows that God's pardon and forgiveness will come to the faithful remnant (v18). What a wonderful promise ends this book – God casting our sins into the deepest sea (v19) and ultimately showing his love and faithfulness to his people.

Psalms 75: God is the one who judges – nobody can exalt themselves (v6). Let us join the Psalmist in declaring His praise (v9) for He is worthy!

Matthew 15: Jesus is tough on the Pharisees – but are we sure that v8-9 doesn't apply to *us* today? Jesus is clear that we are defiled by sin, not food or unwashed hands. Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman sounds harsh, but he ends up commending her and granting her request – even though she wasn't a Jew. Jesus then feeds another great crowd with almost no food.

Week 68 Friday

Isaiah 1-2: Let us begin what many consider to be the greatest work of the Hebrew prophets. Isaiah is not just a brilliant piece of writing, but his words are deeply meaningful for Christians today. He wrote around 740BC and predicted the punishment of Israel for their sin, but also the gracious provision of a salvation for both Jews and Gentiles.

Chapter 1 describes the rebellious nation of Israel, and God’s wonderful promise of forgiveness *for those who are penitent*. I wrote a song based on v18 (and Micah 7:19) which [you can hear here](#). Chapter 2 describes the end of time when Jesus will reign and war will be over – Isaiah uses this to motivate his people to repent and “walk in the light of the Lord” (2:5).

Psalms 76: A reminder that God is the one who we should fear (7) and not humans. God will bring an end to all wars (3) and God is radiant and majestic (4). Let us make our vows to Him in praise (11).

Matthew 16: When asked for a sign of his divinity, Jesus answers cryptically and then warns his disciples of the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ teaching. Then a big moment, as Peter declares his faith in Jesus as Messiah! Jesus then explains what a difficult calling it is to follow him – how it will cost you, but you will be rewarded in heaven for staying faithful. Read v24-27 carefully.

Has God blessed you through His Word this week? I know He has. Think deeply on these words over the weekend.

“

“Whoever wants to be my
disciple must deny
themselves and take up
their cross and follow me.
For whoever wants to
save their life will lose it,
but whoever loses their
life for me will find it.”

Matthew 16:24–25

”

Week 69

We read more beautiful but tough words from Isaiah this week, and continue on through the Psalms and Matthew's Gospel. Seek God as you read – remember, this is about encountering him, not ticking the boxes so that you can say you've read the Bible. He is willing to meet with you and touch your heart each day as you read.

Week 69 Monday

Isaiah 3-4: Israel and Judah have become a godless society (3:9-10). But the righteous still have hope and joy (3:10), and can look forward to the day when Jesus – the Branch of the Lord (4:2) will come and reign in the end times.

Psalms 77: Asaph begins this Psalm in sadness, looking back at how things used to be. Then in verse 10 he has a remarkable turnaround and starts praising God for his present help and power! Take heart as you read his stirring words.

Matthew 17: Jesus is transfigured on the mountain while talking to Moses and Elijah, causing the disciples to fall down in terror. Once Jesus calms their fear, Peter wants to build shelters for them to stay on the mountain, but Jesus instead heads back down to the crowds and heals a young boy that the disciples hadn't been able to help. Today I pray that we have more than "a little faith" (v20)! Jesus then predicts his death, before performing a miracle with a fish to make the point that we should faithfully pay our taxes.

Week 69 Tuesday

Isaiah 5-6: Isaiah uses the picture of a vineyard to illustrate that God gave the Israelites all they needed for a holy life, but they rejected him. Then come six "woes" from Isaiah for those Israelites who were flaunting their sin rather than living for God's glory. 5:20 is particularly convicting today. In chapter 6 we read of Isaiah's famous vision of God in heaven, with angelic creatures singing His praise. Isaiah is cleansed by God and then called to a mission. His words "here I am, send me" have inspired many great songs, [like these](#).

Psalms 78:1-39: The Psalmist promises to pass on the history of his people so that the new generation may also trust God and live for Him. He tells the story of God's freeing the Israelites from exile, their subsequent patterns of sin, and God's continued mercy. V38 is precious to us!

Matthew 18: Jesus tells the disciples to believe like children, and then promises serious consequences for anybody who causes his children to stumble. Jesus' parable of the lost sheep shows God's great love, and his parable of the unforgiving servant causes us to look within and ask if we are loving others as he has loved us. Jesus also talks of conflict resolution here, something we could all learn from.

Week 69 Wednesday

Isaiah 7-8: Isaiah shares God's message with King Ahaz, telling him not to fear the enemy nations. Then comes his famous prophecy in 7:14, which seems to have a double fulfilment: first, Isaiah's wife gives birth to a son, and later Jesus is born of a virgin to complete the prophecy. Chapter 8 shows Isaiah predicting the Assyrian invasion, but choosing to trust in God anyway and not seek help from any other source.

Psalms 78:40-72: The Psalmist continues showing the Israelites' pattern of sin and rebellion. But God eventually brought a good leader in David to keep the people holy.

Matthew 19: Jesus clearly believes that marriage in God's eyes is for one man and one woman. He also seems to believe that singleness is the calling of some. Again he blesses children and uses the occasion to teach a lesson. Then comes a fascinating encounter between Jesus and a rich young man, who is unwilling to give up all for the sake of following Jesus. V26 reminds us that salvation is possible for all people.

Week 69 Thursday

Isaiah 9-10: Isaiah's famous prophecy of Christ in chapter 9 inspired [this song which I sing every Christmas with CrossRoad](#). God's judgement of Israel is harsh, but he promises to also bring judgement on Assyria and preserve a remnant of faithful Israelites.

Psalms 79: This Psalm seems very fitting in the light of the current conflict in Palestine – v11 made me pause to pray for those who have been held hostage by Hamas.

Matthew 20: Jesus' parable of the workers shows us that God's favour is the same, whether you come to him early in life or only right or the end. We must not grumble against deathbed conversions. Then Jesus predicts his own death, before settling a dispute between his disciples. We also see him ask two blind men a pressing question.

Week 69 Friday 📖

Isaiah 11-12: This passage begins with a wonderful prophecy about the future reign of Jesus! We look forward to that day. Chapter 12 is a lovely song of praise that all who are saved by Jesus can sing with joy.

Psalms 80: The Psalmist's repeated cries of "restore us!" show us how the people of Israel needed their God in this time. Jesus called himself the "son of man" (v17), and all people may now be restored to God by faith in Jesus.

Matthew 21: Jesus causes a great stir as he enters Jerusalem, and subsequently drives a group of people out of the temple courts. He curses a fig tree – the only time we see him curse and not bless – as a sign of what would happen to those who do not bear fruit. After shutting down the chief priests and the elders with a single question, he then tells two parables which show that God had given the kingdom to Gentiles and not just faithful Jews.

Where has God spoken to you in His Word this week? Take a moment to consider which story or verse touched you the most, and praise Him for this.

“
THEN I HEARD THE VOICE OF
THE LORD SAYING, “WHOM
SHALL I SEND? AND WHO WILL
GO FOR US?”
AND I SAID, “HERE AM I. SEND
ME!”

ISAIAH 6:8

”

Week 70

The other day I heard somebody say that their motto is 'no Bible, no breakfast; no read, no feed'! Maybe that should be our attitude this week as we continue through Isaiah, Psalms and Matthew's Gospel.

Week 70 Monday

Isaiah 13-14: The next 11 chapters contain Isaiah's prophecies of God's wrath and punishment for the godless nations. Today we see harsh words against Babylon, Assyria and Philistia; and kind words for the remnant of Jacob.

Psalms 81: I love the call to worship through music at the beginning of this Psalm! Then God cautions his people to listen to him and follow his ways.

Matthew 22: The parable of the wedding guests shows us that anybody can come to God, but only some accept the change he offers through grace. Jesus teaches on tax and the afterlife, and sums up the law of God in two commands, before stumping the Pharisees with a question.

Week 70 Tuesday

Isaiah 15-16: Isaiah now predicts the fall of Moab because of their pride, insolence, conceit and arrogance (16:6). The coming of Jesus as Messiah is again prophesied (16:5).

Psalms 82: God is seen as a Judge of judges in this Psalm. We see God's heart for justice and fairness here.

Matthew 23: Jesus soundly denounces the Pharisees, and then pronounces seven woes, in which he sounds a lot like the prophet Isaiah! Let us look closely at these words of his and repent if any of these characteristics can be found in us as Christians.

Week 70 Wednesday

Isaiah 17-18: Now it is the turn of Damascus to receive God's wrath. But the people of God will return to him in repentance (17:7-8). Isaiah also has word for the people in the lands around the rivers of Cush.

Psalms 83: This Psalm seems eerily apt in light of the recent Hamas attack on Israel. The last three verses are important – God's people, in the end, are hoping that other nations see and believe in the one true God.

Matthew 24: Jesus wisely tells us not to be deceived when it comes to end-times matters. He also tells us clearly that nobody knows the times and dates of his coming again. However, we are to be ready at all times for his coming.

Week 70 Thursday

Isaiah 19-20: God judges Egypt, but this will end in the people of Egypt and Assyria worshipping together alongside Israel. We look forward to that day, when there is peace in that part of the world and shared love for Christ!

Psalms 84: The Psalmist yearns deeply for God (v2), and finds that being in God's temple fills his heart. Jesus, of course, changed our understanding – we don't need to go to the temple courts to meet God, but God sends His Spirit to meet *us* and come and dwell within *us*. So we might say "better is one day with Your Spirit dwelling within me, than a thousand without"!

Matthew 25: Some serious words of Jesus here. The parable of the virgins reminds us that those without the oil of faith will not enter heaven. The parable of the talents shows us that when God gives us something to do, we best do it! And Jesus' words about the sheep and goats remind us that simply being a nominal Christian, without *living* the Christian life of service, shows a false conversion.

Week 70 Friday

Isaiah 21-22: God pronounces more judgement on the godless nations, but then comes the shock of his harsh words to Jerusalem! We must never get complacent, but we must honestly assess ourselves regularly, to see that we are indeed in right standing with God.

Psalms 85: The Psalmist looks back on God's mercy, and asks him to pour it out again. He knows that God is good (v10-13), but he also knows that God's peace is for those who fear Him and don't return to their folly (v8-9).

Matthew 26: And so we get to the familiar account of Jesus's last night. He begins by predicting his death, and when he is extravagantly anointed by a woman, he sees it as a royal anointing for his burial (v12). Jesus knows that Judas would betray him and Peter would deny him, yet he still serves them bread and wine as a symbol of his body and blood (v25-35). Then in distress at the ordeal awaiting him, Jesus prays for God to find another way to achieve his purposes – but crucially he surrenders to God's will (v42). He is arrested and made to stand trial, where his torture begins, which Peter proves Jesus's words to be true and denies knowing him.

A sad ending to a full week in the Word. How great is our Saviour for going the distance for us – and serving us even though we aren't deserving!

“ —

“I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.”

Matthew 25:42–43

— ”

Week 71

With Matthew's Gospel coming to an end, we begin with some classic Paul again in the book of Romans. Hang in there through Isaiah – once we get to chapter 40 we will see a major shift of mood. Remember to pray before you read, while you read, and after you read!

Week 71 Monday

Isaiah 23-24: First we read of God's judgement of Tyre, a prosperous city of the time. Then the judgement widens to include the whole earth – although a remnant of faithful people survive and sing God's praise. This seems to be a prophecy of end times.

Psalms 86: A beautiful heartfelt Psalm of David. Read this carefully and see the reasons David has for trusting in God. Then join him in praise and worship through these words.

Matthew 27: Judas tragically takes his own life instead of seeking redemption. Jesus stands trial before Pilate, who eventually gives into the crowd instead and hands Jesus over to be flogged and crucified. As Jesus cried out and dies, a few amazing things happen, causing some of the soldiers to rethink their ideas about him. Jesus' body is placed in a secure tomb to make sure the disciples can't steal his body.

Week 71 Tuesday

Isaiah 25-26: Two heartfelt songs are written here. The first looks ahead to the future when God will destroy death once and for all. The second is a Psalm of praise – pay attention to 26:3-4!

Psalms 87: One of the very few Psalms that celebrates other nations being saved by God. Most Psalms emphasise God's special relationship with Israel, but here we see a glimpse of His saving grace for *all* nations.

Matthew 28: Some of Jesus' followers go to his tomb and find it empty! He appears to them and they are joy-filled at his resurrection. Soon all the disciples see him and they worship him, before hearing his last words as he ascends back to heaven in glory.

What a rollercoaster Matthew's gospel has been! Let us ask ourselves: what are we doing to live out his Great Commission?

Week 71 Wednesday

Isaiah 27-28: Isaiah uses the picture of a vineyard to represent Israel – whom God cared for tenderly. Then he confronts the leaders of Ephraim and Judah who are offered God's peace but who choose not to listen (28:12).

Psalms 88: An unusual Psalm which ends in a negative place, in contrast to most others which have a cheery ending. Some commentators believe that these words capture Jesus' feelings on the cross.

Romans 1: This is one of the most powerful and deep pieces of writing in history. Paul's words to the early churches in Rome have long been revered by believers, because of his detailed explanation of the Christian faith and the glimpses into his personal journey as a Christ-follower which are found here. Read it slowly and carefully, and ask for God's wisdom to be imparted to you with each sentence!

Chapter 1 begins with Paul introducing some of the grand themes of his letter – namely *faith* as the thing that gets us right with God, and the place for both Jews and Gentiles in God's kingdom. He then paints a picture of the world that rejects God, and shows us that God essentially leaves such people to reap the reward of their sin.

Week 71 Thursday

Isaiah 29-30: "Ariel" is another name for Jerusalem. Isaiah foresees the capture of this city of God, and the later victory God's people will have over the enemy. Jesus applied the words of 29:12-14 to the Pharisees of his day, and I am certain they also describe many in our time. Chapter 30 is a rebuke to Israel for making an alliance with the ungodly nation of Egypt instead of seeking God for help – but once more there is a promise that a remnant of faithful people will survive God's punishment.

Psalms 89:1-18: A powerful Psalm which describes many of God's wonderful attributes. Which words will you cling to today?

Romans 2: Paul calls out hypocrisy. V24 shows us the seriousness of this in God's eyes, and v4 reminds us that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance – a much overlooked verse! God clearly wants us to live good and holy lives, rejecting evil. Paul claims, at the end of the chapter, that the old Jewish ritual of circumcision does not help anybody become right with God – it is a circumcision *of the heart* (a transformation, through faith, of the inner character through God's Spirit) that makes a person right with God.

Week 71 Friday 📖

Isaiah 31-32: Isaiah calls on the people of Israel to return to their God, and not rely on other pagan nations or self-made idols. Then he looks forward to Christ's final reign when there will be "quietness and confidence forever" (33:17), but in the meantime he warns those who are complacent, because people's "hearts are bent on evil" (33:6)

Psalms 89:19-52: The end of this Psalm seems to forget V30-37 - which have come true in an amazing way. Though David's descendants at times rejected God, He punished but did not remove His love from His people and Christ fulfilled His promise of an everlasting covenant.

Romans 3: Paul is clear that *all people* need a Saviour because *all people* fall short of God's standard. He again makes certain that his readers know that nobody gets right with God through religious works (v20), and then he states the gospel in v23-26. Look closely for the word "faith" from v21 on and understand that we are made right with God (justified) by our faith, not works!

Powerful stuff in the Scripture this week! Have you been convicted by Isaiah's passionate words? By the emotion of the Psalms? By Christ's death and resurrection and Paul's explanation of salvation? How could you not?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Romans 3:23-24

Week 72

A big shift in Isaiah's writing comes this week. We start a new section in the Psalms, and Romans is full of deep theology – read with care and may God guide you with each reading.

Week 72 Monday

Isaiah 33-34: A profound verse in 33:6 – the fear of the Lord is the key to the rich treasures he offers. Because Assyria doesn't have this, they will be "burned to ashes" (33:12) while faithful Zion gets restored. Chapter 34 records God's startling anger against all nations, who have turned against Him.

Psalms 90: A prayer of Moses which declares the fragility of life and the eternal compassion and joy of God. Make v14 your prayer today.

Romans 4: Paul uses the example of Abraham to show us that our salvation does not depend on religious rituals or works, *but by faith!* God offers us salvation as a gift, not as wages for good work (v3). Ask yourself today: am I relying on my own goodness to make me right with God, or am I relying on His gift of grace alone?

Week 72 Tuesday

Isaiah 35-36: Chapter 35 is beautiful vision of Israel's restoration. Then a new section begins, and we revisit the story of Sennacherib threatening King Hezekiah and his people which we've already read in 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings.

Psalms 91: The famous Psalm which many people memorise and pray every day for protection. I particular like the last two verses which contain wonderful promises from God for those who love Him.

Romans 5: Paul reminds the people that hope comes through Christ, and hard times build character. Then he explains that the salvation Jesus brings restores us from the curse we are all under due to the sin of Adam.

Week 72 Wednesday

Isaiah 37-39: Sennacherib taunts Israel and mocks God, [causing Hezekiah to pray fervently for deliverance](#), which God granted. Then Hezekiah is healed of his illness and composes a lovely Psalm of thanks. But chapter 39 records his great mistake of showing the king of Babylon his riches, causing Isaiah's prophecy of a Babylonian invasion.

Psalms 92: The Psalmist is overwhelmed with joy at God's deeds and sings passionately about His glory. Will our hearts join in his song today?

Romans 6: A classic passage in which Paul teaches that those in Christ have died to sin and need no longer live in it! We are not slaves to sin any longer, but are able, by the grace of God, to offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness. The last verse is profound: sin *earns* us death, but the *gift* of God is life eternal.

Week 72 Thursday

Isaiah 40: The change in feel from chapter 40 has led some to think that a different author is now writing! But I believe that it is the same Isaiah, now writing with great hope as he foresees the end of Israel's exile. The New Testament applies v3 to John the Baptist who "prepared the way" for Jesus. Verses 28-31 have provided much help to many Jews and Christians over the years.

Psalms 93: A short Psalm with lots of repetition to emphasise different aspects of God's character.

Romans 7: This passage has been much debated since Paul wrote it. Is he describing the Christian experience? Or is he describing the pre-Christian experience? I think the key lies in the last sentence – Jesus Christ delivers us from being slaves to sin.

Week 72 Friday

Isaiah 41-42: The one from the east and the north mentioned in Chapter 41 is likely to be the Cyrus the King of Persia, who overthrew the Babylonians and helped the Jews back into freedom. Notice God's words about not needing to fear – perhaps you need to hold 41:10 and 41:13-14 today. In chapter 42 we learn that the Messiah will be a *servant* of the people, and a song of praise follows this declaration.

Psalms 94: The Psalmist begins by asking God to rid the earth of the wicked. He declares that God is faithful to His people, and then in v17-19 are words of great comfort.

Romans 8: For many people, Romans 8 is the high point of the New Testament! It begins by declaring the freedom from sin that God's people are privileged to enjoy, through living in the Spirit and putting the 'old' life of sin to death. Paul then explains that our present suffering is as nothing compared to the glory we will enjoy with God one day, and then comes to climax – Paul's passionate proclamation that nothing can separate us from God's love! I used this passage for [my Easter sermon of 2023](#).

What a ride this week has been! The turning point of Isaiah brought good news of salvation, and Romans celebrated what this salvation accomplished for us. Psalms kept us singing throughout. Praise God for His power and mercy, revealed to us so wonderfully in His Word this week.

“

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”

Isaiah 40:28

”

Week 73

Some very meaningful words from Isaiah come up this week. The Psalms are full of praise and Paul's words to the Romans are deep and powerful. Drink in His Word with gladness each day!

Week 73 Monday

Isaiah 43: This is a powerful chapter! The first 5 verses are filled with wonderful promises from God. V10 and v13 call us to be witnesses of what He has done. And then a famous section from v18 contains God's promise that He is doing something new and will make a way where there seems to be no way – a passage I preached on for [the first English service at Church of the Nazarene Boksburg](#).

Psalms 95: The Psalmist calls us to worship God on bended knee with singing, shouting and music, and in v3 and v7 he tells us why.

Romans 9: Paul's words in this chapter are tricky to navigate. He agonizes over the lost Jews who haven't accepted Christ as their Saviour but still try to earn their righteousness by works. But in Paul's view, God is not unjust in offering salvation to the Gentiles too (v14).

Week 73 Tuesday

Isaiah 44: The first 5 verses bring us comfort as we consider the blessings God has for us. Then comes a long section which repeats a lot from ch43 mocks the false gods of the nations and declares that there is no god beside "Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty" (v6). The last few verses predict someone named Cyrus as the one who will liberate Israel from exile, which is exactly what happened years later when King Cyrus of Persia overthrew the Babylonians.

Psalms 96: A happy Psalm proclaiming God's glory and calling the people and all of creation to sing with joy for His honour! A sober note at the end – that God will come and judge the earth in righteousness and faithfulness at the end.

Romans 10: Paul continues to show that the Jewish understanding of salvation by *good works* is futile, but that righteousness comes *by faith*. We have the famous v13 which has brought hope to many, and v14-15 reminds us that we must *preach* the good news rather than only using our actions to honour God, for without a message to hear, how will people get to know the truth? Paul is sad that Israel has turned away from the message of grace, but notes that it was predicted by the prophets.

Week 73 Wednesday

Isaiah 45-46: Cyrus is mentioned again as the one who would bring Israel back to their home. Then God again speaks out against the idols and false gods that the people were following.

Psalms 97: Another Psalm proclaiming God's great power, and the great joy of the people who are His – look for references to joy or rejoicing and sing praise to the One who reigns.

Romans 11: Closing out this section of his letter on Israel, Paul pictures a tree and reminds the Gentiles that they have been "grafted in" like branches, and so shouldn't look down on the Jews who are the roots. Paul's words about Israel being saved cause many Christians to pray fervently for Israel even today. Paul bursts out into words of praise at the end of this chapter.

Week 73 Thursday

Isaiah 47-48: Here Babylon is pictured as a disgraced queen, punished by God for trusting in her own wisdom and knowledge. Chapter 48 is addressed to the Jews from Judah who are in exile, and predicts their deliverance from Babylon through God's gracious action. 48:22 is a famous statement that we tend to use too lightly today.

Psalms 98: A beautiful Psalm calling all of creation to worship! Look for the author's use of the words 'salvation' and 'joy', and join in the song of praise.

Romans 12: Paul now gets very practical in this classic chapter. You could spend hours pouring over each verse! The last sentence sums it all up, as we are reminded that the Christian life is a relentless pursuit of *good*. Read this passage slowly and then go out and live these values in the world.

Week 73 Friday

Isaiah 49-50: Chapter 49 is a prophecy of Jesus – He is the Servant of God the Father who brought freedom and release for all nations, through his death and resurrection. Chapter 50 begins with God 'divorcing' his own people because of their unfaithfulness – which represents Israel's being sent into exile – and then again we see Jesus in v4-9, before v10-11 condemns those who try make their own 'light' instead of relying on God who is the Light of the world.

Psalms 99: See how the Psalmist emphasizes God's *holiness* in this Psalm. We are to praise, worship and exalt Him because of who He is.

Romans 13: Paul has much to say about honouring the governing authorities and living a peaceful life. V8-10 are beautiful words about the greatest of all values – love. The chapter ends with an urgent call to holy living – since the day of Christ's return is drawing near, let us ensure we are ready by committing to good and godly lifestyles.

What wonderful readings this week – Isaiah's deep prophecies, the Psalms' call to praise, and Paul's heartfelt cry for the Jews and his practical teaching for all Christians. Praise God for such rich and wonderful words to base our lives on!



“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

Isaiah 43:2–3



Week 74

This week we cover some more wonderful prophecies from Isaiah. We continue to praise our way through the Psalms, and we end Romans and begin the fascinating book of Hebrews. Enjoy this deep season in God's Word.

Week 74 Monday

Isaiah 51-52: Some wonderful promises of restoration fill these verses. These were partially fulfilled when the Israelites were released from exile, further fulfilled with Jesus came to offer salvation to all nations, and will be completely fulfilled when he comes again to set up God's kingdom on the new earth. Let us celebrate the "good news" (52:7) of salvation through Jesus, today. The last few verses of this passage should really go with ch53, as they picture Jesus on the cross.

Psalms 100: A classic Psalm which many churches read out at the beginning of their worship services. We can come to God with joyful thanks and praise because He is our Shepherd and we belong to Him.

Romans 14: In this chapter Paul deals with "secondary" issues in the Christian faith. He warns us about getting judgemental towards those who have different beliefs about less important matters. The key is that, whatever you do, you "do so to the Lord" (v5). Let us not allow such things to divide us, when we should be united in our faith.

Week 74 Tuesday

Isaiah 53-54: Take your time as you read the great prophecy on Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead in ch53. Each verse clearly points to Jesus – which is why in many Jewish circles this chapter is left out of the yearly synagogue readings. How amazing that Jesus would become the 'suffering servant' who bore our sins! Ch54 is another prophecy of God's releasing His people from exile with compassion (v7, 8, 10), and ultimately releasing us from sin through Jesus' coming.

Psalms 101: David commits to a blameless life (v2, 6) and wants nothing to do with those who are walking in sin. He looks to the faithful ones as his example (v6). A good Psalm for Christians to read and seek to embody themselves.

Romans 15: We should treat each other the way Christ treated people (v5) and "accept one another" (v7). Paul especially wants the Gentiles to know that they belong in God's kingdom, even according to the prophets (v9-12), and prays as a wonderful prayer for hope in v13. Then Paul explains his upcoming ministry plans and asks for prayer so that he can come and see the Roman Christians.

Week 74 Wednesday

Isaiah 55-56: Ch55 is a beautiful call to "come" and find satisfaction in God, by eating and drinking "what is good" (v2). Nothing will satisfy but God's riches, which are free for us to enjoy by faith! V7 even shows that the wicked can come to God and find forgiveness if they forsake their sin. Then Ch56 declares that foreigners and eunuchs are not excluded from God's plan for salvation.

Psalms 102: The Psalmist is clearly distressed in the first 11 verses of this Psalm, and many of us can relate to his words. Then comes the turnaround in v12, and the rest of the Psalm proclaims that God's greatness and compassion will prevail.

Romans 16: Paul greets many of his personal friends and fellow followers of Christ – and I love reading how he describes them. We can learn from those little descriptions of the early Christians! He has a few final words of teaching in v17-18 and closes his wonderful letter with a powerful statement praising God.

Romans is a hard book, but it is one of the great pieces of early literature and contains some of Christianity's most sacred and important words. How did it touch your life these past few weeks?

Week 74 Thursday

Isaiah 57-58: Isaiah's description of the pagans' idolatry sounds eerily similar to the godless world today. God's promise of healing in v15-21 is wonderful. Then ch58 is a classic passage about fasting – we learn that the ritual of fasting means nothing to God if our lives aren't committed to compassionate deeds. It is when we love and help others that God's glory shines (v6-10).

Psalms 103: A classic Psalm of David in which he calls us to remember the benefits of being God's. V8-13 is a powerful section, and we end with four calls to "praise the Lord" for what He has done.

Hebrews 1: Hebrews is a unique book which begins as a sermon but ends as a letter. Nobody knows the author, although some believe it shows signs of being another Paul composition. The book is about leaving Judaism and coming to Christ, who has fulfilled all the Jewish rituals. You might say that the *superiority of Christ* is the theme of the book.

Chapter 1 immediately exalts Christ as the ‘exact representation’ of God (v3) and the ‘heir of all things’ (v2). Then a poetic section declares the various ways in which Christ is superior to angels – He is creator, sustainer, and the one who is worshipped and will defeat the enemy.

Week 74 Friday

Isaiah 59-60: A tough start today as we read of how sin separates us from God. Sin is taking peaceful paths and turning them into “crooked roads” (59:9). But in 59:16 comes the change, as we see God bringing our salvation from the sorry state of sin and a new covenant “to those who repent” (59:20). Chapter 60 prophesies God’s glory once again shining through his people, and reminds me [of this song which a friend which once asked me to record](#). This has been partially fulfilled through the coming of Christ, but will culminate in the new kingdom where God’s light will be so bright we won’t need a sun.

Psalms 104: God is Creator of all! This Psalm celebrates all the different aspects of God’s creation, from the skies and waters to the mountains and valleys, as well as the animals, birds, fish, plants and grass. We are called to “sing praise” (v33) in recognition of God’s greatness.

Hebrews 2: The author asks us to “pay the most careful attention” (v1) so that we can stay on track with God. We learn that we are brothers and sisters of Jesus who makes us holy (v10-11), and that he breaks the power of death (v14), though he was fully human and tempted like us (v17-18). This wonderful picture of Jesus should lead us to praise and worship Him today.

Once again we have been enriched as we’ve read God’s Word this week. Catch up this weekend if you need, and reflect much on what you have read!

— “ —————

“He was pierced for our
transgressions, he was
crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that
brought us peace was on
him, and by his wounds
we are healed.”

Isaiah 53:5

————— ” —

Week 75

Here's another prayer-poem I've written to start our time in the Word this week:

*It's my joy and it's my pleasure to engage with You Lord God
But it's true that when I read Your Word I sometimes find it hard
So I pray that as I read now You will give me eyes to see
All your glory and your wonder and your love poured out for me*

Week 75 Monday

Isaiah 61-62: Jesus applied the first few verses of this passage to himself in Luke 4. What an amazing calling He had. God's people are promised a double portion from God – which may have been fulfilled when Jesus brought “grace upon grace” (see John 1). In chapter 62, we read of the restoration and renaming of Jerusalem. I [recently recorded this beautiful song about the land of Beulah](#) (v4). We look forward to the day when Israel is finally restored in this way at the Second Coming of Christ!

Psalms 105: The Psalmist praises God, and then looks back through Israel's long history of being blessed by God. Why did God do all this for His people? V45 explains it.

Hebrews 3: Jesus is greater than Moses, as the Son of God who is our great apostle and high priest. We the believers are Christ's 'house' – not the church building! And so, the writer says, we must be careful not to have our hearts hardened by sin, but must keep encouraging one another in our daily walk with God (v12-13). Who can you encourage in the faith today?

Week 75 Tuesday

Isaiah 63-64: A frightening picture of Jesus covered in the blood of his enemies opens this passage. Then we read a prayer of the people of Israel, asking for God's compassion and deliverance. In 64:8 we see a picture of God as potter and us as his clay.

Psalms 106:1-23: Another Psalm which opens in praise, before recounting the rebellious history of Israel. Let's remember v3 today.

Hebrews 4: The writer says that believers in Christ have entered into a place of rest, which was foreshadowed by the old Sabbath law. We then read of the great power of God's Word, and I hope you have discovered the truth of these words throughout this Bible plan! Lastly we see the superiority of Jesus again, who was tempted just like us but didn't sin. Take careful note of v16.

Week 75 Wednesday

Isaiah 65-66: Isaiah emphasises that even those who aren't Israelites will be part of God's salvation plan, because the Jews have rejected God. What harsh promises are given to those who reject Him! But what wonders await those who embrace Him – including the amazing new heavens and new earth, also described in the book of Revelation.

What a journey we've had through Isaiah! I hope that these words have brought you to a place of worship and wonder.

Psalms 106:24-48: The Psalmist continues to describe the unfaithfulness of the Israelites and God's resulting rejection of them. But at the end there is the note of mercy when the people return to God, followed by praise.

Hebrews 5: Continuing from ch4, we see that Jesus is superior to the high priests in the old Jewish system. When the writer talks about Jesus being “perfected” (v9), he is talking about Jesus' death and resurrection completing what was needed for our salvation. The author ends the chapter by encouraging us to move on from basic teachings about Christ to deeper truths about righteousness.

Week 75 Thursday

Nahum 1-2: I wonder how many of us have never read the book of Nahum! It was written around 660 years before Jesus, when the Assyrians had conquered Israel, and predicts the fall of Nineveh – the capital city of Assyria.

Chapter 1 is hard for us to read, with all the talk of God's vengeance and wrath. Remember, the Assyrians were evil and were causing great levels of damage, and so God's feeling toward them are right. Look for his words of comfort for the faithful ones in here too. Chapter 2 sees God begin to wipe out Assyria, and they are no match for Him in His power.

Psalms 107: Notice the pattern here – the Psalmist describes a group of followers who turn from God (v4, v10, v17, v23), and we see each group cry out to God and find salvation (v6, v13, v19, v28). Thus they are called to give thanks to God (v8, v15, v21, v31).

Hebrews 6: We are again encouraged to leave behind the basic teachings of faith and go on to deeper ones. The writer then talks about how one who rebels and falls away from faith will not find their way back, and so we must not be lazy but must continue following in God's ways and hoping in God's promise.

Week 75 Friday 📖

Nahum 3: Frightening words from God here, but let's remember that the Assyrian empire was truly evil. A good God must bring such evil to an end, which is what He does here. What a hectic little book, but an important one as we remember God's seriousness about evil.

Psalms 108: David's words to start the Psalm are familiar, he has said similar words in other Psalms. He is reassured that God is on the side of his people.

Hebrews 7: The author explains here how Jesus can be our high priest without being from the tribe of Levi. Christ's priesthood supersedes the Levitical priesthood, because He is in line with the first priest Melchizedek. His priestly role is also greater because he made one sacrifice, once for all, for the sins of the world – unlike the old priesthood where sacrifices had to be repeated.

Deep truths in God's Word this week! I am sure you have been both challenged and comforted as you've read.

“

“Be glad and rejoice
forever in what I will
create, for I will create
Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.
I will rejoice over
Jerusalem and take
delight in my people; the
sound of weeping and of
crying will be heard in it
no more.”

Isaiah 65:18–19

”

Week 76

Get ready for the unusual book of Ezekiel this week! We also read more from the Psalms and Hebrews. A reminder: this is not about just checking the boxes to say we've read the Bible – it's about meeting with God in His Word. Pray much and seek His face in each reading.

Week 76 Monday

Ezekiel 1-3:15: Let's begin a difficult but rewarding prophetic book. Ezekiel was captured along with his fellow Jews by Babylonians. He wrote between 593 and 571BC, and his book contains many strong pictures and stories that represent God's feelings towards his people on Judah.

The book opens with Ezekiel's vision of a windstorm and four creatures with four faces and wings, which some take to represent God's majesty (lion), His power (ox), His swiftness (eagle) and his wisdom (man). The creatures seem to be carrying a chariot above which God in His glory appeared. Ezekiel falls face down in fear, but God picks him up and speaks, telling him to boldly prophesy to Judah whether they listen or not. In the first part of ch3, Ezekiel is given a scroll representing God's words, which he eats and finds sweet (a lovely picture of how the Word of God should bring us delight!). Ezekiel returns to his people in deep distress.

Psalms 109: A harrowing Psalm calling down God's judgement of enemies. The Christian, however, prays for their enemies and blesses them, since Jesus has commanded us to. Wouldn't it be better for evil people to be *saved and made new* and have a testimony, rather than destroyed?

Hebrews 8: We see here that Jesus' ministry was greater than that of the Jewish high priests, because His sanctuary is the true tabernacle of heaven (rather than the earthly tabernacle set up by the Israelites), and because the New Covenant is greater than the old. The writer quotes from Jeremiah 31 to show us that the covenant Jesus established was one of faith and forgiveness.

Week 76 Tuesday

Ezekiel 3:16-4: Ezekiel is called by God to be a "watchman" – one who would speak God's word of warning to them. He is then not accountable for those who accept or reject his warning, but God is clear that Ezekiel is accountable for the ones he doesn't warn. What a motivation for evangelism! In ch4, Ezekiel is told to portray Jerusalem's fate in 3 ways: first, using a block of clay and an iron pan to show how Jerusalem would be sieged; next by lying on his side for a certain amount of days to represent Israel and Judah's sin; and third by baking the poorest bread imaginable which represents how far the Israelites have fallen from the "land of milk and honey" they first enjoyed.

Psalms 110: This is a famous "Messianic" Psalm which is quoted many times in the New Testament in reference to Jesus, who is seated at the Father's right hand (v1) and will, at his second coming, "judge the nations" (v6).

Hebrews 9: Here the author explains the rituals of the Old Testament times – how the priests would enter into the Most Holy Place to offer sacrifices with the blood of animals. He then explains that Christ became the new high priest, entering into the heavenly tabernacle having offered *himself* as a sacrifice on the cross. Thus, through His blood, we can be cleansed and forgiven. We also read the great news that Jesus' sacrifice was "once for all" (v26) – He doesn't have to do it again, but all human sin can be forgiven through that one act.

Week 76 Wednesday

Ezekiel 5-6: God instructs Ezekiel to use more pictures to teach. He is to shave his head and face (a shocking thing for a Jewish man to do) and divide the hair into three parts: one would be burned to represent God's judgement on his people; one would be hacked by a sword, which representing the Babylonian's killing of Jews; and one would be thrown to the wind, a picture of the Jewish people scattering to different nations. In ch6, God's word of judgement are clear, but don't miss his words of grace in v8-10 for those who are convicted of their sin and turn back.

Psalms 111: A song of praise to the God whose works, deeds and wonders are praiseworthy.

Hebrews 10: The writer again reminds us that the law was just "a shadow" (v1), but that Christ made real all the things the law represented. In particular, the offerings of animals to atone for sins was never a complete system – but when Jesus offered himself, His death was sufficient "for all time" (v12) to take away our sins. At v19, the book turns from sermon to letter, as the writer encourages his people to "draw near to God" (v22) and to persevere through difficult times and not "shrink back" (v39).

Week 76 Thursday

Ezekiel 7-8: The prophet writes these startling words looking ahead to the Babylonian invasion of Judah, the result of the people's "detestable practices" (7:3-4, 8-9). Their wealth, in the end, does them no good (7:19). In Ch8 God begins revealing to the prophet what it was that deserved such punishment – idols being placed in the temple, pictures of all

sorts of unclean animals on the walls of the temple, women mourning for a false god, men bowing down to the sun, and committing violence. God's wrath came because of these things – how far they had fallen from the love for their saving God.

Psalms 112: A lovely Psalm which proclaims that the righteous ones of God need not fear, because God is their delight and their light – unlike the wicked who are anxious (v10).

Hebrews 11: This is a famous passage which speaks of faith! Look at all the different examples of faith portrayed here, and go into your day living with deep faith that pleases God.

Week 76 Friday

Ezekiel 9-10: Another frightening passage, as God's glory leaves the holiest place in the temple and God's judgement sees the sinful Israelites killed – although the faithful remnant are “marked” so that this punishment does not touch them. Ezekiel then sees the same creatures he saw at the beginning of the book, and now recognizes them as heavenly beings called “*cherubim*”. Then comes an awful moment, as the glory of God leaves the temple. For the Jews, this was the ultimate sign of God's punishment for their sinful ways.

Psalms 113: A short but deep Psalm of worship, beginning and ending with the phrase “praise the Lord”. As verse 3 suggests, our days should also be bookended with praise.

Hebrews 12: A powerful picture of Jesus enduring the cross gives us hope as we face our trials (v1-3). The writer then explains how important it is for God to discipline the ones He loves (v4-12), and perhaps these words might bring some perspective to your life at the moment. Lastly we are encouraged not to reject the God who brings us salvation.

I pray that your time in the Word this week has been encouraging and challenging. Ponder on these truths over the weekend, and be ready for more truth from the Word as next week begins.

“He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”

Hebrews 11:25-26

Week 77

More fascinating imagery from Ezekiel is on our plate this week, and more worshipful words of the Psalms. As Hebrews ends we dive back into a gospel and see Jesus' story all over again! Read on with joy.

Week 77 Monday

Ezekiel 11: Ezekiel now has a vision of godless men who plot evil, and prophesies that they will be driven from the city of Jerusalem and judged by God. Are you noticing the phrase “then you will that I am the Lord” (v10) coming up a lot in Ezekiel’s visions? This seems to be the main point God is trying to get across through this prophet. Notice also Ezekiel’s deep concern for his own people – when a wicked man died, he does not rejoice, but falls facedown and cries for God’s mercy (v13). Then God promises to save a remnant of Israelites and bring them back to their land, giving them a new heart and new spirit (v17-20), which is what was fulfilled when Jesus came later. Last we see the Spirit of God withdraw even further away from the temple, now to the mountain outside to the city.

Psalms 114: This short Psalm shows God’s great sovereign power! The sea and mountains obey Him and tremble in His presence. Do we?

Hebrews 13: The lovely book of Hebrews comes to an end here, first with words of practical advice about hospitality, marriage, contentment, orthodox teachings, and more. We learn that Jesus is never-changing (v8) and that his dying outside of the city gates has significance (v12). Thus we are called to live lives of praise (v15), compassion (v16) and obedience (v17), before the writer shares a beautiful benediction and closing greetings.

A deep and profound work which taught us much about the superiority of Jesus. I pray it was a blessing to you!

Week 77 Tuesday

Ezekiel 12: God gets Ezekiel to paint a picture of the upcoming exile by climbing through a hole in Jerusalem’s wall with all of his belongings. Again there is the promise of a remnant of Israelites being protected, and again we see God stating that people’s knowledge of Him is His motive for all of this.

Psalms 115: The Psalmist declares that glory belongs to the true God – not us, and not idols. Thus all people can trust in God as their help and shield (v9-11).

Mark 1: We are back to the Jesus story again! Mark’s Gospel is regarded as the earliest gospel, and presents the life of Jesus in quick-fire fashion.

Ch1 skips over Jesus’ birth and instead begins with John the Baptist preparing the way and baptising Him. We see the calling of His first disciples and His ministry begin to pick up momentum as he teaches, exorcises and heals. But all the while it is his deep prayer-life that defines Him.

Week 77 Wednesday

Ezekiel 13: God has stern words for false prophets who only pretend to speak God’s Word. A startling reminder to preachers of today! Be careful of preachers who “whitewash” their preaching and only give easy, comforting messages. Also, be careful of those who mix God’s Word with other rituals involving magic charms (v17-22).

Psalms 116: A Psalm of praise to the God who delivers us from death. I have used v15 in funeral services many times.

Mark 2: Jesus’ authority is on display in the way he not only heals, but forgives as God! And yet still he eats with those considered sinful. Jesus then explains that the new wine he brought needed to be contained in new wineskins – a new message needed new messengers. Lastly we see that Jesus’ view of the Sabbath was different from the traditional Jews.

Week 77 Thursday

Ezekiel 14-15: God has stern words for those who set up idols. Notice that judgement is an individual matter – having righteous people like Noah, Daniel and Job around you doesn’t guarantee your own salvation. In ch15 Israel is pictured as a fruitless vine – a picture that Jesus himself used in John 15.

Psalms 117: A short little Psalm – the shortest chapter in the Bible – calling all people to praise God for his love and faithfulness. A great message to hold onto today.

Mark 3: Jesus heals more people and exorcises more demons, before appointing 12 apostles to do the same. The Jewish leaders and teachers were most put out by all of this, and accused Jesus of being in league with Satan – which, Jesus explains, is an unforgivable sin. Jesus’ family then arrives, thinking he is “out of his mind” (v21), and Jesus declares that the family of faith is a bond stronger than blood. We can ask ourselves today: am I Jesus’ mother or brother, doing the will of God?

Ezekiel 16: Ezekiel sees that Israel had become even worse than Sodom and Samaria. God compares His special people to a small child whom he lovingly rescued, who then grew up to become an unfaithful spouse and eventually a prostitute who does the most detestable things imaginable. God promises that their sin will catch up with them, but he also promises atonement for their sin. Before we get too judgemental towards Israel, let us consider who this might be *our* story too.

Psalms 118: A rich Psalm indeed! We are called to give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and love (1-4); to know His presence and help (6-7); to trust in Him above people (8-9); to find our victory in Him (10-17); and to praise and worship Him for what He has done (19-29). What words from this Psalm will you take with you into your day?

Mark 4: Jesus teaches through parables. First is the parable of the sower, which Jesus himself explains in the passage. Then the parable of the lamp and the measures get us thinking about how God deals with us. The parable of the growing seed reminds us that we must scatter the good news so that God can make it sprout and grow; and the parable of the mustard seed describes that quick growth of the kingdom of God. Lastly we see Jesus calming a storm, to the amazement of the disciples.

It's great to be back in the gospels again, and straight away we see how similar Jesus was to the prophets of old! As we spend a weekend in rest, let us pray deeply about the truths God has revealed in His Word this week.



“Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Mark 2:17



Week 78

Ezekiel continues his parables of Israel this week, and we make a start on the long but beautiful Psalm 119, while studying Jesus in Mark.

Week 78 Monday

Ezekiel 17: This story outlines Israel's initial partnership with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon – the first eagle – who actually helped them to thrive in their own homeland. But when Israel turned to Egypt – the second eagle – they essentially broke their covenant with Nebuchadnezzar who then turned against them. Israel's King Zedekiah was then carried to Babylon where he died. But notice v22-24, where we have a prophecy of the Messiah who would be planted in Israel and produce branches and bear fruit. Jesus himself used the imagery in v23 in his own parable in Mark 4.

Psalms 119:1–8: The longest chapter in the Bible is a special one. We will walk through this Psalm 8 verses at a time for the next month or so – notice how almost every verse talks about the worth of God's "law" or "decrees" or "precepts" or "commands" etc. The Word of God is indeed powerful and we are called to obey it with all our hearts with the Spirit's power.

Mark 5: Jesus' great power and compassion are on display again. He heals a man who is in deep bondage to a legion of evil spirits, and then tells him to go back to his family and tell them what happened – a reminder to us all to share our relationship with Jesus with those close to us. He then heals a woman with a chronic illness who touches his garment – do we reach out to Him in such desperation? Jesus goes on to heal a little girl in spite of the crowds' mocking. What an incredible healer He is.

Week 78 Tuesday

Ezekiel 18-19: Ezekiel is clear that individuals are responsible for their own sin, and so he calls us to repent and live with a new spirit. Then he uses two more pictures to illustrate Israel's capture by enemies – a lion being trapped in a pit, and a vine being uprooted.

Psalms 119:9–16: God's Word does so much for us. It keeps us pure and free from sin, and also gives us delight and joy. Let's be sure to "not neglect His word" (v16).

Mark 6: We see today that Jesus is only able to do what he does when the people are receptive. Notice the difference between the beginning and the end of the chapter! We also see him sending his disciples out to do the work of preaching and healing, and he still does this today. Jesus feeds 5000 and walks on water, displaying his obvious power as the Son of God. But his cousin, John the Baptist, comes to a sad end.

Week 78 Wednesday

Ezekiel 20: The leaders of Israel are judged by God for rebelling against God through idolatry and desecrating the Sabbath. As ever, God's concern is for the glory of His name (v9-12), but the people simply keep rebelling against Him. Ever merciful, God promises not to destroy them completely (v17, 22, 44), but the consequences of their sin still remains. We must be careful, then, to live our lives as holy and devout followers of God – but remember that as Christians we do so not *in order to earn God's love*, but *because He has freely loved us*.

Psalms 119:17–24: Perhaps v18 should be a daily prayer we use before reading the Bible! God's Word is wonderful and we need to see it this way. The Psalmist declares that the Word is a counsellor to him, and so he is "consumed with longing" (v20) for it. Are we this passionate about the Bible?

Mark 7: Jesus shows us that traditions that are not based on *God's Word* are simply empty and uninformed. Let us be careful not to "nullify God's Word by our tradition" (v13). He also makes the revolutionary declaration that all foods are clean in God's eyes – because sin and evil is a matter of the heart. An interesting encounter with a Gentile woman seems harsh at first, but in fact Jesus' words were an invitation to one who no Jew would have even spoken with. Then Jesus heals a deaf and mute man, showing again his compassion and power.

Week 78 Thursday

Ezekiel 21-22: God's anger at Israel's sin is intense. Let's not forget that God created us to be holy people who can "distinguish between the holy and the common" (22:26), and who treat people with compassion (22:7-12).

Psalms 119:25–32: God's Word preserves us, teaches us, strengthens us, and helps us choose the right way.

Mark 8: Jesus again feeds a large group with just a small amount of food. Still the Pharisees doubt him, and even the disciples struggle to understand him at times. Peter's great confession of faith in Jesus marks a turning point in the story, but soon after he is rebuking Jesus, causing Jesus to speak on the great cost of being a disciple. These words are always convicting!

Week 78 Friday 📖

Ezekiel 23: A vivid picture of Israel and Judah's sin, using the picture of prostitution. We must not forget that God is a jealous God – longing for us to stay faithful to Him in our ways.

Psalms 119:33–40: The Psalmist continues to see God's Word as his guide and help.

Mark 9: A full chapter with Jesus' Transfiguration on the mountain, again proving that He is the Son of God in a unique sense. Coming down the mountain Jesus heals a boy that the disciples couldn't because of their lack of prayer (v29). How powerful our prayers are! Jesus then shows the disciples that humility and childlikeness are important attitudes in God's eyes; that we shouldn't stop people working in Jesus' name in a different group to ours; that sin is indeed eternally dangerous and must be cut off from our lives; and that following Him is like being salt to the world, providing flavour and preservation.

It's been another hectic week in the Word, and God has blessed us as we've read. Think deeply on the truths we've encountered, as you rest this weekend.

“
“Open my eyes
that I may see
wonderful
things in your
law.”

Psalm 119:18

”

Afterword

6 months to go to finishing the whole Bible in 2 years! What a ride so far.

I have so enjoyed reading the Bible this way that I plan to keep on doing it – once we get through week 104

I will simply go back to book 1 and start all over. I hope you might start considering that too.

You can find the PDF for the next 13 weeks [on my website here](#).

Did you find these free notes helpful? Please consider [donating towards my online ministry here](#).

On we go to week 79.