

## St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

Collect for – For the Church

O GRACIOUS Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church; that thou wouldst be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Amen

Questions on Romans 11

Introduction: Another Section of the Letter

I. The Systematic Exposition of the Gospel has ended –The Question is settled

The Hebrews are now divided some believe some don't but it is all for the Glory of God and in the end God will be faithful- It is a mystery how and why

A. Now Paul urges the Romans to be faithful

B. Faithfulness is the distinction between Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy

II. Now the Faithful Know the Truth and must live in a manner that reflects that belief

Romans 12: 1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

I. Life in the Body - play on words – Human body – Body of Christ, the Church

A. The Command is both to the individuals and the communities (Both Bodies)

1. In offering Paul is referring to the physical, material

2. The offering to that which is not material, earthly

B. Remember the fallen world of the Gentiles – The Word had not come to them – Now this is changed

C. The offering of human bodies as Spiritual Sacrifice is to be understood as different from animal sacrifice of other offering – a Living Sacrifice

D. This Living Sacrifice comes from our intellectual ability to “Know” that we should offer it as rational beings

## II. Discerning the Will of God

A. Believers are to know what is and to recognize what is not of God

B. Living in the in between time

1. Here Paul is noting the renewal of existence that believers have to accomplish by God’s Grace

2. We live in the now, but recognize the transitional nature of the present time

C. For Paul, Morality involves constantly discerning God’s Will

1. No fixed formula –referring to the philosophies of the Greeks, Romans

2. It will be difficult in this period of transition

### Romans 12:3-8

For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him. For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

## I. Life in the Body as Continual Sacrifice to God

A. The Rational Mind leads to sober attitude

B. Adopting this attitude is a Charism – Gift from God

C. This is not only a Christian Attitude – Moderation was common in philosophy

## II. The Body of Christ – The Church

A. An ancient image to relate the interconnectedness of a group of people, city or state

B. The image is used to demonstrate the use of the diverse gifts within the group

C. Paul then illustrates with the list of gifts

D. Prophecy is the first gift noted as it is the supreme gift

1. Notes full mental faculties to understand

2. Also the Will to implement what is understood

### Romans 12:9-16

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

#### I. The lubrication that allows the community to function

A. Love – Agape love – this must be the rule of the community

B. Blessing persecutors – those outside the community that oppose the faith

1. These are the unknowing or those that are hostile

2. Passivity will demonstrate the Love of the Christian Community

3. If the Christian Community is aggressive then the Agape Love of the Community will be disturbed – Lawsuits?

**What does this passage remind you of? Sermon on the Mount**

## Romans 12:17-21

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

## I. Paul continues with the issue of interaction with those outside the community

- A. Peace with all vs. retaliation
- B. Leave vengeance to God
- C. Overcome evil with good.

## Romans 13: 1-7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

**This passage seems to complete the thoughts concerning interaction with those outside the community .....But is it Paul?**

## I. Is this passage not exactly contrary to what John taught in his Revelation?

- A. There is no appeal to Jesus or His Commandments
- B. Is not our Citizenship in Heaven?

*But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*  
 Philippians 3:20

C. Several Modern Commentators believe this is a Gloss (An Addition) to make the Christian Community more appealing to the authorities

1. This may save Paul reputation, but it leads to many more questions
2. It also does not deal with the other Paul statements that it into this mold

## II. What did Paul Say?

A. Be Subject – he did not say to be obedient – two different words

I can be subject to gravity, but still fly in an airplane if I am obedient to the natural laws of physics

B. Rules derive their power from Divine Intervention

This was an understanding not only in Emperor Worship but among many people and for a long time. The divine right of kings still exists today, but it does not fit our political culture

C. Seek commendation not punishment

If the divine right exists the punishment you receive in the here and now may have eternal consequences

D. Be subject for conscience sake

Don't oppose just to oppose – you will be constantly second guessing yourself – say yes to what is right and no to what is clearly wrong

E. The Issues of Taxes

Jesus and the Temple Tax – God's Temple – God's World – God's Rulers – Be careful of Christian Pragmatism: Pragmatism is the notion that ideas may be judged by their practical consequences. A pragmatist concludes that a course of action or concept is right if it brings good results, wrong if it doesn't seem to work.

## II. The Passage has been an important one throughout the ages

A. It seems to us simple in the understanding of divine will of rulers

B. It seem opposite to us where the power comes from the people to the Government rather than from God to the rules and then to the people

C. Expediency comes to mind when we read this passage

D. However there is value when we consider the message that no human activity stands on its own merits not even our governments