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Romans

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Proem:

Topic 10.3.2

Rom. 1:8-15



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CONCLUSIONS

10.3.2 Proem, 1:8-15

8 Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. 9 μάρτυς γάρ μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνησθῆναι ὑμῶν ποιῶμαι 10 πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου δεόμενος εἰ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐδοωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 11 ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, 12 τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ. 13 οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἔλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. 14 Ἐλλήσιν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφῆς τε καὶ ἀνοήτους ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, 15 οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. 9 For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10 asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — 12 or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15 — hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Just as the *Praescriptio* uses standard elements of the surrounding ancient Greek letter form and creatively makes them distinctly Pauline, so also does the *Proem* exhibit the same features.¹ The core element of thanksgiving expression revolves around the following structure:

- 1) Εὐχαριστοῦμεν / Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ, *We / I give thanks to God*, (1 Thess. 1:2; Col. 1:3) + μου, 1 Cor. 1:4; **Rom. 1:8**; Philm. 4; Phil. 1:3)
- 2) Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ, *We ought to give thanks to God*, (2 Thess. 1:3)
- 3) Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός, *God be praised*, (2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3)
- 4) Χάριν ἔχω τῷ ἐνδυναμώσαντί με Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, *I have praise to Christ Jesus who strengthened me*, (1 Tim. 1:12)
- 5) Χάριν ἔχω τῷ θεῷ, I have praise to God (2 Tim. 1:3)²

¹Immediately following the prescript (Latin *praescriptio*) in a Greco-Roman letter, there often appeared a section that (1) sought to establish a favorable contact with the writer's addressees, (2) affirmed the addressees in some manner, (3) expressed some type of prayer for them, either a 'health wish' (using the verb *ὑγιαίνειν*, 'to be in good health') or an actual prayer (using the noun *προσκύνημα*, 'worshipful prayer'), and (4) set out the writer's primary purposes and major concerns in writing. And Paul followed much the same pattern, not only here in his letter to the Christians at Rome but also in most of his other letters¹ — usually with the verb *εὐχαριστῶ* ('I give thanks') included at the beginning of these sections, though twice with the adjective *εὐλογητός* ('blessed,' 'praised') used equivalently. Therefore these opening sections in Paul's letters are today often referred to as 'thanksgiving' or 'eulogy' sections rather than merely 'introduction' sections' — 'particularly since the work of Paul Schubert in his 1939 monograph *The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*.' [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 99–100.]

²Note, however, the distinctively different direction taken among the General Letters which contain a Proem:

1 Pet. 1:3a Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός, *God be praised*,

This is Pauline following 2 Cor. and Eph. This is mostly likely due to Silas being the writing secretary of the letter (cf. 5:12).

2 John 4, Ἐχάρην λίαν, *I was greatly caused to rejoice*.

Proem:

1.8 Πρῶτον
μὲν
1 εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου
διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν
ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται
ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ.

1.9 γάρ
2 μάρτυς μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός,
| ὃ λατρεύω
| ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου
| ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,
ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεῖαν ὑμῶν ποιούμαι
|
1.10 | πάντοτε
| ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου
δεόμενος
εἰ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι
ἐν τῷ θελήματι
τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐλθεῖν
πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

1.11 γάρ
3 ἐπιποθῶ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς,
ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν
εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς,
1.12 δέ
4 τοῦτο ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι
ἐν ὑμῖν
διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ.

1.13 δέ
5 οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,
ἀδελφοί,
ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν
πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
καὶ
--- ἐκωλύθην
ἀχρι τοῦ δεῦρο,
ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ
καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς
καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.

1.14 Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάροις,
σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις
6 ὀφειλέτης εἰμί,
1.15 | οὕτως
| τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον
| καὶ
| ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ
εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

3 John 2, εὐχομαί σε εὐοδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν, **I pray that you may prosper and enjoy good health.**

This core Proem is the closest in the NT to the secular Greek pattern of a health wish prayer for the recipients. The two infinitives are often found either alone or together in the Proem prayer and typically invoke the blessing of the patron deity or deities of the recipients. Third John, however, develops the prayer in a very

uniquely Christian direction in the expansion elements. One of those, καθὼς εὐοδοῦταί σου ἡ ψυχή, qualifies the blessing of material prosperity and health to the limits of the spiritual health of Gaius and the community. That is, the Elder prays that God would grant prosperity and health only to the limits of their spiritual health.

Note that neither Galatians nor Titus contain a *Proem*, although each for distinctly different reasons.³ Clearly Romans falls in the dominate pattern of using the verb εὐχαριστέω in either the plural or singular spelling. Conceptually, both εὐλογητός and χάριν ἔχω are close to being synonyms of εὐχαριστέω. Only in 1 Tim. 1:12 is the thanksgiving directed to Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ rather than τῷ θεῷ. What we see here is the collection of expressions that the apostle drew upon for the core expression of the *Proem* in his letters.⁴ The remaining elements reflect expansion of this core expression. And these become very important to not only understanding more about the spiritual condition of the congregation being addressed but also they reflect signals of themes to be fleshed out in the letter body along side those signaled in the *Praescriptio*.

Also to be noted as a pattern in several of the *Proema* of Paul's letters is the tendency to move from thanksgiving to God mostly for positive qualities in the congregations being addressed (especially look for the participle μνημονεύοντες or ὅτι clause as a signal) to prayers of petition for the further development of traits and qualities in the congregations. Rom. 1:9b-15 moves this direction somewhat, with μνείαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι signaling this

Hebrews and 1 John contain an *Prologue* with their Jewish homily structure, along with James which is also a homily that only uses an epistolary *Praescriptio*. Second Peter and Jude do not contain a *Proem*, while having a *Praescriptio*.

³In Gal. 1:6-10, Paul uses the Exordium pattern largely because he found little or anything among the Galatians to give thanks to God for. Instead, this section lines out his basic stance of severe disappointment and anger at the Galatians for their leaning toward the Judaizing version of the gospel. Somewhat similarly, although not as severely, he found little to commend among the Cretan Christians to whom Titus was ministering. Paul's fundamental integrity would not permit any apple polishing of the congregations that his letters were ultimately addressed to, even those written specifically to individuals such as Titus, Timothy, and Philemon.

⁴Schubert set out an entirely new course for the study of these opening sections. He showed how the Pauline thanksgiving or eulogistic sections are distinguishable units of material and spelled out how they function in certain specific ways. The primary form of a Pauline thanksgiving Schubert identified as beginning with the phrase εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ ('I give thanks to God'), followed by one, two, or three participles, which are then followed by another clause that is subordinate to the participles. A secondary form he identified as beginning with the verb εὐχαριστῶ ('I give thanks'), which is followed by another clause introduced by ὅτι ('that') and then by a further clause subordinate to the ὅτι clause and introduced by ὥστε ('therefore,' 'so that'). Schubert also noted that these two forms are sometimes mixed. Further, he argued that the phrase εὐλογητός ὁ θεός ('Blessed be God' or 'Praise be to God') is a similar phrase, which in two instances replaces εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ ('I give thanks to God').⁴ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 100.]

shift.

The Pauline pattern while adopting the idea of the *Proem* from the Greek letter form sets itself off very distinctly from that pattern in the details.

One of the interpretive challenges is defining with certainty the ending of the *Proem* in Romans. A variety of proposals have been put forth seeing the terminus point at v. 13, v. 15, or v. 17. Legitimate arguments for all three views exist from a Literary Critical standpoint.

The οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν at the beginning of v. 14 is indeed often a marker for the beginning of a new topic. The clearly summarizing nature of v. 15, οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελισασθαι, indeed sounds like wrapping up a unit of thought. The obviously thesis orientation of vv. 16-17, introduced by γὰρ, could easily signal the end of the discussion begun in v. 8. If full attention is given to the epistolary nature of the document, rather viewing Romans as a literary tractate, then either v. 15 or 17 should be seen as the terminus point of the *Proem*. Paul's eagerness to come to Rome is injected into the *Proem* by the petitionary prayer nature of v. 10b, ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου δεόμενος, in my prayers asking.... This then grows into an elaboration in vv. 11-15 with v. 15 bringing it to a close. Verses 16-17, in a manner already observed in the Pauline style of transitioning from one unit to the next, provides the link for the *Proem* to the letter body. But vv. 16-17 mostly lay out the core conceptual foundation of the letter body in 1:18-15:13.⁵

10.3.2.1 Thanksgiving, 1:8 Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. **First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.**

1.8
 Πρῶτον
 μὲν
 εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου
 διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν
 ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται
 ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ.

The core expression, εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου, underscores a critically important spiritual principle in Paul. God is thanked for what has taken place among

⁵In evaluating several commentary arguments for one or another of the views about the terminus end of the *Proem*, the one consistently missing topic in all of these discussions is the failure to note the extensive use of transitioning statements by the apostle in his writings. This was good ancient Jewish scribal writing strategy that Paul reflects. The somewhat subjective issue with each of such units is whether the dominate thrust goes with what preceded or with what follows. But in either judgment such units have a 'paperclip' role in holding ideas together.

the Roman Christians. Paul did not praise them, since he was keenly aware that what positive things that existed were due solely to God's working in the church. The subsequent positive things noted about the church revolve around the outcome of unconditional surrender to the lordship of Christ, not due to any actions taken by the Roman Christians themselves. Probably the better English expression is "I give thanks to my God"⁶ following the Vulgate's *gratias ago Deo meo*.⁷ The Spanish RVR 1960 follows the Latin with *doy gracias a mi Dios*.

The verb εὐχαριστέω in secular Greek had no particular religious meaning and simply meant to **show favor to someone**.⁸ The limited religious usage arose late out of the ruler worship cult where a ruler was revered as a god, and thus expressions of thanksgiving to him were a necessary means of currying favor and special treatment. The use of εὐχαριστέω developed as an important marker in Greek epistolary style in private letters as is reflected in the Epistle of Apion.⁹ Here the focus was **on thanksgiving to the emperors perceived as divine**.¹⁰

⁶28 of the 38 NT instances of εὐχαριστέω in the NRSV are translated as 'give thanks.'

⁷The German Menge translation (2003) gets it with *sage ich meinem Gott durch Jesus Christus um euer aller willen Dank dafür*, rather than with the more commonly used *danke ich meinem Gott*.

⁸"The word group [of εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος] is not Attic, cf. Phryn. Ecl., 11.1 Εὐχάριστος 'pleasant' occurs for the first time in Hdt., I, 32, 9 and Xenoph. Oec., 5, 10, 'grateful' for the first time in Xenoph. Cyrop., 8, 3, 49. Most of the instances are post-classical. The verb εὐχαριστέω means 'to show someone a favour' καὶ τὸ εὐχαριστεῖν ἐπὶ τοῦ διδόναι χάριν, οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦ εἰδέναι, Poll. Onom., V, 141, cf. φιλόδομος δὲ καὶ εὐχάριστος, ἐπὶ γὰρ τούτῳ τάττεται τοῦνομα, 140. It is used with dat. of pers.: τῶι δήμῳ τῶι Δηλίων, IG2, XI, 4, 665, 24 f. (3rd cent. B.C.). A favour imposes the obligation of thanks εὐχαριστήσεις μοι, Witkowski, 12, 6, τοῦτο δὲ ποιήσας εὐχαριστήσεις ἡμῖν, P. Petr., II, 15, 3, 6 f. (both 3rd cent. B.C.). Hence the meaning arises 'to be thankful,' 'to give thanks,' Polyb., 16, 25, 1 etc.; τοῖς ὄχλοις, Diod. S., 20, 34, 5. Recipients are gods ἐπὶ μὲν τῶι ἐρῶσθα[ι] σε εὐθέως τοῖς θεοῖς εὐχαριστούν, Wilcken Ptol., 59, 9 f. (168 B.C.) and men τὴν πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον εὐχαριστίαν, Diod. S., 17, 59, 7. The reason for thanks can be indicated by prep. ἐπὶ τινος, Ditt. Syll.3, II, 798, 16 f. (37 A.D.); Ditt. Or., II, 456, 63 f. (1st cent. B.C.), ἐπὶ τινι, Wilcken Ptol., 59, 9 f. (→ 408, 28 f.); περὶ τινος, Ditt. Or., II, 456, 54; Philo Spec. Leg., I, 211; 1 Th. 1:2; 1 C. 1:4, ὑπὲρ τινος, Philo Mut. Nom., 222; Epict. Diss., IV, 1, 105, ἐν, Philo Spec. Leg., II, 175; 3 Aristid. Apol., 15, 10,4 or by ὅτι, Epict. Diss., I, 4, 32.5 The pass. is unusual, Hippocr. Ep., 17 (Littré IX, 372 → n. 65). The element of thanks can yield to the formal sense 'to pray,' e.g., τοῖς θεοῖς, P. Tebt., I, 56, 9 f. (2nd cent. B.C.)." [[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:407.]

⁹Ἀπίων Ἐπιμάχῳ τῶι πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ πλεῖστα χαίρειν. πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν καὶ διὰ παντὸς ἐρ<ρ>όμενον εὐτυχεῖν μετὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς μου καὶ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου. **εὐχαριστῶ τῶ κυρίῳ Σεράπιδι**, ὅτι μου κινδυνεύσαντος εἰς θάλασσαν ἔσωσε εὐθέως. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:408–409.]

¹⁰Compounds in εὐ- are slow and late to appear → 407, 6

Interestingly, no equivalent Hebrew verb or word group existed in either the Hebrew Bible or religious tradition. The Greek word group (εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος) does not begin showing up appreciably in Jewish writings until those in apocalyptic Judaism just before the beginning of the Christian era, and then only sparingly.¹¹ The orientation of this latter Jewish use is toward expressing thanksgiving to God in various kinds of prayers. The religious tone of the word group becomes dominate. Since much of this Jewish literature is out of Diaspora Judaism, it is not surprising for the Diaspora Jew Paul to make use of this language as prayer expression in the *Proema* of his letters.

The distinction between εὐχαριστέω and εὐλογέω as prayer language terms virtually does not exist. They are used interchangeably both in the NT as well as in the surrounding Jewish literature written in Greek.¹² Thus

ff. In the Fr. of older Stoicism we find εὐχαριστία → 407, 28 ff.) only once. Epict. offers a typical ethical evaluation of gratitude; his material closeness to Plato should also be noted.¹⁸ τὸ εὐχάριστον is presented in Diss., I, 6, 1 ff. as a basic ethical attitude; without it even δύναμις ὀρατικὴ is worthless, I, 6, 4. There is a little summary of ethics with a final stress on the duty of thanks to God in IV, 4, 14 f. and 18, cf. the religious accent in IV, 4, 29–32; I, 16, 15 ff.; IV, 1, 105. With I, 19, 25 cf. Did., 9 f.; Aristid. Apol., 15, 10 → 415, 12 f. In assessing the religious components note that the addition τῶ θεῷ has become a mere phrase, cf. I, 10, 3." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:409.]

¹¹Hbr. has no equivalent for the group, or the group is not used for Hbr. originals.¹⁹ Religious thanks are expressed in the thankoffering תְּהִלָּה²⁰ and the song of thanksgiving,²¹ both collective, e.g., Ps. 136,22 and individual, e.g., Ps. 116,23 The group εὐχαρ-, apart from εὐχάριστος in Prv. 11:16, occurs only in the apocr. and denotes the giving of thanks.²⁴ This might be to men, 2 Macc. 12:31; Ἐσθ. 8:12δ; Wis. 18:2, but esp. to God, 2 Macc. 10:7: ὕμνους ἀνέφερον, vl. εὐχαριστούν etc.; Jdt. 8:25; 3 Macc. 7:16. We find wisdom style at Wis. 16:28; Sir. 37:11, epistolary style at 2 Macc. 1:10 f., in the letter of the people of Jerusalem to Aristobulus: ... χαίρειν καὶ ὑγιαίνειν. ἐκ μεγάλων κινδύνων ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένοι μεγάλως εὐχαριστοῦμεν αὐτῷ.²⁵ 2 Macc. 1:11 ff. is the prototype of Paul's salutations;²⁶ the sentence with εὐχαριστοῦμεν comes just after the opening formula, and introduces the main theme of the letter. Thanks are directed to God, and two reasons are indicated, the one by part.²⁷ and the other by γάρ.²⁸

"In Ἄ εὐχαριστία is used for תְּהִלָּה at Lv. 7:12; ψ 41:5; 49:14; 68:31; 106:22; 146:7; Am. 4:5.29"

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:409.]

¹²According to the Jewish-Hellenistic model εὐχαριστέω denotes the prayer of thanksgiving in general at Jn. 11:41; Ac. 28:15; Rev. 11:17 and specifically giving thanks at meals in Mk. 8:6; Mt. 15:36; Jn. 6:11, 23; Ac. 27:35;⁴² on Paul → 412, 8 ff. εὐχαριστέω and εὐλογέω (→ II, 761, 12 ff.) can be used as synonyms. This may be seen from a comparison of Mk. 8:6 with 6:41.⁴³ The alternation of εὐχαριστήσας in 8:6 and εὐλογήσας in 8:7 is to be judged similarly, → II, 762, 34 ff.⁴⁴ There is no gradation in the manner or

the variations in the core expressions of the Pauline Proema do not represent different ideas. Rather they constitute a creative variety of saying the same thing with different terms.

The expansion elements become the 'salt and pepper' flavoring to this core expression. Also it is helpful to note which expansions come before the verb and which come after. This sets up levels of emphasis and categorical grouping of expansions.

First those in the pre-field: Πρώτον μὲν.

The literal sense of πρώτος is that of 'first.'¹³ This centered in spatial location, temporal location, and rank / value location. Context determines which of these three locations is referenced by the adjective. All three of these meanings occur in the LXX with the spatial idea of number being most common. The neuter nominative singular πρώτον has an adverbial role as well. If the idea is of sequence, then one automatically looks for a signal of the second item, such as exists in 1 Cor. 12:28 with δεύτερον, *second*. But nothing of that sort happens here in Romans.¹⁴ To the contrary, the rank / value category of meaning is the appropriate sense here, with the English translation '*most importantly*.'¹⁵ For the apostle,

degree of thanksgiving. The repetition simply corresponds to the Jewish rule that a blessing should be pronounced on each food, → 410, 1 ff.⁴⁵ Thus the two terms are not to be viewed as a symbolical allusion to the eucharist,⁴⁶ though they could easily be viewed that way later. The same applies in Jn. 6:11, 23.⁴⁷ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 9:411.]

¹³"From Hom. πρώτος, 'the first,' developed along three lines: a. spatially 'the front,' e.g., Hom. Il., 15, 340; this meaning became less common later; b. the first in time and no., e.g., Hdt., 7, 168; Hom. Od., 9, 449; c. the first in rank and value, 'the most eminent, important' etc., e.g., Hom. Od., 6, 60; Thuc., 6, 28."¹³ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 865.]

¹⁴Quite oddly the BDAD lexicon lists Rom. 1:8 here with the notation of no continuing enumeration, along with Rom. 3:2 and 1 Cor. 11:18. This seems artificial and very questionable. Particularly, when the value idea fits very naturally, and is re-enforced by the particle of emphasis μὲν in all three verses referenced here.

¹⁵"Paul's thanksgiving section begins with the neuter adverb πρώτον ('first') and the affirmative particle μὲν ('indeed'). Some Church Fathers noted that 'there is no 'second' that corresponds to 'first' and explained this as being (1) because 'Paul's phrases are not always complete' or (2) because the material of 1:13–15 comprises Paul's second point, though he did not explicitly so designate it.⁹ A number of more contemporary commentators have observed the same phenomenon and drawn similar conclusions, sometimes even proposing that 'the second idea the apostle had in view is really to be found in ver. 10, in the prayer which he offers to God that he may be allowed soon to go to Rome.'¹⁰ Others have concluded that since 'first' is not followed by 'second' Paul is 'carried away by his train of thought'¹¹—or that 'quite probably Paul meant to make a further point in continuation, and then omitted to do so.'¹² Still others are prepared to leave matters somewhat unresolved and say

one of the most important actions for him was to express thanksgiving to God for what he saw God doing among the Christians in Rome. It was a top priority for him.¹⁶

a) The expansion elements in the post-field begin with μου, my.¹⁷ Note the use of the unemphatic μου rather than ἐμοῦ or especially ἐμαυτοῦ. The phrase τῷ θεῷ μου shows up also in the *Proema* of 1 Cor. 1:4, Philm. 4 and Phil. 1:3. The point of the personal pronoun is not 'my God and not yours.' Rather it is to underscore Paul's commitment of Almighty God as the focal point of his commitment.¹⁸ The LXX ὁ θεός μου only something along the lines of Douglas Moo's comment: 'The opening word, 'first,' implies a series, but Paul never comes to a 'second' or 'next.' It is hard to know whether Paul simply forgets to maintain the sequence he begins or whether the phrase functions here simply to highlight what he considers of primary importance.'¹³ In all likelihood, however, πρώτον should here be understood as an adverb of time, and so translated 'to begin with' or 'first of all'—or, perhaps, as an adverb of degree, which would signify some such idea as 'in the first place,' 'above all,' or 'especially.'¹⁴

"The particle μὲν, while generally affirmative, is used variously in koine Greek and throughout the NT (principally in Matthew, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Hebrews), with its precise significance being always dependent on the particular author's mood and purpose in the immediate context. Here at the beginning of the thanksgiving section of Romans this particle μὲν should probably be viewed as connoting the idea of an emphatic affirmation, that is, 'in truth' or 'indeed,' with the phrase πρώτον μὲν understood as 'first of all, in truth' — in concert with Paul's insistence at the beginning of 1:9 that 'God is my witness' (μάρτυς γὰρ μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, with the emphatic Greek positioning of μάρτυς, 'witness,' suggesting the need for such an affirmation) and comparable to his use of the phrase in Rom 3:2 ('first of all, in truth') or 1 Cor 11:18 ('in the first place, indeed')."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 102–103.]

¹⁶As usual, Paul follows his introduction with a report of the prayer he offers for the recipients. The formal style does not indicate mere formality. Paul's writing is set in the context of an ongoing ministry of prayer, and if he had to choose between praying and writing, he would have regarded prayer as more important. Here he reports his regular thanksgivings for the faith of the Roman church and his unceasing prayer that he might be able to visit them. This passes naturally into a further statement of his own apostolic vocation, amplifying what has already been said in vv. 1, 5 and explaining further his desire to come to Rome. This in turn leads to his summary of the letter's thesis in vv. 16–17." [N. T. Wright, "The Letter of the Romans," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 421–422.]

¹⁷The dative of direct object function of τῷ θεῷ with the verb εὐχαριστῶ is standard since the object is personal and not impersonal. τῷ θεῷ is a frequent object of this verb in the Jewish religious literature and reflects the Hebrew אֲדַבֵּר לַיהוָה.

¹⁸The μου ('my God') does not, of course, signify 'mine and not yours'; it is simply a way of stressing the fervor of his devotion, his deep personal commitment (so Phil 1:3; Philem 4; used regular-

of Psalms 3:8 5:2; 7:1, 3, 6; 13:3; 18:2, 6, 21, 28–29; 22:1–2, 10 et als provides the background framing of meaning for Paul's use here.

b) Then comes διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.¹⁹ The closest to this idea of indirect agency in reference to Christ in the *Proema* of Paul's letters is καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (2 Cor. 1:3; Col. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; cf. also 1 Pet. 1:3). First Corinthians 1:4 gets at the idea with ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, **based upon God's grace given to us in Christ Jesus**. The expression here in the prepositional phrase διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is unique to the *Proema* of the letters in the New Testament. Still for other instances of the idea inside Romans, see Rom 2:16; 5:1, 9, 11, 21; 7:25a; 8:37; 11:36; 15:30; 16:27.²⁰ Thus the anticipatory role of the *Praescriptio* and *Proem* sections to the letter body surfaces here as well.

But the meaning of this expression is very clear. Paul's thanks expressed to God flow through Jesus Christ to the heavenly throne of the Father. Christ is **the great, exclusive Intercessor of our prayers to God.**²¹ ly in the Pss—3:7; 5:2; 7:1, 3, 6; 13:3; 18:2, 6, 21, 28–29; 22:1–2, 10; etc.). 'This phrase, 'my God,' expresses ... the whole of true religion' (Bengel)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 28.]

¹⁹"The strongly supported phrase διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ('through Jesus Christ') is absent in uncorrected Codex Vaticanus (8* 01), which is probably due to a scribal error." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 99.]

²⁰Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 103.

²¹"The apostle's thanksgiving to God is 'through Jesus Christ' (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), which phraseology is not found in any of Paul's other thanksgivings — though it occurs elsewhere in Romans in various forms,¹⁷ as well as in Paul's other letters and at other places in the NT. The Church Fathers understood 'through Jesus Christ' here in 1:8 as referring to Christ's intermediary role as intercessor in heaven. So, for example, Origen commented:

To give thanks to God is to offer him a sacrifice of praise, and therefore he [Paul] adds 'through Jesus Christ,' as through a high priest. Anyone who wants to offer a sacrifice to God ought to know that he should offer it through the hands of a priest.¹⁸

"Some scholars, however, have played down any mediatorial or priestly activity on the part of the exalted Christ in Paul's use of the preposition διὰ here, preferring rather (1) to highlight his use of διὰ in 12:1, where he speaks of Christian ethics as being in response to the mercies of God,¹⁹ and (2) to spell out ideas that they see as underlying the early Christian use of that preposition, and so have suggested that διὰ here should be translated 'in virtue of' or 'on the basis of' — thereby arguing that it is more appropriate to understand Paul here as saying that Christ's work provides 'the basis and validation of prayer,'²⁰ or, as more expansively stated, that 'Christ is the one who has created the access to God for such thanks to be offered.'²¹ But though Paul was always profoundly conscious

The mediatorial role of Christ standing between God's people and the holy God of Heaven is the central theme of Hebrews, but is not exclusive to this one document of the NT.²²

c) Next comes περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, in regard to all of you. What provided the content of the expressions of thankfulness from Paul to God? This prepositional phrase defines the content in regard to the Christian community at Rome. It was what the apostle was aware of happening through God's actions in the life of the

of Christ's work as the basis for a person's access before God and as what validates one's prayer to God, it yet remains true, as Joseph Fitzmyer has aptly pointed out, that Paul was also 'supremely aware of Christ's actual and current intermediary role in heaven.'²² This is what is explicitly stated in 8:34, in words probably drawn from an early Christian confession: 'It is Christ Jesus — the one who died; more than that, who was raised to life — who is also at the right hand of God, and who, indeed, intercedes for us.' Such a mediatorial role is suggested by Paul's use of this same formula 'through Jesus Christ' in such passages in Romans as 2:16; 5:1, 11, 21; 7:25a; 15:30; and 16:27.²³ Thus it seems fully appropriate to speak of Paul's proclamation of Christ as including Christ's office as God's appointed Mediator, as well as to epitomize the convictions of the earliest believers in Jesus in this manner — and so to affirm, along with Charles Cranfield, that 'Christ is Mediator not only of God's approach to men (as, e.g., in v. 5), but also, as the risen and exalted Lord, of their responding approach to God in worship.'²⁴

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 104–105.]

²²For some of the richness and variety of mediatorial functions note:

Sense b. [mediatorial] occurs in a phrase like διὰ τοῦ προφήτου, Mt. 1:22; 2:5; Hb. 3:16 etc.; R. 1:2; Jn. 1:17; Ac. 15:12; ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς σημεῖα ... δι' αὐτῶν; Gl. 3:19; δι' ἀγγέλων.⁶ The formula "through Christ" (δι' αὐτοῦ, δι' οὗ) is also to be taken more often in the sense that Christ mediates the action of another,⁷ i.e., the action of God, namely, creation (Jn. 1:3; 1 C. 8:6; Col. 1:16); the revelation of salvation and reconciliation (Jn. 1:17, par. διὰ Μωυσέως); 3:17; Ac. 10:36; 2 C. 5:18; Col. 1:20), miracles (Ac. 2:22); judgment (R. 2:16); the consummation of salvation (R. 5:9; 1 C. 15:57); the impartation of the Spirit (Tt. 3:6). Yet the expression can also be used occasionally, though without any causal implication (→ infra), to describe Christ as also the Mediator of man's activity towards God. Indeed, the original sense can sometimes shine through: εἰσελεθεῖν, ἔρχεσθαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, προσέρχεσθαι τῷ θεῷ, προσαγωγὴν ἔχειν δι' αὐτοῦ (Jn. 10:9; 14:6; Hb. 7:25; R. 5:2). Yet it is never suggested that Christ is interposed as an intermediate authority between God and man which may be set in motion by human acts. The basic assumption is always that God takes the initiative through His action in Christ and thus makes all human achievement superfluous and excludes any intermediate authority. There is an approach to the causal use in the phrase πιστεύειν, πίστις, πιστὸς δι' αὐτοῦ (Jn. 1:7; Ac. 3:16; 1 Pt. 1:21).

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:67.]

community and its members. Note the emphasis upon inclusiveness with πάντων that is repeated from the Adscriptio πᾶσιν (v. 7). Sensitivity to the broad diversity in the community through the various house church groups prompted Paul to make this repeated point of including all of the community in the letter. Very likely he was already aware of opposition to him among some of these groups which surfaced openly upon his arrival in the city some five or six years later (cf. Phil. 1:15-18a).

δ) ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. **because your faith commitment is being broadcast in the entire world.** This causal dependent clause, introduced by ὅτι, sets forth the basis for Paul's thanksgiving to God. It is the witness of the Roman Christian community that has spread out beyond Rome that Paul has heard about and thus makes him thankful to God. Note the similar expression in 16:19, ἡ γὰρ ὑμῶν ὑπακοή εἰς πάντα ἀφίκετο, **for your obedience is reaching to all.** This is an important parallel since it provides invaluable defining input into the statement in 1:8.

ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν has been interpreted numerous ways down through the century, and mostly incorrectly. One of the false understandings reaches back to the church fathers who generally saw ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν as referring to the set of doctrines taught by the Roman Catholic Church. But what is labeled here as ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν is labeled ἡ ὑμῶν ὑπακοή in 16:19. Thus faith is not doctrines to be believed but obedience to Christ to be lived out.²³ The pragmatic Romans could care less about the

²³"The reason that Paul gives for his thankfulness is not any personal or spiritual qualities he knew existed among his Romans addressees — as cited, for example, in his thanksgiving for his converts at Philippi, who constituted one of his best churches,²⁵ or even in his thanksgiving for his converts at Corinth, who comprised one of his most troublesome churches.²⁶ Nor is anything said about the faith of the Christians at Rome as being especially great, deep, or strong or in any other way superior to that of other believers in Jesus. Paul did not know most of the Christians at Rome personally, and it would have been disingenuous for him to suggest that he did by attempting to identify any such characteristics in them or by simply flattering them. Rather, he is thankful 'because your faith is being reported all over the world' (ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ).

"The use of the articular expression ἡ πίστις ('the faith') to mean 'the content of what is believed' is not common in Paul's letters. 'The faith' as signifying "a content to be believed" does appear, however, in Gal 1:23 ('They ['the churches of Judea'] only kept hearing, 'The one who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy'). Yet what Paul calls ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ('your faith') here in 1:8 he will later call ἡ ὑμῶν ὑπακοή ('your obedience') in 16:19. So his emphasis is not so much on the content of what they believed as on their act of 'faith' and their actions of 'obedience' in response to God and his salvation as provided 'in Christ'."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016),

abstract thinking of its people. But they watched carefully the life style of the people living under their control. To confess Jesus as Lord (cf. 10:10) and then live out that commitment day by day is what would catch the attention of both fellow believers and non-believers alike. Thus it was the faith commitment of the Roman Christians that became known beyond the city. To be sure, the apostle does not spell out the particulars of how they were living out this commitment since he only knew a small segment of the community personally. Thus compare this to the *Proem* expansion elements in 1 Thess. 1:3-10, with a congregation that he knew well. The obedience of the Christians at Thessalonica rapidly became known throughout the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, and beyond (vv. 7-8).

καταγγέλλεται, from καταγγέλλω, has the sense of *making something/someone known widely in a public manner*.²⁴ Thus the faith commitment of the Roman Christians was being broadcast extensively beyond the city itself. This hints at the rapidly growing size of the community, as well as to the genuineness of their faith commitment. Paul avoids making claims about the Romans that he could not validate from personal experience with them (as vv. 9-15 illustrate). Instead, his generalized language is filled with optimism and confidence about the faith commitment of this congregation.

How this news was spread is not spelled out but can be assumed through the extensive documentation of substantial travels by large numbers of merchants, military members, government workers, etc. from the secular documents of this time. The later Christian emphasis on extending **Christian hospitality** to traveling believers in the Pastoral Epistles and Johannine letters affirms that Christians were often among those traveling from place to place during the first century.

ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, in the entire world. Clearly this is more emphatic than ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ, **in all the world**,²⁵

105.]

²⁴**καταγγέλλω** impf. κατήγγελλον; 1 aor. κατήγγελα; pf. κατήγγελκα. Pass.: 2 aor. κατηγγέλην **Ac 17:13**; pf. ptc. κατηγγελέμενος (Just.). (Since X., An. 2, 5, 38; ins [e.g. SIG 797, 6]; pap; 2 Macc; Philo, Op. M. 106; Joseph., Just., Tat.; freq. used of public decrees) **to make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination, proclaim, announce.** [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 515.]

²⁵"ὅλος == 'whole,' 'complete,' 'undivided,' 'intact,' in the NT mostly with a noun, and to express its totality. Whether it comes before or after the substantive makes no decisive difference to the sense, cf. ὅλη ἡ πόλις (Mk. 1:33; Lk. 8:39) and ἡ πόλις ὅλη (Ac. 21:30) or ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου (Mt. 5:29 f.; 6:22 f.; 1 C. 12:17) and τὸ σῶμά σου ὅλον (Lk. 11:36)."¹ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:174.]

the more commonly used construction (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:6).²⁶ The debated question is What is meant? The entire Roman world including Christians and non-Christians? Just a widespread awareness among Christians in the Roman empire? Clearly it doesn't include the angels in Heaven, as a few church fathers claimed. Most likely, the somewhat hyperbolic phrase simply refers to Christians generally outside the city of Rome (cf. Eph 1:15–16; Col 1:3–4; 1 Thess 1:2–3; 2 Thess 1:3–4; also Col 1:5–7; 1 Thess 1:7–8; 2 Thess 1:3–4; Philem 5; cf. 1 Cor 1:5–7).²⁷ It

²⁶"πᾶς as adjective can have very different meanings acc. to its use with article or without article, predicatively or attributively (cf. words like αὐτός, μόνος, ἄκρος, μέσος, ἔσχατος).² The use of the art. normally depends on whether or not the simple noun would be with or without art.³ As regards the art. and noun one has to distinguish between an individual or demonstrative and a generic or indefinite function. In particular one may speak of a summative, implicative and distributive signification of πᾶς as the term embraces either a totality or sum as an independent entity (summative), an inclusion of all individual parts or representatives of a concept (implicative), or extension to relatively independent particulars (distributive). If the reference is to the attainment of the supreme height or breadth of a concept, we have an elative (or amplificative) significance." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:887.]

²⁷"Paul's reference to his addressees' faith as being proclaimed 'all over the world' (ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ) is, without doubt, an 'amiable hyperbole.'²⁹ It is similar to what he says in 1 Thess 1:8 about the faith of his converts at Thessalonica as being known 'not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but everywhere' (ἐν παντί τόπῳ) and in Col 1:6 about the gospel as 'producing fruit and growing everywhere in the world' (ἐν παντί τῷ κόσμῳ) — also to what he says in 2 Cor 2:14 about his own ministry as having 'spread the fragrance of knowing him [i.e., Christ] everywhere' (ἐν παντί τόπῳ). Luke uses this same type of hyperbolic expression when he speaks of 'all the world' (πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην) taxed by an order of the emperor Augustus, when Quirinius was governor of Syria (Luke 2:1), and of a severe famine 'over the whole world' (ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην) during the reign of the emperor Claudius (Acts 11:28). As parallels, Adolf Deissmann has drawn attention to (1) 'a heathen epitaph (now in Braunsberg) of an otherwise unknown Egyptian lady, Seratus, and her relations,' which 'speaks of their modesty as 'known in all the world' ' and (2) 'a Christian letter of later date,' which 'says of a (Bishop) John that his fame goes throughout 'the whole world.' '30

"Although the gospel has universal significance,³¹ Paul's reference to the faith of Christians at Rome as being known 'all over the world' should not be understood distributively, as though their faith was known in every area and by every person on earth. Likewise, though devotionally true, it should not be read universally — that is, as including both heaven and earth — as though Paul was here teaching that even the angels of heaven rejoiced in the faith of Gentile believers in Jesus, as some of the Church Fathers devotionally proposed.³² Rather, what Paul means here is that the Christian faith of believers at Rome had been proclaimed 'far and wide,'³³ particularly in 'the microcosmos of the Christian 'world.' '34 Certainly reports of a Christian presence at Rome, the capital city of the Roman Empire, would have been newsworthy for Christians throughout the empire. And Paul was no doubt thankful to hear such reports — just as he was thankful for the spread of the gospel

stands as a supreme compliment of the Christian commitment that other believers elsewhere in the empire are hearing about the impact of the Gospel in the imperial capital of the world at that time.

10.3.2.2 Reasons for, 1:9-15

9 μάρτυς γὰρ μοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ὃν λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνησθῆναι ὑμῶν ποιούμεναι 10 πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου δεόμενος εἴ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 11 ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, 12 τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ. 13 οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθη ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. 14 Ἑλλήσιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, 15 οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

9 For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10 asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — 12 or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15 — hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Ordinarily in the Proema of Paul's letters the thanksgiving prayer is followed by several expansion elements. Then quite often the thanksgiving shades off into petition as prayer expression. At this point the apostle signals with core expression followed by expansion elements several things that he regularly prays that God will do in the life of his recipients. But Romans is different. First, because he has not yet visited the church and thus does not know the particulars that well. Secondly, with the petitionary prayer expression in several of the Proema, the apostle speaks from a

elsewhere in the empire, however it came about, through whomever it was proclaimed, and in whatever form it took.³⁵"

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 106–107.]

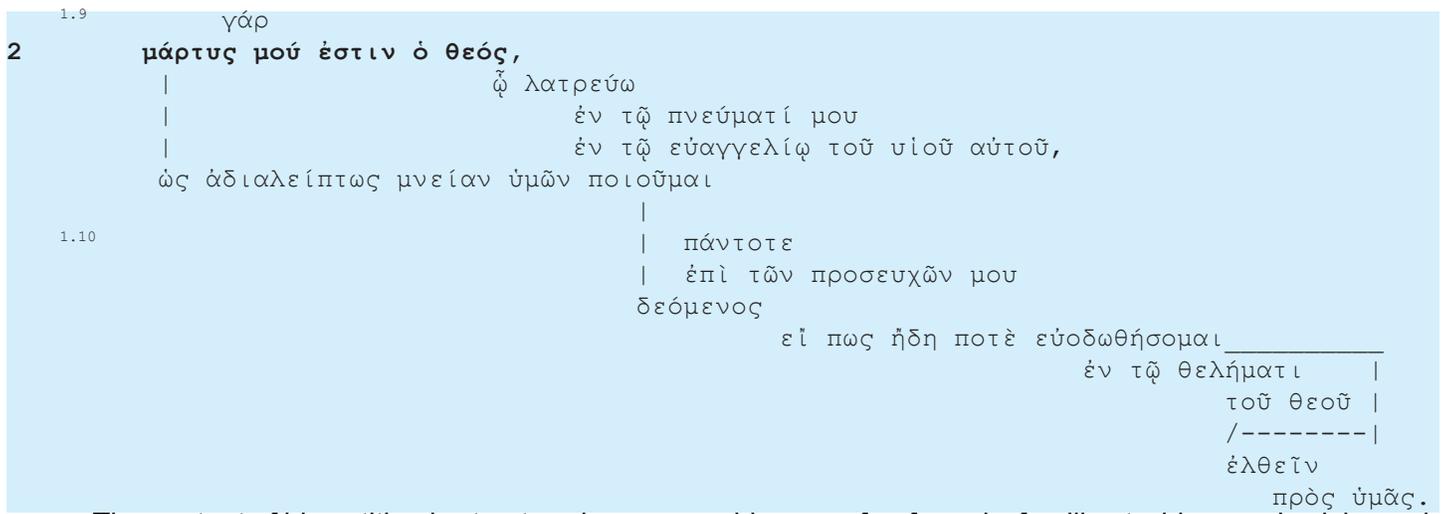
1.9	γάρ	
2	μάρτυς μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός,	
		ὃ λατρεύω
		ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου
		ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,
	ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεΐαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι	
1.10		
		πάντοτε
		ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου
		δεόμενος
		εἰ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐόδωθήσομαι
		ἐν τῷ θελήματι
		τοῦ θεοῦ
		ἐλθεῖν
		πρὸς ὑμᾶς.
1.11	γάρ	
3	ἐπιποθῶ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς,	
	ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν	
	εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς,	
1.12	δέ	
4	τοῦτο ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι	
	ἐν ὑμῖν	
	διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ.	
1.13	δέ	
5	οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,	
	ἀδελφοί,	
		ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν
		πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
		καὶ
	---	ἐκωλύθην
		ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο,
		ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ
		καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθῶς
		καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.
1.14		Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάροις,
		σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις
6	ὀφειλέτης εἰμί,	
1.15		οὕτως
		τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον
		καὶ
		ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ
		εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

pastoral stance of seeking to give counsel to believers he knows well and many of whom came to know Christ under his ministry at the city of their residence.

How does Paul approach this different situation in Rome? The above block diagram clearly shows that this section of vv. 9-13 and 14-15 is set off not as petitionary prayer so much as reasons for his thanksgiving asserted in v. 8. The repeated γάρ in vv. 9 and 11 put on the table two specific reasons (vv. 9-10; 11-13) for thanksgiving. Vv. 14-15 then stand as a gnomic principle of Paul's divine calling to be foundational to his desire to travel to Rome. They sum up the heart of the Proem and also set the stage for the beginning of the

letter body in v. 16.

a) Yet in the opening sentence of vv. 9-10, the language of petitionary prayer is set forth in ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεΐαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου **δεόμενος...**, how unceasingly I remember you always in my prayers **asking...**(see above diagram). And this expression is prefaced by a solemn oath affirmed by the apostle: μάρτυς γάρ μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ὃ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, for God is my witness, whom I serve in the depths of my being in the Gospel about His Son. The oath underscores the intensity of Paul's statement of petitionary prayers in behalf of the Ro-



mans. The content of his petition is structured as a conditional protasis dependent clause (substantival object clause): εἴ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, **whether now at last I may be blessed in God's will to come to you.** The focus centers on God's leadership in Paul's ministry and the conviction of a mutual blessing should Paul be allowed to travel to Rome.

Let's take a closer look at these three segments of the sentence in vv. 9-10. The solemn oath that Paul begins with is a standardized formula out of both Jewish and Greek traditions in his world: μάρτυς μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός.²⁸ Paul makes use of similar oath formulas elsewhere in his letters as well: 2 Cor 1:23; Phil 1:8; 1 Thess 2:5, 10; cf. 2 Cor 11:31; Gal 1:20. His reason for using the formula here is not directly stated but contextually seems to be motivated clearly by a negative image of him and his integrity among his Jewish peers.²⁹ Yet

²⁸"For God is my witness,' is a familiar appeal in both Greek and Jewish literature (e.g., 1 Sam 12:5–6; T. Levi 19.3; Josephus, War 1.595; Polybius 11.6.4). So elsewhere in Paul—2 Cor 1:23; Phil 1:8; 1 Thess 2:5, 10; cf. 2 Cor 11:31; Gal 1:20. For Paul to use such a solemn formula underlines his concern lest he be misunderstood and not given a sympathetic hearing. If he knew Jesus' teaching on oaths (Matt 5:33–37; cf. James 5:12) he presumably did not regard it as necessarily relevant to such conversational conventions." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 28.]

²⁹"For the fact that Paul calls on God as his witness suggests something of the great importance he attaches to his addressees' knowing that he prays for them. Evidently in the 'court of public opinion' among the believers in Jesus at Rome, Paul was not held in highest regard and his interest in them was denigrated. It would, of course, have been impossible for anyone at Rome—as well as anyone anywhere else — to know Paul's real intentions and concerns. Only God knows such matters! So Paul calls on God as his witness regarding his attitudes toward and prayers for his addressees, the Roman Christians.

"In some of his other letters Paul invokes God's 'witness' about his work and his activities using these same words,³⁷ while elsewhere in his writings he uses only similar phraseology.³⁸ In all these affirmations Paul echoes OT usage.³⁹ But what he wants his addressees at Rome to know is that he is really concerned for them,

his use of a formula familiar to his non-Jewish readers communicates to them as well. Thus to the entire readership of the letter, the apostle appeals to God to validate the genuineness and intensity of the following statement ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεῖαν ὑμῶν ποιῶμαι which defines the content of μάρτυς (cf. the above diagram).

The adjective functioning relative clause modifying θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, **whom I serve in the depths of my being in the Gospel about His Son**, further defines and amplifies the identity of Paul's θεός. Paul intentionally uses a specialized verb λατρεύω that connotes religious service, rather than generalized service.³⁰ Again, the particular tone conveyed by λατρεύω conveyed not just distinctly religious service to the Jewish God, but also temple based priestly service to the pagan gods of the Greeks

as he has always been."

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 108.]

³⁰"A first matter of great importance in this subordinate relative clause has to do with the characterization of Paul's mission to Gentiles as his service for God, using the verb λατρεύειν ('to serve worshipfully') that appears in the LXX for both the worship and the religious service of the people of God.⁴⁰ By his use of λατρεύειν Paul would inevitably have raised in his addressees' minds the highly significant cognate nouns λατρεία ('service' or 'worship') and λατρία ('adoration' or 'worship'), the former being used nine times in the LXX and the latter even more frequently in the Greek OT with reference to the people's response to God. Thus Paul seems to want his addressees to know, in effect, that he considers all his missionary activities as both worship and service to God — that is, as his 'worshipful service' or 'service of worship' given to God. So it may be said, as Joseph Fitzmyer has quite rightly pointed out: 'Paul's very prayer for the Christians of Rome is an integral part of his worship of God.'⁴¹" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 108–109.]

and Romans.³¹ Thus Paul's commitment is a religiously motivated commitment of full devotion to God.

The rare but fascinating limits of this devotion is expressed by ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου. Although literally translatable with *in my spirit*, this idiom in Greek goes a different direction in meaning. πνεῦμα literally is one's breath, either human or divine.³² The breath of an individual represented the essence of one's being. The play on πνεῦμα as spirit and Spirit (human / divine) allows for a commingling of 'spirits' deep down inside a person. The preposition ἐν denotes even inside the inner source of this breath at the very core of one's being. Out of this interesting image of πνεῦμα arises the idiom of service to God arising from the very core of his being that is shaped and formed by the divine Spirit of God. It is a hugely powerful claim that is supported by his oath seeking God's validating of its correctness.³³ Thus by

³¹The wide range of ancient Greek to express distinctly religious service to deity is illustrated in the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon, topics 53.1 - 53.15 with 15 different sets of terms.

³²"This is one of the relatively few instances where Paul uses πνεῦμα for the human spirit (see also particularly 8:16; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 16:18; 2 Cor 2:13; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; 1 Thess 5:23; Philem 25), referring to that part, or better, dimension of the person by which he/she is related to God (cf. particularly 8:16; 1 Cor 2:10-13). That it is thus through the human spirit that the Spirit of God acts upon and communicates with the human being results in some experiential ambiguity (1 Cor 14:14, 32; 2 Cor 4:13; and cf. Rom 1:9 with Phil 3:3; elsewhere, e.g., Mark 14:38; James 4:5); but it does not follow that Paul means God's Spirit at this point (against Kümmel, Römer 7, 33; Schweizer, TDNT 6:435). The phrasing here clearly implies that Paul is deliberately contrasting the worship appropriate in relation to the gospel with the typically cult-oriented worship of his fellow Jews (cf. 2:28-29; 12:1; 15:16; Phil 3:3). Whereas Paul's Pharisaic contemporaries sought to enhance the holiness of the cult by extending its purity requirements to everyday life (see particularly J. Neusner, *Politics to Piety*, and elsewhere), Paul abandoned the cultic distinctiveness of Judaism by 'spiritualizing' the cultic language and applying it to all activity which expressed commitment to Christ and his gospel." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 29.]

³³The dilemma facing Bible translators here is enormous. No similar image exists anywhere in any modern western language. The standard three options for translating figures of speech from the source language to the receptor language are all that are available: 1) retain the figure of the source language in the receptor language expression in spite of little or no meaning being transferred; 2) seek to find in the receptor language a figure with comparable meaning to that of the source language figure. Here none exists. 3) translate the perceived meaning of the source language figure with direct, non-figurative expression in the receptor language. From these translation options, assess how different translators approached the Greek (source language) ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου:

Eng: KJV, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, NASB, NIV, HCSB, NET, NJB, D-R: *with / in my spirit*. NLT, TEV, CEDVK: *with all my heart*. NCB, Nlrv: *with my whole heart*. Message: *whom I so love to worship and serve*. Cotton Patch: *whom I worship spiritually*. Tyndale: *with my sprete*. BBE: *in spirit*.

Lat: Vlg (Clem); VUL (SESB): *in spiritu meo*.

ὃ λατρεύω

ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου

ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,

the oath, the apostle asks God to validate the sincerity and depth of his commitment to come to Rome under God's leadership.

The second prepositional phrase modifier of the verb λατρεύω is ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. A second setting / foundation for the religious service of Paul becomes the Gospel. The action orientation of εὐαγγελίῳ means that the genitive case of υἱοῦ is the objective genitive function.³⁴ Thus the translation into English is *the Gospel about / concerning His Son* (= 'gospelizing' His Son). Paul's religious service to God is within the framework of 'gospelizing' His Son. Communicating, in word and deed, the message of the Gospel is how Paul serves God.³⁵ This stands in contrast to the synagogue that focused on communicating the cult of Judaism in its purity laws to the outside world.³⁶

Ger: Zürcher: *mit allem, was in mir ist*. Luther (1545, 1912, 1984), Schlachter (2000), Elberfelder (1905): *in meinem Geist*. Menge: *in (oder: mit) meinem Geiste*. EU2: *mit ganzem Herzen*. GN: *mit ganzer Hingabe*.

Span: RVR60, LBLA, BJ (2000). SEV (1569): *en mi espíritu*. TLADK, Palabra: *y lo hago de todo corazón*. BFC 97: *de tout mon cœur*. DHH-CP, DHH-LA, NTV: *con todo mi corazón*. NVI: *de corazón*.

Fren: Segond, Osterwald: *en mon esprit*.

Mod. Gk: TGV: *με το πνεύμα μου*.

Ital: GDB (1649), RIV (1927): *nello spirito mio*

What emerges from these above western language translations is largely an unwillingness to attempt to clearly convey meaning to the reader. The preservation of the source language image in the receptor expression dominates translations across the various languages. In my estimation, the one translation that gets closer to Paul's meaning is the *Zürcher Bibel* (2007) with its *mit allem, was in mir ist*, (with all that is in me). The shift to the receptor language image of *heart / Herzen / corazón* is inadequate to the degree that it emphasizes self determination rather than a divinely shaped inner commitment. But none of these translations fully communicates this deeper meaning of Paul's expression.

³⁴To speak of 'the gospel of his Son' so soon after speaking of 'the gospel of God' is striking (similarly 15:16 and 15:19); and while the genitive construction here should perhaps be taken in the sense 'the gospel concerning his Son' (objective genitive—so 1:3), the fact that both phrases are of precisely the same form and are inevitably ambiguous should not be ignored." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 29.]

³⁵This phrase τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ relates to περί τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, *concerning His Son* in v. 3 which goes back to εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, *God's Gospel* in v. 1c. But it is more dynamic than the previous one, even though θεοῦ in εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ is subjective genitive case function, i.e., *the Gospel produced by God*.

³⁶Whereas Paul's Pharisaic contemporaries sought to enhance the holiness of the cult by extending its purity requirements to everyday life (see particularly J. Neusner, *Politics to Piety*, and elsewhere), Paul abandoned the cultic distinctiveness of Judaism

ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεῖαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι

1.10

|
| πάντοτε
| ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου
δεόμενος

εἰ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι _____
ἐν τῷ θελήματι |
τοῦ θεοῦ |
/-----|
ἐλθεῖν
πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεῖαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι, how unceasingly I make mention of you. The idiom μνεῖαν ποιοῦμαι here reflects similar expressions in four other Proema in Paul's letters:

- 1 Thess. 1:2, ὑμῶν μνεῖαν ποιούμενοι
- Philim. 4, μνεῖαν σου ποιούμενος
- Eph. 1:16, μνεῖαν ποιούμενος
- Phil. 1:3, ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνεῖα ὑμῶν³⁷

The idiom approximates the verb μνημονεύω, **I remember**, and is a part of the word group that includes μνημονεύω, μμνήσκομαι, ἐπιλανθάνομαι, μνημονεύω, μνήμη, μνήμα, μνημεῖον, and μνεῖα. Two compound verb forms also are a part of this group: ἀναμμνήσκω and ὑπομμνήσκω. The common parameter of meaning ranges from **having someone / something in mind to expressing that awareness to others including God in prayer.** The idiom in Rom. 1:9 centers on the latter emphasis of mentioning the Roman Christians to God in Paul's prayers.³⁸

The adverb ἀδιαλείπτως is a Pauline word in the NT with four uses (1 Thess. 1:2; 2:13; 5:17; Rom. 1:9) and de-

by 'spiritualizing' the cultic language and applying it to all activity which expressed commitment to Christ and his gospel." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 29.]

³⁷"μνεῖα is often found in Gk. (Soph. El.) and Hellen. (inscr., pap., LXX) usage in the sense of 'recollection,' 'mention.' Common both here and in the NT are combinations like μνεῖαν ποιεῖσθαι (cf. Paul's mention in prayer, R. 1:9; Eph. 1:16; 1 Th. 1:2; Philim. 4: Phil. 1:3): μνεῖαν ἔχειν (1 Th. 3:6; 2 Tm. 1:3). The LXX also has μνεῖα μμνήσκεσθαι (Dt. 7:18; Jer. 38:20): ἐστὶ μνεῖα (Zech. 13:2); μνεῖα γίνεται (Is. 23:16; Ez. 21:37; 25:10). μνεῖαν ποιεῖσθαι means 'to think of, to mention, someone' (cf. ψ 110:4: μνεῖαν ἐποίησατο τῶν θαυμασίων αὐτοῦ), μνεῖαν ἔχειν, 'to have in remembrance' (τινός). The original OT כָּן or כָּן may be constantly detected." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:678.]

³⁸"When Paul thinks of his congregations or brethren in intercession, making mention of their names before God and making their welfare his concern in prayer, this mention is part of his calling as an apostle, and it sets all human relations under the grace of God. According to 1 Th. 3:6 the church has him in good remembrance (ὅτι ἔχετε μνεῖαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε); this includes the fact that their mutual relations are unruffled."¹ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:678.]

notes the idea of consistency. Its NT role of adverb is limited to modifying the following verbs: μνεῖαν ποιεῖσθαι Ro 1:9; 1 Th 1:2. εὐχαριστεῖν 2:13. προσεύχεσθαι 5:17. All are prayer language verbal uses and with the modifying adverb connote the idea of consistent and regular prayer to God. "Worship and prayer are closely linked here. We gain the impression that Paul prays a great deal and that he always remembers to pray for the Romans when he prays."³⁹

πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, always in my prayers. One of the grammar questions here is the modifying role of the adverb πάντοτε, **always**. Since the typical position of an adverbial modifying is after what it modifies rather than before it, some are convinced that πάντοτε should be taken with the very ποιοῦμαι, just before it. But given the almost synonymous meaning of πάντοτε and ἀδιαλείπτως, the more correct understanding is for πάντοτε to be taken with δεόμενος, and thus in a parallel pre-position matching ἀδιαλείπτως. Both stand at the beginning of the pre-position modifiers of ποιοῦμαι and δεόμενος, as reflected in the above diagram. The seventeenth century insertion of verse markings into the biblical text reflects this understanding by Stephanus.⁴⁰

³⁹Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 43.

⁴⁰This is contra Longenecker's argument for the post-understanding:

Of greater importance, however, is the perennially vexing question about how the phrases of 1:9b (about Paul's earnestness) and 1:10 (about the content of his prayers) are to be related. Are they to be joined, thereby closing off the sentence that began with "God is my witness" in 1:9a with the words "how I constantly remember you at all times in my prayers"? Or does the phrase of 1:10a begin a new sentence and thus relate to what immediately follows in 1:10b, thereby reading: "At all times in my prayers I pray that somehow, now at last, I will succeed by God's will to come to you." These phrases have frequently been separated by the versification that has become traditional during the past three centuries, with a period, semicolon, or comma inserted after "how I constantly remember you" at the end of 1:9—and with, then, "at all times in my prayers" viewed as the beginning of all that follows in 1:10. Justification for such a division was evidently based on the opinion that the presence of two such nearly synonymous adverbs as ἀδιαλείπτως ("constantly") and πάντοτε ("always," "at all times") was a bit much for one sentence or clause and so required their distribution into two sentences.

But rather than view "constantly" and "at all times" as awk-

What Paul stresses is a regular request to God to allow him to travel to Rome. Every time he mentions the Romans in his prayers, his request to come to the city is a part of that prayer.

The second modifier of δεόμενος is ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, in my prayers. The pattern of Paul's prayer life cannot be determined with exactness.⁴¹ The Jewish and Christian framework of this era is one of three options a) three times daily; b) Jesus' example of more extensive prayers on frequent occasions; or c) praying during the time of traveling from place to place.⁴² This noun προσευχή surfaces only 3 times in Romans: here as a statement of Paul's prayers, and twice as a request of the Romans to pray (12:12; 15:30). The verb προσεύχομαι is used only in 8:26 in the letter.⁴³ Formal,

wardly repetitious when combined in one sentence, it is just as possible to understand these two adverbial expressions as included in one sentence for emphasis. Even more telling against separating the adverbs by allocating them to two separate sentences—and more significant in support of their original appearance together in one sentence—is the fact that, as Charles Cranfield has aptly expressed matters,

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 112.]

⁴¹The primary prayer language verbs / nouns of the NT are εὐχομαι, εὐχή, προσεύχομαι, προσευχή (→ αἰτέω, δέομαι, ἐπικαλέω, ἐρωτάω, ἐυλογέω, εὐχαριστέω, προσκυνέω). [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:775.] This overlaps with the much broader semantic domain of communicating with another person and with deity, as is reflected in topics 33.156 - 33.475 in the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon.

⁴²ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, 'at my prayers.' Paul presumably maintained regular times of prayer: perhaps three times a day, as already established in Jewish practice (cf. Dan 6:11; Acts 3:1; 10:3), and taken over by Christianity (Did. 8.3) (see J. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* [London: SCM, 1967], 67–72); or perhaps following Jesus' practice of extensive prayer (Mark 1:35; 6:46; 14:32–42), or prayer as occasion prompted (cf. Acts 10:9), or prayer as he traveled ('unceasingly'?). For ἀδιαλείπτως see Spicq, 41–43; through Paul's usage it became a characteristic way of describing the concern shown in prayer (1 Thess 5:17; Ign. Eph. 10.1; Herm. Sim. 9.11.7; Pol. Phil. 4.3). δέομαι is a strong word in Paul—'ask earnestly, beg' (2 Cor 5:20; 8:4; 10:2; Gal 4:12; 1 Thess 3:10). [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 29.]

⁴³In non-biblical Gk. the simple εὐχομαι, εὐχή is the most comprehensive term for invocation of the deity. In the earliest period the sense of 'to vow' is present as well as the more common 'to ask,' 'to pray.'¹ In the LXX this word is almost always used for נָזַר and often for נָזַר, but here, and even more so in the NT statistics show a severe loss to προσεύχομαι, προσευχή, which becomes the main word for prayer. There are only a few relics of the simple form in the NT.

"εὐχέσθαι πρὸς τινα in the LXX is normally used in sense 1. (though cf. Job 22:27; 2 Macc. 9:13), but in the NT it occurs only at

set times for prayer each day was an important part of the prayer life of a pious Jew in the first century. Clearly by the beginning of the second century, as is reflected in several of the apostolic fathers writings, e.g., *Didache* 8:3 where praying the Lord's Prayer three times daily is prescribed. Most likely for Jewish Christians, like Paul in the first century, the only change in prayer patterns was to shift to Christian oriented prayers rather than purely Jewish oriented prayers that were taken exclusively from the Psalms. Non Jewish believers did have a pagan background of praying but it was diverse and not as rigid as that of the Jews.⁴⁴ Thus much would 2 C. 13:7. εὐχεσθαι τινι in the LXX mostly has sense 2. (Sir. 38:9 is an exception), but the use in Ac. 26:29 is different. What is prayed for is in the acc. with inf. in Ac. 26:29; 27:29; 3 Jn. 2, in the nom. with inf. in R. 9:3, and expressed by a ὅπως clause in Jm. 5:16. There is a simple trans. in 2 C. 13:9."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:775–776.]

⁴⁴ 2. In the Hellenistic period prayer is affected both by the heritage of Gk. philosophy with its criticism and ideal of prayer and also by the penetration into the Gk. world of the oriental mystery religions whose cultus gives particular features to prayer. Philosophy continues on the course adopted,⁶⁵ and is popularised in the new Stoa and related schools. To an even greater degree than in the classical period one may say that the image presented by literature is also true of popular religion.

a. The first great religious and philosophical stream in Hellenism is the popular philosophical enlightenment as this may be clearly seen in the Stoic-Cynic diatribe. Here the ancient belief in the gods is a thing of the past, and a practical monotheism has been attained which is strengthened rather than obscured by the continuing existence of many local cults, since the one supreme God is everywhere worshipped in the many deities. Prayer is certainly offered to various gods, but these represent God and are in no way differentiated.⁶⁶ The prayer of philosophers is addressed to this one deity. The nature of the thought of God lays its impress upon prayer. Since the conception of God is basically impersonal,⁶⁷ we do not find in prayer those features which presuppose a personal being to whom it is offered. Above all, there can be no true petition in Stoic prayer. It is true that requests for health of soul, for liberation from desires, for 'divine gifts which have nothing to do with carnal and earthly lusts,'⁶⁸ have the appearance of petitions. But they are not really subjects of prayer; they simply reflect the ideal which man should seek. He is to become one whose request is only for blessings of this kind. That this is not true petition may be seen from a statement of Seneca: It is foolish to pray for a right disposition when one can attain it of oneself. What need is there to lift up one's hand to heaven or to approach the statues of the gods? 'God is near thee, with thee, in thee.'⁶⁹ Such statements justify us in wondering whether prayer is seriously meant.⁷⁰ Not only is there no serious prayer; there is also no certainty of being heard.⁷¹ The common request for physical health is repudiated,⁷² since we should not ask the gods for things which they do not give.⁷³ Prayer is thus attacked at the root. Its only remaining content is an expression of resolution in face of destiny. We should not be misled, therefore, by well-known verse of Cleanthes warmly and frequently commended by Epictetus:⁷⁴

ἄγου δέ μ', ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ σύ γ' ἢ Πεπρωμένη,

ὅποι ποθ' ὑμῖν εἰμι διατεταγμένος.

"This Zeus is in fact no more than fate, and the inflexibility (ἀπάθεια, ἀταραξία) of the wise not only separates him by a great gulf from his fellows but also makes it impossible for him to invoke God.⁷⁵ Lifted into the icy regions of philosophical speculation, prayer withers and dies. At a later period there is some reaction against this. Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* says:⁷⁶ ὕσον ὕσον, ὦ φίλε Ζεῦ, κατὰ τῆς ἀρούρας τῆς Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν πεδίων.' ἦτοι οὐ δεῖ εὐχεσθαι ἢ οὕτως· ἀπλῶς καὶ ἐλευθέρως. To be sure the simplicity and freedom of this prayer consist more in the avoidance of a wordy epiclesis or the absence of recollections of past sacrifices or the promises of new ones. In any case he is not expressing a confident petition for rain at a time of drought. The true aspect of his prayer may be seen from another passage⁷⁷ in which he rejects this type of concrete petition and extols prayer for inner development as the only kind appropriate to the wise. Certainly we cannot see any evident signs of a warm confidence in God.

"b. The second great religious trend in Hellenism is the piety of the Mysteries. Though shaped by cultic forms and rituals, this rests on a basis of individual religious life. The redemption sought in the Mysteries presupposes individual religion. The cultic fellowship is a group of seekers or initiates gathered from every class and nation and united only by the consecrating rites. It is here that prayer takes on its full significance. In the great prayers of the Isis dedication of Apuleius,⁷⁸ in the prayer of the Hermes mystery,⁷⁹ in the stuttering and stammering of the Paris magic papyri, the individual everywhere experiences with awe the proximity of the deity whose possession he has become by the sacred rites of dedication, whose hands control his destiny and from whom he expects salvation. Yet prayer is only a penultimate thing for the initiate. The ultimate climax of religious experience is reached in the vision of God, *in adoratio de proximo*,⁸⁰ in ἀτενίζειν τῷ θεῷ.⁸¹ For this mystical vision prayer is simply scaffolding. It forms as it were the bridge from the limited possibilities of human will and work to the sphere of undisturbed, ecstatic and blessed divine vision where silence is the highest form of worship.⁸² where words are heard which man cannot utter.⁸³ It is thus natural that the content of prayer should be secondary and that the whole straining should be towards this visionary experience. Pre-eminence is given to eloquent hymns of adoring worship adorned with every rhetorical device.⁸⁴ Then come songs of thanksgiving for the knowledge granted in visions⁸⁵ or more generally for the gracious rule of the deity.⁸⁶ Prayers for mundane things are rare and they are of minor significance.⁸⁷ Intercession for others is usually concerned with their ἄγνοια.⁸⁸ We never have a concrete need which gives rise to a cry for help, whether in the form of an external difficulty or a troubled conscience. At most it is general human frailty and finitude which the one who prays seeks to escape in periods of ecstasy and finally for ever. But these things are natural facts rather than moral. How far removed the piety of the Mysteries is from Christian prayer may be seen with especial clarity in Paul. He knows mystical ecstasy (2 C. 12:1 ff.), but in prayer he wins through to the assurance that ὅπτασία do not really count, that the grace of God must suffice, and that God's power is supremely operative in weakness (2 C. 12:7 ff.).⁸⁹

"c. A rather different picture is presented where Hellenistic piety meets and unites with Judaism as in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon. So far as prayer is concerned, the Jewish elements are by far the more powerful. To Philo, who even advances new arguments to establish the provisions of the Law concerning vows,⁹⁰ it is self-evident that the righteous, the ἀσκητής, should turn to God in prayer.⁹¹ Only of a man who prays can it be said that he lives.⁹² What constitutes the greatness of a people is that God is near to it

need to be learned about Christian prayer by these who came out of one of the many different Greek religious heritages. In this *Proem* opening of the letter the example in praying is set forth by the apostle's own fervent praying to God.

δεόμενος εἶ πως ἤδη ποτέ εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Asking whether now at last I might be blessed in the will of God to come to you. This adverbial participle phrase reaches back to the verb ποιῶμαι: *I make mention in asking...* Thus the making mention is then defined as asking in Paul's prayers.

and answers its prayers.⁹³ The supreme task of the high-priest is to come before God with prayer and intercession for his people, for all humanity and indeed for the whole of creation.⁹⁴ One who truly prays has for God the value of a whole people.⁹⁵ One should approach God in prayer with purity and penitence,⁹⁶ prepared to make confession.⁹⁷ One should do so voluntarily. If we pray only when driven by necessity, we have as little prospect of being heard as the unrighteous. Enforced prayer is worthless.⁹⁸ Penitent prayer for mercy⁹⁹ is sure of being heard, for God loves to forgive rather than to punish,¹⁰⁰ and goes far beyond our asking.¹⁰¹ On the other hand He answers only to the degree that it is profitable for us.¹⁰² Philo is most clearly the Hellenist in relation to the subjects of prayer. Only very rarely are these external blessings. Prayer for wealth is rejected,¹⁰³ One should pray for a display of God's love rather than His might,¹⁰⁴ The blessings which Philo regards as supremely worthy of prayer to God are increase in virtue, peace, deliverance from anger and other passions, the proper orientation of life, and wisdom (cf. Wis. 7:7 and Solomon's great prayer for wisdom in c. 9).¹⁰⁵ It is prayer which gives the soul true freedom,¹⁰⁶ Man should thus turn to God without delay; He will not spurn him.¹⁰⁷ Above all one should not forget to give thanks for the gifts which God gives.¹⁰⁸ Even the most poverty-stricken who have nothing more to expect of life have received from God so many and glorious gifts that they should not cease to give thanks.¹⁰⁹ In sum, it may be seen that the OT concept of God is strong enough in Philo to keep prayer in the ethical sphere and to prevent it from evaporating into philosophical speculation. On the other hand, there is in the subjects of his petitionary prayer a tendency which, consistently followed, would necessarily lead to the saying of Seneca that it is foolish to pray for things which one can attain of oneself (→ 782).

"As compared with literature, inscr. make only a secondary contribution to our knowledge of Gk. prayer. Worth noting are the public prayers ordered in a council resolution from Magnesia (2nd cent. B.C.),¹¹⁰ namely, that on a festival dedicated to Artemis Leucophryene all the inhabitants are to come to the goddess in prayer with appropriate sacrifices and to beseech health and fortune for the present and future generations. There are also many and varied accounts of healing and thanksgivings at the shrines of Aesculapius.¹¹¹ In Cos in the 2nd cent. B.C. (?) a school officer brings dedicatory offerings to Zeus and Athene for the ὑγεία and εὐταξία of those entrusted to him.¹¹² We may finally refer to prayer-like hymns and aretologies which in I or he-style extol the dignity and acts of the deity.¹¹³ The cursing tablets and magic papyri lead us to the lower depths of religion as with their formulae and to some extent with accompanying actions they purport to utilise the powers of deity for the various purposes of exorcism. medicine and eroticism.¹¹⁴

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:781–784.]

| πάντοτε
| ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου
δεόμενος

εἴ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι
ἐν τῷ θελήματι
τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐλθεῖν
πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

The adverbial modal present tense participle δεόμενος from δέομαι denotes intense asking for something. Some 9 of the 22 NT uses (NRSV translates as 'beg.')

refer to pleading with another person, while the rest focus on petitioning God. All but one (Mt. 9:38) of these 22 uses are in the writings of either Luke or Paul. δεόμενος is very close in meaning to ἀπαιτέω, but is not limited to asking other persons as is ἀπαιτέω.

The content of Paul's petition to God is defined by the substantival object functioning dependent clause introduced the conjunction εἴ. Normally it has an adverbial role in conditional sentences introducing the protasis. But in somewhat rare instances inside the NT -- not in the language generally -- this conjunction can be used to set up an object containing some uncertainty but more so confidence about an object framed as action. Here the perceived action is the future tense passive voice verb εὐοδωθήσομαι, *I will be prospered*. The appropriateness of this verb from εὐοδώ is its literal meaning of being led along a good road.⁴⁵ This is due to the cognate object function of the infinitive phrase ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, to come to you, which is attached to εὐοδωθήσομαι.⁴⁶ Thus introduced by εἴ, the sense becomes 'whether I will be prospered to come to you.'

Also fascinating is the stacking up of three adverbs πως ἤδη ποτὲ side by side in front of the verb. πως is closely linked conceptually with εἴ and together from "if how" creates the sense of "whether." The two temporal adverbs ἤδη ποτὲ together generate the sense of "now at last." Together the sense of this clause is to suggest substantial confidence in being permitted to travel to Rome. But slight uncertainty is maintained due to everything being determined ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ, *in/by God's will*. This clause anticipates 15:30-32 in the letter body.⁴⁷ The dangers that lurked for Paul in Jerusalem

⁴⁵"εὐοδωθήσομαι, 'succeed.' Literally, 'be led along a good road' (cf. Tob 5:16), so 'prosper, succeed' (cf. 2 Chron 32:30; Sir 41:1; 1 Cor 16:2); but in view of the context Paul may have the original meaning in mind (Lightfoot)—cf. 1 Thess 3:11." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 30.]

⁴⁶The cognate object is the second of two objects of certain active voice verbs. Here with the future passive turned into the active voice, the sense is "God will prosper me to come to you."

⁴⁷**Rom. 15:30-32.** 30 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ πνεύματος συναγαρυσασθαί μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, 31 ἵνα ῥυθισθῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπειθούντων ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ εὐπρόσδεκτος τοῖς ἀγίοις γένηται, 32 ἵνα

motivated the framing of the trip to Rome in God's will. Only if God desired Paul to travel to Rome, would he then make the trip? In actual time, it would be some five or so years later before this trip would be made. And it would not be made in a manner that Paul envisioned at the time

of the writing these words in Romans.⁴⁸

ἐν χαρᾷ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν.

30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

⁴⁸As he spoke of God's will, τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, to the Roman readers, the non-Jewish believers would have clearly understood the term, since it was commonly used in regard to the will of the gods in their non-Jewish and non-Christian religious background. The Jewish Christian readers would have heard echoes in this phrase out of the LXX which makes use of the phrase as well.

1. Θέλημα occurs once in the Sophist Antiphon (5th cent. B.C.), Fr., 58 (II, 302, 27, Diels) in the sense of "purpose" or "wish" in the plur., in the 4th cent. in Aristot. De Plantis, I, 1, p. 815b, 21, where, in contrast to plants which have neither ἐπιθυμία nor αἴσθησις, it is said of man that τὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου θελήματος τέλος orientates itself πρὸς τὴν αἴσθησιν. Here ἐπιθυμία and θέλημα are interchangeable. The latter is used quite neutrally, with no moral implication, for the human impulse of desire. Cf. also Aen. Tact. (4th cent. B.C.), Poliorcetica (ed. L. W. Hunter, S.A, Handford, 1927), 2, 8; 18, 19. This early use helps us to see why the term could also be used for sexual desire and specifically for the θέλησις of the male (→ 62). There are clear traces of this in V 3, p 53 Preis. Zaub., IV (Paris), where the wish is expressed concerning the desired paramour who is placed under magic: τὰ ἐμὰ θελήματα πάντα ποιεῖτω, 1521 f., cf. 1532 f. To this corresponds the use in the Ptolemaic doctrine of the two σύζυγοι == διαθέσεις, Ἔννοια and Θέλημα, the deity Bythos: Iren. Haer., I, 12, 1; Hipp. Ref., VI, 38, 5-7; Eriph. Haer., 33, 1, 2-7. Here θέλημα is the male force of procreation, whereas ἔννοια is simply the activity of conception. Similarly in the Barbelognostics in Iren. Haer., I, 29, 1 f. the will of God the Father is the begetting force which forms a syzygy with ζωὴ αἰώνιος. (Cf. Ign., Just., Tat. → 61, where this sense stands in the background.)

2. A deeper or more explicit moral and especially religious use is in evidence in the LXX. Here it is a translation of γρη as subst., verb and adj., and of γρη, also μωρ, with a few other special cases (→ infra). There is here a notable tendency to use the plur. both when this is present in the Heb.: Jer. 23:17, 26; ψ 102:6, and also when it is not: Is. 44:28; 58:13; ψ 15:3; 2 Ch. 9:12, and even when there is the sense of pleasure rather than directions, or when the Mas. has a verb, Iep. 9:23. In terms of distribution the usage is as follows.

Of God: a. of the divine "will." Sir. 43:16 (freely translated) of His majestic rule in creation. For a voluntarist conception the rendering of ψ 29:5 is important, since here the divine delight becomes will, along with passion. The word is used for

This reality of how ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ worked in Paul's life merits a closer look. In 56 AD Paul expressed the anticipation that by God's will he would get to travel to Rome. He amplifies this simple expression in much greater detail in 15:14-32, and uses διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, *through God's will*, in v. 32, in regard to this anticipated trip to Rome. It is clear from this enlarged discussion that the idea of traveling to Rome had been on his mind for a considerable period of time. Plus the statement itself in 1:10 expressly indicates such, as it was an often repeated petition to God in his prayers. How Paul would eventually arrive in Rome some five or six years later obviously was not either known to Paul nor revealed to Paul. God would work out the details in His own timing and manner.

Often in modern circles of discussion, the will of God is a label reserved for a divine calling to ministry or some other grand scope of a lifespan of Christian service. But from Paul's use of the phrase in Rom 12:2; 15:32; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 8:5; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:1; 6:6; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 4:3 makes it clear that God's will encompasses every aspect of our life, including daily behavior. This was Paul's perspective. In Rom. 12:2, τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ is defined by the appositional expression τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον, *what is good and pleasing and perfect*. A description of God's will surfaces in 1 Thess. 4:3-6,

- 3 **Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,**
ὁ ἀγιασμός ὑμῶν,
ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας,
εἰδέναι ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκευὸς
κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἀγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ,
μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας
καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν,
6 **τὸ μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν**
ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ,
διότι ἕκδικος κύριος περὶ πάντων τούτων,
καθὼς καὶ προείπαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ διεμαρτυράμεθα.
- 3 **For this is the will of God,**
your sanctification:
that you abstain from fornication;

God's rule in creation in Da. Θ 4:34 (אבצ). The formula: ׀צא הַשׁ, for the doing of the divine will, is often rendered ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημά σου, αὐτοῦ, ψ 39:9; 102:21; 142:10, cf. 1 Εσδρ. 9:9; 4 Macc. 18:16. There is an important par. to the Lord's Prayer in 1 Macc. 3:60: ὡς δ' ἂν ἦ θέλημα ἐν οὐρανῷ, οὕτως ποιήσει. As a divine direction, 1 Εσδρ. 8:16, plur. ψ 102:6 (תִּיבִלְיָ, great acts); Is. 44:28 (גִּזְוֹן, purpose); 2 Macc. 1:3. b. "Delight," "pleasure": ψ 29:8 (וַיִּצְרָה); Ier. 9:23 (גִּזְוֹן verb). Here the ἐν is kept, as with γ γִּזְוֹן (θέλειν ἐν). Thus also Mal. 1:10 (גִּזְוֹן, subst.); ψ 15:2. In Is. 62:4 LXX there is an erotic nuance: θέλημα ἐμόν ((הַבִּי־צִדְוֹן), of the spouse, though this is ennobled by the application of the metaphor to God (→ supra).

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964—), 3:52–53.]

that each one of you know

how to control your own body
in holiness and honor,
not with lustful passion,
like the Gentiles who do not know God;
that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister
in this matter,
because the Lord is an avenger
in all these things,
just as we have already told you beforehand
and solemnly warned you.

Here the behavior aspect is strongly emphasized as central to God's will. In the Superscriptio section of First Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians, the life career calling of God is identified as His will. In 2 Cor. 8:5, the enthusiastic commitment of the Macedonians to the relief offering is defined as ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, *they gave themselves first of all to the Lord and to us by the will of God*. In the Haustafeln section of Ephesians, sincerely doing the will of God in day to day service with respect of one's human master as a household slave is strongly emphasized: μὴ κατ' ὀφθαλμοδοουλίαν ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι ἀλλ' ὡς δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ ποιοῦντες **τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ** ἐκ ψυχῆς (Eph 6:6). The Christian life in utterly every aspect is to be lived day by day under the complete guidance and empowerment of God. This is His desire.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Compare the word group θέλω (208x), θέλημα (62x), θέλησις (1x). The verb, θέλω, *I wish / want*, has 15 uses in Romans, The noun θέλημα, *will*, has 4 uses in Romans. But θέλησις, *will*, is only used in Heb. 2:4 in the NT.

The somewhat related word group βούλομαι (37x), βουλεύω (6x), βουλή (12x), βούλημα (3x) at times has overlapping meaning to the above group. But generally this second word group stresses intention, planning, purposing more so than the first group. In Eph. 1:11 the very unusual phrase τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, *the intention of His will*, surfaces in reflecting how the two groups distinguished themselves from one another.

The original difference in meaning between βούλομαι and (ἐ)θέλω is disputed in philological investigation. Two diametrically opposing views confront one another. a. The one finds in θέλειν impulsive and unconscious desire, and in βούλεσθαι rational and conscious.¹ ἐθέλειν thus signifies volition by inclination or natural instinct, the *proclivitas animi e desiderio*, while βούλεσθαι denotes a decision of will based on deliberate resolve, the *consilium secundum deliberationem*.² b. On the other hand, ἐθέλειν is understood to mean the resolution of the spirit, and βούλεσθαι as desire or inclination, as the wish of the soul.³

. . . In the LXX the two words are almost equal numerically; βούλομαι is very slightly in the lead. This is not merely due to the fact that the LXX belongs to the age when the distinctions were being obliterated by the struggle between the terms. It also owes something to the fact that the Canon includes both historical and poetical sections, so that the words preferred by both the prose authors (→ supra; Polyb., Diod. S.) and the poets are accepted. The frequent use of θέλειν

The substantive object role of the infinitive phrase ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *to come to you*, completes the idea of the verb εὐδοωθήσομαι. When God decided to bless Paul (εὐδοωθήσομαι), one of those blessings would be his traveling to Rome to visit the members of the Christian community in the city.

The logistics of traveling from point A to point B in the middle of the first Christian century entailed considerable planning and preparation. As the above chart reflects with 85 uses of just verbs, ancient Koine Greek was rich in a widely diverse set of words with the central idea of ‘send.’ The various nouns for ‘travel’ are much less frequent with just nine uses.

Ancient literature is packed full of depictions of the extreme dangers and hardships of travel around the eastern Mediterranean world. Although roads did exist they generally were not safe means of travel. Where rivers of some size existed, they typically provided the safest and most efficient means of travel inland.⁵⁰ The Romans built substantial roads in order to facilitate travel and communication between Rome and the provinces of the empire for government officials, especially couriers in the postal system, and the military.⁵¹

in the Ps. is particularly noteworthy. βούλεσθαι is usually the rendering of בָּרַחַ and בָּרַחַ, or, in the negative “to refuse,” of מָנָה pi and adj. It is often used for determined refusal,¹⁶ but also for the royal will,¹⁷ caprice¹⁸ and especially the divine resolve and will.¹⁹ This shows that it is not thought of as merely the desire of the heart or wish of the soul.²⁰ Like θέλειν, it often has also the sense of “having a desire for,”²¹ of “desiring something,” or “seeking,”²² “wanting,”²³ or “purposing.”²⁴ Indeed, in some instances the sense is simply that of “being ready or inclined.”²⁵

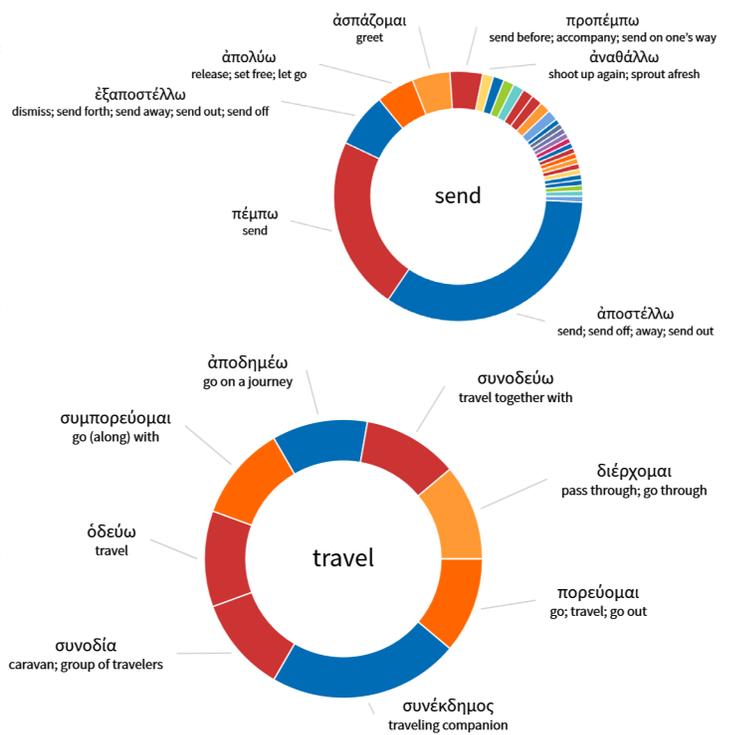
[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:629-631.]

⁵⁰In NT times, an important means of communication by sea was the imperial grain fleet plying between Alexandria and Italy. Egypt was the granary of Rome, and as the regular and adequate supply of grain to the capital was essential, this service was organized as a department of state as early as the Ptolemaic period (Rostovtzeff 1957: 708). The ships were privately owned, but the owners (Gk nauklēroi; Lat navicularii) let out their services under contract to the state and operated under state control. An inscription from Andriace, the port of Myra, marks an imperial building for grain storage (CIL 3.6738); there is a similar one from the same period at nearby Patara (CIL 3.12129). With a steady wind from the west, the best route from Alexandria to Italy was by Rhodes or one of these Lycian ports.

"The fleet served other state interests than the transport of grain: for example, state prisoners being taken under guard to Rome might be carried on board. Private passengers and cargo were also carried."

[F. F. Bruce, “Travel and Communication: The New Testament World,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:649.]

⁵¹“All roads led to Rome’ in NT times: the Romans paid much more attention to communications between the several provinces



But, private citizens, even Roman citizens, were not permitted to use these roads, however. Every Roman mile a watch tower was established to monitor the traffic and those using the roads had to have written permis-

and Rome than between province and province. The good workmanship put into Roman roads is evident from the survival of many of them to this day: the Romans spoke of 'building' a road (Lat viam struere). They learned some road-making techniques from the Etruscans, but the idea of continuous paved roads was Roman. A road required a sound foundation, efficient drainage, and where necessary, strong bridges.

"In Italy the most famous road was the Via Appia, began under Appius Claudius in 312 B.C.; it ran S from Rome to Capua, and was later extended to Brundisium (Brindisi). From there the sea-crossing to the Balkan peninsula was about 100 miles. When Macedonia became a Roman province in 148 B.C., the Via Egnatia was constructed, running east from Dyrrhachium (modern Durres) and Apollonia (modern Poyani) on the Adriatic to Thessalonica, from which existing roads ran S to the main Greek cities. The Via Egnatia was later extended farther E to Neapolis (modern Kavalla), the port of Philippi, and later still to Byzantium on the Bosphorus. When the Roman province of Asia was formed in 133 B.C., the Via Egnatia (with a short sea-crossing at either end) provided easy communication between Rome and the new province.

"Asia Minor was already provided with superior roads going back to the period of Persian supremacy. The Persian empire operated an efficient road system with inns or caravanseries and watering places at convenient intervals. The 'Royal Road' ran from Susa to the Aegean, a distance of some 1,500 miles, a three months' journey. Herodotus (Hdt. 5.50–54) lists 81 staging posts, at each of which fresh couriers and horses stood ready to carry royal decrees to the remotest parts of the empire (cf. Esth 8:10). See also ROADS AND HIGHWAYS (ROMAN ROADS)."

[F. F. Bruce, “Travel and Communication: The New Testament World,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:649.]

sion in order to travel on them. On some occasions exceptions would be granted and private individuals would be given permission to use the roads.

Sea travel in the Mediterranean and adjacent seas along the northern coasts was carried out except for the winter months which were hugely stormy and dangerous.⁵² The safest means for individuals was to book passage on a grain ship going back and forth between Alexandria, Egypt and the city of Rome.⁵³ These ships, some gigantic, followed the eastern coastal regions in their trips. Although most of these ships were privately owned they were contracted out to the Roman government for hauling their cargo. This gave them the protection of the mighty Roman military against pirates and others.

Travel by private individuals, although extensive due to traveling merchants and substantial trade,⁵⁴



was different than traveling by a government official or member of the Roman military.⁵⁵ It typically was slow-

work, conduct business, transport merchandise, carry correspondence, visit loved ones, attend school, and to fulfill various government and religious obligations and duties. Leisure travel was extremely rare and was undertaken only by a very small minority of the population who had the necessary means.

"Partly facilitated by the newly established Roman peace (*pax Romana*), which made travel safer and much easier than it had been previously, commerce flourished and afforded people opportunities all over the empire. Skilled artisans and laborers of all kinds traversed the Mediterranean as various projects required their special skills, and merchants traveled extensively importing and exporting goods. There is the notable example of the merchant Flavius Zeuxis from Hierapolis in Phrygia who traveled extensively and who is reported to have voyaged from Asia Minor to Rome some seventy-two times on business (CIG 3920).

"While certain types of work might require that people travel great distances, with many occupations people might travel only locally but frequently. In the agricultural industry, which was by far the largest industry in antiquity, people would have to travel constantly in order to tend to crops, obtain supplies, or transport produce to markets. At tax time, which tended to coincide with the harvest, travel volume was especially high as produce was being moved about and tax collectors and landlords went about collecting dues.

"In NT times religious motives also served as important reasons for travel, and this travel was not limited to either Jews or Christians. Worshipers of Greek and Roman deities might travel regularly to particular shrines or temples to venerate and invoke certain gods and goddesses. The cult of Asclepius, the Greek demi-god of medicine and healing, frequently attracted a number of pilgrims to his various shrines because they were thought of as places of healing. The many inscriptions and votive offerings found at the shrines (most notably Epidauros) show that his devotees often traveled great distances to seek his healing powers. People also traveled to attend various festivals and games for particular deities, since attendance was often seen as an act of devotion and offered entertainment typically in the form of games and contests.

"For Jews in NT times religious travel was most often brought about by one of the three pilgrimage festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. During such times Jews from all over the Mediterranean world were known to travel to Jerusalem to partake in the festivities. In Acts 2:5–13 it is reported that Jews from all over the Diaspora came to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, and Josephus reports that so many Jews would travel to Jerusalem for Passover that the city was literally overflowing with visitors during the time of its celebration (J.W. 6.423–25)."

[Lincoln H. Blumell, "Travel and Communication in the NT," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:653.]

⁵⁵Private travelers generally had to be content with a slower rate than the imperial post; they could not rely on guaranteed transport and were usually more leisurely in their progress. If the imperial post could cover 50 miles in a day, private travelers with horse transport would do well to cover 25–30, while pedestrians might achieve 15–20. Yet, where business was urgent a private traveler could go surprisingly fast. When Galba was proclaimed emperor by the Roman senate on June 9, A.D. 68, he was at Clunia in Spain, but his freedman, Icelus, left Rome at once and brought him the news within seven days, two days before the arrival of the official

⁵²"The voyage from Italy to Alexandria in favorable weather was much shorter and faster than the circuitous land route by Macedonia, Asia Minor, and Syria. Herod Agrippa I, appointed king of the Jews by Gaius, set out from Puteoli for his new kingdom when the NW winds began to blow in A.D. 38 and reached Alexandria "a few days later" (Philo, Flacc 27)—perhaps in about two weeks. By contrast, the accession of Pertinax on January 1, A.D. 193 took 63 or 64 days to be announced at Alexandria: on March 6 the prefect of Egypt issued an edict with directions for its celebration (BGU 646). At that time of year, the news would have come by land (ca. 2,500 miles).

"Travel by sea was virtually ruled out in winter. According to the elder Pliny (HN 2.122), the seas were reopened to navigation on February 8; according to Vegetius (De re militari 4.39), they remained closed until March 10. Vegetius probably had in mind sailing over the open sea. He adds that the safe season for Mediterranean sailing ended on September 14; after that it became dangerous, and ceased altogether for the winter on November 11. In an emergency, however, winter sailing might be attempted. In a time of food scarcity at Rome, Claudius insured shipowners against the loss of their vessels in wintry weather and offered a bounty for every new ship constructed for the grain fleet. (Suet. Claud. 18.2). Even by land, travel was hazardous in winter, especially on roads which led through mountain passes.

"Where the time taken by a journey is specified, it is usually because it was exceptionally short (or, occasionally, exceptionally long); such precise time indications afford no basis for calculating average speeds, whether for the imperial post or for private travel."

[F. F. Bruce, "Travel and Communication: The New Testament World," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:649–650.]

⁵³The well known Sea Voyage Narrative of Paul described by Luke in Acts 27:1–28:15 gives a vivid picture of many of the dangers of sea travel in the first century. Enough such stories exist in the literature of this time that a sub genre form surfaced providing general guidelines on how to properly describe such trips. And Luke follows this pattern in Acts.

⁵⁴"People in NT times traveled for all sorts of reasons: to find

er, overland travel often required use of “back roads,” rather than following alongside the super highways of the Romans etc.⁵⁶ Paul during his missionary travels seemed mostly able to avail himself of the Roman

road system to some extent.⁵⁷ In spite of the Roman

messenger (Plut. Galba 7)—a journey of 348 miles by land plus four or five days’ voyage from Ostia to Tarraco.

“In A.D. 143–44 the orator Aelius Aristides completed a winter journey from Smyrna to Rome. He fell sick and had to spend a long time at Edessa on the Via Egnatia, reaching Rome only on the hundredth day from his departure; yet he claims that for part of the way he traveled as fast as the imperial post (Aristides Or. 24).

“The conveyance of private letters depended on the availability of carriers bound for the appropriate destination; they might therefore be earlier or later in arrival. A letter sent by Cicero from Rome to Athens reached its destination in 21 days, which he describes as ‘pretty smart’ (Fam. 14.5.1); another, though sent at the height of summer, took 46 days to complete the same journey (Fam. 16.21.1). Of two letters sent to Rome from Syria, one—received on May 7, 43 B.C.—had taken 61 days (Fam. 12.10.2); another, dated December 31, 45 B.C., took 100 days (Att. 14.9.3).”

[F. F. Bruce, “Travel and Communication: The New Testament World,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:650.]

⁵⁶“By modern standards travel and communication in NT times was extremely slow. It has been estimated that the ordinary person going on foot could cover about 20 mi. per day, but this average could easily change depending on terrain, weather conditions, or a number of other factors (Sabbaths, stopovers, sickness, etc.). For shorter trips a 20 mi. per day average was certainly realistic; Peter’s trip from Joppa to Caesarea (about 40 mi.) took two days (Acts 10:23–30) and Josephus reports that a journey from the southern edge of the Galilee to Jerusalem (about 65 mi.) took three days (Life 269). However, for longer trips it cannot always be assumed that such a rate was always maintained. Likewise, this rate could certainly be increased if necessity required.

“For the most part, travel by donkey, mule, or even camel moved at about the same rate as walking. Wagons and chariots tended to move a little quicker provided one stayed on a paved road, and travel by horse was much quicker as one could average about 50 mi. per day. However, horses were rarely used by anyone except the military and *cursus publicus*. Since speed was one of the main purposes of the imperial post, on rare occasions when important correspondence had to be relayed a rider could cover a distance of 100 to 150 mi. in a single day, but this was very unusual. In 9 BCE the future emperor Tiberius was able to cover a distance of about 500 mi. in three days using horses and relays supplied by the imperial post when he learned that his brother Drusus was on the point of death (Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 5.3).

“In favorable conditions ships could average about 7 mi. an hour. In such conditions a boat leaving Rome could make it to Alexandria in about ten days (Philo, *Flaccus* 27). However, a return trip against the winds could easily take at least twice as long. Luke reports in Acts 16:11–12 that a voyage from Troas to Philippi with favorable winds took two days, while the return trip took five (Acts 20:6). While ships could move at a fairly swift speed, the frequent loading and unloading of cargo, unfavorable winds or storms, waiting for connecting ships, and unscheduled stops could substantially prolong a voyage.”

[Lincoln H. Blumell, “Travel and Communication in the NT,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 5:653.]

⁵⁷“When Paul and Barnabas landed from Cyprus at the river port of Perga in Pamphylia and made their way up country to Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13–14), they probably crossed the Taurus range by the Klimax pass and went N to Prostanna, at the S tip of Lake Eğirdir, and moved along the SE shore of the lake to the An-thios valley (Broughton 1937: 131–33). Pisidian Antioch, a Roman colony, was linked by road to the province of Asia on the W and to the cities of S Galatia on the E. For example, it was linked with Lystra, another Roman colony, by a military road which did not pass through Iconium. Paul and Barnabas, however, did not take this road: before going on to Lystra from Pisidian Antioch they visited Iconium. Iconium was an important road junction then as now: five Roman roads converged there. Derbe, to which Paul and Barnabas went from Iconium and Lystra, lay on the frontier between Roman Galatia and the client kingdom of Antiochus, but the Roman road system did not halt at the frontier; it continued through the client kingdom to the Cilician Gates and so on to Tarsus and Antioch on the Orontes.

“On his next visit to Asia Minor (Acts 15:41–16:10), Paul set out by land from Antioch on the Orontes by the Syrian Gates, crossed the Taurus by the Cilician Gates (a gap worn by the Cydnus river), and so on to Derbe and Lystra (Ramsay 1906: 273–98). Another road from the Cilician Gates ran by Philadelphia to Troas; yet another ran N by Cappadocian Caesarea to Amisos on the Black Sea, crossing a main thoroughfare leading W from Armenia to the Bosphorus.

“On this occasion Paul probably intended to continue along the main road to Ephesus, but he was directed not to do so; instead, he and his companions left that road at Iconium or Pisidian Antioch and crossed the Sultan Dag to Philomelium (Akşehir), from which a road running NW would take them to Cotiaeum (Kütahya). From there they journeyed by Adramyttium to Troas (for the route, see Broughton 1937: 135). Alexandria Troas (to use its full name) was “a nodal point on what became a sophisticated system of international routes” (Hemer 1975: 91). The imperial post used the short sea crossing between Troas and Neapolis as a link between N Asia Minor and the Via Egnatia.

“Paul and his company crossed from Troas to Neapolis, and visited Philippi and then Thessalonica on the Via Egnatia. Having been prevented from going to Ephesus, Paul may have planned now to make for Rome along the Via Egnatia, but trouble at Thessalonica forced him to turn S. Thus, he eventually reached Corinth, where he stayed for 18 months (Acts 18:11).

“From Corinth he returned to Palestine and Syria by sea. In general, contrary winds made Mediterranean sea travel from E to W difficult: for example, Casson (1951: 136–48) reckoned that, while the voyage from Rome to Rhodes took 7–11 days, that from Rhodes to Rome took 45–63 days. Paul, having visited Caesarea, Jerusalem, and Antioch, set out again by land for Asia Minor. This time he succeeded in reaching Ephesus. According to Acts 19:1, he approached Ephesus from “the upper country.” Any route from the interior would pass through what was “upper country” from the perspective of Ephesus, but Ramsay (1897: 93–96) supposed (probably rightly) the reference to be to a higher road which left the main westward road at Apamea (modern Dinar) and led to Ephesus from the N side of Mt. Messogis (modern Aydin Dağları). From Col 2:1, one might infer that Paul was a stranger to the Lycus valley, through which the main road ran.

“After his three years’ ministry in Ephesus, Paul revisited his European mission field. At Troas he hoped to meet Titus, whom he

had entrusted with a delicate mission to the church of Corinth. He waited until sailing had ceased for the winter; he concluded then that Titus would come by land through Macedonia, and he set out for Macedonia to meet him (2 Cor 2:12–13; 7:5–6).

"It was probably after meeting Titus that Paul visited Illyricum (Rom 15:19). To do this he would follow the Via Egnatia to the vicinity of its W terminus at Dyrrhachium (see Hammond 1974: 185–94) and then turn N along the Adriatic, either by land or (if the time of year permitted) by sea.

"At the end of this time in Europe, Paul set out for Palestine, primarily to deliver the proceeds of a relief fund which he had organized in his gentile mission field for the church of Jerusalem. He was accompanied by delegates from the contributing churches. The delegates set sail from Cencreae, the E port of Corinth, but Paul changed his mind at the last minute and went N to Philippi; from Neapolis he and Luke sailed to Troas and rejoined the others there. The voyage from Neapolis to Troas took five days (Acts 20:6), by contrast with the two days required earlier for the journey in the opposite direction (Acts 16:11), no doubt because of a prevalent northeasterly wind. By this time the Passover and festival of unleavened bread were past (in A.D. 57 the festival lasted from April 7 to 14), and Paul was anxious to reach Jerusalem in time for Pentecost (which in A.D. 57 fell on May 29).

"From Troas the party set out by a fast ship, which rounded Cape Lectum and put in at Assos; Paul, for reasons not disclosed, went from Troas to Assos by land, a considerably shorter journey (25 miles) than the sea route, and was taken on board at Assos. The ship next put in at Mytilene, Samos, and Miletus. Instead of putting in at Ephesus, it sailed across the head of the Gulf of Ephesus, but it stayed in port at Miletus long enough for Paul to send a messenger asking the leaders of the Ephesian church to come to Miletus to meet him.

"The ship then continued on its way to Cos, Rhodes, and Patara. As it was probably proceeding E along the S coast of Asia Minor, Paul and his party left it at Patara and found a large ship which was making a straight run across the open sea to the Phoenician coast to unload its cargo at Tyre. Chrysostom (hom. 45 in Ac.) reckoned that the voyage from Patara to Tyre took five days. Luke notes that on their way they sighted Cyprus to starboard.

"At Ptolemais (Acco) the ship probably reached its final destination. The party went on by road to Caesarea (a journey of some 30 miles) and, as time was now well in hand, spent several days with the Caesarean Christians before completing the remaining 64 miles up country to Jerusalem, perhaps on muleback.

"The hazards of travel by land and sea are underlined by a passage in which Paul lists the perils he endured in his apostolic journeys (2 Cor 11:25–26). Travel by land involved dangers from flooded rivers and highway robbers. He does not include (though he might well have done so) hazards incurred in spending the night at inns along the road: these were notoriously dangerous and unsavory places. Travel by sea involved the danger of shipwreck, which he had endured three times (this was before he was shipwrecked off Malta); on one of these occasions he had spent 24 hours adrift on the open sea.

"The hazards of sea travel are best illustrated by the account of Paul's voyage from Palestine to Italy (Acts 27). This is narrated in considerable detail, and in terms which point clearly to the record of an eyewitness who was not himself a seaman, but has provided "one of the most instructive documents for the knowledge of ancient seamanship" (Holtzmann *Apostelgeschichte* HKNT, 421).

"Paul, who had been sent to Rome for the hearing of his appeal to Caesar, was (with other prisoners) put under the charge of a cen-

turion. The ship of Adramyttium, which they boarded at Caesarea, took them to Myra; its port Andriace was a principal port of the imperial grain service. A large ship of the grain service was in harbor, ready to continue its homeward voyage; the centurion, who may have been a *frumentarius*, a supervisory officer of the grain service, put his charges on board.

"It was already late in the sailing season, and the shipowner was anxious to make good speed and reach Italy before the seas closed for the winter. The NW wind slowed their progress, but they rounded Cape Salomne and sailed under the lee of Crete. By the time they came to Fair Havens (6 miles E of Cape Matala), it was clear that they could not complete the voyage before winter, so it was decided to make for Phoenix, 40 miles farther W, and spend the winter there. Suddenly, however, a violent N NE wind, called the *Euraquilo* (the *gregale*), blew down from the interior of Crete and drove them out to sea. During the short time that they sailed under the lee of Cauda, the crew hauled the dinghy on board, undergirded the ship, dropped a floating anchor, and then, with storm sails set, drifted before the wind on the starboard tack. The situation was so desperate that they had to jettison most of the wheat cargo, the *raison d'être* of the voyage and the source of the shipowner's livelihood.

"With no navigational aids—neither sun nor stars were visible, because of the storm—they had no idea where they were, and all hope of survival had been given up when they found themselves approaching land—Malta, as it turned out, where they managed to get ashore, although the ship was a total wreck.

"After three months' stay on Malta, they embarked on another vessel of the grain service, which had wintered there in harbor, and reached Puteoli safely. Passengers from Alexandria were normally put ashore there, while the cargo was taken on to Ostia. From Puteoli, Paul and his party went N by the Via Appia—two staging posts on the road are mentioned, the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns—"and so we came to Rome" (Acts 28:14). An adventurous journey indeed!

"Paul's associates also made use of those communications on his behalf, none more assiduously than his aide-de-camp Timothy. When Thessalonica had been newly evangelized and Paul was forced to leave the city before his mission was completed, he sent Timothy back there from Athens to see how his converts were faring. This journey could have been made by land or by sea. On another occasion Paul sent Timothy from Ephesus to Corinth: he was in the course of writing a letter to the church, but received news of a situation so urgent that it called for personal intervention by a man in whom he had total confidence, before the letter could be completed and dispatched.

"More arduous was the mission undertaken by Timothy when Paul was in custody in Rome. Anxious to have news of his converts in Philippi, Paul sent Timothy there. This involved a road journey of nearly 750 miles (about forty days) each way—360 miles to Brindisi from Rome and 381 miles along the Via Egnatia to Philippi—over and above the crossing of the Straits of Otranto (occupying the best part of two days). Timothy undertook it readily: one who spent so much time in the company of a man who spoke of himself as 'constantly on the road' must himself have been a seasoned traveler."

[F. F. Bruce, "Travel and Communication: The New Testament World," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:650–652.]

ger.⁵⁸ Thus Paul's framing of ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς with ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ included dependence on God to keep him safe during this journey from Jerusalem to Rome. To be certain, God had an interesting way of doing that later on when the Roman government secured Paul's journey to the capital city from Jerusalem.

b) The second sentence of this unit is in vv. 11-12.

11 ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, 12 τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ. 11 For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — 12 or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each

^{1.11} γὰρ
3 ἐπιποθῶ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς,
 ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν
 εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς,
^{1.12} δέ
4 τοῦτο ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι
 ἐν ὑμῖν
 διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ.

other's faith, both yours and mine.

Through the use of the causal conjunction γὰρ, as with the first sentence in vv. 9-10, a further reason for Paul's thanksgiving (v. 8) is provided.⁵⁹ Here the focus

⁵⁸"Despite the advent of the Roman peace, in NT times travel could still be quite perilous and had to be undertaken with forethought and care in order to ensure one's safety. Consequently, most people opted to travel in groups because it tended to afford more safety (Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.1.91). Paul's summary of some of the many dangers he faced on his various missionary journeys is certainly indicative of the types of perils many travelers faced in NT times (2 Cor 11:26-27). Gangs of bandits frequently preyed along ancient highways looking for their next victim (Luke 10:30-36), and though Julius Caesar had done an effective job purging the Mediterranean of pirates, they continued to be a threat to those traveling by ship. Disturbances such as local fighting or war greatly added to the perils of travel by causing instability in certain regions (Suetonius, *Aug.* 32), and all sorts of troublemakers were known to frequently hang out on the roadways (Plutarch, *Mor.* 304e). Severe weather always posed a problem for travelers, by land (Seneca, *Ep.* 57.1-2; 96.3) and by sea (Acts 27), and roadside inns, which might seem like a place of relative safety, were often filthy and usually frequented by people of unscrupulous character (Pliny, *Nat.* 9.154; Cicero, *Div.* 1.27; *Inv.* 2.4.14-15)." [Lincoln H. Blumell, "Travel and Communication in the NT," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006-2009), 5:653.]

⁵⁹Vv. 11-12 have frequently been treated rather lightly by commentators of both the past and today, who usually deal only in very general terms with the meaning of words and phrases in the passage. We would argue, however, that these two verses are actually highly significant for a proper understanding of the letter. For what is stated in 1:11 and then explicated in 1:12 provides us, in compact form, with two very important statements regarding Paul's primary purpose and his major concern in writing to the Christians at Rome. And further, when combined with statements in the salutation of 1:1-7, commentators are in possession of extremely im-

portant interpretive keys for (1) all that Paul will write throughout the theological and ethical sections of the letter's body-middle in 1:16-15:13 and (2) all that he will say with respect to his purposes in the body closing (or 'apostolic parousia') section of 15:14-32 and in the concluding sections of 15:33-16:27.⁶⁰ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 113.]

In the beginning sentence of vv. 11-12, two core main clauses comprise this compound declarative functioning sentence. The first clause asserts Paul's

intense desire to see the Romans and why. The second main clause amplifies what he means by this longing.

i) ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν

εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, for I am yearning to see you so that some spiritual blessing I may share with you in order for you to be strengthened (v. 11). Also in Phil. 1:8, the apostle speaks of longing to see the church at Philippi as well.⁶⁰ In regard to Timothy and others, he will speak of their longing to see other congregations for fellowship etc.: 2 Cor. 9:14; Phil. 2:26; 1 Thess. 3:6. The compound verb ἐπι + ποθέω is an intense form of ποθέω, and means to long for something (τι; 2 Cor. 5:2; 1 Pet. 2:2; Jas. 4:5) or someone (τινά; Rom. 1:11; 1 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 1:4; Phil. 1:8; 2:26; 2 Cor. 9:14). The root form ποθέω is not found inside the NT. The defining of highly intense longing is seen in Phil. 1:8 with the prepositional phrase modifier ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, (literally), with the bowels of Christ Jesus. The ancient location of feelings in the intestines of a person produced this strange figurative image that refers to very intense feeling toward someone. Here the "bowels of Christ Jesus" figure underscores the intense compassion of Christ for the Philippians flowing through Paul's feelings for them. Such intense longing

portant interpretive keys for (1) all that Paul will write throughout the theological and ethical sections of the letter's body-middle in 1:16-15:13 and (2) all that he will say with respect to his purposes in the body closing (or 'apostolic parousia') section of 15:14-32 and in the concluding sections of 15:33-16:27.⁶⁰ [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 113.]

⁶⁰Phil. 1:8, μάρτυς γὰρ μου ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

by Paul to visit Rome is the natural product of his repeated petition to God to be granted the opportunity to travel to the city. Remember also the syntactical connection of the ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς back to εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου (v. 8) via the causal conjunction γὰρ. This longing to see the Romans is one of the foundations for his thankfulness to God for them.

His intense longing is defined in Rom. 1:11 as ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, *to see you*. Here the aorist infinitive ἰδεῖν from ὀράω has the sense of *to visit you*.⁶¹ This would particularly be true of seeing again the several individuals in the Christian community mentioned in chapter sixteen that he had met earlier in other parts of the empire. But it included the entire community which the apostle looked forward to meeting, as the plural ὑμᾶς signals. Although it would be some five or so years before this coming together would take place, by that later point not all the members of the Christian community at Rome were interesting in meeting Paul, as Philippians chapter one makes very clear.

The goal of the anticipated visit is set forth in the adverbial purpose ἵνα clause: ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, *so that I may share some spiritual gift with you in order for you to be strengthened*. The following main clause comes back to amplify in much greater detail what Paul was trying to say in this purpose dependent clause. Thus interpretively the next main clause provides the clear parameters of possible meaning for this dependent clause here.⁶²

The aorist subjunctive verb μεταδῶ is from μεταδίδωμι. And all but one of the five uses of this verb are in the letters of Paul. 1 Thess. 2:8 comes close to

⁶¹Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. S.v. εἶδον.

⁶²"Paul expresses quite explicitly his purpose in writing the Christians at Rome in 1:11b: ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς ('in order that I may share with you some spiritual gift so as to make you strong.' The verb μεταδίδωμι ('give,' 'impart,' 'share'), from which the first person singular, second aorist, subjunctive μεταδῶ ('I may give,' 'impart,' 'share') is derived, appears elsewhere in Paul's letters in the sense of sharing with someone.⁷¹ The aorist passive infinitive στηριχθῆναι (with or without the article), when preceded by the preposition εἰς, expresses purpose, and so may be translated 'so as to make you strong.' Thus as Alexander Wedderburn, in agreement with Marku Kettunen, has expressed matters: 'It is clear from 1:11 that Paul feels himself responsible to further the Romans' faith, whether by a personal visit or by letter, and that is evidence of his conviction that he was their apostle too and pastorally responsible for them.'⁷² And as Wedderburn goes on to conclude regarding Paul's words in 1:11: 'This much is clear from this verse and that is a valuable clue to Paul's frame of mind in writing the letter.'⁷³" [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 114.]

the idea expressed here in v. 11: οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε. *So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us*. The pastoral side of the apostle comes to the surface here in the desire to share something of God's blessings with the Roman Christians. He has no ulterior motive in wanting to travel to Rome. This purpose statement puts the motivation on the table. It is then explained in the following statement. Then the letter body takes this core idea and enlarges it into the longest letter of the Pauline corpus in the NT. His goal is to share with the Romans what God has blessed him with.

What he desires to share with the Roman Christians is labeled as τι χάρισμα πνευματικόν, *some spiritual blessing*.⁶³ The sequential structure is *Pro Mod + Noun + Adj Mod*. Given the immense flexibility of Koine Greek for sequencing words in a sentence, the pronoun modifier τι -- from τις, τι -- is in the pre field position in front of the verb and immediately after the ἵνα conjunction that introduces the clause. This gives the pronoun heightened emphasis. These contextual considerations impact the translation as much as the cognitive meaning, as well as increase the challenge for correct translation. The χάρισμα then is undefined as to specifics, such as the listing in 1 Cor. 12:1-11 as one of several differing lists found in the NT. But with τι positioned in front of the verb the stress is that this is an important χάρισμα rather than unimportant. Thus the translation should communicate in English the idea of *some special gift*.

The other modifier is the adjective πνευματικόν,⁶⁴ and is located after the noun two slots: **χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικόν**.⁶⁵ Thus the χάρισμα comes solely from the

⁶³"The expression τι χάρισμα πνευματικόν ('some spiritual gift'), however, undoubtedly is the most significant exegetical feature of this statement. Yet it is also the most difficult and so needs to be considered here more intensely and at greater length." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 114.]

⁶⁴πνευματικός, -ή, -όν is used 26 times in the NT. All but two (1 Pet. 2:5) uses are in Romans (3x), First Corinthians (15x); Ephesians (2x); Colossians (2x) and Galatians (1x). First Corinthians contains the most detailed discussion of the term. The two uses in First Peter 2:5 even have a strong Pauline tone due to Silas having done the actual writing of the letter. Also the derivative spelling of the adverb πνευματικῶς has but two uses inside the NT: 1 Cor. 2:14 and Rev. 11:8. The sense of doing something spiritually, i.e., under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is maintained. That is, "pela ajuda do Santo Espírito." [James Strong, *Léxico Hebraico, Aramaico E Grego de Strong* (Sociedade Bíblica do Brasil, 2002).]

⁶⁵"Paul's usage [of πνευματικός] is specific when he contrasts the πνευματικοί and the ψυχικοί. In 1 C. 2:13-15 the πνευματικός

Spirit of God as a divine blessing.⁶⁶ Thus what Paul seeks to share with the Romans is not something from himself. Instead, it is a blessing that comes solely from God through the Holy Spirit.

This corresponds to the inherent meaning of χάρισμα itself. This third declension neuter gender noun references something as a concrete expression of divine χάρις, *grace*. This allusion to spiritual blessings in the Proem anticipates several references to χάρισμα in 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29; and 12:6. Once more χάρισμα is a Pauline word inside the NT with 16 of the 17 uses in Paul's letters. Rom. 5:16 pretty much defines χάρισμα in terms of a specific action of God prompted by His χάρις. Thus what Paul seeks to share with the Romans is indeed something that God will do in their midst through his ministry with them in person. The apostle does not know exactly what that might be, since God decides those things and not him. But he is convinced that some blessing from the Lord will come to the Romans when the apostle is allowed to visit them.

The intent behind this sharing of a blessing is stated as εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, *so that you may be strengthened*. Note the creative writing strategy here. The ἵνα purpose conjunction introduced the intent of Paul's

is the man who knows God's saving work by virtue of the Spirit of God (→ 425, 22 ff.), while the ψυχικός is blind thereto.⁷⁰¹ The contrast is especially sharp because Paul recognises no neutral ground between them. Not to have the πνεῦμα of God is to be controlled by the πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου.^{702, 703} No less specifically the σῶμα πνευματικόν is distinguished from the σῶμα ψυχικόν in 1 C. 15:44–46, → 408, 1 ff. This shows that the terms had already been developed and circulated prior to Paul, → 395, 9 ff. and n. 396. In keeping with what has been said πνευματικά can denote the content of the knowledge given by God's πνεῦμα i.e., the heavenly things inaccessible to the νοῦς, or, materially, the message of Christ, 1 C. 2:13;⁷⁰⁴ 9:11; R. 15:27. In the last two references earthly things are σαρκικά, though without taking on the character of what is evil. These are simply the things which promote natural life, but do not unite with God. Thus the spiritual food and drink which comes directly from God's sphere and gives divine power (1 C. 10:3 f., → 146, 17 ff.) is distinguished from ordinary food and drink. The idea that the elements are bearers of the πνεῦμα⁷⁰⁵ is not present here; this is shown by parallels to the usage⁷⁰⁶ and also by v. 4b.⁷⁰⁷ πνευματικά is used for the totality of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 C. 14:1.⁷⁰⁸ When the νόμος is called πνευματικός in R. 7:14, it is characterised thereby as the νόμος θεοῦ (v. 22, 25) which comes from the world of God and not from that of man.⁷⁰⁹ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:436–437.]

⁶⁶The post apostolic age development of the idea of spirituality as something of a religious 'ora' possessed by an individual doing extraordinary spiritual deeds is completely unconnected to anything in scripture. In most instances it stands as a phony replacement of the biblical concept of πνευματικός, which is simply being led and controlled by God's Holy Spirit. The leadership of the Spirit is the 'spiritual' matter, the product indeed does become known to others but the product in deeds is not spiritual itself. And certainly not when achieved by human effort.

ἐπιποθῶ longing, and the purpose use of the preposition εἰς introduces the intent of Paul's μεταδῶ, his anticipated sharing. This statement of intention functions as the bottom line objective of the spiritual strengthening of the Roman believers. The visit would be successful if the believing community at Rome became more committed Christians. Such was the prayerful concern of the apostle in asking God to make such a visit happen.

The idea of strengthening in the aorist passive infinitive στηριχθῆναι⁶⁷ has a distinctive tone of being supported.⁶⁸ Out of the LXX usage of στηρίζω in particular,

⁶⁷The word group στηρίζω, † ἐπιστηρίζω, † στηριγμός, † ἀστήρικτος for the verb provides helpful insight into the distinctive idea of this set of words. στηρίζω: I support. ἐπιστηρίζω: I support in the sense of rest on something. στηριγμός: steadfastness in the sense of standing still in contrast to moving. ἀστήρικτος: the opposite idea with the sense of unsupported.

⁶⁸"στηρίζω occurs in the original sense 'to fix,' 'to establish' Lk. 16:26: χάσμα μέγα ἐστήρικται, 'an unbridgeable cleft is fixed.' Lk. 9:51 (→ VI, 776, 22 ff.) follows LXX usage (→ 655, 2 ff.): αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν, 'he had set his face on.' Jesus is announcing herewith both His own unalterable purpose and also the divine will not just that He should go to Jerusalem but that He should summon it to decision.

"Very common in the NT is the transferred use which is found already in the LXX (→ 655, 2 ff.) and then enjoys more extensive usage in the Dead Sea Scrolls (→ 655, 34 ff.). The verb is found with the personal obj. ὑμᾶς (R. 16:25; 1 Th. 3:2; 2 Th. 3:3 and 1 Pt. 5:10, where ὑμᾶς is to be supplied), with καρδίας (1 Th. 3:13; 2 Th. 2:17; Jm. 5:8), ἀδελφούς (Lk. 22:32), πάντας τοὺς μαθητάς (Ac. 18:23), τὰ λοιπὰ (Rev. 3:2). The passive form occurs in R. 1:11; 2 Pt. 1:12. The strengthening is by God, the Lord, or the truth (1 Pt. 1:12), but also men (1 Th. 3:2). It may be accomplished, besought, or commanded. It presupposes that the Christians who are to be strengthened are under assault and in danger of becoming uncertain or slothful in their faith or walk. What the στηρίζειν consists in may be seen from parallel terms like παρακαλεῖν (→ V, 796, 19 ff.) (1 Th. 3:2; 2 Th. 2:17). In R. 1:11 στηριχθῆναι is used of the apostle himself and it is explained by συμπαρακληθῆναι: 'to experience the comfort of the Gospel.' The context of 1 Pt. 5:10 offers καταρτίζω, σθενόω, and θεμελιόω in illustration of στηρίζω.

"The effect or aim of strengthening is the impregnability of Christian faith in spite of the troubles which have to be endured → 55, 25 ff.: εἰς τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν, 1 Th. 3:2 f. The same applies in Ac. 14:22 where the compound ἐπιστηρίζω (→ 657 1 ff.) is used; this reads: ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 1 Pt. 5:10 also has in view confirmation in face of the afflictions of persecution which had been mentioned earlier. Lk. 22:32: στήρισον τοὺς ἀδελφούς, which is addressed to Peter, is also referring to strengthening in faith, since just before there is mention of Peter's own faith: ἵνα μὴ ἐκλίπη ἡ πίστις σου v. 32. Similarly God is to strengthen the hearts of the Thessalonians so that they may be blameless at the parousia of the Lord, 1 Th. 3:13. 2 Th., on the other hand, has moral confirmation in view: ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ (2:17), being kept from evil: φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ (3:3).⁹ At issue in the letter of Rev. is preservation from spiritual death: γίνου γρηγορῶν καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἔμελλον ἀποθανεῖν (Rev. 3:2).¹⁰ The reference in 2 Pt. 1:12 is to confirmation in present truth, in Christian

the religious sense of the usage implies that the one doing the supporting is God. This is further signaled by the use of the passive voice infinitive *στηριχθῆναι*. Thus Paul's intention is that his visit can open the way for God to undergird the Roman Christians. Clearly with the visit having been made possible by God's blessing, one would then expect this divine undergirding of the Christian community in Rome.

ii) *τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ*, **And this is to be mutually encouraged among you through the faith residing in one another, both yours and mine** (v. 12). This second main clause in the compound sentence adds expansion of idea to that expressed in the first clause.

The core expression *τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν συμπαρακληθῆναι*, **and this is to be mutually encouraged**. The antecedent of the neuter singular demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο* goes back to the preceding clause and via the parallel passive infinitive *συμπαρακληθῆναι* especially to *στηριχθῆναι*. The apostle felt that if God supported the Roman Christians through his visit, then both would be encouraged and reinvigorated.⁶⁹

The aorist passive infinite *συμπαρακληθῆναι* (only used here in the NT) maintains the sense of divine encouragement taking place with the visit as is found in the preceding *στηριχθῆναι*.⁷⁰ When God supports, out doctrine, or in Christianity generally.

"In R. 1:11 the means of strengthening is the impartation of a spiritual gift: *μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικόν*. This comes with the presence of the apostle in person and cannot be sent on in advance in a letter. The reference is obviously to a wellknown expression in primitive Christianity, cf. 2 C. 1:15: *ἵνα δευτέραν χάριν σχῆτε*, i.e., by the presence of the apostle."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 7:656.]

⁶⁹To read from this that somewhat Paul didn't want to sound like he was bragging or that only the Romans would benefit from his visit is to fail to grasp the nuanced tones of Paul's language here.

⁷⁰*τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν* occurs in the NT only here. It differs from the common *τοῦτ' ἔστιν* (meaning 'that is to say'), in that it does not simply repeat in different language what has just been said, but actually amends the effect of what has been said by expressing a complementary truth.² *τοῦτο* does not refer merely to *στηριχθῆναι* (as though *εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς* were being corrected to *εἰς τὸ συμπαρακληθῆναι*, κ.τ.λ.), but to everything following *ἐπιποθῶ γάρ*.³ Paul's desire to see them in order to be the means of their receiving a blessing will only be rightly understood, if it is seen as part of his desire for a mutual *παράκλησις* between him and them. To regard v. 12 as evidence of embarrassment on Paul's part at the anomalousness of his plans to visit a church not founded by himself (cf. 15:20), as does Barrett,⁴ and to see in it a calculated *captatio benevolentiae*, as does Kuss,⁵ are alike uncalled for. There seems to be no cogent reason for refusing to accept the verse at its face-value as the sincere expression of a real humility (cf. the last clause of 15:24 and the note on it). An apt comment is Calvin's: 'Note how modestly he expresses what he feels by not refusing to seek strengthening from inexperienced beginners. He means what he

of it comes encouragement and renewed commitment. And by adding the prepositional prefix *συμ-* to the verbal infinitive the idea of mutuality is stressed significantly.⁷¹

The infinitive itself is the modified by several expressions. First comes *ἐν ὑμῖν*. The sense of this prepositional phrase is best understood as 'in regards to you.' The divine blessing is to come to the Roman community, but, when it does at the visit, Paul will be caught up in it and blessed by it as well.

Second comes *διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν*, literally expressed as **through the among one another faith of you**. Although almost impossible to preserve clearly in English, the reciprocal pronoun *ἀλλήλοις* from *ἀλλήλων* sets up an interaction between Paul and the Roman Christians. The prepositional phrase *διὰ τῆς... πίστεως ὑμῶν*, **through your faith**, affirms that the channel for this mutual encouragement from God will come via the discussion about the Christian commitment of the Romans. The wise teacher Paul can engage the various house church groups about what faith surrender to Christ means and implies. As they examine where the various house church groups are in their commitment and their understanding of it, Paul can offer helpful insights and suggestions about how to move it deeper and toward fuller maturity.

The use of *τῆς... πίστεως ὑμῶν*, **your faith**, stresses the quality of commitment to Christ present among the Roman Christians. It would not be discussions of doctrinal differences over a system of beliefs. No where in the New Testament is there interest in doing such

says, too, for there is none so void of gifts in the Church of Christ who cannot in some measure contribute to our spiritual progress. Ill will and pride, however, prevent our deriving such benefit from one another.'⁶⁰ [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 80.]

⁷¹"But what did Paul have in mind when he spoke of being 'mutually encouraged by each other's faith' and then emphasizing the reciprocal nature of that encouragement by the addition of the phrase 'both yours and mine'? The language, while suggestive, is considerably compressed. Later in the body closing (or, 'apostolic parousia') section of 15:14–32 it will be unpacked to mean (1) Paul's sharing with his Christian addressees at Rome the gospel message that he proclaimed in his Gentile mission (15:14–22), which he believed they needed to understand and accept since they were predominantly Gentile believers in Jesus themselves, and (2) their readiness to assist him in his proposed missionary outreach to Gentiles in Spain and its environs in the western portion of the Roman Empire (15:23–24, 32b), which would include both their prayers and their financial support, much as the church at Antioch of Syria had prayed for and assisted him throughout his ministry in the eastern part of the empire." [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 118.]

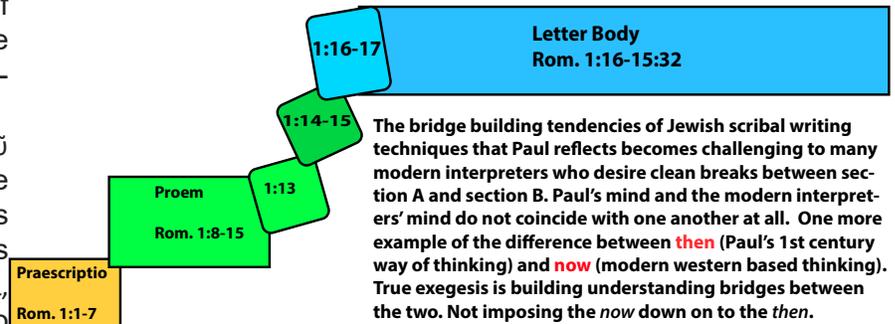
discussion. This is a modern paradigm wrongly imposed back on to the scripture. Instead πίστις as a noun of action centers on personal surrender of oneself to Christ as Lord. And this is what the apostle deeply desires to help move forward to deeper levels.

The final modifiers ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ set up the explicit designations of whose faith will be supported by God through this visit: **both yours and mine**. This amplifies the verb prefix συμ- on συμπαρακληθῆναι, **to be mutually encouraged**. These two pronouns, both used in the genitive of possession role, are attached to πίστεως in specifying whose faith is referenced here. The combined τε καὶ, **both...and**, adds a touch of eloquence to the expression.

What Paul says here is later referenced in 15:24c, ἐὰν ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπὸ μέρους ἐμπλησθῶ,⁷² **assuming first that I will be filled to satisfaction from you**. And also in 15:32, ἵνα ἐν χαρᾷ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν, **so that when I come to you by God's will I may be refreshed by your company**. Both verbs, ἐμπλησθῶ and συναναπαύσωμαι anticipate a positive visit by the apostle in Rome that will be mutually satisfying and encouraging to both Paul and the Romans. In [Acts 28:14c-31](#), Luke does describe a fundamentally positive experience even though Paul's situation as a prisoner of Rome confined to a home was certainly not what the apostle anticipated when writing this letter some five or so years earlier. Paul's own depiction of this experience in Rome at the time of the writing of [Philippians in 1:12-26](#) is a little more mixed between positive and negative aspects. But even this depiction is basically encouraging.

⁷²"ἐμπίμπλημι is reserved exclusively for 'to satisfy' in the NT. It is predominantly pass.: 'to be satisfied.' The satisfaction is physical in Jn. 6:12. It is used with the gen. of that which brings satisfaction in Ac. 14:17. God is He who satisfies the heart with nourishment and hence with εὐφοροσύνη; the expression is to be understood in the light of LXX usage.⁷ Lk. 1:53 is somewhat ambiguous (→ 129, 29–33): πεινῶντας ἐνέπλησεν ἀγαθῶν. This is based on ψ 106:9, which undoubtedly has a bodily reference. The saying in Lk. relates to the Messianic kingdom whose dawn is seen. If the canticle has its source in Jewish piety, what was originally meant might have been, in the first instance, the removal of external want. There is a plain transition to transf. usage in Lk. 6:25. The satisfied are those who have enough to eat and drink well. What excludes them from participation in the rule of God is the fact that they are inwardly satisfied with external goods. Purely fig. is the use in R. 15:24. Paul wants to 'satisfy himself' with the faith and fellowship of the Roman church when he stays in the city. The idea of joy and strength is contained in the word 'to satisfy' here." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:130–131.]

Romans 1:13-17 Transitions from Proem to Letter Body



Consequently a modern English translation of the second main clause should move along the following lines: **And this is being mutually encouraged in regard to you through mutual exploration of faith commitment, both yours and mine**. No ulterior motive stands behind any of this. Full acknowledgement is given to the fact that when such a visit takes place by God setting it up, and a vigorous exploration of the meaning and implications of their shared faith commitment to Christ takes place, then nothing but divine blessing for everyone will be the outcome of such a visit. Both parties will be encouraged and reinvigorated by one another's commitment to serve Christ.

The next sentence in v. 13 both amplifies and shifts direction somewhat from the previous discussion: οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. **Now I do not want you to be ignorant brothers about the many times I have sought to come to you, and was hindered until now, so that I might have some fruit also among you just as even among the rest of the Gentiles**. The apostle continues the emphasis upon wanting to visit Rome, but recalls the past efforts to do so without success.

One of the literary challenges is the role of this sentence. The basic reason for the uncertainty is the language used in the main clause: οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, **And I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers...** Typically all through the Pauline letters of the NT such an expression signals the beginning of a new topic of discussion. For its use in signaling the letter body after the *Proem* see 2 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:12, and possibly Gal. 1:11. The verb ἀγνοεῖν is used six times, with two of them in the phrase οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν (1:13 and 11:25). The second use in 11:25 signals a shift of emphasis inside the same general topic of Israel and salvation. But ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, **Or are you ignorant that...** (6:3) does not indicate a shift but a continuation of the same line of reasoning. Yet Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε, **Or are you ignorant...** (7:1) does signal a shift in topic but not the major one

5 οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,
ἀδελφοί,

ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἔλθεῖν
πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

καὶ
--- ἐκωλύθην

ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο,

ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ

καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς

καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.

as some assume for 1:13. The participle ἀγνοοῦντες in 10:3 does not signal a topic shift. Neither does the participle ἀγνοῶν ὅτι in 2:4. I take the position that vv. 13-15 are a part of the Proem, mostly due to the content of these two sentences. But as the chart suggests, in typical ancient writing style they both bring to a conclusion the Proem and begin transitioning to the letter body of the letter. Additionally, the use of ἀδελφοί is seen as a topic shift signal, and indeed often it is. In the 19 uses of the vocative plural ἀδελφοί for brothers, some serve as signal of new topics, but a large number do not. Thus it doesn't provide evidence one way or the other here about a literary function. What it does accomplish is to inject a pastoral tone by Paul into his writing to them. To be sure ἀδελφοί literally means birth brother, but its wide spread use across Greco-Roman culture to reference members of a association of some kind (=ἐκκλησιαί) makes it easy to understand by Paul's readers in the church at Rome.

It is helpful to compare other similar expressions of Paul's interest in visit a church: 1 Thess. 2:17-3:10; 1 Cor. 16:1-11; and Philm. 21-22.⁷³ The planning out

⁷³**First Thess. 2:17-3:10.** 17 Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ. 18 διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἔλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δῖς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς. 19 τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως — ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς — ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ; 20 ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρὰ.

3.1 Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι 2 καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηριξάει ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν 3 τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα· 4 καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε. 5 διὰ τοῦτο κἀγὼ μηκέτι στέγων ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπέiraσεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

6 Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνηεῖαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς, 7 διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ' ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως, 8 ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ. 9 τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣ χαιρόμεν δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, 10 νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;

17 As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you — in person, not in heart —

we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face. 18 For we wanted to come to you — certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again — but Satan blocked our way. 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 Yes, you are our glory and joy!

3.1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens; 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith, 3 so that no one would be shaken by these persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor had been in vain.

6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. 7 For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. 8 For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. 9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

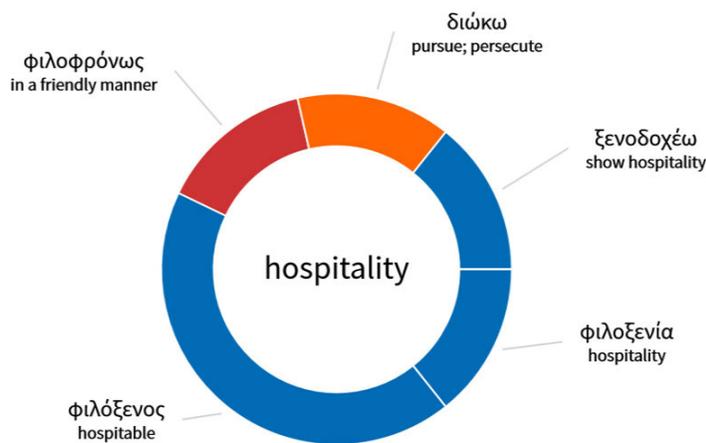
1 Cor. 16:1-11. 16.1 Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογεῖας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὡσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε. 2 κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῷ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὅ τι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται. 3 ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι, οὐς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, δι' ἐπιστολῶν τούτους πέμψω ἀπενεγκεῖν τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ· 4 ἐὰν δὲ ἄξιον ἦ τοῦ κάμει πορευέσθαι, σὺν ἐμοὶ πορεύονται.

5 Ἐλεύσομαι δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅταν Μακεδονίαν διέλθω· Μακεδονίαν γὰρ διέρχομαι, 6 πρὸς ὑμᾶς δὲ τυχὸν παραμενῶ ἢ καὶ* παραχειμάσω, ἵνα ὑμεῖς με προπέμψητε οὐ ἐὰν πορευώμαι. 7 οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἄρτι ἐν παρόδῳ ἰδεῖν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπιμεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐὰν ὁ κύριος ἐπιτρέψῃ. 8 ἐπιμενῶ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς· 9 θύρα γὰρ μοι ἀνέωγεν μεγάλη καὶ ἐνεργής, καὶ ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί.

10 Ἐὰν δὲ ἔλθῃ Τιμόθεος, βλέπετε, ἵνα ἀφόβως γένηται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ ἔργον κυρίου ἐργάζεται ὡς κἀγὼ· 11 μή τις οὖν αὐτὸν ἐξουθενήσῃ. προπέμψατε δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν εἰρήνῃ, ἵνα ἔλθῃ πρὸς με· ἐκδέχομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν.

16.1 Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

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



of the future for Paul always carried with it large uncertainties. The logistics of traveling made precise time frames impossible. The dangers associated with travel both from the natural world and from human deviousness possessed uncertainties about traveling. Not the least was the cost of traveling any great distance. Such was not inexpensive. One could walk, ride an animal, or book passage on a merchant ship. Traveling in groups was essential for safety reasons.

All of these could keep a person from traveling. But Paul's missionary calling to preach the Gospel had traveling extensively built into it. So these hurdles to traveling had to be cleared in whatever way God provided. Making these trips necessitated a clear sense of God's direction and guidance. The Lord would have to provide the necessary funds mostly by impressing on other believers to generously support the apostle and those in his group as they moved from point A to point B. Then someone would need to host them when they arrived at their destination.

The larger cultural norms of hospitality and patronage of both the Jewish and the Greco-Roman societies provided an important framework for his doing this work.

The welcoming of visitors into one's home in Paul's world was a given.⁷⁴ Among traveling believers in the

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.

10 If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord just as I am; 11 therefore let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I am expecting him with the brothers.

Philim. 21-22. 21 Πεποιθώς τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου ἔγραψά σοι, εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ ὑπερ ἃ λέγω ποιήσεις. 22 ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἐτοιμαζέ μοι ξενίαν· ἐλπίζω γάρ ὅτι διὰ τῶν προσευχῶν ὑμῶν χαρισθήσομαι ὑμῖν.

21 Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22 One thing more — prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

⁷⁴ The practice of receiving a guest or stranger graciously was common to many social groups throughout the period in which the OT and NT were composed. But special nuances of hospitality, par-

mid-first century world, being able to find fellow believers for lodging in towns and cities along the path of their journeys was crucial for avoiding having to sleep outside or in the hostels that mostly were brothels. Although welcoming in traveling strangers was universally expected in the many different societies of that world, Christians providing lodging especially for traveling believers was basic to their faith.

What the apostle didn't want his readers to be unaware of is ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, *that many times I have attempted to come to you and have been prevented thus far*. The core expression προεθέμην ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς is built off the verbs προτίθημι and ἔρχομαι with both in the aorist tense forms of verb with infinitive complementary object. The main verb προεθέμην has the literal idea of placing something in front of oneself. The figurative meaning shifts this to a mental action with the sense of planning some action or intending to do something. The sense of προτίθημι is stronger than either βούλομαι or θέλω.⁷⁵ The three uses of προτίθημι inside the NT are all Pauline. God set forth Christ as a sacrifice (Rom. 3:25) and He put forth His will so all could know it (Eph. 1:9). What then did Paul put forward? ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *to come to you*. This repeats exactly the infinitive phrase first in v. 10 as what Paul requested from God in prayer. This construction is also found in Mt 3:14; 7:15; Mk 9:14; Lk 1:43; J 1:29, 47; 2 Cor 13:1; cf. also Lk. 15:20; Jhn 14:6. The making of concrete plans to travel to Rome was not something done once or twice and then forgotten. The adverb πολλάκις such a large number of such instances had taken place prior to the writing of this letter. Whether one basic plan had been developed such as the one put forth in 15: 22-32 and then successive

particularly with regard to the guest and host roles played by God or Christ, serve to distinguish the notions of the biblical writers from those of their contemporaries. The word most often associated with hospitality in the LXX and the NT is xenos, which literally means foreigner, stranger, or even enemy. In its derived sense, however, the term comes to denote both guest and host alike. Typically, the verb used to describe the extending of hospitality is xenizein (Sir 29:25; 1 Macc 9:6; Acts 10:23; Heb 13:2). In the NT one who receives visitors is said to be philoxenos, i.e., a "lover of strangers," or to be practicing the virtue of philoxenia (1 Tim 3:2; 1 Pet 4:9; Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2). All these terms occur in classical Greek literature as well." [John Koenig, "Hospitality," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:299.]

⁷⁵ The verb προτίθεσθαι is stronger than βούλεσθαι or θέλειν. So προεθέμην here says more than ἠθελήσαμεν in 1 Th 2:18: the implication of this clause is that on a number of occasions Paul's wish to see them has actually been transformed into a more or less definite plan to visit them. For the use of the aorist tense see BDF, § 332(2)." [C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 82.]

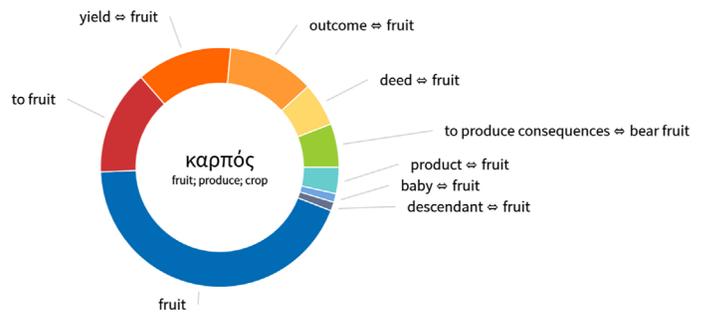
attempts to carry it out were made. Or whether different plans to visit Rome were developed but not carried out. It's not clear from Paul's language which way he developed his plans to come to Rome. But as he repeatedly stressed it was all within the framework of God's will. Each time an obstacle arose that prevented him from carrying out his plan to travel to Rome.

This Paul stresses in the parallel statement *καὶ ἐκωλύθη ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο*, and I was prevented thus far. In 1 Thess. 2:18 in a similar type statement Paul indicates that Satan kept him from making a trip: *διότι ἠθέλησαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δὶς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς*. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again—but Satan blocked our way. But in 15:22 Paul explained to the Roman Christians that a basic reason for not coming to Rome was the calling of God to preach the Gospel “from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum” (Rom. 15:19b): *Διὸ καὶ ἐνεκοπτόμην τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Wherefore indeed I have been hindered many times from coming to you*. Now that he had done this, it was God's timing for him to come to Rome with the further plans for evangelizing the western Mediterranean as far as Spain (15:23-24). The closeness of 15:22 to 1:9 in language and with it as the elaboration of the preliminary idea in 1:9 makes it clear that he had a central time that he thought would be implemented many times prior to the writing of the letter, but that it just wasn't God's timing yet for him to make the trip. Ἰλλυρικῶν, Illyricum, on the western coast of the Grecian territory was not that far away from Rome and was the farthest westward point that Paul traveled on his missionary journeys.

The temporal adverbial expression *ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο* is interesting.⁷⁶ The idiom, although common in the literature of this era, is only found here. More often Paul uses *ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν* for this idea than *ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο*.⁷⁷ Both idioms denote the passing to time up to the present moment. His point is that although up to the writing

⁷⁶“But what had previously prevented him ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο ('until now'), using the improper preposition ἄχρι ('until') with the articular adverb τοῦ δεῦρο as a substantive in the genitive case ('the present'), was no longer a factor—and so he now wants to visit the Christians at Rome on his way to Spain.” [Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 136.]

⁷⁷This is a term found in the Gospels (Matt 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22), Acts 7:3, 34, and Rev 17:1; 21:9 but nowhere else in the Pauline corpus. While ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο is a standard Greek expression (Josephus Ant. 10.265; Galen Plac. 6.5.8.1; 9.5.35.4; Aelius Aristides πρὸς Δημοσ. 24.18), the usual Pauline idiom is ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν ('until the present') in Rom 8:22; Phil 1:4." [Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), p. 129, fn. 24.]



of this letter he has not been able to make a trip to Rome, he fully expects to do so at some point in the future.

The stated goal for making this trip is expressed again (cf. vv. 11-12) but in different words: *ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν*, so that some fruit I may have also among you just as I also have among the rest of the Gentiles. The use of *καὶ* is interesting in the parallel *καὶ ἐν ... καθὼς καὶ ἐν* construction. The sense of *also among . . . just as also among* is created indicating the desire to see converts among the Gentiles at Rome in a manner similar to what he had experienced elsewhere in his ministry.⁷⁸

The figurative image of fruits denotes a broad range of ideas inside just the NT use of *καρπός*, not to speak of in the Greek literature generally of this era. The general sense of product or outcome stands behind these meanings. The idea of fruit among the Romans denotes at best a positive outcome of his visit there. His sense of divine calling to minister to non-Jews quite naturally pushed him to desire to minister to this largely non-Jewish Christian community of believers.⁷⁹ He expected

⁷⁸“καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν, 'among you also just as among the rest of the Gentiles.' By 'the rest of the Gentiles' Paul would have in mind particularly the congregations established by him in Asia, Macedonia, and Greece. Again the thrusting dynamism of Paul's call to the Gentiles asserts itself. However much he recognizes the two-way nature of ministry within the Christian community (v 12), what drives him on personally is his overpowering conviction that God has chosen to use him for special ministry among the Gentiles. So even if he is not the founder of the Roman congregations he would hardly be true to his calling if he did not expect some fruitful outcome of his visit to Rome. Here again the strongly Gentile composition of the Roman congregation is clearly implied; see also 11:13, 17–24; 15:7–12, 15–16." [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 32.]

⁷⁹The purpose statement *ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν* ('in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among other Gentiles as well') expresses what was always Paul's reason for wanting to visit the Christians at Rome. The noun *καρπός* ('fruit') is an agricultural term used among Jews (1) as a euphemism for 'offspring' or 'children'⁴¹ and (2) as a locution for the praise-offering.⁴² It was also used widely in antiquity, however, as a metaphor for any 'result,' 'outcome,' 'product,' 'gain,' or 'profit.'⁴³

"Paul's use of "fruit" later in Romans as a locution for the

positive outcomes for such ministry. Certainly when he did eventually get to Rome years later, he enjoyed a productive ministry there according to Luke in Acts 28:30-31, as well as in Phil. 1:12-26. So his goal expressed here in Rom. 1:13 was indeed realized, although not in ways that the apostle envisioned.

The final sentence in the Proem at vv. 14-15 continues the shift away from the Proem theme and toward the letter body itself: **14 Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, 15 οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ* εὐαγγελίσασθαι. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15 — hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.** Here the

1.14	Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους,	
	σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις	
6	ὀφειλέτης εἰμί,	
	οὕτως	
		κατ' ἐμὲ
7	(ἐστίν) τὸ...πρόθυμον	
	καὶ	
	ὑμῖν	
	τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ	
	εὐαγγελίσασθαι.	

focus is upon the theological foundation underneath Paul's desire to make a visit to Rome. This sets up 1:16-17 that gives core reasons for Paul's desire, and at the same time sets forth the essence of his calling to preach the Gospel. This becomes a crucial framework in which the entire body of the letter is set forth.

The core expression of this sentence is ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, I am in debt. Although that resonates with a modern readership, it has significantly different meaning to Paul than to most modern readers. This ancient Greek economic term ὀφειλέτης did indeed literally designate an individual who was in debt to another in a monetary

money he was collecting from his Gentile churches for the impoverished Jewish believers in Jesus at Jerusalem (cf. 15:28) — as well as his use of this same term in Philippians for the money he had received from the Philippian church (cf. Phil 4:17) — has led some interpreters to think that he had principally in mind here the financial support that he wanted to receive from the Christians at Rome for his intended mission to Spain.⁴⁴ But the expression τινὰ καρπὸν ('some fruit') is scarcely so specific as to mean only money. Rather, it should probably be understood, in conjunction with the agricultural imagery of 1 Cor 3:6-9 and Phil 1:22, as a 'spiritual harvest' that would result from his ministry among the Christians at Rome — that is, as Charles Cranfield has expressed the matter: 'the return to be hoped for from apostolic labours, whether new converts gained or the strengthening of the faith and obedience of those already believing.'⁴⁵

[Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 136.]

sense. Of the seven NT uses only Matt. 18:24 uses it with this literal meaning in one of Jesus' parables. The other six NT uses (4 in Paul) picks up on the figurative meaning of being obligated to someone in a moral or social sense. The natural questions arising from indebtedness is To whom? and What amount?

To whom? Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις. This pair of matching expressions is visually expressed as

Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, both to Greeks and barbarians
σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις both to the wise and the ignorant

The second line explains the first line.⁸⁰ It came out of a widely used Greek saying that reflected the division of all humanity into two groups: we wise Greeks and you ignorant non-Greeks.⁸¹ To a dominantly Greek speaking audience these sets of terms communicated a mental based way of categorizing all humanity. And this is Paul's point. His obligation to preach the Gospel was to every person no matter whether they consid-

⁸⁰Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, 'to both Greeks and barbarians.' From its first appearance this was not merely a contrast between Greeks and other nations, or Greek speakers and non-Greek speakers. The very word βάρβαρος carried derogatory significance. It referred to a speaker of a strange, unintelligible language (cf., e.g., Ovid, *Tristia* 5.10.37; 1 Cor 14:11); and from its early use in reference particularly to the Medes and Persians, the historic foes of Greece, it gained a clear note of contempt—hence Roman unwillingness to be classified as βάρβαροι (see BGD; also MM). Thus the phrase came to be used by cultured Greeks conscious of their sophistication over against the rest, and since Greek culture had indeed captured the main centers of population in the eastern Empire it could be used by all who aspired to being 'Greeks' over against the rest as uncultured—an international 'set' with whom Paul would often have rubbed shoulders on his travels and with whom indeed he could identify to a significant extent. In using the phrase here, however, Paul is not necessarily accepting the viewpoint of the 'Greeks' or designating particular groups as "barbarians." By now it had simply become a standard phrase to include all races and classes within the Gentile world. See further TDNT 1:546-53; Lagrange; Michel; Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:38, 65, 300.

"σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, 'to both wise and foolish.' This is a similar way of classifying humankind as a whole, which the 'Greek' would consider synonymous with the preceding contrast. The same derogatory note is implied: all who do not share my insight are fools! ('the educated as well as the ignorant'—NJB). For the contrast cf. Prov 17:28; Plato, *Timaeus* 30b. In ἀνόητος the high Hellenistic regard for the νοῦς (mind) is reflected; whereas in Jewish wisdom literature ἄφρων (foolish, ignorant) is preferred (cf. particularly 2:20). That Paul should be thus prepared to designate the Gentile world in categories of culture and rationality (rather than of races or geographical areas) is striking; it indicates his confidence in the power of his message even in the face of Hellenistic sophistication (cf. 1:16); see also Schlatter. For his view of human wisdom see especially 1 Cor 1:17-2:13; 3:18-20."

[James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 32-33.]

⁸¹It has similar tones of negative elitism as did the Jewish saying: we Jews and you Gentiles.

ered these among the sophisticated elite or among the uneducated masses. The subtly implied in this use is his conviction of the desperate need of the Gospel by the educated elites of that world. Now he doesn't accept the legitimacy of this biased way of looking at humanity. But it provides a dramatic vehicle for saying that his calling is to all humanity.

What amount? οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι. The elliptical clause in v. 15 brings the general principle stated in v. 14 to application to the Roman Christians. Grammatically the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι, *to gospelize*, stands as an adjective modifier of the nominative noun πρόθυμον, *eagerness*. Technically this is an exegetical use of the infinitive to complete the thought of a special category of nouns into which πρόθυμον falls: *eagerness to gospelize*.

This eagerness, τὸ...πρόθυμον stems from a divinely imposed obligation, rather than merely a human needs based obligation. It comes out of the apostle's Damascus road calling to ministry that happened simultaneously with his conversion, as Paul so effectively stated in Gal. 1:15-16a, 15“Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ 16 ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, *But when the God who set me apart at birth and called me through His grace was pleased to disclose His Son to me, so that I might gospelize Him among the Gentiles...*

The verb εὐαγγελίζω from which the aorist intensive middle voice⁸² infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι is derived, is one of those virtually untranslatable words into English.⁸³ I used above the non-existing English verb ‘*gospelize*’ for this word simply does convey the core sense of the Greek verb. The usual English translation is to ‘*preach the Gospel*,’ but this captures only a small part of

⁸²Perhaps it is a deponent middle voice. Both the middle voice and the active voice are commonly used in ancient Greek with essentially the same meaning. "The act., found in our lit. only Rv 10:7; 14:6; Ac 16:17 v.l., belongs to later Gk. (Polyaenus 5, 7; Cass. Dio 61, 13, 4; PGiss 27, 6 [II A.D.]; PAmh 2, 16; 1 Km 31:9; 2 Km 18:19f; cp. Phryn. 268 Lob.), and does not differ in mng. (s. B-D-F §309, 1) from the much more common mid. in earlier Gk." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.].

⁸³The word group εὐαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγέλιον, προεὐαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγελιστής is rich in its meaning. "Most significant for an understanding of the NT concept *euangelion* is Dt. Is. [=Deutero-Isaiah] and the literature influenced by it. Ps. 40:10 and 68:11 speak only of the isolated acts of Yahweh which are to be declared. Dt Is., however, expects the great victory of Yahweh, his accession, his kingly rule, the dawn of the new age. In this connection the עֲבָרָה is of the greatest importance." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2:708.]

the meaning. Although important to εὐαγγελίζω is proclamation, the central concept is closer to μαθητεύω, *to disciple* individuals and groups of people. Thus ‘*to gospelize*’ is to make followers of Christ through the good news of salvation in Christ. This dynamitic sense of εὐαγγέλιον, *Gospel*, is subsequently elaborated on in vv. 16-17.⁸⁴ Although the Hebrew רוֹטוּ הַטִּיבִּים, *good news*, (cf. 2 Sam 18:27) stands underneath the idea, εὐαγγέλιον in the new covenant is so much more than the Hebrew concept.

Thus Paul's keen sense of eagerness εὐαγγελίσασθαι grows out of his divine calling to do this among Gentiles in his world. Thus the general principle (v. 14) with its application to Rome (v. 15). The correlative adverb οὕτως sets this up eloquently and elliptically without the need of a state finite verb. The NRSV handles this well with its elliptical expression in English “—hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”

The noun πρόθυμον denotes “*being eager to be of service*.”⁸⁵ Three NT uses reflect this idea with two used by Jesus in the axiom the spirit indeed is willing (τὸ μὲν ⁸⁴εὐαγγελίσασθαι, ‘to preach the gospel.’ The word is well enough known in Greek, but its meaning is almost entirely Jewish and Christian (see on 1:1). (1) To preach the gospel, (2) to the Gentiles, sums up the heart of Paul's understanding of his calling. The conviction of what he personally had been called to do dominates vv 13–15, without diminishing the force of the clarification in v 12. He does not, of course, imply that his readers need to be evangelized (the Western addition of ἐν, ‘among you,’ rather than ‘to you’ is an attempt to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding here), though the openness of the Christian gatherings to outsiders and inquirers (cf. 1 Cor 14:23–25) makes that sense not altogether inappropriate. It is simply that if any one verb sums up his lifelong obligation it is this one—‘to preach the gospel’—so that its use can embrace the whole range of his ministry, including his explication of the gospel, as in this very letter. Certainly it is the case that Paul elsewhere uses εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in the sense of ‘evangelize,’ a preaching which aims for conversion (10:15; 15:20; 1 Cor 1:17; 9:16, 18; 15:1, 2; 2 Cor 10:16; 11:7; Gal 1:8, 9, 11, 16, 23; 4:13; so also Eph 2:17; 3:8; 1 Pet 1:12, 25; and regularly in Acts). But Paul did not confine his apostolic ‘set-apartness to the gospel’ (1:1) or ‘service in the gospel’ (1:9) to ‘first time’ preaching of the gospel, or restrict the gospel simply to the initial impulse on the way to salvation (1:16), and 1 Thess 3:6 is sufficient evidence that his use of εὐαγγελίζεσθαι was not narrowly fixed (against Zeller, *Juden*, 55–58). Klein in particular makes too much of the conflict between this verse and 15:20: ‘the founding of a church was at stake’ (“Purpose,” 47), which is an unlikely explanation, despite the lack of ἐκκλησία (see Introduction §3.1), since Paul otherwise addresses his Roman readers in precisely the same terms as he addresses the churches of his own foundation (see on 1:8–10; cf. 15:14; 16:19).” [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 33–34.]

⁸⁵William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 870.

πνεῦμα πρόθυμον), *but the flesh is weak* (Mt. 26:41 // Mk. 14:38). The construction τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον reflects one of the two clear ways for a Greek prepositional phrase to function adjectivally: *article (preposition + object) noun*. By placing the prepositional phrase between the article and the noun it goes with a clear adjectival role for the inherently adverbial prepositional phrase is signaled. The alternative construction for the same adjectival function would be as follows: τὸ πρόθυμον τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ. By using this construction more emphasis is given to Paul's eagerness than would have been with τὸ πρόθυμόν μου. But all of these patterns would have been translated by the same English *my eagerness*.

καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ, *also to you at Rome*. This string of expressions is attached to the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι. First καὶ is in an adverbial adjunctive function rather than its usual coordinate conjunction role. Thus the meaning 'also' that signals Paul's eagerness to gospelize at Rome is in addition to the work already done elsewhere. Then ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ, *to you in Rome*, sets up the indirect object of the infinitive or perhaps the dative of direct object. The second person plural personal pronoun ὑμῖν, *to you*, is followed by the adjectival prepositional phrase τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ, *in Rome*. The article τοῖς carries no cognitive meaning. Instead it is merely a marker attaching the prepositional phrase ἐν Ῥώμῃ back to the dative plural pronoun ὑμῖν. This is somewhat similar to the designation of recipients in the Adscriptio of v. 7a, τοῖς οὖσι ἐν Ῥώμῃ.⁸⁶ His use of a geographical noun



rather than a personal designation noun is not unusual in his writings (cf. Galatians; 1 - 2 Corinthians; Romans; Colossians; Ephesians; Philippians).

*****CONCLUSIONS*****

What insights can be gleaned from the Proem that relate to our situation today? This opening section of the letter does provide us with quite a number of insights. Insights into the world of Paul. And insights into how to enhance our world today. Let me put some of

⁸⁶For details about ἐν Ῥώμῃ, see the discussion in v. 7a under

[Adscriptio](#) above.

these on the table that come to mind.

a) Paul understood well how to communicate with his readers. He was well versed in the patterns of letter writing in the Greco-Roman world of his ministry. Plus his writing secretary for this letter, Tertius (cf. 16:22) was also skilled in this art. The letter presents the apostle's ideas with sensitivity to the situation. Paul was not a founder of the church. He had never visited the church nor the city prior to the letter. All he knew was a few of the members and leaders in the Christian community there, as chapter sixteen reflects.

Thus the tone and approach to his readers in this letter is noticeably different than with the other letters to churches which he had been a founding minister. He does not deal with specifics or problems in the church in the *Proem* as is typically the case with other letters. Instead, he centers on broad complements such as ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, *your faith is broadcast in the entire world* (v. 8b). Since this is a letter of introduction that hopefully will establish positive relationships with the congregation, his focus in the proem is appropriately upon his appreciation for the Roman Christians (περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, *for all of you*, v. 8b) and his desire to make a visit to the church (ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, v. 9-14). This desire has its roots in God's calling to him at his conversion (vv. 14-15).

Quite clearly there is no 'apple polishing' that takes place from the apostle. He deals sincerely and honestly with his own person situation of having prayed many times for the opportunity to make this visit (πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου δεόμενος, v. 10), and even having made specific plans to visit (πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, vv. 13-14). But everything must unfold within God's plans (ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 10b), which up to the writing of the letter had not opened the door for a visit. But at the time of the writing of this letter he was much more confident that God would make such a trip possible at some future point (cf. ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο in v. 13b). The detailed plans that Paul had in mind are given in chapter fifteen.

How should one approach a group of Christians whom you don't basically know? This letter of introduction that we call Romans provides some insights. Be positive, but honest. Complement real virtues but don't exaggerate. Let them know clearly about the sincerity of your desire to get to know them. Understand how to effectively present yourself to these strangers. Use language they will understand even to describe personal aspects not familiar to them culturally (e.g., Ἕλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, v. 14a). Use familiar structures like letter *Proema* as a part of that presentation. If you communicate in ways comfortable to your readers, you make a better case for yourself.

But on the other side, don't be hesitant to be creative in your presentation. The apostle used the thanksgiving and petitionary prayers pattern found in virtually all his letters. But he profoundly customized the Proem of Rom. 1:8-15 to the specific situation of this letter. This gives the passage here a dramatic distinction from the other Proema in the other letters. Over time with the increased circulation of copies of other letters from Paul among most of the churches he had contact with, the readers understood just how personalized each letter was to the individual congregation. The very creative ways that the apostle and his writing secretaries had in crafting very unique Proema to the different congregations reveals deep understanding of how to effectively communicate the message of the Gospel. This is one of the many reasons why in later centuries the letter writing pattern of the apostle Paul had profound impact on how later Christian leaders sought to communicate with their congregations and with others. Be creative, but know how to do it within the framework of familiar structures.

b) Be transparent about your intentions. Paul's intentions in the visit were stated initially as ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς, *so that I may share some spiritual blessing which will strengthen you* (v. 11). He then elaborates greater detail on what he meant: τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ, *and this is to be mutually encouraged by your situation through the faith we have together, both yours and mine* (v. 12). It is further elaborated in v. 15, οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι, *thus my eagerness also to gospelize you at Rome also*. Paul had no hidden agenda behind his desire to come to Rome. He genuinely wanted to be a vehicle for strengthening the congregation spiritual as a part of his calling from God. And he was very open to them about this.

One of the great tragedies of contemporary religious life in North America is that the label 'preacher' no longer connotes a person of trust and integrity in the thinking of large numbers of people. In fact, it suggests just the opposite. To be sure TV preachers are a major source for the corrupting of the occupation of preacher. But they are not the only source of giving it a bad connotation. Even the name Christian no longer is necessarily a positive label. God's people and its leaders must, of all people in society, be honest and transparent in dealings with others. The very integrity of the Christian Gospel is at stake here. In every aspect of his life and ministry Paul sought to reflect the presence of a holy God in his life. The righteous, holy character of God must shine through His people. The apostle knew this and sought in his complete yieldedness to Christ to see this happen. We must passionately follow the

apostle's example here.

c) Seek to communicate your message clearly. One of the creative communication strategies used by Paul was in the expansion elements signaling at the beginning of the letter much of the coming content in the letter body that would follow. By adding modifiers etc. to the core elements of the Proem the apostle manages to let his readers anticipate larger discussions yet to come in the letter. In the Praescriptio, the elaboration of εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ as centered in τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (vv. 1b-6) anticipates a foundational theme of the letter body. In the Proem with its focus on Paul's ministry a lot of what is anticipated finds detailed expression in chapter fifteen in the travel plans at the end of the letter body. Central to this anticipated visit was the desire to strengthen an already strong faith commitment of the Romans to Christ (cf. v. 8, 11-12). From a communication standpoint, these beginning signals help create interested anticipation in what the apostle intends to say as the letter was read in the various house church groups around the city.

What that faith commitment means with detailed implications will be spelled out in great detail in chapters one through eleven. How it must impact one's daily living is central to chapters twelve through fifteen. By coming at composing the letter in this manner, the apostle prepares his readers for what to expect when he is able to make the trip to the city. They will have multiple opportunity to make copies of it for circulation to the numerous house church groups. In their gatherings it can be read repeatedly and discussed at length. By the time of the visit, the congregations will have questions and concerns ready for discussion with the apostle.

When considered from this larger perspective, one realizes how marvelous is Paul's teaching strategy. His letter writing ministry helped address relevant concerns in advance of a trip to the congregation. It established a framework for the visit that enabled the congregation to prepare itself for his arrival. If problems existed in the church, they were addressed in the letter and thus gave the congregation advanced opportunity to solve them prior to the apostle's visit. If not, then the congregation was not blindsided by criticisms from the apostle after his arrival. And like at Rome where his visit was a first time trip, the letter served to acquaint the church in advance with the apostle and what he sought out of the visit.

How does such a teaching strategy relate to us in modern church life? At minimal it sets an example of clarity and transparency in our teaching of the Gospel in ministry. Our goal should be full and profound understanding of the meaning of the Gospel. First century Christianity sought the details. Far too much of mod-

ern North American Christianity only wants the least amount of basics as possible. Several writers in the NT, including Paul in for example First Corinthians, fuss at individuals who content themselves with superficial Christian commitment. In some contrast to this general trend toward superficiality, as a teacher I have experienced over many decades a deep hunger by significant numbers of folks for much greater understanding of scripture and of their Christian faith. Often times the barriers to these individuals has been preachers and pastors with little or no training or skills to help them go deeper in their understanding. But as the writers of the NT clearly understood, Christian faith commitment is never static. It must always be developing and maturing the life of the individual. Otherwise, it is lifeless and the religious experience of the individual will be shallow and empty.

Can we learn from Rom. 1:8-15? I think so. Many marvelous insights about the Gospel, our religious life, and how to communicate our message are found in these verses. We must just apply them, if we are to move into the vibrant kind of spiritual life experienced by the apostle Paul.