

IHOPers, For those of you using this study as a Bible Commentary, you will want to add the following summary to the Romans' study. These few paragraphs summarize the work that Pastor Robert Winters shared with us at the end of our study.

To the IHOP Bible Study subscribers:

As you know our study of the Book of Romans is now closed. During the four weeks I was on vacation, Pastor Robert Winters made several presentations on the depth of Romans. I will share a brief review of his intended purpose. You will find what he says both intriguing and worthwhile.

A Brief Review of Pastor Winters' presentations on Romans

Pastor Winters' contention is that Paul uses his material in the Book of Romans for more than a theological and ethical statement. He maintains that Paul lays out a description of the spiritual development of the Christian.

I. The use of Key Words

Paul uses the key phrase "Lord Jesus Christ" and the word "Amen" to indicate his movement from one development stage to the next. From Winter's analysis, this phrase can be used in any order as long as all three words are used. The word Amen serves a similar function. Winter's studies ideas where these key words are used. He noted that this process is consistent with one exception.

Building on the theme of the universality of sin and the act of redemption from sin sets the stage.

II. The use of the symbols of the Jewish Tabernacle

Paul uses the Tabernacle symbols beginning in the Outer Court where people passed by the "Sacrifice Altar," and the "Washing Basin." These symbols introduced them to their spiritual journey into the Holy Place. These symbols are associated with activities of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and relate the story of the Passover and exodus from Egyptian Slavery. The Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Trumpets accompany us on the beginning of this spiritual journey.

Next, the Tabernacle symbols of the "Unleavened Bread," the "Lampstand" and the "Incense Altar" direct the spiritual journey through the "Holy Place" (an inner room) and introduce us to the "Holy of Holies" or the inner High Altar.

The third, and most intense symbols of this journey ends in the high holy place of the "Holy of Holies" where we encounter the "Mercy Seat" and the "Ark of Covenant." The associated feasts are the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Booths.

Pastor Winter's adds the following caveat. In ". . . reference to the transition phrase, 'Jesus Christ Our Lord, and Amen,' these are primarily transition phrases and sometimes do not indicate a transition from one temple article or feast. Most of the time they do make that transition but not always."

III. The development of the Christian Life

Pastor Winters associates Paul's statements on spiritual development with the general characteristics of our cognitive development in seven stages from babies to maturity. In this process he notes that each stage is entered into naturally, yet there are interior activities to be acquired and acted on. In each of these stages there are things that happen that can retard, or prevent, the stage from full realization.

Winters maintains that our development into full spiritual maturity is seldom fully achieved, even in a minority of people. This is due to the various contradictions experienced along the spiritual journey.

Winter's adds one caveat. ". . .the parallel to human development stage theory is only approximate and do not follow Gilligan's description of female development which include all the stages but not always in the same order as male development."

Pastor Robert is commended for his thoughtful presentations. I express my gratitude for his interest in sharing this with the Salina IHOPers in my absence. I am grateful for his leadership and for his friendship.

Pastor Bill