

October 25, 2025

The Way

The West Valley End-Time Ministries Newsletter

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Acts of the Apostles

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"We are living in the season of Christ's return."



Bible Study

Acts 28

Paul Ashore on Malta

1 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. **2** The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. **3** Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. **4** When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." **5** But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. **6** The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. **7** There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. **8** His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. **9** When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. **10** They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

Paul's Arrival at Rome

11 After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island--it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. **12** We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. **13** From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. **14** There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. **15** The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. **16** When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard

17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. **18** They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. **19** The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. **20** For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." **21** They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none



Bible Study

of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. **22** But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect." **23** They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. **24** Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. **25** They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: **26** " 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." **27** For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' **28** "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" **29** After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves. **30** For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31** He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ--with all boldness and without hindrance!

Honest Questions

Honest Question #1: Why do people try to honor the Sabbath, since Colossians 2:14-17 appears to abolish it?

Bible Text In Question:

“You, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, **having wiped out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us**, which was contrary to us. And **He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross**. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. **So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.**” Colossians 2:13-17.

Comments: When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, He wrote them in stone with His finger. **In addition to the Ten Commandments**, God also gave Moses three other sets of laws which Moses recorded in his own “handwriting” (Exodus 24:4):

- 1) A set of civil laws to govern Israel
- 2) A set of health laws to keep Israel healthy
- 3) A set of ceremonial laws, or ordinances, which governed the rituals of the sanctuary, the duties of the priests, and the various feast **sabbaths**, or **festivals** (Leviticus 23), all of which were “**shadows** of things to come [in] Christ.” The Feast of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Wave Sheaf Offering, and the Feast of Pentecost were the Spring feasts, and each of these feasts were shadows of events which took place in A.D. 31 – on the very day of the feast. Jesus was the Passover, the sinless Sacrifice, who took the “wave sheaf offering” of resurrected saints to heaven with Him when He returned to His Father, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church on the very day of Pentecost!

The ceremonial laws are “the handwriting of **ordinances**” Paul is referring to in Colossians 2, not the moral Law of Ten Commandments. He speaks of these “ordinances” in Ephesians 2:14-18 as well:

“For He [Jesus] Himself is our peace, who has made both [Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised (verses 11-13)] one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation [which kept Gentiles out of the place of worship in the temple], having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in **ordinances**, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both [Jews and Gentiles] to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity [between the two groups]. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Eph. 2:14-18.

The Ten Commandment Law of God is **not** the subject matter of Colossians 2:14-17, thus it has no application to the seventh day Sabbath of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue! This text **cannot** be used to suggest that the Sabbath should no longer be observed by the followers of Christ.



Honest Questions

Honest Question #2: Some people believe Christians don't have to worship on Saturday (seventh day), because the Bible simply says in the fourth commandment to worship on the seventh day. Since there are seven days in a week, any one of these days will do, right?

Bible Answer:

"So, the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And **God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy**, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation. Genesis 2:1-3 NLT.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but **the seventh day** is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work.... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it [**made/declared it holy**]" Exodus 20:8-11 NKJV.

Comments: Since God was specific about which day He made holy, it **does** matter which day His followers observe as holy. He didn't say, "any one of the seven," He said, "the seventh day." And the days of the week have not changed their sequence since Eden, so the seventh day spoken of in Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11 is the same day we call "Saturday" today!

Just a simple observation – why would you chose to celebrate your birthday, or your wedding anniversary, or any other special day on a different day than those events represent??? It is an affront to God that so many Christians observe Sunday as their day of worship in today's Christian culture!

Honest Question #3: What is/are the primary theme(s) of the Book of James in the New Testament?

The Best Answer:

James begins his epistle (letter) with these words:

"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, **To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:** Greetings." James 1:1.

Comments: The epistle of James is addressed to Jewish Christians – "the twelve tribes [of Israel] scattered" by the persecution of Christians in the First Century. James is a Jew – a "half-brother" of Jesus. Jude, another "half-brother" of Jesus, also wrote an epistle in the New Testament.

The introduction to the Book of James in my Bible, a New King James version published by Thomas Nelson publishing, offers the following answer to the "Honest Question" above, and because I feel it answers the question better than I could, I'm offering it as my response.



Honest Questions

“Faith without works cannot be called faith. ‘Faith without works is dead’ (James 2:26), and a dead faith is worse than no faith at all. Faith must work; it must produce; it must be visible. Verbal faith is not enough; mental faith is insufficient. Faith must be there, but it must be more. It must inspire action. Throughout his epistle to Jewish believers, James integrates true faith and everyday practical experience by stressing that true faith must manifest itself in works of faith.

“Faith endures trials. Trials come and go, but a strong faith will face them head-on and develop endurance. Faith understands temptations. It will not allow us to consent to our lust and slide into sin. Faith obeys the Word. It will not merely hear and not do. Faith produces doers. Faith harbors no prejudice. For James, faith and favoritism cannot coexist. Faith displays itself in works. Faith is more than mere words; it is more than knowledge; it is demonstrated by obedience; and it overtly responds to the promises of God. Faith controls the tongue. This small but immensely powerful part of the body must be held in check. Faith can do it. Faith acts wisely. It gives us the ability to choose wisdom that is heavenly and to shun wisdom that is earthly. Faith produces separation from the world and submission to God. It provides us with the ability to resist the Devil and humbly draw near to God. Finally, faith waits patiently for the coming of the Lord. Through trouble and trial it stifles complaining.”

Note: Although James was chosen to lead the Jerusalem Church after Christ’s ascension, the word “gospel” never appears in the epistles of either James or Jude; neither were called by Christ to be apostles; and neither are recorded as becoming followers of Christ until after His resurrection.

Studies In Romans

October Celebration of the Reformation!

(Reprint)

October 31, 2025 is the 508th Anniversary of the “beginning” of the Protestant Reformation — the day Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to door of the Wittenberg Chapel, sparking a blazing challenge to Roman Catholic authority and igniting the fires of persecution in response! As a result of the Reformation, the Bible was once again exalted to its original place of authority; the Gospel, so clearly stated by Paul the Apostle, was unearthed from its grave of paganism and superstition; and Jesus was exalted as the Savior of all who place their faith in Him. There could be no better time than now to go to the writings of Paul and clarify our understanding of the most important message of the Bible — the saving work of Jesus Christ on behalf of all who place their faith in Him.

From cover to cover, the Bible is the story of Jesus and the human family He created for His pleasure and their eternal happiness. It is a story of a perfect creation lost to the curse of sin and the story of a Savior and complete redemption.

The Old Testament is about Jesus, in type and promise, pointing to the first Advent of Christ — Bethlehem to Calvary, the incarnation of Jesus to the salvation of mankind.

The first four Books of the New Testament tell the story of Jesus as He lived out His life on earth among us. The rest of the New Testament, half of which was written by Paul the Apostle of the Gospel, tells how the life and death of Jesus secured eternal life for the sinner and promises the full restoration of all that was lost by sin in the beginning.

West Valley Ministries Presents a study on the story of a perfect creation lost to the curse of sin... and of a Savior who brings complete redemption.

**Join us for a virtual series on
Romans!**



Send an email to pastor@wvetm.com to receive the meeting invite!

Day: Wednesdays in October

Time: 5:30 MST (AZ time)

Location: Virtual

Contact: pastor@wvetm.com

Romans reveals the heart of it all!

In the first eight chapters of the Book of Romans, we find the only complete and concise treatise of the Gospel found in the Bible — the systematic play by play account of how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus brings complete reconciliation of the sinner to a holy God. It is the Gospel in a capsule — the greatest theme of Scripture in only eight chapters! It is the most wonderful news a sinner can ever hear! And this passage is the subject of a short series of studies which is offered to you on **Wednesday evenings during the month of October, each session beginning at 5:30 p.m. MST/PDT.**

[Click to Join Romans Study Group Wednesdays @ 5:30 p.m. MST](#)

Studies In Romans

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL – A STUDY IN ROMANS

Text and Notes from Our Study of Romans 4

October 22, 2025

Review

- 1) We are all desperately lost without Christ – condemned to eternal death
- 2) Jesus was and did all that was necessary to reconcile us to God
- 3) Faith claims what He was and did for us and makes us right with God
- 4) Faith in Christ gives us **a new identity** – once condemned, we are now declared righteous:
"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness [Cf. Gen 15:6]. ... He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, ... being fully convinced that what He [God] had promised He was also able to perform. Therefore, it was accounted to him for righteousness. **Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him.**" Romans 4:3, 20-25.

"As with Abraham, so with us!"

Romans 5

A Summary of the What's Behind and An Introduction to What's Ahead!

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God (eternal life – heaven!). **3** More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. **6** While we were still *utterly helpless* (NLT), at the right time **Christ died for the ungodly**. **7** Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man – though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. **8** But God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners Christ died for us**. **9** Since, therefore, we are now **justified by his blood**, much more shall we be **saved** by him **from the wrath of God**. **10** For if when we were enemies we were **reconciled** to God **by the death** of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be **saved by His life**. **11** Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom **we have now received our reconciliation**. NKJV/RSV.

- ♦ In the first three chapters of Romans, we learned why we need a Savior – our sin, and even our best attempts to keep the Law of God, condemn us.
- ♦ In the third chapter of Romans, we learned what Jesus did to reconcile us to God, offering us His

Studies In Romans

- ♦ righteousness, His satisfaction of all the demands of the Law upon us. Jesus became our satisfaction (“propitiation”).
- ♦ In the fourth chapter of Romans, Abraham is given as an example of how Christ’s righteousness is credited to us, apart from our works and by faith in Christ alone.
- ♦ **Now in chapter five, Paul shows us the “divine mechanism” by which Jesus was able to take the blame for my sin, and how I am able to take the credit for His righteousness!**

Our Solidarity with the First Adam – Our Solidarity with the Second Adam

12 Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned** – **13** (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. **14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam.

- ♦ How can Paul say that when Adam sinned, “**all sinned**” – you and I too?! We weren’t there and had no part in Adam’s sin! Paul tells us!
- ♦ We have also noted that the Law of God is what defines and exposes our sin, but the Law was not given to Moses on Mt. Sinai until 2,500 years after Adam’s sin! Yet death, the consequence of sin, “reigned” over the human race “from Adam to Moses” – over people who had no part in Adam’s sin! Why? This too is explained in the following verses....

[Adam] is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. **16** And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. **17** For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) **18** Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. **19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. **20** Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But **where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21** so that **as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

How Can This Be?! – “As In Adam, So In Christ!”

- ♦ It is because of **our solidarity with Adam by birth** that we are credited with his sin. We were “in him” – “in his loins” when he ate the forbidden fruit, and because of that reality, we were credited, and condemned, for something we didn’t do! Seems unfair, doesn’t it! Yet this very “divine mechanism” is what justifies our salvation!

Studies In Romans

- ♦ It is because of **our solidarity with Christ by faith** that we are credited with His righteousness – and His death – in all of which we had no part!
- ♦ Further, it is because of **Christ's solidarity with me and you by birth** that He “who knew no sin was made to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21) – sin in which He had no part!

The Biblical Concept of Solidarity

- ♦ **“Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”** Hebrews 7:9, 10.
- ♦ “Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: **‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;** she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:22-24.
- ♦ “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.... For **we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.** ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and **the two shall become one flesh.**’ This is a great mystery, but I **speak concerning Christ and the church.**” Ephesians 5:25, 30-32.
- ♦ **“Adam, is a type of Him who was to come.”** Romans 5:14.
- ♦ “If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now **Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.** But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ... And so it is written, “The **first man Adam** became a living being.” **The last Adam** became a life-giving spirit.” 1 Corinthians 15:17-23, 45.
- ♦ “We see **Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,** for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, **that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.** For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 **For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one,** for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.... **Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”** Hebrews 2:9-11, 14.
- ♦ “The Word [**Jesus**] **became flesh** and dwelt among us....” Jn 1:14.
- ♦ “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh,** on account of sin: **He condemned [our] sin in the flesh.**” Romans 8:3.

Studies In Romans

- ♦ “[He] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in **the likeness of men**. Philipians 2:7.

The Gospel In Summary

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He literally became a part of our human family — my family — literally “flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone.” He became one with me, in the very same way in which I am one with Adam, reaping the consequences of his (Adam’s) sin in which I had no part. Jesus’ incarnation became the basis upon which His life, death, and resurrection would become my very own. Jesus became for us the “second Adam” — offering to us the credit for ALL He was and did!

For 33 years, Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience to all that God requires of humanity. He not only lived a perfect life, He was perfectly righteous in nature, without sin. Then, at the end of His life on earth as my Savior, Jesus endured Gethsemane and Calvary for MY sin/sins. Jesus’ solidarity with me enabled Him to bear my sin/sins, in which He had no part, on the cross AS ME, dying my eternal death, a death He didn’t deserve. He became me at Calvary, bearing my sin, dying my death.

And what follows is what is so amazing! My solidarity with Jesus, through faith alone, now enables me to claim AS MY OWN a righteousness that is not mine, and a perfect life AS MINE that is not mine but which meets every demand of the just Law of God — bringing for me a right standing with God, quite apart from my own efforts, which will withstand the scrutiny of the final judgment! When I, by faith alone, claimed all that Jesus was and did for me, I “passed from death to life”! Nothing can change that for me — not my fallen nature, not my faltering ways, not anything in me can ever separate me from the love and redemption that is in Christ Jesus alone!

All of this is yours too by simply claiming in faith that which Jesus did for you, **as you**! He lived **your life AS YOU**, died **your death AS YOU**, and came forth from the grave in victory over death **AS YOU**. When you claim it all in faith, it becomes yours as certainly as if you had done it!

Next: Romans 6-8 – The **implications** of our faith union/**solidarity** with Christ – all from the vantage point of a secure standing with God!