

THE APOSTOLIC HEART AND MIND

ROMANS 15 IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL PASSAGES IN THE SCRIPTURE THAT LAYS OUT THE APOSTOLIC MIND CONCERNING THE LOGIC BEHIND LAYING FOUNDATIONS WHERE THERE ARE NONE AND A DUAL-PASSIONED VISION FOR BOTH JERUSALEM, THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, AND FOR THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

- A. In [Romans 1-8](#), Paul lays out the gospel for the church in Rome. In [Romans 9-11](#), Paul lays out what the gospel is in context to the cosmic wisdom of God in the relationship between Israel, the covenant people, and the Gentiles. In [Romans 12](#) through the end of the book, Paul digs deep into the practicalities of the life of the redeemed community who have been bought with the blood of the Lamb, filled with the Holy Spirit, adopted by the Father, and grafted into this great cosmic story of the ages.
- B. [Romans 15: 17-19](#): what Paul did
 - 1) all of this is written in past tense. Paul basically eliminated unreached people groups from Jerusalem to the Balkans personally. This shows you what one person laid down, fully given over to the purposes of God can do in his or her generation
- C. [Romans 15:20-21](#): what Paul wanted to do
 - 1) having fulfilled the ministry of preaching in Asian minor, Paul wanted to move on. He had eliminated foundationless areas and had laid foundations across the whole region to where the whole region had heard the message
 - 2) but he wanted to continue and lay foundations where there were no foundations. This is the maranatha missiology
- D. [Romans 15:22-29](#): what Paul knew he had to do
 - 1) Paul understood that what needs to happen before the return of the Lord is the elimination of foundationless territories and the elimination of unreached people groups in the world. And Paul understood the interconnected nature of that with the issue of Jerusalem
 - 2) [vs 22](#) Paul was hindered from coming to them in Rome because he was laying foundations everywhere. It's like he was saying, "I'm aching to come be with you. But my ache to lay foundations where there are none is stronger than my ache to be with you"
 - 3) [vs 24](#): Paul didn't plan to set up shop in Rome but wanted to visit them *on his way to Spain*, the ends of the earth
- E. This apostle was consumed with Spain, the edges of the frontier, and consumed with the centrality of Jerusalem. It's not either/or, it's both.
 - 1) I want the global body of Christ to feel such a burden for the centrality of Jerusalem, but yet feel the intense burden and agony of needing to see gospel foundations laid where there are none

MARANATHA GLOBAL BIBLE STUDY
THE CHURCH IN SPLENDOR AT THE END OF ALL THINGS // DALTON THOMAS

- 2) the Jerusalem of our generation is still the Jerusalem of Paul's generation, but the Spain of Paul's generation is not the Spain of our generation. The Spain of our generation looks like Afghanistan, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, etc. It looks like nations where there is no witness
- F. The Lord wants to invite us into this dance where we feel the same tensions and pullings that Paul felt and the agony on both fronts. The maranatha reality revolves around this: every nation needs to hear, but not at the expense of the marginalizing of Jerusalem, of Israel, of the Jewish people, of the covenant promises and realities that are so central to redemptive history and the restoration of all things.
- 1) there are a lot of people who love frontier missions but don't care about Israel at all. There are a lot of people who love Israel but don't care about frontier missions at all. Paul brings together the burden for both, and this is who we are called to
- G. **Romans 15:25-26**
- 1) in **Acts 15-17**, Paul was trying to go to multiple places, and he got deterred. Then one night he got a dream of a Macedonian asking him to go to Macedonia and help
 - 2) **vs 26**: Paul is taking financial resources from a recently unreached people group, who have now been made into a thriving community of believers, who are now giving of their financial substance and resources to bring to believers in Jerusalem
 - 3) the assumption that believers in Israel matter but Israel itself doesn't matter is a misrepresentation of Paul's priorities. Paul is not saying, "I only care about the believers in Jerusalem." He's saying the believers in Jerusalem are the people on the ground who are interfacing with the covenant people who are presently estranged from their Maker because of a wisdom, a logic, and a purpose that transcends politics and momentary seasons of history in the land of Israel
- H. In **Romans 9-11**, Paul laid out the brilliant plan and wisdom and purposes of God where Israel is concerned. Paul intended, in **Romans 11**, for the Gentiles to receive the gospel so that they would provoke national Israel to jealousy, who, at this present moment are partially hardened.
- 1) in part, one of the reasons I believe that Paul was bringing aid to the saints is for the provocation of the nation of Israel. This means that the issue of Israel, the Jewish people in the city of Jerusalem, retains its centrality in the apostolic mind in the New Testament
- I. We are called to stand with God's purposes for Israel, and we are called to stand with God's purposes for Spain.
- 1) Spain is not your backyard. If your backyard is an area where there is a foundation, that means that there's no room - if we're talking in terms of Paul's language - for you to work there if you have a **Romans 15** mandate
- J. Paul understood that his assignment prohibited him from laboring in locations where foundations were already laid. He wasn't anti-local church. Rather, he believed in the local church so much that he wanted to go where there wasn't one. That is the apostolic mind
- K. The foundation laying ministry, which I believe is at the heart of the apostolic ministry, isn't something that the Lord calls everyone to. But some of you who are listening to this are called to either lead it, meaning

MARANATHA GLOBAL BIBLE STUDY
THE CHURCH IN SPLENDOR AT THE END OF ALL THINGS // DALTON THOMAS

lead initiatives and lay foundations where there are none. Some of you are called to pray for those who are, some of you are called to financially support and enable those who are. It's an integrated approach, and we need to understand our respective roles in the collective whole.

1) some of you are called to lay foundations where there are none but you've been tinkering around in areas where there's already foundations, and you're never quite feeling fulfilled because you're not doing what you're called to do

- L. Even Paul went back to places where there were foundations. But the issue is not that I'll *never* go there, it's that I make it my *primary ambition* to lay foundations where there are none. Yes, I want to relate to the believers in Rome, etc., but my core life ambition is to lay foundations where there are none found. To the degree that that vision and message and mandate is marginalized in our generation is to the degree that we will not see or witness the maranatha realities breaking out across the earth.
- M. If we are going see these realities break out on the earth and Jesus is going to come, we need to have a [Romans 15](#) perspective, paradigm and mandate. That's what God has called us to do, and that is at the heart of the maranatha message, mandate, and missiology.