

# ROMANS, PART 2

*An Expanded Analysis based on the [New American Standard Version, 1995 Update](#)*

Romans 9:1-16:27

"GOD'S GOOD NEWS ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS"

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”  
Romans 1:16-17

EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF ROMANS, PART 2

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E 2    The principle illustrated 9:9-13

G 1    With reference to Isaac: For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." 9:9

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H 1    The unity of conception: And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 9:10

H 2    The choice of God 9:11-13

J 1    Before birth: for though the twins were not yet born, 9:11a

J 2    Before any moral activity: and had not done anything good or bad, 9:11b

J 3    According to God's purpose: in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, 9:11c

J 4    Without reference to works: not because of works, 9:11d

J 5    According to God's calling: but because of Him who calls, 9:11e

J 6    According to God's promise: it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." 9:12

J 7    Confirmed in Scripture: Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Cf. Mal. 1:2ff) 9:13

**C 3    God's righteousness cannot be questioned 9:14-29**

D 1    In His selective mercy 9:14-18

E 1    The question of God's possible unrighteousness asked: What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?

9:14a

E 2 The question answered: "May it never be!" 9:14b

E 3 The answer elaborated 9:15-18

G 1 The Scriptural statement to Moses 9:15

H 1 Fact: God chooses those to whom He will show mercy – For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

H 2 Implication: A righteous God has no obligation to show mercy to **anyone**; therefore He is not unjust if He shows mercy to some.

G 2 The explanation: So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.<sup>1</sup> 9:16

G 3 The Scriptural illustration in Pharaoh: For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 9:17. Why God raised up Pharaoh –

H 1 To display God's own power: "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate my power in you, 9:17a

H 2 To advertize God's own name: "and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." 9:17b

E 4 The principle broadened 9:18

G 1 Whom God wishes, He shows mercy: So then He has mercy on whom He desires, 9:18a

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 9:16 - but on God who has mercy: God's mercy is His alone to give, independent of human desire or effort.

- G 2 Whom God wishes, He hardens: and He hardens<sup>2</sup> whom He desires. 9:18b
- D 2 In His policy of holding man accountable despite Divine election 9:19-29
  - E 1 God's righteousness questioned 9:19
    - G 1 For blaming humanity: You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? 9:19a
    - G 2 When no one can resist God's decree anyway: For who resists His will? 9:19b
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    - G 1 **His demonstrable authority:** Created things have no right to question the prerogatives of their Sovereign Creator 9:20-21
      - H 1 The absurdity of the question stated: On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? 9:20a
      - H 2 The absurdity defined 9:20b-c
        - J 1 By man's finite creatureliness: who are you, O man, who answers back to God? 9:20b
        - J 2 By God's Infinite Creator-ness: The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 9:20c
      - H 3 The absurdity illustrated - The potter has the

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<sup>2</sup> Rom. 9:18 - He hardens: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Singular Present Indicative Active of the verb *sklērúnō* (4645), "I. to make hard, harden II. metaphorically A. to render obstinate, stubborn ...." This is the active sense here. With the example of Pharaoh, God renders the hearts of some people to be obstinate and stubborn against Himself. Sadly, I know of a small number of people who once called themselves Christians, but now have turned their backs on God and Jesus. Assuming they make no changes in their lives before they die, they are among those whom God has deliberately hardened against himself. They never actually were believers in Jesus, and their hardened hearts now apparently demonstrate that. God is Sovereign, and He has the right to make some containers for honorable purposes (like a drinking glass) and others for common purposes (like a commode) (Rom. 9:21).

right to fashion clay as he chooses 9:21

J 1     Some of it to honor: Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use,

J 2     Some of it to dishonor: and another for common use?

H 4     The unstated implication: A Sovereign by definition is not answerable to any of His creatures -- else He ceases to be sovereign.

G 2     **His demonstrable mercy:** The Sovereign Creator has actually exercised mercy -- therefore He is a merciful God 9:22-23

H 1     God's righteous desire to execute wrath: What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, 9:22a

H 2     God's longsuffering policy toward creatures of wrath fitted for destruction: endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 9:22b

H 3     God's exercise of mercy toward creatures He had previously prepared for glory: And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 9:23

H 4     The unstated implication: God rightly desired to punish the evil of all His creatures. Yet He was longsuffering to all and merciful to many. He must therefore be a merciful God.

G 3     **His demonstrable impartiality:** The Sovereign Creator's election applies to both the Gentiles (nations) and the Jews 9:24-29

H 1     The statement of election to glory from

among the Jews and from among the nations (Gentiles): even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. 9:24

H 2 The Scriptural documentation of the election of the nations (Gentiles) 9:25-26

J 1 The calling and loving of a people not previously God's: As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'" (Hos. 2:23) 9:25

J 2 The calling "Sons of the Living God" of those who were previously "Not My People": "And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' there they shall be called the sons of the living God." (Hos. 1:10) 9:26

H 3 The Scriptural documentation of the election of a remnant from within the nation of Israel 9:27-29

J 1 The prediction of the salvation of a remnant within national Israel: And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; (Isa. 10:22) 9:27

J 2 The prediction of the destruction of all the rest of the earth including the non-remnant of Israel): "for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly." (Isa. 10:23) 9:28

J 3 The prediction of the necessity of a remnant in Israel: And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth



had left to us a posterity, we would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah." <sup>3</sup> (Isa. 1:9) 9:29

## **B 2 The Responsibility of National Israel in Failing to Attain the Righteousness of God 9:30 - 10:21**

### **C 1 Israel's failure: The transitional summary 9:30-33**

D 1 The non-seeking nations have attained the "by faith" righteousness: What shall we say then?

E 1 The ethical indifference of the nations: That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness,

E 2 The surprising attaining of righteousness by the nations: attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 9:30

D 2 Israel has not 9:31-33

E 1 Israel's unsuccessful pursuit of legal righteousness: but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 9:31

E 2 Israel's lack of faith: Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, 9:32a

E 3 Israel's pursuit of works: but as though it were by works. 9:32a

E 4 Israel's stumbling over the Stumbling Stone 9:32b-33

G 1 The reality of their having stumbled: They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 9:32b

G 2 The prediction of their stumbling: just as it is written, 9:33

H 1 God's establishment of an unpalatable object

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<sup>3</sup> Rom. 9:29 - Sodom ... Gomorrah: - without the [election](#) of a [remnant](#), all Israel would be destroyed. The word translated "posterity" is the noun *spérma* ([4690](#)), "seed, offspring" ([Accordance](#)).

of faith: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,

H 2     God's promise of reward to those who believe anyway! and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." (cf. Is. 8:14; 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6-9) 9:32b-33

**C 2     Israel's failure by trying to establish her own method of righteousness 10:1-5**

D 1     Paul's longing for Israel's salvation 10:1

E 1     His desire: Brethren, my heart's desire

E 2     His prayer: and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

D 2     Israel's zeal for God: For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, 10:2a

D 3     Israel's ignorance of righteousness from God 10:2b-3a

E 1     The non-productiveness of their zeal: but not in accordance with knowledge. 10:2b

E 2     Their ignorance of God's righteousness: For not knowing about God's righteousness,

D 4     Israel's pursuit of her own self-righteousness: and seeking to establish their own, 10:3b

D 5     Israel's failure to submit to the righteousness of God, namely, Christ (Gal. 3:19,24) 10:3c-4

E 1     Israel's insubordination: they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 10:3c

E 2     Christ's termination of the Law as a means of righteousness: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 10:4

D 6     Israel's failure even to keep the righteousness of the Law: For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 10:5

**C 3 Israel's failure to understand the "by faith" nature of righteousness as stated in her own Scripture 10:6-15**

D 1 The nearness of righteousness by faith 10:6-10

E 1 Not obtained by human effort: But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, (cf. Deut. 30:12-14) 10:6-7

G 1 Not working to retrieve Christ from heaven: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 10:6

G 2 Not working to retrieve Christ from the dead: "or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead." 10:7

E 2 But internal and accessible 10:8-10

G 1 The statement of internality 10:8

H 1 The proximity of the message: But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" --

H 2 The identification of the message: that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

G 2 The explanation of internality 10:9-10

H 1 Confession with the mouth: that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, 10:9a

H 2 Faith within the heart: and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, 10:9b

H 3 Resultant salvation: you shall be saved; 10:9c

H 4 The significance of the heart: for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, 10:10a

H 5 The significance of the mouth: and with the

mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.  
10:10b

D 2 The universal availability of righteousness by faith 10:11-13

E 1 The O.T. statement of universal availability to all who believe (cf. Isa. 28:16) 10:11

G 1 The authority of the availability: For the Scripture says,

G 2 The universality of the availability: "Whoever

G 3 The qualification for availability: "believes in Him

G 4 The cashing in on the availability: "will not be disappointed."

E 2 The implication of availability--to both Jew and Greek 10:12

G 1 The disclaimer of distinction: For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek;

G 2 The ubiquity of Christ: for the same Lord is Lord of all,

G 3 The reward of Christ: abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;

E 3 The O.T. confirmation of availability: "for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (cf. Joel 2:32) 10:13

D 3 The "universal communication" implications of righteousness by faith 10:14-15 <sup>4</sup>

E 1 Calling impossible without faith: How then shall they call

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<sup>4</sup> Rom. 10:14-15 Title - the "universal communication" implications of righteousness by faith: This whole section carries with it several implications: Churches need to encourage young people and young adults to full-time Christian service. Thus, churches also need to encourage these same groups to prepare for full-time Christian service (e.g., in a Bible College or conservative seminary). Furthermore, churches need to encourage people presently to take short-term missions trips. Churches need to encourage their members to encourage one another in the pursuit of short-term and full-time Christian service. This includes verbal encouragement and financial encouragement.

upon Him in whom they have not believed? 10:14

E 2 Faith impossible without hearing: And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?

E 3 Hearing impossible without announcing: And how shall they hear without preacher?

E 4 Announcing impossible without sending (cf. Isa. 52:7) 10:15

G 1 The statement of the impossibility: And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

G 2 The example from Scripture: Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"

E 5 **Implication:** Had Israel really understood the "by faith" nature of righteousness, she would have sent missionaries all over the earth!

**C 4 Israel's failure as a nation to obey the good news about righteousness by faith 10:16-21**

D 1 The analysis of incomplete obedience 10:16-17

E 1 The fact of Israel's disobedience: However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; 10:16a

E 2 The prediction of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 53:1): <sup>5</sup> for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 10:16b

E 3 The dependence of faith upon hearing 10:17

G 1 The priority of hearing: So then faith comes from hearing,

G 2 The source of hearing: and hearing by the word of Christ.

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<sup>5</sup> Rom. 10:16 - who has believed our report? Cf. John 5:42-43, where Jesus said, "...but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him."

## D 2 Israel's failure was not a lack of hearing (cf. Ps. 19:4) 10:18

E 1 The objection -- people have never heard: But I say, surely they have never heard, have they?

E 2 The rebuttal: Indeed they have;

G 1 The universal message: "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH,

G 2 The articulate message: "AND THEIR WORDS <sup>6</sup> TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD." <sup>7</sup>

## D 3 Israel's failure was not a lack of knowledge 10:19-21

E 1 The present gracious opportunity for the nations was predicted in Scripture 10:19-20

G 1 God's plan to provoke Israel to jealousy 10:19

H 1 The objection -- Israel did not understand: But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they?

H 2 The first rebuttal (cf. Deut. 32:21) -- At the first Moses says, (God's goading Israel into): 19:20

J 1 Jealousy: "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION;

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<sup>6</sup> Rom. 10:18 - words: The sound is intelligible -- the term is, in Hebrew in Ps. 19:5 *milah* (4405), "word, speech, utterance" (OBU); in Greek in Rom. 10:18, *hrema* (4487) the word for *words* or *terms* or *verbal utterances* (excerpted and adapted from OBU). The book of Psalms is speaking about the message of the stars. God has communicated His creative power and craftsmanship in the stars. It is plain for all to see and understand, unless they take a biased view against God and in favor of blind chance, the false "god" of [Evolution](#).

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 10:18 - and their words to the ends of the world: One church I pastored made a point to distribute copies of the Jesus video as an evangelistic outreach. It was interesting to watch peoples' responses to the opportunity. Some took the opportunity to watch the video almost immediately. Others, who may have been eager to receive it in the first place, still, weeks later, had not watched it. The opportunity was there. If people did not take advantage of it, it was certainly not God's fault! God has communicated His existence through the stars. If people choose not to listen, that is their fault. In Rom. 1:18-20, people earn God's wrath for refusing to decipher His message in creation -- "they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20)!

J 2 Anger: "BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU."

G 2 God's planned self-disclosure to non-seeking nations -- The second rebuttal: And Isaiah is very bold and says (cf. Isa. 65:1), 10:20

H 1 "I was found by those who sought Me not,

H 2 I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me." <sup>8</sup>

E 2 Israel's disobedience and contradiction documented in Scripture (cf. Isa. 65:2): But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE." 10:21

**B 3 The Praise of God's Merciful Wisdom in Temporarily Casting Away National Israel to Save the Nations 11**

**C 1 The incompleteness of National Israel's being cast away: "The present rejection of Israel is not total." <sup>9</sup> The remnant 11:1-10**

D 1 Paul's case as proof of a present remnant 11:1

E 1 The question asked - "Did God cast aside His people?": I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? 11:1a

E 2 The answer given: May it never be! 11:1b

E 3 The answer explained: For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 11:1c

D 2 Elijah's case as proof of a historical remnant (cf. 1 Kings 19:10-18) 11:2-4

E 1 The fact declared - "God did not cast aside His people": God has not rejected His people 11:2a

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<sup>8</sup> Rom. 10:20 - I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me: The point: "How can Israel be excused for ignorance of a world-wide Gospel, when even the heathen discovered it?" (James Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 182.)

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 11:1-10 Title - The present rejection of Israel is not total: **Stifler**, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

- E 2 The reason given -- God's foreknowledge: whom He foreknew. 11:2b
- E 3 The fact historically illustrated 11:2c-4
  - G 1 Elijah's incorrect conclusion - The remnant would die out with he himself 11:2c-3
    - H 1 The reference to Elijah: Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 11:2
    - H 2 The desperation of Elijah: "LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." 11:3
  - G 2 God's assessment – Remnant = 7,000: But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." 11:4
- D 3 The conclusion – There is a present remnant among the hardened nation of Israel 11:5-10
  - E 1 The remnant's existence: In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant 11:5-7a
    - G 1 Chosen by grace: according to God's gracious choice. 11:5
    - G 2 Works not a factor 11:6
      - H 1 The exclusion of works by grace: But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works,
      - H 2 The protection of the voluntary nature of grace: Otherwise grace is no longer grace.
    - G 3 The elect remnant found what the seeking Nation did not 11:7a
      - H 1 What then? That which Israel is seeking for,



it has not obtained,

H 2 but those who were chosen obtained it,

E 2 The Divine hardening of the non-elect Nation 11:7b-10

G 1 The hardening stated: and the rest were hardened;  
11:7b

G 2 The Divine hardening documented in Scripture: just  
as it is written, 11:8-10

H 1 Dulled spiritual sense

J 1 Quoting Moses (Deut. 29:4): "GOD  
GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES  
TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,  
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

J 2 Quoting Isaiah: "EYES TO SEE NOT  
AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO  
THIS VERY DAY." (Isaiah 29:10) 11:8

H 2 Irresistibly trapped and blinded – Quoting  
David (Psalm 69:22,23): And David says,  
11:9-10

J 1 "Oblivious of danger": "LET THEIR  
TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,  
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A  
RETRIBUTION TO THEM. 11:9

J 2 "Insensibly weighed down": "LET  
THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,  
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."  
11:10

H 3 Notes on Imprecatory Prayer by David:

J 1 Statement: See RSB, "Introduction to  
Psalms"; See also Baxter.

J 2 These are prayers for God's  
righteousness to be vindicated.

- J 3 The prayers in these psalms are those of a prophet.
- J 4 Today, we do not judge unbelievers-- God does (1 Cor. 5:12-13).
- J 5 Today, we can pray that God's will may be done: that means the ultimate exclusion of unrighteousness from God's universe (Rev. 21:27; 22:14-15; 2 Pet. 3:13).
- J 6 Today, we must be part of the purifying process in the lives of believers, but this always has the idea of judgment of sin in the body so the spirit can be saved (1 Cor. 5:1-13).

C 2

**C 3 The dual purpose of National Israel's being cast away: Gentile salvation and Jewish jealousy 11:11-16**

- D 1 What God's purpose is not 11:11a
  - E 1 The purpose asked: I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? "Is the casting aside to shatter forever Israel's hopes of existing as a saved nation?"
  - E 2 The answer given: "May it never be!"
- D 2 What God's purpose is 11:11b-c
  - E 1 Salvation for the nations: But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, 11:11b
  - E 2 Jealousy incentive for national Israel: to make them jealous. 11:11c
- D 3 The implications of God's dual purpose 11:12-16
  - E 1 Regarding the nations - Future blessings much greater than present 11:12
    - G 1 The nations' present rich benefit from Israel's

transgression

H 1 Now if their transgression be riches for the world

H 2 and their failure be riches for the Gentiles,

G 2 The nations' projected far greater benefit from Israel's blessed obedience: how much more will their fulfillment be!

E 2 Regarding Paul's ministry - Paul employs the jealousy principle in his ministry 11:13-16

G 1 Paul's audience: But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. 11:13

G 2 Paul's strategy -- Working super-hard among the nations: Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry. 11:13

G 3 Paul's motive -- "To provoke (national) Israel to jealousy and thereby save some Jews" 11:14

H 1 Jealous Jews: if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen

H 2 Saved Jews: and save some of them. 11:14

G 4 The nations' benefit (if Paul employs the jealousy principle) 11:15-16

H 1 The benefit stated 11:15

J 1 "If God's casting aside (national) Israel provided the world reconciliation" -- For if their rejection be the reconciliation <sup>10</sup> of the world,

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<sup>10</sup> Rom. 11:15 - reconciliation: "Because Israel rejected Christ, the gospel was taken to these Gentiles. In Scripture reconciliation is a work of God in the death of Christ which does not actually restore an individual to fellowship with God but provides the basis for him to be restored to fellowship (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-20). (TBKC, II, 483,484.)

J 2 "God's reception of (national) Israel will provide the world resurrection from the dead." -- what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?<sup>11</sup>

H 2 The benefit assured: The salvation of the remnant of Israel ultimately assures the salvation of the whole nation at a future time! 11:16

J 1 The holy harvest: And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also;<sup>12</sup>

J 2 The holy tree: and if the root be holy, the branches are too.<sup>13</sup>

#### **C 4    The warning to the nations in light of national Israel's being cast away 11:17-22**

D 1    Don't boast against the cast-aside branches of national Israel 11:17-18

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<sup>11</sup> Rom. 11:15 - acceptance = life from the dead: "Israel's 'acceptance' of Christ is related to 'the first resurrection' (Rev. 20:4-6), the resurrection of life (John 5:29, KJV). The first resurrection includes dead saints at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18), martyred Great Tribulation saints raised at Christ's return to rule upon earth (Rev. 20:4, 5b), and believing Old Testament saints at the same time (Dan. 12:1-2). The second resurrection will include all the wicked dead to be judged at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:5a, 12-13). The teaching that there will be one general resurrection of all humanity at one time fails to take these distinctions into account." (*TBKC*, II, 484.)

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 11:16 - "The first piece of dough (firstfruits) describes the believing remnant in Israel now, Christian Jews. The "lump" or "batch" refers to the whole nation, Israel. God has consecrated both groups to Himself" ([Constable](#)).

<sup>13</sup> Rom. 11:16 - if the root be holy, the branches are too: Paul moves from a baking metaphor – dough – to a horticultural metaphor – an olive tree. The way Paul uses this metaphor, the “root” refers to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as being blessed through the Abrahamic Covenant. The “branches” refer to the nation of Israel. Paul here states that the root (the blessed patriarchs) was holy. If that be true, the branches (the individual components of the nation of Israel) are also holy.

This chapter constitutes one of the strongest defenses of the dispensational view that God has an ongoing program for the nation of Israel. [The Church has not replaced Israel](#). If God set apart Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for special blessing (they are holy), then God has just as surely set apart the nation of Israel for special blessing (they are holy). As Paul will state a few paragraphs later, “All Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

The foundation for Paul’s statement is the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3). The Abrahamic Covenant is the foundational covenant of God’s redemptive program throughout human history.

## E 1 The reality of the situation 11:17

- G 1 The breaking off of some branches (non-elect Israel's being temporarily cast aside): But if some of the branches were broken off, <sup>14</sup> 11:17a
- G 2 The grafting in of wild olive branches (elect among the nations): and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them <sup>15</sup> 11:17b
- G 3 The partaking by wild branches of the root (the salvation experienced by the patriarchs and the elect

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<sup>14</sup> Rom. 11:17 - some of the branches were broken off: The branches of the olive tree that were broken off refer to non-elect Israelis, broken off from the sphere of God's blessings because they did not believe. In Paul's use of the olive tree, the natural branches refer to national Israel, and the "rich root of the olive tree" refers to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who believed and were blessed by God. The branches that were broken off refer to non-elect Israelis who do not believe. The wild olive branches that were grafted in refer to believing Gentiles. It is important to understand that the wild olive branches remain wild olive branches. They do not become natural branches. So the wild olive branches do not become Israel, either physically or spiritually. They become partakers of the rich root of the olive tree – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since God promised that through them, all the nations of world would be blessed, it is in that way that the Gentiles participate in God's blessings by being grafted in as wild olive branches.

Not only is it not accurate to say that believing Gentiles become Israel, it is also not accurate to say that the olive tree is the Church. [Thomas Constable](#) states it this way:

... The olive tree is not the church, or the so-called the "new Israel," in which God has united Jewish and Gentile believers in one body (Eph. 3:6). This is the view of many amillennialists and covenant theologians. The branches from the "wild olive tree" (v. 24) retain their own identity as wild branches (Gentiles) even though they receive blessings that come through the Jews (e.g., the Messiah, the Scriptures, etc.). Some believe that the grafted in branches represent specifically all who profess to be Christians (i.e., Christendom), saved and unsaved alike. I prefer the view that they are Gentiles.

Another common misunderstanding of this figure is that the olive tree is a symbol of all believers throughout history: all the people of God. If the tree represents all believers, this must mean that some believing Jews have ceased to be part of the people of God. This, of course, is not true.

<sup>15</sup> Rom. 11:17 - and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them: "Paul said that God grafted Gentiles in among the Jews. They became partakers with the Jews of the blessings that come through the roots. Paul did not say that the Gentiles became part of Israel, only that they partake with Israel of the blessings of the root. This is a very important point" ([Constable](#), from a previous edition of his commentary on Romans).

The root is not Israel, but are rather the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are prophesied to be the conduits for blessing the world through the Abrahamic Covenant, the foundational covenant of the entire Bible and of God's redemptive program for mankind. The Abrahamic Covenant promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob blessings to the Nation of Israel, but it also promised through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, blessings to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). It is a mistake to say believing Gentiles are grafted into Israel. They are not, but rather remain distinct entities throughout history. What is accurate is to say that believing Gentiles are grafted into the root – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the conduits of blessing – i.e. the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

remnant): and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, <sup>16</sup> 11:17c

E 2 The warning from the situation 11:18

G 1 Don't boast against the cut-off branches of national Israel: do not be arrogant toward the branches; <sup>17</sup> 11:18a

G 2 Reason given - The root (the patriarchs) is not dependent on elect among the nations, but you (elect among the nations) are dependent on it. 11:18b

H 1 but if you are arrogant,

H 2 remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. <sup>18</sup>

D 2 Don't be proud of your present position 11:19-20c

E 1 The acknowledgment of the grafting process (elect from among the nations in place of non-elect Jews) 11:19-20a

G 1 Gentile recognition: You will say then, "Branches

<sup>16</sup> Rom. 11:17 - became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree: According to [Constable](#) (from a previous edition of his notes on Romans), "The rich root of the cultivated tree, Israel, probably corresponds to the Abrahamic Covenant from which all God's blessings and the very life of the nation sprang."

While I believe the Abrahamic Covenant is key to God's blessing both Israel and the Gentiles, I do not agree that a covenant, in the context, can be identified as "the rich root." If the branches, both the natural branches and the wild branches grafted in are people, then the root also has to refer to people, not promises made to people. So, as even Constable himself admits in the same context, "Another view is that the rich root refers to the patriarchs themselves: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." I prefer this latter view, for it is more consistent with the context. God covenanted blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God covenanted, through them, to bless even the Gentile nations of the earth. God promised this to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:15-18); to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-5); and to Jacob (Gen. 28:10-15).

<sup>17</sup> Rom. 11:18 - do not be arrogant toward the branches: Tragically, the great bulk of Christianity has defied the Apostle's warning and has become arrogant toward the branches (the nation of Israel). Most of Christianity has declared Israel to be irrelevant, and even an impediment to God's blessing of the world. Most of Christianity has adopted [Replacement Theology](#), the view that the Church has replaced or superseded Israel – the view that the Church is the [New Israel](#). How arrogant, and how tragic. The vast extent of this arrogance is outlined in the book, [Future Israel](#), by Barry E. Horner.

<sup>18</sup> Rom. 11:18 - remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you: Once again, the root refers to the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 11:19

G 2 Apostolic agreement: Quite right, 11:20a

E 2 The identification of the reason for the breaking-grafting process: the presence or absence of faith 11:20b

G 1 Israeli unbelief: they were broken off for their unbelief,

G 2 Gentile faith: but you stand by your faith.

E 3 The warning application -- Don't be proud!: Do not be conceited,<sup>19</sup> 11:20c

D 3 Rather fear 11:20d-21

E 1 Attention to fear commanded: but fear; 11:20c

E 2 Reason for fear described: for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.<sup>20</sup> 11:21

D 4 Be aware of God's kindness and sternness: Behold then the kindness and severity of God; 11:22

E 1 Severity to the unbelieving Jews: To those who fell, severity,

E 2 Kindness to believing Gentiles: but to you, God's kindness,

G 1 The qualification of continuity in believing: if you continue in His kindness;

G 2 The danger of failing to continue believing: otherwise you also will be cut off.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Rom. 11:20 - conceited: The implication – Faith means that grace, not works is in operation. There can then be no pride in human merit.

<sup>20</sup> Rom. 11:21 - neither will He spare you: If God didn't spare national Israel in unbelief, He won't spare the nations in unbelief, either.

<sup>21</sup> Rom. 11:22 - cut off: The question of continuing in God's kindness is not raised to suggest that an individual Christian can lose his salvation. The question is whether national groupings, in this case Gentiles, can continue to participate in God's kindness through belief. National groups such as Israel and the Gentiles can certainly lose God's

**C 5    The reversal of national Israel's being cast away: Total national salvation! 11:23-32**

D 1    The prediction of national Israel's total salvation 11:23-27

E 1    The plausibility of restoration 11:23-24

G 1    In view of God's ability to graft the nation back in faith 11:23

H 1    Israel's responsibility: And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in;

H 2    God's ability: for God is able to graft them in again.

G 2    In view of God's already having grafted in unnatural branches 11:24

H 1    The Gentiles' wild past apart from God's blessing: For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree,

H 2    The Gentiles' grafting into the place of God's blessing: and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree,

H 3    The likelihood of Israeli restoration to the place of God's blessing: how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

E 2    The apostolic revelation of total salvation 11:25-27

G 1    The apostolic caution 11:25a

H 1    Against ignorance of God's new revelation: For I do not want you, brethren, to be

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blessings if they do not continue to believe, at least in a representative way. In fact, there will come a time when the church has been raptured, and the Gentiles will be largely unbelieving. God will in fact introduce severity into His dealings with the Gentiles as He begins, once again, to show kindness to Israel. This time of terrible severity against the Gentiles, along with unbelieving Israel, is called the [Tribulation](#).



uninformed of this mystery,

- H 2 Against Gentile pride in present blessing:  
lest you be wise in your own estimation,
- G 2 The apostolic revelation 11:25b-26a
  - H 1 Partial hardness has happened to Israel: that  
a partial hardening has happened to Israel  
11:25b
  - H 2 Temporary hardness has happened to Israel:  
until the fulness of the Gentiles <sup>22</sup> has come  
in: 11:25c
  - H 3 Total salvation will happen to Israel: and  
thus all Israel will be saved; 11:26a
- G 3 The Scriptural documentation: just as it is written,  
11:26b-27
  - H 1 God's promise of a Deliverer to remove  
ungodliness from Jacob 11:26b (cf. Isa.  
59:20,21; Ezek. 20:33-44)
    - J 1 The promise of the Jewish Deliverer:  
"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM  
ZION,
    - J 2 The purpose of the Jewish Deliverer:  
"HE WILL REMOVE (ALL)  
UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."
  - H 2 God's covenant to remove from Israel (all)  
sins: "AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH  
THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."  
11:27 (cf. Isa. 27:9)

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<sup>22</sup> Rom. 11:25 - fulness of the Gentiles: a reference to the full number of Gentiles who make up the Church. When the full number of Gentiles in the Church have been saved, the Church will be [raptured](#). Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week will begin, and God will begin working strategically and explicitly with Israel. By the time Christ returns to set up His Kingdom millions of Jews will have become believers, for God will have rectified their hardening and their spiritual blindness (see Jer. 31:31-17; Zech. 12:10-13:1)!

D 2 The reasons for national Israel's total salvation 11:28-32

E 1 God's election of the nation 11:28

G 1 National Israel's position from the nations' viewpoint  
-- Enemies of the gospel for the nations' benefit:  
From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies  
for your sake, 11:28a

G 2 National Israel's position from God's viewpoint --  
God's beloved choice because of promises made to  
the patriarchs: but from the standpoint of God's  
choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;  
11:28b

E 2 God's unswerving character 11:29

G 1 God does not alter His gifts: for the gifts 11:29a

G 2 God does not alter His calling: and the calling of  
God are irrevocable. 11:29b

E 3 God's determination to show mercy to Israel and all other  
nations 11:30-32

G 1 The fact of God's present mercy to the nations:  
11:30

H 1 The Gentiles' past disobedience: For just as  
you once were disobedient to God,

H 2 The Gentiles' present possession of mercy  
because of Israel's disobedience: but now  
have been shown mercy because of their  
disobedience,

G 2 The fact of God's future mercy to Israel 11:31

H 1 The fact of Israel's present disobedience: so  
these also now have been disobedient,

H 2 The prospect of present jealousy over the  
Gentiles providing future mercy for Israel: in  
order that because of the mercy shown to you  
they also may now be shown mercy.

G 3 remarkable redemptive program with regard to all nations 11:32

H 1 Having shut up all nations in disobedience:  
For God has shut up all in disobedience  
11:32a

H 2 To show mercy to all nations: that He might  
show mercy to all. 11:32b

**C 6 The reaction of praise for God's merciful wisdom in relation to all the earth's nations 11:33-36**

D 1 Praise of the depth of the wealth of God's character as seen in His  
11:33a

E 1 Wisdom: Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom

E 2 Knowledge: and knowledge of God!

D 2 Praise of God's wisdom and knowledge as seen in His 11:33b-34

E 1 Unsearchable judgments: How unsearchable are His  
judgments 11:33b

E 2 Unchartable methods: and unfathomable His ways! 11:33c

E 3 Unknowable mind: FOR WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE  
LORD, 11:34a (cf. Isa. 40:13-14; Jer. 23:18)

E 4 Uncounselability: or WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?  
11:34b

D 3 Praise of God's initiative 11:35-36a

E 1 Because His gifts are given out of indebtedness to no one:  
OR WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID  
BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 11:35 (cf. Job 35:7; 41:11) <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Rom. 11:35 - that it might be paid back to him again?: There are some people whose every motive one has to question. Why is he doing this? What hidden agenda does he have? To whom is he beholden that he makes such an offer? God carries none of this baggage. He gives gifts sincerely, with no strings and no hidden agenda, simply because He wishes to. God, though the most complex Being in all the universe, is very simple and transparent in His dealings with man. His motives are always pure and ethical – unquestionable.

E 2 Because He is the Be-All and the End-All of all things  
11:36a

G 1 The Source of all: For from Him

G 2 The Administrator of all: and through Him

G 3 The Purpose of all: and to Him are all things.

D 4 To God be the Glory into the ages: To Him be the glory forever.  
Amen. 11:36b

## A 6 **TRANSFORMATION: The Application of Righteousness in Specific Areas** 12:1 - 15:13

### B 1 **In the Believer's Daily Conduct** 12

#### C 1 **The logical foundation for daily conduct** 12:1-2

D 1 The offering of the body to God 12:1

E 1 The urgency: {1} Therefore <sup>24</sup> I urge <sup>25</sup> you,

E 2 The addressees: brethren,<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Rom. 12:1 - therefore: The conjunction *oun* (3767). In this context, *oun* is used “inferentially, to introduce a logical result or inference from what precedes ...” Thus, it is translated “therefore, so, consequently” (*Friberg Greek Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament*). NASB translation frequencies include therefore (178), so (153), then (141), so then (9), now (5), contrary (1), however (1), so ... then (1). The inference Paul here makes is connected with “the mercies of God”, on which, see the footnote. In view of God mercies, Paul urges the Roman believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1); continually refuse to be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2); but rather to be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2).

<sup>25</sup> Rom. 12:1 - urge: *parakaleo* (3870): Keep urging (pres. act. impv.). The appeal to Christians to dedicate themselves to God is an open-ended, ongoing appeal. Literally, Paul *begs* the Christian brothers in Rome to present their bodies a living sacrifice to God, refuse to conform to this age, and rather to be transformed by renewing their minds.

<sup>26</sup> Rom. 12:1 - brethren (*adelphos*, 80): A general reference to the Christians at Rome whom Paul here addressed as “brothers.” Yet, Paul realized that in a church, men are the key. If the men dedicate themselves to the Lord, the chances are excellent that the women, most of whom are their wives, will follow suit.

Paul made his appeal to people who were already Christians. There are some who espouse what I term “Lordship salvation.” In this regard, some state, “If He is not Lord *of all*, He is not Lord *at all*.” This is manifestly untrue. There is progress in the Christian life, which is entered by simple faith in Jesus. To those who are already Christians, Paul urges a dedication of one’s body, a refusal to conform to this age, and the renewal of the mind.

There may be some individuals who enter the Christian life with a dedication and commitment intact from their first day. But most of us, I suspect, are not like that. As we grow in the Christian life, we become more and more

E 3 The motivation: by the mercies <sup>27</sup> of God,

E 4 The objective: to present <sup>28</sup> your bodies <sup>29</sup>

G 1 a living <sup>30</sup>

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aware of what Jesus' lordship entails in practical terms. Consequently we are forced to make decisions – will I dedicate this aspect of my life to God or not? Sometimes circumstances in life crop up that leave us scratching our heads and saying, “I wasn’t aware of that! – I guess I had better yield that aspect of my life over to Jesus!” Living the Christian life is a lifelong process with many twists and turns in the road that were unexpected and unanticipated – and we have new decisions to make about yieldedness and dedication.

<sup>27</sup> Rom. 12:1 - mercies of God: *oiktirmos* (3628) is not a common word in the NT, occurring only five times – here in Romans 12:1, “the mercies of God”; in 2 Cor. 1:3 God is described as “the Father of mercies”; in Philippians 2:1, “compassion” is seen as a desirable human attribute; believers are commanded to clothe themselves with “a heart of compassion” (Col. 3:12); “Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Heb. 10:28). So *oiktirmos* refers to sympathy, mercy, or pity (Friberg); its corresponding verb, *oiktiro*, means “to show mercy and concern, with the implication of sensitivity and compassion” (*Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

The preceding chapters of Romans have demonstrated God’s mercy: (1) God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18). Indeed, all men stand condemned before God (Rom. 1:18 - 3:20); (2) God mercifully declares righteous those who place their faith in His Son, who paid the death penalty (Rom. 3:21 - 5:21); (3) God has provided for the sanctification in time and eternity for all believers (Rom. 6 - 8); (4) God’s fairness and justice is vindicated in dealings with the entire human race in that He has temporarily set aside national Israel to save the earth’s nations (Rom. 9-11). What a merciful, compassionate God! It is in view of these mercies (*oiktirmos*) that Paul begs Christians to dedicate themselves as a living sacrifice to God; refuse to conform to this present evil age; but instead to be transformed by renewing their mind!

It is most remarkable that Paul does not attempt to shame or “guilt-trip” Christians into dedicating themselves to God! Rather he begs them to respond to God’s loving, compassionate mercies!

<sup>28</sup> Rom. 12:1 - present: *paristemi* (3936): to present at a point in time (aor. act. inf.). This amounts, I believe, to a crisis in one’s Christian life. I think that there is a parallel to be made between maturing physically and socially as a human being from infancy to mature adulthood on the one hand, and maturing spiritually and experientially as a Christian from infancy to mature adulthood on the other. I think that what Paul is saying is that at some point, all Christians need to be confronted with the urgent appeal to dedicate their bodies to Jesus, to stop being conformed to this present evil era, and to be transformed by renewing their mind! Many baby and adolescent Christians live the Christian life perhaps for their own benefit. But mature, adult Christians have made this basic and crisis commitment to stop living their lives for themselves, and instead to live their lives for Jesus. This is not an easy decision to make, and it should not be made casually. It should be revolutionary! And the entire way one lives from that point forward should be perceptibly different!

<sup>29</sup> Rom. 12:2 - bodies: *soma* (4983). “The word ‘bodies,’ mindful of the Old Testament sacrifices, represents the totality of one’s life and activities, of which his body is the vehicle of expression” (John A. Witmer, Romans, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* [TBKC]). If God has your body, He has all of you!

<sup>30</sup> Rom. 12:1 - living: *dzao* (2198) (aor. act. fem. sing. ptc.). In contrast to the dead bodies in the OT sacrificial system, Christians are to present their bodies as living sacrifices so they can thereby serve God with their bodies.

- G 2 and holy sacrifice,
- E 5 The assessment
  - G 1 acceptable <sup>31</sup> to God,
  - G 2 which is your spiritual <sup>32</sup> service of worship.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rom. 12:1 - acceptable: *euarestos* ([2101](#)) literally, “to God, well-pleasing.” See more comments on the same word in Rom. 12:2.

<sup>32</sup> Rom. 12:1 - spiritual: the reasonable (*logikos* - [3050](#)), rational, logical

<sup>33</sup> Rom. 12:1 - service of worship: *latreia* ([2999](#)). “Religious service based in worship” (Friberg)

- D 2     The continual refusal to be outwardly conformed to this age: {2}  
And do not be conformed <sup>34</sup> to this world, <sup>35</sup> 12:2a
- D 3     The commitment to continual inner transformation 12:2b
- E 1     The process: but be transformed <sup>36</sup>
- E 2     The method: by the renewing <sup>37</sup> of your mind,

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<sup>34</sup> Rom. 12:2 - conformed: do not be being conformed (*suschematidzo*, [4964](#)) (present middle or passive masculine plural imperative) Middle = “to conform or assimilate oneself to” (Bagster). Christians are commanded (the word is an imperative) to avoid being conformed or assimilated to this present evil era! The difficulty lies in that we are constantly being bombarded by every aspect of society to conform to the standards of this era: Our non-Christian friends and associates pressure us to conform; our schools pressure us to conform; our government pressures us to conform; our entertainers pressure us to conform; our workplace pressures us to conform; our news media pressure us to conform; the marketplace, along with all its advertizing, pressures us to conform. It takes a deliberate, persistent, watchful effort to resist being conformed to this present evil era! The biggest motivator ought to be a warm response to God’s vast sympathy and compassion!

<sup>35</sup> Rom. 12:2 - world: to this world (lit. age) (*aion*, [165](#)) “a period of time of significant character; life; an era; an age: hence, a state of things marking an age or era; the present order of nature; the natural condition of man, the world; ...” (Bagster). We get our word eon from *aion*, but *aion* has not so much to do with the length, as with the character of the era. NASB translation frequencies forever, 27; forever and ever, 20; age, 20; world, 7; ages, 6; ever, 2; forevermore, 2; eternal, 2; ancient time, 1; beginning of time, 1; course, 1; eternity, 1; long ago, 1; never, 1; old, 1; time, 1; worlds, 1.

Here in Rom. 12:2, I prefer to use the translation *age* or *era*, as time is the most fundamental aspect of *aion*. Again, the emphasis is not so much the *length* of the era, but the *character* of it. This present age is characterized as evil! Jesus gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4). According to 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Satan is designated as the god of this era ([aion](#)). In context, the people of this age are said (1) to be perishing; (2) the Good News is veiled to them; (3) they are unbelieving; (4) the god of this era has blinded their minds; (5) he has done so in order that they might not see the light of the Good News. So this age is very much in a state of blinded rebellion against God and Jesus. Satan has profoundly blinded minds of the people of this era to the Good News of the glory of the Messiah, Jesus, who is the image of God. It is no wonder that Christians are urged not to be conformed to this age or era! This era is completely inimical to God and Christ and the values they represent!

<sup>36</sup> Rom. 12:2 - transformed: *metamorphoo* ([3339](#)) (2 pers. pl. pres. imptv. pass.) “to change the external form, transfigure; mid. to change one’s form, be transfigured; to undergo a spiritual transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18)”

<sup>37</sup> Rom. 12:2 - renewing: *anakainosis* ([342](#)) noun, dat. sing. “renovation, renewal” (Bagster). “figuratively in the NT, as the action by which a person becomes spiritually new and different” (Friberg).

E 3     The goal: so that you may prove <sup>38</sup> what the will <sup>39</sup> of God is,

G 1     that which is good <sup>40</sup>

G 2     and acceptable <sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Rom. 12:2 - prove: *dokimadzo* (1381) “to prove by trial; to test, assay metals, (1 Pet. 1:7); to prove, try, examine, scrutinize, (Luke 14:19; Romans 12:2) ....” (Bagster). To me this means that as we live our lives out in actual practice according to the dictates of Romans 12:1-2, we increasingly demonstrate that God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect. It may not initially seem so to us. But I have seen Christians go through some exceedingly difficult experiences, yet say, “I wouldn’t have missed it for the world.”

<sup>39</sup> Rom. 12:2 - will of God: *thelema* (2307). There is an inherent tension in the will of God. This is reflected in its first usage in the NT, Matt. 6:10, where Jesus illustrates prayer by praying, “Your kingdom come. Your **will** be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” There is the **moral will of God**, which ought to be done, but most often on this earth, is not done. It is always done in heaven, and Jesus prayed that it might so be done on earth. Obviously, from Jesus’ point of view, God’s will was not yet being done on earth as in heaven. Otherwise, why pray the prayer?

There is another will of God – His **sovereign will**. That will encompasses everything that happens. God’s sovereign will is seen in Ephesians 1:11, where Paul said that in Jesus “also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His **will**,” the objective of which is “the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:12). In that God “works all things after the counsel of His will,” which includes the predestining of the elect, God’s sovereign will necessarily encompasses *everything* that happens. It makes little sense at this point to distinguish between God’s decree and His permission. If it happened, either God was in control or He wasn’t. It is an abomination to hold that God is *ever* out of control. Therefore whatever happens is under His control and part of His sovereign will, if not His moral will. It was not God’s moral will for Adam to sin. But in God’s sovereign will, He permitted Adam to sin.

Paul’s point here in Romans 12:2 is that if we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, refuse to conform to this era, but rather allow ourselves to be transformed by renewing our minds, we will demonstrate in our lives that God’s will (both moral and sovereign, however that may unfold) is good, acceptable, and complete, meaning that there is nothing lacking. The good, acceptable, and complete may not be so according to our standards, but certainly so according to God’s. In practice, it may take a lifetime of living on the basis of Romans 12:1-2 to demonstrate the perfect nature of God’s will in every area of our lives. In fact, I suspect we may not see the complete perfectability of God’s will for us until we can examine the data on the other side of eternity. Life is hard, and we must take God’s perfect will by faith, not by sight.

<sup>40</sup> Rom. 12:2 - good: *agathos* (18). Here, *agathos* is a neuter adjective used to describe the will of God. It is a *good* will! If we wish to know and understand the moral will of God and His sovereign will as it relates to our particular lives, we will have to take the three steps Paul commands us to take: (1) offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God; (2) avoid being conformed to this age; and (3) renew our minds. I believe God’s will here refers both to His moral will, which is inevitably the same for each person; but also His sovereign will, which is inevitably different for each believer. Each of us believers, in the sovereign will of God, goes through trials, tribulations, and heartaches; triumphs, successes, and joys. God uses each circumstance to mold us and transform us into a complete and useful subject. God’s sovereign will is able to take the good and the bad we experience and mold each Christian into a unique individual, admirably conformed to the image of His dear Son (Rom. 8:28-29).

In the end it takes a commitment of faith and trust in God to believe that what happens in our lives is good. But if we take the three steps outlined above, we can, indeed, be assured that God’s will for us is good!

<sup>41</sup> Rom. 12:2 - acceptable: *euarestos* (2101). A neuter adjective describing God’s will. NASB translates it as acceptable (3), pleasing (3), and well-pleasing (3). If we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, that is acceptable *euarestos* or pleasing to God. Then in actual practice we prove out the fact that God’s will is acceptable *euarestos* or



G 3 and perfect.<sup>42</sup>


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pleasing to us!

We should make it our ambition, whether we are dead or alive, to be acceptable [euairestos](#) or pleasing to God (2 Cor. 5:9). We should try to learn what is pleasing [euairestos](#) to the Lord (Eph. 5:10). It really pleases [euairestos](#) the Lord when children obey their parents in all things (Col. 3:20). Slaves are exhorted to be well-pleasing [euairestos](#) to their masters rather than argumentative (Tit. 2:9). We pray that God will work into our lives that which is well-pleasing [euairestos](#) in His sight (Heb. 13:21).

<sup>42</sup> Rom. 12:2 - perfect: *teleios* ([5046](#)) – “complete, perfect; (1) with its chief component as totality, as opposed to partial or limited ... (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 13:10; Heb. 9:11; Matt. 5:48; 19:21); (2) with its chief component being full development as opposed to immaturity ... (1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Cor. 2:6; James 1:4; 1 John 4:18); (3) with its chief component being full preparation or readiness ... (1 Cor. 1:28; James 3:2); in all its meanings *teleios* carries the component of a purpose that has been achieved” (*Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*). Our lives are in a state of process, and as we obey the three imperatives in these two verses, we will demonstrate that both God’s moral will and His sovereign will for us are complete, finally developing us into believers who will reflect the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29). We ought to carry signs with us that read, “Under Construction. Please be patient. God is not finished with me yet.” Those signs ought to help fellow believers be patient with us, and they ought to help us be patient with God and patient with ourselves.

**C 2 In relation to gifted ministry to the Church 12:3-8****D 1 The foundation for proper self-esteem in ministry 12:3**

- E 1 The basis of Paul's apostolic communication: For through the grace <sup>43</sup> given to me
- E 2 The scope of his communication: I say to everyone <sup>44</sup> among you
- E 3 The prohibition against inflated self-esteem: not to think more highly of himself <sup>45</sup> than he ought to think;
- E 4 The recommendation of proper self-esteem: but to think so as to have sound judgment, <sup>46</sup>
- E 5 The source of proper self-esteem: as God has allotted to

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<sup>43</sup> Rom. 12:3 - through the grace given to me: Paul did not plant the church at Rome, nor had he ever visited them, though he had hoped to do so (Rom. 15:22-29). Yet, his intentions were, in the latter part of this letter, to write "very boldly" to them, on account of the grace that God had given him to be "a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles" (15:15-16). By grace (*charis*, [5485](#)) – a gift – given to him (in 12:3 and 15:15), Paul meant that Jesus Christ had graciously given him the privilege and responsibility of serving the Gentiles on His behalf. It was for that reason that Paul had, in this portion of his letter, begun making some very personal commands that demanded their obedience. He was not acting on his own authority – he was serving the Messiah!

<sup>44</sup> Rom. 12:3 - to everyone: Paul was, indeed, becoming personal. The word *pas* ([3956](#)) appears in the singular. We could translate, "to each one among (all singular words) you" (plural).

<sup>45</sup> Rom. 12:3 - not to think more highly of himself: These seven words translate two in Greek - the negative (*me*) and the present infinitive, *hyperphroneo* ([5252](#)). They were not to be haughty or conceited. The trouble with all the emphasis, even in Christian thinking today, on self-esteem is that almost invariably, when a Christian looks at himself unaided by a biblical perspective, he tends to over-rate his importance, and destructive pride ensues! To be honest, when I was in school, I had a fairly high opinion of myself. But the school of hard knocks has taught me that I am, in many respects, pretty average. I think that I, at my present age, have a much more realistic opinion of myself than I did 45 or 50 years ago! I am a small duck in a small pond, and whatever gifts I have are exactly that – gifts, not earnings! Even so, I regularly battle pride.

<sup>46</sup> Rom. 12:3 - sound judgment: *sophroneo* ([4993](#)), lit., to be sound-minded or saved-minded. More bluntly, to think sanely or sane-mindedly. The root word *phroneo* ([5426](#)) occurs repeatedly. "For I say ... not to **super-think** (*hyperphroneo*, [5252](#)) beyond what is necessary **to think** (*phroneo*), but **to think** (*phroneo*) toward the [goal of] **to be sound-thinking**" (*sophroneo*). It is always a challenge for us Christians, battling the world, the flesh, and the devil, to think sanely. This means we must always seek to use God's perspective so that we live in a world of reality, not insanity and self-delusion.

each a measure of faith.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Rom. 12:3 - as God has allotted to each a measure of faith: A proper self-esteem comes from an assessment of myself from God's perspective, using God's gift of faith. Paul is about to embark upon the subject of spiritual gifts, and it will require faith for each believer to live in light of the fact that God has given him a particular spiritual gift which he is to use in serving.

- D 2 The instruction about the Church as constituting in Christ a single spiritual body whose members are diverse, yet united in mutual interdependence 12:4-5
  - E 1 Implying the diversity of the many individuals: the analogy of the human body 12:4
    - G 1 The multiplicity of various organs in a single human body: For just as we have many members in one body <sup>48</sup>
    - G 2 The variety of the functions of the human body's organs: and all the members do not have the same function, <sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Rom. 12:4, 5 - one body; one body in Christ: The word for body in each case is *soma* (4983). In the first instance (12:4) Paul used it of the literal, flesh-and-blood human body; in the second (12:5), he used it for the mystical, spiritual body of Christ, meaning all the believers in Jesus of the present Church Age, who thus constitute his presence in the world today. Of course, a great portion of the members of the body of Christ are deceased and now with Him in heaven. Nevertheless, all believers in Christ in the Church Age constitute the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ, the Church, remains a distinct entity in both time and eternity, perpetually distinguished from believers among the Nations (or Gentiles) both before and after the Church Age, and from the redeemed from among the nation of Israel, both before and after the Church Age. Redeemed Jewish people in the Church Age have a dual status – they are eternally identifiable as members of the Church and also as Israelis. The primary residence of the Church and of the Nation of Israel in eternity will be New Jerusalem. The primary residence of the redeemed from among the Nations in eternity will be New Earth. A corollary presumption is that there will exist in New Earth an identifiable portion of real estate identifiable as the nation of Israel. As Isaiah indicates, foreigners, redeemed from among the Nations, will perform the bulk of the tasks of agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce in the physical State of Israel on New Earth (Isa. 61:5-6). Many of these concepts are unacceptable to advocates of Covenant Theology and, to a lesser extent, Progressive Dispensationalists, but I believe the Scriptures support this view.

<sup>49</sup> Rom. 12:4 - all the members do not have the same function: Paul is obviously using the human body to teach truths about the spiritual body of Christ. The implied concept “body of Christ” used in this passage (see also 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 4:12) clearly does not here refer to Jesus’ physical body, but to His spiritual or mystical body, which is composed of all of the believers in Jesus during the Church Age. Paul’s point is that we do not expect the different members/organs of the human physical body to perform the same task. The arms, legs, kidneys, and lungs all perform distinct tasks for the greater good of the human body and the person whom they represent. By the same token, we should not expect all the different members of the Body of Christ to perform the same task. There is great diversity among the members of the Body of Christ, and yet there is a mutual unity and interdependence. And this all fits together for the greater good of the Body and the Person whom we represent, Jesus.

By way of practical application, I as a pastor am occasionally confronted with unrealistic expectations, sometimes voiced, more often not. I have sometimes jokingly said that a church looks at its past pastors, selects all the gifted traits from each of them and throws out all their less-gifted traits, then expects its new pastor to exhibit all the gifted traits and none of the ungifted traits! It is not only unrealistic, but is also unbiblical to place those expectations on one person. God has gifted each of us in a different way with a unique ministry, and we need to accept and support one another with the gifts and ministries that each of us has. A church who recognizes these truths and practices them will be more effective and more harmonious than a church who does not.

- E 2     Implying the interdependence of each individual: the application of the human body to the body of Christ 12:5
  - G 1     The unity of the diverse, multiple believers constituting Christ's Body: so we, who are many,<sup>50</sup> are one body in Christ,<sup>51</sup>
  - G 2     The interdependence of the many members of Christ's Body: and individually members one of another.<sup>52</sup>
- D 3     The necessity of each individual serving in his God-given area of giftedness 12:6-8
  - E 1     The importance of knowing the nature of gifts 12:6a
    - G 1     The fact – the variety of spiritual gifts of different

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<sup>50</sup> Rom. 12:5 - we, who are many: As Christians, we need to acknowledge the staggering diversity in the Body of Christ. As Paul revealed in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, there are various gifts, but the same Spirit who gives them; there are various ministries using those gifts, but the same Lord who authorizes; there are various effects in employing those gifts in those ministries, but the same God who empowers. We need to recognize and celebrate and make good use of all the diversely-gifted people the Lord brings into our local churches. Let us not expect "cookie cutter" Christians coming off the assembly line. Let us expect and capitalize on the diversity!

<sup>51</sup> Rom. 12:5 - one body in Christ: Despite the fact that there are millions of us believers in Jesus, and despite the fact that we are so incredibly diverse, we are actually one body – the Body of Christ. The almost infinite diversity in the Body of Christ ought not to obscure the fact of our unity in Christ. Theoretically, it seems, there ought to be a way for us all to unite together for the common good. That was, after all, a fervent intent of Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17:11, 20-22. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. I found recently on the internet a Baptist pastor of a flock of fifty who asserted that his was the only true church in the entire world, and he railed against other Christians with whom he would not associate. I do not think that is quite what Jesus had in mind.... But sadly, I fear I am also guilty....

<sup>52</sup> Rom. 12:5 - individually members one of another: Not only are we united in one body, we Christians are mutually dependent on one another. It is easier to see that on a small scale – in a local church. It is not so easy to see that on a larger scale – the Church Universal. But surely it is true. Perhaps we should look at it this way – there are Roman Catholics who can reach people for Jesus that Baptists cannot. There are Presbyterians who can reach people for Jesus that Methodists and Lutherans and Mennonites cannot. And there are amillennialists who can reach people for Jesus that dispensational premillennialists cannot. And there are Kenyans who can reach people for Jesus that Venezuelans and British cannot. I could go on, but you get my point. The interesting thing is that no one has a lock on truth, and no one entirely represents truth. There are people who attend Roman Catholic churches that are truly believers in Christ, and other Roman Catholic attenders who are not. Similarly, there are people who attend Baptist churches that are truly believers in Christ, and Baptist attenders who are not. It is a good thing that Jesus does not ask us to consign people to hell. Otherwise we would send some fellow-believers there (Matt. 13:24-30).

believers: Since we have gifts <sup>53</sup> that differ

G 2 The reason – God’s differing distribution of grace: according to the grace given to us,<sup>54</sup>

E 2 The importance of exercising the gifts: each of us is to exercise them accordingly: <sup>55</sup> 12:6b-8

G 1 Of prophecy according to faith: if prophecy,<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Rom. 12:6 - gifts: The word is *charisma* (5486), a verbal noun from *charidzomai* (5483) (*give, give freely, even forgive*). A related noun is *charis* (5485), grace. Theologians call these gifts (*charismata*, plural accusative case), of which Paul here speaks *spiritual gifts*. A spiritual gift is a special, God-given ability to serve Him. Some of the gifts (such as healing – 1 Cor. 12:28) have a miraculous element in them, while others (such as teaching – Rom. 12:7) seem to consist of a heightened natural ability. Nevertheless, all spiritual gifts are supernatural in that the ability comes from God. There are some groups of Christians who emphasize especially the gifts of miracle working, healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy. Sometimes this movement is called Pentecostal, at other times, Charismatic. There is a technical distinction between the two, but that is beyond our present discussion. With the possible exception of the gift of prophecy, the gifts Paul here discusses in Romans 12 do not have miraculous overtones. 1 Corinthians 12-14 gives a much fuller discussion of spiritual gifts.

<sup>54</sup> Rom. 12:6 - gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: All Christians have been gift a gift or gifts. Put another way, all Christians have been gifted to serve God. It is an act of grace (*charis*, 5485) on God’s part that permits us to serve Him. The more we learn about the Christian life, the more we discover that it is God’s grace, meaning unmerited favor, that is behind the whole of the Christian life. Whatever is of grace, of course, can not be claimed for one’s own credit. If God gifts me to serve Him, then I have no rational reason for being proud of my gifts, on the one hand, or of being discouraged and jealous because I do not have certain gifts I might have preferred! Paul is clear that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts as He wishes (1 Cor. 12:11), not as we might wish! We should expect that we are gifted differently than other Christians, and that other Christians are gifted differently than we are. Cooperation and mutual upbuilding for the benefit of Christ’s Body and the expansion of His work are in order.

<sup>55</sup> Rom. 12:6 - *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: The NASB editors have placed this clause in italics because it has no counterpart in the Greek text. The Greek text here is elliptical, but the English translation is warranted. What Paul is saying is this: God has given each Christian a gift. Whatever that gift is, major on that gift! Use it for God’s glory! Do well what God has gifted you to do. Don’t fret over gifts you don’t have. Don’t try to serve where you are not gifted. Do major on serving where you are gifted! All of us have certain tasks that we are obligated to perform that may not necessarily be in an area where we are gifted. Perform them, but don’t major on them. Major instead – focus instead on serving in areas in which God has gifted you. You will be more effective, and the Body of Christ and the purposes of God will be better served!

<sup>56</sup> Rom. 12:6 - prophecy: “Prophecy” translates *propheteia* (4394). This word conveys a dual meaning, depending upon the context.

(1) In some contexts *propheteia* (4394) refers to a message received *directly* from God and which was to be passed on to people. We might further identify this meaning as referring to “the *product* of prophecy,” meaning the end result – that which the prophet either spoke or wrote or, in some cases, both. Examples include Matt. 13:14; 1 Thess. 5:20 (notice the plural); 1 Tim. 1:18 (note the plural); 2 Pet. 1:20; probably also 1:21; Rev. 1:3; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18.

(2) In other contexts *propheteia* (4394) refers to the actual process of communicating to others a message received directly from God. We might specify this meaning as “the process of prophecy.” Examples of this second

according to the proportion of his faith;<sup>57</sup> 12:6b

meaning include our present passage, Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22; possibly 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Tim. 4:14; possibly 2 Pet. 1:21; Rev. 11:6; possibly 19:10. Charles Ryrie, in his *Ryrie Study Bible (RSB)* note on 1 Cor. 12:8-10, defines prophecy (*propheteia*, [4394](#)) in v. 10 as “The ability to proclaim new revelation from God.” His definition focuses on the second of the two meanings outlined above.

John MacArthur, in his commentary on Rom. 12:6, acknowledges Ryrie’s definition, but disagrees with it. He states that while prophecy “certainly had a revelatory aspect during Old Testament and apostolic times, it was not limited to revelation. It was exercised when there was public proclamation of divine truth, old or new.” He states, further, that prophecy “has the literal meaning of speaking forth, with no connotation of prediction or other supernatural or mystical significance. The gift of prophecy is simply the gift of preaching, of proclaiming the Word of God.”

At this stage of my study, I reject MacArthur’s definition. I believe he is confusing the gift of prophecy with the gift of teaching. I believe that Biblical prophets did not prophesy every time they opened their mouths in a public assembly. Sometimes, perhaps most of the time, they merely taught that which they had learned from their own study of Scripture or that which had previously been revealed to them by the Spirit of God. But when they were merely teaching, they were not acting as prophets, but as teachers. What made them prophets was the fact that they received messages directly from God and communicated those messages without error to the people. Just as Old Testament prophets at certain times predicted the future, so did New Testament prophets. The prophet Agabus accurately predicted a famine (Acts 11:28) and Paul’s incarceration under Gentile authority (Acts 21:10-11 cf. Acts 21:27 - 28:31). When the prophets spoke *ex cathedra*, as prophets not teachers, they could not err, because their message came directly from God.

It is my personal belief that, with the completion of the New Testament canon of Scripture, God was no longer giving the gift of prophecy. Paul does, after all, reveal that prophecy is a temporary gift (1 Cor. 13:8-10). If bona fide prophets have existed since the writing of the Book of Revelation, why have none of their utterances been incorporated in Scripture? It is unprecedented that utterances of prophets, if indeed they exist, have gone unrecorded in Scripture for almost two millennia!

Will the world ever see prophets again? Undoubtedly! God has revealed that, during the Tribulation period, “And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth” (Rev. 11:3). Furthermore, that which Yahweh predicted through the prophet Joel (2:28), though it was partially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-18), has yet to be fulfilled for Israel in all its fullness: “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.” Additionally, Jesus is a prophet. When He reigns in Jerusalem for a thousand years, nations will stream from all over the world to learn of His ways (Isa. 2:3). I cannot imagine that none of His words will be added to the Bible!

<sup>57</sup> Rom. 12:6 - according to the proportion of his faith: There are two ways this phrase can be translated. Faith (*pisteos*, [4102](#)) appears with the article (*tes*). “The faith” probably refers back to the occurrence of “faith” in 12:3, where Paul exhorted his readers to think with “sound judgment, according as God allotted to each a measure of faith.” Since it takes faith to exercise spiritual gifts, Paul here urged a prophet [to prophesy] in accordance with the amount (proportion – *analogia*, [356](#)) of faith he possessed. But “the faith” can also refer to the body of revealed truth which one is to believe. In that case, Paul was urging a prophet [to prophesy] in correspondence (*analogia*) with or analogous to the body of revealed truth – “the faith” (*pistis*, [4102](#)).

There are about 37 passages in the Greek NT which combine the article “the” (*tes*) with the noun “faith” (*pisteos*, [4102](#)). In most of these, the NASB justifiably does not translate as “the faith” depending on other words in the context. But in nine passages, NASB *does* translate the phrase “the faith,” because from the context, it is clear that the writer was referring to “the body of revealed truth which is to be believed.” Those passages are Acts 13:8; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 1:25, 27; 1 Tim. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:1, 6; 1 Tim. 6:10.

Personally, I believe that in Rom. 12:6, Paul had both ideas in mind. I think that he meant that a prophet must prophesy according to the amount or proportion of faith which he possesses; and also that a prophet should prophesy analogous to or in correspondence with the body of revealed truth which is to be believed. In this latter



G 2 Of ministry (service): if service, in his serving;<sup>58</sup>  
12:7a

G 3 Of teaching: or he who teaches, in his teaching;<sup>59</sup>

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instance, a Biblical prophet never utters a prophecy which contradicts the previously revealed truth of the Bible.

<sup>58</sup> Rom. 12:7 - if service, in his serving: “Service” (*diakonian*, [1248](#)) is the *accusative* singular form of the noun; “serving” (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) is the *dative* singular feminine of the same noun. Friberg’s lexical entry: (1) generally *service* (Heb. 1:14); (2) as charitable giving *aid, support, arrangement for provision* (Acts 6:1); (3) as preparing meals *serving, preparation* (Luke 10:40); (4) as the role or position of one serving God in a special way *task, office, ministry* (Rom. 12:7; 1 Tim. 1:12).” Let us look at some examples: (1) Martha busied herself with food *preparation* (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) and complained to Jesus that her sister Mary had left her to do all the *serving* (*diakoneo*, [1247](#)) alone (Luke 10:40). Jesus said that Mary had chosen the better option of having fellowship with Him (Luke 10:41-42)! (2) The NT church provided a daily *serving* (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) of food for widows (Acts 6:1). (3) The Gentile Christians in Antioch sent money to provide *relief* (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) for the Christian Jews in Judea (Acts 11:29). (4) God had given to Paul and his associates a *ministry* (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). (5) Angels are sent to render *service* (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) to those who inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). Here in Rom. 12:7, service (*diakonia*, [1248](#)) is seen as a spiritual gift – a special God given ability to serve Him by serving other Christians. A brief working definition of this gift is as follows: A special ability to meet the needs – often the physical needs – of others. Paul’s point was this: If God has given a Christian the gift of service, that Christian ought to specialize in using that gift to serve others!

<sup>59</sup> Rom. 12:7 - or he who teaches, in his teaching: “He who teaches” translates the verb *didasko* ([1321](#)); “teaching” translates the noun *didaskalia* ([1319](#)), the content of that which one teaches.

Examples of the verb, to teach (*didasko*, [1321](#)): (1) As one studies the NT, he realizes that Jesus strongly emphasized teaching. He went around *teaching* (*didasko*, [1321](#)) in synagogues (Matt. 4:23). (2) The Pharisees acknowledged (whether or not they actually believed it) that Jesus *taught* (*didasko*, [1321](#)) the way of God in truth and impartiality (Matt. 22:16). (3) It was no accident that Jesus’ apostles, who had seen him teach for three years, themselves emphasized teaching. The priests and Sadducees were upset that the apostles were *teaching* (*didasko*, [1321](#)) in Jesus the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:1-2).

Examples of the noun, teaching (*didaskalia*, [1319](#)): (1) Paul wrote, “Whatever was written [in the OT] in earlier times was written for our *instruction* (*didaskalia*, [1319](#)) (Rom. 15:4). (2) [In this second, extended passage (in Ephesians), I have identified certain words that also appear in Romans 12.] Paul also wrote, “<sup>11</sup>And He [Jesus] gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers (*didaskolos*, [1320](#)), <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of service (*diakonia*, [1248](#)), to the building up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup>As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of *doctrine* (*didaskalia*, [1319](#)), by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:11-14). (3) To the Colossians, Paul wrote about “the commandments and teachings (*didaskalia*, [1319](#)) of men” (Col. 2:22). There are many Christians who somehow think that what Paul wrote about justification and election and sanctification is doctrine, but what Jesus said about the Good Samaritan is not. They are mistaken. Both are merely the content of what Paul and Jesus, respectively, taught.

How does someone who has the gift of teaching (*didasko*, [1321](#)) differ from someone who has the gift of prophecy (*propheteia*, [4394](#))? Teaching is the communication of a message received *indirectly* from God, while prophecy is the communication of a message received *directly* from God. Teachers expound upon the messages communicated by prophets. Presumably, all prophets also have been given the gift of teaching, but not all teachers are prophets.

Paul’s point in Romans 12:7 is that if God has given a Christian the gift of teaching, he ought to focus on and major on the content (and perhaps presentation) of that which he teaches.



12:7b

- G 4 Of urging: or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; 12:8a
- G 5 Of sharing intently (single-mindedly): he who gives, with liberality; 12:8b
- G 6 Of leading diligently: he who leads, with diligence;<sup>60</sup> 12:8c
- G 7 Of showing mercy cheerfully: he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 12:8d

### C 3 In relation to general deportment toward the Church 12:9-16

D 1 Flavored over-all by love 12:9-10

E 1 Genuine, discerning love 12:9

G 1 The command of genuine love: Let love<sup>61</sup> be without hypocrisy.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Rom. 12:8 - he who leads, with diligence: *Diligence* is the word *spoude* (4710), from which we derive our English word, speed. In the NASB, it is translated twice in Mark-Luke as going somewhere “in a hurry.” It is translated as “diligence” in Rom. 12:8, 11; as “earnestness” six times in 2 Cor. and Hebrews; and as “making every effort” in Jude 1:3. The point is that church leaders are to lead with diligence, effort, energy, and enthusiasm. No half-hearted ambivalence or laziness is warranted here!

<sup>61</sup> Rom. 12:9 - love: The word is *agape* (26), the highest form of love. *Agape* love is the greatest of the three cardinal Christian virtues (1 Cor. 13:13). *Agape* love is self-sacrificial (“For God so loved that He gave”... (John 3:16), looking out for others’ interests, not its own (1 Cor. 13:5). Love is long-suffering, humble, and sides with truth (1 Cor. 13:4-7). God is essentially *agape* love (1 John 4:8, 16), and therefore we are to love as He does (1 John 4:7-8, 16). Loving one another is a sign that we are Christ’s disciples (John 13:35). Whoever loves the Father must also love the Father’s child (1 John 5:1).

<sup>62</sup> Rom. 12:9 - without hypocrisy: These two English words translate *anupokritos* (505), which incorporates the negative prefix *an* and the verb *hupokrinomai* (5271), “to pretend.” Biblical love cannot masquerade as loving another Christian on the one hand, while actually hating him on the other (1 John 4:20). I am sometimes asked, “Can I love a Christian brother but not like him?” That is a difficult question to answer. The standard for love is high:

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup>does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, <sup>6</sup>does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; <sup>7</sup>bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

At the same time, we must acknowledge that Jesus had three favorites – Peter, James, and John. Also, loving others

G 2 The command of discerning love <sup>63</sup>H 1 Fleeing moral evil: Abhor what is evil;<sup>64</sup>H 2 Adhering to moral good: cling to what is good.<sup>65</sup>E 2 Family-brotherly love: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;<sup>66</sup> 12:10a

E 3 Reciprocal honoring: give preference to one another in

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does not mean that one does not confront them with their evil and hypocrisy. Jesus spoke the truth to His diabolical opponents – the scribes, Pharisees, priests, and Sadducees of His day (Matt. 23). Yet He loved them so much He died to pay for their sins! The standard of speech for Christians is to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

Anupokritos, meaning not hypocritical, genuine, or sincere, is linked with love in Rom. 12:9, 2 Cor. 6:6 and 1 Pet. 1:22; with faith in 1 Tim. 1:5 and 2 Tim. 1:5; and with wisdom in James 3:17.

<sup>63</sup> Rom. 12:9 subtitle - The command of discerning love: The point of the caveat is that love cannot embrace moral evil, but must condone and support only that which is upright. For example, I am obligated to love another Christian, but I am not thereby obligated to embrace and support an evil agenda he may have. In context, a hypocritical love would include embracing someone's evil.

<sup>64</sup> Rom. 12:9 - abhor what is evil: Abhor, *apostugeo* ([655](#)), is a strong word, used only here in the NT. It means to abhor or hate utterly, to shrink away from (Friberg). Louw-Nida Lexicon incorporates the ideas of "to have a strong dislike...implying repulsion and desire for avoidance...to despise." It must be noted that Paul clearly intended that we are to abhor evil *things*, not evil *people*! "*to poneron*," lit. "the evil," appears in the accusative case, neuter gender, not the masculine gender! God loved evil people enough to send His Son to die for their sins!

<sup>65</sup> Rom. 12:9 - good: We are to cling to "the good" (*agathos*, [18](#)). Used substantively here, "the good" refers to that which is morally good. Here, Paul deliberately switched cases from the accusative case to the dative case (*to poneron* was accusative; *tw agathw* is dative). Why did he switch? Because in the dative case, the spelling can be either neuter gender or masculine gender! While we are called to abhor only evil *things*, we are called to cling to good *things* and to good *people*!

<sup>66</sup> Rom. 12:10 - *be devoted to one another in brotherly love*: Back to our discussion of whether Christians can love one another with an *agape* love but not like one another... Paul here closes the wiggle room! *Be devoted* translates *philostorgos* ([5387](#)), used only here. *Philostorgos* is a compound composed of *philos* ([5384](#)) and *storge* (not used in the NT). *Philos* is a friendship kind of love. *Philos* is translated in the NASB as either *friend* (12 X) or *friends* (17 X). *Storge* means "cherishing one's kindred, especially parents or children". So Christians are to have the same affection toward one another as friends and family members do!

Paul didn't stop there. He added "brotherly love" (*philadelphia*, [5360](#)), again from *philos* ([5384](#)) – friendship love, and *adelphos* ([80](#)), brother. We Christians are commanded to exhibit every kind of warm affection to other members of the Body of Christ! "To one another" means the warm affection is to be reciprocal, not one-sided. I don't know about you, but I have some attitude adjustments to make!

honor;<sup>67</sup> 12:10b

D 2 Serving intensely 12:11

E 1 Unslothful zeal: not lagging behind in diligence,<sup>68</sup>

E 2 Burning inner drive: fervent in spirit,<sup>69</sup>

E 3 Serving the Master: serving the Lord;<sup>70</sup>

D 3 With a positive, prayerful attitude 12:12

E 1 Rejoicing in hope for the present and future: rejoicing in

<sup>67</sup> Rom. 12:10 - give preference to one another in honor: “Give preference” translates *proegeomai* (4285), used only here in the NT. It means (1) *lead the way, be the leader*; figuratively in the NT *outdo others* (possibly Rom. 12:10); (2) prefer, consider better, esteem more highly (possibly Rom. 12:10)” (Friberg). Though the NASB opts for the second definition, I believe the first is truer to the etymology of the word. I think Paul was asking all the Christians to lead the way in honoring one another, to outdo one another in honoring each other. “in honor” translates *timē* (5092). John MacArthur, in his commentary on Romans, states this:

To honor is to show genuine appreciation and admiration for one another in the family of God. We are to be quick to show respect, quick to acknowledge the accomplishments of others, quick to demonstrate genuine love by *not* being jealous or envious, which have no part in love, whether *agape* or *philadelphia*.

<sup>68</sup> Rom. 12:11 - not lagging behind in diligence: “Not lagging behind” translates *me skneros* (3636), which conveys the idea of being “shrinking, timid, hence idle, lazy, troublesome.” Friberg states that it pertains to shrinking from or hesitating to engage in something worthwhile, possibly implying lack of ambition - “lazy, lacking in ambition.” The master in Matt. 25:26, using this word, called his slave “lazy.” The words “in diligence” translate the primary word, *te spoude* (4710), which Paul has previously used in 12:8 (see the discussion there). Just as leaders in the church were challenged to lead with diligence, effort, energy, and enthusiasm, so each Christian is charged with serving Jesus with diligence, effort, energy, and enthusiasm! Lazy, half-hearted Christians are not Biblical Christians! Christians are not to be slothful, but zealous in their service.

<sup>69</sup> Rom. 12:11 - fervent in spirit: Fervent translates *dzeo* (2204), literally, to “well up, bubble, boil; figuratively, of spiritual fervor *be very eager, show enthusiasm*” (Friberg). Acts 18:25 describes Apollos as being fervent in spirit. These are the only two uses of *dzeo* in the NT. The NASB translates the word spirit (*pneuma*, 4151) in both passages as referring to the human spirit or motivation of the individual Christian and of Apollos. But both instances incorporate the dative case of the article “the” (*tw*), as in “the spirit”. In my view, one cannot rule out a reference to the Holy Spirit. We must be fervent in our own spirit, but zealous also in the power of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>70</sup> Rom. 12:11 - serving the Lord: Serving translates *douleuo* (1398), the verb for performing the duties of a slave. “Lord” is *kurios* (2962), often (but not always) used in reference to a slave-owner, one who had power and authority over his slave(s). The referent is obviously Jesus the Messiah. We Christians have no authority over our own lives. We are slaves serving our Master, Jesus Christ. We ought to live our lives that way, serving Him zealously and with diligence, never lazily or haphazardly!

hope,<sup>71</sup>

E 2 Persevering in present trouble: persevering in tribulation,<sup>72</sup>

E 3 Constantly praying: devoted to prayer,<sup>73</sup>

D 4 Helping others 12:13

E 1 Materially, financially: contributing to the needs of the saints,<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Rom. 12:12 - rejoicing in hope: Literally, “in the hope rejoicing.” Christians should be optimistic and constantly rejoicing because of the hope (settled assurance) we have of eternal life with God and Jesus; of Jesus’ coming rule over this entire world; of a resurrection body; of a pristine heaven and earth unblemished by sin; of a utopian world governed by the co-regency of Jesus and God from their throne in New Jerusalem, the ultimate, eternal capital of New Earth. Many of these sureties are described in Rom. 8:16-39; Rev. 21:1-22:5.

<sup>72</sup> Rom. 12:12 - persevering in tribulation: Literally, “in the tribulation persevering.” Tribulation (*thlipsis*, [2347](#)), translated in NASB as affliction (14X); afflictions (6X); tribulation (16X); tribulation (4X); distress (2X); persecution (1X); trouble (1X). Jesus told His followers, “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Jesus has promised to keep His church out of the [Great Tribulation](#) (Rev. 3:10; cf. Matt. 14:21; Rev. 7:14).

But in the ordinary course of life, Christians must learn to endure trouble and pressure from living and from the world. But instead of succumbing or giving up or becoming despondent or depressed, Christians are to “remain under” (*hupomeno*, [5278](#)) – *hupo* means under, *meno* means to remain. *Hupomeno* is translated in the NASB with the “endure” family of terms thirteen times (13X) as follows: endured (5X); endure (3X); endures (3X); endure...with patience (1X); patiently endure (1X); and otherwise, perseveres (1X); persevering (1X); remained (1X); and stayed behind (1X). Christians must expect trouble and must persevere through it. Evidently God seeks to mature us through trouble in this life, and does not necessarily preserve us from it. Our task is to develop perseverance – spiritual toughness.

<sup>73</sup> Rom. 12:12 - devoted to prayer: Devoted (*proskartereo*, [4342](#)) has a basic meaning of persist at, stay by; ... with the dative of the thing [as here] ... it means to “occupy oneself diligently with, pay persistent attention to, be devoted to ...” (Friberg). Devoted is, as are the other verbal forms in this passage, a plural present participle with imperatival force. The expected action is seen as being commanded and ongoing, reinforced by the meaning of the word itself. Prayer is to be a continual way of life for us Christians.

<sup>74</sup> Rom. 12:13 - contributing to the needs of the saints: Contributing translates *koinoneo* ([2841](#)), here “denoting common participation *share, have in common, take part with someone*” (Friberg). The nature of the sharing is defined by the context. The believers in Rome are urged continually (*koinoneo* is a present participle with imperatival force) to contribute to the needs of the saints, meaning other believers. Presumably these are physical, material needs. Government welfare programs do not absolve us Christians from our God-given responsibilities to share with other Christians. Meeting the needs of the Christian family carries a higher priority than meeting the needs of people outside the faith.

E 2 Opening up one's home: practicing hospitality.<sup>75</sup>

D 5 Upbuilding others with one's speech 12:14-15

E 1 Blessing one's persecutors 12:14

G 1 Bless those who persecute you;<sup>76</sup>

G 2 bless and do not curse.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Rom. 12:13 - practicing hospitality: *Practicing* is the second person, present participle with imperatival force of *dioko* (1377), meaning to run, here used in a figurative sense “as being zealous; ... as an earnest striving after something *pursue, follow after, seek after*.” Paul was commanding the Roman Christians constantly to be pursuing *philoxenia* (5381). This is a compound word from *philos* (5384), to be a friend of or fond of, and *xenos* (3581), a stranger or foreigner. Christians are constantly to be pursuing hospitality, opening up their homes even to foreigners. *Philoxenia* is used elsewhere in the NT only in Heb. 13:2 – “Do not neglect to show *hospitality to strangers* [*philoxenia*, emphasis mine], for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.” In context, Paul, in Rom. 12:13, meant that Christians were intentionally to pursue hospitality with other Christians, no matter what their ethnic or national background was. Faith in Jesus forms a bond that ignores ethnicity and nationality. Christianity is the supreme melting pot!

<sup>76</sup> Rom. 12:14 - Bless those who persecute you: NASB note: Two early mss do not contain *you*.

Bless those who persecute you: This verse is a quotation from Luke 6:28. *Bless* is the plural present imperative of *eulogeo* (2127), from which we derive our English word *eulogize*. In its most basic sense, *eulogeo* means to speak well of someone. We humans bless God, or speak well of Him, when we praise Him. We bless men when we call upon God to prosper them. In this sense we are “calling down God’s gracious power on persons” (Friberg). Examples of humans blessing other humans include the following: Elizabeth blessed Mary and Jesus, her unborn child (Luke 1:42); Simeon bless Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:34) after having first blessed God (Luke 2:28); Jesus blessed His gathered disciples at His ascension (Luke 24:50-51); Melchizedek blessed Abraham (Heb. 7:1, 6-7); Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau (Heb. 11:20); and Jacob blessed Joseph’s sons (Heb. 11:21).

those who persecute you: *Persecute* is *dioko* (1377), which Paul already used in a good sense in Rom. 12:13 of *practicing* or *pursuing* hospitality. Here Paul uses it in a negative sense – when people *pursue* Christians in order to *persecute* them. He will use it again in a positive sense in Rom. 14:19 – we are to “pursue the things which make for peace ....” Jesus repeatedly used *dioko* in its negative sense of persecution: Matt. 5:10-12, 44; 10:23; 23:34; Luke 11:49; 21:12; John 15:20. Paul’s point here is that, even though others *persecute* us, we are to *bless* them!

<sup>77</sup> Rom. 12:14 - bless and do not curse: When others revile us or persecute us, we are tempted to curse them. Curse is the second person plural present tense imperative of *kataaomai* (2672). (1) In the middle voice, as here, *kataaomai* is used “as stating that a supernatural power will cause harm to someone or something – *curse* (Luke 6:28); (2) passive *be doomed, be accursed* (Matt. 25:41)” (Friberg). In Rom. 12:14 we are forbidden to curse continually, and we are twice commanded to bless continually instead! Counting this passage, this word is used five times in the NT. Jesus used *kataaomai* in Matt. 25:41, saying to the “goats” – the people of the nations on His left, “Depart from me, *accursed* ones, into the eternal fire ....” Peter noted that the fig tree Jesus had *curse*d had withered (Mark 11:21). Jesus said, “bless those who *curse* you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:28). James shamed his readers, “With it [our tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we *curse* men, who have been made in the likeness of God” (James 3:9). So here in Rom. 12:14, Paul not only commands us twice to keep blessing those who persecute us, but he forbids us to keep cursing them. Dedicating one’s body to God (Rom. 12:1-2) and serving Jesus with our gifts (Rom. 12:3-8) requires us to act exactly opposite of what the normal, fallen human reaction would dictate!

- E 2 Rejoicing with the overjoyed: Rejoice with those who rejoice,<sup>78</sup> 12:15a
- E 3 Sharing the sorrow of those in tears: and weep with those who weep.<sup>79</sup> 12:15b
- D 6 Upbuilding others with one's realistic humility 12:16
  - E 1 The command of unity: Be of the same mind toward one another;<sup>80</sup>
  - E 2 The forbidding of arrogance: do not be haughty in mind,<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Rom. 12:15 - rejoice with those who rejoice: Rejoice is the present infinitive of *chairō* (5463). We are “to rejoice continually”. “Those who rejoice” translates the present plural participle of *chairō*. Literally, we are “to rejoice continually with the ones continually rejoicing.” To rejoice is to be glad, to be delighted in something or someone (see Friberg). The Christian is commanded to empathize with others, no matter what their situation. If someone is overjoyed that he inherited a fortune, we are to rejoice with him rather than become jealous and envious and disdainful. If they had a good day and we didn’t, we are to rejoice with them! If others received an honor we were hoping for, we are to rejoice with them!

<sup>79</sup> Rom. 12:15 - weep with those who weep: We are “to keep weeping” (present active infinitive of *klaio*, 2799) with “weeping ones” (present active participle of *klaio*, 2799). To weep is to express “strong inner emotion *weep, cry, shed tears*” (Friberg). Again, Paul is urging Christians to empathize with one another. If someone is sad and we are happy, we are not to chide them, “Well, you don’t need to rain on my parade!” That is selfish. The dedicated Christian always seeks the good of the *other* person, not himself. We are to place ourselves in one another’s shoes and join them in their perspective. We are often tempted to quote Scripture verses to others. Sometimes the greatest comfort is to join silently with someone else in his or her misery. Usually “I’m so sorry!” is better than “Cheer up, things could be worse!”

<sup>80</sup> Rom. 12:16 - Be of the same mind toward one another: Literally, the phrase translates something like this – “The same thing toward one another thinking.” In this literal translation, “thinking” is not a noun (as in most translations), but a present tense participle with imperatival force. It translates the word *phroneo* (5426), meaning to “*think, have an opinion, have understanding*” (Friberg). Paul has already used this word twice in this chapter, in Rom. 12:3, when he was discussing the attitude that Christians should maintain in assessing themselves and their own spiritual gifts. There he said, “For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to **think**; but to **think** so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith (emphasis added).” The caution there was not to become conceited about the gifts God has given to us with which we serve Him, but to exercise sound judgment. Here in 12:16, the same general idea persists, but now the focus is not so much on what we think of *ourselves*, but how we perceive *others*: We are all one in Christ, so let us each maintain the same attitude toward one another – let us not have a degrading view of other Christians, thinking they are inferior to us in any way. In other words, let us not devalue other Christians. The latter part of 12:16 provides context – “do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

<sup>81</sup> Rom. 12:16 - do not be haughty in mind: Haughty translates the adjective *hupselos* (5308). Literally *hupselos* means that which is “high, lofty, tall (Matt. 4:8),” while its opposite is *tapeinos* (5011), that which is lowly (Friberg). In a figurative sense, and coupled here with, again, the present participle of *phroneo* (5426), Paul means, “Don’t be



E 3 The command of humble association: but associate with the lowly.<sup>82</sup>

E 4 The command of humble self-esteem: Do not be wise in your own estimation.<sup>83</sup>

#### C 4 In relation to deportment toward those outside the Church 12:17-21

D 1 Reaction – Never react to evil in kind: Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.<sup>84</sup> 12:17a

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having an exalted opinion of yourself in comparison to other Christians, whom you deem to be beneath your dignity and status.” It is a warning against high-mindedness regarding oneself mixed with corresponding condescension toward others.

By way of more personal application, I believe that those who believe the King James Version is the only valid Bible need to obey Paul’s injunction here. And I believe that those who disagree with the KJV-only adherents need also to obey Paul’s injunction. Likewise I believe that non-dispensational covenantalists need to follow Paul’s injunction here, as also do premillennial dispensationalists.

<sup>82</sup> Rom. 12:16 - associate with the lowly: Lowly translates *tapeinos* ([5011](#)), the opposite of *hupselos* ([5308](#)), exalted. Back in school I associated with a friend whom many considered to be among the lowly. There were those who appeared to be somewhat conceited and who held a high opinion of themselves who would not associate with him. I chose to associate with someone who was not “cool”, and have felt that God honored that. When we choose not to associate with someone whom we think is beneath our dignity or status in life, we are exhibiting arrogance. We are being high-minded (*hupselos*, [5308](#)). Do we really think God is more impressed with sinner A than with sinner B? What arrogance! God will destroy pride!

<sup>83</sup> Rom. 12:16 - do not be wise in your own estimation: *Wise* translates *phronimos* ([5429](#)). Jesus uses *phronimos* in contexts in which it is a valued trait, and that is its normal meaning. But Paul often uses it in a negative way, but he qualifies it so his readers can understand. In Rom. 11:25, Paul did not want these same Roman, non-Jewish Christians to be *wise* in their own estimation, thinking that Jewish people are forever of no further account as Jews. That status is only temporary, Paul explained. And here in Rom. 12:16, Paul does not want us to have an exalted opinion of ourselves and consider ourselves to be full of wisdom while other Christians, in our opinion, are destitute of wisdom and completely wrong-headed. John Murray’s well-spoken comments are as follows:

“Apparently the conceit in view is that self-sufficiency by which our own judgment is so highly esteemed that we will not have regard to wisdom that comes from any other source. It strikes at the opinionated person who has no regard for any one else’s judgment. ‘The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated’ (James 3:17). The opinionated person is intractable and impervious to any advice but his own. Just as there is to be no social aristocracy in the church, so there is to be no intellectual autocrat.” (John Murray, *Romans*, Vol. II, p. 137.

<sup>84</sup> Rom. 12:17 - evil for evil: Both words translate *kakos* ([2556](#)), used 48 times, 32 of those translated “evil.” There is that within fallen man which passionately desires a reverse sort of justice. If someone has done me wrong, then I demand that he get paid back exactly what he did to me. That would be justice, we think. The difficulty is that we are hopelessly biased. If we have ill-treated someone else, we do not wish for justice – that we should be ill-treated also. In a word, we are selfish. God, through Paul, forbids us to pay back evil with evil. We are to represent the nature of God, who is longsuffering, “not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). At the proper time, God will bring justice, if His mercy is first rejected. But in the meantime He offers mercy.

- D 2 Foresight – Plan to be good: Respect <sup>85</sup> what is right <sup>86</sup> in the sight of all men. 12:17b
- D 3 Lifestyle – Seek peace 12:18
  - E 1 The contingency: If possible, <sup>87</sup> so far as it depends on you,
  - E 2 The goal: be at peace with all men.<sup>88</sup>
- D 4 Revenge 12:19-20
  - E 1 Let God take revenge 12:19
    - G 1 The prohibition against taking one's own revenge: Never take your own revenge, <sup>89</sup> beloved,

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And so should we.

<sup>85</sup> Rom. 12:17 - respect: *pronoō* ([4306](#)) is difficult to translate. Literally it means “to know ahead of time” or “to foreknow.” It is used only here in Rom. 12:17, in 2 Cor. 8:21 (“for we have *regard* for what is honorable”), and in 1 Tim. 5:8 (“But if anyone does not *provide* for his own ... he has denied the faith”). The NASB in 1 Tim. 5:8 is the easiest of the three to understand the root idea. The head of a household must exercise foresight, organization, and effort to provide for the financial well-being of his dependents. The idea in Rom. 12:17 is this: Instead of retaliating with evil for evil done, we are to exercise planning and foresight to bring about good for others, not evil. The ESV has a better translation here, “give thought to do ....”

<sup>86</sup> Rom. 12:17 - what is right: This phrase translates the single word *kalos* ([2570](#)). *kalos* is a vanilla word for “good,” which is far and away its most common translation. In my view there is no reason why it should not be translated “good” here. *kalos* is used 100 times, and 79 of those times it is translated “good.” Why not here? It is directly contrasted with *kakos* ([2556](#)), a common word for evil. Instead of retaliating with *evil* against an evil-doer, we should “give thought to do” *good* to him. If “right” were the preferable translation here, we should have expected the word *dikaos* ([1342](#)). Nevertheless, “right” is sufficiently close that the thought is not obscured.

<sup>87</sup> Rom. 12:18 - if possible: *ei dunatos* ([1415](#)). The “if” (*ei*) assumes it is possible, that one has the ability; but the rest of the phrase, “so far as it depends on you,” admits that peace is a two-way street. Not all wish to be peaceful. The Christian is not to be the one preventing an amicable relationship.

<sup>88</sup> Rom. 12:18 - be at peace with all men: literally, “with all men be keeping peace” (*eireneuo*, [1514](#)). The emphasis is on all men, not just Christians, or not just nice pagans. *eireneuo* is used only three other times in the NT: Mark 9:50 – “Be at peace with one another.” 2 Cor. 13:11 – “Live in peace.” 1 Thess. 5:13 – “Live in peace with one another.”

<sup>89</sup> Rom. 12:19 - revenge: literally, “not yourselves taking revenge.” Taking revenge is *ekdikeo* ([1556](#)), a present participle with imperatival force. In Luke 13:3, 5, *ekdikeo* is translated as “give legal protection.” In 2 Cor. 10:6 Paul says, “we are ready to *punish* all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.” In Rev. 6:10, the martyrs cry out, “How long, O Lord ... will you refrain from judging and *avenging* our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” The instinct for revenge is a cry for justice. But we are not to exact justice ourselves. It is never *our* task to do so. That prerogative is God’s alone. Those who are so addressed are beloved of God. If God loves us, surely He will



- G 2     The command to yield to God's wrath: but leave room for the wrath of God,<sup>90</sup>
- G 3     The documented assurance: for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.<sup>91</sup>

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provide justice on our behalf at the right time!

<sup>90</sup> Rom. 12:19 - but leave room for the wrath *of God*: leave room, lit. "but give place to the wrath". "Give" (*didomi*, [1325](#)), 2 person plural imperative. "the wrath" (*te orge*, [3709](#)): It is understood that "the wrath" refers to the wrath of God. (*of God* does not appear in the Greek text, thus the italics. But the added words are a correct interpretative supply.) Here in 12:19 it refers to "the divine reaction against evil, bringing judgment and punishment both historically and in the future," meaning "*wrath, indignation*" (Friberg). Jesus experienced, in His then present time the emotions of *wrath* (translated *anger*), along with grief at the hard-heartedness of those opposed to His healing a man in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Mark 3:5), but no judgment ensued immediately. God's awful wrath was unleashed upon His people, Israel, in A.D. 70 for their rejection of His Anointed King, Jesus. But there is an eternally devastating wrath in the distant future that awaits every person who fails to submit to King Jesus: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the *wrath* of God abides on him" (John 3:36). This is the future, eternal wrath of God against unbelieving man, and it will be expressed in the [lake of fire and sulfur](#), which burns forever (Rev. 20:10, 14-15).

<sup>91</sup> Rom. 12:19 - "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay": These six words translate but three Hebrew words from Deut. 32:35. The text there reads, literally, "To Me [one word] vengeance and recompense [one word]." NASB accurately translates, "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution." The concept of "Vengeance is Mine" is repeated in Ps. 94:1. The phrase, "I will repay" translates the Heb. *shillēm* ([8005](#)) in Deut. 32:35. The Heb. word has three radicals (consonants) *sh* (*shin*), *l* (*lamedh*), *m* (*mem*). In certain contexts, the word carries the idea of agreement, or peace. We are familiar with another word that possesses the same three radicals, but with different vowel pointings – *shalom*. The idea in Deut. 32:35 is that any human (or angelic) sin (violation of God's standards) brings about disruption in God's peaceful, ordered universe. Thus, God's world is in a state of disagreement, imbalance, non-peace. That disruptive state arouses God's wrath. The resolution of that disruptive state through vengeance restores tranquility or peace to God. Because God is not only a God of wrath, but of mercy and love, He provided for the full appeasement of His wrath against sin by sending Jesus as a willing substitute for each of us. On the cross He bore all of God's wrath against all sin for all time. It is no wonder that Isaiah terms Jesus, the child to be born and the son to be given, the "prince of peace" (Isa. 9:6[5, Hb.]), and that the "good news" (gospel) about Jesus is the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15).

When I was a parent, I would punish, including, if necessary, spank my children for disobeying. I was wrathful at their disobedience, but the punishment restored some level of equanimity in the household. I was able to control my children because I was able to discipline them effectively. When I taught Jr. High and High School students for five years, I was unable to discipline them the same way I disciplined my own children. I battled internally with a rising level of wrath that went unresolved because I could not discipline them the way they needed to be disciplined. (Some of the students, frankly, needed a stout board wielded across their backsides!) Because of the rising tension within me, undissipated wrath at their evil and misbehavior, I finally resolved the problem by exiting the teaching profession and returning to pastoring. (My "students" in the pews, for the most part, exhibit respectful decorum.) God resolves His inner tension (wrath) against mankind (a) by permitting them to undergo the consequences of their rebellion (death or self-destruction), (b) by sending calamities and invading nations, [c] by sending His own Son to pay the death penalty for their rebellion, and (d) by permitting all who do not trust in His wrath-bearing Son to pay for their own misdeeds by spending eternity separated from Him in the [Lake of Fire](#) (Rev. 20:10-15). There will come a time when all evil will have been removed from God's universe, and when He will create [new Heavens](#) and a [new Earth](#) in which only righteousness will be present (2 Pet. 3:13). There will be no

## E 2 Repay evil with good 12:20

- G 1 The provision of food: “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM,”<sup>92</sup>
- G 2 The provision of drink: “AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK;
- G 3 The causing of shame and penitence: “FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD.”<sup>93</sup>

further disruption of either God’s equanimity or of ours who have submitted to His Son.

<sup>92</sup> Rom. 12:20 - if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink: This is a direct quote from Proverbs 25:21. The next line, referring to burning coals is a direct quote from Prov. 25:22a (on which, see the next note). “Clearly the point of this proverb is to return good for evil (cf. Matt. 5:40-46; Rom. 12:20)” (Thomas Constable, [Notes on Proverbs](#)).

In Matthew 5:38-48 Jesus lectured fairly extensively on returning good for evil: (1) The Biblical standard of justice in a court of law was “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” (Matt. 5:38, quoting Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). That is a just and fair standard in a court of law. (2) But on a personal level, people in Jesus’ kingdom are not to resist an evil person (Matt. 5:39a). (3) If someone slaps you on the right cheek, you are to turn the other (Matt. 5:39). (4) If anyone sues you for your shirt, let him have your cloak also (Matt. 5:40). (5) If a Roman soldier forces you to help carry his baggage for one mile, carry it for him another (Matt. 5:41). (6) Give to the one who wishes to borrow from you (Matt. 5:42). (7) Love your enemies and pray for them (Matt. 5:43-44). (8) Why? – and this is key – so that you may accurately represent the love of your Father in heaven, who causes His sun to shine on both evil people and good, and who sends rain upon both righteous and unrighteous people (Matt. 5:45). (9) Why else? – because even unrighteous people love those who love them! Despised tax collectors love those who love them, and despised (to the Jewish mind) Gentiles even greet their brothers! Surely you ought to have a higher standard of love than they, shouldn’t you? (Matt. 5:46-47). (10) The final standard is this: We who are believers in Christ are children of the Heavenly Father. We ought to be complete (the word *teleios* [5046] always carries the idea of completeness) in our love just as He is (Matt. 5:48)!

<sup>93</sup> Rom. 12:20 - heap burning coals upon his head: This phrase quotes exactly Prov. 25:22a. The coals on the head may refer to a ritual in Egypt in which a person showed his repentance by carrying a pan of burning charcoal on his head. Helping rather than cursing an enemy may cause him to be ashamed and penitent.” (John A. Witmer, *TBKC*, II, 490.) Commenting on the parent Scripture in Proverbs 25:21, [Constable](#) stated,

Evidently this clause alludes to an ancient custom. When a person’s fire went out at home, he or she would go to a neighbor and get some live coals to rekindle the fire. Carrying the coals in a pan on the head involved some danger and discomfort for the person carrying them, but they were an evidence of the neighbor’s love. Likewise the person who receives good in return for evil feels somewhat uncomfortable even though he receives a good gift. His discomfort arises over his guilt for having wronged his neighbor in the first place. So returning good for evil not only secures the blessing of God (v. 22b), it also convicts the wrongdoer of his ways (v. 22a) in a gentle way.

Paul, in his quotation of Proverbs 25:21-22, left out the last phrase of v. 22: He who feeds his enemy and give him water will heap burning coals on his head, “*and the LORD will reward you*” (emphasis mine). Paul’s decision not to quote that part of the verse does not obviate the principle. God always rewards those who honor Him.

## D 5 General policy: Defeat evil with good 12:21

E 1 The prohibition against allowing oneself to be controlled by evil: Do not be overcome by evil,<sup>94</sup>E 2 The command to control evil with good: but overcome evil with good.<sup>95</sup>**B 2 In the Believer's Relation to the State 13****C 1 The necessity of subjection to the state 13:1-7**D 1 The **command** to be in subjection: Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities.<sup>96</sup> 13:1a

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<sup>94</sup> Rom. 12:21 - Do not be overcome by evil: Literally, "Do not be being conquered by that which is evil." "Overcome" translates the present tense, passive voice, imperative mood of *nikao* (3528). *Nikao* means to win a victory over, to be a victor, to conquer ..." (Louw-Nida). Its corresponding noun, *nike* (3529), means *victory*. (Now perhaps you know what Nike footwear stands for!) *Nike* appears only once in Scripture, in 1 John 5:4, along with *nikao* (twice). Here is my translation: "For whatever is born of God conquers (*nikao*) the world; and this is the conquest (*nike*) – the one having conquered (*nikao*) the world – our faith!" Notice how *nikao* is properly translated twice in Revelation 6:2. Rom. 12:21a contains a command imposing an ongoing policy – we are commanded, as a matter of course, not to be being conquered by *that which is evil* (*kakos*, 2556, is neuter in gender). The Christian life is not a passive, easy life. It is a life of constant wariness, constant alertness, constant watchfulness, and constant effort in the power of the Spirit. Satan wants, above all, to conquer Christians. We are surrounded by the world, which wants to conquer us and squeeze us into its mold. Our own flesh is against us, because it desires to give in to the world and its allure. Satan desires to bring as much pressure against us as he can mount, and is quite happy to have people who are willfully or unwittingly in his kingdom carry water for him. But when they do us evil, we are forbidden either to retaliate or to become defeated, despondent, or discouraged.

That brings me to another point. The evil may perhaps be evil that does not even come to us at the hand of other humans. It may be sickness, calamity, misfortune, tragedy. It may be completely impersonal. It makes no difference. We are not to permit ourselves to be conquered by evil. We are not to become depressed, discouraged, defeated, or to feel that God has given up on us.

<sup>95</sup> Rom. 12:21 - but overcome evil with good: Rather than allowing ourselves to be conquered by impersonal evil, we are to take the offensive – rather we are commanded continually to be conquering, with that which is good – that which is evil!" "Overcome" (conquer), in the second half of the verse, is the second person singular imperative of *nikao* (3528). We are commanded to conquer and that, continually! We are not to conquer – with that which is evil – the evil. Rather we are to conquer – with that which is good – the evil! Good is an all-purpose, general word that translates the adjective *agathos* (18), used 102 times in the NT. Clearly *agathos* (18) and *kakos* (2556) are polar opposites. *Agathos* describes (1) good moral character (John 7:12); (2) the good performance of a faithful slave (Luke 19:17); (3) things that are good and beneficial, as good soil, of useful words; (4) or as a substantive for that which is morally good and right (Friberg). In summary, we are commanded not to let ourselves be conquered by that which is evil. Instead, with that which is good, we are commanded to be conquering that which is evil!

<sup>96</sup> Rom. 13:1 - Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities: One way not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good, is to submit to the government under which one resides. In many countries there are multiple layers of government to which one must be in subjection. In the United States, frequently, one

D 2 The **reasons** for subjection 13:1b, c

- E 1 All governmental authorities are from God: For there is no authority except from God,<sup>97</sup> 13:1b
- E 2 Existing governmental authorities have been pre-ordained by God: and those which exist are established by God.<sup>98</sup> 13:1c

must submit to his city government, county government, state government, and the federal government.

(1) *Every person* is to be in subjection. Being a Christian in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is no excuse for not submitting oneself to the earthly kingdom in which one resides. As Paul will tell us, submitting to the earthly kingdom is a way to submit to the heavenly King. “Every person” translates *pas* (3956) *psuche* (5590); *psuche* is most often translated “soul” (33X) or “souls” (14X); next “life” (36X) or “lives” (7X), etc. This is the only occasion in which NASB translates *psuche* as “person,” thrice as “persons.” We of course derive our English word *psyche* from this noun. In this context, “person” is a perfectly good translation.

(2) *be in subjection*: The third person singular present passive imperative of *hupotasso* (5293). Every person is constantly to be placed in subjection to the governing authorities. *Hupotasso* literally means “to place or arrange under.” In the passive, it means to be obedient. (Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon). According to Louw-Nida, it means “to bring something under the firm control of someone.” NASB most often translates with some form of the word “subject,” as here, less often as a form of the word “submit.” To pick out a sample of Paul’s varied employment of this word, he uses *hupotasso* to speak of (a) submission to the government (Rom. 13:1); (b) all things in subjection under Christ (Eph. 1:22); (c) mutual subjection of Christians to one another (Eph. 5:21); (d) the church in subjection to Christ (Eph. 5:24); and (e) the implied subjection of wives to their husbands in everything after the pattern of the church under Christ (Eph. 5:22, 24) (see the explicit statements in Col. 3:18 and Tit. 2:5). In other contexts, Jesus was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51); demons were subject to Jesus’ name (Luke 10:17); the creation was subjected to futility (Rom. 8:20); slaves are to be subject to their masters in everything (Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18); Christians are to submit to God while resisting the devil (James 4:7); and younger men are to submit to their elders (1 Pet. 5:5).

(3) *governing authorities*: *Governing* translates *huperecho* (5242), strictly speaking, “*hold above*; hence (1) of value *surpass, be better than, excel* (Php. 4:7); (2) of power *be in authority (over), be in control* (1 Pet. 2:13)” (Friberg). It could well be translated “higher.” Indeed, the KJV translates the two words “higher powers” in Rom. 13:1, while NASB, ESV, NIV, and NKJV all translate “governing authorities.” *Authorities* translates the plural of *exousia* (1849), which means the right, authority, or power to act. Without the word “governing” (*huperecho*), it would be difficult to know what Paul meant by “authorities” (*exousia*). But placing the two words together with the subsequent context makes it clear that Paul meant the authoritative governments. The implication is that governments have both the right and the power to control their citizenry. The stated goal of the government is to praise good (13:3-4) and to create a fear of reprisal for participating in evil (13:3-5).

<sup>97</sup> Rom. 13:1 - For there is no authority except from God: *For* translates *gar*, which indicates a causal connection. The reason that every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities is that there is no government that exists that does not come from God. God not only establishes governments generally; he installs individual rulers specifically! Remember that it is God who removes kings and raises up kings (Dan. 2:21). Even the most morally permissive democracy or the most brutal dictatorship is better than anarchy. There is no inherent conflict in obeying both God and human government. Jesus said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25).

<sup>98</sup> Rom. 13:1 - those which exist are established by God: Several principles may be derived: (1) God is in charge of founding new nations. (2) God is in charge of the overthrow of old nations and heads of state. (3) There is no government nor head of state, no matter how corrupt, that exists apart from the providential hand of God. (4) Even though nations or heads of state are corrupt, they still have a profound role to play in God’s overall purpose. (5)

D 3 The **implications** of non-subjection 13:2E 1 Resisting the government authority is resisting God's ordinance: Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; <sup>99</sup> 13:2a

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Even the most corrupt government is better than no government, which is anarchy.

<sup>99</sup> Rom. 13:2 - whoever resists authority: *Resists* translates *antitasso* (498), used only in the middle voice in the NT; strictly set in array against; as setting oneself against oppose, resist, be hostile toward (Acts 18:6)" Friberg. It is used 5X in the NT: Acts 18:6 ("they *resisted* and blasphemed"; Rom. 13:2; James 4:6 ("God *is opposed* to the proud"); (5:6 ("the righteous man ... does not *resist* you"); 1 Pet. 5:5 ("God *is opposed* to the proud").

*has opposed*: *anthistemi* (436) is a synonym of *antitasso* (498). If you *resist* (*antitasso*) the human authority (government), you have *opposed* (*anthistemi*) God. It is our Christian duty to cooperate with and submit to the secular government. Being a good Christian does not justify civil disobedience. The only circumstances under which we can justify civil disobedience are (a) if the government asks us to do something that God forbids us to do or (b) if the government forbids us from doing something that God commands us to do. But in all cases, we are to offer no physical resistance to the government. If we violate, on Biblical grounds, the decrees of the government, we cannot overthrow the government or resist it, but we must take the punishment the government offers us. Two cases illustrate this point:

(1) The government of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, decreed that all citizens should worship and bow down to the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected under pain of death. Daniel's three friends, Azariah, Mishael, and Hananiah, refused to obey the government's edict. Their lot, then, as those who participated in civil disobedience, was to be thrown into the fiery furnace. Their answer was remarkable. The three prisoners replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (Dan. 3:1-18). And of course, they were thrown into the fire. And God, in His sovereign mercy, elected to rescue them.

(2) In another instance, Peter and John healed a congenitally lame man at the temple. They took the occasion to teach the people in the temple about Jesus (Acts 3). While they were speaking, the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees were greatly disturbed that the apostles were teaching in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They arrested them, and held a hearing the next day. They ordered Peter and John "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus." Peter and John replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:1-20). As the narrative reveals, they were released and continued to teach. Within a short amount of time all the apostles were apprehended and imprisoned because the priests and the Sadducees were jealous of the apostles' increasing success and popularity. The Jewish Supreme Court, the Council, interrogated the apostles and reminded them of their previous prohibition against teaching in Jesus name, which restriction the apostles had flaunted. Again, Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:17-29). The Council eventually flogged them before releasing them. (Acts 5:33-40). Ultimately the Apostle James paid with his life (Acts 12:1-2), and Peter almost did also (Acts 12:3-11). My point is that in each case believers felt obliged to partake of civil disobedience in obedience to God, they were prepared to pay the consequences the government imposed for that disobedience.

John MacArthur, in his commentary on Rom. 13, mentions other instances of justifiable civil disobedience: the Hebrew midwives' refusal to murder Hebrew baby boys (Ex. 1:15-21); the refusal of Daniel and his three fellow exiles to defile themselves with the King's diet (Dan. 1:8-20); and Daniel's refusal to quit praying to God in response to the King's ill-advised decree (Dan. 6). MacArthur, in the same volume, wrote of the following incident:

Some years ago, the tax department of the state of California issued a broadly-worded form that required all tax-exempt organizations, including churches, to attest that they did not and would not engage in political



E 2 Those who resist receive judgment: and they who have opposed will receive condemnation<sup>100</sup> upon themselves. 13:2b

D 4 The **motivation** for subjection 13:3-7

E 1 The fear of wrathful judgment 13:3-5a

G 1 Planned avoidance of fear 13:3-4a

H 1 Know the basis of the government's fear-

activities. A number of local congregations arched their backs, as it were, and refused to sign the affidavit, which resulted in their buildings being boarded up by state officials. Although he had no association with those churches and was not asked by them to intervene, a prominent Christian attorney talked with state officials on the churches' behalf. He explained that a Christian's conscience sometimes requires him to take certain positions on moral issues that relate to civil laws, but that those positions come from religious convictions that are based on Scripture, not on political ideology. Appreciating that explanation, the state officials reworded the form in a way that better protected religious rights. Conflicts do not, of course, always work out that favorably, but churches and individual believers should make every effort to explain carefully and respectfully their reasons for wanting a civil law or mandate to be changed that they believe would force them to disobey God.

As our American government increases its opposition to God and Christ, more and more Christians and churches will be forced to make tough decisions in the decades that lie ahead. A Christian Canadian pastor, Stephen Boissoin, for example, was found guilty of committing a "hate crime" by Alberta's Human Rights and Citizenship Commission in 2002 because of his views on homosexuality. Boissoin was ordered to pay \$7,000, to apologize publicly to Darren Lund, the homosexual activist who made the claim, and was banned from publicly expressing his views on homosexuality for the remainder of his life. Providentially, in December of 2009, Justice Earl Wilson overturned the Commission's decision. That decision, however, did not retrieve Boissoin's legal fees or his seven years of emotional duress. Moreover, the law remains on the books. (See [Canadian pastor cleared of 'hate crime' after 7 years](#).) This case represents only a small indicator of the persecution that awaits Christians in North America in the future.

*the ordinance of God:* *Ordinance* translates the noun *diatage* (2996), derived from the verb *diatasso* (2999). It means "that which has been specifically ordered or commanded" (Louw-Nida), in this case, ordered or commanded by God.

From a pragmatic point of view, I have often wondered what I would have done had I lived in the colonies of North America in the 1770's. I believe that, in obedience to God's Word, I may have had difficulty in shouldering a gun to fight against the British in the Revolutionary War. On the other hand, just as there are layered levels of authority in our present country, so there were then. There was the British crown, and then there were the colonial governments. What would I do today if my state, which includes my county and my city, were to secede from what was perceived to be a tyrannical U. S. Government? There are no easy answers!

<sup>100</sup> Rom. 13:2 - condemnation: The Grk. word is *krima* (2917), which can mean (1) "an administrative decree [as] the result of *krino*" (2919)," to judge or pass judgment: "*judgment, verdict, sentence* (Luke 24:20); often in an unfavorable sense *condemnation, punishment* (2 Pet. 2:3); (2) as the function of a judge *authority to judge, judgment, judging* (Rev. 20:4); (3) as a legal action or process *lawsuit* (1 Cor. 6:7) (Friberg). Here the judgment or condemnation reaped is the judgment of the secular government as the agent of God.

principle 13:3a

J 1 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior,

J 2 but for evil.<sup>101</sup>

H 2 Co-operate with the government's fear-principle 13:3b

J 1 Do you want to have no fear of authority? <sup>102</sup>

J 2 Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

H 3 Know the significance of the state's fear-principle: for it is a minister of God to you for good.<sup>103</sup> 13:4a

G 2 Defiant invitation of fear 13:4b-d

H 1 The creation of fear - practicing evil: But if you do what is evil, be afraid; 13:4b

H 2 The instrument of fear - capital punishment: for it does not bear the sword <sup>104</sup> for nothing;

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<sup>101</sup> Rom. 13:3 - good behavior, but for evil: Literally, "Rulers are not a fear to the good work but to the evil."

<sup>102</sup> Rom. 13:3 - no fear of authority: He who consistently drives the speed limit has no fear of a Highway Patrol vehicle he encounters. He who deliberately exceeds the speed limit is always looking, apprehensively, for patrol cars.

<sup>103</sup> Rom. 13:4 - good: The government authority is a servant of God to you to encourage good.

<sup>104</sup> Rom. 13:4 - the sword: The purpose of a sword is to kill people. God has given human governments the authority to protect its citizenry by prosecuting criminals with lethal force. Police have the right to kill offenders if the situation warrants such action. Governments have not only the right, but the responsibility of exercising capital punishment for capital crimes. Long ago, God decreed, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:6). Government's use of the sword also authorizes it to wage war, if necessary, to protect its citizenry. Greg Boyd's thesis, that there is no such thing as a defensible war, is, in my judgment, indefensible from a Biblical point of view (see Greg Boyd, [\*The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church\*](#)). Boyd makes the mistake that pacifists make – he confuses God's directive for personal action ("turning the other cheek" – Matt. 5:39) with His prescription for a government's maintaining law and order via the sword (Rom. 13:1-5). If God authorizes the government to use the sword, then Christians can serve on the police force or in the military without fear they are violating God's moral standards.

13:4c

H 3 The function of the government authority in fear -- wrath: for it is a minister of God, an avenger <sup>105</sup> who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. 13:4d

G 3 Obligatory conclusion -- "Out of fear, be subject to avoid wrath.": Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, 13:5a

E 2 The maintenance of a clear conscience 13:6b-7

G 1 The statement of a clear conscience as a valid motivation for submitting to the government authority: but also for conscience' sake. 13:5b

G 2 The implications of maintaining a clear conscience 13:6-7

H 1 The payment of taxes 13:6

J 1 Payment commanded: For because of this you also pay taxes, 13:6a

J 2 Payment explained 13:6b

K 1 The government authority is a priestly servant of God: for rulers are servants of God, <sup>106</sup>

K 2 The government authority constantly attempts as God's agent to encourage good for God and avenge evil for God:

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<sup>105</sup> Rom. 13:4 - avenger: The government authority is God's servant to avenge God's wrath against the one practicing evil.

<sup>106</sup> Rom. 13:6 - For rulers are servants of God: There is reassurance for a Christian who is paying his taxes that his payment of taxes is more like paying a tithe to God which God in turn uses to support the government to keep law and order in our society. Christians cannot guarantee that any government to which they pay taxes will use the money responsibly in every case. What we can guarantee is that God is using our money to help this government keep law and order. We don't want an intrusive, inefficient, immoral government, which is increasingly what we have in America. But consider the alternative. Would we rather have anarchy?



devoting themselves to this  
very thing.

H 2     Rendering to all their dues: Render to all  
          what is due them: 13:7

J 1     Personal/property tax: tax to whom  
          tax is due;

J 2     Business/sales tax: custom to whom  
          custom;

J 3     Fear: fear to whom fear;

J 4     Honor/Respect: honor to whom  
          honor.

**C 2     The Place of Love in Subjection to the State 13:8-10**

D 1     The **command** – to be indebted to no one in any area: Owe nothing  
          to anyone 13:8a

D 2     The **exception** – One always owes love: except to love one another;  
          13:8b

D 3     The **reason** – Love for others fulfills legal requirements 13:8c-10

E 1     The statement of fulfillment: for he who loves his neighbor  
          has fulfilled the law. 13:8c

E 2     The demonstration of fulfillment 13:9

G 1     Any commandment 13:9a, cf. Ex. 20:13-15,17

H 1     For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT  
          ADULTERY,

H 2     “YOU SHALL NOT MURDER,

H 3     “YOU SHALL NOT STEAL,

H 4     “YOU SHALL NOT COVET,”

G 2     Is summarized under loving one's neighbor 13:9b,  
          cf. Lev. 19:18

H 1 and if there is any other commandment,

H 2 it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

E 3 The explanation of fulfillment 13:10

G 1 Love never works evil to one's neighbor: Love does no wrong to a neighbor; 13:10a

G 2 So love is fulfillment of law: therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. 13:10b

### C 3 The Urgency of Subjection to the State 13:11-14

D 1 Wakeful awareness of the near day of final salvation urged 13:11

E 1 The alarm from sleep: Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep;

E 2 The need for alertness: for now salvation <sup>107</sup> is nearer to us than when we believed.

D 2 Appropriate action commanded in light of the coming dawn 13:12

E 1 The assessment of time 13:12a

G 1 The night is almost gone,

G 2 and the day is near.

E 2 The call to action 13:12b

G 1 **Cast off** works of darkness: Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness 13:12

G 2 **Put on** weapons of light: and put on the armor of light. 13:12

D 3 Appropriate day-time action specified: Let us behave properly as in the day, 13:13-14

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<sup>107</sup> Rom. 13:11 - salvation: NASB note: Or *our salvation is nearer than when*

E 1 **Negatively:** not drunken, orgiastic strife: 13:13

G 1 not in carousing and drunkenness,

G 2 not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality,

G 3 not in strife and jealousy.

E 2 **Positively:** put on Jesus, making no loophole for fleshly lusts 13:14

G 1 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,

G 2 and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

### **B 3 In Relation to Debatable Matters 14:1 - 15:13**

#### **C 1 The Principle of Non-Judgmental Acceptance 14:1-13a <sup>108</sup>**

D 1 The command of mutual acceptance 14:1-3a

E 1 The command of acceptance of the weaker brother 14:1

G 1 The command: Now accept the one who is weak in faith,<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Rom. 14:1-13a Subtitle – The Principle of Non-Judgmental Acceptance: There is a great temptation for us to think that the views at which we personally have arrived regarding clothing, diet, religious observances, music, possessions, leisure time, and a host of other areas, are the only correct ones. Those who disagree with us are either too liberal (i.e. not spiritual enough) or too conservative (i.e., unnecessarily legalistic). This passage teaches us that in certain debatable areas, there is room for differences of opinion and Christian service. People can be on both sides of an issue and still be serving Christ. Our job is to be fully convinced in our own minds and not to judge someone we think too liberal, nor to regard contemptuously someone we think too legalistic. Our job is to accept one another, because God has accepted us. We will each, one day, have to give an account to Him. Therefore, we ought not judge one another!

<sup>109</sup> Rom. 14:1 - accept the one who is weak in faith: better, weak in the faith (the article *ton* is present in the text). The point is that he is weak in the area of revealed truth, known as “the faith”. In this case, he has scruples against eating meat that had presumably been offered to idols previously. The doctrinally correct view is given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. It is this: There is no valid idol in the world, and there is only one true God, the Father, Maker of heaven and earth, “from whom are all things and we exist for Him.” And there is only one Master – Jesus Christ, by whom all things came into existence, and through whom we exist. Therefore any meat is created by the one true God and can be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:3-5). The difficulty is, that some in the church in Corinth (and presumably in Rome) did not have this knowledge (1 Cor. 8:7). So the weaker brother was a vegetarian because the meat, in his view, had been defiled by having been offered to idols. Paul’s opening command here is to accept this

- G 2 The prohibition: but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.
- E 2 The area of debate 14:2
  - G 1 The tolerant conscience: One man has faith that he may eat all things,
  - G 2 The restrictive conscience: but he who is weak eats vegetables only.<sup>110</sup>
- E 3 The command to refrain from mutual judgment 14:3a
  - G 1 The command to the tolerant: Let not him who eats regard with contempt<sup>111</sup> him who does not eat,
  - G 2 The command to the restrictive: and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats,<sup>112</sup>
- D 2 The reasons for mutual acceptance 14:3b-12
  - E 1 Because God has accepted the (tolerant) brother: for God has accepted him.<sup>113</sup> 14:3b

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brother who is weak in the faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his (doctrinally unenlightened) views.

<sup>110</sup> Rom. 14:2 - eats vegetables only: The brother who was weak in the faith eschewed meat not for dietary reasons nor for animal-rights reasons, but because it had come to the meat market via the idol temple. His scruples would not, for that reason, ever allow him to eat meat. Consequently, he ate only vegetables.

<sup>111</sup> Rom. 14:3 - regard with contempt him who does not eat: The tendency on the part of the enlightened believer (the one who believes he can eat all things) is to regard with contempt the believer who is weighed down by an over-active conscience.

<sup>112</sup> Rom. 14:3 - judge him who eats: The tendency on the part of the brother who is weaker in the faith is to stand in judgment on the brother who eats. Ironically, the brother who is weaker in the faith actually thinks he is more spiritual because he does not indulge in what he considers to be a sinful practice. But the message from God through Paul is that he is not to judge the brother who believes he can eat anything. The truth is that we need to leave room for the more liberated Christian brother and the more scrupulous Christian brother.

<sup>113</sup> Rom. 14:3 - for God has accepted him: The closest antecedent is the stronger brother, "him who eats." However, by application, God has accepted both the stronger and the weaker brother. But as the statement reads, the specific referent of Paul is the stronger brother, whom God has accepted. If God has accepted the stronger brother, it would have been scandalous for the weaker brother *not* to accept him!

E 2 Because we are not responsible to judge another's servant  
14:4-5

G 1 The analogy of the servant 14:4a

H 1 Who are you to judge the servant of  
another?<sup>114</sup>

H 2 To his own master he stands or falls;

G 2 The acceptability of each servant 14:4b

H 1 and stand he will,<sup>115</sup>

H 2 for the Lord is able to make him stand.

G 3 The necessity of individual decision 14:5

H 1 The restrictive view of one: One man  
regards<sup>116</sup> one day above another,

H 2 The tolerant view of another: Another  
regards every day alike.

H 3 The necessity: Let each man be fully  
convinced in his own mind.

E 3 Because each Christian lives his life for the Lord's benefit

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<sup>114</sup> Rom. 14:4 - who are you to judge the servant of another? It is sheer audacity for someone to judge the household servant of another. In modern terms, if I owned a business and employed workers, and you owned a business and employed workers, what right would I have to go to one of your employees and start lecturing him on how poorly he was serving you? Or worse yet, what right would I have to fire him? You are his employer, and you only have the right to correct him. By the same token, the brother who scrupulously avoids meat and eats only vegetables, has no right to stand in judgment on the liberated brother who eats meat. Why? Because the meat-eating brother is a servant of Jesus, not the servant of the vegetarian. We have no right to judge Jesus' servant!

<sup>115</sup> Rom. 14:4 - stand he will: The brother stronger in the faith will indeed stand successfully before Jesus, for the Lord, Jesus, is able to make him stand. In the context, it seems that the one more likely to stand in judgment is the Christian with the more scrupulous conscience.

<sup>116</sup> Rom. 14:5 - one man regards: Literally, the word is judges (*krino*, 2919) just as in 14:3, 4. Whereas the one who does *not* eat is *not* to judge (*krino*) the one who does eat (14:3), and whereas he has not right "to judge (*krino*) the servant of another", a Christian does have not only the right, but the responsibility judge whether he will regard one day above another or to regard every day alike (14:5). We have no right to judge *people*, but we have an obligation to judge our personal *policy*. "Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5).

14:6-9

G 1 Activities and non-activities are done for the Lord  
14:6

H 1 Those who participate for Christ's sake

J 1 The restrictive observer of a "holy"  
day: He who observes the day,  
observes it for the Lord,

J 2 The tolerant eater of food

K 1 His tolerant participation: and  
he who eats,

K 2 His spiritual motive: does so  
for the Lord,

K 3 The sign of his service: for he  
gives thanks to God;<sup>117</sup>

H 2 Those who abstain for Christ's sake

J 1 The conservative abstainer from food:  
and he who eats not,

J 2 His spiritual motive: for the Lord he  
does not eat,

J 3 The sign of his service: and gives  
thanks to God.

G 2 Life and death are for the Lord 14:7-9

H 1 The denial of life or death as being for one's  
private self 14:7

J 1 For not one of us lives for himself,

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<sup>117</sup> Rom. 14:6 - he gives thanks to God: Elsewhere Paul wrote to Timothy that there are "foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:3-5). Those who advocate abstaining from these foods are thus in error.

- J 2 and not one dies for himself;
  - H 2 The affirmation of life and death for the Lord 14:8
    - J 1 for if we live, we live for the Lord,
    - J 2 or if we die, we die for the Lord;
    - J 3 The conclusion: therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
  - H 3 The reason for Christ's death and resurrection: to reign as Lord over the dead and the living 14:9
    - J 1 For to this end Christ died and lived again,
    - J 2 that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.<sup>118</sup>
- E 4 Because each brother will be judged of God 14:10-12
  - G 1 The unreasonableness of judging one another 14:10a
    - H 1 The warning to the Christian with a restrictive conscience: But you, why do you judge your brother?
    - H 2 The warning to the Christian with a tolerant conscience: Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt?
  - G 2 The reality of universal judgment by God: For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. 14:10b
  - G 3 The Scriptural documentation of universal judgment: For it is written, 14:11 (cf. Isa. 45:23; 49:18)

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<sup>118</sup> Rom. 14:9 - Lord both of the dead and the living: Jesus is Lord (Master) over all who are live. And He will judge all who die. Therefore, through His death and resurrection, He is Master over every person, regardless of whether he happens to be alive or dead.

H 1 “As I live, says the Lord; every knee shall bow to Me,

H 2 “and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

G 4 The conclusion – universal accountability: So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. 14:12

D 3 The concluding command: "Stop judging one another." Therefore let us not judge <sup>119</sup> one another anymore, 14:13a

## C 2 The principle of not being a stumbling block 14:13b-23

D 1 The command to avoid being a stumbling block or an offence 14:13b-14

E 1 The command stated: but rather determine <sup>120</sup> this – not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. 14:13b

E 2 The inherent amorality of things in themselves: I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself;<sup>121</sup> 14:14a

E 3 The reality of the uncleanness of things in the mind of the beholder: but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.<sup>122</sup> 14:14b

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<sup>119</sup> Rom. 14:13 - let us not judge one another anymore: With the exception of the two uses in 14:5 translated *regards*, Paul has been using the word judge (*krino*, [2919](#)) with reference to the weaker brother not judging the stronger brother (14:3, 4, 10). But here he uses the word reciprocally – “let us not judge one another anymore.” So in general terms, the principle of not judging can be applied both to the weaker brother not judging the stronger and to the stronger brother not judging the weaker.

<sup>120</sup> Rom. 14:13 - rather determine this: Christians, whether strong or weak in the faith, are not to judge (*krino*, [2919](#)) one another, but they are to judge (*krino*, [2919](#)) this – not to put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother's way.

<sup>121</sup> Rom. 14:14 - nothing is unclean in itself: Paul is convinced, apparently through revelation received directly from Jesus, that there is no such thing as food that is morally inappropriate to eat in and of itself. That is the correct, and therefore preferred doctrinal position (see 1 Timothy 4:3-5).

<sup>122</sup> Rom. 14:14 - but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean: Notwithstanding the correct doctrinal position, if another (can we say, incorrectly instructed?) believer thinks that meat offered to idols is unclean and morally inappropriate to eat, to him, that perception becomes his reality, and he must abide by his perception,



## D 2 The command expanded 14:15-23

## E 1 Don't destroy a brother by your food 14:15

## G 1 Because that is not loving him 14:15a

H 1 The unfeeling use of liberty: For if because of food your brother is hurt,<sup>123</sup>H 2 The absence of love in one's lifestyle: you are no longer walking according to love.<sup>124</sup>

## G 2 Because Christ died for him 14:15b

H 1 The prohibition: Do not destroy with your food

H 2 The reason: him for whom Christ died.<sup>125</sup>

## E 2 Don't let your good be ill-spoken of 14:16-18

G 1 The command stated: Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil,<sup>126</sup> 14:16

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however imprecise it might be.

<sup>123</sup> Rom. 14:15 - if because of food your brother is hurt: *lupeo* (3076) 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular passive - he is distressed or grieved or caused sorrow because of my persistence (in this case) of eating meat offered to idols when I know it is extremely problematic for him.

<sup>124</sup> Rom. 14:15 - you are not walking according to love: The Christian life is not about personal fulfillment, but about exhibiting love to one another. Flaunting my right to eat meat offered to idols to the weaker brother's detriment is acting selfishly, not out of love.

<sup>125</sup> Rom. 14:15 - do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died: This weaker brother is one for whom Christ died. Jesus sacrificed His life to deliver Him from death and judgment. If Jesus made that extreme sacrifice for my weaker brother, what right do I have to destroy his spiritual equilibrium by eating meat that I know is morally clean but that he thinks is morally repugnant?

<sup>126</sup> Rom. 14:16 - do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil: It is possible for a Christian to be completely in the right as far as God is concerned, and yet be handling his position poorly, to the detriment of a weaker brother. In this case, it is possible for a knowledgeable Christian to be able to eat meat that has been offered to idols without violating his conscience and without offending God. However, if what is right for him is viewed by a weaker brother as something sinful, it becomes wrong because it causes distress to the weaker brother. We are not to permit what is good to us be spoken of as evil.

## G 2 The reasons given 14:17-18

H 1 Because the kingdom of God does not consist in materialism, but in spiritual character 14:17

J 1 What the kingdom of God is not: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,<sup>127</sup>

J 2 What the kingdom of God is: but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.<sup>128</sup>

H 2 Because this is serving Christ: For he who in this way serves Christ 14:18

J 1 This pleases God: is acceptable to God 14:18a

J 2 This gains approval from men: and approved by men 14:18b

E 3 Pursue things which create peace and build one another up: So then let us pursue the things 14:19

G 1 which make for peace

G 2 and the building up of one another.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Rom. 14:17 - the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking: What is the essence of the kingdom of God? It is not material qualities, but spiritual qualities. Paul is not saying that eating and drinking never take place in the kingdom of God. Of course they do. If not, why is there a river of life-giving water and a tree of life that bears a different fruit each month in New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1-2)? What he is saying is that spiritual qualities take precedence over material qualities in the kingdom of God. His point is that, for the sake of promoting righteousness and peace and joy, I must be willing to give up eating meat that causes my brother to stumble.

<sup>128</sup> Rom. 14:17 - righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit: The eternal intangibles of moral and spiritual rectitude, of peace, and of Spirit-filled joy are what make the kingdom of God unique, good, beneficial, and eternally good. One is reminded of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and Paul's comment that there are three eternal verities – faith, hope and love, the greatest being love (1 Cor. 13:13).

<sup>129</sup> Rom. 14:19 - let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another: Christians should make it our goal to promote peace in the body of Christ. And we should make it our goal to do things that will build other Christians up, not tear them down. That means at times we will have to give up our rights as liberated Christians to do things that do not offend us, but that do offend a Christian with a more restrictive conscience.

E 4 Don't undo God's work for the sake of food 14:20-21

G 1 The command stated: Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food.<sup>130</sup> 14:20a

G 2 The command explained – Things clean of themselves become evil to the one causing another to stumble 14:20b

H 1 All things indeed are clean,<sup>131</sup>

H 2 but they are evil <sup>132</sup> for the man who eats and gives offense.

G 3 The command applied: "Don't do anything that causes a brother to stumble." 14:21

H 1 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine,

H 2 or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.<sup>133</sup>

E 5 Don't flaunt your faith in debatable matters – keep it between yourself and God 14:22-23

G 1 The command: The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God.<sup>134</sup> 14:22a

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<sup>130</sup> Rom. 14:20 - do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. This is a specific application of the principle that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but rather righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

<sup>131</sup> Rom. 14:20 - all things indeed are clean: Paul here reaffirms the truth that Christians have the moral and spiritual right before God to eat any kind of food, even meat offered to idols.

<sup>132</sup> Rom. 14:20 - but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense: Even though all foods (including meat offered to idols) are permissible, a man who eats with a guilty conscience the meat that has been offered to idols, that meat is an evil thing. He is offending God in eating because he is violating his conscience.

<sup>133</sup> Rom. 14:21 - it is good not ... to do anything by which your brother stumbles: Even though I have the right before God to eat or drink anything, it is a good thing if I voluntarily give up that right in order to avoid causing a Christian brother to stumble in his walk with God.

<sup>134</sup> Rom. 14:22 - the faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God: In other words, if I believe (and rightly so) that I can eat meat offered to idols, I can do so privately in my own home. But I should not become a "meat evangelist," flaunting my right before Christians with a more restrictive conscience, or trying to convert them

## G 2 The results 14:22b-23

H 1 The one not judging himself in what he allows is happy: Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.<sup>135</sup>  
14:22b

H 2 The one who doubts has been condemned:  
But he who doubts is condemned if he eats,<sup>136</sup>  
14:23

J 1 Because he is unable to believe:  
because his eating is not from faith;<sup>137</sup>

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to my point of view.

<sup>135</sup> Rom. 14:22 - Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves: Whatever we do, we must have a clear conscience before God. If I am participating in some activity, but I have this nagging doubt that it is not really right, I am in the wrong. My conscience, even if improperly programmed, condemns me. But I can be filled with joy if I participate in something with a clear conscience. Perhaps a personal illustration is in order here.

I grew up in a very conservative Christian home. I was taught that it was wrong to smoke cigarettes, use chewing tobacco, drink any alcohol, gamble, dance, go to the movie theater, or participate in card games with traditional playing cards. When we argued with Mom (she seemed to be the enforcer) that there were some good movies, she responded, "But someone might see you go into a theater and then justify his going to a theater to watch a bad movie." So I cooperated and didn't go.

I went to a Bible college that forbade attending movies in a theater. That rule was problematic for some of the students, but not for me – I was used to it. But one time, there was an exception. There was a Billy Graham movie that showed in local movie theaters. And the faculty encouraged us to attend! I thought that was a betrayal of policy and refused to go. But I learned my lesson: If there is one good movie to attend, there is probably another.

After I graduated from Bible College, I attended Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. I was exposed to guys from all over the nation studying to be ministers and Bible teachers. I observed they loved Jesus, but that they didn't have the same conservative scruples that I did. By that time I was married and out from under the jurisdiction of both my parents and the Bible College I had attended. So one time, I decided to go see a movie. The first movie I ever watched in a movie theater was 2001: A Space Odyssey. My wife doesn't like science fiction movies, so I went all by myself. And I went with a clear conscience. And enjoyed every minute of it! It was an exhilarating experience!

My point here is that having a clear conscience is critical. I didn't have a clear conscience to go to the Billy Graham movie in Bible College days. But later, I did have a clear conscience to go to 2001: A Space Odyssey. God's standards didn't change. My conscience had been properly educated.

<sup>136</sup> Rom. 14:23 - he who doubts is condemned if he eats: Paul's point here is not that it is wrong to eat meat offered to idols. Rather his point is that if I *think* it is wrong to eat meat offered to idols, and I eat anyway, I have a guilty conscience and my conscience condemns me. Violating one's conscience is sin.

<sup>137</sup> Rom. 14:23 - because his eating is not from faith: Why is it wrong to violate my conscience? Because I do not have faith before God that what I am doing is right. If I do something out of the energy of my flesh, but I am not acting in faith that it is right, I am sinning. Sometimes we may be believing something that is not quite right theologically. But God has constructed our conscience in such a way that we are never excused for violating our

14:23a

J 2 The absence of faith is sin: and whatever is not from faith is sin.<sup>138</sup>  
14:23b

### C 3 The principle of living for others 15:1-6

D 1 The principle stated 15:1-2

E 1 The strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong: Now we who are strong<sup>139</sup> ought to bear the weaknesses<sup>140</sup> of those without strength<sup>141</sup> 15:1a

E 2 The strong ought not to live to please themselves: and not just please ourselves.<sup>142</sup> 15:1b

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conscience for any reason at all.

<sup>138</sup> Rom. 14:23 - whatever is not from faith is sin: Faith is an indispensable coin in the Christian life. We cannot please God without faith (Heb. 11:6); we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10); and we walk (live) by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). If we are not trusting God at any moment, even trusting Him that what we are doing is right, we are sinning.

<sup>139</sup> Rom. 15:1 - we who are strong: For the first time, Paul identifies the believer who has the freedom to eat meat offered to idols and who observes all days as holy days, and thus feels no compulsion to treat one day as more holy than another – he calls him “strong” (from *dunatos*, [1415](#), one who possesses strength, power, or might). Paul includes himself as being one of the strong.

<sup>140</sup> Rom. 15:1 - weaknesses: plural adjective of *asthenema*, [771](#), meaning weaknesses or infirmities. This is the only time this word is used in the NT. But twice, in Rom. 14:1 and 2, Paul used the verb weak (*asthuneo*, [770](#)), obviously related to *asthenema* ([771](#)). In 14:1 Paul wrote that the church was to “accept the one who is weak (*asthuneo*, 770) in the faith” (lit. translation); and in 14:2 he wrote “he who is weak eats vegetables only”. So the weaknesses (*asthenema*, [771](#)) that “we, the strong” are to bear would include, among other things, eating meat offered to idols and special holy days. By that, we the strong are urged, where necessary for the sake of “those without strength”, to forego eating meat (that has been offered to idols) and to observe a particular day as being holy even though we believe all days are equally holy.

<sup>141</sup> Rom. 15:1 - those without strength: Instead of referring to “the weak” (*asthenes*, [772](#)) in contrast to “the strong” (*dunatos*, [1415](#)), Paul referred to those “without strength” (*adunatos*, [102](#)), the opposite of “the strong” (*dunatos*, [1415](#)).

<sup>142</sup> Rom. 15:1 - and not just please ourselves: Most people, and too many Christians, are merely intent on pleasing themselves. That was not the motivation of Jesus when He came into this world, and it cannot be our own. Jesus expressed His standard for us and His own drive in these terms, “...whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for all” (Mark 10:43-45). Commenting on this last

- E 3 Each ought to please his neighbor for building up: Let each of us please his neighbor 15:2
  - G 1 for his good,
  - G 2 to his edification.
- D 2 The principle modeled 15:3-6
  - E 1 Christ the example 15:3 (cf. Psalm 69:9) <sup>143</sup>
    - G 1 For even Christ did not please Himself;
    - G 2 but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL UPON ME.”
  - E 2 The use of the O.T. Scriptures justified 15:4-6
    - G 1 As providing hope through patience and comfort 15:4
      - H 1 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction,
      - H 2 that . . . (3) we might have hope.
        - J 1 (1) through perseverance
        - J 2 (2) and the encouragement of the Scriptures
    - G 2 As a basis for Paul's prayer for the Romans 15:5-6

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phrase of 15:1, John Witmer (Romans, [\*The Bible Knowledge Commentary \[TBKC\]\*](#)) wrote, “This last clause is the key; a Christian should not be self-centered, but should be concerned about the spiritual welfare of others.”

<sup>143</sup> Rom. 15:3 - Psalm 69:9: In Romans 15:3 Paul quoted from a Messianic psalm which, though written by David about himself, also looked ahead to the future Messiah. In Psalm 69:8 David said he was “estranged from my brothers and an alien to my mother’s sons.” This was prophetic also of the Messiah. In Psalm 69:9 The source of their embarrassment about him and their reproach of him was his total absorption with God’s House and God’s Cause. This was true both of David and of Jesus. Zeal for God’s House: “For zeal for Your house has consumed me;” Zeal for God’s Cause: “And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.” In the case of David, one is reminded of His own wife Michal’s reproach of David when he brought up the ark of the covenant to its residence in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:16-23). In the case of Jesus, His own brothers mocked him (John 7:3-5), and on the cross the leaders and the people of Israel mocked Him (Matt. 27:41; Mark 15:31).

## H 1 For unity in Christ 15:5

## J 1 The gifts of God: Now may the God

K 1 who gives perseverance

K 2 and encouragement

J 2 The request of God: grant you to be of the same mind with one another <sup>144</sup> according to Christ Jesus;

## H 2 For united glorification of God the Father 15:6

## J 1 The accompaniments: that

K 1 with one accord you may

K 2 with one voice

J 2 The goal: glorify the God and Father<sup>145</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## C 4 The principle of Jew and Gentile accepting one another for the glory of God 15:7-13

D 1 The command of mutual acceptance: Therefore, accept one another,<sup>146</sup> 15:7a

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<sup>144</sup> Rom. 15:5 - same mind with one another: Paul's over-riding concern in the "Culture Wars" of the early church was unity. The believers needed to be of the same mind. One of Jesus' ongoing concerns for His followers in His "High-Priestly Prayer" (John 17) was "that they may be one even as We are" (John 17:11, 21).

<sup>145</sup> Rom. 15:6 - glorify the God and Father: The ultimate aim of Church unity is the united glorification of God the Father. None of us lives for himself. Our destiny is to exist for the praise of His Glory (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). Let us help fulfill that destiny with our unity.

<sup>146</sup> Rom. 15:7 - accept one another: "Accept" (plural imperative of *proslambano*, [4355](#)) is another in a series of imperatives. Paul used *proslambano* also in Rom. 14:1 ("accept the one who is weak in the faith") and Rom. 14:3 ("God has accepted him"). Imperatives (**bold font**) in Romans 14:1-15:6 include the following: (1) "**Accept** the one who is weak in the faith" (Rom. 14:1). (2) "The one who eats **is not to regard with contempt** the one who does not eat" (Rom. 14:3). (3) "...the one who does not eat **is not to judge** the one who eats" (Rom. 14:3). (4) "Each person **must be fully convinced** in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). (5) "...**let us not judge** one another anymore" (Rom. 14:13). Technically this is not an imperative, but it is a hortatory (exhortational) subjunctive, which functions as an imperative. (6) "...but rather **determine** this – not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way" (Rom.

- D 2 The example of Christ in accepting both Jews and Gentiles 15:7b-12
  - E 1 The statement of Christ's acceptance: just as Christ also accepted us 15:7b
  - E 2 The motive of Christ's acceptance – to the glory of God 15:7c
  - E 3 The method of Christ's acceptance – to become a servant: For I say that Christ has become a servant 15:8-9b
- G 1 To Israel: to the circumcision<sup>147</sup> 15:8
  - H 1 on behalf of the truth of God 15:8a
  - H 2 To confirm the promises of the patriarchs: to confirm the promises given to the fathers,<sup>148</sup>

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14:13). (7) “**Do not destroy** with your food him for whom Christ died” (Rom. 14:15). (8) “Therefore **do not let** what is for you a good thing **be spoken of as evil**” (Rom. 14:16). (9?) “So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Rom. 14:19). There is a textual problem here. The earliest manuscripts (MSS) read as does the NASB here. But because of the repeated use of imperatives and one hortatory subjunctive prior to this, some textual critics believe the use of the hortatory subjunctive here, which occurs in many MSS, is to be preferred. If it is, it reads, “So then **let us pursue** the things,” etc. (so KJV, NKJV, ESV, NIV, etc.). (10) “**Do not tear down** the work of God for the sake of food” (Rom. 14:20). (11) “The faith which you have, **have** as your own conviction before God” (Rom. 14:22). (12) “Each of us **is to please** his neighbor ...” (Rom. 15:2). (13) Therefore, **accept** one another” (Rom. 15:7).

<sup>147</sup> Rom. 15:8 - Christ has become a servant to the circumcision: The term “circumcision” here refers to the nation of Israel as defined by those who observe the identifying sign of circumcision (Gen. 17:9-14). As Paul has phrased it, The Messiah did not become a servant only to those Jewish people who would trust in Him, but to all Jewish people everywhere who observe circumcision. His objective, of course, was that the Jewish people might believe “the truth of God” (15:8). In what way has the Messiah become a servant to the circumcision? John Witmer (TBKC) succinctly stated, “Jesus was born a Jew as God’s Messiah for Israel ....”

To think that Jesus, the Messiah has become (the verb is a perfect, meaning that in the past Jesus became a servant and He remains such) a servant to the circumcision when the vast majority of Christians across Christendom take a rather different position toward the circumcision. They see Jewish people as an enemy of peace in the Middle East, as occupiers of “Palestinian” territory and as having forfeited any future as a nation. This is the sad outcome of Amillennialism, which refuses to take literally the promises of God to the patriarchs. Barry E. Horner, in his book, [\*Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must be Challenged\*](#), details the tragic history of Christianity’s failure to be a servant to the circumcision. In his “Personal Introduction” to his book (pp. xvii-xviii), Horner related “In conversation, quite a few [but not all Calvinists] by their derogatory manner have inferred that they would be delighted if the Arabs would push Israel into the Mediterranean Sea, repossess Palestine, and thus vindicate their eschatology”. How tragic!

<sup>148</sup> Rom. 15:8 - to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers: The promises are those given first to Abraham, then confirmed to Abraham and Sarah’s promised seed Isaac (not Ishmael), and then to Jacob and his descendants (not



15:8b

G 2 For the nations: and for the Gentiles <sup>149</sup> 15:9

H 1 to glorify God 15:9a

H 2 for His mercy 15:9b

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Esau and his).

There are three essential features of the patriarchal promises (Gen. 12:1-3). God subsequently formalized these promises in terms of a unilateral covenant with Abraham (see Gen. 15). We call this the [Abrahamic Covenant](#). These three essential features were first outlined in Genesis 12:1-3. They include: (1) **Blessing**: God would bless Abraham. He was to be a blessing. God would bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him. God's plan was to bless "all the families of the earth" through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). (2) **Descendants**: It was not only Abraham whom God would bless, but his numerous (as the stars – Gen. 15:2-6) descendants through the promised line of Isaac and Jacob. (3) **Land**: In God's plan, one cannot have a nation without a place to live. In a unilateral covenant, God guaranteed to Abraham and his descendants a specific piece of real estate. This land, God revealed, stretched "from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:17-19). This land was given to Abraham and his promised descendants *in perpetuity* (Gen. 15:14-17).

Most people in Christendom today believe that the Church is the fulfillment of the promises God gave to the Israeli fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and that Israel, because of her rejection of her Messiah, forfeited those promises. This majority view comes from a failure to take many of the promises, the covenants, and the eschatological prophecies of the Old Testament literally. The NT does not abrogate these promises, but fulfills them and expands certain (but not all) of their benefits to believing Gentiles. Jesus did not take the stance of modern-day Christendom. He came to *serve* the circumcision to *confirm* the promises made to the fathers, not *abort* them! One day, Israel will mourn over her Messiah as the One crucified by the nation (Zech. 12:10-13:1). Jesus will return to Israel, to the very place from which He left, the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4). He will deliver Israel from the savage attacks of the United Nations of the world (Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-3, 12-15). Jesus will reign from Jerusalem as King of Israel and of the entire earth (Zech. 14:9), replacing the evil, anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Israel focus of the United Nations. All of the world will come to Jerusalem at least annually to worship the King, the LORD of Hosts, Jesus of Nazareth, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Zech. 14:16-21) and to learn of His ways (Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3). There will be universal peace and prosperity! And there will be no separation of Church and State. For further studies, see [The Second Coming of Christ](#) and [Characteristics of the Millennium](#). Read the Glossary Entry concerning the [Abrahamic Covenant](#). This URL also links to a more extensive discussion

<sup>149</sup> Rom. 15:9 - and for the Gentiles: As John Witmer (Romans, *TBKC*) pointed out, Jesus had two objectives in becoming a servant to observant (circumcised) Israel:

The first was to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs (Rom. 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).

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).

- E 4     The documentation of Christ's acceptance from O.T.  
Scripture: as it is written, 15:9c-12
  - G 1     The prediction of Messiah's praise of God among the nations 15:9c (cf. Psalm 18:49 and 2 Sam. 22:50)
    - H 1     “THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU  
AMONG THE GENTILES,<sup>150</sup>
    - H 2     AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”
  - G 2     The prediction of the nations' uniting in joy with God's people, Israel: And again he says, “REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”<sup>151</sup> 15:10 (cf. Deut. 32:43)
  - G 3     The prediction of praise toward God by all the nations 15:11 (cf. Psalm 117:1)
    - H 1     And again, “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
    - H 2     AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES<sup>152</sup> PRAISE HIM.”
  - G 4     The prediction by Isaiah of Jesse's offspring to rule

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<sup>150</sup> Rom. 15:9 - Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles: A quotation from Psalm 18:49 and 2 Sam. 22:50. Though David wrote Psalm 18 and 2 Sam. 22:50, he himself realized that, because of the Davidic Covenant God had made with him (2 Sam. 7:12-16), promises made to him applied to his messianic (anointed) heirs. In this case Paul states that Psalm 18:49 is fulfilled ultimately in David's greatest descendant, Jesus, The Messiah. Jesus will praise God among the Gentiles. And indeed He has and He will!

<sup>151</sup> Romans 15:10 - Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people: Paul here quoted Deuteronomy 32:43. Deuteronomy 32:34-43 proclaimed Yahweh's ultimate vindication of His servants and His vengeance upon His adversaries. Yet even in this diatribe against the nations (Gentiles) who oppose Israel, there is a jewel of redemption. There will be those nations who rejoice with God's people instead of attempting to destroy them (Deut. 32:43). It was always God's purpose to bless all the peoples of the earth through Abraham's ultimate descendant, Jesus of Nazareth (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8). As the Sons of Korah so beautifully proclaimed in [Psalm 87](#), it was always God's plan to grant “[born in Zion](#)” status to multitudes of Gentiles!

<sup>152</sup> Rom. 15:11 - and let all the peoples praise Him: Paul here used the word “peoples” (*laos*, [2992](#)) as a synonym for “Gentiles” (*ethnos*, [1484](#)), meaning “the nations of the world.” Repeatedly in the NT, “people” is used for the “people of God,” often meaning the people of Israel, and sometimes the people of God through Christ. Here, in context, it means the nations. There follows a list of references where *laos* refers to Gentiles specifically: Luke 2:31; Acts 4:25; 15:14; Rom. 9:25-26; 15:11; Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15.

the nations 15:12 (cf. Isaiah 11:10) <sup>153</sup>

H 1 The prediction of Messiah to rule the nations  
15:12a

J 1 And again Isaiah says, “THERE SHALL  
COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,” <sup>154</sup>

J 2 AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER  
THE GENTILES, <sup>155</sup>

H 2 Messiah as being the hope of the nations: “IN  
HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.” <sup>156</sup> 15:12b

<sup>153</sup> Rom. Romans 15:12 cf. Isaiah 11:10: In Romans 15:12, Paul quoted from Isaiah 11:10. Anyone comparing the two must surely scratch his head and wonder how Paul arrived at his text. The problem is resolved, upon closer examination, when one understands that, with certain omissions, Paul was quoting the Septuagint text almost verbatim, not translating from the Hebrew (Masoretic) text (MT). There is surprising latitude between the LXX and the MT. The LXX is a defensible, but hardly a literal translation. Paul chose to quote from the LXX. For a further discussion of this issue, see “[A Comparison of Romans 15:12 with Isaiah 11:10](#)”.

<sup>154</sup> Rom. 15:12 - Root of Jesse: A reference to the Messiah, the descendant of Jesse (David’s father) who will serve as the Ultimate King not only of Israel, but of the Earth. This refers, of course, to Jesus, the Messiah.

<sup>155</sup> Rom. 15:12 - There shall come the root of Jesse ... who arises to rule over the Gentiles: Paul here quoted from Isaiah 11, a Messianic chapter. Specifically, he quoted Isaiah 11:10 to prove that God has always had a plan to bring Gentiles to a place of subservience to His will and consequent blessing through faith in the Jewish Messiah. This will not happen to the extent that Isaiah prophesied until Jesus returns to set up His kingdom here upon earth. Then Jesus will reign as the Great Jewish King who is also King Over All Nations. The OT prophets repeatedly predict this time of future blessing for the world. The Messiah will have achieved His dual goal of benevolently ruling over both faithful Israel and faithful nations (Gentiles) of the world.

Amillennialists, because they do not interpret prophetic Scripture literally, deny that Jesus will one day rule over the Gentiles (nations) in a literal political/spiritual kingdom on this present earth. They say that He is ruling over the Gentiles now. If that is true, why do the Gentiles perpetually blaspheme Jesus’ name? The very next line in Romans 15:12 states, “In Him shall the Gentiles hope.” While a fraction of the Gentiles presently trust in Jesus, the vast majority do not and continue rebelling. In the verse immediately preceding Isaiah 11:10, Isaiah predicted, “For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). The very next verse (Isa. 11:10) continues, “In that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious.” It is eminently clear that today, the earth is not full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea, and it is eminently clear that the nations are not today resorting to the root of Jesse the way Isaiah meant, but rather stand in blatant rebellion against Jesus and against God, just as David stated in Psalm 2:1-3. So the fractional Gentile trust in the Messiah today in the Church Age can only be a partial fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 11:10, not a complete one. The world awaits a yet future fulfillment, first in Christ’s future Millennial Kingdom, and ultimately, in the eternal state in connection with New Earth, whose capital city will be New Jerusalem, governed by the Co-Regency of God the Father and Christ the Son (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

<sup>156</sup> Rom. 15:12 - in Him shall the Gentiles hope: The Hebrew text (MT) of Isaiah 11:10 reads, “For him nations will seek” (author’s translation). Paul quoted from the Septuagint (LXX): “in Him shall the Gentiles hope.” He will

D 3 Paul's prayer for abundance of hope for the Gentile Christians of Rome 15:13

E 1 Now may the God of hope <sup>157</sup> fill you with all

G 1 joy

G 2 and peace in believing,

E 2 that you may abound in hope <sup>158</sup> by the power of the Holy Spirit. \*\*\*\*

A 7 **INFORMATION: Paul, the Model of Righteousness 15:14 - 16:27**

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amplify the theme of hope in the following lines.

<sup>157</sup> Rom. 15:13 - Now may the God of hope fill you: Paul is beginning to conclude his didactic (teaching) portion of his letter to the Romans. (He will conclude by informing them of the nature of his ministry and by explaining why he has not yet visited them (Rom. 15:14-23). Then he will write a fairly extensive list of greetings (Rom. 16).) Here he expands on the theme of hope (*elpis*, [1680](#)), derived from the LXX translation of Isa. 11:10, by extolling God, from whom the hope derives. Paul previously spoke of hope in this chapter in 15:4-5.

<sup>158</sup> Rom. 15:13 - that you may abound in hope: Paul continued to expand on the theme of hope begun in his quotation of Isa. 11:10. He prayed that the God of hope may fill them with all joy and peace in believing so that they may abound in the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the NT hope for the believer is not wishful thinking, but a Spirit-empowered, settled assurance of good, both in the present and in the future, based upon the character and promises of God. According to Paul's prayer, it is God's task to fill the believers with all joy and peace; it is the believers' task to believe; and it is the believers' task to abound in the hope, but they can only do so by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 15:13, Paul spoke of the God of the hope, and he stated that believers are to abound in the hope by the Spirit's power. What is *the* hope?

In Rom. 5:1-2, Paul stated that, "having been justified by faith, we [Christians] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God." So the hope we have as Christians consists in part of **partaking of the glory of God** by virtue of our having been declared righteous through faith (not works). In the same context (Rom. 5:4-5), proven character works hope; moreover, the "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." So hope is linked to **experiencing the love of God**.

In Romans 8:20-21, hope is defined as the assurance that the whole created order will be set free from its slavery to destruction and decay to the glory that the children of God are destined to enjoy. So the believers' hope includes **deliverance from bondage to decay to enjoy the glory which God's children are predestined to experience**.

As God has constructed redeemed living this side of Adam's fall and this side of the cross and the empty tomb, **hope is a fundamental experience of the Christian life** (Rom. 8:24-25). Hope presupposes that we cannot see that for which we hope, but that with perseverance we eagerly await it. So a fundamental characteristic of Christian living is that we must constantly be rejoicing in hope (Rom. 12:12). To that end God has given us the Scriptures to encourage us, and He gives us perseverance so that we might have hope (Rom. 15:4,5). So it is no surprise that Paul concludes His mini-essays on hope by praying that the God of the hope would fill his readers with all joy and peace in believing so that they will abound in the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13).

**B 1     In His Reasons for Writing to the Romans Instead of Visiting Them Personally**  
**15:14-22**

**C 1     To tell them he is convinced of their ability to warn one another without his being there personally:** And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are 15:14

D 1     full of goodness,

D 2     filled with all knowledge,

D 3     and able also to admonish <sup>159</sup> one another.

**C 2     To remind them he is Christ's priest to the nations 15:15-19**

D 1     His acknowledged boldness in writing: But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again,<sup>160</sup> 15:15a

D 2     His reminder of the grace given to him by God 15:15b-16

E 1     His acknowledgment of God's grace to him: because of the grace that was given me from God, 15:15b

E 2     His awareness of his God-given, priestly role 15:16

G 1     His priestly role for Christ to the nations: to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, 15:16a

G 2     His personal sacrifice – a ceaseless commitment to telling the gospel: ministering as a priest the gospel

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<sup>159</sup> Rom. 15:14 - able also to admonish one another: Admonish translates *noutheteo* (3560), to caution or warn or instruct others in regard to their belief or behavior (see Friberg Analytical Lexicon). It is used in the NT in Acts 20:31; Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 14:14; Col. 1:28; 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:12, 14. Paul offers two characteristics requisite for admonishing others: One must be filled with goodness and all knowledge. Paul was convinced the Romans met those requirements.

<sup>160</sup> Rom. 15:15 - so as to remind you again: “remind you again” translates *epanamimnesko* (1878), used only here in the NT. The translation “remind you again”, is, unfortunately, redundant. “Remind” is all Paul meant to say. His point is that, even though the brothers at Rome are “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another” (Rom. 15:14), it was perfectly fitting that he had written to them this tome to remind them of certain points. It was fitting because God had given him special grace to serve as a priest on behalf of Jesus the Messiah to the nations (Gentiles), wooing them to be reconciled to God through Jesus (Rom. 15:15-16).

of God,<sup>161</sup> 15:16b

G 3 His acceptable offering to God – the nations: that my offering of the Gentiles <sup>162</sup> might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 15:16c

D 3 His restrictions in boasting 15:17-19

E 1 The **area** in which he boasts – in Christ: Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. 15:17

E 2 The **activities** of which he speaks 15:18-19

G 1 Their identification – only those in whom Christ worked through him: For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, 15:18a

G 2 Their result – obedience among the nations: resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles 15:18b

H 1 In word: by word

H 2 In work: and deed,

G 3 Their authentication – by means of power displayed: in the power of 15:19a

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<sup>161</sup> Rom. 15:16 - the gospel of God: “Gospel” translates *euaggelion* ([2098](#)), strictly, “good news.” But “the Good News of God” is that fallen men, under condemnation because of sin, can be justified (declared righteous) – not by works – but by faith in Jesus the Messiah, who died and rose again to pay the death penalty for the sins of all. Not only can man be declared righteous by faith in Jesus, but he can anticipate a resurrection and a future life in a glorious, redeemed creation freed from the curse of death and decay, and an existence in which there is perfect harmony between Gentile peoples and Jewish people, the latter finally fulfilling their promised destiny. That is the gospel of God, summarizing Romans 1-11. See the footnote on “the gospel of God” in 1:1 for a listing of all the occurrences of *euaggelion* in the book of Romans.

<sup>162</sup> Rom. 15:16 - my offering of the Gentiles: Paul sees his ministry among the Gentiles as an offering which he, as a believer-priest, is presenting and will present to God. That perspective gives rise to a sobering question for each of us. What offering will we have to present to God when we stand in His presence? Are the things we are doing in this life of sufficient value and merit that we can present them as an offering to God?

- H 1 In signs (authenticating miracles): signs <sup>163</sup>
- H 2 In wonders (awe-producing miracles): and wonders
- G 4 Their source of power – the Holy Spirit: in the power of the Spirit; 15:19b
- G 5 Their extent – from Jerusalem to Illyricum: so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum <sup>164</sup> 15:19c
- G 6 Their function – the fulfillment of the gospel of Christ: I have fully preached <sup>165</sup> the gospel of Christ. <sup>166</sup> 15:19d

<sup>163</sup> Rom. 15:19 - signs: *semeion* ([4592](#)) refers to authenticating miracles Paul performed by means of the power of the Holy Spirit. Here Paul used “signs” – *semeion* ([4592](#), authenticating miracles) in tandem with *teras*, “wonders” ([5059](#), awe-producing miracles). The signs and wonders were designed to authenticate Paul as a legitimate apostle of Jesus Christ, with all the authority and responsibility that office entailed. He was as fully a hand-picked apostle of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1-18) as were any of the original twelve. In Acts 2:43 and 5:12 Luke noted that many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. In 2 Corinthians 12:12 Paul defended his apostleship by stating that his apostolic ministry had been authenticated by the signs (*semeia*) of a true apostle. He further denoted this as authentication in terms of signs (*semeion*, [4592](#)), wonders (*teras*, [5059](#)), and miracles (lit. powers - *dunamis*, [1411](#)). These miracles were designed to prove that both he and his message were from God. That was particularly necessary since Paul, as an apostle of Christ, was also a prophet, and was repeatedly dispensing revelation given to him directly by God.

In the Gospel that bears his name, the Apostle John selected certain signs (*semeion*, [4592](#)) Jesus had performed in order to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, so that if his readers continued believing, they might have life through His name (John 20:30-31). It is worth noting that when the “lawless one”, the Antichrist is revealed, his coming (*parousia*, [3952](#)) will be according to the energy of Satan with all power (*dunamis*, [1411](#)), and signs (*semeion*, [4592](#)), and wonders (*teras*, [5059](#)) – of falsehood (!) “and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:8-10).

<sup>164</sup> Rom. 15:19 - Illyricum: A Roman Province on the Grecian peninsula adjacent to the NW corner of Macedonia, bounded on its west by the Adriatic Sea. As of his writing to the Romans, Illyricum was the westernmost extent of Paul’s evangelism (proclaiming of the gospel of Christ), Jerusalem being the easternmost extent. Rome, of course, was further west, across the Adriatic from Illyricum.

<sup>165</sup> Rom. 15:19 - I have fully preached: This partial clause translates but one word in Greek, the perfect tense of *pleroo* ([4137](#)), to fulfill. What Paul stated literally was, “I have fulfilled the good news of Christ.” Of course, he did so by proclaiming, but that is not what he stated here. Of the 87 translations of this word in the NASB, this is the only instance in which it is so translated. The most frequent translations include “fulfill” (20X); “fulfilled” (20X); “filled” (16X); “made full” (5X); “fill” (3X); and “completed” (3X).

<sup>166</sup> Rom. 15:19 - the gospel of Christ: “Gospel” translates *euaggelion* ([2098](#)), “good news.” Paul in this letter has referred to “the gospel of God”, “the gospel of Christ”, and even “the gospel of me” (Paul). See the notes on “the gospel of God” in 1:1 and 15:16 for further definition.



**C 3 To inform them of his reasons for never having visited them personally 15:20-22**

- D 1 His *policy* – to evangelize only where Christ was unnamed: And thus I aspired to preach the gospel,<sup>167</sup> not where Christ was already named,<sup>168</sup> 15:20a
- D 2 His *purpose* – to avoid building on another's foundation: that I might not build upon another man's foundation,<sup>169</sup> 15:20b
- D 3 His *motive* – to fulfill Scripture – Those untold about Him will see and understand: but as it is written,<sup>170</sup> 15:21 (cf. Isa. 52:15)
- E 1 “THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE,

<sup>167</sup> Rom. 15:20 - to preach the gospel: This phrase translates the present tense infinitive of *euaggelidzo* (2097), to announce good news, or, literally, “to good-news-icize.” (We would say today, “to evangelize.”) *Euaggelidzo* (2097) is the verb of which *euaggelion* (2098) is its noun. *Euaggelidzo* (2097) is used only three times in Romans – in 1:15; 10:15; and here in 15:20. It means in Romans to announce the good news about Jesus and the salvation He brings to all who believe in Him.

<sup>168</sup> Rom. 15:20 - not where Christ was already named: Jesus assigns different ministries to different ones of His servants (1 Cor. 12:5). One parameter of Paul's evangelistic, church-planting ministry was to present the good news about Jesus in regions in which the residents had never before heard of Him. In the twentieth century, we would have said that Paul was engaged in “pioneer missions.” In this century, we would say that he was targeting “unreached people groups.” Obviously, the good news about Jesus had already reached Rome, and so, because of his priorities, Paul had never visited them. He is explaining his absence.

<sup>169</sup> Rom. 15:20 - not build on another's foundation: Another way of stating Paul's priority in evangelism and church planting was that he did not wish to build on a foundation laid by someone else. I can personally identify somewhat with that priority as it relates to my publication in this venue (WordExplain) of my understanding of theology and different books of the Bible. I was recently asked why I do not possess and read a great many commentaries. Why, in WordExplain, do I seek to reinvent the wheel? I must confess that, though I have had years of formal theological and biblical training, and though I feel free to consult commentaries as needed, my desire in this venue is to present the truth of God as I see it, now as how others see it. If readers wish to know how others see the truth of God, they may read others' commentaries. If they wish to know how I see the truth of God, then they are welcome to read WordExplain.

<sup>170</sup> Rom. 15:21 - as it is written: Here Paul quotes the last two lines of Isaiah 52:15, which happen to be the last two lines of one of Isaiah's Servant passages that speak of the Messiah (Isa. 52:13-15). This passage predicts both the exaltation of the Servant and His humiliation, the latter of which would be the means of His sprinkling (redeeming) “many nations.” What Isaiah predicted, and what Paul here confirms, is that many Gentiles (people among the nations) would hear for the first time about this Jewish Messiah who died for their sins, and they would see the truth, perceive it, and believe. Paul used this OT prophecy as a justification for his policy of disseminating the Good News to Gentiles who had never before heard about Jesus. For further discussion of the Servant passages in Isaiah, see “[The Identification of the Servant in the Book of Isaiah](#).”



E 2 AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.”

D 4 The *effects* – he was often hindered from visiting them: For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;<sup>171</sup> 15:22

## **B 2 In His Plans for the Future 15:23-33**

### **C 1 His plans to visit the Romans 15:23-29**

D 1 His completion of the work in Greece: but now, with no further place for me in these regions, 15:23a

D 2 His long desire to visit the Romans: and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you 15:23b

D 3 His plan to visit them on the way to Spain: whenever I go to Spain<sup>172</sup> 15:24

E 1 Intended visit: for I hope to see you in passing,

E 2 Hoped for support: and to be helped on my way there by you,

E 3 Enjoyable fellowship: when I have first enjoyed your company for a little while –

D 4 His interim plan to visit Jerusalem 15:25-28

E 1 His purpose – to serve the saints: but now, I am going to Jerusalem, serving the saints. 15:25

E 2 His explanation – to deliver a collection to the poor saints in Jerusalem 15:25-28

G 1 The Macedonian and Achaian Christians' desire to

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<sup>171</sup> Rom. 15:22 - often been prevented from coming to you: Because of his policy of taking the Good News about Jesus to Gentiles who had never before heard, Paul had been unable to visit the Romans, who had already heard. Now, however, he has plans to sail beyond them to Spain (Rom. 15:24). That will justify his stopping in to visit them en route. But before he could travel to Spain, and thus see the Romans, he had prior obligations in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-29). At the very beginning of his letter, Paul had previously expressed his thwarted desire to visit them (Rom. 1:10-15).

<sup>172</sup> Rom. 15:24 - Spain: Paul's previous venture westward had been the province of Illyricum (15:19). Now he had plans to travel clear to Spain!

contribute: For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution <sup>173</sup> 15:26-27a

H 1 for the poor

H 2 among the saints

H 3 in Jerusalem.

H 4 Repetition: Yes, they were pleased to do so, 15:27a

G 2 Paul's awareness of their indebtedness 15:27b

H 1 The sharing by the Christian Jews of spiritual realities: For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things <sup>174</sup> 15:27b

H 2 The obligation of the Christians among the nations to reciprocate materially: they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. 15:27c

G 3 The projected completion of his task 15:28a

H 1 Therefore, when I have finished this,

H 2 and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs,

D 5 His projected stopover on the way to Spain 15:28b-29

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<sup>173</sup> Rom. 15:26 - pleased to make a contribution: It had long been Paul's policy to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10). On several occasions Paul referred to his bringing this contribution from the Gentile Christians of Macedonia and Achaia to poor Messianic Jews in Jerusalem: 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:13-14; 9:12-13. He had succeeded in delivering the contribution when he was apprehended in the temple (Acts 24:17-18). His arrest in the temple and lengthy incarceration would prevent Paul from visiting the church at Rome (Acts 21-24). Nevertheless, God used Paul's appeal to Caesar to permit him to see the Romans personally (Acts 25-28).

<sup>174</sup> Rom. 15:27 - if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things: Paul gives here a correct and Biblical assessment of the relation of the largely Gentile Church to spiritual Israel. The Church has not replaced spiritual Israel. Rather, the Church has *shared* in the *spiritual* benefits of saved Israel. There are *physical* benefits that saved Israel will yet inherit on this earth – the physical land of Israel and the physical blessings of great wealth, along with a position of great *honor* among Earth's nations (see, for example, Isaiah 60-62; 65:18-25; 66:10-24). The prophets have predicted these things, and no NT Scripture ever precludes these promises from being fulfilled. Despite what amillennialists say, these promises will be fulfilled in Christ's spiritual, political kingdom here on this present earth. See "[Characteristics of the Millennium](#)."

E 1 Planned layover: I will go on by way of you to Spain  
15:28b

E 2 Anticipated blessing: And I know that when I come to you, I  
will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. 15:29

## **C 2 His request for the Romans' prayers 15:30-33**

D 1 The urgency of his request: Now I urge you, brethren, 15:30a

E 1 by our Lord Jesus Christ

E 2 and by the love of the Spirit,

D 2 The intensity of his request – for diligent prayer: to strive together  
with me in your prayers to God for me, 15:30b

D 3 The thrust of their prayers 15:31-32

E 1 For his protection from disobedient Jews: that I may be  
delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea,<sup>175</sup>  
15:31a

E 2 For the acceptance of the collection by the Jewish saints in  
Jerusalem: and that my service for Jerusalem may prove  
acceptable to the saints; 15:31b

E 3 For his joyful arrival in Romans 15:32

G 1 so that I may come to you

H 1 in joy

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<sup>175</sup> Rom. 15:31 - delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea: Paul asked the Roman believers to pray with him that he would be preserved from Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judea who refused to believe that Jesus was their Messiah. As it turns out, God did not answer this prayer in the affirmative. But He did affirmatively answer Paul's desire to meet the Roman believers in person!

Paul did successfully arrive in Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-26), but he was seized by an angry Jewish mob. With his life in danger, he was rescued by the commander of the Roman cohort in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-22:29). Thereafter, he underwent a succession of trials (Acts 22:30-26:32) before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30-23:35); before Felix, the governor (Acts 24:1-27); before Festus, the new governor (Acts 25:1-12); and before Agrippa and Bernice (Acts 25:13-26:32). Having appealed to Caesar, Paul sailed to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16). It was upon his arrival in the vicinity of Rome that Paul, in the providence of God, finally met in person the Roman Christians he had planned, years earlier, to visit (Acts 28:14-16)! God's sovereignty is amazing to behold as He works it out in our individual and corporate lives!

H 2 by the will of God

G 2 and find refreshing rest in your company. 15:32

**C 3 His prayer for the Romans:** Now the God of peace be with you all.  
Amen. 15:33

### **B 3 In His Concern for Others 16:1-24**

#### **C 1 For the letter-bearer 16:1-2**

D 1 His commendation of Phoebe 16:1

E 1 As a fellow-Christian (sister): I commend to you our sister Phoebe,<sup>176</sup> 16:1a

E 2 As a servant in the church at Cenchrea: who is a servant<sup>177</sup> of the church which is at Cenchrea; 16:1b

D 2 His request for their help 16:2a

E 1 To receive her: that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints

E 2 To help her: and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you

D 3 The basis for his request: the great help she had been to many 16:2b

<sup>176</sup> Rom. 16:1 Phoebe: “Phoebe, who belonged to the church at Cenchrea near Corinth (16:1), probably carried the letter to Rome” (Ryrie Study Bible, Introduction to the book of Romans). Phoebe’s transportation of the letter from Corinth to Rome illustrates the surprising mobility of first century Christians in the Roman Empire.

**Note:** For a complete listing of names in Romans 16, please go to Appendix I at the end of the Document.

<sup>177</sup> Rom. 16:1 - servant: The Greek word is *diakonos* ([1249](#)), the normal designation for a house-hold servant. It is unlikely that Phoebe was an officer of the church on a par with the “Servants” or “Deacons” in Philippi (Philippians 1:1). This is true for at least three reasons: (1) The qualifications for a deacon as listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 presuppose a male deacon. (How can a woman be a husband of only one wife (1 Tim. 3:12)? The women of 1 Tim. 3:11 are most likely the wives of deacons and would assist their husbands as the need arose.) (2) If ever the church had the opportunity to install a female officer, it was in Acts 6. The Hebrews in charge of distributing food were apparently discriminating against Grecian widows. But the apostles recommended the appointment of seven *men* to supervise a ministry strictly for *women*. (3) God did not create women to rule over men in the very beginning, but to assist them. It seems clear that Phoebe was a diligent and tireless worker in the church, as Rom. 16:2 reveals, helping even Paul, but that she was not an officer. Sadly, the church at large today has been infected with the unbiblical and destructive dogma of feminism. The early church was not so afflicted.

E 1 for she herself has also been a helper of many,

E 2 and of myself as well.

## C 2 For those in Rome whom he knows and wishes to greet 16:3-16

D 1 Priscilla and Aquila: Greet <sup>178</sup> Prisca and Aquila, <sup>179</sup> 16:3-5

E 1 Co-workers: my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 16:3

E 2 Life-riskers for Paul: who for my life risked their own

<sup>178</sup> Rom. 16:3 - Greet: "In his epistles Paul greeted more individuals by name in the churches he had not visited than in those that he had (cf. Col.). He may have wanted to establish more personal contact with congregations that had not seen his face" ([Constable, Notes on Romans](#)). All the instances of "Greet" (*aspodzomai*, [782](#)) in Romans 16:3-16a, in which Paul commands the Romans to greet his friends, are plural imperatives. Paul expected all the Christians of the Roman church to greet these individuals he singled out. Thereafter (Rom. 16:16b-23), Paul used other verbal forms (of *aspodzomai*) when passing along greetings from others to the Romans. There are 21 occurrences of some form of *aspodzomai* ([782](#)) in Romans 16!

<sup>179</sup> Rom. 16:3 - Greet Prisca and Aquila: Paul now embarks on an astonishing list of Christians who live in Rome whom he knows and wishes the recipients of his letter to greet. Foremost are Prisca and Aquila, whom Paul describes as his "fellow workers in Christ Jesus." "Fellow-workers" translates *sunergos*, [4904](#). In the entire letter to the Romans, Paul designated only Urbanus (Rom. 16:9) and Timothy (Rom. 16:21) also as his fellow-workers. Here is a brief history of the couple. Dates are derived from the Ryrie Study Bible.

**(1) Corinth.** Prisca (a.k.a. Priscilla, the diminutive form of Prisca) and Aquila were a godly Jewish couple whom Paul first met in Corinth (ca. A.D. 50) while he was on his **second missionary journey** (A.D. 49-53). They had been forced to flee from Rome on account of the decree of Claudius, who, for political reasons, had commanded that all Jews leave Rome. This couple had then evidently moved to Corinth. They, like Paul, were tent-makers by trade, so they worked together during the week. Paul taught in the synagogue on Sabbath days, presumably joined by the couple (Acts 18:1-4), who presumably became believers in Christ because of Paul's ministry there in Corinth. After at least 18 months in Corinth (Acts 18:11, 18), Paul sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

**(2) Ephesus.** En route to Syria, the trio arrived at Ephesus. Paul left the couple there while he traveled onwards (Acts 18:18-22). When Apollos arrived at Ephesus, he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. He taught accurately about Jesus, but was acquainted only with the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and privately instructed him more accurately in the way of God (Acts 18:24-26). On his **third missionary journey** (A.D. 54-58), Paul returned to Ephesus and spent at least two years and three months there (Acts 19:1-10). When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55) from Ephesus, he sent greetings to the Corinthian believers from the churches of Asia in general and from Aquila and Prisca in particular, along with the church that met in their house (1 Cor. 16:19).

**(3) Rome.** When Paul wrote Romans from Corinth in A.D. 57 or 58, Prisca and Aquila were back in Rome. Paul called them his "fellow workers" (Rom. 16:3). Paul said that they had risked their lives for him (Rom. 16:4). Once again, he acknowledged the church that met in their home (Rom. 16:5).

**(4) Ephesus.** By the time Paul wrote his last letter (2 Timothy, A.D. 67) to Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3), he asked Timothy to greet Prisca and Aquila, also, presumably, in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19).

First century Christians had no telephones, no email capabilities, no cars, and no airplanes by which they could circumnavigate the Mediterranean. They did travel by sea, but they were limited to wind power and human oar power. Aquila and Priscilla illustrate the relative ease and frequency with which Christians of that era traveled. Their surprising mobility illustrates the method by which copies of New Testament Scripture would quickly make their way from one part of the empire to another. See "[A Case for the Circulation of the New Testament Papyri](#)."

necks, 16:4

G 1 to whom not only do I give thanks,

G 2 but also all the churches of the Gentiles;<sup>180</sup>

E 3 (Greet also) the church in their home: also greet the church that is in their house.<sup>181</sup> 16:5a

D 2 Epaphroditus – beloved first convert in Asia: Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert<sup>182</sup> to Christ from Asia. 16:5b

D 3 Mary – hard worker for them: Greet Mary, who has worked hard<sup>183</sup>

<sup>180</sup> Rom. 16:4 - the churches of the Gentiles: The increasing expansion of the Church outside the state of Israel meant that, increasingly, the composition of the Church as a whole was growing more Gentile than Jewish. Paul implicitly acknowledged that fact here.

<sup>181</sup> Rom. 16:5 - also greet the church that is in their house: Though the early church first met in the spacious expanse of the temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1-4; 5:20-21, 24-25, 42), they also early on began to meet in one another's homes (Acts 2:2, 46; 5:42; 8:3; 20:20; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 1:2). Paul's reference to the church that met in the home of Prisca and Aquila suggests that there were a number of house churches throughout the first century metropolis of Rome. It has been my own experience that fellowship is best maintained even today if Christians fellowship with a small number of believers some time during the week in addition to a larger, more corporate worship. There is something about the fellowship in a small group of Christians gathered together in someone's home to study the Bible and pray together that contributes positively toward mutual spiritual health. See also the comments on Rom. 16:15 for reference to another probable house church, though that term is not there used.

<sup>182</sup> Rom. 16:5 - first convert: Epaphroditus was a firstfruit (*aparche*, [536](#) - singular) won to Christ (presumably by Paul) in the Roman province of Asia (the central western region of modern day Turkey). Illustrating the mobility of people in the Roman world, Epaphroditus had, since his conversion, moved from Asia to Rome. Paul called him "my beloved" (*agapetos*, [27](#)). MacArthur (in his commentary on Romans) hypothesizes that Epaphroditus was Paul's beloved precisely because he was Paul's first convert in Asia. That is possible, of course, but it does not explain why Paul also referred to Ampliatus (Rom. 16:8) and Stachys (Rom. 16:9) as his beloved when neither was also a firstfruit. Nor does it explain why the household of Stephanas was a firstfruit of Achaia but not also considered beloved (1 Cor. 16:15). Paul also called Persis "the beloved" (Rom. 16:12), meaning, perhaps, that he was beloved by others, but not necessarily by Paul himself. It is, therefore, impossible to state with any certainty why Paul called certain ones, but not others, "beloved". Perhaps one day we can ask him. This is the only time in his letter to the Romans that Paul referred to a specific person as being the first convert of a geographic area. Elsewhere, however, as mentioned previously, Paul identified the household of Stephanas as being a firstfruit of Achaia (1 Cor. 16:15). There is a sense in which all Christians of the Church Age *may be* a kind of firstfruit (2 Thess. 2:13 – one early ms reads *firstfruit* instead of *from the beginning*). Certainly, James stated that Jewish Christians of the Church Era *are* a kind of firstfruit among God's creatures (James 1:18, cf. 1:1).

<sup>183</sup> Rom. 16:6 - worked hard: The word is *kopiaio*, [2872](#), meaning to exert so much effort that one becomes physically weary or tired. It indicates a more strenuous effort than that signified by being merely a "fellow-worker" (*sunergos*, [4904](#)), the term Paul applied to Prisca and Aquila. Paul was not faulting them (*ergos*, [2041](#)) is a more "vanilla" term for work), but he was certainly singling out Mary for her diligent effort. *Kopiaio* is used in Romans

for you. 16:6

D 4 Andronicus and Junias: Greet Andronicus and Junias,<sup>184</sup> 16:7

E 1 Relatives: my kinsmen<sup>185</sup>

E 2 Fellow-prisoners: and my fellow prisoners,<sup>186</sup>

E 3 Well known by the Apostles: who are outstanding among

only of Mary (lit. Maria) (16:6), Tryphaena and Tryphosa (16:12), and Persis (16:12). All four were women. Though God has granted to males the role of leadership in the church and family, I'm certain that God takes note of women who work strenuously to serve Jesus in His kingdom. They will be granted their appropriate reward!

<sup>184</sup> Rom. 16:7 - [Junias](#): Two questions arise: (1) Is the preferred Greek text Junias or Julia? (2) If it is the former, was Junias a man or woman? (The issue hinges on the accent marks, which were not part of the original Greek text written by Paul.)

In answer to question (1), the Committee of the United Bible Societies' 4<sup>th</sup> edition (UBS4) unanimously opted for Junias (*Iounian*) over Julia (*Ioulian*) "on the basis of manuscript evidence." They were sufficiently convinced to give their decision an "A" rating of probability, the highest possible.

In answer to question (2) the Committee was divided over how to accent the name. In fact, the UBS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (UBS2) had opted for a masculine accentuation of the name. The Committee of UBS4 has opted for a feminine accentuation. Their reasons? First, "the female Latin name Junia occurs more than 250 times in Greek and Latin inscriptions found in Rome alone, whereas the male name Junias is unattested anywhere ..." Second, "when Greek manuscripts began to be accented, scribes wrote the feminine ... Junia" (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, pp. 475-476). Metzger further cautioned that the "A" decision of the Committee applied only to the spelling of the name, not its accentuation.

Part of the issue is a theological/historical one. How could Junia, a woman, be considered "outstanding among the apostles"? Would a woman be considered an apostle? There is no known precedent. [Constable](#) solves this dilemma as follows: "'Apostles' (v. 7) here must have the general sense of representatives (traveling missionaries) rather than being a technical reference to one of the 13 official apostles (cf. Acts 14:4, 14; 2 Cor. 8:23; 1 Thess. 2:6; Phil. 2:25)." Another solution, which I prefer, is to understand Andronicus and Junia, who were more likely husband and wife or less likely, brother and sister, to have been highly regarded by the original [apostles](#) (see James A. Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p.. 246).

<sup>185</sup> Rom. 16:7 - kinsmen: Some believe that Paul was merely identifying Andronicus and Junias as being Jewish. There is some warrant for stating this point of view. In Rom. 9:3-4a Paul wrote, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites ...." But other Jewish people in this list (eg., Aquila – cf. Acts 18:2) are not identified as being his kinsmen. Note also that in Rom. 9:3-4, Paul carefully qualified "my kinsmen according to the flesh." Therefore, Andronicus and Junias, along with Herodion (16:11), and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (16:21), are to be identified as Paul's actual relatives, however distant that relationship might have been.

<sup>186</sup> Rom. 16:7 - my fellow prisoners: Paul does not indicate when and where Andronicus and Junias were in prison, but only that they were. It is worth noting that Paul, when referring to himself as a prisoner, typically used the word *desmios*, [1198](#), (eg. Eph. 3:1; 4:1) rather than the word here, *sunaiχmalotos*, [4869](#). This latter word means, literally, "taken with the spear" referring to a prisoner of war. Friberg (*Analytical Lexicon of the Grk NT*) opines that Paul probably used the word here figuratively to describe fellow workers who shared his hardships without having necessarily been in prison. That, however, is a matter of conjecture which cannot be proven.

the apostles,<sup>187</sup>

- E 4 Long-time Christians: who also were in Christ before me.<sup>188</sup>
- D 5 Ampliatus – beloved of Paul: Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. 16:8
- D 6 Urbanus and Stachys: Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved 16:9
- D 7 Apelles ("approved in Christ"): Greet Apelles, the approved<sup>189</sup> in Christ. 16:10

<sup>187</sup> Rom. 16:7 - outstanding among the apostles: I take this phrase to mean that Andronicus and Junias (female) were well-known and highly-reputed among the original [apostles](#), not that they themselves were outstanding apostles. This view is supported by John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 230; James Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 246, acknowledges this view. See the note under Junias in Rom. 16:7 for a further discussion of Andronicus and Junias.

<sup>188</sup> Rom. 16:7 - in Christ before me: James Stifler (*The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 246) comments, "This note, together with that about Epaenetus in verse 5, shows that regeneration, or the state in which one can be said to be 'in Christ,' is a matter of definite date. Between the condition of condemnation and that of 'not condemned' (John 3:18) an appreciable interval of time is inconceivable." I agree. There is a definite point at which one becomes a Christian. Some Christians seem not to know when that point is in their own lives, but God certainly knows. If someone professes not to know when they became a Christian, I ask, "In whom are you trusting now? In yourself, or in Jesus Christ?" If someone is presently trusting in Jesus, he must have done so at some point in the past, whether he can remember or not. The important point, to me, is not to be able to identify when, but to identify if. If I am presently trusting in Jesus, I have forgiveness of sins and eternal life (John 1:12; 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 20:30-31; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1; 8:1-2).

<sup>189</sup> Rom. 16:10 - approved: Approved translates *dokimos*, [1384](#). *Dokimos* is used "as a qualification that results from trial and examination approved, reliable" (*Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*). This word is used here of Apelles as being someone who has passed the test, someone who is genuine. Here is an explanation by Donald Barnhouse:

In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money. All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into moulds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft and of course many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens, to stop the practice of shaving down the coins then in circulation. But some money changers were men of integrity, who would accept no counterfeit money. They were men of honour who put only genuine full weighted money into circulation. Such men were called "[dokimos](#)" or "approved".

The fact that Paul considered Apelles "approved in Christ" is a weighty commendation, indeed! Apelles is the only Christian in this entire list of whom Paul states that he is "approved." Elsewhere, the Christian who refuses to destroy his Christian brother with his food, and who does not let what is for him a good thing be spoken of as evil, is thereby acceptable to God and approved ([dokimos](#)) by men (Rom. 14:15-18).



- D 8 Those of the household of Aristobulus: Greet those who are of the *household*<sup>190</sup> of Aristobulus. 16:10
- D 9 Herodion (relative) and those of Narcissus' household who are Christians 16:11
- E 1 Greet Herodion, my kinsman.<sup>191</sup>
- E 2 Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.<sup>192</sup>
- D 10 Tryphaena and Tryphosa ("presently working hard in the Lord"): Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord.<sup>193</sup> 16:12a
- D 11 Persis 16:12b
- E 1 Beloved: Greet Persis the beloved,<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Rom. 16:10 - *household*: "Household" does not appear in the Greek text. Literally, Paul wrote, "Greet those of Aristobulus." Paul was greeting those who belonged to Aristobulus' household, possibly including his slaves. Stifler (p. 247) wrote, "Of Aristobulus, whether he was dead or alive, a saint or a sinner, these words give no hint." It was those who were of his household to whom Paul sent greetings. The same would hold true of those who belonged to Narcissus who were also Christians (16:11).

<sup>191</sup> Rom. 16:11 - Herodion, my kinsman: See the note on Andronicus and Junias (16:7).

<sup>192</sup> Rom. 16:11 - Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord: Again, the word "household" does not appear in the Greek text. Literally, Paul wrote, "Greet those of Narcissus – the ones being in Lord." These may have included both family members and slaves. But the wording here is more restrictive than it was for those belonging to Aristobulus. Paul restricts the greeting to those being "in Lord", meaning, "in Christ." Presumably only a portion of Narcissus' household were Christians.

<sup>193</sup> Rom. 16:12 - workers in the Lord: Actually, these two are presently working hard in the Lord. Only regarding Tryphaena and Tryphosa here, along with Mary (Maria) (16:6) and Persis (16:12) did Paul specify that they worked hard (*kopiaio*, [2872](#)) in serving Jesus. All are women. The subtle distinction is that Mary (16:6) and Persis (16:12) worked hard in the Lord (the tense is aorist, suggesting that their labors were in the past), while Tryphaena and Tryphosa (16:12) are presently working hard. The presumption is that Mary and Persis were older women, while Tryphaena and Tryphosa were younger and still serving Jesus strenuously.

<sup>194</sup> Rom. 16:12 - Greet Persis the beloved: Persis was a woman. When Paul greeted men who were beloved, he phrased it, "my beloved." Here he delicately omitted the personal pronoun and simply called her, "the beloved." He added that she "worked hard in the Lord" (*kopiaio*, [2872](#)) aorist tense). This was in contrast with Tryphaena and Tryphosa, two women who were presently "working hard in the Lord." Paul does not berate Persis. It may be that she was getting on in years and simply not able to do as much as once she had done. Or she may have become disabled (Stifler, p. 248). To the contrary, he compliments her not only on working hard in the Lord, but on working *very* hard in the Lord! Of the four women who "worked hard", Maria (16:6) and Persis (16:12) worked *very* hard (emphasis mine). They, two, however, seem to have completed their work. Maria (16:6) had worked very hard in

- E 2    Very hard worker in the Lord: who has worked hard <sup>195</sup> in the Lord.
- D 12   Rufus ("chosen in the Lord") and his ("motherly") mother: Greet Rufus, <sup>196</sup> a choice <sup>197</sup> man in the Lord, also his mother and mine. 16:13
- D 13   Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas <sup>198</sup> and the brethren with them. 16:14
- D 14   Greet Philologus and Julia, <sup>199</sup> Nereus and his sister, <sup>200</sup> and Olympas

serving the Romans, while Persis had worked very hard “in Lord.”

<sup>195</sup> Rom. 16:12 - worked hard: See the previous footnote on Persis (16:12).

<sup>196</sup> Rom. 16:13 - Rufus: John MacArthur (commentary on Romans) argues that this Rufus is to be identified with the Rufus of Mark 15:21 who was the son of Simon of Cyrene, the one who bore Jesus' cross. Under this theory, Mark, who ostensibly wrote his gospel for the Romans, would have had no reason to mention Rufus if he were not well known. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, here greets him. This identification is possible, perhaps even plausible, but it cannot be proven. In any event, Rufus' mother is known to Paul. She must have shown Paul some “motherly” kindness at some past point in his life.

<sup>197</sup> Rom. 16:13 – choice: The Greek text reads, “Greet Rufus the chosen in Lord ....” “Choice” translates *eklektos* (1588), which generally means, “chosen, picked out.” Typically *eklektos* refers corporately to those who have been chosen by God (see Rom. 8:33 for Paul's only other use of *eklektos* in Romans). Since *all* those greeted in Romans 16 are believers, Rufus cannot be the only one God chose in the typical sense. It must rather mean, as NASB has translated, that Rufus is a choice man, alluding to “some eminence belonging to Rufus” (Murray, p. 231).

<sup>198</sup> Rom. 16:14 - Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas: None of these individuals are mentioned anywhere else in the NT, and nothing is known of them except that they must have come from the same community. In an interesting footnote, when Paul and Barnabas first visited Lystra, Paul healed a man lame from his mother's womb. The excited crowd said that the gods had visited them, and they called Barnabas Zeus, and Paul Hermes because he was the chief speaker (Acts 14:8-12). In Latin, Hermes is Mercury, the chief spokesman for the pagan gods of Greece and Rome.

<sup>199</sup> Rom. 16:15 - Philologus and Julia: Never mentioned elsewhere, nothing is known of them except that they came from the same community as the others in Rom. 16:15. Presumably they were husband and wife (see the distinction in the next pair of names). “The scribes of C\* F G<sup>sr</sup> mistook *Julian* for *Junian* (compare the contrary error in ver. 7)” (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., p. 476).

<sup>200</sup> Rom. 16:15 - Nereus and his sister: Nereus is never mentioned elsewhere. They came from the same community of believers as the others in Rom. 16:15. It is curious that Paul did not mention Nereus' sister by name. He evidently knew enough about her to know she was a believer. Perhaps he had never known her name or perhaps, like the present writer, his memory had failed him on this occasion. (In the vernacular, was Paul having a “senior moment”? If so, I can certainly identify with him!) It is comforting to know that, though humans forget others' names, God never does!

<sup>201</sup> and all the saints who are with them. 16:15

D 15 Each other: Greet one another with a holy kiss.<sup>202</sup> 16:16a

D 16 Greetings to you from all the churches: All the churches of Christ greet you. 16:16b

### C 3 For potential trouble-makers among the Romans 16:17-20

D 1 The urgent request 16:17

E 1 To watch out for ones causing divisions and offences contrary to teaching: Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances<sup>203</sup> contrary to the teaching which you learned, 16:17a

<sup>201</sup> Rom. 16:15 - Olympas: He is never mentioned elsewhere. From the following phrase, “and all the saints who are with them”, we deduce that everyone listed in Rom. 16:15 came from the same community, perhaps the same house church. First century Rome was a large enough city that various groups of Christians could have lived in different suburbs. Presumably they typically worshiped together in their own community (or house church – see Rom. 16:5), but occasionally fellowshipped with other believers throughout the city. Certainly, Paul expected that the recipients of this letter would eventually convey greetings to each and every believer mentioned, no matter where they lived or worshiped throughout the city. See the discussion on this subject by John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>202</sup> Rom. 16:16 – holy kiss: This exhortation is repeated in 1 Cor. 16:30; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26. A kiss was (and remains) the standard greeting among Middle Easterners. It was and is a non-sexual form of greeting, as appropriate among men as among women. In my opinion, the application of this command can differ in different cultures. All Christians in all cultures are to greet one another in holiness of life and motive in a manner appropriate to that culture. In Japan, bowing is an appropriate greeting. In many western countries, a handshake is appropriate. More intimate forms of greetings may be appropriate in individual churches. Whatever those greetings are, they must be holy.

<sup>203</sup> Rom. 16:17-18 – keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances: In these two verses, Paul warns the saints at Rome to watch out for potential trouble-makers among their number. Here are the identifying marks of the trouble-makers:

- (1) They cause dissensions (*dichostasia*, [1370](#)) (Rom. 16:17).
- (2) They stake out traps (*skandalon*, [4625](#)) to deceive and ensnare the unsuspecting.
- (3) They operate outside of the teaching (*didachē*, [1322](#)) of the apostles which the Romans had learned.
- (4) They do not serve as slaves (*douleuō*, [1398](#)) of our Lord Christ (Rom. 16:18).
- (5) Rather, they serve as slaves of their own appetites (*koilia*, [2836](#)).
- (6) They use smooth talk (*chrēstologia*, [5542](#)) and flattery (eulogía, [2129](#)) to deceive the hearts of the naïve, or unsuspecting.

Who are these trouble-makers? Whatever else they are, they appear to be false teachers who make a living by their false teaching (Stifler, p. 249). Murray (p. 235) suggests that some commentators believe these false teachers are libertines – others, that they are Judaizing zealots. Murray attempts to harmonize the two. In reality, Paul does not identify what they teach – only that they are divisive, self-serving, and deceptive. Elsewhere, Paul warned of such in similarly general terms in Acts 20:28-31. Paul orders the Romans to turn away from such trouble-makers.

- E 2 To turn away from them: and turn away from them. 16:17b
- D 2 The reason for the request 16:18
  - E 1 Such men don't serve Christ but their own belly: For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Jesus Christ but of their own appetites; 16:18a
  - E 2 Such men deceive the simple through eloquent and flattering speech: and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. 16:18b
  - E 3 Paul doesn't want their present well-known obedience tarnished: For the report of your obedience has reached to all; <sup>204</sup> 16:19
    - G 1 He rejoices over their well-known obedience: therefore I am rejoicing over you, 16:19a
    - G 2 He wants them to be 16:19b
      - H 1 Wise toward good: but I want you to be wise in what is good,
      - H 2 Uncompromising toward evil: and innocent in what is evil.
- D 3 The assurance of victory: And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. <sup>205</sup> 16:20a
- D 4 Prayer for Jesus' grace to be with them: The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. 16:20b

#### C 4 For those wishing to greet the Romans 16:21-23

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<sup>204</sup> Rom. 16:19 – the report of your obedience has reached to all: The saints in Rome have a reputation for being obedient Christians. Paul really had nothing negative to say about them. In contrast, when he wrote to the church at Corinth, he gave them a brief commendation (1 Cor. 1:1-9), but then launched an attack against their ungodly behavior in sometimes blistering terms for most of the remainder of the letter! Paul is filled with joy over the obedience of the Roman believers, but he does ask them to remain watchful (Rom. 16:17), wise, and innocent (Rom. 16:19).

<sup>205</sup> Rom. 16:20 – soon crush Satan under your feet: “Paul meant that the Roman Christians would frustrate Satan's work among them soon as they rejected false teachers. His terminology suggests that he had Genesis 3:15 in mind” (Constable, [Notes on Romans](#)).

D 1 Timothy ("fellow worker") and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater ("relatives") 16:21

E 1 Timothy <sup>206</sup> my fellow worker greets you,

E 2 and so do Lucius <sup>207</sup> and Jason <sup>208</sup> and Sosipater, <sup>209</sup> my kinsmen. <sup>210</sup>

D 2 Tertius the letter writer: I Tertius, <sup>211</sup> who write this letter, greet you

<sup>206</sup> Rom. 16:21 - Timothy: Timothy, whom Paul found in Lystra on his second missionary journey, appears several times in the Acts narrative: (Acts 16:1; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4). Timothy appears several times in the epistles as Paul wrote about his deployment of his assistants: 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:1-2, 6. Paul several times included Timothy in his initial greetings in the letters he wrote: 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philemon 1:1. Paul passed along greetings from Timothy in our present passage (Rom. 16:21). Paul wrote two letters to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2), and twice therein addressed him by name (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:20). Paul spoke highly of Timothy in 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thess. 3:2; and Philippians 2:19-22. Timothy seems to have been beset with a somewhat timid, fearful spirit: 1 Cor. 16:10-11; 2 Tim. 1:6-8). But it is obvious that Timothy was blessed with a godly heritage (2 Tim. 1:3-5). Elsewhere, Timothy is mentioned in passing in Hebrews 13:23.

Paul here (Rom. 16:21) described Timothy as his fellow worker (*sunergos*, [4904](#)). There are three references to *sunergos* (fellow worker) in Romans: (1) Paul asked the Romans to greet Prisca and Aquila, the fellow workers of Paul in Christ Jesus (Rom. 16:3). (2) Paul asked the Romans to greet Urbanus, "the fellow worker of us" (Rom. 16:9). (3) "Timothy, the fellow worker of me, greets you" (Romans) (Rom. 16:21). Paul honored those who worked with him or alongside him (as Prisca and Aquila so aptly illustrate), but he seemed to afford special honor to those who worked hard (*kopiao*, [2872](#)) – Maria (Rom. 16:6), Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Rom. 16:12), and Persis (Rom. 16:12).

<sup>207</sup> Rom. 16:21 - Lucius: Some (eg. MacArthur) wonder if Lucius is not Luke, the beloved physician (Col. 4:14) who accompanied Paul on certain journeys and his voyage to Rome, and who penned Luke and Acts. Paul did speak elsewhere of Luke in 2 Tim. 4:11 and Philemon 1:24, but in every case the spelling (*Loukas*) is different than the spelling here in Rom. 16:21 (*Loukios*). In my opinion, the different spelling and the absence of any qualifier by Paul make it doubtful that Lucius here was Paul's traveling companion.

<sup>208</sup> Rom. 16:21 - Jason: It is doubtful that this Jason is the same as the Jason whose house in Thessalonica was attacked and who was dragged before the city authorities in Acts 17:5-9.

<sup>209</sup> Rom. 16:21 - Sosipater: This is the only occurrence of Sosipater in the NT. We know nothing about him except that he was somehow related to Paul.

<sup>210</sup> Rom. 16:21 - kinsmen: There are six who are identified as Paul's kinsmen (*suggenes*, [4773](#)): Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7), Herodion (Rom. 16:11), and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater here (Rom. 16:21). I take it they are actual relatives, not merely fellow Jews. See the note on Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7).

<sup>211</sup> Rom. 16:22 - Tertius: A Latin personal name meaning "Third" (perhaps "Third [son]" - so *Holman Bible Dictionary* (HBD). Somewhere I have heard that Tertius (Rom. 16:22) and Quartus (Rom. 16:23) may have been the names assigned to former slaves, perhaps even rowers on a galley ship. But I have seen no commentary that even suggests this. To the contrary, there is no record that Romans of this era used slaves to man the oars, but rather used freemen (see Wikipedia, Galley). HBD states that some have suggested that Quartus was Tertius' younger brother.

in the Lord. 16:22

D 3 Gaius ("the host of Paul and of all the church"): Gaius,<sup>212</sup> host to me and to the whole church, greets you. 16:23a

D 4 Erastus (the city treasurer) and Quartus (the brother): Erastus,<sup>213</sup> the

There is no way to prove or disprove this theory. In my opinion it is unlikely, for Quartus is separated from Tertius by two names, and Quartus is not stated to be Tertius' brother, but rather "the brother," meaning, simply, "the Christian brother." John Gill, in his [\*Exposition of the Entire Bible\*](#), commenting on this passage, suggests that the names Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, Quintus, etc. were common Roman names. In modern society, I know personally two males named "Trey." We do not know anything for certain of Tertius except that he was Paul's amanuensis (stenographer), and, almost certainly, that he was also a believer, for he took the initiative to greet the Christians in Rome "in the Lord." According to John Murray (commentary, p. 238), "Paul's practice of using an amanuensis is attested in other epistles (1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; II Thess. 3:17)."

<sup>212</sup> Rom. 16:23 - Gaius: Gaius, who sent his greetings to the Romans, was evidently a man of some means. He was evidently a successful enough businessman (or else he had received a sizeable inheritance) to own a home large enough to accommodate not only Paul as an ongoing house guest, but also the entire church (presumably of Corinth). God is pleased with people of means who are willing to share their successes and blessings with other Christians (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Gaius was a fairly common name. Indeed, there are five references to a Gaius in the NT:

(1) In Acts 19:29, Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, were dragged into the theater at Ephesus in an uproar instigated by Demetrius, the silversmith. This took place on Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

(2) Acts 20:4. After the uproar in Ephesus (Acts 19), Paul left for Macedonia and then Greece. To avoid a plot by the Jews to kill him as he sailed for Syria, he opted instead to travel by foot back through Macedonia (Acts 20:1-3). "And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia" (Acts 20:4). This Gaius is from Derbe, and thus is to be distinguished from the Gaius from Macedonia (Acts 19:29).

(3) Here in Romans 16:23, Paul, likely writing to the Romans from Corinth, referred to a Gaius who was host to him and to the whole church. This Gaius was evidently wealthy enough to own a home big enough to accommodate the entire church. Paul himself was a prolonged house guest. This Gaius appears to be a settled resident of Corinth. It is unlikely, therefore, that he is to be identified with either Gaius #1 or Gaius #2.

(4) In 1 Corinthians 1:14 Paul referred to a Gaius in Corinth whom he had baptized. It is possible, even likely (so John Murray, Romans, p. 238) that he is the same as Gaius #3, who sent his greetings to the Romans.

(5) In 3 John 1:1, John the Apostle wrote to "the beloved Gaius." Since there is no evidence that John and Paul worked in the same circles, it is unlikely, though not impossible, that this Gaius is to be identified with any of the above.

<sup>213</sup> Rom. 16:23 - Erastus: There are three references to an Erastus in the NT:

(1) Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia while he himself stayed in Asia (Acts 19:22). This Erastus was teamed up in this instance with Timothy, and was mobile enough to travel to Macedonia.

(2) Erastus here in this passage (Rom. 16:23) is identified as a city official. NASB calls him the city treasurer. F. Bruce (see below) calls him "clerk of works." In any event, as a city official, he was probably not mobile enough for Paul to dispatch him to other cities. Therefore it is doubtful this Erastus is the same as the one who teamed up with Timothy in Acts 19:22.

(3) Paul wrote to Timothy that he had left an Erastus at Corinth, but Trophimus was sick and was forced to remain in Miletus. This Erastus, well-known to Timothy, is mobile, and therefore likely the same as the Erastus in Acts 19:22, and thus to be distinguished from the Erastus of Rom. 16:23.

The following comment is from F. F. Bruce's commentary on Romans, p. 266, as quoted by Constable, [Notes on](#)

city treasurer greets you, and Quartus,<sup>214</sup> the brother. 16:23b

**C 5 For the Romans to be continual recipients of the grace of the Lord**

**Jesus:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.<sup>215</sup> **16:24**

**B 4 In His Glorification of God 16:25-27**

**C 1 For His ability to establish the Romans 16:25-26**

D 1 The statement of God's ability to establish them: Now to Him who is able to establish you 16:25a

D 2 The standard according to which God is able to establish them 16:25b-26

E 1 According to Paul's gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ 16:25b

G 1 according to my gospel

G 2 and the preaching of Jesus Christ,

E 2 According to the unveiling of the mystery: according to the

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Romans:

Erastus, the city treasurer "has been identified with the civic official of that name mentioned in a Latin inscription on a marble paving-block discovered at Corinth in 1929 by members of the American School at Athens: 'ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT' ('Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense'). The aedile ('commissioner for public works') was a responsible magistrate in a Roman city. The office of oikonomos, perhaps 'clerk of works' rather than 'city treasurer', was a much humbler one (Lat. *arcarius*). Since the pavement seems to belong to a later part of the first century, it might be inferred that Erastus acquitted himself so satisfactorily in the inferior office that he was promoted to the higher magistracy, and showed his appreciation of the honour thus done him by presenting the city with a marble pavement. He need not be identified with the Erastus of Acts 19:22 or 2 Timothy 4:20; the name was common enough."

<sup>214</sup> Rom. 16:23 - Quartus, the brother: See the note on Tertius, 16:22.

<sup>215</sup> Rom. 16:24 – This verse is bracketed in the NASB, and the note is appended: "Early mss do not contain this v". This verse is omitted in the main text of the United Bible Societies' 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, but included with its several variants in the apparatus. Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Second Edition), p. 476, states, "The earliest and best witnesses omit ver. 24. In his comments on Rom. 16:20, Metzger states, "Several Western witnesses ... transfer the benediction to follow ver. 23, thus preventing the greetings of verses 21-23 from having the appearance of being an afterthought. Other witnesses ... place ver. 24 following Rom. 16:27 (i.e. after the doxology), thus concluding the epistle with a benediction. If, however, it stood in this position originally, there is no good reason why it should have been moved earlier." My own conclusion is that verse 24 was not in Paul's original text.



revelation of the mystery<sup>216</sup> 16:25c-26

G 1 The time of the unveiling of the mystery 16:25c-26a

H 1 From eternity past kept silent: which has been kept secret for long ages past, 16:25c

H 2 But now revealed: but now is manifested 16:26a

G 2 The method of the unveiling – through the prophetic writings: and by the Scriptures of the prophets, 16:26b

G 3 The authority behind the unveiling: the command of the eternal God: according to the commandment of the eternal God, 16:26c

G 4 The purpose of the unveiling: to make known the obedience of faith to all the nations: 16:26d

H 1 has been made known to all the nations,

H 2 leading to obedience of faith;<sup>217</sup>

**C 2 For His wisdom:** to the only wise God, **16:27a**

**C 3 Through Jesus Christ:** through Jesus Christ, **16:27b**

**C 4 Forever:** be the glory forever. Amen.<sup>218</sup> **16:27c**

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<sup>216</sup> Rom. 16:25 – according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past: “The gospel had been hidden in eternity past until God revealed it first in the Old Testament and then fully in the New (cf. 11:25; Gal. 1:12, 15-16; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26; 4:3)” (Constable, p. 168, 2010 Edition, Notes on Romans). This note is no longer valid. Here is the [same passage exegeted by Constable in 2024](#).

<sup>217</sup> Rom. 16:26 – obedience of faith: To believe in the gospel (God’s Good News about Jesus, the Messiah) is to obey God. To disbelieve the gospel is to disobey God.

<sup>218</sup> Rom. 16:27 – subscriptions: Several different subscriptions appear in the Greek mss. None of these, to my knowledge, is included in any English version. Here is a sampling: “(a) The earliest subscription is merely ‘To Rome’ .... Other subscriptions include ‘To Rome written from Corinth ...;’ (c) ‘to Rome written through Phoebe from Corinth’ ...; (d) ‘To Rome written from Corinth by means of Phoebe the servant’ ... (e) as (d) but adding ‘the in Cenchrea church’ ... followed by the Textus Receptus. This information appears in Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition, p. 477. He printed the Greek text, which I have here





**Appendix 1: Names in Romans 16**

This appendix lists those greeted or greeting or otherwise mentioned by name in Romans 16. For those of you are keeping score (!), this list is segregated by gender:

Men	Indeterminate	Women
Aquila. 16:3 Epaenetus. 16:5 Andronicus. 16:7 Ampliatius. 16:8 Urbanus. 16:9 Stachys. 16:9 Apelles. 16:10 Herodion. 16:11 Rufus. 16:13 Asyncritus. 16:14 Phlegon. 16:14 Hermas. 16:14 Philologus. 16:15 Nereus. 16:15 Olympas. 16:15 Timothy. 16:21 Lucius. 16:21 Jason. 16:21 Sosipater. 16:21 Tertius. 16:22 Gaius. 16:23 Erastus. 16:23 Quartus. 16:23	Aristobulus. 16:10 Aristobulus is a male, but he himself is not greeted. Only those of his household are. Narcissus. 16:11. Narcissus is a male, but he himself is not greeted. Only Christians in his household are.	Phoebe. 16:1 Prisca. 16:3 Mary (Maria). 16:6 Junia. (NASB lists this person as Junias, a man, but United Bible Societies Greek Text 4 <sup>th</sup> edition (UBS4) acknowledges the feminine spelling. We here opt for UBS4's spelling.) Tryphaena. 16:12 Tryphosa. 16:12 Persis. 16:12 Mother of Rufus. 16:13 Julia. 16:15 Sister of Nereus. 16:15 (Not mentioned by name, but a specific person is meant.)

**Appendix 2: The Nature of Baptism in Romans 6:1-10**

1. Note: An indeterminate number of reasons why the baptism under discussion here is "Spirit baptism", not "water baptism" have been borrowed from J. Dwight Pentecost, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary. If memory serves me correctly, I culled his views from notes I took from his class on the Book of Romans many decades ago.
  - a. No water is mentioned.
  - b. βαπτίζω does not necessarily require water as the agent (1 Cor. 10:2; 12:13; 15:29).

- c. This is real death here, not a picture of death.
- d. Romans 6:1-6 is the Divine perspective, not personal experience.
- e. Water baptism is prominent in Acts (the external is emphasized), whereas Spirit baptism is emphasized in the epistles (the internal is emphasized).
- f. The only baptism that is said to place us in Christ is the Spirit's baptism (1 Cor. 12:13).
- g. Colossians 2:12 is a parallel passage and it clearly speaks of Spirit baptism. ??
- h. A mere outward ordinance has never been a deterrent to sin.
- i. Outward rituals can only **mirror**, but can never **achieve** inward spiritual realities (JTB).

## 2. Arguments for Water Baptism and against Spirit Baptism

- a. The word "Spirit" (*pneuma*, 4151) is never once used in Romans 6.
- b. One might assume that, when the verb baptize (*baptidzō*, 907) occurs by itself without any qualifier, such as "Spirit" (*pneuma*, 4151), one would normally think of baptizing by means of water.

## 3. Arguments for Spirit Baptism and against Water Baptism

- a. How can a mere rite accomplish a spiritual reality?
  - i. Even John the Baptist understood (Matt. 3:7-10) that his water could not produce repentance, but only symbolized it. He told the hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees to bring forth fruits fitting for repentance--not just go through the motions of being wet!
  - ii. There are many different kinds of baptism in Scripture. The chief meaning is one of identification:
  - iii. Jesus' baptism (Matt. 20:3) evidently spoke of His coming crucifixion. No water here!
    - (1) The Israelites were baptized into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2) at Dead Sea. Only ones who got wet were the dead Egyptians!
- b. Water baptism in Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 Cor. is distinguished from Spirit baptism as being baptized into the **name** of Christ. That is a symbolical baptism. (Acts 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; 1 Cor. 1:13-17)
- c. Water baptism in the New T. follows Spirit Baptism (Acts 10:47, 48)

- d. Real Baptism actually places one into Christ, not merely into the name of Christ! (Cf. Acts 11:16; Romans 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:7)
4. Here are a list of passages, all of which, in my opinion, convey the idea of Spirit Baptism as opposed to water baptism.
  - a. Matthew 3:11. John the Baptist speaking: “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
  - b. Mark 1:8. John the Baptist speaking: “I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
  - c. Luke 3:16. John the Baptist speaking: John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
  - d. John 1:33. John the Baptist speaking: “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’
  - e. Acts 1:4-5. Jesus speaking: <sup>4</sup>Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
  - f. Acts 11:15-16. Peter speaking: <sup>15</sup>“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup>“And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’
  - g. Romans 6:3-4. Paul writing: <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
  - h. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. Paul writing: <sup>12</sup>For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
  - i. Galatians 3:26-27. Paul writing: <sup>26</sup>For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup>For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
5. Conclusion: For the reasons given above, I maintain that baptism in Romans 6:1-10 is Spirit Baptism as identified by John the Baptist (in Matthew 3:11-13; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:16-17; John

1:32-34) and as identified by Paul (in 1 Cor. 12:13).

## EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF ROMANS

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