

Romans Chapter 15

Before we begin studying Romans chapter 15, please review what we learned in Romans chapter 14 by circling the correct answers.

1. Romans 14 is about: **a.** Letting go of doctrinal truth, **b.** Letting go of moral truth, **c.** Letting go of denominations, **d.** Not arguing over non-essentials.

2. Romans 14 - Non-essentials are things that are not doctrinal issues or moral issues. Yes - No.

3. Romans 14 - Please circle the non-essentials in this list. **a.** Salvation by grace alone through faith alone. **b.** Justification by faith. **c.** Sanctification by faith. **d.** Eating meat. **e.** Water baptism by immersion. **f.** Drinking wine. **g.** Jesus is the only way to heaven. **h.** Observing Jewish holy days. **i.** Hell is a real and literal place. **j.** We should always listen to false teachers to learn what they believe.

4. What is the underlying issue in Romans 14? **a.** Being religious vs. not being religious. **b.** Street preaching vs. being a quiet witness. **c.** Getting all denominations together vs. everyone being independent. **d.** OT law vs. NT grace.

5. Romans 14:10 - At the judgment seat of Christ, we get judged for: **a.** How religious we were. **b.** How high we rose in the church. **c.** Whether or not we are saved. **d.** Our works get judged concerning our motives but our salvation doesn't get judged here. **e.** Our diet gets judged to see how much junk food we ate.

Introduction to Romans 15

Romans 14 and 15 are Paul's practical advice to first century Christians about how to love one another while the NT is being written, accepted by boots on the ground believers long before church councils like the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, were formed and individual books of the NT are being hand-copied and distributed to churches throughout the Roman Empire. Paul puts great emphasis on saved Jews and saved Gentiles treating each other with love and helping each other to grow spiritually in Christ while they wait for the NT to be completed. Romans 14 and 15 are intensely practical instruction for Christians. In Paul's view, there is no room for Christians to fight over non-essentials.

15:1 - We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

We then that are strong - Paul continues his thought from chapter 14, weak vs. strong. In general, the weak are the saved Jews and the strong are the saved Gentiles. The idea is: Don't be one of those Christians who just talk the talk; start walking the walk. This is the practical reality of how real Christians should live it, not just talk about it.

Strong Christians have greater responsibility because they understand that NT grace has superseded OT law. Weak Christians haven't yet got their minds around that truth. Strong Christians know the joyful truth of Romans 6:14 and 10:4, that Christians are under NT grace, not OT law. That truth is a game changer for everyone who believes it, takes it to heart and lives that reality every day. When you pass from death unto life, from OT law to NT grace, your life will never be the same again.

1. What do strong Christians know? **a.** They know that the law of Moses is a yoke around their necks forever, Acts 15:10. **b.** They know that they must work to earn their salvation for as long as they live. **c.** They know that nothing in life is free and they'd better keep working if they want to stay saved. **d.** They know that the death of Christ ended the reign of OT law and started the reign of totally awesome and absolutely free NT grace, Hebrews 9:15-17.

2. Do you understand that OT law has ended and NT grace is God's plan right now? _____ 3. When did OT law end? **a.** When Malachi, the 39th book of the OT was written. **b.** When Matthew, the fortieth book of the Bible and the first book of the NT was written. **c.** When John the Baptist started baptizing. **d.** On the cross, when Christ died, Hebrews 9:15-17. **e.** When Christ resurrected from the dead. 4. When did the New Testament period of grace begin? **a.** When the Gospel of Matthew was written. **b.** When the apostle Paul got saved, Acts 9. **c.** When Christ died on the cross of Calvary, Matthew 27:50, Hebrews 9:15-17.

ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, - Bearing *the infirmities of the weak* is in the context of Romans 14 and what Paul has already taught us about weak Christians. This is about understanding OT law vs. NT grace. This is about the startling truth that NT grace has superseded and replaced OT law. Bearing *the infirmities of the weak* is not about going along with false doctrine and false teachers and is not about dumbing down biblical morality.

Weak Christians are tempted to get upset with strong Christians who hold to Bible doctrine and biblical morality. Sometimes weak Christians insist that

Romans 14 and 15 are telling us not to take a stand for Bible doctrine and biblical morality. Strong Christians must not give in to the misinterpretation and misapplication sometimes made by weak Christians in Romans 14 and 15. Bible doctrine and biblical morality are non-negotiables and are not to be compromised for any reason.

1. What makes a weak Christian weak? _____
2. What makes a strong Christian strong? _____
3. This next one is a trick question. Who is more saved, weak Christians or strong Christians? _____ Why? _____
4. Do weak Christians have eternal security? _____ 5. Are weak Christians sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption? _____
6. How do weak Christians become strong Christians? _____

bear the infirmities of the weak - This is not an unconditional surrender of our Christian liberty. Instead, this is biblical love and spiritual wisdom, a recognition that edifying our brothers and sisters in Christ in the local church is a vitally important part of our Christian life. Living a genuinely spiritual Christian life requires sacrifice on our part. Instead of spiritually aborting baby Christians, we are to grow them up spiritually, to nurture and edify them so that they become strong Christians.

What does it mean for strong Christians *to bear the infirmities of the weak*? In the list that follows, did we discover, in Romans 14, any clues about what it means for strong Christians to bear the infirmities of the weak? Why should strong Christians bear the infirmities of the weak? Because we are told:

1. Receive weak Christians - 14:1
2. Weak Christians are saved - 14:1
3. Do not despise weak Christians - 14:2
4. Do not judge weak Christians - 14:4
5. Weak Christians are worshiping the Lord - 14:6
6. Weak Christians are living unto the Lord - 14:8
7. Weak Christians are the Lord's - 14:8
8. Weak Christians will stand before the judgment seat of Christ - 14:10
9. Weak Christians will give account of themselves to God - 14:12
10. If weak Christians esteem it unclean, to them it is unclean - 14:14
11. Weak Christians are our brethren in Christ - 14:15
12. For weak Christians, follow after things which make for peace - 14:19
13. Do not stumble, offend or make weak a weak Christian - 14:21

Strong Christians have a duty (a duty is based on a moral or ethical principle in the Bible) and an obligation (an obligation is a set of rules based on mutual agreement or shared law) to weak Christians, to bear their infirmities, Romans 15:1. That should be unmistakably clear from Romans 14 and 15. God, Paul and the Bible see being a weak Christian as an infirmity.

It is not a glowing compliment to be called a weak Christian. Weak Christians are weak precisely because they have rejected and refused to accept the biblical truth that Jesus showed Paul, Romans 14:14. The word, bear, as in, *bear the infirmities of the weak*, as used here, means: to carry, to sustain, to uphold, to support. It is the same word used in Matthew 8:17 and 20:12, Luke 10:5, Galatians 6:2, 5, Revelation 2:3.

What would it look like if you as a strong Christian were to *bear the infirmities of the weak*? _____

If you were bearing the infirmities of the weak, what would you be doing differently in your life than you are doing now? _____

infirmities of the weak - The particular infirmity the strong should help the weak bear is their lack of understanding that NT grace has superseded OT law. That refers to the three basic issues Paul listed in Romans 14:2, 5, 21.

1. Can I eat meat and still please God?
2. Can I drink wine and still please God?
3. Can I ignore Jewish days and still please God, Colossians 2:16?

The answer is, yes, of course you can do all of those things which were proscribed under OT law and still please God. God's salvation and favor come by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. NT grace, meaning, the free grace of God in Christ, has replaced OT law as the way to find favor with God. Since the resurrection of Christ, no one has to keep OT law to get saved or to stay saved or to earn God's favor.

and not to please ourselves. - It is natural and human to please ourselves but it is not Christian to only please ourselves when we're interacting with weak brethren. If you think it's easy to live as a Christian, then you haven't spent much time living as a Christian. Romans 15:1 is rubber meets the road Christianity. It is about treating your weak Christian brethren like they are your beloved baby brothers and sisters in Christ.

Not to please ourselves means: Doing what is most likely to edify your weak brothers and sisters in Christ and help them learn and grow strong in their

Christian understanding and Christian faith, instead of pleasing yourself. It means not keeping the focus on you and your liberties and your wants and desires and your rights and instead, putting others ahead of yourself. That is part of being a strong Christian. Does living that way sound easy? _____

15:2 - Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

Let every one of us please his neighbour - Is Paul talking about your next door neighbor who is unsaved or is he talking about your neighbor at church? It's easy to shift responsibility like the scribe in Luke 10:25-37 tried to shift responsibility. Based on Jesus' teaching in Luke 10:25-37, who is your neighbor in Romans 15:2? _____

for his good to edification. - *For his good* means for his spiritual good, making the spiritual growth and spiritual health of your weak Christian neighbor one of your priorities in life. It is so easy to get inwardly focused or self-focused and lose sight of what God has for us to do. God's plan is to use you to help your weak brothers and sisters grow in their faith and knowledge and practice, so that they're living as genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You cannot do that if you're not strong in the Lord yourself. Are you reading the Bible and learning the Bible? _____ Are you consistently growing in your faith? _____ Is growing as a Christian your primary focus in life or do you have many priorities ahead of growing as a Christian? _____ Who is responsible for changing your priorities so that your Christian life comes first?

Pleasing your neighbor doesn't mean abandoning Bible truth or accepting bad doctrine or bad behavior. God intends all of us to be involved in ministry. Helping weak Christians grow is vital to the growth of the local church and the fulfillment of God's plan to evangelize the world. God's plan is for strong Christians to be involved in the spiritual growth of baby Christians and weak Christians.

Let's Define Edification

Edification means to come alongside your weak brothers and sisters in Christ and help them grow spiritually. Edify means to build up your weak brothers and sisters in faith and knowledge, to tenderly care for their spiritual health as part of your spiritual responsibility as a strong Christian.

Part of edifying others is to pray for them and pray with them and teach them to pray. It also means to teach them how to live by faith and walk by faith, using

yourself as their example. Are you living by faith and walking by faith? _____
Are you an example that weak Christians can follow? _____
Do you remember the golden rule in the gospels, Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31? This is one of those cases where the neighborly ethos of OT law still exists under NT grace. This neighborly ethos is based on the law of Moses, Leviticus 19:18, 34.

Have you thought about how you can obey Romans 15:2? _____ Please list four ways you can please and edify your neighbor in 2022.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

15:3 - For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

For even Christ pleased not himself; - Jesus came as Israel's Messiah Savior and that's not what national Israel expected. Unsaved Messiah rejecting national Israel expected their Messiah to be a political King who would overthrow the Roman government and make Israel a free and independent nation again. Christ pleased not Himself and Christ pleased not national Israel. *Christ pleased not Himself* can be understood in several ways.

Christ pleased not Himself in the sense of Philippians 2:5-8. **a.** He made himself of no reputation. Jesus our Creator God lowered Himself to become a man, John 1:14, 1 Timothy 3:16. **b.** He took upon him the form of a servant. He pleased not himself in the sense that He came to be a servant, Luke 22:24-27. He didn't come to be a political King who was ministered unto by everyone else. Jesus said, If you want to be great, be a servant, Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:25-35. **c.** He was made in the likeness of men, which is not as pleasing as being the God Who created everything. **d.** He pleased not Himself in the sense that He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

but, as it is written, - Paul quotes the OT seven times in Romans 15. Paul quotes the OT here to make his point because Paul never tries to divorce the OT from the NT. Every Christian on earth should follow Paul as Paul followed Christ and never attempt to divorce the OT from the NT, 1 Corinthians 11:1. What Paul quotes here is from Psalm 69:9.

The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. - Paul quotes Psalm 69:9. Historically, David says this about himself being reproached by his adversaries in ancient Israel. In the OT, David is a type of Christ. In Romans 15:3, the Holy Spirit leads Paul to apply David's words to Jesus Christ as Israel's Messiah. In that scenario, the adversaries of Christ, the ones who are reproaching Christ in national Israel are the scribes and lawyers and the Pharisees and Sadducees, Romans 11:28.

When you read Psalm 69, much of that Psalm has prophetic application to Messiah Jesus and Calvary. This truth reminds us that scripture can have more than one meaning, including meanings and applications beyond the historical meaning of scripture in its original context.

15:4 - For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime - *written aforetime* refers to the OT, not the NT. Paul is teaching the relevance of the OT to NT Christians on the resurrection side of Calvary. That is an important truth to keep in mind.

1. Have you noticed that you never find Jesus or any of the human authors of the NT trying to divorce the OT from vibrant soul-winning Christianity? _____
2. Should modern Christians try to divorce the OT from the NT or try to divorce the OT from the glorious gospel of Christ? _____
3. Why is divorcing the OT from NT Christianity a dumb idea? _____
4. Did any of the human authors of the Bible try to divorce the OT from the NT or the OT from the gospel of Christ? _____
5. Please list apostles or pastors in the NT who tried to divorce the OT from the NT? _____

*“Then he (Jesus) said unto them,
O fools, and slow of heart
to believe all that the (OT) prophets have spoken:
Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,
and to enter into his glory?
And beginning at Moses and all the (OT) prophets,
he expounded unto them
in all the (OT) scriptures
the things concerning himself.”
Luke 24:25-27.*

were written for our learning, - In the first century, Christians were learning how to be Christians without having a completed NT to read and study and memorize and obey. They were using the OT because the OT told them about the coming Messiah. The OT was not just for OT Jews. The OT was also for those of us who are Gentiles. The OT was *written for our learning*.

Paul has a purpose in telling us this. Beginning in Romans 15:9, Paul is going to quote six verses from the OT, to teach us that we must get along in the body of Christ in the NT - we must not please ourselves - because God intends to save every Gentile who believes on Christ as Savior. As Jews and Gentiles believe on the Lord Jesus, they will all become Christians in the body of Christ, no longer Jews, no longer Gentiles, Galatians 3:28. For that evangelism to be successful, the body of Christ must work together instead of being torn apart by arguments and infighting.

OT Judaism, in its day, was God's glorious truth and was the only way to God. Before the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, if you were a Gentile who wanted to get saved, you obeyed God and became a convert to OT Judaism in some way, 2 Kings 5:1, 17-18.

After the resurrection of Christ, OT Judaism was no longer God's only glorious truth and becoming a convert to OT Judaism was no longer the way to God. After the resurrection of Christ, Jesus was the only way to God, not OT Judaism, John 14:6, Acts 4:12.

After the resurrection of Christ, OT Judaism was an obsolete, has been, yesterday religion in this sense. Once God's ultimate sacrifice, *the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*, John 1:29, had been offered, God didn't accept any more animal sacrifices from Jewish priests in the Jewish temple or anywhere else.

From the death and resurrection of Christ on, OT sacrifices were nothing more than empty religious rituals. Messiah had come and had died for the sins of the world. God had accepted the *once for all*, Hebrews 10:10, sacrifice of Christ, signaling His acceptance by raising Christ from the dead. The OT sacrificial system which pointed to the coming Messiah was no longer the way to a holy God and could no longer please God.

After the resurrection of Christ, OT Jewish sacrifices were a denial of the gospel, a denial of Calvary, a denial of NT grace, a denial of the absolute sufficiency of Christ alone. It took centuries for some Christians to get up to speed on those truths. Instead of believing the preaching of their godly pastors and apostles, about NT grace replacing OT law, they kept fighting the truth as it is in Jesus.

They wrestled with the idea of walking away from OT law and living in the glorious freedom of NT grace provided by the Lord Jesus Christ. God's good news was so good they struggled to believe it.

written for our learning, - *Our learning* refers to NT Christians on the grace side of Calvary, also known as, the resurrection side of Calvary. Is there even a hint in Romans 15:4, that Paul wants Christians to divorce Christianity from the OT or from their Christian lives or from their frame of reference? _____ If we're following the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul, will we use the OT for our learning or will we divorce the OT from our Christianity? _____

Let's look at an example of OT truth that informs and illuminates our understanding in the NT time frame and in the twenty-first century. Christians tend to bend, form and shape what the Bible says, to match their desires so they can maintain the illusion that they are following Christ even when they are most assuredly not following Christ. The Bible is clear about this topic of not making affinity, 1 Kings 3:1, Ezra 9:14, with unsaved folks, with unbelievers.

Don't form romantic friendships with unbelievers!

Don't waste your romantic life on unbelievers!

Don't make affinity with unbelievers!

Don't shack up with unbelievers!

Don't marry unbelievers!

Don't date unbelievers!

If you get romantically close to unbelievers, they will have more influence upon you for evil than you will have upon them for good. You will tend to adopt their ways instead of them getting saved and adopting God's ways. Their false religion and their pagan ways will have more influence upon you and the way you live than your Christianity will uplift and influence the way they live. If the Bible is true, you are sinning, you are doing evil, you are living wickedly when you disobey God on this issue and get romantically involved with unbelievers.

Have you considered how much your disobedience to God will cost you?

The OT says NOT to do this.

Deuteronomy 7:1-11

thou shalt make no covenant with them - v. 2

Neither shalt thou make marriages with them - v. 3

thy daughter shalt thou not give unto his son - v. 3

nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son - v. 3

For they will turn away thy son from following me - v. 4

so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you - v. 4

ye shall destroy their altars - v. 5

and break down their images - v. 5

and cut down their groves - v. 5

and burn their graven images with fire - v. 5

For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God - v. 6

the LORD thy God hath chosen thee - v. 6

to be a special people unto himself above all people - v. 6

and redeemed you out of the house of bondage - v. 8

the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy - v. 9

with them that love him and keep his commandments - v. 9

And repayeth them that hate him to their face - v. 10

to destroy them - v. 10

he will not be slack to him that hateth him - v. 10

he will repay him to his face - v. 10

Thou shalt therefore keep the

commandments - v. 11

1. Which commandments? **a.** The Ten Commandments. **b.** The 613 commandments in the law of Moses. **c.** In context, the specific commandments about not making affinity with and staying separate from unbelievers.
2. Is Deu 7:1-11 teaching us it's okay to date unsaved people? _____
3. Is Deu 7:1-11 teaching us it's okay to have sex with unsaved people? _____
4. Is Deu 7:1-11 teaching us it's okay to get engaged to the unsaved? _____
5. Is Deu 7:1-11 teaching us it's okay to marry unsaved people? _____
6. According to Deu 7:4, what is one good reason God warns us against dating, living with or marrying unsaved people? _____

Judges 1:1-5, 28, 2:1-4, 3:5-7

that we may fight against the Canaanites - Jud 1:3

ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land - Jud 2:2

ye shall throw down their altars - Jud 2:2

they shall be as thorns in your sides - Jud 2:3

their gods shall be a snare unto you - Jud 2:3

and they took their daughters to be their wives - Jud 3:6

and gave their daughters to their sons - Jud 3:6

and served their gods - Jud 3:6

And the children of Israel did evil - Jud 3:7

and forgot the LORD their God - Jud 3:7

and served Baalim and the groves - Jud 3:7

Canaanites represent the world which is against God and His truth. Fight against the Canaanites means to resist them, to oppose them and their unbiblical ungodly pagan ways. The problem with many Christians is, they are too lazy and unspiritual to ever fight against or oppose the Canaanites/world. For us in the twenty-first century, fighting against the Canaanites means not making affinity with unbelievers, not getting romantic with unsaved pagans (anyone who is unsaved is a pagan), not being friends of the world and living worldly, taking God's side against the world, the flesh and the devil. Some professing Christians are afraid to oppose the world, the flesh and the devil. They are gutless wonders.

They are too busy getting along with the world to fight the Canaanites or resist the Canaanites. They are too busy dating the Canaanites and having sex with the Canaanites and marrying the Canaanites and getting drunk with the Canaanites to fight the Canaanites.

Fight is, for us, metaphorical. We don't get in fist fights with the Canaanites. We oppose their false teaching and we evangelize them with the glorious gospel of Christ so that they will get saved. We don't evangelize them by treating them like they're already saved. Preach the gospel to them instead of getting drunk with them, instead of getting romantic with them.

1. Are you fighting the Canaanites or getting along with them? _____
2. Are you fighting the Canaanites or dating them? _____
3. Are you fighting the Canaanites or marrying them? _____
4. Are you fighting the Canaanites or being a barfly with them? _____
5. Are you fighting the Canaanites or getting drunk with them? _____
6. Is God's will crystal clear or hard to figure out on this issue? _____

1 Kings 11:1-14 - King Solomon

Loved many strange women - v. 1

Ye shall not go in to them - v. 2

for surely they will turn away your heart -v. 3

and his wives turned away his heart - v. 3

his wives turned away his heart after other gods - v. 4

his heart was not perfect with the LORD his god - v. 4

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth - v. 5

And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD - v. 6

and went not fully after the LORD - v. 6

Solomon tolerated / facilitated worship of false gods - v. 7-8

And the LORD was angry with Solomon - v. 9

because his heart was turned from the LORD God - v. 9

but he kept not that which the LORD God commanded - v. 10

God rended the kingdom from Solomon - v. 11

And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon - 14

1. According to 1 Kings 11, why should Christians not date or get romantically involved with unsaved people? _____
2. If a Christian disobeys God and goes in to unsaved people, 1 Kings 11:2, is his heart perfect with the LORD his God, 1 Kings 11:4? _____
3. According to 1 Kings 11:6, is it good or is it evil to have marriage relationships and sexual relationships with unsaved people? _____
4. According to 1 Kings 11:9, does marrying unsaved people make God happy or make God angry? _____
5. Does God judge the sin of marrying unsaved people and the sin of having sex with unsaved people? _____

Ezra 9:1

*Now when these things were done,
the princes came to me, saying,
The people of Israel,
and the priests, and the Levites,
have not separated themselves
from the people of the lands,
doing according to their abominations,
even of the Canaanites, the Hittites,
the Perizzites, the Jebusites,
the Ammonites, the Moabites,
the Egyptians, and the Amorites.*

1. Must God's people separate themselves from the people of the land? _____
2. Why? _____
3. If everyone is doing it, does that make it okay? _____

Ezra 9:2

*For they have taken of their daughters for themselves,
and for their sons:
so that the holy seed have mingled themselves
with the people of those lands:
yea, the hand of the princes and rulers
hath been chief in this trespass.*

1. Who led the people to do evil? _____
2. If your leaders do evil, does that make it right to do evil? _____

Ezra 9:3

*And when I heard this thing,
I rent my garment and my mantle,
and plucked off the hair
of my head and of my beard,
and sat down astonished.*

1. Was Ezra happy or grieved at Israel's wickedness? _____

2. What was Israel's wickedness that grieved Ezra? _____

Ezra 9:4

*Then were assembled unto me
every one that trembled at
the words of the God of Israel,
because of the transgression
of those that had been carried away;
and I sat astonished
until the evening sacrifice.*

1. What transgression is Ezra talking about here? _____

2. Trembling at *the words of the God of Israel* implies: **a.** They didn't care what God said, **b.** They had incurred the wrath of God by their disobedience and disregard for God's words, **c.** They were afraid of God's wrath upon their disobedience, **d.** They were beginning to realize how important it is to obey God's words.

Ezra 9:5

*And at the evening sacrifice
I arose up from my heaviness;
and having rent my garment
and my mantle,
I fell upon my knees,
and spread out my hands
unto the LORD my God,*

1. Does your personal sin and disobedience cause heaviness in you? _____

2. Does your sin bring you to your knees in prayer and repentance? _____

Ezra 9:6

*And said, O my God,
I am ashamed and blush
to lift up my face to thee, my God:
for our iniquities are increased
over our head, and our trespass
is grown up unto the heavens.*

1. Does your sin make you ashamed of yourself before God? _____
2. Does your sin make you lift up your face to God in prayer? _____
3. Where are a Christian's sins right now? _____
4. Are you willing to humble down and get right with God? _____

Ezra 9:7

*Since the days of our fathers
have we been in a great trespass
unto this day; and for our iniquities
have we, our kings, and our priests,
been delivered into the hand
of the kings of the lands,
to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil,
and to confusion of face, as it is this day.*

1. Is getting romantic with unsaved people a *great trespass* or just a minor disagreement with God? _____
2. What was God's judgment upon them for their sin? _____

Ezra 9:11

*Which thou hast commanded
by thy servants the prophets, saying,
The land, unto which ye go to possess it,
is an unclean land with the filthiness
of the people of the lands,
with their abominations,*

which have filled it from one end to another
with their uncleanness.

1. Should believers go along with uncleanness? _____
2. Should believers join in the filthiness of the people of the land? _____
3. What happens when believers get romantically involved with unbelievers and make affinity with unbelievers? _____

Ezra 9:12

*Now therefore give not your daughters
unto their sons,
neither take their daughters
unto your sons,
nor seek their peace
or their wealth for ever:
that ye may be strong,
and eat the good of the land,
and leave it for an inheritance
to your children for ever.*

1. Is it up to each individual whether or not to marry unbelievers? _____
2. If God says not to marry unbelievers, is it still okay to date unbelievers? _____
3. Is it still okay to romantically date unbelievers? _____
4. Is it still okay to have sex with unbelievers as long as you don't marry them?
5. Is it okay to seek the peace and wealth of unbelievers? _____
6. Will disobeying God on this issue make you strong or weak? _____

Ezra 9:13

And after all that is come upon us

*for our evil deeds,
and for our great trespass,
seeing that thou our God
hast punished us less than
our iniquities deserve,
and hast given us such deliverance as this;*

1. Getting romantically involved with unbelievers = *evil deeds*. Yes or No?
2. Getting romantically involved with unbelievers = *a great trespass*? Yes or No?
3. Do you love God enough and trust God enough to obey Him about who you date/marry? _____

Define affinity: Affinity means: affection, closeness, fondness, rapport, sympathy, kinship, compatibility, partiality toward, likeness, alliance, association, connection. The Hebrew word translated, affinity, in the Bible refers to marriage and means: Don't get so close to unbelievers that you want to marry them and spend your life with them because they will end up evangelizing you for the world and for evil instead of you evangelizing them for salvation.

Ezra 9:14

*Should we again break thy commandments,
and join in affinity
with the people of these abominations?
wouldst not thou be angry with us
till thou hadst consumed us,
so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?*

1. Is getting romantic with unbelievers breaking God's commandments? _____
2. Is joining affinity with unbelievers something God wants us to do? _____
3. What made God angry in Ezra 9:14? _____
4. Angry - consumed - no escaping: Is that talking about judgment? _____
5. In Ezra 9, are *the people of these abominations* saved or lost? _____

6. Is it okay with God for believers to date or marry unbelievers? _____
7. Marrying unbelievers is breaking God's commandments. Yes or No?
8. Is it rational to argue, I can live with an unbeliever as if we are married, as long as I don't marry an unbeliever? _____

Ezra 9:15

*O LORD God of Israel,
thou art righteous:
for we remain yet escaped,
as it is this day:
behold, we are before thee
in our trespasses:
for we cannot stand before thee
because of this.*

1. What trespasses is Ezra talking about? _____
2. What kept Israel from standing before God in Ezra 9:15? **a.** They were marrying fellow Israelite believers. **b.** They were marrying pagan unbelievers.

Ezra 10:11

*Now therefore make confession
unto the LORD God of your fathers,
and do his pleasure:
and separate yourselves
from the people of the land,
and from the strange wives.*

1. Should believers confess their sin of chasing after, getting romantic with, dating and marrying unbelievers? _____
2. If you have to confess it as sin, does that mean it's right or wrong? _____
3. Does *do his pleasure* imply that God's pleasure for his believing people is to not date, not get romantic with and not marry unbelievers? _____

4. Does *separate yourselves from the people of the land* imply that believers should not make affinity with, get romantic with or date *unbelievers*? _____
5. *Separate yourselves... from the strange wives*. What does that mean? _____

Ezra 10:12

*Then all the congregation answered
and said with a loud voice,
As thou hast said, so must we do.*

1. All the congregation agreed to obey God on this issue. Will you? _____
2. Is this an “I must obey God” issue for you? _____

Ezra 10:13

*But the people are many,
and it is a time of much rain,
and we are not able to stand without,
neither is this a work of one day or two:
for we are many that
have transgressed in this thing.*

1. Is sin less sinful if a lot of people are doing it? _____
2. Should Christians follow the crowd or obey the Bible? _____
3. Is there any excuse for intentionally disobeying God? _____

Ezra 10:14

*Let now our rulers
of all the congregation stand,
and let all them which have
taken strange wives in our cities
come at appointed times,
and with them the elders of every city,*

*and the judges thereof,
until the fierce wrath of our God
for this matter be turned from us.*

1. The issue is that believing Jews were marrying strange wives, meaning: they were marrying unsaved people who didn't obey God. True or False

2. When believers disobey God and marry unbelievers, did that make God angry and stir up His fierce wrath? _____

Nehemiah 13:23-31

13:23 - In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:

13:24 - And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.

13:25 - And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

13:26 - Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

13:27 - Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

13:28 - And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me.

Neh 13:29 - Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

13:30 - Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

13:31 - *And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.*

1. In Nehemiah 13, is it possible to figure out what God is telling us? _____
2. Were Ashdod, Ammon and Moab believers or unbelievers? _____
3. According to Nehemiah 13:25, should believers confront evil? _____
4. According to Neh 13:26, did Solomon sin by marrying strange wives? _____
5. *even him did outlandish women cause to sin*, Neh 13:26. What does that mean? _____

The NT Says NOT To Do This 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 39

7:1 - *Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

7:2 - *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

Only in the Lord

7:39 - *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*

1. In your own words, what is the meaning of, only in the Lord, in 1 Corinthians 7:39? _____

2. Which of the following excuses will God accept so we don't have to obey 1 Corinthians 7:39, about marriage: *only in the Lord*? **a.** But we love each other. **b.** But (s)he is so nice. **c.** Love is too special to pass up. **d.** I know what I'm doing. **e.** Some of my Christian friends have told me it's okay. **f.** I'm praying (s)he will get saved. **g.** We read the Bible together. **h.** I'm tired of being lonely. **i.** Someone online said it's okay. **j.** That's just your interpretation; I read it differently. **k.** I don't take things as literally as you. **l.** It's not saying, Don't do it. It's saying, Be

careful if you shack up with or marry someone who isn't saved. m. None of the above.

3. Does the wording of 1 Corinthians 13:39 leave leeway for a Christian to date an unsaved person, get romantic with an unsaved person, shack up with an unsaved person or marry an unsaved person? _____ What is your reasoning?

2 Corinthians 6:14ff.

6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

6:15 - And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

6:16 - And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

6:17 - Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

6:18 - And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We are commanded to not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The Greek word used here is ἑτεροζυγέω heterozygeō, pronounced he-ter-rah-zoog-gay'-o. It means to have the wrong yoke, to have a different yoke, to be yoked unequally, to be yoked with someone who does not match you, to be yoked to someone who is not suited to you, to be yoked to someone who, according to God, is definitely not a spiritual match for you.

Paul seems to be reasoning from Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 7, but he is expanding the prohibition from farming (the reference to yokes) to personal relationships which are forbidden under the New Covenant.

*Ye shall keep my statutes.
Thou shalt not let thy cattle*

*gender with a diverse kind:
thou shalt not sow thy field
with mingled seed:
neither shall a garment
mingled of linen and woollen
come upon thee.
Leviticus 19:19*

God intends His believing people to be separate from unbelieving people of the world so He regulates how we may interact and what we may do, even in an endeavor as simple as farming and making cloth for clothing. The principle is, the people of God are not like the world, therefore God commands His people to do things differently than the world does them.

These were the rules under OT law. We are on the resurrection side of Calvary so we are not under OT law, Romans 6:14. We point out these OT rules to show the OT basis for what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 in the NT. Instead of regulating our farming practices under NT grace, God regulates who we can get religiously involved with and romantically involved with because, under NT grace, our bodies are God's temple, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

OT Rules - Leviticus 19:19

1. Don't mingle divers kinds of cattle when you breed
 2. Don't mingle divers seeds when you plant your field
 3. Don't mingle divers threads when you make clothing
- Deuteronomy 22:11

OT Rules - Deuteronomy 22:10

Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. - Deuteronomy 22:10

In the OT, a wild ass represents an unsaved man, born wild and unsaved, rebellious and headstrong. "*For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.*" Job 11:12. The idea is, an ass and an ox are mismatched in size and strength and temperament. They are a different size. They have different personalities. They are vastly different in strength. They have a different gait. They are not natural partners in the yoke and they do not naturally work well together. Don't keep raising objections. Learn to read and believe what God says in the Bible. Humble down and believe God.

In the same way, an unsaved person and a saved person are mismatched morally and spiritually. God is not interested in unsaved people serving Him. God's will is that unsaved people get saved and then serve Him as saved people. Just as an ox and an ass should not be unequally yoked, so saved and lost should not be unequally yoked, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

A Christian should never be yoked with - dating, getting romantic, having sex, getting engaged, getting married to - an unbeliever because that is an unequal yoke. Christians and unbelievers don't love the same God, don't worship the same God, don't serve the same God. Christians and unbelievers have different motivations, different goals, different purposes, different priorities. Christians are focused on serving the true and living God. Unbelievers are serving the devil and not God. No matter how you try to make it work, it doesn't work when a Christian marries an unbeliever. God is always against that unequal yoke.

**Stop trying to make the Bible mean
the opposite of what it says.**

Christians should never date unbelievers. Christians should never get romantic with unbelievers. Christians should never romantically pursue unbelievers. Christians should never have sex with unbelievers. Christians should never shack up with unbelievers and live together as if they are married. Christians should never get engaged to unbelievers. Christians should never marry unbelievers. Here is some of the biblical reasoning for why a Christian with an unbeliever is an unequal yoke.

**Christians vs. Unbelievers
2 Corinthians 6:14-18
Don't be unequally yoked**

1. righteousness with unrighteousness
2. light with darkness - John 3:19
3. Christ with Belial (Satan)
4. he that believeth with an infidel (unbeliever)
5. temple of God with idols
6. clean vs. unclean - Isaiah 52:11
7. be separate - don't join with them
8. be clean - don't touch the unclean thing
9. be obedient to God, not to your lusts
10. the unsaved have a different father - John 8:44

Those are the issues as God sees them, when a Christian decides to disobey God and yoke up with an unbeliever. When you do that, you are testifying that you don't believe God, you don't care what God thinks, you don't care what the Bible says, you are determined not to do God's will, you are going to see if you can get away with disobeying God on the issue of marriage to and romance with a lost hell-bound sinner. This disobedient mindset is described in Ezekiel 5:6.

*“And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness
more than the nations, and my statutes
more than the (Gentile) countries that are round about her:
for they have refused my judgments and my statutes,
they have not walked in them.”
Ezekiel 5:6.*

The issue of whether or not God wants us to marry an unbeliever illustrates why we should never divorce the NT from the OT, the NT gospel from the OT, NT Christianity from the OT. The OT supports and serves as the foundation of the NT. They are inextricably linked and cannot be separated from each other.

*“For whatsoever things
were written aforetime (OT)
were written for our learning,
that we through patience
and comfort of the scriptures
might have hope.”
Romans 15:4.*

*“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:
and they are written (OT) for our admonition,
upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
1 Corinthians 10:11.*

*“Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying,
Write thee all the words that
I have spoken unto thee in a book.”
Jeremiah 30:2.*

that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures - The scriptures are God's words in a book - Joshua 1:8, Isaiah 34:16, the oracles of God or the words of God, Jeremiah 30:2, Romans 3:2, meaning the OT, and the spoken words of God, John 14:23, and the written words of God, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, the *more sure word of prophesy* which Peter wrote about in 2 Peter 1:15-21. When

Paul uses the word, *scriptures* here, he is referring primarily to the OT because the NT had not been completed when Paul wrote Romans.

through patience - Patience of the scriptures implies that things don't happen overnight. Prayers don't always get answered overnight. Situations don't always get solved overnight. Needs don't always get met overnight. Therefore, we need patience to trust God, patience to wait on God and patience to serve God faithfully while we're waiting on Him.

and comfort of the scriptures - The scriptures do not comfort the rebellious and disobedient in their rebellion and disobedience. If you want the comfort of the scriptures, you must obey the scriptures. Many Christians make up their mind to disobey what the Bible says and then claim they don't feel under conviction from God about their disobedience, therefore, they feel fine continuing to rebel. Sometimes they claim that God is blessing them in their disobedience. Can a saved man disobey God? Of course he can. Is that a wise thing to do? No, intentional disobedience to God is incredibly foolish.

we... might have hope. - This is aimed at NT Christians on the grace side of Calvary. Paul is crystal clear that we, NT Christians, are to use the OT for our learning so that we, NT Christians, through patience and comfort of the OT scriptures, *might have hope*. Can you think of a spiritual lesson you've learned or had reinforced based on what the OT says? _____ Please share a lesson you've learned from the OT. _____

Never follow false teachers in their deluded efforts to divorce the OT from the NT, or their deluded efforts to divorce NT Christianity from the OT. There is great encouragement in the OT for NT Christians. There are great examples, great life lessons, great spiritual principles, excellent practical teaching for NT Christians when we read, study and ponder what the OT says. Will you read the OT and let God speak truth to your heart ? _____ Share with us a lesson you have learned from the book of Proverbs. _____

A Practical Example For Today

Let's look at an example of OT truth that informs and illuminates our understanding in the NT time frame and in the twenty-first century. Christians tend to bend, form and shape what the Bible says, to match their desires so they can maintain the illusion that they are following Christ even when they are most assuredly not following Christ. The Bible is abundantly clear about this.

Instructions For Christians

Don't romantically pursue hellbound unbelievers!
Don't form romantic friendships with unbelievers!
Don't waste your romantic life with unbelievers!
Don't make affinity with hellbound unbelievers!
Don't date hellbound unbelievers!
Don't marry hellbound unbelievers!
Don't rebel against God on this issue!

If you get romantically close to unbelievers, they will have more influence upon you for evil than you will influence them for good. You will tend to adopt their habits, their past-times, their ways instead of them adopting your Bible believing Christian ways. How do we know that? We know that because that is what the OT tells us time after time.

Their false religion will have more influence upon you and the way you live than your OT Judaism / NT Christianity will influence the way they live. According to the OT, you are sinning, doing evil, living wickedly when you disobey God on this issue.

Develop the ability to recognize a Bible blockhead when you hear one and then develop the spiritual fortitude NOT to follow a Bible blockhead who wants you to divorce your Christianity from the OT. Paul says to learn from the OT in Romans 15:4 and every Christian with spiritual common sense follows Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:1. If you've got a King James Bible and if you believe the King James Bible, you don't have to be a spiritual dummy and you don't have to follow Bible blockheads. Kindly and gently, share God's truth in Romans 15:4 with them. If they reject the truth twice, then move on, Titus 3:10-11.

15:5 - Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Now the God of patience and consolation - God is the God of patience and consolation precisely because living a biblical Christian life is difficult and challenging. Calling yourself a Christian isn't the same as really being a Christian or the same as living a biblical Christian life. Sometimes we need patience.

Patience occurs 34 times in 33 verses of the KJV New Testament. The apostle Paul uses the word, patience, 16 of the 34 times it occurs, including 5 times in Romans. If you're following Paul and living for Jesus as Paul lived for Jesus, you

will need patience and consolation. The need for patience and consolation is just a normal part of being a Bible believing Christian.

Biblical patience

Patience is waiting on God to do things in His own way (the only correct way), not your way, on His timetable (the only correct timetable), not your timetable. The opposite of patience is found in the story of Abram, Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16. Let's read and discuss Genesis 16:1-16 and discover what patience is not.

When you or anyone gets so impatient you stop waiting on God and start trying to work it out yourself, instead of waiting on God, you always create a giant, perpetually expanding mess. Would the world have been better off if Sarai and Abram had waited on God? _____ How? _____

Learning to live your Christian life while waiting patiently on God may be one of the biggest challenges of the Christian life. Do you find that to be true? _____ In what way? _____

Patience implies that:

1. God will not always answer your prayers immediately. Since God doesn't always answer your prayers immediately, that means you will need to learn to: **a.** wait on God without getting antsy, **b.** without getting impatient, **c.** without getting discouraged, **d.** without getting mad at God, and sometimes, waiting on God is difficult enough that you need consolation from God while you wait. What has been your experience of waiting on God? _____

2. You will need to live by faith and walk by faith in order to be a joyful successful Christian. That is part of growing up in Christ. Living by faith means, you will trust God: **a.** knowing that He is never late, **b.** remembering that He knows everything about your situation, **c.** resting in the truth that He has a purpose for not acting immediately, **d.** taking comfort in the truth that part of His purpose is to teach you to trust Him and wait on Him, because God is always right, God is always trustworthy and it is safe and sane and sensible to wait on God? What lessons have you learned about trusting God? _____

3. It is possible to experience the God of patience and consolation because: **a.** Christ dwells in your hearts by faith, Ephesians 3:12-17, **b.** because ye are *an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Ephesians 2:22, and **c.** the indwelling Christ

is your *hope of glory*, Colossians 1:27, and **d.** the Holy Spirit dwells in your body as His holy temple, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Biblical Consolation

God is the God of patience and consolation precisely because living a biblical Christian life is difficult and challenging. Sometimes we need consolation. Our English word, *consolation*, occurs 15 times in 14 verses in the KJV. The Greek word which is translated, consolation, comfort, exhortation, intreaty, is used 29 times in 28 verses in the Textus Receptus, including 23 times by the apostle Paul. Paul has an interesting tie in to consolation. Do you remember what they called Barnabas in Acts 4:36? _____

Why would they call him *the son of consolation*? Perhaps he had a brother who died or who did not honour his parents. Or Barnabas may have experienced some difficult tribulations in his Christian life and in those tribulations, he received comfort and consolation from God and learned to use the consolation he received to console and comfort others, 2 Corinthians 1:4-6.

Consolation means: to comfort, to give solace. Solace is a feeling of comfort, to make cheerful, to provide help in times of grief and misfortune, to allay pain and distress, to provide comfort and relief, to assuage pain, to soothe. According to Luke 2:25, Christ is the consolation of believing Israel.

When Messiah comes, He will provide comfort for believing Israel, will give solace to believing Israel, make believing Israel cheerful, provide help to believing Israel, allay the pain and distress of believing Israel, assuage the pain of believing Israel, soothe the centuries old hurt of believing Israel, aka, the remnant.

When Messiah came and national Israel, aka, unbelieving Israel rejected Him, as Jesus knew they would, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, John 16:7-14. Paul was an expert on serving God in the midst of suffering, 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, 11:23-29. Because of the suffering he endured and the consolation he received in his ministry for Christ, Paul could write 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 and all of his other epistles with confidence.

If you're going through something right now and the battle is raging all around you, take heart. God will get you through it, He will teach you lessons that are only learned in battle and He will also lead you onto victory ground. Is it safe to trust God in suffering? _____ Did you know that when God saved you, He gave you: 1. everlasting consolation, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, _____ and: 2. a strong consolation, Hebrews 6:18? _____ How rich we are in Christ!

*“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself,
and God, even our Father,
which hath loved us,
and hath given us everlasting consolation
and good hope through grace,
Comfort your hearts, and stablish you
in every good word and work.”*
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.

*“That by two immutable things,
in which it was impossible for God to lie,
we might have a strong consolation,
who have fled for refuge
to lay hold upon the hope set before us:”*
Hebrews 6:18.

grant you to be likeminded one toward another - Christians should always be ready to comfort and console each other as needed. Instead of taking pot shots at each other, one of our ministries should be to comfort and console. There should be unity in the body of Christ, a love for each other because we share the same Savior and we have a shared world view based on what the Bible says in context. We should be willing to help each other. That is part of what Paul had in mind in Romans 12:5 and 1 Corinthians 12:13-20, 25.

*“So we, being many,
are one body in Christ,
and every one members
one of another.”*
Romans 12:5.

Why should Christians be likeminded one toward another? **a.** Because all Christians have the risen Christ in their heart, **b.** Because all Christians are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, **c.** Because all Christians have the same heavenly Father, **d.** Because all Christians are part of the body of Christ. **e.** Because the Bible is supposed to be our truth and the basis of our worldview, not our worldly and often false presuppositions. **f.** All of the above.

according to Christ Jesus: - We can only be likeminded in the way God intends us to be likeminded if we are following Christ in the biblical way, 1 Corinthians 11:1. This is a qualifying phrase, *according to Christ Jesus*. Paul uses this kind of phrase to make a point. He isn't teaching a bland interspirituality of all religions or a bland intersectionality of all religions or a

bland and boring religious philosophy which is separate from the scriptures and separate from the Savior.

Everything Paul teaches is focused like a laser beam on the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to know how the God who created the universe feels about false religion and false teachers and lazy believers, read Deuteronomy 28 and 1 Kings 18 and Matthew 23. Gentle Jesus meek and mild is the ultimate Author of those chapters. Did you know that THAT is precisely how Jesus feels about false teachers and their false teaching? _____ Do you agree with Jesus about that? _____

There are no Buddhist Christians or Taoist Christians or Wiccan Christians. Those Satanic false teachings have nothing to do with the truth of the Bible and cannot be mixed with the truth of the Bible. JEHOVAH God of the Bible doesn't love, like or admire any of the false teachings of any religious false teacher. Please cite one chapter in the Bible which explains that God hates false teaching. _____

according to Christ Jesus - That means according to the GOD who created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is because the Lord Jesus Christ created the universe, Genesis 1:1, John 1:1. According to the Bible, the Creator died for the people He created, took their place, took their punishment, bore the wrath of God in their place, dying as them, for them and rose from the dead on the third day, proving that God the Father accepted His payment for their sins.

That's why, if you ever get saved and get into heaven, it will be because you got saved according to Christ Jesus. You must believe on the risen Christ who created the universe and everything in it, who also died on the cross as the payment for your sins. If you struggle to believe that but want to believe that, God will help you believe that, Romans 1:16-18. You can get saved today if you will believe on the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Are you saved today? _____

15:6 - That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That ye may with one mind - This isn't group think or hive mind or herd mentality or mindless conformity regardless of truth. Instead, *one mind* describes biblical unity; unity based on believing what the Bible says in context. It is important to remind ourselves that all unity is not good unity and all unity is not biblical unity. Biblical unity is never interfaith religiosity.

In the Bible, religious unity of Christians with false religions and false teachers is never encouraged. It isn't your job as a Christian to seek interfaith religious unity. It is your job as a Christian to always resist interfaith religious unity. Christians evangelize people of other faiths. We do not refuse to evangelize them and then seek religious unity with them by adding their pagan teaching to Christianity.

You cannot be of one mind with your fellow Christians if you are joining affinity with unsaved people and living in open rebellion against God. In the Bible, no OT believer in God, Judges 2:10, and no NT believer in the Lord Jesus Christ ever sought religious unity with pagans. God warns His people against marrying pagans and we are warned against being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. It's an unequal yoke precisely because unsaved people are unbelievers.

**God doesn't want you getting
married to an unsaved person.**

Some Christians try to weasel their way around God's prohibition against marrying pagans, Numbers 33:51-56, Deuteronomy 7:1-6, Joshua 23:6-13, 1 Kings 11:1-12, Ezra 9:1-4, 10-14, Nehemiah 13:26, Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:1-11, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, by becoming close friends with pagans, by dating pagans and/or cohabiting with pagans without benefit of marriage.

They excuse their unbiblical conduct by saying: Well, I'm not married to her; she's a common law wife, not a legal wife. If God doesn't want you marrying them, then He also doesn't want you dating them or cohabiting with them as if you are married. The biblical idea is don't get too cosy with them because they will end up converting you instead of you converting them.

**The Bible never encourages believers
to unite with: a. unsaved folks,
b. false teachers, and, c. false doctrine.**

In plainer words, Christians in the Bible never accepted false doctrine for the sake of religious unity. In the Bible, there is never any unity of believers with false teachers who teach false doctrine. If professing Christians seek that kind of ungodly unity with false religions and false teachers and religious pagans, the Bible rebukes them for it, Revelation 2:12-16.

In the Bible God never admires, blesses or commends false religious teachers and false religions. Therefore, anyone who professes to be saved should never practice interfaith cooperation, should never try to unify Christianity with false

teachers and false religions. If your Christianity views unity with false teachers and false religions as a good thing, then you are not practicing biblical Christianity.

Biblical Unity

Biblical unity is not based on abandoning Bible doctrine or accepting false teaching or following false teachers. The biblical unity Paul commends is about: **1.** strong Christians bearing the infirmities of weak Christians, Romans 15:1, **2.** every one of us pleasing his neighbor for his (neighbor's) good to edification, Romans 15:2, **3.** not pleasing ourselves or insisting on having our way on non-essential matters like eating meat, drinking wine or observing Jewish holy days, Romans 15:3, **4.** paying attention to OT examples of what God's people did right and what God's people did wrong and learning from their examples, Romans 15:5. That is biblical unity - with one mind and one mouth glorifying God. No Christian glorifies God by dating pagans or marrying a pagan.

and one mouth - If you're using your mouth to cut down your brothers and sisters in Christ, that doesn't glorify God. Paul explains in Ephesians 4:11-15, that unity is based on our shared biblical faith and disunity and false doctrine are the marks of baby Christians, Ephesians 4:14.

glorify God, - Does fighting with other Christians about non-essential issues glorify God? _____ Does Christian unity about essential doctrinal and moral issues provide a solid foundation so that we can disagree on non-essentials and still love each other? _____ Does that biblical truth resonate with your innate sense-making ability? _____

even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. - Paul is pointing out the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, a relationship which was prophesied by the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1 Chronicles 17:13, by King David in Psalm 2:2, 7, 12, by King Solomon in Proverbs 30:4-5 and by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6.

15:7 - Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Wherefore receive ye one another, - It is essential to the body of Christ that born again Christians receive one another. Arguing, debating and fighting is not receiving one another. Stirring the pot and provoking arguments goes against God's intention for the local church. The local church is the body of Christ visible in a community. God's intention is for the local church to evangelize the lost,

make disciples of the saved and then reach beyond the local community by sending missionaries to the regions beyond. You can only do that effectively if you receive one another and help each other grow spiritually.

as Christ also received us - The local church is not a colosseum where we go to enjoy gladiatorial combat every week. The local church is not a contest to see who can corral the most support so they can run the church behind the scenes. The local church is not Survivor Island where we try to eliminate each other so we can win the grand prize. That is not how Christ received us and therefore, that is not how we should receive each other. How does Christ receive us?

**Christ receives us as we are,
where we are, Matthew 11:28.**

a. Wounded, b. Weary, c. Heavy laden.

Christ receives us with love, John 3:16.
Christ receives us with kindness, Ephesians 2:7.
Christ receives us with grace, Ephesians 2:8-9.
Christ receives us with blessings, Ephesians 1:3.

Sinners Jesus Will Receive

1 - Sinners Jesus will receive:
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heav'nly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.

Chorus:
Sing it o'er and o'er again:
Christ receiveth sinful men.
Make the message clear and plain:
Christ receiveth sinful men.

2 - Come, and He will give you rest;
Trust Him, for His word is plain;
He will take the sinfulest;
Christ receiveth sinful men.

3 - Now my heart condemns me not,
Pure before the law I stand;
He who cleansed me from all spot

Satisfied its last demand. [Chorus]

4 - Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin;
Purged from ev'ry spot and stain,
Heav'n with Him I enter in.

- Erdmann Neumeister, 1718, 1671-1756,
- Trans. by Frances Bevan, 1899, 1827-1909

to the glory of God. - In our interactions with fellow Christians, do we receive one another as Christ also received us? _____ The glory of God should be our first priority. It usually isn't but it should be. The glory of God is us believing and being obedient to what He tells us in the Bible. In the history of the universe, unbelief never glorified God. Do you want to personally glorify God? Dump your heartfelt unbelief. Kick your unbelief to the curb. Leave behind your unbelief and move on for Jesus with a believing heart.

15:8 - Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision - That is another way of saying that Jesus Christ ministered God's truth to Jews and the nation of Israel. Circumcision was the token of God's covenant with Abraham, Genesis 17:9-14, the sign of the righteousness Abraham had, Romans 4:11. Abraham was the father of circumcision, Romans 4:12 and Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, Romans 15:8.

1. Abraham was the father of circumcision - Romans 4:12
2. Jesus was a minister of the circumcision - to Jews - Romans 15:8
3. Paul was the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles - Romans 15:16

for the truth of God, - There are two things in this world that will always count for more than anything we think or say or do. Those two things are: **a.** the glory of God and **b.** the truth of God. Your religious opinion and my religious opinion count for nothing when compared to the glory of God and the truth of God. The only way to get real insight into the glory of God and the truth of God is by reading, believing and obeying the Bible in context.

The word, *truth*, occurs 235 times in 222 verses in the King James Bible. Paul uses the word, truth, eight times in Romans.

How important is Bible truth in the life of a Christian?

1. Is our God the God of truth, Exodus 34:6, Deuteronomy 32:4? _____
2. Should we serve God in truth, Joshua 24:14, 1 Samuel 12:24? _____
3. How important to God is it that we walk in truth, 1 Kings 2:4? _____
4. What did John's children do, 2 John 4? _____
5. What did John's children do, 3 John 3-4? _____
6. Did King Solomon understand walking in truth, 1 Kings 3:6? _____
7. Did King Solomon walk in truth, 1 Kings 11:1-13? _____ What was the result of Solomon refusing to walk in truth? _____
8. Does believing truth get you the favor of God, Matthew 15:27? _____
9. What is the right way to deal with God, Mark 5:33? Tell him all the _____
10. If you're going to be like Jesus, you need to be full of _____ and _____, John 1:14.
11. According to John 16:13, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of: **a.** invention, **b.** greatness, **c.** kindness, **d.** truth, **e.** miracles.
12. Did Paul claim to possess truth, Acts 26:25? _____

to confirm the promises - This has in mind the OT promises of God to Abraham about Messiah Jesus. God was crystal clear in Genesis 12:1-3, Galatians 3:8, 16, that these promises included Gentiles getting saved, when He says, *All nations of the earth*. Do you see that truth? _____

made unto the fathers: - *The fathers* are the Jewish fathers, beginning with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Genesis 48:15-16, Exodus 3:15, 6:14. The nation of Israel was God's chosen people, God's chosen nation. The nation of Israel is Jewish. The fathers are Jewish. The oracles of God, meaning the written words of God, were given to the Jews, Romans 3:2.

All of that being true, there are contained within the promises to Abraham, unbreakable promises to the Gentiles also. “*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*” Genesis 12:3. All families includes Gentile families, Genesis 18:18, Galatians 3:8 and the particular blessing is Christ’s genuine salvation available to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, Galatians 3:14-16.

15:9 - And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

And that the Gentiles might glorify God - Paul wants to be absolutely clear that the NT grace he teaches isn’t a new doctrine that he made up. The NT grace of God toward Gentiles is based on the written truth of the OT scriptures, the oracles of God, Romans 3:2. In plainer words, what Paul writes is based on what the OT actually says. As the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul implemented God’s plan. Evangelizing and saving Gentiles is the plan of God, not Paul’s idea, not Paul’s invention, not Paul’s scheme, not Paul’s self-invented plan.

The Gentiles will glorify God by receiving the Messiah whom national Israel rejected. The Gentiles will glorify God by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ even if national Israel doesn’t. That is what Paul says in Galatians 3:1-16. The OT has always been clear about the grace of God and God’s inclusion of the Gentiles (aka, the heathen, aka, the nations), as Paul reminds his readers by quoting the OT in Romans 15.

**What you believe
makes all the difference.**

How on earth did the scribes and Pharisees and the Sanhedrin miss this obvious truth of God? The truth about Messiah also going to the Gentiles was knowable had they wanted to know it, Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 49:6, Luke 2:28-32, because they had access to the same sources. The difference was that some believed the OT scriptures and many didn’t believe the OT scriptures. Belief makes all the difference. God never blesses unbelief. How on earth do modern apostates who tell us we need to divorce NT Christianity from the OT miss this obvious truth of God?

glorify God for his mercy; - God owed nothing to the Gentiles yet the Gentiles obtained the mercy of God and when they responded to the call of God in the gospel and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, Gentiles received the grace of

God and the eternal salvation of God. God reaches out in love and kindness to everyone who will receive His gift of free grace, Romans 5:17.

as it is written, - Whenever we read, *as it is written*, in the NT, it reminds us that no Christian in the NT ever tried to divorce the OT from the NT or the OT from the gospel. Divorcing the OT from the NT is always a fool's errand. Jesus joined the OT to the NT and Jesus joined the OT to His glorious gospel, Luke 24:25-27. If you insist on divorcing the OT from the NT, you're not following Jesus.

Now, starting in Romans 15:9, Paul quotes six passages from the OT to illustrate God's grace toward Gentiles, to let us know that evangelizing and saving Gentiles has always been part of God's plan.

Six OT Passages About Gentiles In Romans 15

Romans 15:9 - 2 Samuel 22:50
Romans 15:9 - Psalm 18:49
Romans 15:10 - Deuteronomy 32:43
Romans 15:11 - Psalm 117:1
Romans 15:12 - Isaiah 11:10
Romans 15:21 - Isaiah 52:15

Part of Paul's purpose is to show that what he writes is not new doctrine, is not something he made up. God's love for Gentiles and the inclusion of Gentiles in His plan of redemption has been clear and unequivocal truth in the OT since the OT was written. Every Jew should have known that OT truth.

One of the sticking points for national Israel was God's grace toward Gentiles. God wanted to save Gentiles, people the Jews didn't like and didn't want to see saved. Israel's loathing for Gentiles was keeping Israel from receiving Jesus as Messiah. If Paul can show the Jews that OT heroes like Samuel, Abraham, Moses, the Psalmist and Isaiah affirmed God's promises and intentions toward Gentiles, that might persuade them to change their minds and receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, - Paul quotes King David, from 2 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:49. 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18 are Messianic passages, referring historically to King David while also referring prophetically to Messiah Jesus. How can any Jew reject what King David said about Gentiles?

Confess to thee here can mean: Public worship, public witnessing, private witnessing, testifying in Jewish synagogues, testifying in the marketplace. Although *confess* here reminds us of Romans 10:9-10, its meaning probably primarily indicates public testimony after salvation in the OT time frame. Paul repurposes confession for the resurrection side of Calvary.

*“That if thou shalt confess
with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
and shalt believe in thine heart
that God hath raised him from the dead,
thou shalt be saved.
For with the heart
man believeth unto righteousness;
and with the mouth
confession is made unto salvation.”*
Romans 10:9-10.

among the Gentiles - In the OT, the Hebrew word, גוֹי *gôy* is translated as: heathen, Gentiles, nation, nations. In the NT, the equivalent words are: Gentiles, heathen, nation, nations, people, all of which translate the Greek word, ἔθνος *ethnos*.

*“Therefore I will give thanks unto thee,
O LORD, among the heathen, = גוֹי *gôy* Gentiles
and I will sing praises unto thy name.”*
2 Samuel 22:50.

*“Therefore will I give thanks unto thee,
O LORD, among the heathen, = גוֹי *gôy* Gentiles
and sing praises unto thy name.”*
Psalm 18:49.

*“Thou also hast delivered me
from the strivings of my people,
thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: = גוֹי *gôy* Gentiles
a people which I knew not shall serve me.”*
2 Samuel 22:44.

*“And hath put all things under his feet,
and gave him to be the head
over all things to the church,”*

Ephesians 1:22.

*“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren,
in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”*
Hebrews 2:12.

*“And that the Gentiles
might glorify God for his mercy;
as it is written,
For this cause I will
confess to thee among the Gentiles (heathen),
and sing unto thy name.”*
Romans 15:9.

What can we learn from these verses and from Romans 15:9? Paul explains to Christians in Rome that saving Gentiles was always part of God’s plan. The OT is abundantly clear about that. National Israel, which rejected Messiah Jesus, had no biblical basis, no OT basis for rejecting Him as their Messiah.

If national Israel, meaning: rebellious, unbelieving, unsaved, Christ rejecting, disobedient Israel, had believed their OT, they would have gladly received Jesus as their Messiah and they would have gladly evangelized Gentiles. You’d better be careful when you reject biblical truths in your own life. God blesses belief and God never blesses unbelief in anything He said. Approximately 25 years after the resurrection of Christ, national Israel still had the same unbelief problem, Romans 9:31-32, that they had throughout the OT and during the earthly ministry of Christ.

Jesus Himself testified that they did not believe the scriptures, John 5:39-47 and as a result of their unbelief, they didn’t keep the law of Moses, John 7:19. Their practice of Judaism was hollow hypocritical self-delusion. Paul has already pointed out in Romans 9:31-33, Israel’s unbelief and lack of faith. Unbelief was always Israel’s stumblingstone.

1. Are there biblical things God expects you to believe that you struggle to believe or refuse to believe? _____ 2. What are some of those things? _____ 3. Isn’t it time to give God the benefit of the doubt and start believing the Bible while rejecting your unbelief? _____ Will you begin doing that this week? _____

and sing unto thy name. - Did you ever wonder why Christians sing in church? Perhaps this is one of the reasons. In 2 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:49, Messiah sings praises among the heathen (Gentiles, nations). In Romans 15:9, saved

Gentiles sing praise with his people, saved Jews. In Hebrews 2:12, Messiah sings praise in the midst of the church which contains saved Jews and saved Gentiles. Christians sing to confess God's name, Romans 15:9 and to worship the Lord with our blended voices. Our singing reflects our joyful rejoicing hearts.

15:10 - And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

And again he saith, - Paul constantly quotes the OT in his NT epistles. *And again he saith* - Is it clear to you that Paul did not believe in divorcing the gospel of Christ and NT Christianity from the OT? _____ Notice how determined Paul is to use the authority of the OT here in Romans 15. Do you have enough biblical common sense to use the authority of the OT in your Christian life? _____

1. Romans 15:3 - *as it is written* - quoting Psalm 69:9
2. Romans 15:9 - *as it is written* - quoting 2 Sam 22:50 & Psalm 18:49
3. Romans 15:10 - *And again he saith* - quoting Deuteronomy 32:43
4. Romans 15:11 - *And again* - quoting Psalm 117:1
5. Romans 15:12 - *And again* - quoting Isaiah 11:10

Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. - Paul quotes part of Deuteronomy 32:43, where Moses encourages Gentiles to rejoice with God's people Israel.

*“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 be merciful unto his land, and to his people.”*
Deuteronomy 32:43.

15:11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

And again, - Is the Holy Spirit speaking to us through Paul, that we should not neglect and reject the OT, that we should never divorce the glorious gospel of Christ from its roots in the Tanakh, the Hebrew OT? _____

By saying, *And again*, Paul is pointing out the relevance of the OT to everyone on the resurrection side of Calvary, to unsaved Jews who are national Israel and to saved Jews and Gentiles who are *the church which is his body*, Ephesians 1:22-23. God expects us to read, believe and obey the written scriptures of truth in the Holy Bible.

Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; - Paul quotes Psalm 117:1 to emphasize what the OT says about Gentiles. This isn't a strange new doctrine from Paul, that God is now including Gentiles. This emphasis on Gentiles has always been in the OT and most Jews simply ignored it and refused to find it relevant.

If the Gentiles are told to: *Praise the Lord*, what does that imply? **a.** That the Gentiles will get saved, **b.** That God loves Gentiles and wants their praise, **c.** That Gentiles are an important part of God's salvation plan for the human race, **d.** That God showed His truth about Gentiles to Moses and to Israel 1500 years before Messiah came, **e.** That national Israel in the first century AD should believe the OT scriptures and joyfully receive their Messiah, **f.** All of the above.

National Israel rejected the truth about Gentiles, that they are part of God's plan, even though that truth was plainly written in their OT. The oracles of God, meaning the OT, contained excellent, perfect truth and religious unsaved Jews kicked that truth to the curb because they didn't like Gentiles. The truth about God's plans for the Gentiles went against their grain. 1. Have you ever experienced a time when God's truth about something went against your grain? _____ 2. How did you deal with that? _____ 3. Who needs to change and get right, you or God? _____

*“O praise the LORD, all ye nations:
praise him, all ye people.
For his merciful kindness is great toward us:
and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever.
Praise ye the LORD.”
Psalm 117:1-2.*

and laud him, all ye people. - *Laud* means to praise highly, especially in a public context. Lauding God isn't reserved for a few people with genuine singing talent. Lauding God isn't reserved for a few spiritual people or a few spiritual leaders. Lauding God should be part of the life of everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think about the the things you believe and the way you live your life. Think about the things you laud and praise and focus on every day of your life. 1. Is there any evidence in your life that you are a Christian? _____ 2. Does the world, the flesh and the devil fascinate you more than the Bible? _____ 3. Does pursuing sin occupy more of your time than serving God and learning the Bible? _____ 4. How long will you let that sin continue in your life? _____

1. Are your beliefs biblical beliefs based on what the Bible says in context? _____ 2. Are your beliefs worldly beliefs, more like unsaved Christ rejecting pagans than like Bible believing Christians? _____ 3. Is the way you live and think biblical and Christian? _____ 4. Is the way you live and think carnal and worldly? _____ 5. Does the way you live laud, praise, lift up and glorify God your Savior? _____ Why or why not? _____

6. Does the way you live and think more closely resemble the way lost, hell-bound unsaved people live and think? _____ 7. What, if anything, differentiates the words you use from the words lost people use? _____ 8. Do you curse like an unsaved man? _____ 9. If you drink the same beer and hang out in the same bars and laugh at the same dirty jokes and watch the same porn as an unsaved man, why should anyone take seriously your profession of faith in Christ? _____ 10. What, if anything, differentiates your morals from the morals of the lost and dying world around you? _____ 11. Does your life laud, praise and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ? _____ 12. Laud means: **a.** Condemn, **b.** Exalt, **c.** Highly praise, **d.** Argue, **e.** Provoke, **f.** Reject, **g.** Glorify.

15:12 - And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

And again, Esaias saith, - Esaias is Isaiah, the OT prophet who prophesied from 745 BC to 680 BC. Paul quotes the OT six times in Romans 15 to emphasize how important Gentiles are to God and how important the OT is to God and Paul. The quotation is from Isaiah 11:10.

There shall be a root of Jesse, - 1 Samuel 17:12. *A root of Jesse* is a Hebrew poetic way of describing Messiah Jesus, used by Isaiah the prophet. The root of Jesse - Messiah Jesus - *shall stand as an ensign of the people and to it* (the Savior represented by the ensign) *shall the Gentiles seek*, Isaiah 11:10.

An ensign is a banner, Song 2:4, a flag, a standard, Numbers 1:52, 2:2-3, a beacon, Isaiah 30:17, the stones of a crown, Zechariah 9:16. An ensign is a banner or marker or a crown around which to rally. Rally round the flag, boys!

Messiah Jesus

1. He is *as a root out of a dry ground* - Isaiah 53:2.
2. He is called the Branch - Isaiah 11:1.

3. He is called a righteous Branch - Jeremiah 23:5.
4. He is called the Branch of righteousness - Jeremiah 33:15.
5. He is called my servant the BRANCH - Zechariah 3:8.
6. He is called the man whose name is The BRANCH - Zechariah 6:12.

*“For he shall grow up before him
as a tender plant, and as a root
out of a dry ground:
he hath no form nor comeliness;
and when we shall see him,
there is no beauty
that we should desire him.”*
Isaiah 53:2.

*“And there shall come forth
a rod out of the stem of Jesse,
and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:”*
Isaiah 11:1.

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

*“I the LORD
have called thee in righteousness,
and will hold thine hand,
and will keep thee,
and give thee for a covenant of the people,
for a light of the Gentiles;”*
Isaiah 42:6.

*“And he said, It is a light thing
that thou shouldest be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob,
and to restore the preserved of Israel:
I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,
that thou mayest be my salvation
unto the end of the earth.”*
Isaiah 49:6.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD,

*that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch,
and a King shall reign and prosper,
and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”*
Jeremiah 23:5.

*“In those days, and at that time,
will I cause the Branch of righteousness
to grow up unto David;
and he shall execute judgment
and righteousness in the land.”*
Jeremiah 33:15.

*“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou,
and thy fellows that sit before thee:
for they are men wondered at:
for, behold, I will bring forth
my servant the BRANCH.”*
Zechariah 3:8

*“And speak unto him, saying,
Thus speaketh the LORD 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 the LORD:”*
Zechariah 6:12.

What these verses tell us

1. Messiah was prophesied in the OT
2. Messiah is definitely coming
3. Messiah is as a tender plant
4. Messiah is as a root out of a dry ground
5. Messiah is a rod out of the stem of Jesse
6. Jesse was David's father - 1 Samuel 17:12
7. Messiah will be a root of Jesse, descended from David
8. Messiah is a Branch out of his (Jesse's) roots
9. Messiah is a righteous Branch raised unto David
10. Messiah the Branch of righteousness grows up unto David
11. Messiah is my servant the BRANCH
12. Messiah is the man whose name is The BRANCH

There shall be a root of Jesse, - *Shall be* is a statement of certitude. It will happen. This prophesy will be fulfilled in Christ. What Isaiah 11:10 says around

700 BC will definitely happen and did definitely happen. When Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10, it is another verse about the Gentiles seeking God. There was no question, for anyone who believed the OT, that God wanted Gentiles to get saved. For unbelieving national Israel, the truth that God also loved Gentiles and reached out to Gentiles and wanted to save Gentiles was an enormous stumblingblock. Israel's foolish pride and unbelief sent them to hell, Romans 9:32. Jesse was King David's biological father, 1 Samuel 17:12.

and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; - If national Israel rejected Messiah Jesus (*he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles*), the gospel would go to the Gentiles anyway: Acts 13:46-48, 18:6, 28:28 - *unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it*, Acts 28:28. Anyone who hears the gospel is capable of believing the gospel.

Anyone who believes the glorious gospel of Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Timothy 1:11, gets saved, which means they are in Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13. In Christ they have all the blessings of God, Ephesians 1:3 and they are elect, Ephesians 1:4 but they are only elect in Christ. The OT and the Jewish prophets prophesied with certainty that the Gentiles would get saved. The Jews, God's chosen and elect people, refused to believe their prophets and their God.

Paul is *the apostle of the Gentiles*, Romans 11:13 and *the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles*, Romans 15:16, but this isn't talking about Paul rising to reign over the Gentiles. He that rises to reign over the Gentiles is the Jewish Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, by the way, also created the universe and everything in it, John 1:1-3.

Jesus will reign over the nation of Israel and Jesus will reign over the Gentiles. The OT and particularly Isaiah, was abundantly clear that Messiah would minister to Gentiles. That is what made national Israel's rejection of Messiah Jesus so difficult to understand. They could speak, read and write Hebrew. They thought they knew their OT and the truth was, they had not a clue because they had hearts of unbelief. They claimed to believe the OT while rejecting the truths it contained.

in him shall the Gentiles trust. - God intends to save every Gentile who hears the gospel and believes on Christ. Abraham began life as a pagan Gentile who trusted God, Genesis 15:1-6, got saved and became the first Jew. National Israel were all physical descendants of Abraham but rejected the faith of Abraham. Unserved Gentiles were believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and getting saved in the first century AD while unserved Jews were rejecting their Messiah and clinging to their own inferior righteousness instead of receiving the perfect righteousness of Christ.

15:13 - Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now the God of hope - God is the God of hope because of the resurrection of the dead and ultimately, because of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul makes that clear in Acts 23:6. The hope that grips Paul's heart is resurrection hope, Acts 24:15, 26:6-7. Does resurrection hope grip your heart? _____ Paul has already pointed out in Romans 10:9-10 that believing in the resurrected Christ is required for salvation. This part of Paul's argument is as simple as this. The Gentiles are trusting the risen Christ. You unbelieving Jews must also trust the risen Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:12-26, because the risen Christ is the only hope any lost sinner has.

*"But when Paul perceived
that the one part were Sadducees,
and the other Pharisees,
he cried out in the council,
Men and brethren,
I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee:
of the hope and resurrection of the dead
I am called in question."*
Acts 23:6.

*"And have hope toward God,
which they themselves also allow,
that there shall be a resurrection of the dead,
both of the just and unjust."*
Acts 24:15.

*"And now I stand and am judged
for the hope of the promise
made of God unto our fathers:"*
Acts 26:6-7.

The only way around the unbelief of the Jews is belief. Judaism and religion are not the answer. Unsaved unbelieving Jews need to repent of their unbelief, meaning: change their mind about their unbelief, and believe the gospel, believe on the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because of Romans 1:16. The God of hope is the covenant keeping God, the everlasting God, Creator of the world, Israel's marvelous Messiah. The God of hope had chosen Israel as His most favored nation and they rejected Him and cried out for Him to be crucified.

fill you with all joy and peace - Unsaved unbelieving Jews were not joyful people, were not peaceful people. They rejected their Messiah and cried out for Him to be crucified. They hounded and persecuted saved Jews who witnessed to them about Messiah Jesus.

After the resurrection of Christ, no unsaved Jew had a biblical God-blessed religion, Romans 6:14, 10:4. Instead, unsaved Jews in the first century AD had an empty religion that God was through with, full of pomp and pageantry yet utterly unable to satisfy their proud hearts, utterly unable to save their souls because, after the resurrection of Christ, God did not accept any of the Jewish temple offerings and sacrifices.

Christians are to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and therefore, filled with joy and peace, Romans 14:17. Unbelief never produces joy and peace. Unbelief always breaks fellowship with God and if you are saved, always slows your spiritual growth. What do we have to do to have peace with God, Romans 5:1?

in believing, - Joy and peace always come from believing. God never rewards unbelief with blessing. If you don't believe Christ died on the cross for your sins, you can never get saved. If you don't believe God raised Jesus from the dead, you can never get saved. You need to believe what God said because it is your duty to believe what God said. It is a sin if you don't believe on the resurrected Christ, John 16:7-9. The job of the Holy Spirit as Comforter is to *reprove the world of sin... because they believe not on me.*

that ye may abound in hope, - Abounding in hope isn't the default for most people, saved or lost. For Christians, abounding in hope should be our default mode. *Abound in hope* isn't talking about having a teensy tiny bit of hope once or twice a month. *Abound in hope* means to be filled with hope, to overflow with hope, to surf the crest of the tidal wave of hope.

through the power of the Holy Ghost. - Our power source is not positive affirmation or positive thinking or name it and claim it or blab it and grab it. Our power comes from God and this reminds us of Galatians 2:20 - *and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* The victorious Christian life is the supernatural life, by the faith of the Son of God through the power of the Holy Ghost. Have you memorized Galatians 2:20 yet? _____ If not, why not? _____

15:14 - And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, - According to v. 15, this is a gentle reminder from Paul to the Roman Christians. We Christians have the ability to size people up, to take their measure, to evaluate their character. Paul has done that with the born again saved Christians at Rome, even though Paul had not personally been in Rome when he wrote Romans, Romans 1:10-12. Nonetheless, Paul had already met and ministered with some of the Roman Christians in other parts of the Roman Empire and he names 26 of them in chapter 16 as he closes his epistle/letter to the Romans.

that ye also are full of goodness, - Paul began his epistle to the Romans with a sincere compliment in Romans 1:8. *“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”* He now compliments the Roman Christians again by telling them, *ye also are full of goodness.*

Full of goodness, as Paul uses it here, means: **a.** the Roman Christians are genuinely saved, **b.** they are genuinely indwelt by the risen Christ, **c.** they are genuinely indwelt by the blessed Holy Spirit, one of whose fruits is *goodness*, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:9, and **d.** they are genuinely faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 14:4-6.

Both weak Christians and strong Christians in the church at Rome are doing what they do because they love God. They have good hearts toward God and both weak and strong Christians are trying to do the right thing. Their desire is to please God and to serve God. In that sense, they are full of goodness.

For the reasons listed and because they are *full of goodness*, the Christians at Rome are capable of obeying Paul’s instructions in Romans 14 and 15, about receiving each other and not fighting over non-essentials. They are capable of harmony and unity as they grow spiritually and serve the Lord Jesus Christ together.

Paul doesn’t mean they are *full of goodness* in the sense of a goodness that earns their salvation or a goodness that helps keep them saved. Some understand Romans 15:14 - *full of goodness* - as contradicting Romans 7:18 - *in my flesh dwelleth no good thing*. Of course, they are wrong about that.

*“For I know that in me
(that is, in my flesh,)
dwelleth no good thing:
for to will is present with me;
but how to perform
that which is good I find not.”
Romans 7:18.*

Why is there no contradiction between Romans 15:14 and 7:18? In Romans 7:18, Paul is pointing out that his flesh didn't get saved and therefore, in his flesh, there is no goodness that earns or merits salvation. His personal attempts at goodness can never be part of meriting salvation.

Paul's Christian life after he gets saved must be based on the power of Christ in him, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27, not any goodness he tries to gin up in his flesh. In Romans 15:14, the topic is different. Paul is pointing out that because of the blessings God gives to everyone who is saved, Ephesians 1:3, Christians have that goodness from God which enables them to obey and serve God.

filled with all knowledge, - They are *filled with all knowledge* even though they do not have a completed NT to read, study and memorize. They are *filled with all knowledge* because they are being taught by faithful men, some of whom were probably taught by the apostle Paul. They are *filled with all knowledge* because the Holy Ghost who indwells their physical body as His temple, 1 Corinthians 6:19, is teaching them, John 14:26, by bearing witness to the truth of what their pastors and disciplers are teaching them.

Being *filled with all knowledge* doesn't mean they know everything they will ever need to know. They are *filled with all knowledge* in the sense that they have the information they needed at that present time, to obey God, to serve God and to get along with each other in the local churches of Rome. They were also still capable of spiritual growth beyond where they were when Paul wrote to them.

able also to admonish one another. - Admonish is from the Greek word, *νουθετέω* *nouthetēō*, *new-tha-tay'-o*, meaning: to remind, to put in mind, to caution, to reprove gently, to warn. Paul uses this word 8 times in 8 verses in the NT: Acts 20:31, 1 Corinthians 4:14, Colossians 1:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, where it is translated, warn or warning. In Romans 15:14, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 2 Thessalonians 3:15, the same Greek word is translated admonish or admonishing. Biblical admonishing and warning is not in your face, mean spirited rebuke. It is *peaceable, and gentle, easy to be intreated*, James 3:17.

*“Let the word of Christ
dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
teaching and admonishing one another
in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*
Colossians 3:16.

Colossians 3:16 is Paul’s view of the proper way Christians admonish one another. 1. In what part of the Bible are the Psalms found? **a.** OT, **b.** NT. 2. Has the apostle Paul provided us with yet another reason why Christianity should not be divorced from the OT? _____ 3. Since NT admonishing is linked to the OT Psalms, should we be careful not to divorce our Christianity from the OT? _____ 4. Does admonishing mean fighting, arguing, lecturing and verbally assaulting each other? _____ 5. Should our admonishing come from grace in our hearts to the Lord. _____ 6. Please give an example of how a modern Christian might admonish someone? _____

Admonish here is like Paul is saying: You’ve got this! You can do this! You saved Jews and saved Gentiles, you weak Christians and you strong Christians can get along and work together in the church as a team as you serve God. You weak and strong Christians can admonish each other and help each other grow spiritually in Christ.

This explains *filled with all knowledge*. They have enough goodness and enough knowledge to admonish one another as Spirit filled Christians should admonish one another. Their admonishment of each other should be Spirit led, holiness focused, truth focused and the admonishment should be gentle so as not to give offense, 1 Corinthians 10:32.

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

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, - Paul writes as a genuine apostle of Christ with the glory of God and the spiritual good of Roman Christians in mind. He has spiritual authority from God, as the apostle of the Gentiles, to instruct Christians about how they should live. Because Paul holds the apostolic office and has the apostolic calling of God and the grace of God upon him, he can write boldly to the Christians at Rome. Never did any Pope speak with the authority the apostle Paul has in his letter to the Romans. Paul’s words in Romans 14 and 15 model how the Roman Christians should admonish one another.

Paul speaks with kind and gentle boldness as a father admonishes his beloved children. His goal is to see them grow up spiritually, living as genuine disciples of Christ, as part of something bigger than themselves. He wants them to see themselves as part of the local church (*able also to admonish one another*), and instead of being Lone Ranger Christians, to live as team mates in the body of Christ, Team Jesus, if you will. WE, the body of Christ, are Team Jesus.

because of the grace that is given to me of God, - Paul wasn't an average Christian or a normal Christian. He was the apostle to the Gentiles and God used him to write 14 books of the NT. Paul held the apostolic office and as such, he had power from God to do many things normal Christians cannot do. 1. What was the source of Paul's power according to Galatians 2:20? _____ 2. What was the source of Paul's power according to Colossians 1:29? _____ 3. Is the power of God available to you today? _____

15:16 - That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, - Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, Romans 11:13, directly commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 9:15. Peter was the apostle to the Jews, aka, the apostle of the circumcision, Galatians 2:7-8, as "*Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,*" Romans 15:8.

1. *Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision* - Romans 15:8
2. Paul was *the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles* - Romans 15:16
3. Peter had *the apostleship of the circumcision* - Galatians 2:8

God has always been serious about evangelizing both Jews and Gentiles. Israel's fifteen centuries long rebellion against God in the OT is what thwarted saved Jews evangelizing the Gentiles back then. In spite of that, some Gentiles got evangelized in the OT, Here is a partial list.

Gentiles in the OT who got saved

1. A certain Canaanite, Genesis 38:1-2
2. Tamar, Genesis 38:6
3. Rahab the harlot, Joshua 2:1-2

4. Ruth the Moabitess, Ruth 3:1-9
5. Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite, 2 Samuel 11:1-5
6. Naaman the Syrian, 2 Kings 5:1-19

These Gentiles who got saved in the OT are probably representative of many other Gentiles who got saved in the OT just like those in the above list did, Hebrews 11:4-8, 32-40, 12:1. Remember when you read Hebrews 11:4-8, that no one until Abraham was Jewish. Until Abraham all people on earth were Gentiles including Abraham. Therefore, in Hebrews 11, some of the great cloud of witnesses were Gentiles. Meditate on that for a good long while and consider the spiritual implications of that truth. What are the spiritual implications?

In the first century AD, God saved an amazing Jewish man named Saul, who became known as Paul, and that amazing man, once he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and got saved, gave himself wholeheartedly to God to evangelize the Gentiles.

1. The circumcision refers to: **a.** Gentiles, **b.** Protestants, **c.** Catholics, **d.** Jews, **e.** Bedouins from the desert. 2. That being true, to whom did Jesus minister? **a.** Mostly to Gentiles, **b.** Mostly to Jews, **c.** Mostly to Baptists, **d.** Mostly to Mormons. 3. Since God called Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, was it still okay for Paul to minister to Jews? **a.** Yes, of course. **b.** No, of course not.

God's amazing grace is also for Gentiles.

Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:1-18 - all families/nations of earth.
1 Kings 8:43 - all people of the earth.
Isaiah 45:22 - all the ends of the earth.
Jeremiah 22:29 - O earth, earth, earth.
Micah 1:2 - Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth.
Matthew 4:15, 25, 10:1-6, 15:21-28, 28:19-20 - Gentiles.

Consequences of rejecting the glorious gospel of Christ

Acts 4:1-13 - Jewish leaders rejected the witness of Peter and John.
Acts 5:28 - Jewish leaders rejected Jesus in Jerusalem.
Acts 7:57-58 - Jerusalem Jewish leaders rejected Stephen's witness.
Acts 13:45-46 - Jews rejected Jesus in Pisidian Antioch.
Acts 18:4-6 - Jews rejected Jesus in Athens, Greece.

Acts 28:28-31 - Jews rejected Jesus in Rome.
John 5:45-47, 7:35 - The Pharisees knew and rejected this truth.

“Io, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.

*“I am clean: from henceforth
I will go unto the Gentiles.” Acts 18:6.*

*“the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles,
and that they will hear it.”
Acts 28:28.*

At the very time Paul was writing Romans in AD 58, God was in the process of rejecting the Jews and removing them from the place of blessing, Acts 13:39-46, 18:4-6, 28:28-31, Romans 11:25, because of their unbelief and their rejection of Jesus as Messiah. As national Israel rejected successive offers of Christ and the gospel, God led Paul to begin switching his evangelistic focus from Israel to the Gentiles.

ministering the gospel of God, - The gospel of God here is Paul’s gospel, Romans 2:16, 16:25, 2 Timothy 2:8, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, not the gospel of the kingdom of heaven that John the Baptist preached, Matthew 3:1-2, not the gospel of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus preached, Matthew 4:17, not the gospel of the kingdom of God that Jesus preached, Mark 1:15.

**What’s the difference between
going to heaven and going to hell?**
Believing the gospel of God.

If you believe the gospel of God, you’re going to heaven. If you don’t believe the gospel of God, you’re going to hell. If you believe the gospel of God, you get in Christ and getting in Christ makes you elect and predestinated. If you don’t believe the gospel of God, you’re not in Christ and you’re not elect and you’re not saved and you’re not predestinated. Everything you need and want spiritually is found in Christ, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 2:2-3, and you get it as a free gift by simply believing the Gospel.

that the offering up of the Gentiles - An *offering* is mentioned 724 times in 504 verses in the King James Bible. Most of those references are in the context of an offering under OT law. Paul writes from what he knows and references a practice familiar both to his saved Jewish readers and his saved Gentile readers. Almost

all religions have offerings and Paul's saved readers grew up in religions which had offerings.

Rome was the wondrous capital of the Roman Empire, the greatest and most powerful Gentile empire on earth in the first century AD. Of course Paul wanted to visit Rome, meet Roman Christians and see what he could do to encourage Roman Christians to take up the missionary challenge, Matthew 28:18-20, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Part of Paul's reason for writing Romans was to prepare the way for his upcoming visit.

The offering is a sacrifice. The offering up is Paul's personal sacrifice to the God who saved him. Paul uses the analogy of OT sacrifices under the law of Moses to picture the end result of his ministry as the apostle of the Gentiles, that saved Gentiles are his offering to God. Are you offering anything up to God as a sacrifice? _____ What are you offering? _____

Offering Up

1. Offering Isaac was a type of Christ - Genesis 22:1-8
2. Isaac's resurrection was a type of Christ - Hebrews 11:17-19
3. Aaron offered the Levites to the LORD - Numbers 8:11-13, 21
4. We are identified with Christ's death/resurrection - Romans 6:1-8
5. Our resurrection brings forth fruit unto God - Romans 7:4-6
6. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter - Romans 8:36
7. We offer our own body to God - Romans 12:1-2
8. The offering up of the Gentiles - Romans 15:16

In the OT, before the law of Moses, everyone was a Gentile, and everyone could offer sacrifices to God. Abraham was a Gentile who became the first Jew, Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6. Under the law of Moses, given in Exodus 19-20, there was no mechanism for Gentiles to come to God and make offerings and sacrifices at the tabernacle and the temple.

Under OT law, making offerings/sacrifices was only for Jews. The Gentiles were not God's chosen people in the OT. *Israel mine elect* was God's chosen people, Isaiah 45:4. In the NT, after the resurrection of Christ, everything changed. The Gentiles were now as welcome as the Jews to get saved and become part of the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13. Everyone who gets saved comprises God's chosen people in the church age.

Every Gentile who got saved through reading and believing the gospel truth in Paul's epistles and/or through his evangelistic efforts is Paul's offering to God. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that

believeth, Romans 1:16. Paul describes this in Colossians 1:27-29 as presenting the converted Gentiles to God, perfect in Christ. We are not apostles to the Gentiles in the sense that Paul was but the souls we lead to saving faith in Christ are souls we can also present to God.

*“To whom God would make known
what is the riches of the glory
of this mystery among the Gentiles:
which is Christ in you,
the hope of glory:
Whom we preach,
warning every man,
and teaching every man
in all wisdom;
that we may present every man
perfect in Christ Jesus:
Whereunto I also labour,
striving according to his working,
which worketh in me mightily.”*
Colossians 1:27-29.

Presenting saved Gentiles to Christ is Paul’s way of saying: I’ve fulfilled my apostleship to the Gentiles. I’ve preached the gospel and taught the gospel and lived the gospel and God has blessed me with souls saved. Obedience is Paul’s way of giving back to God, the souls who got saved under his ministry.

In the first century AD, when God saved the apostle Paul, that incredible man gave himself wholeheartedly to God, to evangelize the Gentiles but Paul’s evangelistic work was powered by the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Ephesians 1:19. What could God do with you if you gave yourself to God as freely, as wholeheartedly as did Paul? _____

**Only one life,
twill soon be past.
Only what’s done
for Christ will last.**
-Missionary C.T. Studd

Are you doing anything for Christ that will last for all eternity? _____

“the offering up of the Gentiles”
Romans 15:16

**This is what Paul
is talking about.**

1. The offering up of the Gentiles - Romans 15:16
2. the presenting of the Gentiles - Col 1:27-29, 2 Cor 11:2, Eph 5:27
3. the standing perfect and complete of the Gentiles - Colossians 4:12

*“For I am jealous over you
with godly jealousy:
for I have espoused you
to one husband,
that I may present you
as a chaste virgin to Christ.”
2 Corinthians 11:2*

*“That he might present it
to himself a glorious church,
not having spot, or wrinkle,
or any such thing;
but that it should be holy
and without blemish.”
Ephesians 5:27*

*“Epaphras, who is one of you,
a servant of Christ, saluteth you,
always labouring fervently for you in prayers,
that ye may stand perfect
and complete in all the will of God.”
Colossians 4:12*

Those three phrases are Paul's goal and are only possible because the Gentiles believed the gospel Paul preached, meaning, they got saved and they got in Christ, meaning that, because they were in Christ, they were chosen, elect and predestinated and able to be presented. If you're not in Christ, you're not chosen, you're not elect, you're not predestinated and you won't be presented to Christ. Those four things only happen when you get in Christ by believing the gospel. And now, in Christ, you are presentable to God.

When the Gentiles believed Paul's gospel, *the gospel of the grace of God*, Acts 20:24, (not the gospel of the kingdom Matthew 4:23), they got saved and they got in Christ, they were justified by faith, Romans 5:1, they were sanctified by faith, Acts 26:18, they were chosen once they were in Christ and Paul was then able to offer up the saved Gentiles as an offering to God.

Why offer up the Gentiles to God? That is God's way and Paul's way of making clear that God was no longer accepting sacrifices offered in the Jewish Temple. OT animal sacrifices were no longer the way to God because OT law was over and done. The physical bodily resurrection of Christ ended OT law and started NT grace. God wants every Jew to know that the law is over. OT law has served its purpose and God has moved on from OT law to NT grace.

Paul offered up the saved Gentiles to God. After the resurrection of Christ, the purpose of OT law is to be our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, Galatians 3:24-26. After the glorious resurrection of Christ, OT sacrifices were unneeded, unnecessary, unwanted, unavailing. After the resurrection of Christ, God didn't accept any sacrifice offered upon Jewish altars. Have you seriously considered that radical Bible truth? _____

**Paul offers up saved Gentiles to God.
What will you offer up to God?**

1. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of pain?
2. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of praise?
3. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of suffering?
4. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of submission?
5. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of loneliness?
6. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of obedience?
7. Can you offer up to God the sacrifice of service?
8. Can you offer up to God the souls you've led to faith in Christ?

Under the law of Moses, only circumcised Jews could offer sacrifices in the Jewish Temple. Gentiles were not allowed to offer sacrifices in the Jewish Temple. Now that Jesus has died and resurrected bodily, now that the veil of the temple has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom, now that the most holy place has been opened to the view of the Levitical priests through the torn veil, OT law and sacrifices are officially over and done. Paul's ministry seems to be doing what national Israel would have done if they had believed on the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. They would have evangelized the unsaved Gentiles.

might be acceptable, - What makes the offering up of the Gentiles acceptable to God? The Gentiles believed God and as a result of their believing on the risen Lord Jesus Christ, God made them qualified in these ways.

1. They believed the gospel - Romans 1:16
2. They obeyed the gospel - Romans 10:16
3. They were justified by faith - Romans 5:1
4. They were sanctified by faith - Acts 26:18

5. They were given the indwelling Holy Spirit - Romans 8:9
6. They were sealed unto the day of redemption - Ephesians 1:13-14

Have you ever obeyed Romans 12:1-2? _____ According to Romans 12:1-2, Holy is acceptable to God. Unholy but enthusiastic in your unholiness is not acceptable to God. God is holy and He will not accept or bless your unholiness. There is no cutting corners on holiness when you're serving God.

**No cutting corners on holiness
when you're working for the Lord.**

*"For God is not the author of confusion,
but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."*
1 Corinthians 14:33.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."
1 Corinthians 14:40.

*"And if a man also strive for masteries,
yet is he not crowned,
except he strive lawfully."*
2 Timothy 2:5.

**No cutting corners on holiness
when you're serving God.**

*"And every man that striveth
for the mastery
is temperate in all things.
Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown;
but we an incorruptible."
1 Corinthians 9:25.*

**God will not let you make up
your own rules on the fly.**

It's God's way or the highway.
No cutting corners on holiness
when you're serving God.

**We need to stay biblical
and do things God's way**

in our service for God.

being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. - Sanctified means to be set apart in holiness to serve God. We are set apart from the world, the flesh and the devil. We are set apart from unequal yokes, from uncleanness, from unholiness, from ungodliness, from pagan practices, from drunkenness, from the wicked activities which accompany drunkenness, from the moral and spiritual darkness of the unsaved world, Romans 13:11-14. Are you set apart from sin or are you an enthusiastic willing sinner who ignores God's will for your life? _____

Sanctify occurs 70 times in 65 verses in the KJV Bible. Paul uses the word sanctify 3 times, Ephesians 5:26, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 13:12. Sanctified occurs 62 times in 58 verses in the KJV Bible. Sanctification occurs 5 times in 5 verses in the KJV Bible, used by Paul 4 times and used 1 time by Peter.

1. Sanctified by faith in Christ - Acts 26:18
2. Sanctified in Christ - 1 Cor 1:2, 30
3. Sanctified by the blood of Christ - Hebrews 13:12

God the Holy Ghost will not sanctify your fleshly service. God doesn't bless you for ignoring Him and doing things your way. God doesn't want or need your fleshly service. Serving God by your own fleshly rules will not produce the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23. We need to understand sanctification in its three aspects.

1. Positional Sanctification - Your sanctified standing in Christ
2. Practical Sanctification - Your experiential state in Christ
3. Perfect Sanctification - Your ultimate state in eternity

Paul's soul-winning, disciple making, church planting missionary ministry was sanctified by the Holy Ghost. That is why Paul's ministry was spiritually successful. You will never be successful for God unless your life and ministry are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. That means obeying Romans 12:1-2 and presenting your body to God a living sacrifice.

That means submitting to God and doing things God's way instead of doing things your way and hoping God will let you do what's He's never let anyone else do. Worldly methods will sometimes produce worldly success but will never produce the godly, holy, sanctified success that God desires for you.

Adopting the pagan practices and pagan standards of false religions will not make you more spiritual and will not enhance your life and ministry. Your soul-winning disciple making efforts will only be successful if they are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. If we are to have God's blessing, we must do things God's way. It is good to remember that every born again Christian since the resurrection of Christ is justified by faith, Romans 5:1 and sanctified by faith, Acts 26:18, because they are in Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:2.

15:17 - I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

I have therefore whereof I may glory - Paul has things he can glory in, in the sense of evangelizing the Gentiles and then presenting the saved Gentiles as an offering to God. This is not proud, fleshly, ungodly boasting. This is Paul saying that God has blessed his call to apostolic ministry by giving him souls. It reminds us of the gospel hymn by James M. Gray.

Naught have I gotten but what I received;
Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed.
James M. Gray, 1905, 1851-1935

Notice that Paul isn't glorying about big offerings and huge crowds at rock festivals that draw in thousands of religious people who refuse to believe on and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul isn't glorying in a multi-site mega-church known for its cold and carnal worldliness. Paul isn't glorying that he stays in the Presidential suite of the most expensive hotel in town. And Paul isn't bragging about how greatly God is using him to promote faux Christian paganism.

Everything good that Paul accomplished in his ministry was due to the grace of God. Paul doesn't say: I have therefore whereof I may glory. He says: I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. Paul recognizes the source of the power that made his glorying possible and gives credit to Christ in the same breath.

Paul uses the Greek word for boast or boasting, 35 of the 38 times it is found in the NT. This word in its various forms is also translated, rejoice, glory, glorieth, glorying. It is boasting about, rejoicing in and glorying in what God has done, not what Paul has done. In plainer words, this isn't Paul giving in to his flesh and tooting his own horn. 2 Corinthians 11:14-23 describes the genuine Holy Ghost sanctified ministry of a genuine Christian apostle. Don't be fooled by the fakery of fake Christians. Have you been fooled by their fake Christianity? _____

**Religious fakirs are
always faking it,
Fake - Fake - Fake.**

1. fake miracle workers - Exodus 7:8-10
2. fake miracles - Exodus 7:11-12
3. a fake Jesus - 2 Cor 11:4
4. a fake spirit - 2 Cor 11:4
5. a fake gospel - 2 Cor 11:4
6. fake apostles - 2 Cor 11:13
7. fake ministers - 2 Cor 11:15
8. fake brethren - 2 Cor 11:26, Gal 2:4
9. fake Christians - 1 John 2:19

whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ - The way you can tell if someone is a real Christian or a fake Christian is by who they talk about with their mouth and who is the focus of their life. If they're on social media, do they ever mention the Lord Jesus Christ? _____ Do they ever post Bible verses? _____ Do they ever encourage people to get saved? _____ Do they ever take a stand against sin? _____ Do they ever talk about reading the Bible? _____ Do they ever talk about obeying God? _____

When you look at the social media of a professing Christian, if they quote the mindless twaddle of positive thinkers and the interspiritual blather of religious false teachers, you can mark it down, their heart isn't honest before God. If they are saved, there is no evidence in their life to demonstrate their salvation. A real Christian glories *through Jesus Christ*. They don't glory through Jesus Christ because they are not real Christians.

in those things which pertain to God. - Be careful what you glory in. Christians should never glory in the world, the flesh and the devil yet many do. Christians should never glory in pagan celebrities, should never glory in professing Christian celebrities. Christians should never glory in being barflies, should never glory in spending their weekend evenings drinking with unsaved people.

According to Romans 15:17, what should Christians glory in? **a.** Things which pertain to wealth. **b.** Things which pertain to filthy fame. **c.** Things which pertain to seizing power in the church. **d.** Things which pertain to the sins of your unsaved life. **e.** Things which pertain to God.

15:18 - For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

For I will not dare to speak - Paul doesn't want to take credit for the preaching or soul-winning or Bible teaching of other Christians. He doesn't want to build on the spiritual foundation laid by another man. He is, after all, the apostle of the Gentiles. Paul wants to win lost Gentiles to Christ. He is a missionary pioneer, a tough, resilient preacher of the glorious life-changing gospel of Christ and, by the way, Paul also wrote 14 books of the 27 books in our NT.

“Some want to live within the sound
Of church or chapel bell;
I want to run a rescue shop,
Within a yard of hell.”
- C.T. Studd, 1860-1931

Paul isn't saying, I'll never criticize another preacher, Galatians 2:8-11. Paul publicly criticized the apostle Peter when Peter was being a hypocrite. Paul is focused on running his own race for God, doing what God called him to do. Here Paul is saying that he will not cite what others did for Christ and then try to take credit for their spiritual work.

If you're a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, sometimes you must mention, criticize and correct others. That is part of being faithful to God. Christians are not called to go along to get along. Please take a moment and read the last sentence again. Christians are not called to go along to get along. Christians are called to stand for God's truth in the Bible rightly divided, 2 Timothy 2:15, and to speak the truth in love, Ephesians 4:15.

of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, - This isn't Paul saying he will never correct a Christian who believes false doctrine. This is Paul saying he is focused on doing what God called him to do. Paul's letter to the Corinthians provides insight into Paul's statement, 1 Corinthians 9:22-27. How does what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:22-27 explain Paul's statement here?

to make the Gentiles obedient, - This is Paul returning to his theme in Romans 10:16. To be obedient to the gospel, people must believe and obey the gospel. Understanding the gospel but not obeying the gospel is not enough. If you want to get saved, you must believe and obey the gospel, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

When we believe and obey the gospel, Isaiah 53:1, John 12:37-43, and God saves us, the risen Christ comes to dwell in our hearts by faith. The Holy Spirit dwells in our unsaved body as His holy temple. If that has happened to you and if you are reading the Bible with an obedient believing heart, your life will

radically change. That dramatic change will be *by the faith of the Son of God*, Galatians 2:20-21. On the other hand, if you are like a lot of professing Christians, you will ignore the Bible and continue to live like an unsaved man while professing to be a Christian, without being able to see the hypocritical irony of your situation.

Paul is focused on the ministry God gave him in Acts 9:15, evangelizing Jews, Kings and Gentiles and bringing them to Christ. *Make the Gentiles obedient* refers to: **a.** Making the Gentiles obedient to the traffic laws of ancient Rome. **b.** Making the Gentiles obedient to the tax laws of ancient Rome. **c.** Making the Gentiles obedient to OT Jewish law. **d.** Making the Gentiles obedient to the gospel of Christ so that they get saved.

by word and deed, - Words and deeds are not the same; they are different. *By word* means that Paul actually used words. Paul wasn't of the group that professes to live it without using words. Paul wasn't part of the silent, afraid to take a public stand for Christ crowd. That nonsense about being a silent witness for Jesus isn't the OT way or the NT way. Do you follow Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:1?

*“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he hath redeemed
from the hand of the enemy;”
Psalm 107:2*

1. Paul convinced, Acts 18:28, **2. Paul disputed**, Acts 9:29, 17:17, **3. Paul preached**, Acts 9:20, 27, 13:5, 14:7, 21, 25, 15:36, 17:13, 18, 20:7, **4. Paul reasoned**, Acts 17:2-4, 18:4, 19, 24:24, **5. Paul taught**, Acts 11:26, 14:21, 20:20, **6. Paul testified**, Acts 18:5, 20:21, 25, 28:23, **7. Paul witnessed**, Acts 26:22-23.

Paul used words as a normal part of his apostolic ministry and so should we, even though we are not biblical apostles. Paul's ministry didn't stop with words. There were also *mighty signs and wonders* by the power of God to authenticate Paul's apostolic message and ministry, Romans 15:19. We have the completed NT now and God expects us to believe what the Bible says, 2 Peter 1:16-21, the more sure word of prophesy. More sure than what? _____

and deed - *Deed* refers to the *mighty signs and wonders* which accompanied Paul's ministry. The first century church had the offices of apostle and prophet, Ephesians 4:11, because in the first century AD, God was transitioning from

ministry to Israel to ministry to Gentiles, from OT law to NT grace, from the Jewish temple to the Christian church, while the NT was being written.

The Jews needed signs to help them believe what God wanted them to believe, 1 Corinthians 1:22. Israel began with signs, Exodus 3:1-6, 4:1-9, Deuteronomy 29:1-5, and even in their rebellion against God, Israel sought signs, Psalm 74:9, Jeremiah 32:21. The apostle Paul was a genuine apostle with apostolic signs and wonders.

15:19 - Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Through mighty signs and wonders, - When dealing with national Israel in the first century AD, signs were necessary for at least six reasons.

First, the nation of Israel started with signs, Exodus 3:2, 4:1-5, Psalm 74:9, Jeremiah 32:21-22, Deuteronomy 29:3-6, and apostolic ministry started with signs, Matthew 10:1, 8, and most of the people getting saved between the public ministry of Christ and Acts 11:19 were Jews, Matthew 10:5-6, 1 Corinthians 1:22, 14:22, who needed signs to help them believe.

Second, in AD 57-58, the NT was in the process of being written but when Paul writes Romans, only about half of the books of the NT had been written and the NT books that had been written were not then widely distributed. *Mighty signs and wonders* authenticated the message the apostles preached and helped people believe when they didn't yet have a NT they could read for themselves.

Third, because Paul was a genuine apostle who held the biblical office of an apostle, called by Christ Himself, Acts 9:1-6, 15-16, *mighty signs and wonders* by the power of God accompanied Paul's ministry.

Fourth, remember, in the mid-first century AD, because Christians lacked access to the written NT, God graciously gave *mighty signs and wonders* to authenticate the ministry and the message of the apostles and other servants of God so that Jews would believe and get saved. Those sign gifts probably also encouraged Gentiles to believe. As the NT was completed and as national Israel repeatedly rejected the glorious gospel of Christ, the focus of evangelism switched from national Israel to the Gentiles, Acts 13:46-48, 18:6-8, 28:26-31.

Fifth, *These signs shall follow them that believe*, Mark 16:15-18. Paul was a real apostle, not a charlatan who called himself an apostle but lacked the sign gifts

and spiritual authority and power of an apostle, which describes all modern day apostles. No modern day apostle is a biblical apostle. All modern apostles are religious grifter fakes. No Bible believer would follow them across the street let alone support their ministry.

Sixth, Paul held the genuine biblical office of an apostle and had the apostolic power which accompanied the apostolic office. Obviously, where there are real apostles, Satan will have false apostles, a false Christ and false ministers. Paul taught us in 2 Corinthians 11:1-15, that false apostles would arise, therefore, wise Christians don't need to be fooled by false apostles.

mighty signs and wonders - Real apostles who hold the biblical office of an apostle and are called and commissioned by God, have apostolic gifts, to authenticate their message, Mark 16:20, and ministry. Real apostles can do *mighty signs and wonders*, Acts 4:30, 5:12.

Fake apostles can do signs which may fool the unwary, like the sorcerers of Pharaoh, Exodus 7:8-13, but fake apostles are religious grifters, running a long con on God's unwary people. The signs of an apostle are not sign gifts given willy nilly to ordinary Christians. The age of the apostles ended when the apostle John died, around AD 100. We now have the complete Bible to read, memorize, believe and obey.

*“Truly the signs of an apostle
were wrought among you
in all patience,
in signs,
and wonders,
and mighty deeds.”
2 Corinthians 12:12*

18 mighty signs and wonders
in Paul's ministry

1. the blinding of Elymas - Acts 13:1-11
2. signs and wonders by their hands - Acts 14:3
3. healing of the crippled man - Acts 14:8-11
4. Paul's recovery from stoning - Acts 14:19
5. miracles and wonders among the Gentiles - Acts 15:12
6. Paul casts out a spirit of divination - Acts 16:16-18
7. miraculous jailbreak of Paul/Silas - Acts 16:25-32
8. Paul imparted the Holy Ghost - Acts 19:1-6

9. special miracles of healing - Acts 19:11-17
10. Spirit led book burning - Acts 19:18-20
11. the raising of Eutychus - Acts 20:7-12
12. warning not to go to Jerusalem - Acts 21:4-13
13. surviving Euroclydon - Acts 27:22
14. Angel of God appears - Acts 27:23-24
15. Paul survives ship wreck - Acts 27:34-44
16. Paul survives a viper bite - Acts 28:1-5
17. Paul heals father of Publius - Acts 28:7-8
18. Paul heals others on Melita- Acts 28:9

by the power of the Spirit of God; - The power of the Spirit of God and the signs of a real apostle are never scam artistry. The signs of an apostle are never fake gold dust or fake angel feathers being blown through the overhead air conditioning vents like they do at Bethel Church in Redding, California, so the easily deceived will think they've witnessed an apostolic miracle.

The Holy Ghost and the Spirit of God are two names for the third person of the Trinitarian Godhead, Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9. The power of the Spirit of God doesn't make people bark like dogs, doesn't cause them to writhe like snakes, as if they're burning in a fire or crawl around on the floor like an animal or exhibit the uncontrolled shaking of kundalini kriyas. Barking like a dog, writhing like a snake or exhibiting kundalini kriyas indicates devil possession, not the blessed Holy Spirit of the Bible and not the power of God.

so that from Jerusalem, - Jerusalem was the epicenter first of Judaism and then, of Christianity until Paul gets saved in Acts 9. By Acts 11, the epicenter of Christianity has shifted away from Jerusalem to Syrian Antioch, Acts 11-13, which was Paul's sending church for his missionary journeys. Because Paul continually returned to Jerusalem, and because he started in Jerusalem, Paul uses Jerusalem as the reference point of his missionary adventures.

and round about unto Illyricum, - "Lying between Italy, Germany, Macedonia, and Thrace, bounded by the Adriatic and the Danube. The usual Greek name was Illyris. The name Illyria occurs in both Greek and Latin. Though the shore was full of fine harbors and the coast-land fertile, Greek civilization never spread on the coast.

Dyrrachium or Epidamnus was almost the only Greek colony, and its history for centuries was a continuous conflict with the barbarous nations. In the time of the Roman Empire the name spread over all the surrounding districts. In the division between the Eastern and Western Empire it was divided into Illyris Barbara, annexed to the Western Empires and Illyris Graeca, to the Eastern,

including, Greece, Epirus, and Macedonia.” - Vincent’s Word Studies, Marvin R. Vincent, 1887, 1834-1922

This is Paul’s way of summing up his missionary adventures. Illyricum was in eastern Europe, along the east coast of the Adriatic Sea, northwest of Macedonia. Illyricum is partially the area we know today as Albania. Paul first visited Macedonia in Acts 16:9-12, and made another visit to Macedonia in 20:1-2. It is possible that on both visits, Paul visited Illyricum and probably preached *there*, based on Acts 17:1 - “*Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia*” and Acts 20:2 - “*And when he had gone over those parts.*”

In Acts 17:1, Apollonia was in Illyricum and Paul passed through Apollonia. In 2 Timothy 4:10 Paul tells us “*Titus unto Dalmatia.*” This statement along with Acts 20:1-2, puts Paul and his co-worker Titus at least in the vicinity of Illyricum and Dalmatia, Dalmatia being a province of Illyricum, named after an Illyrian tribe called the Dalmatae. When Paul says, *from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum*, he references much of the known Roman world, where he had evangelized and preached the gospel and started churches.

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. - *Fully preached* means Paul had witnessed, evangelized, won souls, made disciples and started churches. It means the gospel was spread abroad, faithfully preached, faithfully taught, made clear so that the wild tribes understood they had a Savior who was also their Creator, who died for their sins and rose from the dead so they could be saved.

The gospel Paul *fully preached* was the gospel of Christ, not the kingdom of heaven gospel or the kingdom of God gospel that Christ preached in His earthly ministry, Matthew 3:2, 4:17, Mark 1:14-15. The gospel of Christ was Paul’s gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ according to the scripture, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, which, when believed, saves the soul.

What must be included for anyone to claim they have *fully preached the gospel of Christ*? **a.** the love of God. **b.** the praise of God. **c.** the miracles of Jesus. **d.** the death, burial and bodily resurrection of Christ. **e.** the unity of all religions.

The truth is, Christians often ignore or neglect to mention or forget to mention the glorious resurrection of Christ in our witnessing. If we do not mention the resurrection of Christ, we have not *fully preached the gospel of Christ*. We tell people they are sinners. We tell them Christ died for their sins. We tell them Christ will save them if they call upon the Name of the Lord. Have we left out something in that presentation? _____

What is missing in all of that? _____ Is witnessing the right way important enough to you to get intentional and learn to witness for Christ using the gospel of Christ? _____ What is the gospel of Christ? Please circle the components of the gospel of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. If it's not mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, do not circle it.

- a. God loves you
- b. God has a wonder plan for your life
- c. Christ died for our sins
- d. according to the scriptures
- e. Christ was buried
- f. Christ rose from the dead
- g. According to the scriptures

15:20 - Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, - *Strived* is Paul's way of alluding to the intentionality of his ministry and perhaps also, a reminder of the great persecution he suffered. Paul worked at ministry, had a message he always preached and ministered everywhere he went but he often faced persecution. Paul's ministry was intentional, meaning, it didn't happen by accident. It was planned and prepared for and was well thought out.

Paul's ministry didn't happen by accident. If you are to be a faithful witness for Christ, your personal ministry for Christ won't happen by accident. Being a faithful witness for Jesus is the result of intentional obedience to God's commands to you in the Bible.

Do you carry gospel tracts with you in your car? _____ Do you leave a gospel tract somewhere on the gas pump when you get gas? _____ Do you have gospel tracts near the door of your house, to give to anyone who comes to your door? _____ Isn't it time for you to get intentional in your witnessing for Christ? _____ What specific things must you do as you get intentional about witnessing? _____

not where Christ was named, - Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, a great pioneer missionary, a man full of faith, a man who loved the adventure of pioneering new mission fields where Christ was not named, where Christ was not known. Roman Catholicism teaches that Peter was in Rome and started the church at Rome. If that is true, then Peter must not have preached the gospel of Christ because to preach the gospel of Christ, you have to name Christ.

Under inspiration of God, Paul has just told us that he preached *the gospel, not where Christ was named*. Paul was focused on the regions beyond, 2 Corinthians 10:16. We know from the gospels that Peter had a big mouth and was not a shy man. If Peter had been in Rome before Paul, then Peter had already preached the gospel of Christ in Rome and had already named Christ in Rome.

Paul, God and the Bible are telling us that Peter had not been to Rome, did not start the church at Rome and hadn't preached the gospel in Rome, hadn't named Christ in Rome. Paul wasn't going to Rome to start a church. He was going to Rome on his way to the mission field of Spain. Rome was a Gentile city and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, not Peter.

"Some want to live
within the sound
of church or chapel bell;
I want to run a rescue shop
within a yard of hell."
- C.T. Studd

lest I should build upon another man's foundation: - The apostle Peter was not the first pope and probably, was never in Rome. Some folks believe Peter was the first pope and the founder of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome. There is no biblical evidence which supports that belief.

In any event, Paul's main goal was not to start a church at Rome. His epistle to the Romans was written to the church at Rome, therefore the church at Rome already existed before Paul went to Rome. Paul's main goal was to journey to Spain, Romans 15:24. The stopover in Rome was to visit his friends and former co-laborers in the gospel and help the Roman Christians get grounded and settled in the truth of justification by faith and sanctification by faith.

15:21 - But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

But as it is written - This is Paul's seventh quotation from the OT in Romans 15, again pointing us to God's loving care for and intentions toward Gentiles. Paul is wound up, spiritually speaking, and starts quoting the OT in rapid fire mode, to make his point that the OT has already told us that the Jewish Messiah would also bring in the Gentiles. That wasn't particularly exciting news for Jews but it was wonderful news for Gentiles.

To whom he was not spoken of, - This is a prophetic reference to the Gentiles getting the gospel of Messiah Jesus. Think about this logically. In the OT, was Messiah spoken of to the Jews? _____ If Messiah had been spoken of to the Jews, then Isaiah must have had someone other than the Jews in mind when he wrote Isaiah 52:15 - *to whom he was not spoken of*. Here in Romans 15:21, Paul is quoting Isaiah 52:15 and he applies it to the Gentiles. The last verse of Isaiah 52, is Isaiah launching into the great Messianic chapter, Isaiah 53.

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

What does Isaiah 52:15 say which leads us to believe that Isaiah is talking about the Gentiles? _____ Yes indeed, Isaiah 52:15 is a reference to Gentile nations and Gentile kings receiving the glorious gospel of Christ. Do you remember Paul’s commission from the Lord Jesus Christ? It was a threefold commission, **1. to the Gentiles, 2. to kings, and, 3. to Israel.**

*“But the Lord said unto him,
Go thy way:
for he (Paul) is a chosen vessel unto me,
to bear my name before the Gentiles,
and kings,
and the children of Israel:”*
Acts 9:15

*“For I say unto you,
that this that is written
must yet be accomplished in me,
And he was reckoned among the transgressors:
for the things concerning me have an end.”*
Luke 22:37 - Quoting Isaiah 53:12

*“Therefore will I divide him
a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil
with the strong;
because he hath
poured out his soul unto death:
and he was numbered with the transgressors;
and he bare the sin of many,*

and made intercession for the transgressors.”
Isaiah 53:12.

Have you ever noticed that Jesus told His disciples in Luke 22:37, that Isaiah 53:12 is about Him? _____ What an interesting revelation of truth from our Messiah Himself. Messiah Jesus told us that Isaiah 53 is about Him. That is important to keep in mind. Do you see how important belief and unbelief are? Do you believe all that the prophets have spoken, Luke 24:25? _____

Every Jew in first century Israel should have believed on Jesus as his prophesied Messiah because Isaiah 53 is all about Messiah Jesus and He told them that during His earthly ministry. How do we know that for sure? We know that for sure because in Luke 22:37, Luke wrote down what Jesus said. Do you believe what Jesus said in Luke 22:37? _____

Romans 15:21
they shall see:
they shall understand.

they shall see: - This is definite - *they shall see*. If the Gentiles were not going to receive Messiah Jesus when the Jews rejected Him, there would be no need for God to make Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. *They shall see* means the Gentiles will listen to the glorious gospel of Christ and many will receive Messiah Jesus and get saved. And some of those saved Gentiles will evangelize unsaved Jews.

and they that have not heard shall understand. - This is definite - *they that have not heard shall understand*. This is a reference to the Gentiles receiving and believing the glorious gospel of Christ. Remember, by the time of Christ, Israel had heard God's prophets for 1450 years.

Israel had heard and rejected the message of God's prophets, had heard and rejected prophecies about Messiah, had heard and rejected prophecies about the Gentiles coming to God, had heard and rejected the message of John the Baptist, had heard and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Israel heard and didn't see. Israel heard and didn't understand, because of Acts 28:26-27, quoting Isaiah 6:9-10, 29:13-14, Jeremiah 19:15, Zechariah 7:11-14. Israel shut their own eyes, closed their own ears, hardened their own heart. No Christian should ever be as unbelieving as OT Israel.

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

For which cause also I have been much hindered - Because the Gentiles will believe on Jesus, because the Gentiles will hear and understand and get saved, Paul was much hindered from going to Rome on his way to Spain, where there are people who have never heard of Christ. There have been believers in Rome for a long time, Acts 2:6-11.

There is a great spiritual battle going on behind the scenes, behind the headlines, behind the news stories, behind events and circumstances we see in our world. We are witnessing a great spiritual battle. The ultimate origin of that spiritual battle is Satan hindering the plan of God and the preaching of the gospel.

The principalities and powers who hindered Paul from going to Rome and Spain are described by Paul himself in Ephesians 6:11-21, written around AD 64. They are the same kind of powers which hindered Michael in Daniel 10.

This reminds us of what Paul wrote in Galatians 6:9. If we give up because of opposition or lack of an immediate answer, if we give up because we are *hindered*, that's the wrong thing to do. Giving up and quitting when we are *hindered* is not a winning spiritual warfare tactic. Don't be a quitter just because you're facing opposition. God has your back and God will give the victory if you don't quit.

Remember Galatians 2:20 and trust the power of God through the indwelling Christ to get you onto victory ground. Persistence in prayer is vitally important. Persistence in serving God, day in and day out, even when you cannot see anything happening, even when it feels like God is distant, is part of God's plan to teach you faithfulness. Can God count on you to be faithful? _____
Are you a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? _____

*“And let us not be weary in well doing:
for in due season
we shall reap,
if we faint not.”
Galatians 6:9.*

I have been much hindered from coming to you. - The biblical commentary on being supernaturally and spiritually hindered, is found in Daniel 10:1-21. Are you a Christian believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Believers face spiritual opposition to our prayers. That is why we are told to pray without ceasing. That is why Jesus taught persistence in prayer in Luke 18:1-8. Spiritual opposition is designed to hinder the plan of God. Spiritual opposition and hindering are always Satanic opposition and hindering.

*“men ought always to pray,
and not to faint.”*

Luke 18:1

Our Christian response to hindering and opposition is to continue faithful in prayer. The next time you are hindered, remember to stay faithful to God. If you stay faithful to God, you will win spiritual victories. If you quit on God when God intends you to be victorious, you may develop the habit of quitting and losing the victory and that would be a sad situation.

What hinders us?

1. Lack of spiritual preparation
2. Lack of spiritual consistency
3. Spiritual laziness
4. Failure to read the Bible
5. Failure to believe the Bible
6. Failure to obey the Bible
7. Getting mad at God
8. Getting mad at other Christians
9. Getting mad at circumstances
10. Ignorance about our spiritual opposition
11. Ignorance about our victory in Christ
12. Ignorance about our real enemy
13. Focusing on the flesh instead of the Spirit

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

But now having no more place in these parts, - Paul wrote Romans from the rowdy eastern seaport of Corinth known as Cenchrea, Acts 18:18, Romans 16:1. The area of Corinth and Cenchrea, Cin-kree-a, is Paul's probable location when he wrote Romans. Remember also where Paul is in his ministry, chronologically speaking. Paul got saved in Acts 9, around AD 34. He has been in the gospel preaching, soul-winning, church-planting, disciple-making, apostle to the Gentiles ministry for 24 years by the time he writes Romans, around AD 58.

Paul has preached all over Greece and Asia Minor (John the Apostle had also written to the seven churches of Asia, Revelation 1:11), and Macedonia, witnessing and working miracles to authenticate his message, leading people to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, making disciples, training pastors, starting

churches. He has already told us in Romans 15:16, that he is *the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles*.

He has already told us in Romans 15:19, that he has *fully preached the gospel of Christ*. He has already told us in Romans 15:20 that he has preached Christ where Christ was not named, in other words, to people in places where they had never heard of Christ.

When Paul says, *But now having no more place in these parts*, he is saying that his ministry in these parts is complete. He has done what God called him to do. The gospel has been preached and the lost have been evangelized, by Paul, by Paul's co-workers, by Paul's converts, by the pastors Paul has trained, by the people in the churches Paul has planted. Luke explains this in Acts 20:36-38, as Paul says goodbye to the Ephesian elders. His ministry is over in Greece, Macedonia, Achaia, as Luke explains in Acts 20 and Paul explains in Romans 15:23.

Paul is ready for a new missionary adventure in an unevangelized place like Spain, where Christ is not named, in a place where no apostle has yet preached the glorious gospel of Christ. Although he probably doesn't know it, in AD 58, Paul has about ten years left to minister before he dies a martyr's death at the hands of a Roman executioner and goes home to glory.

and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; - Throughout his previous 24 years of ministry, Paul has kept what we might describe as a spiritual bucket list. For many years Paul has wanted to go to Rome, at that time, the capital of the greatest empire on earth. Of course, Paul isn't going to Rome as a sight-seeing tourist on vacation. His purpose is missionary evangelism, to win souls and start churches and encourage the Roman Christians. Rome was of interest to Paul because it was a great pagan city where souls could be won and disciples and missionaries and pastors could be trained and sent to the regions beyond.

People sometimes talk about their bucket list - a list of things they intend to do and places they intend to see before they die - but rarely do we hear of anyone having a spiritual bucket list. If you have a bucket list, is there anything spiritual on your bucket list, anything you intend to do for Christ before you die?
_____ What is on your spiritual bucket list that you would like to do for Christ? _____

One of the items on Paul's spiritual bucket list is a strong desire to visit Spain, a place where Christ had not been named, a place unvisited by the other apostles, and there continue his missionary adventures. Some people believe that it was

on Paul's journey to Spain, in the last ten years of his life, that he also checked off another spiritual bucket list item, an evangelistic journey to Londinium and the wild island province of Roman Britain.

The Regions Beyond

2 Corinthians 10:16

To the regions beyond I must go, I must go,
Where the story has never been told;
To the millions that never have heard of His love,
I must tell the sweet story of old.

Chorus:

To the regions beyond I must go, I must go,
Till the world, all the world,
His salvation shall know.

To the hardest of places He calls me to go,
Never thinking of comfort or ease;
The world may pronounce me a dreamer, a fool—
Enough if the Master I please.

Oh, you that are spending your leisure and pow'rs
In pleasures so foolish and fond;
Awake from your selfishness, folly, and sin,
And go to the regions beyond.

There are other lost sheep that the Master must bring,
And to them must the message be told;
He sends me to gather them out of all lands,
And welcome them back to His fold.

- Albert Benjamin Simpson, 1904, 1843-1919,
Founder of the Christian And Missionary Alliance,
Founder of Nyack College and Alliance Theological Seminary

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

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, - As first century Rome was the most powerful city in Italy and the Mediterranean, so Carthage was the most powerful Phoenician city in North Africa and the Mediterranean. The Romans began the conquest of Spain around 218 BC with their assault on Carthage (known to history as the First Punic War, 264-241 BC). Carthage was in what we know today as Tunisia, North Africa.

Carthage had established colonies in ancient Spain and the Roman conquest of Spain was part of the Roman Empire's strategy to destroy the power and wealth of Carthage by taking over her colonies. By AD 57, when Paul is planning his missionary journey to Spain, meaning, the Iberian Peninsula, what we know today as Spain and Portugal had been under Roman influence for more than 250 years.

Roman armies, Roman commerce, the trade language of koine Greek, Roman government, the Roman governmental language of Latin, Roman governors, Roman occupation, the pax Romana (Roman peace because of the power of Rome) and Roman roads had already prepared the way for Paul and his co-laborers to take the glorious gospel of the risen Christ to Spain.

Even in his 60s, Paul had plans for more evangelistic ministry and those plans included a missionary journey to Spain. It is clear from Paul's own words in Romans 15:24, that he intended to make a missionary journey to Spain. On the other hand, there is no statement in the Bible that Paul went to Spain. That Paul's journey to Spain is not specifically mentioned in the Bible as happening, does not however, prove or even indicate that his journey to Spain didn't happen.

In the wisdom of God, the book of Acts ends before Paul had time to make his journey to Spain, because Paul spent *two whole years*, Acts 28:16, 23, 30, living in his own hired house in Rome, under house arrest, receiving all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, evangelizing and teaching.

If, after his two year detainment, Paul did make a missionary journey to Spain, that journey would have happened sometime after he was freed from house arrest in Rome. Paul was executed by the Roman government around AD 68 so in the time between his release from house arrest in AD 62 to his execution around AD 68, Paul could have made his journey to Spain.

In the first century AD, the 500+ mile sea voyage from Rome's seaport of Ostia to Tarracco, Spain, modern Tarragona, took as long as six days, and sometimes longer, depending on the route sailed, the prevailing winds, the time of year, the skill of the captain and the number of stops that were made. Sailing in the

Mediterranean was curtailed during the winter, Acts 27:1-16, because of storms and contrary winds. Roman ships could sail at a speed of 4 or 5 knots, day and night, over open water.

Did early Christians believe that Paul took his missionary journey to Spain?

Clearly early Christians did believe that Paul took his missionary journey into Spain.

The book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome but that is not the end of the story and that is not the end of Paul's missionary ministry. Because the biblical account ends with scant information about the final years of Paul's life and ministry, the period after his release from house arrest in Rome, AD 62, until his death, AD 68, we can piece together fragments of information from outside the Bible.

These fragments of information are not as authoritative as scripture. We present them here so the reader can make an historically informed judgment about the possibility of Paul's missionary journey to Spain. The following citations from church history provide insight into how early Christians viewed Paul's missionary journey to Spain.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS

translated by Charles H. Hoole, 1885. Clement, **AD 35-99** - This Clement may be the Clement Paul mentions in Philippians 4:3, Bishop of Rome, AD 88-99.

Some scholars date the writing of First Clement around AD 70. If that is accurate, Clement, a man who knew Paul and worked with him in ministry, Philippians 4:3, testifies that Paul heralded the gospel, Romans 1:16-17 - preached righteousness - in the West, meaning Spain, within just a few years of the death of the apostle Paul in AD 68.

"5:5 Through envy Paul, too, showed by example the prize that is given to patience:

5:6 seven times was he cast into chains; he was banished; he was stoned; having become a herald, both in the East and in the West (Spain is to the west, across the Mediterranean Sea and west of Rome), he obtained the noble renown due to his faith;

5:7 and having preached righteousness to the whole world (Romans 15:23), and having come to the extremity of the West (Spain was considered the western extremity of Europe and the western extremity of the Roman Empire), and

having borne witness before rulers, he departed at length out of the world, and went to the holy place, having become the greatest example of patience.”

The Muratorian Canon, Roberts-Donaldson Translation: Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, III.-Canon Muratorianus.²² (In Muratori, V. C. Antiq. Ital. Med. oev., vol. iii. col. 854.) The Muratorian Canon dates to approximately **AD 170**, within about 100 years of the apostle Paul.

“2. Moreover, the Acts of all the Apostles are comprised by Luke in one book, and addressed to the most excellent Theophilus, because these different events took place when he was present himself; and he shows this clearly-i.e., that the principle on which he wrote was, to give only what fell under his own notice-by the omission 33 of the passion of Peter, and also of the journey of Paul, when he went from the city-Rome-to Spain.”

Catechetical Lectures Cyril of Jerusalem, **AD 313-386**, Paragraph 26

“26. With this Holy Spirit Paul also had been filled after his calling by our Lord Jesus Christ. Let godly Ananias come as a witness to what we say, he who in Damascus said to him, The Lord, even Jesus who appeared to you in the way which you came, has sent me, that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 9:17 And straightway the Spirit's mighty working changed the blindness of Paul's eyes into newness of sight; and having vouchsafed His seal unto his soul, made him a chosen vessel to bear the Name of the Lord who had appeared to him, before kings and the children of Israel, and rendered the former persecutor an ambassador and good servant — one, who from Jerusalem, and even unto Illyricum, fully preached the Gospel Romans 15:19, and instructed even imperial Rome, and carried the earnestness of his preaching as far as Spain, undergoing conflicts innumerable, and performing signs and wonders. Of him for the present enough.”

Chrysostom, Homilies on Second Timothy - **AD 347-407**,
2 Timothy 4:20

Ver. 20 - “Trophimus I have left at Miletum sick.” Miletus was near Ephesus. Did this happen then when he sailed to Judea, or upon some other occasion? For after he had been in Rome, he returned to Spain, but whether he came thence again into these parts, we know not. We see him however deserted by all. “For Demas,” he says, “has forsaken me. Crescens is departed into Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Erastus abode at Corinth. Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”

The Acts of Peter, Written no later than **AD 200**, From "The Apocryphal New Testament" M.R. James-Translation and Notes, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924, This is an apocryphal book. It is not scripture. We include it here because it indicates that before AD 200, people believed and wrote that Paul did take his journey into Spain.

"III THE VERCELLI ACTS

At the time when Paul was sojourning in Rome and confirming many in the faith, it came also to pass that one by name Candida, the wife of Quartus that was over the prisons, heard Paul and paid heed to his words and believed. And when she had instructed her husband also and he believed, Quartus suffered Paul to go whither he would away from the city: to whom Paul said: If it be the will of God, he will reveal it unto me. And after Paul had fasted three days and asked of the Lord that which should be profitable for him, he saw a vision, even the Lord saying unto him: Arise, Paul, and become a physician in thy body (i.e. by going thither in person) to them that are in Spain. ”

“And when they had touched at Puteoli, Theon leapt out of the ship and went unto the inn where he was wont to lodge, to prepare to receive Peter. Now he with whom he lodged was one by name Ariston, which alway feared the Lord, and because of the Name Theon entrusted himself with him (had dealings with him). And when he was come to the inn and saw Ariston, Theon said unto him: God who hath accounted thee worthy to serve him hath communicated his grace unto me also by his holy servant Peter, who hath now sailed with me from Judaea, being commanded by our Lord to come unto Italy. And when he heard that, Ariston fell upon Theon's neck and embraced him and besought him to bring him to the ship and show him Peter. For Ariston said that since Paul set forth unto Spain...”

15:24 - I will come to you: - Paul intends to visit Rome after his journey to Jerusalem because he has Christian friends in Rome. There are many reasons Paul desired to visit Rome.

1. Rome is the epicenter of art and culture.
2. Rome is the epicenter of architecture.
3. Rome is the epicenter of finances.
4. Rome is the epicenter of philosophy.
5. Rome is the epicenter of power.
6. Rome is the epicenter of pagan religion.
7. Rome is where Paul has many Christian friends.
8. Rome is the capital of the civilized western world.

As the capital of the Roman Empire, Rome offers Paul opportunity to fellowship, teach and preach with Christians in the capital city, some of whom he already knows. And as we will see in chapter 16, Paul had many good friends and co-laborers for Christ who lived and ministered in Rome.

for I trust to see you in my journey, - It is easy to read that without remembering how difficult was Paul's journey to Rome. Do you remember how Paul finally arrived in Rome? After spending two years as a prisoner in Jerusalem and Caesarea, Paul survived a shipwreck and other dangers before arriving in Rome. Luke tells us of that journey in Acts 27:1-28:29. Do you remember how sweetly the Lord comforted and encouraged Paul throughout his travels and on his arduous journey to Rome, Acts 18:9-11, 23:11, 27:23-24?

*“And the night following
the Lord stood by him,
and said, Be of good cheer, Paul:
for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem,
so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”*
Acts 23:11

Behind every difficulty, disturbance and trial in our lives, the hand of God moves men and circumstances to achieve the will of God. Paul trusted God that in all the circumstances of his life, God would be glorified because in all the circumstances of Paul's life, Paul first and foremost served God. Do you? _____

and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, - When Paul says, *and be brought on my way thitherward by you*, does he mean, thitherward to Spain or, thitherward to Rome? _____ Read Romans 15:24 out loud several times and notice that Paul's primary goal isn't Rome. Paul's primary goal is Spain.

Rome already has churches and pastors and Christians. Paul's focus is the regions beyond. Rome is a stopping point, not Paul's ultimate destination. Rome is a place along the way where he can rest and be refreshed and encouraged but Rome is not primary. For Paul, the great missionary apostle to the Gentiles, the new frontier is Spain, with its unreached multitudes in pagan tribes who have never heard the glorious gospel of Christ.

if first I be somewhat filled with your company. - Paul knows and loves people in Rome because he has met them in person. He probably led some of them to Christ on his missionary travels in other cities and has discipled them and worked with them in ministry in cities across the Roman Empire. These

people, 26 of whom Paul mentions by name in Romans 16, minister to Paul and refresh his spirit and Paul ministers to them and refreshes their spirit.

15:25 - But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

*“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

*“And now, behold,
I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,
not knowing the things that shall befall me there:
Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth
in every city, saying
that bonds and afflictions abide me.”*
Acts 20:22-23

But now I go unto Jerusalem - Paul always has plans for future ministry and his journey to Jerusalem is no exception, Acts 19:21. His itinerary was Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem and Rome, with other ministry opportunities scattered along the way, as given in Acts 21:18 to 28:16. Of course, at this time in his ministry, Paul's ultimate missionary destination was Spain, Romans 15:24. Jerusalem and Rome were just temporary stops on the journey to Spain.

Paul's actual visit to Jerusalem is found in Acts 21:12-17. Events that happened to Paul during and after his Jerusalem visit are found in Acts 21:18 to 28:16. Paul's arrival in Rome probably occurs about two years after his Jerusalem visit, when he reaches Rome early in the year AD 60.

to minister unto the saints. - Life is about ministry. Besides being a soul-winning, church-planting, disciple-making evangelistic apostle to the Gentiles, Paul ministered unto the saints. From this simple statement we learn a valuable spiritual lesson. Saints, meaning normal everyday Christians, also need ministered unto. Ministering to the saints was important enough that even the great apostle Paul ministered to them willingly. Paul saw ministering to the saints as meaningful enough and important enough that he would make a special trip to Jerusalem to perform that service.

Ministering unto the saints means making disciples, teaching them the Bible, teaching them to follow Jesus as Paul followed Jesus, 1 Corinthians 11:1, teaching them to live by faith, teaching them to give faithfully to support the poor saints and the men who pastor them, showing them by example how to pray and how to live for Christ.

15:26 - For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia - Macedonia was a Roman province which Paul evangelized at the direct instruction of the Holy Ghost, Acts 16:7-10. Macedonia was a land of unsaved Gentiles, located north of the province of Achaia which was north of the city of Corinth. Macedonia was ancient Greece.

In 27 BC, at the command of the Roman Emperor Augustus, Macedonia was divided into two provinces, Macedonia (northern Greece) and Achaia (southern Greece). This division by Augustus the Roman Emperor was so that Achaia (southern Greece) could become a Roman Senatorial Province, governed by a Roman Proconsul while Macedonia (northern Greece) continued as a Roman province.

Macedonia is mentioned 26 times in 23 verses in the KJV NT. God specifically sent the apostle Paul and his missionary team to Macedonia, Acts 16:9-12. Macedonia and Achaia are mentioned together 5 times in the Bible, Acts 19:21, Romans 15:26, 2 Corinthians 9:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. That is because, in the plan of God, Macedonia and Achaia are vitally important. You remember that God directed Paul away from Asia, Acts 16:6-7, Revelation 1:11, Asia in the first century AD being what we know as modern Turkey and the surrounding area, and instead, sent Paul to Macedonia, northern Greece and toward Europe.

God saved people in Macedonia and Achaia - ancient Greece, the birthplace of western civilization, because God intended to use the western cultural ethos of redeemed men and women from the cradle of western civilization to spread the glorious gospel of Christ to the whole world. God did a great Holy Ghost work in Macedonia and Achaia and the surrounding areas of ancient Greece as Paul and his co-laborers led Greeks to Christ, started churches, trained pastors, made disciples and sent missionaries.

In the midst of the great blessing of God, remember Paul's personal testimony about how difficult it was in the middle of all of that blessing, 2 Corinthians 7:4-7. Sometimes the greatest storms come when we're right in the middle of God's will, doing exactly what God called us to do. If the apostle Paul experienced opposition and storms in the process of serving God, you probably

will too. Never fear the storms of life. Storms indicate that God is using you and the devil is opposing you. God will protect you in the storm and give you victory if you keep going for God and refuse to quit.

*“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night;
There stood a man of Macedonia,
and prayed him, saying,
Come over into Macedonia,
and help us.
And after he had seen the vision,
immediately we endeavoured
to go into Macedonia,
assuredly gathering
that the Lord had called us
for to preach the gospel unto them.
Therefore loosing from Troas,
we came with a straight course
to Samothracia,
and the next day to Neapolis;”
Acts 16:9-10*

*“Great is my boldness of speech toward you,
great is my glorying of you:
I am filled with comfort,
I am exceeding joyful
in all our tribulation.
For, when we were come into Macedonia,
our flesh had no rest,
but we were troubled on every side;
without were fightings,
within were fears.
Nevertheless God,
that comforteth those that are cast down,
comforted us by the coming of Titus;
And not by his coming only,
but by the consolation
wherewith he was comforted in you,
when he told us your earnest desire,
your mourning,
your fervent mind toward me;
so that I rejoiced the more.”
2 Corinthians 7:4-7*

**Never doubt in the darkness
what God showed you in the light.**

1. Did Paul and his co-laborers know for sure that God had called them to Macedonia? _____
2. What two words does Luke use to help us understand the certainty of their calling? _____
3. Did Paul's co-laborers see the same vision Paul saw or did they get their information secondhand, from Paul? _____
4. How did God call Paul's co-laborers, according to Acts 16:9-10? _____
5. Did Paul's co-laborers, including Dr. Luke, understand that, when God called Paul, He also called them, because they were part of Paul's team? _____
6. Is that spiritual truth clear to you in Acts 16:10? _____
7. In what way did God comfort Paul and Luke and their missions team as they evangelized in wild and woolly Macedonia? **a.** By sending them a big DoorDash food order. **b.** By holding back a great thunderstorm. **c.** By giving them favorable coverage on the nightly news. **d.** By sending Titus to encourage them in person.
8. Are you someone who encourages people when you show up? _____

and Achaia - Achaia is mentioned 11 times in the NT, Acts 18:12, 27, 19:21, Romans 15:26, 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:15, 2 Corinthians 1:1, 9:2, 11:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8.

Achaia, southern Greece, was the Roman senatorial province where the city of Corinth was located and which Paul also evangelized and started the church at Corinth. Like Macedonia, Achaia was the land of Gentiles. A senatorial province was governed by a Roman senator or a Roman proconsul instead of by a Roman military ruler.

In 146 BC, ancient Corinth was destroyed by Roman general Lucius Mummius, 193-140 BC, in a squabble with the Achaean League. Corinth was mostly uninhabited for the next 102 years until Julius Caesar rebuilt it and again made it a Roman colony in 44 BC. Corinth was in Achaia, 2 Corinthians 1:1.

to make a certain contribution - First century Christians were serious and intentional about giving. Are you like the first century Christians about your giving? _____ Getting saved should affect every area of our life including our finances and our giving.

The Christians to whom Paul ministered gave money to help other Christians in need, as Paul describes here in Romans 15:26. In other areas where Paul ministered, Christians were instructed to pay elders that labored in the word and

doctrine, twice as much as they paid other elders, which is the meaning of, double honour, 1 Timothy 5:17. According to the Bible, people who are taught the gospel and the Bible should financially support the elders who are teaching them, 1 Corinthians 9:11.

*“Let the elders that rule well
be counted worthy of double honour,
especially they who labour
in the word and doctrine.”*

1 Timothy 5:17

*“If we have sown unto you
spiritual things (Bible teaching),
is it a great thing if we shall reap
your carnal things (financial support)?”*

1 Corinthians 9:11

An Offering

From Poor Saints - 2 Cor 8:1-2

For Poor Saints - Romans 15:26

for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. - *poor saints* - Not every Christian is rich. Some saints give out of their poverty. They are poor but they still give. Not every Christian has been made healthy, wealthy and wise by the Christ who died for their sins and rose from the dead to save them from a devil's hell. Don't fall for the false teaching of the prosperity gospel. Never join the name it and claim it, blab it and grab it crowd. Are you like the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia? Do you have a generous heart toward your financially poor brothers and sisters in Christ? _____ Why? _____

In the Bible, there is no record that NT Christians gave the money God had entrusted to them, to support the Humane Society of Jerusalem or Kitty Cat Rescue efforts in Judea or pagan charities or pagan social services. No Christian in the Bible ever said: “You know, those pagans are doing such great work with children. I need to financially support their pagan children's ministry.”

According to Romans 15:26, the offering from Macedonia and Achaia was for: **a.** Paul's retirement fund, **b.** building a beautiful hilltop church in Athens, **c.** paying for Paul to travel first class to Jerusalem, **d.** starting social welfare programs for disadvantaged pagans in Pergamos, **e.** the poor saints at Jerusalem.

The Bible tells us, Christians in Macedonia made a certain contribution for *the poor saints which are at Jerusalem*. Agabus the prophet may have been one of those poor saints, Acts 21:10. Judea is the hill country around Jerusalem. They gave to support their Christian brothers and sisters. Some professing Christians give the money God trusted them with to support some really weird and unbiblical things. Why would they do that? _____
What should Christians consider before they financially support a ministry?

Questions to answer before giving money to a ministry.

1. Is this a biblical Christian ministry?
2. Is this a pagan ministry masquerading as a Christian ministry?
3. Is this ministry trying to get people saved?
4. Is this ministry teaching people the Bible?
5. Is this ministry teaching people to be disciples of Jesus?
6. Do I personally know that this ministry is working for Christ?
7. Is this ministry open about its finances?
8. Does this ministry spend lots of money on fund-raising each month?
9. Does this ministry pay big salaries to its leaders?
10. Is it wise to only give my money where I know the people and the ministry is legit?

the poor saints - The word, *saints*, occurs 96 times in 95 verses in the KJV. Paul uses the word, *saints*, 8 times in Romans. Here are ten fascinating facts about saints and Christians. In the Bible, saints are just regular, normal Christians. In the Bible, saints are never people who have been beatified by a church. In the Bible, a saint is someone who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and has gotten saved. Agabus the prophet may have been one of the poor saints, Acts 21:10.

Bible Facts About Saints

1. In the Bible, no Christian ever bowed down to a statue of a saint, **2.** In the Bible, no Christian ever prayed to a saint, **3.** In the Bible, no Christian ever genuflected in front of the statue of a saint, **4.** In the Bible, no Christian ever made a statue of a saint, **5.** In the Bible, no Christian ever put a statue of a saint in a church building. **6.** In the Bible, no Christian ever lit candles to a saint, **7.** In

the Bible, no Christian ever venerated a saint, **8**. In the Bible, no Christian ever gave financial support to a church which housed statues of saints. **9**. In the Bible, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a saint. **10**. In the Bible, saints are never elevated above normal Christians.

What do you think about those interesting facts? _____
Is your Christianity real biblical Christianity or are you following a pagan religion and its pagan, unbiblical, unChristian religious practices? _____

1. In the Bible, there are no LDS, Latter Day Saints. **2**. In the Bible, no one claiming to be a saint or a Latter Day Saint ever wore secret magical underwear. **3**. In the Bible no one claiming to be a Latter Day Saint ever believed or taught that Jesus and Satan were brothers in the spirit world.

Isn't it interesting what isn't in the Bible, even though some people think it is in the Bible? _____ Something doesn't become Christian just because someone who identifies as Christian believes it religiously or does it religiously. Do you understand and agree with that important truth? _____
What makes something Christian? _____

1. In the Bible, there are no RC popes. **2**. In the Bible, there are no RC priests. **3**. In the Bible, there are no RC nuns or Buddhist nuns or any other kind of nuns. **4**. In the Bible, there are no RC saints or Latter Day Saints. **5**. In the Bible, including RC Bibles, every saint is just an ordinary normal Christian. **6**. In the Bible, believers are called saints because they are sanctified, Acts 26:18, not because they are perfect and not because they have been beatified and canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.

at Jerusalem - Jerusalem is the name of the ancient capital of Israel, while King David and King Solomon, David's son reigned. Judea is the name of the geographical area known as the hill country or the Judean hills around Jerusalem, Luke 1:39, 2:4. Judah is the name of the tribal area of Israel settled by the tribe of Judah, and Judah eventually became the name of the southern kingdom, the Kingdom of Judah, after Jereboam revolted with the ten northern tribes and established the Kingdom of Israel, leaving Solomon's son Rehoboam with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The southern Kingdom of Judah had Jerusalem as its capital.

Jerusalem - Capital city of Israel - 2 Sam 5:4-9

Jerusalem - the city of Judah - 2 Ch 25:27-28

Jebus - Original name of Jerusalem - Jud 19:10, 1 Ch 11:4

Judaea - hill country around Jerusalem - Mark 1:5, Lu 1:65

Juda - hill country around Jerusalem - Luke 1:29

Judah - One of twelve tribes of Israel - Num 1:27

Judah - Southern Kingdom after Solomon died - 2 Ch 11:17

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

It hath pleased them verily; - Paul is talking about giving money here and he says, the poor saints in Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to be able to give. It is as simple and profound and spiritual as that. The Macedonian Christians were young in the Lord. They were not mature Christians who had been saved for many years. They were not spiritual veterans who had their spiritual act together after decades of living for Christ. They were not rich Christians. Paul describes them as giving from *their deep poverty*, 2 Corinthians 8:2.

And yet, the Macedonian Christians were excited about being saved and they were excited about giving money to help their poor Christian brothers and sisters whom they had never met. What made them excited? They knew and trusted Paul and his presentation of the financial need of the poor Jewish believers in Judea. And, the Macedonian saints hadn't lost their first love. Their first love was the Lord Jesus Christ Who died and rose from the dead for their sins.

It hath pleased them verily, uses *verily* as an intensifier, to point out the truth, that they were happy to give sacrificially, to give out of what Paul describes as *their deep poverty*. Paul's own commentary on Romans 15:27 is found in 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. At the moment in time that the Macedonian and Achaian Christians gave money for Paul to take to help the poor saints at Jerusalem, this was their situation.

1. They were young Christians who had recently gotten saved. Remember that Paul first preached in Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, around AD 50 and writes Romans in AD 57-58. **2.** The Macedonian Christians were in a great trial of affliction, **3.** Yet they had abundance of joy. **4.** They were in deep poverty, **5.** Yet they abounded unto the riches of their liberality. **6.** They were willing to give, **7.** They were excited and joyful about giving liberally. That describes what we mean when we ask: Did your wallet get saved when you got saved? The wallets of the Macedonian Christians apparently did get saved when they got saved.

It's easy for Christians who are unenthusiastic about giving to say: Well, he's rich so it's easy for him to give. Or, he has lots of resources so when he gives, it's

less of a sacrifice than when I give. And yet, as we see in 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, the Macedonian and Achaian Christians were not financially rich.

They were poor enough that Paul describes the situation as, *their deep poverty*, and at the same time they were financially poor, they were also going through a great trial of affliction and yet, in spite of those obstacles, they gave money joyfully, generously, cheerfully anyway, out of *their deep poverty*.

The Greek word we translate as, *verily*, γάρ *gar*, pronounced *gar*, like the fish, is used 1067 times in 1016 verses (out of 7957 verses in the NT) in the Textus Receptus Greek text of the KJV NT. *Verily* means: truly, and is used to affirm and intensify a statement of truth while also affirming a conclusion as being true.

That intensifying factor is more apparent to us English speakers when *gar* is translated, *Verily*, meaning, truly. Oftentimes in the NT, *gar* is translated, *For...* and is more emphatic in Greek as a truth intensifier than *For* sounds to us in English. Paul uses the Greek word, *gar*, 145 times in 131 verses in Romans.

For example, in Romans 1:9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, *gar* is translated, *For...* at the beginning of each verse where it says: *For...* and then states a truth Paul wants to emphasize or wants to mark out as important. The Greek word, *gar*, and our English word, *For*, intensify and emphasize the truth of what Paul says.

It hath pleased them, gar, verily - Isn't it wonderful when the truth of the Bible pleases us instead of crossing our grain? Isn't it a blessing when our heart wants to do what the Bible says instead of rebelling against what the Bible says?

1. If you had opportunity, would it please you verily - truly - to give money to help out poor Christians? _____ 2. Does it please you verily - truly - to give money to support missionaries? _____ 3. Does it please you verily - truly - to financially support your pastor every week? _____

and their debtors they are. - The Greek word for debtors is ὀφειλέτης *opheiletēs*, pronounced, off-fi-lay'-tace. It is a masculine noun, used 7 times in 7 verses in the Textus Receptus Greek Text of the KJV, in Matthew 6:12 - *debtors*, 18:24 - *owed*, Luke 13:4 - *sinners*, Romans 1:14 - *debtor*, 8:12 - *debtors*, 15:27 - *debtors*, Galatians 5:3 - *debtor*. It means: one who owes another, one who is under obligation, one who is in debt. What is the Christian thing to do when you owe a debt? _____

The saved Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia are in financial debt to the poor saints at Jerusalem who ministered to them spiritually and who have borne the

spiritual burden and heat of the day, Matthew 20:12, after the resurrection of Christ, while the NT church was getting started.

Are you in financial debt to anyone because they helped you get saved and then stuck by you and helped you grow spiritually? _____ Can God trust you to be as spiritual about the financial debt you owe, as the baby Christians in Macedonia were? Can God trust you to pay the financial debt you owe for the spiritual ministering you've received? _____

The saved Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia who got saved under Paul's ministry recognized the financial debt they owed to their Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ and the saved Macedonian Gentiles had enough joy in the Lord that they were happy - *it hath pleased them verily* - to pay their financial debt even though they gave out of *their deep poverty*. Isn't that interesting?

For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, - Why is Paul taking the time and making the effort, in Romans 15:27, to point out, to Christians in Rome, this truth about giving money? _____

Paul says the saved Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia had been made partaker of the spiritual things of the saved Jews in Judea. Therefore, it was only right that the poor saved Gentiles in Macedonia should financially support the poor saved Jews in Judea in their time of need.

Paul is making a common sense argument why the poor saved Macedonian and Achaian Gentiles should give money to help their poor saved Judean Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ. The Macedonian Gentiles owed their spiritual things, like their salvation and their spiritual blessings in Christ, to the saved Judean Jewish Christians who faithfully served God, who refused to quit on God despite enduring persecution from their fellow but unbelieving Jews after they believed on Messiah Jesus.

The saved Jews stood strong for Christ and witnessed and won souls even when it cost them something. Has being a Christian and standing for Christ ever cost you something? _____ Do you have a testimony to share about what it has cost you? _____

The saved Gentiles owed their spiritual things, like their salvation and their spiritual growth and their spiritual blessings and their family members who got saved and their churches and their Bible believing pastors and deacons, to the saved Jews who originally spread the glorious gospel of Christ in the years after the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ. Those are the spiritual things of which Paul speaks here.

their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. - The Greek word for duty is ὀφείλω *opheilō*, pronounced, off-fi'-low. It is the verb form of the Greek word for debtors. It means, to owe money or to be in debt, to have a duty toward someone. If you owe a debt, it is your duty to pay your debt and that is the truth that Paul and the Holy Spirit convey here. When Paul says, carnal things, he is talking about giving money.

Please don't miss this. The saved Judean Jews faithfully ministered spiritually and that spiritual ministry positively impacted Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia who got saved because of the ministry of faithful saved Jews. The saved Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia therefore, owe a financial debt and have a financial duty to the saved Jews in Judea. What relevance does that have for us in the twenty first century? _____

That's the teaching Paul provides under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The saved Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia have a financial debt to pay and a financial duty to fulfill precisely because they had benefited spiritually from the gospel, from the preaching and teaching about the resurrected Christ by saved Judean Jews like the apostles and converts of the apostles. Do you agree with the apostle Paul about debt and duty? _____ What is your reasoning? _____

Romans 15:27 - A financial debt
Romans 15:27 - A financial duty

That the saved Macedonian Gentiles had benefited spiritually by getting saved from hell and getting saved out of drunkenness and drugs and pagan practices meant that they also, now, had a financial debt and owed a financial duty to the saved Judean Jews who made all of that possible because of their faithfulness to God.

So, when Paul and his evangelistic team witnessed to the Macedonians and led them to Christ and taught them the Bible, the natural response of the saved Macedonians, to the people who prayed for them, to the people who led them to Christ, to the people who nurtured them and taught them the Bible and were Christian examples to them, the natural response was to trust them and give financial support. That is the lesson Paul teaches us here.

their duty... minister unto them in carnal things - This isn't Paul coveting the silver and gold and apparel, meaning the worldly wealth, of the young Christians in Macedonia and Achaia, Acts 20:33. Paul is talking about money but he is not coveting the money in the offering he is going to collect. He is giving the

Macedonians and Achaians and other people who read Romans the opportunity to grow spiritually by participating in giving money to the Lord's work. He isn't collecting money for pagan causes or pseudo-Christian causes.

their duty - A duty is an obligation; in this case a financial obligation. A duty is also a responsibility, a debt to be paid, something that is not optional, something they shouldn't opt out of. *Their duty* was to minister to them in carnal things. In this situation, carnal things means, support them with your money. The newly saved Gentiles, though poor themselves, were financially capable of paying the debt they owed to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Do you see where Paul is going with this? _____ Where is he going? _____

Do you see that Paul isn't telling the saved Gentiles, Instead of giving money, you'll just have to pray more for the poor saints at Jerusalem? _____ Do you see that Paul isn't saying: You just need to send positive thoughts to the poor saints at Jerusalem? _____ Now there's nothing wrong with the saved Gentiles praying more for the poor saints at Jerusalem but that isn't what Paul is saying here. Can you put in your own words what Paul is saying here about *their duty*? _____

Please answer the questions based on what the verse or passage says.

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

- 1. What is the duty Paul mentions here?**
- 2. What are the carnal things here?**

*"If we have sown unto you spiritual things,
is it a great thing if we shall
reap your carnal things?"*
1 Corinthians 9:11

- 3. What does it mean, reap your carnal things?**

"Even so hath the Lord ordained

*that they which preach the gospel
should live of the gospel.*
” 1 Corinthians 9:14

4. What does it mean, should live of the gospel?

*“Let him that is taught in the word
communicate unto him that teacheth
in all good things.”*
Galatians 6:6

5. What does it mean, communicate unto him that teacheth?

*“For even in Thessalonica ye sent
once and again unto my necessity.
Not because I desire a gift:
but I desire fruit
that may abound to your account.”*
Philippians 4:17

6. What did they send?

7. What fruit abounded to their account?

Part of your spiritual growth in Christ is to learn to trust God enough to give money to support the cause of Christ and the work of Christ. God didn't give you everything you've got so you can hoard it for yourself. Supporting the work of Christ can take many forms, including: supporting your pastor financially and supporting missionaries financially and buying gospel tracts and distributing them and buying Bibles and New Testaments and giving them away. Are you learning to share your financial blessings or are you avoiding sharing? _____

We have a debt.

We have a duty.

We have a debt and we have a duty to help out financially. They helped us out spiritually. It's time for us to help them out in carnal things, like money. Reach into your scrip. In the Bible, a scrip is a leather bag, small or large, a leather pouch, a leather sack or a leather wallet, in which, in Bible times, shepherds and travelers and people in general normally carried their money and provisions, 1 Samuel 17:40, Luke 10:4, 22:35-36. A scrip can vary in size and scrips were often home made. In Bible times, money was not paper. Money was metal coins.

When they start taking up the offering...

Pull out some coins - money - and put those coins in the offering to help them out financially. If you're embarrassed about only giving coins, since ultimately, your offering is a gift to God, wrap your gift to God - those coins - in some pretty green wrapping paper and then put your coins in the offering all nicely gift wrapped.

The idea is: pay the financial debt you owe. Don't cheat God. God expects you to financially pay your spiritual debts and if God expects you to give money, then you are capable of giving money. You are capable of obeying God. People in Bible times didn't have paper money. In Bible times people used copper, bronze, silver and gold coins. You can trust God. Can God trust you?

Here in Romans 15:27, Paul is saying: Minister unto them in carnal things, meaning, help them out financially. You poor saved Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia are financially indebted to the poor Jewish saints at Jerusalem so pony up, chip in, contribute, dish out, cough up some cash, fork over some dough.

Have you ever thought about, prayed about, meditated on, asked the Holy Spirit for guidance about your debt and your duty to the people who led you to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your debt and your duty to whoever teaches you the Bible? _____ Answering that question and discovering the practical application of Romans 15:27 for us today is an important part of your spiritual growth. Paul is talking about their debt and their duty. What is your debt and your duty? _____

Too many Christians read Romans 15:27 and never think to apply it to themselves. It never occurs to them that they have a financial debt and they have a financial duty before God. They get ministered to in spiritual things and never imagine that they have a debt and a duty to minister in carnal things, like financial things, to the one who ministers to them in spiritual things. In the context of Romans 15:26-27, ministering in carnal things means: giving money, including financially supporting the minister who ministers spiritually to you.

15:28 - When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

When therefore I have performed this, - *This* is Paul personally bringing the offering from the poor Macedonian and Achaian saints to the poor saints at Jerusalem. The offering Paul collected in Macedonia and Achaia traveled with

Paul on his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem. Paul takes personal responsibility for the safe delivery of the offering to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

This is Paul's way of saying: After I have spent time in Jerusalem and safely delivered the offering that the saved Macedonian Gentiles gave, I'll be heading on to Rome to visit you and then it's on to Spain. My itinerary is: Jerusalem, Rome and then Spain.

and have sealed to them this fruit, - *Sealed* is an interesting word choice here because it is the same word found in Matthew 27:66 when they *sealed* the sepulchre of Jesus. In John 6:27 Jesus applies the word, *sealed*, to Himself, when He is *sealed* by God the Father. In 2 Corinthians 1:22 Paul uses the word *sealed* about Christians. In Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, Paul talks about believers being *sealed* unto the day of redemption. It's the same Greek word in each case.

Sealed conveys the idea of safety and security, of an absolute guarantee that what is promised will be fulfilled. When Paul *sealed* this fruit unto the poor saints at Jerusalem, it conveys absolute certainty that Paul would deliver the offering he collected, to the poor saints at Jerusalem, instead of keeping it for himself or giving it to someone else or using it in some other way.

Coins In The First Century AD

this fruit - *Fruit* refers to the coins which were given in the offering Paul collected in Macedonia and Achaia. Some of the Roman coins in circulation then and possibly part of the offering collected were: copper as's, struck in pure copper after the monetary reform of Emperor Augustus in 23 BC. Brass alloy coins known as semisses, triens, quadrans, sextans and uncia were widely used. Other brass coins used in the first century were known as the aes grave, the dupondius, and the sestertius.

The Romans also had silver denarius coins and the gold aureus coins. Because the Macedonians and Achaians were poor, it is doubtful that the offering had many silver or gold coins. It is also possible there were other coins from other nations included in the offering from the poor saints in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor saints at Jerusalem. This would be true because of merchants trading and traveling and travelers from other nations carrying the coins of their home country.

Possible other coins in the first century AD include Achaian coins minted in Achaia, Macedonian coins minted in Macedonia, Peloponnesos coins, probably minted in Corinth after Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in 44 BC, Greek coins from other parts of Greece, Persian coins, Phoenician coins and Herodian coins

minted by the various Herods. There may also have been Babylonian coins and coins of Carthage in circulation in Macedonia and Achaia during the first century AD.

Paul is saying: When I have delivered *this fruit*, meaning, the coins which were given in the Macedonian offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem, then I will continue on my journey to Spain, stopping in Rome on my way to Spain, so that I can visit you.

I will come by you into Spain. - That is clear and unequivocal - I will come by you into Spain. Paul intends to go to Spain, another missionary frontier made accessible by Roman roads and Roman armies and Roman laws and Roman economics and Roman freedom and Roman languages, both koine Greek and Latin. God and Paul used the Roman Empire, with its considerable economic and geographic and social benefits, to spread the glorious gospel of Christ from one end of the Empire to the other. Spain was on the far western edge of the Roman Empire.

15:29 - And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

And I am sure that, when I come unto you, - Paul is sure because he has had personal encounters with the risen Christ, as Dr. Luke points out, Acts 9:3-6, 18:9, 23:11, 27:24, 28:16, 30-31. The apostle Thomas missed a personal encounter with the risen Christ but he should have believed by faith. If you wait to get saved until you see the risen Christ in person, you will spend eternity in a devil's hell. God expects us to live by faith, Galatians 3:11. We can be as sure as God wants us to be and expects us to be, by faith, based on the truth of John 20:24-29.

When Paul writes Romans 15:29, he is at least two years away from actually visiting Rome. He knows he will face opposition in Jerusalem, before he gets to Rome, because the Holy Ghost has already told him that in Acts 21:4, 10-14.

when I come unto you - When Paul says, *when I come unto you*, he means, when he comes unto the Christians at Rome. It was a long journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem and, chronologically in time, an even longer journey to Rome. Paul first visited Phillipi, Macedonia, Acts 16:12-14, around the summer or fall of AD 50.

Paul did missionary evangelism for five years or longer, visiting city after city, Acts 16:10, 17:1, 10, 15, 18:1, 11, 19, 22-27, 19:1, 8, 10. It was in Phillipi,

Macedonia that Paul and Silas were jailed, Acts 16:22-31. Paul's return to Jerusalem, (he had visited Jerusalem previously), from Greece and Macedonia, after five or six years of ministry, is presented in Acts 20:1-21:18.

In Romans 15:29, do you sense the spiritual enthusiasm Paul still has in the later years of his ministry? Are you still full of enthusiasm for Christ and the gospel? _____ Are you still excited about witnessing for Christ? _____ Do you wake up every morning expecting God to use you in His service or show you something new in the Bible or give you opportunity to put your Christianity into practice? _____

I shall come in the fulness of the blessing - *I shall come* expresses Paul's joyful optimism and his determined intention. Paul was serious about going to Jerusalem, then Rome, then Spain. Are you optimistic about the future based on what the Bible says and based on what God has given you in Christ? _____ Since you are in Christ, does it make sense to be optimistic about your future? _____ Why? _____

These are the elements of *the fullness of the blessing* on which Paul's contagious optimism is based. For Christians, the fulness of the blessing is always inextricably linked to the gospel of Christ. What should we learn from that basic Bible truth? _____

What is the fulness of the blessing?

1. Having all spiritual blessings of God in Christ, Ephesians 1:3 - You get those blessings in Christ because you are in Christ. If you're not in Christ, you don't have those blessings **2.** Everyone who is in Christ has also already been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13, therefore they are in Christ. **3.** Everyone who is in Christ has the permanently indwelling Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13-14. **4.** Everyone who is in Christ has the power of the permanently indwelling risen Christ, Ephesians 3:17-19. **5.** Everyone who is in Christ has the ability *live by the faith of the Son of God*, Galatians 2:20. **6.** *The fulness of the blessing* is linked to the gospel of Christ. **7.** There is no *fulness of the blessing* apart from the gospel of Christ so, if you're not giving out the gospel of Christ, you won't have the fulness of the blessing.

Do you view your future with the joyful optimism Paul expressed? _____ Paul is upbeat and joyfully optimistic regardless of his circumstances precisely because he lived by the faith of the Son of God. The reality, at least on the surface, is that Paul came to Rome as a prisoner after surviving a ferocious two

week long storm called Euroclydon, Acts 27:14. Great and violent storms didn't dampen Paul's spontaneous joy. We can learn a helpful lesson from that.

A Euroclydon is a tramontane, the classical name for a powerful northern wind on the Mediterranean Sea. Euroclydon and tramontane describe a sudden cold, gusty and violent wind blowing down from the Alps and the Pyrenees onto the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, with winds sometimes exceeding 75 knots, causing 5 meter high waves (16 foot high waves). 75 knots is approximately 86 miles per hour, which qualifies as a category 1 hurricane, with sustained winds of 74 to 95 mph.

In 1993 the Tyrrhenian Sea experienced a 17 day long tramontane. In Acts 27:27, the Euroclydon tramontane Paul experienced lasted 14 days, ending in a shipwreck which destroyed the ship that carried Paul. This happened in Adria, which, in Paul's time was a term used to describe most of the Mediterranean Sea. After the shipwreck, Paul came ashore on Melita, modern day Malta, which is in the Mediterranean Sea, south of the island of Sicily.

the fullness of the blessing - The gospel is blessed IF we will use it. *The fullness of the blessing* always accompanies the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ. *The fullness of the blessing* is inextricably linked to the gospel of Christ. You cannot have *the fullness of the blessing* apart from the gospel of Christ.

Some people think *the fullness of the blessing* comes from the praise band drums which keep pounding a rhythm to the brain or comes from waving your hands in worship or comes from a good loud praise band or comes from colored lights and fog machines or comes from a driving hypnotic beat or from emotional feelings ginned up by the music. None of those fleshly things brings *the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*.

**Where he leads me I will follow,
What he feeds me I will swallow.**

Paul was used by God because he was: 1. surrendered, 2. usable, 3. yielded, 4. obedient, 5. available AND, 6. he preached the gospel of Christ wherever he went. Are you all of those things or some of those things? _____ Which of those things are you? _____

Which of those things do you need to work on to get yourself up to speed in your Christian life? _____

Paul had presented his body a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1-2 and that was a game changer. Have you presented your body a living sacrifice? _____ Has that been a game changer for you? _____

Where He leads me I will follow; what He feeds me I will swallow is a great motto for an all in Christian. Is that motto talking about trusting God or not trusting God? _____ Is that motto talking about living by faith or not living by faith? _____ Paul was all in for Christ and there aren't many Christians who can honestly say that about themselves. Is Romans 12:1-2 a biblical way of saying, I'm all in for Christ? _____

All in is the Spirit-filled attitude we need to learn and apply every day of our life. In everything we do, we come and we go, *in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*. If we can get over ourselves and get our minds off of ourselves and focus on the life-changing gospel of Christ and the power of the faith of the Son of God in us, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27, the fruit we bear in our lives might start to resemble the fruit that Paul bore for Christ.

of the gospel of Christ. - Although Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner, he still traveled *in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ*. That fullness was demonstrated by the fact that, for two whole years, Paul lived, as a prisoner, in his own hired house in Rome, *preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ*, Acts 28:30-31. The *fullness of the blessing* is Paul's calling, ability, willingness and opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ to *the chief of the Jews*, Acts 28:17-28, and *to all that came in unto him*. What is the gospel of Christ? The gospel is a defined set of facts.

What is the Gospel of Christ?

The word *gospel* occurs 101 times in 95 verses in the King James Bible New Testament. The word *gospel* is never used in the Old Testament. Our English word *gospel* comes from the Greek word, εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion or yū-än-ge'-lē-on, meaning good news. In classical Greek, a eu-an-ge-los was a messenger who brought good news of victory (like Ahimaaz in 2 Samuel 18:19-31) so eu-an-ge-li-on became a message of victory, good news for all who believe on the risen Lord Jesus Christ as their Substitute, who paid the penalty for their sins.

What is the gospel good news?

We were lost sinners under the curse of the Law, unable to satisfy the justice of God by paying sin's penalty ourselves. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus became our substitute. He took our place, dying as us for us, paying the penalty for our sins, appeasing the wrath of God, Romans 1:16-18, Isaiah 53:4-6, 8, 11. God signaled us that He accepted Jesus' payment by raising Jesus from the dead.

The bleeding Lamb upon the Cross
Bore all God's wrath that day;
The guiltless for the guilty, slain,
To take my sins away. - Rick Brentlinger

*"Christ hath redeemed us
from the curse of the law,
being made a curse for us:
for it is written,
Cursed is every one
that hangeth on a tree:"*
- Galatians 3:13

What wondrous love is this
O my soul, O my soul?
That Christ should leave his heavenly bliss
And take upon himself the curse,
For my soul, for my soul!

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus stepped up for us, took our place and paid the sin penalty we owed by taking our sins upon Himself, thus becoming a curse for us. *"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all."*
- Isaiah 53:6

He paid a debt he did not owe,
I owed a debt I could not pay;
I needed someone to wash my sins away.

And now I sing a brand new song
Amazing grace the whole day long;
For Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay.

Memory Verse:

*"For I am not ashamed
of the gospel of Christ:
for it is the power of God
unto salvation
to every one that believeth;
to the Jew first,
and also to the Greek."*
- Romans 1:16

Upon the cross where Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
His blood was shed for you and me,
Amazing grace has set us free! - Rick Brentlinger

The gospel demonstrates:

God's holiness - 1 Peter 1:16

God's wrath appeased - Romans 1:16-18

God's righteousness - Romans 3:26

God's justice - Romans 3:26 =
all of our sins paid for

God's love - Romans 5:8

God's grace - Galatians 1:6

God's faithfulness - 2 Timothy 2:13

God's awesome power - Romans 1:16

Here is the biblical gospel in 1 Cor 15:1-8

Christ died for our sins - v. 3

according to the scriptures - v. 3

he was buried - v. 4

he rose from the dead the third day - v. 4

according to the scriptures - v. 4

he was seen by 500+ eyewitnesses - vs. 5-8

Bearing shame and scoffing rude
In my place condemned he stood;
Sealed my pardon with his blood-

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
Phillip P. Bliss, 1875, 1838-1876

What the biblical gospel is not

1. Jesus loves everyone - true but that is not the gospel because it emphasizes the positive and ignores the negative
2. all roads lead to heaven - false
3. do your best and God will accept you - false
4. because Jesus died, everyone is already saved - false
5. behavior modification - does not save
6. trying to live like Jesus - does not save you
7. trying to be a good person - will never satisfy God
8. turning from all your sins - not part of the gospel

What does the biblical gospel teach us?

Our sins are real and destine us for a real hell - Revelation 20:12-15

Our need is real - we cannot save ourselves - Titus 3:5

Our real sins must be paid for - Romans 3:23

Jesus was our real substitute - 2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus' payment for our sins was real - 1 John 2:2

Jesus' death was real - he was buried - Mark 15:46

God's acceptance of Jesus' propitiation was real - 1 John 2:2

Jesus' resurrection was real - Romans 8:11

God really raised Jesus from the dead, proving that Jesus' payment was accepted by God the Father - John 2:19, Romans 8:11, 10:9

Jesus' resurrection was utterly real - he was seen by more than 500 eye-witnesses - 1 Corinthians 15:5-8

What is the gospel called?

The gospel of God - Romans 1:1 - God is the source of the gospel. He did all the work to make it possible for us to be saved, while we were still his enemies, Rom 5:10.

The gospel of Christ - Romans 1:16 - Jesus dying on the cross for our sins is the focus of the gospel, not the kingdom of heaven, not the kingdom of God, not joining a church, not getting baptized, not trying to clean up your life.

The gospel of the grace of God - Acts 20:24 - The gospel leaves no room for human works. Getting saved is all about God's incredible free gift of grace, not something we can earn by our works.

The gospel of peace - Ephesians 6:15 - Salvation brings us peace with God, Rom 5:1, through our Lord Jesus Christ because when we believe the gospel we are justified by faith.

My gospel - Romans 16:25 - The gospel we preach started with Paul and is for the church age. It is distinctively different than other gospels, like (a) the gospel of the kingdom which was preached during the earthly ministry of Christ and (b) the everlasting gospel which will be preached in the tribulation and (c) the false gospels of religious pretenders.

How do we access the gospel?

John 3:18 - believe and you are not condemned

John 5:24 - believe and have everlasting life

John 6:47 - believe and have everlasting life

Acts 16:30-31 - believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Getting saved is always by grace alone
through faith alone
in the Lord Jesus Christ alone!

Christians reject false gospels

1. Acts 15:1 - the false gospel of adding works of the law like circumcision
2. Galatians 1:6-10 - the false gospel of law-keeping brings damnation
3. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - the false gospel of Satan who blinds people to the glorious gospel of Christ, telling them they can get saved just by being a good person.

A watered down and false gospel focuses on getting rid of guilt or living a better life or Jesus as a prosperity gospel genie who grants all our wishes. A watered down false gospel talks about heaven (positive) but never mentions hell (negative).

A legalistic false gospel focuses on things you must do like: turn from all your sins or get baptized in water or make Jesus Lord of your life or prove you got saved by doing good works. Good works should happen after you get saved but they are not part of the gospel. Good works are not part of getting saved. Rather, they are a result of getting saved.

The gospel is exclusive

1. John 14:6 - Jesus' gospel is the ONLY way to heaven
2. Acts 4:12 - Jesus' name is the ONLY name which saves
3. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 - God reconciled the world ONLY through Jesus
4. 1 Timothy 2:5 - there is ONLY one God and one Mediator and that is Christ Jesus

Study Questions

1. Is the gospel whatever anyone thinks it is or is the gospel a defined set of facts?

2. Does the gospel contain both positive and negative truth?
3. If we leave out the negative truth, that our sins were so horrific that Jesus had to die, suffering God's wrath to pay the penalty, have we truly shared the gospel?
4. Is the gospel the power of God unto salvation or is it just another religious story?
5. Who is the center of the gospel, Jesus or human beings?
6. Is there any gospel apart from Jesus?
7. In which Bible verses is the gospel found?
8. Have you believed the gospel and trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin?
9. Will you learn to share the gospel with people who need it?

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

Now I beseech you, brethren, - *Beseech* means: to ask, to request, to plead, to beg. Paul is facing serious Jewish opposition, serious Satanic opposition, serious spiritual opposition and he needs God's people praying for him. The opposition Paul faces will last until he dies and goes home to heaven but in the context of Romans 15:30, There is about a two year long period of time, from the time Paul writes Romans to the time Paul arrives in Jerusalem, during which Paul beseeches them to pray for him.

If you lived in first century Rome, would you pray for Paul consistently and seriously for two years? _____ Paul expected Roman Christians to pray for him. I wonder how many of them actually did. The people who prayed seriously for the apostle Paul during that time period were part of his ministry. What does that truth mean to you? _____ How can we apply that truth to our lives in the twenty first century? _____

**Some reasons why Paul
needed people to pray for him.**

1. He was getting old and had some health problems.
2. He had eye problems which made it difficult to read.
3. He had Jewish enemies who wanted to kill him.
4. He had already been beaten physically many times.
5. He was the focal point of the advance of the gospel.
6. He was the focal point of spiritual opposition from Satan.
7. He needed spiritual encouragement and God's strength.

for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, - When we think right and live right and serve God and our fellow Christians, we do it for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. If that is not your motivation, you need to make a major correction in your thinking, in your heart and in your practice.

**Be a lifeboat -
Don't be a showboat!**

Every Christian should be a lifeboat, not a showboat. If you live like a showboat Christian, you're not following Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:1. God needs honest, faithful, reliable, trustworthy Christians. If you are not all of those, you need a major course correction and you need it now. Are you honest? _____ Are you faithful to God? _____ Can God rely on you to live right when no one is watching you? _____ Are you trustworthy in your character before a holy God? _____

If your answer to any of those questions is, No, or I'm not sure, you now know an area of your spiritual life that needs work. It's time to reread the NT, Matthew to Revelation, time after time and write down the verses God shows you about honesty, character, reliability and being trustworthy. And as you read, keep your heart open to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you through the scriptures.

and for the love of the Spirit, - Paul mentions the Trinitarian Godhead here in Romans 15:30. Did you notice the Trinity in this verse? _____ Paul's line of thought is: Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Then pray for me. Do you love the Holy Spirit? Then pray for me. Do you love God the Father? Then pray for me. Strive together with me in prayer for me. If you were the tip of God's great evangelism spear (like Paul was), would you want other Christians praying consistently and seriously for you? _____ Are you praying seriously and consistently for your pastor? _____ What doth hinder you? _____

that ye strive together with me - Paul explains what it means to strive together with him in prayer in Colossians 4:12-13. "*Epaphras, who is one of you, a*

servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.”

If you want to *strive together* in prayer, Paul explains how in Colossians 4:12-13. You need to be:

1. A servant of Christ. Are you a servant of Christ? _____ Do other Christians view you as a *servant of Christ*? _____

2. Someone who always labors fervently in prayers. Do you labor fervently in prayers for your pastor and for other Christians and for unsaved folks? _____

3. Someone who has a great zeal for the people you pray for. Do you have a great zeal for Christians you know, to see them grow spiritually and become servants of Christ? _____

Strive together in prayer describes a prayer warrior. Most Christians are not prayer warriors because: **1.** They don't read the Bible much so they've never seen the need to be a prayer warrior. **2.** They don't take the Bible seriously even when they read it so they refuse to accept their responsibility to be a prayer warrior. **3.** Their lives are so busy with worldly things and satisfying themselves that they rarely think about their responsibility to be a prayer warrior. **4.** Most Christians are more sold out to the world, the flesh and the devil than they are sold out to God. That's why, when they get to the judgment seat of Christ, there will be a great bonfire and their self-indulgent fleshly works will be all burned up, 1 Corinthians 3:9-15.

Are you facing a great bonfire at the judgment seat of Christ? _____

Do you strive together in prayer with other believers, for other believers? _____

If Jesus asks you: Why are you not a prayer warrior, what is your answer to that question? _____

If you think your answer won't satisfy God at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you're still alive so you still have time to do something about it now. What are you going to do about it? _____

in your prayers to God for me; - How can you help the man of God? **1.** You can work with him in evangelism. **2.** You can pray for him. **3.** You can financially support him and his ministry. **4.** You can pray for his ministry and the people he witnesses to and leads to Christ. **5.** You can encourage him instead of discouraging him.

There were saved people throughout Paul's ministry who opposed him, fought him and didn't stick with him. What fools they must think themselves now, almost two thousand years later. What an opportunity they missed and what rewards they have lost at the judgment seat of Christ.

15:31 - That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

That I may be delivered - Acts 21:27-32 is perhaps the kind of scenario Paul is praying about. What is Paul praying to be delivered from? _____ Who is Paul praying to be delivered from? _____ What kind of deliverance is Paul praying for? _____

Unsaved Jews were often vicious enemies of the gospel Paul preached. Unsaved Jews were vicious precisely because they were not saved. They weren't good people who simply disagreed on a few doctrinal matters. They were willing to kill people who disagreed with them. They were willing to listen to lies, become enraged at the lies they listened to and murder an innocent man, the apostle Paul, based on the lies they believed and their ungoverned, ungodly, unrighteous rage.

*“And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.”
- Acts 14:19*

Does it make sense to you now, that Paul wanted saved people to pray to God to deliver him from the foolish opposition and murderous hearts of the Jews? Is the incident in Acts 21:27-32 the only time the Jews tried to murder the apostle Paul? _____

from them that do not believe - This is probably an oblique reference to Jewish religious leaders associated with the Temple in Jerusalem and with Jewish leaders of synagogues and the persecution by the Jews, which Paul endured over the course of his ministry, 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, 11:23-30.

Paul's evangelistic strategy was to go to synagogues and evangelize unsaved Jews and unsaved Gentiles who gathered there. Synagogue is mentioned 23 times in the gospels and synagogues are mentioned 18 times in the gospels. Synagogue is mentioned 18 times and synagogues are mentioned 5 times in the book of Acts.

When Paul traveled the Roman world, outside the holy land, Zechariah 2:12, one of his first visits in a new city was to the Jewish synagogue, Acts 13:14-15, 42, 14:1, 17:1, 10, 17, 18:4, 7-8, 17, 19, 26, 19:8. Paul employed that evangelistic strategy because that is what Jesus did, Matthew 4:23-25, Luke 4:16, 1 Corinthians 11:1.

When Saul was an unsaved Jew aiming to persecute Christians, he focused his attention on synagogues because that is where some believing Gentiles and some inquiring Gentiles also assembled with Jews and that is where some Gentiles first heard about God, Acts 22:10, 26:11. The unbelieving Jews who opposed Paul used the same strategy Paul had used as an unsaved Jew and continued to use, with an evangelistic purpose, after he got saved.

We know from Acts 21:32, 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, 11:21-29, the harsh persecution Paul endured as the apostle to the Gentiles because Paul also preached to his fellow countrymen the Jews. On his upcoming visit to Jerusalem, this is the persecution and these are the beatings he would like to avoid by the grace of God and this is why Paul asks them to *strive together with me in your prayers to God for me*. Paul is giving Christians the opportunity to pray for him, the opportunity to see God answer their prayers and the opportunity to be a part of Paul's ministry through their prayers.

from them that do not believe in Judaea; - It turns out, according to Acts 21:27, that the Jews who did not believe, in this instance, were *Jews which were of Asia*. They may have been on a brief trip to visit the temple in Jerusalem or they may have been students of Gamaliel, as Paul had been years earlier, Acts 22:3. It is also possible they were from some place other than Israel but visiting Jewish relatives in or near Jerusalem.

them that do not believe - This refers to Jews who did not believe on Messiah Jesus. Paul recognized these Jewish unbeliever as enemies, Romans 11:28, and he wasn't afraid to say so. Paul lived in reality - dispensational reality, doctrinal reality, evangelistic reality, ethical reality, moral reality, physical reality and spiritual reality. There isn't anything fake or woke or progressive about the Bible or Jesus or Paul. The Bible is God's unwoke, straightforward, honest truth. Our God is the God of reality.

**The Christian life is not
a contest for ascetics
to see who can suffer the most
or be the most miserable.**

and that my service which I have for Jerusalem - Paul wanted to be fruitful for Christ in his life and ministry and service. The Christian life is not a contest for ascetics to see who can suffer the most. There are strands of religion which fix an unholy focus on suffering instead of on biblical evangelism. If we suffer as Christians, our suffering should always be because we are serving God biblically and faithfully, not because we went out of our way to suffer because we thought God would give us religious rewards for our religious suffering.

**It is a sin to take one step
out of the path of duty
either to meet or to miss a cross.**
-Matthew Henry, 1662-1714

may be accepted of the saints; - Implied in Romans 15:31 is the uncomfortable fact that sometimes, the saints of God have made a fine art out of killing the joy of other Christians. Some Christians are determined not to be ministered to, are determined not to accept anyone ministering to them, even if the minister is the great apostle Paul, who wrote 14 books of our NT. Can you think of any good biblical reasons why the saved and sanctified saints at Jerusalem would not accept being ministered to by the apostle Paul? _____

In the first century AD, saved Jews still clung to their OT Judaism. They were a bit like Lot's wife, who, as she left Sodom, had to look back longingly as God destroyed the wicked city. Instead of looking forward to the glories of grace, some of the saved Jews looked back with longing to their bondage to OT law.

They may have learned the unspiritual bad habit of longing for the past from their Jewish ancestors who, after God freed them from bondage in Egypt, kept looking back with longing for the leeks and garlic of Egypt, Numbers 11:5. Some Christians ignore the glories of God's grace and falsely imagine that, before they got saved, life was so much easier and so much more fun. Is that way of thinking: **a.** spiritual, or **b.** very unspiritual?

*"Brethren, I count not myself
to have apprehended:
but this one thing I do,
forgetting those things which are behind,*

*and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
I press toward the mark for the prize
of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*
Philippians 3:13-14.

that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

- Does that strike you as a strange prayer request from the apostle Paul? Part of Paul's service was bringing the offering from the poor saints in Macedonia and Achaia to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Why would the greatest Christian who ever lived feel the need to request prayer that the financially poor saved Jewish Christians at Jerusalem would accept his financial and spiritual ministry to them? Here are four possible answers.

a. Even though they were saved, Jerusalem Jews may have still blamed Paul for what they viewed as his abandonment of them and of OT law.

b. Even though they were saved, Jerusalem Jews still harbored religious resentment against the apostle Paul because they were not up to speed on the glories of NT grace.

c. Even though they were saved, they still struggled to come to terms with the lies about Christ, lies about Christians, lies about grace, lies about OT law and lies about Paul that unsaved Jewish leaders had spread.

d. Even though they were saved, perhaps some Jerusalem Jews still struggled with spiritual jealousy against Paul for spending all those years going to the Gentiles instead of staying in Judea and Jerusalem to disciple and teach them. In your life as a Christian, have you ever struggled with spiritual jealousy of other Christians? _____ How did you handle it? _____

Did you notice that Paul seems to have some concerns, some doubts, some questions about whether or not his ministry would be accepted? Paul was not superhuman. He needed encouragement in his spiritual life just like the rest of us. Paul's encouragement came from the indwelling Christ, Ephesians 3:17, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:19, and they are also our ultimate source of encouragement.

15:32 - That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

That I may come unto you with joy - Did you notice that Paul doesn't seem concerned with his reception in Rome? _____ He was so concerned about

his reception in Jerusalem that he asked for prayer about it. Paul is first heading to Jerusalem before he comes to Rome. His journey to Rome will be more joyful if his journey to Jerusalem has been fruitful and accepted by the saints at Jerusalem. It's something to ponder, that Paul was concerned about his reception in Jerusalem and looking forward to his reception in Rome.

by the will of God, - One of the things Christians agonize over is, What is God's will for my life? When we do not know God's will for our lives, we should remind ourselves that God knows, Ephesians 2:10, and God is intent on doing what achieves His will in our lives, Romans 8:28. Our inability to know or understand or appreciate God's will, does not keep Him from working His will in our lives.

Think of God and His will for our lives as spiritual GPS. Just as the GPS in our car or phone corrects our course when we don't follow the directions, God corrects our course when we take spiritual wrong turns, so that we arrive - grow - become fruitful, as God wants us to be. Some lazy Christians and some rebellious Christians insist on doing the Christian life the hard way and make God's spiritual GPS work overtime.

There are aspects of God's will, which every Christian knows or should know, which are clearly revealed, in the Bible. And yet, many Christians keep seeking areas of God's will that are not revealed to them, while ignoring and refusing to do the part of God's will, which is clearly revealed to them in the Bible.

Some Christians shy away from the list below because they have a sneaking suspicion that, if they surrender, God will ask them to do something they are unwilling to do. If we commit to doing these Christian basics where God's will is absolutely clear, then knowing God's will in other areas becomes less of a problem.

**Here is God's will
for each of us
according to the Bible.**

- 1. That everyone get saved,** 2 Peter 3:9, 2 Timothy 2:4. **Saved.**
- 2. Present your body a living sacrifice to God,** Romans 12:1-2. **Surrendered.**
- 3. Love one another,** John 13:34, Romans 13:8, Galatians 5:14. **Sweet.**
- 4. Abstain from fornication,** 1 Thessalonians 4:3. **Sanctified.**

5. Search the scriptures daily, Acts 17:11. Searching.

6. Follow Paul as he followed Christ, 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, 11:1. Servant.

7. In everything give thanks, 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Satisfied.

8. Be filled with the Spirit, not with yourself, Ephesians 5:17-18. Saturated.

The will of God is something every Christian struggles to discover and do because we tend to ignore the will of God where it is clear in the Bible - see the list above - and we tend to seek the will of God for ourselves personally without obeying the will of God which is clearly revealed in the Bible.

**You can have anything
you want in life but,
you have to take
everything that goes with it.**

Do you want to disobey God? If you do, you have to be willing to endure the results of your intentional disobedience. Chastening from God is God's cure for rebellion. Chastening from God goes with rebellion against God. Even the great apostle Paul sometimes ignored the will of God and did what he thought was best despite the will of God being made clear to him, Acts 20:22-23, 21:4, 11. In Paul's case, his disobedience cost him two years of captivity in Caesarea and another two years of captivity in Rome. Every Christian always pays a price for being disobedient to God.

**What every Christian should know
about the will of God.**

The Bible gives us a lot of information about the will of God. Every Christian has a desire to know and do the will of God. If you have no desire to know and do the will of God, you may be saved but you are not a Christian. In thinking about the will of God, there are two correct ways to view the will of God in the Bible.

Two Wills of God in the Bible

1. The declared will of God is what the Bible says is the will of God. The declared will of God is clear based on what the Bible actually says. We never

have to wonder about the declared will of God. Here are some examples of the declared will of God, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, 1 Timothy 2:4-6, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:2, 5:13. Is some of God's will absolutely clear in the Bible? _____

2. The discerned will of God is what God has for you to do personally, as an individual Christian, in service to God if you are already obeying the declared will of God. The discerned will of God for you personally is not written down in the Bible. The discerned will of God for you personally is often not as clear as the declared will of God. Discovering the discerned will of God sometimes takes time and for some Christians, it can be a painful process. Examples of the discerned will of God are Acts 8:26ff., 10:1-34, 11:1ff., 13:1-4, 46-49, 15:1ff., 16:1-12.

**If you are disobeying the declared will of God,
Don't expect God to show you His discerned will.**

It is important to remember: If you're not currently obeying the declared will of God, don't expect God to ignore or overlook your disobedience and show you His discerned will anyway. By that, we mean, if you are living in willful disobedience to what the Bible says, that situation needs to be made right and you need to get your heart right with God before He will show you His discerned will.

Do you really expect God to show you His discerned will when you're already deliberately disobeying His declared will? _____ If you have rejected God's declared will for your life, 2 Corinthians 5:15, you've strayed from the path or righteousness. You need to stop rebelling and get your heart right with God and start obeying God.

**STOP REBELLING
START OBEYING**

God had a goal, a plan, a purpose when He created Adam with the freewill ability to make choices, including sinful choices. God had a purpose in allowing Adam to sin and allowing Adam's sin to pass through the entire human race, Romans 5:12. You can trust God. Can God trust you to use your freewill to choose obedience to God instead of disobedience? _____

God had a purpose in sending the Lord Jesus Christ to die as Israel's rejected Messiah, to pay for all the sins of all the world (including the sins of those who rejected Him, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:2), thereby reconciling the world to God, 2

Corinthians 5:18-21, and then, rising again the third day from the dead, according to the scriptures, so that those whom He reconciled can get saved. God had a purpose in giving the glorious gospel of Christ as His truth for the 2000 year long period of time known as the church age.

Here's the bottom line.

God intends to finish His plan and accomplish His purpose in your life and mine. God's will WILL be done. You can get dragged kicking and screaming along the path of God's purpose for your life or you can walk joyfully and obediently with God along the path of His purpose for your life. Which sounds most enjoyable? Which sounds most blessed by God? Which will it be for you? **a.** Kicking and screaming, **b.** Joyfully and obediently.

God intends that His will be acknowledged, accepted and accomplished. Jesus taught His disciples to pray: *Thy will be done*. Every born again Christian who accepts the challenge of presenting your bodies to God a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1-2, gets to be an active participant in proving the will of God and an active participant in doing the will of God.

Are you interested in knowing the will of God?

God's intention for every Christian who presents his body to God a living sacrifice is for that Christian to then experience in a practical, life-long way, the neon truth that the will of God in every area is always: *good and acceptable and perfect*. That is why we sometimes refer to living the Christian life as the adventure of faith.

There is only one will of God and regardless of how we may negatively perceive the will of God at some difficult struggling point in our life, the will of God concerning anything in His universe and anything on earth and anything in our personal lives is always: *good and acceptable and perfect*. Amen!

God's will is clearly revealed and clearly stated in the Bible and can be known by anyone who wants to know the will of God, simply by reading, believing and obeying what the Bible says in context. The Bible has a lot to say about the will of God for Christians so we will examine here what the Bible says. We know

absolutely for sure, in some areas, what the will of God is because the Bible clearly tells us what the will of God is.

Knowing The Will Of God

1. If you could know the will of God, would you want to know it? _____
2. If you could know the will of God, would you do the will of God? _____
3. Does God want you to know His will for your life? _____
4. Does God want you to do His will for your life? _____
5. What is the best way to find the will of God for your life? **a.** My imagination, **b.** My opinion, **c.** The opinions of my friends, **d.** My self-help books, **e.** By doing meditation, **f.** By reading and believing the Bible, **g.** By positive thinking, **h.** By guessing, **i.** By hoping I just stumble across God's will by accident.
6. Does the Bible say anything about the will of God for Christians? _____
7. Does every command in the NT, from the resurrection of Christ to the rapture in Revelation 4:1, indicate the will of God for us as Christians? _____
8. If God tells you in the Bible, to do something or not do something, does that indicate God's will for you? _____

What Does The Bible Say About God's Will?

The phrase, *will of God*, is found 23 times in the NT of the King James Bible. That exact phrase, *will of God*, is never found in the OT yet the OT, without using the phrase, *will of God*, is crystal clear in many verses which state what the *will of God* is. In the NT, Jesus mentions the *will of God* once in Mark 3:35. Paul mentions the *will of God* seventeen times. Peter mentions the *will of God* four times and the apostle John mentions the *will of God* one time.

Every Verse In The Bible Which Mentions *the will of God*

Assignment: Please write something true about the will of God next to each verse below, based on what each verse says.

1. *For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.* Mark 3:35 - Jesus
2. *For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on*

sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: Act 13:36 - Paul

3. *Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. Romans 1:10 - Paul*

4. *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
Romans 8:27 - Paul*

5. *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:2 - Paul*

6. *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Romans 15:32 - Paul*

7. *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 1 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul*

8. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: 2 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul*

9. *And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 2 Corinthians 8:5 - Paul*

10. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: Galatians 1:4 - Paul*

11. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 1:1 - Paul*

12. *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; Ephesians 6:6 - Paul*

13. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, Colossians 1:1 - Paul*

14. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in*

all the will of God. Colossians 4:12 - Paul

15. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 1 Thessalonians 4:3 - Paul*

16. *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - Paul*

17. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 1:1 - Paul*

18. *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. Hebrews 10:36 - Paul*

19. *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 1 Peter 2:15 - Peter*

20. *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 1 Peter 3:17 - Peter*

21. *That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 1 Peter 4:2 - Peter*

22. *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Peter 4:19 - Peter*

23. *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. 1 John 2:17 - John*

Writing Assignment: On the back of this paper, please list seven helpful things you've learned by reading and thinking about the 23 Bible verses which mention *the will of God*.

**We Know With Absolute Certainty
God's Will On These Issues
- The Declared Will Of God**

1. God's will is for no one to perish and for all men everywhere to repent and get saved - Acts 17:30-31, 1 Timothy 2:3-7, 1 Peter 3:9.

2. God's will is for every believer to be filled with the Spirit - Ephesians 5:17-20, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Colossians 3:16.

3. God's will is for every believer to be sanctified and to abstain from fornication - 1 Thessalonians 4:3ff., 1 Peter 4:2.

4. God's will is for every believer to submit to God and resist the devil - James 4:7.

5. God will is, it is better for you to suffer for well doing, than for evil doing, as part of your sanctification - 1 Peter 3:17. Romans 12:2 - *that ye may prove what is that good* - The will of God is good. Paul doesn't say, The will of God is fun or easy or unchallenging.

and may with you be refreshed. - Friendship and fellowship are designed by God to be mutual endeavors to refresh our souls. Friendship and fellowship don't work well when they are one sided. Paul intended to be refreshed by the saints in Rome and he intended to be refreshing to the saints at Rome. Paul didn't go to Jerusalem and Rome to spiritually assault and attack and hurt his brethren in Christ. He intended to minister and he prayed his ministry would be accepted of the saints.

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

Now the God of peace - Do you know, meaning, are you personally acquainted with the God of peace? _____ In the OT, the pagan gods were gods of war. Do you know the God of peace? _____ In the NT era, the pagan gods were gods of war? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of peace? _____

Never forget this sobering truth. No unsaved person on this earth knows the God of peace. No one on earth can know the God of peace until they hear the gospel, believe the gospel, obey the gospel and believe on the risen Lord Jesus Christ and get saved.

be with you all. Amen. - The gospel of God is God's universal remedy and God's only remedy for sin and shame and hate and lust and war and covetousness and rebellion and anger and hatred. God will not let nice, clean, sweet religious people into His holy heaven. If you want to get saved and go to heaven, it's God's way or the highway.

That little phrase, *be with you all*, denies and defies and kicks to the curb the false teaching of Calvinism. The TULIP crowd believes they're part of the small group for whom Christ died and no one else is welcome in their exclusive club.

The TULIP Philosophy About Salvation

For Christians, the first three axioms are: **1.** God exists. **2.** God is true. **3.** Therefore, scripture is true (because scripture comes from God).

TULIP Calvinists have a different first axiom. Their first axiom is: The five points of TULIP are true.

TULIP people believe false teaching about how they get saved or got saved. Even though the five points of TULIP are never stated in the Bible or even hinted at in the Bible, Calvinists still use TULIP as their starting point, not the Bible. Because TULIP teaches it (but the Bible never says it), therefore, the TULIP Tribe believes that God saved them:

1. Without them believing in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. **2. Without** them having faith in Christ. **3. Without** them repenting of their sins. **4. Without** them receiving the gift of God which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **5. Without** them trusting Christ as God's payment for their sins, Romans 3:26. **6. Without** them calling upon the Name of the Lord. **7. Without** them believing the glorious gospel of Christ. **8. Without** them believing on the risen Christ as their Savior from sin, hell and the wrath God. Yes indeed, if you are tiptoeing through the TULIPs, that is what you believe as a Calvinist.

You see, TULIP people believe that an unsaved man, since he is Totally Depraved or Totally Unable to come to Christ, must be saved against his will, without his will being involved, since, according to TULIP, a sinner's will is totally depraved, totally fallen, therefore he is Totally Unable to respond on his own. That's the Total Depravity part.

The Irresistible Grace part is, since Calvinism, (not the Bible), teaches that man is totally depraved and totally unable to come to Christ, God must come to him and save him against his will, before he can believe, without him believing. That's the Irresistible Grace part.

The problem is, the Bible never says that, no way, no how. That is TULIP false philosophy and you know what Paul said about philosophy, Colossians 2:8.

TULIPs believe that, after God saves a man against his will, then and only then can a man do the eight things in the above list, after God has saved him before he did any of those things. That's the crazy, completely unbiblical, upside down and backwards teaching of TULIP. It isn't biblical because the Bible never says that. It isn't Christian because TULIP teaching is never stated in the Bible as Christian doctrine.

No one in the OT ever got saved the crazy TULIP way and no one in the NT ever got saved the crazy TULIP way and nobody in our modern world ever got saved the crazy unbiblical, unChristian, unGodly, unholy TULIP way.

If you believe the Bible teaches TULIP, please be so kind as to list the verses where each point of TULIP is stated and taught in the Bible. Please be so kind as to not take verses out of context and please do it without wresting the scriptures to your own destruction.

The Five Points of TULIP Calvinism

1. **T**otal Depravity or Total Inability
2. **U**nconditional Election
3. **L**imited Atonement
4. **I**rresistible Grace
5. **P**erseverance of the Saints

Here's something to think about. The TULIP plan of salvation is as fake as a \$3 dollar bill. Since the Bible never states any of the five TULIP points, since the Bible never teaches any of the five TULIP points, since the Bible never even hints at any of the five TULIP points, the TULIP teaching is unbiblical, unChristian, unGodly and unholy. If you profess to believe the Bible, why would you also profess to believe in Calvinism?

Since TULIP is never mentioned or taught in the Bible, it naturally follows that TULIP is unbiblical. Since TULIP is unbiblical, it naturally follows that TULIP is unChristian and unGodly and unholy. Since TULIP is not from God and not from the Bible but is false teaching vainly trying to masquerade as biblical truth, it naturally follows that TULIP is a doctrine of the devil, not a doctrine of God.

**TULIPS got that out of the Bible
because
it certainly isn't in the Bible.**

Review Questions For Romans 15

1. Romans 15:1 - *We then that are strong...* Paul contrasts: **a.** the financial strength of Romans vs. Jews. **b.** the physical strength of men vs. women. **c.** the spiritual understanding of weak Christians vs. strong Christians.
2. Romans 15:1 - Who has the greater responsibility, **a.** weak Christians, **b.** strong Christians, **c.** North American Christians?
3. Romans 15:1 - What do strong Christians know that weak Christians did not know in the first century AD? **a.** God was shifting from OT Israel to the NT church. **b.** God was shifting from OT law to NT grace. **c.** Both a. and b. are true.
4. Romans 15:1 - Doctrinally speaking, when did OT law end and NT grace begin? **a.** When the Age of Aquarius began. **b.** When John the Baptist was baptized. **c.** When Christ died on the cross of Calvary, Matthew 27:50, Hebrews 9:15-17.
5. Romans 15:1 - What are *the infirmities of the weak*? **a.** Being unable to bench press 200 lbs. **b.** Being unable to run a mile in 12 minutes. **c.** Not understanding that God has shifted from OT law to NT grace.
6. Romans 15:1 - *Bearing the infirmities of the weak* means: **a.** Helping weak Christians get a Covid vaccine. **b.** Receiving weak Christians without arguing with them. **c.** Receiving weak Christians without despising them.
7. Romans 15:1 - What three things were issues when Paul wrote about the infirmities of the weak? **a.** Sun, moon and stars in their courses above. **b.** Earth, wind and fire below. **c.** Eating meat, drinking wine, observing Jewish holy days, Romans 14:2, 5, 21.
8. Romans 15:2 - According to Romans 15:2, how can we keep peace in the local church? _____
9. Romans 15:2 - Circle the correct answers. Edification is defined as: **a.** Tearing down your neighbor. **b.** Physically attacking your neighbor.

c. Emotionally harassing your neighbor. **d.** Building up your neighbor. **e.** Helping your neighbor grow spiritually. **f.** Being spiritually helpful to your neighbor.

10. Romans 15:3 - Whom does Paul quote here, from Psalm 69:9? **a.** William Shakespeare of England. **b.** Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, **c.** the Roman Emperor Constantine, **d.** King David of Israel.

11. Romans 15:4 - For whom was the OT written? **a.** Only for the Jews. **b.** Only for the Gentiles. **c.** For both Jews and Gentiles. **d.** For ancient tribes and nomads but not for modern people. **e.** For everyone including Christians.

12. Romans 15:4 - In this verse Paul teaches us: **a.** To remember that all religious writings are equal. **b.** To remember not to get carried away with reading the OT. **c.** To never commit the rookie mistake of trying to divorce the OT from the NT, **d.** To never commit the rookie mistake of divorcing the gospel of Christ from the OT.

13. Romans 15:4. Which of the following divorced the OT from the NT and the OT from the glorious gospel of Christ? **a.** Most of the OT prophets. **b.** Most of the OT celebrities. **c.** The human authors of the OT. **d.** The NT apostles. **e.** The human authors of the NT. **f.** NT pastors and deacons. **f.** The Lord Jesus Christ in the NT. **g.** None of the above.

14. Romans 15:4 - Did Jesus teach Christians *to believe all that the OT prophets have spoken* or did Jesus teach Christians to divorce the OT from the NT? **a.** Christ taught us to believe all that the prophets have spoken. **b.** Christ taught us to divorce the OT from the NT.

*“Then he (Jesus) said unto them,
O fools, and slow of heart
to believe all that the (OT) prophets have spoken:
Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,
and to enter into his glory?
And beginning at Moses and all the (OT) prophets,
he expounded unto them
in all the (OT) scriptures
the things concerning himself.”
Luke 24:25-27*

15. Romans 15:4 - How do we KNOW that the OT was written for our learning? **a.** Because that's what the Bible says. **b.** Because that's what Paul says. **c.** Cause Mama ain't raise no dummies.

16. Romans 15:4 - Since the OT was written for our learning, list three important things you've learned from the OT.

- a.**
- b.**
- c.**

17. Romans 15:4 - According to Deuteronomy 7:1-11, should Christians form romantic relationships with unsaved people? **a.** Yes, that's perfectly fine. **b.** No, that is forbidden by God.

18. Romans 15:4 - According to Judges 1:1-5, 28, 2:1-4, 3:5-7, should Christians form romantic relationships with unsaved people? **a.** No, we're supposed to fight against the Canaanites. **b.** No, because their gods will be a snare unto us. **c.** No, because we and our children will end up serving their false gods. **d.** All of the above.

19. Romans 15:4 - According to 1 Kings 11:1-14, should Christians form romantic relationships or marriages with unsaved people? **a.** If we decide to ignore what the Bible says, that makes it okay. **b.** Even if we ignore what the Bible clearly says, ignoring what the Bible says doesn't make it okay.

20. Romans 15:4 - Did King Solomon's unsaved wives bring him closer to the LORD or did they turn his heart away from the LORD? _____

21. Romans 15:4 - 1 Kings 11:4-9 - Did King Solomon's unsaved wives cause him to go after Ashtoreth instead of serving the true God who put him on the throne of Israel? _____

22. Romans 15:4 - Ezra 9:1 - Who is susceptible to leaving the true and living God to serve devil gods? **a.** The people. **b.** The priests. **c.** The Levites. **d.** Everyone.

23. Romans 15:4 - Are you chasing modern day idols and serving false gods instead of serving the Lord Jesus Christ? _____

24. Romans 15:4 - According to 1 Corinthians 7:39, are Christians allowed to marry unsaved people? _____

25. Romans 15:4 - Which of the following excuses will God accept so that we don't have to obey 1 Corinthians 7:39, about Christian marriage being: *only in the Lord*?

a. But we love each other. **b.** But (s)he is so nice. **c.** Love is too special to pass up. **d.** I know what I'm doing. **e.** Some of my Christian friends have told me it's okay. **f.** I'm praying (s)he will get saved. **g.** We read the Bible together. **h.** I'm tired of being lonely. **i.** Someone online said it's okay. **j.** That's just your interpretation; I read it differently. **k.** I don't take things as literally as you. **l.** It's not saying, Don't do it. It's saying, Be careful if you shack up with or marry someone who isn't saved. **m.** None of the above.

26. Romans 15:4 - 2 Corinthians 6:14ff. What do these verses tell us about being unequally yoked together with unbelievers? **a.** It's okay. **b.** If you decide to get unequally yoked, try to be careful. **c.** If you're going to be unequally yoked, try to get a dispensation from the Pope first. **d.** Don't be a rebellious fool - Obey God instead of being unequally yoked. **e.** Just say No to being unequally yoked and save yourself wasted time and wasted love and a wasted life.

27. Romans 15:4 - Which of the following problems with being *unequally yoked together with unbelievers* are pleasing to God?

- a.** righteousness with unrighteousness
- b.** light with darkness - John 3:19
- c.** Christ with Belial (Satan)
- d.** he that believeth with an infidel (unbeliever)
- e.** temple of God with idols
- f.** clean vs. unclean - Isaiah 52:11
- g.** be separate - don't join with them
- h.** be clean - don't touch the unclean thing
- i.** be obedient to God, not to your lusts
- j.** the unsaved have a different father - John 8:44

28. Is your desire to please God stronger than your desire to disobey God? _____ Why? _____

29. Romans 15:4 - According to Romans 15:4, where does the hope of a Christian come from? **a.** Positive thinking. **b.** Positive confession. **c.** Reading self-help books. **d.** Watching Oprah Winfrey. **e.** The scriptures.

30. Romans 15:5 - What is biblical patience? **a.** Praying and then making a decision without waiting on God. **b.** Relying on my life experience to make decisions instead of praying and asking God for guidance. **c.** Waiting on God to do things His way on His timetable.

31. Romans 15:5 - The God of patience and consolation implies: **a.** That the Christian life is easy. **b.** That Christians rarely struggle with anything. **c.** That the Christian life is difficult. **d.** That Christians often struggle as they journey through life.

32. Romans 15:5 - Genesis 16:1-16 is an example of: **a.** Patiently waiting on God. **b.** Refusing to wait patiently on God. **c.** Deciding they know better than God. **d.** Deciding they're going to work things out without waiting on God.

33. Romans 15:5 - Draw lines to connect the matching concepts.

Waiting on God	
Not waiting on God	Patience
Walking by faith	
Not walking by faith	
Trusting God	Impatience
Not trusting God	

34. Romans 15:6 - According to Romans 15:6, what is the purpose of individual Christians and Christians as a group? _____

35. Romans 15:6 - What is biblical unity? **a.** Agreeing with idiots. **b.** Agreeing with God. **c.** Being anti-intellectual. **d.** Being anti-scientific. **e.** Living in biblical harmony with the God who created the universe.

36. Romans 15:7 - Christians are to receive one another: **a.** As members of a cult. **b.** As intelligent sentient redeemed beings. **c.** As argumentative harridans who can't get along. **d.** As hyper-critical misfits who thrive on arguments and chaos. **e.** In the same loving way that Christ received us.

37. Romans 15:8 - What does it mean, that Jesus Christ was a *minister of the circumcision*? **a.** Jesus was the apostle to the Gentiles. **b.** Jesus was the General Manager of Christianity. **c.** Jesus' ministry was mainly to Israel.

38. Romans 15:8 - Jesus intended to confirm the promises made to: **a.** The Gentile fathers. **b.** The Arab fathers. **c.** The American Founding Fathers. **d.** The Jewish fathers descended from Abraham.

39. Romans 15:8 - What is the truth of God about circumcision? **a.** That physical circumcision saves. **b.** That physical circumcision never saved anyone. **c.** That the sign of circumcision symbolized the genuine faith that Abraham had in his heart.

40. Romans 15:9 - Genesis 15:1-6 - How did the Gentiles glorify God for His mercy? **a.** By faith they believed what God said. **b.** Their faith in what God said was counted for righteousness.

41. Romans 15:9 - *Confess to thee among the Gentiles* means: **a.** Evangelize the Gentiles. **b.** Tell the Gentiles about Messiah Jesus. **c.** God loves Gentiles and wants to save Gentiles. **d.** All of the above.

42. Romans 15:10 - *Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people* means: **a.** The Gentiles will believe the gospel. **b.** The Gentiles will get saved. **c.** The saved Gentiles will be part of the body of Christ with saved Jews.

43. Romans 15:11 - *Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people* implies that: **a.** The Gentiles will not get saved. **b.** The Gentiles will get saved. **c.** God wants the saved Gentiles to praise Him.

44. Romans 15:12 - In Romans 15, Paul quotes six OT verses about Gentiles to contrast the way unsaved national Israel responds to the gospel and the way unsaved Gentiles respond to the gospel. What did Gentiles do that national Israel didn't do? _____

45. Romans 15:12 - Who was *the root of Jesse*? **a.** David's cousin. **b.** David's great uncle. **c.** David's great-grandfather. **d.** David's daddy. **e.** King David himself. **f.** Messiah Jesus.

45. Romans 15:12 - Zechariah 3:8, 6:12 - Who is **the BRANCH**? **a.** The branch is the great prophet Moses. **b.** The branch is Jesse the father of King David. **c.** The branch is David's older brother. **d.** The BRANCH is Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

46. Romans 15:13 - How do you get filled *with all joy and peace*? **a.** By working hard on your positive thinking. **b.** By always following the Twelve Step Plan. **c.** By doing exercises to strengthen your mind. **d.** By believing what God says in the Bible.

47. Romans 15:13 - How do you *abound in hope*? **a.** By believing and through the power of the Holy Ghost. **b.** By keeping a daily journal of your thoughts. **c.** By repeating positive affirmations to yourself seven times a day.

48. Romans 15:14 - What is Paul's purpose in Romans 15:14? **a.** He is attacking the Roman Christians for their own good. **b.** He gives the Roman Christians a sincere compliment to encourage their faith.

49. Romans 15:14 - *full of goodness* - Does this verse mean that the Roman Christians were doing a great job of working their way to heaven? _____ What does it mean? _____

50. Romans 15:15 - What gives Paul the right to be bold when he pens his letter to the Romans? _____

51. Romans 15:16 - What does it mean, that Paul was *the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles*? _____

52. Romans 15:16 - What did Paul minister? **a.** 5 loaves and 2 small fishes. **b.** Warm clothing for everyone in need. **c.** the gospel of God.

53. Romans 15:16 - What is *the gospel of God*? **a.** That everyone is welcome at church. **b.** That dinner on the grounds starts right after the morning service. **c.** That Jesus loves everyone. **d.** That every religion is welcome in heaven. **e.** That sincerely doing good works is just as good as believing on Jesus. **f.** That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

54. Romans 15:16 - *the offering up of the Gentiles* - Is that talking about saved Gentiles or unsaved Gentiles? _____

55. Romans 15:16 - Who was the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles? **a.** The great apostle Peter. **b.** John, the closest friend of Jesus. **c.** Strangely enough, Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. **d.** Pope Pius I. **e.** Billy Graham. **f.** Paul the apostle.

56. Romans 15:16 - Genesis 38:6, Joshua 2:1-2, Ruth 3:1-9, 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 2 Kings 5:1-19. Please name two Gentiles who got saved in the OT. _____

57. Romans 15:17 - According to this verse, what do genuine Christians glory in? _____

58. Romans 15:18 - Paul was focused on running his own race for God instead of trying to claim credit for what others did. Are you? _____

59. Romans 15:18 - *to make the Gentiles obedient* - What does it mean, *to make the Gentiles obedient*? _____

60. Romans 15:19 - *Through mighty signs and wonders* - Why did *mighty signs and wonders* accompany the ministry of the apostle Paul?

61. Romans 15:19 - Why did *mighty signs and wonders* accompany the ministry of Paul? **a.** The nation of Israel started with signs, Exodus 3:2, 4:1-5. **b.** The Jews require a sign, 1 Cor 1:22. **c.** Signs are part of apostolic ministry, Matthew 10:1. **d.** Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, Romans 11:13. **e.** Signs authenticated Paul's message before the NT was completed.

62. Romans 15:19 - Where in the Bible are Paul's miracles recorded? **a.** In the writings of Moses. **b.** In Peter's letters to the churches. **c.** In the book of Revelation. **d.** In the Acts Of The Apostles.

63. Romans 15:19 - *from Jerusalem, and round about until Illyricum* - That area covers: **a.** From Ohio to California. **b.** From France to northern Finland. **c.** From Europe to Asia and the Middle East.

64. Romans 15:19 - *I have fully preached the gospel of Christ* - What does that mean? _____

65. Romans 15:20 - Paul didn't like traveling long distances on his missions trips. True or False

66. Romans 15:20 - Where did Paul prefer to work as a missionary?

67. Romans 15:21 - Who was Paul's favorite audience to preach to? **a.** People who had heard the gospel many times. **b.** People who had never heard the gospel.

68. Romans 15:21 - *To whom he was not spoken of* - To whom is that prophesy referring? **a.** Gypsies in southern Europe. **b.** Jews in southern Israel near the Red Sea. **c.** Gentile nations, Gentiles Kings and Gentiles in general.

69. Romans 15:22 - Who or what hindered Paul from coming to visit the Roman Christians? **a.** The armies of God. **b.** The hosts of heavenly angels. **c.** Principalities and powers. **d.** The hosts of Satan.

70. Romans 15:23 - *But now having no more place in these parts* - What does Paul mean by that? **a.** No one will rent him a room. **b.** He has no more friends in that area. **c.** He sold his house. **d.** He has finished the evangelistic ministry and the church planting work and the disciple-making work God had for him there.

71. Romans 15:24 - *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain* - The Roman conquest of Spain began: **a.** After Julius Caesar died, 44 BC. **b.** Soon after Paul was born in AD 5. **c.** Around 260 BC, as Rome began to fight Carthage.

72. Romans 15:24 - Did early Christians believe that Paul DID take his missionary into Spain? **a.** Yes. **b.** No.

73. Romans 15:25 - What is the correct order of Paul's travel from our Romans 15 perspective? **a.** Rome - Spain - Jerusalem. **b.** Jerusalem - Spain - Rome. **c.** Jerusalem - Rome - Spain.

74. Romans 15:26 - Did the rich Christians in Macedonia take up an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem? **a.** Yes. **b.** No.

75. Romans 15:27 - What was the attitude of the Macedonian Christians about giving an offering? **a.** They were not happy about it. **b.** *It hath pleased them verily.* **c.** They complained about how it was inconvenient. **d.** They viewed it as an opportunity *to minister unto them in carnal things.*

76. Romans 15:28 - Paul mentions Spain again. First to Jerusalem to deliver the offering, then to Rome and then on to the mission field of Spain. Which was Paul's primary goal? **a.** Jerusalem. **b.** Rome. **c.** Spain.

77. Romans 15:29 - *the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ* - What does that explain about Paul's ministry? **a.** He preached the gospel of Christ. **b.** He ministered in the power of *the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.* **c.** He traveled in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. **d.** God was the source of Paul's power. **e.** God was the source of Paul's enthusiasm. **f.** God was the source of Paul's joy. **g.** Negative events like storms, imprisonment and ship wrecks didn't dampen Paul's joy. **h.** All of the above.

78. Romans 15:29 - What gospel did Paul preach? **a.** The gospel of the kingdom of heaven. **b.** The gospel of the kingdom of God. **c.** The gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for our sins.

79. Romans 15:30 - What was Paul's belief about prayer? **a.** Prayer is worth striving for, labouring fervently for. **b.** Prayer is worth disciplining yourself to make sure you pray. **c.** Prayer is the natural outgrowth of the love of the Spirit. **d.** Prayer time is not to be neglected. **e.** All of the above.

80. Romans 15:31 - *that I may be delivered from them that do not believe* - Do you ever pray for your Christian friends or your pastor or missionaries, to be delivered from them that do not believe? _____

81. Romans 15:32 - *that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God* - After enduring years of harsh persecution in his ministry, Paul

longs for joy and refreshing with his brothers and sisters in Christ in Rome. What are your thoughts on that? _____

82. Romans 15:32 - *by the will of God* - What is the declared will of God and what is the discerned will of God?

83. Romans 15:33 - *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.* - Who does Paul mean when he says, *be with you all*? **a.** Only elect Jews. **b.** Only saved Jews. **c.** Only elect Gentiles. **d.** Only saved Gentiles. **e.** Everyone on earth, saved or lost. **f.** Saved Jews and saved Gentiles together as one in the body of Christ.

**Thank you so much for
studying Romans with us!**

We love and appreciate you!