ROMANS 15

The God of Hope and the Road to Spain

Strong Shoulders, One Voice, a Priest of the Gospel, and a Plan Bigger Than Paul's

> *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*
> ROMANS 15:13

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Paul has brought us

1. Romans 15 finishes two things at once.

2. The background is a real journey.

3. The Old Testament roots run deep.



The Strong Bear the Weak

Christ did not please Himself — the Scriptures give hope — one accord, one voice

ROMANS 15:1

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

DAVID GUZIK

Bearing up, not just bearing with; make the weak strong; God's delays are not His denials.

R.C. SPROUL

Pleasing for edification is a virtue; Psalm 69 is messianic; nothing comforts like the Word.

C.H. SPURGEON

Handel wanted to make hearers better; the Old Testament is not outworn; Scripture ripens graces.

MATTHEW HENRY

Christ's self-denial is the best argument against Christian selfishness; God is the fountain, Scripture the pipe.

βαστάζειν

BASTAZEIN · "TO BEAR, CARRY"

Bastazō is a load-carrying verb: to lift and carry, and figuratively to endure.

Accept One Another — the Gentiles Sing

Christ the servant of Israel, four Old Testament voices, and the God of hope

ROMANS 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

DAVID GUZIK

Receive one another in pure grace; the quotations show Jew and Gentile share common worship.

R.C. SPROUL

Receiving a brother glorifies God; mercy to Gentiles confirms the truth spoken to the Jews.

C.H. SPURGEON

Christ did not receive us because we were perfect; peace is joy resting, joy is peace dancing.

MATTHEW HENRY

Has Christ been so kind to us? Christ circumcised for Israel; true joy is the fruit of faith.

προσλαμβάνεσθε

PROSLAMBANESTHE · "ACCEPT, WELCOME"

Proslambanō is to take someone to oneself — into your home, your company, your friendship.

Four witnesses: the Gentiles praise God (15:9–12)



Paul calls witnesses from every part of the Hebrew Bible — the Writings, the Law, the Writings again, the Prophets — and the chain ends on the word "hope," which verse 13 turns into a prayer.

A Priest of the Gospel

Written boldly to a good church — the offering of the Gentiles — from Jerusalem to Illyricum

ROMANS 15:16

to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

DAVID GUZIK

Verse 16 is full of priesthood; Paul glories only in Christ; Illyricum is the western Balkans.

R.C. SPROUL

Grace, not merit; not priests in the Old Testament or Roman sense; power is in the Word.

C.H. SPURGEON

Paul says nothing of a sacrificing priesthood; the Spirit alone has power over the heart.

MATTHEW HENRY

The Gentiles made priests unto God; a sanctified soul offered on Christ the altar; Paul broke the ice.

λειτουργὸν … ἱερουργοῦντα … ἡ προσφορά
LEITOURGON · HIEROURGOUNTA

Verse 16 is built from temple words.

Jerusalem, Then Rome, Then Spain

A delayed visit, a Gentile offering for Jewish saints, a plea for prayer, and the God of peace

ROMANS 15:24

whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

DAVID GUZIK

Rome a western base like Antioch; Paul likely reached Spain; prayers answered — in chains.

R.C. SPROUL

We do not know if Paul reached Spain; Gentiles grafted in owed Israel; a bullseye on his back.

C.H. SPURGEON

Strive means agonise; repay Christ by praying for His servant; leave the way to God.

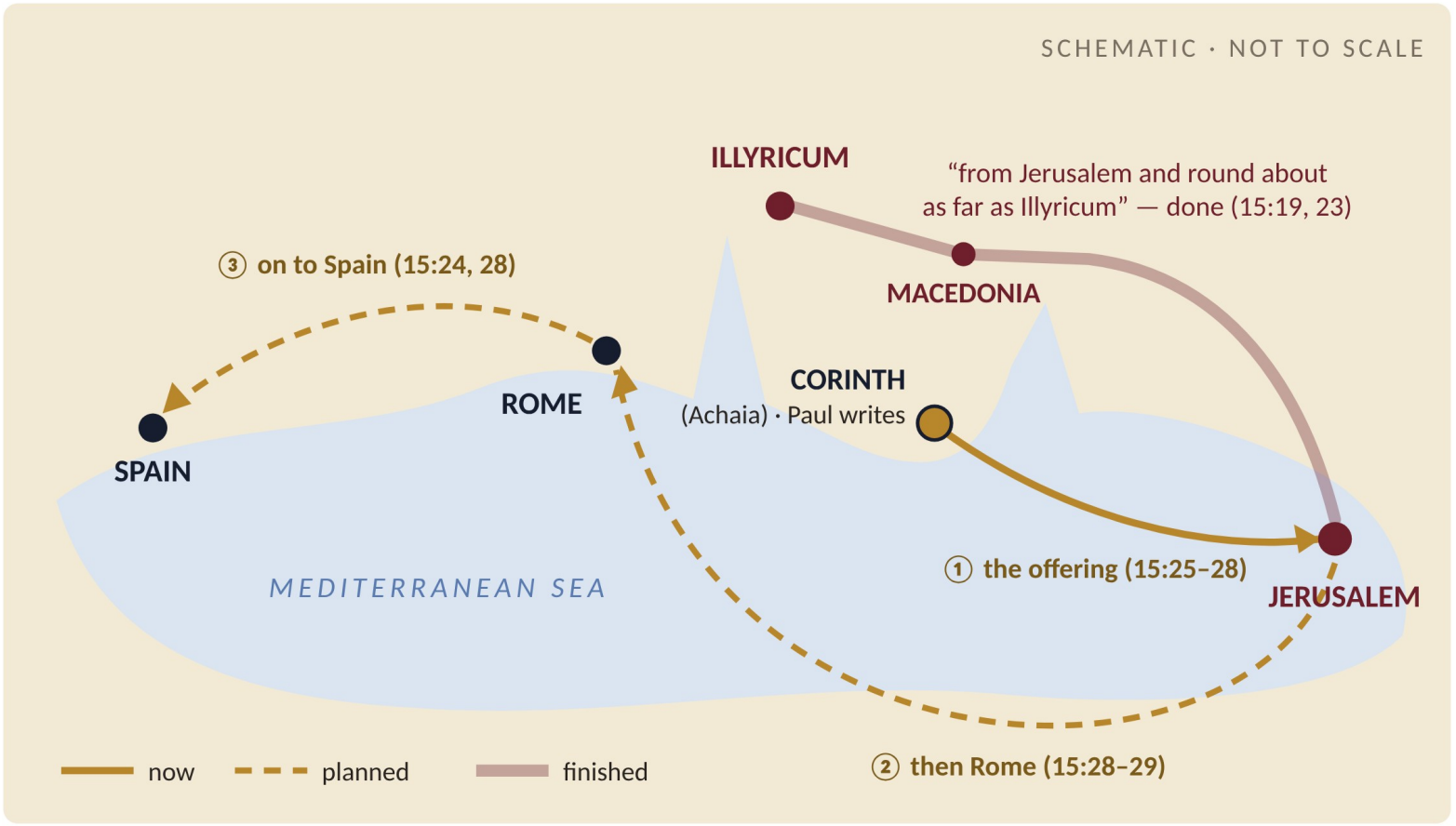
MATTHEW HENRY

Not certain he reached Spain, many think not; Gentiles beholden to Jews; pray with fervency.

κοινωνίαν τινὰ … λειτουργῆσαι
KOINŌNIAN TINA · LEITOURGĒSAI

The money is called koinōnia (G2842) — the word for fellowship, sharing, partnership.

Paul's road west — schematic map (15:19–29)



Read the solid line first: from Corinth Paul goes east to Jerusalem with the offering; only then the dashed road to Rome and Spain. The shaded arc is the work he calls finished. In the event he reached Rome in chains (Acts 21–28).

What to carry from this chapter

1

The strong carry, not just tolerate.

Bastazō (v. 1) is the verb of carrying the cross (John 19:17) and of bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

2

"Even Christ did not please Himself."

Paul answers a dispute about food with Psalm 69 and the cross.

3

The same two gifts, two sources.

Perseverance and encouragement come "of the Scriptures" (v. 4) and from "the God who gives perseverance and encouragement" (v. 5) — the pipe and the fountain.

4

A mob's word made holy.

Homothymadon, "with one accord," is used ten times in Acts — of the praying church and of the mobs at Stephen's death and in Ephesus.

More to carry

5

Receiving a brother is worship.

“When I receive you, I am not just being kind to you. … I am glorifying God.”

6

The whole Old Testament votes.

Law (Deuteronomy 32:43), Prophets (Isaiah 11:10) and Writings (Psalms 18:49; 117:1) all call the Gentiles to praise — and the chain ends on the word “hope.”

7

Peace is joy resting.

Spurgeon on 15:13: “Peace is joy resting, and joy is peace dancing.”

8

A priest whose altar is the gospel.

Leitourgos, hierourgeō (only here) and prosphora fill verse 16 — but the offering is people, sanctified by the Spirit.

Talk it through

1. Who is the “weak” brother in your life right now — the man whose conscience, habits or struggles make him hard to carry? What would it look like this week to bear him up rather than just put up with him?

2. Paul answers a quarrel over food with the cross: “even Christ did not please Himself.” Where are you insisting on your own liberty, preference or comfort in a way Christ never would?

3. Verse 4 says the Old Testament was written for our instruction so that we might have hope. What Old Testament passage has given you perseverance or encouragement in a hard season?

4. “Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us.” How did Christ accept you — and what does that standard say about the brother you are slow to accept?

5. Paul made his ambition to preach where Christ was not named. Who around you — at work, on your street, on the yard, in your family — has never really heard?

CLOSING

Romans 15 begins with one weak brother at one table and ends at the edge of the known world. The Christ who did not please Himself is the Christ the nations hope in, and the God of perseverance, of hope and of peace is with all who bear one another and carry the gospel west. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study, reflection journal and film: see the Romans study page.