

As we close in on the end of Paul's letter to the Romans we once again see his heart for people. He again expresses his intention to visit the saints at Rome but thus far has been hindered by his desire to preach Christ to those who had not heard the gospel as well as the responsibility for delivering a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. His plan is to stop by Rome to see the saints there on his way to preach the gospel in Spain.

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

Paul wanted to come to Rome and preach the gospel there (Rom. 1:9-13), but explains here that one of the reasons that he hasn't already come to Rome is because of his efforts to preach the gospel where it had not already been preached (vs. 18-21). The word "also" implies that there were other reasons he was hindered besides this.

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

**"But now having no more place in these parts"** – Paul's greatest desire was to take the gospel where people had not heard the name of Jesus Christ (v. 20) and he had run out of such places in the regions where he was currently traveling.

**"and having a great desire these many years to come unto you"** – Paul had already mentioned his desire to preach the gospel at Rome (Rom. 1:9-13), and now he saw the opportunity to fulfill this desire while also finding new places to preach the gospel.

**"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you"** – The two previous points Paul mentioned (no new places in the current region to preach and his desire to visit the saints at Rome) had compelled him to plan his journey to Spain. Since Rome would be on his way to Spain, he wanted to use that opportunity to visit the church in Rome and hopefully minister to them.

**"for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you"** – Rome would be one of Paul's stops on his journey to Spain and he wanted to make a point of seeing the Christians in Rome. Being "brought on my way thitherward by you" indicates Paul's hope that they would supply what he needed to continue his journey to Spain.

**"if first I be somewhat [in part] filled with your company"** – He wanted to spend some time and enjoy fellowship with the Christians in Rome, but he couldn't stay as long as he might like since he needed to go to Spain. Since an extended stay was not possible, Paul would only be "somewhat" (in part) filled with their company before he had to leave.

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25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Paul's intended journey to Rome had to wait because he had the responsibility to deliver a financial gift that had been collected by churches in Macedonia and Achaia to help the poor saints at Jerusalem. Obviously the needs of the poor could not wait and Paul had been entrusted in safely delivering the gift to those that needed it at Jerusalem. The money had been given cheerfully for it pleased these churches to give the money.

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

**"It hath pleased them verily"** – Paul mentioned in v. 26 that the saints of Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to give the money, and here Paul repeats that fact for emphasis to indicate how truly cheerfully the money had been given.

**"and their debtors they are"** – The reason they were pleased to give to the saints at Jerusalem was because they considered themselves to be spiritual debtors to the Jews.

**"For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things"** – These Gentiles were able to hear the gospel of their salvation through the ministry of Jewish apostles, teachers, preachers and evangelists.

**"their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things"** – As a result of this ministry which had enabled them to be saved the Gentiles were grateful and considered it their duty to help the Jewish saints in whatever way they were able. They probably considered the giving of money the least they could do in light of the gift of the gospel that has been given to them.

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

Once he had completed his obligation of delivering the gift to the intended recipients at Jerusalem, Paul planned to set out on his journey to Spain, stopping by Rome on his way. However, things did not happen the way Paul intended because he was falsely accused and arrested at Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-29). Paul does make it to Rome but he will do so as a prisoner of the Roman government.

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

Paul anticipated that his arrival in Rome would be in obedience to the will of God and with His blessing, but he did not anticipate that God's will would be that he would arrive as a prisoner. Paul's two years under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:31-32) gave him the opportunity to write many of the epistles contained in the Bible.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

**“Now I beseech [to urge; to beg or plead] you, brethren”** – Paul asks for the saints at Rome to pray for him because he knows that his journey to and from Jerusalem had some potential dangers to him as a preacher of the gospel of Christ.

**“for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake”** – Paul was a servant and preacher of the gospel of Christ and so he appeals to the Romans for prayer on the basis of their love for Christ and their desire to see Paul continue as an effective servant of Christ.

**“and for the love of the Spirit”** – Paul appeals to the love that the Holy Spirit had given them for him and the glory of Jesus Christ.

**“that ye strive together [to help someone in a struggle] with me in your prayers to God for me”** – Prayer is a battle against the powers of darkness and Paul asks for the Roman saints to stand with him in prayer. He knows that there would be a potential spiritual battle ahead as he travels among Jews that hate Jesus Christ and anyone who preaches the message of Christ, and so he asks for the prayers of the Roman saints.

**2 Cor. 10:3-4** “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”

**Jam. 5:16** “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

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

**“That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea”** – Paul mentions specific prayer requests that he wants the Romans to pray for. The first is his safety as he traveled to Jerusalem because he knew there were Judean unbelievers that would love to prevent Paul from preaching Jesus Christ. His life had been in danger before, such as when certain Jews plotted his death and he had to escape Damascus by being let down outside the wall of the city in a basket at night (Acts 9:20-25). Later the Jews actually stoned Paul and left him for dead at Lystra, but God allowed him to survive (Acts 14:19-20). Such events made Paul aware that his life could be in danger anytime he was around unbelieving Jews.

**“and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints”** – Some commentators suggest that Paul was concerned that the Jewish saints might not accept the gift he was delivering because it came from Gentile believers. Other commentators suggest that they might not accept the gift from the hands of Paul, the apostle who had been working among the Gentiles. There were false rumors circulating that Paul was teaching Jews that lived among the Gentiles that they should forsake the customs of Moses and basically live like Gentiles (Acts 21:17-24). The Jews that believed these rumors might reject anything associated with Paul. It's also possible that the Jews might refuse the gift for both of these reasons. Paul's prayer request here is that the Jews at Jerusalem will recognize the love which motivated the gift and would accept it as such.

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. 33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

**“That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God”** – This prayer request seems tied to the previous requests. If God protects Paul from the unbelieving Jews and the believing Jews at Jerusalem accept the gift he is delivering, then he can commence his journey to Rome with joy in his heart if it is the will of God that he do so.

**“and may with you be refreshed”** – Paul's desire (and prayer request) is that all the previous requests would be granted so that he can be “refreshed” with the saints at Rome when he arrives. The refreshment is likely both physical and spiritual. Physically he would be refreshed by resting during his stay with them before continuing his journey to Spain. The saints at Rome would likely provide Paul with whatever supplies he might need to continue his journey. Spiritually, he would be refreshed by the mutual fellowship that he would enjoy with the saints at Rome as well as the opportunity to minister to them.

**“Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen”** – In spite of the potential for trouble and persecution reflected in his prayer requests, Paul's desire is that the saints at Rome would enjoy the peace that can only come from God. True peace can only come from God, especially in the midst of turmoil and the storms of life.

**Romans 16:1-27:** Paul lists various greetings and salutations to/from various individuals and churches (vs. 1-16). He then interjects a warning about false teachers that try to lead astray those without discernment (vs. 17-20) before continuing with more salutations (vs. 21-24). Paul ends his epistle with a descriptive praise of God, the One Who is able to keep His saints (vs. 25-27).