–Save This Page as a PDF–

Paul's Strategy for Success
15: 14-33

Paul's strategy for success DIG: What were some things that God had accomplished through Paul's life? Why did Paul prefer not to minister where others had already ministered? Why did Paul say the Gentiles of Macedonia and Achaia owed an offering to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem? Why do the Gentiles have a responsibility to share the Gospel with the Jews?

REFLECT: Jewish missions are primarily dependent on Gentile churches for their support. Does your church's missions budget include money for Jewish missions (15:27)? If not, why not? What principles of evangelism from Paul's life are you seeking to apply to your own life? What has helped you to share the Gospel with others? What has hindered you in sharing the Gospel? How can you overcome those obstacles? How does Paul's example inspire you?

Unless we understand the distinctive ministry of Paul,
we will not fully appreciate the message of the grace of ADONAI.



After completing the major doctrinal portion of **his** letter **(1:18** to **15:13), Paul** now begins what amounts to an epilogue. Though all of **Paul's** letters have closing remarks, **he** devoted more space to the believers in **Rome** than any other. This was due, at least in part, to the fact that he had never visited the city and its churches, and to **his** desire to establish personal relationships with **his** readers. Another factor

undoubtedly was **his** plan to visit **Rome** in the future. In writing to a group of people whom **he** had never met as a group, **Paul** showed admirable restraint in avoiding personal references to **himself** as an example **(7:7-25)**, and **his** other personal remarks are few **(1:8-16, 9:1-3, 10:1-2** and **11:1)**. Now as **he** closes **his** letter, **he** feels led to discuss **his** philosophy of ministry and **his** plans in light of it.

Paul's reasons for writing his letter: **Paul** had never even visited this church, and then **they** received this lengthy, detailed, letter. **He** had demonstrated in **Romans** and elsewhere **his** ability to be straightforward, even almost blunt. But because **he** had spoken so forcefully, **Paul** did not want to jeopardize **his** relationship with **them** by seeming insensitive, presumptuous, or unloving. **He** wrote: **Now I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you are full of goodness,** maturity, and **filled with knowledge and well able to counsel each other (15:14).** So, if **Paul** did not have a low opinion of the believers in **Rome**, why did **he** write on such basic themes? **He** explained: **But on some points, I have written you quite** boldly (arising out of **his** apostolic authority in **1:1**) **by way of reminding you about them, because of the grace God has given me to be a servant of the Messiah Yeshua** for **the Gentiles (11:13), with the priestly duty of presenting the Good News of God, so that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering, made holy by the Ruach Ha'Kodesh (15:15-16).**

In union with the Messiah Yeshua, then, I have reason to be proud of my service to God; for I will not dare speak of anything except what the Messiah has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience by my words of the preaching of **the Good News**, **and deeds (15:17-18).** All of **the apostles**, as ambassadors of **Messiah**, were authenticated by the miraculous signs **they** performed. A year earlier, **Paul** had written to the believers at Corinth: **The things that prove I am an emissary – signs, wonders and miracles – were done in your presence (Second Corinthians 12:12a).** Divine affirmation does not require **signs, wonders and miracles**. Much, perhaps most, of **Paul's** own ministry was not affirmed in such dramatic ways. But **the power of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** is always evidenced in some way when **the Gospel** is rightly proclaimed, even by the simplest and most uneducated person.

Before the canon of Scripture was closed at the end of the first century when **John** wrote **the Revelation of Yeshua Messiah**, **YHVH** often used **signs, wonders and miracles** to authenticate true teaching and preaching. The ministry of the apostles, especially in the earliest days of the Messianic Community, was

accompanied by authenticating **miracles**.

Paul does not disobey **his** own injunction against boasting, because **his** boasting is never about **himself**, but about **what the Messiah has accomplished**. **So, from Yerushalayim all the way to Illyricum** (in the **Roman** Empire) a distance of 1,500 miles, **I have fully proclaimed the Good News of the Messiah. I have always made it my ambition to proclaim the Good News where the Messiah was not yet known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.** It was not that it was wrong to **build on another's foundation**, because that process is part of **God's** plan for establishing and maintaining **His Body** of Believers. But **Paul** was an evangelist. It is still **ADONAI's** plan that some believers lay **the foundation** by bringing unbelievers to saving faith in **Messiah** (evangelists) and that others build up those converts by ministering **God's Word** to them (Messianic rabbis and pastors). Quoting **Isaiah 52:15**, **Paul** declares: **Those who have not been told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand (15:19-21).** The context of that passage in **Isaiah** indicates that its primary reference is the **Messiah's** Second Coming. But in its broadest application, it refers to the process of evangelism that begun in **Paul's** day and will continue throughout the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bp – The Dispensation of Grace**), until its ultimate fulfillment at **Messiah's** return.[390]

Paul's future plans: **This is also why I have so often been prevented from visiting you** because of the abundance of ministry he needed to do in other lands. **But now, since there is no longer a place in these regions** where **he** had been ministering**, and since he had wanted for many years to come to Rome, he hoped to see** the believers in **Rome as he passed through on his way to Spain.** Because the church in **Rome** was well established and mature, **Paul** probably did not anticipate staying there very long, but although **his** intended layover was to be brief, it was still of great importance to **him**. While visiting, **he** hoped **to be helped** (Greek: *propempo*, meaning *to furnish an escort as well as supplies*) **on his way to Spain, after I have enjoyed your company awhile (15:22-24).**

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** infinite wisdom! Praise **You** that **Your** love for each of **Your** children is a wise love which does not give in no matter how much the child pleads with **You**. **You** know what is best and you give what is best for each of **Your** children. **For ADONAI Elohim is a sun and a shield. ADONAI gives grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly***

(Psalms 84:12). Your *answer to* ***Your*** *child's prayer is like a stop light that sometimes gives a green Go – sometimes yellow -Wait, and sometimes a red Stop. In a similar way* ***You*** *sometimes say yes – Go, sometimes Wait, and sometimes No. It is wonderful that* ***You*** *are omniscient and know all about everything and all about each of* ***Your*** *children.* ***Whenever I sit down or stand up, You know it. You discern my thinking from afar. You observe my journeying and my resting and You are familiar with all my ways. (Psalms 139:1-2).*** *Love* ***You****! In* ***Your*** *Holy* ***Son's*** *name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

Spain included the city or region known in the TaNaKh as **Tarshish**, the place to which **Jonah** sought to flee **(Jonah 1:3)**, and from which ships brought King Solomon's **gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks** every three years **(First Kings 10:22). Spain** was on the far western side of the continent and had become a major center of commerce and culture, made accessible by way of the renowned **Roman** roads. Yet, **Spain** was not evangelized until the middle of the third century. It was therefore, quite understandable why **Paul's** plan was to minister there. Making sensible and careful plans for serving **God** does not conflict with our reliance on **His** providence, and reliance on **His** providence does not excuse failure to plan.[391]

Paul's immediate plans: Remember, **Paul** was writing this letter from Corinth. **He** could have easily made the trip from Corinth to **Rome** in a relatively short amount of time. **But** before **Paul** would be free to go to **Rome**, much less **Spain**, it was necessary for **him** to go about a thousand miles in the opposite direction to **Yerushalayim with aid for God's people there. Macedonia and Achaia thought it would be good to make some contribution to the poor among God's people in Yerushalayim (15:25-26).** Years earlier, the leaders of the **Jerusalem** Messianic community had urged **Paul** to **remember the poor (Galatians 2:10). He** writes about the present collection on their behalf in **First Corinthians 16:1-4** and **Second Corinthians Chapters 8:1** to **9:15.** So well did he succeed in obtaining **Gentile** charity toward **the Jewish** poor that he made this part of his message, and the gift was duly delivered in **Acts 24:17-19.**

They were pleased to do it (15:27a). Obedience in doing *tzedakah* (charity) should be with joy, for **God loves a cheerful giver (Second Corinthians 9:7).** Such charity reveals the fellowship between Messianic **Jews** and **Gentile** believers that **Paul** was anxious to instill in the church in **Rome (11:11-32)**. **For if the Gentiles have shared with the Jews in spiritual matters** simply out of gratitude. **Paul** makes the same point in **First Corinthians 9:11, "If we have**

sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?" Romans 15:27b echoes this: **For if Gentiles have shared with the Jews in spiritual matters, then the Gentiles clearly have a duty to help the Jews in material matters.** The Word of **God** declares: **For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile (Romans 1:16).** Therefore, I encourage **Gentile** believers who believe in **God's** Word to assist Messianic **Jews** and **Jewish** congregations, whether Messianic or not.[392]

The details of Paul's plan: So, when I have finished this task and made certain that they have received this fruit, I will leave for Spain and visit you on my way there. Paul was overjoyed with the generous gift that **he** and the delegation from those **Gentile** churches were bringing to **Jerusalem**. The genuine love and gratitude of those **Gentile** representatives must have been expressed as **they** presented **their** offering to the suffering **Jewish** believers in **Tzyion** must have been extremely heartwarming. But after that task was completed, **Paul** was absolutely sure that **he** would make **his** way to **Rome**. **And I know that when I come to you, it will be with the full measure of the Messiah's blessings (15:28-29).**

What is often referred to as the "health and wealth gospel" was the furthest thing from **Paul's** mind. **His** obedience to **Messiah** cost him dearly in both of those areas. As a result of **his** service to **Messiah**, he suffered imprisonment, beatings, stonings, dangers from **Gentiles** as well as **Jews**, and a host of other hardships **(Second Corinthians 11:23-27)**. But none of those outward problems could rob **him** of **his** inner **blessing**. To the contrary, **he** wrote: **I want you to know that what has happened to me has helped in advancing the Good News. It has become clear to the whole palace and to everyone else that it is because of the Messiah that I am in chains. Also, my being in prison has given most of the brothers in the Lord confidence, so that they have become much more bold in speaking the word of God fearlessly . . . All that matters is that in every way . . . Messiah is being proclaimed; and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice (Philippians 1:12-14** and **18).**[393]

Paul asks for their prayers: And now I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and by the love of the Spirit (**the Ruach Ha'Kodesh loves** us just as much as **the Father** and **the Son**), **to join me in my struggle by praying to God on my behalf that I will be rescued from the unbelievers**

in Y'hudah. Paul was well aware of the problems that lay before **him** in **Jerusalem** (see the commentary on **Acts, to see link click Cn – Paul's Advice from Jacob and the Elders at Tziyon**), and **he** was deeply concerned that the offering from the **Gentile** churches be delivered and distributed properly. If these objectives were accomplished, according to **Paul**, **he** could then say that **his service for Yerushalayim will be acceptable to God's people there.**[394] **Then, if it is God's will, I will come to you with joy and have a time of rest among you. The will of God,** indeed, took **him** to **Rome**, but not to find **joy** and **rest**; but ultimately, to find martyrdom (see the commentary on **Acts Dg – Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey**). **Now may the God of shalom be with you all,** that is, all the believers in **Rome**. **Amen (15:30-33).**

Life Lessons: We end this study on **Paul's** letter to the church in **Rome** with a few recurring themes on our minds. *How will we treat our neighbors? How will we **love** those who share our beliefs and those who do not? How will we speak and live out the gospel within the Church and the world?* This letter invites us to return to it often for encouragement, direction, and challenge. It drives us to appreciate all that **ADONAI** has done for us. It reminds us that the more we learn to **love God**, the better we are equipped to **love** our neighbors.[395]