

Romans 7-16 Ep 215



In this outline are a few links to some of my favorite books that have really helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon](#). As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you).

Paul teaches about being dead to the Law of Moses

The Jewish people believed that they were saved by God's gracious choosing, not by meticulous observation of the commandments. Nevertheless, most sought to keep the commandments as best they knew how, as part of their culture, and this set them apart from *Gentiles. Paul here addresses another major divider between Jew and Gentile in his effort to bring the two together (see the introduction to Romans), because even a Gentile who converted to Judaism would take years to know the *law as well as a Jewish person who had been raised in it did.¹

Romans 7-16

I. Introduction

A. Context and purpose of the Book of Romans (Romans 1:1-7, 15-17)

B. Overview of the themes addressed in Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 1:16-17)

We must remember that Paul's message to these saints in Rome can be seen in these initial verses in Romans 1. The theme of Romans, as summarized in Romans 1:16-17, is the power of the gospel for salvation and the righteousness of God revealed in it. In these initial verses, Paul declares his unwavering confidence in the gospel, describing it as "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." The gospel, which centers on the life, death, and resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ, holds the transformative power to reconcile humanity with God and grant salvation to those who trust in it. This power is available to all people, regardless of their background or status (see 2 Nephi 26.33).

Furthermore, Paul emphasizes the righteousness of God that is revealed through the gospel. He states that in the gospel, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith."² The righteousness of God refers to His perfect standard of justice and holiness. Through the gospel, God's righteousness is both demonstrated and made available to humanity. It is received by faith in Jesus, from the beginning to the end, as individuals respond to God's grace and put their trust in Him.

¹ Craig Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 436.

² Romans 1.17 in the Greek: δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν καθὼς γέγραπται Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται "For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed, from trust into trust, for as it is written, the just will live out of *their* faith *in Jesus Christ*." (my translation). I added Jesus Christ here as the object of faith, because that is the message of Paul's letter. We are not to "have faith," but to "have faith in Jesus." This faith is an abiding, reciprocal trust. This is why I translated πιστις as trust in this verse.

This theme of the power of the gospel for salvation and the revelation of God's righteousness continues to be explored and expounded upon throughout the book of Romans. It highlights the central role of faith in God's redemptive plan and underscores the essential need for humanity to turn to Christ for salvation, relying on His righteousness rather than their own works or merit.

II. The Mortal fight against Sin (Romans 7)

A. Freedom from the Law

Romans 7.1-6 addresses the relationship between the law and believers in Christ. The primary message conveyed in this passage is the believer's freedom from the law through their union with Christ.

Paul begins by using the analogy of marriage to illustrate his point. He explains that the law has authority over a person only as long as they are alive. Just as a married woman is bound by law to her husband, believers were once bound by the law. However, Paul emphasizes that through their union with Christ, they have died to the law and are no longer under its jurisdiction. This freedom from the law enables them to belong to Christ and bear fruit for God.

This passage highlights the transformative power of Christ's death and resurrection. Paul asserts that believers have been released from the law's demands, which held them captive and exposed their sinful nature. Now, they serve in the new way of the Spirit rather than in the old way of the written code as contained in the 613 laws of Torah. The Holy Spirit enables believers to live in righteousness and walk according to God's will.

Elder McConkie explains it thus:

"Paul was an absolute genius at devising illustrations to drive home his gospel teachings. Here he compares Israel's allegiance to the law of Moses with that of a wife to her husband. As long as her husband lives, a wife is bound to him, must obey his laws, and if she be with another, she is an adulteress. But when the husband dies, he can no longer direct her actions, and she is free to marry another; she can no longer be subject to him that is dead.

"So with Israel and the law. As long as the law lived, and was therefore in force, Israel was married to it and required to obey its provisions. If she went after other gods, or followed other religions, it was as adultery. But now the law is fulfilled; it no longer lives; it has become dead in Christ; and Israel is married to another, even to Christ, whose gospel law must now be obeyed."³

.Philosophers spoke of an internal conflict between the reason and the passions; Jewish teachers spoke of a conflict between the good and evil impulse. Either could identify with Paul's contrast between his mind or reason—knowing what was right—and his members in which passions or the evil impulse worked. The language of moral helplessness here resembles some tragic depictions of passion overpowering reason (e.g., in dramas about Medea, who wickedly killed her children).⁴

Basically the message of Romans 7.1-6 is that believers have been freed from the law through their union with Jesus Christ. This freedom allows them to serve God in the power of the Spirit, living a transformed life and bearing fruit for His glory.

³ Bruce R. McConkie, [Doctrinal New Testament Commentary](#), 3 vols. Bookcraft, 1965-1973, 2: 253.

⁴ Keener, p. 438.

B. Paul's personal struggle with sin (Romans 7:14-25)

“For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I... For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do... O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7.15, 19, 24).

We see a similar struggle in Nephi’s words:

For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children. Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me. And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. (2 Nephi 4.15b-19)

Sometimes in our repentance, in our daily efforts to become more Christlike, we find ourselves repeatedly struggling with the same difficulties. As if we were climbing a tree-covered mountain, at times we don’t see our progress until we get closer to the top and look back from the high ridges. Don’t be discouraged. *If you are striving and working to repent, you are in the process of repenting.* As we improve, we see life more clearly and feel the Holy Ghost working more strongly within us.⁵

As we move along the gospel path, we will continue to find that we are changing. This changing of our natures, this process, is sanctification. As we experience justification events in our lives- reading the scriptures, receiving revelation, taking the sacrament, experiencing the guidance of the Holy Ghost in our lives, we become more holy, losing our disposition to do evil. This is what it means to be sanctified. Our hearts change, and we find that we are more and more like our Savior because we have experienced what it means to listen to His voice and follow in His ways.

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7.22 KJV). The Greek reads thus: *συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον.* I translate it as follows: “For I rejoice in the law of God according to the inner soul which is in man.”⁶ In this instance I believe Paul is expressing his belief that the law is good, and his soul rejoices in it, but he is admitting that following it is difficult.

C. The role of the law in revealing sin (Romans 7:7-13)

In Romans 7.7-13, the apostle Paul addresses the purpose and function of the law in revealing sin and the internal struggle it creates within individuals. Paul begins by posing the question of whether the law is sin. He emphatically responds, “Certainly not!” and explains that the law itself is not sinful, but rather it exposes and reveals sin. The law provides knowledge of what is right and wrong, bringing awareness of sin by defining God's standard of righteousness.

⁵ Elder Neil L. Andersen from “[Repent . . . That I May Heal You](#)” General Conference October 2009.

⁶ *συνήδομαι* in a hapax legomenon, or a word that only appears once in the Bible. This word means “rejoice together with” and has a variety of meanings including “congratulate,” and “sympathize with.”

Paul goes on to describe his personal experience with the law. He states that he would not have known what coveting was if the law had not explicitly stated, "You shall not covet." This example illustrates how the law brings awareness of sin by defining specific actions or attitudes that are contrary to God's will.

Paul further explains that sin takes advantage of the law to produce all kinds of sinful desires within individuals. Sin, using the law as a point of reference, awakens desires that lead to disobedience and transgression against God's commandments. The law, though holy and righteous, exposes the sinful nature and creates a conflict within individuals.

In this passage, Paul reveals the paradoxical nature of the law, showing us its contraries.⁷ On one hand, the law is holy and good, providing clear guidelines for righteous living. On the other hand, it exposes the sinful inclinations of humanity and highlights the inability of the law alone to bring salvation or overcome sin. It underscores the need for a Savior and the transformative power of God's grace.

D. The inability of the law to save us (Romans 7:5-6, 24-25)

Lehi stated that, "By the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off... wherefore redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered" (2 Nephi 2.5-6).

Nephi wrote about the law extensively in 2 Nephi 25. In one passage he emphasized, "Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law; and they, by knowing the deadness of the law, may look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the law was given. And after the law is fulfilled in Christ, that they need not harden their hearts against him when the law ought to be done away" (2 Nephi 25.27).

Abinadi taught this regarding the law, "And moreover, I say unto you, that a salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses" (Mosiah 13.28).

E. The Battle of the Mind (Romans 7.21-25)

C.S. Lewis described the battle between the mind and spirit with the body once in this example:

"You are always dragging me down," said I to my body. "Dragging **you** down!" replied my body. "Well [how do you] like that! Who taught me to like tobacco and alcohol? You, of course, with your idiotic adolescent idea of being 'grown-up.' My palate loathed both at first: but you would have your way. Who put an end to all those angry and revengeful thoughts last night? Me, of course, by insisting on going to sleep. Who does his best to keep you from talking too much and eating too much by giving you dry throats and headaches and indigestion? Eh?" "And what about sex?" said I. "Yes, what about it?" retorted the body. "If you and your wretched imagination would leave me alone I'd give you no trouble...You give me orders and then blame me for carrying them out"⁸

⁷ Joseph Smith spoke of this when he said "By proving contraries, truth is made manifest." Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:428.

⁸ C. S. Lewis, *God in the Docks*, 216-217.

In another work, Lewis expressed how what we focus on drives our motives and thoughts. He shared the following from his work *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*:

“Sleeping on a dragon’s hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself.” (*Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Chapter 6)

F. The inward struggle between the mind and the flesh (Romans 7:21-23)

Our Daily Work

“You can't tell the character of an individual by the way he does his daily work. Watch him when his work is done. See where he goes. Note the companions he seeks, and the things he does when he may do as he pleases. Then you can tell his true character...Let us take the eagle, for example. This bird works as hard and as efficiently as any other animal or bird in doing its daily work. It provides for itself and its young by the sweat of its brow, so to speak; but when its daily work is over and the eagle has time of its own to do just as it pleases, note how it spends its recreational moments. It flies in the highest realms of heaven, spreads its wings and bathes in the upper air, for it loves the pure, clean atmosphere and the lofty heights...On the other hand, let us consider the hog. This animal grunts and grubs and provides for its young just as well as the eagle; but when its working hours are over and it has some recreational moments, observe where it goes and what it does. The hog will seek out the muddiest hole in the pasture and will roll and soak itself in the filth, for this is the thing it loves...People can be either eagles or hogs in their leisure time.”⁹

G. The frustration and despair of the human condition (Romans 7:14-25)

III. Life in the Spirit (Romans 8)

A. The law of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:1-4)

B. Freedom from condemnation (Romans 8:5-11)

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8.5).

Elder Maxwell shared this thought regarding Romans 8.5:

"If one 'mind[s] the things of the flesh' (Rom. 8:5), he cannot 'have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. 2:16) because his thought patterns are 'far from' Jesus, as are the desires or the 'intents of his heart' (Mosiah 5:13). Ironically, if the Master is a stranger to us, then we will merely end up serving other masters. The sovereignty of these other masters is real, even if it sometimes is subtle, for they do call their cadence. Actually, 'we are all enlisted' (Hymns, 1985, no. 250), if only in the ranks of the indifferent."¹⁰

“To be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8.6b)

Elder Oaks explained it:

⁹ Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 47.

¹⁰ Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995.

"To be spiritually minded is to view and evaluate our experiences in terms of the enlarged perspective of eternity.

"Each of us has a personal lens through which we view the world. Our lens gives its special tint to all we see. It can suppress some features and emphasize others. It can also reveal things otherwise invisible. Through the lens of spirituality, we can know 'the things of God' by 'the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. 2:11.) As the Apostle Paul taught, such things are 'foolishness' to the 'natural man.' He cannot see them 'because they are spiritually discerned.' (1 Cor. 2:14.)

"How we interpret our experiences is also a function of our degree of spirituality. Some interpret mortality solely in terms of worldly accomplishments and possessions. In contrast, we who have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ should interpret our experiences in terms of our knowledge of the purpose of life, the mission of our Savior, and the eternal destiny of the children of God.

"Spirituality is not a function of occupation or calling. A scientist may be more spiritual than a theologian; a teacher may be more spiritual than an officer. Spirituality is determined by personal outlook and priorities. It is evident in our words and actions."¹¹

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8.11).

Jewish people believed that God would raise the dead at the end of the age. Paul modifies this teaching by only one step: God has already raised Jesus, and this event is a sure sign that the rest of the resurrection will happen someday.¹²

C. Sons and heirs of God (Romans 8:12-17)

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8.14). I read this verse to mean that those that have covenanted with God are "sons and daughters of Christ" through the covenant. This is how King Benjamin explained it:

"And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5.7).

In one aspect, the sons of God are the spiritual offspring of the Father, who joyfully celebrated when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:1-7). However, in a more specific and deliberate sense, they are those who accept Jesus Christ, follow His laws, and diligently pursue truth and righteousness. They live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (D&C 84.44) and, through the transformative power of the Holy Ghost, become new creatures, spiritually begotten of God.

Through adoption, they become the children of Christ, His sons, and daughters and explained by King Benjamin (Mosiah 5.7). Moreover, through Him, they are also begotten as sons and daughters of His Father (D&C 76.22-24). Those who embrace the gospel and unite with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are granted the power to become the sons and daughters of God (D&C 11.30; 35.2;

¹¹ Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Spirituality," *Ensign*, Nov. 1985.

¹² Keener, p. 439.

39.1-6; 45.8; John 1.12). However, it is important to note that this status is not solely determined or granted by church membership. While joining the Church provides the opportunity for such a privileged position, it is the sustained faith and devotion that truly lead to this exalted state.

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. 8.17).

This is one of the places where Paul teaches the doctrine of [theosis or divinization](#), that mankind can become as God is. This was a common teaching in the early Christian church which has now been lost to the bulk of Christians today.¹³ Becoming a joint-heir with Christ is the promise that the Father has given the saints that they shall inherit all that the Father has. Critics of our faith have put forth the challenge that the Latter-day Saints teach that we shall be equals to God or independent of God, but this criticism has been addressed by Robinson.¹⁴ The idea of theosis in no way degrades God, rather, it elevates him in my view, as it shows us that God has the power to make mortals exalted beings as he is.

D. Present suffering and future glory (Romans 8:18-25)

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8.18).

Paul also wrote, “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2.7-9).

Elder Maxwell wrote:

Each post-resurrection kingdom is a kingdom of glory that is far better than this world we now know. Even "the glory of the telestial" will surpass "all understanding" (D&C 76:89).¹⁵ God thus takes into merciful account not only our desires and our performance, but also the degrees of difficulty which our

¹³ Day, [Deification, Divinization, Theosis](#), 12.06.2016.

¹⁴ "It should be noted here that the LDS doctrine of deification is often misrepresented. Despite what our critics claim, the Latter-day Saints do not believe that human beings will ever become the equals of God, or be independent of God, or that they will ever cease to be subordinate to God. For Latter-day Saints, to become gods means to overcome the world through the atonement of Christ (1 Jn. 5:4-5; Rev. 2:7, 11). Thus we become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7) and will inherit *all* things just as Christ inherits all things (1 Cor. 3:21-23; Revelation 21:7). There are no limitations on these scriptural declarations; we shall inherit *all* things—including the power to create and to beget. In that glorified state we shall look like our Savior (1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18) we shall receive his glory and be one with him and with the Father (John 17:21-23; Philip. 3:21). Sitting with God upon the throne of God, we shall rule over all things (Luke 12:44; Rev. 3:21).

"Now, if the Christian scriptures teach that we will look like God, receive the inheritance of God, receive the glory of God, be one with God, sit upon the throne of God, and exercise the power and rule of God, then surely it cannot be un-Christian to conclude with C. S. Lewis and others that such beings as these can be *called* gods, as long as we remember that this use of the term gods does not in any way reduce or limit the sovereignty of God our Father. That is how the early Christians used the term; it is how C. S. Lewis used the term; and it is how the Latter-day Saints use the term and understand the doctrine." Stephen E. Robinson, [Are Mormons Christians?](#) Bookcraft, 1991, 65.

¹⁵ Neal A. Maxwell, [If Thou Endure It Well](#), Deseret Book, 2002, p. 129.

varied circumstances impose upon us. No wonder we will not complain at the final judgment, especially since even the telestial kingdom's glory "surpasses all understanding" (D&C 76:89). God delights in blessing us, especially when we realize "joy in that which [we] have desired" (D&C 7:8).¹⁶

Sometimes I am asked in class if Joseph Smith taught that if people saw the Telestial Kingdom that they would commit suicide to get there. This is not what he taught. Richard Holzapfel explains:

[An often-repeated story associated with the telestial kingdom deals with something Joseph Smith was purported to have said: "The telestial kingdom is so great, if we knew what it was like we would kill ourselves to get there." Wilford Woodruff recounted a comment by the Prophet that may be the basis of that apocryphal story. According to Charles Lowell Walker, Wilford Woodruff "referred to a saying of Joseph Smith, which he heard him utter (like this) That if the People knew what was behind the veil, they would try by every means to commit suicide that they might get there, but the Lord in his wisdom had implanted the fear of death in every person that they might cling to life and thus accomplish the designs of their creator."¹⁷

E. The role of the Holy Spirit in our weakness (Romans 8:26-27)

F. God's love and purpose (Romans 8:28-30)

G. Victory in Christ (Romans 8:37-39)

These final verses in Romans 8 are probably my favorite verses in Romans. I see these final verses as Paul's way of expressing how much God loves us, how much he will do all he can (as Paul did!) to redeem mankind and spread the good news. I appreciate Joseph Smith's views on God's nature:

"While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of those contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes 'His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' [Matthew 5:45.]"¹⁸

IV. God's Plan for Israel (Romans 9-11)

A. Paul's concern for the salvation of Israel (Romans 9:1-5)

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9.3 KJV). The Greek reads as follows:
 ηὐχόμεν γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σὰρκα.

¹⁶ "According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996.

¹⁷ Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision," [The Heavens Are Open 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants](#), Deseret Book, 1993, p. 155.

¹⁸ *History of the Church*, 4:595; from "Baptism for the Dead," an editorial published in *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1842, p. 759; Joseph Smith was the editor of the periodical.

“For I pray that I myself were anathema, cast away from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsfolk according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:3 my translation). I read this verse in connection with Romans 10:1 where Paul says, “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”

Essentially Paul is saying that he would take being cast out of Christ's presence if it could in some way save these people that he loves, his own kinsfolk. That is how much he loves his people.

B. The remnant of Israel and the Gentiles' inclusion (Romans 11:1-10)

C. God's mercy and sovereign choice (Romans 9:14-18)

These passages give strength to the Calvinist position of predestination, as Paul is here citing how God showed mercy to Moses and hardened Pharaoh's heart, as if those that do wickedly are predestined to do so.

Keener works to illustrate both apparent contradictory positions of God's sovereignty and human agency:

God showed mercy by not destroying Egypt (Ex 9:15-16), allowing Pharaoh to remain so God could further display his power. Paul makes the wording even more emphatic: God raised up or stirred this particular Pharaoh for the purpose of showing his power, that “the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord,” as Exodus repeatedly says (e.g., 9:16). God clearly hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex 9:12, 35; 10:27; 11:10), but not until Pharaoh had hardened his own several times (Ex 7:22; 8:15, 32). In other words, God elevated a particular person to fight against him; but that person also made his own choice, which God foreknew, before God punished him with a continuously hard heart (cf. Rom 1:24-25; 2 Thess 2:10-12). The Old Testament affirms both God's sovereignty (e.g., Deut 29:4) and human responsibility (e.g., Deut 5:29), assuming that God is sovereign enough to ensure both (although human choice could not nullify God's word; cf., e.g., 1 Kings 22:26-30, 34-35).¹⁹

D. The future restoration of Israel (Romans 11:13-27) and the Olive Tree

"There is no finer statement in all of holy writ as to God's infinite love and patience with Israel than the allegory of Zenos (Jacob 5). Jacob, the brother of Nephi, delivered this metaphorical marvel-unfolded this 'mystery' (see Romans 11:25; 16:25; Ephesians 3:3)-to his people as a means of dramatizing Jehovah's tender regard for his chosen people over the millennia of their existence. 'How merciful is our God unto us,' Jacob exclaimed in retrospect, 'for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches; and he stretches forth his hands unto them all the day long.' In pleading fashion, Jacob applied the symbolism of the allegory and encouraged his people to 'cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you' (Jacob 6:4-5). It may well be that Paul the apostle was drawing upon his knowledge of the allegory of Zenos when he wrote his epistle to the Saints at Rome."²⁰

"It takes little or no imagination to see a connection between Jacob 5 and Romans 11:8-24. Both texts use the olive tree to explain God's salvation of Israel, and in both texts the metaphor of grafting is central...Both of these passages use the metaphor of grafting to discuss the same theme, the restoration of Israel. As part of that discussion, both Romans and Jacob use the idea of grafting as part of a discussion of the remnant of Israel reserved to God, a discussion that answers the question of whether

¹⁹ Keener, p. 443.

²⁰ Robert L. Millet, [The Power of the Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon](#), Deseret Book, 1994, p. 30.

Israel's apostasy means that she has been rejected. And both passages focus on the operation of grace in the work of Israel's salvation. That there is a connection between these two passages of scripture is obvious."²¹

Paul urges his Christian gentile readers to not “boast against the branches (the Jews)” (Rom. 11.18).

Jewish sources often described Israel as a plant or a tree, whose roots were the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). (Sometimes they even used the image of an olive tree; indeed, at some point a synagogue in Rome was apparently named the “olive tree.”) Contrary to standard Jewish teaching, Paul had argued that uncircumcised Gentiles could become part of that people of God through faith in the Jewish Messiah, but without physical circumcision. Now he reminds Gentiles to respect the Jewish people, who had brought them their faith. It was easier for Jewish branches to be grafted back into the true form of their own faith than for polytheists who had worshiped idols before their conversion to understand the faith they were now accepting. Like other Jewish teachers of his day, Paul does not regard any particular person’s salvation as guaranteed from the human perspective till they have persevered to the end. Grafting of trees (adding a shoot of one tree to another tree) is reported in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. Sometimes shoots from a wild olive tree would be grafted onto a domestic olive tree that was bearing little fruit in an attempt to strengthen or save the life of the tree. The unproductive original branches would be pruned off, and the new graft was considered “contrary to nature” (as in 11:24—nasb).²²

“God is able to graft them (the Jews) in again” (Rom. 11.23).

V. Living as a Sacrifice (Romans 12)

This entire chapter is easy to read and understand, but not always easy to do. These are the things Christ admonished his followers to work towards. This is the essence of Christian living.

- A. The call to present one's body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2)
- B. Renewing the mind and discerning God's will (Romans 12:2)
- C. The diversity of spiritual gifts and the body of Christ (Romans 12:3-8)
- D. Love, humility, and service in the Christian community (Romans 12:9-21)

“Live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12.18).

Elder Oaks taught:

"The Savior and his Apostles had no program for world peace other than individual righteousness. They mounted no opposition to the rule of Rome or to the regime of its local tyrants. They preached individual righteousness and taught that the children of God should love their enemies (see Matt. 5:44) and 'live peaceably with all men' (Rom. 12:18).

²¹ James E. Faulconer, *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*, ed. by Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, Deseret Book, Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994, p. 347.

²² Keener, p. 447.

"Recent history reminds us that people who continue to hate one another after a war will have another war, whereas the victor and vanquished who forgive one another will share peace and prosperity."²³

VI. Christian Ethics and Relationships (Romans 13-15)

A. Submission to governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7)

Here Paul exhorts his audience to submit to Roman authorities. Loyalty to the state was a standard literary topic among ancient writers (e.g., the *Stoic writer Hierocles, *How to Behave Toward One's Fatherland*); it appears in lists and discussions alongside proper treatment of parents, elders and friends. Philosophers and moralists commonly wrote on how government officials should act but also wrote on how citizens should behave toward the government. According to Plato, Socrates even refused to escape execution lest he undermine the state with its good laws as well as its bad laws... Jewish people had to be concerned about public opinion, especially in Rome, where their maintenance of economic ties with Palestine was viewed with suspicion. Because many people viewed Christianity as a minority sect within Judaism, Christians had even more reason to be cautious. Jews and Christians publicly stressed their good citizenship, against the popular slander that they were subversive... Nero was emperor at this time, but he had not yet begun persecuting Christians or repressing other groups; he was still under the benevolent influences of Seneca and Burrus, rather than the reprobate Tigellinus. Nero was always popular in Greece, from which Paul was writing. Although some Palestinian Jews already advocated the revolt against Rome that would take place in little more than a decade, other Palestinian Jews reportedly swore to nonresistance, believing that God had ordained all civil authorities (in the Old Testament, cf. Isa 45:1; Jer 25:9; Dan 4:32). Most Jews in Rome upheld this position and would have been embarrassed by any other. The Old Testament clearly taught God's sovereignty over earthly rulers (Prov 16:10; 21:1).²⁴

Paul's statement indicates that rulers should rule understanding the true source of their power. They must also use that power for good in order to be worthy of the title 'minister of God', for 'he is the minister of God to thee *for good*' (v. 4, italics added). Therefore, the Roman saints should not rebel against civil authorities but be subject unto them, nor are they justified in rebelling against a government which was mostly good, for 'sedition and rebellion are unbecoming [of] every citizen' (DC 134:5). Richard Anderson noted, "Even though Christ was unlawfully crucified with the approval of an appointee of Tiberius, Christian leaders stressed civil obedience as a gospel duty, Paul stating that 'higher powers' were assigned by God (Rom. 13:1) and Peter naming both the emperor and his governors as appointed by God to maintain order in society. (See 1 Pet. 2:13-14.) Thus Christianity was revolutionary, but on a moral, not a directly political, level."²⁵

"Ye must needs be subject... for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers..." (Rom. 13.5-6).

The empire as a whole levied a property tax (often about one percent) and a head tax; local provinces or kingdoms added further taxes; there were also customs duties. Taxes were used to finance roads and run the government but also to support Roman armies and temples devoted to the worship of the emperor. Particular taxes became controversial in Rome perhaps just months before Paul wrote this letter;

²³ "World Peace," *Ensign*, May 1990.

²⁴ Keener, p. 450.

²⁵ Richard Lloyd Anderson, ["The Church and the Roman Empire,"](#) *Ensign*, Sept. 1975.

noncitizen Jews who returned to Rome in or after AD 54 may have also been subject to special taxes from which Roman citizens were exempt.²⁶ Officials expected and received honor by virtue of their position.²⁷

How would Paul have viewed governments in our modern world?

Craig Keener's commentary here has been valuable to me as I have studied these words of Paul in Romans 13:

Many historically used this passage (among others) to support the divine right of kings. But if Paul follows Jesus's teaching on giving to Caesar what is Caesar's (13:6–7; Mark 12:17),²⁸ he presumably also agreed with his caveat that some things belonged only to God (Mark 12:17). For example, Paul surely would not, out of allegiance to the state, sanction participation in the popular imperial cult (cf. 1 Cor 10:20–21). Further, submission was a temporary expedient; Paul did not expect Rome or other worldly empires to continue for long (cf. Rom 2:5; 8:21–23; 9:22; 11:26–27; 12:19; 13:12). Nor did Paul have reason to envision modern democracies, in which Christians as citizens would in a sense constitute part of the government, and hence need to evaluate and critique government activities. Finally, Paul lacked reason to envision this minority movement ending up in a situation of significant influence over the political process and so being able to address large-scale injustices like slavery (despite Paul's personal concerns, cf. Phlm 16–21). Opposed to ideologies behind the Judean revolt, Paul was likely in practice a pacifist. But what do personal pacifists do in extreme cases, when their influence affects whether genocide may be forcibly stopped? German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pacifist, ultimately participated in a plot against Hitler because of the magnitude of evil involved.

While few would support the divine right of kings today, the subservience of the leaders of the German state church to Hitler's Third Reich, based on this passage, raised anew the issue of its application, and Christian cooperation with the apartheid government in South Africa had the same effect. Abolitionists and liberation theologians have long grappled with these issues. Most likely, Paul would have applied

²⁶ Rome was a religiously pluralistic, cosmopolitan city. The practice of offering worship to gods was commonplace, but the idea of worshipping only one God was considered borderline atheism. Given these realities, the integration of Jewish followers of Jesus as well as Gentile converts into local Roman synagogues was apparently not without its challenges. As Mark Allen Powell describes, "...within twenty years of the crucifixion of Jesus, there appear to have been enough Christians in Rome to create a disturbance worthy of the emperor's attention..." (Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 274.) The disturbance that Powell refers to is over a man named "Chrestus," which is likely an alteration of "Christ." This disturbance was such an inconvenience to the emperor Claudius that he took decisive action. Craig Keener describes it this way, "At some point in the 40's CE the Jewish community in Rome was apparently divided over questions of the identity of the Messiah, probably Jesus. As a result, the emperor Claudius followed the precedent of the earlier emperor Tiberius and banished the Jews from Rome...Given the context in our sources this may have happened in about the year 49 CE. (Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 12.) The actual edict issued by Claudius is simple, but clear. The Roman historian Suetonius recalls the edict; "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus [Christ], he expelled them from Rome." This expulsion lasted approximately five years and was lifted upon Claudius' death in 54 CE. See: James Rudd, [The Impact of the Edict of Claudius on the Book of Romans](#), accessed 6.7.23.

²⁷ Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 450.

²⁸ Jewish sources that emphasize allegiance to the state also offer this qualification (Tobin 2004: 397–99; see esp. Josephus Ant. 18.266–68; idem J.W. 2.197; idem Ag. Ap. 2.76–77); philosophic treatises on kingship also qualified royal authority.

13:1–7 as the norm where possible, living in a respectable manner in society but allowing dissent where necessary and political participation for justice when possible. For example, he would presumably urge Christians in China (given the normal situation there at the time I am writing this) to be model Chinese citizens, yet without imbibing atheism. In cases of wholesale massacres of Christians or their neighbors, such as have happened at various times in northern Nigeria, the Indian state of Orissa, parts of Indonesia, and so forth, conclusions are harder to come by (though these were not sponsored by national governments, a situation closer to, e.g., the Turkish genocide of Armenians in 1915). I am inclined to think that Paul would not endorse armed resistance in such cases, but it is admittedly easy for me to pontificate from a currently safe location. I know of other settings where suppression and the killings of individuals led to armed uprisings, which most often led to more suffering without decisive liberation; but other solutions seemed hard to come by. Once we recognize that Paul's words addressed a particular historical situation, translating the message into new situations becomes more problematic.²⁹

Elder James E. Talmage had this to say about the modern Saints being subject to the powers of this world:

"Governments are instituted of God, sometimes by His direct interposition, sometimes by His permission. When the Jews had been brought into subjection by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the Lord commanded through the prophet Jeremiah (27:4-8) that the people render obedience to their conqueror, whom He called His servant; for verily the Lord had used the pagan king to chastise the recreant and unfaithful children of the covenant. The obedience so enjoined included the payment of taxes and extended to complete submission. After the death of Christ the apostles taught obedience to the powers that be, which powers, Paul declared 'are ordained of God.' See Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; see also 1 Pet. 2:13, 14. Through the medium of modern revelation, the Lord has required of His people in the present dispensation, obedience to and loyal support of the duly established and existing governments in all lands. See D&C 58:21-22; 98:4-6; and section 134 throughout. The restored Church proclaims as an essential part of its belief and practice: 'We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.'"³⁰

B. Loving one another and fulfilling the law (Romans 13:8-14)

Rom. 13:14 Greek:

ἀλλ' ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν

Rather, **clothe yourself** in the Lord Jesus Christ and do not worry³¹ about **the flesh** and its longings. (Rom. 13.14, my translation). This verse has Paul using the Greek word ἐνδύω - enduo, a word that is typically translated as "put on" in the KJV. This to me, has direct connection with the endowment and being invested in sacred clothing. In a way, those who have been endowed in our dispensation have "put on" Christ and have been encouraged to not be overly concerned with things of the flesh and worldly desires.

²⁹ Craig Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*, Cascade Books, 2009.

³⁰ James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Deseret Book Co., 1983, 542.

³¹ πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε is translated "do not make provision" in other translations. I chose "do not worry" since πρόνοια is basically forethought, and so to me this made much more sense.

C. Unity and acceptance in the church (Romans 14:1-13)

Avoid doubtful disputations (Rom. 14.1).

Just as there were disagreements among the faithful regarding the interpretation of the Word of Wisdom, the Roman saints faced confusion regarding what foods were permissible to consume. In the Old Testament, specific guidelines were provided regarding kosher foods, distinguishing between clean and unclean animals (refer to Leviticus 11). However, the Roman saints faced a different challenge altogether—the temptation of participating in Roman festivals and indulging in lavish feasts that honored the polytheistic gods of Rome. The question arose: What should a saint do when attending such festivals, weddings, or parties? What foods could they eat without endorsing Roman religion?

The concern arose from the belief that consuming food dedicated to a Roman god might imply support for idolatrous practices. The act of partaking in such food could be seen as implicit consent to the worship of false deities. In response to this dilemma, Paul, most likely authoring the counsel himself, provides practical guidance to the saints regarding the consumption of pagan foods. His advice can be summarized as follows: Feel free to eat whatever you desire. This approach can be seen as a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. If it is evident that the food has been offered to an idol, a wise saint would abstain. However, the crucial emphasis lies in refraining from passing judgment on fellow believers based on their personal interpretations of the law, dietary choices, or holiday celebrations. The principle of avoiding judgmental attitudes remains as vital today as it was in that era.

The main issue

Paul's key exhortation is "accept one another." Apart from Philemon 17, Paul's extant letters employ this verb προσλαμβάνω (*proslambanō*) only three times: at the beginning (14.1, 3)³² and end (15:7) of this section. The context of Romans 15.7 indicates that Jews and Gentiles accepting one another (as Christ has accepted them) is a key issue (15:8–12).³³

Elder McConkie read this passage thus: "Paul's approach to the problem follows the pattern set by the apostles in deciding the question of circumcision. (Acts 15:1-35.) Since eating and drinking, and even some matters connected with Sabbath observance, are not to be compared in importance with the great basic realities of Christianity, such as the divine Sonship of Christ, Paul wisely takes a tolerant view. Bear with the weak, he says. It is not their dietary preferences that will save them, but their faith in Christ."³⁴

"Every knee shall bow" (Rom. 14.11)

If you sense that one day every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, why not do so now? For in the coming of that collective confession, it will mean much less to kneel down when it is no longer possible to stand up!³⁵

"There is nothing unclean of itself" (Rom. 14.14)

³² Romans 14.1 reads Τὸν δὲ ἄσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει **προσλαμβάνεσθε** μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις **διαλογισμῶν** "He being weak in the faith, **accept him**, but not into **judgmental arguments!**" (my translation)

³³ Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*.

³⁴ Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. Bookcraft, 1965-1973, 2: 301.

³⁵ Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "Why Not Now?" *Ensign*, Nov. 1974.

Does an alcoholic beverage carry inherent uncleanness? Does the presence of alcohol or tobacco tarnish our souls? The answer is no. According to Romans 14.14, 'there is nothing unclean of itself,' and it is not the things we consume that defile us, but rather our words and actions (Matthew 15.11). Therefore, a person who hasn't been instructed in the principles of the Word of Wisdom is not rendered unclean by partaking of tobacco or drinking alcohol. While their choice may be the best for their overall health, it is not inherently sinful. However, they may encounter judgment from certain members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Similar to the judgmental Romans, members of the Church occasionally slip and fall into the trap of passing judgment on those who smoke or drink. But how can we hold someone accountable for breaking a law they haven't committed to keeping? Paul would ask us, 'why do you judge your brother? Or why do you disregard your brother?' (Rom. 14.10)

When a member of the Church violates the Word of Wisdom, they become unclean, not because the substance itself is impure, but because they have broken their promise to God to be obedient to His commandments. Faith, hope, charity, peace, and joy are the fruits of the Spirit, and they hold far greater importance than our dietary guidelines in modern times.

"Let us follow after the things which make for peace and the things which one may edify another" (Rom. 14.19)

"Be one who nurtures and who builds. Be one who has an understanding and a forgiving heart, who looks for the best in people. Leave people better than you found them. Be fair with your competitors, whether in business, athletics, or elsewhere. Don't get drawn into some of the parlance of our day and try to 'win' by intimidation or by undermining someone's character. Lend a hand to those who are frightened, lonely, or burdened.

"If we could look into each other's hearts and understand the unique challenges each of us faces, I think we would treat each other much more gently, with more love, patience, tolerance, and care."³⁶

D. Building up others in faith (Romans 15:1-7)

Because divisiveness was rife in ancient urban Mediterranean culture, many speakers offered exhortations to unity, as here (see our introduction to Romans). Being of "one mind" means thinking in unity (1 Chron 12:38)—in this case a unity of love, not of complete agreement.³⁷

Romans 15.7 Greek:

Διὸ **προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους** καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς **προσελάβετο ἡμᾶς** εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ

"Through this **accept each other**, even as Christ has **accepted us** into the glory of God!" (Rom. 15.7 my translation). Note the use of προσλαμβάνω twice in this verse.

Romans 15.7-12 Paul encourages unity among the Jews, Gentiles, and all of God's children

In Romans 15:7-12, Paul presents several key arguments. Here is a summary of his main points:

³⁶ Elder Marvin J. Ashton, "The Tongue Can Be a Sharp Sword," *Ensign*, May 1992.

³⁷ Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 453.

1. Acceptance and unity: Paul encourages the believers to accept one another just as Christ has accepted them. He emphasizes the importance of unity and harmony within the community of believers.
2. Example of Christ: Paul reminds the Roman Christians that Jesus came as a servant to the Jews, fulfilling the promises made to their ancestors. This highlights the faithfulness of God and serves as an example of Christ's humility and inclusiveness.
3. Gentiles as partakers: Paul emphasizes that the Gentiles also have a role in God's plan. Quoting from various Old Testament passages, he illustrates that the Gentiles were prophesied to praise God and rejoice with His people.
4. Hope and joy: Paul stresses that the Gentiles' inclusion in God's plan should bring them hope, joy, and peace. Through faith in Christ, they can experience the abundant blessings of salvation.
5. The power of the Holy Spirit: Paul emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers to live in unity and proclaim the Gospel to all nations. He highlights the Spirit's work in bringing about the salvation and inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles.

Overall, Paul's arguments in Romans 15:7-12 focus on promoting acceptance, unity, and the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in God's redemptive plan of salvation. He highlights the example of Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies to emphasize the significance of embracing one another in the body of believers.

Craig Keener explained this passage:

Speakers could save a climactic, clinching argument for near the end of their speech; Paul here provides some of his strongest biblical argument for the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers. That Christ accepted not only Jews but Gentiles Paul demonstrates from Scripture (Ps 18:49 = 2 Sam 22:50; Deut 32:43 [cf. Rom 12:19]; Ps 117:1; Is 11:10). Paul provides citations from different parts of the Old Testament (Writings, Law and Prophets) and could have provided others to make his case that God seeks the praise of the Gentiles as well as that of the Jewish people (e.g., 1 Chron 16:31; Ps 22:27; 96:10; 102:22; Is 49:23; 60:3, 9-14). Deut 32:43 (cited in Rom 15:10) recalls a context Paul mined also in Romans 10:19 and 12:19. His last citation (in 15:12), Isaiah 11:10, was accepted as messianic. It was also a clear prophecy of Gentiles turning to the Messiah and being saved in the end time; Isaiah also has other prophecies about Gentiles being incorporated into God's people (19:23-25; 56:3-8).³⁸

Illyricum (Rom. 15:19)

Illyricum was north of Macedonia, across from Italy on the eastern Adriatic coast, on the west of the Yugoslav/Serbo-Croatia region. The Roman province was called Illyricum; Greeks included this region and some more territory farther south (including Dyrrhachium on the Via Egnatia in Macedonia) in what they called Illyria. Biblically literate hearers understood that "signs and wonders" occurred during the exodus (Ex 7:3; 11:9-10; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 26:8; 34:11; Jer 32:20-21; Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-16; Baruch 2:11); the proliferation of the gospel is no less a divine work, often accompanied with

³⁸ Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 453.

demonstrations. 15:20. Illyricum (15:19) may have been one of these previously unevangelized areas; Spain would be another.

Paul makes a financial request of the Roman Saints to pay his fare to Spain to spread the Gospel (Rom. 15.24)

Whensoever 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*. (Rom. 15.24)

Paul's mention of his visit to the Roman believers in connection with his planned mission to Spain serves as a polite request. By asking to be "sent on his way" (15:24), he implies a desire for support during his time in Rome and possibly assistance with his travel expenses to Spain. In Paul's time, hospitality held great value, and the believers would likely consider it an honor to partner with an esteemed apostle in this endeavor. It is possible that they would go above and beyond what he asks for.

It is important to note that Paul's expectation of financial support for his journey to Spain does not place an undue burden on the believers in Rome, as similar expectations exist in other mission contexts (as evidenced by the significant offerings mentioned in 15.25-27). By mentioning his plans for Jerusalem along with his Roman and Spanish plans (15.24, 28), Paul suggests that while the Eastern churches have contributed to the Jerusalem offering (although Roman Gentiles should have also felt obligated, 15.27), the Roman believers have the opportunity to sponsor a distinct and groundbreaking ministry of the apostle.

Spain probably did not have Jewish people prior to 200 AD

Keener explains:

Persons of honor often avoided direct requests, but Paul indirectly suggests one here. "Assist" (niv) or "help" (nasb) implies that they would cover his expenses for the trip. This would be a great expression of hospitality, but one which the Roman church would probably consider an honor if they could afford it. There is little evidence of any major Jewish settlement in Roman Spain before the third century AD; Paul's missionary work there would probably be among those who knew nothing of the Bible. Paul also would need to speak Latin there (in the Roman colonies) or use interpreters; most would not understand Greek. At the farthest western end of the Mediterranean, Spain was counted by geographers such as Strabo as at the end of the earth (with China and India on the opposite, eastern side of the world); cf. Acts 1:8.³⁹

Did Paul ever make it to Spain?

Clement taught that Paul made it to Spain and preached Christ.

In Clement's letter *I Clement* 5:5-7 (c. 70's just c. 40 years after the Resurrection and c. 20 years after Paul wrote Romans) Bishop Clement writes:

"Because of jealousy and strife, Paul, by his example, pointed out the way to the prize for patient endurance. After he had been seven times in chains, had been driven into exile, had been stoned and had preached in the East and in the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith, having taught

³⁹ Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 454.

righteousness to the whole world and having reached the farthest limits of the West. (*'to terma tes duseos'*) Finally, when he had given his testimony before the rulers, he thus departed from the world and went to the holy place, having become an outstanding example of patient endurance."

The "farthest limits of the West" at that time would have been Spain (Latin *Hispania*) on the Atlantic Ocean.

Less than one hundred years after Clement the *Muratorian Canon/ Fragment* (c. 170 AD), a listing of those writings which were part of the New Testament Canon at that time in Christian history, mentions as fact that Paul did go to Spain:

"Moreover, the acts of all the apostles were written in one book (Acts). For 'most excellent Theophilus' Luke compiled the individual events that took place in his presence—as he plainly shows by omitting the martyrdom of Peter as well as the departure of Paul from the city (of Rome) when he journeyed to Spain." *The Muratorian Canon 34-39*

Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-386), an Early Church theologian in Jerusalem, passes on the belief that Paul went to Spain: "... (Paul), who from Jerusalem, and even unto Illyricum, fully preached the Gospel, and instructed even imperial Rome, and carried the earnestness of his preaching as far as Spain, undergoing conflicts innumerable, and performing signs and wonders." *Catecheses, Lecture 17.26*

Chrysostom, (347-407), Archbishop of Constantinople, apparently one of the most talented preachers in all of Christian history records: "For after he (Paul) had been in Rome, he returned to Spain, but whether he came thence again into these parts, we know not." *Second Timothy, Homily 10*

Many other ancient Christian writers asserted Paul went to Spain. Jerome (342-420), the ascetic-in-his-golden-years scholar who translated the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 4 Gospels in the New Testament from Hebrew and Greek into Latin and is credited as the author of the Roman Catholic Vulgate Bible, stated: "St. Paul having been in Spain, went from one ocean to another." *Amos, cap.5*⁴⁰

VII. Conclusion and Greetings (Romans 16)

A. Commendations and greetings to various individuals (Romans 16:1-16)

Priscilla and Aquilla (Rom. 16.5)

"Aquila and his wife Priscilla had 'lately come from Italy' when the Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews 'from Rome' (Acts 18:2). They were strong missionaries, for they had convinced Apollos that he had only part of the truth (Acts 18:26). Paul found them so valuable that he brought them to Ephesus (Acts 18:18), from which place they sent greetings (1 Cor. 16:19). Afterward they were free to return to Rome... They had shared their knowledge of Jewish-Christian tensions at Rome when they labored with Paul on two missionary journeys after their expulsion. They probably kept in contact with the Saints there when they were away; there was a church 'in their house' after returning to Rome (Rom. 16:5)"⁴¹

B. Warning against divisions and false teachers (Romans 16:17-24)

⁴⁰ Saint Paul went to Spain? [Early Church History](#), accessed 6.7.2023.

⁴¹ Richard Lloyd Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), Deseret Book, 1983, p. 171-172.

Tertius “wrote this epistle” (Rom. 16:22)

"[In writing the epistles] it appears that Paul did not actually do the writing with his own hand, but dictated to a scribe, although he would sign the epistle himself. Hence we find in Rom. 16:22, 'I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you'; and in 1 Cor. 16:21, 'The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand'; and in 2 Thes. 3:17, 'The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write' (see also Col. 4:18; Philem. 1:19; Gal. 6:11)."⁴²

“Tertius” was a Roman name (often used for a third boy), sometimes used by Jews. Most of the ancient world was too illiterate to write letters, certainly letters as sophisticated as this one; they depended instead on scribes. Those who were highly literate were also wealthy enough that they could dictate letters to scribes as well, sometimes their own secretaries, who were usually literate slaves. Paul’s host may have lent him his scribe, or Tertius may have been a professional scribe; in any case, Tertius seems to be a believer, because scribes did not normally add their own greetings. That Paul followed the common practice of signing dictated letters (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17) indicates that he used scribes regularly.⁴³

C. Doxology and final words (Romans 16:25-27)

VIII. Summary and Application

- A. Recap of the key themes in Romans 7-16
- B. Reflection on the message of salvation, life in the Spirit, and Christian living
- C. Encouragement to apply the teachings of Romans in everyday life.

⁴² Robert J. Matthews, *Behold the Messiah*, Bookcraft, 1994, p. 325.

⁴³ Keener, *Background*, p. 457.