

Book of Romans



Chapter 15

*Theme: Consideration of the weak brother;
consolidation of Jews and Gentiles in one body;
continuation of Paul's personal testimony*

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Romans Chapter 15

Missler: Importance of Unity (1-13)

The more mature are to bear the weaknesses of those who less mature.

Paul had written that Christians should not despise or condemn others (14:1-12) nor should they hinder the conduct of other Christians (14:13-23).

Now he gave a third principle to observe when a believer is dealing with fellow Christians: he is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was supremely the Person who ministered on behalf of others, not for Himself. It is fitting, therefore, that those who take His name should imitate Him.¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

As we continue moving towards the conclusion of our study of Romans and undertake chapter 15, it is helpful to notice that Paul's instructions to the Believers of Rome shift and become more general in nature. Up to this point, all through this exceptionally long letter, Paul has switched back and forth between targeting the gentile part of his audience and then next targeting the Jewish part. Starting in chapter 15 he is addressing all the Believers of Rome without distinction.²

McGee: Consideration of the weak brother; consolidation of Jews and Gentiles in one body; continuation of Paul's personal testimony

We have been looking at the great principles of conduct for the Christian. In the preceding chapter we have seen two of these principles: conviction and conscience. Now we see the third: consideration of the weak brother, a thought which is continued from chapter 14. In the first three verses the subject is separation. Then we shall see the consolidation of Jews and Gentiles in one body to glorify God, and finally the continuation of Paul's personal testimony as the apostle to the Gentiles and to the Romans in particular. This chapter concludes the major argument of the Epistle to the Romans. In the final chapter, Paul will lapse back to personal relationships.

A remark needs to be made here that radical higher criticism has questioned the authenticity of these last two chapters of Romans. Without any valid reason or documentary evidence, the Pauline authorship of these two chapters was rejected. Baur's school led in this objection. Today the Pauline authorship is established, and we may conclude with this statement from Kerr in his Introduction to New Testament Study, "Despite these objections, the integrity of the epistle as it now stands is certain."³

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

The first verse of chapter 15 is based entirely on what Paul has previously said in chapter 14. That is, the “so” to begin the chapter means “because of the principles I have just taught you”.

Missler: Paul summarized the previous discussion (chap. 14) by saying, “We who are strong” (obviously in convictions and conscience) “ought” (pres. tense, emphasizing continuing obligation; its first position in the sentence underscores its importance) “to bear with the infirmities of the weak (lit., “non-strong”): The strong ought not despise the weak; they ought to bear with them.”⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Once again, we have to mentally set aside the chapter divisions that give us the sense that the former subject has ended and a new subject as begun. This is because the first verse of chapter 15 is based entirely on what Paul has previously said in chapter 14. That is, the “so” to begin the chapter means “because of the principles I have just taught you”. And Paul says that because of these principles “we” who are strong must bear the weaknesses of those are not strong. It is important that we pick up on the fact that Paul includes himself as part of the strong because he uses the term “we”. So which side of the kosher eating issue did Paul fall on? The side that says kosher eating is abolished, or the side that says it continues on? In order to know we have to look elsewhere in the New Testament to learn about Paul and how he conducts himself. Listen to how he describes himself as he stands on trial before King Agrippa.

Acts 26:1-5 CJB 1 Agrippa said to Sha'ul, "You have permission to speak on your own behalf." Then Sha'ul motioned with his hand and began his defense: 2 "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that it is before you today that I am defending myself against all the charges made against me by Jews, 3 because you are so well informed about all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently. 4 "So then! All Jews know how I lived my life from my youth on, both in my own country and in Yerushalayim. 5 They have known me for a long time; and if they are willing, they can testify that I have followed the strictest party in our religion- that is, I have lived as a Parush.

Pharisees were super strict about the Torah food laws, even adding some burdensome traditions that made it even stricter. As a Pharisee Paul of course followed their dietary rules. And earlier in Acts when Paul was on trial standing before Governor Felix he said this about himself:

Acts 24:14 CJB "But this I do admit to you: I worship the God of our fathers in accordance with the Way (which they call a sect). I continue to believe everything that accords with the Torah and everything written in the Prophets.

Paul believes everything written in the Torah. The food laws are part of the Torah. Was Paul a liar? Did he “believe” everything in the Torah, but he only obeyed some of it? If that is the case, I don’t know why we would listen to anything the man has to say. And earlier yet Paul said this:

⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Acts 22:3 CJB "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city and trained at the feet of Gamli'el in every detail of the Torah of our forefathers. I was a zealot for God, as all of you are today.

Paul was either lying or telling the truth in these 3 statements (and a few others to this same effect). He either remained a highly trained, strictly Torah observant Jew or he was being a hypocrite and a phony (which, by the way, some of the Early Church Fathers say he was deceiving others by living one way and teaching another way but he can be excused for it because he did it for the good of spreading the Gospel). Paul of course was no hypocrite as he went to great lengths to prove when he went to meet James, Jesus' brother, in Jerusalem and went into the Temple to pay the vow offerings for him and several other men. Paul followed the Torah food laws as a Believer. And as he said to begin Romans 15, he (as part of the "we") is what he considers "the strong". So clearly by Paul's definition it is the strong who eat a kosher diet; not the weak as it is often taught.⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Much of chapter 14 involved a discussion about the weak in faith versus the strong in faith. And interestingly in that chapter Paul dealt with the issue of ritual purity (clean and unclean) as the central focus of his definition of just who is weak and who is strong. As an example, he drew attention to the issue of kosher eating. It is fascinating that almost any commentary on Romans that one can find will make a remark that it must be the Jews who are weak, and the gentiles who are therefore strong, because surely Paul is denouncing the Jewish custom of eating kosher and following the Levitical dietary laws. However, if one is to accept that then the first verse of chapter 15 creates a problem because there Paul the Jew counts himself as among the strong. And as I pointed out last time, Paul has used multiple opportunities to characterize himself as a Pharisee of Pharisees, a Jew who continues to believe in and follow the Law scrupulously, and therefore without doubt he himself eats kosher. Many of the early Church fathers completely agree with that statement; but some (such as Chrysostom) explain it away by saying that even though Paul continued to follow the Law of Moses including eating kosher, he didn't really believe in it and only did so as a deception in order to keep up appearances of being a good Jew so that he could evangelize other Jews. I find that ridiculous if not offensive on its face. However, it does demonstrate the length that otherwise excellent commentators will go to in order to uphold a doctrine they hold dear.

So, Paul of course ate kosher and he also categorized himself as one of the strong in faith. However, the difference between the strong in faith and the weak in faith is not so much whether one eats kosher and the other doesn't as it is about how bothered and judgmental they are to others who don't eat like they do. Thus, the strong in faith, many of them personally eating kosher and knowing that it is God's command that we do, ought not to demean the Believing brother (certainly a gentile) who doesn't eat kosher nor should he demean the Believing Jewish brother (certainly a Jew) who goes overboard on trying to be nearly perfect in his diet by eating only vegetables (Romans 14:2) and abstaining from meat altogether. Recall that generally speaking it was ritually unclean meat that was always the danger in kosher eating. Vegetables and fruits had no prohibitions against them and extreme mishandling had to happen in order to render them unclean. But there were a number of Biblical prohibitions on various kinds of meats and how they were handled that made them legally edible or not.

⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

So, the strong in faith were to be kind and understanding of the weak in faith; not the other way around. Therefore, says Paul in chapter 15 verse 1, the strong should bend towards the weak wherever possible in order to keep them in the fold. Let's talk about that for a moment. When a new Believer comes to faith they are in a vulnerable position. They are operating on the barest of knowledge and have almost no experience with God at all. The Holy Spirit has wooed them into the Kingdom of God and the new Believer may have little understanding of much of anything about the Lord and His ways. Therefore, it would not be hard to convince them that their newfound zeal for God was but a moment of psychological vulnerability; or perhaps they were just mesmerized by a soaring message of salvation from an especially charismatic pastor and got caught up in the emotion of a crowd. Even more, to ask the new Believer to immediately begin to obey a long laundry list of commandments, some of which are daunting or even nearly impossible in his current environment is to risk him or her quickly giving up and deciding that this is simply not doable for them to properly follow this new faith. It is the job of the strong to lovingly nurture and guide the weak and make allowances for their weaknesses; not to be harsh and demanding or to browbeat them. A good strong parent knows that you make the rules and boundaries as few and as simple as possible for a toddler; only the essentials that guard their safety and acquaint them with the concept of obedience. Otherwise you risk overwhelming them with things that they are not mature enough yet to do; and they will certainly fail and incur your wrath, and this is bound to do damage to the relationship.⁶

McGee: This is the third and last guiding principle which should govern the conduct of Christians. When you invite a Christian over to your house who doesn't believe in dancing, don't put on a square dance for him, because you will offend him. Now maybe you can square dance, but I cannot. Why? Because there are certain things I very definitely feel I cannot do because of a consideration of others. Neither have I been inside a motion picture theater in years -- I can't even remember the last time I went. Somebody says, "Oh, you are one of those separated fellows who doesn't believe you can go to the movies." Maybe you can go -- I'm not judging you if you do -- but I cannot. One of the reasons is right here: consideration of the weak brother. "We that are strong" I feel applies to me. I feel that I could go without losing my fellowship with the Lord -- I'm sure that many of these movies would disgust me today, to tell the truth. But a weak brother might be strongly influenced and his relationship to Christ actually damaged by certain movies. So we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Paul identifies himself with the strong ones, and he insists that these should show consideration for the feelings and prejudices of the weak believers. He wrote to the Corinthians, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1Cor. 8:13). In other words, Paul said, "I can eat meat. I love a good pork roast. But I will not eat it if it is going to offend my brother." Also Paul wrote, "Let no man seek his own but every man another's wealth" (1Cor. 10:24). Seek the interest of the other man. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).⁷

⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC: 1-4 Paul had written that Christians should not despise or condemn others (14:1-12) nor should they hinder the conduct of other Christians (14:13-23). Now he gave a third principle to observe when a believer is dealing with fellow Christians: he is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was supremely the Person who ministered on behalf of others, not for Himself. It is fitting, therefore, that those who take His name should imitate Him.

Paul summarized the previous discussion (chap. 14) by saying, We who are strong (obviously in convictions and conscience) ought (pres. tense, emphasizing continuing obligation; its first position in the sentence underscores its importance) to bear with the failings (lit., "infirmities, weaknesses") of the weak (lit., "nonstrong"). The strong ought not despise the weak; they ought to bear with them. Also the strong should not seek to please themselves. This last clause is the key; a Christian should not be self-centered, but should be concerned about the spiritual welfare of others. Pleasing others, however, is not the end in itself, but is for their good, to build them up (lit., "unto edification"; cf. "edification" in 14:19). This is the example the Lord Jesus Christ left. Even He did not please Himself. He came "to do the will" of the Father who sent Him (John 4:34) and to please Him (John 5:30; 8:29). To support this statement Paul quoted a part of a verse from a messianic psalm (Ps. 69:9). Christ was insulted by others because of His associations with God the Father.

Then Paul stated a significant principle concerning the purpose and ministry of the Scriptures: For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us (lit., "for our instruction"). The Scriptures serve to give believers endurance (hypomonēs, "steadfastness in the face of adversities") and encouragement so that they might have hope (pres. tense, "keep on having hope"; cf. Rom. 5:3-5). As Christians learn from the past (what is written in the OT about others who did not please themselves) they are motivated to endure and be comforted in the present, looking ahead in hope (confidence) to the future.⁸

Guzik: We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves: If you consider yourself strong in comparison to your brother, use your strength to serve your brothers in Christ – instead of using your “strength” just to please yourself.

Bear with: The idea isn't really bearing with but bearing up the weaker brother – supporting him with your superior strength.

This goes against the whole tenor of our times, which counsels people to “look out for number 1” and despises those who live lives of real sacrifice for the sake of others. Yet, undeniably Paul points the way to true happiness and fulfillment in life – get your eyes off of yourself, start building up others and you will find yourself built up.⁹

ESV: 1-3 The strong have a responsibility to tolerate and support the weak instead of living selfishly to satisfy their own desires. The Christian life centers on strengthening others. Christ is the supreme example of living for the glory of God, as is shown in the citation of Ps. 69:9.¹⁰

⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹⁰ ESV Study Bible Notes

²Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

Missler: Everything we do should be directed to the growth (edification) of our neighbor. A Christian should not be self-centered, but should be concerned about the spiritual welfare of others. Pleasing others, however, is not an end in itself, but is for their good, to build them up (lit., “unto edification”; cf. “edification” in 14:19). How long has it been since you have encouraged a brother? Or your pastor?¹¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

So, in continuing the theme of the strong and the weak Paul says it is self-evident that it is the strong that must bear the weaknesses of the weak. I say self-evident because if the weak could bear their own weaknesses they wouldn't be weak! He adds in verse 2 that we should “please” our neighbor and choose our actions according to what is best for him. This of course is just another way of stating the love your neighbor as yourself principle that Yeshua and the Rabbis say the entire Torah stands upon and upon which Paul has based most of the Book of Romans. Here is the thing: while what Paul is calling for is for the strong to take the responsibility to lovingly care for the weak, it is also a test of faith for the strong. It is anything but human nature for the strong to want to help those weaker than themselves. Rather more typically the strong want to dominate and impose their ways and doctrines upon the weak. The strongest man who ever lived was Yeshua and He spent His life being a servant to others, giving every ounce of His life for the good of the weak. He is our example. As He said: He came to minister to the sick, not to the healthy. Just as Jesus shouldered our burdens (for we are all weak compared to Him), the strong among us are to help shoulder the burdens of the weak among us. And let's remember: we're talking here about the strong in the faith versus the weak in the faith. Those who have more trust are to help those who, for the time being, have less trust. Nonetheless the weak do have trust, they are saved because of that trust, and they are just as valuable to the Kingdom of God as are the strong of faith.¹²

McGee: "For his good to edification" means with a view to his building up. The objective of all Christian conduct is the edification of our neighbor. Of course our neighbor is not to be pleased to his detriment or loss. Paul said, "For thou I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews..." (1Cor. 9:19-20). A great many people criticize Paul and cannot understand why he would take a Jewish oath, shave his head, and go to Jerusalem to the temple. You will understand it if you understand what Paul is saying here: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law" (1Cor. 9:20).

Now let's keep in mind that we are still in the area of questionable things, things that are not mentioned in Scripture as wrong. Going back to the example of the movies. Would I ever go to a movie? Yes, if I thought by so doing I could win someone for Christ. You may ask, "How far can you carry this?" Well, I know a group that went into a burlesque show to witness. I think they were in the wrong place. I know a girl who started going to nightclubs and drinking with her friends, thinking she could witness to them. But she became an alcoholic, and she didn't win anybody. I can show you from Scripture that these things are wrong.

¹¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

However, because the Scripture is silent on many things in our contemporary society, we have been given these great guidelines, three principles of separation: (1) Conviction. Whatever we do is to be done with enthusiasm because we are persuaded in our own minds that it is what God wants us to do. (2) Conscience. Our conduct should be such that we do not look back upon it with qualms of conscience. (3) Consideration. We should show consideration for the feelings and prejudices of the weak believers.¹³

Guzik: Let each of us please his neighbor: It is a simple yet challenging call to simply put our neighbor first. Paul later wrote much the same thing in Philippians 2:3-4: Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

This does not mean that the church is ruled by the whims of the weak. “A genuine concern for the weak will mean an attempt to make them strong by leading them out of their irrational scruples so that they, too, can be strong.” (Morris)c.

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good: This shows that Paul does not mean being a “man-pleaser.” Such a person may want to please his neighbor, but not for his neighbor’s good.

Leading to edification: All too often, Christians find it easier to tear each other down instead of building each other up; this is a classic strategy of Satan against the church that must be resisted.¹⁴

FCSBN: Please our neighbors. Paul may have been hinting at the teachings of Jesus in light of Lev 19:18 (see note on Mt 22:34–40).¹⁵

³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Missler: Prophecy from Psalm 69:9: For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

In that same spirit, we should be able to set aside our differences as a basis for unity in worship

“As it is written” = formula used frequently: there are at least 7 quotes in this chapter. (Exemplifies verse 4.)¹⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

We’ve thoroughly discussed the first couple of verses already so let’s move on to verse 3 where Paul uses a quote from Psalm 69:10 to validate his claim that even the Messiah (as an example of the strong) didn’t please only Himself. The quote is: “The insults of those insulting you fell on me”. So that we take this in the correct context, we readily know that the “me” in this verse is Christ, but who is “you”? Who was having insults directed at him, but Christ intervened

¹³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹⁵ First-Century Study Bible Notes

¹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

and took those insults upon Himself? It is much easier to see when we look at more of Psalm 69, a Psalm of David.

Psalm 69:6-10 CJB 6 God, you know how foolish I am; my guilt is not hidden from you. 7 Let those who put their hope in you, Adonai ELOHIM-Tzva'ot, not be put to shame through me; let those who are seeking you, God of Isra'el, not be disgraced through me. 8 For your sake I suffer insults, shame covers my face. 9 I am estranged from my brothers, an alien to my mother's children, 10 because zeal for your house is eating me up, and on me are falling the insults of those insulting you.

So, David was taking upon Himself the insults and offenses that were made against His Father in Heaven. Paul imputes the same upon Christ. Thus, even the strongest man in faith who ever lived, Yeshua of Nazareth, did not hesitate to be insulted for the sake of another “person”: His Father. Thus, those who are strong in faith ought to bear the insults meant not only for God, but also for the weak.¹⁷

McGee: The quotation here is from Psalm 69:9. This is an imprecatory psalm and also one of the great messianic psalms. Christ never put His own interest and pleasures first. Stifler thinks that Christ is presented here as an argument rather than as an example. In *The Epistle to the Romans* (p. 250) he writes, "The Scriptures are not in the habit of holding up Christ as an example, for men are neither saved nor sanctified by an example." Always when Christ is given as an example it is in connection with the redeeming grace of God.¹⁸

Guzik: For even Christ did not please Himself: Jesus is the ultimate example of one who did not please Himself, but put others first. Paul’s classic development of this idea is in *Philippians 2:5-11*.

As it is written: As Jesus took abuse and suffered wrong for God’s glory, He fulfilled what was written in God’s word. Jesus showed by example that for the most part we are entirely too quick to vindicate ourselves, instead of letting God vindicate us. Jesus showed how the Father is well able to vindicate us.

The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me: The commandment Jesus fulfilled from Psalm 69:7 applies to us as well. It was written for our learning, that we might have hope, knowing we are doing what is right even when it is difficult.

When we respond rightly to the reproaches the world casts against us for Jesus’ sake, it bothers them even more. It makes them know there isn’t anything they can do against a child of God whose eyes are really on Jesus.¹⁹

CJSBN: 3–4 “The insults of those insulting you fell on me.” Psalm 69, cited here, is prophetic and messianic throughout. It is the third most frequently quoted psalm in the NT (after Pss. 110 and 118; see Matt. 27:34–48; Mark 15:35; Luke 23:36; John 2:17; 15:25; Acts 1:20; Rom. 11:9–10; Rev. 3:5; 16:1). In the original, a persecuted servant of God is addressing God; in the present context, that servant is seen to be Yeshua the Messiah. Sha’ul sees behind the p’shat (“plain sense”) of Ps. 69:10 a remez (“hint”; see 2:28–29, Matt. 2:15) about Yeshua.²⁰

¹⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

²⁰ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁴For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Missler: Every detail in the Scriptures are there by deliberate design. The heroes—and failures—of the OT are there for our instruction! Ordinary men doing extraordinary things. No coverups there: warts and all. . .

Hope = faith about the future

He who has no hope of eternity has no purpose in time. –Thomas Carlyle

Where is there hope outside of the Word of God?

[Antidote for fear: His Love] “I will be with you, for that’s who I am . . .”²¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 4 has caused some amount of heartburn among Christians over the centuries, but none more than in the past hundred years or so with the rise of what could be called modern Evangelical Christianity. Here Paul refers to everything written in the past in the Scriptures that was meant to give us (“us” here meaning Believers) encouragement and patience in hope. The heartburn arises in that Paul of course only ever quotes the Old Testament, at least partly because there was no such thing as a New Testament in his era; and here he says bluntly that this is the source of a Christian’s encouragement and hope. But the Evangelical Church says that while it believes in both the Old and New Testaments, in fact the only relevant testament for Christians is the New. So, this verse is rather at odds with such a doctrine. Perhaps now is a good time to repeat a hermeneutical principle that is important to the Hebrew Roots approach to Bible study: it is that in the Bible, Old and New testaments, the term Scriptures only ever refers to the Old Testament; the New Testament does not reference itself as being “Scripture”. Thus, to read the Bible correctly we must understand that any use of the term Scriptures automatically means the Old Testament. So, to properly analyze the Bible we need to see it as consisting of two pieces: The Scriptures and the New Testament. And for Paul, the Scriptures (the Old Testament) is his Bible.²²

McGee: Paul now begins to talk about the fact that Jews and Gentiles are in one body to glorify God.

The Old Testament, therefore, does have a definite application to believers today. I frequently receive letters from folk who say, "I didn't know the Old Testament was so practical," or, "I had not realized that the Old Testament had such meaning for us today. I did not know it spoke of Christ as it does. Paul here says that it was written for "our learning."

In my opinion, the greatest sin in the church of Jesus Christ in this generation is ignorance of the Word of God. Many times I have heard a church officer say, "Well, I don't know much about the Bible, but..." and then he gives his opinion, which often actually contradicts the Word of God! Why doesn't he know much about the Bible? These things were written aforetime for our learning. God wants you to know His Word. As an officer of the church, are you boasting that you are ignorant of the Word of God? Well, you had better get down to business and find out what God has said to you in His Word. Ignorance of the Bible is the greatest sin of the hour -- in and out of the church. Paul says these things were written for your learning.

²¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

What will a knowledge of the Bible do for you? "That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." The Word of God imparts patience, comfort, and hope.

You won't find any hope in the daily newspaper. You won't find any hope in modern literature. Look at any field and see if you can find any hope. There is none whatsoever. It is dark and dismal when you look out at this world today. My friend, the only place you can find real hope is in the Word of God.

I was in the state of Washington, speaking at a Bible conference, and it rained and rained and rained. Then it rained some more. Oh, how dark and dismal the days were! For our flight back home we went to the airport, and it was still raining. The plane took off and went up through a heavy layer of cloud. In a few moments we broke out into the light -- the sun was shining up there. Oh, how beautiful it was. Less than a mile up, the sun was shining. Here we had been living like a bunch of gophers in all that rain. Now, don't misunderstand me -- Washington needs all that rain to grow that lush vegetation and beautiful trees. But because I live in Southern California, I am used to sunshine, and I love it.

There are a great many Christians today who are living down beneath the clouds. The Lord says, "Come on up here and get in the sunshine of hope!" That is what the Bible will do for you, my friend. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1Cor. 10:11). When I was teaching the life of David, scores of people told me what an encouragement David was to them. One person said that he was going through a very dark period in his life and that the study in the life of David delivered him from suicide. Well, that is the reason God put these things in His Word. God put David's sin on display -- and it wasn't very nice -- but God paints mankind exactly as he is for our learning. Everything in the Old Testament is written for our learning and to give us patience and to give us comfort and to bring hope into our lives.²³

ESV: Whatever was written in former days includes the whole of the OT Scriptures. Paul expresses confidence that all of the OT was written down for the instruction and encouragement of God's people, thus indirectly implying that all the words of the OT are words of God, words that he wisely directed to be written not only for his purposes at the time they were written but also for later centuries.²⁴

⁵Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Missler: "God of" = objective genitive: "God who gives . . ."

"Patience" = hupomone: perseverance; continually bearing under a burden; as a slave carrying a heavy burden . . . enduring whatever; steadfastness in the face of adversities.

Johnny Wooden, UCLA Basketball coach: "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going."

We can apply that to our lives because of the Holy Spirit, not some "macho" attitude of the flesh . . . Optimism is prerequisite to leadership; Our optimism is based on God's truth, not of the flesh.

²³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

“Pessimists simply have more information. . .” Yet, this is without a eternal frame of reference; the Divine Viewpoint. . . It’s actually the spiritually informed that are the Ultimate Optimists!²⁵

McGee: Paul pauses here to pray that the blessings which are channeled only through the Word of God might have their effect upon both Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ; not that they should see eye to eye with each other on meats and drink -- they won't -- but that they might demonstrate that they are one in love and consideration one of another.²⁶

BKC: 5-6. The steadfast endurance and encouragement a Christian receives from the Scriptures (v. 4) come ultimately from God (v. 5), the Author of the Scriptures. Paul prayed that God would give his readers a spirit of unity (lit., "to think the same"; 12:16, "live in harmony," has the same Gr. construction) as they follow Christ Jesus (lit., "according to Christ Jesus"). The ultimate purpose of this unity was that with one heart and mouth (a unity of inward feeling and outward expression) they would glorify (pres. tense, "keep on glorifying") the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3 have the same wording about God). This is the final purpose of Christians individually and of the church corporately (cf. Rom. 15:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Thes. 1:12).²⁷

Guzik: Now may the God: The fact that Paul puts these words into the form of a prayer demonstrates that he recognizes that this is a work that the Holy Spirit must do inside us.

The God of patience: Our God is a God of patience. We are often in such a hurry and God often seems to work too slowly for us. Often the purposes of God seem to be delayed but they always are fulfilled. God’s delays are not His denials, and He has a loving purpose in every delay.

We love God’s patience with His people – we need Him to be patient with us! Yet we often resent God’s patience with His plan – we think He should hurry up. Nevertheless, God is patient both with His people and in His plan.²⁸

‘That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Missler: The ultimate purpose of this unity was that with one mind and mouth (a unity of inward feeling and outward expression) they would glorify (pres. tense, “keep on glorifying”) “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Cf. 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; have the same wording about God). This is the final purpose of Christians individually and of the church corporately (cf. Rom. 15:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Thes. 1:12).²⁹

²⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

²⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

²⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Let's move along now to verses 5 and 6. Here Paul says that while the Scriptures represent the words of God, it is God Himself who actually gives us the encouragement for patience of hope. And so, it is God that we are to look to in order that we can obtain the same attitude as our Messiah Yeshua of constantly wanting to glorify the Father in everything that we do. This is directly connected to the issue of the strong in faith serving and protecting the weak. Therefore, in this context Paul is telling the strong that it glorifies God the Father for us to bear insults made against Him, and for us to bend in service to the weaker in faith and to bear their burdens. What I'd like you to notice here is Paul's specific reference to God the Father. He says that our obtaining this attitude of Messiah glorifies the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua; not that it glorifies Yeshua. Yeshua's goal, as ours should be, is always to glorify the Father. I only point this out because too much within modern Christianity there is a belief that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are co-equal. That is, there is no hierarchy of authority or order of importance. Yeshua says otherwise and Paul's every statement denies this possibility as here he once again puts the Father as above Yeshua and puts the Father as the one to whom we are to direct our praise and glory. I only say this because due to the populist doctrines of 21st century Evangelical Christianity there is this subtle implication among Believers that we are essentially replacing God the Father with God the Son since God the Father is the Old Testament God and God the Son is the New Testament God. And since the Church is to be a New Testament Church, then obviously we are to worship the New Testament God: Christ. Yet even Yeshua Himself (the supposed New Testament God) disputes that when He directs us in just how we are to pray. He begins by saying:

(Mat 6:9-10 CJB) 9 You, therefore, pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven!
May your Name be kept holy. 10 May your Kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.

Christ says we are to pray to the Father; not to Him. We are to endeavor to keep the Father's name holy; not His. And this isn't the first time Messiah has said something like this. In Matthew 12 we read this:

Matthew 12:31-32 CJB 31 Because of this, I tell you that people will be forgiven any sin and blasphemy, but blaspheming the Ruach HaKodesh will not be forgiven. 32 One can say something against the Son of Man and be forgiven; but whoever keeps on speaking against the Ruach HaKodesh will never be forgiven, neither in the 'olam hazeh (the present world) nor in the 'olam haba (the world to come).

I'm certainly not encouraging you to rashly say something against Christ or to diminish His authority or high position as sitting at the Father's right hand. But clearly for Yeshua God the Father and God the Holy Spirit hold a place of preeminence above Him and we need to keep this in mind. Let us never stop praying **IN THE NAME OF YESHUA**; but we must always pray **TO** the Father. The Old Testament God is the Creator God and the Father of us all; and He remains as the New Testament God. Let us never try to relegate Him to the dust bin of history as is all too common in some of the more popular pockets of the modern Western Church.³⁰

³⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: There should be such a harmony in their praise that they reveal the unity of believers. When I was a boy in West Texas, we had a Methodist church on one corner, a Baptist church on another corner, and a Presbyterian church on the third corner. A story was told that one night the Methodists were singing, "Will there be any stars in my crown?" And the Presbyterians were singing, "No, not one; no, not one." And the Baptists were singing, "Oh, that will be glory for me." Well, that is just a story. I'm sure it never worked out that way, but sometimes it actually looks like that. However, if the Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians are really believers (just to be a member of one of these denominations doesn't make you a believer, by the way), all three could sit down and sing the doxology together: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." That is the testimony we should give to the world.³¹

Guzik: That you may: The goal is to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We accomplish that goal by having one mind and one mouth – by unity in our thinking and speech.³²

⁷Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Missler: (Present tense, imperative mood: “keep on accepting or receiving one another”). Significantly this is the same command Paul gave the strong Christians when he opened this entire discussion (14:1).

What did Jesus have to accept in us?!

The Model of acceptance for Christians, however, is the Lord Jesus, who accepted us, when we were:

“powerless” (5:6, lit., “weak”),
“ungodly” (5:6),
“sinners” (5:8), and
“enemies” (5:10).

Certainly, Christians can receive others who differ with them on nonessential matters.

We can learn to love anybody if we are at the foot of the cross.

Fishermen clean the fish after their caught . . .³³

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 7 is essentially the conclusion that we are to draw from all that Paul has taught starting with chapter 14 verse 1 and proceeding up to this point in chapter 15. The idea is that all Believers are to welcome all other Believers into the congregation of Believers just as the Messiah has welcomed all of us. Whether weak or strong in faith, whether brand new in the faith or having held the faith for some years and thus are more spiritually mature; whether one regularly stumbles and falls or one is more devout and consistent in their faith, we all belong to the Kingdom of Heaven thanks to what Christ did for us and we should not be judgmental towards our fellow Believers or question their place in the Kingdom.³⁴

³¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

³³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³⁴ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: Let me give you my translation of this: Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you to the glory of God.

God receives man -- both strong and weak, high and low, Jew and Gentile -- on the simple acceptance of Christ. Now let both the strong and the weak receive each other in fellowship. The glory of God is the supreme objective.

A man said to me the other day, "Since you are very critical of the Pentecostal point of view, why is it that Pentecostal brethren are friendly toward you and actually invite you to speak in their churches?" I said, "Well, the reason is that they have more of the grace of God than I have." A recent letter from a Pentecostal pastor read, "We agree on too many things to let one or two differences separate us." When we agree on the major doctrines of the faith, though we may differ on minor points, we need to receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Although I disagree with Pentecostal brethren on the matter of tongues, I see no reason why I should break fellowship with them. I just pray they will see it as I see it. And the very interesting thing is that one of these days, when we are in His presence, we will agree. In fact, all will agree with me. Do you know why? Because I am going to have to change a whole lot of things also. All of us will be changed, changed into His image and His likeness. Then all of us will agree. In view of that fact, we had better concentrate on the areas in which there is agreement now.³⁵

BKC: Since the goal of interpersonal relationships among Christians is a unified glorying of God, Paul concluded his commands with Accept one another (pres. imper., "keep on accepting or receiving one another"). Significantly this is the same command Paul gave the strong Christians when he opened this entire discussion (14:1). The Model of acceptance for Christians, however, is the Lord Jesus, who accepted us. The Lord received believers when they were not only "powerless" (5:6, lit., "weak") but also "ungodly" (5:6), "sinners" (5:8), and "enemies" (5:10). Certainly Christians can receive others who differ with them on nonessential matters. Jesus Christ received them so that they can bring praise to God (lit., "unto glory of God"), which is the purpose of Christian unity (15:6).³⁶

Guzik: Therefore receive one another: Instead of letting these issues about disputable things divide Christians (especially making a division between Jew and Gentile), we should receive one another just as Christ received us – in the terms of pure grace, knowing yet bearing with our faults.

Spurgeon on just as Christ also received us: "Christ did not receive us because we were perfect, because he could see no fault in us, or because he hoped to gain somewhat at our hands. Ah, no! But, in loving condescension covering our faults, and seeking our good, he welcomed us to his heart; so, in the same way, and with the same purpose, let us receive one another."³⁷

ESV: Therefore, in conclusion, both the strong and the weak are exhorted to accept one another, for they have been accepted by Christ even though they are sinners. Such mutual acceptance will bring great glory to God.³⁸

³⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

³⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

³⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

Missler: Summarizes Chapters 9, 10, 11 (and is the ultimate example Rom 15:4):

His Mission: a “servant of the circumcision” (Israelite’s promises); (the word “deacon” comes from this Gr. noun diakonos);

Koine Greek: Most elaborate verb system of any language: Greek Perfect tense: something that happened in the past with results that continue: Jews have not been “cast off.” Not rejected; fulfilled the truth of God.

To confirm: again, perfect tense: completed in the past with results that continue forever; cannot be revoked. [vs. Reconstructionist heresies]

Romans 11:28-29; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [irrevocable].³⁹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 8 puts the spotlight on the reality that Yeshua is the Messiah of the Jews. Whatever benefit gentiles receive from Yeshua it is because of the covenants God made with the Hebrew Patriarchs. I want to quote to you from C.E.B. Cranfield’s commentary on Romans that I’m not sure can be improved upon as regards this verse.

Christ has become the servant of the Jewish people (the people of the circumcision)... inasmuch as He was born a Jew, of the seed of David according to the flesh, lived almost all His life within the confines of Palestine, limiting His personal ministry almost exclusively to Jews, and both was in His earthly life and atoning death and also still is, as the exalted Lord, the Messiah of Israel.

This fits hand in glove with what Paul had to say in Romans 11 about Yeshua being the Messiah of Israel and that it was for the sake of saving all Israel that God has shown mercy to the gentiles. Now he adds to it that Yeshua’s advent and life’s mission, and the inclusion of gentiles into the Kingdom, were also to keep God’s promises that He made to Israel’s Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Once again, as in Romans 11, we see Paul highlight the special priority and place of the Jews in God’s eyes so that gentiles won’t get the wrong idea of where it is that we fit in God’s plan.

What does this mean? It means that Christ is NOT the gentile Messiah because there is no such thing. It means that the Jews have already received their Messiah even though the vast bulk of Jews are still waiting for someone else. If Christ is not the Messiah of the Jews, and if He is not the fulfillment of the covenant promises made to the Hebrew Patriarchs, then gentile Christians have no Messiah and our faith is but foolishness. We are alive in our sins and dead to God. We are doomed to an eternity of torments and without hope. Key to properly understanding the New Testament is to internalize and realize that Christ was Jewish. Several years ago, I was giving a 10-part lecture at a church and I began my talk with the words that Christ was, and is, a Jew. An elderly man made a sour looking face, looked over to his wife and mouthed the words “that’s not true”; she said something back and he got up and left. The next week as I was starting part 2, to my surprise the man returned and before I could get started asked if he could speak to the group. He stood up and apologized and said that after being a church-going Christian for 50 years, he had never understood that Jesus was actually a Jew. He had never come to grips with the reality that His Savior was Jewish and the initial thought of it had made him angry and

³⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

uncomfortable. Understanding Yeshua in His Jewish context is what helps us to understand His actions and His immutable instructions to us.⁴⁰

McGee 8-9: When the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, He came as "a minister of the circumcision" -- this is the only time it is mentioned. His ministry was confined to the nation Israel. He frankly said so Himself: "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). Also He directed His disciples: "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6). Christ came to earth about nineteen hundred years ago. He came in this capacity to confirm the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God said that from the loins of Abraham He would bring One who would be a blessing to the world. Christ came to be a blessing to both Jew and Gentile. "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21). He could not have been "Jesus" unless He had been born in the line of Abraham and David and unless He followed the Law. They called Him Jesus after he was circumcised. He came to fulfill the entire Mosaic system. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). Salvation came to Israel through Christ in confirming and fulfilling the truth of the Old Testament promises. Also by this method salvation was brought to the Gentiles. The Gentiles' only claim was upon the mercy of God. No promise was ever made to their fathers. I do not know who my father was, way back in the beginning in the forests of Germany and in Scotland. I do not know his name. But I do know that God never made any promise to him. He did, however, make a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Christ came to confirm the truth of the promises made to the fathers of the Jews, and He also came that the Gentiles might obtain mercy. In this the Gentiles are to glorify God. I thank God that He brought the gospel to my ancestors. They were pagan and savage and had done nothing to merit God's grace.

"As it is written" introduces four quotations from the Old Testament that show that the Gentiles are to praise God.

"For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" is a quotation from Psalm 18:49. Christ is praising God through the Gentiles, which implies their conversion.⁴¹

BKC: 8-12. Having pointed to the Lord Jesus as the Model for Christians, Paul proceeded to discuss Jesus' ministry and its objectives: Christ became a servant (the word "deacon" comes from this Gr. noun diakonon) of the Jews (lit., "to the circumcision"). Jesus was born a Jew as God's Messiah for Israel. God had two objectives to accomplish through Jesus' ministry. The first was to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs (cf. 9:4-5). God's second objective in Christ's ministry was so that (lit., "and that," because the following clause is coordinate with the preceding one) the Gentiles may glorify God (cf. 15:6) for His mercy. God had made covenants only with Israel (9:4), not with the Gentiles (cf. Eph. 2:12), so God had no covenantal promises to confirm with the Gentiles. Any spiritual blessings that come to the Gentiles spring solely from the mercy of God. Nevertheless, God eternally purposed to bless the Gentiles spiritually through the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and through His covenants with Israel (e.g., Gen. 12:3; cf. John 4:22).

⁴⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁴¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

God's two purposes in the ministry of Christ are being achieved now while Israel nationally has been set aside (cf. Rom. 11:1-31) and the church is being formed of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-22). And it will be achieved in the future when Israel is restored to her place as head of the nations and becomes a means of blessing to everyone (cf. Deut. 30:1-10).

To demonstrate the validity of his statement concerning the ministry of Christ and its purposes, particularly the one relating to Gentiles, the Apostle Paul quoted four Old Testament passages, introducing the series with the formula, As it is written (perf. tense, "it stands written").

Significantly these quotations are taken from all three divisions of the Old Testament—"the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44)—and from three great Jewish heroes: Moses, David, and Isaiah. The first quotation (Rom. 15:9) is from David's song of deliverance (2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:49); the second (Rom. 15:10), from Moses' valedictory song to the people of Israel (Deut. 32:43); the third (Rom. 15:11), from both the shortest and the middle chapter of the Bible (Ps. 117:1); and the fourth (Rom. 15:12), from Isaiah's messianic prophecy (Isa. 11:10).

A progression of thought can be traced through the four quotations. In the first, David praised God among the Gentiles (Rom. 15:9); in the second, Moses exhorted the Gentiles, Rejoice... with His people (v. 10); in the third the psalmist commanded the Gentiles to praise the Lord (v. 11; cf. v. 7); and in the fourth, Isaiah predicted that the Gentiles will live under the rule of the Root of Jesse (the Messiah) and they will hope in Him (v. 12). The Old Testament never presented the Gentiles as "heirs together with Israel, members together... in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6), but it certainly did see them as receiving blessing from God's fulfilling His covenantal promises to His people Israel.⁴²

ESV: The circumcised refers to the Jews here. In fulfilling God's saving promises to the Jews, the Lord's truthfulness and faithfulness to his word are demonstrated.⁴³

FCSBN: 8–12 One God, one people. Paul reiterated his argument that Christ has brought all people, Jews and Gentiles, under the one God of Israel (see notes on Ro 3:29–30; 8:14; 11:33–36).⁴⁴

CJSBN: The Messiah became a servant of the Jewish people. Yeshua is not the Christian Messiah, while the Jews wait for someone else. He is the Messiah of the Jews. If he is not the Jewish Messiah, then Christians have no Messiah. God will make good his promises to the patriarchs (11:28–29), and he will do this through Yeshua the Messiah (Rom. 9–11).⁴⁵

⁴² The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁴³ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁴⁴ First-Century Study Bible Notes

⁴⁵ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁹And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

Missler: God had two objectives to accomplish through Jesus' ministry:

- 1) The first was to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs (cf. 9:4-5);
- 2) God's second objective in Christ's ministry (because the following clause is coordinate with the preceding one) was that the Gentiles may glorify God (cf. 15:6) for His mercy.

God had made covenants only with Israel (9:4), not with the Gentiles (cf. Eph 2:12), so God had no covenantal promises to confirm with the Gentiles. Any spiritual blessings that come to the Gentiles spring solely from the mercy of God.

Nevertheless, God eternally purposed to bless the Gentiles spiritually through the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and through His covenants with Israel (e.g., Gen 12:3; cf. John 4:22). God's two purposes in the ministry of Christ are being achieved now while Israel nationally has been set aside (cf. Rom 11:1-31) and the church is being formed of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-22). And it will be achieved in the future when Israel is restored to her place as head of the nations and becomes a means of blessing to everyone (cf. Deut 30:1-10).

We, as Gentiles, didn't have such promises: our benefits derive from theirs. It is our union with a Jewish Messiah that we gain anything: it is through our being grafted into the olive tree. God used their failure for our opportunity.

To validate his statement concerning the ministry of Christ and its purposes, particularly the one relating to Gentiles, Paul now quotes 4 Old Testament passages, again introducing the series with the formula, "As it is written" (perfect tense, "it stands written"):

Significantly these quotations are taken from all three divisions of the Old Testament—"the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44)—and from three great Jewish heroes: Moses, David, and Isaiah.

The 1st quotation (Rom. 15:9) is from David's song of deliverance (2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:49);

Psalm 18:49; Therefore, will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.⁴⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 9 Paul gives us a second reason for God the Father making His son Yeshua a servant to the Jewish people; it was to demonstrate the depth of the Father's mercy so that seeing it, it would cause gentiles to seek what the Jews had received and thus glorify the God of Israel. And even this had a reason behind it: it was to fulfill what had been prophesied in the Scriptures. Paul paraphrases from Psalm 18:50, which David took from 2nd Samuel 22:50, to make his case: Psalm 18:50 CJB 50 "So I give thanks to you, ADONAI, among the nations; I sing praises to your name.

I realize that the CJB uses the term "nations" in Psalms 18 but uses the term "gentiles" in Romans 15:9; however, those two terms mean essentially the same thing. The word nations and the word gentiles are the same word in Hebrew thought: goyim. This is because in the Bible, since early in the Torah when through Abraham God separated the world into 2 distinct categories of people (Hebrews and gentiles), the term nations then evolved to automatically mean gentile nations. This is because prior to the covenant God made with Abraham there was no need to specify Hebrews versus everyone else because only 1 unified category of people existed throughout the entire planet. This passage from Psalm 18 is the first of four Old

⁴⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Testament quotations that Paul is going to use to support his case as concerns the prophetic inclusion of gentiles into the redemption equation. It is important to notice something that the Jewish Believers would have caught on to quite quickly: he used quotes from the 3 recognized divisions of the Hebrew Bible as it was seen in his day: from the Prophets, from the Torah, and from the Writings. Actually, he went so far in his four quotes as to take one from the Former Prophets plus one from the Latter Prophets, one from the Torah, and one from the Writings (these are called Torah, Ketuvim and Nevi'im in Hebrew). Why did Paul do this? To show conclusively how the entire Old Testament pointed not only to Christ, but also to the eventual inclusion of gentiles as a result of Yeshua's advent.⁴⁷

Guzik: As it is written: Paul quotes a series of passages from the Old Testament demonstrating that God intends that the Gentiles praise Him. Instead of dividing over disputable matters, Jews and Gentiles should unite in Jesus over the common ground of praise.

I will confess to You among the Gentiles: The quotation from Psalm 18 describes Jesus Himself giving praise among the Gentiles.⁴⁸

ESV: 9-12 Paul cites verses from 2 Sam. 22:50 or Ps. 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Ps. 117:1; and Isa. 11:10, which emphasize the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God along with the Jews. If the first reference is from 2 Sam. 22:50, citations are provided from the historical books, the law, the writings, and the prophets. The one people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, will praise God forever for his great mercy extended to them in Christ Jesus, showing that the worship of God is his ultimate aim in salvation history.

15:9 The whole of Romans emphasizes the inclusion of the Gentiles as well in God's saving plan. They will also praise God for his mercy to them.⁴⁹

CJSBN: 9–12 In order to show his mercy by causing the Gentiles to glorify God. Sha'ul sees this in the sections of the Tanakh: the Former Prophets (2 Sam. 22:50), the Torah (Deut. 22:43), the Writings (Ps. 117:1), and the Latter Prophets (Isa. 11:10). Sha'ul sees every part of the Tanakh as witnessing to the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God.⁵⁰

¹⁰**And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.**

Missler: Deut 32:43; Rejoice, O ye nations [goyim, Gentiles], with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

The 3rd quote is from both the shortest and the middle chapter of the Bible (Ps 117:1);⁵¹

⁴⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁴⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁴⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁵⁰ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁵¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Thus Romans 15:10 is a passage taken from Deuteronomy 32; 15:11 is a passage taken from Psalm 117; and 15:12 is taken from Isaiah 11. And as we see they all prophesy the future inclusion of gentiles into the congregation of God. So the conclusion is that the Jews of Rome should welcome gentiles and not look down upon them as suspect, or as unworthy, or as not belonging, or as the weak in faith just because they know so little about the Hebrew Bible, the redemption history of Israel that begins in the Torah, nor even of the Hebrew Prophets who foretold of gentiles coming to worship the God of Israel. Rather they should be fully welcomed to join the Jewish synagogue congregations and prayer groups in the same spirit that Messiah Yeshua welcomed Jews and gentiles alike to participate in the redemption that He brought to them.⁵²

McGee: This quotation is from Deuteronomy 32:43. It concludes the song of Moses, which is a prophetic recitation of the history of the nation Israel until the coming of the millennial Kingdom. Here the Gentiles are invited to join Israel in praise to God.⁵³

¹¹And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

Missler: Psalm 117, O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD. [that's the entire Psalm!]

The 4th quote is from Isaiah's messianic prophecy (Isa 11:10):⁵⁴

McGee: This is a quotation from the briefest psalm (see Ps. 117:1). It is an invitation to the Gentiles to join Israel in praise to God. It is interesting to note the occurrence of the word all twice in this brief quotation.⁵⁵

¹²And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

Missler: Isa 11:10: And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

[Note also v.11:] 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands [?] of the sea.

A progression of thought can be traced through these four quotations: In the first, David praised God "among the Gentiles" (Rom 15:9); In the second, Moses exhorted the Gentiles, "Rejoice . . . with His people (v. 10);" In the third, the psalmist commanded the Gentiles to "praise the Lord (v. 11; cf. v. 7)"; and In the fourth, Isaiah predicted that "the Gentiles will live

⁵² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁵³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁵⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

under the rule of the Root of Jesse (the Messiah) and they will hope in Him (v. 12).”

The Old Testament never presented the Gentiles as “heirs together with Israel, members together . . . in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Eph 3:6), but it certainly did see them as receiving blessing through God’s fulfilling His covenantal promises to His people Israel.⁵⁶

McGee: This quotation is from Isaiah 11:10. Though the Messiah is from the line of David, He is to rule over the Gentiles. Obviously it was the clear intention of God that the Gentiles should come to Christ. Some had come to Christ in Paul's day, and they were the firstfruits of even a greater day. Remember that Paul was writing to the Romans, and the Roman church was largely a gentile church, as are our churches today.⁵⁷

13Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Missler: All these references emphasize: “Praise.” “Worship” is not a performance, or entertaining us: it is to Praise Him. And the objective is hope, through the Holy Spirit.

“Abound” ...and this should dominate every priority in our lives!

We need a “near death experience” to transform our lives . . .

Personal Plans

Though all Paul’s letters have closing remarks, he devoted more space to them in Romans than in any other epistle. This was due at least in part to the fact that he had never visited the city and its churches and to his desire to establish personal relationships with his readers. Another factor undoubtedly was his plan to visit Rome in the future. Now as he begins to close his letter he felt led to discuss his philosophy of ministry and his plans in light of it.⁵⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 13 is a rather typical Jewish-style blessing; it is a prayer mixed with a wish. It begins by speaking of God as the God of hope. I’ll remind you yet again that when Paul speaks of hope he means it in terms of hope for resurrection from the dead. Little has unnerved and occupied the minds of humankind as has our own death. Some cultures glorify death, others dread it. Some welcome death; others see it as unnatural and the result of upsetting the gods. Some had elaborate death cults (such as the Egyptians), and for others it was simply a mystery and death rituals were simple (like with the Hebrews). Thus, among Jews what happened after death was mostly unknown; life was, and remains, the most important and pleasant part of human existence in the Jewish mindset. However, the concept of resurrection (reanimation, coming alive again after death) was a hot topic in Paul’s era. Thus, perhaps the most welcoming and attractive news Paul brought along with the Gospel of Messiah Yeshua was the hope of bodily resurrection after death. Paul teaches that this hope is available for anyone, Jew or gentile, who puts their trust in Yeshua as Lord and Savior. However, the actual power to make this hope a reality and not merely a comforting theory is contained in the power of God’s Holy Spirit; it does not come from within us or from other humans. Once again, I’d like to demonstrate to you that as true and profound as that line of thought is it was not an original thought of Paul or something that was

⁵⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁵⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

new to Jewish theology as a result of the advent of Christ. Redemption and an accompanying hope for resurrection by the power of God is not something that was born anew from Christianity.

Listen to this excerpt taken from the Dead Sea Scrolls, written by the Essene Jewish community before the birth of Christ. This is taken from scroll 1QS.

For to God belongs my justification, and the perfection of my way, and the uprightness of my heart are in His hand; by His righteousness are my rebellions blotted out. For He has poured forth from the fount of His knowledge the light that enlightens me, and my eye has beheld His marvels and the light of my heart pierces the mystery to come From His wondrous mysteries is the light in my heart, in the everlasting Being has my eye beheld wisdom because knowledge is hidden from men and the counsel of prudence from the sons of men. The fountain of righteousness, the reservoir of power, and the dwelling place of glory are denied to the assembly of flesh; but God has given them as an everlasting possession to those whom He has chosen. He has granted them a share in the lot of the Saints, and has united their assembly, the Council of the Community, with the Sons of Heaven. And the assembly of the holy fabric shall belong to an eternal planting for all time to come.⁵⁹

McGee: "The God of hope" is a new title for God which is thrilling. The believing heart finds here the Rock of Ages who is the shelter in the time of storm. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." This is what a study of Romans should do for you. I trust it has given you joy and peace and that it has strengthened your faith. I trust it has brought hope and power into your life, my friend.

This is the benediction that concludes the doctrinal section of the Epistle to the Romans.⁶⁰

BKC: Several times Paul's words sound as if he were ending this epistle (vv. 13, 33; 16:20, 25-27). This verse (15:13) is in effect a benedictory prayer. The description of God as the God of hope relates to hope mentioned in the preceding verses and to the promises of God recorded in the Scripture which give hope (v. 4). Paul desired God to fill his readers with all joy and peace (cf. 14:17). Joy relates to the delight of anticipation in seeing one's hopes fulfilled. Peace results from the assurance that God will fulfill those hopes (cf. 5:1; Phil. 4:7). These are experienced as believers trust in Him (cf. Heb. 11:1). As a result believers overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 15:19). The achievement of all God's purposes for the spiritual welfare of His children comes from the power given by the Spirit of God. What a fitting closing reminder to the apostle's discussion of Christian living.⁶¹

Guzik: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace: The prayer and blessing concluding the section is appropriate. As God fills us with the blessings of His joy and peace in believing, we are equipped to live in this common bond of unity God calls us to.⁶²

ESV: Hope is the link word from v. 12 (see also v. 4). Joy and peace come from trust in God, but such trust is finally the gift of God, for believers abound in hope only by his grace.⁶³

⁵⁹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁶⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁶² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁶³ ESV Study Bible Notes

14And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Missler: (Perfect tense, “having been filled with all knowledge:” not in the absolute sense, but in the sense that they had an understanding of the full scope of Christian truth).

Paul did not have a low opinion of the Roman Christians; on the contrary he considered them spiritually informed and spiritually mature. We, too, should be able to admonish one another.⁶⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

But now in verse 14 Paul switches both his tone and the subject. It is my opinion that the purpose of these words is that after considering the forceful thought, theology, and impressive list of Halakhot (religious rulings) that Paul has laid out for Believers, Paul is now trying to soften his tone a little. He fears he might have come off too heavy handed, especially considering he didn't start the congregation of Rome and yet is declaring his authority over it. He doesn't want the Believers of Rome to think that he thinks they are much in need of a good dressing down or that they are ignorant, so he says that he is convinced that the Believers of the Roman congregation are full of goodness, and have a great deal of knowledge, and are well able to teach one another proper doctrine. However,there are some things that Paul thought needed to be addressed as more of a reminder than as teaching new doctrine that they didn't know. Paul's statement goes a long way in destroying the rather standard contention of most Christian Bible commentators that Romans is essentially a carefully crafted systematic theology for Christians created from scratch by Paul and he sent it, in full, to the Believers of Rome (perhaps as a trial balloon to see how well it might be received). Rather it is clear that the subjects he covered were because of something he must have heard about the congregation in Rome; things he felt they needed to be reminded of.⁶⁵

McGee: This, I think, is one of the loveliest passages. Paul is offering in this verse a gentle apology for his frankness and boldness in speaking to the Romans in the doctrinal section. It was not because they were lacking in goodness and knowledge, but rather because they possessed these qualities that Paul was able to be so explicit. Isn't that wonderful? He gave us the Epistle to the Romans so that he could talk to us about these important issues. My friend, an understanding of the Epistle to the Romans is an essential part of your Christian growth. Every Christian should make an effort to know Romans, for this book will ground the believer in the faith. Paul is being very humble and sweet about his exhortations in this epistle. He is not lording it over God's heritage.⁶⁶

BKC: Though all Paul's letters have closing remarks, he devoted more space to them in Romans than in any other epistle. This was due at least in part to the fact that he had never visited the city and its churches and to his desire to establish personal relationships with his readers. Another factor undoubtedly was his plan to visit Rome in the future.

A. Personal plans (15:14-33)

In writing to a group of people whom he had never met as a group, Paul showed admirable restraint in avoiding personal references to himself. Only once did he use himself as an example

⁶⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁶⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁶⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

(7:7-25), and his other personal remarks are few (1:8-16; 9:1-3; 10:1-2; 11:1). Now as he closed his letter he felt led to discuss his philosophy of ministry and his plans in light of it.

14-16. Paul had demonstrated in this letter and elsewhere his ability to be straightforward, even almost blunt, and forceful. Yet he also had a deep concern for the feelings of others and an ability to use effective principles of interpersonal relations. This is seen in his statement, I myself am convinced (perf. tense, "I stand convinced"; cf. 8:38), my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge (perf. tense, "having been filled with all knowledge," not in the absolute sense, but in the sense that they had an understanding of the full scope of Christian truth), and competent (lit., "being able") to instruct (nouthetein, "to counsel, admonish"; cf. Col. 1:28; 3:16) one another. Paul did not have a low opinion of the Roman Christians; on the contrary he considered them spiritually informed and spiritually mature. Why then did he write on such basic Christian themes? Paul explained, I have written (past tense, "I wrote") you quite boldly on some points (lit., "in some measure") as if to remind you of them again. This was what Peter did as well (2 Peter 1:12; 3:1-2).

Paul was qualified to remind his readers of those points because he had his special position as a result of God's grace (cf. Rom. 1:5). He was a minister (leitourgon, a "public servant") to the Gentiles. This ministry was carried out as a priestly duty (the Gr. verb hierourgounta means "to work in sacred things") and involved his proclaiming the gospel of God (cf. 1:2-4). Because of his sharing the good news with Gentiles (11:13; Gal. 1:16; 2:2, 7-9; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:27; 2 Tim. 4:17) they became an offering acceptable (the words to God are not in the text but are obviously understood), sanctified (perf. tense, "having been sanctified" or "having been set apart") by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Peter 1:2). Like a priest, Paul introduced Gentiles to God, and then presented them like an offering to the Lord. God's willingness to accept Gentiles, set apart by the work of the Holy Spirit, shows His plan in the Church Age is to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body (Eph. 3:6).⁶⁷

Guzik: Able also to admonish one another: Paul didn't write because he felt the Roman Christians couldn't discern what was right before God or admonish each other to do right. Rather, he wrote to remind them, encouraging them to do what they knew was right.⁶⁸

ESV: The church in one sense did not need to hear what Paul wrote since they already knew the truths in the letter. Instruct translates Greek noutheteō, "instruct, admonish, warn, counsel," which is often used of warning against wrong conduct (Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:12, 14; 2 Thess. 3:15). Paul encourages ordinary Christians (no doubt esp. those who have greater maturity and wisdom) to give one another practical, real-life wisdom and counsel.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁶⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁶⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁵Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

I want to begin today by giving you a thought-provoking tidbit of history about the Book of Romans that you need to carefully weigh. This information reveals something about the book itself but perhaps even more about the uneven history of the development of Christianity in general.

We are about halfway through our study of Romans chapter 15. However, there is much scholarly controversy about the final two chapters of the Book of Romans. One of the controversies is whether or not chapters 15 and 16 were written by Paul and perhaps were added by someone at a much later date. Another is a contention that Paul indeed wrote the first 14 chapters of Romans as a general systematic theology of Christianity meant to be sent out to all the Believing congregations; only later did he revise it by adding chapters 15 and 16 before sending it to the congregation in Rome.

As one can easily imagine much of the reason for these controversies, and where a Bible scholar chooses to take his stand in his conclusions about them, centers around the particular doctrines he or she holds. The reality is that Romans chapters 15 and 16 put up to grave doubt some of the more common Church doctrines such as Paul not just converting to Christianity, but also leaving his Jewishness behind and essentially converting to a gentile. What better way to resolve that dispute than to simply declare chapters 15 and 16 as invalid or of questionable authorship, inspiration or value?

It is true that ancient Greek manuscripts of the Book of Romans are not identical; there are variations and differences, often depending on the region where they are found. Some of the earliest manuscripts of the Book of Romans do end at chapter 14. Others include chapter 15 but not 16, some slightly rearrange a few of the verses, and still others contain all 16 chapters. But what is it about chapter 15 or 16 (or both) that causes such heartburn for some Christian Bible commentators? Generally speaking it is because of the heavy concentration of Old Testament Scripture references that are used and Paul's declaration that it is these that he considers as the Holy Scriptures. Paul also strongly insists that it is the Father, the God of the Old Testament, that is to be glorified and The Son, the God of the New Testament is subject to the Father. This line of thinking casts serious doubt upon the beliefs of that part of Christianity that insists upon a rigid Trinitarian doctrine that demands that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal "persons". That is, there is no authority structure or hierarchy among them, and there is no "person" of the three who is higher or preeminent over the other two. As I have mentioned before, while the modern Church is careful not to say out loud out that the God of the Old Testament is today therefore the old and former God and so largely irrelevant; and the old and former God has given way to Jesus, the new God of the New Testament, in fact, some of the most widespread, fundamental Church doctrines operate upon that assumption. Paul's statements especially in chapter 15 blow holes in that Church tradition.

The early Church Father Origen has recorded for us the reason that the very early Greek manuscripts of the Book of Romans end at chapter 14: Marcion removed chapters 15 and 16. We've discussed Marcion before. He was a wealthy and powerful gentile shipping magnate who claimed Christianity in the mid-2nd century. He used his wealth to gain substantial influence in the Church. He was openly anti-Semitic, despised Jews, and so was greatly agitated by the heavy focus of the Old Testament on Israel and the Hebrews. It was he who first advocated that

Christians should set aside the Holy Scriptures (the Old Testament) and create a Christian Bible to replace it. His suggestion for what would be contained in the new Christian Bible was the Gospel accounts, several of Paul's letters (some of which he personally edited), and a couple more documents. The Church Bishops were appalled at such a suggestion and branded him a heretic. However, as the years passed, and Christianity quickly morphed into a gentiles-only faith and much of the Church separated itself more and more from its Hebraic faith heritage, Marcion's concept of a new Christian Bible was resurrected and by around 200 – 220 A.D. a number of Church Bishops from various regions more or less followed Marcion's formula and the New Testament was created. Not surprisingly these Church Bishops incorporated some of the documents that Marcion had personally edited, and one of those was the Book of Romans. Marcion had edited out of Romans what we today call chapters 15 and 16 for the obvious reason that it exposed Paul's reverence for, and reliance in, the Old Testament as well confirming his staunch Jewishness. It would be many years later before other Church Bishops from other regions of the world who had older copies of Paul's letter to the Romans at their disposal began lobbying to restore the final two chapters. And so over the next many years various Churches added some elements of those 2 chapters, others added them fully but in edited form, and others accepted them in total as-is.

It shouldn't shock us for these various forms of the Book of Romans to exist. It is, after all, human beings with different agendas who were making the decisions about the final form of this document and others of the New Testament documents as well. I've mentioned before that the Book of Hebrews, for instance, has been included, then removed, re-included, and removed again from the New Testament over the centuries, and in the Western version of the New Testament Hebrews was only added back in again 200 years ago. Some like Marcion and others of his anti-Jewish ilk did all they could to wring any favorable Jewish flavor out of the New Testament and wanted it to be a gentile-oriented work. But others had reasonable and pragmatic reasons for leaving certain sections of Romans out; for instance, chapter 16, which as we'll see next week was either an addendum or simply a nontheological ending to the letter that was mostly about certain people who were with Paul that knew many of the folks in the congregation of Rome and simply wanted to say "hello". So as Paul's long letter went into circulation after the Romans received it and released it for general consumption, and as paper was scarce and expensive, then it makes sense that what we call chapter 16 would be left out for all the other congregations to see because it was mostly personal and had no relevance to other congregations (to their way of thinking).

One more historical note that is especially pertinent to our study of Romans 15: Paul was probably in the Province of Achaia when he wrote this letter. He felt he had mostly completed his mission of evangelizing the east as a pioneer of the Gospel of Christ as he explained in verse 19 of Romans 15 that he had ventured all the way to Illyricum. As a result, he was ready, now, to move his mission field towards the west to Italy and then from there to Spain. In fact, a case could be made that Paul was more or less preparing for his trip to Rome by sending the Roman congregation this letter in advance and informing them of his plans. I'll remind you that a few years later (4 years perhaps) he indeed did wind up in Rome but not in the manner in which he had hoped; he arrived as a prisoner who was going to plead his case before Caesar. The Book of Acts indicates that he met with several prominent Jews in the Roman Jewish community but there's nothing explicit that says that he had interaction with the congregation that he had sent

his letter to. And as far as anyone knows, Rome is as far to the west as he ever journeyed; he never made it to Spain.⁷⁰

McGee15-16: When Paul says, "I have written," he is referring to this Epistle to the Romans. He is explaining the fact of his boldness by reminding the Romans that he is the apostle to the Gentiles. On the basis of this God-appointed office, which came to him through the grace of God, he is exercising that office in writing as he does to the Romans. He is ministering to them. This statement gives added weight to the inspiration of the writings of Paul. He adopts the language of the Levitical temple worship in describing himself as a minister preaching the gospel.

The Gentiles are "acceptable" -- apart from the Law or any religion -- through Christ as preached by Paul.

"Sanctified" -- the Holy Spirit indwelt the gentile believers, beginning with Cornelius. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit begins with Jew and Gentile the moment of regeneration when the Spirit of God takes up His abode within the believer. Paul gave the gospel, but God gave the Holy Spirit when they believed. It must be kept in mind that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles in a very special sense. As a high priest, Paul offered up the Gentiles, making an offering unto God. It is difficult for us today to fathom the full significance of all this, and yet we as Gentiles have entered into all that this implies. My friend, if you have never thanked God for the apostle Paul, you should thank Him right now. God gave Paul to us. For this reason we should read his Epistle to the Romans.⁷¹

¹⁶That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Guzik: That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles: This is consistent with Paul's calling to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. In fulfilling this call, he didn't just preach the gospel of salvation but also instructed believers how to live before God.

That the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable: When the Gentiles live glorifying God, then their offering to God is acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit – the necessity of such a sacrifice makes Paul's writing necessary.

The offering of the Gentiles: Romans 15:16 is filled with the language of priesthood. Paul says he serves as a "ministering priest" of Jesus Christ presenting the gospel as a "priestly service" so Gentile converts would be an acceptable sacrifice to God.

"When he defines his ministry as ministering the gospel of God the apostle uses a word occurring nowhere else in the New Testament which may properly be rendered 'acting as a priest.' So the ministry of the gospel is conceived of after the pattern of priestly offering." (Murray)⁷²

⁷⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

ESV: Paul functions, so to speak, as priest relative to the gospel, and the offering he presents to God is Gentile converts. This offering is pleasing to God since it is set apart into the realm of the holy (sanctified) by the Holy Spirit.⁷³

FCSBN: 16–24 Paul’s mission. Paul may have been drawing on Isa 66:19–24, where the nations, together with the Jews, come before God in worship. The image in Isaiah also includes the appointment of priests (see Isa 66:21), which Paul metaphorically called himself (see Ro 15:16).⁷⁴

17I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

But by what right should Paul be able to intervene in a congregation that he had no hand in creating? He says it is because the grace that God gave him of being a servant of the Messiah for gentiles, and because he had the priestly duty of presenting the Good News so that gentiles would be made an acceptable offering, made holy by the Holy Spirit. There’s much here to discuss. First Paul has taken quite seriously the commission he received on the road to Damascus by none other than the risen Christ Himself. His commission was to be as the Apostle to the gentiles. But clearly Paul was not the only Jew who was evangelizing gentiles in the name of Yeshua. Even so, Paul took Christ’s commission to mean that he was to be the chief evangelist and was to be head of the spear in taking the Gospel to the gentile world. In fact, he was to be the authority over the gentiles who came to faith. So, he felt that he had been given the authority to intervene virtually anywhere in the known world outside of the Holy Land where James, Jesus’ brother, was the head of the congregation of Believers that consisted almost exclusively of Jews.

So, what does Paul mean by his “priestly” duty to present the good news? Here’s the thing to understand: according to the Torah it was one of the prime duties and great honors of the Levite Priests to keep and teach God’s Word to God’s chosen people. For centuries they had failed at that and instead the office of priest had become politicized and an occupation meant to enrich oneself or merely to gain special privilege and social status. The synagogue was now where most actual Bible teaching took place and it certainly was not priests who taught in the synagogues.

However, in a sort of restoration-of-the-Torah mindset, Paul describes the duty of preaching the Gospel as being priestly in its fundamental nature since the Gospel is contained in the Word of God. Thus, it was always the priests who had been intended to teach God’s people the Gospel. So, in continuing the metaphor of Temple and priest Paul explains that those gentiles who come to belief in Yeshua are as an offering made holy by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is then presented to God. That is, all offerings made to God at the Temple begin as ordinary and common things; but by setting them apart and devoting them to God this makes them holy property and thus suitable for presenting them to God. The Holy Spirit, through Yeshua, makes the gentiles holy and in this way, they become an acceptable offering to God.

Further explaining himself to the receivers of his letter in Rome, in verses 17 and 18 Paul makes it clear that whatever he has said that might feel to a reader as a personal boast about his accomplishments is not. Rather he is proud, or boasting, about what Yeshua has done through

⁷³ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁷⁴ First-Century Study Bible Notes

him. As a modern-day application, it is not at all wrong to be proud of what God has done with Seed of Abraham Ministries and Torah Class as long as we understand that we are merely tools in God's toolbox and everything good that has come from our efforts is Him operating through His willing vessels. It is God who merits the glory and not us. Philippians 4:13 CJB 13 I can do all things through him who gives me power.⁷⁵

McGee: Paul had written boldly to the Romans and was rather apologetic about it because he recognized that these saints in Rome probably did not need his instructions. In spite of this, however, he wrote with confidence to them. There is no personal assumption in this, He is a servant of Christ Jesus and is doing His will. This is important to see. There is one thing that should never characterize a servant of God, and that is pride. We should never become officious, but rather take the position that we are merely serving the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the One in charge.⁷⁶

BKC: 17-19. As a result of his special ministry by God's grace to the Gentiles, Paul affirmed, Therefore I glory (lit., "I have boasting") in Christ Jesus in my service to God (lit., "in the things relating to God"). This was no boasting in mere human achievements, as Paul explained: I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God (lit., "unto the obedience of the Gentiles"). "Obedience" is a synonym for coming to Christ (cf. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:2; cf. "obey" in Rom. 16:26) for God "commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Paul recognized that all credit goes to Christ. And yet Paul was involved; God worked by what he had said and done. The apostle had been used by God to perform signs (*sēmeiōn*, miracles that signify theological truths) and miracles (*teratōn*, miracles that produce wonder). Luke referred to a miracle God performed through Paul at Cyprus (Acts 13:11, making Elymas blind), "signs and wonders" at Iconium (Acts 14:3; cf. Acts 15:12) and miracles at Lystra (Acts 14:8-10, 19-20), Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12), Troas (Acts 20:9-12), and Malta (Acts 28:1-8). Signs, wonders, and miracles authenticated the work of the apostles (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). And all this, Paul said, was through the power of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 15:13). Anything Paul achieved that was worthy of praise had God's grace as its source, Jesus Christ as its motivation and goal, and the Holy Spirit as its energy.

The result was that Paul preached the gospel from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. Literally, this reads, "from Jerusalem and in a circle (i.e., Jerusalem and its environs) even to Illyricum." "The gospel of God" (v. 16) is here called the gospel of Christ. The New Testament records several of Paul's visits to Jerusalem after his conversion (Acts 9:26-28 [cf. Gal. 1:17-19]; Acts 11:27-30; 15:2 [cf. Gal. 2:1]; Acts 18:22). In the last reference Jerusalem is not named, but the words "he went up and greeted the church" obviously refers to the church at Jerusalem. Paul's visit to Illyricum is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. This area, also known as Dalmatia, corresponds approximately to modern-day Yugoslavia. It is west and north of Greece (see the location on the map between Acts and Rom.). At one time Titus went to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). A logical suggestion is that Paul went into Illyricum from Macedonia while waiting for a response to 2 Corinthians before going on to Corinth (Acts 20:1-3; 2 Cor. 13:1-2, 10). This

⁷⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

visit was fresh in his mind since Corinth was the city where he wrote Romans (see the Introduction to Rom.).⁷⁷

Guzik: Therefore, I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus: As he considers his call to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, Paul can glory in God that he received such a call – speaking only of the things God did through him to bring salvation to the Gentiles.

“Paul will glory only in what Christ has done through him. He is sure that Christ has done great things through him, and he is glad that he can draw attention to those things. But he is not trying to attract adulation. It is what Christ has done that is his theme.” (Morris)⁷⁸

ESV: 17–18 Paul in a certain sense actually boasts of his ministry, for in doing so he glorifies not himself but Christ, who has worked through him in his ministry to the Gentiles.⁷⁹

FCSBN: Contrary to the teaching you have learned. Paul appears to be alluding to a previous teaching that the Christians of Rome had been given (see also Ro 6:17). Though impossible to name with certainty, it’s likely this teaching included the letter from the Jerusalem council in Ac 15. This is important for arguing that the apostolic decree was a given backdrop to Paul’s further instructions to his Gentile Christian audience (see note on Ro 6:18).⁸⁰

18For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

Missler: “Obedience” is a synonym for coming to Christ (cf. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:2; cf. “obey” in Rom. 16:26) for God “commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).⁸¹

McGee 18-19: Paul is saying something very important in this passage. If we are to understand Paul, and especially whether he or Peter founded the church at Rome, we must pay close attention to what he says here. Paul is saying, "I will not take credit for the work of God that is being done by others -- especially among the Gentiles." Of course he couldn't take credit for what was accomplished on the Day of Pentecost, which was the beginning of the ministry that resulted in the gospel going to the Gentiles. He couldn't take credit for the gospel going to the first Gentiles. It was Simon Peter who took the gospel to the home of Cornelius. Paul will speak only of those things which Christ wrought by him. He had a peculiar ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles.

"Through mighty signs and wonders," which were the credentials of the apostles and the ministers in the early church. These were given to establish the church on the right foundation before a word of the New Testament had been written. Paul, speaking to the Ephesian believers, says that they "...are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). He does not intend to say that the apostles are the foundation. There is no foundation but Christ: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is

⁷⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁷⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁷⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸⁰ First-Century Study Bible Notes

⁸¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1Cor. 3:11). But the apostles are the ones who put down the foundation of Jesus Christ. That is what Paul is saying here.

Paul says that the gospel of Christ had come through him "unto Illyricum." Illyricum was a province of the Roman Empire next to Italy. It extended to the Adriatic Sea and the Danube River. Paul, you see, had preached by this time from Jerusalem to the province next to Rome. He had not quite reached Rome. By the way, we have no record of Paul's journey in this area. Undoubtedly, he went many places that are not detailed for us. There are those who believe that Paul went to Spain. I believe this epistle reveals that he did go to Spain, and I think he also went to Great Britain because he covered the Roman Empire, as we shall see.⁸²

Guzik: In word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient: God used mighty signs and wonders and the broader power of the Spirit of God to help Paul fully preach the gospel of Christ everywhere he went – from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

I fully preached the gospel of Christ: We sense that Paul would consider “bare” preaching, without the active and sometimes miraculous work of the Holy Spirit evident, to be less than fully preaching the gospel.⁸³

ESV: Paul summarizes his entire ministry up to this point by saying that Christ accomplished his work through him by word and deed, that is, both by Paul's preaching about Christ and by Paul's actions (lifestyle, with mighty works) that accompanied those words.⁸⁴

19Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Missler: Signs, wonders, and miracles authenticated the work of the apostles (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).

Signs: *semeion*, miracles by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's; miracles that signify theological truths;

Wonders: *teras* miracles that produce awe and astonishment.

Luke referred to a miracle God performed through Paul at Cyprus (Acts 13:11, making Elymas blind), “signs and wonders” at Iconium (Acts 14:3; cf. Acts 15:12) and miracles at Lystra (Acts 14:8-10, 19-20), Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12), Troas (Acts 20:9-12), and Malta (Acts 28:1-8).

Paul's visit to Illyricum is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. This area, also known as Dalmatia, corresponds approximately to modern-day Yugoslavia. It was west and north of Greece. At one time Titus went to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). A logical suggestion is that Paul went into Illyricum from Macedonia while waiting for a response to 2 Corinthians before going on to Corinth (Acts 20:1-3; 2 Cor. 13:1-2, 10). This visit may have been fresh in his mind since Corinth was the city where he wrote Romans.⁸⁵

⁸² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁸⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

So, in verse 19 Paul continues to explain that because of the power of God through him, he has spread the Gospel to the far reaches, all the way from the center of Yehoveh worship in Jerusalem to Illyricum in the pagan Roman Empire. We have not seen in any of Paul's writings that he had been to the province of Illyricum, but that hardly means he didn't go there. The notion that all of Paul's letters have survived, or all of his writings are known to us, or that contained within those letters and writings are complete journals of everything that he did, all the adventures and circumstances that he encountered, and detailed lists of every place that he ever went cannot be taken seriously. Since Illyricum is north of Macedonia and we know he was in the area of Macedonia then it is entirely probable that he made it as far as Illyricum; there is no reason to doubt him in this. The idea is simply to inform his readers of the furthest reaches of his ministry to the North West.⁸⁶

Guzik: From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel: Illyricum is modern Yugoslavia and Albania. This means that Paul's ministry spread from Illyricum in the west to Jerusalem in the east.

Christ Jesus... God... Spirit of God: Paul effortlessly weaves references to each member of the Trinity in Romans 15:16-19. Paul can't talk about God without recognizing His three Persons.⁸⁷

ESV: By the power of signs and wonders refers to the miracles that accompanied Paul's gospel proclamation throughout his entire ministry. Such miracles gave a "sign" of (or pointed to) the power of God, the divine origin and truth of the gospel, and God's mercy and love for people. They were "wonders" in that people were amazed by them (cf. Acts 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4). Paul has fulfilled his mandate to preach the gospel among the Gentiles from Jerusalem to Illyricum (roughly comprising what is now Albania and was formerly Yugoslavia). How can Paul say that his work has been complete when many still have not heard the gospel in this area? It can be seen from the following verses that churches have been planted in key centers, and from there Paul's coworkers will bring the gospel to outlying areas (e.g., Epaphras in Colossae, Col. 1:7).⁸⁸

²⁰Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

Missler: Seeking virgin territory, on the edge of danger.⁸⁹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 20 Paul makes it clear that he wanted to pioneer new areas for the Gospel and not attach himself to the work of others who came before him. This is further proof that Paul was not the only Believing Jewish evangelist of the Good News and more it shows that Paul was not the boss, so to speak, of any Believers or organization of Believers who undertook an evangelistic

⁸⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁸⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁸⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

mission. What set Paul apart from the others was that he was an Apostle appointed directly by Christ and that gentiles were to be his primary mission field. It was simply pragmatism that led to Paul usually winding up at synagogues everywhere he went because there he would find some number of gentiles who had interest in the Jewish faith. It was much less of a leap for a gentile to trust in Messiah Yeshua from already having some knowledge of the Bible and to some degree identifying with the Jewish faith than it was for a pagan gentile who had no familiarity with the Scriptures. Paul had to begin by instructing them in the basic concept of sin and thus the need for a Savior. These were uniquely Jewish concepts for which pagans had no basis for understanding. This is what makes the rapid spread of Christianity among gentiles all the more astounding and downright miraculous.⁹⁰

McGee 20-21: Perhaps my translation will make these verses a little clearer: Indeed, in this way having made it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, in order that I might not be building upon another man's foundation: but as it is written, They shall see, those to whom there came no tidings of Him, and those who have not heard shall understand.

It was a point of honor with Paul -- not competition -- which caused him to go as a pioneer where the gospel had not been preached. Paul had a peculiar ministry. Paul did not minister where a church already existed or where others had gone. He was a true missionary, which is the meaning of the word evangelist in the New Testament. Paul never had a committee to do the groundwork ahead of him. When Paul entered a town, he was not given a welcome. The mayor did not greet him. If anyone greeted him, it was usually the chief of police, who generally arrested him and put him in jail. Since the apostles laid the foundation, the believers would have to be very careful to discern who the apostles were and to whom they were listening. Paul had the credentials God had given to the apostles. It is said of Paul and Barnabus, "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts 14:3). You see, these were the marks of the apostles and the early preachers of the gospel. They did not come with a New Testament in their hands -- it hadn't been written yet. They came with these credentials: mighty "signs and wonders."

Of course the day came when signs and wonders were no longer the identifying mark. The apostle John, near the end of his long life, wrote: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2John 1:10). Correct doctrine was the identifying mark for a man of God even then. And today the identifying mark is correct doctrine, not signs and wonders.

A tragic movement is going on at this writing. Coming to my desk is literally a flood of letters from people who are being carried away by fanaticism, by wrong teaching, and by false doctrine. Although there is a movement of the Holy Spirit today, there is also a movement of the Devil. Satan is busy. A great many people are being carried away and trapped by incorrect teaching. Paul has been so careful to emphasize the fact that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. Well, the kingdom of God is not signs and wonders either. It is not any of these outward things. The Kingdom of God just happens to be righteousness. I hear of groups meeting and indulging in all kinds of sexual rites -- not living for God at all -- yet talking about certain signs that they demonstrate, such as speaking in tongues. My friend, it had better be a clean tongue. If the Lord has come into your life, He will clean you up. A clean tongue and one that declares the Word of

⁹⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

God accurately is what a great many folk need today. Paul always ministered where the gospel had not previously gone. He was a true evangelist, a true missionary.

Since Paul said that he did not go where the gospel had been preached before, who is the founder of the church in Rome? He makes it very clear, both in his introduction and at this point, that he is the founder of the church in Rome.

In Romans 16 we will be introduced to a group of people in Rome whom Paul knew. The record tells us that Paul led them to the Lord. He reached these people out in the Roman Empire and many of them gravitated to Rome. There they met together around the person of the Lord Jesus. I am sure they talked many times about their beloved pastor, Paul. He founded the church, not by going there in person, but by remote control -- you might say, by spiritual radar.

"To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand" seems to be Paul's life verse as a missionary. It is a quotation of Isaiah 52:15 from the Septuagint version. Paul was thrilled to go and preach the gospel to those who were spiritually blind. After Paul had preached, some brother would say, "I understand, brother Paul. I will accept Christ as my Savior." My friend, there is no thrill equal to presenting Christ and having people turn to Him.⁹¹

BKC: 20-22. Reference to the geographical extent of his ministry (v. 19) led Paul to declare something of his philosophy of outreach: It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known (lit., "named"). Paul purposed to be a true pioneer evangelist, opening virgin territory to the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ. This was so that he would not be building on someone else's foundation (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10). Paul then expressed his ministry goal in a quotation of the second half of Isaiah 52:15 and explained, This is why I have often been hindered (imperf. tense, "I was being hindered many times") from coming to you. Up to this time Paul had always found new areas for ministry in Asia Minor and the Grecian Peninsula so that he had not yet felt free to look beyond to Rome and Spain.⁹²

Guzik: Not where Christ was named: Paul did not want to build on another man's foundation. Rather he wanted to do pioneer work for the Lord – not because it was wrong or bad to continue the work begun through another man, but because there was so much to do on the frontiers.⁹³

ESV: 20–21 Paul's aim was to preach the gospel in areas where no churches existed. His calling was not to plant churches where they already existed. Thereby he was fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. 52:15.⁹⁴

FCSBN: The God of peace will soon crush Satan. This in an allusion to Ge 3:15. The Book of Jubilees paints a similar picture of redemption: "They will complete and live their entire lifetimes peacefully and joyfully. There will be neither a Satan nor any evil one who will destroy. For their entire lifetimes will be times of blessing and healing."⁹⁵

⁹¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹² The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁹³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

⁹⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁹⁵ First-Century Study Bible Notes

²¹But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Missler: Paraphrased from:

Isa 52:15; So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Isa 65:1; I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.⁹⁶

Guzik: But as it is written: Paul saw his pioneering heart as obedience to the Scriptures, fulfilling the passage he quotes from the Old Testament.

²²For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

Missler: Up to this time Paul had always found new areas for ministry in Asia Minor and the Grecian Peninsula so that he had not yet felt free to look beyond to Rome and Spain.⁹⁷

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

So then in verse 22 Paul explains that the reason he has never been to Rome is because he was prevented from it by all the missionary work he was doing in pioneering new areas. Apparently even before Paul began his evangelistic efforts the congregation of Rome was already established. Just who established it we don't know. It is interesting that Paul sees himself as a sort of Johnny Appleseed of planting Believing congregations. He has no illusions that his purpose is to start a congregation, stay and grow it, and behave as we think of a Pastor. Paul's purpose was not to be a long-term shepherd or caretaker over a particular group of Believers. In fact, I don't think Paul had the demeanor of a Pastor. Paul was all business; he was a scholar, a teacher and authoritarian. His goal was to spread the Gospel of Christ as far as possible to as many as possible as quickly as possible. So, Paul devised a strategy; he went around establishing Believing congregations by wandering into a town where there was a Jewish community where he would usually be welcome. Next, he would convince some number of Jews and gentiles that Yeshua was the Jewish Messiah, he would select a leader, help the leader to set up an organization establish someplace for the Believers to meet, and all during this time instruct the leadership in proper doctrine. Once accomplished, he moved on. He kept track of the various groups he created through letters; and through these letters he reproved them, commended them, and taught them.⁹⁸

McGee: When Paul says that he had been "much hindered," you may be sure of one thing: he was much hindered. Many roadblocks had been put in his way.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁹⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁹⁸ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁹⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Guzik: For this reason I also have been much hindered: It was his great desire to do pioneer work that hindered him from coming to the Romans, though he did desire to see them.¹⁰⁰

ESV: Paul had been prevented from coming to Rome because his work of planting churches in unreached areas in the eastern part of the Roman Empire (key cities from which the gospel radiated outward) had not been completed.¹⁰¹

23But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Missler: At the beginning of this epistle he had expressed this desire to visit them (Rom. 1:10-11, 13).¹⁰²

McGee 23-24: Paul makes it clear that he wants to take the gospel way out yonder and that he is coming to Rome. Now he says something unusually strange: "But now having no more place in these parts." There is a question about what Paul meant by this. Was he saying that there was no longer an opportunity to preach the gospel in the section of the Roman Empire where he was at that time? Had the doors completely closed to him? Had everyone been saved? Had every nook and cranny been evangelized? I used to take the position that the answer was "no" to these questions. However, now that I have visited the sites of the seven churches of Asia Minor, I'm not sure that I was right, because Paul and the other witnesses had been faithful, and the gospel had been sounded out through the entire area. The Word had gone out. Dr. Luke says that everyone, both Jew and Gentile, had heard the gospel. This does not mean that they all had turned to Christ, but they all had heard. Now Paul is looking for new territory. He has his eyes on the frontier of the empire. He says, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you." In other words, Rome was not his destination. He wanted to go to Spain. He had come from one end of the Roman Empire, and he wanted to go to the other end of the Roman Empire. He says, "For I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way witherward by you." You see, Rome was not his terminal. He wanted to go all the way to the other end of the empire.

The question is: Did Paul ever go to Spain? If he did, we have no record of it. But neither have we a record of his journey to Illyricum; we would not know he had been there if he had not mentioned it in verse 19. Personally I believe that Paul did go to Spain and to the rest of the Roman Empire. My reason is a statement that he made when he came to the end of his life. He said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2Tim. 4:7). Paul said he had finished his course. I don't think he would have said that if he had not been to Spain, because Spain was on his itinerary.

Paul wanted to go to Spain and he also wanted to go to Jerusalem.¹⁰³

BKC: 23-24. Perhaps his visit to Illyricum convinced Paul that no more virgin territory for the gospel lay in Asia Minor and the Grecian Peninsula. This does not mean that he had visited every center, but the gospel had been introduced and local churches had been established that could

¹⁰⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹⁰¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁰² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁰³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

complete the work (cf. Acts 19:8-10). At any rate Paul concluded, There is no more place for me to work in these regions (lit., "having no more place in these regions"). Coupled with this was his longing for many years to see the Roman Christians. At the beginning of this epistle he had expressed this desire to visit them (Rom. 1:10-11, 13). Paul continued, I plan to do so (this clause does not occur in the Gr. text, but the idea is implied) when (the indefiniteness of the Gr. clause requires "whenever") I go to Spain (cf. 15:28). Spain was then a Roman colony where many Jews lived; it was the western limit of the empire. He hoped to visit them while passing through. Apparently, he did not plan a long stay in Rome. They could then assist him on his journey there (lit., "and by you to be sent forward there"); that is, they would encourage him on to Spain. Paul would proceed to Spain only after he had enjoyed (lit., "I am filled full with," "I am satisfied with") their company for a while. Paul paid the Roman believers the sincere compliment that their fellowship would refresh and satisfy him spiritually (cf. 1:13). He also wanted to impart a spiritual gift to them, thereby strengthening them (1:11) and to have some spiritual harvest among them (1:13), that is, to be able to help them grow in Christ.¹⁰⁴

ESV: 23–24 Paul now feels that his work in the east has come to an end. So he hopes to see the Roman church, and desires that they would function as his base of support for his mission to Spain. By the first century a.d. Spain was firmly a part of the Roman Empire. Spain provided significant crops to the empire, and it was the fatherland of several important Roman authors (and a few later emperors); thus it would have been a strategic location for Paul to evangelize. No visit of Paul to Spain is recorded in the NT, but it is possible that he went there after his release from prison in Rome (after Acts 28:30–31). There is some historical evidence after the NT suggesting that Paul did preach in Spain, but it falls short of clear proof.¹⁰⁵

24 **Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.**

Missler: Spain was then a Roman colony where many Jews lived; it was the western limit of the empire.

Think about the logistic challenge. (He was probably in Corinth at the time)¹⁰⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 24 Paul announces that he intends to go to Spain. Does this mean that as far as Paul knows the Gospel has not yet been preached there? I don't know; but I rather think so considering what he just said. However, Paul will take a route to Spain that necessarily has him going through Italy. In Italy he'll go to Rome and spend time with the Roman congregation. Whether by road or by sea Rome isn't really a natural stop on the way to Spain; he would have to make a significant detour. By explaining to the Roman congregation that his ultimate destination was Spain, they would immediately understand that his coming to Rome required some extra time and effort on his part. But we must also understand that in Paul's day Spain was seen as one

¹⁰⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

¹⁰⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁰⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

of the furthest places on earth that a person could travel (at least it seemed that way from a Middle Easterners perspective); it could take as much as a full year to get there.

In the first chapter of the Book of Acts we read this:

Acts 1:8 CJB 8 But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!"

So, in a sense, by going to Spain Paul would have been following Yeshua's instructions by evangelizing the west as representative of the "ends of the earth".

What was Paul's motive for stopping in Rome? After all, this was not a congregation that he had established, and he didn't seem to personally know the leadership. No doubt it had something to do with the City of Rome being the hub of the known world and therefore, also the religious power center of the known world. From a purely pragmatic viewpoint Rome was all important and since the city was so heavily populated likely it had a pretty large congregation of Believers (perhaps even more than one congregation). But Paul also made it clear that he hoped for help from the Believers in Rome to get him to Spain. Likely this help meant monetary help, perhaps even some of the members coming with him to Spain to help. No matter how he might get to Spain it was going to be a long, tiring and risky journey. So staying in Rome to rest for several weeks to recuperate would have been desirable even though it required a substantial detour.

He next explains that before he undertakes his trip to Spain, first he must go to Jerusalem; itself a long and challenging trip. He says he is going to be taking aid for God's people there. In other passages in others of his books he says that it is also to go to Jerusalem to fulfill the Torah commandment to make pilgrimage to the Temple for the occasion of the Biblical Festival of Shavuot.

When he mentions bring aid he is speaking of the collection of money he had been taking from the various congregations he was visiting on his missionary trips around the Mediterranean. To show you just how interconnected Paul's letters are and why we must always look to his other letters to other congregations to give us the fullest context for what he means by many of his challenging comments, we will read about this same collection of charity and Paul's trip to bring it to Jerusalem in a few different places in the New Testament. Just as a small sampling:

Acts 24:17-18 CJB 17 "After an absence of several years, I came to Yerushalayim to bring a charitable gift to my nation and to offer sacrifices.
18 It was in connection with the latter that they found me in the Temple. I had been ceremonially purified, I was not with a crowd, and I was not causing a disturbance.

Notice that Paul intended on making sacrifices at the Temple. Doesn't much sound like a man who has turned his back on the Torah or his Jewishness does it? It seems that Paul certainly doesn't think that Yeshua abolished the sacrificial system, even though most Christian commentators claim Paul teaches against it. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul also speaks of this same trip to Jerusalem from a little different perspective.

1Corinthians 16:1-8 CJB 1 Corinthians 16:1 Now, in regard to the collection being made for God's people: you are to do the same as I directed the congregations in Galatia to do. 2 Every week, on Motza'ei-Shabbat, each of you should set some money aside, according to his resources, and save it up; so that when I come I won't have to do fundraising. 3 And when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the people you have approved, and I will

send them to carry your gift to Yerushalayim. 4 If it seems appropriate that I go too, they will go along with me. 5 I will visit you after I have gone through Macedonia, for I am intending to pass through Macedonia, 6 and I may stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me continue my travels wherever I may go. 7 For I don't want to see you now, when I am only passing through; because I am hoping to spend some time with you, if the Lord allows it. 8 But I will remain in Ephesus until Shavu'ot.....¹⁰⁷

Guzik: Whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you: Therefore, Paul supposes that he will visit the Romans on a future trip to Spain, where Paul will preach the gospel on the frontiers. Stopping off in Rome on the way, Paul anticipates that he can enjoy the support and fellowship of the Romans before he goes to preach the gospel in the regions beyond.

Paul probably wanted Rome to be his base of operations for the western part of the empire, even as Antioch was his base for the eastern part.

For I hope to see you on my journey: Paul had these plans; yet things did not work out according to his plans. He did go to Rome, yet not as a missionary on his way to Spain. He went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar, where he would preach the gospel on a different kind of frontier.

God had unexpected frontiers for the gospel in Paul's life, giving him unexpected access to preach to the emperor of Rome himself.

After his release from the Roman imprisonment at the end of the Book of Acts, we have reason to believe that Paul did in fact make it to Spain and preached the gospel there.¹⁰⁸

²⁵But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

McGee 25-26: He wanted to go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the poor saints there, and he wanted to take it with his own hands. Why? Because with his own hands he had "wasted" the church at Jerusalem; he had led in the persecution of the believers in Jerusalem. Now it was in the heart of this great apostle to make up for that by taking a gift to them.

"A certain contribution." The Greek word which is translated "contribution" is koinonia, meaning "a fellowship." This word was used for everything that believers could share: Christ, the Word, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and material gifts. Christians have fellowship with God, with Christ, and with one another when they give. Fellowship is not just patting somebody on the back. The knife and fork clubs meet every week, and that is fellowship as far as they are concerned. But for a believer, fellowship is sharing the things of Christ. Paul is talking here about going to Jerusalem where previously he had persecuted the church. Now he wants to have fellowship with them; he wants to take a gift to them. In Acts we have the historical record of this: Paul said, "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings" (Acts 24:17). This collection was very important to Paul. We find him writing about it in 2 Corinthians -- in fact, chapters 8 and 9 deal with it.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹⁰⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹⁰⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC: 25-27. Paul balanced his tentative plans for the future with the business immediately at hand. I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there (lit., "ministering [diakonōn] to the saints"). Paul's visit to Jerusalem was to deliver the voluntary offering from churches for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:13-14; 9:12-13; Gal. 2:10). The churches of Asia Minor contributed to the offering also, but Paul mentioned only Macedonia and Achaia, the areas closest to Rome and those on his mind for obvious reasons. (See the location of these two portions of Greece on the map between Acts and Rom.) The voluntary nature of the contribution (*koinōnian*, "fellowship") is stressed by the repetition of the verb, were pleased (cf. Rom. 15:26-27; 2 Cor. 8:10-12). At the same time Paul recognized the churches had an obligation: Indeed they owe it to them (lit., "and they are debtors to them"). This sense of moral obligation had undoubtedly prompted Paul to suggest the offering. Since the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings (lit., "in their spiritual things"; cf. Rom. 11:11-12, 17-18; 15:12; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 3:6), Gentile Christians certainly ought to share with (*leitourgēsai*, "to minister to, serve"; cf. *leitourgon* in Rom. 15:16) the Jews their material blessings (lit., "in fleshly things"; cf. Gal. 6:6).¹¹⁰

ESV: The trip to Rome cannot be carried out immediately. Paul's next task is to travel to Jerusalem to bring the money he had collected for the poor saints there (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9).¹¹¹

FCSBN: 25–27 Doxology. This doxology appears in different locations in the book of Romans in a few different ancient manuscripts, leading some to conclude that it was added later. Regardless, it properly summarizes Paul's central message that the mysterious reconciliation of all humanity to God has dawned in Christ, as predicted in the Prophets.¹¹²

CJSBN: 25–26 It would be good to make some contribution to the poor. Years earlier, the leaders of the Jerusalem Messianic Community had urged Sha'ul to "remember the poor" (Gal. 2:10). He writes about the present collection on their behalf in 1 Cor. 16:1-4 and 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15. So well did he succeed in obtaining Gentile charity toward the Jewish poor that he made this a part of his message (Acts 24:17).¹¹³

26For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Missler: Paul's visit to Jerusalem was to deliver the voluntary offering (cf. Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:13-14; 9:12-13; Gal. 2:10).

"Contribution" = *koinonian*, "fellowship", "communion", "fiduciary communication."¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

¹¹¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹¹² First-Century Study Bible Notes

¹¹³ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

He next explains that before he undertakes his trip to Spain, first he must go to Jerusalem; itself a long and challenging trip. He says he is going to be taking aid for God's people there. In other passages in others of his books he says that it is also to go to Jerusalem to fulfill the Torah commandment to make pilgrimage to the Temple for the occasion of the Biblical Festival of Shavuot.

When he mentions bring aid he is speaking of the collection of money he had been taking from the various congregations he was visiting on his missionary trips around the Mediterranean. To show you just how interconnected Paul's letters are and why we must always look to his other letters to other congregations to give us the fullest context for what he means by many of his challenging comments, we will read about this same collection of charity and Paul's trip to bring it to Jerusalem in a few different places in the New Testament. Just as a small sampling:¹¹⁵

Guzik: But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints: Paul thought he would stop in Corinth on his way to Jerusalem to deliver a collection from Christians in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-3).¹¹⁶

ESV: Christians from the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Achaia had gladly contributed to the collection. These provinces are roughly equivalent to northern and southern Greece today. This collection would include gifts from such cities as Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth.¹¹⁷

²⁷It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Missler: cf. Rom. 11:11-12, 17-18; 15:12; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 3:6.¹¹⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Moving on to Romans 15:27, Paul tells the Roman Believers that while it was generous and kind of the various Believing congregations in the far-flung Diaspora to donate these funds for the poor Jewish Believers in Jerusalem, in fact what they did was closer to paying a debt than to giving charity. Apparently, a great many gentiles had donated; so Paul notes that since the gentiles shared in the Jews' spiritual heritage, then it behooved the gentiles to pay back by helping the Jews in material matters. While the principle of sharing what we have with a brother in Christ is self-evident in this issue of taking aid to the Believers in Jerusalem, it also follows along with Paul highlighting the Biblical principle of "love your neighbor" that he has been preaching since Romans chapter 12. But in this same passage I also want to highlight that Paul makes the point that gentiles don't have our own separate spiritual heritage; by grace gentiles are allowed to share in what God gave to the Jews. It is the Jews' God-given spiritual heritage that gentiles can also enjoy through their trust in the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ. This is another of those passages that drives a number of Christian scholars to want to find sufficient fault with

¹¹⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹¹⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹¹⁷ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Romans chapter 15 to disregard much, if not all, of the entire chapter as not having been written by Paul. This is because it clearly refutes the rather standard Christian doctrine of gentiles possessing a different and superior spiritual heritage than the Jews.¹¹⁹

McGee: Paul makes it clear that it was a freewill offering. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2Cor. 9:7). This is the offering Paul collected. Paul makes it very clear that it not only was a freewill offering (they couldn't give any other way to please God), but he also enforces the fact that they had a moral obligation and debt to pay. The Gentiles had received the gospel from Israel. Our Lord Jesus said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). You see, the gospel began in Jerusalem. Macedonia and Achaia were obligated to Jerusalem. Now some of the saints in Jerusalem were having financial difficulties, evidently because of persecution. Macedonia and Achaia could now pay a spiritual debt in the coin of the realm. This is foreign missions in reverse! It is the missionary church helping the home church. This very thing may take place in our nation, by the way, in the not too far distant future!¹²⁰

Guzik: For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things: Paul's observation is appropriate: the Gentile Christians of the broader Roman empire had received so much spiritually from the community of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, it was only right that they help the Jerusalem Christians in their need.¹²¹

ESV: they were pleased. The gladness of the Gentiles in providing for the needs of Jewish Christians is fitting. They stand in debt to the Jews, for they enjoy the spiritual blessings of the Jewish people and hence should happily assist them financially. Paul assumes that financial aid for needy Christians is a normal part of the Christian life.¹²²

FCSBN: They were pleased to do it. Obedience in doing tzedakah (charity) should be with joy: "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). Such charity reveals the fellowship between Messianic Jews and Gentile believers that Sha'ul is at pains to instill (Rom. 11:11–32). Gentile believers are obligated to help the Jews in material matters, simply from gratitude for the gospel and the word of God.¹²³

28 **When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.**

Missler: Paul got to Rome, but not when or in the manner he anticipated! He would come to Rome: in chains. . . . Caesarea for 2 years; almost assassinated. (Acts 27-28)

Appealed to Caesar; (had the government pay for his trip; witnessed to "Caesar's household").

¹¹⁹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹²⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

ESV: ¹²¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹²² ESV Study Bible Notes

¹²³ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

Christians should plan ahead, but they should also be flexible. Paul, not boastfully but simply confident of God's provision, promised that his visit would be a spiritual blessing to the Roman Christians¹²⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 28 Paul says that once he has completed this task of collecting donations and bringing the aid to the brothers in Jerusalem he will then begin to focus on his intention of going to Spain and stopping in Rome on the way. But then Paul says something rather cryptic; he says that he knows when he comes to the brothers in Rome that it will be "with the full measure of the Messiah's blessings". Nice words; but what do they mean? What is the "full measure of the Messiah's blessings"? Let me tell you in advance that this is another of those statements in Romans 15 that many Bible commentators wish wasn't there because it has a direct connection to the Hebrew heritage of salvation. "The Messiah's blessings" that Paul speaks of are contained in the Father's promise to Abraham (the Abrahamic Covenant) that in his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed. In other words, Paul is saying that his coming to Rome, the pagan capital of the world, and his coming to be with Christ Believers in Rome consisting of both Jews and gentiles, is nothing less than the prophetic fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham 1800 years before Yeshua was born. Paul fleshes out what he means by "the full measure of the Messiah's blessings" in the Book of Galatians.

Galatians 3:13-16 CJB 13 The Messiah redeemed us from the curse pronounced in the Torah by becoming cursed on our behalf; for the Tanakh says, "Everyone who hangs from a stake comes under a curse." 14 Yeshua the Messiah did this so that in union with him the Gentiles might receive the blessing announced to Avraham, so that through trusting and being faithful, we might receive what was promised, namely, the Spirit. 15 Brothers, let me make an analogy from everyday life: when someone swears an oath, no one else can set it aside or add to it. 16 Now the promises were made to Avraham and to his seed. It doesn't say, "and to seeds," as if to many; on the contrary, it speaks of one- "and to your seed"- and this "one" is the Messiah.¹²⁵

McGee{ You can see that this gift was on the heart of the great apostle Paul -- notice the zeal he had in taking it to Jerusalem. That trip, of course, placed him into the hands of his enemies who had him arrested. I disagree with some of my brethren who believe that Paul was out of the will of God during this time. I maintain that Paul was absolutely in the will of God when he went up to Jerusalem, as we have seen in the Book of Acts.

"And have sealed to them this fruit" is an awkward phrase for us and could mean no more than that he wanted a receipt for the offering. He secured to them the gift. It probably means that he wanted the Jerusalem church to see some fruits of their missionary efforts. I personally believe that if you are going to contribute money to some cause, you ought to know what it is doing. The area of Christian giving is one of grave danger today. I do not believe, Christian friend, that you should give to any work unless you know two things about it: (1) what it is doing, and (2) is it getting out the Word of God in a way that is effectual in hearts and lives?¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹²⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹²⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC: 28-29. Again, Paul said that after going to Jerusalem he would go to Spain and visit the Romans on the way (cf. v. 24). Paul got to Rome, but not when or in the manner he anticipated! (Acts 27-28) Whether he ever got to Spain no one knows for sure. Christians should plan ahead, but they should also be flexible. Paul, not boastfully but simply confident of God's provision, promised that his visit would be a spiritual blessing to the Roman Christians: I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ, that is, with Christ's blessing to share with them (cf. Rom. 1:11-13).¹²⁷

Guzik: I shall go by way of you to Spain: Paul would indeed head for Rome after his time in Jerusalem, but not in the way he planned!¹²⁸

ESV: After the collection has been delivered in Jerusalem, Paul plans to travel to Rome and then on to Spain. Paul was imprisoned, however, after he arrived in Jerusalem. Paul's plan to come to Rome was realized (Acts 22-28), but not in the way he intended, since he arrived in Rome as a prisoner.¹²⁹

²⁹And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Missler: He ultimately did go to Spain after being released...

Left for dead three times; beaten to point of death twice. Yet, Rom 8:28! All-expense paid trip to Rome . . . And yet, as an activist by nature, can you imagine his frustrations by the extended imprisonment . . .yet he gave us the precious "prison epistles": Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon.

How about you: how many "weekends" do you have left? 1000 (20 years)?

Psalms 90:12, So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom¹³⁰

McGee: This is Paul's stamp of approval on his prosperous journey to Rome. He went there according to the will of God and in the fullness of his apostolic office. God gave him divine insight into this trip. Paul is not out of the will of God in going to Jerusalem. Neither was he out of the will of God in going to Rome. It may not look like a prosperous journey, but God used it that way. It is very easy for God's children, when trouble comes and things look dark and doubtful, to say, "I must be out of the will of God." My friend, just because you have trouble and disturbed feelings does not mean that you are out of God's will. In fact, it may definitely mean you are in His will. If you are living in perfect calm today and nothing is happening, the chances are you are not in His will.¹³¹

¹²⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

¹²⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹²⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹³⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹³¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁰Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

Missler: The Apostle Paul recognized his need for intercessory prayer support from his readers and asked for it again and again (Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3-4; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1-2; Phil 22).

You can participate in the global struggle for the Gospel in your own prayer closet . . .

Judea was dangerous. Religious fanatics are dangerous – especially when they are wrong.¹³²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul then asks the Believers in Rome to join together in prayer for Paul about his upcoming trip to Jerusalem; he is expecting opposition the moment he enters Judea. Clearly Paul sees danger in his going to the Roman province of Judea because among the majority of Jews who don't believe in Yeshua are many (mainly the Zealots) who would harm Paul. This is a good time to remind you that while it is the common mantra among Christians that the danger that Paul was always in was because he believed in Jesus Christ that isn't really the case. Some new Messiah figure or another was always coming along that various groups of Jews believed in; it was hardly a new or rare phenomenon. Certainly, that Paul thought Yeshua was divine offended the most pious, especially the Pharisees. But the reason that Paul was always facing the prospect of physical violence had to do with his befriending of gentiles.¹³³

McGee: I have been dwelling a long time in this area. One reason is that this is a personal area, and Paul is laying bare his heart. The second reason is that we are seeing how Christianity functioned in the first century. We are seeing the practical side of Christianity. In the first part of Romans Paul gave us doctrine. Now Paul is putting that doctrine into practice.

This is one of the most solemn, earnest, and serious appeals of Paul for prayer that we find in the Bible. He says, "I beg of you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that ye strive intensely with me in your prayers to God on behalf of me." Paul recognizes that he is facing danger and has come to a crisis in his ministry. Enemies are on every hand. Paul had reason to fear, as succeeding events proved. He is asking for prayer in a very wonderful way, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul realized that everything that was to come to him had to come through Jesus Christ. He asked the believers in Rome to join with him in prayer. He says, "I want all of you to pray through Christ -- He is our great Intercessor -- go through Him to God on my behalf."

By "through the love of the Spirit" he means that love is the fruit of the Spirit which joins all believers together. And, friend, we ought to pray for each other.

"That ye strive intensely for me." The Greek word for strive is tremendous. We get our English word agonize from it. Paul is saying, "Agonize with me."

"On behalf of me" -- he is asking for prayer for his personal safety that he might come in "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Oh, my friend, how we need to pray like this -- not just praying by rote or by going over our prayer list hurriedly. For the apostle Paul prayer was with great agony, great exercise of soul. He laid hold of God. This kind of praying is so desperately needed today! You and I need people who know how to pray for us.¹³⁴

¹³² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹³³ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹³⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC: 30-33. The Apostle Paul recognized his need for intercessory prayer support from his readers and asked for it again and again (Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:3-4; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1-2; Phile. 22). Here he entreated the Romans by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit to join him in his struggle through prayer. "The love of the Spirit" is probably the love given by the Spirit (cf. Rom. 5:5), not love for the Spirit. Recognizing that divine love, they would be motivated to pray. A Christian's intercession is a means of sharing in the ministry of others. Paul's specific request was that he would be rescued from the unbelievers (lit., "the disobedient") in Judea and that his service (diakonia) in Jerusalem would be acceptable to the saints. Paul was aware of the problems that lay before him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23), and he was deeply concerned that the offering from the Gentile Christians be delivered and distributed properly. If these objectives were accomplished, according to Paul, he could then by God's will go to them with joy and... be refreshed with them. The word rendered "refreshed" suggests that Paul would be able to rest or relax with them in the knowledge of a job well done. Paul closed this section with a brief benediction: The God of peace (cf. Rom. 16:20; also cf. "the God of hope," 15:13) be with you all. Amen. This is the third benediction in this chapter (cf. vv. 5, 13).¹³⁵

Guzik: Strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe: Sensing that danger awaited him in Jerusalem (having been warned several times as recorded in Acts 20:22-23 and Acts 21:10-14), Paul knew he needed the prayers of God's people to see him through the difficulty promised him.

Strive together with me: The idea is that Paul wants the Romans to partner with him in ministry through their prayers. The New English Bible translates this: be my allies in the fight. The New Living Bible translates the phrase like this: join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

"Ministers need the prayers of their flocks. With Paul I urge you to strive in your prayers for your pastors. We need your prayers and we thank God for them. Pastors are sustained by the power of the Spirit through the support of their congregations." (Smith)

The ancient Greek word translated strive together is sunagonizomai – literally meaning, "agonize together." To emphasize the importance and intensity, Paul repeats the word twice: sunagonizomai sunagonizomai.

This same root word for agony is used of Jesus' anguished prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asked His disciples to agonize with Him in prayer. They failed at that critical moment and left Jesus to struggle alone. We must not leave our ministers and leaders to struggle alone. "It reminds us of Carey, who says, when he goes to India, 'I will go down into the pit, but brother Fuller and the rest of you must hold the rope.' Can we refuse the request? Would it not be treachery?" (Spurgeon)

"Does it astonish you that a man so rich in grace as Paul should be asking prayers of these unknown saints? It need not astonish you; for it is the rule with the truly great to think most highly of others. In proportion as a man grows in grace he feels his dependence upon God, and, in a certain sense, his dependence upon God's people." (Spurgeon)¹³⁶

¹³⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

¹³⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

31¹That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Zealots were radical militant Jews who were itching for an armed rebellion against Rome; they wanted to fight for their freedom from Rome. And just as it always is for human beings, we tend to stereotype entire groups of people simply because someone who looks like them or bears the same affiliations might be seen as our enemy. The Zealots hated all gentiles because to their minds they represented Rome.....the oppressors of the Jews. Clearly all gentiles didn't oppress Jews. Besides that, the oppression was a political oppression and not a religious oppression. It is well documented that generally speaking the Roman government bent over backwards to stay clear of Jewish religious matters and accommodated Jewish beliefs wherever possible. The Romans were known for being tolerant of all gods and religious systems provided they weren't advocating rebellion.

Therefore, in the eyes of the Jewish Zealots Paul was seen as a political traitor to his people. It isn't that the treason was that he might have renounced his Jewishness and taken on a gentile identity (even though thousands upon thousands of Jews, especially in the Diaspora, had done that). Rather it is that he kept on staunchly identifying himself as a Jew at the same time he cavorted with the enemy: the gentiles. That, of course, was a purely political viewpoint. But from the religious perspective Paul was also offering unclean gentiles the opportunity to partake of sacred Jewish religious ideals.....while remaining as gentiles. He would not have been in near as much danger, if any, had he agreed with the circumcision faction that in order to worship the Jewish Messiah a gentile had to convert and become a Jew by means of circumcision. Then Paul's association with gentiles would have been looked at more as a Jew evangelizing for Judaism and Jewishness; that is, Paul would have been seen as one who was working to convert gentiles to Jews.

Thus, when Paul says in verse 31 that he wants the Believers in Rome to pray that the unbelievers in Jerusalem will find his "service" acceptable to them, he is speaking of Temple service; he is referring to the fact that one of the reasons he desires to go to Jerusalem is to sacrifice at the Temple. Paul is hoping that the unbelievers and the Zealots will see that he remains a good, loyal, Torah observant Jew. Sacrificing is something that James, the brother of Yeshua, had advised Paul to do some years earlier when he had come to Jerusalem for different reasons. He felt that doing so would go a long way to proving that Paul remained loyal to the Law of Moses, which was at the heart of being Jewish.¹³⁷

McGee: In other words, this is Paul's prayer request, and it is twofold. His life was in jeopardy from unbelievers in Judea, the religious rulers. He wanted to be delivered from them. Secondly, the church in Jerusalem might be hesitant in accepting a gift from Gentiles, and he wanted them to accept it. My friend, both requests were answered. Somebody says, "Yes, but he was arrested." Right, but he was immediately put into the hands of the Romans and was enabled to appear before kings, and finally he actually appeared before the Caesar in Rome, which was the fulfillment of the will of God for the apostle Paul.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹³⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

ESV: Two prayer requests are found here: (1) that Paul would be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and (2) that his offering would be acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem. Some think the first request was not answered since Paul was arrested in Judea at the impulse of the Jews. But it seems his prayer was answered, for the Jews desired to put him to death (Acts 22-28), and this desire was frustrated, so that Paul did go to Rome, even if not in the way he anticipated. Further, Acts suggests that the offering was accepted in Jerusalem (Acts 24:17).¹³⁹

³²That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

So, says Paul in verse 32, after he goes to Jerusalem and faces all that he fears he might, then he'll be ready to go to Rome and stay awhile to rest. Paul ends this long letter to the Believers in Rome rather typically with a blessing. This blessing is both a wish and a prayer. In calling God the God of peace (or better, in Hebrew, shalom), Paul is acknowledging that all wellbeing, all blessing, comes from God.¹⁴⁰

McGee: This is the conclusion of Paul's prayer request. The prayer was answered: his life was spared, the church in Jerusalem accepted the gift, he did come with joy to Rome -- in spite of the fact that he spent two years in jail at Caesarea, was shipwrecked on the way, and when he arrived in Rome he was in chains. Yet Paul came in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Oh, how all of us need that kind of joy in our lives!

Did Paul find rest and refreshment in Rome? Well, the answer is debatable. He did find all this and more beyond Rome and Spain when he entered the presence of Christ. He wrote near the end of his life to Timothy, his son in the faith: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2Tim. 4:6-8).¹⁴¹

Guzik: That I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe: Paul knew that his danger in Jerusalem would come from those who did not believe. This was the case, as demonstrated in Acts 21:27-28 and 22:22.

And that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints: Paul knew that the church in Jerusalem was very conservative, and sometimes regarded men like Paul as dangerous innovators; for this reason, he asks the Romans to pray that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints.¹⁴²

ESV: Paul arrived in Rome in an unexpected way (as a prisoner), but he did come with the joy of Christ and as an encouragement for fellow Christians (cf. Acts 28:15-16).¹⁴³

¹³⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹⁴¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁴² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001

¹⁴³ ESV Study Bible Notes

³³**Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.**

Missler: “you all” = Paul was a “Southerner.” (But not a Texan: “for I have learned, in whatsoever state I find myself, therein to be content.” Phil 4:11)

“Amen”: This is the third benediction in this chapter (cf. vv. 5, 13).¹⁴⁴

McGee: "The God of peace" shows that Paul experienced peace in prison, in chains, in storm, and in shipwreck. I pray that you and I might have that kind of peace in our lives.¹⁴⁵

Guzik: That I may come to you with joy: The prayers of Paul and the Romans were answered, though not in the manner they expected. Acts 28:15 describes Paul’s “triumphal entry” into Rome, so that he did come to them with joy – though also in chains!

Amen: Paul concludes the letter here except for the personal greetings in Romans 16.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁴⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁴⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-15.cfm?a=1061001