

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Read the Bible in a Year Challenge**

Week 21

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<b>Monday</b>	1 Chronicles 7-9	Psalm 117	Romans 4
<b>Tuesday</b>	1 Chronicles 10-12	Psalm 118	Romans 5
<b>Wednesday</b>	1 Chronicles 13-15	Psalm 119.1-32	Romans 6
<b>Thursday</b>	1 Chronicles 16-18	Psalm 119.33-72	Romans 7
<b>Friday</b>	1 Chronicles 19-21	Psalm 119.73-112	Romans 8
<b>Saturday</b>	1 Chronicles 22-24	Psalm 119.113-144	Romans 9

**Sunday:** *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under "Adult Education, Bible Study".*

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**The 1 Chronicles readings:**

1. See the weekly summary for week 20 for an introduction to 1 Chronicles.
2. In ch. 7 the narrative of the Twelve Tribes concludes with details of elements of the northern kingdom prior to the Davidic era. Chs. 8 and 9 then conclude this extended survey with an overview of the history of the house of Saul, with a focus being on the setting in Jerusalem.
  - a. Details are provided of the post-exilic makeup of Jerusalem, as dominated by priestly and levitical families.
    - i. The 9.22 reference to Samuel is one to the prophet's pre-Temple days, when as a child he "opened the doors of the LORD's house" (1 Sam. 3.15).
3. The long section from 10.1 to the end of 1 Chr. at 29.30 is a re-telling of the formation and existence of David's empire.
  - a. Chs. 10 through 12 focus on the legitimacy of David's succession to the throne, and his use of a militia to secure his reign.
    - i. Reference to Saul (10.2) is included in concert with the post-exilic theme of "out of disaster comes good".
      1. Nonetheless, only Saul's crimes are recited, and that he died by his own hand (and thus that of the LORD).
    - ii. 11.1-2 may be compared to 2 Sam. 5.1, but with this latter account being more positive, and compressing the process of acceptance of David into immediate acclaim.
      1. The account (11.10-12.40) of David's "mighty men" reinforces this telling of power being both recognized and displayed.
4. In the section of 13.1 to 17.27 the events related are those of theocratic consolidation.
  - a. The Ark of the Covenant is recovered (13.1-14) and brought to Jerusalem. David is established in Jerusalem (14.1-17), with this parallel telling of his establishment with the coming of the Ark and inauguration of the tabernacle (15.1-16.43) being a portrayal of evidence of the LORD's favor.

- i. At 2 Sam. 6.12 it was suggested that David brought the Ark to Jerusalem to secure divine favor. In the 1 Chr. account the emphasis is on David setting up the tent of presence in imitation of the desert situation (Num. 1.50), as a continuance of Mosaic ritual.
  - ii. The building of the Temple is, however, deferred. *Compare* 1 Chron.17.1-27 with Ps. 89 and 2 Sam. 7.
  
- 5. Empire-building wars are recounted in 18.1-21.7. Included is an account of the fateful census undertaken by David.
  - a. The census is one of the few secular activities undertaken by David. It's motivation is assigned to Satan (21.1). In 2 Sam. 24 the census is described as an isolated cultic episode.
    - i. Satan appears as an instrument of what 2 Sam. 24.1 describes as the LORD's vexation.
      - 1. The inventory of human resources is depicted as at odds with reliance on God. "Counting one's blessings arrests them" (proverbial).
    - ii. What God permits is effected through an intermediate cause. *Compare* Job and Zech. 3.1, in which Satan is an official (a sort of prosecuting attorney) in the LORD's court. At Num. 22.22, Satan is a messenger. It is only at Rev. 12.9; 20.2 that the name is given to the slanderer, *diabolos*, who is then further identified with the serpent (Gen. 3.15; Wis. 2.24; Jn. 8.44), and with the chief angel defeated in battle by Michael (Lk. 10.18).
  
- 6. The balance of readings this week focus on preparations for the building of the Temple. David makes all the decisions with respect to the building of the Temple.
  - a. In the entire project, David is depicted as the unresisting agent of God's plan, in contrast to the hubris of the census project. (This account differs from the picture of David given in 1 and 2 Kgs.)

**The psalms:** *The psalm numbering and versification system used throughout these study summaries is that found in The Book of Common Prayer (1979).*

- 1. The psalms encountered this week include:
  - a. 117: The shortest psalm; an archetypal example of a hymn (*e.g.*, of a song of praise).
    - i. All nations (*i.e.*, the Gentiles) are called upon to praise God, to recognize who the true God is, by virtue of the great deeds that He has done for His own people.
  - b. 118: An individual song of thanksgiving. The presence of first person plural verbs and pronouns (vv. 23-24, 26-27) is therefore a "democratization" in which the people speak with the king.
    - i. Vv. 1 and 29 form an *inclusio* (bookends) which sets the overall theme for the psalm.
    - ii. The "gates of righteousness" (v. 19) may have been the actual name for the entrance to the Temple. The king, victorious in battle by the LORD, comes to offer thanks.
    - iii. V. 22 is prominent in early Christian understanding of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah by His own people. (Cf. Mtt. 21.42; Acts 4.11; 1 Cor. 3.11; Eph. 2.20; 1 Pet. 2.7-8).

- c. 119.1-32: The great length of the psalm, and the fact that it is followed by shorter psalms which are “songs of ascent,” suggest that it may have been intended as a pilgrimage song to be recited by those traveling to Jerusalem.
  - i. The psalm contains wisdom elements.
  - ii. Each section of the psalm is labeled (and begins with) the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. (The version in *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1979 provides an *aide-memoire* of the alphabet, by labeling each section.)
  - iii. The psalm is filled with references to a personal relationship with God, to the one who follows God’s way. Life is depicted as this pilgrimage.
- d. 119.33-72: Church collects based on this section include those from the Mozarabic (Spanish) rite. The verses repeat a theme of righteousness following from knowing and following the way of the LORD.
  - i. Verses are used in the Daily Office, particularly on Wednesdays.
- e. 119.73-112: Collect references continue, with reference to the one who prays being able to follow God by virtue of God granting him/her this power.
  - i. Faithfulness to the Law, based upon knowledge revealed by God, insures that one may follow God.
- f. 119.113-144: The focus shifts to how those who do not know God, and who do not follow His way, are cursed.
  - i. The faithful psalmist prays that the wicked may be put away from him, by God’s power, and pleads again his fealty to God.

### **The readings from Paul’s Letter to the Romans:**

1. See the weekly summary for week 20 for an introduction to Romans.
2. The ending of ch. 3 sets the stage for the development of the argument that will take place in ch. 4. Boasting is excluded (3.27), because justification is by faith, not works of the law (3.27b–28). Both circumcised and uncircumcised are children of one God (3.29–30), descendants of Abraham, the forefather of all who believe.
  - a. Abraham had no right to boast (4.1–2). Abraham was justified by faith, not works (4.3–8). Both circumcised and uncircumcised are children of Abraham (4.9–17).
3. Justification is of the “ungodly” (not that Paul assumes they stay that way! —*i.e.*, without claim on God by means of their own righteousness). Justification is defined via Genesis 15.6 as the “reckoning of faith as righteousness apart from works” (4.5, 6). Justification, or this status of righteousness, is described in terms of the *forgiveness of sin* via Ps. 31.1–2. It is secured not only by Christ’s death but also his resurrection (4.23–25). Paul’s logic requires a strongly “in Christ” conception of salvation; both Christ’s death and resurrection are participated in by means of union with Christ’s judgment and His vindication.
4. Paul’s description of the results of justification clarifies the conceptual field Paul intends by justification language: “Peace with God” (5.1b); “access to grace in which we stand”(5.2a); “hope of the glory of God” (5.2b); “reconciliation” (5.10–11).
  - a. Justification unambiguously effects a *reconciliation* between human beings, who are estranged from God by sin (v. 6, “ungodly”; v. 8, “sinners”; v. 10, “enemies”) and God, who makes provision for that estrangement. In particular, “peace with God” resulting from justification (v. 1, 9) is directly parallel to reconciliation of enemies (v. 10), suggesting a strong conceptual parallelism. Therefore, it is problematic to limit justification to mere

covenant membership and to make reconciliation to God an incidental or secondary corollary of covenant membership.

- b. Justification and salvation are closely related terms but not identical. Justification refers to an essentially past, juridical reality—a status of acquittal and vindication granted to those who are in union with Christ by faith on the ground of His death (bearing a judgment for sin) and resurrection (vindication and new creation). Salvation is Paul’s generally *more future oriented* term (at this point) for escaping wrath and gaining eschatological life in Christ. (*cf.* Rom. 13.11; Phil. 1.28). It becomes Paul’s more global term for the whole reality (past, present, future) in Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles.

5. In ch. 5 (specifically at vv. 12–21) Paul sets forth what is known as “Recapitulation” theology. Adam personifies the Fall, with Jesus Christ effecting salvation for all. Humans earned the Fall through Adam’s sin, but we are saved as a free gift of God. Grace triumphs over merit.

- a. This argument is developed in ch. 6, which describes how believers die and rise with Christ. Believers are called into transformation. Baptism into Christ is baptism into His death and resurrection, in which believers are united with Jesus in His death. Just as we are united with Jesus in His death, we shall be united with Him in His resurrection. Therefore, we are to live *now* as people of resurrection, in new life.

- i. What does new life in Christ look like? We are called to serve God’s righteousness. We have earned death; we must accept salvation. Accepting salvation is made manifest in how we live.

1. This does *not*, however, involve observance of the law. The law is good and holy in itself, but powerless to make us good (ch. 7). The law becomes toxic and exploitative when combined with sin and the flesh. Sin is a “hypostasized”<sup>1</sup> power; it is real and wars against us. “Flesh” is the fallen human condition. Because we are “under sin” and “fleshly,” the law is no solution.

6. Because we are justified, how do we live? In asking this question, Paul is talking primarily about *status*, not behavior.

- a. His argument in 6.2–11 is about status: we have been united with Christ.

- b. His question in ch. 6 is: Do believers find themselves in solidarity with Adam or with Jesus Christ?

- i. Do believers *live under* [this is a *status* issue] the reign of sin and death or under the reign of grace and righteousness?

1. Therefore, *contra* a traditional Protestant reading of baptism as an outward expression of a believer’s faith (with the emphasis being, therefore, on faith as justifying), Paul in fact argues that baptism itself changes the person, *i.e.*, that change is ontological.<sup>2</sup>

7. Paul characterizes baptism as a new exodus into a new promised land (the kingdom).

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<sup>1</sup> *Hypostasis* in Greek refers to the *person*, the embodiment of a thing. Hypostasized sin refers, therefore, to sin as an actual thing, not just as a concept.

<sup>2</sup> Ontology is the knowledge of being. Therefore, ontological change involves change in the being of something. This is referred to classically as involving change in the “substance” (soul) of the individual; that what is involved in a sacrament is not just a memorialization of what Jesus did (*e.g.*, in Baptism, in Eucharist), but is a participation in what He *does* (*e.g.*, that He is really present in the Holy Communion).

- a. Paul's proclamation (*kerygma*) is that there is a "new King," that sin and death have been overthrown.
  - i. Therefore, those who continue to live in sin do so because they continue to serve another master.
  - ii. This leads into the argument in ch. 7, in which Paul examines the role of the law, and the inner conflict with which we struggle.
  
- 8. Romans 8 focuses on life in the Spirit, now, as a foretaste of future glory. God's love is expressed in Jesus Christ.
  - a. The structure of Romans 8 is complicated:
    - i. 17 *gar* ("for," "therefore," "because") clauses.
    - ii. Thematic repetitions and contrasts:
      - 1. 23 references to Spirit in vv. 2–16, 23–27
      - 2. 13 references to flesh in vv. 3–13
      - 3. "glory" (4x at 17–30) and "hope" (6x at 20–25), combined with other eschatological references, esp. at vv. 18ff.
    - iii. Structural clues (conjunctions and discourse markers):
      - 1. v. 12: "so then" + vocative "brothers"
      - 2. v. 18: shift to 1<sup>st</sup> pers. sing. + catchwords, "suffer" and "glory"
      - 3. v. 31: "what then shall we say . . .?" followed by a series of rhetorical questions
  - b. Paul describes life in the Spirit as answering the flesh/law dilemma (vv. 1–11) and as involving adoption as children of God (vv. 12–17), as life lived in anticipation of future glory (vv. 18–30). He concludes his description of this life with a triumphant recitation of how we are bound to God (vv. 31–39).
    - i. In the Spirit, believers no longer live in the flesh. From this it is clear that when Paul speaks of flesh in ch. 7, he is not speaking about our bodies but about our fallen condition. Our bodies are not changed in this world because of belief.
    - ii. In vv. 3–4, Paul uses a play on words in how he uses "law". He is contrasting necessity with the law as something which cannot be salvific in itself, albeit it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (*cf.* Mtt. 5.17).
      - 1. Atonement is made in, by and through Jesus. The law is thus fulfilled and atonement made, and our own works are of no effect in salvation (vv. 12–13).
      - 2. New life involves casting off our fallen condition, and thus being adopted by God as heirs (vv. 14–17). The Spirit witnesses to this new reality (v. 16) in how we recognize our new status before God.
        - a. What is v. 19 about, especially "revealing of the sons of God"? Since Paul speaks of "flesh" in terms of our fallen condition, he is speaking of Creation as a whole as fallen. With the redemption of humankind, God signals that Creation itself is redeemed (vv. 19–23). God is very present, as witnessed by the indwelling of the Spirit in prayer (vv. 26–27).
  
- 9. Romans 9 focuses on God's election of Israel. In reading this section of Romans, we need to look for the answers to *Paul's* stated question, (9.1–5) *not* Augustine's (or Luther's, Calvin's, or Arminius's).
  - a. Paul is engaged in apologetic theodicy *not* systematic theology. He is speaking of a corporate *not* individualistic relationship to God, and Israel's election is a salvation-

historical *vocation* not a soteriological *destiny*. The problem posed in Romans 9.1–5 is the unbelief of the majority of Israel. In chs. 9–11 Paul gives a three part answer:

- i. Part 1 (9.6–29): This is not without precedent. God has always made distinctions within empirical Israel.
- ii. Part 2 (9.30–10:21): Israel is still culpable for its failure; it has sought the wrong kind of righteousness and cannot claim ignorance as an excuse.
- iii. Part 3 (11.1–36): Nonetheless, Israel is not without hope. The present hiatus of faith is not necessarily permanent and it has resulted in the enlargement of the borders of “Israel.”