

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 42

I. Exposition of Chapter Fifteen (Continued).

A. Verses 25-29 - Paul's desire to come to Rome (Continued).

1. Verses 25-27 – Paul states that he has another obligation before going to Rome.

- a. Verse 25 - **“But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.”** – From Corinth, where this epistle was written, Paul is headed first back to Jerusalem. Paul's visit to Jerusalem was to deliver the voluntary offering from churches for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 24:17; I Corinthians 16:1–4; II Corinthians 8:13–14; 9:12–13; Galatians 2:10).
- b. Verse 26 – **“...contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.”** – There was a famine throughout Palestine at this time, and because of persecution by unbelieving Jews, many Christian men lost their jobs and many others were put in prison.
- c. Verse 27 – **“It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.”**

1) The word **“pleased”** is found both in verse 26 and 27. The word means; **“think it good, choose, determine, to do willingly, to be well pleased with, take pleasure in, to be favorably inclined towards one.”**¹ (cf. II Corinthians 9:6-12)

2) Paul is also saying in this verse that since the Gentiles had benefited, in a spiritual way, by God bringing the Messiah through the Jews, then it seems fitting that the Gentiles share their material things with the Jewish believers. A similar thought is found in the following verse:

“If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?” – I Corinthians 9:11.

2. Verses 28-29 – Paul reiterates his plan to come to Rome and then Spain after Jerusalem. (cf. verse 24)

- a. Verse 28 – **“Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.”**

1) **“...sealed to them this fruit...”** – It seems obvious that the **“fruit”** is referring to the money collected. The expression itself seems difficult for expositors to explain. Robert Picirilli offers the following:

“This expression is a little vague, but this writer thinks Paul means that the money will be presented to the Jerusalem church as a seal and fruit of the genuine Christianity of the Gentiles in his missionary churches.”²

- b. Verse 29 – **“But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.”**

1) Paul did get to Rome but not in the time frame or way he had thought. He was arrested in Jerusalem and after having been on trial before different individuals, he's finally put on a ship with other prisoners for Rome. He ended up spending three months in Malta due to a shipwreck (Acts 27:39-44; 28:1-16) and he finally arrives in Rome and is placed under house arrest and was there for two years where he continued to preach and teach the Gospel (Acts 28:30-31).

“God had provided Paul with rented facilities that would accommodate all who came to hear the gospel. God provided Paul with the message and with the boldness to proclaim it. God even provided Paul with the protection of Rome to do so. Think of it. How would Paul ever have been able to gain an audience with Caesar in Rome? How ‘free’ would Paul have been to preach to the Jews if he had simply been declared innocent and then was released? My sense is that the Jewish opposition would have at least harassed Paul, and most likely would have killed him if they could do so. That soldier to whom Paul was chained did not restrict him from preaching the gospel. Those soldiers to whom Paul was chained heard the gospel over and over. They stood by as Paul dictated his ‘Prison Epistles’ (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians). And, far from hindering Paul, they greatly helped by serving as his personal bodyguards. Isn't it amazing the way God works to accomplish His purposes and promises?”³

¹Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

²Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 311.

³Bob Deffinbaugh, <https://bible.org/seriespage/35-paul-rome-acts-281-31>

B. Verses 30-33 - Paul's request for Prayer.

1. Verse 30 – “Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.”

- a. Paul had already been warned about going to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-23; 21:10-14) and so he knew he needed people to pray for him.
- b. The Greek word for “beg” is the word meaning, “to call to one’s side to help.” Picirilli states, “When Paul urges them ‘by our Lord Jesus Christ,’ he is invoking Christ’s name as the authority behind his charge to pray. But when he does so ‘for the love of the Spirit,’ he is pleading with them in the name of Christian love, a love for each other produced as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)”⁴
- c. “...striving together with me in prayers to God for me.” – For the word “striving” Kenneth Wuest states:

“This word was used in classical Greek as an athletic term, describing the concerted action of a team of athletes in the Greek games. It meant ‘to contend along with, to share in a contest.’ Paul asks the Roman saints to contend with him in prayer against the opposition of the hosts of wickedness, contending with him as athletes would do with one another, with intensity of purpose and in perfect cooperation.”⁵

2. Verse 31 – Paul asks for prayer for two things in this verse:

- a. For deliverance from the unbelieving Jews.
- b. That his “...service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints.” – It seems clear that his “service” was referring to the collection he is carrying. Some expositors suggest that it was possible that some of the Jewish believers would not receive from Paul due to them seeing him as rejecting the law.

3. Verse 32 – “That I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.”

- a. The word “refreshed” means, “metaphorically to rest or refresh one’s spirits with one”. Knowing he would suffer a lot of trials in Jerusalem, he wanted prayer that he would be able to come to them in Rome and be refreshed.

4. Verse 33 – “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.” – This is in the form of prayer again. In verse 13, it was the “God of hope.” Real peace and hope come only from God.

II. Exposition of Chapter 16.

A. Paul's Salutations and Farewell.

1. Verses 1-2 – Phoebe – A Woman highly esteemed by Paul.

a. Verse 1 – “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea.”

- 1) Phoebe seems to be universally believed to be the deliverer of this epistle to the Romans.
- 2) Paul “commends” Phoebe to them. This word means, “to recommend”, and “to vouch for.”
- 3) “...who is a servant of the church...” – The Greek word for “servant” is usually translated as “minister”. The Greek word is *diakonos* which is also the word we get the word “deacon” from. (cf. I Corinthians 3:5; I Timothy 3:8, 12; Acts 6:1-4).

b. Verse 2 – “...that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”

- 1) Paul asked them to do two things:
 - a) “receive her” – This means “to be accepting” as opposed to rejecting.
 - b) “assist her” – This means, “to place beside or near.” It certainly carries the idea of helping.
- 2) “...for indeed she has been of helper...” – The word “helper” means, “a woman set over others, a protectress, a patroness,” caring for the affairs of others aiding them with her resources.⁶

⁴Picirilli, *Romans*, 312.

⁵Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 254–255.

⁶*Ibid.*, 258.