

## ROMANS 15:22-33

\*Paul's desire was to go and preach the gospel of grace, where his ministry of the name of Christ had not been heard. This would be areas in Western Turkey and Northern Greece. These Gentile people had not heard the gospel and became Paul's focus to establish the foundation of the Gospel of Grace Church there.

I Corinthians 3:10-11 - According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.  
1Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

\*Paul had been busy and was wanting to get to Rome. Now, the foundation had been laid in the region and he was therefore free to fulfill his strong desire to go to Rome and finally meet these Roman Christian believers.

Romans 15:22 - For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

1. Paul had spoken of his desire to go to Rome back at the introduction of this epistle (letter to the Romans in Chapter 1).

Romans 1:10, 13 - Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. Rom. 1:13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

2. Evidently, on several occasions, Paul had mentioned his plans to go to Rome. But, he had been hindered sometimes. This hindrance time and time again would be the Holy Spirit postponing his plans until the time was right.
3. Paul will evidently get to Rome - not as a spiritual minister to the Roman believers, but as a prisoner that God might be glorified in his chains and use it to reach the unreached.

Romans 15:23 - But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

1. Before Paul could visit Rome, he had to finish reaching these parts of the new territories in Asia Minor who wanted to hear the Gospel. After that was finished, Paul and his followers (those who had been saved under Paul's gospel of salvation) felt he could now place Rome at the top of his list to go.
2. Paul would minister as an evangelist to win people to Christ. He would become a teacher in order to minister the foundational truth of the Mystery Program.

\*Paul had completed his purpose there in this area and it was time to go see the brethren in Rome finally.

Romans 15:24 - Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

1. Paul's plan was to go to Spain by way of Rome. Paul wanted to reach out to evangelize the many Jews that were in Spain. Having ministered in the eastern Mediterranean area, Paul wanted to take his gospel further west into Spain.
2. No doubt Paul needed help for his journey to Spain. By going to Rome to meet and teach the believers more in the Word, they might be willing to give whatever help was needed to complete his trip to Spain.

3. Unfortunately, there is no biblical or verifiable evidence to suggest that Paul ever made it to Spain.

\*If Paul ever did make it to Spain, it would have been after his release from his first Roman imprisonment. Acts 28 mentions this prolonged imprisonment, where Paul spent two years under house arrest in Rome and got to associate with many of his coworkers.

Acts 28:30 - And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

4. Paul did arrive finally in Rome, but not as Paul had planned. It certainly worked out as God's plan. Before Paul could take his trip to Spain via Rome, there was something Paul had to do. Paul wanted to minister to the poor Jewish saints at Jerusalem.

Romans 15:25-26 - But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. Rom. 15:26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

1. Paul wanted to deliver the collected money from the Gentile churches that he had ministered to. Even though they too were poor, they wanted to show support to help those in Jerusalem.
2. The believers in Macedonia and Achaia had gladly contributed to a fund to relieve the distress among the poor saints at Jerusalem.

\*There were several reasons why these saints were poor and needy.

- a. First: There was the persecution from the religious Jews and even Paul knew that he was included also.

Acts 20:22 - And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

- b. Second: There was a famine that had been prophesied to come.

Acts 11:28-29 - And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Acts 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

- c. Third: There was a dispensational change happening. During Christ's earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus had taught His disciples to prepare for the Kingdom that is "at hand".

Luke 12:22, 31-32 - And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. Luke 12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

3. The Kingdom on earth was taken from lost Israel and given to the true believing Little Flock - His followers.

Matthew 21:43 - Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

4. So the disciples were not to worry about their daily needs, but just seek the Kingdom coming and all things would be provided for them.

Acts 4:32-35 - And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, Acts 4:35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

5. But as the nation Israel continued to resist Jesus as the Messiah (the Christ), they rejected the king of this kingdom of heaven on earth.

\*There were many that were poor and had nothing because the true saints had done what they were told to do.

6. Even at the great Jerusalem Council, the leaders requested that Paul would not forget their poor. Even though Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, he loved his Jewish brethren saints.

Galatians 2:9-10 - And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Gal. 2:10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

\*Paul fulfilled his promise by taking up these love offerings from Gentile churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Romans 15:27 - It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

1. Here we see an opposite direction as far as the mission field movement. Normally the home churches would send money to the mission field to support infant churches in foreign lands. Paul does it the other way around.
2. The Gentile believers were pleased to be able to give such a generous money gift to the suffering Jews in Jerusalem. The reason this was done was because the Gentiles were the beneficiaries of Israel's spiritual blessings. It was only fitting that they would minister to them.
3. God made Israel custodians of the Old Testament. They gave us Paul and even Jesus Christ. All of this came down through the Jews.

Romans 3:1-2 - What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Rom. 3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

4. Gentiles are so indebted to them because this included the Gospel of Grace program given to Apostle Paul by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:24 - But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Romans 15:28-29 - When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. Rom. 15:29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

1. As soon as Paul had completed this mission of delivering the money offering to the poor saints at Jerusalem, he would now visit Rome on his way to Spain.
2. Paul had every confidence that his visit to Rome would be accompanied by the "fullness of the blessing of the gospel", which Christ always pours out when God's Word is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Paul had knowledge and power of the Holy Spirit and he could not wait to be with those believers at Rome to proclaim his God-given mystery gospel

Romans 1:9-10 - For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Rom. 1:10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

4. From Paul's opening letter to the believers in Rome, he shows his desire to come to them. His great goal was to pour himself into the life and fellowship of this Roman church. What an assurance of victory and of being in the will of God.

Romans 15:30 - Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

- \* Before closing this part of his letter, Paul concludes with an urgent appeal for their prayers. Paul humbly asks for prayer and the assistance of the Holy Spirit because of some of the zealot Judaizers that fanatically opposed his new grace gospel. Paul was aware of the dangers which awaited him in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:31-32 - That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; Rom. 15:32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

1. The unbelieving Jews were out to get Paul and he knew it. These lost Jews considered Paul to be a traitor to their nation, because they were not impressed with Paul being appointed the minister of the Gentiles.
2. The financial gift from the Gentile churches was not heartily received by the Jewish brethren, even though Paul worked diligently to raise this offering. We see in the book of Acts how God allowed the unrest to mount, until finally Paul was arrested in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:30-32 - And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. Acts 21:31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Acts 21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

3. God had different plans for Paul. God worked it all out for good, so Paul could get from Jerusalem to Rome. After the trial, Paul was sent to Rome and became an ambassador of God while in chains.
4. So, did God answer Paul's prayers? Yes, in a roundabout way. The Jews were ready to tear Paul apart and kill him, but God used Roman officials to deliver Paul out of harm.
5. It was from his prison in Rome that God used Paul to write his prison epistles, that take us believers to the truths of the mystery program.

Romans 15:33 - Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

1. Paul now finally closes this chapter with the prayer that the God, Who is the source of peace, might be with them for their doctrine and faithfulness.
2. In Chapter 15, the Lord has been named: "the God of patience and consolation" in verse 5, "the God of hope" in verse 13, and now "the God of peace". God provides peace for His own people. Amen.

Colossians 3:15 - And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

\*Next Week, Paul closes out his letter of Romans, acknowledging all the many people that have helped him in life and his ministry.