



Chapter Fifteen

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS chapter Paul is admonishing the ecclesia in Rome about how to think of the brethren. Apparently some of the members of the ecclesia were not thinking right about new and/or weak brethren. Using Scripture, and principles learned from Jesus, Paul rebuked them for not practicing brotherly love.

Verse seven gives us the gist of Paul's admonition:

7. Wherefore receive one another as Christ also receives us, to God's glory.

Romans 15:7

NOTE: As you study Paul's teaching in this chapter it is important to remember that he is writing about brethren, not about outsiders.

This is important to remember because many people don't realize there is a difference.

Jesus does NOT command us to deal with strangers the same way we deal with brethren in the ecclesia. It is common sense ... much like the fact that we do not deal with family the same as we deal with non-family.

His message was that they (and we) ought to follow Jesus' example by being gracious to brethren ... as Christ is gracious to us. The way Jesus receives us should teach us how to receive one another. Not begrudgingly. Not with contention, controversy. Not as foreigners or competitors. But as brethren.

We all are weak and in need before we receive "life" from Jesus. No one is strong without Him. Jesus does not demand strength at first. He only demands sincerity.

He receives the sincere, and gives them strength and support and a chance to grow. He gives us opportunity to choose good over evil. He lifts us up and lets us stand. He receives us if we will commit to follow Him.

The point is: his invitation is given to us when we are in need. He receives us on the mere promise that we will repent and follow Him. But if we don't honor our commitment, and if we revert to lusting after the foreign gods of State, Church, and Man, then we will, on our own, wander away from Him.

He offers us the ability to "see" his Kingship (i.e., citizenship). To remain under his Kingship we must commit to follow Him.

The gift of "sight" (i.e., life) can be lost if we neglect our promise to stop looking to "powers" other than Jesus. Looking to other "powers" equates to idolatry, thus He commands us to look to Him as our only "government." His commitment to us is based, not on our merit, but on our need, our sincerity, and our commitment.

We should receive one another as Christ receives us. We shouldn't expect the impossible from brethren, or focus on their past failures.

Paul teaches us that Christ saves us while we are yet sinners (Rm. 5:8). Paul admitted that he, himself, had been the greatest of all sinners (I Tim. 1:15). He was weak, blind and lost at the time Jesus confronted him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). In other words, Paul said that if anybody deserved to be rejected, it was he ... and yet Christ was gracious to him and called him out of his blindness. Paul then had to decide whether he wanted to stay in the light, or return to the darkness.

He chose to follow the light.

QUESTION: What about non-Christians? Shouldn't we keep our distance from that kind of people and NOT receive them?

ROMANS 15:1-7 BEARING THE WEAK

We then that are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not please ourselves.

Let us each please our neighbor for his benefit and edification.

For even Christ pleased not himself: but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached you fell also on me.

For as many things as were written before were written for our learning, that through our endurance and the comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.

Now the God of this endurance and this comfort grant you this very thing: to consider one another in accordance with Christ Jesus.

That you may in one accord, and one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also receives us, to God's glory.

WHEN Paul says, "please our neighbor" he means to consider your neighbor's welfare and not just your own. He is not

saying that it is wrong to defend or support yourself. But to support yourself at the expense of your neighbor is wrong.

Paul wanted the Roman ecclesians to realize that the Kingship of Christ focuses on reaching out to the weak. Christ's stated mission was to "*the poor,*" "*the brokenhearted,*" "*the captives,*" "*the blind,*" and "*them that are bruised*" (Lk. 4:18).

Now, let us clarify one important point. "Bearing the weak" does not mean "defending sin." We must emphasize this. Bearing the weak does not mean supporting or giving place to sin. We are, "*called to freedom; but not freedom to incite the flesh. Rather through love serve one another*" (Galatians 5:13).

Man's spirit is prone to temptation, and therefore we should not incite or facilitate that spirit. Rather we should struggle against man's baser instincts and not give an excuse to the lusts of the flesh. We're not to defend sin, but we are to bear the weak, and strengthen them in their struggle against sin.

Consider this carefully. There is a difference between "bearing the weak," and "supporting sin."

We're supposed to "bear" each other's weaknesses. To "bear" a burden is to carry it. As one carries a burden he looks for a place to set it down, because in time it gets tiresome and *unbearable*. It is labor. You must eventually rest. Logically, then, you cannot carry your neighbor's burden indefinitely, nor does God expect you to. You are expected to carry it as long as necessary, but not forever. This is common sense.

Your brother may be unable to carry his burden today. You can help him carry it today. You can bear his weaknesses and give him rest, and encourage him to get strong. Your brother then must begin to rid himself of the burden, so he no longer needs to carry it. Weaknesses should not be excused and perpetuated. But neither should we condemn a weak brother.

If, on the other hand, someone proves to be incorrigible – if he clings to his sins – then he must eventually go his own way. The invitation was

free. The gift was without cost. But keeping and caring for the gift requires responsibility. This is true with any gift. A gift that is not cared for is soon lost.

Thus it is with us ... as it is with our brethren. We are given the benefit of the doubt until we prove ourselves interested or not interested in following Jesus.

The "one mouth" and the "one accord" of verse 6 is unity of spirit ... wishing to live in Christ. Christ sets the pattern and we try to follow his example. That puts us in "unity of spirit."

QUESTION: How should we treat the poor souls who stand on the street corners holding signs that ask for food or money? Do you think it would be wrong to help them with contributions? Aren't they our brothers too?

ROMANS 15:8-19 CHRIST'S KINGSHIP IS NOT LIMITED

For I am saying that Christ became a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers:

And that the nations might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, Through this I will acknowledge you in the nations, and sing to your name.

And again he says, Rejoice you nations with his people.

And again, Praise the Lord, all you nations; and let all the people praise him.

And again, Isaiah says, There will be a root of Jesse, and he will stand up to be chief of nations; in him will the nations hope.

May the God of hope fill you of all joy and peace by believing, that you may abound in hope in the strength of holy spirit.

And I myself also am persuaded about you, my brethren, that you yourselves also are full of goodness, having been filled with all the knowledge, being mutually capable.

Nevertheless, brethren, I write more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, through the grace given to me from God.

That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus to the nations, ministering the gospel of God, that the nations' offering might be acceptable, having been sanctified in holy spirit.

Therefore I rejoice in Christ Jesus toward God.

For I will not venture to speak of anything except those things wrought by Christ through me, by word and deed, for the obedience of the nations.

In power of signs and presage through the power of holy spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and in a circuit as far as Ilyricum, in fulfillment of the gospel of Christ.

JESUS first ministered to the circumcision (Israelites) who were still in Jerusalem. Then Jesus told them, and Paul, to go out and minister to dispersed Israelites in the nations.

Paul was quoting from the Old Testament. Verse 11, for example, was from Psalms:

1. *O praise Yahweh, all you nations: praise him, all you people.*

Psalms 117:1

Verse 12 came from the prophet Isaiah:

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

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

Isaiah 11:1, 10

Christ reigns over his people wherever they may be at the time. However, many folks are stuck in a mindset which tries to draw geographical bounds to "the Kingdom." Certain church groups (like "Israel Identity" churches) try to draw geographical boundaries to the Kingdom of God by saying it is only in Britain and/or America, thus imposing

physical boundaries to Christ's Kingship.

Wherever people honor Christ and recognize his Kingship, there He reigns. And those people are the ones whose hearts have been turned from stone to hearts of flesh ... contrite and repentant in spirit. Many people have known that Jesus expects us to repent and follow Him ... but most have not realized that THIS, IN ITSELF, IS THE ESSENCE OF CHRIST'S NEW COVENANT REIGN ON EARTH FOR THIS AGE.

Yes, there is yet another age to be manifested on Earth, where His Reign will be recognized more widely. Nonetheless, that Reign today is present and real ... and not to be ignored or minimized.

And as other nations of the world observe this they are learning about the kingdom. Where God judges the hearts of his people, where his judgment is manifested, the nations observe this. These serve as witnesses to the nations as they observe the relationship between Christ and men.

In verse 14 Paul says that men can be "full of goodness." This may give us pause ... considering Paul's other statement that "no good dwells in the flesh" (Rom. 7:18). But, the "goodness" referred to in verse 14 is not man's own goodness, but the goodness of the holy spirit from God that fills them. And, because they are filled with holy spirit they are able to admonish one another.

Being sanctified by holy spirit is being approved by the right motive – the motive to be holy (separate).

In verse 18 Paul says that he would venture to speak about nothing except the things that God had done through him personally ... thereby avoiding speculation and gain-saying. Paul was not only talking about what Jesus did personally, but also what Jesus was still doing through Paul. In other words, it was Jesus' mission, and it had been handed down to Paul who was carrying it on. Paul was an emissary under King Jesus.

QUESTION: Aren't you spiritualizing away the Kingdom of Christ by eliminating the idea of geographical boundaries? And what about racial Israelites? Are you spiritualizing God's actual chosen people (Anglo-Saxon and other White People) into a multiracial mixture by saying they don't have physical demarcations separating them from the other races?

ROMANS 15:20-27 PAUL: THE APOSTLE UNDER CHRIST'S REIGN

Thus I have strived to declare the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

But as it is written, They, to whom it was not announced about Him, will see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

For which cause also I was delayed many times from coming to you.

But now having no more (unvisited) place in these parts, and having a desire for some years to come to you;

Whenever I go to Spain, on my way I am hoping to see you; and to be directed there by you, after first being filled with your company.

But now I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints,

For those in Macedonia and Achaia are pleased to share some things with the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

It pleases them for they are also their debtors. For if the nations have shared in their spiritual things, they (the nations) owe to minister to them in fleshly things also.

PAUL was directed to preach the good news of Christ's Reign in areas where it had not yet been heard. There was much work to do and he didn't need to follow others around repeating what they had already said. Paul needed to reach those who hadn't heard the Gospel of the Kingdom. In verse 21 Paul refers back to Isaiah 52:15:

15. ... for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

The saints in Jerusalem were being oppressed by the government and the religious establishment. So Paul took up an offering in Macedonia and Achaia to take to the saints in Jerusalem. This contribution was also noted in Acts 19:21 and 24:17.

He then planned to journey to Spain, and visit the brethren in Rome on his way.

The saints who stayed in Jerusalem to minister to the oppressed ecclesia there were in need of help. Also, as they had shared spiritual support with the ecclesias in the nations, it was only right that the ecclesias in the nations return help to them in the form of goods and offerings.

In old national Israel, tithing was the method for supporting the clerical workers in communities. In new covenant times, however, the ecclesias were often not self-sustaining communities where tithes would support them. The Old Covenant system provided the nation of Israel with leaders and teachers who were supported by tithes from their own communities.

However, in New Covenant times there were often small groups struggling to survive under foreign governments and religions that oppressed them. These groups sometimes needed help from outside. Thus was the case with the Saints in Jerusalem.

In our day this would compare to people sharing their goods or money with the teachers and leaders who have shared spiritual things with them.

This is the timeless principle (Dt. 25:4, I Tim. 5:18) that you should not

muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. In other words, if leaders and teachers are producing good spiritual things for you, then you should share your physical goods with them. If you don't receive spiritual value from them, then you owe them nothing. But if you do receive spiritual value, then you are supposed to reciprocate by supporting them.

QUESTION: Doesn't the Bible say that you will be blessed by God if you tithe to the church? Conversely, if you don't tithe, then things won't go as well in your life. Isn't that the goal: to have a good Christian life?

ROMANS 15:28-33 PRAY FOR GOD'S SERVANTS

Therefore when I have finished this, and have safely delivered these goods to them, I will come by you on my way to Spain.

And I know that when I come it will be with the full blessing of Christ.

Now I exhort you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

That I may be delivered from the disbelievers in Judea; and that my service to the saints will be acceptable;

That, by God's will, I may come to you in joy, and may take rest with you.

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

PAUL asks for their prayers, reminding them that he must go to Jerusalem – the stronghold of his greatest enemies.

The saints in Jerusalem were geographically in the belly of the beast. Jerusalem was the lair of the religious arm of the “great red dragon.” At that time, “synagogues” were the equivalent of today’s “churches.” These, along with Jerusalem’s government (the Sanhedrin) were what Paul feared as he went back to Jerusalem. So he asked for prayer because he knew he would be in danger.

Verse 33 is the end of the main body of Paul’s letter to the Romans. In the next chapter we will study the long closing of this letter along with a few personal admonitions at the end of the chapter.

As I told you when we started, the book of Romans contains a wide spectrum of Paul’s general teachings. The book of Romans has been considered, by some, the most general and complete book of teachings that Paul produced.

For that reason, and others, The Letter To The Romans is a very important book.

QUESTION: Are you saying that churches today are not sanctioned or authorized by Jesus? Why would Jesus let His church become corrupt like the synagogues? Isn’t this a rather hopeless scenario that portrays King Jesus as a failure, because He can’t even keep His churches going successfully in the way of truth?

END OF ROMANS CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. The Bible teaches that we are obligated to think of brethren differently from the way we think of outsiders. Most of the conduct we are taught by Scripture is applicable only within the ecclesia (i.e., between brethren), and is not applicable to outsiders.

2. This chapter deals with the brethren in Rome who were failing to treat each other in a brotherly manner.

3. Paul told the Roman brethren to treat each other with grace, after the example of Jesus' grace toward us.

3. Stronger brethren are supposed to "bear the weaknesses of the weak" brethren ... rather than condemn them. Again, these "weak brethren" are BROTHERS. They are in the ecclesia. They are not outsiders or anti-Christians.

4. Ecclesias were developing among the Israelites in the nations. Those ecclesias represented Christ's Kingship wherever they were located ... in Asia Minor or Europe. The point is that "Christ's Reign" (his Kingship) was being manifested everywhere his people were located ... with no physical boundaries or limitations to a particular continent or nation. Christ's Kingdom is not determined by land boundaries, but by the faith of his people.

5. Paul taught his brethren to share their physical things (offerings) with the men who were working to provide spiritual things. Thus, education, moral, clerical and court services were provided to the ecclesias.

ANSWERS:

pg. 2a

First of all, Paul's exhortation here is dealing with brethren, not "non-Christians." Non-Christians are

outsiders in any case. The problem arises when brethren get confused as to what a Christian really is.

Supposing that you want to avoid non-Christians, how would you do it? Do you know how to determine if someone is a Christian or not? Do you realize that asking him if he is a Christian is not the right way to determine this? How would you be sure of his answer ... or if he knows who the true Christ is?

Many people call themselves "Christians" but in fact are following non-Biblical religions. They think they are Christians when in fact they are something else.

Avoiding non-Christians is a good idea, but knowing what that means requires more time and energy than some folks are willing to invest.

We should keep our distance from anyone who knowingly rejects Christ and truth. Being received by the true Christ should cause repentance, and we should not reject anyone who truly wants to repent. Jesus receives the repentant sinner, and so should we. But receiving a repentant brother does not mean condoning or adopting errors that come with him, or non-Christian doctrines.

pg. 2b

We cannot assume that a stranger on the street corner is a brother. That question must be addressed separately. If he is a brother in Christ, we should help him if we can. However, our responsibility to help the brethren is coupled with our responsibility to not help crooks or enemies. Thus, "helping the poor" requires more involvement than merely tossing a dollar into a stranger's tin can on a street corner.

pg. 3

Racial demarcations are genetic, not spatial. A man's location does not determine his race or status with Christ. Nor can one's location determine his genetic/racial classification. Thus, Christ's Reign cannot be

determined by simply assigning it to a land mass.

In fact, "kingdom" is often not the correct Bible word. The correct word is "Kingship" [Reign]. It is determined by belief, not by physical boundaries. The state of mind that recognizes Christ as King is a distinction which physical boundaries cannot define. It is ludicrous to suggest that North America – or any nation – is the only physical location where Christ's Kingship can exist.

Physical and racial demarcations are valid. Anyone who ignores them or tries to blur them is a fool. However, being a racial Israelite, or a resident of a particular land mass, does not qualify anyone to be a citizen of New Jerusalem. It requires repentance and rebirth (Jn. 3: 3).

pg. 4

The Bible does NOT teach us to support churches. In fact, the word "church" is not in the original text. Most English versions of the Bible have inserted the word "church" into the Bible, but originally it was NOT there at all. Why should it be? Jesus never started churches. He started **ecclesias** (Christian communities).

Churches are not truly Christian. They are pagan. Christians should not support them.

Confusion about "tithing" is caused by the ignorance inflicted by the churches. The tithe [tenth] was the amount that the tribes of Israel were commanded to allocate to the Levite priesthood. The Levites were commissioned by God to take care of the nation's system of education, religion, welfare, courts, etc..

Tithes were not used to purchase God's indulgence. They were used to support God's mandated civil system that sustained the people.

People today have been brainwashed by the churches to think that Old Covenant tithing was a bribe to God so He would indulge their sinful ways and grant them favors. But it wasn't. It was for the purpose of supporting public services rendered by the Levites.

Today, those who support church organizations are wasting their resources on paganism, supporting devils, and consequently depriving the true ministers of Christ of the support they need to do God's work. The men who are true ministers of Christ should be supported and encouraged to do their work ... for the benefit of all Christendom.

pg. 5

Churches were/are not of Jesus. Churches are, and always have been, counterfeit creations of men. Churches claim to be Christian but are not. They are evolved forms of Zoroastrianism and Pharisaism. Just as Babylon evolved into Rome, and Rome evolved into Europe ... Zoroastrianism evolved into Pharisaism, and Pharisaism evolved into "Judeo-Christianity" (Churchism).

Churches and their corruption are not the fault of Jesus. They are not his. They never were his. He didn't start them.

Churches confuse the simple-minded by claiming a "Jesus" as their founder. But the "Jesus" of the churches is different from the Jesus of Scripture. The Jesus of the Churches is nothing more than the Persian deity Mithras renamed. Calling someone "Jesus" does not make him the Son of God. The "Jesus" of the churches is a counterfeit ... a myth from Babylon.

The modern institution of church, which calls itself "Christian," was corrupt from its inception. Churches that called themselves "Christian" were invented by Constantine. Before Constantine, the institution we know as "Church" did not exist. Constantine was a Zoroastrian Sun worshiper, and his invented "Church" reflected his religion ... except that he renamed the deities, giving them names from the Bible. Churches teach Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. Zoroaster and Mithras are Persian deities from Babylon.

Zoroastrianism (Babylonianism) was brought to Jerusalem by "the elders." This was the religion Jesus

condemned, calling it "the tradition of the elders" (Mk 7:13).

The Persian followers of Zoroastrianism were called Parsees. When the "elders" brought Parsaism to Jerusalem the Jews called it Pharisaism.

Pharisaism (Judaism) was Zoroastrianism disguised in Old Testament trappings.

Later, under Constantine, churches were established under the same doctrines of the Persian deities Zoroaster and Mithras. Thus, the institution of "Church" was, again, Zoroastrianism disguised in New Testament trappings. The church was adopted by the state and called "Christian." The churches simply changed the name "Mithras" to "Jesus." Thus, Constantine replaced the true Christ with Mithras, the Persian Sun God.

Information on Zoroaster and Mithras is found easily in any library or on the internet. Understanding this Babylonian religion is the only way you can understand modern Churchianity.

The churches' main holidays (Christmas and Easter) reflect the Sun God Mithras ... not Christ. Everyone knows that Christmas and Easter have nothing to do with the true Jesus or the Bible.

Mithras is the messiah figure of Zoroastrianism. In replacing Jesus with Mithras the churches have rewritten the script of the Bible and replaced the leading characters ... changing the truth into a lie. When churchgoers think of "Jesus" they unwittingly think of Mithras instead. When they attend a church they are unwittingly supporting and worshipping Persian (Babylonian) gods ... all the while calling themselves "Christians."

It is no wonder America is confused and faithless. It is no wonder America is under judgment.

This religious anomaly explains why America is sinking into depravity even while calling themselves "Christians." If Americans were following the true Christ they would not be under the present judgment; the Beast System would not be over them.

The US Government is modern

Babylon, and churches are modern temples of Mithras. Churchgoers are worshippers of Mithras.

Thus, churchgoers, calling themselves "Christians," have no clue of the real nature of Christ or his Kingship. They are confused and lost, pledging allegiance to the Beast System: the US Government. They believe in man's government. They believe in wicked men like George Bush; they hang his picture in their churches along with the US Flag. They promote and worship the Beast ... which they think is of God.

They support, directly or indirectly, the very evil that the Bible warns about. Because of the Zoroastrian/Mithraic churches, the enemies of Christ control the minds of our people and this land.

Confused Americans have warm and friendly thoughts about church ... when they should condemn it.

Also, Americans believe in pagan festivals like Christmas, Easter, etc. ... and they never ask what or who is really being worshipped. Think of this the next time you get embarrassed when someone asks you which church you attend.

When people ask me if I have a church, I say "No. I once pastored churches, but I quit."

Then they usually ask if I am still a Christian, and I tell them, "Oh yes, I'm a Christian. If I weren't a Christian I'd still be pastoring a church."



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