

FORGIVENESS THROUGH THE AGES

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Lord of the Lakes
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God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus brings eternal life to all who, by faith, accept this gracious gift. Like a beautiful rainbow, the Gospel spans the ages, offering the promise of salvation to all people. This message of forgiveness bridges all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation – From Adam to Peter and from Isaiah to Paul. The eight chapters selected for study are a means whereby God will also speak to you of His love and grace, today.

GENESIS THREE

The name Genesis means origin or beginning. Many beginnings are recorded in this book: the beginning of the world, the beginning of the human race, the beginning of marriage, the beginning of worship, the beginning of history, the beginning of God's chosen people, and so on. Chapter three has often been called the "blackest chapter in history" because it relates the beginning of sin. However, this same chapter also reveals the beginning of God's plan of salvation in the words of the first Gospel promise.

1. What does Scripture tell us about the origin of sin and the devil? John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; and Luke 10:18.

2. Who used the serpent as his tool? V. 1. Compare Revelation 12:9.

3. Why does God permit us to be tempted? See Ephesians 6: 12-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9.

4. Describe the devil's technique in tempting Eve. Vv. 1-7.

5. What attitude does the world have towards sin? Give some examples

6. Compare Genesis 2:25 with Genesis 3:7. Mention some other immediate consequences of the fall.

7. Which words show that Adam blamed not only the woman, but also God for falling into sin? Who did the woman blame? Vv. 8-13.

8. What effect did the fall of Adam and Eve have on their descendants? Compare Genesis 8:21; John 3:6; Romans 5:12.

9. What is the difference between original sin and actual sin? Which passages speak of original sin, and which of actual sin: Psalm 51:5; John 3:6; Matthew 15:19; James 4:17; Genesis 8:21

10. What is the woman's lot in the world because of the fall? V. 16.

11. What punishment was directed toward Adam? Vv. 17-19

12. What is the importance of verse 20?

13. Why were Adam and Even driven out of the garden? Vv. 22-24

14. Show how God revealed His love for these sinners. Explain Genesis 3:15. See Galatians 4:4; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 3:8.

15. How do you feel about the "beginnings" in this chapter? What effect has this had upon your life?

PSALM FIFTY-ONE

In this beautiful penitential prayer David confesses his sin, pleads for God's mercy, and desires renewed sanctification in his life. Read the entire psalm (Psalm 32 would be an interesting parallel reading). Have you ever felt this way?

1. Read 2 Samuel chapter 12. What background does this provide for a study of Psalm 51?

2. Concerning what sins was David speaking in v. 1? What should our attitude be also toward our transgressions? See Acts 3:19, 20.

3. What must be the first step toward forgiveness? See Proverbs 28:13.

4. When we sin, against whom is the guilt being committed?

5. How are we to understand verse 5? Compare with Ephesians 2:3.

6. How do Exodus 12:22; Leviticus 14:4ff, and Isaiah 1:18 add meaning to verse 7? Explain

7. What does David mean when he speaks of "the bones which thou hast broken" in v. 8? See Psalm 6:2; Matthew 5:4, and Hebrews 12:5-12

8. Compare v. 9 with Isaiah 43:25. How do you feel about this?

9. Why should we be moved to sing aloud of the Lord's righteousness? V. 14. See Psalm 71:23, 24. When do we actually do this? Find some verses in this Psalm that are used in our order of worship. Why do you suppose they have been selected?

10. What type of sacrifices are pleasing to God? Vv. 16-19. See Psalm 4:5 and Romans 12:1

11. In this penitential Psalm David speaks of sin and repentance. Do you find any hope of comfort? Mention the verses and discuss.

ISAIAH FIFTY-THREE

This chapter gives us a vivid picture of the suffering Savior who, as our substitute, gave Himself as the atoning sacrifice for sin. These events are so clear in the mind of the prophet Isaiah that he speaks of it in the past tense, even though it was written more than 700 years before Calvary!

1. Read Isaiah 52: 13-15. These verses are an introduction and summary for chapter 53.

2. Who is the "arm of the Lord"? v. 1. How is he revealed? See Matthew 16:17

3. In v. 2 who is represented by the tender plant and the root? Compare Isaiah 11:1. Why do we not desire him? See 1 Corinthians 2:14.

4. Compare verse 3 with John 1:11. How do verses 1-3 still apply today?

5. What great doctrine of Holy Scripture is clearly taught in vv. 4-6? Explain the various expressions used in v. 5. See Romans 5:1 and 1 Peter 3:18.

6. What is the picture of Christ in vv. 7-8? See Acts 8: 32-35.

7. What events from the passion story, Matthew 27: 57-60, are described in v. 9?

8. In v. 10 who are the seed or offspring? See Psalm 22:30, Psalm 69: 36, Psalm 102: 28, Jeremiah 31:34, revelation 7:9. Are we approaching the conditions described in these passages? Who is the righteous servant in v. 11? See 1 John 2:1. What did he do for us? See Romans 3:24. What important ingredient of the Gospel is mentioned in the concluding words of verse 11?

9. In v. 12 God states that He will give to the Messiah a "portion" and the "spoil". To what does this refer? See Psalm 2:8, Psalm 22:27, Psalm 72:11, Isaiah 52: 15, Ephesians 1:19-21, Philippians 2:8-10, Matthew 28:18.

10. Try to list all of the prophecies contained in this chapter concerning the passion of our Savior. Compare lists. What is your reaction to this chapter? Share your thoughts and feelings.

ACTS TWO

In this chapter, Luke, the inspired writer, relates the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Pentecost was an Old Testament festival, but it was this Pentecost that changed the lives of the believers, and gave them the power and drive to confront the world with the Gospel of the Risen Christ. It speaks of the power given to believers in our day also.

1. What is the day or Pentecost? Lev. 23: 15-19. On which day of the week did this first New Testament Pentecost occur? Speculate on the place and the numbers present. See Acts 1:13-15.

2. How many signs accompanied the gift of the Holy Ghost? Vv. 2,3. In what way was this a type of baptism? See Acts 1:5 and Matt. 3:11.

3. See John 16:13. Did the disciples have the gift of the Holy Ghost before this time? Explain.

4. Why were Jews from all the parts of the world present at Jerusalem at this time? See Ex. 23:14-17; Deut. 16: 1-7. Was this an advantage to be able to speak in another language at this particular time? Vv. 5,9,10,11.

5. What is the surprising contrast between v. 14 and Peter's former personality? What was the reason for this change?

6. In vv. 16-21, Peter quotes from Joel 2: 28-32. Compare this with Rev. 16:17-21. See also Matt. 24. How much of this prophecy has already been fulfilled?

7. For what purpose does Peter speak to the men of Israel? Vv. 22-24.

8. What Psalm of David does Peter quote in vv. 25-28? Why does he quote this Psalm? See vv. 29-31, Psalm 132: 11, Luke 1:32-33.

9. Explain vv. 34 and 35. See Psalm 110:1 and Matt. 22:42-46. What was the purpose of Peter's sermon up to this point?

10. Why was it necessary in v. 38 that they repent? Why was it necessary that they be baptized?

11. What can we learn from vv. 38 and 39 in regard to infant baptism.

12. How should v. 42 be an example for us? Find four distinct parts in this verse.

13. Explain verses 44 and 45. Could it be that v. 44 suggests a type of socialism?

14. In vv. 46 and 47 Luke summarizes the events of this chapter. Is the Lord adding people to your congregation? Why or why not?

ROMANS EIGHT

This beautiful chapter challenges us to live as children of God, because we have been chosen by Him for that purpose. It reminds us of the power of the Spirit at work in us now, and points us to the future glory.

1. What is the general topic of Paul's discussion in vv. 1-11?

2. From v. 2, put the "law of spirit of life" and the "law of sin and death" into your own words. Compare Romans 7:24.

3. How do we walk after the Spirit? See vv. 4, 5. Compare Gal. 5:18ff.

4. What happens when the Spirit of God dwells in you? Compare v. 9 with Gal. 5:22-24.

5. According to v. 10, in what respect is the body dead because of sin? Does this verse speak of the believer or unbeliever? See also v. 11. Compare 1 Cor. 15:42-58, Phil. 3:20-21, 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

6. In vv. 12-18 what is our obligation to the Spirit? Is Paul suggesting salvation by works? Explain.

7. What type of life and death are spoken of in v. 13? See John 14:19.

8. Explain the confronting contrast in v. 15 between the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption. Try to find the meaning of the expression "Abba, Father".

9. Explain in your own words what Paul is comparing in v. 18. See Eph. 3:16-19, Col. 3:4, 1 Thess, 1:10, 1 John 3:2.

10. Mention the comfort and encouragement that we find in vv. 26-30.

11. Why does the Spirit need to pray for us? Vv. 26 and 27.

12. What doctrine is evident in vv. 29,30?

13. Summarize the beautiful promise contained in vv. 31-39.

14. Verse 36 is a reference to Psalm 44:22. In what respect are we killed?

15. All the blessings of believers come to them through Jesus Christ. What are some of these blessings that are mentioned in this chapter? Mention evidence of these blessings in your life.

1 CORINTHIANS FIFTEEN

The general theme of this chapter is the resurrection. Paul begins with the logical proof of Christ's resurrection, proceeds to our resurrection, and concludes with the triumphant resurrection hymn.

1. What might have prompted Paul to discuss this topic with the Corinthian Christians? See V. 12.
2. Read v. 3. How did Paul receive the message which he preached? In v. 3 and 4 he refers to the Scriptures. What scriptures did he have? See Ps. 22; Is. 53:1-9; Dan. 9: 24-26; Zech. 12:10; Zech. 13:7; Ps. 16:10,11; Is. 53: 10-12; Hos. 6:2.
3. Explain v. 8 and 9. Compare Acts 9:1-17; Acts 26:9-11; Eph. 3:8. In what respects should we also feel like Paul? See v. 10.
4. Read vv. 13-19. Paraphrase Paul's argument in your own words. If what Paul states in these verses were true, how would we feel?
5. Is Paul advocating baptism of the dead in v. 29? What philosophy mentioned in v. 32 is still accepted and practiced today?
6. Read vv. 20-28. What facts concerning the resurrection does Paul reveal by inspiration? How is this comforting to us? Who are the two men mentioned in v. 21? See v. 22. When will death be destroyed? Compare v. 26 with Hos. 13:14 and Rev. 20:14.
7. Why is the resurrection of Christ of such importance and comfort to us? See Luther's Small Catechism, question 152.
8. What warning is contained also for us in vv. 33 and 34?
9. Why can man not answer the questions in v. 35 without the assistance of Scripture? In the remaining verses of the chapter the apostle Paul discusses the resurrection of the body, not merely immortality of the Spirit. Scripture is very plain on this doctrine. See Rm. 8:23; 1 Thess. 5:23.

10. Explain the very appropriate example that Paul uses in vv. 36-38.

11. What will be the resurrected body be like? See vv. 35-49. Why must our bodies be changed? See v. 50.

12. What will happen to the bodies of the dead on judgment day? To the bodies of the living? See vv. 51, 52.

13. Where is the saying written that is mentioned in v. 54?

14. Read vv. 55,56. What is the sting of death? Compare Rom. 6:23. Should Christians be afraid to die? Is fear necessarily evidence of lack of faith? How do you feel about death?

15. How can we apply the consolation, encouragement, and advice that Paul gives in vv. 57, 58 to our own lives?

GALATIANS THREE

The Galatians accepted the Word which Paul proclaimed to them. However, false teachers (Judaizers) caused trouble by questioning Paul's authority and insisting that the works of the law were necessary for salvation. Paul wrote this letter in reaction to that problem. The third chapter speaks of Law and Gospel, and the purpose of each. Galatians is a doctrinal epistle, and was Luther's favorite.

1. Compare v. 1 and 1 Cor. 1: 18ff. What was the problem of the Galatians? Is this same problem present today? Examples?

2. Does faith and life come from Law or Gospel? Why? Vv. 2, 3.

3. In verse 4, Paul speaks of the things they had experienced or suffered. Could this have been the event recorded in Acts 14: 19-22?

4. How would you answer the question in v. 5?

5. Read vv. 6-9 and Gen. 15:6 and tell how Abraham was justified. Who are the true children of Abraham today?

6. Explain the last part of v. 8. Compare Gen. 12:3, 18:18, and 22:18.

7. Compare Gal. 3:6 and James 2:20-23. Is this a contradiction? Explain.

8. What is the contrast in vv. 9 and 10?

9. Compare v. 11 with Gen. 15:6, Is. 53:6, Habakkuk 2:4, Eph. 2:8, 9.

10. How does Romans 5:12-19 help us to interpret this section?

11. Discuss this: "A man who keeps out of jail in this life ought to be able to keep out of hell in the next one".

12. Which came first, the demands of the Law or the promises of the Gospel? Compare Gal. 3:15-18 with Gen. 12 and Ex. 20. To what conclusion does Paul come to regarding the priority of the Gospel? V. 18.

13. Explain v. 19. Compare Ex. 20:19, Deut. 5:5, 27, Rom. 4:13, 1 Tim. 1:9.

14. What is the Law unable to do? Does it contradict the Gospel? See Rom. 11:32. According to vv. 23-25, what is one purpose of the Law?

15. How do we become children of God? Vv. 26, 27. See John 3:5.

16. How do vv. 28-29 apply to various racial and national groups in your area?

EPHESIANS TWO

"Saved by Grace" might well be the title of this chapter, for it gives one of the sublimest expositions of the ultimate purpose of God in His redemptive act. It is rich with terms like "Grace" and "love" and "Peace" and "life" and applies these terms to our lives as we see our Salvation in Christ Jesus.

1. Divide this chapter into two main parts, and give a title for each part.

2. What type of death is the apostle speaking of in v. 1?

3. What fundamental doctrine is contained in the last part of v. 3? Compare it to Psalm 51:5.

4. Find several blessings of God that Paul mentions in this chapter (See vv. 4-10).

5. What is distinctive about vv. 8 and 9. What should be our reaction toward this doctrine?

6. Analyze v. 10. In what way are we His workmanship? What part do works play in the life of the converted sinner? What does it mean that God "before ordained" or prepared in advance works for us to do? See chapter 1:4. What is your reaction to this information?

7. Specifically, who is the apostle addressing in vv. 10 and 11? Who are called: Un-circumcision? Circumcision? To which group do we all belong?

8. Give a one-word reaction to v. 13.
What is the "middle wall of partition" or barrier in v. 14? What type of peace is meant in this verse? Compare vv. 14 and 15 with 16-18.

9. Verse 16 mentions one body, but what name would we call this body today?

10. What type of foundation did the apostles and prophets provide? What beautiful and fitting picture of Christ is given in v. 20-21? See Is. 28: 16. What beautiful description of the believer is given in v. 19?

11. What type of building is described in cc. 21 and 22? See 1 Peter 2:5 and 1 Cor. 3:16. What should be our part in this "church"?

12. What is the relation between the Priesthood of Believers and v. 22?

13. Share with your group the "learnings" from this chapter that are important for you.