

ROMANS 12:1-16:27 | LIFE TODAY*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 46***ROMANS 12:1-15:14 | JEWISH LIFE BEYOND THE TEMPLE***Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 47***ROMANS 15:1-7 | DEALING WITH THEIR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN***Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 50*

Note: In my earlier work of "Romans Graphically Presented" and the supplemental color-coding, I had verses 1-7 highlighted in green, indicating a secondary non-doctrinal application to the body of Christ. However, upon further study, I believe there is too much risk in making such an application with these verses. Making an application beyond incidental universal truths would involve applying it to the original context of Roman Jewry and the age of grace and its doctrine, which would result in a confused interpretation of God's Word rather than a properly divided understanding.

VERSE 1 - BLACK

In Romans, the pronoun "we" typically refers to Paul and his apostolic brethren. However, in this context, it is evident that he extends this to include other believing Jews as the stronger brethren, urging them to "bear the infirmities of the weak."

Recalling that Paul's "heart's desire" for his own country was that "they might be saved" (Rom 10:1), and that he would even be "accursed from Christ" (Rom. 9:3) for them if possible, it is not surprising that he would instruct fellow believing Jews to "bear the infirmities of the weak."

VERSE 2 - BLACK

Paul reverses the argument from verse 1 but still encourages the same goal: the edification of the weaker.

Knowing that there was little time left for the nation of Israel, and that the signs of impending doom were already evident, Paul felt a sense of urgency to see his nation acknowledge the Messiah. If this meant sacrificing personal freedoms, he was willing to do so.

Given the impending blindness of the nation, it would be inappropriate to focus on the weaknesses of our neighbors. Passages like this should be understood in context. For instance, in our age of grace, it would not be wise to simply tolerate the weaknesses of fellow believers, as those weaknesses need to be addressed and confronted. Paul's teaching is situational.

VERSE 3 - BLACK

Paul uses the example of the Messiah, quoting Psalm 69:9 to confirm it as a Messianic Psalm. He suggests that just as Christ took the insults aimed at God upon Himself, the Roman Jews should also bear the insults aimed at Jesus.

VERSE 4 - BLACK

This verse explains the purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures to the audience, specifically the Roman Jews. The writings that existed before (i.e., the Old Testament) served the purposes of learning, patience, comfort, and ultimately hope.

This verse is often taught by teachers who emphasize right division as a purpose statement for the Hebrew Scriptures in relation to the Body of Christ. However, I do not believe that the application is directly meant for the Body of Christ, although there may be some indirect application that could be made.

The term "διδασκαλία" (didaskalia), translated as "**learning**," is an abstract noun that encompasses the concept, content, or activity of teaching. It can refer to a body of teaching, doctrine, or instruction that is often associated with a "διδάσκαλος" (didaskalos), the teacher or instructor.

In essence, "διδασκαλία" captures not only the act of teaching but also the content, ethos, and principles behind what is taught by the "διδάσκαλος." It can be understood as a comprehensive term that encompasses the collective teaching or doctrinal instruction provided by a teacher or a group of teachers.

When Paul says that these things were "**for our learning**," it should be understood as "our basic and foundational doctrine" or "our set of known facts." As such, it would be inappropriate as a doctrinal foundation for the Body of Christ, which lives under the things **not** written aforetime, at least in terms of its gospel message. This does not mean that the Hebrew Scriptures are not inspired or are less than the inerrant and preserved revelation of God. Rather, it means that the doctrine for the body of Christ should come from Paul and not from Hebrew scriptures.

VERSES 5-6 - BLACK

In light of his instruction, Paul transitions into prayer for his audience. He prays that they would adopt the mind of Christ in their attitude toward one another, thus bringing glory to God the Father.

VERSE 7 - BLACK

Paul not only encourages the practice of receiving one another (as discussed in verses 1-7), but he also urges us to do so "**as Christ also received us to the glory of God.**" This statement is similar to Ephesians 1:6, which says, "**To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**" Although the words "**received**" and "**accepted**" are not identical, they are closely related concepts. Both verses also emphasize the glory of God. Additionally, I believe that the first-person plural pronouns used in both verses refer to Israel.

ROMANS 15:8-14 | THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

VERSE 8 - BLACK

Having mentioned the Messiah four times in the previous seven verses (under the Greek term "Christ"), Paul now feels compelled to explain a foundational truth about the ministry of Christ. It would be easier for us to accept this if the modern church had not adopted "Christ" as a secondary name for Jesus. If the church had understood "Christ" in its true meaning of "Messiah," then perhaps it would have recognized Christ in His Messianic role more frequently and easily associated Jesus the Messiah with the coming restoration of the kingdom of Israel.

Messiah is derived from the Hebrew term "מָשִׁיחַ" (Māšîaḥ), commonly transliterated as "Messiah." If translated, it means "the anointed one," and thus was used to refer to kings such as Saul, David, and Solomon. The concept of "the Messiah" in Jewish thought referred to a future divinely appointed leader who would liberate Israel and bring about an era of peace and righteousness. Instead of transliterating, the Greek language used the word Χριστός [Christos], which means "anointed one." However, early Christians, having already deviated from proper interpretation, adopted an understanding of "Christ" as the fulfillment of the Messiah, but in ways that often differed from contemporary Jewish Messianic expectations, thus distancing Jesus' ministry from Messianic expectations. It is possible that this divergence in Christian thought was already beginning to occur when Paul wrote Romans, and so he wrote verse 8 as a not-so-subtle reminder of the Messianic role of Jesus.

The claim made in Romans 15:8 that Jesus Christ was "**a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,**" emphasizes the centrality of Jesus' ministry to the Jewish people and the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. This focus is corroborated in several other scriptural passages:

1. **Matthew 15:24:** "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here, Jesus explicitly states the primary focus of His ministry.

2. **Matthew 10:5-6:** "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus instructs His apostles to focus their initial missionary efforts exclusively on the Jews.
3. **John 1:11:** "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This refers to Jesus coming to His own people, the Jews, who largely did not accept Him.
4. **Matthew 1:1-17:** The genealogy presented in Matthew's Gospel emphasizes Jesus' Davidic lineage, a significant point for a Jewish audience given the messianic expectations related to the house of David.
5. **Luke 24:44:** "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Jesus connects His life and ministry to the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures.
6. **Acts 3:25-26:** "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Peter's speech after the healing of the lame man emphasizes Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.
7. **John 4:22:** "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." Though speaking to a Samaritan, Jesus underscores that the origins of salvation are Jewish.
8. **Romans 1:16:** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Paul reiterates that the gospel was initially for the Jew and confirms the promises made to the Israelite patriarchs.
9. **Acts 13:23:** "Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Paul, in his sermon in Pisidian Antioch, also stresses that Jesus is the promised Savior of Israel.

Each of these passages, in its own way, confirms the focus of Jesus' ministry toward the Jewish people and the fulfillment of scriptural promises made to them.

In spite of this explicit testimony, the church has made itself the center of Jesus' ministry, the bride of Christ, the apple of God's eye, the new Israel, the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, and so much more. In doing so, they have been forced to redefine the Kingdom as neither Jewish nor Davidic nor based in Jerusalem nor even physical. In essence, the church has uncircumcised Jesus.

The consequences of this are numerous, but two drastic consequences are worthy of note. Firstly, it introduced systemic anti-Semitism into the Christian community. Throughout the centuries, viewing the Jews as the "Christ killers" or taking pleasure in their rejection of Christ and subsequent spiritual blindness has been common in Christianity. Even today, there is a significant portion of Christianity that is quick to remind pro-Israel Christians of the supposed atrocities committed by Jews and their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Secondly, and related to the first consequence, it has made evangelism of Jews significantly more challenging, as it portrays Jesus as separate from His Jewish identity and ministry, suggesting that He has abandoned the Jews and their hopes for a Kingdom.

The damage caused by Christendom's rejection of the truth of Romans 15:8 would require hundreds of years to eradicate from Christian thinking, let alone to overcome. This process can only be accelerated through constant reminders by Christian writers, thinkers, theologians, pastors, and the men and women in the pews.