

## Psalm 45, Ephesians 1-6 (#34) Revised 2022

**Psalm 45** — This chapter is a wedding song for David or Solomon. The author shifts his focus in verses 6-9 to one greater than David or Solomon, the Messiah Himself. He continues with the earthly wedding in verse 10. *God is mentioned three times in verses 6 & 7, indicating two different persons. Who are they (see Hebrews 1:8-9)?*

**Ephesians**— The apostle Paul wrote this book when he was under house arrest in Rome about 61 A.D. This book was a circular letter to be sent first to the church at Ephesus, and then to be read to all the churches in the province. It is possible that this book is the lost letter Paul sent to the church of Laodicea (Colossians 4:16). This marvelous letter begins with the incredible blessings we have received because of our relationship with Christ, and the awesome future the Father has planned for us all because we have by faith trusted in Christ. “In God’s eternal plan, God’s great masterpiece the church has now been manifested, in which Christ is united with all the redeemed whether Jew or Gentile, transforming relationships in this life and leading to a glorious future.” #11 p. 297. Chapters 1 to 3 describe all our blessings we have received and then chapters 4 to 6 give us practical ways we can live in unity in our relationship with God and other believers. In chapters 5 and 6 Paul speaks of the various attitudes and responses in relationship to marriage, family, and work. The book closes with the believer’s armor that must be put on daily for the spiritual battles we face.

**Ephesians 1**— After a short greeting, the Apostle Paul gives us two extended sentences in the Greek language. The first sentence is found in verses 3 to 14, and the second sentence is from verses 15 to 23. We as Christians have been blessed with a multitude of blessings by the Father which came to us through our relationship with Christ. God chose us and adopted us that we should be holy and blameless sons and daughters. The first mystery that Paul revealed in this book is that God will gather together all of His people, both which are in heaven and on earth, in the dispensation of the fullness of the times at the end of the age (vv. 3-14). In an extended prayer for the believers, Paul prays that they will realize and appropriate all the richness and power that is theirs in Christ. The passage ends with the exaltation of Christ over all creation and created beings to become the head over all things for the benefit of the Church, which is His body that fills everything with Himself. *1. Verses 3 to 14 say that the great spiritual blessing to become God’s children was a joint participation of the Trinity. What part did each member of the Trinity play for us to become His children? See verses 4-5, 11, verse 7, and verse 13. 2. What are the four prayer requests that Paul makes for the believers? See verses 13 to 21.*

**Ephesians 2**— Paul now speaks of our past slavery to sin, self, and the Devil that was our life’s narrative thus leaving us hopeless and spiritually dead (vv. 1-3). The words “But God” shows us the initiative God took, motivated by His mercy and love, to transform evil vile sinners, to raise them from the dead and give them new life, and enthrone them in heavenly realms with Christ. All this was an incredible free gift of God’s grace, apart from any human effort, for the purpose of doing good works which are motivated by God’s Spirit living in us and are done for His glory (4-10). Now Paul changes from addressing personal reconciliation to that of corporate reconciliation. He paints a bleak portrait of the Gentiles past which was without Christ, without hope, and excluded from the covenants and citizenship of Israel. The words “But now in Christ Jesus” shows the reconciliation that the cross and the blood of Christ achieved to unite two previously hostile enemies to become one new body, thus granting peace, equality, and access through the Spirit to the Father. Now it is clear that race, culture, social status, education, past religion, or gender are no longer relevant. Everyone who is born of the Spirit is a member of the God’s new building, a holy temple of God, with the foundation made up of the apostles and the prophets, and Christ being the cornerstone.

*1. Who are the three enemies of the Christian? See verses 1 to 3. 2. Express in bullet points the means and goal of salvation in verses 8 to 10.*

**Ephesians 3**— Paul continues to speak about this body, the church, which God revealed to him. This revelation was a mystery that was not previously known to past generations. “This is so God’s multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens (v. 10/HCSB).” The apostle addresses his prayer to the Father of not only the Jews but also the Gentiles whether they are in heaven or on earth. First, he asks that our inner man will be strengthened with power through the Spirit. Secondly, he prays that they will have the comprehension and knowledge of the love of Christ in all its fullness (14-19). Paul finishes with the fact that God’s ability to work in us and for us far exceeds our scope of comprehension. He then ends with a beautiful doxology (vv. 20-21). *What are the two mysteries found in chapters 1 and 3, and what did Paul mean by the word mystery? See verses 1:9,10 and 3:3, 6.*

**Ephesians 4**— Paul has just written three chapters describing all the blessings we have received as children of God without giving a single command. Now in chapters 4 to 6, believers are given practical ways we should respond and “walk worthy of the calling we have received.” Godly living with fellow believers will require patience, humility, and love as we strive for unity in the body. This unity of the Church has as its foundation the Biblical teachings of the first three chapters (vv. 1-6). To promote the unity and growth of the body, Jesus distributed gifts to all believers at His resurrection but gave the specific gifts for some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers in order to equip, build up, and prepare the saints for works of service and to reach their full maturity in Christ (vv. 7-16). The life of the non-believing Gentiles is one of futility and rebellion, as well as being marked by sensuality and impurity. As believers, we are commanded to take off the old self and its practices and put on the new self that God planted in us the moment we believed so that Holy Spirit can produce in us the very likeness of Christ (vv. 17-24). The righteous character of Christ will be evidenced in: our truthful speaking, our handling of anger, our industry at work, our wholesome talk, our words and attitudes with others, and our forgiving spirit (vv. 25-32). *Taking into consideration this chapter, give a summary of what a mature Christian looks like.*

**Ephesians 5**— Paul gives general instructions on how we can be imitators of God and walk in love as we saw in the life of Christ. He gives us guidelines for sexual propriety, speech, and godly living. Since we are children of light, we need to be godly in our associations and conduct, living a life of goodness, righteousness, and truth. We need to have as our goal the desire to please the Lord in everything, exposing the fruitless works of darkness, and wisely investing our time in discerning and doing the will of God. The keys to a Spirit-filled life are a community of believers that are filled with praise and thanksgiving, mutually submitting themselves to each other in love (vv. 1-21). From verses 5:22 to 6:9, the apostle spells out the duties and responses in our relationships in life: in marriage, between children and parents, and between slaves and masters (employees and employers). In the relationship of marriage, Paul says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord (v. 22).” To the husbands he says, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (v. 25).” Then to sum up he says, “Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband (v. 33).” In this passage the relationship between the husband and the wife is mirrored in the relationship between Christ and the church. “All concerned experience personal worth, value, security, and significance when these reciprocal relationships are exercised under the lordship of Christ.” #12 p. 717.

*Explain the biblical meaning and purpose of wives submitting to their husbands, and husbands loving your wives as Christ loved the church.*

**Ephesians 6**— Now Paul speaks of the relationship between children and parents and brings to mind the importance of this because it is the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment with a promise for children who keep it. Fathers also must be careful not to stir up anger in their children by the way they discipline them (vv. 1-4). Next, the apostle speaks of the relationship of slaves (employees) and masters (employers). Slaves should serve their masters as he would serve Christ, realizing that someday the Lord will pay them back. Masters are to treat their slaves in the same manner that Christ would treat masters since one day they will be judged by Christ Himself for their stewardship (vv. 5-9). Finally, Paul reminds believers that they are engaged in a fierce spiritual conflict against Satan and his spiritual forces of evil. Unless we find our strength in the Lord's mighty power, daily put on the believer's armor, and stand firm in the victory Christ has already won, we will not win in the battle. In addition to the spiritual armor that protects us, we must use the offensive weapons of God's Word and prayer in order to have victory in the battle (vv. 10-24). *1. What is spiritual warfare? 2. What are some steps we need to take to gain victory in our battle over our enemy?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESVc. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible c. 2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

## Psalm 46, Numbers 16-17, 20-23 (#35) Revised 2022

**Psalm 46** — This is a prophetic song celebrating the ultimate triumph of God over the nations, when He "makes wars to cease" and instills a lasting peace on earth. We are reminded to "be still and know that He is God". See verses 9 & 10. *Look for the instances of verb "to be" (is, was, am, will be) where God is the subject (God is, I will, I am God, etc.). List the attributes of God mentioned in these verses.*

**Numbers 16**— This chapter further indicates why Yahweh did not allow this generation to enter the Promised Land. The Scriptures declared they were a stiff-necked, unbelieving, and rebellious people. Korah, a Levite, along with Dathan and Abiram, challenge Moses and Aaron's authority to lead the Israelites. Again, God wanted to consume the whole community, but Moses and Aaron intercede for them. God then swallows up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram with their families and possessions, and the earth closed over them. The 250 leaders who sided with them were consumed with fire. The next day the entire community complained about Moses and Aaron that resulted in the death of 14,700 people in a plague before Moses and Aaron's intercession could stop it. *As you read this chapter, what were the sins of Korah, Dathan and Abiram which caused this rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron?*

**Numbers 17**— To keep the people of Israel from further deaths as well as challenges to Aaron's authority as High Priest, the head of each tribe was commanded to bring their staffs with their names written on it. The staffs were then to be placed in the Tabernacle in the presence of the Lord. The staff that would sprout would be the one the Lord had chosen to be the High Priest. The next day Aaron's staff sprouted buds and produced almonds. His staff was permanently placed in the Ark of the Covenant to remember that Aaron was chosen as High Priest by God. *What were the three reminders the Lord gave to Israel to encourage them to obey His commands and the people He had placed over them? See verses 15:37-40, 16:38-40, 17:10-11*

**Numbers 20**— Miriam dies at the wilderness of Zin (about 130 years old—Exodus 2). #9 p.171 After forty years in the wilderness the people of Israel (now the new generation) revert back to the old ways of their fathers and complain about not having choice foods and water. Unknowingly, this was a test for Moses who had faithfully served Yahweh in humility and obedience. Instead of speaking to the rock as God clearly commanded, Moses struck the rock twice and thus was not allowed, along with his brother Aaron, to enter the Promised Land (vv. 1-13). Moses petitioned the Edomites (descendants of Esau) to allow them to pass through their land, but the king refuses, forcing them to go the long way around (vv. 14-21). Aaron dies on Mount Hor at the age of 123 in the fortieth year of the wilderness wanderings (vv. 22-29, 33:38-39). *What were the reasons why God forbid Moses to enter the Promised Land? Does God seem overly harsh? Explain. Extra Question: What are some lessons we can personally learn from the failure of Moses, since he was almost at the finish line (Promised Land) when it happened?*

**Numbers 21**— Unprovoked, the Canaanite king of Arad attacks Israel and God gives the new generation their first victory as they march to conquer the Promised Land (vv. 1-3). Due to their impatience with the difficult detour around Edom, the Israelites again complain about the quality of food and lack of water. The Lord sends poisonous snakes among the people. After repentance, Moses raises up a bronze snake on a pole and all who look at it are cured (vv. 4-9). On their journey toward the east side of the Jordan River, they camp in various places. God reveals to Moses the location of a well which causes the thirsty Israelites to break out with a song of thanksgiving for His timely provision. This time they exchanged complaining for praising (vv. 10-20). On the east of the Jordan River, Israel scores a series of victories over the Amorites, defeating Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan (vv. 21-35). *What lessons can be learned from the story of the bronze snake? See verses 21:4-9, John 3:14-15, II Kings 18:4.*

**Numbers 22**— Israel's victories terrify Balak and the Moabites, so they seek out Balaam, a pagan hireling prophet, to come and curse Israel. Although God says "no" to Balaam's desire to go and curse Israel, Balaam tries to persuade God to allow him to go, since he received a larger financial offer from Balak than the previous one. When an angel of the Lord almost kills Balaam, he is saved by the actions of his donkey who then speaks to him after receiving a beating from Balaam. With reluctant permission, God allows Balaam to go to meet Balak, with the warning that he is only to speak what God tells him to say. *Why does God use a donkey to deliver His message? Extra Question: Although God gave His permissive will to Balaam to go to Balak, it was not in His perfect will. As we live our daily lives, how can we be sure to be in the perfect will of God instead of His permissive will?*

**Numbers 23**— Balak takes Balaam to a different mountain and offers many sacrifices in order to get him to curse Israel. Each time Balaam speaks, his words break forth in blessings on Israel which makes Balak angry. Exasperated, Balak tells Balaam neither to curse nor bless Israel, but still continues to try to get Balaam to curse Israel. *What is the central message of the two oracles Balaam gave in chapter 23?*  
*Extra Question: Verse 19 says “God is not a man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?” What does this verse say about our relationship with God?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988, Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible c. 1997, Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible c. 1988, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Illustrated Bible Handbook. c. 2008, by George W. Knight, Barbour Publishing Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008, Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible, c. 1994. Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Halley’s Bible Handbook, c. 2000, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible c. 2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.

## **Psalms 47-48, Numbers 24-25, I Corinthians 1-4 (#36) Revised 2022**

**Psalm 47** — This is a joyous song remembering the victories of God when He subdued the land of Canaan (vv. 1-4). God's dominion over the whole earth concludes the Psalm (vv. 5-9). *What are the actions attributed to God?*

**Psalm 48** — The sons of Korah give us a song about Jerusalem, the city where God dwells as their ultimate fortress. *Contrast this Psalm with Nehemiah 1:3, 8-9. How did Jerusalem go from a city of joy and victory to one of disgrace and destruction?*

**Numbers 24**— As Balak once again tried to get Balaam to curse Israel, Balaam did not this time try to use omens or sorcery, but was empowered by the Spirit of God to proclaim blessing on Israel. He finishes his oracle with the words, "Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you (v. 9b)." Balak is furious hearing these words and eventually parts company with Balaam after Balaam pronounces the future destruction of Moab by Israel. *Verse 17 says, "A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." Who is this prophecy talking about? Genesis 49:10, Revelation 22:16.*

**Numbers 25**— Some men of Israel are enticed by Moabite women into immorality and the worshipping of their gods. God sends a plague that kills 24,000 Israelites, but the plague is finally stopped by Phinehas, the son of the High Priest Eleazar, who executes a blatant offending couple. *How does Balaam actually fit into the story of this chapter? What was his judgment? Numbers 31:8, 15-16. Extra Question: "II Peter 2:15 warns against the way of Balaam (seeking wealth through religion). Jude 11 warns of the error of Balaam (choosing profit rather than obedience). Revelation 2:14 warns against the doctrine of Balaam (the sanction of immorality by religion). How does each find expression in these chapters" and in contemporary Christianity and religion? #6, p. 116.*



**I Corinthians**— The apostle Paul founded the church of Corinth about 50 AD on his second missionary journey, and wrote this letter to them about 55 AD from Ephesus, addressing problems in the church, and answering questions of a committee that was sent from the church of Corinth (16:17). Corinth, a rich commercial city, was the capital of Achaia with a population of perhaps 500,000 located in southern Greece, famous for idolatry and immorality. In this letter the Apostle wrote about the disunity, immaturity, and immorality of the church. The major themes of this epistle are Christian unity, morality, women's roles, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection. The best known and most treasured part of this book is the "love" chapter (13).

**I Corinthians 1**— The letter begins with the usual greeting from Paul, giving thanks for the church, and for God's faithfulness to complete His work in them at Christ's return (vv. 1-9). Paul first addresses the problem of divisions in the church, urging its members to be in harmony, united in one mind and purpose (vv. 10-17). The powerful message of the cross seems foolish to the world. The Jews seek signs and miracles, and the Gentiles follow a rational philosophical approach. God's way is through the foolishness of the preaching of the cross of Christ which demonstrates God's power and wisdom. Our boasting must be in Christ alone because through faith in Him we receive God's wisdom; that is, Christ's righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (vv. 18-31).

*Disunity in the church is a sign of immaturity and carnality. What do we need to do to promote unity in the church? Extra Question: The superiority of God's wisdom is seen in the three benefits we receive from Christ. Explain and amplify the meaning of "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."*

**I Corinthians 2**— Although Paul was a brilliant scholar and could debate all of the philosophical ideas of the day, he simply preached the gospel of Christ and the cross in weakness and trembling, allowing the Spirit of God to powerfully work in the hearts of those who would believe. The temporal wisdom of this age is not what the Apostle declared, but the eternal wisdom and truth of God that was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. The unbeliever cannot understand spiritual truth since they don't have the Spirit of God in them. The spiritual person is able to evaluate and comprehend all of God's truth that is revealed to him because he has the mind of Christ.

*How did the world's wisdom explain the meaning of the cross? Extra Question: What two things are necessary to find God's wisdom and viewpoint on any situation in which we find ourselves?*

**I Corinthians 3**— Paul exposes the immaturity of the Corinthian church because of the way each one would pick and exalt a certain leader as his or her favorite, when the truth is that Paul, Apollos, and Peter were just servants performing the tasks God had assigned them (vv. 1-9). Some-day Christ, the only foundation, will judge every believer for the type of materials he has used to build his spiritual house. On

that day the fire of Christ's judgment will test the quality of his work, and rewards will be given (10-15). Paul gives a warning about anyone who destroys God's temple (the local church). Paul circles back to the theme of boasting in human leaders and reminds them that everything they have is a gift from God (including leaders), and they are in union with Christ and Christ is in union with God (vv.16-23). *What tests should we ask ourselves so that we build our lives on gold, silver, and precious stones and not wood, hay, and straw?*

**I Corinthians 4**— The Apostle sees himself as a servant of Christ and a manager of mysteries, and knows that he is required to be faithful to this calling. We must be careful not to judge others, but let the Lord evaluate them on "that day." God's evaluation is perfect since He is omniscient and even knows the motives behind our deeds (vv. 1-5). Paul uses some sanctified sarcasm in comparing Apollos and himself with the Corinthian believers. While they are rich and reign as kings, Paul and Apollos are fools for Christ, a spectacle to the world, and treated as the world's garbage (vv. 6-13). As a godly, spiritual father to the church in Corinth, Paul encouraged them to imitate the ways he lived his life through the transforming power of Christ Jesus. The acid test of spiritual reality is not eloquent words, but a Spirit-empowered life. *Explain the meaning of verse 5. How should you apply this to your own life?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible c. 2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.