***The Delayed Visit  
RO04-02***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1975)**

Please turn to Romans 1:11-13. Our subject deals with the delayed visit. Paul has introduced himself in the opening verses of this letter to the Christians in Rome. He commends them for their progress thus far in Christianity. Paul says that he regularly prays for them: praying that they may continue in this good way that they have begun, because, up to this time, there has been no major teacher of doctrine in the city of Rome. Therefore, Paul himself desires very much to go to Rome, but in God's right time, in order to minister in the nerve center of the empire.

**Rome or Jerusalem**

Remember that, at this time, he is in the city of Corinth as he writes this book. He is writing from Corinth. His ministry in Corinth is at an end, and he is ready to move on. He can now move in two directions. He can either move westward, and go indeed to Rome where the door is open, or he can follow a different inclination which he also has, and that is to go eastward toward Jerusalem.

This passage of Scripture gives us the background of the time in Paul's life when he made a dramatically wrong move. Here is the fact that he is a Christian (a believer) who stands in the position that he stood in, in the knowledge of the Word of God, and yet who made a move that was going to lead to considerable suffering in his own life.

So, let's pick it up at Romans 1:11. Paul says, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto to you some spiritual gift to the end, that you may be established. The word "for" is the Greek word "gar." This is a little particle in the Greek language, and it signals that Paul is going to introduce the reason that he wants to go to Rome. The grammarians call this exegetic. It means it's an explanation. Visiting Rome was, of course, a big thing for anybody in the ancient world. As a matter of fact, these were some very significant days in the Roman Empire. Some of the very best days of the Roman Empire lay immediately before them: when there was the greatest stability; and, when there was peace for almost a period of 100 years, with conflicts here and there; but generally the Roman army had things under great control; and administration was the best that it had ever been in the Roman Empire. So, Rome was a thriving, going city, and it was on top of the whole world. So, to go there was indeed a major event in anybody's life.

There were Christians meeting in the city of Rome, and these Christians were on a collision course with all that the Roman Empire stood for. They were doomed. They were in for a lot of trouble. Paul knew this, and he was very much concerned to prepare them with the only thing that could carry them through a time of national crises and personal suffering, and that is the doctrines of the Word of God.

**"I Long to See you"**

So, Paul says, "For." And that is following verse 10, where he says, "Making requests, if by any means (now, at length), I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." Why? "For" introduces the reason. He says, "I long to see you." "I long" is the Greek word "epipotheo." "Epipotheo" means to have a strong desire. It is a word which connotes a passionate desire, but in a good sense. It comes from two words. You can see how divides here between the little preposition "epi," which means "upon;" and, "potheo," which means "to desire." So, it means "to desire upon" or "to vehemently desire something." Paul really wants to go to Rome in a bad way. It's the center of the gentile world, and, as you know, he was assigned to minister to the gentile world. We have this sort of Acts 9:15; Acts 26:16-20; Romans 15:16; and, Romans 15:23-24. All of these clearly declare that the main part of his calling was to minister to the gentile believers in the Roman Empire. Naturally, he would want to go to the center of that empire.

It is present tense, which means that this was a continual, strong desire over many years that he had. It is active. It is his personal wish. It is indicative. It is a statement of fact. What he wanted to do, he says was "to see them." "To see" is the Greek word "horao." "Horao" is the word for seeing which means a general overall panoramic view. We get our word "horizon" from it, because it's a general panoramic view. It's not like another Greek word "blepo," which means centering in on specific objects. This is the overall view, meaning that: "I want to come to Rome, and visit and meet with Christians in general. I don't know very many of you personally, (specifically, he could say), but I do know you as a group, and I want to meet you as a group.

This is aorist tense, which refers to the point at which you will arrive at Rome, and he will begin to visit with Christians throughout the city. It is active, which again, Paul does this meeting of them in person. That is what he anticipates. And its infinitive, which means that expressing purpose. It is his purpose to go to Rome to meet them.

So, verse 11 says, "For I have a deep desire to get an overall general view of you, the believers in Rome: "That," again, introduces the reason that he wants to visit Rome: "I may impart unto you." The word "impart" is "metadidomi." "Metadidomi" means to share. It's a better translation to say, "I want to share." It is made up of the words "meta," which means "with" or "in association with," and "didomi" means 'to give in association with" or, as we put them together, we get the idea "to share."

This again is aorist, which means at the point when he finally arrives in Rome, where he can minister. It is active. Paul himself is going to do the sharing. But it is subjunctive. It’s potential. It means if he does get to Rome. There are many factors that are going to affect whether he gets to Rome or not. And he wants to do this, he says, "unto you," or it would be better rendered as "with you:" "I long very much to get an overall look at the Christians in Rome for the purpose that I may share with you some spiritual gift." The words "spiritual gift" are made up of the word gift, which is "charisma." That means a gift of grace. It means something that was given without your deserving or having it coming. The word "spiritual" is "pneumatikos." "Pneumatikos" means that it comes from the Holy Spirit. Paul says, "I want to share some kind of spiritual gift with you in Rome. And as a result of sharing my spiritual gifts with you," Paul says, "I will bring you something of great importance."

In other words, Paul is saying, "I want to go to Rome to minister." Well, the only way you can serve the Lord, and the only way you can minister in the Lord's work is through your spiritual gift. That's why it's important to study the basic doctrines series on the spiritual gifts – to learn what the spiritual gifts are; how they function; and, to identify those that are yours. When you know your gift, you have a direction and an indication of the kind of service you should be performing. Paul says, "I want to come to the city of Rome in order that I may share my spiritual gift with you."

**Some Spiritual Gift**

It says "Some spiritual gift." Now, he had several. He obviously had the gift of evangelist. He also had the gift of teacher. He had the gift of apostle. He had the gift of ministering, as he did that. He undoubtedly had several gifts. And his purpose was to come to Rome, and to use those gifts in their behalf.

**Stabilization**

So, he says, "That I may share some spiritual gifts with you (among you) to the end:" "To the end" is the Greek preposition "eis," and it means "resulting in:" "Share a spiritual gift resulting in." Here is the purpose: "with the result that." And what is the result he's looking for? "You may be established ("sterizo"). "Sterizo" means "to make fast." When you pull your motorboat up to the dock, and you throw the line out, and you hook it on the anchor on the dock, you are making it fast. You are "sterizo" the thing. You are stabilizing it up against the dock. That is the idea.

**Fill the Spiritual Deficiency**

"You" are the Roman Christians, and Paul wants to stabilize them in their Christian faith through the exercise of his spiritual gifts among them. It is in the aorist tense, which means that it's at the point of time when he'll be able to be with them to teach them. It is passive because you cannot stabilize yourself. This is something that happens to you as you take doctrine into your soul, and as you go positive to what you have learned. Positive Christians have God the Holy Spirit stabilizing their souls. It is infinitude which again indicates his purpose. His purpose is what? His purpose is to fill the spiritual deficiency of the Roman Christians.

Everybody is born into the Christian life as a spiritual blank – a spiritual zero. These people in Rome have come to a knowledge of the gospel as the result of people filtering in from other parts of the empire who had heard the gospel and believed it, but there has been no major teacher of doctrine. So, the deficiency of their soul has not been filled to any extent. That's why when he wrote to them, he wrote such a formal book. This book is laid out in very orderly, formal fashion, presenting the major doctrines of Christianity, because that's what these people needed. But when they believed it; when they would receive it; and, when he could exercise his purpose, indicated here by this infinitive, then God the Holy Spirit would do His work, and doctrine would do its work.

They would not say, "Now, I must be spiritual", because the moment you say, "I must be a spiritually mature person," or "I must be spiritual" – however you want to describe that, the very next thing you will do is start inventing things that you should do or not do in order to indicate that you are a spiritual person. But this is not something you can create for yourself. It is something that God through His Word creates.

So, we may translate verse 7 in this way: "For I have strong desire to see you (in general), in order that I may share with you some spiritual gift resulting in your being stabilized." He wants to stabilize them in the Christian faith.

After all this is said and done in first 11, we must remind ourselves once more that Paul is sitting in Corinth; he's writing this letter; he's telling them how much he's wanted to come to visit them; and, he has explained to them what he could do for them, and what his spiritual gifts could mean if he were there with them. Then we must remind ourselves that when he finished writing this letter, and he got his gear packed up, he had to decide which way he was going. He had to make his move. And of all things, he made the decision not to go to Rome. Up to the time of Paul's writing, there had been no great doctrinal ministry in Rome. Now the door was open. He was ready to move. His letter lays the groundwork of all the great basic doctrines of Christianity. Here is a city which needs him. Here are believers who are waiting for his teaching ministry, and Paul is the one, above all, to do this. If there's anybody who should go to Rome, and who can go to Rome, and who can do a magnificent job of stabilizing the believers there who are going to face death in the Colosseum; who are going to face torture; and, who are going to face all kinds of suffering, it is Paul who can prepare them.

As you know, up to this time (if you think back into the book of Acts), Paul has been collecting a special offering among the gentile churches which has been gathered in order to relieve the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, who at the time were suffering famine in Judea. We have this described in detail in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 all the way through chapter 9. These two chapters give us a great deal of basic information concerning the great system of giving, and it is not tithing or anything else associated with the Old Testament system. Paul wanted to deliver this money to Jerusalem himself. We have this in Romans 15.

He comes to the end of this book, and now you can just see the wheels in his mind beginning to spin as he's trying to think through and make a decision: "What am I going to do? Am I going to go west to Rome? Am I going to go east, where I'd like to go, to Jerusalem with this offering?" Notice Romans 15:24 Paul says, "Whenever I take my journey into Spain (and that's what he was planning to do – to move into Spain with the gospel), I will come to you. For I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way there by you, if first I'd be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go into Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it has pleased them of Macedonia and of Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are at Jerusalem. It has pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the gentiles had been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal (that is, in material) things."

So, here at the end of the letter, we have the clue. At the beginning of the letter, he tells them, "I wanted to come to you. I couldn't come to you. I really wanted to come to you. That's my plan. That's what I'm going to do. I want to go to Spain, but I'm going to go to Rome, and then over to Spain. And then, when he gets to the end of the letter, we have the first clue that he's made up his mind not to go west, but to go east.

Now the question is: was this a right thing or a wrong thing to do? Well, certainly he had a very good reason. He was a representative of the gentile world – to the gentile believers. And there was still a problem between Jewish Christians and gentile Christians. If he could walk into Jerusalem with this huge offering that had been brought from the gentile Christians, he could, better than anybody else indeed, present this offering and this money. He could give the background and the significance of this coming from gentiles, and the poverty, for example, that we found that the Macedonian Christians gave their offerings out of. He would be an ideal person to bring this offering to have maximum impact for Christian unity between the gentile and the Jewish Christians.

In Romans 15:28, says, "When therefore I have performed this (having decided to go to Jerusalem), and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. He has decided he is going to go to Jerusalem. He has been hindered up to this time of being able to go to Rome. He has been hindered because he has had ministry elsewhere, and very legitimately, therefore, hindered. We read in Romans 15:19, "Through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem and roundabout until Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. He had indeed covered a tremendous amount of territory.

Verse 22 says, "For which cause also I've been much hindered from coming to you. But now (notice), having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you." So, we've got the picture. He in Corinth. His work is finished. He has an open door now to move out of Corinth to go elsewhere. He has been hindered because he's been occupied in other places of the empire, but now his work is finished. He's free to go to Rome. Rome needs him. There's a wide open door. But what does he do? He decides to go east to Jerusalem instead of west to Rome.

Turn over to Acts 20:22, where he describes this decision that he arrived at in Corinth, and which we have referred to here in the book of Romans. In Acts 20:22, Luke says, quoting Paul, "And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." He is speaking here to the pastors of the churches and epistles. "Bound in the spirit" refers to Paul's human spirit, not God the Holy Spirit, and it means his decision in this spiritual matter. He is bound in his spirit, that is in his spiritual outlook, by this decision which he has made in his mind to go to Jerusalem.

Is this a proper decision? Is Paul doing the right thing? Turn over to Acts 21:4. This is now at Tyre, having left Ephesus: "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days, who said to Paul, through the Spirit (God the Holy Spirit) that he should not go up to Jerusalem." So when he arrived at Tyre, the Holy Spirit clearly forbad Paul through these prophets not to go to Jerusalem. Hear you have the picture. Paul wants to go to Jerusalem. He could be very significant indeed, bringing that offering. For a long time, he has wanted to go to Rome. His work now permits him to do so, and the door is open, and the need is very great. For some reason, in spite of the fact that the Holy Spirit communicates a message to him, even through others, not to go to Jerusalem, he persists in that course of action.

This was further confirmed to him by a prophet named Agabus in Acts 21:10: "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's belt, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit. So, shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this belt, and shall deliver him into the hands of the gentiles.' And when we heard these things, (this is Luke and the party that accompanied him, as well as the believers who were there), both we and they at that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.'" That is all they could do.

Certainly, Paul is as courageous as ever. He makes this very dramatic declaration, "I'm not only willing to go to Jerusalem and to be a prisoner, but if necessary, to die for the Lord and for the testimony of the Lord's work." And when his associates and his friends could not persuade him to obey the leading of God the Holy Spirit, and to dissuade him from this course of action that his feelings and his emotions for the Jews were propelling him to, they finally had to say, "We have to leave it with God the Holy Spirit." That, of course, is what you do have to do when people go negative to the Word of God, whether it be within your own family or whether it be in some external circle to you. When people go negative to the Word of God, you simply can go only so far in saying, "Wait a minute. This is what you should do." And then you must leave them to the will of the Lord, even though sometimes, if they happen to be close in the circle of your own life, what they do in a negative way can splash over and cause problems and sufferings for you. Yet, even to that, you have no alternative but to say, "I have to commit this to the Lord." And that is the wise thing to do.

Well, Paul's courage (his boldness in the Lord's service, of course, is not in question. Notice Acts 20:22-24. Paul says, "And now behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, except that the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city, saying the bonds and afflictions await me. But none of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Please notice that the apostle Paul is just as gung-ho for his Christian service as he has ever been. He knows what his gifts are. He knows what his job is. He knows what he can do. He has vast experience behind him, and he is determined to serve the Lord. There is no question in his mind that he is just as courageous; just as devoted; and, his life is as much on the line as it has ever been.

Acts 21:13: "Then Paul answered, "What do you mean to weep and to break my own heart. For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." He told them, "Don't try to dissuade me with your tears. I am ready to die." He had some very strong feelings about going to Jerusalem. Paul, as a matter of fact, knew he was asking for trouble.

In Romans 15:30-32, he knew that at the end of the time when he was writing this book. Paul says, "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." He says, "People, pray for me." Why? "That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea, and that my service, which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted by the saints." He is aware of the fact that trouble awaits him in Judea, and he says, "Please pray for me that I can handle this trouble, and that I may be accepted by the saints there." Why?

Verse 32: "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may, with you, be refreshed:" "Please pray for me that I will not get in any real problem in Judea so that I will not be able to go on to Rome." Right here in this letter, he indicates that he has an awareness that something might happen if he moves on to Jerusalem that will prevent him from going on to the open door in Rome. Yet, his decision was to delay the trip to Rome. Why?

Well, I don't have to draw the diagram for you. I think you can put it together for yourself. Paul, who has a mentality which is steeped with the frame of reference in the Word of God and in Bible doctrine orientation, has a very deep emotional attachment toward the Jewish people. This is made very clear in the very opening verses of Romans 9, where Paul says that his feeling and his attachment for the Jews is so great that, if he could put them into heaven by putting himself into hell, he'd make the exchange immediately. If it were in his power to send the Jews to heaven, and himself to hell, he would do it. Do you know, very many people that you'd be willing to do that for? Yet, this was the true expression of this man's soul. That's deep feeling for a particular group of human beings, and the feelings of Paul took charge of his soul.

**Emotional Domination of the Soul**

Emotional domination of the soul resulted from these feelings that he had for the Jews. And it came to a climax because he had this offering in his hand, and he knew what an impact he could make if he could walk into Jerusalem with it. So, he followed his feelings for the Jews because he felt that he could make such an impression upon them with this offering from the gentiles – such a fantastic display of love on the part of the gentiles, that the Jews would melt before this, and they would be brought up to face the fact that the gentiles, who always hated them, especially because the Jews always hated the gentiles, and treated them accordingly, that the gentiles should be willing to do this for them, would bring them up short and cause them to consider the claims of the gospel.

The emotions of Paul took charge over his mentality. His deep feelings overrode his thinking controlled by doctrine. What Paul is doing, in effect, is playing Jonah. But there's going to be a sad result from this. He rejected all the warnings of God the Holy Spirit not to go to Jerusalem, and he let his emotions override all the advice of the prophets, which is a condition we don't have today. God could send a man who was a prophet who would say, "I've got a revelation (a direct message) for you from God. Our revelation only comes through the Word of God, and through the internal leading of God the Holy Spirit now. In spite of all that, he went to Jerusalem, and the result was that he suffered four years of imprisonment out of the last five years of his life. Paul had five more years to live as at the point of writing this book of Romans. Four years of those five years he spent in prison – two in Caesarea. "Finally, he got to Rome, but he got there as a prisoner. And for two years, he was under house arrest in Rome before he finally came to trial before Nero, and finally was acquitted, and finally was turned free. He spent four years of his life in imprisonment of the last five that he had to live, because of this emotional domination of the soul.

Don't you tell me that emotions are not really a bad thing, and that we need more feelings in our Christian experience, and all the rest of the rot that the charismatics like to put upon us in order to justify the fact that they are tools and playthings that Satan manipulates. Emotions dominate their souls rather than their mentalities so that their feelings can be genuine.

In Jerusalem, Paul, under emotional domination of his soul, arrived and met the pastors. The elder pastors met with Paul and they said to him, "Paul, we do want you to speak to our people here. We do want you to speak to the Jewish population. But Paul, you understand that you have a very bad reputation. You have been going around the Roman Empire preaching the gospel of the grace of God, and that this gospel of the grace of God has freed us from the Law system – that grace has turned us into maximum liberty and freedom. Now. That's right, Paul. Yeah, that's true what you said. All of that is absolutely true. But, you know, Paul, we must adjust to our times. We must be able to speak to people so that we can reach them." Then one of them read Paul a few paragraphs from a book written by a man named Dale Carnegie on How to Win Friends and Influence People. And because Paul was under the emotional domination of his soul, he said, "Yes, that's the way we should deal with people," never realizing that the alternative title for that book is How to Get the Best out of the Old Sin Nature, because that is what he was appealing to.

So, they said to him, "Paul, we would like you to perform an act of legalism here in Jerusalem. The Jews will see you, and they'll love you for it." You can read about this more at your leisure in Acts 21:17-26 that describe how they sweet-talked him into taking this vow – into going into the temple, and sponsoring a group of men who were going through a certain Jewish ritual. And the result was that it turned loose a riot of the Jews in Jerusalem. Instead of winning a hearing, it caused a riot. The riot became so bad that the Roman soldiers had to come storming into the center of the mob, and they had to literally take Paul, who was now literally being beaten by the mob, and they had to grab Paul and jerk him aside to put him under their care and their control. They permitted him to stand on the steps and to speak to the mob.

Interestingly enough, they listened to all that Paul said until he got to one word. When he got to the word "gentiles," everything exploded against them. They started cursing; they started railing; and, they started rushing toward him. The soldiers moved in and made a phalanx front in order to protect Paul. Then the captain of the cohort was an officer, like a battalion commander in charge of 1,000 men, said, "Get him out of here. And they took him into the prison and put him under custody there until they could find out what in the world this was all about.

Paul took this legalistic vow in order to justify his dealing with the gentiles, and all he did was enrage the mob every time he made any reference to what the grace of God was doing among the gentiles. So hated was the concept that God would take a gentile into heaven, and that God would ever do anything for the dogs of the gentiles. Paul could have gone immediately to Rome as a free man. But his emotional thinking kept him for two more years from getting to Rome. Then when he did get there, he spent two more years in prison. Acts 21:27-33 give you the story of his escape with the help of the Roman soldiers from that mob in Jerusalem.

While he's writing in Corinth, certainly Paul knows the issues of legalism. Paul also understands how the emotions can take control of a person's life and destroy it. Paul understood that the soul is the battleground in the angelic conflict. Doctrine in the soul is free to protect the soul when it is there, and it protects the Christian from wrong feelings and from wrong decisions. That's the function of doctrine in the soul. But here is self-induced suffering, which is the product of permitting the emotions to control the soul.

So, as Paul writes this letter, it is rather interesting to read verse 11, and to realize that as he speaks to them of his deep desire to come to them, and to impart to them the benefits of his spiritual gifts, in order that they may be stabilized in the Christian life; and, God knows they needed be. They needed the instruction that they had never yet received in that nerve center of the empire. Instead, because Paul permits emotions to take over, he goes to Jerusalem, and he blows the whole thing. And God disciplines him for four years – four years out of the last five of his life.

Verse 12-13 further explain to us the purpose that the apostle Paul had in all of this. He says, "That is (he gives further clarification), that I may be comforted together with you." "That I may be comforted" is the Greek word "sumparakaleo." "Sumparakaleo" means "to be comforted together," or "to be strengthened" (is the idea) with another. It is in the aorist. At the point of his contact with them in Rome, there will be a series of contacts in which he will strengthen them. It is passive. Their strengthening will be the result of doctrine again in their soul. It is infinitive which us that this is his purpose – to go there to strengthen them. The Word of God, which Paul will teach, will strengthen not only them, but he indicates that it will strengthen him as well. As he studies the Word of God, it's a strength to him.

Sometimes there are idiots who I have heard ask pastors, "What arrangements you make for your private devotional life?" What they're saying is, "When do you sit down to study the Word of God to feed your soul?" And here's this pastor-teacher who's racking his brains all the time studying the Word of God. And these people want to know, "What do you do about studying the Word of God just for yourself – not to give it to anybody else?" And I have heard them say this: "To feed your soul, not so you can teach others." That's the most asinine thing I've ever heard.

Here you have a clue to that asininity in verse 12, because that's exactly what Paul is saying. Paul says, "I'm going to study the Word of God, and I'm going to teach you, and because I have studied and learned the Word of God and I have to teach it to you, I'm going to be blessed along with you. How in the world can you turn off the Word of God when you study it, and then turn it on when it's just for you? That's the professional ministry. Long may it die.

In any case, Paul said, "I will be comforted, and I will be comforted along with you (together with you) by our mutual faith." Incidentally, "with you" is actually "among you." And "by our mutual faith" is the Greek word "dia," "mutual" is "alethos," which means "of you, of me together;" that is, "among us mutually, both one with the other." This we may translate as: "through the faith which you and I alike have." This faith that he is referring to is the body of doctrine again, which we learn through the grace system of perception.

So verse 12 says, "That is, that I may be strengthened among you through the faith which you and I alike have."

Verse 13 gives the spiritual fruit that he is looking for. "Now" is the Greek word "de," which is an indication of an additional piece of information added to verse 12: "I would not desire ('thelo')." It is present – constantly. It is active (I, personally). It is indicative – a statement of fact. It is something that he desires for them. And what is that? "That they would not be ignorant:" "I would not have you ignorant ('agnoeo.')" Presently and actively, it is his desire. It is infinitive. His purposes that they should not be ignorant about what? Ignorant about a certain purpose that Paul has.

"Brethren (Christians in Rome), that oftentimes." "That" introduces what it is he does not want them to misunderstand: "Oftentimes, I purposed to come unto you. The word "purpose" is "protithemi." "Protithemi" means "to resolve:" "Many times," Paul had said, "I'm going."

Have you ever had a trip that you wanted to take – a vacation or something? And, finally, you said, "I'm going." That's "protithemi." You finally made a resolve, and you said, "I'm going." You make the determination.

**In Order to Teach You**

It is aorist – at a point that he decided he was going to go. It is middle. It means that he set it before himself. "Protithemi" means that he set before himself the goal of going to Rome. It is indicative – a statement of fact. It explains what he had set before himself. What was he going to do? "To come unto you." And, "unto you" is "pros" plus the word for you, "su." But the word "pros" is what we're interested in here, because that means face-to-face: "In order that I can come face-to-face with you." For what purpose? "In order to teach you."

**Fruit**

However, he says, "Thus far," and there you have a parenthesis: "I was presented thus far," which means that he was kept from going up to that time, meaning: "Until now, I have not been free to go to Rome." Implying what? "That now I am free to go to Rome." God has a right time for us to do things in our lives. The right time had arrived for Paul to go to Rome. That is the Greek word "hina" again. It gives the purpose: "That I might have some fruit among you:" "I might have" is the Greek word "echo." "Echo" is in the subjunctive here. It's a potential reaping of fruit, meaning spiritual fruit, as the result of his hearers responding to what he taught them: "That I might have some fruit among you (that is, among the Christians in Rome) even as also among the other gentiles."

**Gentiles**

And the word "gentiles" here is the Greek word "ethnos," and "ethnos" means nations. But when it's used in the plural, it's contrasting the nations of the world to the one nation of the Jews. This is the word which is used when Matthew says, "That the Lord at the great white throne is going to gather all the nations of the world before Him to judge them. And it should be translated "gentiles", not "nations," just as it is here. So, what he is going to do is bring the Word to the gentiles in Rome, as he has been bringing it to gentiles everywhere else in the Roman Empire.

So, verse 13 we may translate as: "Now I do not desire you to be ignorant, brethren, that many times I resolved to myself to come face-to-face with you, but I was prevented until the present, in order that I might get some fruit also among you, even as also among the rest of the gentiles." But instead, this door being opened, clearly stating for us in verse 13 that what he's wanted to do for years now finally he can do; instead, the fruit that could have immediately been his in Rome was to be delayed, and never would be (notice) the amount of returns that he would have had. These were the rewards that Paul lost because he was not in Rome able to perform the ministry among these gentiles that could have been his.

So, I hope that from this passage, you will have a new sense of respect for the dangers of letting emotions dominate the soul, apart from the guidance of doctrine in the mentality. The apostle Paul delayed a visit that he should not have delayed, and he is the poorer for it for all eternity.

Of course, you know that God, in His grace, turned that into good. The book of Philippians is one of the letters that was written as he sat in prison in Rome as a result of this decision that he made when his soul was dominated by emotions. Paul, of all people, slipped into a status of backsliding into reversionism. Well, if it can happen to him, you better believe that it can happen to any of us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)