

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Read the Bible in a Year Challenge**

Week 22

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|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>Monday</b>    | 1 Chronicles 25-27 | Psalm 119.145-176 | Romans 10 |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | 1 Chronicles 28-29 | Psalm 120         | Romans 11 |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | 2 Chronicles 1-3   | Psalm 121         | Romans 12 |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | 2 Chronicles 4-6   | Psalm 122         | Romans 13 |
| <b>Friday</b>    | 2 Chronicles 7-9   | Psalm 123         | Romans 14 |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | 2 Chronicles 10-12 | Psalm 124         | Romans 15 |

**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. Chs. 25-27 continue the narrative of the affairs of the Levites during the building of the Temple, a story which began in ch. 23.
  - a. These chs. may represent later additions to the manuscript. The narrative is one focused on establishing the legitimacy of Levite ministry (principally as singers) against the prerogatives of the priests (including in teaching).
    - i. A twenty-four turn calendar for the musicians is specified.
    - ii. At 26.1 gatekeepers are shown to be subservient to the aristocracy (the singers). In post-exile Judah, gatekeepers gained additional status.
    - iii. A list is also provided in ch. 27 of secular officials, and how their functions relate to the clergy.
3. The balance of the book is focused on the atmosphere surrounding the succession to David (in a narrative very much compressed from 2 Sam. to 1 Chr. 28.5, in which David says that God chose Solomon), contrasted with David's complete control of the Temple project, even to the specification of furnishings.
  - a. The reference in 28.18 to "the golden chariot of the cherubim that spread their wings and covered the ark" is ambiguous.
    - i. It is not clear if these winged figures were free-standing or engraved upon the lid of the ark. The former makes more sense, for the picture is one of a throne for the *shekinah* or presence of the LORD, a throne to bear Him into battle.
      1. 28.19, "by a writ from the hand of the LORD" echoes Exod. 31.18, and claims for David a divine origin for his work, as an equal to Moses.
  - b. While Solomon's greatness is acknowledged, the narrative in 1 Chronicles is focused on David's greatness. Sources such as 1 and 2 Samuel are followed, but anything that tends to diminish David's greatness is omitted from 1 Chronicles.

## The 2 Chronicles readings:

1. 2 Chronicles continues the narrative begin in 1 Chronicles, with the canonical division being the inauguration of the reign of Solomon.
2. Chs. 1 through 9 focus on Solomon's reign. Following his enthronement (ch. 1), the narrative shifts to the building of the Temple (2.1-7.22), with much detail on construction, on contracts, and on furnishings.
  - a. This narrative climaxes with the enthronement of the Ark (5.1-7.22).
3. In chs. 8 and 9, Solomon's civil rule is described.
  - a. Ch. 8 includes a discussion of commerce, with a trade agreement relating to twenty cities in Galilee, effected with Hiram of Galilee. There is a dispute over their worth (*cf.* 1 Kgs. 9.11), but comparing accounts the picture emerges of a trade agreement under which Hiram bought the Galilean cities to "prime the pump" of trade, and then later returned them as worthless. (*Compare* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8.5.3 §§141-43.)
  - b. In ch. 9 Solomon is described as establishing a fleet at Eloth (current 'Aqaba, on the N.E. coast of the Red Sea).
  - c. The story of the Queen of Sheba also features in ch. 9. (*See* the summary at week 18, for the 1 Kings readings, for further details on this story.)
    - i. The queen's expedition may well have been a diplomatic mission regarding Israelite interference with Sheba's lucrative India-to-Canaan spice trade. Solomon's wisdom is displayed in reaching a trade alliance and avoiding conflict.
  - d. In contrast to 1 Kings, the narrative portrays Solomon's downfall not in terms of divine disfavor for cultic disloyalty, but in terms of divine disapproval resulting from Solomon's ineptness. The summation of his reign is made in a positive light, albeit presaging a split in the kingdom.
4. From ch. 10 through the end of the book, the focus is on the successors to Solomon. The first Israelite dynasty (beginning with Rehoboam) is described from 10.1 to 16.14.
  - a. Rehoboam has to immediately cope with a northern-southern split. The Deuteronomistic chronicler portrays a split as not part of God's plan, and thus the kings are in general portrayed as not in God's favor.
    - i. The chief builder of the Temple, Jeroboam, asserts his power against the king. The king seeks to placate him, but the situation devolves into rebellion.
  - b. The rebellion in Samaria could have been crushed, easily, but Judah preferred to obey God's prophetic word. (*Cf.* 1 Kgs. 12.21-24.)
    - i. The priests and Levites support Rehoboam, because Jeroboam is considered impious.
    - ii. In the midst of rebellion, Egypt invades, and Jerusalem is devastated under Pharaoh Shishnak.
      1. The peoples' disunion, as a sign of lack of fidelity to God, results in their old enemy triumphing.

**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. 119.145-176: *See* the week 21 summary for an overall summary of this psalm.

- i. The concluding verses (169-176) can be construed as petitions..
- b. 120: Appointed in the Gregorian office for use on Good Friday. This is the first of a collection of Pss. (120-134) known as songs of “ascent,” *i.e.*, to be recited on pilgrimage as one “goes up” to Jerusalem.
- c. 121: Used in the western monastic rite in the Office of the Dead. A psalm of confidence in God’s goodness and favor.
  - i. The change from first person to second person suggests to some a dialogue between a worshipper and a priest, the priest then pronouncing a blessing. (Cf. Num. 6.24-26 for a blessing on a pilgrim.)
  - ii. “My help” (v.2 ) may be compared with Pss. 124.8 and 146.5-6. Help is equated with salvation.
- d. 122: This song may be considered a Zion hymn (*cf.* Ps. 46), sung by pilgrims rejoicing at their arrival at the Temple. The motif of pilgrimage is prominent.
- e. 123: A psalm of confidence.
- f. 124: A thanksgiving psalm. *Compare* v. 1 with Ps. 94.17.
  - i. V. 3’s motif of swallowing may be compared with Prov. 1.10-12, which describes sinners as swallowing the innocent like Sheol (*cf.* Num. 16.30-33).

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

1. *See* the weekly summary for week 20 for an introduction to Romans.
2. *See* the weekly summary for week 21, for a discussion of the argument made by Paul which begins at ch. 9. Ch. 10 takes up in the middle of an argument begun in ch. 9. Therefore, an outline overview of the balance of the letter (including ch. 16) is included here.
  - a. The justification/salvation offered through Jesus Christ does not contradict the LORD’S promises to Israel (9.1–11.36)
    - i. Paul offers a lament for Israel’s rejection of the Gospel (9.1–5)
    - ii. Israel’s response is not in conflict with God’s direction of history (9.6–29)
    - iii. Israel’s failure derives from its own refusal (9.30–10.21)
  - b. Israel’s failure is partial and temporary (11.1–36).
  - c. Hortatory Section—New life in Christ, by the Spirit (12.1–15.13)
    - i. The Christian, by the Spirit, offers worship to God (12.1–13.14)
    - ii. The strong must display charity and encouragement to the weak (14.1–15.13).
  - d. Conclusion (15.14–33).
  - e. Letter of recommendation for Phoebe; commendations (16.1–23).
  - f. Doxology (16.25–27).
3. At 10.4, Paul writes that “Christ is the end of the law”. The word he uses for “end” is *telos*, which can mean either goal or termination. Which is Paul’s meaning? Both meanings are found in Paul’s writing, but the merely temporal is characteristically indicated by temporal markers in context.
  - a. Here context suggests primarily *goal* or *consummation* (10.4: “*For* Christ is the end of the law, *that* every one who has faith *may be* justified”). The cessation of law as means of righteousness is probably implied, but is a secondary consideration in the argument at this point.
  - b. Rom. 10.9–10 borrows the language (mouth, heart) of Deut. 30.12 and applies it as Christian confession:
    - i. Confess with your *mouth*: “Jesus is Kyrios![Lord]”
    - ii. Believe in your *heart*: “God raised him from the dead.”

- iii. Note that v. 10 creates a chiasm,<sup>1</sup> restoring logical order (believe . . . confess).
  - iv. Vv. 11–13 complete the thought:
    - a. Christ is the object of faith (Isa. 28.16; cf. Isa. 8.14)
    - b. Confirmation that Jesus is Kyrios! (Joel 2.32)
    - c. And that He is Kyrios of both Jew and Gentile.
4. In ch. 12, Paul emphasizes that life in Christ is life *together* with other believers. Faith is not just about “Me and Jesus”! He describes Christians as a Body (3–8), one body with many members. We are not to think of ourselves only. Paul’s catalogue in ch. 12 of spiritual gifts may be compared with what he sets forth at 1 Cor. 12.1–14 (written before Romans). The gifts set forth in Romans are those which build up the common Body: Prophecy; Ministry; Teaching; Exhortation; Giving; Leading; Showing mercy (compassion).
- a. Spiritual gifts are to be exercised for the common good (vv. 6–8), not for the individual to “grow” spiritually. This is emphasized by the use of hortatory discourse markers in Paul’s discussion of life in community (vv. 9–16), preparing believers as a Body to face hostility (17–21). Hostility is to be expected. (Note that Jesus does not say we *may* be persecuted for our faith, but that we *shall* be. John 15.18–16.4.) Paul’s exhorts believers to focus on the good of common life.
5. Ch. 13 discusses proper relations with the civil authorities.
- a. Ch. 13 of Romans is cited by some Christians as a set of instructions for a well-ordered society. Is this what Paul says? What about tyranny? Would or could Paul have written this under late-Nero or Domitian? When he writes of the “governing authorities” (13.1), of whom does he speak? Angelic figures? Synagogue leaders? The civil government?
    - i. Remember that the Church is not at this point separate from the synagogue. Is Paul’s intention here to keep them together?
    - ii. In considering these questions/possibilities, it is necessary to put Paul’s words in historical context. At the writing of Romans “Church and state” is an anachronism. The two are not separate when Paul writes. Christianity is still just a kind of Judaism. The state is not a-religious, and the passage is therefore irrelevant to the question of the separation of church and state.
    - iii. How timeless is this passage? For whom and by whom and for what purpose is this text written? This text was *not written for rulers but for subjects*. It is not about legitimating power for the sake of those having it, but for those who don’t.
6. The balance of the letter (up to the conclusion) discusses issues within the community of believers. Who are the “weak” and the “strong”? Whose “side” is Paul on?
- a. Paul emphasizes that being “right” can result in being wrong (14.1, 14). Conscience must remain inviolable (vv. 14, 23), and believers are not to impugn motives (vv. 5–12). Our brothers and sisters are sacred, as members of the Body (vv. 13–15). Some things are *adiaphora* (“those things not necessary for salvation”), and Paul describes the discernment of *adiaphora* as a mark of Christian maturity (vv. 17–21). Deference within the community embodies the way of the cross (15.1–3, 7–13).

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<sup>1</sup> A chiasm is a literary structure found in Scripture, in which statements or propositions (which may be opposites) are placed in parallel around a central verse or statement. The structure is most common in psalms.