

Week 25 Psalm 48 Romans 3-7, Psalm 49

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?**

Romans 3— The Jews do have an advantage in that through them God has revealed the very words of Scripture for which all people will one day be held accountable (v. 1-8). After a complete examination of humankind from head to foot, God's Word declares everyone unrighteous and under sin, being fully condemned by the law (v. 9- 20). Now God gives His superior, perfect righteousness to those who trust in the blood of Christ Jesus to justify them. This salvation excludes all human works and boasting since it is received by faith only (v.21-31). **1. What is the purpose of the law? See verses 19-20. 2. After reading verses 19 to 29, how would you explain the basics of the gospel using five or six bullet points.**

Romans 4— Now Paul begins to prove his case beginning with the Patriarch Abraham, verifying that Abraham believed God and was declared righteous, and thus all those who believe the gospel are children of Abraham and heirs of eternal salvation. After David's declaration of righteousness apart from the law (v. 6-8), it is made clear that Abraham was the father of all who are heirs of salvation, since his faith in God's promise (Genesis 15:6) was before his circumcision, and was not related to keeping the law. Verse 21 says of Abraham, "being fully convinced that God had power to do what he had promised." **Where are you at this present time being stretched in your ability to trust God's promises?**

Romans 5— Paul lists the many benefits of being justified by faith. The benefits of this justification are peace with God, access into this grace, hope in sufferings, and God's love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. All these blessings come to us including our continuous salvation and reconciliation to God, not because we deserved them, but by the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. As a proof that the entire human race participated with Adam in his sin and disobedience, everyone experiences death and condemnation. With the coming of Christ, the second Adam, believers have all the benefits of grace including justification, the free gift of righteousness, and eternal life. **Explain what it means to be reconciled to God and why it was necessary? See verses 10-11, Colossians 1:21-22, II Corinthians 5:18-21. Extra Question: List in two columns the comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Jesus.**

Romans 6— Paul refutes the accusation that his doctrine of grace encourages believers to sin more in order to highlight God's grace more. He proclaims the moral incongruity of a believer living in sin since he was baptized with Christ in His death and united with Him in His resurrection. The three important words Paul uses in this chapter are: (1) know, (2) count (consider, reckon), and (3) yield (present). We must know that our old life was crucified with Christ. We must count as true in our lives that we are dead to sin but alive to God. Lastly, we must fully yield or surrender our bodies as members of God and instruments of righteousness. The promise we receive if we follow these steps is that sin will not dominate our lives because of His grace. When we yield ourselves to sin, we become slaves of sin which leads to lawlessness and death. When we yield ourselves to God, we become His slaves. **1. Is there any hope of escaping the cycle of sinning, asking forgiveness, and then sinning again? Explain how we can escape this cycle using Romans 6. 2. What are the four benefits of being slaves to God (v. 16- 23)?**

Romans 7— After Romans 6 proclamation that sin will have no dominion over us since we are not under the law but under grace, Paul shares with us his and our struggle with the flesh/sinful nature and what relationship it has with the law. “Law” is the key word in this chapter being mentioned 23 times. The Apostle illustrates the death of a husband allowing the living wife to be free from the law of marriage meaning that since we are married to Christ we are free from the law (v. 1-3). He then takes a different tack and says we are dead to the law because of our identification with the death of Christ. The effect of the law on the flesh is that it stimulates us to sin more. Verse 6 gives the key to having victory over sin by (1) understanding that we are released from the law through our identification with Christ’s death and are (2) now free to serve Christ through the new way of being controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit (v. 4-6). The rest of the chapter shows the contrast between the law which is holy, righteous, and good and our sinful fleshly natures which are evil, deceitful, death producing, and wretched. As we begin to see our utter sinfulness and complete powerlessness to obey the law and honor God, we cry out to Jesus Christ who is our only means of escape (v. 7-25). 1. ***What are the reasons God gave us the law? Chapter 7:7- 11, 3:18-19, and 8:2-4.*** 2. ***What are keys to have victory over sin? See verses 6 and 25.***

Psalms 49— The ultimate end of mankind is discussed in this psalm. All men perish but the upright have a hope beyond the grave. ***Considering verse 15, where does the author’s confidence come from? See Genesis 5:24, Psalms 16:11; 17:15 & 73:24.***

Week 26 Psalm 50, Romans 8-12, Psalm 51

Psalm 50— This psalm starts with God’s issuing a judicial summons to the inhabitants of the earth (vv 1-6). He then proclaims His decree against Israel (vv 7-13), offering a remedy for the righteous (vv 14-15), and for those who repent of their wickedness (vv 22-23). **Why is thankfulness so important (see verse 23)?**

Romans 8— In contrast to the law which stimulates us to sin and is followed by death, Chapter 8 declares no condemnation through Jesus Christ because of the new law of the Spirit of life. All this was provided to us by Christ’s sacrificial death. As we walk in the Spirit and keep in step with His promptings, God’s power will enable us to follow the righteous requirements of the law. The key word in this chapter is “Spirit” which is used about 21 times and shows us the means of finding life and peace. Verses 2 through 18 describe how the Holy Spirit enables us to live in the paths of holiness and righteousness. The chapter then speaks about our glorious future liberation and the present struggles of creation as we wait in hope for God to fulfill His promises. The chapter ends with a glorious crescendo of God’s sovereignty, our security, Christ’s inseparable love for us, and our ultimate assurance of being super conquerors in life. **In verses 2-27, what are the things the Holy Spirit does for us? Extra Question: What are the questions and their answers given in verses 31 to 35?**

Romans 9— What a contrast between the joy of Chapter 8 and sorrow and burden of Chapter 9! Paul’s heart is in anguish for his people, the Jews, who had all of the spiritual advantages but rejected God’s way of salvation through faith in Christ (vv. 1-5, 30-33). This chapter clearly declares God’s right to choose and be Almighty God. Paul relates God’s sovereign choice of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and declares that God is not unfair or unjust in what He does. Paul quotes Old Testament prophets showing that God always had the salvation of the Gentiles in mind (vv. 24-26) and that in time only a remnant of Israel would be saved (vv. 27-29). **What advantages did Israel have as a nation (vv. 4-5)? What caused their downfall (vv. 30-33)? Extra Question: Does God predestinate people to go to Hell? Explain.**

Romans 10— Israel sought to establish their own righteousness through obedience to the law which they couldn’t obey and rejected the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ alone. Paul clearly states the only means of salvation and commends those who preach the gospel. Finally, even though God clearly presented the gospel to Israel, they still rejected it and Him. 1. Verse 4 says, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” **What does this mean? Are the Ten Commandments obsolete? Explain. 2. What is necessary to be saved? See verses 9-10, 13, 17.**

Romans 11— This chapter clearly answers the question, “Is God’s setting aside of Israel as a nation permanent?” First, Paul indicates that in his day there was a large remnant of Jews that had believed in Christ. The first church was Jewish and there were thousands of Jewish Christians (vv. 1-10). Paul declares that Israel’s rejection is only temporary so that the Gentiles can be grafted into God’s olive tree. Even though it may have seemed such a difficult thing for wild olive branches to be grafted in (Gentiles), it certainly won’t be difficult for the people of Israel, the natural branches, to be grafted back into God’s olive tree (vv. 11-24). After the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (v. 25) all Israel will be saved (v. 26) because the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable (v. 29). Finally, God’s plan for the world is unsearchable and complex showing His great wisdom and power. God is the source of all things, the sustainer of all things by His power, and His glory is the ultimate goal of all things (vv. 33- 36). **What are the verses in this chapter that indicate that God will reestablish His covenant with Israel again in the future?**

Romans 12— Because of all the blessings God has given us as stated in the previous 11 chapters, we are now encouraged to totally commit our lives to God and this includes rejecting the world's values and allowing our minds to be renewed by His Word (vv. 1-2). With sober judgment we discover the gifts God has given us and exercise them for the benefit of the other members of the body (vv. 3-8). Paul gives the true marks of a Christian community beginning with a sincere love for each other. As individuals progressively put into practice the commands given, they will grow in righteousness and will be powerful change agents in their families, churches and communities (vv. 9-18). Their love for others will be so transforming that they will not take personal vengeance but overcome evil with good (vv.19-21).

1. Romans 12:2 says we can test and approve what God's will is. How can we know God's will for our lives? 2. As you read the commands given to believers in verses 9-21, what are the top two or three that you really need to grow in more?

Psalm 51— David pleads for forgiveness after his sins of adultery and murder are revealed by Nathan the prophet. **How does David request forgiveness and restoration?**

Week 27 Psalm 52, Romans 13-16, 1 Corinthians 1, Psalm 53

Psalm 52— David laments the evil done by Doeg after the priests of Nob helped David during Saul's murderous manhunt, but says that the one who trusts in the mercy of God is secure and productive like the olive tree. ***What did Doeg the Edomite do that was so reprehensible, and what lesson does this teach us about evil men? See I Samuel 22:9-21***

Romans 13— First, Paul addresses the Christian's responsibility to government. We are to respect governing authorities because they are ministers of God in restraining evil. We are commanded to pay the taxes we owe and show respect and honor to whom it due (vv. 1-7). All the commandments are summed up in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Paul urges believers to wake up and cast off the evil works of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 8-14). ***What are the reasons and motives we are to obey governing authorities? Extra Question: How do we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ?"***

Romans 14— Following the exhortation of chapter 13 to "love one another," Paul now helps us to build a unified, loving community by being careful about our judgmental attitudes toward other believers who have different convictions on questionable things. We are not to pass judgment on a brother as to what he eats or what special day he observes since the Lord is the master of each person and it is only to Him that we must give account of ourselves (vv. 1-12). Our goal is to build up weaker believers and not to flaunt our liberty or superior knowledge. Each person needs to make sure he doesn't wound his own conscience by doing something against it or to look down on a brother who exercises freedom in those same areas (vv. 13-23). ***What attitudes and motivations do we see in this chapter that guide our relationship toward those with whom we disagree or have differences (vv. 3, 7, 8, 10, 13, 19, and 22)?***

Romans 15— Paul speaks of the importance of the unity of believers which consists of selflessness, mutual respect, and complete acceptance of each other. God's plan all along was to bring the Jews and Gentiles together into one body that is unified with Christ as the center and ultimate hope (vv. 1-13). Paul focuses on his calling as the apostle to the Gentiles expressing His heart and passion for ministry among the Gentiles in places where the gospel has never been heard (vv. 14-21). He concludes this chapter by saying that since his ministry is finished in Asia Minor and Greece, he now desires to go to Spain, and hopes make a stop at Rome and greet the church on the journey (vv. 22-29). He asks for their prayers realizing the danger that he may soon face in Jerusalem (vv. 30-33). 1. What are some of the traits and attitudes needed for believers to work toward unity and harmony? 2. The Apostle Paul had a passion to take the gospel to areas where it has never been heard. ***What is an area of need in God's kingdom for which He has given you a passion?***

Romans 16— Paul warmly greets twenty-four friends and members of the church in Rome who are involved in ministry (vv. 1-16). The Roman believers are warned to be careful about false teachers in the church that cause divisions by teaching doctrines and practices contrary to the truth (vv. 17-19). The letter finishes with a beautiful doxology giving the theme of Romans which is the proclamation gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations in order to bring glory to God (vv. 20-27). In verse 17 Paul warns the church about those who cause division by teaching things contrary to sound doctrine. ***What are teachings that divide the Christian church today and how do we keep a balance between unity and truth?***

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."***

Psalm 53— The utter depravity of man is lamented by David who yearns for God's salvation to be revealed. ***How does David show his confidence in God's salvation and love? see verse 6.***

WEEK 28 psalm 54, I Corinthians 2- 6, Psalm 55

Psalm 54— David remembers God's help and deliverance when he was rescued from those seeking to destroy him. ***In what ways does this example of answered prayer encourage you?***

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). Someday 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 (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?***

I Corinthians 5 & 6— Chapter five deals with immorality in the church, and chapter six speaks of Christians taking other Christians to court. The church was proud of their allowing a man in their church to have a sexual relationship with his father's wife. Paul commanded that this man be excluded from the church and turned over to Satan's territory. Allowing sin in the church will cause sin to spread over the whole congregation (5:1-13). Paul states that legal disputes among Christians should be settled by wise people in the church and not taken to a heathen court. He talks of the previous immoral lifestyle of the Corinthians, but now they are washed, sanctified, and justified. Although we have freedom in Christ, we are not free to sin sexually since the Holy Spirit indwells in our bodies which were bought with the previous blood of Christ (6:1-20). ***Explain what Paul meant by "you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (5:5)."***

Psalm 55— David complains to God regarding the betrayal of a trusted friend, most likely Ahithophel (see vv 12-14; 2 Samuel 15:12-13). Betrayal from a friend or a spouse is devastating. ***How does David deal with this?***