

## WHY DID PAUL WANT TO VISIT ROME?

### **TEXT: ROMANS 15:14-33**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Paul's prayer in Romans 15:13 concludes the doctrinal section of his epistle to the Romans.
2. Paul began this epistle in a personal manner, and he finishes up in a personal manner (1:7-12; 15:14-16, etc.).
3. Paul said in Romans 1:10, 11, "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
4. Paul longed to get to Rome to see them (cf. 15:22-24, 28, 29, 32).
5. I have entitled tonight's message, "Why Did Paul Want to Visit Rome?"

#### **I. PAUL WAS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES**

1. Paul had a great burden for his fellow Jews (cf. 9:1-3; 10:1-3; 11:1, 2).
2. And Paul said back in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
3. Nevertheless, Paul had a special commission from God to reach the Gentiles (cf. 11:13; 15:16).
4. And since Paul was "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (15:16), it is easy to understand why he was eager to go to Rome, the largest and most influential Gentile city in the world at that time.
5. Rome was the headquarters for the vast and powerful Roman Empire.
6. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, Paul had "an intense longing to witness for his Master in the very heart of heathendom."

7. In Romans 12:1, Paul said the believer in Christ was to present himself a living sacrifice to God. Here in Romans 15:16, the believer makes the offering, and the offering is referred to as the Gentile converts, that “might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

8. An outline of Paul’s ministry as described in Romans 15:15, 16 (W.H. Griffith Thomas, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*).

- The Source of Ministry – “the grace that is given to me of God” (15:15b).
- The Purpose of Ministry – “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ” (15:16)
- The Sphere of Ministry – “unto the Gentiles” (15:16)
- The Work of Ministry – “ministering the gospel of God” (15:16)
- The End of Ministry – “that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable” (15:16)
- The Crown of Ministry – “sanctified” (15:16)
- The Guarantee of Ministry – “in the Holy Ghost” (15:16)

## **II. PAUL WANTED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME**

1. Paul “fully preached the gospel of Christ” all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum, which was close to Italy. Illyricum was northwest of Macedonia, on the Adriatic Sea (15:19).
2. Paul’s strategy is seen in the book of Acts, and it has been followed by missionaries ever since – Paul would evangelize the big cities, and then his converts would spread out into the rural districts and small cities.
3. In Romans 15:19-21, Paul is describing the geographical extent of his ministry, not the chronological order. He had gotten as far as Illyricum, but he still hadn’t gotten to Rome.
4. Paul’s desire was to preach in Gentile areas where people had never heard the Gospel (15:20). That is why he wanted to preach the Gospel in Rome (1:15).

5. Paul drives home this point by quoting Isaiah 52:15 (Rom. 15:21).
6. “But now having no more place in these parts...” (15:23) means that Paul and his co-laborers had successfully evangelized their area, and recognized the need to move further west. To Rome and then to Spain (15:24, 28).
7. Paul had been wanting to go to Rome for “many years” but he was hindered (15:22, 23).
8. Because of all these hindrances, Paul always asked for prayer (15:30-33).

### **III. PAUL WANTED TO GO TO ROME IN THE FULNESS OF THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST (15:28, 29, 32).**

1. Paul knew that God’s power would be upon his preaching (15:29).
2. Paul’s plan was to go to Jerusalem, and then Rome on his way to Spain (15:24-28).
3. The purpose for his trip to Jerusalem was to deliver funds which had been collected among the Gentile churches for “the poor saints” which were at Jerusalem (15:25-27).
4. Paul discusses this collection at great length in II Corinthians 8 and 9.
5. As soon as Paul was finished delivering these funds, he hoped to visit Rome on his way to Spain (15:28).
6. As far as we know, Paul never did get to Spain. However, through the letters that he wrote his ministry has not only gone to Spain but it has gone out all over the world.
7. Paul did make it to Rome, but the Lord brought him there as a prisoner in chains.
8. After Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, the Lord stood by him, and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome” (Acts 23:11).

9. Paul came in chains, but more importantly he came “in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ” (15:29).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Romans 15 ends with a prayer (15:33).
2. Paul always prayed, and he often asked for prayer (15:30).
3. Prayer should be specific (15:31, 32).