

# Romans 13

## 1. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers:

Since this is such an important verse reflecting our relationship to civil governments (especially hostile civil governments) we will take the time to break down all the words and fully explore the passage. First, there is no way to misunderstand “every.”

*“pas,... I. adjectivally, and 1. with anarthrous nouns; a. any, every one (sc. of the class denoted by the noun annexed to pas);... all or any of the class indicated... b. any and every, of every kind, ... esp. with nouns designating virtues or vices, emotions, character, condition, to indicate every mode in which such virtue, vice or emotion manifests itself, or any object whatever to which the idea expressed by the noun belongs... c. the whole ... 2. with nouns which have the article, all the, the whole,... with a Plural, all (the totality of the persons of things designated by the noun) II. without a substantive 1. masc. and fem. every one, any one... 2. everything, (anything) whatsoever;... always, perpetually,... in every condition, or in every matter, ... in everything, in every way, on every side, in every particular or relation,...”* (Thayer, p. 491-493; 3956).

The term is all inclusive: “*any and every, of every kind,*” “*all (the totality of the persons of things designated by the noun.*” After reading this definition we are prepared to understand that every living sacrifice and every transformed servant of God is under this command.

The noun that this *every* is joined is the “*soul.*”

*“psuche... 1. breath... i.e. a. the breath of life; the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing... b. life... 2. the soul... a. the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our soul, heart, etc...)\_ b. the (human) soul in so far as it is so constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life... c. the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death...”* (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 677; 5590)

Every living and breathing eternal being. No exceptions. Each individual soul created by God and placed within the body is under this direction. It is important to see that Paul is not simply speaking of God’s servants here although they would obviously be the ones most likely to submit to this, but Paul of every soul. Those who refuse this command are living in rebellion against God. Thus even if the Christian does to actively do this himself, but associates with those who do, they are joined to sinners involved in a sinful activity.

The present active participle continues from the previous chapter. Again a participle is an action (subjection) turned into a person (the *subjecter* or the *subjecting one*). The action of subjection is so continuous and never varying that this action so permeates this soul that it can be used to describe the essence of this person.

*“hupotasso... to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection... mid. to subject one’s self, to obey; to submit to one’s control; to yield to one’s admonition or advice... to obey ... obey, be subject ...”* (Thayer, p. 645; 5293)

This is a person who constantly and to the degree that one could say the action is this person who “*puts himself into subjection, arranges himself under, subordinates himself, yields, and obeys.*” The other uses of this term in the NT help us see more clearly what the Spirit has in mind.

Jesus was subject to his **parents** Lk 2:51

God put all things in subjection under **Jesus** feet. 1Cor 15:27; Eph 1:20-23

As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their **husbands** in everything. Eph 5:24

Wives, be in subjection to your **husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord. Col 3:18

being in subjection to their own **husbands**, that the word of God be not blasphemed: Titus 2:5

servants to be in subjection to their own **masters** to adorn the doctrine of God. Titus 2:9

Put them in mind to be in subjection to **rulers** and **authorities** Titus 3:1

You put all things in subjection under **Jesus’** feet and left nothing that is not subject to him. Heb 2:8

Be subject to every ordinance of man: to **king** as supreme or **governors** sent by him 1Pet 2:13-14  
wives be in subjection to your own **husbands**; 1 Pet 3:1  
the holy women who hoped in God, adorned themselves, in subjection to their own **husbands**: 1  
Pet 3:5

The roles are clear, children, wives, servants(employees) and citizens are all told to submit. The submission is illustrated by Jesus over the material creation and over the church. All of these roles require the Christian to willingly to place himself/herself under the power and dominion of another and willingly follow all rules and responsibilities that exist while under that subjection. Every one understands a child can't stop being in submission to his parents just because he doesn't like his parents rules even if they are unfair. In the same way we understand that wives and servants do not always have good and fair or just and kind husbands or masters does not give them the right to stop serving and honoring them. In exactly the same way this submission forces the citizen to submit and honor the government even if they do not agree or are treated unfairly.

Paul speaks of powers. The word comes from the general word for authority or power. Higher powers is actually two different words.

*"exousia, ... power 1. power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission... 2. physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endue, which he either possess or exercises... 3. the power of authority(influence) and of right... delegated authority... 4. the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed)...one who possess authority; ... the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates; used in the plur. of a certain class of angels..." (Thayer, p. 225; 1849)*

Throughout the NT this word is either translated authority or power. Jesus has all authority(*exousia*) in heaven and on earth(Mt 28:18) and taught as one having authority(Mt 7:29). Pilate said he had the power(*exousia*) to release or crucify him(Jn 19:10), but Jesus responded you would have not power(*exousia*) over me unless given to you from above. Yet even when translated power, it has more of the power of authority and rule. Paul speaks of these authorities as "*the ones ruling*."

*huperecho* from Homer down; transitive, 1. to have or hold over one 2. intransitive, to stand out, rise above, overtop ... metaphorically, a. to be above, be superior in rank, authority, power. ... (A. V. as supreme), 1 Peter 2:13; ... of magistrates (A. V. higher powers), Romans 13:1 substantively, the prominent men, rulers, ... of kings... b. to excel, to be superior: ... better than ... (Thayer, p. ; 5242)

The powers(authorities) that Paul commands us to be in submission are those who "*have or hold over them*" They are "*above, superior in rank, authority, and power*." Again Paul makes use of the Present Active Participle. These are individuals who continually live "*having power above*" all others. In the next verse he will explain where this power and superiority comes from(God). They are continually "*ruling above*" and "*ruling over*" others. Again this is a verb turned into a person. Their ruling makes them the ruler. Not to be taken on and taken off at the end of the day. These are always rulers. When Peter speaks of this same group of ruling people, he shows there is a graduation of this power: "*whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him...*" (1Pet 2:13-14)

Civil government has the greatest of all rights to rule and command, and there is no institution on earth, not even the church that has more authority. No matter what government a Christian finds himself living under, it is his duty as a living sacrifice to submit to its authority and power. He is quite specific with the term every soul. This is a word that includes both the spirit and the life of the body. It is used in scriptures to refer to the physical life that one has and also to that which has been purified by God. No matter how you view yourself, even though you see yourself as one redeemed and completely offered to God, still this passage applies to you and binds you to it. If we violate this rule, we are not living as transformed people but are still fashioning ourselves after the world.

**for there is no power but of God;**

The "*reason and cause (gar)*" of this previous statement is that no matter who is in this position,

God's people are to understand that no matter who the power (*exousia* -authority) is and no matter how well or poorly they rule, we are to see them as coming of God. All authority comes from God. Every civil government rules based on God's right to allow them to rule. Thus anyone who refusing to submit is actually by extension refusing to submit to God. There is some ambiguity here as to whether each government is ordained or whether the entire concept of civil government is of God. The next phrase will clarify which. The preposition here powerfully attests that God allows and brings into existence these authorities.

*"hupo... prep. under... I with the GENITIVE ... 1. prop. in a local sense, of situation or position under something higher... hence 2. metaph. of the efficient cause, as that under the power of which an event is conceived of as being... the Eng. by ..."* (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 642; 5259)

There no authority who is not "*under*" God. No ruling power who is not "*under the power*" and thus authorized by God to be doing what they are doing.

### **and the (powers) that be are ordained of God.**

These *powers* (supplied from the previous verse) that be are ordained. The term "that be" is the participle of the verb of being. So all those authorities that are in being or existing. The very fact that they exist or are in being proves one very important thing. They are ordained by God. Simply by existing or being they are *ordained* of God.

*tasso to put in place; to station; a. "to place in a certain order ... to arrange, to assign a place, to appoint": passive, ... (A. V. ordained), Rom 13:1; (Thayer 5021).*

*tasso "to place in order, arrange," signifies "to appoint," e. g., of the place where Christ had "appointed" a meeting with His disciples after His resurrection, Mt 28:16; of positions of military and civil authority over others, whether "appointed" by men, Lk 7:8, or by God, Romans 13:1," (Vine's p. )*

There is no authority on the face of this earth and no matter what time on earth that has not be "*put in place*," or "*appointed*," by God.

There is an important play on words in this section.

All government is *tasso* (set in place and appointed by God).

Every soul is to *hupo-tasso* (place ourselves under what is set in place)

Some are *anti-tasso* (resist range in battle against what is set in place).

But God has given ordinances *dia - tasso* ( the means or instrument by which God's order and arrangement are set in place)

If this seems to be more than can be accepted simply by this passage then supplement it with those passages that express the same thing in the Old Testament. Not only of Israel, but of all the nations. What follows is not part of an interpretation of Romans but an elaboration of those things God has revealed about his role with the nations.

As Paul preached to the Athenians, he made it very clear that it was God who made all the nations and that after creating every nation he determined the borders of their land and the duration of their existence.

*and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined (their) appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: Acts 17:26-27*

God revealed through Jeremiah that he is the potter and all the nations are the clay. He determines their existence based upon their conduct and his needs. If the nation is wicked and God makes the determination to break it down and destroy it the repentance of the nation will lead him to change his mind based upon their change of conduct. The opposite is true as well. If God determined so

allow a nation to continue and be blessed and they choose to do wickedly, then God will repent of the good he was going to do.

*The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was making a work on the wheels. 4 And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. 7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; 8 if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 if they do that which is evil in my sight, that they obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. Jer 18:1-10*

We see this in practical terms in Jonah's being sent to Ninevah to declare their end and through repentance God chose to allow them to continue.

*So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. . . . 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not. Jonah 3:3-6, 10*

The exact opposite is what God sternly warned Israel would be their outcome. The nations before them were to be plucked up and the time of their dominion brought to end and Israel given their land. But only as long as Israel walked in God's laws otherwise what had happened to the first nations would happen to them also.

*Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you; 25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. 26 Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you; 27 (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); 28 that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. 29 For whosoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. 30 Therefore shall ye keep my charge, that ye practise not any of these abominable customs, which were practised before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am Jehovah your God. Lev 18:24-30*

Know therefore this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before thee: so shalt thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee. 4 Speak not thou in thy heart, after that Jehovah thy God hath thrust them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness Jehovah hath brought me in to possess this land; whereas for the wickedness of these nations Jehovah doth drive them out from before thee. 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may establish the word which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Dt. 9:3-6

It was to Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar that God revealed some of his strongest teachings on how he rules in the kingdoms of men. Daniel had already come to this understanding then applied it to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that have understanding; 22 he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. Dan 2:20-22

He has a dream that he cannot understand so he calls Daniel to interpret the dream. In this dream Nebuchadnezzar is to learn that "God rules in the kingdoms of men and gives it to whomever he pleases.

this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25 that thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee; **till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.** 26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, **after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.** . . . 31 O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee: 32 and thou shalt be driven from men; and they dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen; and seven times shall pass over thee; **until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.** . . . 34 And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever; **for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation.** 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Dan 4:24-25; 31-32; 34-35;

Later when Nebuchadnezzar's son was reigning and knew all that had happened to his father and still rejected God's dominion, God weighed him found him short and took the kingdom to give to another.

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O thou king, **the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty:** 19 and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. 20 But **when his heart was lifted up,** and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he **was deposed from his kingly throne,** and they took his glory from him: 21 and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; **until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.** 22 **And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this,** 23 but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing was inscribed. 25 And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: **MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end;** 27 **TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.** 28 **PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.** ... 30 In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean King was slain. 31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. Dan 5:17-38; 30-311

This is something God had revealed to Abraham long before. When he promised to give the land to his children he foretold that it would be over 400 years because the nations were not yet wicked enough to cut short their times and seasons.,

*And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them. And they shall afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge. And afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace. Thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again. For the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full. Gen 15:13-16*

There are so many times in the Scriptures where this principle is set forth. as we conclude this section, think about all the examples of things God has done based upon the principal that he rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he choose.

Raising up Pharaoh:

*And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For I will this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For now I had put forth my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth: 16 but in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. Ex 9:13-16*

*For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth. 22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: 23 and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory, Rom 9:17; 22-23*

For three transgressions yea for four:

*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Gaza, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole people, to deliver them up to Edom: 7 but I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour the palaces thereof. Amos 1:6-7*

*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: 12 but I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah. Amos 1:11-12*

*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they may enlarge their border: 14 but I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; Amos 1:13-14*

*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime: 2 but I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet; Amos 2:1-2*

*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Judah, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have rejected the law of Jehovah, and have not kept his statutes, and their lies have caused them to err, after which their fathers did walk: 5 but I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem. Amos 2:4-5*

*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes-- 7 they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go unto the (same) maiden, to profane my holy name: 8 and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined. Amos 2:6-8*

With all these Scriptures there can be no doubt that we are intended to interpret the words of Paul in their fullest sense:

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the (powers) that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. Rom 13:1-2

## 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power,

“*hoste*, ...a consecutive conjunction, i. e. expressing consequence or result,...1. so that, [A. V., frequently *insomuch that*];... it is also used of a designed result, so as to i.q. *in order to, for to...* 2. so then, therefore, wherefore...” (Thayer, p. 683; 5620)

The logical conclusion of v 1 is here plainly put forth. Since all civil government has been set into position and its ruler placed there by God, if a servant of God(or any other *soul* for that matter) refuses to submit to it then there is a linked chain that leads one directly against God.

The word resist was “originally a military term” and meant “to range in battle against.” Resistance would include a refusal to submit to its commands, or more actively seeking to oppose or resist or even overthrow the government itself. In time of war when the term “the resistance” is used it refers to those who actively resist a hostile power and seek to overthrow it.

*antitasso* ... anti, "against," tasso, "to arrange," originally a military term, "to range in battle against," and frequently so found in the papyri, is used in the middle voice signifying "to set oneself against, resist," (a) of men, Acts 18:6, "opposed themselves"; elsewhere "to resist," of resisting human potentates, Romans 13:2; (b) of God, James 4:6; 5:6, negatively, of leaving persistent evildoers to pursue their self-determined course, with eventual retribution; 1 Peter 5:5. (Vine)

This too is a participle and could be translated “*the resisters*” or “*the ones who are resisting.*” It may be a single law, or it may be the government itself, but all civil disobedience is a form of resistance to a governing power is condemned. This completes the play on words described earlier. The powers that be are *tasso*(set in place and appointed by God). The living and transformed sacrifice will be *hupo-tasso*(*place ourselves under what is set in place*) while those who strongly reject some aspect of the government are *anti-tasso*(*resist range in battle against what is set in place*).

Israel had a long history of this activity. They believed that they were the people of God and as such had the only rightful government on earth. Therefore to resist that government is to be a true servant of God. But that was never true and certainly is not true today. Remember what God told Israel through Jeremiah.

*Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all the captivity, whom I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem unto Babylon: 5 Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 6 Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply ye there, and be not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto Jehovah for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. Jer 29:4-7*

When God ordained the fall of Israel, it was the duty of the faithful to submit to that power. According to Daniel’s dreams, God also ordained the captivity and terrible battles between the North and the South after the conquests of Alexander the Great as well as the conquest of Rome. Those who fought against and subverted these powers were fighting against the ordinances of God.

### withstandeth the ordinance of God:

The term withstand falls into the same category as resisting. If we place *anti-tasso*(resist) and *anth(anti) histemi* side by side we again see the tie. This time it is the prefix that is the same. The verb *histemi* means to stand or make to stand. It is often so translated literally. Moses stood(*histemi*) on holy ground. Those who resist civil government are “*standing against*” “*setting against*” “*opposing and resisting*” the ordinance of God.

*anthistemi*, "to set against" (anti, "against," histemi, "to cause to stand"), used in the middle (or passive) voice and in the intransitive 2nd aorist and perfect active, signifying "to withstand, oppose, resist," is translated "to resist...." (Vine 476)

By seeking to knock down and overturn what God has set in place they are actually seeking to

overturn the ordinance of God. Once again the verb *tasso* is prefixed by a preposition. This time the preposition *dia* (means or instrument by which something is accomplished) is added to the verb *tasso* (to place in order, arrange). An ordinance is the means or instrument by which God's order and arrangement are set in place.

*diatage*... , a purely Biblical ... and ecclesiastical word ... a disposition, arrangement, ordinance: Romans 13:2; ... (Thayer 1296)

*diatage* an ordinance, Romans 13:2 (cf. *diatasso*, "to appoint, ordain"), is rendered "disposition" in Acts 7:53; RV, "as it (the law) was ordained by angels" (Vine 1296)

But those who resist any ruling power is arranging himself against (*anti*) it. God has set up all civil government. There is no power that is not ordained of God. Therefore any resistance against what God has set up is a resistance against the very ordinance God set in place to keep them standing. No living sacrifice who is being transformed can do this or will do this.

### **and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.**

Although Paul uses the same word (withstand) this time he makes it a perfect participle. Thus the action of withstanding becomes such a prominent part of these people that they are now called *resisters*. By changing it to a perfect tense he speaks of a decision and action that occurred previously and the affects of that decision still not repented of continues right up to the present moment.

Such *resisters* will receive "judgment."

"*krima*... 1. a decree... judgments;... 2. judgment i. e. condemnation of wrong, the decision (whether severe or mild) which one passes on the faults of others... In a forensic sense, the sentence of a judge... of the punishment to which one is sentenced... where the justice of God in punishing is to be shown, *krima* denotes *condemnatory sentence, penal judgment, sentence*... 3. a matter to be judicially decided, a lawsuit, a case in court..." (Thayer, p. 360; 2917)

Although this word can simply mean judgment in an ambiguous sense with no outcome (acquittal or condemnation) generally when it is used of God's judgment it means "the sentence of a judge" or "the punishment to which one is sentenced." Hence *resisters* will receive a "condemnatory sentence" or "penal judgment."

Much perplexity has been caused by the term "to themselves."

"*heautou*... a reflexive pronoun of the 3d person. It is used 1. of the 3d pers. sing. and plur., to denote that the agent and the person acted on are the same... 2. It serves as reflexive also to the 1st and 2d pers. ..." (Thayer, p. 163; 1438).

A reflexive pronoun describes something in which the agent "*judgment*" and the person its acts upon "*themselves*" are the same. But in the context here the logical agent of judgment is God. So which is it? Consider some other passages where this term is used in a similar context. In Romans one Paul speaks not only of the condemnation from God, but the natural consequence of condemnation that comes from doing something that so many others look down upon for its very unnatural state.

*and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due. Rom 1:27*

The implication is that such people will never be happy and content in the way God created them to be.

*For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. 30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep. 1 Cor 11:29-30*

In this verse Paul speaks not only of the condemnation from God, but also the terrible consequences of the act upon the one who practices it. Such a one is weak, sickly or even dead as a natural consequence of their actions. Does this mean that God will do nothing further, absolutely not for such a one is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led*



*astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Tim 6:10*

In this passage Paul speaks of the natural consequences of the love of money. Not only do they face the judgment of God but they pieced themselves through with many sorrows just as a natural consequence of their decisions. Many lose their wives and families, their health and reputation.

So here, they certainly do receive in themselves judgment, but this does not exclude the judgment of God that will come later. Those who place themselves in opposition to the ordinance of God regarding submission to civil government are hunted down. They are jailed, fined and even killed. Look at Sheba:

*And there happened to be there a base fellow, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew the trumpet, and said, We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. 2 So all the men of Israel went up from following David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem. ... highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. 14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maacah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him. 15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah, and they cast up a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart; and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down. . . 21 The matter is not so: but a man of the hill-country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David; deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. 22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. 2 Sam 20:1-2; 13-15; 21-22*

This certainly did not mean that God also would not punish him, only that he brought down terrible judgment upon himself.

Before leaving this topic we must deal with one of the thornier aspects of this command. All nations eventually fall and many of them fall from within due to treachery or opposition, resisting and withstanding. There is a time when these things are God's will. Think about the kings of Israel:

*And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, he also lifted up his hand against the king. 27 And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breach of the city of David his father. ... 29 the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; now (Ahijah) had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field. 30 And Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces. 31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces; for thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee 1King 11:26-27; 29-31*

Jeroboam resisted the power because he knew it was God's will to resist. So also did Zimri(1 Kings 16:9-13), Jehu(2 K 9:1-10) and many of the judges. The problem we face today is that we do not know the will of God. We could never know until it was accomplished that God wanted America to be a sovereign nation and no longer under England. Throughout history there have been insurrections some succeeded and many failed. The simplest solution for the Christian is to be in submission to the ruling authorities and when it is clear there will be a new ruling authority one must be in submission to them.

The second thorny issue is the one set forth by Peter and John in Acts and all the Christians in the first century. What happens when civil government begins to create laws that force the living sacrifice and transformed servant of God to violate their commands or God's commands.

*But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. Acts 4:19-20*

*But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29(ASV)*

*Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against his anointed, (saying), 3 Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision. 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure: 6 Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Ps 2:1-6*

The only answer to this question is to place the commands side by side and violate neither of them. We can continue to obey our King and also respect the ruling authorities. Just because we cannot keep a law they set that violates our own convictions does not mean we are withstanding or

resisting. Only that we must obey God rather than men when the situation arises where such a choice must be made. But too many use the one to justify the other.

### 3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil.

With a “*gar - the reason and cause of the foregoing statement*” is explained. Paul reminds God’s people of the reason why civil government was created. This is the ideal for all human authority. They exist to be a terror to the evildoer and bring no terror to those who do good. Paul introduces a new term for those who are placed over men to lead.

*archon...* (present participle of the verb) *archo ... a ruler, commander, chief, leader.* (Thayer p. ; 758)

These ruling ones(participle) are those who make up civil government. Peter calls them “the king as supreme and the governors sent by him.” The term governor is similar to this one “*hegemon... a leader of any kind, a guide, ruler, prefect, president, chief, general, commander, sovereign;*” (Thayer p. 276; 2232). Every government has officials who create and administer law, officials who enforce the laws, and officials who punish those who break law. In America this would be the local, state, and federal government made up of police(city), sheriff(county) Highway Patrol(state), FBI(Federal). We have the same with creating of the laws(legislation) and the judicial branch to mete out the penalties. All of these fall under the word “*rulers.*”

But those who are keeping all the laws and are respectful of the civil governmental authorities as decreed by God fore his servants have nothing to *fear* from these people. No arm of the government creates any *fear* in the hearts of those who are doing what they want to be done.

“*phobos, ...1. fear, dread, terror; in a subjective sense... In an objective sense, that which strikes terror ...*” (Thayer, p. 656; 5401)

When one is breaking the law, and suddenly those who enforce those laws are present, there is a fear and dread that creates a momentary feeling of terror verging on panic. Who has not felt this when they see the red lights appear in their rearview mirror and they look down to see they are speeding? But if they are not speeding and were not speeding, that red light creates no *terror*. Those who obey the law want to see those who enforce the law. It makes them feel safe.

Hence rulers see only two classes in those they govern. There are those who do good and those who do evil. Those doing good are those who are “*upright and honorable,*” “*useful and of good constitution.*” Citizens who obey the laws, respect the authority and give honor to those who rule are seen by any government as good and profitable. They respect in return and do not harass or trouble them. But the second class is different. For those who are evil are a plague and trouble to those who rule. They are “*not such as they ought to be*” and are thus judged “*troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, or baneful.*”

When government rules as it was designed and intended to rule by God then the good have nothing to fear and the evil everything to fear. So God’s children have an obvious choice whether they respect or agree with those who are ruling over them. Regardless of our own personal feelings we are going to be seen as good or evil by those appointed by God to rule. No living sacrifice who is transforming his mind will ever do anything that is perceived by another as an evil act.

Once again we are bought back to the circumstance that makes this so difficult. Many governments do not reach the level of the ideal God had in mind. Many governments do not punish those whom God defines as being evil.

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Isa 5:20*

Worse than this is tyranny and injustice.

*If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent taking away of justice and righteousness in a province, marvel not at the matter: for one higher than the high regardeth; and there are higher than they. Eccl 5:8*

But this is not for the servant to judge. He must leave it to the master. We may see tyranny and dishonesty in those who rule. We may be given laws we can neither respect or hold in honor. But the Scriptures are silent for us to take matters into our own hands. We do have authority from God

to choose him over those who rule under him if we are forced to choose between them. But only in that instance are we given the right to resist the government we are born under.

### **And wouldest thou have no fear of the power?**

There just isn't any middle ground. Though the worldly mind seeks for it, it is not to be found. We are either viewed by the government (and by our God) as an evildoer or as a good citizen. If we want to have no fear then we can only go in one direction. If we "will" to have no fear then there is only one path open to us.

*"thelo, ... (derived apparently fr. helein with a fuller aspiration, so that it means prop. to seize with the mind; ...) TO WILL, (have in mind,) intend; i.e. 1. to be resolved or determined, to purpose ... 2. to desire, to wish: ... 3. l. q. to love foll. by an inf., to like to do a thing, be fond of doing... 4. in imitation of the Hebr. ... to take delight, have pleasure... the will which proceed from inclination..." (Thayer p 285-286; 2309)*

What do we *intend* for our relationship to those who rule in this present evil world to be? Are we "resolved or determined," do we "purpose" and have a "desire and wish" to be fearless?

*"phobeo... to terrify, frighten..., to put to flight by terrifying (to scare away). 1. to be put to flight, to flee, ... 2. to fear, be afraid; ... to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm: of those who fear harm or injury... of those startled by strange sights or occurrences... 3. to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience..." (Thayer, p. 655-656; 5399).*

If we do not want to be terrified every time we hear a noise, a knock at the door, see a government official approaching, then we have to count the cost. There is no reason to get involved in government resistance and the desire to overthrow what exists. That is not what blood bought servants of God do. They leave those things to God. It is not our domain. God never intended for his people to get involved in these things.

### **do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:**

This is where the natural man and the living sacrifice can come into stark contrast. It makes sense to us to do whatever is necessary to bring about equity in this life. But God has asked us not to do this. Regardless of our feelings toward those in power, it is God's order. Civil government punishes evildoers and praises those who do good. Citizens do that which is good and receive honor and praise from those ruling. This is the perfect order God established, but as we all know, when fallible men are placed into God's order, they do not always do what God asked or desired for them to do.

As in all commands of the Lord, we are responsible only for our actions, not for the actions of others. Regardless of what evil others might be doing, we have responsibilities to God that are not impacted by them. We still love our enemies and pray for those who spitefully use us. We still turn the other cheek and go the second mile. As much as lies within us we live in peace with all men and we never repay evil with evil, but only evil with good. This is clearly true of individuals, now Paul has made it a part of our relationship with civil government. We may disagree with the fallible men placed into the position God ordered and doing it badly.

We may feel our convictions are being compromised and the truth being trampled upon. We may even feel that we must do something because no one else is doing it. But God forbids it. We live in God's order even if others do not. This is true of all other relationships and it is true of civil government. Christians who are parents or Children, Husbands or wives; servants or masters or brethren with brethren all have the duty to do all that Jesus asks us to do. It doesn't matter what those we are commanded to treat well are doing. All that matters is that we are doing what we should be doing.

*Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 18 Servants, (be) in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. 1 Pet 2:13-19*

#### 4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good.

With a second “*gar - the reason and cause of the foregoing statement*” is again given. This is why we must be in subjection, why we must not resist, and why we should do that which is good. Paul has moved from *higher powers to rulers* and now to *he*. He is the pronoun for any individual who is a part of civil government. Whether it is the king, governor, mayor, police or judge, we are to see him as a *minister* of God.

“*diakonos, ... one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; 1. univ.: of the servant of a king... of those who advance others' interests even at the sacrifice of their own;... of one who does what promotes the welfare and prosperity of the church, 2. a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use ...*” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., 138; 1249)

As one can see from the definition, there is a wide variety of meanings to this term. It is the word used for the deacons in the local church. It is also used of those who “*executes the commands of another.*” Thus this person has been placed into the position of being a “*servant, attendant or minister*” to God. Those who have been chosen as the rulers in this world have been chosen by God for this specific purpose. They are the ministers for this end. God has other ministers and each is to minister, serve and function as God has determined. In the scriptures below we see the diversity of servants(ministers) God has chosen and the work they have been chosen to do.

*But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your **minister**; Mt 20:25-26*

*for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a **minister** of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Rom 13:4*

*For I say that Christ hath been made a **minister** of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises (given) unto the fathers, Rom 15:8*

*What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? **Ministers** through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. 1 Cor 3:5*

*And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his **ministers** also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works. 2 Cor 11:14- 15*

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and **deacons**: Phil 1:1*

*And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, 22 yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprieveable before him: 23 if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a **minister**. Col 1:21-23*

***Deacons** in like manner (must be) grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 1 Tim 3:8*

*Let **deacons** be husbands of one wife, ruling (their) children and their own houses well. 1 Tim 3:12*

*If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good **minister** of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed (until now): 1 Tim 4:6*

As is clearly seen, each individual as his or her realm of ministry and service. All Christians are to be ministers of one another. Civil Government is God's minister to administer justice and punishment to evil doers. Christ came as a minister to the circumcision Paul and Apollos were ministers to the church at Corinth. Satan has ministers who do his will and deacons are appointed to minister to the local church where they attend.

Each has a realm in which to work. It is not the business of one who is ministering in one realm to get involved in a ministry that another has been appointed to do. King Josiah is a classic example

of meddling with one of God's ministers:

*After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? (I come) not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from (meddling with) God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Neco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. 23 And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. 24 So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 2 Chr 35:20-24*

Paul warns those who have brought their bodies to him as living sacrifices in the same way as Pharaoh did to Josiah. God has given the rule to whomsoever he will and regardless of how well they are doing their work, those transforming themselves through the good, perfect and acceptable will of God leave to him how to deal with the ministers he appoints to rule over man. The end never justifies the means. If in accomplishing that which we deem to be good we do that which is evil, we have transgressed into a realm that is neither our business or concern.

Civil government is a servant of God. It rules as he desires it to rule, or it is removed. This Nebuchadnezzar and his son found out, as did the Assyrian kings. All Christians need to view civil government as an extension of the power of God. As the Christian is the servant of God in spiritual matters so also is civil government in matters of punishment. When a man deserves the death penalty, or to be penalized in any fashion, personal vengeance is not to be taken, but still punishment must be meted out. Civil government is God's minister to do that. He is a minister for good in that he takes care of those who do well by protecting them from those that would do evil.

**But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid;**

As God's minister then, the most important role is to deal with evil. Any one who is judged "*not such as they ought to be*" is quickly condemned as "*troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, or baneful.*" Those so judged are then punished. So anyone who does evil either in violating the laws created to protect those who are innocent or in regard to the overthrow or other forms of disobedience as a matter of conscience is of little concern to the government. Those who cheat on their taxes whether to become rich, or to make a point that they do not agree where the money is going are judged the same by government. So if anyone (Christians) included do what is evil then they need to be afraid regardless of why they are breaking those laws.

This is what God's minister does and it is God's will that he do so. We cannot expect praise from God's minister or God himself if for whatever reason we choose to set ourselves against those who rule. Even if the motives are the very best, we are still doing evil when we break the laws of men. He will punish you just as he punishes all other evil doers and you cannot expect God to intervene in your behalf even though you have been washed in the blood of Jesus. If one commits murder or one breaks a speed limit, they will be punished by civil government accordingly. God will forgive them of their crime, but still they must be punished for it. Death could still be meted out to a forgiven man. Fear therefore.

**for he beareth not the sword in vain:**

Once again Paul uses *gar* - reason and cause of the previous statement) to join the phrases. The reason that those who do evil need to be afraid is now set forth. This minister of God "*bears*" a sword. This is "*not a simple act of bearing, but a continuous or habitual condition*" (Vine) or "*bear constantly*" (Thayer). The civil authorities never take off this sword. They are always bearing it. This sword is either a "*large knife*" or "*a small sword.*" It is used "*as a weapon for making or repelling an attack... of the sword as the instrument of a magistrate of judge: death by the sword.*"

*"machaira... 1, a large knife, used for killing animals and cutting up flesh... 2. A small sword, distinguished from the large sword... and curved for a cutting stroke ... In the N.T. univ. a sword... as a weapon for making or repelling an attack... of the sword as the instrument of a magistrate of judge: death by the sword, Rom 8:35... to bear the sword, is used of him to whom the sword has been committed, viz. to use when a malefactor is to be punished;*

hence i.q. *to have the power of life and death...* Rom 13:4" (Thayer p 393; 3162)

Most of the definitions have within it the idea of "*the power of life and death.*" This passage is often cited as the proof that the NT authorizes the government to use capital punishment. With all the passages in the Old Testament clearly revealing that God expected all nations to punish a murderer and others with capital punishment it is difficult to see why that would have been removed, and Paul states that it has not. This command goes all the way back to Noah after he left the ark.

*And surely your blood, (the blood) of your lives, will I require. At the hand of every beast will I require it. And at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. 6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God made he man. Gen 9:5-6*

In Israel, God expanded it to violations of the Sabbath(Ex 21:), kidnaping(Ex 21:16), cursing mother and father(Ex 31:14-15), adultery(Lev 20:10), or blaspheming God's name(Lev 20:16). Civil government has always held life and death power and the sword signified this in Rome. It was by the sword that James and other faithful men were put to death.

*Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. Acts 12:1-2*

*they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated Heb 11:37*

If this does not refer to the highest form of punishment given to those who rule, then it is difficult to understand why Paul used the term at all. But obviously if this refers to the power of the state to put evil-doers to death then we ought to fear them indeed. For that sword was not given in "*vain.*"

*eike ... .. adverb; ... in Greek writings ... 1. *inconsiderately, without purpose, without just cause:* Mt 5:22 ... Rom 13:4 (i.e. 'not to hide it in the scabbard, but to draw it' Fritzsche); Col 2:18. 2. *in vain; without success or effect:* 1 Corinthians 15:2; Galatians 3:4; 4:11. Thayer's NT:1500*

God gave that sword to be used. It is not "kept in the scabbard" nor is it held "without purpose." It was given to take life and it was used to take life. Therefore all who resist that power need to be afraid.

### **for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.**

Once again a *gar* to emphasize that this is the reason and purpose for the previous statement. He repeats minister then states what this minister has been designated by God to accomplish. This minister is the avenger for wrath.

1. *ekdikos* primarily, "without law," then, "one who exacts a penalty from a person, an avenger, a punisher," is used in Rom 13:4 of a civil authority in the discharge of his function of executing wrath on the evildoer (KJV, wrongly, "revenger"); in 1 Th 4:6, of God as the avenger of the one who wrongs his brother, here particularly in the matter of adultery. (Vine's 1558)

He is the "avenger or punisher" for the purpose of wrath. Thus civil government is the minister of God to punish those who are evil. The context now becomes clearer. Remember that at the end of the previous chapter Paul used these same words with a prohibition.

*Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath (of God): for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. Rom 12:19*

No Christian is a minister to avenge for the Christian is not to avenge anything. Instead he is to leave it to God and God has appointed a minister to do this avenging. We are not that minister. We are not to avenge ourselves individually nor are we to take it upon ourselves to avenge wrongs on a civil government. We leave all this to God and the ministers he chooses. God chose Nebuchadnezzar to avenge the blood that the leaders in Judea had shed. So God can choose a civil government to avenge evil and if it becomes an evil doer he can appoint another minister to avenge that wrong as well. But no living sacrifice is to become such a minister. We are to transform our minds away from this and allow God to do things his own way.

### **5 Wherefore (ye) must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath,**

All of this is the reason why every servant of God who has placed his body as a living sacrifice for God to use will be in subject to that governing authority. All governments are ordained and set in

place by God, when they are resisted the one resisting becomes an evil-doer not only in the eyes of God but also in the eyes of those God appointed to be his ministers. He has been given a sword that he never takes off and will not hesitate to use in order to avenge evil. But all this being true, this wrath is not the only reason.

*“monos,... 1. an adjective alone(without a companion); a. with verbs... b. it is joined with its noun to other verbs also so that what is predicated may be declared to apply to some one person along... 2. alone, only, merely... referring to an action expressed by a verb” (Thayer, p. 418; 3441).*

Literally Paul says *“you must be in submission not “alone, only, or merely” because of wrath.”* Wrath is not the only reason why those transforming submit to civil government. The term “because of” is *dia - primary meaning through(because this is how the action passes through)* hence “the ground or reason on account of which anything is or is not done.” Hence the portal through which submission comes is not just fear of wrath but as if not more importantly through conscience.

### **but also for conscience’ sake.**

In English and Greek the term is made up of exactly the same two terms. The Greek prefix *sun-* and the English prefix *con-* both mean with. The Greek *eido* and the English *science* both speak of thing we see and know. So the conscience is that which sees and knows with or next to something else.

*“suneidesis... [lit. ‘joint-knowledge’]... a. the consciousness of anything... b. the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other; conscience... “ (Thayer, p. 602-603; 4893)*

*“suneidon... 1. To see(have seen) together with others. 2. To see(have seen) in one’s mind, with one’s self... to understand, perceive, comprehend... 1. To know with another, be privy to... 2. To know in one’s mind or with one’s self; to be conscious of...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; Op. Cit. P. 603; 4894)*

Rather than speak of how conscience the conscience is generally understood in the breakdown of the mind in psychology, we are better to go to the Scriptures and gain a clear understanding from the God who gave it to us.

The most comprehensive passage on the inner workings and purpose of the conscience is also in Romans.

*in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing (them) Rom 2:15*

The conscience bears witness and either accuses or excuses. Thus the conscience is a separate entity in the mind that watches over all our thoughts, words and deeds. It assesses motives, goals, and the true intent of each. Once we have a knowledge of right and wrong the conscience will assess these things and excuse us if it is right and accuse us if it is wrong. Paul says the same thing about himself:

*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, Rom 9:1*

What he says with his mind, his conscience bears witness to as being the truth. Thus there are two voices and two to bear witness in our thoughts. Whenever we are faced with moral dilemmas, whether good or evil, the decision making process begins with our taking all the facts we know from the Scriptures and from our personal life and striving to make a decision. Our conscience is overseeing all of this and with no help from our conscience mind bears witness to whether what we are doing is right or wrong. It either accuses us if we are knowingly overlooking something that would change the outcome or it excuses us if we have taken all the facts into consideration and are doing the best we can to do what is right.

As Paul spoke of his own conscience he revealed that he had lived *“before God in all good conscience,”* had a *conscience void of offense toward God,”* and a *“pure conscience.”*

And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. Acts 23:1

Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. Acts 24:16

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day 2 Tim 1:3

As Paul had carefully considered his actions before doing them, he always allowed his conscience to thoroughly examine his motives, his facts and his decisions. Always what he had done was in full knowledge that his conscience approved of what he was doing. This brings up an interesting dilemma. While Paul speaks above of his good, pure and void of offence conscience, he speaks elsewhere of being the chief of sinners and an injurious blasphemer.

Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief: 1 Tim 1:15

I thank him that enabled me, (even) Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to (his) service; 13 though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; 1 Tim 1:12-13

The key is found in “I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Paul’s conscience was not involved in this because he did not know it was wrong because of his ignorant unbelief. This of course reveals the limitation of a conscience. It must have all the facts in the moral realm before it can make the right decisions. If we believe something is right because of ignorance our conscience will be fine with what we are doing and will not accuse us because the mind is not educated enough for it to work properly. This is why we must be proving the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. There is always a danger that we can in all good conscience do something that is wrong.

But the other side is different. Whether by ignorance or deception, our conscience is led to accuse us of something we think is wrong when it is not really wrong, the violation of the conscience is a sin. Even if it is not wrong, if we believe it is wrong and leads to our conscience accuses us and making us feel as a sinner, then it actually becomes a sin. In short it is always a sin to violate ones conscience. Paul uses the issue of meat that has been sacrificed to an idol. Although the idol is nothing, the sacrifice is nothing, and there is nothing tainted about the meat, not all have the knowledge and subsequent faith to see it in this manner. So those who still feel it is a sin to eat this meat cannot eat the meat. If a stronger brother in eating the meat encourages them to also eat the meat then the weaker brother defiles (pollutes, stains, contaminates) his conscience. This is always a sin. Because whatever is not of faith is sin.

yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him. 7 Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as (of) a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. . . . 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 1 Cor 8:6-7, 10-12

The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. 23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because (he eateth) not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Rom 14:22-23

The Scriptures clearly demand we live with a good conscience always seeking to satisfy its demands to do that which is good and to abstain from all that is evil.

But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned: 1 Tim 1:5

This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; 19 holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: 1 Tim 1:18-19

Violating ones conscience can lead to its being seared and defiled.



*But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 1 Tim 4:1-2*

*To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. Titus 1:15*

The best option is to always work in such a way that our heart does not condemn us and our conscience remains free from concern.

*Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him: 20 because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; 1 Jn 3:19-21*

With all this in mind we can now return to Paul's warning. We have now learned that it is always evil to resist or hinder civil government. Those put into the positions to rule are placed there by God. We are not to take vengeance but to give place to God's wrath which is to be poured out by his chosen minister(civil government) all evil doers are to be punished and therefore should fear this government and be obedient and submissive. Not that we know all this, we have an obligation to live up to our conscience which will now cause us grief every time we choose to be disobedient to the ruling authority.

## **6 For this cause ye pay tribute also;**

With another *gar* Paul again gives this as the reason and cause of the previous version. Because of all the above this is why you pay tribute. In the word *tribute*, both to Jews and to Greeks the real emotional punch is seen. With the exception of the Romans themselves, the connotation of *tribute* was slavery and subjugation. To the Jews however, the paying of tribute was considered treason to God who was their only sovereign.

*phoros/phoroi* ... 1. A verbal abstract of *phero*, *phoros* means strictly "carrying," "bringing." It then denotes the tribute to be paid by subject peoples, ... means in all the references "tribute" paid to a foreign ruler, whether as "land-tax" or "poll-tax." It differs from *tele* i.e., the "tolls," "use-taxes," "customs dues" and "business taxes" which either native authorities or an alien power, in this case the Roman emperor, might exact. The problem in the texts, then, is that of the relation of members of God's people, both Jews and Christians, to pagan government. After the census of Quirinius in 6 A.D. and the opposition stirred up against it by Judas the Galilean, the imposing of the *phoros* and the collection of *tele* for the emperor gave new pertinence to the question as to the right of an earthly ruler to tax the people that belongs to God alone. If the term *phoros* carried with it the odium of bondage for the Greeks ... it posed for the Jews the alternative of loyalty or treason to God as the one and only Lord. (Kittel TDWNT 5419

It was this term that the Jewish leaders hoped to entrap Jesus for it embodied all the pent up fury of the Jews over the mistreatment and subjugation by Rome. If he answered pay it, he would be discredited to the people and if he answered don't pay it he would be speaking treason against Rome. His answer is exactly what Paul is teaching here.

*Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, 24 Show me a denarius. Whose image and superscription hath it? And they said, Caesar's. 25 And he said unto them, Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Luke 20:22-25*

This is what all living sacrifices who are seeking transformation must understand. There are things that belong to Caesar as God's minister and those things are to be paid(Paul will deal with this more fully in the next verse). Regardless of the reasons or the uses of the tribute(tax) God's people are commanded to pay it.

So the question should a Christian pay taxes to a civil government is now answered. Because of the reasons listed above including conscience, a Christian is compelled to pay taxes. To cheat on tribute no matter what the reason the individual might give is simply the sin of stealing. Civil government is God's minister and therefore is sanctioned by God to exact whatever tribute it chooses. It may or may not always be fair, but it must always be paid.

It is interesting to think about to whom and where this letter was going. Only three or four years

after this epistle was written when Paul arrived in Rome the Jews wanted to know about “*the way that is spoken against everywhere*” (Acts 28:22). Any official in Rome who read this letter would find nothing within it to create a charge of treason or even to see Paul’s teaching as any kind of a threat to Rome.

### **for they are ministers of God’s service,**

Another *gar*, a further explanation. Our tribute is going to God’s ministers. This time Paul uses a different word for minister.

*leitourgeo* ... 1. a public minister; a servant of the state: ... Inscriptions; of the lictors, ... 2. universally, a minister, servant: so of military laborers, often in Polybius; of the servants of a king, 1 Esdras 10:5; Ecclesiasticus 10:2; (of Joshua, Joshua 1:1 Alex.; universally, 2 Samuel 13:18 (cf. 2 Samuel 13:17)); of the servants of the priests, ... of the temple, i. e. one busied with holy things, of a priest, Hebrews 8:2,... of Paul likening himself to a priest, Romans 15:16; plural ... those by whom God administers his affairs and executes his decrees: so of magistrates, Rom 13:6; of angels, Heb 1:7 from Ps 103:4 ( 104:4)... (Thayer p. 375; 3008)

By using this term Paul is placing these *servants* alongside of the priests, Paul himself, and angels. There is not an equivalency here. Paul is only saying that God set them in place and they are doing the job God appointed them to do. They are therefore only accountable to God. Whether those ministers are what they ought to be is inconsequential. Christians can in good conscience pay taxes to a government that may be hostile to them or odious to them in regard to their policies and lifestyles. Seldom in the history of God’s people or of foreign governments have God’s true people regarded with respect their leadership based upon their lifestyle. Even Paul recognized that regardless of how wicked their actions we must still show them the proper respect.

*Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people. Ex 22:28*

*And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest? 5 And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people. Acts 23:4-5*

How can it be against our conscience to pay tribute after we learn that God appointed them to do what they are doing and we are to support them in that role. This is something they are doing for God and therefore:

*Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Rom 14:4*

### **attending continually upon this very thing.**

Their responsibility which continues day by day is to protect that which is right and punish that which is evil. They attend to it continually.

*proskartereo*... from *karteros* (‘strong,’ ‘steadfast’), ... *to persevere* (‘continue steadfastly’) in anything ... of persons, with the dative of a thing, *to give constant attention to a thing*, Acts 2:42 ... to adhere to one, be his adherent; to be devoted or constant to one: Acts 8:13; 10:7, *to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing*, Romans 13:6 (Thayer 4342)

*proskartereo* “to be steadfast,” a strengthened form of *kartereo* (pros, “towards,” intensive, *karteros*, “strong”), denotes to continue steadfastly in a thing and give unremitting care to it, e. g., Romans 13:6, of rulers in the discharge of their functions. (Vine 4342)

The services of police, military and other things is the responsibility of civil government. Therefore pay your tribute.

### **7 Render to all their dues:**

The Spirit now broadens this out. The term “*render*” means “to give or do something which one should in fulfilment of an obligation or expectation.” Whatever the obligation or expectation of a good citizen in the land, the Holy Spirit commands us to give it.

“*apodidomi*. 1. a. “To give or do something which one should in fulfilment of an obligation or expectation.” Mt 20:8; 2 Tm. 4:8(a reward); Mt. 21:41 (fruits of the leased vineyard); Mk 12:17...(Taxes); ... b. More particularly “to repay in the form of reward or punishment:” of the divine retribution, Mt. 6:4,6,18; to each according to his works. Rom. 2:6; 2 Tim 4:14...” (Kittel Vol 2; p. 167-168; 591)

Specifically one has the obligation to give to all their “dues” i.e. “that which is owed.”

“*opheile... that which is owed; prop. a debt... metaph. plur. dues; Rom 13:7; Spec of conjugal duty...*” (Thayer, p. 469; 3782)

So every employee of the government who is sent forth with a task for us to fulfill. We see it as an expectation and obligation and therefore our debt which is owed to them. This obviously includes all local, state and federal obligations. Those sent forth to collect these things must be rendered what is owed. Police deserve our respect and obedience, building inspectors, tax collectors, etc.

### **tribute to whom tribute (is due);**

Paul first returns to the term used above. Not only is this tribute to be given to God’s minister because he is doing God’s work, but it is now set forth as a debt we owe. God expects his people to shoulder their financial obligations to the government. We have local sales tax, property tax, state income tax, federal income tax etc. Paul here informs us that truly transformed people see these as obligations to God as well as to them.

### **custom to whom custom;**

The term “custom” is also a tax.

*telos* “an end, termination,” whether of time or purpose, denotes, in its secondary significance, “what is paid for public ends, a toll, tax, custom,” Matthew 17:25 (RV, “toll”); Romans 13:7 (RV and KJV, “custom”). In Palestine the Herods of Galilee and Perea received the “custom”; in Judea it was paid to the procurator for the Roman government. (Vine 5056)

This is the tax paid on a toll road or toll bridge. The idea obviously is that we should not try to escape any lawful tax or toll. If it is owed, then a living sacrifice will pay it.

### **fear to whom fear;**

From the financial side of submission to the emotional side. The term fear has two meanings. The one was used earlier as the terror or fear that should be created due to the terrible consequences they are able to inflict. But this is respect and reverence.

“*phobos, ...1. fear, dread, terror; in a subjective sense... In an objective sense, that which strikes terror ... 2. reverence, respect, (for authority, rank, dignity.*” (Thayer, p. 656; 5401).

We may not respect the man, but we must respect the office. Regardless of our personal feelings toward those who hold these offices, we are to show respect and reverence for the office itself and thus by extension the man who holds it. This is exactly what Paul did in all his journeys. Whenever he was imprisoned, he showed respect to those in authority. Even when struck contrary to the Law he held himself in check once he know the office the man held.

*And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people. Acts 23:2-5*

Ridicule and lack of respect toward people in positions of authority is something this world may do, but not those who are being transformed.

### **honor to whom honor.**

“*Honor*” is a little different from fear. While fear lead to respect out of possible consequences, honor leads to respect out of the value and rating that God himself has given to them.

“*timé... (fr. tio, to estimate, honor,...) ... (a valuing, rating)... 1. a valuing by which the price is fixed; hence the price itself: of the price paid or received for a person or thing bought or sold... 2. honor which belongs or is shown to one: the honor of one who outranks others, pre-eminence... veneration, ... deference, reverence...*” (Thayer, p. 624; 5092).

We must honor those in the position of authority no matter how much we disagree with them on a personal level. We see this in the way David honored Saul.

*And the men of David said unto him, Behold, the day of which Jehovah said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thy hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the*

*skirt of Saul's robe privily. 5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. 6 And he said unto his men, Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, Jehovah's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is Jehovah's anointed. .... 10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that Jehovah had delivered thee to-day into my hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but (mine eye) spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is Jehovah's anointed. 1 Sam 24:4-6, 10*

Though Saul tried to kill him, was treacherous and wicked in his treatment of David, David showed honor to whom the honor was due. Not to the man, but to the office.

As transfigured people let us not as the world fall into the category of those who ridicule their rulers no matter what the provocation.

## 8. Owe no man anything,

The term “no man” here is supplied by the translators. Other translations have “owe no one” (ESV NKJ) or “owe nothing to anyone” (NAS).

“*medeis*,... it is used either in connection with a noun, *no*, *none*, or absolutely, *no one*, *not one*, *no man*, neut. *nothing*,...” (Thayer, p. 411; 3367).

Who is Paul referring to here? Is he simply continuing the thought from the previous verse and speaking of the realm all men? Or is he speaking only of the church? While the context of the 7 to 8 seem to continue the thought. The reciprocal pronoun “one another” is not something we can expect from those in the world. The most logical is to extend it to all, but realizing that not all are going to return it though all should return it.

While some apply this only to financial debt, the word itself is much broader. Not only does it mean “to owe money,” but also to be “bound by duty or necessity.” Note however that the extent of this “debt of duty/necessity” is “by law and duty,” “by reason,” “by the times,” or “by the nature of the matter under consideration.”

“*opheilo*... to owe, a. prop. to owe money, be in dept for... b. metaph... absol. to be a debtor, be bound... foll. by an inf. to be under obligation, bound by duty or necessity, to do something; it behooves one; one ought; used thus of a necessity imposed either by law and duty, or by reason, or by the times, or by the nature of the matter under consideration...” (Thayer, p. 469; 3784)

This word group is not only made up the action of owing(*opheilo*). But also the debtor(*opheiletes*), and the debt owed(*opheile*; *opheilema*),

*opheiletes* ... one who owes another, a debtor: properly, of one who owes another money ... with a genitive of the sum due, [Mt 18:24](#). Metaphorically, a. *one held by some obligation, bound to some duty*: [Gal 5:3](#) to be one's debtor l. e. under obligations of gratitude to him for favors received, [Rom 15:27](#); to be under obligation to do something for someone, [Rom 1:14](#); [8:12](#). b. *one who has not yet made amends to one whom he has injured*: [Mt 6:12](#); ... *one who owes God penalty or of whom God can demand punishment as something due*, l. e. a sinner, [Lk 13:4](#). (Thayer 3781)

*opheilema* ... *that which is owed*; a. properly, *that which is justly or legally due, a debt*; ... *as of debt*, [Rom 4:4](#). b. in imitation of the Chaldean metaphorically, *offence, sin* b.); hence, forgive them, [Mt 6:12](#). (Thayer 3783)

*opheile* *that which is owed*; properly, a debt: [Mt 18:32](#); metaphorical plural, *dues*: [Rom 13:7](#); specifically, of conjugal duty ®. V. *her due*), [1 Cor 7:3](#) (Thayer 3782)

As we follow this word through the NT we begin to understand more fully what the Spirit is warning us against here. In the gospels, Jesus used this word to describe the nature of sin both to God and to our fellow man. It's meaning of financial debt is used by Jesus to describe the debt of sin which we incur when we sin against God or our fellow man as well as the sin that other commit against us.

*And forgive us our **debts**, as we also have forgiven our **debtors**. 13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil (one.) 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. [Mt 6:12-15](#)*

*And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is **indebted** to us. And bring us not into temptation. [Lk 11:4](#)*

In answer to Peter's question as to how far the forgiveness of that debt is to carry he uses a parable of large and small debts owed. Such debts can only be paid by seeking or asking forgiveness. Hence one of the debts that Paul is here warning against is that no one should owe another an apology and confession of sin and no one should be in the debt of forgiving someone who has sought it.

*Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that **owed** him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not (wherewith) to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who **owed** him a hundred*

shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took (him) by the throat, saying, Pay what thou **owest**. 29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was **due**. (ASV) 31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that **debt**, because thou besoughtest me: 33 shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was **due**. 35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts. Matt 18:21-30-34

We owe someone the right to hear the gospel and should not carry that debt but pay it as soon as possible.

I am **debtor** both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome. Rom 1:14-15

We should not owe God the debt of obligation to keep the whole law so we must stay under the authority of Christ

Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a **debtor** to do the whole law. Gal 5:3

We also have obligations to serve, obligations to the weak, obligations to give thanks for those who grow, obligations to become teachers, and an obligation to walk as Jesus walked.

If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. John 13:14

Now we that are strong **ought** to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Rom 15:1

Even so **ought** husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: Eph 5:28

We are **bound** to give thanks to God always to you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith growth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; II Th 1:3

For when by reason of the time ye **ought** to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. Heb 5:12

he that saith he abideth in him **ought** himself also to walk even as he walked. I Jn 2:6

Those who are true living sacrifices seek to “render to all their due.” Not only to those who are in authority over us, but to those in the church and those in the world. Don't conduct your life in such a way that you leave unpaid debts strewn all across your life.

- ☞ Don't owe money that should have been paid but was not.
- ☞ Don't owe apologies that should have been said but were not
- ☞ Don't owe forgiveness that should have been given but was not.
- ☞ Don't owe favors that should have been paid,
- ☞ Don't leave promises unfilled so that they are owed but have not been paid.

As you go to bed at night, be sure that all debts have been filled for the day. If they have not been taken care of then see to it that not another day goes by when it is not. When we render to all their dues, we will find that we are never in debt in the sense that the term is being used here. To contract a loan on a home or on a car is not under consideration here. Borrowed money is not considered a debt until the payment owed for the month is due. At that point the bill is paid out and a day set for that bill to be paid. Only when we fail to send out the money when due would we be in violation of this passage.

### **save to love one another:**

The contrast is that while other debts ought to be paid and can be paid, there is one that we can never fully absolve ourselves. This is the one exception to the above admonition.

*eti me* a. in a conditional protasis, ... b. it serves, with the entire following sentence, to limit or correct what has just been said, *only, save that*, ... c. *eti me* very often coalesce into one particle, as it were, which takes the same verb as the preceding negation: *unless*, equivalent to *except, save*, (Thayer p. 1487)

This is the one limitation on our debts. We can never fully discharge this obligation. It is actually a

part of our inner being and character. It is actually a reflection of our image and likeness of God. God is love and every act he does toward is out of love. Just as it is a part of his character it needs to become a part of ours. It is an obligation, duty, and debt we hold to all men. If we refuse to see this as an ongoing obligation we can never fulfill then we can't be like Jesus or his Father. We know love from the manner in which he acted toward us and we are obligated to treat others the same.

*Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we **ought** to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? 18 (My) Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. 1 Jn 3:16-18*

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son (to be) the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also **ought** to love one another. ... 16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. 1 Jn 4:7-11, 16*

All the obligations and duties that God has placed upon us regarding love is to be seen as a debt that we pay whenever we have the opportunity. To fully grasp what the Spirit is asking of us we have to understand the word for love (*phileo*) that was commonly used by Greek speaking people in the first century and the word used in the Septuagint that Jesus used to elevate our thoughts and feelings. To fully understand **agape**, we must first understand the distinction between it and **phileo**

## Two Words for Love

The common words for love in the Greek culture were the noun **philos** and the verb **phileo**. Greek scholars who have studied both the language and the Bible give us the following definitions of the term.

*"philos...friendly... to be friendly to one,... a friend... one who finds his pleasure in a thing..."* Thayer, p 654

*"phileo... 1. to love; to be friendly to one,... to love, i.e. delight in, long for, a thing... to love to do, i.e. to do with pleasure... 2. to kiss..."* Thayer, p. 653; 5368)

*"phileo, philos... the original sense of the verb phileo is "to regard and treat somebody as one of one's own people." It thus denotes natural attraction to those who belong, love for close relatives... The word is thus used for the love of parents for children... of spouses for one another, ... of masters for servants... In a further development... then shifts from that which belongs to that which is chosen... It is then used esp. for the love of friends, which like that of married couples is based on reciprocity ... Kittel Vol 9 p 115-116*

Thus, the primary meaning of **philos/phileo-love** corresponds nearly exactly to what the word love means in our own culture. Just as we use the word love to describe our feelings of being friendly, finding pleasure in, delighting in, longing for, and the natural attraction we feel toward things that bring warmth and joy to us.

- ☞ a young man or woman in expressing their love to each other.
- ☞ feelings toward a newly acquired hobby or possession we find great pleasure and enjoyment doing.
- ☞ feelings toward a new car or home that delights us.

This love can only occur when it finds something in another person or thing with which it can ignite. **philos/phileo-love** is therefore in the strictest sense a self-centered emotion. We can only love in this sense when we get something out of it. When it makes us feel good, when we see something attractive, when we find a reason we like. This is neither wrong nor unnatural, it is both right and wholesome. We want those we love to need us like this. We want our hobbies to grab us and give us delight. We want to feel great joy and delight in them.

This quality of love is so right and necessary. It is the glow and ardor of a soul on fire for another. But in all honesty, the fire kindles in the breast because a strong need felt there is fulfilled.

This was Peter's answer to Jesus (Jn 21:15-17) Lord I love you with a glow and ardor deep in my soul. You have so touched and warmed my heart toward you that I will do anything for you. **phileo** is used in the following verses in the NT.

**love** for the praise of others (Mt 6:5);

the **love** of parents more than Jesus (Mt 10:37)

**Love** of chief seats and salutations (Mt 23:6-7)

Judas **Kiss** (Mt 26:48)

The **love** of the Father for the Son (Jn 5:20)

(Rev 3:19)

Jesus **love** for Lazarus (11:3)

Our **love** of life (12:25)

The world's **love** for its own (15:19)

the Father's **love** for the disciples (16:27)

A man's **love** for the Lord (1 Cor 16:22)

Jesus **love** for those he rebukes and chastens

The **love** of those who make lies. (Rev 22:15)

In each of these instances the Holy Spirit uses **philos/phileo -love** to describe the love of delight, longing and need. For those not striving to be Godlike, this is the only kind of love there is. When most people say "I love you" they can only mean "I find in you some emotional, physical or intellectual quality which draws me to you and makes me feel emotionally attracted to you."

Although in English we only have one word for love and for the most part before we become a Christian our word for love corresponds to **philos/phileo -love**.

Jesus wanted to reveal that there is so much more to this quality than **philos/phileo** can describe. He chose a term that had been in the Greek language for many years, and the Jews were familiar with it for its use in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term "love- **hassad**." The Greeks themselves had not used the term in any significant or positive way. Jesus and the Holy Spirit completely changed that. Though the worldly Greeks had little use for the ideas conveyed by this word, the Holy Spirit used it often!

From the time of the NT writings **agape** and **agapao** have become two of the most discussed terms in the Bible. It is unfortunate, but there is no English equivalent for this term. We must therefore learn to use **agape** and **agapao** when speaking of them.

*"agapao.. to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of..."* (Thayer, p. 3-4; 25)

*"agapao and ... agape present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, enquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the N.T... Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to "all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith," Gal. 6:10.... (Vine Vol 3 p 20-21)*

*"agape,... a purely bibl. and eccl. word... in signification it follows the verb AGAPAO; consequently it denotes 1. affection, good-will, love, benevolence:..."* (Thayer, p. 4-5; 26)

**agape/agapao -love** is a word based in God's revelation. It is not used in cultures where Christianity has no influence. We would not even understand or comprehend it if it were not for God's showing it to us.

*7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son (to be) the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: . . . 19 We love, because he first loved us. | Jn 4:7-12, 19*

This love can and often does overlap that of **philos-love**, but it does so from an entirely different set of circumstances and reasons. The first comes because we have some stake in the outcome. For whatever reason, it is the benefits we receive from it that causes the feelings of **philos-love**. It makes us feel good, gives us delight, enriches or helps us in some way and therefore we take



great delight in it. This is the wonderful quality of marriage, family, work and life.

Yet God reveals that for all those whom we feel **philos-love**, there is a higher and more exalted motivation to gain the same delight. Unselfish concern for the needs of others in which we have no stake or benefit to ourselves. If we have no reason to feel **philos-love**, we will never need a reason for **agape-love**. Hence **agape** is greater, higher, more noble and exalted: 1 Cor 13:1-13; Mt 5:43-48; John 13:31-35; Eph 3:17-20

From the number and manner in which each term is used in the NT, it is clear that **agape** is the superior term. Jesus used **phileo/philos** forty four times in the gospels while it is only used eleven times in the rest of the Scriptures. While **agape/agapao** is many more times.

<u>VERB</u>		<u>NOUN</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>phileo</b>	25 uses (21 in gospels)	<b>philos</b>	30 uses(23 in gospels)	55 in NT. (11 in epistles)
<b>agapao</b>	134 uses (73 in gospels)	<b>agape</b>	116 (9 in gospels)	250 in NT (168 in epistles)

The clearest passage to help see the distinctive use of each term is found in the inquiry of Jesus into Peter's love for him after his denial.

*So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love(**agape**) Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love(**philos**) You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love(**agape**) Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love(**philos**) You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love(**philos**) Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love(**philos**) Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love(**philos**) You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. John 21:15-17*

There is so much to be gained by learning as much as we can about each of these terms. They are both noble emotions that lead to great acts of Christian service. But the latter takes us higher than the former. It is **agape** that Paul defines:

*Love suffereth long, (and) is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Love never faileth: but whether (there be) prophecies, they shall be done away; 1 Cor 13:4-8*

The obligation of **agape** is one we can never exhaust. It is to always be given to "one another."

*"allelon... one another; reciprocally, mutually..." (Thayer, p. 28; 240)*

Vine calls it a "a reciprocal pronoun" which can only be captured in our own language as one to another. More literally it would be

This is the fifth time Paul has used this pronoun:

*so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members **one of another**. Rom 12:5  
In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned **one to another**; in honor preferring **one another**; Rom 12:10  
Be of the same mind **one toward another**. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. Rom 12:16*

It is unlikely that he has changed the subject of the pronoun. He is still speaking primarily of the body of Christ, and the love(**philos**) of the brethren. But after his admonitions regarding civil government and to our obligations toward them(13:1-7), it seems best to approach this verse the same way as Paul did to the Galatians.

*So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith. Gal 6:10*

Summing up, we are not to have longstanding obligations toward anyone. Instead we should

remove these obligations whatever they are as quickly as possible. But this is not true of the love of personal interest and good will (*agape*) This love is a universal debt that we owe to all at all times. To our husband/wife (Eph 5:25), to fellow members in the Lords body (I Pet 4:8), to our children, to our friends, neighbors and acquaintances, to those whom we find in distress (Lk 10:27ff), to those who we are not on friendly terms with. Regardless of the relationship, we owe them the debt to love them. To act in their best interests and have care and concern for. This is a debt that we can never completely fill and then consider ourselves no longer under obligation. We will always owe all this debt.

### **for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.**

Paul adds a *gar* to give the reason and cause for owing love to all. If we truly have *agape love* then the entire Law will be fulfilled. It in and of itself with no further obligation or incentive this will *fulfill* the law

*“pleroo, ...1. to make full, to fill, to fill up... to fill to the full... to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally...2. to render full, i. e. to complete; a. prop. to fill up to the top...so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim,... b. to perfect, consummate... bb. to make complete in every particular; to render perfect... c. to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize; a. of matters of duty, to perform, execute ... bb of sayings, promises, prophecies, to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish; ... hh universally and absolutely, to fulfill, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment ...” (Thayer, p. 517-518; 4137).*

As one can see from the definition of this term, there is nothing left to do if this occurs. The Law has been “filled to the full,” “made complete in every particular,” and “be obeyed as it should be.” What this means is that there is nothing in the Law that is not fulfilled if we love God and love our neighbor. Paul said this also to the Galatians:

*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, (even) in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Gal 5:14*

Jesus said exactly the same thing when asked about the greatest commands in the law:

*And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: 36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second like (unto it) is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets. Mt 22:35-40*

The point of both passages is the same. There is no law in the law of Moses that is not based on either “love God with all your heart soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. All the commands in the Law regarding the respect, worship, sacrifices and honor that we hold toward God is summed up and hangs on the command to love the Lord with all our heart. All the commands in the law regarding murder, adultery, stealing, and coveting are fulfilled in the command to love our neighbor as ourselves. All the commands in the law regarding any aspect of our relationship with our fellow man is also summed up in love. When we add to this what Moses said about the law we see the full picture.

*And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. 25 And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath commanded us. Deut 6:24-25*

Consider the following syllogism (if A=B and B=C then A=C):

- A All the statutes are fulfilled if we love our neighbor as ourselves.
- B If we observe to do all the commands it shall be righteousness unto us.
- C If we love our neighbor as ourselves we shall be righteous

This is a profound thought. We know that God is love. We know that we were created in the image and likeness of God. We know that sin is selfishly taking what belongs to another. Hence what we lost in the garden of Eden was our ability to love as God loves. For if we had continued to love as God loves we would have fulfilled all the law and been righteous.

**9. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment,**

The ones listed above are four of the 10 commandments (the KJV and the NKJV both add bearing false witness). But many manuscripts do not contain it so it is left out of the ASV, NASB, and ESV). None contain the command to honor father and mother so it would be of little consequence if he left out false witness.

*Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. Exod 20:13-17*

Paul adds "if there be any other commandment" not because he doesn't know what they are but because it would take too long to list them all. The term *other* emphasizes that all sorts of commands even those very different from these are also under his scope. There are many commands in the Scriptures that are very different from the ones above.

"heteros... 1. *the other; another, other*; It refers 1. to number, as opp. to some former person or thing;... 2. to quality; *another* i.e. *one not of the same nature, form, class, kind; different...*" (Thayer, p. 254; 2087)

But all the commands in the law of Moses can be placed under the heading of love your neighbor as yourself. James also addresses this calling the command to love our neighbor as the royal law. He only used adultery and murder, but makes the same point as Paul.

*Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: 9 but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one (point), he is become guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. 13 For judgment (is) without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment. James 2:8-13*

Jesus placed this in his sermon on the mount in different words that mean exactly the same thing.

*All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets. Mt 7:12*

The point is clear. If we would do to others what we want done to ourselves and if we would love our neighbor as ourselves, then every command in the law of Moses would make perfect sense to us and we would not even need those laws. We would know intuitively and obviously exactly what we should do.

The four listed are obvious. No one wants his spouse to commit adultery so they will not commit adultery. No one wants to be murdered so they will not murder. No one wants to have something stolen or people looking at their things with a desire to take them. All in the law is like that. Take any one you want to take. If we love our fellow man and are seeking to act in his best interest we would not do it, not because of the command, but because we love them. This is the essence of its fulfilling the law. The law becomes unnecessary when people treat each other with mutual respect and consideration. There is no need of law when people care about each other and want what is best for them.

**it is summed up in this word, namely,**

All the laws that God has ever given regulating the conduct of man with man is *summed* up in the following.

*anakephalaioo... to sum up (again), to repeat summarily and so to condense into a summary* (Thayer, p. 39 # 346)

*anakephalaioo* "to sum up, gather up" (*ana*, "up," *kephale*, "a head"), "to present as a whole," is used in the passive voice in Romans 13:9, RV, "summed up" (KJV, "briefly comprehended"), ... middle voice in Eph 1:10, RV, "sum up" (KJV, "gather together"), of God's purpose to "sum up" all things in the heavens and on the earth in Christ...

It is interesting how many times in this passage Paul says the same thing in different word. Every command in the Law can be "*summed up*," "*condensed into a summary*," and "*presented as a whole*" in this saying. It is like a man giving a speech and then summing it all up in a few words at the end. So the Law is both fulfilled and summed up in the same saying.

**thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.**

This is not the first time this thought has been embodied in the word of God. If one carefully read Lev 19:1-18 they can get the context of this passage.

*when you reap... don't... wholly reap the corners of thy field... glean thy harvest... glean thy vineyard... gather the fallen fruit... but leave them for the poor and for the sojourner... You shall not... steal... deal falsely... lie one to another... oppress thy neighbor... rob him... keep the wages of a hired servant all night until the morning... curse the deaf... put a stumblingblock before the blind... do unrighteousness in judgment... respect the person of the poor... honor the person of the mighty... go up and down as a talebearer... stand against the blood of thy neighbor... hate thy brother in thy heart (you may rebuke him but not bear sin because of him.... take vengeance... bear any grudge ... but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah. Lev 19:1-19*

Loving your neighbor as yourself encompasses all this and more. It involves compassion, respect and a desire to be helpful. It also involves righteous dealings with all without partiality and keeping a close check on our emotions.

It is also interesting that the original command in Leviticus used a Hebrew word for love that is much more similar to *phileo* and our own word love than the *agape* Jesus came to reveal.

*'ahab or 'aheb "to love; like." It appears ... around 250 times in the Bible. ... Basically this verb is equivalent to the English "to love" in the sense of having a strong emotional attachment to and desire either to possess or to be in the presence of the object. First, the word refers to the love a man has for a woman and a woman for a man. ... is also used of the love between parents and their children. ... sometimes depicts a special strong attachment a servant may have toward a master ... A special use of this word relates to an especially close attachment of friends: "...the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" 1 Sam. 18:1. In Lev. 19:18: "...thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.." (cf. Lev. 19:34; Deut. 10:19) 'ahab (or 'aheb) signifies this brotherly or friendly kind of love. ... The strong emotional attachment and desire suggested by 'ahab (or 'aheb) may also be fixed on objects, circumstances, actions, and relationships. Vine 157*

The warm and tender affections we feel toward those things that bring a strong emotional attachment must be carefully analyzed by each person. Then those things must be carefully applied to how we treat ourselves with this emotion. As we love, wife, children, parents, friends, special people, hobbies and possession for ourselves, we must also love them for our neighbor. When those seventy scholars translated this Hebrew word into Greek they choose *agape*, and Jesus also used *agape*. Which tells us that even if the neighbor is someone odious to us, we still treat them with this same love because it is not the actions of the neighbor, but the care and concern in our own heart that is under consideration.

In the days of Jesus they sought to minimize this command by narrowing the scope of the term neighbor. But Jesus crushes the attempt.

*But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on (them) oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (ASV) Luke 10:29-37*

Jesus point is clear whoever is in our lives at any given moment is our neighbor. Every human being on earth with whom for however long we have a relationship must be and it our neighbor.

All the law is summed up by this concept as well as our understanding of the image and likeness of God.

## **10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor:**

Paul again repeats his words in a slightly different way to make sure that the point is clearly understood. *agape* love does "work, labor exercise, perform, and acquire." But it only does so in the realm of doing good, being kind, helpful and useful.

*"ergazomai... 1. absol. a. to work, labor, do work: it is opposed to inactivity or idleness... b. to trade, to make gains*

by trading ... 2. trans. a. (to work l. e.) to do, work out... with acc. of virtues or vices, (to work l. e.) to exercise, perform, commit... b. to work for, earn by working, to acquire..." (Thayer, p. 247; 2038)

One realm where it will never operate is in the realm of doing ill. Love cannot do things "of a bad nature; not such as it ought to be." Love cannot do "wrong" or commit a "crime." Love will not "inflict wrongs" or be "troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, or baneful."

"kakos... bad 1. univ. of a bad nature; not such as it ought to be. 2. [morally, i.e.] of a mode of thinking, feeling, acting; base, wrong, wicked:... neut. KAKON, TO evil i.e. what is contrary to law, either divine or human, wrong, crime... spec. of wrongs inflicted... 3. troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful... (Thayer, p. 320; 2556)

It is simply not possible for those with *agape love* in imitation of the Father's *love* and Jesus *love* and therefore living up to our divine image and likeness to ever by word, thought, or deed to do anything of such nature to any other human being.

### **love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.**

All the above being so, Paul sums it all up with the term therefore which means that "something now follows from another necessarily." *agape love* is the "fulfillment" of all the laws God has ever given. The analogy in the Greek culture is that of a ship being complete filled with cargo. It means completeness, fulness, abundance.

"pleroma,... 1. etymologically it has a passive sense, that which is(or has been)filled; very rarely so in class. Grk. ... 2. that which fills or with which a thing is filled ...esp. of those things with which ships are filled, freight and merchandise, sailors, oarsmen, soldiers,... Of time... that portion of time by which a longer antecedent period is completed; hence completeness, fulness, of time... 3. fulness, abundance ..." (Thayer, p. 518 # 4138)

The point is simple. Love is the ship and every law, every ordinance, every nuance and implication in the Law can fit within it.

### **11. And this,**

This phrase can point either forward or backward. Paul could either be saying "and from this" emphasizing "the substance of the preceding discourse." Paul could also be saying "and this too" "preparing the reader" to "render him attentive to what follows."

"touto, ... 2. The neuter *touto* a. refers to what precedes...*auto touto for this very cause... ek touto for this reason... from this, i.e. hereby, by this* note... it refers to the substance of the preceding discourse... b. it prepares the reader or hearer and renders him attentive to what follows, which thus gets special weight... c. *kai touto, and this, and that too, and indeed, especially...*" (Thayer, p. 467, 3778)

The context points us backward primarily because of what Paul says after. Instead of moving to a new subject he sums up all that he has been saying. This actually takes us right back to his wording at the beginning of the section. Paul pleaded with them to bring their bodies to God as a living sacrifice (thus implying that they must become aware of the new responsibilities while at the same time forgetting the old. He further explained this expectation by warning that we should not be fashioned according to what we were, but become transformed to what we should be.

As we examine this new vista we see exactly the same thing in different words. We must awake from sleep (again implying that we were in one condition and now it is time to awaken to another). We must cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light (again we must change from what we were into what we should be). Our former condition was sleeping in the night, but now we must be awake in the day. We must put on the Lord and take off the flesh.

It doesn't matter therefore whether this "and this" was only intended to take us only back to the previous section or to cover the whole section. For they are exactly the same points and overlap everything anyway.

<b>Body no longer yours to do as you please</b>	<b>Body brought to God as living sacrifice to do as he pleases</b>
<b>Don't be conformed to the world</b>	<b>Be transformed to do his will.</b>

It ends:

**we were asleep  
we were lost until we believed  
We then lived in the night(far spent)  
cast off works of darkness(conformed)  
We did the deeds of night “  
We make no provisions for the flesh**

**Now we must be awake  
Now salvation is nearer  
We are nearing the day(our new dawn in eternity)  
Put on armor of light(transformed).  
Now we cast them off. “  
We put on the Lord Jesus Christ**

As we compare these Scriptures it seems clear that they are the same points put into different words. Therefore they can both cover the entire section and if they were intended to cover a smaller part of the section it doesn't materially affect our understanding.

### **knowing the season,**

With a perfect participle Paul stresses that this knowledge is something we gained in the past but have continued to know up to the present moment. The Greek's had several words for knowledge each representing a different aspect of what is in our mind. This one has a primary meaning of "to see" which emphasizes the enlightening elements of knowledge. As a perfect we "perceived and discovered," "paid attention and observed," and "experienced" the season.

*"eido... lat. video... The tenses coming from eido and retained by usage form two families, of which one signifies to see, the other to know... l. to see 1. to perceive(with the eyes)... 2. lat. video, to perceive by any of the senses... 3. univ to perceive, notice, discern, discover... 4. to see, i.e. to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything; a. to pay attention, observe... b. ... to see about something i.e. to ascertain what must be done about it... c. to inspect, examine... d. to look at, behold... 5. to experience, any state of condition... 6. to see i.e. have an interview with, to visit..." (Thayer, p. 172-174; 1492)*

This "season" describes the limits of a specific time and not just the passing of time. We speak of a "measure of time" in the words second, minute, hour, day, year, decade, and century. There is a clear beginning and end.

*"kairos... 1. due measure; nowhere so in the bibl. writ. 2. a measure of time; a larger or smaller portion of time; hence a. univ. a fixed and definite time:... b. opportune or seasonable time... c. the right time... d. a (limited) period of time... e. as often in Grk. writ., ... is equiv. to what time brings, the state of the times, the things and events of time..." (Thayer, p. 318-319; 2540)*

Our words for seasons, spring(renewal), fall(harvest), winter(dormant) and summer(growth), not only describe a definite period of time, but also general elements of what is within this time. So also here. The season begins when we come naked and ends when we leave naked(Job 1:21). Other descriptions also define these seasons. We brought nothing in we can't take anything out(1 Tim 6:7) It is appointed once to die and after comes the judgment(Heb 9:27). We live in a fixed and definite set of time. A time that begins at birth and ends in death. Truly our days are numbered as "threescore and ten" or "by reason of strength fourscore."

*For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we bring our years to an end as a sigh. 10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore years; yet is their pride but labor and sorrow; for it is soon gone, and we fly away. 12 So teach us to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom. Ps 90:9-10, 12*

This is something everyone knows intuitively from observation, but becomes much more serious after we hear the gospel and know that "after this cometh the judgment."

### **that already it is time**

This second word for time stresses the same thing It means "a certain definite time or season fixed by natural law and returning with the revolving year; of the seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, winter"

*"hora... 1. a certain definite time or season fixed by natural law and returning with the revolving year; of the seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, winter,... 2 the daytime (bounded by the rising of and setting of the sun), a day... 3. a twelfth part of the day time, an hour, (the twelve hours of the day are reckoned from the rising to the setting of the sun...) ... 4. any definite time, point of time, moment..." (Thayer, p 679-680; 5610)*

This is where the English word "hour" comes from. But in Greek it not only meant a 12<sup>th</sup> part of the day or night, but also "a certain definite time or season" "any definite time, point of time, moment."

This is the time from our conversion to the receiving of our salvation at death. *Already* it is this time. Just as there is “*daytime*” or a “*springtime*” There is also “*nowtime*” or “*alreadytime*”

*ede* denotes “already, now already,” “the subjective present, with a suggested reference to some other time, or to some expectation” ... (Thayer), Romans 13:11; (Vine’s 2235)

The moment of our conversion until the moment of our death is a fixed and definite time period in which certain things must be done. Within this fixed time is the “*nowtime*” that continues to move like the second hand of the clock or the sands moving through the hourglass. There is pasttime (the sand already in the bottom), a “*nowtime*” the sand flowing through the center (the spot the secondhand points to), and a future time which is the sand still left in the top. We are to see ourselves as in the *nowtime*.

### **for you to awake out of sleep:**

We should see in this *nowtime* the morning star and the cock crowing. At the moment when the alarm sounds and two clear periods clash. Sleep time has ended and awake time has begun. Those who push the snooze button are sluggards.

*How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 10 (Yet) a little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep: 11 So shall thy poverty come as a robber, And thy want as an armed man. Prov 6:9-11*

*As the door turneth upon its hinges, So doth the sluggard upon his bed. Prov 26:14*

For the Christian the moment of conversion is a wake up call. A call that is to be heeded throughout life. It is all too easy to fall asleep to the responsibilities and duties of our Lord.

*Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning; 36 lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. Mk 13:35-37*

Living sacrifices who are being transformed are always awake. They live in *nowtime*, alert, aware, sober and seeing. They were *aroused* (*aorist*) and are *awake*.

“*egeiro*... used intransitively and employed as a formula for arousing; properly, *rise*, i.e. *up! come!*... *to arouse, cause to rise*; 1. ... *to arouse from sleep, to awake*... 2. *to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead to life*...” 3. in later usage generally to cause *to rise, raise*, from a seat, bed, etc. ... a. of one sitting... b. of one reclining... c. of one lying, ... d. of one “down” with disease, lying sick...” (Thayer, p. 165; 1453)

Obviously sleep here is being used as a parable. He is not speaking of what is done each night to rest and strengthen the body. But of a certain aspect of sleep that all must beware. While asleep we are completely unaware of what is going on around us. If we are in danger, hungry, thirsty or in sorrow or pain, we do not know it when we are asleep. All reality recedes while we slumber. For the Christian our faith makes us aware and awake to realities that many are unaware of. Some are awake to the Scriptures being the Word of God while others sleep on seeing the Bible as just another book of men (1 Th 2:13). Those who are asleep see Jesus as only a man, while those who are awake see him as Creator, Redeemer, King and High Priest. Those aware of eternity in heaven or hell are powerfully motivated while those who sleep see them as myths and ignore them.

We see then why we must be awake and why it is always *nowtime* to be awake, aware and sober. As we live our lives we continue to awaken to more and more knowledge of duty and service. It is always *nowtime* to awaken to something.

### **for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed.**

Paul now uses a *gar* to make the reasons for the above evident. The powerful need to wake up also has to do with a word of time.

“*nun*... adv. *now*... 1. adv. of Time, *now*, i.e. *at the present time*; ... it stands in a conclusion or sequence; *as things now are, as the matter now stands; under these circumstances; in the present state of affairs; since these things are so; as it is*...” (Thayer, p. 430; 3568)

Like the words above this one also points to that sand passing through or where the second hand is pointing. This is the “*presenttime*” or the “*nowtime*” pointing at our salvation. Our “*deliverance*”

from this present evil world is *nearer* now. It is “*at hand*” more “*imminent*” and “*sooner to come to pass*.”

“*Eggus*, adv., (fr *en* and *guion* [limb, hand], at hand;...)... *near* 1. of Place and position; a. prop. absol. ... Eph. 2:17... *to be brought near* ... 2. of time; concerning things imminent and soon to come to pass.... *egguteron*... neuter ... from *eggus*... used adverbally *nearer*... (Thayer, p. 164; 1451; 1452)

Think of it like this. Imagine an hourglass that is full of sand at our birth. It contains the sand for the number of our days(threescore and ten or by reason of strength fourscore). “*When we first believed*” some of that sand(much for some and less for others) had already passed through and lay at the bottom. This is the mark Paul wants us to look back at. Now where is the “*presenttime*?” How much sand is now at the top? How much sand has slipped through and how much lies in the bottom. This is a point of urgency. There are certain things that must be done.

*We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. Jn 9:4*

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do (it) with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest. Eccl 9:10*

The day draws ever closer when this life ends and our new life begins. Things must be done while it is day so whatever things we can find to do(all the things in Rom 12-13), we need to be diligent, awake and aware to do. Listen to Paul speak of his own urgency.

*Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I could not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing (I do), forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. 14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: 16 only, whereunto we have attained, by that same (rule) let us walk. 17 Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. Phil 3:15-17*

## 12. The night is far spent,

The Scriptures draw some interesting parallels from the words day and night, light and darkness and sleep and awake. There are two other passages that blend these together as Paul does here. The first is in Ephesians where Paul reminds us that once we were darkness, did the unfruitful works of darkness, and were asleep. Now it is time to be awake and walk as children of light.

*For ye were once **darkness**, but are now **light** in the Lord: walk as children of **light** 9 (for the fruit of the **light** is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; 11 and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of **darkness**, but rather even reprove them; 12 for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. 13 But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the **light**: for everything that is made manifest is **light**. 14 Wherefore (he) saith, **Awake**, thou that  **sleepest**, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee. Eph 5:14*

The second in the letter to the Thessalonians where once again he reminds us we are sons of light and of the day. We are not of the night, nor of the darkness, if we were of these we would be asleep. But since we are of the day we are sober(aware and seeing clearly).

*But ye, brethren, are not in **darkness**, that that day should overtake you as a thief: 5 for ye are all sons of **light**, and sons of the **day**: we are not of the **night**, nor of **darkness**: 6 so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that **sleep sleep** in the night: and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, since we are of the **day**, be **sober**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. 1Thes 5:4-8*

Thus night here is used in a moral or spiritual sense. Those in the night are those who seek to hide their deeds in the darkness, knowing they would be reprov'd in the light of day. This spiritual night will only last as long as we are in this world. Thus since our salvation is nearer, this “*night*” is “*far spent*.”

“*pro-kopto*,... *to beat forward*; 1. *to lengthen out by hammering* (as a smith forges metals); metaph. *to promote, forward, further*... 2. *to go forward, advance, proceed*... the night is advanced (A. V. is *far spent*) (day is at hand), Romans 13:12 ... metaph. *to increase, make progress*.” (Thayer,., p. 540; 4298).

Each time period begins and then progresses to the end. Paul literally says “*the night is progressing*” or “*the night is advancing*.” So again the allusion of the hourglass shows clearly what



is involved. The sands passing through the glass representing the night are advancing. They have advanced so far that the day is at hand. Since the day is at hand the night has advanced to the point where it is far spent or nearly over. Whether we are asleep or awake, this time is nearly through and we need to take this warning seriously wake up and start watching.

*Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; 36 and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. 38 And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find (them) so, blessed are those (servants). 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. 40 Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh. Luke 12:35-39*

### **and the day is at hand:**

The night is so far spent that the day “*has come nigh.*” The day is so near that the sun is just about to rise.

“*eggizo... 1. trans. to bring near, to join one thing to another... 2. intrans. to draw or come near, to approach... perfect has come nigh, is at hand: ... Rom 13:12; ...*” (Thayer, p. 164; 1448)

What day does Paul have in mind here? Is this day within the same time frame as when “*our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*” If so he speaks of the resurrection day or the day we are appointed to die. But he could also be speaking of the day in which we have woken up out of sleep, which would be the day in which we see clearly.

### **let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,**

With “therefore” Paul gives the application for those who are waking up. Once fully awake we must cast off and then put on. The figure here is that of taking off one’s dirty clothes. Cast off the filthy garments which the works of darkness produce.

*apotithemi ... to put off or aside; in the N. T. only middle to put off from oneself: ... tropically those things are said to be put off or away which anyone gives up, renounces: Rom 13:12; Eph 4:22 ... Col 3:8; Jas 1:21; 1Pet 2:1; Heb 12:1; (Thayer 659)*

This word is used many times in the Scriptures to stress what we need to get rid of as Christians.

*let us therefore **cast off** the works of darkness, Rom 13:12  
ye **put away**, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, Eph 4:22  
**putting away** falsehood, speak ye truth Eph 4:25  
but now do ye also **put** them all **away**: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking Col 3:8  
**lay aside** every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, Heb 12:1  
**putting away** all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, James 1:21  
**Putting away** therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 1 Pet 2:1*

All of the above are the works of darkness. The term works can either be the work and effort put toward creating something or the product and thing accomplished by the work.

“*ergon... 1. business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied... 2. any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind... 3. an act, deed, thing done: ...*” (Thayer, p. 248; 2041)

Those who work and walk in darkness are going to produce something. But those things we have produced from the darkness we must now cast off and throw far from us.

### **and let us put on the armor of light-**

After we have put off, we something else must be “*put on.*” Once again the main idea to “*clothe with a garment,*” or “*put on oneself.*” We must take it off (works of darkness) and we must put it on (armor of light).

“*enduo... 1. trans. (prop. to envelop in, to hide in), to put on: ... a. in a literal sense, to put on, clothe with a garment... b. in metaphorical phrases: of armor fig. so called, ... mid. to put on oneself, be clothed with... to be furnished with anything, adorned with a virtue, as if clothed with a garment...*” (Thayer, p. 214; 1744)

**Put on** the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph 6:11

**put on** the new man, Col 3:10

**Put on** therefore, ... a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; Col 3:12

**putting on** the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. 1Thes 5:8

The soldier is an often used figure in the Scriptures. We are soldiers (1Tim 2:3) who suffer hardship. We have weapons (2Cor 10:3-4) and are at war (1Tim 2:18). We have armor for protection.

*Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (hosts) of wickedness in the heavenly (places). 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil (one). 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Eph 6:11-17*

*But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. 1Th 5:8*

Our armor consists of truth, righteousness, preparation in the gospel, faith and love, salvation and the word of God.

### **13. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day**

The English idiom for how and where we conduct ourselves is live. Where and how one lives is summed up for us in the word lifestyle. Which means the manner we live our lives. Our work, hobbies, recreation are all part of how we live our life. For the Greeks and the Hebrews it was not where do you live or what is your life-style? It was where do you walk and what is your walk-style? There is very little difference between these two idioms. The word *walk* is defined as “to live,” “to regulate one’s life,” “to conduct oneself.”

*“peripateo... to walk a. prop. to make one’s way, make progress, in fig. disc. equiv. to to make a due use of opportunities... to frequent, stay in, a place... b. Hebraistically, to live... a. to regulate one’s life, to conduct one’s self...” (Thayer, p. 504; 4043)*

Judging from the differences in the translations there is some overlap of meaning in the word “*becomingly*.” It has also been translated honestly (KJV), properly (NASB, NKJV, ESV) and decently (NIV). The adverb which modifies the action of the verb has a root meaning of “*graceful*,” “*comely*,” *bearing one’s self becomingly in speech or behavior.*” But it also means “*of good standing, honorable, respectable.*”

*“euschemon... (eu and schema the figure...) 1. of elegant figure, shapely, graceful, comely, bearing one’s self becomingly in speech or behavior, ... 2. in later usage... of good standing, honorable, influential, wealthy, respectable, [R.V. of honorable estate]...” (Thayer, p. 262-263; 2156 & 2158)*

It is clear that the translators have a large word to try and convey. Since Paul goes on to say that this is to be done “*as*” in the day, the main idea seems to be out in the open where everyone can see us.

*“hos... an adverbial form of the relative pronoun hos, he, ho, which is used in comparison, as, like as, even as, according as, in the same manner as, etc....” (Thayer, p. 680-682; 5613)*

Since we are out in plain view and everyone can see us, we want to look as nice and good as is possible. When we then contrast this with what we are not to look like properly, decently and becomingly fit the best today. I prefer the ASV rendering as the broadest and more restrictive. Not simply properly or decently, *becomingly* includes but goes beyond them. Christians are to walk in such a way as to adorn the doctrine and take thought for things honorable as the light of the world and salt of the earth.

*(Exhort) servants to be in subjection to their own masters, (and) to be well-pleasing (to them) in all things; not gainsaying; 10 not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Titus 2:9-10*

*for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 2 Cor 8:21*

The vocabulary that follows have been the battleground of the weak and the worldly. Many have

itching ears and do not want to fully understand these words as they are designed to exclude many of the things that are not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures. These are lusts and feelings, not deeds and activities. Many things are condemned if they incite them. We will therefore define them look at them in context and then discuss the methods man has devised to develop and fulfill them.

### not in reveling

*“komos... a revel, carousal, i.e in the Grk. Writ. Prop. A nocturnal and riotous procession... generally, of feasts and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry...”* (Thayer, P. 367; 2970)

*“komos... a festive procession, a merry-making; in the NT. A revel, lascivious feasting...”* Harpers analytical concordance. p. 245

*komos, in the NT found in the plural only, and rendered in our Version once “rioting” (Rom 13:13), and twice “revellings” (Gal. 5:21; I Pet 4:3), may be said to unite in itself both those notions, namely, or riot and of revelry.... komos is often used of the company of revelers themselves; always a festal company, but not of necessity riotous and drunken... Still the word generally implies as much, being applied in a special sense to the troop of drunken revelers...”* (Trench, Synonyms of the NT p. 225-227)

This word is only used three times in the NT and it is always linked with alcohol.

*envyings, **drunkenness, revellings**, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:21*

*For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, **winebibbings, revellings, carousings**, and abominable idolatries: 1 Pet 4:3*

What they did at feasts and drinking parties is done today in the casino, bar, or disco. It is also found at dances, and the wild parties of young people who want to “have fun.” Revelry is the exuberance of those excited by alcohol, drugs, or evil companionship. Sadly this has found its way into the schools at the prom, and other dancing activities(after the game). Although such places and activities have reached a level of respectability for the worldly, they are not becoming in a Christian. Whenever and Wherever people get together with alcohol and music, revelry will follow as night follows day.

### and drunkenness,

There is little difficulty in understanding drunkenness itself. The difficulty is in pin pointing the exact line between sobriety and drunkenness. The Scriptures actually have different words to describe the various phases of drinking alcohol.

*“**methe**, occurring in the NT at Lk 21:34Rom 13:13; Gal 5:21 and **potos**, found only at I Pet 4:3 are distinguishable as an abstract and a concrete. **methe** ... is drunkenness...; **potos** ... the drinking bout, the banquet, the symposium, not of necessity excessive... but given opportunity for excess... The next word in the group, **oinophlugia**(“excess of wine,” A.V.) occurs in the N.T. only at I Pet 4:3; and never in the Septuagint... It marks a step in advance of **methe**. ... It is used for a debauch; no single word rendering it better than this; being as it is an extravagant indulgence in potations long drawn out...”* (Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament p. 225-227)

The word used here simply means intoxicated or “under the influence” of alcohol. It is the exact point where we are no longer soberly able to make good decisions. These decisions may be the judgment to drive a car, or they may be moral decisions of right and wrong, but when they are impaired by alcohol then the person is drunk. We have codified it today to .08 alcohol level in the blood. The person may not slur his speech, or even manifest in any other way that he is drunk, but his motor skills and judgment are impaired. This leads to the interesting dilemma of the social drinking Christian. How does he know when he is drunk? The moment he is drunk he is no longer walking becomingly.

*And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot Eph 5:18*

*Be not deceived: drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor 6:9-10*

In the proverbs, God makes it easy. Don't look at the wine when it sparkles in the cup and the problem will be solved. Wine itself is a mocker and a brawler and those who err into its path are unwise.

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise. Prov 20:1*

*Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; They that go to seek out mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it sparkleth in the cup, When it goeth down smoothly: 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, And stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things, And thy heart shall utter perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, (shalt thou say), and I was not hurt; They have beaten me, and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again. Prov 23:29-35*

Timothy had the right idea and Paul did not seek to move him away from it except for medicinal purposes:

*Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. 1 Tim 5:23*

The Scriptures are clear that drunkenness and the alcohol that creates it are a portal leading otherwise pure and holy men where they would never go sober. Lot and his daughters (Gen 19:30-38) or Noah on his bed (Gen 9:20-24) would never have occurred if alcohol's influence had been removed and those men had been sober. Alcohol makes a fool of the righteous by stealing their reasoning ability and dulling their inhibitions. Alcohol leads into temptation while at the same time decreasing our ability to resist or flee from it. There can be no doubt that the abuse of alcohol is a sinful act.

### **not in chambering**

This is not a word we use today. Later translations have *orgies*(ESV), *lewdness*(NKJV), *carousing*(NAS), the general idea of this word is sexual promiscuity. The root idea of a bed and couch used for an activity that is only lawful for those married to each other.

*koite ... a. a place for lying down, resting, sleeping in; a bed, couch: Luke 11:7. b. specifically, the marriage-bed, ... of adultery Hebrews 13:4. c. cohabitation, whether lawful or unlawful (Leviticus 15:4,21-25, etc.; Wisdom of Solomon 3:13,16; Euripides, Med. 152; Alc. 249): plural sexual intercourse Rom 13:13)... Thayer 2845*

*marriage had in honor among all, and the **bed** undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Heb 13:4*

There are many passages in the NT describing the defiling nature of this sin.

*Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body: 14 and God both raised the Lord, and will raise up as through his power. 15 Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid. 16 Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, The twain, saith he, shall become one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; 20 for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body. 1 Cor 6:13-20*

*3 For this is the will of God, (even) your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; 4 that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who know not God; 6 that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified. 1Th 4:3-6*

One of the strongest passions of man is the sexual desire. But God has limited that desire to one man and one woman in the bounds of marriage. Any other indulgence of this emotion outside of this relationship is a grievous sin.

### **and wantonness,**

Once again we have a word that is not often used today. The later translations have *sensuality*(ESV NAS) or *lewdness*(NKJV). The word itself has many different aspects and elements so it is a difficult word to translate, though it is an easy word to identify and understand. I think of this word as when any lust becomes strong enough and our conscience seared enough that it no longer cares if it is seen. There are many sins that cannot be committed until we become “wanton.” The sense of shame and the desire to be pure and holy keep us from doing many things. But when the lust is strong enough that we no longer care we are “wanton.” Considering the definitions in this light it becomes much clearer. It is “*shamelessness and insolence*,” and “*unbridled lust*.” Vine adds that there is also an “*absence of restraint*” and “*indecent*” about it.

“*aselgeia*... the conduct and character of one who is *aselges* ...*unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence... wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females...*” (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit. p. 79-80; 766)

Those who have lost their sense of shame and their ability to blush can do things that others restrain themselves. There are certain things that have to be overruled by the conscience and social norms to be practiced openly. “*filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females*” are things that would be embarrassing and shameful unless one is *wanton*. Immodest dress, suggestive language, dance moves that are sexual are all *wanton*. When a Christian can walk into a grocery store and purchase a bottle of hard liquor or enter into a video store and rent an adult, when they can use filthy language in company with others who know they are a Christian they are *wanton*.

*being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; 19 who being past feeling gave themselves up to **lasciviousness**, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Eph 4:18-19*

*lest again when I come my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and **lasciviousness** which they committed. 2 Cor 12:21*

*3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in **lasciviousness**, lusts, winebibblings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries: 1 Pet 4:3*

### **not in strife-**

Strife is what arises when the emotions of enmity, bitterness, or a desire to get even are aroused. We seek to stir up a quarrel or sow discord.

“*eris... contention, strife, wrangling...*” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 249; 2054)

“*eris... strife, quarrel, especially rivalry, contention, wrangling, strife, contention is the expression of enmity...*” (Vine v 4 p. 82)

Some people have a lust that leads them to enjoy fighting and bickering over things that ought to be worked out. It often shows itself in murmuring or sowing discord among brethren. It was a serious problem in the churches in the first century.

*for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and **strife**, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men? 1 Cor 3:3*

*For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means (there should be) **strife**, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; 2 Cor 12:20*

*he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, **strife**, railings, evil surmisings, 5 wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain. 1 Tim 6:4-5*

*But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Gal 5:15*

Many denominations and sects arise due to strife. Homes are destroyed, businesses ripped apart, teams have lost their unity. All because one or more people get it into their heads that someone has demeaned or not given them what they deserve and so they create an environment of strife, wrangling, and disharmony.

*There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood; 18 A heart that deviseth wicked purposes, Feet that are swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that uttereth lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren. Prov 6:16-19*

*A perverse man scattereth abroad strife; And a whisperer separateth chief friends. Prov 16:28*

### **and jealousy.-**

This is one of those words that helps us understand that every sinful emotion is the perversion of something that could have been noble and right. The true meaning of this emotion is to be zealous, on fire for something and giving it all we can give to be the best. If we find another who is better it

motivates us to strive ever harder to reach that level. It is a good, wholesome and uplifting emotion. In this sense it is defined: “*zeal, ardor in embracing, pursuing, defending anything... zeal in behalf of, for a person or thing...*”

*“zelos... excitement of mind, ardor, fervor of spirit; 1. zeal, ardor in embracing, pursuing, defending anything... zeal in behalf of, for a person or thing... the fierceness of indignation, punitive zeal,... 2. an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy...”* (Thayer, p. 271; 2205)

Sadly there is another path for those with such zeal and ardor. Those who seek for the benefits of being the best who are not interested in the effort and toil, or simply believe they can never reach that level are then led to jealousy. Instead of pulling oneself up, these seek to tear others down. It then becomes a rivalry, an envious sense of indignation. We see this word used in a good sense:

*For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what **zeal**, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. 2 Cor 7:11*

*for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your **zeal** hath stirred up very many of them. 2 Cor 9:2*

And also in an evil sense as it is used here.

*Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter **jealousy** and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not (a wisdom) that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where **jealousy** and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. James 3:13-16*

James reveals it in all its ugliness Jealousy leads to confusion and every vile deed among people who ought to work together.

#### **14. But put ye on the lord Jesus Christ,**

This is exactly the same word Paul used for “putting on” our armor.

*“enduo... 1. trans. (prop. to envelop in, to hide in), to put on: ... a. in a literal sense, to put on, clothe with a garment... b. in metaphorical phrases: of armor fig. so called, ... mid. to put on oneself, be clothed with... to be furnished with anything, adorned with a virtue, as if clothed with a garment...”* (Thayer, p. 214; 1744)

Putting on Christ is something God first does for each of us when we are baptized.

*For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. Gal 3:26-27*

After God puts us in Christ and by grace he sees us in the same way as Jesus. But then it is up to us to make that a reality. As Paul we need to sacrifice to make this happen.

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that (life) which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, (the faith) which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. Gal 2:20*

*And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. Gal 5:24*

Jesus Christ is our perfect example of all that we should be. His teachings are the foundation upon which we build everything. He said “cut it off” “pluck it out.” If we are to truly put him on we must do these things.

*And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. ... 45 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. ... 47 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; 48 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49 For every one shall be salted with fire Mark 9:47-49*

#### **and make not provision for the flesh,**

The word “provision” can be broken down in English the same as in the Greek. The word “pro” is a prefix for before and the word “vision” refers to what we can see. When we put them together it means to see before. So if we provide we must first “to perceive in advance,” “to note beforehand,” “to foresee.” But that is only the first part of the word provide. For not only do we see what the

needs are we get them(provide) them.

*pronoio* ... The verb means “to perceive in advance,” “to note beforehand,” “to foresee,” *praevidere*, though it can easily come to mean “to know or to think in advance... The most common sense, for active as well as middle (with passive aorist), where the preposition can hardly have temporal significance, is in both classical and later Gk. (cf. Hesych.) *providere*, “to care for,” “to be concerned about,” “to make provision for,” “to take thought for” (absolute, with genitive, more rarely accusative, or clause); ... *pronoia* ... The use corresponds to that of the verb, ... The meaning, “prior vision or knowledge,” is found mainly in older poetry (Soph., Aesch.). The word is more common in the sense of “provision” or “forethought” ...” Kittel 4306; 4307)

The only other use of the noun gives exactly this sense. This was the word the Jewish leader used to describe the forethought, care and bringing of the needed things. Since he provided for these people they spoke of his providence.

*And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by the **providence** evils are corrected for this nation, Acts 24:2*

The verb is used to emphasize the forethought and providing that is done by the one who is supposed to nurture his family. So if any does not provide for his own he is worse than an unbeliever.

*But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Tim 5:8*

So what does this have to do with the flesh? Paul is urging us against something that the flesh is very good at. As Paul revealed in 7-8, the flesh is deeply concerned about gratification. So much so that there is a battle in the mind at all times for the Christian. The flesh is either provided for or it is crucified. Micah pronounced a strong woe against those who take thought(devise) the way to fulfill their evil lusts beforehand then fulfill it as soon as possible.

*Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Micah 2:1-2*

We must be careful lest our fleshly nature find the means for providing for itself. The flesh is to be denied, put to death and destroyed. Our duty is to destroy it and not to make any forethought for its fulfillment. When we decide we'll turn on the tv set and just see how bad this show really is, or when we rent a movie just to see if it really is all that bad, we are providing our flesh with a means of fulfilling its lusts. This is wrong and something that we must fight. When we start walking where we know we might meet sin then we are violating this passage. There are subtle ways of doing this. We convince our conscience that we are not going to do evil, we only want to see. But once there it is much easier to fulfill the lust and so even the drawing near can be a provision for the flesh.

### **to fulfil the lusts thereof.**

Literally “*provision not to make for lusts.*” We are not to “*produce, construct, form, fashion, or create*” any means to provide for the flesh. We are not “*to carry out, or execute*” in any way anything that would make provisions for the flesh.

*“poieo... I. to make ... 1. ... a. with the names of the things made, to produce, construct, form, fashion, etc. ... to create produce: of God, as the author of all things... absol. of men, to labor, to do work... to be operative, exercise activity ... b. joined to nouns denoting a state or condition, it signifies to be the author or, to cause ... 2. With additions to the accusative which define or limit the idea of making... 3. As the active poiein..., so also the middle poieisthai, ... to be the author of a thing (to cause, bring about...)... II to do... i.e. to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind... a. univ., with adverbs describing the mode of action... with nouns which denote a command, or some rule of action POIO signifies to carry out, to execute... in bibl. Grk. to do the law, meet its demands... with nouns describing a plan or course of action, to perform, accomplish...” (Thayer, p 524-527; “)*

To fulfill this command we must be shrewder and wiser than the flesh. We must watch how it works assess our failures in the past and seek to cut off each and every means that the flesh seeks for to make provisions for its fulfillment.

Remember Jesus words? If you arm, eye or foot causes you to stumble(make provision for the

flesh to sin), cut it off or pluck it out. We can and must destroy all the things that the flesh uses to provide the means to create a sin.



# Romans 14

## Issues with Meat: Jews

Before moving in the fourteenth chapter a little background from the Scriptures will be very instructive and helpful. With the change in the Law of Moses and the addition of the Gentiles to the people of God, some very important changes occurred that had led to some very strong differences of opinion. One of the first changes they were made aware of came with Peter's vision.

*Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: 10 and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, down by four corners upon the earth: 12 wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. 15 And a voice (came) unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. 16 And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven. Acts 10:9-16*

When Peter saw "all manner of four footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of heaven" and was then told to "kill and eat," he was unprepared for this new revelation and strongly affirmed that such things were "common and unclean." Lest we question Peter's response as overreacting, carefully consider how strongly the Law of Moses had condemned the very thing Peter was now being commanded to do.

*And Jehovah spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the living things which ye may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. 3 Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, (and) cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat. Lev 11:1-3*

For the Israelite the only animals they could lawfully eat were those that had a cloven hoof and that chewed the cud. Israel could not eat ham or anything from the pig. They could not eat bear, racoon, possum, mouse or squirrel. All these animals were unclean and as Peter pointed out he had never eaten anything unclean and wasn't about to start now. Israel was also warned about all living things under the water.

*These may ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, that may ye eat. 10 And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of all the living creatures that are in the waters, they are an abomination unto you, 11 and they shall be an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses ye shall have in abomination. Lev 11:9-11*

Only those things that had fins and scales were clean. Anything under the water that had no fins and no scales was unclean. Israel could not eat clam chowder, shrimp, lobster or catfish. Added to this God spoke of birds and of insects:

*And these ye shall have in abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the gier-eagle, and the ospray, 14 and the kite, and the falcon after its kind, 15 every raven after its kind, 16 and the ostrich, and the night-hawk, and the seamew, and the hawk after its kind, 17 and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, 18 and the horned owl, and the pelican, and the vulture, 19 and the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. Lev 11:13-19*

*All winged creeping things that go upon all fours are an abomination unto you. 21 Yet these may ye eat of all winged creeping things that go upon all fours, which have legs above their feet, wherewith to leap upon the earth. 22 Even these of them ye may eat: the locust after its kind, and the bald locust after its kind, and the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. Lev 11:20-22*

*This is the law of the beast, and of the bird, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth; 47 to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the living thing that may be eaten and the living thing that may not be eaten. Lev 11:46-47*

In the past, God had strongly condemned the eating of these animals. When Israel violated these commands God considered it an act of unfaithfulness and apostasy.

*I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, that walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts; 3 a people that provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens, and burning incense upon bricks; 4 that sit among the graves, and lodge in the secret places; that eat swine's flesh, and broth of*

**abominable things is in their vessels;** 5 that say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. . . . 17 They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves (to go) unto the gardens, behind one in the midst, **eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse,** they shall come to an end together, saith Jehovah. Isa 65:2-5, 17

Peter knew all this and being a faithful Jew who loved the Lord, had never violated the Law of Moses regarding these things. So had all the faithful in Israel. With such strong warnings and rebukes, Peter's reaction is just as it should have been. All Israel, dispersed into "many nations under heaven" would have been very careful about the meat they bought. The word "kosher" is still used today for those foods that have been inspected by a rabbi and are guaranteed to be clean according to the standards of the law. It would have been impossible for them to purchase meat at just any market. For even if they could verify that the meat they were purchasing was from a clean animal, there was no way to verify it had not been contaminated by those that were. The Gentiles had no scruples about these animals and would therefore butcher them in the same shop. This would also have made the meat unclean for anything that had touched an unclean animal was also unclean.

*And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherewith any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even; then shall it be clean. 33 And every earthen vessel, whereinto any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean, and it ye shall break. 34 All food (therein) which may be eaten, that on which water cometh, shall be unclean; and all drink that may be drunk in every (such) vessel shall be unclean. 35 And every thing whereupon (any part) of their carcass falleth shall be unclean; whether oven, or range for pots, it shall be broken in pieces: they are unclean, and shall be unclean unto you. Lev 11:32-35*

No one with such laws and such a heritage could have done any differently than Peter did. He had meticulously kept these distinctions all his life and obviously had a strong visceral and emotional response to this request. He never had and as far as he was concerned he never would. Any devout Jew would have felt exactly the same way. But the voice that spoke to Peter was emphatic "what God has cleansed make not common." A great change had occurred and mental and emotional adjustments now had to be made. This was not the first time Peter had heard this. Jesus had already revealed that these food distinctions were done away and that "making all meats clean."

*And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, (it) cannot defile him; 19 because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? (This he said), making all meats clean. Mark 7:18-19*

So all that was revealed in Leviticus 23 was done away at the cross. All the prejudice and contempt that had been created by these commands had to be forgotten and set aside. All that Israel had done to please God no longer had any significance. Obviously some would find this easier than others. Clearly it would be a slow adjustment to move from what they had never done and considered an abomination to something lawful and inconsequential.

## **Issues with Meat: Gentiles**

After Paul's first missionary journey there was a serious contention among Israel regarding the relationship of these new Gentile converts to the Law of Moses. After a vigorous debate, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to discuss this with the apostles. It was decided after the meeting that the Gentiles had no responsibility to the Law of Moses but that they "abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."

*And certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, (saying), Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. . . . 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses. . . . 22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; (namely), Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 and they wrote (thus) by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; 25 it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, . . . 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary*

*things: 29 that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well. Acts 15:1, 5, 22-25; 28-29*

These decrees created a new responsibility for the Gentiles. Many of the temples in these idolatrous cities had idolatrous priests who butchered these animals and offered a portion to their god. Thus this was meat offered to idols. After this ceremony, some of the meat was restored to the owner who would then either take it back home to eat or sell it in the meat market. This created a great dilemma and new questions for the Gentiles. They could not eat the meat that had been specifically sacrificed to idols, but what about the portion of the animal that was returned? What were they to do when they bought their meat. Even if they asked the store owner if it had been involved in a temple sacrifice, he might not be telling them the truth or may not know himself. For some the best thing to do was to stop eating meat altogether. While others sought to unravel just how extensive this command was and how far it was to be taken.

This led to the questions and theories posed by the Corinthians. Though the decree stated they are not to eat things sacrificed to idols, many now understood that these were not idols at all but just statues of stone or wood. If they had such knowledge was the meat really tainted? Did their knowledge of the emptiness of idolatry remove, or modify the command? The Holy Spirit through Paul both explains their reasoning and then gives the answers.

*Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is (anything) in the world, and that there is no God but one. 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; 6 yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him. 7 Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as (of) a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak. 1 Cor 8:4-9*

Paul began by explaining that though they might know that there is one God and one Lord and that nothing else exists, not all men know this and so it is not a clear proposition to make. Some will still have a defiled conscience if they eat such meat. Though this might be a liberty under a best case scenario, it was not a logical or a necessary inference until all other factors are considered. The primary issue is whether or not this liberty becomes a stumbling block to any. Paul then gave a worst case scenario. What if you take this liberty to it's fullest limit. What if you actually went into an idol's temple and ate the meat there because your conscience was perfectly clear since the meat is not tainted in any way?

*But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak. 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble. 1 Cor 8:9-13*

On a more practical level, this liberty is extremely dangerous and cannot be used fully. There is no possible way that such knowledge would allow such a liberty. Love would forbid it because we could not possibly know who might see us eating the meat and the damage that it might do. If any brother saw such a thing and was emboldened himself to eat the meat(though in his mind it was sacrificed to idols and he was committing the sin of idolatry), the stronger brother would be guilty of sin. It would be a double sin. First by wounding the conscience of the weaker and more ignorant brother they would sin against the brethren. Second because by their actions a weaker brother perished or was led into sin they also sinned against Christ.

Paul then masterfully removes any argument of knowingly eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols. First he explained the true spiritual reality of eating meat sacrificed on an altar. He began with Jewish sacrifices to God. Those sacrifices were much more than simply killing an animal on the altar. There was a spiritual fellowship and communion with God and with the altar that they were sacrificed upon.

*Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they that eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? 1 Cor 10:18*

Paul revealed that though there is no idol, there are demons and that in these sacrifices there is a fellowship and a communion with demons. This is an interesting revelation. Though idolatry only appeared to be a figment of their imaginations there was a much more sinister thing involved. Since man is a spiritual being and has a need to worship, all worship is to be directed toward God. Yet Satan sought to remove that worship by creating idolatry. Hence all worship that does not go to God goes to Satan and the demons under his control.

*What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 But (I say), that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons. 1 Cor 10:18-21*

So the argument that superior knowledge could allow eating meat sacrificed even in idols temples is completely destroyed. They must keep the decrees given by the letter and refuse to eat meat that is sacrificed to idols in the idols temple. Because no one can partake of the table of the Lord(communion) and also the table of demons(eating meat sacrificed to idols in their temple).

But what about all the meat in the markets that we don't know anything about? Should we refuse to buy any meat just in case? Is meat tainted by what is done to it before we buy it even in the store? As the voice to Peter Paul now reveals in the Holy Spirit that all meat in the market place is clean. There is no reason to ask any questions. Anything sold at the shambles(meat market) can be eaten. But there are some limitations that Christians must observe. If we are informed that it was offered in sacrifice then it should not eat be eaten. Not because we think it has been tainted by non-existent idols, but because they think it was.

*Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake, 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. 27 If one of them that believe not biddeth you (to a feast), and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: 29 conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no occasions of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the (profit) of the many, that they may be saved. 1 Cor 10:25-33*

## **Conclusions Regarding Meat**

One can now see the dilemmas in the early church. New converts from both the Jews and Gentiles had issues regarding meat. Some were deeply offended by any thought of eating meat made unclean either by the distinctions of the Law of Moses or by the idolatrous contamination of meat sacrificed to idols. Those who were stronger and had been in the church longer were no longer troubled by the distinctions made in the Law. As they grew in knowledge they also understood that once the meat was in the market place and could no longer be traced back to any idol or temple it was no longer tainted. The only contamination was in the conscience of men and with no knowledge the conscience could not be harmed. Only when it was clearly pointed out that it was so sacrificed were those with knowledge forced to abstain. But with the mix of new and old converts, there was often circumstances that arose to create issues. The strong might offend the weak. The weak might hold the strong in contempt. With such powerful emotions in play, the Holy Spirit made it all very clear. If there is any doubt do not eat.

## **Issues with Days to Israel**

With the giving of the Law of Moses Israel was taught that there were special days that God had ordained and were to be treated with respect and honor. Some had the death penalty for a failure to observe and all of them the way they were observed either honored or dishonored God

The weekly Sabbath was to be kept holy. They were not to work and to remember their servitude in Egypt and the six days of creation.

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: (in it) thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy*

man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Ex 20:8-11

And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel, and said unto them, These are the words which Jehovah hath commanded, that ye should do them. 2 Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work therein shall be put to death. 3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day. Ex 35:1-3

Along with the Sabbath there were also monthly and annual days that were to also be honored. The twenty-third chapter of Leviticus sets forth these set feast days.

### **The Passover and feast of unleavened bread.**

These are the set feasts of Jehovah, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season. 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, is Jehovah's passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Jehovah: seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. Lev 23:4-6

### **The feast of firstfruits and Harvest(Pentecost).**

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: . . . 15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: 16 even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah. . . 21 And ye shall make proclamation on the selfsame day; there shall be a holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile work: it is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. Lev 23:10, 15-16, 21

### **Trumpets:**

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 Ye shall do no servile work; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. Lev 23:24-25

### **Atonement**

Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. 28 And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God. 29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day; he shall be cut off from his people. 30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people. Lev 23:27-30

### **Tabernacles(booths)**

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Jehovah. . . 35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work. 36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: it is a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work. . . 40 And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days. 41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto Jehovah seven days in the year: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations; ye shall keep it in the seventh month. 42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths; 43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. 44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the set feasts of Jehovah. Lev 23:34-36; 40-44

All their lives those of the seed of Abraham and Israel had kept these special weekly and annual feast days. They were very special to them and they felt as strongly about them as they did the food distinctions above. Each Sabbath brought to them a reverence and respect. From sunset Friday to Sunset Saturday they did no work and they hallowed that day. The same was true with the Passover to remember their deliverance from Egypt, first fruits and initial Harvest to praise God for his kindness, and the day of atonement a day of fasting to remember our sins and strongly repent begging for God's forgiveness. The feast of ingathering(tabernacles) to praise God for the blessings of the yearly gatherings and to remember they dwelt in booths while in the wilderness. These were special days creating both honor to God and national pride. When with the death of Christ all of

these things were done away, it took some time for them to adjust.

*And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, (I say), did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; 14 having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross; 15 having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: 17 which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's. Col 2:13-17*

Now the Sabbath and all the feast days were a part of a law that was “nigh unto vanishing away.”

*In that he saith, A new (covenant) he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away. Heb 8:13*

Those with quicker and nimbler minds could quickly grasp the significance of this and change all their love and devotion to the first day of the week assembly. It would not be long until all of their affections were removed from the ordinances of the old and moved to those of the new. The communion and remembrance of Christ's death as well as singing, praying proclaiming the gospel and bringing our offerings to the Lord more than made up for the loss of the Sabbath and feast days. But it happened quickly with some and slowly with others. With new converts added daily, there were many degrees of understanding. Gentiles who had never been under this law had no feelings toward any of those days while some among the Jews kept them long after they knew that they were no longer necessary.

The Jews were well aware of these teachings though they falsely ascribed them to Paul.

*And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: 21 and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children neither to walk after the customs. Acts 21:20-21*

The Fourteenth chapter of Romans was written to address these issues and answer all the questions and issues that had arisen as a result of them. Once we understand the principles involved in this topic, we can then apply it to all the situations we are confronted with in our own lives.

## 1. weak in faith

Paul again uses a participle to take an action of the verb and turn it into a person. This is the weakling in the faith, or the one who is a weakling in the faith

*“astheneo... to be weak, feeble; univ. to be without strength, powerless... to be weak in faith” (Thayer, p. 80; 770)*

Some Christians are weak and feeble in their faith. They are without strength and powerless. Since the concept of being weak in the faith has not yet been defined in the book we will have to learn it from the context. The distinction between the weak in faith and the strong in faith is based upon:

14:2	<i>One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs.</i>
14:5	<i>One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike.</i>
14:14	<i>Nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.</i>
14:20	<i>All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.</i>
14:23	<i>he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because (he eateth) not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.</i>
15:1	<i>Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.</i>

In the context of this passage the weak are those who “eat herbs,” “esteem days,” “account things to be unclean” “eat with offence,” “doubt” “eat not of faith” possess the “infirmities of the weak.” So the entire context of this chapter is dealing with the differences in opinion that brethren hold on things that God cares nothing about. Paul made it clear that these are things that are morally neutral. Look carefully at how God and Christ look at them:

14:3 for God hath received him.  
 14:4 he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.  
 14:6 regardeth the day, unto the Lord: eateth unto the Lord, eateth not unto the Lord  
 14:8 we live unto the Lord; or we die unto the Lord: we are the Lord's.  
 14:12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.  
 14:18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men.  
 14:20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean;

All that is under discussion in this passage must already be proven to be lawfully and morally upright. These are things that can be done and "God hath received him," "the Lord hath power to make him stand," "regards or does not regard; eats or does not eat unto the Lord," "are the Lord's" "give an account to God," "serving Christ, well pleasing to God and approved of men," and "the work of God." None of these could be things that are clearly condemned in the Scriptures. Paul made this clear when he spoke of these same things to those in Corinth.

*All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any. 1 Cor 6:12*

*All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. 1 Cor 10:23*

So these weaknesses are all confined to those things that are *lawful* and *expedient*, *edify* and are *not under their power*(mastered/addicted). Anything that violates any of these things is not under discussion here.

**receive ye,**

There is no threat to the unity and purity of the local church in these weak ones. But there is a great opportunity to save a soul and help them to grow. This is the very purpose of the body of Christ to receive those who are weak and help them to become strong. It is also the essence of edification(building others up). The very purpose of the gifts Jesus gave to the church is to edify the body:

*And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, (even) Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love. Eph 4:11-16*

All brethren must be willing to take those who are not yet full grown men but children tossed to and fro and help them to grow up in all things into the head(Christ) and the building up of itself in love. So those who are weak must be "received." They must be "taken into fellowship" "received hospitably" and "drawn to" themselves.

*proslambano ... active literally "to take beside," into free or forced fellowship (possession) etc. Mid. "to draw to oneself," "to lend a hand." ... In the NT the word is found only in the middle (as in the LXX): "to take to oneself" (men, Acts 17:5; 18; 26; nourishment, Acts 27:33,36 [v. 36 partitive genitive]) or "with oneself" (Mark 8:32 and par.), "to receive hospitably" (Philemon 17; Acts 28:2). Romans 14:1. 3; 15:7: As God (or Christ) has taken every member of the Church into fellowship with Himself, so incorporate each other into your Christian circle with no inner reservations (such as might spring from differences in religious custom). (Kittel TDWNT 4355)*

Such brethren no matter how few or how many are to be received by those who are strong into a friendship and close relationship. Though it may require sacrifice of liberty a sacrifice of time and effort to help them grow, and a tolerance of their ignorance and weakness.

**yet not for decision of scruples.**

Paul places a limitation on how we are to receive those who are weak in faith. It is never to be done with the intent of passing judgement or forcing them to conform. "Decision of Scruples" is also

translated “*quarrel over opinions*” (ESV) “*disputes over doubtful things*” (NKJV), “*passing judgment on his opinions.*” The term “decision” is used three times in the NT once for “discerning of spirits” and once for “discern good or evil” and here. Literally to “judge through” it means a “*distinguishing, a clear discrimination, discerning, judging.*”

*diakrisis* "a distinguishing, a clear discrimination, discerning, judging," is translated "discernings" in 1 Corinthians 12:10, of "discerning" spirits, judging by evidence whether they are evil or of God. In Hebrews 5:14 the phrase consisting of pros, with this noun, lit., "towards a discerning," is translated "to discern," said of those who are capable of discriminating between good and evil. In Romans 14:1 the word has its other sense of decision or judgment, and the phrase "doubtful disputations" is, lit., "judgments of reasonings" (marg., "not for decisions of doubts," i. e., not to act as a judge of the weak brother's scruples). (Vine 1253)

Paul is therefore forbidding those who are strong to make distinctions and judgments on their “scruples.” The primary meaning is to “think through” or “deliberating with oneself.” Jesus used this word to describe the thoughts that were in their heart. Paul for imaginations, thoughts and disputing.” It’s use here has created many differing opinions.

*dialogismos* ... the thinking of a man deliberating with himself; hence 1. a thought, inward reasoning... the reasoning of those who think themselves to be wise... 2. a deliberating, questioning, about what is true: Lk. 24:38; when in reference to what ought to be done, hesitation, doubting..." (Thayer, p. 139; 1261)

I suspect that our proverb “trying to make a round peg fit into a square hole” captures the idea Paul is discussing here. In matters of weakness of this nature there is no reason for force them through intimidation or the power of the mind to conform to their own judgments. As Paul will point out, these are things that are indifferent and those who are strong ought to treat them as such (exactly as God does). It is inexcusable for strong members of the church to accept those who are weak and immediately begin to intimidate them into conforming. People grow at their own pace based upon Scripture not upon intimidation. So when the weak enter the congregation they are not to be interrogated or asked to reveal their thoughts and imaginations for the judgment and discernment of others. Each man and woman must grow at their own pace and speed. They do not need to be pushed or shoved, mocked, scorned, or belittled either by words or demeanor. Each of us must remember how long it took us to overcome certain misunderstandings we had about things and thus learn to be as patient with others as others were with us. Allowing them the time to grow and develop as we did. In our loving fellowship do not be continually determining and discerning their thoughts by asking them questions or throwing out arguments to them. This will only succeed in violating the concepts brought out above.

## **2. One man hath faith to eat all things:**

As discussed in the introduction, there were many things to be learned and unlearned to reach this level of faith. As Paul revealed earlier in the blood, “*faith comes by hearing the word of Christ.*” (Rom 10:17). Since the root idea of faith is “*to think to be true; to be persuaded of; to credit, place confidence in,*” we might as easily use “*conviction.*” This is the mature servant of God who has gone through the transformation that Peter and his Jewish brethren had to make. It is also what the Gentile used to idols had to make to reach a level where he understood that no idol is anything and the meat in the shambles was untainted. As faith came by hearing they became fully convinced from the Scriptures that God had no concern and neither should they.

Those with such faith and conviction can eat all things. Paul himself was one of these men. He knew that nothing was unclean of itself and those nothing is to be rejected since it has been sanctified by the word of God.

*I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Rom 14:14*

*For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. 1 Tim 4:4-5*

## **but he that is weak eateth herbs.**

“*He that is weak*” is the same participle as in the previous verse. This is the spiritual weakling who is still feeble in his faith. Such a one is still without strength and powerless to overcome this



difficulty yet. Since faith comes by hearing, he has just not had the time and opportunity to learn and digest all that the Scriptures reveal. Just because we can read a verse does not mean that we can understand or fully believe it. We must study, ponder, compare and assess. This is how the transformation occurs. Since these have not yet done this, they are still weak and their conscience will not yet allow them to eat any meat. They either feel that idolatry has tainted it, or their heart can not yet let them violate the food distinctions of the law.

These people are weak. Paul calls them so, and wants them to see themselves as such. He does not desire them to stay in that condition any longer than is necessary, but while they are in that condition they are to be recognized as having the right to that opinion and not to be forced to continually evaluate and defend it. They will grow at the pace that is suitable to them and each Christian is to give them the right to be weak in this area. But until then, they will eat herbs.

*lachanon* ... Mostly in the plural, "edible plants," "vegetables," which are grown in the field or garden (lachainein "to grub up"), sold on the market ... for the vegetable market... 1. For vegetarian diet, ..." (Kittel TDWNT 3001)

### 3. Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not;

With two participles Paul sums up these two individual as "the eating one" and the "not eating one." Both are continuous actions and both take the action and turn it into a person. The "eater" and the "non-eater" are two classes of brethren in the church. There are two errors that each of these people are prone to and Paul forbids both of them. The strong are often tempted to "set at nought" those who are weaker than they.

*exoutheneo*... To make of no account, to despise utterly... to treat with contempt...(with mockery)...": (Thayer, P. 225; 1848)

*exoutheneo*... "to make of no account" (ex, "out," *oudeis*, "nobody," alternatively written, *outheis*), "to regard as nothing, to despise utterly, to treat with contempt." (Vine 1848)

Thus the strong are often tempted to treat the weak as nobodies who are of no value or significance. Thus they make them of no account, utterly despise and treat them with contempt. This is the pride of life John warned us against.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. 1 Jn 2:15-17*

This pride of life makes those who have talent, wisdom, knowledge and strength to use those things as a barrier instead of as a bridge. Why wouldn't those with more want to share it with those with less instead of holding them in contempt? One would think that all would do this, but they don't because they allow such strength to make them feel superior instead of bringing out a desire to lift them up. Jesus spoke an entire parable to keep people from this sin. Although the context is a bit different the attitude is exactly what Paul is forbidding.

*And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and **set all others at nought**: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. 13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. 14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Lk 18:9-14*

Any time we meet a brother who is weak and/or ignorant the right emotion is compassion and a desire to help them grow. We must never forget that it was God's grace that has led any man to the level of maturity and knowledge he has attained. Jesus could have treated all of us in this way for we were all weak.

*For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. 8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:6, 8*

If we always remember where we were, we will never look down on those who are now where we used to be.

**and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth:**

The other comes from the “*not eating*” brother. Because of his own weakness, immaturity and lack of knowledge of the Scriptures and the will of God he sees those who disagree with him as sinners. There is a strong tendency in those who are weak to pronounce judgment and condemnation on those who do not hold the same views and attitudes as himself. So the devout Jew who has kept the food distinctions his entire life will judge those who have become Christians as setting aside the commands of Moses and being in sin. Those Gentiles who have used meat to worship idols their entire life will judge those who eat meat as sinners. All they are doing (in their eyes) is using the same standard of judgment they hold toward themselves toward these others. Yet Paul forbids it. The difficulty here has been to draw the right circle around the things that belong and the things that do not belong in this command not to judge. This passage has created a powerful and difficult paradox in our service to God. In doctrinal and moral matters we are commanded by the Scriptures to judge and condemn those who violate God’s commands. We are commanded to withdraw from those who walk disorderly (2Th 3:6, 14), mark those who are causing divisions (Rom 16:17-18) go to our brother who has sinned against us (Mt 18:15-18), and judge those who are within (1 Cor 5). This is the one side of the strait and narrow path we walk. On the other side and pressing us into a very tight spot is this command not to judge in matters God has given us liberty.

This is why it is so important to keep the context in mind here. This is only dealing with things that are lawful. Things that God has clearly revealed are within the realm of human opinion. Morality is not even in this Scripture and neither are doctrines. What God demands regarding our character and our service to him can not be placed here. Yet many seek to put them here. Those who sin want to be the weak we are not to judge. Those who fulfill the commands of discipline are placed into those who despise and set at nought. It takes a truly wise and loving servant of God to find the right path through all this.

**for God hath received him.**

With a *gar* Paul now gives the reason and cause of the command not to set at nought. This is an important key thought to this whole chapter and to the whole subject. Only those God has received are under this command. This is the same word used in the previous verse. We receive those who are weak in the faith because God has received them. We are commanded to “*receive*” “*take into fellowship*” “*receive hospitably*” and “*draw to*” ourselves because God already has. Do we see the point? Those who are strong are those who “*by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil*” (Heb 5:14). They know through the Scriptures whether or not God has received them. They can discern whether or not these weak are truly Christians and they can discern good and evil regarding their conduct. These are not weak fornicators or weak false teachers. They are true and devout Christians who have not yet come to a full understanding of those things they feel are morally bound but are not. Since only the strong were commanded to “*receive*” the weak it is only the strong who are told that they must receive because God has received. The weak were told not to judge and in the next verse are told why.

**Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?**

Paul now addresses those Christians who have judged those who eat meat as being sinners. Although there are many places where we are commanded to judge, there are just as many where we are commanded not to judge. The principle revealed here is an important one for all Christians to understand. Those in the Lord’s church are servants of Jesus Christ and though we all have some collective responsibilities as the church there are also many individual responsibilities that are left solely to each servant. We may have difficulty deciding which realm to put something, but one thing is clear. There is a realm where we have no business passing judgment because we are not the Lord. Rather than trying to figure out where we are not apply this and where we are not, let’s just stay within the context here. In the matter of eating meat, we have Paul’s assurance that those who eat meat are strong and those who do not are weak. Those who do not eat meat are here commanded to withhold any type of judgment on those who do. Although we may feel very strongly that it is wrong for us to eat meat, we are not the Lord to bind our own ideas on others. Since the

Lord has decreed that we can eat meat, then we must accept that and if we can't then we leave it at that and have no idea of condemning other servants of the Lord. In this area of personal liberty, no one has the right to decide what another can do. We can advise, we can teach, we can offer opinions and reasons, but if they choose a different course, then we must leave them to the Lord to judge. We will all be judged by Jesus and not by anyone else. We cannot afford to become bitter, angry, or frustrated with a brother or sister who will not hold our opinions.

## Judging Others

What happens today if a doctor or engineer documents his findings or opinions on a patient, structure, or project and later is proven wrong? If a patient dies, a building collapses, or a car must be recalled what occurs if it is later found that human error was the cause? In our age of lawsuits we have all seen the terrible legal costs of human error. To be protected from such catastrophic consequences, doctors, and engineers rely on instruments or documented tests to prove their conclusions were not simply based on opinion. They carefully consider how all their judgments will be perceived in a court if they have to testify in a lawsuit. Many professions are now deeply concerned about the consequences of a terrible flaw in all human judgment:

*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov 14:12*

*The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him. (NKJ) Prov 18:17*

These absolute truths are documented not only throughout the Bible, but in the legal system, and the daily news. No one is exempt. People convinced they were right find they were not. Even the most careful among us, those who always “*measure twice and cut once*” in every realm of life still find occasions where they thought they were correct in a decision only to learn moments or even years later it was wrong. Such experiences lead the wise to humility, caution, and prayers for wisdom.

Sadly such errors in judgment are not confined to secular decisions. They also affect our ability with Scripture and relationships with brethren. An airline pilot might kill hundreds through an error in judgment, but an eldership can “*seek to draw away disciples after themselves*” and may not even be aware of it! Even Paul for a time “*thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus*”(Acts 20:28; 26:9) and sought to influence others to his way of thinking.

Have we fully considered the interesting parallel between this dilemma of the doctor and engineer and that of the devout Christian? Just as doctors and engineers must be careful to document all their judgments with facts that will justify them in court, so must the Christian. We too will stand in judgment to give an account. How will our own judgments sound when we are explaining them to our Lord?

Jesus spoke forcefully, both personally and through his apostles, about our judgment and opinions in his church. He gave specific steps that must be followed. The church is commanded to judge the conduct of its members with God's word and withdraw from all who refuse to repent after sin is clearly documented or observed(Mt 18:15-18; 1 Cor 5:1-13 2 Th 3:6-15). He also gave specific guidelines about judging the teaching of others with God's word. It must pass the test of soundness and truth(Mt 15:8-9; Gal 1:6-9 2Jn 9-11 2Tim 4:1-4) that is all.

What about other opinions, judgments and assessments we make about others? What about those things just on the line of sin but not quite over? What about faithfulness or fidelity? Outside the specific areas we are commanded to judge, we are told not to judge at all.

*Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. Mt 7:1-2*

After comparing this prohibition with all the commands above what other conclusion can we draw? When we stand before the Lord at the last day the way we judged others will be the way the Lord judges us. Do we see the parallel of the doctor now? When he sits in court and defends his decisions he wants clear

documentation to clear him of any wrongdoing. So will we! If we want God to be merciful, understanding, and compassionate then we must do so now with others. We will receive the exact same judgment we now give. If we are harsh, judgmental, and form opinions and judgements quickly, or based on our own criteria that is exactly how the Lord will treat us. After Paul experienced firsthand the terrible consequences of falsely judging Jesus, here is how he applied Jesus words on the subject.

*Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judges me is the Lord. 5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God. 1Cor 4:2-5*

Do we see the point? Paul refused to judge before the time. He would allow the Lord to make those difficult decisions regarding faithfulness or motive or thoughts of the heart. He refused to assign motives or go beyond the Scriptural mandate in judging. We are commanded to judge conduct or teaching nothing more! James is even stronger in his own warning. When we go beyond what is written in judging others we place ourselves above the law and seek to act as the lawgiver instead of a law keeper.

*Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judges his brother, speaketh against the law, and judges the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 One (only) is the lawgiver and judge, (even) he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judges thy neighbor? James 4:11-12*

Brethren we are in grave peril if we violate this command. There is only one lawgiver and judge and we are commanded to defer to him in all matters of judgment except those he specifically commanded us to act in.

By both forbidding and then commanding judgment we must place it among the paths that are strait and narrow leading to life. Our safest and first course should always be to not judge at all. Our second course after careful thought is to only judge what we are commanded to and no more. We judge conduct or teaching but not motive or intent. We always approach it with great caution, using abundant love and mercy and holding a great willingness to defer to the Lord. Remember we will be like that doctor, we will give an account of every idle word (Mt 12:36-37). Since we will be judged exactly as we have judged we must be careful. Paul reveals the right way: Always a spirit of gentleness.

*Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Gal 6:1*

Jesus followed a simple rule we should strictly adhere to:

*And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. Jn 12:47-48*

Jesus felt no need to judge except in the areas he was commanded. He warned, exhorted and rebuked, but knew that judgement would occur on the last day and the word he spoke would do that judging. Just as the doctor relies on an EKG or Lab result and a driver relies on the speedometer or fuel gauge, Christians rely solely on God's word to judge.

If we go beyond this we fall into condemnation: *"He that speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law."* This happens every time we form opinions based on our own assessment or judgment. This is what Paul did with Jesus and what he warned the Ephesians their elders would do. Only God's word accurately *"discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb 4:12). We can't and are forbidden to attempt it.

Every time Scripture deals with harsh judgment, judgment based on human supposition, or judging outside of God's specific commands, it is condemned (Rom 2:1-6; 14:2-4, 10-13). James shows us a better and safer system.

*So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (NKJ) James 2:12-13*

## **to his own Lord he standeth or falleth.**

We need to get this one thing clear in our mind. No servant is above another servant. All are only brethren.

*But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, (even) he who is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, (even) the Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted. Mt 23:8-12*

Once we grasp this we are prepared to learn this important principle. Only the Lord has the right to set up the lines of measurement that leads to standing or falling. Paul spoke of how God did this in the Corinthian letter.

*For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, (are called): 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; 28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, (yea) and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory before God. 1 Cor 1:26-29*

God most certainly set up the gospel to show who will stand and who will fall. Every Scripture is designed for that very purpose. Only Scripture will teach, reprove, correct and instruct.

*Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17*

The Lord gave the Scriptures and the Scriptures will determine whether a man will stand or fall. We have no part or lot in such matters. We need to be more humble and leave more to the Lord. We do not have to pass judgement on every matter. We do not have to determine what matters and what doesn't. Jesus has already determined those things and they are simply too high and exalted for us to even understand.

*Jehovah, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too wonderful for me. Ps 131:1*

We confess at our baptism that Jesus is Lord. No one else. Jesus decrees through the Scriptures what matters and what does not matter. Paul here commands that we allow him to do so. The position is his and his alone and we are way over our head if we seek to intervene.

## **yea, he shall be made to stand;**

The only way to chart a safe course through this verse is to keep the context firmly in mind. The only thing Paul is speaking of here is the weak looking at the strong and fighting the tendency to judge them on this one specific matter of eating meat. Of course the Lord is able to make a strong man stand when he does something the weak think is wrong but the Lord himself has revealed is not sinful in the least. That is all Paul is speaking about here and any applications we make to other things must fit the same criteria. If it not in the realm of the weak judging the strong over things that the gospel reveals are right then this passage is not addressing it and cannot be used to prove one way or another. Those who are newly converted to the gospel or those who are just learning of a new concept need to take this to heart. The Lord has to power to make his strong stand in matters where he has revealed they are right. Regardless of what others think of them or judge in them if they are doing the Lord's will then he will make them *stand*.

*"histemi... to cause or make to stand; to place, put set; 1. univ... to bid to stand by... b. to make firm, fix, establish... to cause a person or thing to keep his or its place... to establish a thing, cause it to stand i.e. to uphold or sustain the authority or force of anything: Heb 10:9..." (Thayer, p. 307-308; 2476)*

any one can go on eating or not eating meat, keeping or not keeping days right up until the Lord's return and neither will be condemned for it. That is the beauty of the gospel. It contains all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Pet 1:3). It contains all that is right and wrong. If it is not in the Word of God or condemned by any principle found therein, then it is a matter of indifference in the eyes of God and should not be allowed to become an issue among the people of God.

## **for the Lord hath power to make him stand.**

Regardless of what others think the Lord(or God KJV) has the power to make him stand. Nothing has changed in the context. This is still being addressed to the weak regarding the strong. Since the Lord made this a matter of liberty(eating meat), there is no danger that this strong brother will fall in doing it. The Lord will never allow us to be tempted above what we can bear.

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it. 1 Cor 10:13*

If the Lord had believed that this was a dangerous matter, he would have legislated upon it. Since he did not it is not something that will lead to a fall. If a weak brother has concerns about such a thing he needs to remember that the Lord who did or did not legislate on it has the power to make someone stand on that matter. We all need to learn to trust Jesus as the Lord and King to do with his servant as is best.

### **5. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike.**

Leaving meat, he now moves to a similar issue. Israel had many special days that were lost when the law was nailed to the cross. The Sabbaths, new moons, and annual feast days ceased to be binding or to be an act of service to God. No one is bound by them any longer and no one was to judge or be judged by them.

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: 17 which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's. Col 2:16-17*

But even though all of this was true there were still some who chose to *esteem* those days. The term *esteem* is actually the word “*judge*” from the previous verse. One man takes all the facts and judges that he will still keep the Sabbath holy, or still remember the Passover, thank God on Pentecost, fast on the day of atonement, and praise God on the feast of trumpets/booths. In the judgment of one man these days are considered above other days.

Yet there is another in the congregation, either a Gentile who has never kept such days, or a Jew who has been a Christian long enough that those days no longer have any meaning.

It is exactly the same point. The weak keep days special because they have not yet come to an understanding that God has changed his demands on thanks and praise. After Jesus death on the cross he removed the Sabbath because it was not the creation of exodus from Egypt that he wanted his children to remember any longer. He set aside the first day of the week and asked us to remember Jesus sacrifices for us. So those who do exactly what the Lord wants are the strong. They have grown to understand that these previous ordinances have expired so that something greater could replace them.

### **let each man be fully assured in his own mind.**

Paul now moves to the one point where each group shares the same thing. For any of the above to be true, each must be fully assured in their own mind that they are doing what God wants them to be doing and that what they are doing is right.

*“plerophoreo... to bear or bring full, to make full; a. to cause a thing to be shown to the full i.e. to fulfill the ministry in every respect, 2 Tim. 4:5 ... b. to carry through to the end, accomplish... c. to fill one with any thought, conviction, or inclination... to make one certain, to persuade, convince one ... pass. to be persuaded... persuaded, fully convinced, or assured Rom. 4:21...” (Thayer p 517; 4135)*

This term begins with “*bearing or bringing full.*” This means that they have given careful thought to every passage and every possible application they can think of “*carrying it though to the end.*” Having done the is they are “*filled with conviction,*” “*are certain, persuaded and convinced.*” Finally after all this they feel “*fully assured*” in their own mind.” Such Christians are like the Bereans.

*Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Acts 17:11*

This is how we all come to convictions. We look at the Scriptures while our conscience oversees all the work and effort. We seek for ways to be convinced without compromising the truth. It is a slow and agonizing process but once it is complete and we feel fully assured, it is not easy to move us away from it. Both the weak and the strong are in this condition. The difference is that the strong have had enough time to reevaluate and draw a different conclusion.

Through such reading, studying, meditating along with fasting, prayers and conversations with other Christians, we are constantly growing and maturing in our convictions. Hence from time to time we need to be prepared to go through the process again and reassess the ideas and principles we live by. When enough new information enters the mind and causes us to believe a conclusion drawn earlier in life may need to be modified then we make the modification. But the day we are no longer fully assured in our own mind what we do is right is the day that we must stop that activity.

### **6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord:**

Those who are fully assured either *regard* or do not regard, eat or do not eat.

*“phroneo... 1. to have understanding, be wise.... 2. to feel, to think... to have an opinion of ones self, think of one’s self... to think, judge...several persons are said phronein to auto, to be of the same mind, i.e. to agree together, cherish the same views, be harmonious... 3. to direct one’s mind to a thing, to seek or strive for, ... to seek one’s interests or advantage, to be of one’s party, side with him...” (Thayer, p 658; 5426)*

Because of training and upbringing, because of study and teaching the man *“has an understanding and is wise”* toward the day. He has an opinion about that day and holds that opinion toward the Lord. In a positive sense as here he *“cherishes”* and *“seeks the interest and advantage”* of the day. He uses the Sabbath or Feast Day to honor and praise the Lord. Clearly this is an individual and private matter. Paul deals with those who actually want to go back under the law in a completely different way in Galatians. But if a Christian who is too weak to pass from the ability to honor a certain day, uses that day to honor the Lord in the means prescribed in the New Testament to do so, then he in no way dishonors Christ or his authority. If he wants to continue to hallow the Sabbath day and set it apart to read the Bible, pray and meditate then that in no way dishonors the Lord. The Lord is still receiving the honor and glory. Where is the problem?

Although the second phrase (he that regards not the day regards it not to the Lord) is scriptural and true, but has no textual support to be in the text.

### **and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth thanks;**

Paul again returns to the participles eater and non-eater. The strong one is the eater. Yet he is one who eats unto or to the honor and obedience of his Lord. The *gar* gives the reason and cause by which one knows it is unto the Lord. He continually gives God thanks.

*For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. 1 Tim 4:4-5*

This one only eats because of his knowledge that to the Lord nothing is tainted or unclean and can not dishonor the Lord. In giving God thanks he proves his conscience is clear and he is right in God’s sight. There is therefore nothing wrong and nothing to judge.

### **and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.**

Those who have not yet reached the level or maturity to see these things clearly are making a great sacrifice for the Lord. They have stopped eating all meat and are only eating herbs. They do this out of respect for the Lord. When they give thanks they are manifesting their gratitude and appreciation for all that God has done for them. They thank God for their herbs in the same way that the one above gave thanks for his meat.

When he abstains from meat he is making a personal sacrifice of something that he would like to do because he loves the Lord too much to violate his conscience. Therefore what can any other Christian find to fault in such a case? Paul's whole point is simply that both the weak and strong are in this sense on an equality. Though from entirely different perspectives, both are honoring their Lord by obedience to that which they deem to be right. Since they violate no command, God is pleased to accept by faith both the strong and the weak brother.

### **7. For none of us liveth to himself,**

Paul will now link seven things together to prove and elaborate on our attitude toward the above:

Those who regard or do not regard a day, those who eat or do not eat meat all do it unto the Lord.

Link 1: **For(gar)** none of us lives or dies to himself

Link 2: **For(gar)** whether we live or die it is unto the Lord for we are the Lords.

Link 3 **For(gar)** Christ died and lived to Lord of dead and living.

Link 4: **But:** why do you judge or set at nought your brother

Link 5: **For(gar)** we will all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

Link 5: **For(gar)** it is written, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God.

Link 6: **So then** each shall give account to God.

Link 7: **Therefore** Don’t judge one another any more:

Paul ties these thoughts together with the conjunction *gar* meaning each will bring forth a *and cause* for what lies before. Although the Christians in Rome (and throughout the Roman empire) had differing views of meat and days, Regardless of those convictions they were done only for the Lord. The one who kept a special day did so only to honor, glorify, serve and obey his Lord. He did not do it for himself, he did it out of respect for what he believed the Lord wanted him to do. Those who did not keep that day were doing exactly the same thing in not keeping it. The one ate meat

did so only to honor, glorify, serve and obey his Lord. He did not do so only for his own pleasure. Those who did not eat meat did so for exactly same the reasons. The reason they were doing this is because a true Christian who has obeyed the gospel does not live to *himself*.

*“heautou... a reflexive pronoun of the 3d person. It is used 1. of the 3d pers. sing. and plur., to denote that the agent and the person acted on are the same... 2. It serves as reflexive also to the 1st and 2d pers. ...”* (Thayer, p. 163; 1438).

Whenever this “reflexive pronoun” is used, whatever the action of the verb, it is reflected back into the person doing that action. So the action of the verb “*live*” is reflected upon the one who is doing the living. He who lives unto himself uses his own standards of good and evil, likes and dislikes etc to base his life upon. Like the song “*all of self and none of thee...*” Before becoming a Christian we all lived only to ourselves:

*among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:-- Eph 2:3*

*knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; 1 Pet 1:18*

*Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 1 Peter 4:1-2*

At this time we were not yet transformed but conformed. When called to be a servant of Christ everyone is taught in the confession that he is Lord and as Lord, he requires all if we are to become his disciples.

*And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. Mt 10:38-39*

*If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Lk 14:26-27*

This is exactly how things were done prior to becoming a part of the body. But none of the people under consideration were doing these things any longer. The decisions being made to eat or not to eat, to keep or not to keep a day were no longer based upon their own will.

### **and none dieth to himself.**

Using the same construction of the reflexive pronoun and a verb the Spirit now states that no servant of the Lord wants to acts alone with reference to himself when he dies. Though some want to refer this to our need to put the flesh to death, it is not as powerful as the literal understanding. The very reason that all Christians live to Christ and no longer for self is because. They do not want to die alone bereft of any hope of salvation. Truly what would any man be profited if he gained the whole world for himself but then lost his own soul in death.

*And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self? Lk 9:23-25*

We refuse to live unto self because we want the living hope and realize that if we laugh now we will cry then but if we cry now we will laugh then.

*But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25 Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe (unto you), ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Luke 6:24-25*

The point is that there are some very powerful motivations behind those who are making the choices they make regarding things that no longer significant to the Lord. In all good conscience to live unto the Lord so they can die unto the Lord some eat and some refuse to eat. Some hold days special and others see all days the same. But since these things are insignificant and the thing that really matters is being done by both, both should see each other on the same level. Serving the Lord with all their might to the best of their ability.

### **8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord;**

Again the conjunction *gar* ties us back to the previous thought. This is why(*reason/cause*) we don't live or die to ourselves. We have replaced ourselves with the Lord. We can't live to ourselves because we are living unto the Lord and the two are mutually exclusive.

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that (life) which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, (the faith) which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. Gal 2:20*

If we are alive then Christ is still dormant, if Christ is alive then our own will and desires have been



crucified. When we became a servant of the Lord it was a great price.

*Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; 20 for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body. 1 Cor 6:19-20*

*For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. . . . 17 Wherefore if any man is in Christ, (he is) a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. 2 Cor 5:14-17*

No true servant of the Lord can put his own interests above those of the Lord and if these two groups were thinking clearly they would realize that there is no real difference between them. All who put the Lord above all things are “*living unto the Lord.*” They no longer seek their own, just as Jesus himself did and asks us to do.

*For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Jn 6:38-40*

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Mt 7:21*

Because Jesus has “*all authority in heaven and on earth*”(Mt 28:18) and because he is “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” (Rev 17:14), we all live unto him.

### **or whether we die, we die unto the Lord:**

Just as we are now living unto the Lord, we will also die unto the Lord. While in this life our service to him leads us to seek first God’s righteousness and kingdom in the most zealous way possible. We do this in order that we do not have to sorrow as the rest, so that we will never die and never see death.

*But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1Thes 4:13-14*

*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; 26 and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this? Jn 11:25-26*

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death. Jn 8:51*

As Balaam saw so long ago, to be in Israel brings special blessings at death.

*Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, And let my last end be like his! Num 23:10*

As Paul contemplated his own “last end” he spoke exactly as he does here. To live is to live unto the Lord and because we also die unto the Lord, it is very far better.

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if to live in the flesh,— (if) this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not. 23 But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: Phil 1:21-23*

Finally, we have the promise of the Lord that nothing can snatch us from him or from his Father.

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who hath given (them) unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch (them) out of the Father’s hand. Jn 10:27-29*

### **whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s.**

With a different conjunction *oun* Paul now states that “*this necessarily follows from the previous statement.*”

*“oun... a conj. indicating that something follows from another necessarily; [al. regarding the primary force of the particle as confirmatory or continuative, rather than illative...] Hence it is used in drawing a conclusion and in connecting sentences together logically, then, therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so...” (Thayer, p. 463-464; 3767)*

Then with two present subjunctive participles, Paul sums it all up. Whether “*we may be living*” or whether “*we may be dying*” we belong to the Lord. It is interesting that both of these states are continuous though in the subjunctive time is left out completely. Hence while we may continuously live in this life we are the Lord’s, and while we continuously die(are separated) from this world, we still are the Lords. This fits perfectly with the Lord’s final words to the Sadducees.

*But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not (the God) of the dead, but of the living. Mt 22:31-32*

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob though dead were still continuously the Lord's.

Remember that we have not left the context of the two brothers on different spiritual levels of maturity, but both belonging to the Lord. Whether they are alive or whether they are dead, they belong to the Lord and we have no control whatsoever. To his own great Lord and Master over life and death does he stand and certainly this Lord can make him stand.

## 9. For to this end Christ died and lived again,

Another conjunction(*gar*) ties another link. The reason and cause that whether we live or die we are the Lords is because he died and lived again. The emphasis is greater though with the addition of "to this end" (the demonstrative pronoun(*this*) and the preposition "eis" (*into; for the purpose of*). So for the very purpose of being Lord of the dead and living in order that we might live or die unto him he died and lived again. These are both in the Aorist tense so they sum up something done in past time without giving any time frame. This describes his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. This adds a new dimension to his atoning death. There are some things we simply cannot fully comprehend. This passage states that this is an additional reason for his death and resurrection. Paul spoke of it in Ephesians and John in Revelation.

*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) Eph 4:8-10*

*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Rev 1:17-18*

In the process of the death, all that Isaiah prophesied(Isa 53) was done. But at the resurrection something else just as important occurred. Not only did Jesus spirit return to his human body, but he came forth from that tomb leading captivity captive and holding the keys of death and Hades. At that same moment he was declared to be the son of God with power.

*who was declared (to be) the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; (even) Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom 1:4*

## that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living

With another conjunction, Paul now gives the "intent, end and purpose" for this dying and living again.

*hina... I. An adverb of place,... a. where; in what place. b. in what place; whither... II a final conjunction(for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention)denoting purpose and end: to the intent that; to the end that, in order that;... it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;... " (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)*

This is an important statement that we must break down and understand. The word who was with God, was God and created all things was already Lord before he came to earth.

*but of the Son (he saith,) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee With the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of thy hands: 11 They shall perish; but thou continuest: And they all shall wax old as doth a garment; Heb 1:8-11*

Actually 10-11 describe him before he became the son and 8-9 describe him after. Only by becoming the Christ, could he become the Lord of salvation to those who were dead. All who die in sin are lost. No one can help them. The wages of sin is death and that debt must be paid. Even God(if he were to remain just) could not help them. He needed a way to pay the debt and Jesus death upon the cross paid that debt. After the resurrection Jesus was Lord of all.

*Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, 8 though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation; Heb 5:7-9*

The price Jesus paid upon the cross is what gives him the power to be a saving Lord of the dead. With the keys of death and Hades, having led captivity captive, and having brought eternal salvation to those who were or were to become dead, Jesus is now Lord of all.

*and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might 20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly (places), 21 far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Eph 1:19-23*

## 10. But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother?

With all the above firmly in mind the insignificance of our own judgments is made clear. Only Jesus has the power, wisdom and right to judge. We do not. This brings us back to verse four: “*Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he stands or falls.*” Paul has now fully elaborated upon the last clause. His own Lord is far above all authority, power, and dominion. So what can we possibly add? Why would we do it on things the Lord has revealed are not important to him. Every specific command is a judgment and every general command requires no judgment. We may not like how others fulfill such commands as eating meat, keeping days, or those Paul discusses in Corinthians: Eating or drinking; leading about a wife; or being paid as a preacher. But Paul did not judge and neither should we. Instead like Paul we should become all things to all men.

*For though I was free from all (men,) I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. 20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. 23 And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. 1 Cor 9:19-23*

## or thou again, why doest thou set at nought thy brother?

This time from verse three: “*Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not.*” After realizing how great our Lord is and what makes him great how can we possibly set at nought (*make of no account, despise utterly, treat with contempt, mock*) those we disagree with? When it comes to all the general commands in the Scriptures and how they ought to be fulfilled, no one is Lord over another. No one is to set at nought and look down upon those who take a stronger or more Spartan position than those who consider themselves strong. Perhaps the most important consideration in all this is something Jesus warned against.

*Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Matt 7:1-12*

It is obvious that one mans expediency is another mans law. With some many decisions to be made the best solution is to be merciful, compassionate and as often as possible to withhold judgment.

*For judgment (is) without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment. Jas 2:13*

There are certainly doctrines, morals and practices that need to be judged and condemned. They clearly violate Scripture and must be dealt with. But there are also multitudes of things that ought to be left to the Lord. When faced with a tough and difficult set of circumstances to judge, the best thing to do is to move slowly with mercy, and a reticence to judge quickly, either by passing a censorious judgment upon those who have done nothing wrong in the eyes of the Lord or by setting at nought and treating with contempt those with whom we disagree. We all need to pray for wisdom to tell the difference.

## for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

Another *gar* presents another link in this continuous chain. The reason we should not do this judging and setting at nought is because we do not have to. God will do it for us and we have nothing to fear about letting someone who is guilty not be judged as guilty. This is very similar to the admonitions given in chapter thirteen about civil government. God gave them the power to judge and therefore they are ultimately responsible for those judgments. If they judge wrongly, it is not the place of any Christian to intervene. God will deal with it and we need to leave it to God.

*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is (the book) of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. Rev 20:12-13*

*For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things (done) in the body, according to what he hath done, whether (it be) good or bad. 2 Cor 5:10*

There are so many difficult and thorny matters that exist today. Things one side is convinced is an expediency and judge those who disagree with them as false teachers. Things the other side is convinced is a liberty and set at nought and despise all who disagree with them. All of them are obvious to one side or the other, but not to all. Meat is obvious to all and days are equally obvious because Paul placed them there. Everything not specified in Scripture is not so obvious. Yet we are commanded to judge those who cause divisions and do not walk after the traditions. Yet no

one can agree one which so we are faced with the rock and hard place or the strait and narrow way. The best way to navigate: with Scripture judge; without Scripture show mercy and wait for God.

### 11. For it is written,

With another *gar*, Paul forcefully gives this as the reason why we now for certainty that we will indeed stand before the judgment seat. Although there are some subtle differences, the passage Paul is referring to is found in Isaiah.

*By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth (in) righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Isa 45:23*

God wanted all men (especially those under the Law) to be aware of the absolute certainty that no one is exempt from both meeting God and acknowledging him as Lord. They also will not be passed over having to speak. Paul will now tell us exactly what this verse means.

### as I live, saith the Lord,

“Just as I live” is a form of oath. Just as absolute is God’s existence so also is the absolute nature of what he is about to reveal. The Holy Spirit who is inspiring Paul reveals the content of the oath instead of simply saying he swore by himself. When God swears by himself one of the formulas he uses is “As I live”

*And Jehovah said, I have pardoned according to thy word: 21 but in very deed, **as I live**, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah; Num 14:20-21*

*Say unto them, **As I live**, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Num 14:28*

*For I lift up my hand to heaven, And say, **As I live for ever**, 41 If I whet my glittering sword, And my hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, And will recompense them that hate me. Deut 32:40-41*

***As I live**, saith Jehovah, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; Jer 22:24*

***As I live**, saith the King, whose name is Jehovah of hosts, surely like Tabor among the mountains, and like Carmel by the sea, so shall he come. Jer 46:18*

*Wherefore, **as I live**, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish (thee); neither shall mine eye spare, and I also will have no pity. Ezek 5:11*

*though these three men were in it, **as I live**, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, but the land should be desolate. Ezek 14:16*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: **As I live**, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, I will even bring it upon his own head. Ezek 17:19*

Just as God is eternal and lives forever, so also what he says is eternal and will live forever. This formula therefore is an oath.

### to me every knee shall bow,

Bowing the knee is a sign of complete submission and obedience. Hence when every knee bows to God it will be because at the judgment day everyone will be convinced and will willingly do so. This is why as his servants we do not need to worry about this now. Our role is never to judge, set at nought or form opinions. Our duty is to preach the word, live the word and prepare to bow our knee to God in such a way while here that doing so there will be an honor to him.

### and every tongue shall confess to God.

The term confess is literally “to speak the same thing” which means “to assent, accord, agree with.” This term has been intensified by placing the preposition “ex -out” before it which blends the term into “to confess forth” “freely, openly.”

*homologeō lit., “to speak the same thing” (homos, “same,” lego, “to speak”), “to assent, accord, agree with,” denotes, (a) “to confess, declare, admit,” (b) “to confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of inward conviction,” 1 John 1:9; (c) “to declare openly by way of speaking out freely, such confession being the effect of deep conviction of facts,” Matt. 7:23; 10:32 Rom. 10:9-10 (“confession is made”); 1 Tim. 6:12 (d) “to confess by way of celebrating with praise,” Heb. 13:15; (e) “to promise,” Matt. 14:7.*

*exomologeō “out,” intensive, and homologeō above. and accordingly stronger than homologeō. “to confess forth,” i. e., “freely, openly,” is used (a) “of a public acknowledgment or confession of sins,” Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5; Acts 19:18; Jas. 5:16; (b) “to profess or acknowledge openly,” Matt. 11:25 Phil. 2:11 (Vine; 1843)*

Since this term is used in two different senses in the Scriptures and it not specified here, we must use the context.

*And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Mk 1:5*

*Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. Acts 19:18*

*and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil 2:11*

*Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. James 5:16*

Is this a confession of God(saying the same thing as God does about his character and existence) or a confession to God(speaking the same thing as he does about our sins)? What does the context infer? By looking at the next verse it seems more likely it is referring to our conduct and confessing to God its sinful nature.

## **12. So then**

The term “so” clearly ties us back into the next verse as an explanation. “It intimates that, “under these circumstances something either is so or becomes so.” It is therefore translated “*so then, accordingly.*”

*“ara... an illative particle... It intimates that, “under these circumstances something either is so or becomes so”... consequently ... 2. ... it is placed at the beginning of a sentence; and so, so then, accordingly,... 5. ara oun a combination peculiar to Paul, at the beginning of a sentence... ara is the more logical, oun the more formal connective...” (Thayer, p. 71; 686)*

So because we are bending the knee and confessing we are giving an account. This would infer that the confession in the previous verse is not an acknowledgment of God’s existence, but an admission of our own state before him.

## **each one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

There will be no exceptions. Every one will be there to give an account. The term “*account*” is *logos* which is generally translated word, but it means the message or communication behind the word so here will give the message or communication about ourselves to God. All will come out, all will be known and we ourselves will confess to it all. Picture it: Everyone will be standing before the judgment seat of God/Christ. Each will render an account(message) regarding our words and our actions as well as confess them.

*And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Mt 12:36-37*

*For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things (done) in the body, according to what he hath done, whether (it be) good or bad. 2 Cor 5:10*

Remember the context. We should not judge because God will judge. If we judge or set at nought what we ought not to, we too will find ourselves giving account of something we should not have done.

Paul's Expediencies  
Eat or drink  
lead about a wife  
be paid as a preacher

to the Jews I became as a Jew,  
to them that are under the law, as under the law,  
to them that are without law, as without law,  
To the weak I became weak,  
I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. 1 Cor 9:19-23

**Generational Shifts:** *Old vs New*

*Clothing:*

*What pertains to men/woman Modesty Issues:*

*length of shorts; skirts;*

*Women wearing Pants;*

*Men in suits for worship.*

*Hair Styles:*

*Length of hair men & women*

*Jewelry:*

*Men wearing earrings; rings; bracelets*

**Doctrinal:**

*Church Building - Color/Size/Location; carpeting*

*Accessories: A/C; PA System; Communion Table*

*Bible Classes; Number of Containers; Night communion*

**Questionable Expediencies:**

*Alcohol*

*Dancing*

*Drinking*

*Smoking*

Movie viewing:

How much:

violence;

immodesty;

language; etc.

Holidays:

Halloween;

Christmas;

Easter;

Speech:

bywords

words that change their meaning over time.

The method of fulfilling every general command that gives no specifics will always fall into this realm.

### 13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more:

Paul now uses the conjunction “*oun* - indicating that something follows from another necessarily” After revealing that we all stand or fall before our Master(Christ) and have no business judging the servant of another (:4). That Christ is Lord and that we are all living for him so we can live before him after we death(:7-9). And that God has already promised to judge all and we will all give account to him(:10-12). It follows necessarily that we should not judge one another any more. Though the terms “*not*” and “*anymore*” are separated in English they are a compound word in Greek.

“*meketi...*(fr. *me* and *eti*), adv., employed in the same constructions as *me*; *no longer*; *no more*; *not hereafter ...*” (Thayer, p. 412; 3371)

“*eti...*adv. *as yet, yet, still*; 1. of time; a. of a thing which went on formerly, whereas now a different state of things exists or has begun to exist... 2. of degree and increase; with the comparative, *even, yet...*” (Thayer, P. 254; 2089)

Although judging “*went on formerly*,” “*now a different state of things exists*” So “*no longer*” and “*not hereafter*” should *judging* occur. The term is clearly broad and can mean “*selecting and choosing*,” “*approving and esteeming*,” “*thinking and holding an opinion*,” “*pronouncing an opinion of right and wrong*,” and “*pronouncing judgment*.”

“*krino...* 1. *to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose...* 2. *to approve, esteem...* 3. *to be of opinion, deem, think...* 4. *to determine, resolve, decree...* 5. *to judge*; a. *to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong...* Pass. *to be judged, i.e. summoned to trial that one's case may be examined and judgment passed upon it...* b. *to pronounce judgment; to subject to censure*; of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in the matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 361-362; 2919)

In this section, it moves from “*pronouncing judgment*” in 14:3, “*pronouncing an opinion concerning right and wrong*” in 14:4 to “*approving and esteeming*” in 14:5. Then again from “*pronouncing judgment*” in 14:10, 13 to “*determining and resolving*” in 14:13.

let not him that eateth not **judge** (pronounce judgment; subject to censure) him that eateth: for God hath received him. 14:3

Who art thou that **judgest**(to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong) the servant of another? 14:4

One man **esteemeth**(to approve, esteem) one day above another: 14:5

another **esteemeth** (to approve, esteem) every day (alike). 14:5

But thou, why dost thou **judge** (thy brother? 14:10

Let us not therefore **judge** (pronounce judgment; subject to censure) one another any more: 14:13

but **judge** (to be of opinion, deem, think) ye this rather 14:13

Happy is he that **judgeth** (pronounce judgment; subject to censure) not himself in that which he approveth. 14:22

The context here takes in both the weak who judges and the strong who setting at nought(despise). That is the only way to understand the reflexive pronoun which means “*reciprocally or mutually*.” There has to be two different groups that both reflect the same action of the verb one to another. Those who are strong and would tend to judge and set at nought and those who are weak who would judge and condemn are both to stop. Though they did it when the were conformed to this world, they can no longer do it if they are to be transformed.

No true living sacrifice is going to pass judgment on any action or deed that is not specifically and clearly set forth in Scripture. Within the pages of the law of Christ(Gal 6:2) or perfect law of liberty(Jas 1:25; 2:12), everything that should be judged is listed. If it is not listed it is for each individual to decide and no one is to pass judgment that condemns or passes judgment that set at nought or despises. Regardless of how strongly we feel about things that seem right or wrong to us, if they are outside the Scriptures and the word of God does not specifically address it, we must no longer judge. This certainly does not mean that we cannot discuss these things and attempt to teach or to persuade. But if after that has been done our brother remains unconvinced, then it is time for us to move on and leave it for the Lord to decide. He knows their heart better than we ever could, and we are not going to make a decision in the such matters for honestly they are none of our business for they are servants of another.

**but judge ye this rather,**

Here is one judgment(*be of opinion, deem, think*) that the law of Christ demands that we make. Rather than judge them we ought to be assessing and judging something entirely different and infinitely more important. That is what the term rather means. It “*marks the preference of one thing above another*.”

*“mallon... more, to a greater degree; rather; 1. When added to verbs and adjectives it denotes increase, a greater quantity, a larger measure, a higher degree, more, more fully... b. In comparison it often so stands that ‘than before’ must be mentally added; [A.V. the more, so much the more], ... 2. it marks the preference of one thing above another, and is to be rendered rather, sooner...” (Thayer, p. 387-388; 3123).*

So instead of judging to condemn (the weak) and or judging to despise (the strong), *“to a greater degree, and more fully”* we should be judging each circumstance and interaction for an entirely different outcome. Instead of entering relationships with an eye to judge them. We should be entering into relationships with an eye to the outcome of our own conduct. At the very least this is a great complement to Jesus warning about judging in the Sermon on the Mount. It could very well be the very beam Jesus spoke about. For any time we judge to condemn or set at naught we have a beam in our own eye that makes it impossible for us to see clear and really be helpful.

*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Mt 7:3-5*

So there is a much better and more noble way to always be judging and assessing the words and conduct of others.

### **that no man put a stumbling block in his brothers way, or an occasion of falling.**

Every time we are with our brethren and situations arise where we do not agree and feel strongly that what is being done is inappropriate (but not specifically condemned in Scripture) are first concern is not judging them. It is judging the outcome of what we might do next and base our behavior on that outcome and not on the conduct of the individual.

The Spirit would have us view our words and our responses to the behavior of others as either impeding or helping their walk as a Christian. Hence we must assess and base our behavior not primarily on removing the mote, but much more importantly that we never *“set, place, or lay down”* by our conduct or judgment something that might cause someone to stumble or be hurt. The words *“stumbling block”* and *“occasion of falling”* are close in meaning but have some subtle differences. A stumbling block is *“an obstacle”* that someone could kick or trip over. We have all done this. An object that blends in with the ground or something we do not see because our attention is elsewhere and after kicking it with our foot, or having it twist our foot to the side we lose our balance and stumble for a few paces. Sometimes we fall down and other times we recover, but it is always an unpleasant experience.

*“proskomma... A stumbling-block... i.e an obstacle in the way which if one strike his foot against he necessarily stumbles or falls; trop that over which the soul stumbles, i.e. by which it is impelled to sin. prop. A stone against which the foot strikes...” (Thayer, p. 547; 4348)*

The strongest and clearest use of this word in the Scriptures reveals how Jesus conduct affected the leaders of Israel. Though Jesus was exactly what God expected and wanted him to be, he fell far short of Jewish expectations. He became the chief cornerstone in the church, but a stone of stumbling to those who wanted something different. The stumbled over Jesus and were broken in pieces.

*The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner; 8 and, A stone of **stumbling**, and a rock of offence; for they **stumble** at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 1 Pet 2:7-8*

*But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner? 18 Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust. Luke 20:17-18*

Hence a stone of stumbling is something done that leads another to trip or fall in their spiritual walk with the Lord. This is what Peter did in Antioch. He was so concerned about how the weak Jews from Jerusalem would despise him for eating the Gentiles that he drew back leading others to stumble.

*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. Gal 2:11-13*

This is the real issue behind this word. He used it again later in this chapter to clearly reveal the danger he described.

*Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with **offence**. Rom 14:20*

This was the biggest concern that all servants of Christ must be concerned about with this term.



It is generally the strong who are exercising their liberty that lead to this problem. We know that something is right and we can do it, but we are commanded here to have our eyes focused upon others and not upon our liberties. We can lead someone to stumble by forcing liberties we believe we have but leads them to sin and possibly lose their soul. He discussed this more fully when speaking to the Corinthians.

*But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a **stumbling block** to the weak. 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 1 Cor 8:8-12*

A liberty of the strong can become a stumbling block to the weak. This is where the focus of all Christians ought to be. Instead of judging on the basis of likes and dislikes or even convictions of things that are not wrong to us, we need to focus on the needs of others. Since actions influence others, we need to consider the possible affects of our actions and not simply judge the action itself. If our knowledge and judgment leads to a brother being tempted to sin or even to fall away from the Lord, then we have sinned no matter how right the deed itself was.

*Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. 3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. 1 Cor 8:1-3*

The second term was first used of the movable stick or trigger that set the trap or snare into motion and captured or killed the one who stumbled into it. It then came to mean anything that would ensnare or cause one to stumble or fall.

*"skandalon... prop. the movable stick or trigger of a trap, trap-stick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall.... [a stumbling block, occasion of stumbling]..." (Thayer, p. 577; 4625)*

Jesus warned that even our hand, foot or eye could cause us to stumble and that this stumble would lead to being cast into hell.

*And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. 9 And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. Mt 18:8-9*

So these are "occasions of falling." These are the temptations, snares, troubles and trials that can lead the weak to fall back into sin. This is what Jesus warned that persecution and tribulation could do to the seed sown in the rocky heart for "straightway he stumbleth."

*And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; 21 yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, Mt 13:20-21*

Jesus strongly warned his disciples. He revealed that it would be better to have a millstone tied around our neck and be drowned in the sea than to ever cause someone to stumble.

*And he said unto his disciples, It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. Luke 17:1-3*

Here we see the entire scope laid out. If it is a sin and a clear violation of Scripture then he must be rebuked, then forgiven after repentance. But anything else that we might place stress on a brother that leads to his slip or fall is a stumbling block. It was just such a stumbling block that Balaam sought for when he wanted Balak's reward. He found a weakness in Israel and taught him how to exploit it.

*But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. Rev 2:14*

So what is being asked for here is clear. We should never seek to judge as God does with the view of always giving a verdict of right or wrong on all the conduct of others based upon our present knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. We are not capable and have not been entrusted with this duty. If Scripture is clearly violated then we do what Scripture says. But if not, then we have a much higher duty. We are to see to it that we never do or say another to another that could lead to spiritual set backs, sins, or apostasy. Anything we do that leads to that is a sin regardless of how well meaning or how convicted we are.

This is an exceedingly fine line. But God gives one more command that helps us make the decision

by weighting it in that direction.

*For judgment (is) without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment. Jas 2:13*

*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Mt 5:7*

*Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful. 37 And judge not: and you shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released: Luke 6:36-37*

When situations arise that are clear violations of Scripture we do exactly what God says to do. If they refuse to repent and fall away we are guiltless because we have done what God told us to do. When situations arise where we know for certain that it is morally neutral and no harm can be done then we simply hold our peace even though we disagree. But if a situation arises right in the middle. We know it is wrong. We could never do it ourselves, but it is not specifically addressed in the Scriptures and we are torn not knowing which way to go, then mercy glories over judgment. It is always better in such circumstances to do nothing and leave it to God. To show mercy and not strict judgment.

#### **14. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus,**

This is the progression for all things we wish to do in all good conscience. First we must learn the truth from the Scriptures. As we hear the Lord's will on any matter we first come to know it. We "*learn, understand and perceive.*"

*"oida,... 1. like the Lat. novi it has the signification of a present to know, understand; and in the plpf. the signif. of an impf. 1. to know,... 2. to know l. e. get knowledge of, understand, perceive; a. any fact... b. the force and meaning of something that has definite meaning:... c. as in class. Grk., foll. by an inf. in the sense of to know how(Lat. calleo, to be skilled in ...Phil 4:12)..." (Thayer, p. 174; 1492).*

This is what happened to Peter on the rooftop in the vision about all unclean foods being cleansed.

This is what the Jews learned after they became a Christian and were taught that the Law of Moses was nailed to the cross and many of its ordinances were no longer binding. But such knowledge is no always enough to change our feelings and attitudes. We know in our mind, but our heart is still unconvinced and unable to apply this knowledge. Peter resisted the implications of the vision until the Holy Spirit commanded that he go, but was still not fully persuaded as is evidenced by what happened when the Jews came to Antioch. But Paul was now persuaded. He had taken the truth and so applied it in his heart that he had "*yielded to and complied with it*" and now "*trusted and had confidence.*"

*"peitho... 2. Passive and Middle... a. to be persuaded, to suffer one' self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe... to be persuaded of a thing concerning a person Heb. 6:9... b. to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with ...to trust, have confidence, be confident..." (Thayer, p. 497-498; 3982).*

Both of these are in the perfect tense so Paul both learned and became persuaded sometime in the past and the affects of that knowledge and persuasion were will powerful and still affecting his heart and conscience. It is interesting how this works in our heart. Anyone converted out of a false religion who were taught that they were forbidden to do something and then finding out it is a good and wholesome thing will go through this process. The first time they hear it, they are astounded and amazed. So Israel must have been with their days and foods. So those who were forbidden to marry and commanded to abstain from meat. The Jehovah Witnesses forbid celebrating birthdays and pledging allegiance to the flag, the Mormons teach that caffeine is a sinful substance. After learning the truth, people learn that God cares nothing for such things. But even after they learn the facts and the truth they will often not be persuaded deeply within themselves. They will ponder and consider to see if there is any misunderstanding. It may take weeks, months or even years for some to be persuaded enough that it will not violate their conscience. Paul was already there and already one of the strong.

#### **that nothing is unclean of itself:**

This is one of those blanket statements that was never intended to be taken in any sense broader than the context here. The term "nothing" is all encompassing. *Not one single things, nothing whatever, in no wise.*

*"oudeis... and not one, no one, none, no; ... 1. with nouns... 2. absolutely, ... nothing whatever, not at all, in no wise..." (Thayer, p. 462; 3762)*

In this context it is a true statement, but in the realm or morality or doctrinal modifications it is not true. Though it is true that all emotions and activities in this life are not unclean of themselves man has found ways to make them unclean. Fornication and adultery are unclean of themselves. Murder and stealing as well. But Paul is not speaking in this context of things clearly revealed in Scripture as unclean. This statement is very similar to the one made in Corinthians. Sandwiched between:

“know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” and “Flee fornication.... he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” 1 Cor 6:9, 18 is:

*All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any.* 1 Cor 6:12

Does Paul then contradict himself in the same Scripture? Certainly not! After ruling out all the things that make us unrighteous, all other things are lawful. In the same way after ruling out all the things condemned in the Scriptures, everything else is clean. With the reflexive pronoun the reflects the thing itself against the concept of unclean and says that it is not reciprocal. Without the “nothing” “the agent(unclean) and the thing(thing) acted on are the same. That would mean that every thing is unclean. But with the nothing they are not the same and never will be the same.

**save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**

There is one very important exception to the above. Nothing is unclean in itself, but when anyone contemplating that action or thing “accounts” it to be unclean a different set of circumstances arise. Some after adding up all that they know and all that they have *reckoned* and *computed*, and “considered, took account, weighed, and meditated on will still determine, purpose and decide that it is unclean.

*“logizomai... [a favorite word with the apostle Paul, being used (exclusive of quotations) some 27 times in his Epp., and only four times in the rest of the N.T.]. 1. ...to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over; hence a. to take into account, to make account of... 2. ...to reckon inwardly, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate,... 3. by reckoning up all the reasons to gather or infer; i.e. a. to consider, take account, weigh, meditate on... b. To suppose, deem judge... c. To determine, purpose, decide...” (Thayer, p. 379; 3049)*

This brings up an interesting paradox that Paul will clear up at the end of the chapter. Nothing is unclean unless you think it is unclean, but if you believe and account it to be unclean, then it really becomes unclean, but only to you and not to anyone else. It is not really unclean, but since it is unclean within in your mind, it is unclean to you. Let's put this in simpler terms. God cleansed all things at the death of Jesus all the ceremonial things that were meant to separate men were no longer needed hence were abolished. The emotions that these ceremonial laws evoked in people though were not abolished. Consequently a man must be bound by his emotions and his conscience. If one cannot get past his emotional feelings that something is wrong, then he is bound by those feelings until he can be convinced and persuaded within himself that it is not true. Intellectual assent is not enough, he must learn and apply it until it feels good and right for him because of his new found faith and conviction in the Lord.

But such feelings do not make it unclean for others. One can know it is not unclean and the one next to him believe it is unclean. The one who knows it is not unclean must understand that for the brother next to him it is unclean because he thinks it is unclean. If the brother is not present a man can do as his own heart directs him. But if the brother is present, to prevent a stumbling block or occasion of stumbling, you must not force the issue. It is not simply a figment of his imagination that must be forcibly removed. It is a genuine crisis in the mind of this brother and by forcing he really will sin.

**15. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved,**

With the conjunction *gar* Paul continues to explain the above. This is the application. It is the reason why the above has been explained. Since it really is unclean then the brother will truly be grieved by your eating it and even more so if he is forced to eat it with you. The term grieve has the literal sense of sorrow over a loss(1Th 4:14) *sorrow as the rest who have not hope.*

*“lupeo... to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief; to throw into sorrow... in a wider sense, to grieve, offend... to make one uneasy, cause him a scruple...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 383; 3076)*

But it's general meaning in Scriptures is seen by grief and remorse over hurt feelings, being forced to do something they do not want to do or with sinful activities when they are pointed out. Peter was *grieved* when the Lord asked him if he loved him in John 21. Herod was *grieved* that he had to kill John the Baptist(Mt 14:9) and the rich man when he was told he had to sell all that he had(Mt 2:19-32). The best sense of this word is the reaction of the Corinthians to that first letter.

*For though I made you **sorry** with my epistle, I do not regret it: though I did regret (it) (for I see that that epistle made you **sorry**, though but for a season), 9 I now rejoice, not that ye were made **sorry**, but that ye were made **sorry** unto repentance; for ye were made **sorry** after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. 10 For godly **sorrow** worketh repentance unto salvation, (a repentance) which bringeth no regret: but the **sorrow** of the world worketh death. 11 For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made **sorry** after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. 2 Cor 7:4-11*

Their sorrow was the deep remorse and hurt of knowing one is in sin and has failed to live up to God's expectations. The sorrow here is similar, but may have a different outcome. It is the sorrow of the Corinthian fornicator due to their withdrawal which could lead to a terrible outcome.

*Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was (inflicted) by the many; 7 so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch **sorrow**. 8 Wherefore I beseech you to confirm (your) love toward him. 2 Cor 2:6-8*

We can create such a grief in the heart of a brother just by eating a piece of meat. But should we do so, we are violating the previous verse as well as violating the law of love.

### **thou walkest no longer in love.**

Paul spoke of this in 12:8-12. We have an unending obligation to love one another and this love works no ill to his neighbor. But if we are so selfish as to demand our liberties regardless to the cost of our neighbor then we have left love behind. God did not care about circumcision yet when others demanded it of Titus Paul stood firm at the Jerusalem conference out of love for their souls. It was not a case of weakness but of error. Later Paul had Timothy circumcised for exactly the same reason out of love for souls. These two exact opposites fully reveal what Paul seeks to get across.

*But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Gal 2:3-5*

*And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. 2 The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Acts 16:1-3*

It would have been a terrible burden of grief on the Gentiles if Paul had not stood up to those who were forcing those who were weak to take it on. His love for the souls of the weak forced him to stand up to those who were equally weak hoping to help them as well. But with Timothy it was different. Paul was going out to the Jews to help them and Timothy's uncircumcision would grieve them. He could not become a Jew to the Jews if Timothy were uncircumcised. We see how wise Paul was when he was falsely charged with that very thing in Jerusalem.

*crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. 29 For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. Acts 21:28-31*

Israelites would be deeply grieved over Timothy's liberty so that liberty was not exercised so that as many as possible could be saved. This is walking in love. But to demand liberty at the cost of souls is not walking in love.

### **destroy not with thy meat**

*Destroy* takes things much further than a stumbling block or occasion of falling. The weak may possibly recover from such selfish and inconsiderate acts even though they are sinful regardless of the consequences. But now Paul discusses those who have been "ruined," and "lost" and thus have "perished."

*"apollumi... to destroy ... 1. to destroy i.e. to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin... contextually, to declare that one must be put to death ... metaph. to devote or give over to eternal misery ... contextually, by one's conduct to cause another to lose eternal salvation ... Mid. to perish, to be lost, ruined, destroyed ... A... tropically, to incur the loss of true or eternal life; to be delivered up to eternal misery ... B. of things; to be blotted out, to vanish away... to perish, of things which on being thrown away are decomposed... or which are ruined so that they can no longer subserve the use for which they were designed, ... 2. to destroy i.e. to lose; (Thayer, p. 64-65; 622)*

This word is used many times in the NT, but some of the passages that have the same force as here are listed below. Only God is able to actually destroy these but it was the action of these strong ones who brought it about. While God sent his son so that no one should perish and is longsuffering toward that same end those in the church can undo all that God has done.

*And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to **destroy** both soul and body in hell. Matt 10:28*

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not **perish**, but have eternal life. John 3:16*

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not*

wishing that any should **perish**, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Pet 3:9

### him for whom Christ died.

Every brother by definition has been washed in the blood of Jesus. Jesus died for him and he was well on his way to receiving the eternal life that God promises to all who obey the gospel. Then along comes this strong one who must exercise his liberties regardless of the cost. So in the course of his selfish and inconsiderate use someone stumbles, falls and perishes. How will this look on the day of judgment? Will the Lord be as happy with the knowledge and wisdom of this man as he is himself? Certainly not!

*Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. 2 If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; 3 but if any man loveth God, the same is known by him. . . . 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble. 1 Cor 8:1-3, 11-13*

Certainly the knowledge and persuasion gained from study and hard work is commendable. But if in the exercise of that hard earned liberty one who is weak is destroyed and falls away, we are guilty of a grievous sin. First by sinning against the brethren and in the process also sinning against Christ.

Liberties are just that. They are wonderful truths that lead to freedom. Jesus promised this to all his disciples in John 8:31-32. But such freedom for one must not lead to destruction and bondage to another. Liberties should be shared and grown into by all. If there is any one who is unable to participate in the liberty then all others should not partake either. They are not rights, they are liberties.

### 16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Not only does such conduct make one a sinner in the eyes of God and Jesus. It also makes us look evil to those who hear or see it. Because this is an imperative it is something we are not to allow to happen, but because it is in the passive it is something that others will be doing. This is simply saying in a negative prohibition what he had already said in the positive: “*Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men*” (Rom 12:17). We have to be concerned about the consequences of our actions. Our growth in knowledge and maturity in the Scriptures is a good thing. Paul wanted Timothy to do this.

*Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15*

But if we abuse our knowledge and use it selfishly without care and concern for the consequences it will have on others, this wonderful good will be “*evil spoken of.*” Most uses of this term are not even translated. They are simply given English letters. It is the Greek word “*blasphemeo*” which comes from “*blasphemia.*” Kittel says that “*blasphemia* is a ‘abusive speech’ (misuse of words) in contrast to *euphemia.*” Hence *blasphemy* and *euphemism* are exact opposites. A *euphemism* is a word that sounds pleasing and is a compliment and giving of honor. A *blasphemy* is a “*word of evil sound.*” an insult and a form of dishonor to whomever it is spoken against. In English we save blasphemy for words spoken against God that are insulting and dishonoring. The Greeks did not make such a distinction. So our translators use the Greek word when it is spoken against God and use its definition when speaking about our fellow man or his deeds.

*“blasphemeo... to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate ... Passive ... to be evil spoken of, reviled, railed at... of those who by contemptuous speech intentionally come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred things...” (Thayer, p. 102; 987)*

Do not let your good be *blasphemed*. Do not allow your wisdom and understanding to cause others to look down upon you. This is the terrible possibility every time we are not acting in love. We may be fully within our rights to do what we are doing. But if it brings an outcome in which good people are driven away and perish, our good (knowledge of liberties) can be blasphemed.

This can happen within the church as the weak consider the damage done by the strong and begin to lose all respect. It can also happen outside the church as those who watch see the church being broken up by things they either consider inconsequential or even wrong themselves. So the Jews would speak evil of the church for driving off good people by doing something evil and the Gentile would speak evil for driving someone off for something that doesn't even matter.

### 17. For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,

Another *gar* another explanation of the reason for the previous statement. God did not establish

the kingdom for the purpose of giving to others the right to eat and drink whatever they wanted to. Before proceeding with Romans, it is wise to gain a better understanding of the Kingdom of God.

## The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven

The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are mentioned much more in the gospels than in the epistles. Matthew and Luke use the terms almost one hundred times, Mark twenty and John five so in the gospels it is used about one hundred and twenty times. In the rest of the Bible it is only used about twenty times and of that eight are in Acts. This is the only time Paul used it in Romans. The relationship of those who obey the gospel with the Lord are illustrated with a variety of figures. Jesus is the head over all things to his body (Eph 1:22-23), he is the vine and we are the branches (Jn 15:1-8) and he is the shepherd over the sheep (Jn 10). He is also the husband and the church is his bride, he is the chief cornerstone and foundation and we are the living stones (1Pet 2:1-9). He is also the king and we are his kingdom. It was all the way back to the time of David that God promised through Nathan the prophet that one of his sons would receive an eternal kingdom.

*And it shall come to pass, when thy days are fulfilled that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever. 13 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; 14 but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established for ever. 15 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. 1 Chr 17:11-22*

David also wrote the Psalm that contains the great power of this coming King.

*Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against his anointed, (saying), 3 Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision. 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure: 6 Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ps 2:1-12*

Later in the prophets more and more details of this king and his kingdom are revealed. He would be mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace who will sit on the throne of David.

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this. Isa 9:6-7*

When Daniel interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, God revealed the time in which the kingdom would be established. It would be in the days of those kings of the fourth kingdom of Iron (Rome).

*And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Dan 2:44*

In a vision later in his life, he again pointed to the fourth kingdom as the time period and then gave some details which we fully understand today. The son of man (Jesus) came to the ancient of days after his resurrection. What Daniel therefore saw was the coronation of the Christ when he was given dominion, glory and a kingdom.

*I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. . . . 27 And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Dan 7:13-14, 18, 27*

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary he revealed to her that the son she would bear in her virginity would be the one promised to David and described in Isaiah and Daniel.

*And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Lk 1:31-33*

God gave John the Baptist the duty of revealing Jesus to Israel, and preparing the way for him. He began his mission by preaching “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mt 3:2), which Jesus also announced (Mt 4:17). Jesus then went everywhere preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23) and most of Jesus’ parables in Matthew were given to illustrate and explain it.

He was revealing “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 13:11) The seed of the sower was “the word of the kingdom” (Mt 13:19); then in quick succession: The “kingdom of heaven is...” “like a man who sowed good seed and another sowed tares.” “the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil” (Mt 13:24, 38) “like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:” (Mt 13:31) “like unto leaven,” (Mt 13:33) “like unto a treasure hidden in the field;” (Mt 13:44) “like a man seeking goodly pearls:” and (Mt 13:45) “like unto a net.” (Mt 13:47)

He told Peter that he would “give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt 16:19) and that “some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” (Mt 16:28)

These words make it clear that even while Jesus was here they were pointing to the future for the beginning of the kingdom and the reign of the king. Jesus again affirmed that they would see the kingdom come:

*And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand (by), who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power. Mark 9:1*

When Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king, he revealed some of the most profound aspects of it.

*Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Jn 18:36*

When Peter preached the sermon in Acts two he affirmed that Jesus was then sitting at the right hand of God exalted and then after the second sermon while they were gathered with the apostles Peter quoted the second Psalm, and stated plainly that Jesus was the subject.

So our faith and repentance, along with our confession that Jesus is Lord and our baptism into Christ place us into this great kingdom. A kingdom that begins here with our submissive obedience to the Lord and continues into eternity.

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Mt 25:34*

*And this (word), Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a consuming fire. Heb 12:27-29*

When we understand the greatness and vastness of the kingdom of God, we see the power and irony of Paul’s words. This is the kingdom of the saved over whom Christ is reigning and who died to purchase their souls from the debt of sin. He did not die, set aside the Law of Moses and establish his kingdom for the saved simply to abolish the ceremonial laws of Moses and give absolute freedom in these matters to his people. Although these things did happen as a result of the coming of the kingdom it is an insignificant part.

While Paul has been speaking about food and days, he now also introduces drink. This is not something that changed with the Law. Nor is it something that only affected Jew or Gentile. Paul reveals what he is speaking of later: “It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor (to do anything) whereby thy brother stumbleth.” (Rom 14:21). So Paul introduced the drinking of wine into the discussion. We will discuss this when we get to this verse. The kingdom of heaven has nothing to do with such things for the reason Jesus explained while he was here.

*And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. . . . 17 And when he was entered into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked of him the parable. 18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, (it) cannot defile him; 19 because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? (This he said), making all meats clean. 20 And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: 23 all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man. Mark 7:14-15, 17-23*

Food goes into the belly and only affects the body. It is the heart and the soul that matter. Anything that defiles us spiritually is what the kingdom of God is designed to help and deal with. Our food and drink are insignificant unless they impact the soul.

### **but righteousness**

This term has been the theme of this book since the very beginning. God makes man righteous by his faith and the kingdom is the place where all these **“faith-made-righteous”** people. Yet there is much more to righteousness than what God gives to us by his grace and our faith. In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus had a lot to say about our personal righteousness in his sermon on the Mount. He started with our desire for it and our need to show it to the point where people notice and are unhappy about it. He warns that if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven it must exceed that of those who ruled in that day. He then warned that righteousness is not something we do for show, it is something we do for God and in the process of doing it for God others will see it. Finally he asked us to hunger and thirst for it.

*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Mt 5:6*

*Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mt 5:10*

*For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed (the righteousness) of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mt 5:20*

*Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. Mt 6:1*

*But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Mt 6:33*

Righteousness is based upon **“observing divine and human laws,”** **“the state of him who is such as he ought to be”** and thus **“integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling and acting”** (Thayer p 149). This is what the kingdom was designed for and exists to accomplish. God sent his son to die for our sins and become our king so that we would hunger and thirst for this righteousness. When we strive to be all that we should be toward God and toward our fellow citizens in the kingdom, we will not be arguing over such petty things and will know that Paul is right. Since the same baptism that is they *antitype* or Noah’s ark (IPet 3:21), is also our means of entering the kingdom, we need to see the church as a place of safety and security where every brother has the opportunity to grow and become as righteous as he can. To accomplish this all other brethren must be willing to help and not hinder.

### **and peace**

One of the most important elements for people to work together and to help one another is **“peace, harmony and concord.”** A place where there is **“security, safety, and felicity”**

*“eirene,... 1. a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war... 2. peace between individuals, i. e. harmony, concord... 3. security, safety, prosperity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous) ...” (Thayer, p. 182; 1515)*

God has much to say on this. An entire Psalm was written to extol it and God hates those who seek to disrupt it .

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that came down upon the skirt of his garments; 3 Like the dew of Hermon, that cometh down upon the mountains of Zion: for there Jehovah commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Ps 133:1-3*

*There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: . . . 19 A false witness that uttereth lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren. Prov 6:19*

The citizens in the kingdom of God are seeking for peace, unity and harmony in all their dealings with one another. It is the very best environment for servants of the Lord to grow and develop. James speaks of the terrible origin of faction and strife and warns us to seek for peace.

*But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not (a wisdom) that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace. James 3:14-18*

The wisdom that comes from above and is exhibited among the true children of God is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, and full of mercy. This is where the fruit of righteousness will be sown and peace will be made. The attitude of these brethren needs to be brought into harmony with these qualities.

*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Isa 26:3*



*And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. Col 3:15*

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil 4:6-7*

*Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. II Th 3:16*

There is no excuse for wanting liberties more than these things.

## **and joy**

The third thing Paul lists in the kingdom that is pertinent to this context is joy. These last two terms are spoken of as the fruits of the Spirit

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy, peace**, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. Gal 5:22-23*

Joy is the byproduct of the wonderful blessings those in the kingdom receive from God. Jesus described this in one of his parables and it is illustrated by the Ethiopian eunuch.

*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Mt 13:44*

*And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8:39*

All servants of the Lord and citizens in the kingdom feel this joy as they enter. This joy grows with our growth in faith and self-control. As brethren interact with each other that joy is to grow even further. There is nothing more pleasant than to be around mature brethren who seek to be a blessing to others. We will not find such joy in the world.

*These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Jn 16:33*

The world only offers temptations toward evil and persecutions if we seek to be good hence the world will continually bring tribulations. In the kingdom of God we should find joy. In order to accomplish this each member is to do all they can to create the harmony and concord where this joy can grow.

It is the responsibility of every member to make all interactions as joyful and peaceable as possible. Joy can only come from harmony, concord and righteousness. It is not something that can be forced or even given. It is the consequence of having a life full of blessings and peace. So as much as is in us, we need to be at peace and do things that make for peace. So that their will be joy.

Again, the subject Paul is dealing with is creating just the opposite. Those who want liberty, are creating a very toxic environment for those who are weak by setting them at naught and treating them with contempt. Those who are weak are making a toxic environment by judging those who are strong. These very actions reveal that they are not good citizens in the kingdom of God.

## **in the Holy Spirit**

The relationship of the Holy Spirit to all the above is the same relationship we have with all things in the gospel. He is the other comforter sent to lead us into all the truth. Through his agency, the apostles and prophets received their inspiration. Through the Holy Spirit all the blessings and power and wonder of the kingdom of God has been revealed to us. There is no righteousness, peace or joy unless we are in the Holy Spirit and listening to him. These are the real essence of the kingdom. When Jesus died and brought about all things necessary for salvation the Holy Spirit completed the work by his teachings and guidance. Paul's point seems to be that when we listen to his commands we will seek more for the three wonderful virtues in the kingdom and will leave our personal liberties for food or drink at the door.

## **18. For he that herein serveth Christ**

The conjunction *gar* once again takes us into the previous verse and gives the reason why it is so important. The English "herein" is actually two Greek words a preposition and a pronoun. The pronoun "*touto*" "*refers to what precedes.*" The preposition *en* "*in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space.*" Hence, in the interior of the things just listed. Within the limits of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit each church, and each member is truly serving Christ as king.

*"douleuo... 1. prop. to be a slave, serve, do service... 2. metaph. to obey, submit to; a. in a good sense: absol. to yield obedience... to obey one's commands and render to him the services due... b. in a bad sense, of those who become slaves to some base power, to yield to, give one's self up to..." (Thayer, p. 157; 1398)*

True service to the Lord in which we “obey and submit to” him and “obey his commands,” thus “rendering to him the services due to him.” is clearly marked out. We are either part of the solution to the above bringing it about with all our heart, or we are part of the problem in selfishly clinging to our own rights and not giving ourselves up to his will and the needs of our neighbor.

### **is well pleasing to God**

God’s view of those who look at the kingdom and seek to accomplish in the kingdom the things listed above is that they are acceptable or even well pleasing to him.

“*euarestos... eu, well, arestos, pleasing, is rendered “acceptable” in the A.V. ... The R.V. usually has “well-pleasing;”...*” (Vine, Vol 1, p. 20; 2101)

Our translations use either well-pleasing or acceptable for this term. It is good and pleasant, and what God is seeking. A congregation in harmony and concord witnessing the love and sacrifices which these brethren are willing to make one for another is exactly what God wants to see. Jesus testified that this would be the means of identification for all men that we are disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:35). God is well pleased when his children make the personal sacrifices necessary to assure the righteousness, joy, and peace of a local congregation.

### **and approved of men.**

This is what men would expect to see in a congregation that was truly of divine origin. Only when they see it will they “approve.” This term actually means to put to the test and find that it is what it ought to be. This was a common practice when receiving a coin or metal ore. The claim must be tested. Once tested and found to have all the proper characteristic it was said to be approved.

“*dokimos... 1. prop. accepted, particularly of coins and metals... hence univ. proved, tried in the N.T. one who is of tried faith and integrity [R. V. approved]... 2. accepted l. q. acceptable, pleasing...*” (Thayer, p. 155; 1384)

One of the characteristic teaching in the Scripture that a part of our evangelistic efforts center right here. We are to do things that others will see and understand is exactly what they ought to be seeing. This is how servants adorn the doctrine and how others keep it from being blasphemed.

*(Exhort) servants to be in subjection to their own masters, (and) to be well-pleasing (to them) in all things; not gainsaying; 10 not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Titus 2:9-10*

*For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written. Rom 2:24*

*that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 (to be) sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed: Titus 2:4-5*

*Let as many as are servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed. 1 Tim 6:1*

This subject is exactly the same. When the world sees a church filled with peace and joy and righteousness, it is all that they would expect. When they see it filled with strife and bickering, pride and selfishness, it fails the test and they will look elsewhere.

### **19. So then let us follow after things which make for peace,**

So then is a combination of the logical conjunction *oun* - “*something follows from another necessarily*” and *ara* “*under these circumstances something either is so or becomes so.*”

“*ara... an illative particle...It intimates that, “under these circumstances something either is so or becomes so”... consequently ... 2. ... it is placed at the beginning of a sentence; and so, so then, accordingly,... 5. ara oun a combination peculiar to Paul, at the beginning of a sentence... ara is the more logical, oun the more formal connective...*” (Thayer, p. 71; 686)

Paul is the only one who uses this combination but it truly captures the connection between these two thoughts. Eating and drinking are insignificant in the rule of Christ in his kingdom. What are important are righteousness, peace and joy, and it is the Holy Spirit who has revealed and is urging us in this direction. Since this is not only pleasing to God but is obviously something all men are also looking for, it follows logically that with these circumstances being the case the only course open to us that follows necessarily is that we change direction.

Instead of the weak “*following after*” the judging and condemning of the strong. Instead of the strong “*following after*” the despising and minimization of the weak. Each group should instead “*follow after*” peace. This term has an interesting dichotomy of meaning. In the gospels and Acts it is used over twenty times for “persecution.” This term perfectly captures the essence of persecution. Those who “*run swiftly in order to catch,*” perfectly describes the emotion and the effort of those who despise what others are doing and want to put a stop to it.

*“dioko... 1. to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away... 2. to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after... to press on: fig. of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal, 3. in any way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one; ... Pass. with a dat. denoting the cause, to be maltreated, suffer persecution on account of something ... 4. without the idea of hostility, to run after, follow after... 5. metaph. with acc. of thing, to pursue l. e. to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire...” (Thayer, p. 153; 1377).*

Persecution would be the normal way a Christian would understand the term. But it can also mean using those same emotions to accomplish good. While enemies of Christ zealously pursue and seek to destroy Christians, the servants of Christ are zealously pursuing and seeking to do those good things that the Spirit reveals. It is like zeal and jealous. Same emotion but one seeks to rise to the level of the one who is doing better while the other seeks to them down to our own level.

So instead of getting all worked up about liberties and judgments and seeking with all our mind and heart a means to prove we are right and they are wrong, we ought to be using that same energy to bring about things that make for peace. Since the kingdom of God is to possess peace, we need to be pursuing peace. Every interaction with our brethren needs to be less about judging and more about peace. People can be allowed to grow at their own pace in many of the realms in the Scriptures only the clearest and most obvious violations of Scripture that even after gentle admonition will not bend need be dealt with. For the rest, peace is a better outcome than an environment of those who are with energy and zeal pursuing the course of judgment and condemnation.

Thus we see two entirely different local churches here. We see the church that is doing its duty regarding doctrinal and moral purity, but only within the limits of the Scriptures and otherwise seeking and pursuing peace instead. Then we find a local church like Israel in the time of Christ. So concerned about the applications of verses that they added their own laws on top of them to be certain their own understanding of the furthest reaching of the law would be complied with. Where sinners are looked down upon as spotted outcasts. In the one congregation everyone is innocent until proven guilty and in the other everyone is guilty until proven innocent. One is stifling and the other is fertile and conducive to growth.

**and things whereby we may edify one another.**

Not only are we to look for those things that make for peace, but we are also to pursue those things that *edify*.

### Edification

This is a very important word in the NT. Paul uses the noun here and the verb elsewhere. The primary meaning of the noun is *“(the act of)building, building up”* or a *“building.”* The verb *“to build a house, erect a building,”* *“to build (up from the foundation).”* It is used many times in the gospels to describe the beautiful buildings that made up the temple in Jerusalem.

*And as he went forth out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Teacher, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings! 2 And Jesus said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down. Mark 13:1-2*

The verb is used literally in the gospels to describe the effort and toil that went into building it.

*The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? John 2:20*

But its material use fades into the background as God reveals the spiritual building(church & temple) and the work and toil to build it(spiritual edification). This is true both individually and collectively. Jesus bids up build our own house upon the rock and not the sand. So we are all builders.

*Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great. Luke 6:47-49*

But more importantly to the context is the fact that both God and Jesus are actively involved in this great building of the church and temple and that one of our primary roles is to enter into this work ourselves.

And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt 16:18-19

unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Because it is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. 1 Pet 2:4-6

According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly

stones, wood, hay, stubble; 1 Cor 3:10-12

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household

of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Eph 2:19-22

As the stones in God's temple we are to be continually looking for ways to improve the quality of the stones and the quality of how those stones hold together.

And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, (even) Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love. Eph 6:11-16

One of the most important missions of the church is to build up the body of Christ by edifying the brethren.

Therefore each servant in the kingdom must make this a priority. We must endeavor and pursue with zeal all that we can to build up and strengthen the body. This is done by encouragement and love, not by judging and despising one another. So the choice is clear. Selfish fulfillment of our own desires and a despising or judging of all who disagree with us, or an unselfish love that defers to condemn or despise based upon things the Scriptures do not specifically address.

With the addition of the reciprocal pronoun the Spirit intends us to understand that this is something that is to be done mutually. Each seeking to outdo the other and with each act going higher and higher in this goal of edification.

## **20. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God.**

The word overthrow is often used as the opposite of build up. When one overthrows, they dissolve, disunite, or destroy what has been put together and built.

*kataluo... to dissolve, disunite a. (what has been joined together) equivalent to to destroy, demolish: ... universally opposed to oikodomein (to build up - edify) b. metaphorically, to overthrow, i. e. to render vain, to deprive of success, to bring to naught: ... to subvert, overthrow* (Thayer 2649)

In this case we have God taking the living stone and placing it with care into his temple to be a building fitly framed. Then a servant of Christ comes along destroys one of the stones and possibly brings down the whole building, and for what "for" the sake of meat.

*eneka .... (only before consonants)... and eneken... before consonants and vowels ... a preposition followed by the genitive, on account of, for the sake of, for...* (Thayer 1752)

Harsh judgment and the pursuing of liberties such as eating meat could actually lead to the overthrow of what God labored to gain. To destroy or undo the work of God will occur each time some unthinking Christian does something that hurts the feelings of another and thereby causes them to fall away from their faith and lose their salvation. God is working for the salvation of all men. This help us put into perspective the actual spiritual consequences of such actions.

### **all things indeed are clean;**

This is similar to the truth revealed back in 14:14. The strong are right! There is nothing unclean of itself. All the meats described in the Law have been cleansed and there is nothing that is unclean. The difference between this verse and the earlier one is the addition of "indeed" for

emphasis. All things are “truly, certainly, surely” clean.

*men* a weakened form of *men* and hence properly a particle of affirmation: *truly, certainly, surely, indeed*— ... Owing to this, its original meaning it adds a certain force to the terms and phrases with which it is connected, and thus contrast them with or distinguishes them from others.” (Thayer p 397; 3303)

There can be no question or doubt about this. No successful logical sequence or argumentation can change it. All things are clean period! The other difference is in the words for clean. There he uses the negative *common* and here the positive “*clean*.” There is nothing any longer that is unclean in food. Nothing that can corrupt or make impure.

*katharo, clean, pure* (free from the admixture or adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts); **a.** physically: **b.** in a levitical sense; *clean*, i. e. the use of which is not forbidden, imparts no uncleanness: **c.** ethically; *free from corrupt desire, from sin and guilt: ... free from every admixture of what is false, sincere, ...*” (Thayer 2513)

### **howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.**

But the weak are right too! For those like the weak who do see it as unclean, it is just as evil as they think it is, but only for them. This is the confusion. both are right and both are wrong. The strong is right in that it is clean, but wrong for thinking it is also clean for the weak. It isn't! The weak are right that it is unclean for them to eat, but wrong that the strong are equally unclean if they eat. They aren't! Only those who eat “*with offence*” are doing evil. Only those who eat, stumble and even fall spiritually when they do so.

“*proskomma... A stumbling-block... i.e an obstacle in the way which if one strike his foot against he necessarily stumbles or falls; trop that over which the soul stumbles, i.e. by which it is impelled to sin. prop. A stone against which the foot strikes...*” (Thayer, p. 547; 4348)

When one believes something is wrong and they force themselves to do it anyway, soon their conscience will begin to accuse them and they will realize that they stumbled and fell into sin and now need to repent. Since their conscience condemns them it is evil for them.

Think about it! Those who eat believing it is unclean; begin to eat, but during their eating they feel they are doing what is unclean. Soon they reach the point where they have tripped and fallen. They are then in a difficult condition. If they stop eating and say I cannot eat any more then they will offend you, if they continue to eat, then they are offending God. Stop and consider the consequences of what you have done. You have by your knowledge forced another to commit an act of sin. Sure it really is clean, but to him it is not and by your inconsiderate act, you have hurt him, and quite possibly gone so far as to have overthrown the work of God.

### **21. It is good not to eat flesh,**

Guided only by pride and selfishness, it is easy to feel that missing out on any lawful pleasure would be something bad. All that it is lawful and good for us to do ought to be done. Why should we withhold ourselves from any lawful pleasure? But Paul revealed that this is not true, the real evil is to tempt someone to “*eat with offence*.” Even though it is lawful and enjoyable for the strong, they must train themselves to see it as being *good* to restrain themselves and not eat. There is something “*beautiful and distinguished*” to God about not eating under these circumstances. It is “*excellent, commendable and admirable,*” and “*praiseworthy and honorable.*”

“*kalos... Sept for ... beautiful, but much oftener for ... good; beautiful, applied by the Greeks to everything so distinguished in form, excellence, goodness, usefulness, as to be pleasing; hence (acc. to the context) i.q. beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable;... a. beautiful to look at, shapely, magnificent... b. good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well-adapted to its ends: ... c. beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy; morally good, noble... d. honorable, conferring honor...*” (Thayer, p. 322; 2570).

As spiritual beings who see the flesh as a separate part of our being, there are higher and more noble things than simply gratifying lawful desires even if they are lawful. There are times when denial of the lawful is more noble and honorable than enjoying it and giving God thanks. The mature Christian begins to see (as Paul will soon lead us), that like his master, he too must be willing to make sacrifices. It was certainly good that Jesus left heaven where he lawfully abode to make sacrifices for others. Paul too spoke of spending and being spent for souls.

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 2 Cor 8:9*

*And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? 2 Cor 12:15*

The sooner we learn that “*it is better to give than to receive*” we will understand why it is good to forego any liberty that will lead to the strengthening and comfort of others.

Though Paul replaced the word food with the *flesh* or *meat*, he is carrying all that was previously said into this verse. There is nothing unclean and there is nothing unlawful, Yet under these circumstances it is good to leave it alone. When choosing between enjoying a wonderful and tasty meal or helping a brother with his weaknesses, clearly there is no difficulty in seeing which is good, honorable and beautiful in the eyes of the Lord.

### **nor to drink wine,**

Paul had alluded to an intent to broaden this subject beyond food and days in verse 17 when he said “*eating and drinking.*” He now specifically states what drink he had in mind. As one reads all the commentaries on this verse (the only one in the NT dealing with wine in the context of liberties and stumbling) it is clear there is a great difference of opinion on where wine fits in the lives of the children of God. Some place it as a liberty regardless of the wine (strongly or mildly alcoholic). Others see this as a limitation of those who would drink mild wine in the presence of those who might think it was stronger.

The baselines are very clear. Jesus command to use fruit of the vine on the first day of the week in remembrance of him precludes anyone from removing grape juice from the use of each Christian. What we can partake of in the assembly we can certainly use in daily life. On the other end of the spectrum, drunkenness is a sin placed in the same lists with murder, idolatry, and adultery.

*Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor 6:9-10*

*Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. Rom 13:13*

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are (these): fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21*

*But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: Luke 21:34*

*And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; Eph 5:18*

Peter discussing those beverages that lead directly to drunkenness warned his readers that there was no longer any time left for such things:

*Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, and abominable idolatries: 4 wherein they think it strange that ye run not with (them) into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of (you): 1 Pet 4:1-4*

Specifically Peter speaks of “*winebibbings, revellings, and carousings.*” Since these terms are not used today it is important to know exactly what the terms mean. Trench takes them and places them in their graduated position. *methe* is the common word for drunkenness used in the passages above. It is the deepest intoxication, but these other terms clearly describe different degrees. The first level is the banquet (carousing) where alcohol is present, not of necessity excessive but the opportunity is there. The second level (winebibbing) is the hilarity and slight loss of inhibition that comes just before complete drunkenness. The third are the actions (revelry) where alcohol impels people to do those things that make a fool of themselves.

“*methe*, occurring in the NT at Lk 21:34 Rom 13:13; Gal 5:21 and *potos*, found only at I Pet 4:3 are distinguishable as an abstract and a concrete. *methe* ... is drunkenness...; *potos* ... the drinking bout, the banquet, the symposium, not of necessity excessive... but given opportunity for excess... The next word in the group, *oinophlugia* (“excess of wine,” A.V.) occurs in the N.T. only at I Pet 4:3; and never in the Septuagint... It marks a step in advance of *methe*. ... It is used for a debauch; no single word rendering it better than this; being as it is an extravagant influence in potations long drawn out... *komos*, in the NT found in the plural only, and rendered in our Version once “rioting” (Rom 13:13), and twice “revellings” (Gal. 5:21; I Pet 4:3), may be said to unite in itself both those notions, namely, or riot and of revelry. ... *komos* is often used of the company of revelers themselves; always a festal company, but not of necessity riotous and drunken... Still the word generally implies as much, being applied in a special sense to the troop of drunken revelers...” Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament p. 225-227)

These are the facts as we know them. It is all the information we have. When we add those passages regarding wine with alcoholic content we get about as complete a picture as we can about how God feels.

**Wine** *is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise. Pr. 20:1*

*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over **wine**, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the **wine** when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. Prov 23:29-33*

So what is the answer? Is Paul giving license here to all uses of wine with alcohol regardless of the alcohol content and by extension all the liquors in existence today? Is Paul here revealing that the use of alcohol is a liberty that the strong can indulge in as long as there are no weak present? With all the above information to sift and consider my answer is no. Paul is not speaking of any beverage that could lead to the things described in the Proverbs or that leads directly to drunkenness. How could he? If drunkenness is a sin, how could the beverage that leads to it be stamped with approval? If anger leading to murder and looks leading to lust(Mt 5) are sinful then so is the first drink leading to drunkenness.

So what then are the passages dealing with wine such as this one, the qualifications of deacons and aged women, and the one urging Timothy to take some wine speaking about.

*Deacons in like manner (must be) grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 1 Tim 3:8*

*Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. 1 Tim 5:23 that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; Titus 2:3*

First of all if either qualification were dealing with too much wine that was creating drunkenness(from tipsy to staggering) Paul would not be saying they are unworthy of the position, he would be urging church discipline.

*but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. 1 Cor 5:11*

So whatever this too much is, it is not leading anywhere near to drunkenness. So what is he dealing with? Why was Timothy only a drinker of water and never drank wine? If it was a drink as free from stigma in those days as those today maintain why didn't Timothy drink it? We can't answer all these questions. We know that some wine was "new wine," other wine was mixed with water, and some was highly intoxicating. We know that the latter that led directly to drunkenness was evil. We know that the previous two were not. The line was so blurred that there was a great struggle in the hearts of many. The strong could drink the wine mixed with water but the weak simply drank the water is about as far as we can safely conclude.

## **Wine Is a Mocker!** *by Alan Hitchen*

Two things are certain: Drunkenness cannot occur without alcohol, and both create a portal leading pure and holy people where they would never go sober. Both Lot(Gen 19:30-38) and Noah(Gen 9:20-24) would never have done those things sober. It was alcohol that made fools of these righteous men. Alcohol stole their reason and dulled inhibition. Alcohol leads into temptation while at the same time decreasing our ability to resist or flee it. God condemned drunkenness(Rom 13:13-14; I Cor 5:11; 6:9-11; Gal 5:19-21) as a work of the flesh and of the darkness.

Yet there are always some who contend there are legitimate uses of alcohol. They believe a "self-controlled" Christian can drink wine, beer, or liquor for relaxation and enjoyment without the guilt and folly of drunkenness. Scriptures for and against moderate use of alcohol are then arrayed against each other. Those seeking justification for such behavior read passages where wine is called a blessing and then affirm only an immoderate use of alcohol is sinful. They argue that "safe drinking" is justified with:

- God only condemned drunkenness. ●Jesus made wine.
- God called wine a blessing. ●Timothy drank a little wine.

### **Ambiguity in the term "Wine"**

No honest person can deny that Scripture strongly praises and condemns "wine." How we harmonize passages that both extol and condemn wine reveals our wisdom, caution and love for the truth.

*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth, 15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, (and) oil to make his face to shine, and bread that strengtheneth man's heart. Ps 104:14-15*

*Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works. Ecc 9:7*

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise. Pr. 20:1*

*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. Prov 23:29-33*

*And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." . . . 6 Now there were set there six water pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. . . . 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine,. . . John 2:3, 6-7, 9*

How can wine "make glad the heart of man" if it brings "woe, sorrow, contention, complaining and wounds?" How can we drink "wine with a merry heart" when it "bites like a serpent and stings like a viper?" How could Jesus make "six waterpots containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece" of wine when wine is "a mocker, and a brawler" and "those led astray" to drink it are "not wise?"

This riddle is easily solved if we look at how Hebrews and Greeks used their word "wine." The Hebrew "yayin" and the Greek "oinos" both have a much larger scope than our English "wine." While our word always implies alcohol, theirs describes any beverage made of grapes. From fresh juice to carefully created alcohol or even grape vinegar. So even if the same term is used in all the passages above they may not be speaking of the same thing. One passage may be speaking of grape juice or vinegar while another of wine specially created with alcohol.

Since these passages cannot be harmonized and Scripture can't be broken, they must be different. If yayin is a blessing in Ps 105 and a curse in Pr 20 something has to be different. Let us consider the possibility that it is alcohol that makes the difference. Blessed wine has no alcohol while cursed wine contains it. It is not hard to prove it is so.

Consider, it was alcohol in the wine that Noah and Lot drank that cursed them. Without alcohol, there is no danger of drunkenness. Wine that is only grape juice is a blessing because there is no risk or danger. Such wine "makes glad the heart of man." We can "drink wine with a merry heart" if it contains no alcohol. Jesus' 150 gallons of wine would be harmless without alcohol and very dangerous with it. Finally, when wine contains alcohol it brings "woe, sorrow, contention, complaining and wounds," "bites like a serpent and stings like a viper" and is "a mocker, and a brawler." Alcohol certain can turn wine from a blessing into a curse.

Since "yayin" and "oinos" are used for all forms of grape juice only the way the word was used can tell us if it had alcohol. If a passage describing fresh grape juice is used to justify drinking alcohol we are wresting that scripture to our destruction (II Pet 3:14-17). The same wine cannot be a blessing and a curse! A distinction must be made. The truth is God consistently condemned wine containing alcohol.

By linking "wine" as "a mocker" with "strong drink" as "a brawler" it is evident both contain alcohol. It is intoxication that makes it a mocker (making mouths at us). Alcohol creates a brawler and leads the wise astray.

Wine with alcohol mocks us (literally 'sticks out the tongue at us')! When the mask is torn away, this "friend" has a hideous face of malicious deception. Bidding us drink and be merry, then mocking us for our folly! As a cunning animal it hides its intent until we are close enough to strike! The farther down the path of alcohol one walks, the further from wisdom they are going.

This proverb strips away alcohol's allure, revealing it in stark clarity. Like a cunning wolf, it wags its tail like man's best friend, but then bites and devours. Alcohol is a wolf in sheep's clothing. The deceptive friend who loves us to our face but ridicules and destroys us behind our back.

"Who has woe, sorrow, contentions, complaining, wounds without cause, redness of eyes?" No matter how long one lingers over wine without alcohol they will never have any of these things. Alcohol causes them all. The "wine that is red, sparkles in the cup, goes down smoothly" must have alcohol to "bite like a serpent" and "sting like a viper." Non alcoholic wine will not cause "your eyes to see strange things," or "your mind to utter perverse things."

Even today alcoholic beverages are portrayed and advertised as "sparkling in the cup" and "going down smoothly" A sophisticated friend bringing popularity and success. But the godly are warned



to look deeper. How does it end? What are the fruits of a long term relationship with alcohol? Honesty forces us to admit that wine with alcohol fits this description perfectly while wine without it has none of these risks or dangers. God revealed that wine with alcohol brings a curse. Wine, fresh from the vine, carefully preserved or diluted with water, is harmless and always a blessing. When alcohol is added then wine becomes a curse.

Medical science and public safety agencies now validate God's revelation. Once in the brain, before it affects motor skills, alcohol removes inhibition and compromises the conscience. Things godly people would never do sober, are done after one drink. Even though motor skills are intact, one can still be drunk enough to sin. Those who drink socially may never stagger, slur their speech, or be "legally" drunk, but still drunk enough to succumb to temptation.

One drink of alcohol can make the impossible frighteningly possible! Only those who refuse the *sparkling cup* know they are sober! The transition from friend to enemy occurs after one drink. The impairment of conscience and sound judgement are the first thing alcohol affects. Statistics prove alcohol is man's enemy. More than 10% who take a first drink will become an alcoholic. 50% of traffic fatalities, murders, divorces, and violent crime are caused by alcohol. Think of it! Without alcohol they would be cut in half! Alcohol is the close companion to misery and woe.

We will be staggered when God reveals the full cost of alcohol to the human race. The woe, sorrow, fighting, complaining and wounds it has caused. Promising lives cut short, shattered homes, children crying themselves to sleep, lost jobs, ruined health, and wasted youth. This is the cost to those who make alcohol a friend.

When God calls wine a blessing can we honestly say we believe he is speaking of alcohol? Is it fair to Scripture if we don't discriminate how *yayin* and *oinos* are used? Did Jesus really make 120 gallons of intoxicating wine to curse that wedding feast? Can you imagine the terrible evil it would have made possible? Would Jesus supply the wine to turn that wedding into what Peter later condemned as "*drunkenness, revelry and a drinking party?*" (1 Pet 4:3)

Since alcohol is a biting serpent, stinging viper and growling mocker, Jesus did not make it! Wine with alcohol is a curse! Wine without it is a blessing! Did Jesus create a blessing or a curse? What a question! After reading the Proverbs, it is an insult to the Son of God to say that He created 120 gallons of alcoholic wine.

Brethren, no one can deny that alcohol and Christianity do not co-exist peacefully. The more Christianity takes root in a good and honest heart the less likely one is to drink it. The more alcohol takes root the less likely one is to remain a faithful Christian. They are paths to entirely different destinations. One cannot go both ways. The path to wisdom leads away from alcohol.

### **nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.**

The *italics* tells us that they were supplied to complete the thought. Many times after an adjective the subject or object is left to be filled in. Greek writers will say *all \_\_\_\_\_* or *any \_\_\_\_\_* leaving the reader to fill in the blank based on the context of what was just said. Literally Paul says: "*It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor (\_\_\_\_\_) whereby thy brother stumbleth.*" Some of the translations (NKJV/NAS/ASV) point this out with *italics* - (*they added them for us*), while others give them without *italics* (ESV/KJV).

not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor (to do anything) whereby thy brother stumbleth. ASV  
not to eat meat or drink wine or **do anything** that causes your brother to stumble. ESV  
neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles NKJV  
not to eat meat or to drink wine, or **to do anything** by which your brother stumbles. NASB  
neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, KJV

Regardless how it is translated Paul said eat flesh, drink wine or not do anything/do nothing. So the concept dealt with in this chapter is broadened beyond the subject of food, days and wine. Anything that fits into the realm of liberty because God has not forbidden it is now placed into the same prohibitions and instructions. This is what makes this subject so difficult today. Few indeed can agree on what is lawful and a liberty and what is unlawful and a sin. Some liberties become false doctrine when they are bound.

*But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Gal 2:3-5*

Others false teachers seeking to turn a sin into a liberty

*For, uttering great swelling (words) of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; 19 promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. 2 Pet 2:18-19*

Others are the strong struggling against and despising the weak and the weak judging and condemning the strong. In the middle are all those who love the truth and are struggling to keep what belongs in here as Paul revealed and keeping out what does not belong here as sin and error. But obviously this will take great wisdom. The weak will always say it is wrong to place it here for it is not a matter of judgment. The strong will seek to rightfully put it here and those teaching error will seek to secretly bring in their heresy by placing it here.

*Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in privily, (even) they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 1:3-4*

## **22. The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God.**

As Paul began the chapter with those who were weak in the faith, he ends with those who are strong. The use of faith here is along the same line as verse fourteen: *"I know, and am persuaded."* Just as faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ so also conviction and strength in the faith regarding liberties comes from hearing, learning and becoming persuaded. He now speaks to the "man" who *"hath faith to eat all things:"* (Rom 14:2). After careful study some develop the faith to eat all things, treat every day alike, forego circumcision for their children, and *"any other thing"* that is truly a liberty and can be exercised by a Christian as such.

Everyone has differing levels of faith regarding liberties. Some move further than others. Paul bids us remove this faith from the eyes of our brethren and hold it to ourselves with God. He is not forbidding us preaching and teaching to seek to persuade and convince. He is forbidding the active use of liberties that are in the face of those who may not yet hold them. There is nothing wrong with the wisdom and knowledge that has led to the liberty. He can still hold it. But instead of using it as a hammer to break others, he must use it only within himself and before God. He may never even get to indulge in the liberty because of love and respect for the work Jesus has already done with them and for the sake of the souls of those who are weaker. This does not require that we give up our understanding of the liberty. It means we keep it private. In our own heart and before God. When God sees such faith and the refusal to use it out of love, it is a wonderful sacrifice for him. Some take this a little further and allow that the man may practice such things in the privacy of his home. That too is within this same subject of having the faith to do that. Have it before yourself before God.

## **happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth.**

Paul introduces the same word Jesus used in the sermon on the mount. There it is translated blessed and here happy. It is a word of praise and congratulations. It is the conferring of an honor and by the giving of that honor one is happy, fortunate, well of and blessed."

*makarios* (mak-ar'-ee-os); *makarios*...supremely blest... fortunate well off...(Strong p. 46)... *blessed, happy: ...In congratulations, the reason why one is... blessed..*"(Thayer, p. 386)

This is honor and a state of blessedness for those who do not judge themselves in what they approve. These are the assessments we make regarding such subjects as meats, days, and drinking. They are personal judgements we make over ourselves in our conduct and refers to our conscience. When we learn what the Scriptures say and become convicted, we can eat without judging ourselves a sinner. This is what Paul said when he describe himself: *"I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself."* Paul and all others who knew and were persuaded could judge himself/herself guiltless when engaging in such activities. While the one who *"accounts(judges) anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."* This is the man who sees from the scriptures that such activities are approved. they have been *tested, scrutinized* and *recognized as genuine*.

*"dokimazo... to try 1. to test, examine, prove, scrutinize( to see whether a thing be genuine or not), as metals... 2. to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy."* (Thayer, p. 154; 1381).

But though there be many things we have so examined and so proved, the only blessed one is the one who after seeing this has a completely clean conscience when he engages in them. But if there is any question at all then not only is he no longer blessed but because he doubts and is not convince he is condemned.

## **23. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat,**

The participle doubting make this one a continuous doubter when he partakes. James gives us a picturesque way to see this word:

*But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; 8 a double minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:6-8*

A doubter is one like a stick on the surf tossed too and fro and also double minded and unstable. The picture then is of a man who feels strong enough to get the meat, or prepare for the activity, but then begins to move from position to position. One moment feeling it is wrong and having a conscience that is hurting, the next moment he has rationalized and justified and prepares to eat the first bite only to find his conscience again reminding him he is not truly convinced. So it goes, back and forth in double minded confusion. If there is any of this in the heart as one is engaging in a the eating of meat in the manner described above, he is condemned if he eat. This is a very strong word literally “judging down,” “giving judgement against” “worthy of punishment.”

“kata-krino... to give judgment against... to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn...” (Thayer p 332; 2632)

To go ahead and eat in such a state of turmoil is to bring condemnatory judgment upon oneself. When we practice things that we are not convicted and fully persuaded are right, regardless of the reason, we stand condemned in the sight of God. Even if the strong are present and by word and example urging you that it is good and right, if our own conscience is violated, the do it in a blessed state and we in a damnation state.

### **because he eateth not of faith;**

Paul now uses the subordinating conjunction *hoti* to give “the reason why anything is said to be or to be done.” This is why they are condemned. Those who eat without the full knowledge and complete persuasion that it is right and proper in the eyes of God do not have the conviction to avoid violating their conscience. Since one of the main purposes of the gospel is a good conscience and unfeigned faith, and this fails on both points no servant of the Lord can do so.

*But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned: 1 Tim 1:5*

Paul spoke much more about this concept in the Corinthians. The conscience is the key. If we have enough faith to keep the conscience pure, then we can eat with faith. If we do not have enough faith, then not only is our faith weak but so also is our conscience.

*Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as (of) a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. ... 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 1 Cor 8:7, 10-12*

So the process is clear. When we come to Christ we practice things that are sinful and must be repented of and we do not do things the ought to be done but must be done. But there are also things that we believe are wrong that are lawful in the eyes of the Lord. Just as we repent, confess, and turn away from sin, we must also learn, become convinced until our conscience is clear in these activities before we can practice them.

### **and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**

With *pas - all and every* and the relative pronoun *whatsoever* a circle is drawn around faith and everything within the circle is “of faith” and everything outside the circle is “not of faith.” All that is within that circle that deals with personal liberties and justified activities that we are convinced and our conscience bearing witness is also convinced is lawful and good. This is the reason why “happy is the man whose heart does not condemn him in the things that he practices.” Everything that can fit into this criteria is good and wholesome.

But regardless of truth and of Law, if our heart condemn us because we have not yet placed it within the circle of faith, then it is sin. No law will justify it and no strong or mature Christian can erase it for him. Only through learning and time can we learn to place things we have always believed to be wrong and outside of our faith and conviction and move it within.

God created our souls, our emotional makeup and our conscience. He is emphatic that we must not violate it for it is a fragile thing that can be defiled and seared.

*To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. Titus 1:15*

*speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 1 Tim 4:2*

# Fifteen

## 1. Now we that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak

I like the word order in the Greek. It is not good English, but it follows Paul's thoughts more closely. "*we ought then, we the strong, the lack of strength of the weak to bear, and not ourselves to please.*" The thought begins with the obligation, then explains the nature of the obligation. From the word selected, this is not only a *duty* and *obligation*, it is also a *debt* and a *necessity imposed by duties*.

"*opheilo... to owe, a. prop. to owe money, be in dept for... b. metaph... absol. to be a debtor, be bound... foll. by an inf. to be under obligation, bound by duty or necessity, to do something; it behooves one; one ought; used thus of a necessity imposed either by law and duty, or by reason, or by the times, or by the nature of the matter under consideration...*" (Thayer, p. 469; 3784)

Both the laws and the duties were clearly set forth in the previous chapter. Though Paul did admonish the weak not to judge the strong, he imposed much more on the strong. It is they who hold the fate of the weak in their hands much more than the weak do the strong. The strong were warned not to: "*set at nought*" 14:3 "*put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling,*" 14:13 "*Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*" 14:15 "*follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.*" 14:19 "*do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.*" 14:21

All this is now summed up under the general heading of obligation. The obligations and debt fall to the strong for that is why the Lord has given them the gospel. So they can become strong and then help those who are weaker and thus become just like him. Strong and weak will vary with the subject. Jews were strong about idols and weak toward days and meat. Gentiles were strong about days and meats, but weak about idols and superstitions. So our role may shift with the same two people. On one day the strong and weak work with each other and the next the roles are reversed but they still help one another. Those who are strong in any given situation are those with the *power, might and strength* to bear the load.

"*dunatos... able, powerful, mighty, strong;... 1. absolutely; a. mighty in wealth and influence... b. strong in soul; to bear calamities and trials with fortitude and patience... strong in Christian virtue... firm in conviction and faith... 2. in construction; a... to be able to do something... b. mighty i.e. excelling in something... c. mighty i.e. having power for something...*" (Thayer, p. 160; 1415)

It is important to understand that those who consider themselves to be strong must see themselves as responsible to accomplish what this verse commands. It reveals that those who are strong enough to partake in the activities of indifference to God must see that they an obligation to the weak (*agape*) to help and carry them. Without this second quality they are not yet strong and do not yet know as they ought.

*Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. 2 If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; 1 Cor 8:1-2*

So there are two genuine qualities that separate the strong who have power and the weak who do not. The strong are those who love, those who have learned to be patient and kind, looking out for those who need help and helping.

*And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. 15 See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. 1Th 5:14-15*

So the strong are those who admonish, encourage, support, and are longsuffering. The strong are those who in the previous chapter had the faith to eat all things and the knowledge to esteem every day alike, but who place the best possible motive on what others are doing. They do not judge in such matters but allow the Lord to be their judge. They simply accept the brother as they are and patiently wait for them to grow. They never grieve another over their own personal liberties, and they recognize that they have the power with their knowledge to do something that would overthrow the work of God. Therefore they never eat or drink or do anything that would cause any brother to stumble.

Then there are the *weak* and their *infirmities*. Those who can't eat meat and observe days. Those who are hindered in their conscience because there are things they do not yet understand. The Greek called these the "*unstrong*" those who those who are weak and feeble and are unable to do what the strong can do.

"*astheneo... to be weak, feeble; univ. to be without strength, powerless... to be weak in faith*" (Thayer, p. 80; 770)  
*adunatos* 102, from *a*, negative, and *dunatos*, "able, strong," is used (a) of persons, Acts 14:8, "impotent";

figuratively, Rom. 15:1, "weak"; (Vine's Vol 2 p. 251)

Whatever the strong had that made them strong these do not yet have. While the strong are able, these are unable and while the strong can, these cannot. They are without strength, unable to carry and do what the strong can do. Thus they are impotent and unable. This should not be seen as a stigma just as it is not so viewed in children. We that are strong (parents) carry and help those who are weak (children). Just as the parents bear the weaknesses of children so also the strong bear them for the weak.

*"bastazo... 1. to take up with the hands... to take up in order to carry or bear; to put upon one's self (something) to be carried; to bear what is burdensome... 3. simply to bear, carry..." (Thayer, p. 98-99; 941).*

In the world where it is the survival of the fittest, the stronger we become the more we can do as we please and the less we have to be concerned about the weak who can now do nothing to stop us. This is the competitive nature of the world of losers and winners. The winners are strong and the losers are weak. Not so in the church, where everyone is a winner and not one is a loser. Regardless of strength or knowledge those in the position of strength bear the load and carry what the weak cannot carry. This was one of the most difficult lessons Jesus sought to teach his disciples over and over again. He started by helping them to see that if they want to be great (strong and powerful) in the kingdom it will only come through serving and helping others

*And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning on the way? 34 But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who (was) the greatest. 35 And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all. Mark 9:33-35*

Because they did not learn this lesson he spoke to them again in the next chapter once again dispelling the worldly notion of success and replacing it with the spiritual concept of success.

*And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; 44 and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. 45 For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Mk 10:41-45*

While the Gentiles sought power and might over the weak, Jesus demands that it not be so among his servants. The strong and great are the servants and ministers. Instead of the strong forcing the weak to carry them, the strong prove they are strong by carrying the weak. Sadly they still did not get the message, even during the Lord's Supper they were still arguing about it (Lk 22:23-27). But Paul makes it clear here. To be strong, great and a leader within the church requires an attitude of service toward those who are weak.

### **and not to please ourselves.**

One of the qualities of the strong that separates them from the weak centers on needs. The weak are focused upon their own needs, wants, and pleasures and the strong do not, but are instead focused on the needs and wants that will bring pleasure and contentment to others. Whenever we have the opportunity to "*accommodate ourselves to the desires and interests of others.*"

*"aresko,... a. to please... b. to strive to please; to accommodate one's self to the opinions, desires, interests of others..." (Thayer, p. 72; 700)*

But in this case with the reflexive pronoun the other is actually *ourselves*.

*"heautou... a reflexive pronoun of the 3d person. It is used 1. of the 3d pers. sing. and plur., to denote that the agent and the person acted on are the same... 2. It serves as reflexive also to the 1st and 2d pers. ..." (Thayer, p. 163; 1438).*

Whenever a "reflexive pronoun" is used, the action of the verb (pleasure and pleasing), is reflected back into the person doing that action. So the action of this verb "*please*" is not to be reflected back upon ourselves. The strong do not accommodate all the circumstances of their life to bring about their own pleasure. Instead for the strong the focus changes from self to others. Note how the word is repeated in first three verses. The strong do not please ourselves but pleases his neighbor unto edifying just as Christ did not come to please himself.

If decisions are made based upon what we want, like and need, in other words all reflected back to ourselves, then we are not strong. But if they are focused solely upon the needs of Jesus and of his servants then we are strong.

## **2. Let each one of us please his neighbor**

Paul now reveals the full scope of how the strong who have given up the reciprocal nature of pleasing themselves (if it feels good do it) and replaced it with the pleasure making others happy. Paul now replaces the term *weak* with the term *neighbor*.

*pleasion ... near... a neighbor; i. e. a. friend: Mt 5:43. b. any other person, and where two are concerned the other (thy fellow-man, thy neighbor) i. e., according to the O. T. and Jewish conception, a member of the Hebrew race and commonwealth: Acts 7:27; and Rec. in Hebrews 8:11; according to the teaching of Christ, any other man irrespective of race or religion with whom we live or whom we chance to meet (which idea is clearly brought out in the parable Lk 10:25-37). (Thayer 4139)*

We are reminded of the lawyer who came to Jesus about eternal life then asked “*who is my neighbor?*” to which Jesus replied with the parable of the good Samaritan. The priest and Levite simply looked the other way and were in no way a neighbor to this poor man. But the Samaritan helped him in every way possible. Rather than giving the application, he demanded that the lawyer (and all who read the account) make the application.

*Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Lk 10:36-37*

Thus anyone in need who could be shown mercy is a neighbor, and as we have opportunity we need to be a good neighbor toward all men and especially toward them that are of the household of faith.

*And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith. Gal 6:9-10*

Anyone in need of mercy is a neighbor who should receive mercy not only in the church but outside as well. When speaking to the Corinthians about this same subject he names Jews, Gentiles and the church. Then using the same word *please* he makes it clear that it is toward “***all men.***”

*Give no occasions of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the (profit) of the many, that they may be saved. 1 Cor 10:32-33*

If we want to view ourselves as being ***strong***, then this is how we feel, see and act. For this is the unselfish focus of *agape-love*.

### **for that which is good, unto edifying.**

The goal of this pleasing has nothing to do with the pleasures of this life. It is the pleasure of doing good and growing. The term good (*agathos*) is an all encompassing word that describes those things that excel and are distinguished, things that are upright and honorable, things that are “good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy.” While those in the world are often only looking for those things for themselves and those who are especially close. The strong in the church are focused upon bringing these things to all.

Not only do they seek what is good and wholesome, but even more they are also looking for things that edify or build up. The strong are always watching others, looking for opportunities to reach out to them and help to them to grow. This is done first for the lost by seeking ways to bring about obedience to the gospel and salvation and then for the saved by avoiding all offense and seeking to bring about their growth in knowledge and maturity.

*For though I was free from all (men,) I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. 20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. 23 And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. 1 Cor 9:19-21*

### **3. For Christ also pleased not himself;**

Paul uses the conjunction *gar* to stress that this is another reason why we ought to bear infirmities and stop pleasing ourselves. Christ is our Lord and our example and we ought to do as he has done. The only reason we are strong is because he bore our infirmities. Is it too much to ask that we would do the same? Peter used this exact same reasoning to show why we ought to suffer wrongfully as a Christian.

*For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not; but committed (himself) to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. 1 Pet 2:21-24*

Just as the only reason we have been called to be Christians is because Christ suffered for us and so we ought to suffer for others, Paul says here that we need to bear the infirmities for others because Christ bore them for us. From the moment Jesus left heaven, he was no longer pleasing himself. All that he bore was to bring about our own growth and strength.

*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient (even) unto death, yea, the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; Phil 2:5-9*

From the moment Jesus left heaven, his focus was upon doing whatever was necessary to please and bring happiness to others. He left his power and comfort behind. He humbled and sacrificed himself to please God and to please his fellow man. He also did this at the foot washing to bring the consciousness of this quality into their minds and ours.

*(Jesus), knowing that the Father had given all the things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, 4 riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself. 5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . . 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. . . . 12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them. Jn 13:1-3, 5, 12-17*

What possible excuse could any one who considers himself to be strong not to help the weak. Jesus did it for us, we ought to do it for one another. No one was stronger than Jesus, yet no one bore our griefs and carried our sorrows like Jesus.

**but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.**

Paul has already quoted from this Psalm in 11:9 and revealed that it was David who wrote it. This is a Messianic Psalm that first applied to David and then to his son and Lord. This is a broad passage with many different meanings. Peter could have used it, Isaiah could have used it chapter 53. But keeping this within the context of Jesus not pleasing himself, even God needed him to bear with the infirmities of the weak. Those who reproached God were weak, but Jesus came so that those reproaches could fall upon God. He did this in hope that they could all be forgiven. He prayed even for those directly involved in the crucifixion who were reproaching him.

*And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. Lk 23:34*

Paul knew first hand what he was speaking about. In weakness and unbelief, he had reproached Jesus and thought to do many things contrary to his name. Yet Jesus chose not to please himself, but to try to please his neighbor. He took the reproach of God from those who were weak in order to bless and please his neighbor. All the enemies of God, all those who hated the light and despised God for whatever reason found in Jesus the focus for their enmity. Jesus knew it would be so prior to his coming yet came anyway to redeem those who could be saved from the horror of their situation. If Christ could willingly do this for us, we too can learn to please our neighbors and not ourselves.

#### **4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,**

With another *gar* Paul continues the explanation. We should please our neighbor unto edifying because that is what Christ did, and exactly what the prophets confirmed that he would do. But not only is this verse pertinent to this subject, all that has been written aforetime were written for us to learn from and will establish this and many other truths revealed in the New Covenant. But how much of these written things? Are there some things in Song of Solomon, or Job, or even the Law that have no practical value today? The word used for "whatsoever" makes it clear that the Spirit had them all in mind.

*"hosos ... a relative adjective ... of time (as long as): ... b. of abundance and multitude; how many, as many as; how much, as much as: neuter ... neuter plural, absolutely (A. V. often whatsoever), ... Romans 15:4..." (Thayer 3745)*

As we look at the 37 books of the OT, we see Law(5), History(12), Poetry(5) and Prophets(Major(5) and Minor(12)), these are the things that were written aforetime. If we imagine these as the boundaries of the lake, then all that is written within them is like the surface of the water within that boundary. This relative adjective takes all the things in these books, draws a circle around all of

them and saws it goes as far as the boundary of the circle. Nothing is overlooked, no exceptions. From the Genesis account of creation and sin in the garden to the final words of Malachi. From Cain and Abel to Nadab and Abihu along with Balaam's talking donkey. They are all written for our learning. Nothing superfluous or unimportant. Even the distinctions of days and meats is still for our learning. All the prophecies and their teachings are for our learning. It is all for our learning.

There is another element to this passage. Not only does it broaden out all the writings written aforetime as inspired and designed for us to learn, but it narrows them down as well. Paul had recently written Galatians and was clearly in the midst of a great doctrinal battle concerning circumcision and the keeping of the Law. The battle had been won in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and the decrees sent forth that Gentile Christians had no obligation to keep the Law of Moses, but was still raging among the churches. The letter to the Galatians is the most pointed, but he mentioned it again to the Corinthians (2 Cor 3), spoke of it to the Romans (Rom 7) and later to the Colossians (2:11-18). It is therefore highly likely that this verse also teaches that they only purpose for that which was written aforetime (every bit of it) is for our learning. The Law was done away in Christ. It was no longer binding and had no force for "the prophet like unto me" had come and whoever does not

*Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Acts 3:22-23*

So the law has been abrogated and is nigh unto vanishing away (Heb 8:13). So the purpose for these writings today is for our learning. God wants us to learn them as well as the Jews knew them. He wants us to be able to use them as Apollos and Timothy. They make us wise unto salvation:

*But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. 15 And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. 2 Tim 3:14-17*

Hebrews eleven reveals that all the characters in these things written aforetime are a great cloud of witnesses that we need to learn and have recall. The same is true of 1 Cor 10 where the negative side of these characters are discussed. We have much to learn from Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah; Abraham; Isaac; Jacob; Joseph; Moses. We learn from Nadab and Abihu; Saul; David; Solomon. We learn things from their lives that keep us from making the same mistakes. We learn from the law, we see the New Testament truths revealed and expounded upon there. We learn from prophecy. We learn that our faith has great basis and foundation. Many things are learned from a careful reading and meditation of the Old Testament scriptures.

### **that through patience**

But uses a conjunction that denotes purpose and end. The purpose, intent and end of learning the things that were written aforetime is that through their patience and comfort we might have hope

*"hina... It a final conjunction (for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention) denoting purpose and end: to the intent that; to the end that, in order that;... it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;... " (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)*

Studying, learning, and having good recall of these Scriptures has this very important purpose. First, Paul mentions patience.

*"hupomone... 1. steadfastness, constancy, endurance... in the N. T. the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings... 2. a patient, steadfast waiting for... 3. a patient enduring, sustaining..." (Thayer, p. 644; 5281)*

While Paul and James both reveal that the primary way that this "patient steadfast waiting for" is developed is through our own personal trials, Paul gives another here.

*And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; 4 and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: Rom 5:3-4*

*Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; 3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. 4 And let patience have (its) perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4*

As we read the lives of those who lived before us, we are stirred by their own patience and seek to emulate it.

*Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful. Jas 5:10-11*



A study of the Scriptures will reveal first of all that all who serve God will suffer persecution, trials and sorrows. We see through their example that it can be done. Others have suffered far worse than we and that knowledge can help when we are struggling. We can remain under them and be victorious. The Scriptures will help us.

### **and through comfort of the scriptures**

Another great value behind the Old Testament scriptures revolves around the comfort they bring. As one looks carefully at the definition of this word, there is some difference of meaning which even the translators have taken into account. While some translations (ASV KJV NKJV) have *comfort* and others (ESV NASB) *encouragement*. When Greek speaking people used this word they were expressing they were right up next to them conveying an important message. While this close depending upon the need, it conveyed the emotion of entreaty, exhortation, encouragement or consolation and comfort.

*“paraklesis... (parakaleo, q.v.)... 1. prop. a calling near, summons... 2. imploration, supplication, entreaty... 3. exhortation, admonition, encouragement... 4. consolation, comfort solace... 5. univ. persuasive discourse, stirring address, --instructive, admonitory, consolatory; powerful hortatory discourse...”* (Thayer, p. 483; 3874)

The Scriptures do all of these things. They draw us right up next to God's side and allow him to implore, encourage, console, persuade, and comfort. Which one English word can convey all this? The things written aforetime become a mentor, a comforting and encouraging friend to help us. They will bring us encouragement, admonition, beseeching and begging necessary to motivate us in any dire situation that we might be called upon to pass through in life. We can be stirred by David, by Shadrach Meshach and Abednego, We can be warned by Saul and Jeroboam. We can be comforted by Job and Jeremiah. Most any need that comes up in our life can be met by one or another man or event found in the Old Testament.

### **we might have hope.**

Along with faith and love, hope is a very precious and valuable possession for the Christian. It motivates us to sacrifice for things in the future.

*But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor 13:13*

*For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? 25 But if we hope for that which we see not, (then) do we with patience wait for it. Rom 8:24-25*

Learning the things written aforetime, gaining perseverance and comfort and encouragement leads us to have this hope. Hope is a compound emotion made up of two essential things. First, it must be based upon something we want to happen, something we are looking forward to and will bring us great joy. Thus it is something we want and desire very deeply. Second, it must be something that can be expected.

*“elpis... expectation, hope; i.e expectation whether good or ill; 1. rarely in a bad sense, expectation of evil, fear;... 2. much more freq. in the classics, and always in the N. T. , in a good sense: expectation of good, hope; and in the Christian sense, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation...”* (Thayer, p. 205-206; 1680)

Every Christian has the former. It is the latter that brings such great difficulty with hope. Everyone wants to be saved and receive eternal life. But with all the troubles, trials and sins, it is sometimes very difficult to believe that we will actually receive it. So it is the “*confident expectation*” element of our hope that many find difficult. This is one of those areas with the things written aforetime shine most brightly. When we see the mercy and compassion of God toward Israel even when they were wicked adulterers, idolaters and murderers, we begin to grasp how deep God's love and mercy can be. David's sin with Bathsheba gives hope to all who struggle with temptation and sin. Samson gives hope to those who have fallen through their own folly but want to do better. Moses gives hope that even the most public of sins can be forgiven. Rahab that regardless of how wicked and low we have gone, we can rise above it. On and on we go. There is so much the Old Covenant can do to give hope. All we must do is learn it and be ready to apply it both to ourselves and to others.

When David committed adultery and murder, he sought to hide it. He would have greatly preferred that these lapses in his life be forgotten, but thousands who have sinned in similar ways have received hope from God's forgiveness of this man. Job spoke in such a way that God told him he had "condemned him that he might be justified". Yet God forgave and blessed him. Noah got drunk, Abraham lied, Sarah laughed, Moses failed to sanctify God, on and on it goes. Brethren there is hope in the Old Testament. Foolish are we indeed when we fail to find it and pass our days on the earth in worry and concern over things that could be resolved in an instant if we would but allow that Old Covenant to become our friend and guide.

### **5. Now the God of patience and of comfort**

The Scriptures are only a reflection of God. They only reveal what God truly is toward us. It is God who put this patience and comfort into those things written aforetime. So in offering this prayer for these people (and all others who are reading and benefitting from his writings!), he hallows God's name with these same terms.

Just as Peter did in Acts 2 when addressing God as "*thou who knows the hearts of all men,*" and in Acts 4 when he addressed God as "*O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is,*" Paul here addresses God with the very things necessary to fulfill the prayer. Since Paul was praying to God for the help they needed to fulfill Paul's request, he prayed to him in this manner.

This is are subjective genitives. God is the source and giver of all patience and all comfort. The belong to him and only he can give them to us. The Scriptures reveal what is necessary for God to give these things to us, but it is he who gives them. Therefore it is to the God who possesses these things and gives them based upon the afore written things that Paul makes this request.

### **grant you to be of the same mind**

By placing this in the optative mode, Paul expresses his desire in the form of a wish or stated desire placed before God. Thus this is a prayer for God to give this to them.

*"didomi... to give... A. absolutely and generally... B. In construction... I to give something to some one, - in various senses; 1. of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow; give as a gift... 2. to grant, give to one asking, let have... 3. to supply, furnish, necessary things..."* (Thayer, p. 145-147; 1325)

This is Paul's final conclusion of what he began in the first verse of chapter fourteen. There were some serious fractures in the church at Rome over the previous lives of the Jews and the Gentiles. Strong opinions over things that God has revealed are no longer issues he cares about. The Spirit has spoken clearly through Paul about the need for caution and concern. It is too easy to assume what we believe is what God believes and therefore who ever disagrees with us disagrees with God. Paul has warned the weak and the strong to take a step back from this abyss and carefully assess whether or not unity or this doctrine are more important. Whether the grace and mercy to give time to grow is more important than forcing them to accept our view or forcing them to leave.

God is a God who gives perseverance and comfort to all. Paul pleads with him and with them to properly apply this to being of the same mind.

*"phroneo... 1. to have understanding, be wise.... 2. to feel, to think... to have an opinion of ones self, think of one's self... to think, judge... several persons are said phronein to auto, to be of the same mind, i.e. to agree together, cherish the same views, be harmonious... 3. to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for; ... to seek one's interests or advantage, to be of one's party, side with him..."* (Thayer, p 658; 5426)

This is not demanding what he just finished saying we cannot have. He is petitioning God that we will learn to have the same mind one toward another in this subject. The truth is that we move from category to category as we scan all that the Scriptures reveal. In one realm we are more rigid and in another more tolerant. In every circumstance we all need to be of the same mind one toward another. When strong we need to be forbearing and when weak we need to be tolerant and patient.

*I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph 4:1-3*

*Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; 13 forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: 14 and above all these things (put on) love, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. Col 3:12-15*

*If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, 2 make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; 3 (doing) nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; 4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Phil 2:1-4*

When all of these emotions and attitudes are working properly, truth will never be loosed, but no one will go beyond and seek to bind on others what God has not bound. It is a very tight and narrow line, but we all need to look to God for the wisdom, the tolerance and the love for the truth necessary to accomplish it.

### **one with another**

The use of the reciprocal pronoun requires exactly the same thing from every member.

*“allelon... one another; reciprocally, mutually...”* (Thayer, p. 28; 240)

Whether we see ourselves or the other as weak or strong, convicted or complacent, or in error or truth, we all need to be of the same mind to one another. If I am the strong, convicted and thinking I am in the truth and you are in error then I need to be of the same mind with the one who I consider weak, complacent or in error. Until and unless we are fully convicted that the brother is in error as set forth by the Lord. But until that time we must be forbearing, non-judgmental, patient, and gracious. On the other hand if I am the man who is considered weak, complacent or in error, I am not to set at nought or judge harshly the one who thinks he is strong convicted and holding the truth. Each will be judged by his own Lord, and all the principles have been set forth since 14:1. The strong bearing the infirmities of the weak and the weak respecting the strong.

### **according to Christ Jesus:**

But there is one overriding principle that takes precedence over everything else. It must be “*according to*” Jesus. This is the word used to “denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts.” It expresses proportion and equal measure.

*“kata,... II with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;...c. according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...(bb) in proportion to, according to the measure of...”* (Thayer, cit., p. 328; 2596)

If we picture the balancing scales, with Jesus on one side and our minds on the other then we have the proper idea from this term. Jesus is the way, truth and life, no one comes to the Father except through him. Jesus is the standard that we are to conform and agree to. So we come to the most important element of all this discussion. Jesus has spoken on all things that pertain to life and godliness.

*Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; 2 Pet 1:2-3*

If it is revealed in the gospel and Jesus has spoken upon it then we must all conform and live according to what he has revealed. Whether it be in the gospels, or in the things written by the apostles and prophets, that is the truth and we must be in compliance with it. None of the things described in Romans 14-15 would violate the clear teaching of Jesus on doctrine or morality. If Jesus has spoken either directly or through his apostles and prophets, then all we can do is comply and submit. We must all be of the same mind on this.

*Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor 1:10*

But if the convictions we hold and the truth we believe is not found within the words of the Lord (even though they might be in Moses law), then we need to be of the same mind toward one another on the principles found in Romans fourteen. If there is any doubt, then we must err to the side of compassion and mercy, waiting for the Lord to clear it up.

### **6. that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

This is the genuine goal of each Christian. Regardless of our own personal differences regarding things the Lord has not discussed in detail, we have this as our greatest and highest goal. We need to have “one accord.”

*homothumadon ... This word denotes the inner unity of a group of people engaged in an externally similar action. It can thus be rendered "with one mind." ... is used to stress the inner unanimity of the community. The term occurs in connection with the actions which constitute the community of the risen Lord, namely, listening to apostolic teaching (Acts 8:6; 20:18)... (Kittel TDWNT 3661)*

This word is used many times in Acts, but only here in the epistles. This word describes an inner unity of those who are externally doing the same thing. Hence there is unity on all the essential elements of our Lord's dominion. We do not add or delete any of the Lord's commands and we are united inwardly and outwardly upon that. The inward emotion and the external act is to give glory to God. For all God has done in the creation, for all God has done for our heart, soul, mind and body. For our emotions and enjoyments and for our redemption we should be giving God the glory. We want to honor and worship him. We seek to impart glory to him and render him illustrious. To exalt to a glorious rank or condition.

“doxazo... 1. to think, suppose, be of opinion... 2. to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate... 3. to honor, do honor to, hold in honor... to worship... 4. By a use not found in prof. writ. to make glorious, adorn with lustre, clothe with splendor; a. to impart glory to something, render it excellent... b. to make renowned, render illustrious, i. e. to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged ton logon tou theou II Th 3:1;... c. to exalt to a glorious rank or condition...” (Thayer, 157; 1392)

But without the one accord and the one mouth, this glory will sound hollow to all who hear it. When a church is being torn apart by selfish desires to have one’s own way and a lack of care and concern for those whom Christ has died, there is no glory to God. God is being blasphemed just as the Jews had done beforetime (Rom 2:24).

As Jesus himself prayed, for the world to believe that God sent Jesus his disciples must be one. We have to learn to get along with one another and we have to learn to hold fast to the will of the Lord.

*Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, (art) in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. 22 And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we (are) one; 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me. Jn 17:20-23*

When a church is holding fast to the word of truth, in worship, organization, terms of salvation etc. but allows itself to be torn apart by something the Lord hasn’t even spoken clearly upon, there is no glory to God. Only another sad example of selfish faction destroying the work of the Lord.

## **7. Wherefore receive ye one another,**

This is his final conclusion. For all the above, “receive” one another. A preposition is prefixed to the word receive to add a special emphasis. They are to receive toward themselves “signifying a special interest” and “suggesting a welcome.”

*proslambano...* denotes "to take to oneself" (pros, "to") or "to receive," always in the middle voice, signifying a special interest on the part of the receiver, suggesting a welcome, Acts 28:2; Romans 14:1,3; 15:7; ..." 12 (Vine's 4355)

Since you now realize the importance of the reception (same Greek word) which began this entire section:

*But him that is weak in faith **receive** ye, (yet) not for decision of scruples. 2 One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath **received** him. Rom 14:1-3*

All that was said about weak and strong, judging, being assured on one’s own mind, realizing that to the weak the things really are unclean, that they could overthrow God’s own work if they are not careful, that the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak just as Christ did all of us. When all this is working as it should then we are of the same mind and with the same mouth in one accord are giving glory to God. For all of this we must receive and welcome “one another.” Which once again is the reciprocal pronoun. I accept you and you accept me. We may have differences in custom, culture and expediencies. We may have convictions that differ from one another. But still, strong or weak, convicted or complacent, seeing ourselves in truth and others in error (in our own eyes but not the Lord’s) we must receive one another reciprocally and mutually.

## **even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God.**

Another pivot point of the balancing scale. In exactly the same way that Christ received us we ought to receive one another. Whatever degree, proportion, or weight that was involved in the reception that Christ gave to us we must give to one another.

*“kathos,...1. according as, just as, even as: in the first member of a comparison:...2. according as i.e. in proportion as, in the degree that:...3. since, seeing that, agreeably to the fact that.” (Thayer, p. 314; 2531).*

This is a powerful scale. The balance is only perfect when the manner and degree of mercy, compassion and patience with which Christ received me I must be willing to do with those who Christ also received.

Christ received us with all our weaknesses, misunderstandings and even false teachings. He graciously and patiently helps us to remain faithful and to grow. He knew that without his grace and mercy we would never truly be worthy to be in his kingdom, or that we could not and would never be able to do what he himself was able to do. He knew that like Peter we would boast of things we could not truly do. But if we truly obeyed the gospel then Jesus received us.

At what point in the life of a Christian should we be willing to receive them as a brother or sister in Christ? At what point should I be willing to be their friend and companion. At what point in our

judgement will we consider them worthy of our time, efforts, and sacrifices. It must be at the same point that Jesus received each of us.

This will bring the glory to God which he deserves. This is the living sacrifice that is well pleasing in his sight. This is the type of honor that truly manifests its quality and value. Like the faith that is precious because it is proved by fire, like Abraham whom God bore witness of "now I know" because he would not withhold his only son from him, so too the personal sacrifices we make to keep unity in a congregation manifest our character and bring glory and honor to God.

## **8. For I say that Christ**

The Holy Spirit now offers some final thoughts on the relationship of the weak to the strong and the circumcision to the uncircumcision. In using the conjunction "*for - gar*" he offers this as "*a reason or cause* of the previous thoughts. Jesus did not please himself. He came to bring about salvation and the fulfillment of all that God had promised. In the process of doing these things the persecutions and hatred of those who despised God fell upon him. Jesus did nothing to deserve these things. Loving God and striving to help the weak and sinful led to even greater sacrifices. This was the price that had to be paid to bring salvation and blessings, maturity and godliness to all.

Since Christ did this in order to receive us as sinners and see us as saints God made this the standard for all who have been blessed by him. There is no sacrifice a mature and godly servant can refuse to complete what Jesus began. Christ accepted us with grace, mercy, compassion, understanding and patience. He has never expected us to move from sin into truth more quickly than we are able to do so. He has never demanded perfection or that we see things exactly as he does immediately. So should we with both the lost and the saved!

This new thought will bind both circumcised and uncircumcised into a common bond of love and respect. What Christ did for the circumcised was then offered to the Gentiles. The breach was healed. The circumcised rejected and crucified their Christ "*by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.*" (*Acts 2:23*) Beginning with David in the Psalms and continuing through the prophets, the suffering and death of the Christ was revealed.

Their rejection placed them on equal footing with the Gentiles. There was nothing left for either feel any superiority over another. Both were cursed because of their own sins and both were blessed because of what God promised and did.

### **hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,**

The only other time the word "*minister*" is used in Romans was in Chapter Thirteen describing civil government as a *minister* of God for vengeance on evil doers. Just as civil government is a minister (*one who executes the commands*) of God for vengeance, Christ is a minister who (*executes the commands of God and advances his interests even at the sacrifice of his own*) of the circumcision to confirm all the promises of mercy, compassion and salvation made to the fathers. He *was made* this minister. Literally he "*came into existence*" and "*began to be.*" This was the same term John used to describe how the word who was with God and was God "*became / was made*" flesh. , the Christ "*has been made*" this minister. Jesus was made the Christ and the minister of the circumstance "*for*" the truth of God. This preposition is often used for "*in behalf of*" or "*for the advantage or benefit.*" The word became flesh and dwelt among us *in behalf of* the truth and thus make true all God had promised, prophesied and revealed. He entered the world as the son of Mary in order "*to do thy will O God.*"

*For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, But a body didst thou prepare for me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and (sacrifices) for sin thou hadst no pleasure: 7 Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God. . . . 9 then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. Heb 10:4-7; 9*

All that Jesus did as the minister of the circumcision was for the advantage and benefit of the truth.

### **that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers,**

With *eis* Paul reveals that Jesus ministry to the circumcision not only benefitted the truth, but it brought about "*the end, result and effect*" of *confirming* the promises.

*bebaioo ... to make firm, establish, confirm, make sure: ... tas epaggelias make good the promises by the event, i. e. fulfil them, Romans 15:8 (Thayer's NT:950)*

Not only did Jesus work with the circumcision bring about the salvation of all men, it also had the additional purpose of fulfilling and confirming the promises of God. God had made promises to Adam & Eve, then to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen 3:15

Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee. 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make they name great. And be thou a blessing. 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse. And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. . . . 16 and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, 17 that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because thou hast obeyed my voice. Gen 12:1-3; Gen 22:16-18

And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. 5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. Gen 26:4-5

And he dreamed. And behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Gen 28:12-13

God fulfilled all of these promises when the word became flesh and dwelt among the circumcision as their minister. One by one all of the promises and prophecies were confirmed and the truth was established.

And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Acts 3:17-18

for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, 28 to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass. Acts 4:27-28

Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. 27 For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled (them) by condemning (him). 28 And though they found no cause of death (in him), yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. Acts 13:26-29

And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who shall do all My will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; . . . 32 And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, 33 that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Acts 13:22-23

This is a critical truth for all to understand. What the circumcision did to Jesus as their minister was in direct fulfillment of and confirmed what God had promised. Jesus was the promised son of Adam and Eve who came to bruise the head of the serpent. Jesus was the promised son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who came to bless all the nations of the earth. He was the son of David who fulfilled all that things David said about his son. He was the suffering servant of Isaiah, etc. None of the things that were done as the minister of the circumcision was done without the foreknowledge and approval of God. God knew they would do these things and used what they did to fulfill and confirm what he had promised. The integrity and honor of God was maintained by Jesus ministry. What Abraham did during his lifetime fulfilled all that the covenant God made with him demanded. Thus a binding agreement was made. God wanted all to know the absolute certainty of these things so he swore with an oath.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself, ... 15 And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. 17 Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: 19 which we have as an anchor of the soul, (a hope) both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil; Heb 6:13,15-19

Regardless of how wicked and rebellious the circumcision were in their treatment of their Christ, it established the promises of God and fulfilled his oath. This creates an interesting paradox. Instead of viewing Israel with contempt and disgust for what they have done, God looked upon it as the means of blessing all with forgiveness. Though their actions were contemptible, God made them forgivable by those very acts. What happened had to happen for God to be faithful to his word. If we want to focus upon the circumcision, focus on Abraham and David. Keep your eyes on those who did what was necessary to bring about the blessings of all nations. There is no one to look down upon. No one to scorn or despise. At the same time there is no one to rise up as though they were better than others. There was no one of the circumcision who had come through all this

with anything to boast of. The leaders and all Israel clamored for his death. His apostles forsook him and Peter denied him. Paul was hardened in unbelief. So Israel had nothing special to boast of. Gentiles had been cast off long ago and Israel had been cast off recently. God used the evil of both Jew and Gentile to bless all nations of the earth who were now on equal footing. All needed the Christ to become a minister to the circumcision to fulfill the promises.

### **9. and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy;**

Not only did Christ become “*a minister of the circumcision*” “*for the truth of God*” and “*that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers,*” but also as a benefit to the Gentiles. What Christ did as *minister of the circumcision* allowed Gentiles to glorify God. Before Christ came as minister, Gentiles were in a terrible plight.

*Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; 12 that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Eph 2:11-12*

What Israel did to Jesus not only fulfilled God’s promise and brought salvation to them as God had promised Abraham, but it also brought about the second promise that all the nations of the earth might be blessed.

*But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 15 having abolished in the flesh the enmity, (even) the law of commandments (contained) in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, (so) making peace; 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: Eph 2:13-17*

Far from reviling one another, they should receive one another as Christ received them. Far from despising and looking upon one another with contempt, they should all be praising God for his merciful plan that brought such great good to those who had done such great evil. What all Gentile converts should have learned from Jesus *ministry* to the circumcised is that they should *glorify, praise, hold in high esteem, and honor God for (huper again) in behalf of God’s mercy.*

Israel should praise God for his mercy through Christ who forgave them and gave them a second chance. The Gentiles should praise God for his mercy through Christ who forgave them and gave them a second chance. Israel should see in the Gentiles the same forgiveness they received and glorify God for his mercy. The Gentiles should see in Israel the same forgiveness they received and glorify God for his mercy. There is no room for schism.

### **as it is written, Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles, And sing unto thy name.**

That God had always intended to bring this about is now established with quotations from the Psalms, Deuteronomy and Isaiah. He alluded to the Scriptures that Jesus was the minister of the circumcision when he spoke of fulfillment of promises. He will now do the same with the promises through prophecy of the restoration of the Gentiles. Gentiles as Gentiles would praise God. James was the first to do this at the gathering in Jerusalem to discuss the relationship of the Gentile to the gospel. He quoted Amos 9:11-12.

*Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, 18 Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old. Acts 15:14-18*

It had always been God’s intention to bring the Gentiles as Gentiles into his kingdom. This first quotation is not only found in Ps 18:49, but also in 2 Samuel 22:50. This is one of the few Psalms that is directly ascribed to David.

*And David spake unto Jehovah the words of this song in the day that Jehovah delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: 2 Sam 22:1*

*Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah, among the nations, And will sing praises unto thy name. 51 Great deliverance giveth he to his king, And showeth lovingkindness to his anointed, To David and to his seed, for evermore. 2 Sam 22:50-51 & Ps 18:49-50*

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

These words form the last stanza of the song Moses was told to write and sing to Israel before his death. It is the song that they ought to be singing at that time as it had reached its highest fulfillment in their rejection of Jesus hanging him upon the cross.

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, **thy days approach that thou must die**; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. 15 And Jehovah appeared in the Tent in a pillar of cloud: and the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the Tent. 16 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, **thou shalt sleep with thy fathers**; and **this people will rise up, and play the harlot** after the strange gods of the land, whither they go to be among them, and **will forsake me**, and **break my covenant** which I have made with them. . . . 19 Now **therefore write ye this song for you, and teach thou it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths**, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. . . . 21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are come upon them, that **this song shall testify before them as a witness**; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they frame this day, before I have brought them into the land which I sware. 22 So **Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel**. . . . 30 And **Moses spake** in the ears of all the assembly of Israel **the words of this song, until they were finished** (Deut 31:14-16, 19, 21-22; 30). . . . 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, (with) his people: For he will avenge the blood of his servants, And will render vengeance to his adversaries, And will make expiation for his land, for his people. 44 And **Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people**, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun. 45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel; Deut 32:43-45

After all their harlotry and evil, God promised in the song: “Rejoice, O ye nations, (with) his people:”

### **11. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; And let all the peoples praise him.**

This Psalm has the distinction of being the shortest.

*O praise Jehovah, all ye nations; Laud him, all ye peoples. 2 For his lovingkindness is great toward us; and the truth of Jehovah (endureth) for ever. Praise ye Jehovah. Ps 117:1-2*

Yet its message finds its way into the New Covenant. It is a song of promise for the very days in which Paul was living and had a direct bearing on the equality of the “Gentiles” and “all the peoples.”

### **12. And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse,**

Many important truths were revealed in this messianic prophecy which spans the entire Eleventh Chapter of Isaiah. This quotation is the second time this phrase was used. Jesse as David’s father is the root. While David was the first branch, Jesus would also be a branch.

*And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; 4 but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*

Many such prophecies were given to reveal more and more about this branch that will come from this root.

*Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness. Jer 23:5-6*

*Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will perform that good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and concerning the house of Judah. 15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. Jer 33:14-15*

*Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch. Zech 3:8*

*and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; 13 even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. Zech 6:12-13*

### **And he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; On him shall the Gentiles hope.**

There is a slight divergence from the Hebrew from which our English translation is based and the Greek from the Septuagint that Paul is quoting from. The Spirit validates the translation as being accurate.

*10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious. Isa 11:10*

He will “stand as an ensign of the peoples” (Hebrew) as “he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles” (Greek). Thus the branch will not only come from David and be king over all Israel, but he will also rule over the Gentiles. But lest this be misunderstood, his ruling will bring hope and not despair.

Perhaps the most applicable element of this prophecy is the verses that follow. For in them is made much clearer why there is no longer a distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision. At that



same time the Gentiles are being sought and brought under the rule of this branch all Israel who had been cast off and sent out among the nations for punishment would also be given another opportunity to return and be gathered again.

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Isa 11:11-12*

How can Israel feel superior to the Gentiles? How can the Gentiles look down upon the Jews. All are under the grace and mercy of God.

### **13. Now the God of hope**

As Paul concludes the section he makes his final application. He spoke of how we ought to receive one another as Christ received us. He spoke of how God sent Christ to the circumcision to fulfill his promises to the Fathers and how in fulfillment to that the Gentiles were also welcomed back into fellowship with God. The truths just revealed should fill one with hope. Paul addresses God as the God of hope.

As one looks at all the prophecies and all the promises made and kept in spite of sin and unfaithfulness not only on the part of the fathers, but more so their children who were the recipients of the promise. After all Israel did in crucifying their minister and all the Gentiles did in being cast off and worshipping idols for God to even offer them a second chance was enough to encourage. The most difficult part of hope for most of us is feeling worthy to receive it. But when we compare our lives to those who lived before us, and see how merciful, compassionate, and faithful he is, just how much hope we can have. There is nothing we can do to exceed what they have done and yet God still forgave and helped them.

#### **fill you with all joy and peace in believing,**

This verse is filled with superlatives: Filled, all, abound, power! All that God has already done gives us a such great confidence that he can now *fill* us. This is a broad verb that can be literal as filling a cup or it can *make complete perform, execute*.

*“pleroo, ...1. to make full, to fill, to fill up... to fill to the full... to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally...2. to render full, i. e. to complete; a. prop. to fill up to the top...so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim,... b. to perfect, consummate... bb. to make complete in every particular; to render perfect... c. to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize; a. of matters of duty, to perform, execute ... bb of sayings, promises, prophecies, to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish; ... hh universally and absolutely, to fulfill, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law)to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment ...” (Thayer, p. 517-518; 4137).*

This verb is in the optative mode which is a wish or a hope. In reference to God it is considered a prayer for a wish offered to God is a request for fulfillment. God can do this through the prophecies, through the sacrifices of Jesus and through the promises. Not only did God make promises to the father that he already fulfilled, but he has made promises to us that he will also fulfill.

This is what brings us a sense of well being and contentment that we feel not just joy and exultation but *all* joy and exultation over our future. It also gives us peace and serenity for even if all the world caves in around us we can still look to God to solve all things. Since all that God promises is based upon believing this is where all hope, joy and peace are to be found.

Paul here points back to the content of the letter. All that God does for us is done through faith. He makes us righteous by faith, redeems and gives us grace by faith, fulfills all his promises by faith and now here, gives us hope and joy and peace by faith “In *believing*” reveals the source of hope, joy and peace. When ones faith is strong then these three also become strong. When faith falters so also will our hope, joy and peace. Hence God who has the control is requested to help these brethren keep their faith strong so that the wonderful benefits attached to it will abide.

#### **that ye may abound in hope,**

With an *eis* Paul describes the *purpose* and *goal* of the request. It is Paul's desire that their hope may *abound*. This is the word used when fill is not enough. Now it is *overflowing, abounding, and exceeding*

*“perisseuo,... 1. intrans. and prop. to exceed a fixed number or measure; to be over and above a certain number or measure:... a. to be over, to remain... b. to exist or be at hand in abundance: ... to be great(abundant)... a thing comes in abundance, or overflows, unto one; something falls to the lot of one in large measure Rom 5:15... c. to abound, overflow i.e. (a). to be abundantly furnished with, to have in abundance, abound in (a thing)... to be in*

affluence,... (b). to be pre-eminent, to excel..." (Thayer, p. 505; 4052)

Hope is one of our most precious possessions. With this hope, we can endure all the trials and persecutions of life without complaint. With hope, all of life takes on a different meaning. It was this hope that led to "for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." The true hope of eternal life, brings a joy and peace that can never be removed. Often it is our own conscience that keeps us from this joy. But again, after seeing all that has already done, it is evident that he will not fail us either as long as we believe.

### **in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

The Holy Spirit is our guarantee of the veracity and truth of all that is in the Scriptures. The power of the Holy Spirit is seen in his miracles that confirmed the Scriptures, his inspiration that created the Scriptures it, and his continued power that makes the Scriptures living active and sharper than any two edged sword.

The promises of God, our hope and joy, our faith and our perseverance are all directly tied to the power of the Holy Spirit. He is our other comforter who will be with us forever. All that his word accomplishes it does by his power.

### **14. And I myself also am persuaded of you,**

This appears to be the final transition in the book. The book began with some personal comments to the saints in Rome 1:1-15. There he told them:

7 To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints:  
8 I thank my God through Jesus Christ that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.  
9 God is my witness, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers  
10 making request, that I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you.  
11 I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;  
12 I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.  
13 oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered), that I might have some fruit in you also.

Paul wanted it clearly understood that though he had never met them, he was one of their closest brothers and allies in the faith. He had heard from others of the quality of faith and trust they had placed in God. He was praying unceasingly for them, pleading with God that he could come and see them. He had two reasons for this request. First, so he could be a blessing to them as an apostle, as Peter and John had been when they came to Samaria to bring the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.

*Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: 16 for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money. Acts 8:14-18*

Clearly this could not be given by prayer alone or they would already have had it since Paul was praying for them. He needed to come and impart them through the laying on of his hands. The second reason he wanted to come was for the mutual edification they would receive from one another. Paul. They would be comforted in each other faith in a very similar way to Hebrews 11. Now he returns to personal comments to the saints there in Rome. It is clear from these passages that he is aware of all they are doing, is deeply impressed, and strongly desires to be a part of them. This is the tone and the purpose of this section of the book. It is personal and for that reason has puzzled some. Why should an inspired letter be so filled with things that have no bearing upon all of us today? Perhaps the most important answer is to give us an example of how we ought to be today. These emotions desires and aims are not simply for the first century. They are not simply for apostles. All of us can do these things and encourage others.

14 I am **persuaded** that ye are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.  
15 I write unto you putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God,  
16 I a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, that the offering of Gentiles be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.  
20 my **aim** to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation;  
22 Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you:  
23 having these many years a **longing** to come unto you,  
24 I **hope** to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way by you, if first I shall have been **satisfied** with your company

29 I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

31 that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea,

32 that I may come unto you in **joy** through the will of God, and together with you find **rest**.

16:19 your obedience is come abroad to all men. I **rejoice** over you:

Although Paul says he is persuaded, he has also said he has never been among them. Obviously Paul is not writing based on hopes or assumptions. No one can say he is persuaded unless he has facts and all facts must be validated by competent and trustworthy witnesses. Paul does not cite any single person or credit them with his information as he did to the Corinthians (*household of Chloe* 1:11; *the things you wrote* 7:1). Yet though he has never been to Rome, he speaks with personal knowledge of the spiritual development of the church. His high compliments reveal a letter far different in tone from those sent to Galatia or Corinth. This letter is more like the letters to the Thessalonians. There he was getting his information from Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:14-15; 18:5; 1Th 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2Th 1:1).

We know Paul is no flatterer. Nor would he speak of things he had no knowledge. So either Phoebe had been in contact with Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila or someone else in Rome who had persuaded her to make the journey which she had passed on to Paul, someone had come directly to Paul, or he had direct knowledge through the inspiration of the Spirit. But whatever the source it led him to high compliments. He had become persuaded. He uses the perfect tense to describe this as something he had done in the past and nothing up to the present moment had changed it at all. He had become and still was *persuaded*.

*peitho*... 1. Active; a. *to persuade*, i.e. to induce one by words to believe... *to cause belief in a thing*... b. as in class. Grk... c. *to persuade unto* i.e. *to be induced to believe*... 2. Passive and Middle... a. *to be persuaded*, *to suffer one's self to be persuaded*; *to be induced to believe*... *to be persuaded of a thing concerning a person* Heb. 6:9..." (Thayer, p. 497-498; 3982).

Again, through some means he had assessed the fruits of their doctrine and morality and was "*induced to believe*" and fully *persuaded*" of these things. Yet there is something else that cannot be put into English but literally the words read like this: "*I have become persuaded, my brethren, even I myself of you*. This is an unreserved and emphatic compliment. He had been won over by the facts and was now confident and convicted that these things were true.

There is a very important lesson here for all of us to consider. Paul had not reserved his judgment until after he arrived. Nor had he not only taken time to assess them, but also to give it enough time to see if it was a true assessment. His compliment is a wonderful one and given based on a limited knowledge. If we are to follow Paul's example, we need to carefully consider the implications.

As a people the Lord's church today is a skeptical lot. We have given our trust and love to many who were unworthy. After a few such experiences we decide to withhold our judgement. Sadly sometimes we withhold it forever. We all know of preachers, elders, new converts and members who fell far short of what we thought of them. Our compliments and well-wishes were crushed under the reality of their unfaithfulness. This often leads to cynicism and skepticism. "Fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me" has become an unscriptural proverb. We begin to treat all brethren based upon the faults of the few. Jesus never did this. Even Judas was treated as an apostle with love and care. Peter was highly complimented even though the Lord knew he was inconsistent and weak at that time. This is a great example for all of us to seek to follow.

### **my brethren,**

This has always been a term of equality. Regardless of the position in the church (apostle, prophet, elder, deacon, evangelist, etc.) all are simply brethren.

*But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, (even) he who is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, (even) the Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted. Mt 23:8-12*

More than this is the relationship we all have in the family of God. As Paul pointed out in Chapter four, Abraham is the father of us all. We have entered the great family of God where even God is our father and Jesus our brother.

*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and (such) we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 1 Jn 3:1*

*4 but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 So that thou art no longer a*

bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. Gal 4:4-7

For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me. Heb 2:10-13

### **that ye yourselves are full of goodness,**

The testimony Paul had heard had persuaded him that “*all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints*” were filled with this goodness. He makes it clear at the end of the letter that there are many different churches that were to receive this letter so it was not written to the church at Rome but all the saints that are in Rome. These brethren were “*full*” of goodness.

*mestos* . . . probably akin to a root signifying “to measure,” hence conveys the sense of “having full measure,” (a) of material things, a vessel, ... (b) metaphorically, of thoughts and feelings, exercised (1) in evil things, ... (2) in virtues, goodness, Romans 15:14; ... (Vine 3324)

We would say filled to the brim and they having full measure. It is clear that Paul wants them to understand that he sees them as so fully good, as to be filled to the very top with it.

“*agathosune*... found only in bibl. and eccl. writ., *uprightness of heart and life*, [A. V. *goodness*]: ...” (Thayer, p. 3; 19)

Thus the quality of being good and upright is something that the Romans were fully exhibiting. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and Paul is convinced that these brethren have been filled with it. I suspect that Paul is seeking to lesson the power of the book to condemn. There have been some strong things affirmed in the letter and Paul now makes it clear that it was not a deficiency on their part that prompted the letter. it.

### **filled with all knowledge,**

Paul used another word for fill here.

“*pleroo*, ... 1. *to make full, to fill, to fill up... to fill to the full... to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally... 2. to render full, i. e. to complete; a. prop. to fill up to the top... so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim, ... b. to perfect, consummate... bb. to make complete in every particular; to render perfect...*” (Thayer, p. 517-518; 4137).

As is clear from the definition there is nothing lacking here. They are *filled to the full* and *liberally supplied* with *goodness*. They are also mature Christians. They have grown and are filled with knowledge. Using a perfect participle takes this action and turns it into the person. They were have become filled. This was something that was done in the past and the affect of it are still with them. If present they would be “*the filled with knowledge*” but perfect “*the having been filled with knowledge*.”

“*gnosis*... *knowledge*... the knowledge of God, such as is offered in the gospel... GNOSIS by itself signifies in general *intelligence, understanding*... *objective knowledge*: what is known concerning divine things and human duties...” (Thayer, p. 119; 1108)

These are not babes. They are not novices or new converts. These are saints who have been taught and trained. Remember that there were men “*from Rome both Jews and proselytes*” (Acts 2:10) who heard Peter’s first sermon and remained on: and *continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers* (Acts 2:42). When these men returned home they too would be able to teach and train and had done so very well.

### **able also to admonish one another.**

Paul again uses the Perfect participle to emphasize that this had become true in the past and was still true now. they are “*the abled*” or the “*the having become abled*”

“*dunamai*... *to be able, have power*, whether by virtue of one’s own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom... *to be able to do something... to be able, capable, strong, powerful...*” (Thayer, p. 158-159; 1410)

These have the power, strength, capability and ability to do *admonish*. Not only “*teach*” and “*impart understanding*,” but also “*to set right*,” and “*to have a corrective influence on someone*,” to change “*the will and disposition*.”

“*noutheteo*,... in the heart, mind, etc.,... “to impart understanding (a mind for something),” with accusative of person (e.g., Test. Jos. 6:8), “to set right,” “to have a corrective influence on someone,” with double accusative “to lay on the heart of someone.” ... *nouthetein* can mean “to impart understanding,” “to teach” but it is not a direct synonym of *didaskein* ... though often linked with it, ... In the case of *didaskein* the primary effect is on the intellect, and someone qualified exercises the influence. *nouthetein* however, describes an effect on the will and disposition, and it presupposes an opposition which has, to be overcome. It seeks to correct the mind, to put right what is

wrong, to improve the spiritual attitude. “The basic idea is that of the well-meaning earnestness with which one seeks to influence the mind and disposition by appropriate instruction, exhortation, warning and correction,” ... Hence the dominant meanings “to admonish, warn, soothe, remind, correct,” ...” (Kittel TWDNT 3560)

This is a sure sign of maturity. Not only can they teach the knowledge of the Scriptures, but they can make the direct applications to the hearts and minds of those who need to change. They have the power and the ability to seek “*to influence the mind and disposition by appropriate instruction, exhortation, warning and correction.*”

## 15. But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you in remembrance,

Paul now uses an conjunction to imply an antithesis. Generally it is translated with *but* if it is a strong antithesis and *now* if it is a milder one.

*de* "but, and, now," often implying an antithesis, ... " (Vine's 1161)

Paul explained how he how he felt about them as saints in the previous verse and now explains why the words he wrote do not quite match how he felt about them. He respects them as brethren but wrote the more boldly. Paul uses the first word here and the second in verse 18. He will not shun through fear, but will deal more boldly with the truth.

*tolmeroteron...* (neuter comparative from the adjective *tolmeros* ... more boldly:...) (Thayer p 627; 5111)

"*tolmao...* to dare; a. not to dread or shun through fear... b. to bear, endure; to bring one's self to;... c. absol. to be bold; bear one's self boldly, deal boldly..." (Thayer, p 627; 5111)

How many times has a preacher stood before a congregation that was full of goodness and yet preached a bold sermon to stir up and strengthen even further. This is what Paul is telling them. I did not do this because I thought you needed it out of weakness, but I wrote more boldly (then necessary) to in *some measure* help you to remember

*meros* (to share, receive one's due portion) ... a part; l. e.:... 1. a part due or assigned to one ... 2. one of the constituent parts of a whole; a. universally; in a context where the whole and its parts are distinguished, ... where it is evident from the context of what whole it is a part, ... in part, partly, ... in a measure, to some degree,... as respects a part, ..." (Thayer 3313)

This word is used when one has a whole and is only speaking of a portion of that whole. Some of this will put them in remembrance and some of it will be applications they have never heard before. This is comparable to what Peter said in II Pet 1:12-13. No one wishes to cause another to feel that they have been sized up as less than they are. Each of these apostles go to great lengths to be certain that they are not misunderstood. Paul says I write boldly, not because of your ignorance and weakness, but to help you *remember* these things even more vividly.

*epanamimnesko* "to remind again" (epi, "upon," and No. 3), is used in Romans 15:15, "putting (you) again in remembrance," KJV, "putting (you) in mind." ... " (Vine 1878)

*anamimnesko* ... ana, "back," and No. 1, signifies in the active voice "to remind, call to one's mind," "put (KJV, bring)... into remembrance";... (Vine 363)

*mimnesko* from the older form *mnaomai*, in the active voice signifies "to remind"; in the middle voice, "to remind oneself of," hence, "to remember, to be mindful of"; the later form ... (Vine 3403)

As is evident from the three definitions this is a triple compound word. To root word *remind* or *be mindful* is added *ana* back thus to recall what has already been remembered. Then *epi upon* is added to remind what has been remembered again and again. As an active participle, Paul wanted to make them a *rememberer* i.e. *one who can remember what he has already remembered*.

## because of the grace that was given me of God,

This is a common theme in all Paul's letters. Paul did not consider his role in the church as an apostle as the base upon which to reveal his greatness and authority. Far from it, he saw it as a gift that he did not deserve and only came through the grace and mercy of God. This is where the humility and merciful kindness of Paul came from. What he had received he gave. What Jesus did in dying for him and making it possible for him to be an apostle, he gave in return as the apostle to the GENTILES.

through whom we received **grace and apostleship**, unto obedience of faith among ALL THE NATIONS, for his name's sake; 6 among whom are ye also called (to be) Jesus Christ's: Rom 1:5-6

According to **the grace of God which was given unto me**, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. 1 Cor 3:10

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But **by the grace of God I am what I am:** and **his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain;** but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but **the grace of God which was with me.** 1 Cor 15:9-10

(for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also UNTO THE GENTILES); 9 and when they perceived **the grace that was given unto me**, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that WE SHOULD GO UNTO THE GENTILES, and they unto the circumcision; Gal 2:8-9

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus IN BEHALF OF YOU GENTILES,— 2 if so be that ye have heard of **the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me** to you-ward; 3 how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, 4 whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; Eph 3:1-4

whereof I was made a minister, **according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me** according to the working of his power. 8 **Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, TO PREACH UNTO THE GENTILES** the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; Eph 3:7-9

I thank him that enabled me, (even) Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to (his) service; 13 though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and **the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly** with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Tim 1:12-14

So the basis of Paul's inspiration, apostleship, and authority had nothing to do with him. There was nothing in it that could lead him to feel any superiority or pride. He had simply been given grace.

*"charis... grace; ... the word charis contains the idea of kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved... pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offenses, and bids them accept eternal salvation through Christ... charis is used of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues..."* (Thayer, p. 665-666; 5485)

It was a favor he did not deserve, the merciful kindness of God. This is the motivation not only behind this letter but behind all the things that Paul does as an apostle.

### **16. That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles,**

Paul used this word in 13:6 to describe the role of civil government. Now he uses it to describe his role in the church as an apostle to the Gentiles. Paul saw himself as *"a public servant or minister"* not in civil government, but within the church. Jesus appointed him to serve in this capacity.

*leitourgos ... denoted among the Greeks, firstly, "one who discharged a public office at his own expense," then, in general, "a public servant, minister." In the NT it is used (a) of Christ, as a "Minister of the sanctuary" (in the Heavens), Hebrews 8:2; (b) of angels, Hebrews 1:7 Psalms 104:4; (c) of the apostle Paul, in his evangelical ministry, fulfilling it as a serving priest, Romans 15:16; that he used it figuratively and not in an ecclesiastical sense, is obvious from the context; ..." (Vine 3011)*

Jesus made this very clear to him when he appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

*But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. Acts 9:15-16*

This is exactly what the leaders in Jerusalem were made to see when Paul came to Jerusalem in the matter of the Gentile circumcision (Acts 15).

*(for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also UNTO THE GENTILES); 9 and when they perceived **the grace that was given unto me**, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that WE SHOULD GO UNTO THE GENTILES, and they unto the circumcision; Gal 2:8-9*

It was not Paul's choice or ambition. He did not work for or earn it. He was the most undeserving person to be given this role, but it was his. By God's grace he was the minister (and apostle) of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, and the nature of his duties was to be:

### **ministering the gospel of God,**

A new word for "minister" is now introduced. Literally "sacred work," it implies that Paul (of the tribe of Benjamin) has been given a priestly ministry. What the priests did in the temple, Paul was now doing with the gospel.

*hierourgeo "to minister in priestly service" (akin to hierourgos, "a sacrificing priest," a word not found in the Sept. or NT: from hieros, "sacred," and ergon, "work"), is used by Paul metaphorically of his ministry of the Gospel, Romans 15:16; the offering connected with his priestly ministry is "the offering up of the Gentiles," i. e., the presentation by gentile converts of themselves to God. (Vine 2418)*

This is a concept that is often alluded to in the NT. Christians are a kingdom of priests, living sacrifices, living stones built up to be a holy priesthood. Now Paul speaks of those converted to Christ among the Gentiles through the gospel as an offering.

### **that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable,**

Paul was appointed a minister in order that (*hina*) the *offering up* of the Gentiles might be made acceptable. This is an OT term brought into the NT. Primarily it was used of animal sacrifices and of Jesus sacrifice on the cross.

*"prosphora... offering; i.e. 1. the act of offering, a bringing to, ... 2. that which is offered, a gift, a present... In the N. T. a sacrifice [A. V. offering], whether bloody or not..."* (Thayer, p. 550; 4376)

But here it is used as something brought before God as an offering that will please him. It is the

Gentiles who are being offered to God as a sacrifice and Paul's duty was to be certain that they were not just "acceptable" or "pleasing and welcome," but "very favorable acceptance."

*dektos* ... akin to No. 1, denotes "a person or thing who has been regarded favorably," Luke 4:19,24; Acts 10:35; 2 Corinthians 6:2 Philippians 4:18. (Vine 1184)

*apodektos* NT.), a strengthened form of No. 1 (*apo*, "from," used intensively), signifies "acceptable," in the sense of what is pleasing and welcome, 1 Timothy 2:3; 5:4. (Vine 587)

*euprosdektos* a still stronger form of No. 1, signifies a "very favorable acceptance" (*eu*, "well," *pros*, "towards," No. 1), Romans 15:16,31; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 8:12; 1 Peter 2:5. (Vine 2144),

Here he elaborates on what he has said above. His duty was to write letters such as these to congregations where he felt there was a need and which need he could not personally fulfill. He was a servant of Jesus for the Gentiles. He wanted to be sure that all Gentile congregations were acceptable to God.

### **being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**

Paul's role is secondary. God planned, Jesus executed and the Holy Spirit completed the process of *sanctification*.

*"hagiazō... to make hagian, render or declare sacred or holy, consecrate. Hence it denotes 1. to render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow... 2. to separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate and so render inviolable... 3. to purify... a. to cleanse externally... to purify leuitically... b. to purify by expiation, free from the guilt of sin... c. to purify internally by reformation of soul..."* (Thayer, p. 6; 37)

Before obedience to the gospel Paul preached we were all unclean. After obedience the power of God and the blood of Christ perfectly applied by the Holy Spirit leads to a sanctified offering in which Paul by grace played a small but essential part.

### **17. I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus**

The conjunction *therefore* is used to indicate "that something follows from another necessarily," and is "used in drawing a conclusion and in connecting sentences together logically." Paul added this to what he has just finished saying about his role in God's eternal purpose to draw an important conclusion. This is such an enlightening revelation into Paul's mind. How many men have been lifted as high as Paul and kept their head out of the clouds? God chose Paul to bring the gospel to those who were destined to become the church. The role of Israel receded into non-existence after the fall of Jerusalem and close of the first century. He may not rise to the level of Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, but he is not far below them. He was the apostle to the Gentiles and God gave to him the role of revealing much of the commands and instructions regarding the church through the centuries. This summarizes some of the things he said above. Now, he explains how he felt about the greatness of the role that had been given to him. First, he makes clear that he was not unaware of the honor and importance of what Jesus had given to him. He did have "glorying:"

*"kauchaomai... in the N. T. often used by Paul [some 35 times; by James twice]; to glory (whether with reason or without):... to glory (on account) of a thing..."* (Thayer p. 342)

*"kauchesis... the act of glorying... ... crown of which we can boast... that of which one glories, cause of glorying..."* (Thayer, p. 342; 2746)

This is not a term we use today. We do not speak of glorying. This is what has led the ESV to translate "I have reason to be proud of my work" and the NASB, "I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God." Paul is describing his sense of self esteem, and the value and pride he feels about what he is doing. With all the passages in the Scriptures condemning pride and boasting, one is surprised to find it here. How can Paul speak of an emotion condemned elsewhere? Using the same word James condemns boasting.

*But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. James 4:16*

So isn't boasting and the pride that leads to it always sinful? A more fundamental question would be does man have any emotions today that were not given to him at the creation and are a part of the image and likeness of God? After the fall, did man develop new emotions he had not been given by God? That is not possible. The problem is not in any emotion. For God saw that all he had made was very good and every emotion God gave man was good, wholesome and in his image. We know this is true of love, mercy and devotion. But what about sexual lust, jealousy, hatred or pride? Are they not evil emotions that have no good use? Of course not! God gave man the desire for sexual relations as a blessing to be found in the marriage relationship. Man may pervert the expression of the emotion and thus make it sinful but it is not inherently sinful. So also with hatred, wrath and jealousy all of which have been attributed to God. They may be more prone to sinful abuse, but they are not wrong of themselves. There is a place for boasting, pride and taking glory



in something. But it is obviously in very narrow parameters.

Paul felt a sense of accomplishment and pride in what he was doing. It led him to a desire to boast and praise. But the critical difference between sinful and wholesome is in the direction. Paul's boasting was not focused upon himself, but upon Christ. It was not what Paul was doing, but what Christ was doing through Paul. The dangerous side of pride is when we look at anything we have or have done as though we did it alone. This is why human pride is so dangerous.

Look at the facts. Everything began with and was made possible by God. If we are intelligent, diligent, healthy, rich, wise or have any other special ability, God gave it to us and we have no basis for allowing it to make us feel superior or better than others. Everything in the church is a gift of grace. There is no merit or greatness that arose from ourselves. God made it all possible through Jesus death upon the cross. The Spirit made it possible through the gift of the inspired word. Paul spoke strongly about this to the Corinthians as Moses did to Israel.

*For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? 1 Cor 4:7 (ESV)*

*(lest) thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18 But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as at this day. Deut 8:17-18*

There is nothing about anyone that makes them different from anyone else. Everyone has gifts from God. They may be different and we may even value them differently, but they are all gifts of grace. The genius who reveals great mysteries is only using the brain God gave him to discover the amazing nature of the creation God gave us. The beautiful, the popular, the gifted, the wise, the strong, etc. only have a more powerful reason to thank God for those gifts. But how can they make anyone feel superior? "*What do you have that you did not receive?*" How can we boast about something we were given as a gift from God as though it was not a gift?

Therefore the right way to boast, have pride and feel a sense of esteem and well-being is that God was kind enough to do these things for us and our boasting and praise is that he gave them. He created them, they come from him, he makes everything possible. God does not forbid boasting, he only forbids the manner and the things we boast about.

*Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; 24 but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah. Jer 9:23-24*

As an inspired apostle, Paul has given us the example. We do not feel worthless and we do not feel indispensable. We are neither great or nothing. We do not feel more highly than we ought to think and we do not feel more lowly than we ought to think. We think soberly as God has dealt to us what we have. Since reward is based on ability and opportunity we are all equal. No matter what gifts we have, if we use them to the same degree, we are exactly the same in the eyes of God. As Paul we need to praise God for all that we can do and forget what we have done.

Paul was so thrilled he boasted of the grace of God that had given him such a position. But it only led to a delightful praise to God for such a gift. It did not come of himself, but of God and so he only gloried in Christ.

### **glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God.**

Throughout the Scriptures the term "*in Christ*" was used to describe the relationship we have with Jesus and the blessings that are ours because of that relationship. We enter that relationship when we are baptized for "*everyone who is baptized into Christ puts on Christ*" (Gal 3:27) and "*if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation*" (1 Cor 5:17). All that we have and are is a result of that relationship. From eternity, God chose that those in Christ to have every spiritual blessing as a free gift of grace.

*Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) in Christ: 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: Eph 1:3-4*

For Paul only what is within his relationship to Jesus (who made it all possible), can he find any reason to boast or feel proud. Paul drew a circle around all that was in Christ, and only those things within that circle would he have any reason to boast. It was in Christ that he was forgiven, in Christ that he was given apostleship and in Christ that he would be saved.

*Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 2 Tim 2:10*

*in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: Col 1:14*

*through whom we received grace and apostleship, Rom 1:4-5*

Therefore it was only in Christ that he could boast. Yes, he was doing great things, but only because God gave him the gifts and Christ first forgave, then gave Paul the right to be an apostle and the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish it all.

All true servants and ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ need to heed this great example. Some among us have great gifts. Some are amazing speakers with great charisma to draw others to serve the Lord. Some have great skill in preaching to the lost and saving many souls. Such people are praised and held in high esteem. They are sought out and have a great reputation. Paul bids us consider a very important truth. The only thing all of this should do is lead to more praise to God and to Jesus. What infinite grace and mercy that fallen sinful man could be redeemed and given such a wonderful second chance. What an amazing gift and blessing that some have such great minds or personalities. But it is all from God and not from themselves. They do these things because of God's love and generosity. If Paul felt this way with all that he had become how can any who follow after feel any different. Paul had accomplished much in as short time. He had established congregations and saved multitudes. Many of these people would have great gratitude and respect toward Paul. Yet Paul stresses he only allowed himself to take pride and self-esteem in two things. First in Christ, and second, in the things pertaining to God.

### **18. For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me,**

With a *gar*, Paul connects this sentence with the previous one as a explanation. The reason he only gloried and boasted in Christ and the things pertaining to God is now further developed.

*"tolmao to dare; a. not to dread or shun through fear... b. to bear, endure; to bring one's self to;... c. absol. to be bold; bear one's self boldly, deal boldly..."* (Thayer, p 627; 5111)

Paul will "*dread and shun through fear,*" he will not "*deal boldly*" or "*bear himself boldly*" in regard to anything that he has done himself. Paul does not have the *courage* to talk about those things he has done except the things that Jesus did through him. Since that covers everything in his life, he has nothing left to discuss except those things.

Clearly Paul is speaking of any quality of his own or any great act of courage and that might lead him to boast as if they were his own accomplishment. He *dreads* and *shuns* such things because they are dangerous. Truly *pride goes before a fall*, (Pr 16:18) and *let him who stands take heed lest he fall* (1Cor 10:12). We get a sample in the second letter to the Corinthians of the things Paul would not dare to speak of:

*Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty (stripes) save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; 26 (in) journeyings often, (in) perils of rivers, (in) perils of robbers, (in) perils from (my) countrymen, (in) perils from the Gentiles, (in) perils in the city, (in) perils in the wilderness, (in) perils in the sea, (in) perils among false brethren; 27 (in) labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. . . . 11 I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works. 2 Cor 11:22-27; 12:11-12*

As we look at this list, we get a clear picture of the things no one should dare to boast or take pride in. When we use our heritage, work as a Christian, persecutions and tribulations we become foolish. Paul would speak of things that were brought about through Christ. Is he saying that there are some things that he could do this with? Absolutely not! As we look at the list of things Paul discusses every one of them is a gift from God at birth or something made possible by the grace and redemption of Jesus. How can we speak of anything outside of these two fundamental facts. Paul said he would not dare to do so and James that "*all such boasting is evil.*" Paul saw everything he was doing as a Christian, preacher and apostles as things Christ *wrought* in him. As things Christ had "*performed, accomplished, and achieved*" through Paul.

*"katergazomai... a. to perform, accomplish, achieve [RV often work]... b. to work out... i.e. to do that from which something results... bring about, result in,... c. ... to fashion, i.e. render one fit for a thing..."* (Thayer, P. 339; 2716)

That Paul was an apostle at all was something that Paul saw as a favor and gift of grace. He did not deserve it, none of them did and no one every would. He speaks not of how great he had become, but of how undeserving he was and how wonderful what God and Jesus made possible for him.

*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1 Cor 15:10*

*I thank him that enabled me, (even) Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to (his)*

*service; 13 though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Tim 1:12-14*

All this can be summed up: It was not what he did it was what God did through him. It was not what he was, but how he was using what God had given him. All that Paul was and had done as an apostle were only things that Christ had wrought through him. He did not see himself as having any merit or accomplishments. His sin had completely disqualified him from everything. He could not feel any pride or any sense of glory in his own accomplishments because he had none. But he could feel all those things toward Christ because Christ had wrought them through him. Therefore all the glory goes to Christ.

Paul spoke of this again to the Philippian. He revealed how he saw himself and how much confidence he had in his fleshly accomplishments as a rebellious man of Israel. But after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and all his illusions were destroyed he learned that the true circumcision were only those who believed and submitted to the Christ. Only those who "*glory in Christ Jesus*" are the true circumcision. Those who "*glory in Christ*" are those who "*dare not to speak of things not wrought in Christ.*" Once Paul saw this he lost all confidence in the flesh.

*for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: 4 though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. 7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, Phil 3:3-8*

Paul made it clear that those things had always been rubbish and when he finally saw them for what they were, he gladly threw them away to gain those things that can only be wrought in Christ. As he continued, he spoke specifically about those things that are wrought in Christ and how all should view them. He had no righteousness of his own. Like Isaiah, "*all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.*" (Isa 64:6) Paul wanted the righteousness that Christ had wrought and is now found only in our faith. Only when we have this complete faith in Christ and none in ourselves can we receive our glory, boasting and pride from the right source.

*and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, (even) that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: 10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; 11 if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Phil 3:9-10*

As many as a perfect will also have this mind and imitate Paul in this.

*Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: 16 only, whereunto we have attained, by that same (rule) let us walk. 17 Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. Phil 3:15-17*

Christ had wrought some amazing things for Paul. He died for him, forgave him and appointed him to be an apostle. He gave him the Holy Spirit, and had so worked in the world that it was the fulness of time when Paul's efforts would be the most rewarded. He protected and guided Paul through all that he did. Paul had much to be proud of and much to boast about, but only because of what Christ had wrought.

### **for the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,**

All that Christ had wrought through him had been for (eis- for the purpose of) the obedience of the Gentiles. This is what Paul could boast about. Before he became an apostle there were few Gentiles in the church. Now because of what Christ had wrought through Paul multitudes of Gentiles had been obedient. They had heard what Paul preached and had placed themselves under it. This is what this word for obedience signifies. One is *hearing under* and therefore feels compelled to obey, comply and submit to what has been heard.

*hupakoe* "obedience" (*hupo*, "under," *akouo*, "to hear"),... " (Vine 5218)

*"hupakoe... obedience, compliance, submission... obedience rendering to any one's counsels... of the thing to which one submits himself... the obedience of one who conforms his conduct to God's commands..." (Thayer, p. 637;5218)*

All that Luke recorded in Acts 13-20 was now history. City after city and province after province Paul had entered, preached the gospel and found those among the Gentiles who would obey the gospel. What a great honor was conferred on Paul. From the moment the Spirit separated Barnabas and Saul, Paul's course was set.

*And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. . . . 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 13:2, 4*

*And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts 14:27*

All his preaching and all his letters, All his work, toil and suffering were for the purpose of bringing the Gentiles into obedience to God and were wrought in him through Christ. Therefore his desire to take pride in and boast of the wonderful role God had given him was because God had chosen him and Jesus had worked through him. From Hebrews 11, it is clear that all of God's great servants would have seen themselves in the same light. It was not Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses or David who were special. It was God who lifted them from a common life to do something great in his kingdom. Noah built an ark, David led a nation, and Paul brought about obedience of the Gentiles.

### **19. In the power of signs and wonders,**

This obedience occurred in the midst of powerful miracles. Beginning in the very first sermon with the wind, tongues of fire and proclaiming in foreign tongues, powerful things had been wrought in Christ through their hands. The healing of the lame man(Acts 2), the shadow of Peter healing all(Acts 5:15-16), and Peter healing Aeneas and raising Dorcus from the death(Acts 9:33-34, 39-40). Then Paul began to do the same among the Gentiles.

*Long time therefore they tarried (there) speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. Acts 14:3*

*And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them. Acts 15:12*

*And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the evil spirits went out. Acts 19:11-12*

What an amazing thing it must have been to have such power! The power of signs and wonders brought great results and Paul was given the power to accomplish these things. He brought hope and joy to those who had been taken captive and bound by Satan. Remember how the apostles felt the first time they went out on their own and they cast out demons?

*And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. Lk 10:17-19*

This is the power Paul too had been given. It brought a great sense of power and a powerful reputation among the people. But how could Paul brag or feel any personal sense of greatness in the miracles he performed? They were given to him when Jesus sent the other comforter who would give him(and the other apostles) the power to perform such signs and wonders. The signs not only confirmed the word, but brought great excitement and advertisement to those who saw and heard about them. These are the thing Jesus allowed Paul to do as an apostle to bring about this one great result.

*And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. 19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen. Mk 16:17-20*

This was all done through Paul but it was Christ who was working through Paul. The praise and honor went to Jesus, but the joy and esteem that being given such a role was Paul's.

### **in the power of the Holy Spirit;**

The power of the Holy Spirit would take in all the above and then go beyond it. Paul had the power as an apostle to lay his hands on others who would then receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Each individual would be given a single gift by the Holy Spirit as he saw fit.

*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the **word of wisdom**; and to another the **word of knowledge**, according to the same Spirit; 9 to another **faith**, in the same Spirit; and to another **gifts of healings**, in the one Spirit; 10 and to another **workings of miracles**; and to another **prophecy**; and to another **discernings of spirits**; to another (divers) kinds of **tongues**; and to another the **interpretation of tongues**: 11 but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will. 1 Cor 12:7-11*

For those in the early church before the writing of the Scriptures such gifts brought great blessings to the church. Another power Paul possessed was the power to preach and write by inspiration.

Paul wrote over half the letters in the New Testament. Already, the letters to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans had revealed the power of the Holy Spirit that was working through Paul leading to the obedience of the Gentiles and revealing the amazing power that Christ had wrought through Paul.

*but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. 10 But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. 12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words). 1Cor 2:9-13*

Think of how we would feel if we were one of those chosen by the Lord to directly receive this power. All that Jesus had promised the other apostles had also been given to Paul.

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, 17 (even) the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. Jn 14:16-17*

*But the Comforter, (even) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. Jn 14:26*

*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, (even) the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: Jn 15:26*

*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, (these) shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. Jn 16:12-13*

Truly Paul had much for which to boast and praise God. He had been chosen as a vessel to bring great results, “yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.”

**so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ;**

Paul uses the consecutive conjunction “*hoste*” to reveal the results of all that Christ had wrought through him.

*“hoste, ...a consecutive conjunction, i. e. expressing consequence or result,...1. so that, [A. V., frequently inso much that];... it is also used of a designed result, so as to i.q. in order to, for to... 2. so then, therefore, wherefore...” (Thayer, p. 683; 5620)*

He had *fully* preached the gospel. As one reads through Acts, one sees how the Spirit used Paul in ever widening areas throughout Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. The Holy Spirit’s assessment of Paul’s work is that it was “*made complete*,” and “*filled to the full*.” Luke could have ended his book as John did. Truly “*many other things*” were done. Only a few days of Paul’s life were given in each account. Multitudes of things had been done and thus with inspired words, Paul writes that what needed to be done had been done from Jerusalem to Illyricum. What does it mean to fully preach the gospel? Since Jesus had asked them to preach to the whole creation and to all nations (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16), this passage revealed that this had now been done from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

Before moving to the next verse let us once again capture the thread and direction of these words. He started in verse fifteen by reminding them that he had written this letter through “*the grace that was given me of God*,” (15:15) and that this was the reason “*that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles*.” (:16) These two things allowed him to have “*my glorifying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God*.” (:17) which are those things “*which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles*.” (:18) This obedience was accomplished “*in the power of signs and wonders*” and “*in the power of the Holy Spirit*.” Now, as a result of these things “*from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ*,” (:19)

**20. Yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named**

This was a decision Paul had made and had fulfilled. Out of a “*love for honor*” or out of “*ambition*” or simply he was “*striving earnestly*.”

*“philotimeomai... (.. fr. philos and time)... a. to be fond of honor; to be actuated by love of honor; from a love of honor to strive to bring something to pass. b. followed by an infinitive, to be ambitious ... to strive earnestly, make it one’s aim...” (Thayer, p. 655; 5389)*

This is difficult because the reality is that the first and root meaning fits very well with what he has already said about glorying, boasting and taking pride in what he had done. He said something similar to the Corinthians:

*But I have used none of these things: and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case; for (it were) good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorifying void. 15 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. 17 For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me. 18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel. 1 Cor 9:14-24*

There was nothing in which he could boast (same root word as here) in all the things that he was doing. So he made some decisions to make it feel better to him. First, he chose to preach without charge, and second to preach in the most difficult fields where no one else had yet come. This was his reason for boasting or his love of honor. Not to do easier things, but harder things.

So the *manner* and *way* in which he chose to preach was based on that aim and goal.

*“houtu... in this manner, thus, so; 1. by virtue of its native demonstrative force it refers to what preceded; in the manner spoken of; in the way described; in the way it was once; in this manner; in such a manner; thus so...” (Thayer, p. 468-469; 3779)*

He would always go to places where no one yet named the name of Christ in honor and submission. Paul was not always given a choice where he preached (Acts 19:6-10), but when he had any choice in the places he would go, he always chose those places that were the most difficult. The places where no one knew Christ and so Paul had to be the trailblazer. He had to take the hard and painful way in order to make it easier for those who followed.

### **that I might not build upon another man's foundation;**

Paul is not saying here that it would be wrong to do this. For when he came to Antioch in the beginning he was building on the foundation of what another man had started. But from that time onward, he had chosen to be the first to lay the foundation. He spoke of the various roles in the Corinthian letter. First speaking of planting and watering and then of laying a foundation.

*I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building. 1 Cor 3:6-9*

*According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire. 1 Cor 3:10-15*

Paul laid the foundation at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, etc. No one had come before him. He was the first to plant then others came to water. He was the first to lay the foundation and others came to build thereon. He is not deprecating those who come after. They are both servants and both will receive a reward. He is only discussing his own personal decision.

### **21. But, as it is written,**

The reason he refused to build upon the foundation of another is found in what is written in the Old Testament prophets. Paul did this to fulfill prophesy. This passage is one of the most powerful of all the messianic prophecies. It is the preface to Isaiah 53 where Isaiah describes the suffering servant who would be “*despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,*” and who was “*wounded for our transgressions,*” was “*bruised for our iniquities;*” and “*with his stripes we are healed.*” Just before these words Isaiah said this:

*Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14 Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men), 15 so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand. Isa 52:13-15*

**They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, And they who have not heard shall understand.**

This was a promise of God that would occur at the same time that all these other things did. Paul was living in that time and he had made it his personal ambition to allow God and Christ to use him for that end. Every time Paul went into a new town and preached the gospel to those who had never heard or even imagined that such things could be true he was fulfilling this prophecy.

### **22. Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you:**

Because of Paul's decision and aim to only preach the gospel to those who had never heard it before there were two hindrances to his coming to them. First, every time an opportunity arose to preach the gospel to an area that had never heard it before Paul felt compelled to buy up that opportunity first. Second, since Rome had already heard, it could never be his first priority, not because of any fault or lack on their part but simply because of his own convictions on how best to allocate his time and resources. These things had *hindered* him. His way was not clear or open to him.

*enkopto* lit., "to cut into" (*en*, "in," *kopto*, "to cut"), was used of "impeding" persons by breaking up the road . . . of "hindrances" in the way of reaching others, Rom 15:22; or returning to them, 1 Th 2:18; of "hindering" progress in the Christian life, Gal 5:7 (*anakopto* in some mss.), where the significance virtually is "who broke up the road along which you were traveling so well?"; of "hindrances" to the prayers of husband and wife, through low standards of marital conduct, 1 Peter 3:7 (Vine 1465)

This had happened *many* times. As one reads Paul's life story in Acts, it is clear that he had been torn in many directions. The Spirit directed them on the first journey (Acts 13:2). On the second journey, forbidden to go into Asia and Bithynia, a vision led them to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). Soon Paul had been to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth. Each of these churches had created different issues and led to various anxieties (2 Cor 11:28). The letters written to Thessalonica and Corinth and Galatia make it clear that Paul had good reasons to stay and help them. Now, a crisis in Jerusalem had created a great need that Paul felt obligated to fulfill. It was his hope that this would narrow the great chasm between Jewish and Gentile churches. All of these and many other unwritten things kept Paul busy and kept breaking up the road that would lead Paul to Rome.

### **23. but now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you,**

At the present moment (*nuni*) things had changed. There was no longer any place between Jerusalem and Illyricum that would fit the above aim he had set for himself. This gives the real meaning of "*fully preached*" in v 19. Since his aim had been to preach where the gospel had not come and now was no longer any place there, "*fully preached*" meant that it had been taken to every possible area in that region and all had heard. With these impediments out of the way, there was then a clear way for him to proceed.

He had longed (*earnest* or *great desire*) to come and now he could do so.

3. *epipothesis* "an earnest desire, a longing for" (*epi*, "upon," intensive, *potheo*, "to desire"), is found in 2 Corinthians 7:7, 11, KJV, "earnest desire," and "vehement desire"; RV, "longing" in both places. (Vine 1972)

4. *epipothia* with the same meaning as No. 3, is used in Romans 15:23, RV, "longing," KJV, "great desire." Cf. *epipothetos*, Philippians 4:1, "longed for," and *epipotheo*, "to long for" [see B, Note (4)]. (Vine 1974)

This earnest and great longing had been in his heart these many years. Clearly Paul had heard about the churches in Rome earlier in his life and had desired to go there ever since. This lets those in Rome know how he feels about them. There is no indication in Acts of the epistles how he received this knowledge. But once Paul heard there was a church in Rome and that the church was doing very well, but had not yet been established by the visit of an apostle to impart spiritual gifts, he had been longing to go there and now all the hindrances were removed.

*For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 that is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles. Rom 1:8-15*

### **24. whensoever I go to Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey,**

Paul then revealed his next goal to them. Another place that had never heard the gospel. He had made the plan to go to Spain. Since Rome is on the way to Spain and he truly wanted to go there, he expressed his hope (desire and expectation) to see them. Actually he had two hopes, first to see them and second to be brought on his way by them. Seeing them would give him the opportunity to be a blessing to them. He would establish them and give them spiritual gifts. He would assess the congregation and preach the things he believed they needed to hear.

### **and to be brought on my way thitherward by you,**

The term "*to be brought on my way*" is used several times and in a variety of ways in the NT. It can be no more than accompanying him but it often implies "fitting him out with" "practical assistance."

*propempe*... translated "accompanied," in Acts 20:38, KJV, lit. means "to send forward"; hence of assisting a person on a journey either (a) in the sense of fitting him out with the requisites for it, or (b) actually "accompanying" him for part of the way. The former seems to be indicated in Romans 15:24 and 1 Corinthians 16:6, and v. 11,

where the RV has "set him forward." So in 2 Corinthians 1:16 and Titus 3:13, and of John's exhortation to Gaius concerning traveling evangelists, "whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God," 3 John 6, RV. While personal "accompaniment" is not excluded, practical assistance seems to be generally in view, as indicated by Paul's word to Titus to set forward Zenas and Apollos on their journey and to see "that nothing be wanting unto them." In regard to the parting of Paul from the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, personal "accompaniment" is especially in view, perhaps not without the suggestion of assistance, Acts 20:38, RV "brought him on his way"; "accompaniment" is also indicated in 21:5; "they all with wives and children brought us on our way, till we were out of the city." In Acts 15:3, both ideas perhaps are suggested. (Vine 4311),

Since the term is open to interpretation, he is not asking them directly for help, but he is implying that if they want to be involved financially in his trip, he would be grateful for it. This too is a compliment to the church for Paul did not always do this. As he told the Philippians,

*And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only: 16 for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. 17 Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. Phil 4:15-17*

**if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)-**

Paul now guards against any misunderstanding. He is not quickly going through Rome to Spain with a hope to getting some support from them. He does not want these brethren to feel that they are simply an extension of him going to Spain, and that he truly does not have the care and concern for them. He has every intention of remaining long enough to be satisfied with their company. This is a word often used for the satiation and comfort one feels after they are full.

*empiplemi ... to be satiated; in Greek writings from Homer down; to fill up, fill full: ... to bestow something bountifully on one, Luke 1:53; Acts 14:17 ... to fill with food, i. e. satisfy, satiate; passive, Luke 6:25; John 6:12 ... to take one's fill of, glut one's desire for: passive with the genitive of person, one's contact and companionship, Romans 15:24; (Thayer's 1705)*

Here he plans to remain until he is satiated and feels comfortable and full with their company. Though he does not say so it seems clear that this will be mutual. He will not leave until he is satisfied with their company and they with his. It is not his plan for this to be an overnight where he preaches briefly greets and is then on his way. He intends to remain long enough that they can truly get to know one another. visit

**25. But now, I say, I go unto to Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints.**

With the word "now" we can stamp the date of the Roman letter after writing the second letter to the Corinthians and in Acts 20:1-3 where he is still giving instructions and about this collection and telling them he would be coming soon. Now "at this very moment" he is going.

*"nuni... now, at this very moment (precisely now, neither before nor after...) and only of Time, almost always with the pres., very rarely with the fut... Not found in the N. T. exc. in the writ of Paul and in a few places in Acts and the Ep. to the Heb.; ... 1. of time: with a pres... with a perf. indicating continuance.. Eph. 2:13... 2. contrary to Grk. usage, in stating a conclusion... but since the case stands thus, [as it is]...; but now.... after a conditional statement with eti... Rom. 7:17..." (Thayer, p. 430-431; 3570)*

The purpose of this visit is to minister to the saints. Paul uses a participle to make himself the action of the verb. He is he ministering on to the saint. He is the minister to the saints. He serves their needs and supplies what is necessary for them.

*"diakoneo... to be a servant, attendant, domestic; to serve, wait upon; ... 1. univ. ... to minister to one; render ministering offices to... Pass. to be served, ministered unto... 2. to wait at table and offer food and drink to the guests... 3. to minister i. e. to supply food and the necessaries of life:... 4. with the acc. to minister i. e. attend to, anything, that may serve another's interests... to serve as deacons... to minister a thing unto one, to serve one with or by supplying any thing..." (Thayer, p. 137; 1247)*

This ministry is first described by Paul as something he had already done with the Galatians. At that time his own plans for going had not yet been decided upon. He was clearly leaning in that direction but had not committed himself.

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. 3 And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: 4 and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me. 1 Cor 16:1-4*

Not long after writing this letter, his plans had crystalized and he had purposed in the spirit to go. This either means he had resolved in his own mind or that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to go. In his address to the elders at Ephesus, he does say that he goes bound in the spirit.

*Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. Acts 19:21*

It was not many weeks after this event recorded by Luke that he wrote the letter to the Romans and



the second letter to the Corinthians. Notice the number of times he speaks of this as a ministration and always to the saints.

*I go unto Jerusalem, **ministering unto the saints**. Rom 15:25  
a certain **contribution for the poor among the saints** that are at Jerusalem. Rom 15:26  
**ministration** which (I have) for Jerusalem may be acceptable **to the saints**; Rom 15:31  
concerning the **collection for the saints**, 1 Cor 16:1  
in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the **ministering to the saints**: 2 Cor 8:4  
as touching the **ministering to the saints**, 2 Cor 9:1  
For the **ministration of this service** not only fills up the measure of **the wants of the saints**, but abounds also  
through many thanksgivings unto God; 2 Cor 9:12*

The next thing we hear about the journey to fulfill this ministry is revealed by Paul while he is preaching to the elders at Ephesus that he is still bound in the spirit to go unto Jerusalem and he still doesn't know exactly what is going to happen but he has been told by the Holy Spirit through the prophets "in every city" that bonds and afflictions abide.

*And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:22-24*

That Paul already knew this seems clear from his final words to the Romans and the end of this chapter.

*strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; 31 that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea, and (that) my ministration which (I have) for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints; Rom 15:30-31*

He knew that he was to have some problems in Jerusalem. The problems were made much clearer and more severe when he arrived in Caesarea. But by then, Paul had made some type of inner commitment that he would not break.

*And as we tarried there some days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. Acts 21:10-11*

All now know the rest of this story. He is arrested in Jerusalem by the Romans and sent to Caesarea. After more than two years he begins his journey to Rome still as a prisoner. The trip to Rome ends in the loss of the ship and more delays. It was probably more than three years from the time he wrote this letter until he arrived. When he arrived it was not as a free apostle who could walk among them, but as a prisoner who could receive visitors but not go out.

*But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds. Acts 24:27*

*And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.*

## 26. For it hath been the good pleasure

In I Cor 16:1-2 Paul speaks of an order: "As I gave *order* to the churches of Galatia so also do ye. Either the order came after the good pleasure was manifested, or no one did it as a command, but as a blessing.

*each man according as he has purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. 2Cor 9:7*

Good pleasure takes on out of the realm of strict command and into the realm of being well pleased, thinking something good, and having a willingness.

*eudokeo* signifies (a) "to be well pleased, to think it good" [*eu*, "well," and *dokeo*, ... not merely an understanding of what is right and good as in *dokeo*, but stressing the willingness and freedom of an intention or resolve regarding what is good, e. g., Luke 12:32, "it is (your Father's) good pleasure"; so Romans 15:26,27, RV; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Galatians 1:15; Colossians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:8, RV, "we were well pleased" (KJV, "we were willing"); ... (Vine 2106)

It may (and in this case did) begin as a command, but it soon took on a different light. As with most of God's commands there is something within us that leads us to do it not as a command, but as something we know is good and we do it willingly.

**of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution** One wonders what happened to Galatia. Paul had told the Corinthians he had given order to them. Perhaps they did not comply, perhaps they never recovered themselves from the error Paul warned them, or maybe Macedonia and Achaia had given the bulk of the contribution and he did not want to mention all the other works that had been involved.

By inserting the term *contribution* here the translators may have done a disservice to English readers. It may have been more confusing at the beginning, but since Greek speaking people had to make this distinction we could have made it also. The term *contribution* is actually the word *fellowship*.

“*koinonia*... *fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse, contact*; in the N.T. as in class. Grk. 1. *the share which one has in anything, participation, ...* 2. *intercourse, fellowship intimacy*...” (Thayer, p 352; 2842)

As we look at the variations in translation, we see why it would have been better simply to keep *fellowship* or *communion* all the way through. Although the translators give us *fellowship*, *communicate*, *contribute*, and *communion*, they are often used for exactly the same thing yet given different terms. What Paul says is that there was a *fellowship* among the saints. Those who had having *fellowship* with those who did not. This is exactly the wording Paul used to the Philippians when he spoke of “***fellowship*** with me in the matter of giving and receiving.” Take a look at the list and see if it doesn’t change the way we look at our giving.

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and ***fellowship***, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42

***communicating*** to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality. Rom 12:13

For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain ***contribution*** for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Rom 15:26

God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the ***fellowship*** of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Cor 1:9

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a ***communion*** of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a ***communion*** of the body of Christ? 1 Cor 10:16

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what ***fellowship*** have righteousness and iniquity? or what ***communion*** hath light with darkness? 2 Cor 6:14

beseeking us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the ***fellowship*** in the ministering to the saints: 2 Cor 8:4

seeing that through the proving (of you) by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of (your) contribution unto them and unto all; 2 Cor 9:13

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the ***communion*** of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. 2 Cor 13:14

and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of ***fellowship***, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; Gal 2:9

for your ***fellowship*** in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; Phil 1:5

Howbeit ye did well that ye had ***fellowship*** with my affliction. 15 And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had ***fellowship*** with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; 16 for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. 17 Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. Phil 4:14-17

Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to ***communicate***; 1 Tim 6:17-18

But to do good and to ***communicate*** forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:16

### for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem.

With the preposition *eis* Paul uses a term “denoting entrance into” “of a place entered.” When it is “used metaphorically, *eis* retains the force of entering into anything.” So we are to envision a circle drawn around the poor among the saints at Jerusalem and this fellowship enters into the circle. This is not just those who can’t have everything they want these are the poor who have to beg and are destitute.

*ptochos*... "to bow down timidly," means as an adjective "destitute," "mendicant," ... intransitive "to be destitute," "to lead the life of a beggar." ... Whereas *penes* denotes one who has to earn his living because he has no property ... .. *ptochos* denotes the complete destitution which forces the poor to seek the help of others by begging. . . . (Kittel TDWNT 44340)

*ptochos* an adjective describing "one who crouches and cowers," is used as a noun, "a beggar" (from *ptosso*, "to cower down or hide oneself for fear"), Luke 14:13,21 ("poor"); 16:20,22; as an adjective, "beggarly" in Galatians 4:9, i. e., poverty-stricken, powerless to enrich, metaphorically descriptive of the religion of the Jews. While *prosaiteis* is descriptive of a "beggar," and stresses his "begging," *ptochos* stresses his poverty-stricken condition. (Vine 4434)

The circle then of this fellowship is thus limited to those who are destitute and are lacking in the necessities of life. As James pointed out these are brothers and sisters naked (unprotected from the elements) and lacking daily food.

*If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Jas 2:15-17*

With two genitives that qualify these poor even further Paul narrows the circle. He has told the Corinthians, Galatians and Romans that this fellowship is for the saints in Jerusalem. If Paul is honest and a man of integrity then this money which was taken with the specific promise that it would go to these people could only be charged with misappropriating the funds if they went somewhere else. This fellowship between those who have and those who do not have is specifically for the needy saints in Jerusalem.

## **27. For it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are.**

He repeats the verb of the previous verse. All that had been done since the very beginning had been a willing and enjoyable thing. Listen to Paul extol those in Macedonia for the attitude he sums up here.

*Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, (they gave) of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: 5 and (this), not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. 1 Cor 8:1-4*

Paul now introduces the word *debtors* to describe this fellowship. It is a spiritual paradox. Those in Jerusalem were in poverty and the churches in fellowship with them were sending the money. One would think the debt and debtor would be the other way around. But it is not. The reason the church in Jerusalem was in this conditions was to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. So the Gentile churches are in debt to those in Jerusalem for the spiritual blessings they now possess. This is similar to something Paul said to the Corinthians.

*If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? 1 Cor 9:11*

This was not a normal debt. It was a debt of gratitude. They were “*held by some obligation, bound by some duty.*”

*opheiletes... one who owes another, a debtor prop. Of one who owes another money. . . Metaph. a) one held by some obligation, bound by some duty. . . to be under obligation to do something for some one. . . b) one who has not yet made amends to whom he has injured; one who owes God a penalty or whom God can demand punishment as something due, i.e. a sinner...” (Thayer 469; 3781)*

As Jesus had been rich and became poor so we could become rich, so had the church in Jerusalem.

*I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 2 Cor 8:8-9*

What had the church in Jerusalem done to have created this obligation. The list of their sacrifices is described in the following ways:

*For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. 36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, 37 having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:34-37*

*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison. Acts 8:1,3*

*Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. Acts 12:1-2*

*But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; 33 partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. 34 For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. Heb 10:32-34*

We have no idea all that they suffered in order for the gospel to go into all the world, for men and women to be prepared to preach and teach, and for the stand they took for their Lord. Paul had been involved in a similar act years earlier. Although the famine was all over the world. The brethren in Jerusalem were especially in need.

*And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. 29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability,*

determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: 30 which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:28-30

### **For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things,**

With a *gar* Paul gives the reason and cause for the above. What the saints had done for them in Jerusalem was a great debt. All the Gentiles were made partakers. Paul now uses the verb form of the word fellowship discussed above.

*"koinoneo,... a. to come into communion or fellowship, to become a sharer, be made a partner... b. to enter into fellowship, join one's self as an associate, make one's self a sharer or partner..."* (Thayer, p. 351-352; 2841).ee

The Gentiles had come into communion or fellowship with the saints in Jerusalem. They had *"become a sharer, been made a partner."* Here the concept of fellowship is clarified. The Gentiles were in fellowship by what they did on the first day of every week. The saints in Jerusalem were in fellowship because of the spiritual things these Gentile churches now possessed. By inspiration, Paul explains how God saw the early days in the church. From Acts 2 through Acts 8 the words of Jesus and the prophets were fulfilled.

*and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Lk 24:46-47*

*And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. Isa 2:2-3*

*But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8*

God had foretold that all would come from and begin at Jerusalem. The price to those in Jerusalem had been high but the benefits they brought to the rest of the world was even higher. Their early sacrifices were making all that was then being done possible. God wanted it clearly understood that this was the truth and that there was an obligation that should have been felt. I believe it should still be felt today. Their faith and sacrifices make it much easier to believe that it is all true for what else would have led them to do what they did?

### **they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things.**

Owe is the same word as obligation above. The Gentiles were *"held by some obligation, bound by some duty."* This duty is to *minister unto them*. This is a different word than the one above. It was a common word the Romans would recognize as "render public service" or "do service" that is owed or one is obligated to do.

*leitourgeo ... in classical Greek, signified at Athens "to supply public offices at one's own cost, to render public service to the State"; hence, generally, "to do service," said, e. g., of service to the gods. In the NT (see Note below) it is used (a) of the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, who "ministered to the Lord," Acts 13:2; (b) of the duty of churches of the Gentiles to "minister" in "carnal things" to the poor Jewish saints at Jerusalem, in view of the fact that the former had "been made partakers" of the "spiritual things" of the latter, Romans 15:27; (c) of the official service of priests and Levites under the Law, Hebrews 10:11 (in the Sept., e. g., Exodus 29:30; Numbers 16:9). (Vine 3008)*

While the saints in Jerusalem had suffered great hardship and done great sacrifices in order to fulfil their side of the fellowship the Gentiles could now make similar sacrifices in order to do service for them which is their side in the fellowship. Both bearing burdens to make it easier for the other.

*For (I say) not (this) that others may be eased (and) ye distressed; 14 but by equality: your abundance (being a supply) at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become (a supply) for your want; that there may be equality: 2Cor 8:13-14*

### **28. When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain.**

Paul now uses the conjunction *"oun* - to indicate that something follows from another necessarily). He has just finished explaining the importance of this fellowship between the Gentile churches that received the benefit and the saints in Jerusalem who sacrificed to make it possible. He will complete the thought at the end of the chapter by expressing his concern about the saints accepting this offering. Because of these two important considerations, Paul must see this through to the end. In his mind the end will be with he has *accomplished* this.

*epiteleo epi, "up," intensive, and No. 3, is a strengthened form of that verb, in the sense of "accomplishing." The fuller meaning is "to accomplish perfectly"; in Romans 15:28, RV, "accomplish"; "perfecting" in 2 Corinthians 7:1; "complete" in 8:6 and 11; ... "(from Vine's NT:2005),*

3. *teleo* "to finish, to bring to an end" (*telos*, "an end"), frequently signifies, not merely to terminate a thing, but to carry out a thing to the full. ... (Vine 5055)

Because this is a participle, Paul reveals that he expects to be the *performer* (the one who fully and completely accomplishes or accomplishes perfectly). Note that he selects and emphatic and intensified word. No only will he bring it through to the end (which he had already done when he gathered the money and had it prepared to send it on its way), but he will "*complete it up*." He will oversee this work until it is completely and perfectly accomplished with no chance of any misstep or misunderstanding.

This can only occur when has sealed this fruit. The term *sealed* has a variety of meanings. The Roman soldiers sealed the tomb to be certain that no one tampered with it. We do this when we purchase a product that is sealed so we know it has not been opened and tampered with.

"*sphragizo*... To set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal; **a.** for security: Mt 27:66 ... **b.** Since things sealed up are concealed (as, the contents of a letter), *sphragizo* means trop. to hide... *keep in silence, keep secret*... **c.** in order to mark a person or thing; hence *to set a mark upon by the impress of a seal, to stamp*: angels are said... i.e. with the seal of God... to stamp his servants on their foreheads as destined for eternal salvation, and by this means to confirm their hopes, Rev. 7:3... Metaph... respecting God, who by the gift of the Holy Spirit indicates who are his... **d.** in order to prove, confirm, or attest a thing; hence trop. *to confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt*..." (Thayer, p. 609 # 4972)

This could be Paul's meaning here. He wants to remain with this project until he is certain that all has been accomplished. Satan could seriously tamper with this effort. Any misunderstanding between the Gentile churches who had sent this fellowship and the saints in Jerusalem who received it could produce a serious rupture in the church. Paul had already seen this after his first journey to preach to Gentiles ended with him going to Jerusalem.

*And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain. 3 But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Gal 2:3-5*

He went then by "*revelation*" (The Spirit told him to go). His concern at that time was that "*I should be running, or had run, in vain*." Paul's role as the apostle to the Gentiles did not preclude him from preaching to the Jews (to the Jew first and also to the Greek), but if this controversy had not been resolved there would have been a terrible division between Jew and Gentile which would have seriously damaged the church. These "false brethren" were threatening to do to the Lord's church what Jeroboam did to the ten tribes of Israel. So Paul went that time and used his influence along with Peter and James to resolve this problem before it became too big.

Now he has a similar situation, and he does not intend to leave it until he has this sealed (a participle) Paul wants to be the sealer (the one who makes it tamper proof). A second meaning of seal could also have some bearing on Paul's thinking. He seeks to seal (mark as genuine) this sacrifice of gratitude and fellowship by going along and using the right words and right influence to bring it about. Either way, Paul will not stop what he is doing and go to Rome until it is tamper proof and accepted as genuine.

When all of this is accomplished, Paul will feel free to move on with his new plans. He intends to go through Rome and then on to Spain.

## **29. And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.**

Paul now gives his own heartfelt assurance that when he does get to Rome, He will come in the *fulness* of Christ's blessings. He will bring all that there is to bring of Christ's blessings.

*pleroma* ... stands for the result of the action expressed in *pleroo*, "to fill." It is used to signify (a) "that which has been completed, the complement, fullness," e. g., Jn 1:16; Eph 1:23; some suggest that the "fulness" here points to the body as the filled receptacle of the power of Christ ... denotes "fulness," that of which a thing is "full"; it is thus used of the grace and truth manifested in Christ, Jn 1:16; of all His virtues and excellencies, Eph 4:13; "the blessing of Christ," Rom 15:29,..." Vine 4138)

This may be nothing more than what he told the Ephesians. Every spiritual blessing is a blessing of Christ given by the Father to all who are in him.

*Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) in Christ: Eph 1:3*

It may include all of that and also that which he promised them earlier. The giving of spiritual gifts.

*For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 that is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. Rom 1:11-12*

Remember that in the early days of the church, these spiritual gifts were the equivalent of having a NT. It was the only method before the books were written for knowing the will and law of Christ. So when Paul came he hoped to preach to them of the fulness of the blessings of Christ and by elaborating on them and how to receive them and he also hoped to give them that same ability so that after he is gone they can continue in them.

### **30. Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ,**

As Paul now completes this thought about his plans and the fellowship with the saints in Jerusalem, he makes a request of them. He uses the tender *parakaleo* to “call them to his side” to “beg and entreat” them. This is a deep concern to Paul and he wants them to be involved in this work through their prayers. This too is a *fellowship*. Paul is entering into a potentially dangerous situation and the outcome is still in doubt. Through their prayers, God will be entreated and Paul will be further protected. The construction here is nearly identical as his words in 12:1: “I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God.” In that verse Paul asked them to carefully consider how merciful God had been to them and then use that mercy as the motivation for what he then asked them to do. Here he asks them to pray by our Lord Jesus Christ. Since he uses the term Lord it seems most probable that it is by his authority that Paul is appealing. Jesus is the great Lord of all the earth. Paul is his apostle seeking to do his will. What Paul asked them to pray for is directly tied to his work as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul had just outlined the great plans he had to take the gospel to Spain and to spend some time in Rome. This would greatly benefit Christ and his kingdom so Paul petitions them to pray for him passed on that relationship. It is not a selfish request but one that the Lord would seek.

### **and by the love of the Spirit,**

The selfless care and concern of *agape love* is the second reason why Paul pleads for their prayers. Is this our love for the Holy Spirit (*objective genitive*: when the noun in the genitive receives the action), or our love taught to us by the Holy Spirit and/or his love for us (*subjective genitive*: when the noun in the genitive produces the action - Dana and Mantey, Manual Grammar of the Greek NT p 78-79). Since Paul is an apostle and is directly inspired by the Holy Spirit and is directly doing the work the Holy Spirit all who pray for Paul are manifesting a love for the Holy Spirit and the work he is doing through Paul. But these brethren have also had love produced within their heart as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). So it could just as easily be understood as the love that he produced in us and is now directed toward Paul and the lost Paul will reach out to if he is able to fulfill the plans outlined above.

It is always difficult to choose between two equally Scriptural interpretations. I have often felt that perhaps such ambiguity allows the reader to read the verse and take away the one that most appeals to him. Since they are both Scriptural and we cannot read Paul's mind, what else could we do?

### **that ye strive together with me**

The term strive comes from the Greek term we have taken into our own language with the word *agonize*.

*“agonizomai... 1. to enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games... 2. univ. to contend with adversaries, fight... 3. fig. to contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers antagonistic to the gospel... 4. to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive, to obtain something...”* (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 10; 75)

Paul places the prefix *sun - with - in association and union*) to join them in a joint participation of fellowship.

*sunagonizomai . . . to strive together with one, to help one in striving: ... in prayers, i. e. to offer intense prayers with one, Rom 15:30; in what sense intense prayer may be likened to a struggle, Col 4:12 (Thayer 4865)*

Paul's request here is in the same vein as that of Jesus in the garden. He too agonized over the morrow and prayed earnestly.

*And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. Lk 22:44-45*

Paul is asking that they all share in this as the event approached. We ought to do the same when a brother or sister is in the hospital and we do not know the outcome, or there is a dire set of circumstances that we do not yet know the outcome. Jesus asked his disciples to share in this with

him, but they fell asleep. Paul hopes for better from his brethren in Rome.

### **in your prayers to God for me;**

This striving is in the midst and interior of their prayers. We often speak of sincere prayers and of prayers that are not vain repetition. This is fervent prayer, prayer of importunity and supplication a deep prayer of concern. Only this type of prayer could be in the midst of striving with Paul. These prayers are directed toward God and they are “for” me. This word implies being over in the sense of bending over to help. Such a one is doing something “for one’s safety, for one’s advantage or benefit.”

“*huper...* 2. i. q. Lat. *pro, for*, i. e. *for one’s safety, for one’s advantage or benefit*, (one who does a thing for another, is conceived of as standing or bending ‘over’ the one whom he would shield or defend...)...

### **31. That I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea,**

Paul had a specific *direction* that he wanted these prayers be directed.

“*hina...* I. An adverb of place,... a. *where; in what place*. b. *in what place; whither...* II a final conjunction (for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention) denoting purpose and end: *to the intent that; to the end that, in order that...* it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;...” (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)

He wanted all their striving in prayer to be “*to the intent that; to the end that, in order that*” (1) he be delivered from the disobedient and (2) that his ministrations will be acceptable to the saints. It is unlikely that Paul would have spoken this boldly about his plans to come to them and then go to Spain if he had already heard the prophecies of what would happen to him if he entered Jerusalem. For he did not speak in the same manner once he had heard them.

*And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:22-24*

*And coming to us, and taking Paul’s girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. Acts 21:11-20*

But it is certainly not impossible that he had already heard. But much more likely is the information that was coming to him of the ugly rumors and slander that was coming out of Jerusalem. It is ironic that the very things Saul was consenting to Stephen’s death are similar to the slander against Paul.

*Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and (against) God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, 13 and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: 14 for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. Acts 6:11-14*

*And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: 21 and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children neither to walk after the customs. Acts 21:20-21*

Stephen was accused by false witnesses (slander) that he “*ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law:*” and “*shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us.*” Paul was accused of teaching “*all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children neither to walk after the customs.*”

When the disobedient did catch up with him the slander was

*And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. Acts 21:27-28*

*For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: Acts 24:5*

Paul had enough information about the problems at Jerusalem that he was deeply concerned about how he would be treated by the *disobedient* to Christ in Judea.

“*apeitheo...* not to allow oneself to be persuaded; not to comply with; a. to refuse or withhold belief (in Christ, in the gospel; ...) ... b. to refuse belief and obedience...” (Thayer p 55; 544)

**and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints;**

Yet Paul had a much deeper concern. Paul has revealed how important he believes his ministry to Jerusalem is. It will allow the saints among the Gentiles to have fellowship with the saints in Jerusalem. He has a deep concern that all that has been done that makes up this ministration (*diakonia* -*servicing*) is in jeopardy. He seeks their prayers that the saints in Jerusalem will find this gift *acceptable*. What we can't see in English that is abundantly clear in Greek is that this is a superlative term. He uses a root word that means to "regard favorably" Then adds to prefixes to make it stronger. Paul wants them to pray it will have a "very favorable acceptance."

*eu-pros-dektos* a still stronger form of No. 1, signifies a "very favorable acceptance" (*eu*, "well," *pros*, "towards," No. 1), Rom 15:16,31; 2 Cor 6:2; 8:12; 1 Pet 2:5. (Vine's :2144)

*dektos* NT:), akin to No. 1, denotes "a person or thing who has been regarded favorably," Lk 4:19,24; Acts 10:35; 2 Cor 6:2 ..." (Vine's 1284)

Paul knows the fragile relationship between the Jewish and Gentile Christians in the city of Jerusalem. As noted in verse 28, it had been a deep concern of Paul's even at the discussion over the duty of circumcision and keeping the law of Moses among the Gentiles. That situation had been dealt with successfully, but it had not completely resolved the problem. Even Peter felt the pressure that was being exerted and succumbed to it.

*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before (them) all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. Gal 2:11-19*

Peter, all the Jews and even Barnabas were carried away with the prejudice that Paul calls dissimulation (hypocrisy). What had been decided at the conference in Jerusalem based on Peter's conversion of Cornelius, Barnabas & Paul's miracles among the Gentiles and James' quotations had been enough to write the letter, but not enough to destroy the prejudice and hypocrisy of some.

Paul was deeply concerned that this prejudice could be ignited again and the saints could reject this offering outright or just as bad accept it grudgingly. Those carrying the bounty to Jerusalem would have been deeply offended, and carrying the news back to the Gentiles could have done great damage to the church. When he arrived in Jerusalem, we see how justified this concern actually was.

*17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: 21 and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men that have a vow on them; 24 these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. 25 But as touching the Gentiles that have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. Acts 21:17-25*

The elders in Jerusalem were deeply concerned about the offensive nature of the accusations made against Paul. To prove they were baseless they asked him to do what all Jews did in order to disprove the accusations and disarm the criticism. Paul was willing to do this in order to make the offering well-pleasing. This must have been successful as it is not mentioned again, but it brought severe consequences to Paul who would have been safer to leave Jerusalem quickly and as privately as he came.

So many times in the history of God's people a few have influenced the many to the detriment of God's plan. In the days of Moses, the Judges, and the kings the missteps of a few have led to the destruction of many. So did Korah and Dathan, King Saul and Jeroboam. So Paul's concern was not groundless and he pleads with the Romans to pray to God that the saints will find his offering well pleasing.



### 32. That I may come unto you in joy,

If these two prayers are granted then this will follow (*hina -to the intent that; to the end that, in order that*). Paul will come unhindered to them (delivered from the disobedient) and he will come with joy (ministration received joyfully and with great pleasure. This will bring great benefits to the church and Paul will be filled with joy and gladness at the great good that was done. Success from a difficult work with a good outcome always bring joy. But especially so with the thanksgiving rendered to God as a result of its being well received.

#### through the will of God,

What had been implied with the request for prayers is now openly stated as James revealed it always should be.

*Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: 14 whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. James 4:13-15*

Only the will of God can bring about the plans of the future. God has goals and plans above all that we can imagine. Our lives are intertwined within his will and only when what he wills is in harmony what we will can our plans come to fruition. This by no means implies that time and chance have been suspended and it is all according to God's will.

*I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. Ecc 9:11*

But God's plans often intervene in the affairs of men as we see in the flood, tower of Babel, Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon and Rome, and allowing the free will of man to operate for some greater good. We never know what God's will is in regard to our prayers and our future plans. What we want may hinder the more important needs of another, or even God's great plans for the conversion of as many as possible. So before all other considerations our first priority is to be prepared for the will of God to change our plans.

Paul hopes that by his prayers, God's will can be influenced. But what actually happened was far different than what Paul had planned. There may or may not have been dark days in Caesarea or the voyage to Rome, but after he arrived he formed this judgment.

*Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things (which happened) unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; 13 so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; 14 and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 the one (do it) of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; 17 but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds. 18 What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Phil 1:12-19*

So it is always better as Joseph found out to allow God to work out his plans in his own time and way and simply be content to live as circumstances allow.

#### and together with you find rest.

Paul again uses a compound word (only use in the NT). He takes the root "to give rest, refresh" and adds a prefix which makes it mutual. We will find rest in each other. We will be refreshed from the attitude we gain one from another.

*anapauo* NT:), "to give intermission from labor, to give rest, refresh" (*ana*, "back," *pauo*, "to cause to cease"), is translated "to refresh" in 1 Cor 16:18; 2 Cor 7:13; Philemn 7,20. (Vine 373)

*sunanapauomai* "to lie down, to rest with" (*sun*, "with," and *anapauo* in the middle voice), is used metaphorically of being "refreshed" in spirit with others, in Romans 15:32, KJV, "may with (you) be refreshed" (RV, "...find rest"). In the Sept., Isaiah 11:6. (Vine's 4875)

The root word is used elsewhere in the NT to illustrate what Paul is describing here.

*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you **rest**. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find **rest** unto your souls. Mt 11:28-29*

*And I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied. 18 For they **refreshed** my spirit and yours: acknowledge ye therefore them that are such. 1 Cor 16:17-18*

*Therefore we have been comforted: And in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been **refreshed** by you all. 2 Cor 7:13*

*For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been **refreshed** through thee, brother. Phile 1:7*

There is a special sense of comfort and renewal when godly people in each others company discuss the wonderful things God has done for them and to be mutually edified by sharing each others knowledge and faith. After all the trials and sufferings Paul had endured, he was looking forward to spending time with faithful brethren.

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

Some see this as a prayer and others as a blessing as God had asked the Levites to do:

*Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel: ye shall say unto them, 24 Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: 25 Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27 So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. Num 6:23-27*

He is either expressing his request to God, or knowing their hearts are in compliance expressing to them the blessings God will confer upon them. As the God of Peace he can confer peace and grace upon all. Paul simply expresses his prayer or expectation that God will do that.

**amen.**

Again this may be the conclusion of the prayer of his own validation of all he has said.

amen is transliterated from Hebrew into both Greek and English. "Its meanings may be seen in such passages as Deuteronomy 7:9, 'the faithful (the Amen) God,' Isaiah 49:7, 'Jehovah that is faithful.' 65:16, 'the God of truth,' marg., 'the God of Amen.' And if God is faithful His testimonies and precepts are "sure (amen)," Psalms 19:7; 111:7, as are also His warnings, Hosea 5:9, and promises, Isaiah 33:16; 55:3. 'Amen' is used of men also, e. g., Proverbs 25:13. ... "There are cases where the people used it to express their assent to a law and their willingness to submit to the penalty attached to the breach of it, Deuteronomy 27:15, cf. Nehemiah 5:13. It is also used to express acquiescence in another's prayer, 1 Kings 1:36, where it is defined as "(let) God say so too," or in another's thanksgiving, 1 Chronicles 16:36, whether by an individual, Jeremiah 11:5, or by the congregation, Psalms 106:48. ... "Thus 'Amen' said by God 'it is and shall be so,' and by men, 'so let it be.'" ... "The individual also said 'Amen' to express his 'let it be so' in response to the Divine 'thus it shall be,' Revelation 22:20. Frequently the speaker adds 'Amen' to his own prayers and doxologies, as is the case at Ephesians 3:21, e. g. (Vine's 281)

## Sixteen

As we enter the final chapter we find verse after verse greeting many different people in Rome, many of whom we know nothing about today as they are not found anywhere else in the NT. Were these words only intended to have application to those who lived in that day and time? Is there something in these words that God expects us to learn from and practice today? The one clear application that we ought to make is that within these personal greetings Paul was acknowledging their faith and their works. Paul is simply being an example of the things revealed elsewhere in the Scriptures that all Christians are to practice.

*In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; Rom 12:10*

*Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high Rom 12:15-16*

*Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute (is due); custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Rom 13:7*

*And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or (one) member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 1 Cor 12:26*

What Paul does here is what all Christians ought to be doing when they make announcements and when speaking to one another. Those he knows personally, he praises for things they have done. Those he does not know he greets and speaks of what he has heard that is commendable. This gives us an insight into the social relationships of the saints in the first century. They reveal the love and mutual respect that brethren ought to feel about one another.

### **1. I commend unto you Phoebe our sister,**

Paul introduces a Christian to the Romans as one who is to be commended. This word expresses the idea of one who has reached a level where he/she now stands with others. In this case the others are those who are faithful and honorable to the Lord.

*sunistemi ... lit., "to set together" (sun, "with," histemi, "to stand"), hence signifies "to set one person or thing with another by way of presenting and commending." This meaning is confined to Romans and 2 Corinthians. The saints at Corinth had "approved themselves in everything to be pure," in the matter referred to, 2 Cor 7:11. The word often denotes "to commend," so as to meet with approval, Rom 3:5; 5:8; 16:1; 2 Cor 4:2; 6:4 (RV); 10:18; 12:11..." (Vine 4921)*

So Phoebe is a sister(child of God) who stands with those who are approved. Paul knew her and wanted the church in Rome to benefit from that knowledge. Rather than entering the church as one who is unknown and must first prove herself, Paul sent this letter to reveal that she was a sister in Christ, and had already proven herself and should be accepted at the same level or maturity as she had when she left Cenchrea.

More perplexing is her relationship to the letter itself. There are several scenarios that could have placed this passage here. First, the Spirit used Paul to reveal all that the book contains and knowing Phoebe was going to Rome he simply added this recommendation without her knowledge. Second, intending to write a book to the Romans and knowing Phoebe was going to Rome, he gave the letter into her hand to take it to them. Third, Phoebe came to Paul requesting a letter of recommendation since she had decided to go to Rome. In the process of planning to write this letter of commendation, the entire book of Romans was written. Each of these is plausible and possible. But all that can be fairly deduced from this passage is that Paul wrote the book to the Romans and Phoebe was going to Rome.

In an age of limited communication, this is a wise practice. When a Christian moves from one location to another, it proves that the one entering their midst is a true child of God, and that they are faithful and honorable.

### **who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae:**

Paul also gave the high compliment that she was a servant of the church. After all that Jesus revealed about the greatness of being a servant this is truly a high commendation. This word is often translated *minister* for it describes a person who serves "others' interests even at the sacrifice of their own."

*"diakonos, ... one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; 1. univ.: of the servant of a king... of those who advance others' interests even at the sacrifice of their own;... of one who does what promotes the welfare and prosperity of the church, 2. a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use ..." (Thayer, 138; 1249)*

It seems she was acting like Dorcas in the midst of the church at Cenchrea.

*Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. Acts 9:36, 39*

Much has been written and contemplated regarding this term *servant* for it is also the word translated *deacon*. Some see Phoebe as a *deaconess* of the church. But although this is the same Greek term that is translated *deacon* in Phil 1:1 and 1Tim 3, there is no compelling reason to translate it as *deacon* here. All of the recent translations (KJV; ASV; NASB; ESV; NIV; etc) translate it as *servant* and not as *deacon*. The term *diakonos* is used 26 times in the NT. Only three times is it translated *deacon*.

As we look at its varied use in the NT we see why it is natural to translate *servant* and not *deacon*. There are many terms in Greek and English that describe an action that all can do. Over time that action becomes the name of an office or occupation. Many people served and ministered to others. A Christians who desire to be great must be **ministers** and **servants**. Civil government as a **minister** of God and Christ is the **minister** of the circumcision. Paul and Apostles were **ministers** of evangelism, while Satan's **ministers** served him. All of these acts of service were done by people with no official office or title. Only three times in the NT is the word used as an official title of one who has been designated to do this service. We do the same today. Many people do some of the things an accountant does. They can balance their checkbook, plan budgets and keep track of financial information. But this does not make them an accountant. The official designation requires qualifications based on education and qualifications. The same is true of a nurse or doctor. Many can do some of the things they do (bandage a wound or dispense medication). But this does give them the office. No one can be a nurse or doctor without education testing and certification. Obviously there is a big difference between someone who does some of the work of an occupation, and the person who has been qualified and officially designated for that position. Below are all of the unofficial uses of the term *servant*. They are those who serve in one capacity or another, but are not officially designated.

*Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your **minister**; Mt 20:26*  
*Then the king said to the **servants**, Bind him hand and foot, Mt 22:13*  
*But he that is greatest among you shall be your **servant**. Mt 23:10-11*  
*If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and **servant** of all. Mk 9:35*  
*whosoever would become great among you, shall be your **minister**; Mk 10:43*  
*His mother saith unto the **servants**, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. John 2:5*  
*but the **servants** that had drawn the water knew John 2:9*  
*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my **servant** be: if any man serve me, ... Jn 12:26*  
*for he is a **minister** of God to thee for good. . . for he is a **minister** of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Rom 13:4*  
*For I say that Christ hath been made a **minister** of the circumcision for the truth of God, Rom 15:8*  
*What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? **Ministers** through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. 1 Cor 3:5*  
*as **ministers** of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: 2 Cor 3:6*  
*but in everything commending ourselves, as **ministers** of God, 2 Cor 6:4*  
*It is no great thing therefore if his **ministers** also fashion themselves as **ministers** of righteousness, 2 Cor 11:15*  
*Are they **ministers** of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; 2 Cor 11:23*  
*But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a **minister** of sin? Gal 2:17*  
*whereof I was made a **minister**, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me Eph 3:7*  
*Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful **minister** in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Eph 6:21*  
*to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and **DEACONS**: Phil 1:1*  
*even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful **minister** of Christ on our behalf, Col 1:7*  
*the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a **minister**. Col 1:23*  
*whereof I was made a **minister**, according to the dispensation of God which was given me Col 1:25*  
*Tychicus ... the beloved brother and faithful **minister** and fellow-servant in the Lord: Col 4:7*  
**DEACONS** in like manner (must be) grave, not double-tongued, ... 1 Tim 3:8  
*Let **DEACONS** be husbands of one wife, ruling (their) children and their own houses well. 1 Tim 3:12*  
*If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good **minister** of Christ Jesus, 1 Tim 4:6*

Could Phoebe be a deaconess? Is it not probable that it might be an official designation? Although anything is possible, there is one insurmountable barrier from her moving from the serving role and being a deaconess. The qualification for the official designation is deacon the husbands of one wife.

*Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling (their) children and their own houses well. 1 Tim 3:12*

One could argue that the term deacon takes in both male and female, but one cannot argue that a women can be the husband of one wife. Since the deacon must be the husband of one wife and no where does it say that *deaconesses* must the wife of one husband, the evidence clearly shifts to her being a servant. The only plausible argument left is that the term “*women*” in the qualifications infers *deaconesses*:

*Deacons in like manner (must be) grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. 11 Women in like manner (must be) grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling (their) children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Tim 3:8-4:1*

But once again there is an ambiguity. The Greek word for woman is also the Greek word for wife and only the context gives the answer. Consider how the translators saw the context.

*Their wives likewise must be dignified, ESV      Likewise, their wives must be reverent NKJV*  
*Women must likewise be dignified NASB      Even so must their wives be grave KJV*  
*In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect NIV*

These translations reveal that there is no definitive answer. It could be women or it could be wives. With all these questions, there is no sure and certain ground upon which to place the interpretation that Phoebe was a deaconess. We can place it on no stronger foundation than assumption. There simply is not enough evidence to make Phoebe anything more than a *servant* of the church. But still a high honor indeed!

## **2. That ye receive her in the Lord,**

Paul’s commendation was given for the purpose and intent(*hina*) that the saints in Rome will receive her in the Lord. This word not only means to accept, but “*to accept favorably, or receive to oneself.*”

*prosdechomai* pros, "to," and *dechomai*, "to accept favorably, or receive to oneself," is used of things future, in the sense of expecting; with the meaning of "accepting," it is used negatively in Hebrews 11:35, "not accepting their deliverance"; of receiving, e. g., Luke 15:2; Romans 16:2; Philippians 2:29. (Vine's 4327),

*dechomai* signifies "to accept," by a deliberate and ready reception of what is offered (cf. No. 4), e. g., 1 Thessalonians 2:13, RV, "accepted"; 2 Corinthians 8:17; 11:4. (Vine 1209)

The commendation is designed to lead them to an immediate favorable reception as a servant in the Lord. Her reputation is to be based on Paul’s commendation. She need not prove herself over weeks or months, but will be approved and accepted as a godly and pure member of the Lords body immediately upon arrival. Just as a family immediately accepts their newborn infant into the family, these brethren are to accept her into their family as a sister in the Lord.

## **worthily of the saints,**

The adverb *worthily* describes the manner of reception. Coming from the root *axios* it has the idea of "bringing up the other beam of the scales," "bringing into equilibrium," and therefore "equivalent": (Kittel 514)

*axios* ... adverb, suitably; worthily, in a manner worthy of: with the genitive, Romans 16:2... (Thayer 516)

Paul is asking that their reception of Phoebe be in “*a manner worthy*” of the saints. On the one side of the scale is the proper way to treat saints and on the other is the commendation of Paul regarding Phoebe’s character. They should be equal. Receive her in a manner equal to how a saint ought to be received and treated.

## **and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you:**

Paul does not know what type of needs she may have, but whatever they are these brethren were not to balk at them. She is a saint, and if she has any needs, then they are real needs and she should be assisted. Literally to stand by her and give her what ever help she might need. Whatever deed or matter that arises that places her in the position of need and want.

*“pragma... a. that which has been done, a deed, an accomplished fact... b. what is doing or being accomplished... spec. business (commercial transaction... c. a matter (in question), affair... spec. in a forensic sense, a matter at*

law, a case, suit... d. that which is or exists, a thing... " (Thayer, p. 534; 4229)

*chrezo* ... from Homer down; *to have need of, to be in want of*: with a genitive of the object (Winer's Grammar, § 30, 8 a.), Matthew 6:32; Luke 11:8; 12:30; Romans 16:2 (here with the genitive of a person); 2 Corinthians 3:1. (Thayer's 5535)

No matter what the need, lodging, food, or fellowship, Paul pleads with them that she is worthy of that help.

### **for she herself hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self.**

The reason and cause upon which Paul bases this request(*gar*) is that she has been a helper. Paul chooses a word that carried the idea of her being "*a protectress, patroness*"; in a "*metaphorical*" way. Vine states that this implied she was regarded with high esteem by those she helped. Again one is reminded of Dorcas.

*prostatis* a feminine form of *prostates*, denotes "*a protectress, patroness*"; it is used metaphorically of Phoebe in Romans 16:2. It is a word of dignity, evidently chosen instead of others which might have been used (see, e. g., under HELPER), and indicates the high esteem with which she was regarded, as one who had been a protectress of many. *Prostates* was the title of a citizen in Athens, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident aliens who were without civic rights. Among the Jews it signified a wealthy patron of the community. (Vine, 4368),

This was not done for just a few but for many which is a word for a "*numerous or great multitude*" of whom even Paul counted himself.

"*polus*,... *much*; used a. of multitude, number, etc., *many, numerous, great*: b. with nouns denoting an action an emotion, a state, which can be said to have as it were measure, weight, force, intensity, size, continuance, or repetition, *much* l. q. *great, strong, intense, large*... c. of time *much, long*... d. Neut. sing. POLU, *much*, substantively, l. q. many things... *much*, adverbially, of the mode and degree of an action..." (Thayer, p. 529; 4183)

Through these recommendations one can see the true meaning of one who serves in a congregation. Her fruits, which these brethren have not yet seen, have now been related by Paul. She has already made sacrifices for others and her fidelity to the Lord cannot be questioned. She is to be recognized as such from the moment of arrival.

### **3. Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,**

This is the first of over twenty times that Paul uses this word *salute* or *greet*. This is the normal term of greeting, like our hello. We say it on the phone, in greeting on the way and say hello to... this is exactly the same with this word. Say hello to... or send my well-wishes to, etc.

*aspazomai* ... hence, properly, *to draw to oneself* ... a. with an accusative of the person, *to salute one, greet, bid welcome, wish well to* (the Israelites, on meeting and at parting,... of those who NT:782 visit one to see him a little while, departing almost immediately afterward: ... of those who greet one whom they meet in the way: ... as a salutation was made not merely by a slight gesture and a few words, but generally by embracing and kissing, a journey was retarded by saluting frequently). of those departing and bidding farewell: Acts 20:1; 21:6 © G). of the absent, saluting by letter: Romans 16:3,5-23; (Thayer's 782)

His first greeting is to Prisca and Aquila. We are first introduced to this couple when Paul first comes to Corinth. At that time their relationship was based on their mutual occupation and they were in Corinth because "*Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.*"

*After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; 3 and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought, for by their trade they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. Acts 18:1-4*

Later, he takes them with him to Ephesus where they take Apollos aside and teach him more accurately and so thereafter a church is meeting in their home. It is also interesting to note that they are among the final people Paul speaks to before his death.

*And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila: having shorn his head in Cenchreae; for he had a vow. 19 And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. Acts 18:18-19*

*and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately. Acts 18:26*

*The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 1Cor 16:19*

*Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus. 2 Tim 4:19*

Evidently, an opportunity had come about for them to return to Rome. Clearly they had been Paul's fellow workers for as long as they had known each other. Paul wants it understood by all that these

two were fellow workers with him.

*“sunergos, ... a companion in work, fellow-worker,... in the NT one who labors with another in furthering the cause of Christ,... one whom God employs as an assistant, as it were(a fellow-worker with God) 1 Th 3:2... 1 Cor 3:9...”* (Thayer, p. 603-604; 4904)

#### **4. Who for my life laid down their own necks;**

“Laying down the neck” is an idiom based upon the death dealt out as punishment in those days. When one lays his neck on the chopping block there is only one outcome. So these two had put themselves in the position of risking their own lives to save his. We do not read of this in Acts or anywhere else, but clearly their friendship had been cemented by working together and risking their lives together.

#### **unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles:**

Their reputation went further than just Paul. He had seen to it that all the churches of the Gentiles heard about them. On his third missionary journey he had returned to most of these churches, evidently as here, he had sung their praises. It is interesting that a man who would not praise himself and felt silly when forced to do so is so lavish in his praise for others. Each of us to seek diligently for this fine art of praise. Cautiously walking the line of vain flattery on the one side and foolish boasting of our own accomplishments on the other. We need to learn to praise others for their spiritual accomplishments as Paul does here. Although we are warned,

*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; A stranger, and not thine own lips. Pr 27:2*

we are clearly not prohibited from praising others.

#### **5. And salute the church that is in their house.**

This too gives us insight into the workings of the church in the first century. They met in their home, and not for the first time as they had also had one while in Asia(1Cor 16:19). Whether this implies a large home or a small congregation is not clear. They met in Solomon's porch at Jerusalem, in the School of Tyrannus in Ephesus, and in the home of Priscilla and Aquila at Rome. Did the saints in Rome meet in many small homes, or did all the saints in Rome meet in the house of these two tent makers?

#### **salute Epaphroditus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.**

Paul's commendation of this man is that he was one of the first converts in Asia. This may mean he was among those in Acts 2 who having heard Peter and becoming a Christian was one of the firstfruits unto Asia. It could also mean that he was one of the twelve men in Asia that Apollos had begun teaching and Paul completed(Act 19:1-7). It may also mean that others had been preaching in Asia and he was one of the first to be converted. Since Paul calls him my beloved, it is clear that he knows this man and thus makes it much more probable that he is the firstfruits of his own converts in Asia. This man was set apart to the Romans as one of the first converts of Asia.

#### **6. Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you.**

Paul mentions another sister in Rome whom he has heard about and knows is a hard worker. He salutes her and praises her for her “labor.” There is more than one word for work, one simply means one is busy doing things and this word which means the type of work that leads on to grow “weary, tired, and exhausted.”

*“kopiao... 1. ... to grow weary, tired, exhausted, (with toil or burdens or grief)... 3. in Biblical Greek alone, to labor with wearisome effort, to toil... of bodily labor... of the toilsome efforts of teachers in proclaiming and promoting the kingdom of God and Christ...”* (Thayer, p. 355; 2872)

A textual question arose between the time of the KJV and that of the ASV on whether *labor on us*” or “*labor on you*” is correct. The weight of evidence is on the latter. The difference would be one of personal knowledge. Either Paul has heard of the labor of this woman on the church at Rome(you) through Priscilla and Aquila or others or he has experienced it himself(us). It would have made a difference to those who knew her and what she had done and to them it was clear. For us it makes no difference at all. She was a hard worker for those who are in the church.

#### **7. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen,**

Once again, because of our lack of knowledge and with nowhere else in the NT to go we are left to consider only possibilities not certainties. Paul calls these two men his kinsmen. This is a word that means to share existence from the same source either by being of “*same kin*” and “*related by blood*” which would be the same family or “*of the same race*” which would in this case mean both

being of Israel.

*suggenes ... of the same kin, akin to, related by blood, (Pliny, congener): Mark 6:4; Luke 2:44; 21:16;... in a wider sense, of the same race, a fellow-countryman: Romans 9:3 (so some take the word in 16:7,11,21, ... (Thayer 4773)*

Although we know Paul had family in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16 - *a sister's son*), the ambiguity of this word and the frequent use here in Romans makes it difficult to say with certainty that these are close family and now simply part of the Jewish family. Although it is clear in Romans 9:3 that it is national heritage, it is by no means certain here. Priscilla and Aquila were Jews and they were not called kinsmen.

*For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my **kinsmen** according to the flesh: 4 who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service (of God), and the promises; 5 whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Rom 9:3-5*

*7 Salute Andronicus and Junias, my **kinsmen**, and my fellow-prisoners,... 11 Salute Herodion my **kinsman**. Lord.... 21 Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you; and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my **kinsmen**. Rom 16:7, 11, 21*

Perhaps these also as Paul (Rom 11:1) are of the tribe of Benjamin. Perhaps they share the same grandfather or beyond. Perhaps because they have shared the same dangers and same work he feels a kinship with them. It is impossible to say. They knew and we do not. One thing is clear, Paul had a close and friendly relationship with these men and wanted to express it.

### **and my fellow-prisoners,**

Paul has often been in prison, and at one time or another these had in some way shared in that imprisonment.

*Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. 2 Cor 11:23*

Were these at one time or another in the same jail with Paul or were they men who had been in jail as Paul had? We cannot answer with certainty, but they knew and it created a bond of closeness.

### **who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me.**

These two men had labored and toiled to such an extent that they had a good reputation even among the apostles. They had a "mark upon" them that even the apostles recognized. This mark was something good they had done that had set them apart in the good sense of being "illustrious."

*episemos* primarily meant "bearing a mark," e. g., of money "stamped, coined," (from *epi*, "upon," and *sema*, "a mark, a sign"; cf. *semaino*, "to give a sign, signify, indicate," and *semeioo*, "to note"; ...); it is used in the NT, metaphorically, (a) in a good sense, Romans 16:7, "of note, illustrious," said of Andronicus and Junias; (b) in a bad sense, Matthew 27:16, "notable," of the prisoner Barabbas. (Vine's 1978)

That they were of note among the apostles infers that they had at one time been among them. This makes it probable that these were among those who had been in Jerusalem in the early days of the church. That probability is greatly strengthened by the truth that they have been in Christ before me. Since Paul was converted shortly after he had persecuted the church it is almost certain they would have been among these. It is also important to grasp the terminology. These had "been" literally *became* or *began to be* and still are (perfect tense) before me.

*"ginomai... 1. to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being... to be born... of the origin of all things... 2. to become i.q. to come to pass, happen, of events... 3. to arise, appear in history, come upon the stage of men appearing in public... 4. to be made, done, finished... 5. to become, be made, "in passages where it is specified who or what a person or thing is or has been rendered, as respects quality, condition, place, rank, character..." (Thayer, p. 115-116; 1096).*

Since everyone who is baptized into Christ puts on Christ and is born again, these men had become Christians before Paul.

### **8. Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord.**

The next eight verses list many people that we cannot comment upon specifically since they are unknown to us and the things they have done are forgotten by all but God and his Christ. Paul knew and they knew and that is all that the Spirit cared for us to know. But one thing is clear, each of the things Paul greets, compliments, and praises them for are things we can do the same thing for today. While Barnabas was the "*son of exhortation*" Paul is illustrating how exhortation and building up can be done by all Christians. None of this is empty flattery.

So at some time in the past, this man had done something that endeared him to Paul. Some



sacrifice for the Lord, some personal characteristic or effort that made him special. It may have only been a “cup of cold water” but it was important enough for Paul to cite.

*He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward. Mt 10:41-42*

### **9. Salute Urbanus our fellow-worker in Christ,**

All who work in the vineyard either by preaching, teaching, or simply being faithful deserve to be viewed and complimented as fellow workers. Paul had many “fellow-workers.” Timothy(Rom 16:21), Apollos(1Cor 3:9), Titus(2 Cor 8:3), Epaphroditus(Phil 2:25), Euodia, Syntyche, Clement and the rest, (Phil 4:2-3), Philemon(1:1).

*Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him), 11 and Jesus that is called Justus, who are of the circumcision: these only (are my) fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, men that have been a comfort unto me. Col 4:10-11*

*(and so do) Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers. Phile 1:24*

As we look at these various people we get the sense that just as Paul said in the twelve chapter that each has a gift and when they minister it, they are fellow workers. We ought to use such terms as we speak of those who faithfully labor in the Lord.

### **and Stachys my beloved.**

This man had also done something to endear him to Christ(see 16:8)

### **10. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ.**

Here is another high compliment that many today deserve. As one passes through trials and tribulations and holds their faith intact, they become approved. They have been tried and have passed the test.

*“dokimos... 1. prop. accepted, particularly of coins and metals... hence univ. proved, tried in the N.T. one who is of tried faith and integrity [R. V. approved]... 2. accepted I. q. acceptable, pleasing...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit. p. 155; 1384)*

Some examples of what one might do to be so greeted and noted are struggling with false teaching and coming to the truth, rightly preaching the truth and being faithful after serious trials and temptations.

*For there must be also factions among you, that they that are **approved** may be made manifest among you. 1 Cor 11:19*

*Give diligence to present thyself **approved** unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15*

*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been **approved**, he shall receive the crown of life, which (the Lord) promised to them that love him. James 1:12*

This is the state of this man. He has done something that leads Paul to call him the "tried and true one in Christ."

### **salute them that are of the household of Aristobulus.**

We know nothing of these people. Some have sought to link them to a famous Roman of that age, but even if that were the case(which certainly cannot be proved now) would not be any reason to make them special. Paul uses the term to identify those whom he wanted to greet. These had done nothing that Paul could specifically name, but enough that he wanted them greeted. They were faithful servants of the Lord and Paul wanted to set them apart in the letter.

### **11. Salute Herodion my kinsman.**

The same questions that were discussed in verse seven also apply here.

### **salute them of the household of Narcissus, that are in the Lord.**

Again, some ascribe to Narcissus some fame that would lead Paul to mention him, but it is not him, but those of his house who are in the Lord. This designation like that of being in Christ emphasizes the close relationship these people have to him.

### **12. Salute Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord.**

These individuals had done the same exhaustive and wearying labor as Mary in 16:6. All who work hard at anything in the church should be marked as diligent and hard working brethren. )3Another two of whom either reputation or personal acquaintance have made Paul aware of the efforts put forth by these two women. He here commends them for such labor.

### **13. Salute Rufus the chosen in the lord,**

Paul singles out Rufus as one who is chosen. Unfortunately this is such a general term both in definition and as used in Scripture that it is difficult to ascribe any single event to it. The definition describes those who because they are chosen by God are chosen.

*“eklektos... picked out, chosen... 1. chosen by God... hence Christians are called... the chosen or elect of God... 2. Univ. choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellent, preeminent...”* (Thayer, p 197; 1588)

Perhaps the main idea is that which was spoken by Jesus when he said:

*For many are called, but few chosen. Mt 22:14*

This man by his faithful service to the Lord had proven that he was not just one of the called but one of the chosen.

*These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they (also shall overcome) that are with him, called and chosen and faithful. Rev 17:14*

### **and his mother and mine.**

Again due to ambiguity we are forced to decide if this is physical or spiritual. Is this man related to Paul as a brother, or is this a spiritual relationship. From the words of the Lord, it is not difficult to make this decision.

*But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother. Mt 12:48-50*

*Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, 30 but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. Mk 10:29-30*

This woman had entered Paul's life and had treated him with the same love, affection and concern as a mother. Paul therefore compliments her as such. This too gives us a clear path for older women. They can take under th their wings those young men and women who come into the church and need hospitality and encouragement.

### **14. Salute Asynchritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren that are with them. 15. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that are with them.**

As so many others in the Scriptures all that remain of the lives of these people are their names. Multitudes of faithful men and women have lived and died with no record of their deeds. Paul saw in them something special enough to greet them and certainly could have listed things about them. More important is the implication behind *“the brethren who are with them”* and *“all the saints that are with them.”* These appear to be autonomous churches of Christ. The preposition used with both of these groups infers that there is a *fellowship* and *association* among these people.

*“sun... a preposition... it takes the Dative after it and denotes accompaniment and fellowship whether or action or of belief, or of condition and experience... with II. In composition sun denotes 1. association, community, fellowship, participation...As to its Form, sun in composition... before g, k, ch into sug...”* (Thayer, P. 599; 4862)

The only such *fellowship* and *association* of saints is that of a local church. In a city the size of Rome, it make perfect sense to have churches close enough that all could attend. Since there was a church in the house of Prisca and Aquila, there is nothing out of place that there would be churches in the homes of these as well.

### **16. Salute one another with a holy kiss,**

There are three other passages in the NT that also make this statement.

*All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. 1 Cor 16:20  
Salute one another with a holy kiss. 2 Cor 13:12  
Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. 1Th 5:26*

The question that is often asked when reading these verses is whether this is a cultural or spiritual command. In America the kiss has two distinct purposes. In the home, it is used as a sign of family affection and nothing more. Outside of the home, the kiss is only used as an act of intimate

affection. In other cultures the kiss is only a form of greeting that is given to both men and women. Clearly the custom to this day among oriental people is to greet one another with a kiss, and even in these cultures Paul stresses that the quality of this kiss which any Christian would offer another must be a holy kiss. This would be a kiss that is sanctified and in connection with God. These brethren who were accustomed to kissing in public were to elevate this kiss in the church to a special greeting.

If it is only a cultural command, then each culture would have its own means to fulfill it. If it is a kiss of greeting that we do not use here it could become a handshake of greeting, a pat on the back of greeting or even a hug of greeting. But if it is a spiritual command, then it is something that must be incorporated into the church regardless of the culture.

An example of a cultural activity would be the foot washing which in a culture of those who walked with sandals on dirt roads makes perfect sense but in our own culture would make little sense. We can accomplish the same thing by offering a drink of water or allowing one to wash his hands. No one sees the foot washing as a spiritual command, only as a command to show service to those who need it, capable of being fulfilled in whatever way that culture does it. On the other hand there are spiritual commands that must be fulfilled regardless of culture. Unleavened bread and fruit of the vine must be used even if that culture does not have grapes.

So which is it? Can we just have a warm handshake, pat on the back or hug or do we need to kiss our brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of the culture? Since the obvious purpose of a holy kiss is to show affection and agape love to our brethren it is not the vehicle but the affection. All that the kiss meant to them the handshake means to us. It would be extremely difficult if not impossible to make a kiss holy in our culture. It would be awkward and uncomfortable with men and create the wrong emotions in women. One could affirm that we would just have to get over such emotions, but the reality is that all that Paul seeks for is complied with today with a handshake or hug.

### **all the churches of Christ salute you.**

With the contribution to the saints in Jerusalem we can date the writing of this letter as from just before the writing of the first letter to the Corinthians and just after the writing of the second letter to the Corinthians. Paul had been in Asia, Troas, Macedonia and Achaia as he collected the money for the saints. So many of these churches may have been aware that Paul was writing the letter and sent their greetings. At the least the churches in Ephesus, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth, but likely many others as well. All who have heard of the letter being sent have sent their greetings and salutations.

Another important point is the plural sense of the term church. Jesus spoke of building his church(singular) and God gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body (singular). There is but one body and therefore there is but one church over which Jesus is the head. has just passed through likely others as well. This is generally called the “universal” church to designate all servants of Christ the world over who are all within his body and church.

*And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matt 16:18*

*and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Eph 1:22-23*

*(There is) one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; Eph 4:4*

But there is a secondary use of the term church. The local church that is established in each city through the preaching of the gospel. After the first journey of Paul and Barnabas, they appointed elders in “every church” they had established. Later Peter warned these elders that they were only elders in the flock that is among them (i. e. the local church that appointed them as elders).

*And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. Acts 14:23*

*For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church. 1 Cor 4:17*

*The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 1 Pet 5:1-2*

So here Paul speaks of the church in its local sense and says all the churches of Christ salute you.

The designation church of Christ, church of God (1 Cor 1:1) or church of the Thessalonians in God and the Lord Jesus are all descriptive titles of possession. The church that belongs to Christ, the church that belongs to God the church that belongs in Thessalonica in God and Christ.

*unto the church of God which is at Corinth, (even) them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (to be) saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their (Lord) and ours: 1 Cor 1:2*

*Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. 1Thes 1:1*

Local churches designated by God with the proper name.

There are three more sections to Romans. This warning which is a complete unity with conjunctions tying it all together(17-20). Then there are the greetings of Paul's associates(21-24), and the final doxology of praise to God(25-27). The only thing that seems to be out of order is this final exhortation. He has finished, he is saluting them and should then move to those who were with him and wanted to greet them. Instead he places here a deep concern about the dangers facing the church there. Perhaps he has learned something at the last minute that has led him to this warning. Perhaps to emphasize and stress the importance of this warning, he or even perhaps because it was not an issue at the time and so he left it for the end.

### **17. Now I beseech you, brethren,**

This is only the third time Paul has used the word "beseech" Romans.

*"parakaleo* primarily, "to call to a person" (*para*, "to the side," *kaleo*, "to call"), denotes (a) "to call on, entreat"; see BESEECH; (b) to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (always prospective, looking to the future, in contrast to the meaning to comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with trial experienced), ..." (Vine's 3870)

It is a word used by someone deeply concerned about another, and wants them to know that it is concern and not authority that is prompting it. He is calling upon them to make a gentle request. The request can be an entreaty or an admonition/exhortation. But it is not harsh but gentle. Paul has a deep concern about a specific danger that the Roman church will soon face and he wants them to be on their guard.

### **mark them**

This is the word that has made it into our language with the word scope. Telescope, microscope, periscope all refer to an image that has been marked out by the limits of what the scope can see. If turned to the deer, it sees a small area around the animal, but no further. We therefore train a scope on a specific thing we want to see.

*skopoeo* from Homer down; *to look at, observe, contemplate, to mark*: absolutely, followed ... Luke 11:35; to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to, anyone: Romans 16:17; Philippians 3:17; ... with the subjunctive *to look to, take heed to thyself*, lest etc. Galatians 6:1 ... to look at, i. e. care for, have regard to, a thing: 2 Corinthians 4:18; Philippians 2:4 (2 Maccabees 4:... *skopein* is more pointed than *blepein* often equivalent to *to scrutinize, observe*. When the physical sense recedes, equivalent to *to fix one's (mind's) eye on, direct one's attention to*, a thing in order to get it, or owing to interest in it, or a duty toward it. Hence, often equivalent to *aim at, care for*, ... "Thayer's 4648

After we have trained our eye upon a specific set of circumstances and find what we are looking for, we then mark it that so we can quickly return and see it again. So the word actually has two ideas. The first is to look out for and the second after looking and finding, marking it so others can see it for what it is. We see the first use in II Cor 4:18 where we look find and seek to find the things that cannot be seen but are eternal and the second in Phil 3:17 where he warns us to seek out a certain type of person who is imitating him and the putting a mark on them so that others can also see.

*while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor 4:18*

*Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. Phil 3:17*

### **that are causing divisions**

There will be some people who need to be watched out for because the cause and create problems. Although the translators changed the word order to make it sound better in English, the original order is very powerful. *Mark the one divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which you learned causing and turn away from them.* Since "causing" is a participle the nouns in between are actually part of the action of the participle. This is literally the "division and occasion of stumbling causer." Whenever we identify division or occasions of stumbling the "causer" or the "one who caused it" must be marked out. He must first be identified and then a circle around or mark applied to identify him. The term "causer" is "maker" "producer" or "fashioner." They are also the author, creator and the originator.

*"poieo... I. to make ... 1. ... a. with the names of the things made, to produce, construct, form, fashion, etc. ... to create produce: of God, as the author of all things... absol. of men, to labor, to do work... to be operative, exercise activity ... b. joined to nouns denoting a state or condition, it signifies to be the author or, to cause ... 2. With additions to the accusative which define or limit the idea of making..." (Thayer, p. 524-527; 4160)*

The idea here would be like a man checking an oil pipeline for leaks. Having found a leak he moves closer to find the cause. Once he identifies the cause he marks to pipe so that those who come

behind him can find it quickly and knowing the cause will be able to immediately fix the problem. Trouble is that those causing *division* cannot be immediately fixed so they have to be marked and turned away from. There will also be a *causer* when brethren begin to “*stand apart*” from each other. This is what must be done “*dissension or division*” occur in the church. Whoever it is that has caused the “standing apart”

*dichostasia* ... lit., “a standing apart” (*dicha*, “asunder, apart,” *stasis*, “a standing”), hence “a dissension, division,” is translated “seditions” in Galatians 5:20, (Vine’s 1370)

### **and occasions of stumbling,**

Not only those who cause division, but also those who cause occasions of stumbling must be treated the same way. This is the same term used in Rom 14:13 used of the movable stick or trigger that set the trap or snare into motion to capture or kill the one who stumbled into it. It then came to mean anything that would ensnare or cause one to stumble or fall.

“*skandalon*... prop. the movable stick or trigger of a trap, trap-stick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall.... [a stumbling block, occasion of stumbling]...” (Thayer, p. 577; 4625)

Jesus warned of the terrible consequences to the “*causer*” of such things and Paul now tells what to do with them.

*And he said unto his disciples, It is impossible but that occasions of **stumbling** should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to **stumble**. 3 Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. Luke 17:1-3*

In Paul’s day such people are those who troubled that Galatians with the need to go back under the law. Later John described the gnostics who did the same thing with the philosophies of the day as the Jews did with the Law of Moses. In both cases those who believe them quickly move apart from the faithful who only follow Christ. Paul speaks of such people in Timothy and Titus. The words of such men eat as gangrene, leading to a shipwreck of the faith. Their mouth must be stopped and to do it they must be marked.

*But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, 17 and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. 2 Tim 2:16-18*

*This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; 19 holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: 20 of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme. 1 Tim 1:18-20*

*For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. 13 This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. Titus 1:10-14*

The key to finding and marking such men is explained in the next clause:

### **contrary to the doctrine which ye learned:**

If it is different from the doctrine which was learned from the apostles and prophets as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Most Greek propositions are illustrated by a circle and what the action of the preposition does in reference to it. The prepositions, in, at, near, above, under, around can all be illustrated by arrows pointing in reference to that circle. This preposition puts one beside, but not within the circle. Since it is “*beside*” or “*beyond*” it is contrary to it.

“*para*... a preposition indicating close proximity, with various modifications corresponding to the various cases with which it is joined... with an ACCUSATIVE... 1. prop. of place *at, by near, by the side of, beside, along*; so with verbs of motion... 2. *beside, beyond*, i. e. metaphorically, a. equivalent to contrary to: Romans 16:17; *para elpida literally*, beyond hope, i. e. where the laws and course of nature left no room for hope, hence, equivalent to without (A. V. against) hope, Romans 4:18 (in secular authors, of things which happen against hope, beyond one’s expectation, ... *para ton nomoi* contrary to the law, Acts 18:13 . . . opposed to ... contrary to that which, i. e. at variance with that which, Galatians 1:8 f; ...”

Anything that is beside, but not within the *doctrine* or *teaching* must be marked and dealt with.

*didache* ... 1. *teaching*, viz. *that which is taught*: ... with the genitive of the object, *doctrine, teaching, concerning something*: ... 2. (*the act of teaching, instruction*, (Thayer’s 1322)

The apostles and prophets of the first century first taught and then wrote the doctrine and teaching by which everything else is to be compared. Those things that are within the teachings of Christ places on inside the circle and anything outside of that teaching places one outside the circle.

John speaking of the same thing warns against even bringing them into one's house.

*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into (your) house, and give him no greeting: 11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works. II Jn 1:9-11*

There is only one course for such people.

**and turn away from them.**

Since they went out from us, for we did not move, there is only one thing left. We can take a *bend out* of the path leading to life or we can take the *bend out* that leads away from them.

*"ekklino..."* "to turn away from, to turn aside," lit., "to bend out of" (*ek*, "out," *klino*, "to bend"), is used in Romans 3:12, of the sinful condition of mankind, KJV, "gone out of the way," RV, "turned aside"; in Romans 16:17, of turning away from those who cause offenses and occasions of stumbling (KJV, "avoid"); in 1 Peter 3:11 of turning away from evil..." (Vine 1578)

So the process here is clear. First we are constantly on the look out for those who do these things. When we find one, we mark them out for all the rest to see. They can easily be identified for they are no longer in our midst, but standing beside. This is due to the doctrinal differences they have begun to teach or believe. Those who are within the body of Christ speak the same thing and have no division among them (1 Cor 1:10), they endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:1-4), and hold fast. Those who go beyond this must have a circle drawn around them and then we must take the bend that carries us away from them forever.

Some have question whether this is an individual or congregational marking. When we compare it to similar passages the answer must be the latter.

*And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he hear (thee) not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. 17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Matt 18:15-17*

*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. ... 14 And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. 15 And (yet) count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. II Th 3:14-15*

*For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, 4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ... 11 but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. 12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves. 1 Cor 5:3-5, 11-13*

There is no question that this ought to be public with a public announcement that explains who and why they are being marked.

**18. For they that are such**

Paul now summarizes these people, not by a specific doctrine or teaching, but just those who "of *this kind*" are "*such a character*."

*"toioutos... such as this, of this kind or sort... a. joined to a noun... with the article ... one who is or such a character, such a one..."* (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 627; 5108)

The other uses of this term illustrate how it captures the summation.

*who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise **such things** are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them. Rom 1:32*

*And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise **such things**. 3 And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise **such things**, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Rom 2:2-3*

The point is powerful. It doesn't matter in what realm the divisions and stumblings arise. If they are beside and not within the doctrines of Christ, then Paul makes a serious accusation against them.

**serve not our Lord Christ,**

Regardless of the claims of those who do such things, the reality is that they are not servants of our Lord. They are not his *slave*, they do not *do him service*. They have not *obeyed* or *submitted to* and they are not "*yielding obedience*."

“*douleuo*... 1. prop. *to be a slave, serve, do service*... 2. metaph. *to obey, submit to*; a. in a good sense: absol. *to yield obedience... to obey one’s commands and render to him the services due*... b. in a bad sense, of those who become slaves to some base power, *to yield to, give one’s self up to*...” (Thayer, p. 157; 1398)

Jesus was too clear on this point. These are the false prophets who come in sheep’s clothing. These are the fruits by which we shall know them. These are those who call Jesus Lord, but do not do the will of the Father.

*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. 16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do (men) gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*  
Matt 7:15-23

Jesus is not the reason for their actions. He is not the master and Lord that they are serving.

### **but their own belly;**

They serve their own belly. This is a *hard saying!* The term is used throughout the gospels as *womb* or *belly* (*place where food the swallowed food goes*). Paul uses it only here and in Philippians in this manner.

*For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, (that they are) the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and (whose) glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.* Phil 3:18-19

We know that an empty belly is the source of all cravings for food. When it is used in a symbolic sense of the appetites of the flesh, it would include all the cravings and appetites that lead men to do such things. Elsewhere it is called “*covetousness*” “*lasciviousness,*” and “*gain.*”

*And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.* 2 Pet 2:3

*If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, (even) the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain.* 1 Tim 6:3-5

*For, uttering great swelling (words) of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; 19 promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage.* 2 Pet 2:18-19

From the Scriptures we learn that there is no end to the things people covet and wish to gain. Some seek power and others financial wealth. Some covet a higher knowledge that will give them a sense of pride. For some it is a desire for wisdom (1Cor 1:18-31).

*For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, (are called): 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; 28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, (yea) and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory before God.* 1 Cor 1:26-29

It is the appetites of man that seeks for wisdom nobility and strength away from God. All that is in the world, lust of the flesh eyes and the pride of life. We will never know exactly which of these motivates such people. All we know is that when they take any words of Jesus or the apostles and prophets and twists them to their own destruction it is because they are serving their own bellies with the pretense that they are serving Christ.

### **and by their smooth and fair speech**

One of the timeless questions that one has to wonder about centers on their own thinking. Are they aware of what they are doing. Is this by design or deception. In other words are they the followers of or the creators of cunningly devised fables? It is impossible to say. Some truly believe and others are hypocrites. Jesus speaks of the blind leading the blind (Mt 15) and Paul of those branded in their conscience with a hot iron. He did it in the ignorance of unbelief but there are others who out of their own contempt for the gullibility of others use this for their own ends.

*But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 3 forbidding to marry, (and commanding) to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth.* 1 Tim 4:1-3



Whether they are ignorant themselves and only seek to do what they think is right without taking the commands far enough to be a servant, or they are simply using the gullibility of others to gain some type of control over them is of little consequence to us today. God will deal with the motivations. But he expects us to deal with the error they are preaching.

They use “*smooth*” and “*fair*” speech.

*chrestologia*... and this from *chrestos* which see and *lego* ... speaking, the smooth and plausible address which simulates goodness": Romans 16:18. ..." (Thayer's 5542)

"*chrestos*... 1. prop. *fit for use, useful; virtuous, good*... 2. *manageable, i.e. mild, pleasant*, (opp. to *harsh, hard, sharp, bitter*)... of persons, *kind, benevolent of God*..." (Thayer, P. 671; 5543)

Smooth words, virtuous, mild, pleasant, kind and benevolent words. They are also “*fair*” words. They speak of *praise* and *blessings*, using fine discourse and polished language.

*eulogia* ... lit., "good speaking, praise," is used of (a) God and Christ, Revelation 5:12-13; 7:12; (b) the invocation of blessings, benediction, Hebrews 12:17; James 3:10; (c) the giving of thanks, 1 Corinthians 10:16; (d) a blessing, a benefit bestowed, Romans 15:29; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 6:7; of a monetary gift sent to needy believers, 2 Corinthians 9:5-6; (e) in a bad sense, of fair speech, Romans 16:18, RV, where it is joined with *chrestologia*, "smooth speech," the latter relating to the substance, *eulogia* to the expression." (Vine 2129)

*eulogia*... ... 2. *fine discourse, polished language*: Plato, rep. 3, p. 400 d.; Luc. Lexiph. 1; in a bad sense, language artfully adapted to captivate the hearer, *fair speaking, fine speeches*: Romans 16:18 ..." (Thayer's 2129)

Listening to them one could find nothing to criticize in the manner and substance of what they are saying.

One can hear such words from Satan in the Garden of Eden and King Saul who only wanted to do something special for God as a result of his rebellion and stubbornness. We hear it all the time. I think God would be very happy if we changed this or that. So much good could be accomplished just by making this tiny modification. They are such good and loving people how could they possibly be wrong. God's grace and mercy are too great for him to require such a terrible thing. How could a loving God ...? Jesus would never demand such things as the apostles are asking for. Smooth words, virtuous, mild, pleasant, kind and benevolent words, but “*beguiling words*. Keeping God's word is our highest mandate. If it makes us look harsh, narrowminded and judgmental, so be it.

*A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household! Mt 10:24-25*

*If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. Jn 15:19-20*

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. 2 Cor 11:3*

False teachers have always had the ability to speak sweet and precious things. Generally there is only one slight twist in all they are saying. But it is that one twist that leads to terrible deceptions that one cannot be reasoned away from. They can often speak far better and more persuasively than the true servants of God because they are not bound by the laws of conscience or by the word of God.

**they beguile the hearts of the innocent.**

It is difficult for the translator to capture the difference between the simply word *beguile* and the intensive word *beguile*. They would have to add the word “*thoroughly*” or “*completely*” to *beguile*.”

*apatao* "to deceive," is rendered "beguiled" in the RV of 1 Timothy 2:14. See No. 2. 538

*exapatao* a strengthened form of *apatao* is rendered "beguile," 2 Cor 11:3; the more adequate rendering would be "as the serpent thoroughly beguiled Eve." So in 1 Tim 2:14, in the best mss., this stronger form is used of Satan's deception of Eve, lit., "thoroughly beguiled"; the simpler verb, No. 1, is used of Adam. In each of these passages the strengthened form is used. So of the influence of sin, Romans 7:11 (RV, "beguile"); of self-deception, 1 Cor 3:18 (RV, "deceive"); of evil men who cause divisions, Rom 16:18 (RV, "beguile"); of deceitful teachers, 2 Ths 2:3 (RV, "beguile"). (Vine 1818)

Smooth and fair words in the ears of the innocent can lead to a complete and thorough deception so deep that even when the truth is pointed out to them they cannot see it. Paul warns that only those who have not received a love for the truth can be deluded in this manner.

*and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: 12 that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. II Th 2:10-12*

Paul here calls the people who are open to such deception within the church as being (ASV - *innocent*), (KJV - *simple*), (ESV - *naive*), and (NASB *unsuspecting*). The word literally means without evil and refers in Scripture to those who are *simple, guileless, and harmless*. Thayer adds that they “*fear no evil from others, “distrusting no one.*”

*akakos* .... lit., "without evil" (a, negative, *kakos*, "evil"), signifies "simple, guileless," Romans 16:18, "simple," of believers (perhaps unsuspecting, or, rather, innocent, free from admixture of evil); in Hebrews 7:26, RV, "guileless" (KJV, "harmless"), the character of Christ (more lit., "free from evil")...." (Vine 172)

*akakos* a. without guile or fraud, harmless; free from guilt: Hebrews 7:26; (cf. Clement, fragment 8, Jacobson edition (Lightfoot S. Clement of Rome etc., p. 219): b. fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one, (cf. English guileless): Romans 16:18. (Thayer 172)

This is such a terrible plight to the babe in Christ. Assuming that all are as innocent and sincere as they are themselves they are willing to listen and give credibility to all. Such ,must be taught these truths as quickly as possible. For they are easy prey until they grow up.

### **19. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.**

Paul then revealed the reason(*gar*) for these warnings. It is a terrible truth that a good reputation draws both the good and the evil. The larger the church the more likelihood that such people are in their midst. Jude also warned of those who sneak in privily(unnnoticed/unawares).

*For there are certain men crept in privily, (even) they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 1:4*

Paul had seen this among the Galatians and was concerned that it might occur at Rome as well. There were people who followed Paul around and after he left enter in among the congregation and do exactly what he has described above. Because of this reputation in Rome, Paul wants to put them on their guard. They were doing a great and wonderful work for the Lord and their obedience was being spoken of as it came abroad. Like a stone thrown into the lake sends ripples further and further from the place it entered, so their obedience was rippling further and further from Rome. It was reaching out to all(men is supplied).

### **I rejoice therefore over you:**

Paul doesn't want this misunderstood. He is deeply pleased and feels joy and happiness over this reputation. It is truly a wonderful thing for a congregation to reach maturity doing good works, manifesting true faith in Jesus and love toward the saints. When one considers the nature of the city of Rome, and the fact that no apostle had been there to ground and establish them, it is quite a compliment to their love for the truth and their integrity that they have been able to remain obedient. Even the nature of the epistle itself is quite a compliment to them. It is so unlike the Corinthian epistle. The only serious problem in the epistle revolves around the proper use of liberties.

### **but I would have you wise unto that which is good,**

Paul had an *desire* and *purpose* for the things that he is saying. There are two things he has *determined* to accomplish by this warning.

*“thelo,... (derived apparently fr. helein with a fuller aspiration, so that it means prop. to seize with the mind; ...) TO WILL, (have in mind,) intend; i.e. 1. to be resolved or determined, to purpose ... 2. to desire, to wish:...” (Thayer p 285-286; 2309)*

He seeks to make them wise but wise in a very specific area. Over time people gain skill and experience. They learn to “*form the best plans*” and “*use the best means for their execution.*”

*“sophos... wise, i.e. a. skilled, expert... b. wise, i.e. skilled in letters, cultivated, learned... c. wise in a practical sense, i.e. one who in action is governed by piety and integrity: Eph 5:15; Jas. 3:13;... d. wise in a philosophic sense, forming the best plans and using the best means for their execution...” (Thayer, p. 582; 4680)*

But unfortunately one can turn that wisdom in one of two direction. We can become wise to what is good or we can become wise to what is evil.

*But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not (a wisdom) that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace. James 3:14-18*

Paul is seeking through this letter and all his letters to give them a wisdom that leads to being experienced and making the best plans for that which is good. Thing which according to Scripture are not only good in appearance, but good through and through.

*“agathos... excelling in any respect, distinguished, good. It can be predicated of persons, things, conditions, qualities and affections of the soul, deeds, times and seasons.... 1. of good constitution or nature... 2. useful, salutary... 3. of the feeling awakened by what is good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy... 4. excellent, distinguished... 5. upright, honorable... upright, free from guile, particularly from a desire to corrupt the people... pre-eminently of God, as consummately and essentially good... The neuter used substantively denotes 1. a good thing, convenience, advantage, ... 2. what is upright, honorable, and acceptable to God...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 2-3; 18)*

Such are the good works God afore prepared for us to walk in (Eph 2:10). So we give diligence to present ourselves approved by handling God's word aright and thus make up thoroughly furnished to ever good work (II Tim 2:15; 3:16-17, speaking only as the oracles of God (I Pet 4:11).

### **and simple unto that which is evil.**

*Simple* is actually a very complex term. He wants them completely unmixed with evil and pure because it is not present. In the good heart there is no *“foreign mixture”* of evil and harm.

*akeraios* lit., "unmixed, with absence of foreign mixture" (from *a*, negative, and *kerannumi*, "to mix"), "pure," is used metaphorically in the NT of what is guileless, sincere, Matthew 10:16, "harmless" (marg., "simple"), i. e., with the simplicity of a single eye, discerning what is evil, and choosing only what glorifies God; Romans 16:19, "simple (unto that which is evil)," KJV marg., "harmless"; Philippians 2:15, "harmless," KJV marg., "sincere." The Greeks used it of wine unmixed with water, of unalloyed metal; ... Trench compares it and synonymous words as follows: "as the *akakos* (see No. 2, below) has no harmfulness in him, and the *adolos* no guile, so the *akeraios* no foreign mixture, and the *haplous* no folds" (Syn. Sec. lvi). *Haplous* is said of the single eye, Matthew 6:22; Luke 11:34. (Vine's 185)

This was brought to its highest level in the garden before eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is still seen in the hearts of children before the coarsening that occurs after the age of accountability. We need to keep it that way. Having no mixture of evil within our soul is our greatest goal as a servant of God. We don't need to be poking around things that are *“of a bad nature”* and *“not such as it ought to be.”* God reveals in his word those things that are good that ought to be pursued and learned and those things that are evil. Such things are *“base, wrong, and wicked.”*

*“kakos... bad 1. univ. of a bad nature; not such as it ought to be. 2. [morally, i.e.] of a mode of thinking, feeling, acting; base, wrong, wicked:... neut. kakos, TO evil i.e. what is contrary to law, either divine or human, wrong, crime... spec. of wrongs inflicted...” (Thayer, p. 320; 2556)*

There are doors that need to remain closed. There are many things we are much better not knowing about.

*To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. Titus 1:15*

*But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. Rev 2:24*

Every open door into evil leaves a mark on our heart and soul. We have opened a door into something that we can never close again. The more simple we are to such things the more pure and holy we remain. The last thing Christians need to do is study deeply into the evils of others in order to better understand them. We need to trust fully in the Lord that the gospel is good and leave all other things alone. The only thing that learning more about evil will do is make it more tempting for us, it will not make us better able to deal with it as the Word is the only thing to do that. With this in mind, we ought to be very cautious in this realm.

Certainly we need to learn to use the Scriptures to combat all evil that is outside of Scripture but to do in-depth studies of the writings of those who do evil and gaining an insight into their mind and thinking is not a good thing. We need to remain simple to all but what the Scriptures reveal about an evil activity. One cannot learn the evils of pornography by looking at it. One cannot learn the evils of drunkenness by getting drunk. Such things will make us wise unto evil in a terrible and corrosive way.

### **20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.**

Paul has just described the great conflict between good and evil. The terrible battle between those who preach truth and those who preach error. But God is the God of peace. He brings no conflict. He brings only harmony and concord. He is a God of mercy, love, compassion and faithfulness. There is great controversy over the Scriptures, but it is not of God. God is a God of peace. None of this can be placed at his feet.

*Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; Rom 5:1*

*For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 15 having abolished in the flesh the enmity, (even) the law of commandments (contained) in ordinances; that he might create in himself of*

*the two one new man, (so) making peace; 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: Eph 2:14-17*

All conflict goes back to Satan. All error, all divisions, all stumbling, the curse and the enmity were created and brought into being by the serpent. Hence God is the God of peace and God is going to bruise Satan so that all the above will be removed forever. All was in ruins and peace was gone. Even their first and second born manifested this by Cain murdering Abel (because he was of the evil one 1Jn 2:11-12). This is clearly an allusion to the promise and prophesy to Eve after the terrible fall and curse.

*And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen 3:14-15*

God would allow the conflict created by the serpent to be irreversible. For those men and women who longed to be what God had created them to be and who longed for peace with God and with their fellow man, he would send one of her "seed" to bruise and destroy this serpent and his deed. This had been done with Jesus death upon the cross. Certainly the serpent used his seed to bruise the seed God sent. He was afflicted and bruised by the seed of the serpent. But it was only a minor wound. A bruise on the heel. But the same even that bruised his heel bruised the head of the serpent. With Jesus death on the cross he was able to enter Hades. As he raised from the dead and came forth from Hades he left with the keys that would open it to all and led captivity captive (he conquered captivity and submitted it to his God's will and his own.

*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) Eph 4:8-10*

*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Rev 1:17-18*

In symbolic terms God reveals to us what happened as a result of Jesus death upon the cross that created the circumstances where the head of the serpent was bruised.

*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels (going forth) to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Rev 12:7-9*

As is clear from this symbolic representation of what occurred, his power has been greatly reduced. He has been severely damaged. As Jesus said, he has bound the strong man, brought to nought him who had the power over death.

*But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. 29 Or how can one enter into the house of the strong (man,) and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong (man)? and then he will spoil his house. Mt 12:28-29*

*And if Satan hath rise up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 But no one can enter into the house of the strong (man), and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong (man); and then he will spoil his house. Mk 3:26-27*

*Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb 2:14-15*

*Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Lk. 10:17-18*

So God has already bruised Satan under Jesus feet. Yet it is equally clear that he has not yet been bruised under our feet. Though his power has been lessened and his head bruised, he still has great hatred and wrath knowing he only has a short time (his days are numbered). Peter's warning follows the same line of reasoning as Paul here. The adversary is here, seeking whom he may devour by the means spoken by Paul above. But God will perfect, establish and strengthen (bruise the serpent under our feet).

*Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, 9 whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who*

are in the world. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. 1 Pet 5:8-10

The battle still rages, we can never rest until the very end. We must have on armor on and suffer hardship and do battle as a soldier.

*Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (hosts) of wickedness in the heavenly (places). 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Eph 6:11-13*

*Suffer hardship with (me), as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of (this) life; that he may please him who enrolled him as soldier. 2 Tim 2:3-4*

Thus there is one final bruising that must occur. God will at the end bruise Satan under the feet of the saints. This may be what is revealed by John at the end of Revelation when he is cast into the lake of fire.

*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Rev 20:10*

It may also have some other meaning such as what happens when we die and leave this world to enter into the peace which can never be taken from us. But either way, this reference ought to give great hope and the ability to endure all the terrible conflict and fighting that must be done by those who love the Lord and must do what Paul has just described in the previous verse regarding the marking and turning away from those who cause division along with the often terrible consequences of the gangrene and overthrow of entire houses.

**the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

While we await complete victory, we must rest on something that will make it all possible. What Jesus has already done he will continue to do. This is similar to Paul's words in the eighth chapter. The victory is already within our grasp. All has been done we simply need to hold on.

*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; 34 who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:32-9:8*

As long as this grace and favor remains with us, in our mind and in our heart we can overcome everything.

**21. Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you;**

Paul now sends greetings from those who are with him who want to salute the church there. Using the same word he himself used to salute them he sends the salutations and greetings from those who are with him. Again, this seems to be more of an insight into the inner workings of the body in the first century than anything else. For though we know a lot about Timothy, we know nearly nothing about the other people mentioned. Timothy has a great history written of him. First introduced as a young man well spoken of by the church at Lystra and/or Derbe on Paul's first missionary journey after the loss of his earlier travelling companions (Barnabas and John Mark).

*And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. 2 The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Acts 16:1-3*

Paul has much to say about his early life and training. :

*I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day 4 longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also. 2 Tim 1:3-5*

*But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. 15 And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim 3:14-15*

Not once is any negative thing ever said about Timothy. As a matter of fact toward the end of the

Roman imprisonment he gave one of the highest compliments about him and also revealed that the Romans later had the chance to meet him.

*But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. 21 For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child (serveth) a father, (so) he served with me in furtherance of the gospel. 23 Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me: Phil 2:19-23*

Timothy has never met these people at the time of the writing of Romans, but already truly cares for their state as well.

### **and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.**

Again we have the word kinsmen and must seek to determine whether this is Jewish kinship, Benjamin kinship, or that of the immediate family. Also, although some of these names are mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures, we cannot know if they are the same men. A Jason is mentioned in Acts as well as a Sopater, but no Lucius.

*But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, (one) Jesus. ... 9 And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. Acts 17:5-7, 9*

*And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater of Beroea, (the son) of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. Acts 20:4*

These may be the men Paul refers to, but they may not be. It is the care and concern from those who are with Paul that is the message here.

### **22. I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord.**

We learn that Paul did not write this letter, but that he dictated it and this man Tertius wrote the letter for Paul. The Holy Spirit allows him to add his salutations to the church in Rome expressing his respect, care and concern for them. It is evident that Paul spoke these words under the influence of the Holy Spirit and Tertius would have written them with the same guidance.

### **23. Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.**

Three Gaius's are mentioned in the book of Acts. A man named Gaius was baptized by Paul and mentioned by him in I Cor 1:14. Another man named Gaius is mentioned in Acts 20:4 as a citizen of Derbe, and another man named Gaius was a man of Macedonia and a traveling companion is mentioned in Acts 19:29 Since Paul is writing this epistle either from Corinth or somewhere in Asia/Macedonia, it is most likely that it is the man in Corinth or Macedonia. But even there it I only a reference to show respect.

### **Erastus the treasurer of the city saluteth you,**

Erastus is mentioned two other times in the Bible.

*Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. Acts 19:21-22*

*Erastus remained at Corinth: but Trophimus I left at Miletus sick. 2 Tim 4:20*

It is possible that all three of these references refer to the same man. If Paul was in Corinth then this was the treasurer of the city of Corinth. This reveals that the gospel had found it's way into the public officials of that city.

### **and Quartus the brother.**

This is the only reference to this man and one too meager to allow even a guess. He is the brother which appears to emphasize him in some way. They may have known who he was, we do not.

### **25. Now to him that is able to establish you**

Paul concludes this epistle with what some call a prayer in which he praises gives adoration to God. But it seems more likely after reading it carefully through a few times that it is Paul's own exclamation of praise and adoration for God, or giving them the truth that will lead them to praise and lean upon the Lord. God's ability to establish is the foundation of the first section and God's wisdom in the second.

With the warning of those causing divisions still fresh in the mind along with God bruising the serpent under our feet the need to be established becomes imperative. God is able to make us *stable*, place us *firmly*, and cause us to be *set fast and fixed*.

*“sterizo... a. to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix, ... b. to strengthen, make firm; ... to render constant, confirm, one’s mind...”* (Thayer, p. 588; 4741)

Kittel adds *“to support,” “to fix something so that it stands upright and immovable,” “to support a vine by a stake and an aging man by a stick.”* That God is able to do this is one of the most comforting elements of the gospel. With all the terrible forces we must contend with, it is a great comfort that we can be supported and made firm.

But as Paul just finished saying, God depends on us to bring this about. These are the talents and the pounds of the servants, the oil of the virgins and the faithfulness of the steward. God can establish us by not allowing us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but we have to flee and put it to death. In the garden, God established Adam & Eve, but they had to keep themselves from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So we have a fellowship. We can depend on God to fix, establish, strengthen and make us firm. We can praise him for such a wonderful promise. But we must also understand that he is depending upon us to do all that is within our power. As Peter said, *“if you do these things you will never stumble.”* God gave the means and the motivation, we do the adding (2Pet 1:3-11).

### **according to my gospel**

The term “according to” sets the manner in which this establishing occurs. God has the power to establish *“according to”* my gospel. Thus our being established is in *proportion* to my gospel. The gospel itself is the measure and reference for its being established.

*“kata, ... II with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;...c. according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...(bb) in proportion to, according to the measure of...”* (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 328; 2596)

The term *kata* is the equivalent to the “=” sign in math and is a *verbal* equal sign. On the one side is being established and on the other side is the gospel. Paul calls it “my gospel” to distinguish it from the gospel of those in verse 17-18. There were many gospels circulating at that time. The gospel of the Judaizers being of the most concern and the gospel of the gnostics beginning to be of concern. The gospel preached by the inspired apostles and prophets was *“their”* gospel because they were the ones preaching it.

*Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, 2 by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. 1 Cor 15:1-2*

*I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; 7 which is not another (gospel) only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. Gal 1:6-8*

They had seen and they had heard and thus they were brought into fellowship with God. When we set apart what they preached from what others preached, we know the difference between the spirit of truth and error.

*that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: 4 and these things we write, that our joy may be made full. 1 Jn 1:3-4*

*We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 1 Jn 4:6*

This was in direct compliance with exactly what Jesus had decreed and they were doing.

*And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matt 28:18-20*

Thus the gospel according the Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke and according to John is their gospel and the true gospel. The gospel according to Judas or according to Thomas is not *“their gospel.”* It is another gospel preached and thus leads to being accursed.

God can only establish if we believe and obey their gospel. The one revealed by them through the power of the Holy Spirit. Anything else is *“causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary*

to the doctrine they had learned" from him(my gospel).

There is great comfort, but also a great need for concern. The gospel preached by Paul is God's power to establish and fix, just as it is the "power of God unto salvation." (Rom 1:16) As long as we are following that gospel, we are fixed and established. Only when drift away do we become unstable.

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away (from them). 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; 4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will. Heb 2:1-4*

### and the preaching of Jesus Christ,

Is this an objective or subjective genitive. Is the Jesus the subject of the preaching(one preaching it) or the object of the preaching(one being preached about). If we look again at Hebrews, "at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;" we see both. It was first preached by the Lord and then confirmed by those who heard. The context seems to favor him as the subject. The preaching about Jesus Christ. The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ I Cor 15:1-4. Without the vital truths surrounding Jesus, the gospel is only empty words. Jesus is the power that makes the gospel strong. He is the wealthy one who became poor so we could become rich. The preaching of Jesus Christ must be our gospel, he is our mediator, our high priest, our redeemer, our savior. Jesus is everything.

### according to the revelation of the mystery

Again Paul uses kata because again the need for congruity has arisen in his mind. The establishing, the gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ are all in proportion to and in congruity with the revelation of the mystery. This was not an afterthought. God did not quickly patch over and come up with a new plan after Adam & Eve sinned. Nor did anything man has done or will do affect it in any way. All that is within the gospel is in harmony with according and in congruous with the revelation of the mystery. The term "revelation" means to "uncover what has been veiled" or "make known something that was before unknown."

*"apo-kalupsis... (apokalupto which see) an uncovering; 1. properly a laying bare, making naked... 2. tropically in the N.T. and ecc. language... a. a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown - especially those relating to the Christian salvation-given to the soul by God himself, or by the ascended Christ, esp. through the operation of the Holy Spirit(I Cor 2:10)..." (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 62; 602)*

*"apokalupto... 1. prop. to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; to disclose, make bare:... 2. Metaph. to make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown; a. pass. of any method whatever by which something before unknown becomes evident... e. pass. of persons, previously concealed, making their appearance in public..." (Thayer, p. 62; 601)*

God's ability to establish us is in harmony and concord with "my gospel," the "preaching of Jesus Christ" and the "revelation of the mystery." God had great plans, but prior to his decision to reveal them, they were a mystery.

*musterion ... Philippians 4:12, mueomai, "I have learned the secret," RV). In the NT it denotes, not the mysterious (as with the English word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. In the ordinary sense a "mystery" implies knowledge withheld; its Scriptural significance is truth revealed. Hence the terms especially associated with the subject are "made known," "manifested," "revealed," "preached," "understand," "dispensation." The definition given above may be best illustrated by the following passage: "the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to His saints" Colossians 1:26,(Vine 3466)*

Unlike the word in English *mystery* in Greek only means that there was something that had previously been unknown and thus "outside of the range of unassisted natural apprehension" Before God revealed, it was a mystery.

*but we speak God's wisdom in a **mystery**, (even) the (wisdom) that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: 8 which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And (which) entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. 10 But unto us God revealed (them) through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Cor 2:9-10*

*And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the **mysteries** of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*



... 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not. Matt 13:10-11; 16-17

After it was revealed, it was God's revelation or Scripture.

making known unto us the **mystery** of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him 10 unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, (I say,) Eph 1:9-10

how that by revelation was made known unto me the **mystery**, as I wrote before in few words, 4 whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the **mystery** of Christ; Eph 3:3-4

whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fulfil the word of God, 26 (even) the **mystery** which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, 27 to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Col 1:25-27

And without controversy great is the **mystery** of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. 1 Tim 3:16

The purpose of calling it a mystery is to make it clear that all these things had been determined and decided long before they were revealed to man. How old were these "mysteries"

**which hath been kept in silence through times eternal,**

These plans were a mystery because they had been kept in silence. God had formed the plans and in his own time revealed them to us. But somewhere back in eternity, "before the foundation of the world" God made all the plans.

Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) in Christ: 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: Eph 1:3-4

Then through the actual deeds that fulfilled the prophecy.

him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: Acts 2:23

And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Acts 3:17-18

Then by the revelation Paul spoke of here.

Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God; 9 who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before times eternal**, 10 but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher. 2 Tim 1:8-11

in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised **before times eternal**; 3 but in his own seasons manifested his word in the message, wherewith I was intrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour; Titus 1:2-3

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery **which for ages hath been hid in God** who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 according to **the eternal purpose** which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: Eph 3:8-11

God planned in eternity to establish us according to the gospel. Now it is a completed fact.

**26. But now is manifested,**

It was hidden, now it is *manifested*. It has been made "visible" and "exposed to view." Now it is "known, plainly recognized" and "thoroughly understood."

"phaneroo,... to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way... to make known by teaching... b. with an acc of the person, to expose to view, make manifest, show one ... Pass. to become known, to be plainly recognized, thoroughly understood..." (Thayer, p. 648; 5319)

Now, anyone can read about God's hidden plans because he has manifested or revealed them for all to study and learn them.

**and by the scriptures of the prophets,**

Not only was this manifested by "my gospel" and "the preaching of Jesus Christ, but it had already been manifested in the OT prophets. God had a great deal to say about the relationship between

the prophets who were commissioned in the Old Testament to give information about the mystery. First, Peter states that the prophets did not fully understand what they were describing but when they sought for more information, it was revealed that these scriptures were for those living in the times they described. In other words these prophecies are information for those living in the New Covenant. None of these prophecies came by the will of men, and we ought to take heed to them.

*Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things which angels desire to look into. 1 Pet. 1:10-12*

*And we have the word of prophecy (made) more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. 21 For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Pet 1:19-21*

Peter also breaks this information into the prophets, and the commands of Jesus revealed by the apostles.

*This is now, beloved, the SECOND epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; 2 that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: 2 Pet 3:1-2*

Many times in the Scriptures the apostles and prophets use the information given by those prophets in the Old Testament to validate the things they are saying. Peter did this in Acts 2 by citing David in reference to the Christ. It was also done by others.

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called (to be) an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, Rom 1:1-2*

*God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in (his) Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; Heb 1:1-2*

*For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled (them) by condemning (him). Acts 13:27*

*Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; 23 how that the Christ must suffer, (and) how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. Acts 26:22-23*

*And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded (the matter,) testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. Acts 28:23*

### **according to the commandment of the eternal God,**

Once again a *kata* gives the proportion and relation between the things that are now revealed and the things that had been hidden. It was all equal to and in reference to the command of God. All that is recorded in the Old Testament and all that is now revealed in the New Testament by the Apostles and Prophets (of both covenants) are in harmony and in reference to the commands of the eternal God. All else outside of these things is against and out of harmony and relationship to these commands. Here Paul refers to him as the eternal God because he has devised eternal plans that relate to eternal life. It was by his will that we now know all that we know.

### **is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith:**

An integral part of the plan is to make certain that every one knows about it. God commanded that it be taken into all the world (Mk 16:15-16) and preached in every nation (Mt 28:18-20). God wanted it preached for one specific reason (*eis*), obedience of faith. He wanted all to trust and believe in all that was revealed and then obey it.

### **27. To the only wise God,**

Now Paul ends with an Eulogy. One very similar to the one Paul gave in Ephesians.

*Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) in Christ: Eph 1:3*

God is the only God and he is wise. There is no God except for Jehovah. So Paul ascribes all glory and honor to him. It is interesting how even after the Scriptures reveal that Jesus was with God and was God that there is only one God.

*For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; 6 yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ,*

through whom are all things, and we through him. 1 Cor 8:5-6

*(There is) one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. Eph 4:4-6*

Even though we know Jesus was with God and was God, we still only acknowledge one God. This is an fascinating paradox that will not be revealed until the end. But until this mystery is revealed we will speak as the oracles of God on this matter.

### **through Jesus Christ,**

All praise and thanks goes to the only God through Jesus Christ.

*giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; Eph 5:20*

*And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, (do) all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:17*

Jesus is the mediator and we cannot thank God except through him.

*For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, (himself) man, Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony (to be borne) in its own times; 1 Tim 2:5-6*

We cannot come to God without our relationship to Jesus. Jesus made reconciliation possible, but even in this the Scriptures are clear. We were not reconciled to Jesus but to God through Jesus.

*But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech (you) on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Cor 5:18-20*

*But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, ... 16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: Eph 2:13-14*

On a practical level how do we do this? How do we thank God through Jesus Christ. How do we glorify God through Jesus Christ? Do we completely separate them or are they joined. If we thank God by saying Thank you for making this possible through Jesus are we not glorifying them both and still complying with the words here and elsewhere.

### **to whom be the glory for ever.**

to whom is the only wise God. As noted above this does not remove glory from Christ, it only shows how we direct it first and foremost to God.

**Amen**

So be it.