

# BIBLE & BAGEL

## Romans – Our Common Faith

6 April 2016

*Most Christians understand the “Great Commission” as just sharing the gospel to others, actually this is only half the job and in fact the easier half. We are called to make disciples, this takes a lot of investment of time and energy. We see today the Apostle’s heart for both evangelism – he wanted to go to places that had not yet heard the name of Yeshua and discipleship; he wanted to ensure that the believers he ministered to grew in maturity in Messiah. Listen to his heart...*

### Romans 15:14-19

14 Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, 16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient — 19 in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. NKJV

Apostle Paul now begins the closing statements of his letter. He says that he is confident of the believers in Rome that they have knowledge and are able to strengthen each other. He says that there were some points in his letter where he had to speak strongly to them. This was because he, as an apostle to the Gentiles, wanted to ensure that the Gentiles would be acceptable to God and set apart by the Holy Spirit.

He says he has reason to boast in Messiah in the things of God, and he will only dare to speak of things which Messiah has done through him not just by his preaching but also with acts that served to make the Gentiles obedient. The signs and wonders which were performed through him by the Holy Spirit, so much so that from Jerusalem to Illyricum and all the areas around he had fully preached the gospel of Messiah.

His faith in the Gentile believers in Rome is that they are mature enough to teach others. This is a point we all need to come to in our faith, the place where we can confidently teach others, God did not create us simply to be people who listen to the Word but people who do it and also teach it. As we have studied this letter we saw that at many points he spoke very strongly to them, he needed to remind them of certain truths, just we all need to be reminded over and over again of things we have already learnt. So that they would be an acceptable offering to God, this is in line with his heart that he expressed in the book of Colossians; to present every man perfect in Messiah<sup>i</sup>. He desired that all the people he ministered to would rise to a level of maturity in Messiah. His ministry was not just in words but also expressed through the power of the Holy Spirit displayed in signs and wonders<sup>ii</sup>.

The ministry that God has given us all is to make disciples, this means more than just evangelism, it means making sure the people we minister to grow up and mature in



Yeshua and our ministry must simply be by words but also with the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Romans 15:20-33

20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, 21 but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand." 22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. NKJV

Apostle Paul says that his purpose was to preach Messiah in places where they had not heard of Him before because he did not want to build on a foundation that someone else had laid, he is one who likes to start the work from the bottom up. Inverse 19 he mentions that he had preached the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum, a distance of a few thousand kilometers. This he says, was the reason why he had not gone to Rome before, they had already heard the gospel and he wanted to go to places that had not heard the gospel yet.

This shows that Apostle Paul really gave himself to the work that God gave to him, it was this vision of preaching the gospel where it had not been heard that drove him. We have to ask ourselves, what drives us in the work of God, is there a vision in us that motivates our service to God are we just serving God as a "hobby". If we don't have a God given vision then our life becomes meaningless. This does not mean that everyone has to be a missionary or full time worker; if we have a vision to reach people around us in the marketplace who have not heard the gospel, and that is the vision that we live for then life becomes meaningful. Although Paul wanted to visit Rome, his priority was preaching to people who had not yet heard the gospel, the vision takes priority over our preferences, when it comes to a choice we must choose the vision.

### Romans 15:25-33

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. 28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. 29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. 30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. NKJV

Apostle Paul explains that he was on his way to Jerusalem bringing with him gifts given by the believers in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor in Jerusalem; these were Gentile congregation who understood that they had a debt to the Jews for the spiritual blessings they had received so they repaid it with material blessings. After he had delivered this gift he would go to Rome on his way to Spain, and he believes that he



would come to Rome with a great blessing for them. He requests that they pray for his protection from the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem who were waiting to arrest him and that the gifts he brought would be acceptable to the saints, i.e. the believers in Jerusalem. So that when he returned to Rome it would be with great joy.

He was on a mission at that moment, that mission was to bring monetary gifts that had been given by the Macedonian and Achaian churches to the church in Jerusalem. Notice here that the gifts were not given to Jewish religious authorities but to the church leaders for them to distribute, the Bible says that we should do good first to the family of God<sup>iii</sup>. Secondly we see here that the Gentiles understood their debt to the Jews and were repaying that debt by sending gifts to the Jewish believers, we need to have this same sense of gratitude as well and continue to support the work of the gospel among the Jewish people.

Apostle Paul was going to back to Jerusalem knowing that there were people who were waiting to arrest him, yet he was willing to go, in the book of Acts that while he was in Caesarea he was warned by the prophet Agabus that he would be arrested in Jerusalem<sup>iv</sup>, yet he did not waiver from his task. He could easily have given the money to someone else to deliver but he knew what God wanted him to do. It did end up with him being arrested and ultimately going to Rome but as a prisoner instead. Even though he knew the dangers ahead Paul, went ahead and was willing to obey God no matter what the consequences. How many of us have this kind of spirit to obey God now matter what the cost. The kingdom of God needs more such people.

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<sup>i</sup> Colossians 1:28

<sup>ii</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:4

<sup>iii</sup> Galatians 6:10

<sup>iv</sup> Acts 21:8-13

