

Bible Challenge 2017

Week 3: January 15-21

Poetry (Psalm 8-10)

Our reading in the psalms begins again with some familiar language. Psalm 8 is a psalm of praise to God for his mightiness as well as for his humbling the mighty things of this world by the weak. Thus, "out of the mouth of babes" God establishes his strength — how often it is that our small children speak the truth that humbles us when adults remain silent. Indeed, we even have the language of mankind here, that we are made just a little lower than angels and are given dominion over this world. God has crowned his image-bearers with glory that we might govern to His glory and say, "how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

Psalm 9 is a psalm of praise even when the psalmist is in distress. He recounts the wonderful deeds of God in how God has silenced his enemies and blotted out the name of all who stand in wickedness. Once again we find familiar language of God establishing his throne of justice and that he judges over the people and how the wicked will be sent to Sheol. We should note that the word, "Sheol" as is used in the Old Testament sometimes refers to Hell as a place of judgment and sometimes simply refers to the grave — context determines how it is to be read. Psalm 9 flows naturally into Psalm 10. There are some who would argue that whenever a psalm does not have a superscription, it shares the superscription of the psalm that went before it. Here, in light of God's righteous deeds mentioned in psalm 9, the psalmist calls out to God to bring about justice once again for those who are oppressed and for the Fatherless as well.

Gospel (Matthew 4)

We find here Matthew's account of Jesus' temptation and the beginning of his public ministry. Here in the temptation, Jesus is challenged with three things: rocks to bread (food for the belly), danger (testing the truth of God's word), and idolatry. In all three cases, Jesus cites from the book of Deuteronomy. His choice of citations has led many to see these temptations as essentially the same kinds of temptation that the Jews faced in the wilderness — food, enemy armies, and idolatry — Jesus going through a mini-wilderness experience as did the people of Israel.

We should also note that Jesus was facing the same temptations as Adam and Eve faced prior to the fall (food, "will I really die?", and idolatry — wanting to be like God. Here, Jesus is being tested in the same way, but passing the tests so that he might become the redeemer not only of national Israel, but of all the races that descended from Adam.

Notice that as Jesus went out of the wilderness and into the region of Galilee, his message was essentially the same as John: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" To those who prefer not to preach repentance, saying that to do so is unloving, I say, listen to Jesus' words and follow his model.

Wisdom Literature (Leviticus 7-9)

Tired of blood yet? No, still not done. But again, remember, these sacrifices are meant to turn your stomach because they demonstrate to us that our sin turns God's stomach. Note too how these sacrifices are not just visual, but you would be hearing the bleat of the lambs or the death cries of the birds, you would smell the stench of intestinal matter, and eventually portions would be eaten by the priests. All was done to engage our senses to help us understand the evil of sin.

Chapters 8 and 9 record the ordination ceremony for Aaron and his sons. The beginning of this ordination service includes the anointing of Aaron with fragrant oil (an act referred back to in Psalm 133). The oil would be absorbed by the hair of his head and of his beard and would stay with him, giving him a distinct fragrance different from that of the people and setting him apart as God's servant on earth. Yet, not long after the beauty of the fragrant oil is applied, we find the sprinkling of the sacrificial blood upon the robes and garments of Aaron and his sons. How sin stains and robs things of their beauty. Before you pour out your affections on the things of sin, remind yourselves of the words of these chapters. It is

not worth it. After Aaron and his sons are so marked with blood they were commissioned to make offerings and sprinkled or otherwise threw the blood on the sacred items of the Tabernacle. Nothing can be redeemed unless it is covered by the blood of the sacrifice...ultimately covered by Jesus' blood.

History (Genesis 17-24)

In our reading this week, we cover the vast majority of Abraham's life. Last week we covered the second-most important chapter in his life (chapter 14...with chapter 15 and the covenant ceremony being a very near second), but chapter 22 is clearly the most significant event because we see in Isaac as a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice.

Chapter 17 introduces us to the covenant of circumcision... something that will be fulfilled by Christ and reinstated in the practice of baptism (see Colossians 2:11-13) as a perpetual covenant. Noticing that Abraham circumcised the entirety of his household, including Ishmael and his servants, we have a reminder as to why we baptize the household of a believing father.

Chapter 20 contains the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole valley around the region as well as the deliverance of Lot and his family (at least until his wife's sin). The fall into sin of his wife is to be expected, but of his daughters should sadden us as well as to teach us a lesson of wisdom, for such will always be the case when children are not raised in the faith...something that Lot clearly did not do with his daughters.

Isaac is born, taken to Mount Moriah as a type of Christ's sacrifice to come and a wife is later found for him in our reading. While Isaac is of a huge significance to the redemptive story because of the promise of his birth and of the sacrifice, he is of relatively small significance to his father, Abraham and to his son, Jacob.

Prophets (Isaiah 11-15)

The language of "the Branch" is language that speaks of the Messiah — the shoot from the line of Jesse being a reference to the Messiah's descent from the line of David — the one to whom God gave the promise that his kingship will reign forever. And the promise of the Messiah...to gather the lost and scattered people to himself (verse 11:12).

Chapter 12 contains a song of praise and 13 contains words of judgment on Babylon for their oppression of Israel. Yet then, we see Isaiah returning to the theme of God's Messianic deliverance of his people.

In Isaiah 14:12, we see the language of a fallen star from heaven which is referred to as the "Son of Dawn." In the Latin translation of the Biblical text, this is "Lucifer," and hence the name of the devil is derived. There is debate as to what extent that this speaks of the actual demon or whether this is just a title of a human leader under the judgement of God...that is a debate for another time, yet, this is the only source for the name, Lucifer, found in the Bible.

Epistles (Romans 6-7)

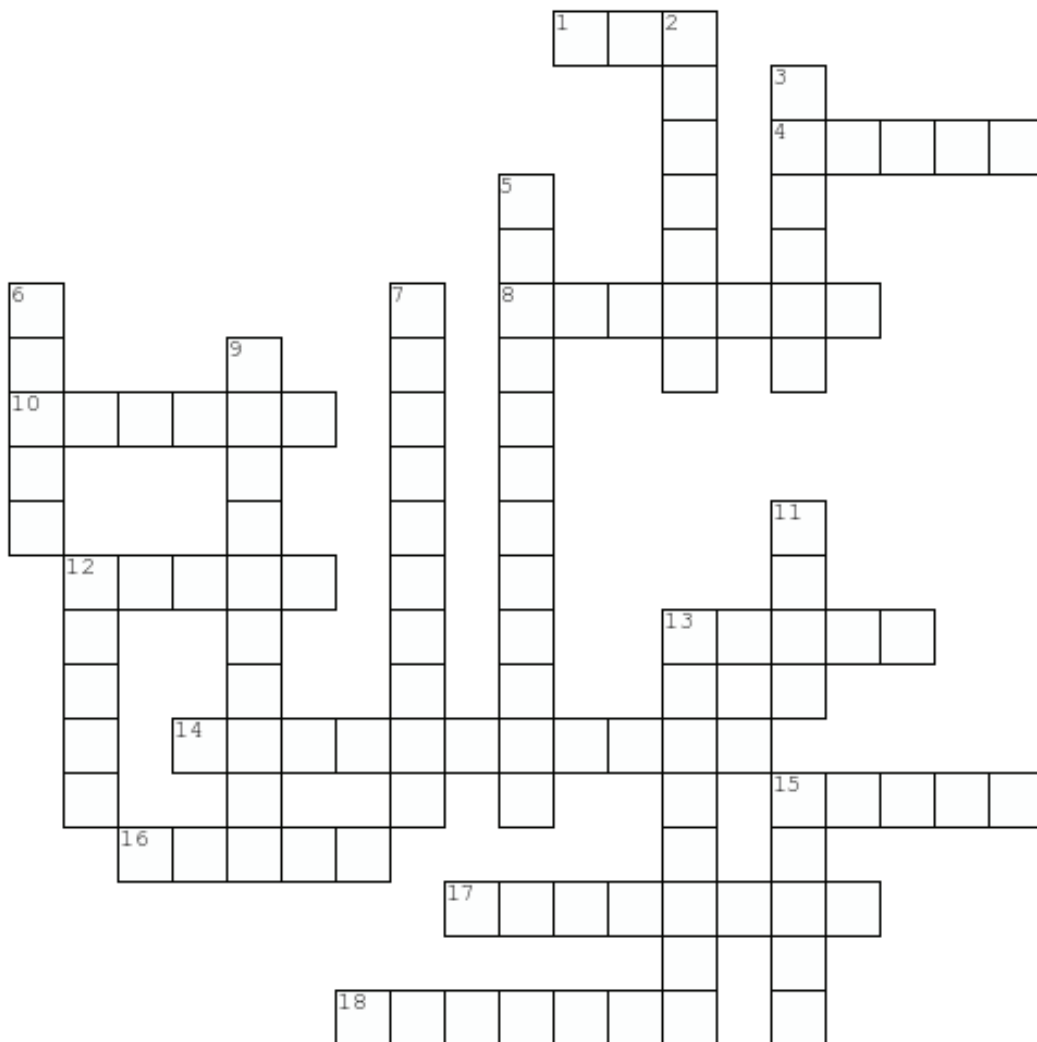
We conclude our week back in Paul's letter to the Romans. In chapter 6 Paul develops the idea of the Old and New man...the old man referring to our life of sin and the new man referring to the new life in Christ. When asked whether one has freedom to live in their sin, he exclaims in Greek, "Mae Gnoita!" — "May it never be!" It is the equivalent of us saying, "God forbid!" For we are dead to our sin and no longer slaves to it...at the same time, freedom from sin is not absolute freedom to live how we want...we have become slaves to righteousness...which means we live in such a way that is designed to please Christ.

This transitions into Paul's account of his own struggle with sin — the battle between the old man and the new man, until he cries out, "Who will deliver me from this body of Sin!" — "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" So, then, let us live to Christ and not for the things of this world.

Name: _____

Week 3

Complete the crossword below



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Puzzle Generator](http://TheTeachersCorner.net)

Across

1. This was poured over Aaron's head during his ordination.
4. Rebekah's brother.
8. The woman found to be Isaac's wife.
10. It was on this mountain that Abraham was sent to sacrifice Isaac.
12. Out of the mouth of _____ God establishes his strength.
13. 'For the wages of sin is _____'.
14. When Satan tempts Jesus, Jesus quotes from this book of the Bible.
15. A break in the music of a psalm.
16. Jesus is called the Root of whom?
17. One tribe that descended from Lot.
18. Capernaum is located in this region.

Down

2. Latin for 'Son of Dawn.'
3. We are to kill this (2 words).
5. This covenant sign was replaced by baptism.
6. Peter's Hebrew name.
7. The type of tune or music that one of this week's Psalms is to be sung to.
9. 'Do justice to the _____ and the oppressed.'
11. Lot originally fled here when leaving Sodom.
12. In the sacrifice at the altar, this was sprinkled on everything.
13. God gives man this over his creation.
15. This can be either a reference to Hell or to the Grave.