

Week 8 Introduction to Paul's Epistles III

1. Summary of Theological Core in Paul's Letters

1) Soteriology (Doctrine of Salvation):

Salvation is by grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 3:28).

2) Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church):

The Church is the body of Christ, unified by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 1:22–23).

3) Pneumatology (Doctrine of the Holy Spirit):

The Spirit seals believers for salvation and empowers new life (2 Corinthians 1:22; Romans 8:9–11).

4) Eschatology (Doctrine of Last Things):

Christ's return and the glorification of believers (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Romans 8:30).

2. Key Themes by Epistle

Epistle	Theme	Summary
Romans	The Righteousness of God	How sinners are justified by God's righteousness
1 & 2 Corinthians	Church Problems and Spiritual Gifts	Issues of division, immorality, and orderly use of spiritual gifts
Galatians	Law and Freedom	Justification by faith, not by the law
Ephesians	The Mystery of the Church	The unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ and the glory of the Church
Philippians	The Epistle of Joy	Living with joy even amid suffering
Colossians	The Supremacy of Christ	Christ's divinity and His headship over the Church
1 & 2 Thessalonians	Faith in Christ's Return	Preparing for the second coming and living alert lives
Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)	Church Leadership and Order	Qualities of church leaders and principles for orderly governance
Philemon	Forgiveness and Reconciliation	Receiving Onesimus, a runaway slave, as a brother in Christ

3. The Theological Flow of Paul's Letters

- 1) The sequence of "Justification → Sanctification → Glorification" runs throughout Paul's writings.
- 2) Paul emphasizes not only individual salvation but also the communal life of the Church.
- 3) Redemption history points ultimately to the glory of God, not just human salvation.

4. Points to Consider When Reading Paul's Letters

- 1) Paul builds New Testament theology by quoting heavily from the Old Testament (especially Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah).

- 2) His style combines Hebrew argumentation and Greek rhetoric.
 - 3) As occasional letters, each must be interpreted with awareness of the specific circumstances of the original audience.
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5. Week 8 Summary

- 1) Paul's epistles are not merely personal letters but profound theological declarations of the gospel.
 - 2) A comprehensive understanding of salvation, the Church, the Holy Spirit, and eschatology is essential.
 - 3) Practice memorizing and organizing the background, themes, and key verses of each letter.
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