

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Romans 15.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Romans 15.

Topics.

- Those who are strong have an obligation to support the weak.
- The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.
- Through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.
- Gentile nations with Israel will praise the Lord.
- Those who have never been told will see and understand.
- Paul takes aid to the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem.
- The Gentiles share in Israel's spiritual blessings.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Paul told brothers and sisters in Christ they should not do anything that might cause another to stumble, his focus was on the strong and the weak in faith and being free to live with our own conscience before Christ and not before man. The underlying thought was that God does not want us to live in pretence, but rather that we are free from the influence of other people's conscience and walk with our own conscience in freedom before the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Those who are Strong have an Obligation to Support the Weak.

Romans 15:1-7 ----- ¹We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings (infirmities in KJV) of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. ³For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- Remember this is a letter Paul is writing to the Christian brothers in Rome.

Infirmities: can refer to two things firstly a scruple of conscience meaning a misgiving or doubt of conscience and secondly to be feeble or made weak in any sense (i.e., having an illness, disability or disease, being sick mentally or physically or impotent and powerless).

Paul's focus in the previous chapter was also on the strong in faith supporting the weak in faith and not do anything that would cause their brother or sister stumble in their faith. Now in this chapter he is expanding this same principal by telling those that are strong in the faith that they should also bear and be patient with the sicknesses, disabilities and misgivings of the conscience of their brothers and sisters in the faith and not live to please themselves, but to do-good and encourage those amongst them who have a weaker conscience regarding eating of meats, keeping holy days etc., and those in Christ who are struggling with mental or physical illnesses. We are called to live in this way, because the Lord Jesus Christ did not live to please himself (Rom 15:1-3).

During Paul's generation many believed those who were blind, deaf or had any kind of sickness they did not understand was possessed with evil spirits called demons and therefore would cast them out of their society. Then there were others who believed it was important to keep the Jewish customs and traditions to be saved. Paul is telling the stronger brothers and sisters who understand the wonder, splendour and vastness of God's abundant grace and that in Christ we are set free from works to attain to eternal salvation to be patient and do-good to those whose conscience has not yet fully seen the majestic beauty of grace and to be kind to the sick and feeble.

For further information on demons see the title: -

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on Me.

Reproaches: refer to, criticisms, accusations, rebukes and scolding's in this context it carries the idea of a person being taunted, suffering and being defamed and disgraced because of others.

The words, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me" (v3) alludes to David's words in Psalm sixty-nine in which David in prophecy echoes Christ, saying: -

- For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonour has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons. For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me (Psalm 69:6-9).

When Christ was cruelly nailed to the cross as a common criminal his brothers and his disciples deserted him. Paul by alluding to the words of David is saying that the reproaches, criticisms and accusations of the religious leaders (the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes) against those seeking God fell on Christ, he took upon himself their brutal mocking and cruel and bloody torture even to death so that we could have life eternal clearly magnifying to all that Christ did not live for his own pleasure, but for the well-being of others.

Paul in these verses is teaching those in Christ to live as Christ did (i.e., not to please themselves, but to do-good to their brothers and sisters in the faith). Jesus lived a life of self-denial, Paul is saying we should all live with this same attitude in the sense that we should live to not only do-good to others, but support and encourage them in their weaknesses.

NOTE: it is interesting to notice that Jesus healed whoever came to him, many of them would have believed in pagan gods and living in lifestyles totally contrary to the Lord's teaching, yet the Lord never questioned any of them he always showed compassion, mercy and did good to whoever came to him.

Through the Encouragement of the Scriptures we Might have Hope.

The words, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (v4) shine a spotlight on the truth all Scripture is written to give hope, meaning hope for eternal life. When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie (Rom. 8:24).

The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, Promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2).

The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

Faith and hope: the difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will be raised to eternal life. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God, thus faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in.

Faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith. A person who is full of faith is a person who has examined the evidence and is fully convinced that what they have examined proves itself to be true. The pillars of faith are conviction, assurance and confidence without these three there is no faith.

Encouragement: (consolation in KJV) means to comfort or cheer one up and carries the idea of helping, reassuring, inspiring and supporting others.

Endurance: (patient in the KJV) means persistence, perseverance, tenacity and continuance it carries the idea of cheerfully and in hope enduring while suffering or undergoing trials so that one survives to the end.

Paul's prayer for those in Christ: notice; the title Paul gives to God, "The God of endurance and encouragement" and Paul's prayer for those in Christ, "That they live in harmony with each other" Thus the reason Paul not only in this chapter but also the previous one is shining a flood light on the principal of the strong in faith not living for themselves, but for others by supporting, encouraging and doing good to those with a weaker conscience or are feeble in strength mentally or physically, because of illnesses so that together they would be one voice glorifying God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will Praise you among the Gentiles, and Sing to your Name.

Romans 15:8-9 ----- ⁸For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised (Jews) to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I (David) will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.

NOTE: the primary focus from here on is the Gentiles glorifying Christ.

The promises given to the patriarchs refer to: the LORD'S promise to Abraham that he would make of him a great nation and that he would be the father of a multitude of nations. God swore He would make Abrahams name great, bless him, nations, and kings would come from him and He would give to him and to his offspring after him all the land of Canaan/Israel for an everlasting possession. The LORD promised Abraham that his offspring would be as the dust of the earth and the stars of heaven so that they cannot be numbered and God will be their God. The LORD confirmed this promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their offspring after them throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant promising Abraham that in his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

(Gen. 12:1-3) (Gen. 13:14-17) (Gen. 15:4-7) (Gen. 17:1-8) (Gen. 22:15-18) (Deut. 9:5).

Now the majestic wonder and beauty of God's promise is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writes that the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. that is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all Abrahams offspring—referring to Jews and Gentiles who share the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all as it is written: -

- I have made you (Abraham) the father of many nations—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist (i.e., creation and the resurrection) (Rom. 4:17).

In hope Abraham believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as the LORD in Genesis had told him: -

- So shall your offspring be (Gen 15:5).

Paul tells us that: -

- The twelve tribes of Israel earnestly worshipped night and day hoping to attain to this promise (Acts 26:7).

And then Paul gloriously points out that the Scripture does not say: -

- And to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one, And to your offspring, who is Christ (Gal 3:16).

Some may think the promises made to Abraham was for the Jews only, but Paul magnificently explains in the book of Galatians that the promises of God have been extended to all nations through being baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ and clearly shows that the promises made to Abraham and to his offspring the Lord Jesus Christ are not limited to the Jews only but embraces whoever will come to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

(Rom. 4:13) (Rom. 4:16-18) (Gal. 3:16) (Gal. 3:27).

For further information see the title: -

- The Commonwealth of Israel (at the end of this chapter).

The Lord Jesus Christ became a servant to the Jews to confirm this promise God had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and he became a servant to the Gentiles so that God would be glorified for his mercy meaning that through Jesus God showed mercy to the Gentile nations by saving them to eternal life not by works or self-effort but by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (v8-9).

Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles.

Paul's words, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name" allude to the following words of David in the book of Samuel: -

- For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing praises to your name (2 Sam. 22:50).

The entire chapter of Samuel is a song that expresses David's gratitude and thankfulness to God because the LORD saved David and showed him mercy by delivering him from all his enemies and from Saul. At this time many foreigners came and served David (2 Sam. 22:44-45), thus the reason he stated that he will sing praises amongst the Gentile nations (see also Psalm 18:49) the entire song is full of praise expresses David's gratitude and thankfulness to God for delivering him from his enemies. Paul alludes to this song of David because just as David rejoiced before the LORD and sang praises to God amongst the Gentile nations for delivering him from his enemies; now in the same way the Gentile nations are glorifying God because he has through Christ delivered them from their enemy SIN since the Bible states: -

- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

And the law of the Spirit and of sin and death states: -

- The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

David in his song was singing about an event that took place in his life and expressing his amazing joy and gratitude amongst the Gentile nations that had come to him, but the song also transcends history and travels through time to a future day when: -

- The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

And once again David will stand amongst the Gentiles rejoicing and singing praises to God.

Gentiles will Rejoice with Israel.

Romans 15:10 ----- ¹⁰And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

Here the call is for the Gentile and Jewish brothers and sisters to rejoice together, in the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and praise and glorify God together as one people united in Christ.

Under the Old Covenant only the Jewish high priest could enter behind the curtain of the temple and enter into the Most Holy Place of God's presence, the curtain stopped the average or common person from entering into the Most Holy Place, the place of God's presence, but at Christ's death it was torn in two from top to bottom, symbolising that the way was now open not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles to enter into God's presence and fellowship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ (he is the curtain to God).

This is the great blessing for all New Testament believers. Under the Old Covenant the curtain stopped the common person from entering into the place of God's presence, but now it is torn in two, symbolizing that everyone (Jews and Gentiles) can come into God's presence and rejoice with each other through the Lord Jesus Christ.

For further information see the title: -

- The Commonwealth of Israel (at the end of this chapter).

Gentile nations with Israel will Praise the Lord.

Romans 15:11 ----- ¹¹And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him."

Paul cites the words of the shortest Psalm in the Bible (it has only two verses) which say: -

- Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!" (Psalm 117:1-2).

The Psalmist here is calling all nations, referring to the Jews and the Gentiles nations to praise the Lord together. Paul knowing that the Jews saw themselves as the holy race with God and the Gentiles as an unclean people without God is using Old Testament Scriptures which the Jews clearly understood to show them that God has broken down the wall of partition between the two and is now calling Jews and Gentiles to rejoice, praise and fellowship together as one people in Christ. Paul in the book of Ephesians stated it this way: -

- For Christ himself is our peace, who has made us both (Jews and Gentiles) one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility (Ephes. 2:14).

Gentiles will hope in Jesus.

Romans 15:12 ----- ¹²And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."

Here Paul cites the following words of Isaiah: -

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious (Isaiah 11:10).

Jesse gave birth to David who gave birth to a son named Nathan who gave birth to Heli who gave birth to a daughter named Mary who gave birth to Jesus that is why Jesus is called the son of David and the root of Jesse (Rev. 5:5) (Rev. 22:16). Matthew also refers to the prophetic words of Isaiah "In him will the Gentiles hope."

Matthew wrote: -

- Jesus healed all who followed him to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name *the Gentiles will hope*” (Matt. 12:15-21).

Paul now almost at the end of his letter to the brothers and sister in Rome is using the words of the prophets whom the Jews esteemed with great honour to persuade the minds of both the Jewish and the Gentile brother's and sisters in Christ that they are not to see themselves as two different nations or people, but are to join together as one united family in Christ.

Gentiles will Glorify God for His Mercy.

Romans 15:13-16 ----- ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. ¹⁴I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct (admonish in KJV) one another. ¹⁵But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul prays that those in Christ would abound in hope, this hope is the hope of eternal life, but it is not called hope because it is uncertain, but because it is unseen and not yet realised. The hope itself is guaranteed to those in Christ because it is based on the promise of God and He cannot lie. Paul is praying that this hope would flood the mind and spirit of every believer, since it is this hope that carries us through the trials and troubles of life with joy and contentment. Paul after telling the Thessalonians: -

- That those who are alive at the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first then those who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

He then tells them to encourage one another with this majestic glorious and eternal hope (1 Thess. 4:18). Those who live with the splendour and wonder of this hope patiently and quietly residing in their consciousness and their mind will have a calm excitement bubbling deep inside their spirit since they know that even if the worst should happen and they face death before their time it is not the end, but a beginning of something far more wonderful than we can ever imagine with our finite and mortal minds. This is the reason Paul prays that we may thrive and overflow in abundance of hope and the reason he give God the title, the God of hope.

NOTICE: those in Christ should be full of goodness and knowledge so as to instruct one another (v14) meaning knowledge should be used with kindness and gentleness contrasted to using knowledge legalistically or to intimidate or puff oneself up in pride with.

Paul has Fulfilled his Ministry to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:17-21 ---- ¹⁷In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, ¹⁹by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, ²¹but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

Pauls says he has reason to be proud of his work for God because he will not speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through him meaning that he does not puff himself up or boast in pride since he is fully aware it is Christ working through him that is bringing the Gentiles into the faith. Paul names the following three avenues that Christ's Spirit works through him: -

1. The Good News of the Gospel.
2. By living his life to honour the name of Christ.
3. By miraculous signs.

The most powerful of these three are firstly the Good News of the Gospel because it has the power to deliver a sinner from the domain of darkness and transfer them into the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13). Secondly is those who belong to the global body of Christ who live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith. This is because one of the greatest things that turns unbelievers against God are hypocritical Christians who confess to believe, but live a lifestyle totally contrary to the life Jesus calls those in his Kingdom to.

Lastly miracles are the least since they have no power to save and many came to Jesus in the hope they would be healed and not because they were seeking God. The city of Capernaum saw a paralytic man; a woman with a discharge of blood for twelve years; a ruler's daughter who had died; two blind men; a man that was mute; Peters mother in law; a man with a withered hand; a Roman Centurion servant; a man's son who was at the point of death and all who were sick and had diseases who were brought to Jesus miraculously healed

(Matt. 9:1-33) (Mark 1:21-34). (Mark 2:1, 15) (Mark 3:1-5) (Luke 7:1-10). (John 4:46-53).

And yet despite seeing all these incredible miracles Jesus said:

- You, Capernaum, will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day (Matt. 11:23-24).

Chorazin and Bethsaida saw many of Jesus miracles and Jesus said of them: -

- Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (Matt. 11:21) (Luke 10:13).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that miracles do not always lead people to repentance that leads to salvation, much of the crowd was simply coming to Christ for healing and not because they were seeking God (of course there were exceptions). This is why miracles are the least important though they are a great blessing to the person being healed they do not necessarily bring people to repentance which is needed for salvation whereas the Gospel does.

Miracles were primarily to authenticate that Jesus was the Son of God and acts of compassion, teaching the apostles the Gospel and proclaiming it was Jesus most important mission since only the Gospel contains the words of life and shine a bright light on the path too union with God and eternal salvation in Christ.

The wonder of Jesus and the apostles' miracles: unlike today's modern healers Jesus and the apostles did not need mood shifting music and the positive and hopeful atmosphere that is created by very skilful oratory and leaders who understand how to create amongst a crowd an atmosphere of expectation in which the power of suggestion is very influential.

It mattered not where Jesus and the apostles were, they spoke the word on the streets and amongst secular crowds filled with men and woman who believed in pagan gods and people were not only spectacular healed, but they were such dramatic healings that it was very clear to everyone in the crowd that the man or woman had been miraculously healed.

Witnessing: when we are sharing the Good News of the Gospel we should always be mindfully conscious that whether we feel it or not the Spirit of Christ and of God is working on the heart of those we are speaking too, if they do not respond it does not mean the Holy Spirit was not working, but that their heart was not right to hear. Consider how many times God by His Spirit spoke to the people of Israel yet they did not receive what was spoken even though it was God's word and God's Spirit speaking through the prophet.

The problem was not with the prophet, but the heart of the people he was speaking to. The encouragement we should all learn from this is never be harsh on yourself because people do not respond to the Gospel, because you are not what is hindering the Good News of the Gospel from taking root, but rather it is the rocky soil of their heart. A wise man once said when witnessing Christ, "You cannot say the wrong thing to a person with a right heart, and you cannot say the right thing to a person with the wrong heart."

NOTICE.

Paul's ambition was to take the Good News of the Gospel of Christ to those who have not heard it.

Those who have Never Been Told will See and Understand.

The words, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand" (v21) allude to the following words of Isaiah: -

- Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted and as many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—so shall he sprinkle many nations kings shall shut their mouths because of him; *for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand* (Isaiah 52:13-15).

Much of Old Testament Scripture has Christ inter-woven into it in many different ways often the prophets spoke the words of God but did not always fully understand them, but the beauty and wonder of these hidden things is now revealed by the New Testament since it puts a shining light on those things that were hidden or interwoven into much of what the prophets spoke and like a book being opened brings many revelations of Christ and God's plan out into the open for all to see.

Here Paul is using the words of Isaiah to clearly show the Jews that many people from Gentile nations who have never been told or even heard of the wonders of God as the Jewish people had over thousands of years will nevertheless understand the Good News of the Gospel of Christ and his death and resurrection when they see the goodness of his life and look upon his bloody and brutally beaten bleeding body hanging on the cross and hear his non-judgmental words of forgiveness being spoken toward those who cruelly nailed him as a common criminal to it.

Paul was Hindered from Going to the Brothers and Sisters in Roman.

Romans 15:22-24 ----- ²²This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. ²³But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, ²⁴I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

Paul's words, "This is the reason" link back to the previous verses in which he said he had been doing God's work in bringing the Gentiles into the faith (v18). Remember Paul is writing this letter to the brothers and sisters in Rome so it is the church in Rome that Paul has been hindered from visiting. The thing that hindered him was his passion and God's calling for him to take the Good News of the Gospel to the Gentiles nations. Now after many years of travelling throughout the region proclaiming the Gospel he is now ready to travel to Spain and visit the brothers and sisters in Rome.

Paul takes Aid to the Brothers and Sisters in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:25-33 ---- ²⁵At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. ²⁶For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. ²⁷They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. ²⁸When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. ²⁹I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. ³⁰I appeal to you brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, ³¹that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. ³³May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul is travelling to Jerusalem to take the offerings the churches in Macedonia and Achaia have happily taken up to help the Jewish brothers and sisters who are poor. After taking the offering to Jerusalem, Paul intends to go to Rome and then after spending some time with the brothers and sisters there leave for Spain.

Gentiles share in Israel's Spiritual Blessings.

The words, "The Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in verse twenty-seven means that through Christ the Gentiles have been spiritually grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel which means they now receive all the promises made to Israel because of their faith in Christ the promised seed of Abraham. Added to this it was through Israel that Christ came this is the reason Paul says Gentiles have been spiritually blessed by the Jews and therefore should be happy to bless them with their material blessings.

Paul's request for prayer: there is at Jerusalem a hierarchy of Jews who are totally set against followers of Christ especially those who proclaim his name, many times they attempted and plotted to have Paul killed, this is why Paul asks the brothers and sisters in Rome to pray for his safety while in the city whose religious leaders plotted the murder of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Commonwealth of Israel.

To understand God's eternal promises made thousands of years ago it is important to know that the promised seed of the woman in (Genesis 3:14-15), the promised seed of Abraham and the promised seed of David is Christ and that all the eternal promises God made to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ and are therefore no longer limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ. This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew).

Jews and Gentiles become One New Nation in Christ.

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS of PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making

peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God because in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

The practical application of what this means to you: -

If you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

End.