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How are we to live in a turbulent world as Christians? Paul's words to the Christians at Rome in the middle 50s of the first Christian century have vital relevance to our world, especially when we realize the level of turbulence in the world where these words were first written.

The Formations series of the Smyth-Helwys Sunday School lessons sets forth a four part study on the Coming of Christ as a part of the December Advent season. Though Advent is focused on Christ's first coming, the scripture texts treat Christ's second coming. Thus a disconnect exists between the stated theme and the scripture passages to be studied. But some small relation can be made legitimately since the admonitions for Christian living, as motivated by the reality of Christ's second coming, can help us celebrate His first coming.



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I. **Context**

As is usual, we will draw upon [previous studies](#) in Romans for the basics of the background information. New material will supplement this.

a. **Historical**

External History. The writing of the letter to the communities of believers in the imperial capital of the world in the mid-first century is relatively easy to understand with the traditional reporter type questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? These have to do with the *external history* of this document. Since the beginning of the era of modern critical scholarship in the 1700s, New Testament scholars in the western world have virtually universally acknowledged the role of Paul in the composition of this document, along with that of 1 & 2 Corinthians and Galatians. These are often labeled "the big four."

Thus what are the answers to these questions?

Let's begin with the *when* and *where* questions. In the [Chronology of Paul's Life and Ministry](#) page at Cranfordville.com, Romans will fall toward the end of the third missionary journey:

II. [Paul's middle period of ministry](#)

A. [The second missionary journey \(ca. AD 48-51\), Acts 15:36-18:22](#)

- 1. Ministry in Syria and Cilicia, Acts 15:41
- 2. Ministry in Galatia and Mysia, Acts 16:1-10; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:5-6; 1 Cor. 16:1
- 3. Ministry in Macedonia, Acts 16:11-17:14; Phil 4:15-16
 - a. Work in Philippi, Acts 16:12-40; Phil. 1:4-6; 1 Thess 2:2



- b. Work in Thessalonica, Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thess 1:4-2:20; 2 Thess 2:6, 3:7-10
- c. Work in Berea, Acts 17:10-14
- 4. Ministry in Achaia, Acts 17:15-18:17
 - a. Work in Athens, Acts 15:15-34; 1 Thess 3:1-5
 - b. Work in Corinth, Acts 18:1-17; 1 Thess 3:6-13; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 1:13-17; 2 Thess 3:1-5; 1 Cor 3:5-10; 11:2,23; 15:1; 2 Cor 11:7-9
- 5. Return back to Antioch, Acts 18:18-22
- B. The third missionary journey (ca AD 52-57), Acts 18:23-21:16
 - 1. Ministry in Galatia-Phrygia (AD 52), Acts 18:23
 - 2. Ministry in Asia (AD 52-55), Acts 19:1-20:1; 1 Cor 1:11-12; 4:11-13,17; 16:10-12,17-18; 2 Cor 1:8-11, 15-17 (plans), 23; 2 Cor 12:18; 15:32 3.
 - 3. Ministry in Macedonia and Achaia (AD 55-57), Acts 20:1-3; 1 Cor 16:5-7 (plans); 2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-7,13-16; 8:1-7; 8:16-9:15 (plans); 13:1-3 (plans)**
 - 4. Return to Jerusalem (AD 57), Acts 20:3-21:16; 1 Cor 16:3-4 (plans); Rom 16:31 (plans)

Thus when Paul was finishing up his ministry in Corinth at the turning-around point of the third missionary journey in AD 57, Romans was written as a letter of introduction of the apostle to a community of faith that he had not yet personally visited. Luke provides a brief description of this ministry in Corinth

in [Acts 20:2-3](#) (NRSV):

1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples; and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given the believers much encouragement, **he came to Greece, 3 where he stayed for three months. He was about to set sail for Syria when a plot was made against him by the Jews,** [ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ποιήσας τε μήνας τρεῖς; γενομένης ἐπιβουλῆς αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων μέλλοντι ἀνάγεσθαι εἰς τὴν Συρίαν,] and so he decided to return through Macedonia. 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. 5 They went ahead and were waiting for us in Troas; 6 but we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we joined them in Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

From such a limited statement we can glean very few details of what took place during this three month stay in Corinth. The one thing Luke stresses is that Paul managed to upset the Jewish synagogue leaders enough for them to hatch a plot to get rid of him. Earlier in [1 Cor. 16:5-9](#) he had sketched out his plans to travel to Corinth from Ephesus (NRSV):

5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to

pass through Macedonia, 6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. 7 I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

In [Rom. 15:22-29](#), Paul described his plans at the time of the writing to the Romans (NRSV):

22 This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you 24 when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while. 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. 28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

When stitching the bits of information together along with several other pieces, the following picture emerges. Paul was at Corinth and was making plans for the future. These plans most immediately focused on taking the substantial “relief offering” to the Christians in Palestine who were suffering greatly. This offering had been collected from the churches in three Roman provinces: Asia (Ephesus), Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Borea) and Achaia (Athens, Corinth). As he mentions in verse 28, his plan was to come to Rome on his way to Spain in order to spend the rest of his career evangelizing the western side of the Mediterranean Sea, just as his first three missionary endeavors had focused on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. Most take his words here and elsewhere to suggest that he had hoped that the church at Rome would become the launchpad for that ministry, just as Antioch in Syria had been for the first three missionary endeavors. Of course, God had other plans for Paul and it is doubtful that Paul ever visited Spain, although some early church traditions suggest that he did.



Another interesting insight about the composition of Romans comes from [Rom. 16:22](#) (NRSV): “22 I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord” [ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ.] With this statement, we get a glance into the way the more formal ancient letters were written in the ancient world. The actual writer of this letter was [Tertius](#), not Paul. Most ancient letters of a formal nature were dictated by the sender of the letter (cf. [Rom. 1:1](#)) to a writing secretary (in this case Tertius). Usually, the broad outline of the contents of the body of the letter would be

sketched out by the sender and the writing secretary would “flesh out” the outline in the writing of the letter, especially the body section. Once this -- usually after several revisions -- had been approved by the sender, the letter would then be sent to its destination. Since this is the only place where Tertius’ name is mentioned in the New Testament, we don’t know any more about him than the one fact that he did the actual writing of the book of Romans.

The origins of the Christian community in Rome are hidden from our knowledge. Prof. Werner Kummel (*Introduction to the New Testament*, iPreach) has a helpful summation of the available information:

The earliest sure attestation of the existence of a Roman community is Rom itself, followed by Acts 28:15 with the report that Christians from there brought Paul to Rome. In Rom 15:22 f (cf. 1:13) Paul writes that he had for many years intended to come to the brethren in Rome, which implies that there must have been Christians in the capital of the Imperium Romanum as early as the fifties. Probably the remark of the Roman writer Suetonius in his *Life of Claudius*, 25 (ca. 120), leads still farther back: [Claudius] *Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Rom. expulit* (=Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, since they had been continually causing disturbances at the instigation of a certain Chrestos²). Since Chrestos can be another way of writing Christos, so that the names are the same, Suetonius is likely concerned, not with a Jewish insurrectionist in Rome, by the name of Chrestos,² but with Jesus Christ, whose gospel had brought great unrest to the Jewish community in Rome, thus providing the occasion for the Emperor Claudius to expel the Jews or a segment of them. The report, which is not quite clear, is based on inexact information of the Gentile writer. This information does not necessitate the inference that Christianity first reached Rom. shortly before the edict of Claudius, which

occurred in the year 49 (see §13), but it had spread effectively among the Roman Jews by that time to the extent that fierce struggles arose between those who held to the old faith and those with faith in Christ.

In any case Peter was neither the founder of the Roman church nor had he been active in Rom. before Paul wrote Rom. Against the assumption that Peter had conducted a mission in Rom. before Paul³ is the evidence of Gal 2:7; Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 10:15 f (Paul will not intrude on someone else's mission territory); and 1 Cor 9:5, where the itinerant missionary preaching of Peter is mentioned, but nothing is said of his settling down in a community founded by him.

Rom nowhere mentions any persons to whom the community is indebted for the gospel, even at those points where it might be expected: e.g., 1:8 ff; 15:14 ff. Probably Christianity entered the capital of the Empire, not through a particular apostle or missionary, but very early on the streams of world commerce through the instrumentality of the great Jewish Diaspora at Rome. A sign of the religious ties between the Roman Jews of the Diaspora and Jerusalem is perhaps the fact that there was in Jerusalem a Synagogue of the Libertines (Acts 6:9) which is understood by many scholars to represent in the main the

descendants of Jews who had been dragged off to Rom. as prisoners of war by Pompey in 61 B.C. Later they were released and formed a powerful element in the Roman Jewish community.⁴ Christianity in Rom. had a stretch of history already behind it when Paul wrote his Letter to the Romans.

But by AD 57 it appears to have been a thriving Christian community made up of numerous house-church groups, as the long list of house-church leaders greeted in [chapter 16](#) indicates. Interestingly, about half of those leaders were women. These communities appear to have contained both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians, but in what mixture no one knows with certainty. The contents of Romans itself addresses issues related clearly to both ethnic groups.

Internal History. The time and place markers inside the passage are limited to the Day of the Lord theme in vv. 11-14. They will be treated in the exegesis section below.

b. Literary

Genre. The literary form issue has multiple layers. At the broadest level, 13:8-14 is part of an [ancient letter](#). Paul adhered to the basic pattern of letter writing common in the Greco-Roman world of his day. The typical elements of an ancient letter were:

Praescriptio	Rom 1:1-7
Superscriptio	1:1-6
Adscriptio	1:7a
Salutatio	1:7b
Proem	Rom 1:8-15
Thanksgiving	1:8-15
Intercession	
Body	Rom 1:16-15:32
Conclusio	Rom 16:1-27

Also, 13:8-14 falls in the **body section** of the letter. In Romans, this section falls into two basic types of material: 1) theological treatise, chaps. 1-11; and 2) [paraenesis](#), or moral exhortation, chaps. 12-15. Thus, our passage is a part of the **moral exhortation** section. In general, *paraenesis* (*παρά-ίνεσις*) refers to expressions of spoken and written exhortation advocating higher standards of living. In the ancient world, these could have either a religious or a philosophical basis, or a mixture of both. For Paul, only the religious foundation of being in spiritual union with Christ, ἐν Χριστῷ in his words, was the correct basis for moral living, and that as a

disciple of Jesus Christ. As such, one's way of living (*ἀναστροφή*) demonstrated the genuineness or lack of faith commitment ([Rom. 12:1](#), NRSV): "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Although inside the New Testament letter [distinct sub-forms](#) of paraenesis surface, most of which is paralleled by similar forms in the surrounding literary world of Paul, much of the moral exhortation does not take on a distinctive literary form so much as it revolves around central themes. This is the case of the two units of paraenesis in 13:8-14.

Literary Context. The literary setting of [our passage](#), 13:8-14, can be traced this way. Rom. 12:1-2 forms the foundational basis for all that follows:

- (1) Spiritual Gifts, 12:3-8;
- (2) Guidelines for Christian Living, 12:9-21;
- (3) Obeying Rulers, 13:1-7;
- (4) *Brotherly Love, 13:8-10;*
- (5) *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming, 13:11-14;*
- (6) Not Judging your Brother, 14:1-12;
- (7) Not Causing your Brother to Stumble, 14:13-23;
- (8) Pleasing Others rather than Self, 15:1-13.

The imperatives of 12:1-2 form the foundation for Christian living. In the subsequent pericopes in 12:3-15:13, Paul specifies some of the areas of the "living sacrifice" approach to Christian discipleship. Two of those, 13:8-14, constitute our study in this lesson.

Thus, we must not lose sight of the “living sacrifice” foundation for the two topics in our study.

II. Message

Literary Structure. As affirmed above, the passage under consideration, 13:8-14, naturally falls into two distinct sections: 1) vv. 8-10, on brotherly love, and 2) vv. 11-14, on being prepared for the approaching Day of the Lord. This literary nature is clearly illustrated in both the [Block](#) and [Semantic](#) Diagrams of the Greek text, as well as discussed in more detail in the [Summary of the Rhetorical Structure](#) of the text. These more technical analyses of the Greek text can be found in the larger internet version of this study. For this study on the internet, go to <http://cranfordville.com> >> Spiritual Resources >> Bible Studies >> NT Studies >> Romans >> Rom. 18:8-14.

a. Love one another, vv. 8-10

Greek NT

^{13:8}Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν· ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν. ^{13:9}τὸ γὰρ Οὐ μοιχεύσεις, Οὐ φονεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. ^{13:10}ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.

Notes:

The theme of brotherly love, φιλαδελφία, surfaces here again after being touched on in 12:9-13 earlier. In the [preceding passage](#), Paul advocated a sincere love and then defined traits of such:

Admonition:

Let love be genuine; (ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος)

Identifying Actions expressing it:

1. Hate what is evil,
2. Hold fast to what is good;
3. Love one another with mutual affection;
4. Outdo one another in showing honor.
5. Do not lag in zeal,
6. Be ardent in spirit,
7. Serve the Lord.
8. Rejoice in hope,
9. Be patient in suffering,
10. Persevere in prayer.
11. Contribute to the needs of the saints;
12. Extend hospitality to strangers.

NASB

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

NRSV

8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

NLT

8 Pay all your debts, except the debt of love for others. You can never finish paying that! If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill all the requirements of God’s law. 9 For the commandments against adultery and murder and stealing and coveting – and any other commandment – are all summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to anyone, so love satisfies all of God’s requirements.

Thus, when our love is unhypocritical, the literal meaning of ἀνυπόκριτος in 12:9, the dozen traits that Paul mentioned will be produced in actions growing out of this genuine love. Number 3 in his list specifically mentions brotherly love, which Paul comes back to in 13:8-10.

But the focus here stresses other aspects of brotherly love. Some definition of this love is given, but more importantly its importance on the basis of the OT Law of God is set forth. Thus two distinct but complementary perspectives on brotherly love are set forth in 12:9-13 and 13:8-10.



The thought structure of vv. 8-10 flows as follows:

1. Admonition, v. 8a

Owe no one anything, except to love one another;

2. Reasons, vv. 8b-10a

8b *for* the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor;

3. Conclusion, v. 10b.

therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

For a detailed analysis of this in the Greek text, see the [Semantic Diagram](#) and [Summary of Rhetorical Structure](#) sections. The discussion here grows out of that analysis.

1. Admonition, v. 8a.: Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους, ἀγαπᾶν (Owe no one anything, except to love one another). The literal rendering of the Greek, which gives some attention to the highlighted emphasis present, is "to no one nothing be owing, except the one another to be loving." Paul declared in the strongest of tones that the believer should not owe any one anything, except love.

The context of the reverse perspective in verse 7 must be taken into consideration here: ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν (Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due).

The inclusiveness of his demand covers not just monetary indebtedness, but other forms of obligation as well. Ancient Judaism had aversions to monetary indebtedness, as is pointed out in the article "Debt" (*New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D.R.W. Wood, InterVarsity Press, 1996, 268):

Loans in Israel were not commercial but charitable, granted not to enable a trader to set up or expand a business but to tide a peasant farmer over a period of poverty. Since the economy remained predominantly agricultural up to the end of the Monarchy, there developed no counterpart to the commercial loan system already existing in Babylonia in 2000 bc. Hence the legislation contains not mercantile regula-



Vintage Image of Brothers
by Pascale Wowak

tions but exhortations to neighbourliness. The same outlook persists in Eccles. 29. The background changes in the NT. The debtors in the parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:1-8) are either tenants who pay rent in kind or merchants who have goods on credit. The description of sins as debts (Mt. 6:12) is a Jewish commonplace which Jesus employs, not to characterize the relationship between God and man as one between creditor and debtor, but to proclaim the grace and enjoin the duty of forgiveness (Lk. 7:41f.; Mt. 18:21-27).

The agricultural basis for the OT commands regarding the lending of money did not address the much later shift to a commercial economy in post-exilic Judaism. Thus, as noted in the above article, "in the Judaistic period Hillel

invented a system for legal evasion of Dt. 15, the purpose of which was not to frustrate or circumvent the law but to adapt it to a commercial economy." With interest rates in the ancient near eastern cultures running as high as 50% it's no wonder that the Israelites were very leery of engaging in this. But, despite the OT Law forbidding such charging of interest on loans, violations of the Law were so common that prophets and others frequently condemned merchants and others for driving people into poverty through charging interest on loans, e.g., Ezek. 18:5-18; 22:12; Prov. 28:8; Amos 5:11.



This religious heritage helped shape Paul's thinking in his admonition here. In a commercially based economy as was the first century world, avoiding debts was virtually impossible. But Paul strongly admonished Christians to have absolutely no unpaid indebtedness, whether taxes (v. 7) or anything else. Judiciously paying one's debts is a Christian principle, seen as a way to witness to one's Christian commitment. In the context of 12:1-15:13, it is one expression of the "living sacrifice" commitment to

Christ.

The one area of ongoing indebtedness was loving one another. In the Greco-Roman world of Paul's day, loving other people generally was colored by the Greek and Latin terms that can be translated by the English word 'love.' E. Stauffer ("love," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged version, p. 7) notes this about the Greek words for love in the ancient non-Judaeo-Christian context:



1. erán. This is the passionate love that desires the other for itself. The god Eros compels all but is compelled by none. In Plato éros symbolizes fulfillment, in Plotinus desire for

union with the one. What is sought in éros is intoxication or ecstasy. Reflection is good, but ecstatic frenzy, while sometimes viewed with horror, is greater. éros masters us and confers supreme bliss thereby. Religion seeks the climax of experience in transmuted eroticism (cf. the fertility cults). But éros can transcend the sensory world. In Plato it issues in creative inspiration. In Aristotle it has (or is) a cosmic function as the force of attraction that maintains orderly movement. In Plotinus it is an impulsion beyond the senses toward the point of coincidence. Even in these forms, however, the original idea is that of erotic intoxication.

2. phileín. This signifies solicitous love, e.g., of the gods, or of friends. It embraces all humanity and entails obligation.

3. agapán. This term has neither the magic of erán nor the warmth of phileín. It has first the weak sense "to be satisfied," "to receive," "to greet," "to honor," or, more inwardly, "to seek after." It can carry an element of sympathy, but also denotes "to prefer," especially with reference to the gods. Here is a love that makes distinctions, choosing its objects freely. Hence it is especially the love of a higher for a lower. It is active, not self-seeking love. Yet in the Greek writers the word is colorless. It is often used as a variation for erán or phileín and commands no special discussion. The noun agápē occurs very seldom.

Thus, to love someone in that world meant seeking to get something from them. Often the erotic quest for emotional climax in loving others was the main goal.

But even in the Judaism of Paul's day, a radically different perspective existed. Stauffer (*TDNT*) continues his discussion with a focus on the Jewish perspective:

1. The Background. The normative Hebrew term 'hb (see A.) covers all three Greek words. But it lacks the element of religious eroticism and denotes a particular, not a universal love. OT love is a jealous love (cf. Song of Songs 8:6). Thus Jacob's love focuses on Rachel and Joseph (Gen. 29; 37:3). Similarly, God loves Israel, but jealously insists on love and loyalty in return. Again, love of neighbor is not cosmopolitan. It does not embrace millions but is love within the nation. The LXX uses agapán almost exclusively for the Hebrew term. This word was best adapted to express what was meant, and received a rich new content from the association.

2. Hellenistic Judaism.

a. The OT influence intermingled here with Greek and Near Eastern thought and language. God loves his creation, his people, and those who are righteous, obedient, and merciful. Love is supremely a relationship of faithfulness (as displayed by martyrs). God is the source of love. Love of God includes love of wisdom (Sir. 4:12). In love we turn to true being, overcome fear, and attain to true life (Philo *On the Migration of Abraham* 169).

b. Love of neighbor derives from God and leads to life (unlike hatred, which is of the devil and leads to death). In Philo a more general philanthropy is read into the OT; love extends finally to all creation (*On Virtues* 51ff.). But the movement is still concentric from the compatriot outward by way of the resident alien and proselyte. éros is unfavorably contrasted with agápē (*Sibylline Oracles* 3.171).

3. Rabbinic Judaism.

a. Here love is still primarily volitional and religious. It pinpoints the relation between God and humanity, especially Israel. God loves his people with fidelity and mercy. The gift of the law proves this. God's love imposes the obligation of reciprocal love and the related obedience and loyalty. Suffering in particular manifests the mutual love of God and his people. In it God is loved for his own sake. The main stress, however, falls on God's own love. Concealed during suffering, in which it is truly as strong as death, it will finally be gloriously manifest. No one can pluck Israel away from it.

b. Love of neighbor comes to expression in works of mercy. The neighbor is the fellow citizen or proselyte, whether friend or foe. Some, like Hillel, included foreigners, discerning love's missionary force, but others contested this (except for resident aliens). With law and the service of God, love is a foundation of the world. It is the sum of the law as formulated in the negative statement of the Golden Rule (Hillel). Yet it is more than a discharge of duties. It is the power behind all acts of love, and hence it cannot be enforced by legislation.

c. For the rabbis love is the basic principle of the threefold relationship of God, the I, and the Thou.

It must determine all dealings within this relationship, or the relationship is broken. As God acts with love, so must we, and by the same token, as we act with love, so will God. A basis is perceived here for assurance of the divine mercy, though not at the expense of the divine righteousness.

This Jewish religious heritage challenged the self-centered idea of love in Greek and Roman traditions. But, its particularity was limited to ethnic boundaries. God loves His covenant people Israel. Thus, Israelites in covenant with God are to love one another because God loves them. The idea of loving is oriented toward helping and blessing others, rather than the Greco-Roman selfish seeking of something.

Jesus is the one who exploded the Jewish perspective with dramatic redefinition. By his words and personal example he reached out to others as the epitome of unselfish giving of himself to bless others. John 3:16 has immortalized this teaching on love: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

The Body of Christ



Love is giving rather than getting. And it isn't limited to ethnic boundaries (Jn. 13:35, NRSV): "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Love is now defined by Jesus through his teachings and

his example. Thus, it is not mere emotion as with the Greek *érōs*. It is concrete action designed to bless the other person. Sometimes sternness is involved. Gentleness is typically a tone. Love has both a backbone of steel and gentle hands!

Not only did Jesus see the possible witness value of brotherly love, but Paul also sensed it, especially in a ministry context increasingly outside of Judaism and in Greco-Roman paganism. If believers inside the Christian communities would follow the model of Christ in loving, they could powerfully impact the surrounding world to Christ.

2. Reasons, vv. 8b-10a: ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν. ¹³⁻⁹τὸ γὰρ Οὐ μοιχεύ-

σεις, Οὐ φονεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν. ¹³⁻¹⁰ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται (for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor). The justification for the admonition to owe no one anything but love is given as the Law of God. That Paul grounds his Christian principle of brotherly love in the ongoing relevance of the OT Law is not surprising. James Dunn (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) notes the significant relationship of the OT code to Christian responsibility to God:

It is hardly accidental that explicit reference to the letter's subtheme (the law) reemerges at this point, since the theological treatment of the law in 1:18–11:36 was bound to raise the question of its continuing role as norm for personal and social ethics in the redefined people of God, and since the parenesis so far had both used and transformed Torah themes. With the people of God redefined in nonethnic categories it was obviously important that the law, so much identified with ethnic Israel as such, be similarly redefined—not abandoned or attacked (against Käsemann); otherwise continuity between the two epochal phases of the people (and purpose) of God would be lost. This he was able to do because the Christian tradition of Jesus' teaching had already shifted the focus of the law regarding human relationships to Lev 19:18 (Mark 12:31, etc.), and so provided a new center around which the rest of the law could cohere and by means of which the reference of competing principles and relevance of ethnically restrictive rules could be determined (differently Hübner, *Law*, 85). The triple emphasis on love of neighbor (vv 8, 9, 10) and bracketing emphasis on fulfilling the law (vv 8, 10) effectively gathers together and sums up the earlier scattered references on these themes (lover—5:5; 8:28; 12:9; fulfillment—8:4; cf. 1:5; 3:31; 9:31–32; 10:6–8). Räisänen, *Law*, 65, misses the continuity of Paul's thought here, as elsewhere, and leaves it in confusion.

Some defining of "to love one another" (τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν) in v. 8a takes place. In v. 8b it becomes "the one loving the other person" (ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον). The other person becomes "your neighbor" (τὸν πλησίον σου) via the Lev. 19:18 quote in v. 9e. The use of τὸν ἕτερον (the other person) underscores the expansion of the Torah concept beyond ethnic Jews.

As Dunn notes above, the central role of Lev. 19:18 in Christian teaching became major in Jesus

and the apostles. In [eight different texts](#) in Jesus, Paul and James it is cited as a major OT text principle. In Mt. 22:39 // Mk. 12:30 this principle is lifted to the status of one of the two central commandments of God: love God and love your neighbor. In both these texts as well as Lk. 10:27, Jesus redefined neighbor away from ethnic covenant Jew as traditionally understood to include other people generally, and especially those in need.

Clearly Lev. 19:18 in its [original context](#) was ethnic focused. VV. 11-18 treat a series of laws relating to treatment of fellow Israelites.

1 You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. 12 And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord. 13 You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. 14 You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. 15 You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. 16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. 17 You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.**

But now the principle is expanded by Jesus and the apostles to apply to others generally.

Loving the other person is seen as having fulfilled the Law of God in

v. 8b: ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον **πεπλήρωκεν** (the one who loves another has fulfilled the law).

and in **v. 10b:** **πλήρωμα** νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη (love is the fulfilling of the law).

Does this mean that loving others is so important that it does away with the other laws? Absolutely not! The sense of “fulfill” is clearly that loving others is foundational to proper treatment of them. In the listing of the second tablet commandments from the Decalogue (v. 9) Paul indicates that not killing, not stealing etc. reflect the foundational stance of loving one’s neighbor: “The commandments...are summed up in this word, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (τὸ...ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.) The seldom used verb ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται literally means “to bring to a head” in the sense of reducing something down to “the bottom line” issue. When Greek orators summed up their arguments, it was labeled ἀνακεφαλαιεῖν. What lies behind not killing, not stealing, not coveting? For Paul, the dynamic of loving one’s neighbor

was the basis for being able to adhere to these action commandments. Thus, loving others means doing what the Law says both to do and to not do in regard to other people.

Somewhat as a comment on the Decalogue commands that he cited, Paul observes in v. 10a: ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται (Love does no wrong to a neighbor). The “Thou shalt nots” cited forbidden wrong action against another person. Love refuses to engage in such actions; thus it is foundational to obeying these commands.

Thus in Jesus’ interpretation, that Paul here adopts, the entire Law of God grows out of two core concepts: love God and love your neighbor. Without commitment to these, keeping the other laws proves both impossible and worthless spiritually.

3. Conclusion, v. 10b. Paul’s “therefore” (οὖν) in the middle of verse 10 draws a conclusion as an obvious implication of his assertions about loving others. But the compound sentence in verse ten is closely linked with the inclusio marker of love:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον **κακὸν** οὐκ ἐργάζεται· **πλήρωμα** οὖν νόμου **ἡ ἀγάπη**.

By directly stating what is implicit in previous statements, Paul brings his discussion to a conclusion. In a real sense the declaration πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη. (lit., “fulfillment of the law is love”) is to do what the Greek orators did in τὸ τὸν λόγον αὐτῶν ἀνακεφαλαιῶσαι. Love as fulfillment means not doing wrong things, and, instead, doing good things to others. The Elder in 3 John 11 put it this way to Gaius: Ἀγαπητέ, μὴ μιμοῦ τὸ κακὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν. ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ· ὁ κακοποιῶν οὐχ ἑώρακεν τὸν θεόν (“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.”).

In Gal. 5:13-15, Paul had earlier set forth this same essential idea but to a different group in a different situation where doing evil to one another was running rampant:

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, **but through love become slaves to one another.** **14** For the whole law is summed up [πεπλήρωται] **in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** **15** If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

To love others is never to do harm to them. Instead, it is to take positive, beneficial actions toward them. In 12:3-15:13 most of the actions mandated by Paul represent many of those positive actions.

How does all this relate to Christians today? The answer is clear: profoundly! In these verses Paul has defined love for others in the context of the OT Decalogue. Love must be religious in nature. Non-religious love is inappropriate for believers. Judaism established this principle centuries before Christ. Love for others must grow out of and reflect love for God. Love God and love others are but opposite sides of the same coin. Love must then be religious for it to be legitimate.

Love is defined by the words and actions of Christ himself. He modeled the OT ideal of the Law by loving God and others unselfishly and self-givingly. Thus the NT writers use the Greek *ἡ ἀγάπη* for this idea of love. Jesus is our example and our standard.

Love must be more than passion; it must express itself in concrete actions toward others. Void of God's love, the Greek love turned to passionate seeking

to get something from others. Love became using others for personal gratification. The grounding of love in God and commitment to God through Christ is the only corrective to the purely human tendency to love. Deliberative commitment to do good and not harm becomes the Christian expression of love. Because Christian love is more volitional than emotional, unselfishness and self-giving stand as the definers of its actions toward others. We choose through Christ to do good to others. As Paul put it in Gal. 6:10, "[so then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.](#)"

In a season of Advent when we are looking forward to Christ's first coming in incarnation, let us not forget the importance of loving others. This is our obligation, yea our unpaid debt, laid on us by God Himself.

b. Live prepared, vv. 11-14

Gk. NT

¹³⁻¹¹ Καὶ τοῦτο εἰ-
δότες τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι
ώρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου
ἐγερθῆναι, νῦν γὰρ ἐγ-
γύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρι-
α ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν.
¹³⁻¹² ἡ νύξ προέκοπεν ἡ
δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀπο-
θώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα
τοῦ σκότους, ἐνδυσ-
ώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ
φωτός. ¹³⁻¹³ ὥς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ
εὐσχημόνως περιπατη-
σωμεν, μὴ κώμοις καὶ
μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ
ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι
καὶ ζήλῳ, ¹³⁻¹⁴ ἀλλὰ ἐν-
δύσασθε τὸν κύριον
Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν καὶ
τῇ σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ
ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμι-
ας.

Notes:

This pericope at first seems to have minimal relationship to the previous one of vv. 8-10. James Dunn in the *Word Biblical Commentary* (Logos Systems) gives a very insightful summation of the contextual

NASB

11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

NRSV

11 Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; 12 the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13 let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

NLT

11 Another reason for right living is that you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for the coming of our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So don't live in darkness. Get rid of your evil deeds. Shed them like dirty clothes. Clothe yourselves with the armor of right living, as those who live in the light. 13 We should be decent and true in everything we do, so that everyone can approve of our behavior. Don't participate in wild parties and getting drunk, or in adultery and immoral living, or in fighting and jealousy. 14 But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires.

role of vv. 11-14:

[The opening phrase recalls the recipients to the eschatological perspective so basic to Christian self-understanding — not](#)



only a new but the final age of God's purpose (3:26; 8:18; 11:5). The theme is no doubt prompted, like the preceding emphasis on love, by the harshness and hazards of the situation which called forth the advice of 12:14–13:7. The emphasis on salvation to faith (v 11) recalls the opening thematic statement (1:16), and the exhortation recalls the earlier counsel in 6:12–13 (vv 12, 14) and 8:13 (v 14) in particular. The imagery of putting off/putting on was common in earliest Christian parenesis (Selwyn, 1 Peter; 394–95), perhaps reflecting a widespread pattern of exhorting new converts and baptisands; vv 11b–12 in fact fall without strain into a four-lined hymn form (Schlier) which Paul may well be quoting with elaboration; and parallels with other first-century Christian writings again suggest a common parenetical sequence (cf. particularly 1 Thess 5:4–9 and Eph 5:8–14). The imagery of night and day, darkness and light, echoes the sharper dualism of the first verses in each of chaps. 6, 7, and 8; but the recognition that the night is not yet over and that continually renewed commitment is necessary equally echoes the eschatological tension of the second half of these chapters. The characterization of nighttime revelry (v 13) probably reflects not so much a fear on Paul's part that this was true of the Roman congregations as it does a knowledge of Roman society. Striking is the mixture of first and second person exhortation, the triple mixed metaphor of v 12b, and the contrast of three double negatives (v 13) with the single call to "put on Christ" (v 14). The summary climax of the exhortation in terms of the character of Christ (v 14) is obviously as deliberate as the summary of the law in the love of neighbor command (vv 8–10). In the sweep of its embrace vv 11–14 make as effective a summing up of this phase of parenesis as the opening summary of 12:1–2 (cf. Merk, 166).

Thus Paul is pulling together previous images and motifs into this single place in order to highlight the importance of living each day fully prepared to face the end of life on planet earth.

The internal structure of thought flow is reasonably clear. After four declarations about the nearness of "that day" Paul pulls five admonitions from these declarations that he considers implicit in them. These admonitions are cast in two forms: 1) "Let us...." and 2) "you do ..."

Considerable discussion exists about whether Paul is using elements from an early Christian hymn

in verses 11b-13. Quite clearly from the [Block Diagram](#) visual analysis of the syntax of the Greek text, one senses that the idea expression in these first statements is not regular prose. But precise and confident identification of this material as hymnic eludes careful scholarship. One effort to reconstruct this material in English translation has been proposed by Robert Jewett, Roy David and Eldon Jay Epp in the *Hermeneia* commentary on Romans:

And knowing this [hymn], The Critical Time,

"The hour [is] already [past] for us to be roused from sleep"

(for now is our salvation nearer than when we came to faith.)

"The night is far advanced,

the day is drawn near.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness

And let us step into the armor of light."

As by day, let us walk in a seemly manner,

Not in carousings and drunken bouts,

Not in bouts of sex and indecencies,

Not in strife and zealotry.

Καὶ τοῦτο εἰδότες, τὸν καιρὸν,

ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι,

(νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπίστευσάμεν.)

ἢ νῦν προέκοψεν

ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν.

ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτοῦς,

ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός.

ὥς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν,

μὴ κόμοις καὶ μέθαις,

μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις,

μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ,

A major weakness of this proposal is the obvious non-poetic section *for now is our salvation nearer than when we came to faith*. The response is to claim that Paul here inserts his own comment into the existing hymn. Although rather technical, Heinrich Schlier who first proposed this observes: "The proposed hymn has impressive *homoioptoton* in the identical verbal forms with -μεθα in the beginnings of lines 12c and d, with *parechesis* in the assonance of "o" sounds in the conclusions of these two lines that echo the "o" sound of the opening syllable of 11b*. There is an appealing rhythmic symmetry in the proposed hymn, with each line containing five beats. However, the second line of the hymn contains an antithetical parallelism that is not matched by the other lines; the subsequent two lines echo this parallelism in an A + B: A' + B' pattern."

The scholarly discussion then focuses on the original setting (*Sitz im Leben*) for this hymn. Schlier and many others argue for a baptismal setting as a part of the initial instruction given to new converts

leading up to their baptism. But Jewett, among others, argues that the better original setting for this was the early traditional Christian Agape feast. As such, it would have been a teaching device used to musically reenforce Christian principles around meal time that included celebration of the Lord's Supper. The speculative nature of such analysis is high because the hard data for analysis is minimal. Thus the tendency is to read the scholar's own liturgical tradition and orientation back into the text as though this were the original situation. What does appear to be reasonably clear is that Paul made some use of pre-existing Christian tradition in pulling together his thoughts. Its wide-spread use among early Christians for affirming their faith commitment made it helpful to the apostle in communicating his thoughts to the Christians at Rome.

Declarations of nearness. (1) *knowing the time*: τοῦτο εἰδότες τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι.

How to properly translate this clumsy Greek expression is unclear. The NRSV makes a regular verb out of the Greek participle and renders it as "*Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.*" The NASB adopts a commonly used approach in assuming an ellipsis: "*Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep*" The NLT takes a highly interpretive, and somewhat questionable, approach in rendering it as "*Another reason for right living is that you know how late it is; time is running out.*" Dunn's translation (WBC, Logos System) is very literal, but is nonsensical in English: "*And this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep...*" The most radical approach is that of Jewett (*Hermeneia*, Logos Systems): "*And knowing this [hymn], The Critical Time, The hour [is] already [past] for us to be roused from sleep....*"

All of this underscores caution about some of the details here. The exact meaning of τοῦτο (this)

is debatable: whether it goes back to the previous verses or whether it anticipates the ὅτι-clause "that it is already...." Does the ellipsis here assume a verb, and, if so, which one? "Do this." Or should the participle εἰδότες just be made into a verb: "you know this..." These are the uncertainties in the expression.

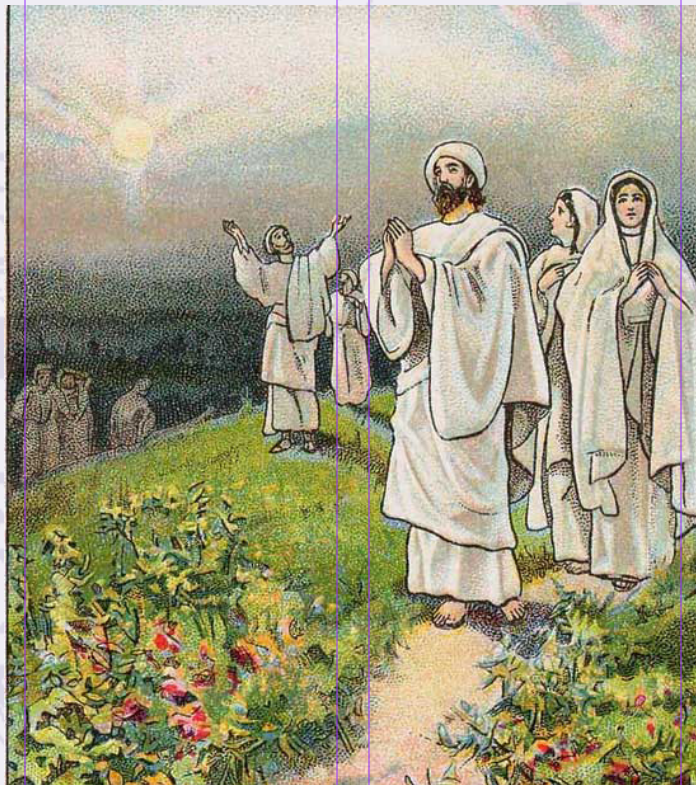
But what is clear is Paul's emphasis upon the "lateness of the time" eschatologically. The "hour is already" [ὥρα ἤδη], thus prompting the need for believers "to rise up from sleep" [ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι]. The imagery is dramatic, but common in Christian eschatological discussions about the second coming of Christ. The call to wake up is a call

to become watchful and perceptive about the nature of the "time" / "hour" that we are living in. [Watchfulness](#) is a major component of preparation for the Lord's return in Jesus' teachings and in apostolic Christianity. It emphasizes both right thinking and right living on a daily basis.

(2) *nearness of our salvation*: νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν. This is provided as the basis (γὰρ) for the preceding declaration. Unquestionably the expectancy of the consummation of salvation in the return of Christ is

the point here. Each passing day bring believers one day closer to the return of Christ, even though that exact day is unknown. Early Christians felt strongly that the return of Jesus would be very soon. Whether the delay of that return caused problems is debated by scholars. But at least [2 Peter 3:3-8](#) alludes to questions being raised about it:

3 First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!" 5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the



same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless. 8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

Knowing how near it is becomes a minor issue. Knowing that it could happen *at any moment* is the major issue.

(3) night time is nearly over. ἡ νύξ προέκοπεν.

In eschatological language, night time (νύξ) is imagery for wicked living that characterizes this “present evil age” before the return of Christ, which becomes the dawning of the new day, the new age of the Messiah. That Paul so understood the night as such is clear from his comments in verse 13.

Also, Dunn (WBC, Logos Systems) observes:

Somewhat surprisingly, the metaphorical or spiritual contrast between night and day is not strongly attested, occurring only

infrequently in the biblical tradition (Ps 139:12; Isa 21:11–12; John 9:4; 11:10), though the negative overtone of “night” in such a contrast is self-evident (as also in a phrase like “thief off/in the night” [Jer

49:9; Obad 5; 1 Thess 5:2]). It naturally lent itself to apocalyptic, but even there only occasionally functions to characterize the supersession of the old age by the new (Zech 14:7; Rev 21:25; 22:5; 2 Enoch 65.9). Paul’s usage therefore may be distinctively his own (the closest parallel is again 1 Thess 5:5–8) or at least a feature of very early Christian parenesis expressive of its eschatological perspective.

(4) the day is near. ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. The Day is the Day of the Lord with its roots in the OT prophetic declaration. Placed, as here, in antithetical parallelism to night time, the emphasis is upon God’s wrath being poured out on evil in divine judgment. This was the central theme of the motif in the OT prophets. And God’s judgment of all humanity, including believers, is a major theme of the NT expression of the motif as well. Only, the Christian expression sees the Day of the Lord

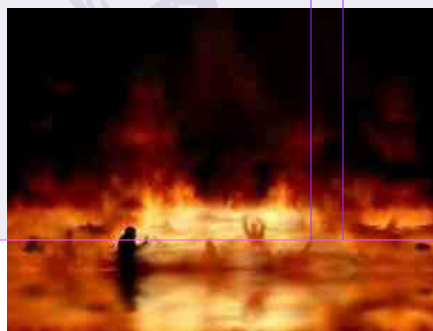
in apocalyptic Jewish terms of the final judgment of humanity at the coming of the Messiah. This will be the transition point between “this present age of the Evil One” (Gal. 1:4) and the age of the Messiah in the eternal order of things. That Paul so understood “the Day” as such is reflected in his characterization found in 2:5 (NRSV): “**on the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed**” (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ).

In light of these foundational affirmations there come a series of five admonitions that grow out of the spiritual reality painted in the affirmations. The shape of these affirmations is twofold: **1)** “Let us ...” (vv. 12b–13). Three admonitions are bunched together around two motifs. The first pair revolve around getting undressed and then getting dressed, and are cast in the Aorist cohortative subjunctive mood verb forms in the Greek. They stand in antithetical parallel to one another. The third sees life as a journey through which we walk. It is cast in the 1 Aorist cohortative subjunctive mood verb form.

The second set 2), v. 14, is cast in direct command addressed to the readers. They are set up in step parallelism to one another. The first admonition, positive in thrust, picks up the “getting dressed” motif from above, while the second admonition, negative in nature, plays off business planning for the future. The first is a 1 Aorist imperative of command mood form of the verb, while the second is present prohibitive imperative in form. The forms of these admonitions play an important role because English translation is able to capture only a very small part of the meaning contained in the Greek text.

The Day demands getting dressed with proper clothes: “**Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light**” (ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους, ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ φωτός). The use of the Aorist tense for both verbs heightens the urgency of taking off the improper clothes, “the works of darkness,” and of putting on the proper clothes, “the armor of light.” In commenting on this, Dunn (WBC, Logos Systems) observes:

The contrasting imagery of taking off and putting on clothes is again obvious and would be familiar to Paul’s readers in metaphorical usage: putting off vices (a more Greek than Hebrew metaphor—e.g., Demosthenes 8.46; Plutarch, Coriolanus 19.4; Ep. Arist. 122; in the NT—Eph 4:22, 25; Col 3:8; James 1:21; 1 Pet 2:1); and putting on virtues (more characteristically Hebraic—e.g., Job 29:14; Pss 93:1; 132:9, 16; Prov 31:25; Isa 51:9; 61:10; Wisd Sol 5:18; Bar 5:1; Philo, Conf. 31; and cf. particularly Isa 59:17; in the NT—Eph 6:14; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 5:8; and here particularly Eph



6:11; see further on 13:14); see BGD for both terms. Although we should not assume a practice of changing clothes for night wear and day wear (Michel, Cranfield), the context in this case does suggest a change of clothes related to the transition from night to day; and the fuller phrases here suggest some divesting of ordinary (night?) wear in order to clothe oneself with the accoutrements of war. The stronger the eschatological note, the more the imagery of preparation for the (decisive) final battle (between the forces of darkness and those of light) comes to the fore; see further on 13:13.

Paul here anticipates the fuller image of the Christian soldier image developed later in Eph. 6:11 [cf. vv. 10-18]: “Put on the whole armor of God, so that you

may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

The Day demands walking circumspectly (εὐσχημόνως): “let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunk-

enness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy” (ὥς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κόμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ). Paul placed in sharp contrast the high standards of ethical behavior required of believers to the notorious reputation of ancient Rome as the preeminent “party city” of that day. The vices mentioned here portray drunken sexual oriented orgies. Once dressed correctly for the “Day” we must behave ourselves appropriately. Again, the demand is cast in the Aorist cohortative subjunctive mood verb underscoring the intensity and urgency of the requirement.

The Day requires proper dress and careful planning: “Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν καὶ τῇ σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας). Again, Paul returns to the getting dressed motif, but with a different emphasis. In verse 13 the proper dress to be put on was “the armor of light.” But now, the proper dress is “the Lord Jesus Christ.” This second emphasis reaches to the heart of the matter in being able to live appropriately as a Christian.

To “put on” Christ is a rich Pauline image alluding to establishing and developing spiritual union with the resurrected Christ. The ultimate depiction is found in Gal. 2:19b-20 (NRSV): “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” The developmental side is set forth by Paul

in Phil. 3:10-14 (NRSV):

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Whether the Aorist tense verb here implies a connection to Christian baptism is debated. The consistent use of the Aorist tense for all the admonitions except the fifth one more likely serves to heighten the intensity of the demands; this is particularly true for the non-indicative mood use of the Aorist verb.

Once we are appropriately dressed “in Christ,” we have everything needed to live successfully. Thus, we have no need to plan for the satisfying of the passions of our “fleshly” or unredeemed physical nature. Christ has brought us out from under its control in conversion (cf. 8:3). It has no more claim to control our living. Thus our focus is to be on following the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:6-12).

The connection of all this to us? It should be pretty clear. We are called upon to live in the awareness of the second coming of Christ at any moment. We must realize that the coming of this Day will bring divine scrutiny of our lives that is total. Our responsibility is to live prepared for that day. The spiritual presence of Christ provides all the needed resources. But we must make the commitment to live that way every day. Always the promise of God through Paul stands before us: λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε

καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε [Gal. 5:16, “I declare to you, Walk under the Spirit’s leadership and there is no possible way for you to gratify fleshly passion”]. We live by the highest of ethical standards and face God’s eventual scrutiny for living by them.



Greek NT	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p>^{13:8}Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν· ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν. ^{13:9}τὸ γὰρ Οὐ μοιχεύσεις, Οὐ φονεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ Ἀγαπήσει, τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. ^{13:10}ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.</p> <p>^{13:11}Καὶ τοῦτο εἰσὶν δότες τὸν καιρόν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι, νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν. ^{13:12}ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν ἢ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους, ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός. ^{13:13}ὥς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κώμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ, ^{13:14}ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν καὶ τῇ, σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν.</p>	<p>8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.</p> <p>11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.</p>	<p>8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.</p> <p>11 Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; 12 the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13 let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.</p>	<p>8 Pay all your debts, except the debt of love for others. You can never finish paying that! If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill all the requirements of God's law. 9 For the commandments against adultery and murder and stealing and coveting – and any other commandment – are all summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to anyone, so love satisfies all of God's requirements.</p> <p>11 Another reason for right living is that you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for the coming of our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So don't live in darkness. Get rid of your evil deeds. Shed them like dirty clothes. Clothe yourselves with the armor of right living, as those who live in the light. 13 We should be decent and true in everything we do, so that everyone can approve of our behavior. Don't participate in wild parties and getting drunk, or in adultery and immoral living, or in fighting and jealousy. 14 But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires.</p>

Greek NT Diagram

1	13·8	Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν·	
2		γὰρ ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν.	
	13·9	γὰρ τὸ Οὐ μοιχεύσεις, Οὐ φονεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις,	
3		καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὥς σεαυτόν.	
4	13·10	ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται·	
5		οὖν πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.	
6	13·11	Καὶ τοῦτο (ποιεῖτε) εἰδότες τὸν καιρόν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη (ἐστὶν) ὕμᾱς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι,	
7		γὰρ νῦν ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν.	
8	13·12	ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν	
9		δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν.	
10		οὖν ἀποθώμεθα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους,	
11		δὲ ἐνδυσώμεθα τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός.	
12	13·13	ὥς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κόμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ,	
	13·14	ἀλλὰ	
13		ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν	
14		καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας.	

Semantic Diagram

I--	A	1	Pres	Act	Imp+	2 P	(ὁμεῖς)
		γὰρ					
	B	2	Perf	Act	Ind	3 S	ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἑτέρον
		γὰρ					
II--	C	3	Pres	Pass	Ind	3 S	τὸ.....

	A	4	Pres	Dep	Ind	3 S	ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον
		οὖν					
	a	5	(Pres	---	Ind	3 S)	ἡ ἀγάπη
		καὶ					
	1--	6	(Pres	Act	Imp+	2 P	ὁμεῖς) *
		γὰρ					
	b	7	(Pres	---	Ind	3 S)	ἡ σωτηρία

	2--	8	1 Aor	Act	Ind	3 S	ἡ νύξ
		δὲ					
	b	9	Perf	Act	Ind	3 S	ἡ ἡμέρα
		οὖν					
	1--	10	1 Aor	Mid	Subj	1 P	(ὁμεῖς)
		δὲ					
	B	11	1 Aor	Mid	Subj	1 P	(ὁμεῖς)

	c	12	1 Aor	Act	Subj	1 P	(ὁμεῖς)
		ἀλλὰ					
	2--	13	1 Aor	Dep	Imp+	2 P	(ὁμεῖς)
		καὶ					
	b	14	Pres	Mid	Imp-	2 P	(ὁμεῖς)

*The ellipsis in v. 11 can presuppose one of the following verbs:

ποιήσατε
ποιήσωμεν
ποιεῖτε

Summary of Rhetorical Structure.

Most commentators will divide the passage into two sections: 1) vv. 8-10 [statements 1-5], on brotherly love, and 2) vv. 11-14 [statements 6-14], on the approach of the day of the Lord. Good reason for doing this exists inside the text itself. Certainly the coordinate conjunction καὶ at the beginning of verse 11 argues for this. The elliptical construction also in verse eleven suggests a shift in thought.

The first section, statements 1-5, is structured in a threefold flow of thought. First, the admonition (#1), which is buttressed by a threefold foundation (#s 2-4). Then a logical conclusion, #5, is drawn from these.

The second section, statements 6-14, is developed differently. Two set of ideas on the nearness of the day of the Lord, #s 6-7 and 8-9, form the theological basis [οὖν] for the admonitions, #s 10-14, that are concluded from them. The admonitions are divided into two parts. First, the first person plural exhortations in #s 10-12; then, the positive/negative direct commands in #s. 13-14.

The connection between the two sections is ambiguous. This is largely due to the elliptical nature of statement 6. Of the two ways this can be taken, either will suggest that expectation of the Day of the Lord with its judgment of both believers and non-believers stands as a motivation to loving one another. If an implied verb such as ποιεῖτε τοῦτο is assumed, this connection is stronger. But, if τοῦτο is taken as "resumptive" -- whatever commentators mean by this -- the connection is still present, just not as clear.