Romans 15:16-17

Romans 15:16a-The Father Gave Paul The Gift Of Apostleship In Order To Be A Servant Of Christ Jesus To The Gentiles

We have completed a study of Romans 15:1-13 and in this pericope the apostle Paul exhorts the Roman believers to maintain unity by avoiding selfishness and imitating Christ by demonstrating self-sacrificial love toward each other and putting each other first and receiving one another.

By way of review, Romans 15:1 marks a transition to a new section, which is within the sixth major section in the Roman epistle, that appears in Romans 12:1-15:13. It marks the transition from a discussion in Romans 14:13-23, which instructs the strong to conduct themselves according to love and not exercising their freedom in the presence of the weak to a discussion in Romans 15:1-13 that emphasizes the strong imitating Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice resulting in unity. The word marks a transition to a new stage in the discussion that appeared in Romans 14:13-23 and advances this discussion further by emphasizing with the strong the importance of imitating Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice, which will result in unity between the weak and the strong.

Romans 15:1, “Now, we who are strong are, as an eternal spiritual truth under obligation to patiently and sympathetically endure the weak’s scruples and in addition not please ourselves for our own benefit.”

Romans 15:1 contains both a command and a prohibition. The former reminds the strong that they are under obligation to patiently and sympathetically endure the scruples of the weak and the latter that they are not to please themselves for their own benefit. This idea is echoed in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 and Galatians 6:2.

1 Thessalonians 5:14, “And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all.” (NET Bible)

Galatians 6:2, “Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (NET Bible)

The command in Romans 15:1 reminds the strong that they are under obligation to patiently and sympathetically endure the scruples of the weak and the prohibition that they are not to please themselves for their own benefit.

The apostle Paul in Romans 15:2 wants his readers who were strong to meditate upon the command in this verse to continue making it their habit of pleasing the weak for their benefit, for the purpose of that which is good in character, specifically, their edification, i.e. their spiritual growth.
Romans 15:2, “Each and every one of us without exception must continue to make it their habit of pleasing his neighbor for their benefit for the purpose of that which is good in character specifically, edification.”

This command does not mean that the strong are to conform to the scruples of the weak or that the strong are to let the weak control the local assembly since this would not further the spiritual growth of the weak. Rather, this command means that the strong are to refrain from exercising their freedom in Christ with respect to eating and drinking while in the presence of the weak for the purpose of their spiritual growth. The strong would hinder the spiritual growth of the weak by exercising their freedom since this would tempt the weak to live according to the convictions of the strong rather than their own and thus they would sin in their own mind and lose fellowship with God. Paul simply wants the strong to be considerate of the scruples of the weak by operating in God’s love, which involves self-denial and self-sacrifice for the benefit of the weak.

Romans 15:1-2 emphasizes with the strong that even though they have the freedom to eat unclean meats and drink wine offered in pagan sacrifices, they must be willing at all times to deny themselves of this freedom for the sake of their spiritual brother or sister in Christ who is weak. God’s love does insist upon its own rights but rather denies oneself of his rights for the sake of others.

Romans 15:3 presents the reason why the strong obey the command in Romans 15:2.

Romans 15:3, “Because, even the one and only Christ never pleased Himself for His own benefit on the contrary just as it stands written for all of eternity, ‘The insults from those who insult You fell upon Me.’”

The causal clause “because the one and only Christ never pleased Himself for His own benefit” speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ devotion to the Father’s will for the sake of saving sinners. It speaks of His self-denial and self-sacrifice in order to execute the Father’s will by suffering a substitutionary spiritual and physical death on the cross in order to deliver sinful humanity from the sin nature, personal sins, real spiritual death, physical death, eternal condemnation, the devil and his cosmic system.

To support this causal clause Paul cites verbatim the Septuagint translation of Psalm 69:9b (68:10b in LXX). He uses this quotation to present Jesus Christ as the perfect example for the strong to follow of not pleasing oneself but the Father for the good of others. The Lord Jesus Christ is their perfect example of self-denial and self-sacrifice as the governing principle when conduct themselves in the presence of the weak. Our Lord’s example teaches the strong to set aside one’s personal freedom and comfort to help those who are weak with respect to conviction grow to spiritual maturity.
Psalm 69:9 records David lamenting the fact that people were insulting God and that he was the victim of these insults as well. In this Psalm, King David laments his unjust treatment from men because of his devotion to God. In the same way and to an infinitely greater degree Jesus Christ suffered unjust treatment from sinners because of His devotion in doing the Father’s will. Sinners insulted God the Father and the Son became the victim of those insults Himself.

Paul does mention Christ bearing the wrath of God to bring sinners to God since this was not overtly apparent to sinners of course. Rather, he mentions Christ bearing the insults of men, which was clearly demonstrated and understood by all who witnessed His ministry and passion. Just as David had a consuming zeal for the house of God, which resulted in his being the object of insults from those who hated the God of Israel, so Christ to an infinitely greater degree possess a consuming zeal for the Father’s house, which resulted in His being the object of insults from those who hated the Father. Therefore, if Christ could endure insults directed at the Father for the sake of saving sinners, the strong can certainly refrain from exercising their freedom with respect to eating and drinking while in the presence of the weak so as to build up the weak spiritually.

So Paul’s point in quoting this Psalm is to emphasize with the strong that if Jesus Christ Himself could deny self and self-sacrificially endure the humiliation of the cross to save souls, then certainly they can deny themselves and refrain from exercising their freedom with respect to food while in the presence of the weak.

Then, in Romans 15:4a, Paul reveals to the Romans that he cited Psalm 69:9 in Romans 15:3b as support for the statement in Romans 15:3a that Christ never pleased Himself for His own benefit because the Old Testament Scriptures were written for their instruction. He teaches that the purpose of this instruction in the Old Testament Scriptures was so that by means of perseverance as well as by means of encouragement, which are both produced by the Scriptures, they may experience confidence that they have been blessed, are being blessed and will be blessed in the future.

**Romans 15:4**, “For you see, whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction in order that by means of perseverance, which is divine in quality and character as well as by means of encouragement, which is divine in quality and character, which are produced by the Scriptures we may experience confidence, which is divine in quality and character.”

Romans 15:5 begins a new paragraph within the main division that appears in Romans 12:1-15:13. It marks a transition from a discussion in Romans 15:1-4, which instructs the strong to imitate Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice when conducting themselves in the presence of the weak to a discussion in Romans 15:5-12 regarding unity between and Jew and Gentile. The passage is not a prayer but rather Paul’s Spirit inspired desire that the Holy Spirit who produces perseverance
and encouragement, cause the Roman believers as a corporate unit to continue making it their habit of thinking the same with one another according to the teaching of Christ, who is Jesus.

Though it is not technically a prayer since the Father is not addressed by Paul, it is the content of Paul’s prayer for the Roman believers, which was revealed by him to encourage the Romans.

**Romans 15:5, “Now, may God the Holy Spirit who produces perseverance as well as encouragement cause all of you for your benefit to continue making it your habit of thinking the same with one another according to the teaching of Christ, who is Jesus.”**

The verse instructs the Roman believers that the teaching of Christ is the standard by which the Holy Spirit causes the Roman believers to think the same with one another. The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to love one another as He loved them (John 13:34). Obedience to this teaching enables the Holy Spirit to cause believers to think the same with one another since He makes understandable the teaching of Christ and guides the believer in applying this teaching and reproduces the character of Christ in the believer who obeys this command. Therefore, unity among believers is the direct result of believers obeying the Spirit who speaks to the believer through the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

The believer’s mental attitude must be based upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus, otherwise the Spirit can not unite believers since He unites believers in their thinking with one another according to the standards of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are revealed through His teaching. The believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18 and to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in their soul in Colossians 3:16. They are synonymous since both bear the same results since the Holy Spirit inspired the Word of Christ. Ephesians 5:18 emphasizes the Spirit’s role in fellowship whereas Colossians 3:16 emphasizes the Word of God’s role. Both passages address the believer’s thinking. Believers can only think the same with one another or in other words can only be unified in their thinking if they are thinking like Christ and that can only happen if they are obeying the commands of Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16.

Paul has already made clear that the Lord Jesus taught that all foods are clean. Thus, in Romans 15:5, by teaching that unity of thinking among believers is the result of the Holy Spirit causing believers to think the same according to the teaching of Christ Jesus implies that the weak need to be further educated in the Word of Christ. So in Romans 15:5, Paul reveals his Spirit inspired desire that the Holy Spirit, who produces perseverance as well as encouragement, would cause the Roman believers as a corporate unit to continue making it their habit of thinking the same with one another according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus.
Romans 15:6 presents the purpose of this desire, which is that the Roman believers would unanimously, with one voice, continue making it their habit of glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of worshipping Him.

Romans 15:6, “In order that unanimously, with one voice, all of you may continue making it a habit of glorifying the God and Father of our Lord, namely, Jesus, who is the Christ.”

Then, in Romans 15:7, the apostle Paul issues a command that is direct at both the weak and the strong in Rome that is a self-evident inference or conclusion based upon his teaching in Romans 14:1-15:6 and is summarization of what he has taught in this passage. He commands them both to continue making it their habit of welcoming one another into their fellowship because the one and only Christ also welcomed all of them into fellowship with Himself the moment they were declared justified through faith in Him. The purpose for which he wants them to obey this command is that it would glorify the Father in the sense that it would manifest the love of God.

Romans 15:7, “Therefore, all of you continue making it your habit of welcoming one another into your fellowship because the one and only Christ also welcomed all of you into fellowship with Himself for the purpose of glorifying God the Father.”

There are two basic options for the syntax of Romans 15:8-9, which is awkward: (1) Romans 15:8 and 9a are two parallel assertions that are dependent upon *lego*, “I affirm,” which would render the two verses: I affirm: (a) That Christ is serving the circumcision because of God’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the covenant promises to the patriarchs of Israel. (b) That the Gentiles glorify God because of His mercy. (2) Romans 15:8b and 9a are two parallel purpose expressions that are dependent upon Romans 15:8a, which would render the two verses: I affirm, Christ is serving the circumcision because of God’s faithfulness: (a) In order to fulfill the promises to the patriarchs (b) consequently that the Gentiles glorify God because of His mercy.

The syntax is awkward since Paul is attempting maintain his argument throughout the Roman epistle, which he presents in Romans 1:16.

Romans 1:16, “For I am never ashamed of the gospel for it is as an eternal spiritual truth God’s power resulting in deliverance for the benefit of everyone who as an eternal spiritual truth believe, to the Jew first and then to the Greek.”

The argument expressed in Romans 1:16 and developed throughout the rest of the epistle is that the Gentiles are included in the plan of salvation along with the Jews but that the Jews have the salvation-historical priority since salvation comes to the Gentiles through Christ fulfilling the covenant promises to Israel’s
patriarchs. Therefore, in Romans 15:8-9a, Paul maintains the integrity of this argument by using parallel statements to describe in what way the Jews and Gentiles benefited from Christ fulfilling the Father’s plan of salvation. In relation to the Jews, Christ became a servant to the Jews because God the Father is faithful to His promises to Israel’s patriarchs thus the first purpose for His coming is to fulfill these covenant promises to the patriarchs. In relation to the Gentiles, Christ became a servant to the Jews that the Gentiles would glorify the Father because of His mercy. Therefore, in Romans 15:8-9a, Paul is implicitly reminding the weak who were primarily Jewish that God has accepted into His family the strong who were primarily Gentile. He is also reminding the strong who were primarily Gentile that their salvation rests upon the covenant promises that God made to the patriarchs of the Jews. Thus, Paul is echoing his teaching in Romans 11.

In Romans 15:8, Paul presents the first of two purposes for Christ becoming a servant to the Jew, namely, it was because of the Father’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the Father’s promises to the patriarchs of Israel.

Romans 15:8, “For, I affirm, Christ is serving the circumcision because of God the Father’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the promises, which belong to the fathers.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is described by Paul as a “servant” to the Jews which He manifested by fulfilling the Messianic promises and the promises made by God to the patriarchs of Israel and redeeming Israel from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13; 4:4b-5a). The Lord said that He was sent by the Father to “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). This was true because He came to serve Israel by fulfilling the promises of her patriarchs.

In Romans 15:8, Paul teaches that Christ became a servant to the Jews because of the Father’s faithfulness. Christ came to fulfill the promises that God made with the patriarchs of Israel and are contained in the four unconditional covenants to Israel. These promises would also include Messianic promises as well.

Faithfulness is one of the attributes of God as related to moral beings (Deut. 7:9; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 John 1:9). It is one of the relative attributes of God meaning that it is related to God’s relationship to men.

The four great unconditional covenants to Israel: (1) Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:16; 22:15-18; 26:4; 28:14; 35:11; Ex. 6:2-8). (2) Palestinian (Gen. 13:15; Ex. 6:4, 8; Num. 34:1-12; Deut. 30:1-9; Jer. 32:36-44; Ezek. 36:21-38). (3) Davidic (2 Sam. 7:8-17; Ps. 89:20-37) (4) New (Jer. 31:31-34; cf. Heb. 8:8-12; 10:15-17).

We must reiterate that these four unconditional covenants (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) are all related to Israel and not the church. The nation of Israel was “directly given” the covenants according to Romans 9:1-5.

Romans 9:1-5, “I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and
unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, 
{separated} from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according 
to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the 
glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the {temple} service 
and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ 
according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

However, the church and regenerate Gentiles who live outside the church age 
participate in the blessings of these covenants since she is the bride of Jesus Christ, 
the king of Israel (See Galatians 3).

Galatians 3:13-14, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having 
become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO 
HANGS ON A TREE’ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham 
might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receiv e the promise of the Spirit 
through faith.”

Ephesians 3:1-13 teaches that it was a mystery that the Gentiles through faith in 
Christ would become fellow heirs with Jewish believers, fellow members of the 
body of Christ and fellow partakers of the four unconditional covenants of promise 
to Israel.

So in Romans 15:9a, the apostle Paul presents the second purpose for Christ 
serving the Jews, namely, that the Gentiles would glorify the Father because of His 
grace.

Romans 15:9, “So that the Gentiles glorify God the Father because of 
grace. As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘Because of this, I myself will, as 
a certainty, give praise to You among the Gentiles. Also, I will, as a certainty, 
sing praise to the character and nature of Your person.’”

The second purpose is a direct result of Christ fulfilling the first purpose. By 
fulfilling the promises to the patriarchs of Israel, Christ provided the Gentiles the 
opportunity to experience eternal salvation through faith in Him since the promises 
to the patriarchs included blessings for the Gentiles and not just Israel. Therefore, 
Paul is saying that Christ welcomed the weak and the strong because He became a 
v servant to the Jew because of God’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the Father’s 
promises to the patriarchs. Thus, consequently, a second purpose was fulfilled, 
namely that the Gentiles would glorify the Father because of His grace.

Christ welcomed the weak, who were primarily Jewish, into fellowship with 
Himself because of the Father’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the covenant 
promises to the patriarchs of Israel. He welcomed the strong, who were primarily 
Gentile, into fellowship with Himself in order that they would glorify the Father 
because of His grace policy.

To support all of this Paul cites Psalm 18:49 that the Father’s redemptive 
purpose through His Son includes Gentiles along with Jews. In Romans 15:9b, he
cites this Psalm to support his affirmation that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

**Romans 15:9,** “So that the Gentiles glorify God the Father because of grace. As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘Because of this, I myself will, as a certainty, give praise to You among the Gentiles. Also, I will, as a certainty, sing praise to the character and nature of Your person.””

Next, Paul in Romans 15:10 cites Deuteronomy 32:43 to support his affirmation that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

**Romans 15:10,** “And, furthermore, it says, ‘I solemnly charge all of you Gentiles to make it your top priority to rejoice together with His nation and do it now.’”

In Romans 15:11 cites Psalm 117:1 to support his affirmation in Romans 15:8-9a that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

**Romans 15:11,** “And likewise, ‘Each and every one of you Gentiles continue making it your habit of joyfully singing praise to the Lord. Also, I solemnly charge all of you to make it your top priority to praise Him each and every one of His people and do it now.””

Paul in Romans 15:12 cites Isaiah 11:10 to support his affirmation in Romans 15:8-9a that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

**Romans 15:12,** “And again, Isaiah says, ‘the root springing from Jesse will, as a certainty, cause Himself to live, specifically, the one who will, as a certainty, cause Himself to rise again in order to rule over the Gentiles, upon Him, the Gentiles will, as a certainty, place their confidence.””

This citation from Isaiah 11:10 is a prophecy of Israel’s Messiah. It predicts that He will cause Himself to live again, specifically, He will cause Himself to rise again from the dead in order to rule over the Gentiles. Isaiah predicts that upon Him, the Gentiles will place their confidence for eternal salvation. Of course, this prediction was fulfilled and Paul’s readers who were Gentile are living proof.

Romans 15:13 completes the argument of the epistle. In this passage he shares with his readers the prayer he makes to the Father on their behalf that the Spirit will cause them all to be filled with all joy and peace by exercising faith in what the Spirit’s says in the Old Testament and through the Lord and the apostles’ teaching that now appears in the Greek New Testament. The purpose of this he teaches is that they would prosper with a confidence that is divine in quality and character by means of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is appropriated through faith in what the Spirit says in the Word of God.
Romans 15:13, “Now, may God the Holy Spirit cause each and every one of you without exception to be filled with all joy as well as peace by exercising faith in order that each and every one of you without exception would prosper with that confidence, which is divine in quality and character by means of power originating from the Holy Spirit.”

Now, in Romans 15:14-15, Paul expresses his confidence that the Roman believers were living the spiritual life and relates his purpose for things he wrote in the epistle.

Romans 15:14, “Now, concerning all of you as a corporate unit, my spiritual brothers and sisters I myself in fact am of the firm conviction that you yourselves indeed are characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, being able also to instruct one another.”

This verse marks a transition from the main argument in 1:16-15:13, the sixth major section in 12:1-15:13 and the literary unit connected to it in 14:1-15:13 to the seventh and final section of the epistle. In this passage, Paul addresses the Romans as a corporate unit and as fellow members of the royal family of God expressing his firm personal conviction that all of them were indeed characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, being able also to instruct one another. He feels important to share this conviction with his readers since in the main argument he wrote boldly to them concerning some issues as he acknowledges in Romans 15:15.

In Romans 15:14, he is emphasizing that contrary to the bold things he wrote them, his personal conviction is that they were indeed characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. Paul asserts his conviction that the Roman Christians were characterized as being full of goodness, which means that they were morally excellent in the sense that their conduct was characterized as being benevolent or benefiting others. This implies that they are righteous in that they do right by each other and were thus operating in divine love towards each other since love never commits evil against one’s neighbor. This conduct is the result of obeying the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God. This first assertion about the Roman Christians indicates that they were characterized as obeying everything Paul prohibited and commanded in Romans 12:1-15:13.

The second assertion was that the Romans had an intellectual and spiritual grasp or comprehension of the will of the Father as revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God by the pastor-teacher and in prayer. By spiritual comprehension I mean that the believer has accepted by faith the Spirit’s teaching regarding the Father’s will as the Spirit reveals this will in the gospel through the communication of the Word of God by the pastor-teacher and in prayer.
The third and final assertion was that the Roman Christians were characterized as possessing the capacity to instruct one another as to proper Christian conduct. It indicates that the Roman Christians were experiencing fellowship with one another and were communicating with each other and experiencing the companionship aspect of Christian fellowship.

Paul’s statement in Romans 15:15 stands in contrast with his statement in Romans 15:14.

Romans 15:15, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father.”

The contrast in verses 14-15 is between Paul’s conviction about the Roman Christians as a corporate unit that they were characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge of the Father’s will and able to instruct each other with that of why he wrote to them boldly in the main argument of the epistle. If Paul was of the firm conviction that the Roman Christians as a corporate unit were characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct each other, then why did he write what he did in the main argument? The answer: To remind them again, which implies obviously that they were taught the very things that he wrote them in the epistle.

The apostle Paul’s statement in Romans 15:15 reveals to the Christians in Rome that he wrote very boldly on some points in the main argument of this epistle so as to remind them again because of the grace (His apostleship) that was given to him by God. When Paul says he wrote boldly in certain parts of the epistle he is referring specifically to those passages in which he commands or prohibits the Roman Christians. This is indicated in that Paul was writing to the Roman Christians whom he did not evangelize and had not yet taught them the Word of God since he had not yet met them, thus to command or prohibit the Roman Christians to a certain course of conduct would on the surface appear bold, however he was an apostle. Thus, he did have the authority to command or prohibit the Roman Christians.

However, Paul chooses to use this type of language with the Roman Christians because he is being polite and thoughtful and considerate of them and that he cared for them. In fact, he calls this authority a gift, specifically a spiritual gift. Also, he puts the noun charis, “grace” in the accusative case to denote cause since he wants to emphasize with his readers that the responsibility of being given the spiritual gift of apostleship “caused” him to issue commands and prohibitions to the Roman Christians or in other word, it required that he do so. So the prepositional phrase
indicates that by issuing these commands and prohibitions in the main argument, Paul was exercising his apostolic authority.

However, even though he was exercising his apostolic authority by issuing these commands and prohibitions, he is also informing the Romans that this authority was given to him as a gift by God indicating that he did not earn or deserve the gift and thus he did not earn or deserve this authority as an apostle. Thus, he is not being arrogant but humble in that he recognizes that this authority was a gift from God. In this same way that he views his authority as a gift from God to serve others so also he wants his readers to view their positions in the body of Christ as a gift from God designed to serve others.

Next, we will study Romans 15:16 and in this passage Paul reveals to the Christians in Rome that the Father gave him the spiritual gift of apostleship for the purpose of being a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He then states that he served the gospel of God like a priest in order that his offering of the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“A minister” is the accusative masculine singular form of the noun leitourgos (λειτουργός) (lee-torah-goce).

The noun leitourgos means “servant, minister, one who performs manual labor, one commissioned for service.”

The word has the following cognates: (1) leitourgeo (λειτουργέω) (verb), “to perform public service at one’s own expense, to serve the public at one’s own expense, to perform specific services on behalf of the public, to serve, to administer an office, to provide a service” (2) leitourgia (λειτουργία) (noun), “service for the people, any work or service done on behalf of the public, a public service, a public duty, any type of service rendered” (3) leitourgikos (λειτουργικός) (adjective), “serving, concerning the service, subservient.”

These words are a compound of leitos, “of or for the people,” and the root erg, “to do work,” thus they connote public service.

Leitourgos rarely appears in classical literature. It is used in classical Greek literature for governmental and public servants, to priests in pagan religions, and to angels as spiritual ministers of God.

The demons are called leitourgos who are servants of the signs of the zodiac. It is often used a noun for one who ministers or serves usually in the form of manual labor, hence a worker, carpenter. The word is used of attendants at public sacrifices. It was in the military for those who work on entrenchments (pioneers).
We find it in Polybius 3.93.5 and 7; 5.2.5; 10.29.4. The word is used of the Roman lictors (Plutarch Romulus 26).

The noun *leitourgos* occurs 12 times in the Septuagint. The word is normally used for the servant (not slave) of another, a superior such as of: (1) Moses (Josh. 1:1 A of Joshua) (2) Amnon (2 Bas. 13:18). (3) Solomon (2 Bas. 10:5; 2 Ch. 9:4) (4) Elisha (4 Bas. 4:43; 6:15) (5) Ptolemy (3 Macc. 5:5).

In the Septuagint, *leitourgos* refers both to the servants who were attending to King Solomon when the Queen of Sheba visited (1 Kgs. 10:5 [LXX 3 Kgs. 10:5]) and to the priest as servants of God (Neh. 10:39).

Isaiah prophesies when the Gentiles will refer to regenerate Jews in the Millennium as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 61:6; cf. Ps. 103:21 [LXX 102:21]).

The noun *leitourgos* is used to translate the following Hebrew terms in the LXX: (1) *lits* (פַּלָס), “mock; hiphil: officer (Sir. 10:2). (2) *pelach* (פֶּלַח), “servant” (Ezr. 7:24-Aramaic). (3) *sharath* (שָׁרָת), “piel: servant, minister” (2 Kgs. 4:43; Ps. 103:21 [102:21]; Is. 61:6).

The noun *leitourgos* occurs only 5 times in the Greek New Testament (Rm. 13:6; 15:16; Phlp. 2:25; Heb. 1:7; 8:2).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition lists the following meanings for the word: (1) one engaged in administrative or cultic service, servant, minister, the formal sense (a) of Greek-Roman officials (b) priests (2) one engaged in personal service, aide, assistant (Pages 591-592).

Vine writes that “*Leitourgos* denoted among the Greeks, firstly, ‘one who discharged a public office at his own expense,’ then, in general, ‘a public servant, minister.’ In the NT it is used (a) of Christ, as a ‘Minister of the sanctuary’ (in the Heavens), Heb 8:2; (b) of angels, Heb 1:7 Ps 104:4; (c) of the apostle Paul, in his evangelical ministry, fulfilling it as a serving priest, Rom 15:16; that he used it figuratively and not in an ecclesiastical sense, is obvious from the context; (d) of Epaphroditus, as ministering to Paul's needs on behalf of the church at Philippi, Phil 2:25; here, representative service is in view: (e) of earthly rulers, who though they do not all act consciously as servants of God, yet discharge functions which are the ordinance of God, Rom 13:6. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Louw and Nida defines the noun leitourgos, “a person who renders special service—‘servant’” (35.23) (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based upon Semantic Domains)

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament defines the word “strictly, of one performing public service; in the NT of one who carries out God’s will by serving others servant, minister” (Page 246).
The word is used of elect angels who are servants who execute God’s judgments (Heb. 1:7). It also used of the resurrected humanity of Christ in hypostatic union functioning in His High Priesthood interceding on behalf of believers (Heb. 8:2). The term is used of Epaphroditus here in Philippians 2:25 who functioned not only as the Philippians’ spiritual commander but also as their servant to Paul’s needs in Rome as he awaited the decision of his appeal before Caesar in the Praetorian Camp. Paul applies the term to himself as a servant of God (Rm. 15:16).

In Romans 13:6, leitourgos describes the Roman governmental authorities as servants of God (Rm. 13:6). The word denotes that the Roman governmental authorities have been commissioned by God to not only to serve Him but also those who are under their authority, which has been delegated to them by God. It describes the Roman governmental authorities and all those in human government as “public servants.”

Romans 13:4, “For you see, it is, as an eternal spiritual truth God’s servant for your benefit for the purpose of encouraging that which is good in character. However, if you, at any time practice that which is evil in character, then begin and continue to live in a state of fear because it, as an eternal spiritual truth by no means exists in the state of bearing the sword without justification because it is, as an eternal spiritual truth God’s servant, an avenger for the purpose of exercising God’s righteous indignation against those who exist in a state of committing that which is evil in character.”

Paul does not use diakonos as he does in Romans 13:4 to describe the governmental authorities’ relationship to God and His plan for the entire human race. Rather, in Romans 13:6, Paul uses leitourgos, which in the ancient world described doing a service of special importance, thus it describes one who is highly respected and honored by his fellow citizens. It is a word that emphasizes service that is performed not only on behalf of God but also for one’s fellow human beings. Therefore, in Romans 13:6, the word has a double sense in that it describes the Roman governmental authorities as servants of God and the public, i.e. those whom they exercise power and authority over.

In Romans 15:16, the noun leitourgos is used by Paul to describe himself as one who has been commissioned by God to not only serve Him but also the Gentiles and as we will note specifically, “regenerate” Gentiles such as those whom he is writing to in this epistle.

The word was used in the ancient world to describe doing a service of special importance, thus it describes one who is highly respected and honored by his fellow citizens. It is a word that emphasizes service that is performed not only on behalf of God but also for one’s fellow human beings. So the word speaks of one who is a public servant.
Therefore, in Romans 15:16, the word has a double sense in that it describes Paul as a public servant who serves both God and Gentiles whom Paul has been delegated authority and power over by God. It describes Paul as a public servant on behalf of God and the Gentiles.

Cranfield following Barth believes that this word indicates that Paul was presenting himself as a Levite priest in subordinate service to the High Priest, Jesus Christ based upon the fact that the word was used in the LXX of the Levitical priests. However, this is ridiculous since a Levitical priest must come from the tribe of Levi and Paul came from the tribe of Benjamin. Paul is using figurative language to describe his ministry to his Gentile readers, which he expressed in the main argument of the epistle.

In Romans 15:16, the noun *leitourgos* is figurative language to describe Paul’s service to the Lord and his Gentile Christian readers. Both this noun and the verb *hierourgeo*, which means “to serve as a priest”, picture Paul as a priest and the gospel is the means by which he offers his acceptable sacrifice to the Father, which is regenerate Gentiles.

Now, this noun *leitourgos* and the verb *hierourgeo* are not describing Paul communicating the gospel to unsaved Gentiles so that they can receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life but rather they describe his service to born-again or regenerate Gentiles. This is indicated by the context since Paul is providing an explanation as to why he wrote rather boldly in some parts of the main argument to the Roman Christians. In Romans 15:15, he reveals that he wrote boldly because of the grace, i.e. spiritual gift of apostleship given to him by the Father. Then, in Romans 15:16, he says that the purpose of the Father giving him this gift was so that he could be a public servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. So because he is explaining to the Roman Christians the manner in which he wrote to them in the main argument of this epistle and why and was not writing to those who were unsaved, we know that Paul is speaking of his ministry to regenerate Gentiles.

Therefore, in Romans 15:16, the noun *leitourgos* does denote a priestly function, not a Levitical priest but rather pictures Paul as a priest and the gospel is the means by which he offers his acceptable sacrifice to the Father, which is regenerate Gentiles.

It is very significant that Paul uses the noun *leitourgos* in connection with communicating the gospel to Christians indicating that this function was a solemn and sacred act as Morris points out (Page 511). Therefore, God considered it a sacred and solemn act of Paul functioning in his spiritual gift of apostleship to communicate to the Romans the things he did in the main argument. So in the same way, it is a sacred and solemn act when a pastor-teacher communicates the gospel to his congregation.
In Romans 15:16, the noun *leitourgos* functions as a predicate accusative meaning it stands in predicate relation to the accusative form of the personal pronoun *ego*, “I myself.” This indicates that it is making the assertion that the Father assigned the spiritual gift of apostleship to Paul in order that he would be a servant of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles. We will translate *leitourgos*, “a servant.”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“To be” is composed of the preposition *eis* (ἐἰς) (eece), “to” and the accusative neuter singular form of the definite article *ho* (ὁ) (owe) and the present active infinitive form of the verb *eimi* (ἐιμί) (ee-mee), “be.”

The verb *eimi* means, “to belong to a particular class of individuals” in the human race that is identified by the expression *leitourgon Christou Iesou eis to ethne* (λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰσσου ἐις τὰ ἐθνῆ), “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.”

The articular infinitive form of the verb *eimi* is governed by the preposition *eis* and functions as an infinitive of purpose meaning that it is used to indicate the purpose or the goal of its controlling verb, which is *didomi* that appears in Romans 15:15. It answers the question “why” in that it looks ahead to the anticipated and intended result. Thus, the articular infinitive of purpose *eimi* indicates the purpose or the goal of its controlling verb, which is *didomi*, “which was assigned.” Therefore, the verb *eimi* as an infinitive of purpose signifies the “purpose” for which the Father assigned Paul the spiritual gift of apostleship. It says that the Father assigned to Paul the gift of apostleship “in order that” he would be a public servant of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles.

The present tense of the verb is a customary present or stative present used to signal an ongoing state. The active voice is stative as well meaning that the subject exists in the state indicated by the verb. This indicates that the Father assigned to Paul the spiritual gift of apostleship in order that he would “exist in the state of being” a servant of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles. We will translate the verb *eimi*, “for the express purpose.”

Not translated is the accusative first person singular form of the personal pronoun *ego* (ἐγώ) (eh-go), which refers to the apostle Paul emphasizing identity and is the demonstrative force intensified and when used with an articular infinitive, it has the force of “myself.” The word emphasizes that Paul is a minister of God for the Gentiles. It functions as the “accusative subject” of the infinitive form of the verb *eimi* as indicated by the rule of grammar, which states that when an infinitive has two accusatives, the pronoun is the subject regardless of word order. We will translate the word, “I myself.”
Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16a, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“Christ” is the genitive masculine singular form of the proper name Christos (Χριστός) (cree-stoe), which is a technical word designating the humanity of our Lord as the promised Savior for all mankind who is unique as the incarnate Son of God and totally and completely guided and empowered by the Spirit as the Servant of the Father. It functions as a “genitive of possession” indicating that Paul is “owned by” the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Jesus” is the genitive masculine singular form of the proper name Iesous (Ἰησοῦς) (yee-soose), which refers to the human nature of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth. The proper name Iesous functions as a “genitive of simple apposition” meaning that it stands in apposition to the articular genitive form of the noun Christos, “Christ” and simply clarifies who is Christ here, namely Jesus of Nazareth since there were many in the first century who made the claim.

Therefore, we will translate the expression Christou Iesou (Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ), “owned by Christ, who is Jesus.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16a, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“To the Gentiles” is composed of the preposition eis (εἰς) (eece), “to” and the articular accusative neuter plural form of the noun ethnos (ηνος) (eff-noce), “the Gentiles.”

The noun ethnos means “the Gentiles” and is used in contrast to the Jews and thus refers to all those individuals who are “not” of Jewish racial descent and thus “not” members of the covenant people of God, Israel. The articular construction of the word is “generic” distinguishing the Gentiles from the Jews.
The preposition *eis* is a marker of persons benefited by an event with the implication of something directed toward them indicating that the Father assigned the spiritual gift of apostleship to Paul in order that he would be a servant of Christ Jesus “on behalf of” or “for the benefit of” the Gentiles.

In Romans 1:5a, Paul communicates to the believers in Rome that through the Lord Jesus Christ, he has received grace and apostleship in order to minister to the Gentiles. In Romans 1:5b, the apostle Paul teaches that the purpose for which the Lord gave him the spiritual gift of apostleship was to bring about among the Gentiles the faith, which produces obedience to God.

**Romans 1:1-5**, “Paul, a slave owned by Christ who is Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel originating from God which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was born as a descendant of David with respect to His human nature. The One demonstrated as the Son of God by means of divine power with respect to a nature characterized by holiness because of the resurrection from the dead ones, Jesus Christ, our Lord through whom we have received the spiritual gift of apostleship in order to bring about the faith, which produces obedience among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name.”

Then, in Romans 11:13, Paul addresses specifically his Gentile Christian readers in Rome and expresses the fact that he takes great pride in his ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles.

**Romans 11:13**, “Now, I am at this particular time speaking to and for the benefit of all of you Gentiles. Contrary to what you might be inclined to conclude, to the very extent that I myself am sent to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry.”

The apostle Paul was called as an apostle to the Gentiles by the Lord Himself and not the other apostles (See Acts 9:15; 22:21; Romans 11:13; 15:16; Galatians 1:15-16; 2:2, 7-9; Ephesians 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:7). The Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to present the gospel to all the nations, both Israel and the Gentile nations (See Matthew 24:14; 28:19) since He came to save both Israel and the Gentiles (Luke 2:32).

Therefore, we will translate the prepositional phrase *eis ta ethne* (ἐις τὰ ἑθνή), “for the benefit of the Gentiles.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16a, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles…”
To summarize, thus far our study of Romans 15:16, Paul reveals to the Christians in Rome that the Father gave him the spiritual gift of apostleship for the purpose of being a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. Next, we will note that he served the gospel of God like a priest in order that his offering, namely, the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:16b-Paul Served The Gospel Of God As A Priest So That The Gentiles Would Cause Themselves To Be An Acceptable Offering

We continue with our study of Romans 15:16 by noting that Paul served the gospel of God like a priest in order that his Gentile Christian readers in Rome would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father.

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16a, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“Ministering as a priest” is the accusative masculine singular present active participle form of the verb hierourgeo (ἱερούργεω) (ya-roo-adah-yeh-owe), which means “to perform a holy or sacrificial service” and refers to the attitude and conduct of a priest when performing any kind of service for God. The implication is that one is aware of the sacredness and solemnity of his actions and conduct and the seriousness of the results they render.

The word does not appear in the Septuagint and only once in the Greek New Testament, Romans 15:16.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition defines the word “to act in some cultic or sacred capacity, perform holy service, act as a priest” (Page 471).

Louw and Nida defines the verb “to serve as a priest in the performance of religious rites and duties—‘to serve as a priest, to be a priest.’” (53.85) (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based upon Semantic Domains)

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament define the word “minister in sacred service, serve as a priest; ἱερούργεῖν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον serve as priest of the gospel, minister the gospel” (Page 203).

In Romans 15:16, the verb hierourgeo means “to serve as a priest” and is used with Paul as its subject and the gospel as its object indicating that Paul is describing the discharge of his duties as an apostle in communicating the gospel to the Gentiles as sacred. The idea of sacrifice is contained in the word as indicated by Paul’s use of the noun prosphora, “offering.” This word pictures Paul as a priest and the gospel is the means by which he offers his acceptable sacrifice to the Father, which is regenerate Gentiles.
The verb *hierourgeo* functions as an accusative of simple apposition meaning that it stands in apposition to the personal pronoun *ego*, “I myself,” which functions as the accusative subject of the infinitive form of the verb *eimi*, “would be.” This indicates that Paul is making the assertion about himself, namely that he serves like priest the gospel of God in order that his offering, namely regenerate Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word functions as a substantive participle. The present tense of the verb is a customary present or stative present used to signal an ongoing state. The active voice is stative as well meaning that the subject exists in the state indicated by the verb. This indicates that Paul “exists in the state of” serving like a priest the gospel of God in order that his offering of regenerate Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We will translate the verb *hierourgeo*, “I serve as a priest.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“The gospel” is the articular accusative neuter singular form of the noun *euangelion* (*εὐαγγέλιον*), which means, “good news, victorious proclamation” and appears ten times in Romans (1:1, 9, 15, 16; 2:16; 11:28; 15:16, 19, 20; 16:25).

Liddell and Scott list the following meanings: (1) Reward of good tidings, given to the messenger; to make a thank-offering for good tidings; to crown one for good news brought (2) Good tidings, good news (Greek-English Lexicon, New Edition, page 705).

The verbs *euangelizomai, euangelizo* and the adjectival noun *euangelion* and the noun *euangelos* are all derived from the *angelos*, “messenger,” or the verb *angello*, “to announce.”

The verb *euangelizomai* is a middle form and is found in Aristophanes. The verb *euangelizo* is a form not encountered until later Greek. The noun *euangelion* is found as early as the writings of Homer.

*Euangelos*, “messenger” is one who brings a message of victory or other political or personal news that causes joy.
In the ancient world, the noun euangelion became a general term for the triumphant message from the battlefield, and it was used for joyous political proclamations or for personal messages of good news. In the Hellenistic period the word can also mean one who announces oracles. Similarly the verb euangelizomai means “to speak as a messenger of gladness, to proclaim good news,” and in the religious sense “to promise.”

Euangelizomai also gains a religious meaning when it is used in connection with the appearance of a “divine man,” whose approach is announced with joy (e.g. of Apollonius of Tyana in Philostratus, VA 1, 28, 3rd century A.D.).

The original classical definition of the noun euangelion was a “reward for bringing a good message.” But the term also stood for the message itself. It became a general term for the triumphant message from the battlefield, and it was used for joyous political proclamations or for personal messages of good news. It was a technical term for “news of victory.”

The messenger appears, raises his right hand in greeting and calls out with a loud voice: chaire...nikomen. By his appearance it is known already that he brings good news. His face shines, his spear is decked with laurel, his head is crowned, he swings a branch of palms, joy fills the city, euangelia are offered, the temples are garlanded, an agon is held, crowns are put on for the sacrifices and the one to whom the message is owed is honored with a wreath.

Such messages are seen as a gift of the gods. When the message had been received, sacrifices are offered to them out of gratitude but also in order to hold the gods to their gift.

Euangelion is chiefly used in connection with oracles (i.e., the promise of some future event) and in the imperial cult it acquired a religious meaning. In the latter sphere news of the divine ruler’s birth, coming of age, or enthronement, and also his speeches, decrees and acts are glad tidings which bring long hoped for fulfillment to the longings for the world for happiness and peace.

Ulrich Becker, Professor of Theology at Hanover, quoting from Barker’s work entitled From Alexander to Constantine: Passages and Documents Illustrating the History of Social and Political Ideas 336 B.C.-A.D.337, documents the decree of the Greeks in the province of Asia in 9 B.C. marking the birthday of Augustus (September 23rd) the beginning of the civil year: “It is a day which we may justly count as equivalent to the beginning of everything-if not in itself and in justly count as equivalent to the beginning of everything-if not in itself and in its own nature, at any rate in the benefits it brings-inasmuch as it has restored the shape of everything that was failing and turning into misfortune, and has given a new look to the Universe at a time when it would gladly have welcomed destruction if Caesar had not been born to be the common blessing of all men...Whereas the Providence (pronoia) which has ordered the whole of our life, showing concern
and zeal, has ordained the most perfect consummation for human life by giving to is Augustus, by filling him with virtue for doing the work of a benefactor among men, and by sending in him, as it were, a saviour for us and those who come after us, to make war to cease, to create order everywhere... and whereas the birthday of the God (Augustus) was the beginning for the world of the glad tidings (in the Greek the Evangel) that have come to men through him...Paulus Fabius Maximus, the proconsul of the province...has devised a way of honoring Augustus hitherto unknown to the Greeks, which is, that the reckoning of time for the course of human life should begin with his (Augustus’s) birth.” (Colin Brown’s Dictionary of New Testament Theology, volume 2, page 108).

The proclamation of this euangelion does not merely herald a new era, but it actually brings it about. The proclamation is itself the euangelion, since the salvation it proclaims is already present in it.

To Christians the emperor was a false lord (kurios) who claimed divine rule, something which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. In the same way, the euangelion of the emperor cult was a false gospel which opposed the gospel of Christ.

Linguistically, however, the noun euangelion and its cognate verb euangelizo formed a background for the preaching of Jesus Christ as Lord. Therefore, when Paul spoke of “another gospel,” a very literal sense can be understood because he lived in an age of “gospel preaching.”

When Christians used the term euangelion, they were speaking the familiar language of the day. The emperor in Rome was considered divine by nature. His power was considered to extend to men, to animals, to the earth and to the sea. Nature belongs to him, wind and waves are subject to him. He works miracles and heals men. He is the savior of the world who also redeems individuals from their difficulties. He has appeared on earth as deity in human form. He is the protective god of the state of Rome and his appearance is the cause of good fortune the whole kingdom.

Extraordinary signs accompany the course of his life. They proclaim the birth of the ruler of the world. A comet appears at his ascension to power and at his death signs in heaven declare his assumption into the ranks of the gods. Because the emperor was considered more than a common man, his ordinances are glad messages and his commands are sacred writings. What he says is a divine act and implies good and salvation for men. The emperor cult of Rome was inspired by Satan and is a counterfeit gospel.

Euangelion in the sense of good news itself belongs to a later period. Outside of Christian literature the neuter singular form first appears with this meaning in a papyrus letter from an Egyptian official of the third century A.D. In the plural it is found in a calendar inscription from Priene about 9 B.C. It is not until the writings
of the apostolic fathers that there is a transition to the later Christian usage of *euangelion* as referring to a book which sets forth the life and teaching of Jesus (Justin, Apology i. 66).

The noun *euangelion* never appears in the singular form in the Septuagint. The plural form of the word is used to render the Hebrew *besorah*, “to reward for good news” is found in 2 Samuel 4:10. In Samuel 18:20, 22, *besorah* could be translated “good tidings.” It is rendered *euangelia* by the Septuagint translators. This derivative of *euangelion* does not appear in the New Testament. The noun never functions in a religious capacity in the Septuagint. This fact indicates that the New Testament term *euangelion* is derived from the Greek usage rather than the Hebrew or more precisely from the language of the imperial cult. The only difference between the *euangelion* of the New Testament and the imperial cult is the content of the message.


The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon lists the following meanings for *euangelion* in the New Testament: (1) A reward for good tidings (2) Good tidings (a) The glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus, the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom (b) The glad tidings of salvation through Christ; the proclamation of the grace of God manifested and pledged in Christ; the gospel (c) As the Messianic rank of Jesus was proved by His words, His deeds and His death, the narrative of the sayings, deeds, and death of Jesus Christ came to be called *euangelion* (page 257).

The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following: (1) Glad tidings, good or joyful news (2) The Gospel, doctrines of the gospel (3) Metonymically, the preaching of, or instruction in, the Gospel (page 172).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition lists the following meanings for *euangelion*: (1) God’s good news to humans (2) details relating to the life and ministry of Jesus, good news of Jesus (3) a book dealing with the life and teaching of Jesus, gospel account (Pages 402-403).

Louw and Nida define *euangelion*, “the content of the good news (in the NT a reference to the gospel of about Jesus)” (33.217) (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains).

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament defines the word “good news; in the NT only of God’s message of salvation gospel, good news (1) as denoting the act of proclamation preaching of the gospel (2) as denoting the work of evangelization cause, service, or spread of the gospel (3) as denoting the content of the message as an offer of salvation gospel, good news, God’s message (Page 177).
Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “Euangelion originally denoted a reward for good tidings; later, the idea of reward dropped, and the word stood for ‘the good news’ itself. The Eng. word ‘gospel,’ i. e. ‘good message,’ is the equivalent of euangelion (Eng., ‘evangel’). In the NT it denotes the ‘good tidings’ of the kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ, to be received by faith, on the basis of His expiatory death, His burial, resurrection, and ascension, e. g., (Acts 15:7; 20:24; 1 Pet. 4:17). Apart from those references and those in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, and (Rev. 14:6), the noun is confined to Paul's epistles. The apostle uses it of two associated yet distinct things, (a) of the basic facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, e. g., (1 Cor. 15:1-3); (b) of the interpretation of these facts, e. g., (Rom. 2:16; Gal. 1:7,11; 2:2); in (a) the ‘gospel’ is viewed historically, in (b) doctrinally, with reference to the interpretation of the facts, as is sometimes indicated by the context. The following phrases describe the subjects or nature or purport of the message; it is the ‘gospel’ of God, (Mark 1:14; Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thes. 2:2; 9:1; 1 Pet. 4:17); God, concerning His Son, (Rom. 1:1-3); His Son, (Rom. 1:9); Jesus Christ, the Son of God, (Mark 1:1); our Lord Jesus, (2 Thes. 1:8); Christ, (Rom. 15:19), etc.; the glory of Christ, (2 Cor. 4:4); the grace of God, (Acts 20:24); the glory of the blessed God, (1 Tim. 1:11); your salvation, (Eph. 1:13); peace, (Eph. 6:15). Cf. also ‘the gospel of the Kingdom,’ (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14); ‘an eternal gospel,’ (Rev. 14:6). In (Gal. 2:14), ‘the truth of the gospel’ denotes, not the true ‘gospel,’ but the true teaching of it, in contrast to perversions of it. The following expressions are used in connection with the ‘gospel’: (a) with regard to its testimony; (1) kerusso, ‘to preach it as a herald,’ e. g., (Matt. 4:23; Gal. 2:2); (2) laleo, ‘to speak,’ (1 Thes. 2:2); (3) diamarturomai, ‘to testify (thoroughly),’ (Acts 20:24); (4) euangelizo, ‘to preach,’ e. g., (1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Cor. 11:7; Gal. 1:11); (5) katangello, ‘to proclaim,’ (1 Cor. 9:14); (6) douleuo eis, ‘to serve unto’ (‘in furtherance of’), (Phil. 2:22); (7) sunathleo en, ‘to labor with in,’ (Phil. 4:3); (8) hierourgeo, ‘to minister,’ (Rom. 15:16); (8) pleroo, ‘to preach fully,’ (Rom. 15:19); (10) sunkakopatheo, ‘to suffer hardship with,’ (2 Tim. 1:8); (b) with regard to its reception or otherwise: (1) dechomai, ‘to receive,’ (2 Cor. 11:4); hupakouo, ‘to hearken to, or obey,’ (Rom. 10:16; 2 Thes. 1:8); pisteuo en, ‘to believe in,’ (Mark 1:15); metastrepho, ‘to pervert,’ (Gal. 1:7). Note: In connection with (a), the apostle’s statement in (1 Cor. 9:23) is noticeable, ‘I do all things for the Gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof,’ RV, for the incorrect KJV, ‘that I might be partaker thereof with you.’”

Euangelion has a broad semantic range in the New Testament. Nevertheless, this variety should be examined and understood in light of the basic concept that the gospel is a message of victory.
According to its Greek heritage, euangelion describes a good report from the battlefield, a message of victory. This is its essential meaning in the New Testament.

The New Testament use of euangelion does not derive from the Septuagint. Euangelion appears primarily in Paul’s writing where it is used in an absolute sense meaning without any qualifying definition. For the apostle Paul, there was only one gospel. Paul’s ministry was distinctively that of the propagation of the gospel. Unto this gospel he was set apart (Rom. 1:1) and made a minister according to the grace of God (Eph. 3:7). His special sphere of action was the Gentile world (Rom. 16:16; Gal. 2:7).

Since Paul accepted the gospel as a sacred trust (Gal. 2:7), it was necessary that in the discharge of this obligation he speak so as to please God rather than man (1 Tim. 2:4). The divine commission had created a sense of urgency in Paul where he cried “woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). For the sake of the gospel Paul was willing to become all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22-23). No sacrifice was too great since eternal issues were at stake.

By the time wrote his epistles, the word was a technical term for the Christian proclamation. In the Synoptic Gospels euangelion and euangelizo denote the message and teaching of the Lord Jesus. The Christian message of salvation is both a proclamation of and an interpretation of the facts of salvation history. Thus, one word, euangelion, summarizes the Christ event: (1) His incarnation (2) His earthly life (3) His death on the cross (4) His resurrection (5) His ascension (6) His session.

Euangelion is the message of God’s action in Christ, executed within the framework of human history, which is the appeal trial of Satan-what God has done to make salvation possible. The proclamation of this message of Christ’s victory is the creative Word of God in action. It changes spiritual darkness into light and death into life. It is the power of God for salvation (Rm. 1:16). This same word becomes active in those who trust it (1 Th. 2:13).


In addition to the above qualifying descriptions, other phrases are used in the New Testament to describe the gospel. The content of the message is “the preaching of the cross” (1 Cor. 1:18) and also the “witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33). It is also called the “word of God’s grace” (Acts 14:3), “the word of salvation” (Acts 13:26), “the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19), “the word of truth” (Eph. 1:13), “the word of faith” (Rom. 10:8), “word of life” (Phlp. 2:16).

The main emphasis of the message is contained in the phrase “preach Christ” (cf. Acts 8:5; Col. 1:28). The content of the gospel message is further explained in Romans 1:17 which states that “in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

Faith in Christ and not obedience to the Law brings righteousness. Faith alone in Christ alone enables the justice of God to impute the righteousness of Christ to an individual. It is the preaching of the gospel that provides an individual to exercise faith (Rom. 10:17). Faith alone in Christ alone produces peace in the soul (Eph. 2:17; 5:16), confidence (Col. 1:23) and provides eternal life (Titus 1:1-3). Believers are not to be ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tm. 1:8) and are to govern their lifestyle by it (Phlp. 1:27). Believers are at times called on to endure undeserved suffering because of the gospel (Phlp. 1:27), yet they must continue to proclaim it to the end of the dispensation (2 Tim. 4:2). It alone heralds the sound words of truth, salvation, reconciliation, and grace (e.g. Acts 13:26; 14:3; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 1:13). Only the gospel is the word of life (Phlp. 2:16). According to 1 Timothy 1:11, the Gospel contains teaching on the right use of the Mosaic Law. It reveals the glory of God.

Euangelion was the central concept of Paul’s theology. For Paul, euangelion was not only the content of what is proclaimed, but also the act, process and execution of the proclamation. Content and process of proclaiming the message are one for him. The gospel is not of human origin but the word of God (1 Pet. 1:12). It was entrusted to Paul as an apostle and teacher (2 Tm. 1:11). Its message of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, and descended from David (2 Tm. 2:8) is not limited to a single, past event, but rather is experienced as a word charged with power in the present so that it cannot be fettered by human chains (2 Tm. 2:9). This message of Christ’s victory at the Cross of Calvary produces regeneration and eternal life. It brings peace (Eph. 2:17; 6:15) and incorporates both Jews and Gentiles under the Headship of Christ (Eph. 3:1-9). It not only gives salvation but has “brought life and immortality to light” (2 Tm. 1:10).
The Gospel is the manifestation of divine glory in history. It is the presence of Christ. The gospel is divine power (Rom. 1:16) and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit it convicts (1 Thess. 1:5) and converts (Col. 1:6). Although it is good news, it is strenuously opposed by a rebellious unregenerate world (1 Thess. 2:2). Opposition to the message takes the form of opposition to the messenger (2 Tm. 1:11-12; Phlm. 13). Yet those who proclaim it must do so boldly (Eph. 6:19) and with simplicity (2 Cor. 4:2), not with eloquence lest the cross of Christ be robbed of its power (1 Cor. 1:17). To those who refuse to respond to the gospel it is both foolishness and a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:18 ff.), but to those who respond in faith it proves itself to be “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

“Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David” (2 Tm. 2:8) may well stand as a summary of what the entire New Testament means by “gospel.” It has to do with the Person of Christ, though with an equal stress on Christ’s saving work centered in the cross and resurrection. The advent of salvation is depicted in the Old Testament terms of promise and fulfillment (Rom. 3:21; 15:4-9; 1 Cor. 10:11). The present availability of that salvation is offered “by grace alone, through faith alone.” The work of reconciliation is both complete meaning God in Christ has effected the salvation of the entire cosmos (2 Co. 5:19, 21) and incomplete meaning that God has entrusted the gospel to His servants who as ambassadors for Christ call men and women to accept all that has been accomplished (5:20).

In relation to the unbeliever, the noun euangelion is God’s victorious proclamation of God’s love in delivering the entire human race from sin, Satan, his cosmic system and eternal condemnation and has reconciled them to Himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

This reconciliation with God and deliverance and victory over sin, Satan and the cosmic system that God accomplished through His Son’s crucifixion, burial, death, resurrection and session is received as a gift and appropriated through faith in Christ (John 3:16-18; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1-2).

In relation to the believer, the Gospel message is God’s victorious proclamation regarding the believer’s deliverance and victory positionally from the power of Satan, the old sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan (See Romans 5-7).
By positionally, I mean that God views the believer as crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ, which was accomplished at the moment of salvation through the Baptism of the Spirit when the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit placed the believer in an eternal union with Christ.

The Baptism of the Spirit identifies the believer with Christ in the sense that the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to become identical and united with the Lord Jesus Christ and also ascribes to the believer the qualities and characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Baptism of the Spirit identifies the believer with Christ in His crucifixion (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20), His death (Romans 6:2, 7-8; Colossians 2:20; 3:3), His burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), His resurrection (Romans 6:5; Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 2:12; 3:1) and His session (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1).

The believer can experience this victory and deliverance by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17).

In Romans 1:16-17, the apostle Paul describes the gospel in that it is the power of God for salvation and that it reveals the righteousness of God, who is Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

The context of Romans 1:16 indicates that the noun soteria, “salvation” refers to the deliverance from sin, Satan and his cosmic system that is available to every member of the human race and is received as a gift through faith in Christ. Paul is referring to the salvation or deliverance that is available to the unbeliever since it is used within the context of Paul pointing out the universal need for salvation regardless of whether they are a Jew or Gentile, which is indicated by the phrase “to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

The Christian’s salvation, i.e. his deliverance from the sin nature is also accomplished in three stages. (1) Positional: At the moment the believer exercised faith alone in Christ alone, he was delivered “positionally” from the sin nature through the crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 19:9; John 4:22; Acts 4:12; 13:26, 47; 16:17; Rom. 1:16; 10:1, 10; 11:11; 2 Cor. 6:2; Eph. 1:13; Phlp. 1:28; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 6:9; 1 Pet. 1:9-10; 2 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3; Rev. 7:10). By “positionally,” I mean that God views the believer as crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ, which was accomplished at the moment of salvation through the Baptism of the Spirit when
the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit placed the believer in an eternal union with Christ. In other words, the “positional” aspect of the believer’s salvation refers to the past action of God saving us from sin when we trusted in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The believer’s deliverance positionally sets up the “potential” for him to experience this deliverance in time since this deliverance can only be experienced after salvation through obedience to the teaching of the Word of God. It also guarantees the believer’s ultimate deliverance at the rapture, which is based upon the sovereign decision of God rather than the volition of the believer.

(2) Experiential: After salvation, the believer can “experience” deliverance from the sin nature by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ. This constitutes the believer’s spiritual life after being delivered from real spiritual death (2 Cor. 1:6; 7:10; Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Phlp. 2:12; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17; 2 Tim. 2:10; 3:15; Heb. 2:3, 10; 1 Pet. 2:2). In other words, the “experiential” aspect of salvation is used of the believer’s deliverance from sin in the present moment.

1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

(3) Ultimate: At the resurrection the believer will be delivered “ultimately” and permanently from the sin nature when he receives his resurrection body at the rapture of the church, which is imminent (Rom. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:8-9; Heb. 1:14; 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:5). In other words, the “ultimate” aspect of salvation is used of the believer’s future deliverance from sin.

2 Timothy 4:18, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

In Hebrews 9:24-28, all three stages of the believer’s salvation are referred to.

Hebrews 9:24-28, “For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (experiential aspect of the believer’s salvation); nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (This makes possible the “positional” aspect of salvation) And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes
judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many,
will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who
eagerly await Him. (This refers to the “future” deliverance of the believer at
the rapture)”

Warren Wiersbe commenting on Hebrews 9:24-28, writes, “Did you notice that
the word ‘appear’ is used three times in Hebrews 9:24–28? These three uses give
us a summary of our Lord’s work. He has appeared to put away sin by dying on the
cross (Heb. 9:26). He is appearing now in heaven for us (Heb. 9:24). One day, He
shall appear to take Christians home (Heb. 9:28). These ‘three tenses of salvation’
are all based on His finished work.” (Wiersbe, W. W. The Bible Exposition
Commentary. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

Just as in the believer’s sanctification, his deliverance positionally sets up the
“potential” for him to experience this deliverance in time since this deliverance can
only be experienced after salvation through obedience to the teaching of the Word
of God through the enabling power of the Spirit. It also guarantees the believer’s
ultimate deliverance at the rapture, which is based upon the sovereign decision of
God rather than the volition of the believer. The believer can experience his
sanctification and salvation, i.e., the victory over and deliverance from sin, Satan
and his cosmic system through the omnipotence of the Spirit by appropriating
when he appropriates by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been
crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17;
Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17).

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of
God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the
Greek.”

“Who believes” is the articular dative (of recipient) masculine singular present
active (substantive) participle form of the verb pisteuo, which means to “trust,
place complete confidence in” the Person of Christ in order to receive the gift of
eternal life.

The present tense is “gnomic” used to make a statement of a general, timeless
fact indicating that it is an “eternal spiritual truth” or “spiritual axiom” that the one
who believes in the gospel message of Jesus Christ will receive salvation since the
gospel is the power of God for salvation.

Faith is a non-meritorious system of perception. There are three forms of
perception: (1) Empiricism: Trusting in one’s experiences in life to make
decisions. (2) Rationalism: Trusting in one’s intellect to make decisions in life. (3)
Faith: Trusting in the authority of another to make decisions in life.

When a person believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior he is in effect trusting in
the authority of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, which declare the Person and
Work of Jesus Christ as the object of faith for salvation. Our faith is the only
system of perception that God will accept because it is compatible with His grace policy.

Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

The believer is saved based upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross.

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Therefore, the expression “who believes” refers to making the non-meritorious decision to trust or place one’s complete confidence in the Person of Jesus Christ for salvation. Then the apostle Paul notes the universal nature of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ with the phrase “to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” This phrase demonstrates that God desires all men to be saved and that Christ died for all men, which theologians call the “unlimited atonement.”

1 Timothy 2:4, “God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

1 John 2:2, “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

1 Timothy 4:10, “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

The expression “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” does “not” mean that every Jew must be evangelized before the gospel can be presented to the Gentiles but rather means that the Jews were elected by God as noted by Paul in Romans 9-11. Also, this expression “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” places the Jew on equal footing with the Gentile with respect to the need for salvation.

Romans 3:10, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.”

In Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul reveals three principles: (1) The effect of the gospel is salvation. (2) The extent of the gospel is that it is for all men. (3) The condition attached to the gospel is faith in Christ.

Romans 1:17, “For by means of it, the righteousness originating from God is as an eternal spiritual truth revealed from faith to faith.”
In Romans 1:17, the noun *dikaiosune* means, “righteousness” and refers to the righteousness of Christ since Paul writes that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God and in Romans 1:3-4 he writes that the gospel message centers upon the Person of Christ.

The righteousness of Christ refers to the character of Christ having perfect integrity in the sense that His character is perfectly sound, perfectly adhering to the will of God, which is upright, honest, perfectly whole, undiminished, sound, unimpaired and in perfect condition. The righteousness of Christ refers to the character of Christ having perfect virtue in the sense that His character is perfect moral excellence, goodness, and His conduct is conformed perfectly to the will of God.

“Of God” is the noun *theos*, which is a genitive of source indicating that the righteousness referred to in Romans 1:17 “originates” from God and was “not” of human origin.

The righteousness of God refers to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ since the gospel centers upon the Person of Christ according to Romans 1:3-4 and the gospel message reveals the righteousness of God according to Romans 1:17. Therefore, the genitive of source *theos* indicates that the righteousness referred to in Romans 1:17 “originates” from God and is in fact the second member of the Trinity, the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ who is the object of faith.

“Is revealed” is the third person singular present passive indicative form of the *apokalupto*, which is a compound word composed of the preposition *apo*, “from” and the verb *kalupto*, “to conceal, hide.”

Interestingly and surprisingly, the result of combining these two words is that *apokalupto* means the exact opposite, “to reveal, disclose, uncover.” So thus far, we can see that the righteousness of God in the Person of the impeccable, incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ is revealed by means of the communication of the gospel.

“From faith” is composed of the preposition *ek*, “from” and the genitive feminine singular form of the noun *pistis*, “faith.”

The preposition *ek*, “from” is a marker of the extent of time from a point in the past whereas the noun *pistis*, “faith” is a genitive of time and together, they emphasize time with emphasis upon the beginning. Therefore, *ek pisteos*, “from faith” emphasizes that by means of the communication of the gospel, the righteousness of Christ was revealed in the believer the moment he accepted Jesus Christ as His Savior since at that moment God the Father imputed the righteousness of His Son to him (See Romans 4).

“To faith” is composed of the preposition *eis*, “to” and the accusative feminine singular form of the noun *pistis*, “faith.” The preposition *eis*, “to” is a marker of continuous extent of time up to a point whereas as the noun *pistis*, “faith” is an accusative of measure or extent of time and together, they emphasize the extent of
time. Therefore, the prepositional phrase *eis pistin, “to faith”* emphasizes that by means of the communication of the gospel, the righteousness of Christ is revealed in the believer “after” his conversion. This is accomplished by the believer appropriating by faith the teaching of the gospel that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17). It also emphasizes that the righteousness of Christ is revealed in the believer when he receives a resurrection body at the rapture of the church, which completes the Father’s plan to conform the believer into the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29).

Therefore, in Romans 1:17, the expression *dikaiosune gar theou en auto apokaluptetai ek pisteos eis pistin, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”* indicates that by means of the communication of the gospel, the righteousness of Christ is revealed in the believer in three stages: (1) Positionally, at the moment he exercises faith in the gospel message and trusts in Jesus Christ as his Savior. (2) Experientially, after salvation when the believer exercises faith in the gospel message that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ. (3) Ultimately, when he receives his resurrection body at the rapture of the church.

The noun *euangelion*, summarizes the Christ event: (1) His incarnation (2) His earthly life (3) His death on the cross (4) His resurrection (5) His ascension (6) His session. (7) He Will Judge.

The gospel message not only contains the teaching that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all mankind and was raised from the dead on the third day and that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life but it also contains the teaching that men will receive eternal condemnation for rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior. This is illustrated by the Lord Jesus Christ in John 3 when He gave the gospel to Nicodemus, a self-righteous, unsaved Jew.

**John 3:1, “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.”**

Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, which had seventy members. The Sanhedrin put Jesus on trial according to Luke 22:66. Nicodemus defended Jesus before the Pharisees for condemning Jesus without hearing Him (John 7:50-51) and he is the one who helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus (John 19:39-40). Nicodemus was initially attracted to the miracles that Jesus performed and he wanted to know more about the doctrines that the Lord taught. Nicodemus himself was a prominent teachers in Israel as we will note John 3:10 where the definite preceding the Greek noun *didaskalos, “teacher”* indicates that Nicodemus was a “well-known” teacher or interpreter of the Law in Israel.
John 3:2, “this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

In John 3:1-21, the Lord employs four different illustrations in order to teach Nicodemus the basics of salvation: (1) Birth (John 3:1-7). (2) Wind (John 3:8-13). (3) Serpent on a Pole (John 3:14-18; cf. Num. 21:8-9). (4) Light and darkness (John 3:19-21). These illustrations were directed toward Nicodemus’ human frame of reference.

John 3:3-5, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’”

The phrase “of water and the Spirit” is a figure of speech called hendiadys, which literally means, “one by means of two.” In this figure two words are employed but only one thing or idea is intended. One of the two words expresses the thing, and the other (of synonymous, or even different, signification, not a second thing or idea) intensifies it by being changed (if a noun) into an adjective of the superlative degree, which is, by this means, made especially emphatic. There is no definite article in the Greek text of John 3:5 before the nouns hudor, “water,” and pneuma, “Spirit” and they are both in the same case. Therefore, because of this figure of speech and the context only 1 thing, namely, the Holy Spirit is meant here in John 3:5.

John 3:6 and 8 both refer to the Holy Spirit and not literal water, nor the Word of God as some have interpreted “water” here in John 3:5. The Lord is speaking to Nicodemus about “earthly things” and as well-known and great teacher of the Jews, he knew or ought to have known perfectly well the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:25-27 concerning entrance into the kingdom.

Ezekiel 36:25-27, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

The cleansing of that day is not to be with literal water, as in the ceremonial cleansings of the Law, but with the Spirit of God. Hence, here in John 3:5, only 1 thing is meant: “Unless, a person becomes born of water, yes-and spiritual water too, he can never enter into the kingdom of God.” That spiritual water stands by another figure, namely metonymy, for the Holy Spirit Himself.
John 7:37-39, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.””

So the Lord in John 3:5 and John 7:37-39 is referring to the Holy Spirit with this figure of water.

John 3:6-7, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

Now in verses 8-13 the Lord uses the wind as an illustration to teach the basics of salvation.

John 3:8, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

One of the symbols for the Holy Spirit in Scripture is the wind or breath as in Job 33:4, John 20:22, and Acts 2:2. Like the wind, the Spirit is invisible but powerful and you cannot explain or predict the movements of the wind. When the Lord used wind as a symbol for the Spirit, Nicodemus as a teacher of the Law should have recalled Ezekiel 37:1-14.

John 3:9-13, “Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.’”

Now in verses 14-18 the Lord uses an illustration from the Old Testament namely Numbers 21:8-9, where Moses put a serpent on a pole and those who simply looked at it were delivered from the plague.

John 3:14-16, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Corrected translation of John 3:15-16, “So that any person who trusts in Him (Son of Man) will, as an eternal spiritual truth, possess eternal life. In this manner God the Father self-sacrificially loved the world that He gave His uniquely born Son in order that whoever places his trust in Him, will never perish but rather will as an eternal spiritual truth, possess eternal life.”
John 3:17-36, “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God. After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized -- for John had not yet been thrown into prison. Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification. And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him.’ John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, I am not the Christ,' but, I have been sent ahead of Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.’”

It is the Holy Spirit, who takes the Gospel information that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. When this is presented, then it is simple case of believing this information regarding the Lord Jesus.

Ephesians 1:13, “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

We have to possess some information regarding Christ in order to believe in Him. You can’t believe in someone you have no knowledge of. Therefore, it is essential that we present the Gospel accurately and concisely to the unbeliever
because the Gospel is the power of God for salvation. The Holy Spirit takes whatever truth is communicated to the unbeliever and makes it understandable so that they can make a decision for or against Christ as their Savior. God the Holy Spirit, in common grace, makes the Gospel understandable to unbelievers, so that they may make a decision to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

“Common grace” is grace that the entire human race receives when God the Holy Spirit makes the Gospel message, which is a spiritual language, understandable to the spiritually dead unbeliever. It is given to everyone in the human race, so that all men may have the same privilege and opportunity to be saved.

Titus 2:11, “For the grace of God has appeared [the Lord Jesus Christ], bringing salvation to all men.”

The entire human race is born spiritually dead because of Adam’s sin.

Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and spiritual death spread through sin, and so spiritual death spread to all men, because all sinned when Adam sinned.”

Therefore, God the Father sent His Son to the cross for everyone because He made everyone a sinner at physical birth through the imputation of Adam’s sin.

Now, the fact that every member of the human race possesses a sin nature does mean that the entire human race is qualified for grace, which is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior.

Galatians 3:22, “But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

Romans 11:32, “For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.”

Nevertheless, despite God’s grace in offering everyone salvation, not everyone will be saved because God, in His perfect integrity, also provided everyone with a free will, or volition. Therefore, unbelievers must make the decision to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior; God cannot make the decision for them.

People go to the Lake of Fire because they make the decision to go there. God doesn’t want anyone in the Lake of Fire. He wants them all in heaven. But, we are not robots. We are human beings with volition to choose—to choose Christ and be saved or to choose Satan and succumb to the Lake of Fire.

John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see eternal life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

There is only one way to be saved and that is through faith alone in Christ alone. There is no other person through whom you can attain salvation. Our ticket to heaven is through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter made this extraordinarily clear in Acts 4:10-12.
Acts 4:10-12, “Let it be known to all of you [rulers of the Jews], and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead [what Satan meant for evil, God meant for good]—by this name this man stands before you in good health. He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you [the rulers of the Jews], THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone [the most important].' And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”

We must also remember that God the Holy Spirit convicts and reveals Jesus Christ to all men (John 16:8-11). The Holy Spirit, in common grace, bears witness to the unbeliever that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. God the Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever that he is a sinner and needs a Savior.

The Lord, in His Upper Room Discourse, mentioned this principle. The convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit in common grace convicts the unbeliever that he is a sinner and that Jesus Christ is their Savior and that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will receive the forgiveness of their sins from a holy God. When the unbeliever hears the gospel message of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, the Holy Spirit convicts them of three things, namely, the sin of not believing in Christ, the righteousness of Christ and the judgment of Satan.

John 16:7, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

The “Helper” is a reference to God the Holy Spirit according to John 14:26.

John 16:8-11, “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

The statement “concerning sin because they do not believe in Me” refers to the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior. The statement “concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me” refers to the righteousness of Christ who is the only sinless Person in all of creation that can approach the Father on His own merits. The statement “concerning judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged” is a reference to the fact that the Christ’s death on the Cross judged Satan.

The moment a person believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior, the Holy Spirit makes their faith “effective” for salvation, which is called in theology, “efficacious grace.”
2 Corinthians 6:1-2, “And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-for He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation (the day that you believed in Christ) I (God the Holy Spirit) helped you,’ behold, now is 'the acceptable time,’ behold, now is ‘the day of salvation.’”

The Holy Spirit in common grace takes the Gospel message and makes it understandable to the unbeliever so that they can either make the non-meritorious decision to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior or reject Him. The unbeliever cannot understand the gospel message of Jesus Christ unless the Holy Spirit enables him. A spiritually dead person cannot understand the things of God without the aid of the Holy Spirit in common grace. This principle appears in 1 Corinthians 2:1-10. A spiritually dead person needs help at salvation.

The Holy Spirit in common grace has to make spiritual information understandable to the spiritually dead person so that they can make a decision to either accept Christ as Savior or reject Him. This process takes place over a lifetime until the unbeliever accepts Christ or they die. There are no more opportunities after death.

Hebrews 9:27, “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this {comes} judgment.”

The Spirit also manifests the righteousness of God through the communication of the gospel by offering Christ’s righteousness as a gift of God’s grace through imputation as a result of exercising faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21-22, “But now, independently of seeking to be justified by obedience to the Law, the righteousness originating from God is being manifested at the present time while simultaneously being attested to by the Law and the Prophets. Namely, the righteousness originating from God through faith in Jesus who is the Christ for the benefit of each and every person who does believe for there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely no distinction.”

The gospel demonstrates the Father’s perfect virtue and integrity in that it proclaims that the Father fulfilled His promises of a Savior for the human race in the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. The Gospel message demonstrates that all of humanity is totally and completely dependent upon God and His grace for not only human existence itself but also for salvation. They could do nothing to earn or deserve salvation and were totally and completely dependent upon God to provide salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the gospel rejects human arrogance and pride.

Now, we must make clear that when the New Testament uses the term euangelion, “gospel” it does not always referring to communicating the gospel to the unsaved but at times refers to communicate the plan of God to believers.
Depending upon the context the noun \textit{euangelion}, “gospel” refers to: (1) The gospel presentation to the unbeliever.

\textbf{Ephesians 1:13}, “And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation) – when you believed in Christ – you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.” (NET Bible)

(2) The communication of Bible doctrine to the believer.

\textbf{Romans 16:25}, “Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages.” (NET Bible)

Notice, in this passage, Paul is addressing the Christians in Rome and reveals his desire that the gospel that he communicating to them in the Roman epistle would be able to strengthen them spiritually, thus indicating that \textit{euangelion}, “gospel” is used in relation to the saved and not just the unsaved.

\textbf{Ephesians 6:15}, “Also, I solemnly charge all of you to make it your top priority to strap on your own feet combat boots and do it now, equipped with a firm foundation, namely, the Gospel, which produces a peace that is divine in quality and character.” (My translation)

\textbf{Ephesians 6:14-15}, “Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace.” (NET Bible)

Paul is addressing the Ephesian believers and commanding them to fit their feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace. They were to strap on their combat boots, equipped with a firm foundation, which is the gospel, which produces a peace in the believer that is divine in quality and character. So again the gospel is used in relation to the believer.

\textbf{Colossians 1:5}, “Your faith and love have arisen from the hope laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard about in the message of truth, the gospel.” (NET Bible)

In this passage, Paul is again addressing believers and teaches them that their faith and love have arisen from the hope that is laid up for them in heaven, which they have heard about in the message of truth, the gospel.

In relation to the unbeliever, the noun \textit{euangelion} is God’s victorious proclamation of God’s love in delivering the entire human race from sin, Satan, his cosmic system and eternal condemnation and has reconciled them to Himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In relation to the believer, the Gospel message is God’s victorious proclamation regarding the believer’s deliverance and victory positionally from the power of Satan, the old sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan (See Romans 5-7).
In Romans 15:16, the noun *euangelion* means “gospel” and is used in relation to regenerate Gentiles since this word is used in the context of Paul explaining why he wrote boldly to the Roman “believers” in the main argument of the epistle. He explains in verses 15-16 that he wrote boldly on some points in the argument so as to remind them because of the spiritual gift of apostleship, which he received from the Father in order that he would be a servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. Then, he goes on to describe to the Roman Christians the function of his spiritual gift in communicating the gospel to the Roman Christians as serving like a priest the gospel of God in order that his offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the noun *euangelion* in Romans 15:16 refers to the gospel in relation to believers since in context he is explaining why he wrote boldly to the Roman Christians in the main argument of the epistle.

Furthermore, he wrote boldly to the Roman Christians because it was his function and responsibility to do so as an apostle to the Gentiles. By operating in his gift by writing boldly to them he served like a priest the gospel of God in order that his offering, namely, the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

So Paul wrote in the main argument to the Roman believers in order to promote their spiritual growth and to encourage them to experience their salvation and sanctification. Experiential sanctification can only be experienced by believers and not unbelievers. Therefore, the noun *euangelion* in Romans 15:16 is the good news and God’s victorious proclamation regarding the Gentile Roman Christians’ deliverance and victory positionally from the power of Satan, the old sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan.

The word functions as an accusative direct object meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *hierourgeo*, “I serve as a priest.”

The articular construction of the *euangelion* indicates that the noun is in a class by itself, thus indicating that the Christian gospel was the only gospel worth mentioning. We will translate *to euangelio* (τὸ ἐναγγέλιον), “the gospel.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

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“God” is the articular accusative masculine singular form of the noun theos (θεός) (thay-oce), which refers to the Father as indicated by its articular construction since the articular construction of this noun in the New Testament commonly signifies the first member of the Trinity unless otherwise indicated by the context. Also, the articular construction is anaphoric indicating that the word was used in Romans 15:15 and its meaning and referent in that verse is being retained here in verse 16.

Romans 15:15, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father.”

In this verse, the noun theos refers to the Father and not the Son or the Spirit since the preposition hupo plus the genitive expresses ultimate agency and not intermediate agency, which dia plus the genitive would express. Thus, even though the Lord Jesus Christ authorized the Spirit to assign the spiritual gift of apostleship to Paul, theos does not refer to either the Son or Spirit but rather the Father since the Scriptures teach that the Father is the ultimate authority who sent the Son and the Spirit for the benefit of Paul and all believers in Christ.

In Romans 15:16, the noun theos functions as a genitive of source indicating that the gospel that Paul communicated to the Romans in the main argument of the Roman epistle “originated from” the Father and not Paul or any human being. We will translate the word “originating from God the Father.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“So that” is the conjunction hina (ἵνα) (ee-nah), which is employed with the subjunctive mood of the verb ginomai, “would become” in order to form a purpose clause indicating Paul’s purpose in communicating the gospel to Gentile believers such as those among his readers. We will translate hina, “in order that.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather
boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that...

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“My offering of the Gentiles” is composed of the articular nominative feminine singular form of the noun prosphora (προσφορά) (prose-for-dah), “my offering” and the articular genitive neuter plural form of the noun ethnos (ἐθνος) (eff-noce), “the Gentiles.”

The noun prosphora is composed of the preposition pros, “toward, before” and the verb phero, “to bring,” thus the word literally means “to bring before.” It indicates a “bringing to, a presenting, an offering” of something.

The word is used of dowry in marriage contracts (Moulton-Milligan, Vocabulary of the New Testament, page 552). It was used of the gift of a house from a mother to her daughter on the occasion of her marriage (ibid. 552). The word was used of the “increase’ of bad symptoms (ibid. 552). It was also used of a gift of wheat (ibid 552).

It appears 14 times in the Septuagint, of which only two are canonical (Psalm 39:7; Daniel 12:13). The word occurs only 9 times in the Greek New Testament (Acts 21:26; 24:17; Romans 15:16; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:5, 8, 10, 14, 18).

The word was used in the LXX for the sacrifice offered on the altar. Paul only uses the word twice (Ephesians 5:2) so it was not a word he used often.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition lists the following meanings for the prosphora: (1) the act of bringing as a voluntary expression, in our literature in the literal as well as figurative sense of sacrificing, offering (2) that which is brought as a voluntary expression, in our literature in figurative and literal use offering (Page 887).

Louw and Nida define it “that which is offered to God in religious activity—‘offering, sacrifice’” (53.16) (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based upon Semantic Domains)

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, “used of sacrifice and gifts to a deity (1) as a religious activity offering, presenting, sacrificing (2) literally and figuratively, as referring to what is brought gift, offering, sacrifice (Page 336).

In Romans 15:16, the noun prosphora means “offering” referring to the state of the Gentile Christians continuing to experience their salvation and sanctification and thus fellowship with God. It refers to the state of the Gentile Christians
continuing to experience their sanctification and growing up to be like Christ by responding to Paul’s teaching. If they respond to his teaching then they will be offering their bodies as a sacrifice-alive, holy, extremely pleasing and beneficial to the Father, which is what commanded the Romans to do in Romans 12:1.

In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul appealed to his Christian readers in Rome on the basis of the merciful acts of the Father on their behalf to offer their bodies as a sacrifice-alive, holy, extremely pleasing to the Father, which is their reasonable service to the Father.

**Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I appeal to each and every one of you spiritual brothers and sisters on the basis of the merciful acts produced by God the Father to offer your bodies as a sacrifice-alive, holy, extremely pleasing and beneficial to God the Father, which is your reasonable service.”**

Then, in Romans 12:2, Paul prohibited his Christian readers in Rome from being conformed to the standards of the cosmic system of Satan.

**Romans 12:2a, “Consequently, do not conform your behavior in accordance with the standards of this age.”**

If the Gentile Roman Christians respond to Paul’s teaching in the main argument, they will obey this command. In Romans 12:2, Paul then issued a command on the heels of this prohibition to be transformed in their character into the image of Christ by the renewing of their minds. He teaches that this transformation of the believer’s character into the image of Christ by renovating their mind accomplishes what the Father intended in that it provides the believer the capacity to discern what the will of God is with regards to any situation.

**Romans 12:2b, “On the contrary, permit yourselves to be transformed by renovating your mind in order that each and every one of you may discern what is, as an eternal spiritual truth, God the Father’s will, that which is good as well as extremely pleasing and in addition perfect.”**

By responding to his teaching in the main argument, Paul’s Gentile Christians readers in Rome would continue to renovate their mind and continue to discern what is the Father’s will.

Therefore, in Romans 15:16, the noun *prophora* means “offering” referring to the state of Gentiles growing to spiritual maturity by being obedient to his gospel. It refers to the state of the Gentiles experiencing their salvation and sanctification, which speak of fellowship from different perspectives, and growing to spiritual maturity by responding to Paul’s gospel. Only regenerate Gentiles are sanctified by the Spirit in an experiential sense. The unbeliever can be sanctified positionally by exercising faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The noun *prophora* in Romans 15:16 functions as the nominative subject in this *hina* purpose clause as indicated by its articular construction meaning that the word is performing the action of the verb *ginomai*, “may become.” The article is
also functioning as a possessive pronoun as indicated by the context and should be translated “my” referring to the fact that regenerate Gentiles whom communicated the gospel to, “belong to” him.

Once again the noun ethnos means “the Gentiles” referring to all those individuals who are “not” of Jewish racial descent and thus “not” members of the covenant people of God, Israel. The articular construction of the word is “generic” distinguishing the Gentiles from the Jews. The word functions as a genitive of apposition or epexegetical genitive, which defines the noun prosphora, “offering,” which is ambiguous and begs to be defined. We will translate the expression he prosphora ton ethnon (ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἑθνῶν), “my offering, namely the Gentiles.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“May become” is the third person singular aorist middle subjunctive form of the verb ginomai (γίνομαι) (yee-no-meh), which means “to possess certain characteristics with the implication of their having been acquired.” In our passage, the word is used with Gentile Christians as its subject and speaks of their possessing the characteristic of being acceptable to the Father as a result of responding to Paul’s gospel. This teaching he describes as serving the gospel of God like a priest and serving Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. Only Gentiles who have accepted Christ as Savior through faith in Him are acceptable to the Father. Those Gentiles who are experiencing their sanctification please the Father even more since they are conforming to His plan from eternity past to conform them into the image of His Son.

The third person singular form refers to Gentile Christians.

The subjunctive mood of the verb ginomai is employed with the conjunction hina to form a purpose clause that indicates that Paul served the gospel of God like a priest “in order that” his offering, namely, the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

The aorist tense is a consummative or culminative aorist, which is used to emphasize the cessation of an act or state. This type of aorist views an event in its
entirety but regarding it from the viewpoint of its existing results. Therefore, the “culminative” aorist views Gentile Christians responding to Paul’s presentation of the gospel. But views this obedience from the standpoint of its existing results, which is that the Gentiles are acceptable to the Father as result of obeying Paul’s gospel presentation.

The word’s predicate nominative, the adjective *euprosdektos*, “acceptable” does not contain an ingressive idea but rather a resultant state from a past action.

The middle voice of the verb is a causative middle meaning that the subject has something done for or to himself or herself. The subject is Gentile Christians. The causative middle indicates that by communicating the gospel to the Gentiles, he served the gospel of God like a priest in order that they, who are Paul’s offering to the Father, would “cause themselves” to be acceptable to the Father. The causative middle emphasizes the exercise of the volition of regenerate Gentiles in obeying Paul’s gospel. We will translate *ginomai*, “would cause themselves to be.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be...”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“Acceptable” is the nominative feminine singular form of the adjective *euprosdektos* (εὐπρόσδεκτος) (ef-prose-thek-toce), which is composed of the prefix *eu* and the preposition *pros* and the adjective *dektos*, “well-received” and thus “acceptable.”

The word pertains to that which is particularly acceptable and hence quite pleasing (Louw and Nida 25.86). This adjective is derived from *prosdechomai*, “to receive favorably.” The *eu* prefix emphasizes the positive aspect of the reception, thus it means “pleasant, acceptable.”

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition lists the following: (1) pertaining to being capable of eliciting favorable acceptance, acceptable (2) pertaining to being welcome in a situation, favorable (Pages 410-411).

The word does not appear in the Septuagint and only 5 times in the Greek New Testament (Romans 15:16, 31; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 8:12; 1 Peter 2:5). The adjective
appears in 2 Corinthians 6:2 to describe the time period of time in which unsaved are alive and still have opportunity to get saved through faith in Christ as acceptable. It is used in Romans 15:31 and 2 Corinthians 8:12 to describe the gift of money and materials for the poor in Jerusalem with the former describing it as acceptable to the Jewish Christians who were its recipients and the latter describing it as acceptable from God’s perspective.

In Romans 15:16, the adjective *euprosdektos* means “acceptable” and is used to describe the attitude and conduct of Gentile Christians being “acceptable” to the Father. The attitude and conduct of Gentile Christians would be acceptable to the Father because this attitude and conduct was sanctified by the Holy Spirit meaning that as a result of obeying Paul’s gospel, Gentile Christians would experience their sanctification. This obedience to the gospel by Gentile Christians is extremely pleasing to the Father because it is offered up to Him in the power of the Spirit, which is accomplished by the believer who appropriates by faith his new position in Christ.

It is extremely pleasing to the Father because it is according to the Father’s will that the believer appropriates by faith the Spirit’s teaching that the believer is crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ. Therefore, it is extremely pleasing since it fulfills the purpose of Christ’s crucifixion, spiritual and physical deaths, His resurrection and session. This obedience to the gospel by Paul’s Gentile Christian readers in Rome also fulfills the purpose of the various ministries performed by the Holy Spirit on the believer’s behalf. It also fulfills the Father’s eternal purpose for the believer electing and predestinating them. It also fulfills the purpose for which the Father delivered the justified sinner from the sin nature, personal sins, Satan and his cosmic system, i.e. salvation.

The word is used in this way to describe church age believer’s conduct as acceptable to the Father in 1 Peter 2:5.

**1 Peter 2:5**, “you yourselves, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood and to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (NET Bible)

This adjective used in the same manner as the adjective *euarestos*, which appears in Romans 12:1-2 and 14:19 and is a compound word composed of the adverb *eu*, “well, good” and the verb *aresko*, “to strive to please, accommodate,” thus the word literally means “well-pleasing.”
Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I appeal to each and every one of you spiritual brothers and sisters on the basis of the merciful acts produced by God the Father to offer your bodies as a sacrifice-alive, holy, extremely pleasing and beneficial to God the Father, which is your reasonable service.”

In Romans 12:1, the adjective euarestos means “extremely pleasing” and is used with reference to the believer pleasing the Father by offering his body to the Father as a sacrifice by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God, namely that he is crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ. This enables the believer to experience eternal life and sanctification. This sacrifice is extremely pleasing to the Father because it is offered up to Him in the power of the Spirit, which is accomplished by the believer who appropriates by faith his new position in Christ. It is extremely pleasing to the Father because it is according to the Father’s will that the believer appropriates by faith the Spirit’s teaching that the believer is crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ.

Romans 12:2, “Consequently, do not conform your behavior in accordance with the standards of this age. On the contrary, permit yourselves to be transformed by renovating your mind in order that each and every one of you may discern what is, as an eternal spiritual truth, God the Father’s will, that which is good as well as extremely pleasing and in addition perfect.”

In Romans 12:2, the adjective euarestos refers to those decisions and actions made by the believer after his conversion that are “extremely pleasing” to God the Father since they are in accordance with His will. It is extremely pleasing to the Father when the believer makes a decision or performs an action that is according to His will since it fulfills the purpose of Christ’s crucifixion, spiritual and physical deaths, His resurrection and session. It also fulfills the purpose of the various ministries performed by the Holy Spirit on the believer’s behalf. It also fulfills the Father’s eternal purpose for the believer electing and predestinating them. It also fulfills the purpose for which the Father delivered the justified sinner from the sin nature, personal sins, Satan and his cosmic system, i.e. salvation. It also fulfills the purpose for which the Father set apart him to do His will exclusively, sanctification.

Romans 14:18, “For the one who serves Christ as a slave by this means is, as an eternal spiritual truth extremely pleasing in the judgment of God the Father and in addition respected in the judgment of this particular group of people, i.e. the weak.”

In Romans 14:18, the adjective euarestos means “extremely pleasing” to the Father and is a reference to obeying the will of the Father. It is used to describe the strong believer’s service for Christ when they obey the command to love one another and do not exercise their freedom in Christ with respect to food in the presence of the weak so that the weak will not be tempted to partake of non-kosher
food and sin in their own mind and lose fellowship. This indicates that the service of the strong is “extremely pleasing” to the Father when they serve Christ by loving their weak brother self-sacrificially like the Lord by not exercising their freedom in Christ with respect to food in the presence of the weak so that the weak will not partake of non-kosher meat and sin their own mind.

Therefore, in Romans 15:16, *euprosdektos* is used to describe the attitude and conduct of Gentile Christians being “acceptable” to the Father. They would be acceptable to the Father because this attitude and conduct was the result of obeying Paul’s gospel and would result in these Gentile Christians experiencing their salvation and sanctification.

In Romans 15:16, Paul uses the adjective *euprosdektos* rather than the adjective *euarestos* since the former emphasizes that obedience to his gospel fulfills what the Father requires whereas the latter emphasizes the joy that this obedience gives the Father.

The adjective *euprosdektos* functions as a predicate nominative meaning that it is making the assertion that Paul served the gospel of God as a priest by communicating the gospel to Gentile Christians in order that his offering of Gentile Christians would be acceptable to the Father. We will translate the word “acceptable.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable…”
Romans 15:16c—The Gentile Christians In Rome Would Cause Themselves To Be An Acceptable Offering By Being Sanctified By The Holy Spirit

Thus far, in our studies of Romans 15:16 we noted that the Father gave the apostle Paul the spiritual gift of apostleship for the purpose of his being a servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. Then, in the second statement Paul writes that he served the gospel of God like a priest in order that Gentile Christians such as the Gentile Roman believers would cause themselves to be an acceptable offering to the Father. Next, we will complete the verse by noting that Gentile Christians would cause themselves to be an acceptable offering to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“Sanctified” is the nominative feminine singular perfect passive participle form of the verb ἁγιάζω (āγiāζω) (eye-ee-ah-zoe), which means “to make holy, to sanctify, to consecrate.”

It rare in classical Greek and belongs almost exclusively to Biblical Greek or Greek influenced by the Bible (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament volume 1, page 111).

The verb appears 187 times in the Septuagint and reflects four basic usages: (1) the consecration or making holy of objects (2) the consecration of persons (3) holy treatment or reverence of persons (4) purification. It signifies an act whereby people or things are consecrated or set apart for the exclusive use of God. They are the special possession of God.

The word appears 28 times in the Greek New Testament.

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament defines the word “make holy, consecrate, sanctify (1) of things set apart for sacred purposes consecrate, dedicate (2) of God’s name treat as holy, revere (3) of persons (a) objectively, of Christ and His church acknowledged as being God’s own possession set apart for a holy purpose, dedicate, consecrate (b) subjectively, of spiritual and moral preparation sanctify, make holy, purify (4) specifically in 1 Cor. 7:14 of an unbelieving partner in a Christian home set aside for God’s purpose sanctified, consecrated, accepted or acknowledged by God (Page 31).

Louw and Nida list the following meanings for the verb: (1) to dedicate to the service of and to loyalty to deity—‘to consecrate, consecration, to dedicate to God, dedication’ (53.44) (2) to cause someone to have the quality of holiness—‘to make holy’ (88.26) (3) to feel reverence for or to honor as holy—‘to hallow, to regard as holy, to honor as holy’ (88.27) (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based upon Semantic Domains)
A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition gives the following: (1) set aside something or make it suitable for ritual purposes, consecrate, dedicate of things (2) include a person in the inner circle of what is holy, in both cultic and moral associations of the word, consecrate, dedicate, sanctify (3) to treat as holy, reverence (4) to eliminate that which is incompatible with holiness, purify (Pages 9-10).

In Romans 15:16, the verb \textit{hagiazo} means “to set apart exclusively for the Father’s purpose” and is used with Gentile Christian as its subject. The word speaks of Gentile Christians experiencing sanctification by obeying the commands and prohibitions that Paul issued in the main argument of the epistle that help to compose his gospel and was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Not only is the main argument in the Roman epistle inspired by the Holy Spirit but also the entire epistle. Therefore, by obeying Paul’s commands and prohibitions in the main argument, his Gentile Christian readers would be sanctified by the Holy Spirit since this entire epistle is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

“Sanctification” is a technical theological term for the believer who has been set apart through the baptism of the Spirit at the moment of conversion in order to serve God exclusively and is accomplished in three stages: (1) Positional (2) Experiential (3) Ultimate.

The “baptism of the Spirit” takes place exclusively during the dispensation of the church age and is accomplished at the moment of conversion when the omnipotence of the Spirit places the believer in a eternal union with Christ, thus identifying the believer positionally with Christ in His death, resurrection and session.

1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

“Baptized” is the verb \textit{baptizo} (\textit{baptivzw}), “to cause the believer to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ.”

At the moment of salvation, the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to become identical and united with the Lord Jesus Christ and also ascribes to the believer the qualities and characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Positional sanctification” is the believer’s “entrance” into the plan of God for the church age resulting in eternal security as well as two categories of positional truth (1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Thess. 5:23; Eph. 5:26-27; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 6:3, 8; 2 Thess. 2:13).

“Retroactive” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His death and burial (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:12). “Current” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His resurrection, ascension and session (See Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:1-4).
Colossians 3:1, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

In Romans 6:3-5, Paul teaches concerning both retroactive and current positional truth.

Romans 6:3-5, “Or, are some of you in a state of ignorance concerning the fact that all of us who have been identified with Christ, who is Jesus, have been identified with His spiritual death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism with respect to His physical death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead ones through the glory of the Father, in the same way, we, ourselves will also walk in the realm of an extraordinary life. Therefore, if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that we are entered into union with Him, conformed to His physical death. Of course, we believe this is true. Then, certainly, we will also be united with Him, conformed to His resurrection."

“Positional sanctification”: (1) What God has done for the church age believer. (2) His viewpoint of the church age believer. (3) Sets up the potential to experience sanctification in time. (4) Provides the believer with the guarantee of receiving a resurrection body.

By positionally, I mean that God views the believer as crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ since at the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit placed the believer in union with Christ. This union identifies the Christian with Christ’s crucifixion (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20), His death (Romans 6:2, 7-8; Colossians 2:20; 3:3), His burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), His resurrection (Romans 6:5; Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 2:12; 3:1) and His session (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer’s sanctification since the Christian’s sanctification is based upon the Person of Christ and His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session and it is designed to conformed them into His image.

1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

“Experiential sanctification” is the function of the church age believer’s spiritual life in time through obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God (John 17:17; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 7; 1 Tim. 2:15).

2 Thessalonians 2:13, “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”
“Experiential sanctification” is the post-salvation experience of the church age believer who is in fellowship with God by confessing any known sin to the Father when necessary followed by obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the Word of God.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess our sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

1 John 2:5, “But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him.”

Sanctification is experienced by the believer who submits to the desires of the Spirit, which constitutes being filled with the Spirit, which is commanded of the Christian in Ephesians 5:18.

Romans 8:5-6, “For you see those who at any time exist in the state of being in submission to the flesh are, as an eternal spiritual truth, preoccupied with the things produced by the flesh. However, those in submission to the Spirit, the things produced by the Spirit. In fact, the mind-set produced by the flesh is, as an eternal spiritual truth temporal spiritual death. However, the mind-set produced by the Spirit is, as an eternal spiritual truth life as well as peace.”

Ephesians 5:18: “And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit.”

This obedience also constitutes obeying the command to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul.

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

This obedience enables the Spirit to reproduce the character of Christ in the believer.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Experiential sanctification is only a potential since it is contingent upon the church age believer responding to what God has done for him at the moment of conversion, therefore, only believers who are obedient to the Word of God will experience sanctification in time. It is obeying the command of Romans 6:11 to consider oneself dead to the sin nature and alive to God.
Romans 6:11, “In the same way, also, on the one hand, all of you without exception make it your habit to regard yourselves as dead ones with respect to the sin nature while on the other hand those who are, as an eternal spiritual truth, alive with respect to God the Father, in union with Christ, who is Jesus.”

The believer experiences sanctification by obeying the Word of God, which states that the believer has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ and which teaching is inspired by the Holy Spirit (See Romans 6).

“Ultimate sanctification” is the perfection of the church age believer’s spiritual life at the rapture of the church, which is the completion of the plan of God for the church age believer (1 Cor. 15:53-54; Gal. 6:8; 1 Pet. 5:10; John 6:40). It is the guarantee of a resurrection body and will be experienced by every believer regardless of their response in time to what God has done for them at conversion.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

“Ultimate sanctification” is experiencing the holiness of God perpetually in a resurrection body.

Sanctification is experiencing the holiness of God or in other words manifesting the character of God through one’s thoughts, words and actions.

1 Peter 1:14-16, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.’”

In Romans 15:16, the verb *hagiazo* functions as a nominative of simple apposition meaning that it stands in apposition to the nominative form of the adjective *euprosdektos*, “acceptable.”

The word also functions as a participle of means, which indicates the means by which the action of the finite verb is accomplished and answers the question “how?” This type of participle usually follows its verb as it does here in Romans 15:16. In our context, the verb *hagiazo* indicates the means by which the verb *ginomai*, “would cause themselves to be” is accomplished. Therefore, *hagiazo*, as a participle of means indicates that Gentile Christians would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father “by means of” being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It defines for the reader the action of the main verb *ginomai* making it more explicit than what Paul intended to convey with the main verb. Thus, *hagiazo*, as a participle of means is making more explicit the idea of Gentile Christians causing themselves to be acceptable to the Father as a result of obeying his gospel as presented in the main argument. It says that Gentile Christians would cause
themselves to be acceptable to the Father “by” being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This would take place if Gentile Christians obeyed his gospel.

The passive voice is a “divine passive.” The passive voice means that the subject receives the action of the verb from either an expressed or unexpressed agency. The subject is Gentile Christian and the expressed agency is the Holy Spirit as indicated by the prepositional phrase en pneumatic hagio (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ), which follows it. This indicates that the Spirit is the agency, which causes Gentile Christians to be sanctified or to experience their sanctification by obeying his gospel, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The perfect tense of hagiazo is an intensive perfect used to emphasize the results or present state produced by a past action. This indicates that the present state of Gentile Christians being sanctified results from the antecedent action of obeying Paul’s gospel. We will translate hagiazo, “by being sanctified.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified…”

Romans 15:16, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

“In the Holy Spirit” is composed of the preposition en (ἐν), “in” and the dative neuter singular form of the noun pneuma (πνεῦμα), “the Spirit” and the dative neuter singular form of the adjective hagios (ἅγιος), “Holy.”


In Romans 15:16, the noun pneuma refers of course to the third member of the Trinity, the Spirit and the adjective hagios is used to describe the third member of the Trinity, the Spirit and denotes the state of being holy, thus it refers to the holiness of the Spirit.

The apostle Paul employs the adjective hagios, “holy” to modify the noun pneuma, which refers to the third member of the Trinity, the Spirit. He does not use pneuma by itself since he wants to emphasize that the sanctification of Paul’s Gentile Christians is based upon the Spirit’s holiness or in other words, the absolute perfection of His character. Or in other words, it flows from the Spirit’s
holiness or the absolute perfection of His character. Therefore, the adjective *hagios* means, “holy” and is used to modify the noun *pneuma*, which refers to the third member of the Trinity, the Spirit. It denotes the Spirit as being inherently holy, thus it refers to the holiness of the Spirit, which refers to the absolute perfection of the Spirit’s character.

The adjective *hagios* is anarthrous and functions in the first attribute position expressing an attributive relation to the noun *pneuma*, “Spirit.” The adjective *hagios* functions as a “dative of simple apposition” meaning that it stands next a noun in the same case and clarifies who is mentioned. The noun it stands next to is of course *pneuma*, “Spirit.” Therefore, *hagios*, “Holy” is clarifying or identifying the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit as the member of the Trinity that manifests God’s righteousness, peace and joy in the believer.

The preposition *en* is a marker of means indicating that the sanctification of Gentile Christians is “by means of” the power of the Holy Spirit, which is appropriated by exercising faith in Paul’s gospel. Therefore, the proper name *pneuma* functions as a “dative instrumental of means” indicating that Gentile Christians such as the Gentile Roman believers will experience their sanctification “by means of” the power of the Holy Spirit. This again is accomplished by exercising faith in Paul’s Spirit inspired gospel.

Although, an instrumental of means is not conceived as personal but “impersonal” the Person of the Spirit is not being emphasized here. Rather His power is presented as the instrument that enables Gentile Christians to experience their sanctification. Therefore, we can see that the figure of “metonymy” is being used here by Paul meaning that the Person of the Spirit is put for His power. So this prepositional phrase emphasizes that Gentile Christians will experience their sanctification “by means of” the power of the Holy Spirit. This accomplished by obeying Paul’s Spirit inspired gospel that appeared in the main argument of this epistle. So we will translate the prepositional phrase *en pneumati hagio* (*ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*), “by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 15:15-16, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father. For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.”
To summarize, Paul’s statement in Romans 15:15 stands in contrast with his statement in Romans 15:14.

Romans 15:14-15, “Now, concerning all of you as a corporate unit, my spiritual brothers and sisters I myself in fact am of the firm conviction that you yourselves indeed are characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, being able also to instruct one another. However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father.”

The contrast in verses 14-15 is between Paul’s conviction about the Roman Christians as a corporate unit that they were characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct each other with that of why he wrote to them boldly in the main argument of the epistle.

If Paul was of the firm conviction that the Roman Christians as a corporate unit were characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct each other, then why did he write what he did in the main argument? The answer: To remind them again, which implies obviously that they were taught the very things that he wrote them in the epistle.

In this passage, Paul addresses the Romans as a corporate unit expressing his firm personal conviction that all of them were indeed characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, being able also to instruct one another. He feels important to share this conviction with his readers since in the main argument he wrote boldly to them concerning some issues as he acknowledges in Romans 15:15.

In Romans 15:14, he is emphasizing that contrary to the bold things he wrote them, his personal conviction is that they were indeed characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. Paul asserts his conviction that the Roman Christians were characterized as being full of goodness, which means that they were morally excellent in the sense that their conduct was characterized as being benevolent or benefiting others. This implies that they are righteous in that they do right by each other and were thus operating in divine love toward each other since love never commits evil against one’s neighbor. This conduct is the result of obeying the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God. This first assertion about the Roman Christians indicates that they were characterized as obeying everything Paul prohibited and commanded in Romans 12:1-15:13.

The second assertion was that the Romans had an intellectual and spiritual grasp or comprehension of the will of the Father as revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God by the pastor-teacher and in prayer.
spiritual comprehension I mean that the believer has accepted by faith the Spirit’s teaching regarding the Father’s will as the Spirit reveals this will in the gospel through the communication of the Word of God by the pastor-teacher and in prayer.

The third and final assertion was that the Roman Christians were characterized as possessing the capacity to instruct one another as to proper Christian conduct. It indicates that the Roman Christians were experiencing fellowship with one another and were communicating with each other and experiencing the companionship aspect of Christian fellowship.

Now, the apostle Paul’s statement in Romans 15:15 reveals to the Christians in Rome that he wrote very boldly on some points in the main argument of this epistle so as to remind them again because of the grace (His apostleship) that was given to him by God. When Paul says he wrote boldly in certain parts of the epistle he is referring specifically to those passages in which he commands or prohibits the Roman Christians. This is indicated in that Paul was writing to the Roman Christians whom he did not evangelize and had not yet taught them the Word of God since he had not yet met them, thus to command or prohibit the Roman Christians to a certain course of conduct would on the surface appear bold, however he was an apostle. Thus, he did have the authority to command or prohibit the Roman Christians. However, Paul chooses to use this type of language with the Roman Christians because he is being polite and thoughtful and considerate of them and that he cared for them. In fact, he calls this authority a gift, specifically a spiritual gift.

Also, he puts the noun charis, “grace” in the accusative case to denote cause since he wants to emphasize with his readers that the responsibility of being given the spiritual gift of apostleship “caused” him to issue commands and prohibitions to the Roman Christians or in other word, it required that he do so.

So the prepositional phrase indicates that by issuing these commands and prohibitions in the main argument, Paul was exercising his apostolic authority. However, even though he was exercising his apostolic authority by issuing these commands and prohibitions, he is also informing the Romans that this authority was given to him as a gift by God indicating that he did not earn or deserve the gift and thus he did not earn or deserve this authority as an apostle. Thus, he is not being arrogant but humble in that he recognizes that this authority was a gift from God. In this same way that he views his authority as a gift from God to serve others so also he wants his readers to view their positions in the body of Christ as a gift from God designed to serve others.

Then, in Romans 15:16, Paul reveals to the Christians in Rome that the Father gave him the spiritual gift of apostleship for the purpose of being a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. Next, he states that he served the gospel of God like a
priest in order that his offering of the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:16, “For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.”

The first statement in this passage “For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles” teaches that the Father’s purpose in assigning Paul the gift of apostleship was so that he would be a public servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles.

The second statement “I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit” describes Paul’s service for the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gentiles.

The statement “I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father” is figurative language picturing Paul as a priest and the gospel the means by which he offers Gentile Christians as an acceptable offering to the Father.

The purpose clause “in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable” reveals the purpose for which Paul served the gospel of God like a priest. Paul is making the assertion that he served the gospel of God as a priest in order that his offering of Gentile Christians to the Father would be acceptable to the Father. This purpose clause emphasizes that Gentile obedience to his gospel as presented in the main argument fulfills what the Father. It refers to the state of the Gentile Christians receiving eternal salvation and growing to spiritual maturity by responding to his gospel to be converted and responded to it also after conversion. It refers to the state of Gentile Christians experiencing their salvation and sanctification and thus fellowship with God by responding to Paul’s gospel as presented in the main argument of this epistle. By obeying Paul’s gospel, Gentile Christians would be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

“By being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit” tells the Gentile Christians in Rome that they will cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This would take place if Paul’s Gentile Christian readers in Rome obeyed his Spirit inspired commands and prohibitions in the main argument of this letter. This clause indicates that their sanctification is by means of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is appropriated by exercising faith in Paul’s Spirit inspired commands and prohibitions in the main argument.
It is clear from Paul’s comments in Romans 15:14-16 that the Roman churches were primarily Gentile rather than Jewish. In these verses, he makes clear that his reason for writing boldly to them in the main argument of the epistle by issuing commands and prohibitions to his readers was simply him exercising his spiritual gift of apostleship. He says that it was given to him by the Father for the express purpose that he would be a servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. His purpose for issuing commands and prohibitions to his readers was so that the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by obeying what he taught in the main argument, which in turn enables the Holy Spirit to cause them to experience their sanctification.
Romans 15:17-Paul Possessed A Feeling Of Pride Because He Was A Servant Of Christ With Respect To The Things Which Concern The Father

By way of review, Romans 15:1 marks a transition to a new section, which is within the sixth major section in the Roman epistle, that appears in Romans 12:1-15:13. It marks the transition from a discussion in Romans 14:13-23, which instructs the strong to conduct themselves according to love and not exercising their freedom in the presence of the weak to a discussion in Romans 15:1-13 that emphasizes the strong imitating Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice resulting in unity. The word marks a transition to a new stage in the discussion that appeared in Romans 14:13-23 and advances this discussion further by emphasizing with the strong the importance of imitating Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice, which will result in unity between the weak and the strong.

Romans 15:1, “Now, we who are strong are, as an eternal spiritual truth under obligation to patiently and sympathetically endure the weak’s scruples and in addition not please ourselves for our own benefit.”

Romans 15:1 contains both a command and a prohibition. The former reminds the strong that they are under obligation to patiently and sympathetically endure the scruples of the weak and the latter that they are not to please themselves for their own benefit. This idea is echoed in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 and Galatians 6:2.

1 Thessalonians 5:14, “And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all.” (NET Bible)

Galatians 6:2, “Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (NET Bible)

The command in Romans 15:1 reminds the strong that they are under obligation to patiently and sympathetically endure the scruples of the weak and the prohibition that they are not to please themselves for their own benefit.

The apostle Paul in Romans 15:2 wants his readers who were strong to meditate upon the command in this verse to continue making it their habit of pleasing the weak for their benefit, for the purpose of that which is good in character, specifically, their edification, i.e. their spiritual growth.

Romans 15:2, “Each and every one of us without exception must continue to make it their habit of pleasing his neighbor for their benefit for the purpose of that which is good in character specifically, edification.”

This command does not mean that the strong are to conform to the scruples of the weak or that the strong are to let the weak control the local assembly since this would not further the spiritual growth of the weak. Rather, this command means that the strong are to refrain from exercising their freedom in Christ with respect to eating and drinking while in the presence of the weak for the purpose of their
spiritual growth. The strong would hinder the spiritual growth of the weak by exercising their freedom since this would tempt the weak to live according to the convictions of the strong rather than their own and thus they would sin in their own mind and lose fellowship with God. Paul simply wants the strong to be considerate of the scruples of the weak by operating in God’s love, which involves self-denial and self-sacrifice for the benefit of the weak.

Romans 15:1-2 emphasizes with the strong that even though they have the freedom to eat unclean meats and drink wine offered in pagan sacrifices, they must be willing at all times to deny themselves of this freedom for the sake of their spiritual brother or sister in Christ who is weak. God’s love does insist upon its own rights but rather denies oneself of his rights for the sake of others.

Romans 15:3 presents the reason why the strong obey the command in Romans 15:2.

Romans 15:3, “Because, even the one and only Christ never pleased Himself for His own benefit on the contrary just as it stands written for all of eternity, ‘The insults from those who insult You fell upon Me.’”

The causal clause “because the one and only Christ never pleased Himself for His own benefit” speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ devotion to the Father’s will for the sake of saving sinners. It speaks of His self-denial and self-sacrifice in order to execute the Father’s will by suffering a substitutionary spiritual and physical death on the cross in order to deliver sinful humanity from the sin nature, personal sins, real spiritual death, physical death, eternal condemnation, the devil and his cosmic system.

To support this causal clause Paul cites verbatim the Septuagint translation of Psalm 69:9b (68:10b in LXX). He uses this quotation to present Jesus Christ as the perfect example for the strong to follow of not pleasing oneself but the Father for the good of others. The Lord Jesus Christ is their perfect example of self-denial and self-sacrifice as the governing principle when conduct themselves in the presence of the weak. Our Lord’s example teaches the strong to set aside one’s personal freedom and comfort to help those who are weak with respect to conviction grow to spiritual maturity.

Psalm 69:9 records David lamenting the fact that people were insulting God and that he was the victim of these insults as well. In this Psalm, King David laments his unjust treatment from men because of his devotion to God. In the same way and to an infinitely greater degree Jesus Christ suffered unjust treatment from sinners because of His devotion in doing the Father’s will. Sinners insulted God the Father and the Son became the victim of those insults Himself.

Paul does mention Christ bearing the wrath of God to bring sinners to God since this was not overtly apparent to sinners of course. Rather, he mentions Christ bearing the insults of men, which was clearly demonstrated and understood by all
who witnessed His ministry and passion. Just as David had a consuming zeal for the house of God, which resulted in his being the object of insults from those who hated the God of Israel, so Christ to an infinitely greater degree possess a consuming zeal for the Father’s house, which resulted in His being the object of insults from those who hated the Father. Therefore, if Christ could endure insults directed at the Father for the sake of saving sinners, the strong can certainly refrain from exercising their freedom with respect to eating and drinking while in the presence of the weak so as to build up the weak spiritually.

So Paul’s point in quoting this Psalm is to emphasize with the strong that if Jesus Christ Himself could deny self and self-sacrificially endure the humiliation of the cross to save souls, then certainly they can deny themselves and refrain from exercising their freedom with respect to food while in the presence of the weak.

Then, in Romans 15:4a, Paul reveals to the Romans that he cited Psalm 69:9 in Romans 15:3b as support for the statement in Romans 15:3a that Christ never pleased Himself for His own benefit because the Old Testament Scriptures were written for their instruction. He teaches that the purpose of this instruction in the Old Testament Scriptures was so that by means of perseverance as well as by means of encouragement, which are both produced by the Scriptures, they may experience confidence that they have been blessed, are being blessed and will be blessed in the future.

Romans 15:4, “For you see, whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction in order that by means of perseverance, which is divine in quality and character as well as by means of encouragement, which is divine in quality and character, which are produced by the Scriptures we may experience confidence, which is divine in quality and character.”

Romans 15:5 begins a new paragraph within the main division that appears in Romans 12:1-15:13. It marks a transition from a discussion in Romans 15:1-4, which instructs the strong to imitate Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice when conducting themselves in the presence of the weak to a discussion in Romans 15:5-12 regarding unity between and Jew and Gentile. The passage is not a prayer but rather Paul’s Spirit inspired desire that the Holy Spirit who produces perseverance and encouragement, cause the Roman believers as a corporate unit to continue making it their habit of thinking the same with one another according to the teaching of Christ, who is Jesus.

Though it is not technically a prayer since the Father is not addressed by Paul, it is the content of Paul’s prayer for the Roman believers, which was revealed by him her to encourage the Romans.

Romans 15:5, “Now, may God the Holy Spirit who produces perseverance as well as encouragement cause all of you for your benefit to continue making
it your habit of thinking the same with one another according to the teaching of Christ, who is Jesus.”

The verse instructs the Roman believers that the teaching of Christ is the standard by which the Holy Spirit causes the Roman believers to think the same with one another. The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to love one another as He loved them (John 13:34). Obedience to this teaching enables the Holy Spirit to cause believers to think the same with one another since He makes understandable the teaching of Christ and guides the believer in applying this teaching and reproduces the character of Christ in the believer who obeys this command. Therefore, unity among believers is the direct result of believers obeying the Spirit who speaks to the believer through the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

The believer’s mental attitude must be based upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus, otherwise the Spirit can not unite believers since He unites believers in their thinking with one another according to the standards of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are revealed through His teaching. The believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18 and to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in their soul in Colossians 3:16. They are synonymous since both bear the same results since the Holy Spirit inspired the Word of Christ. Ephesians 5:18 emphasizes the Spirit’s role in fellowship whereas Colossians 3:16 emphasizes the Word of God’s role. Both passages address the believer’s thinking. Believers can only think the same with one another or in other words can only be unified in their thinking if they are thinking like Christ and that can only happen if they are obeying the commands of Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16.

Paul has already made clear that the Lord Jesus taught that all foods are clean. Thus, in Romans 15:5, by teaching that unity of thinking among believers is the result of the Holy Spirit causing believers to think the same according to the teaching of Christ Jesus implies that the weak need to be further educated in the Word of Christ. So in Romans 15:5, Paul reveals his Spirit inspired desire that the Holy Spirit, who produces perseverance as well as encouragement, would cause the Roman believers as a corporate unit to continue making it their habit of thinking the same with one another according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

Romans 15:6 presents the purpose of this desire, which is that the Roman believers would unanimously, with one voice, continue making it their habit of glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of worshipping Him.

Romans 15:6, “In order that unanimously, with one voice, all of you may continue making it a habit of glorifying the God and Father of our Lord, namely, Jesus, who is the Christ.”

Then, in Romans 15:7, the apostle Paul issues a command that is direct at both the weak and the strong in Rome that is a self-evident inference or conclusion
based upon his teaching in Romans 14:1-15:6 and is summarization of what he has taught in this passage. He commands them both to continue making it their habit of welcoming one another into their fellowship because the one and only Christ also welcomed all of them into fellowship with Himself the moment they were declared justified through faith in Him. The purpose for which he wants them to obey this command is that it would glorify the Father in the sense that it would manifest the love of God.

Romans 15:7, “Therefore, all of you continue making it your habit of welcoming one another into your fellowship because the one and only Christ also welcomed all of you into fellowship with Himself for the purpose of glorifying God the Father.”

There are two basic options for the syntax of Romans 15:8-9, which is awkward: (1) Romans 15:8 and 9a are two parallel assertions that are dependent upon lego, “I affirm,” which would render the two verses: I affirm: (a) That Christ is serving the circumcision because of God’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the covenant promises to the patriarchs of Israel. (b) That the Gentiles glorify God because of His mercy. (2) Romans 15:8b and 9a are two parallel purpose expressions that are dependent upon Romans 15:8a, which would render the two verses: I affirm, Christ is serving the circumcision because of God’s faithfulness: (a) In order to fulfill the promises to the patriarchs (b) consequently that the Gentiles glorify God because of His mercy.

The syntax is awkward since Paul is attempting maintain his argument throughout the Roman epistle, which he presents in Romans 1:16.

Romans 1:16, “For I am never ashamed of the gospel for it is as an eternal spiritual truth God’s power resulting in deliverance for the benefit of everyone who as an eternal spiritual truth believe, to the Jew first and then to the Greek.”

The argument expressed in Romans 1:16 and developed throughout the rest of the epistle is that the Gentiles are included in the plan of salvation along with the Jews but that the Jews have the salvation-historical priority since salvation comes to the Gentiles through Christ fulfilling the covenant promises to Israel’s patriarchs. Therefore, in Romans 15:8-9a, Paul maintains the integrity of this argument by using parallel statements to describe in what way the Jews and Gentiles benefited from Christ fulfilling the Father’s plan of salvation. In relation to the Jews, Christ became a servant to the Jews because God the Father is faithful to His promises to Israel’s patriarchs thus the first purpose for His coming is to fulfill these covenant promises to the patriarchs. In relation to the Gentiles, Christ became a servant to the Jews that the Gentiles would glorify the Father because of His mercy. Therefore, in Romans 15:8-9a, Paul is implicitly reminding the weak who were primarily Jewish that God has accepted into His family the strong who
were primarily Gentile. He is also reminding the strong who were primarily Gentile that their salvation rests upon the covenant promises that God made to the patriarchs of the Jews. Thus, Paul is echoing his teaching in Romans 11.

In Romans 15:8, Paul presents the first of two purposes for Christ becoming a servant to the Jew, namely, it was because of the Father’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the Father’s promises to the patriarchs of Israel.

Romans 15:8, “For, I affirm, Christ is now and will forever be serving the circumcision because of God the Father’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the promises, which belong to the fathers.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is described by Paul as a “servant” to the Jews which He manifested by fulfilling the Messianic promises and the promises made by God to the patriarchs of Israel and redeeming Israel from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13; 4:4b-5a). The Lord said that He was sent by the Father to “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). This was true because He came to serve Israel by fulfilling the promises of her patriarchs.

In Romans 15:8, Paul teaches that Christ became a servant to the Jews because of the Father’s faithfulness. Christ came to fulfill the promises that God made with the patriarchs of Israel and are contained in the four unconditional covenants to Israel. These promises would also include Messianic promises as well.

Faithfulness is one of the attributes of God as related to moral beings (Deut. 7:9; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 John 1:9). It is one of the relative attributes of God meaning that it is related to God’s relationship to men.

The four great unconditional covenants to Israel: (1) Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:16; 22:15-18; 26:4; 28:14; 35:11; Ex. 6:2-8). (2) Palestinian (Gen. 13:15; Ex. 6:4, 8; Num. 34:1-12; Deut. 30:1-9; Jer. 32:36-44; Ezek. 36:21-38). (3) Davidic (2 Sam. 7:8-17; Ps. 89:20-37) (4) New (Jer. 31:31-34; cf. Heb. 8:8-12; 10:15-17).

We must reiterate that these four unconditional covenants (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) are all related to Israel and not the church. The nation of Israel was “directly given” the covenants according to Romans 9:1-5.

Romans 9:1-5, “I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, {separated} from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the {temple} service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

However, the church and regenerate Gentiles who live outside the church age participate in the blessings of these covenants since she is the bride of Jesus Christ, the king of Israel (See Galatians 3).
Galatians 3:13-14, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE’ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Ephesians 3:1-13 teaches that it was a mystery that the Gentiles through faith in Christ would become fellow heirs with Jewish believers, fellow members of the body of Christ and fellow partakers of the four unconditional covenants of promise to Israel.

So in Romans 15:9a, the apostle Paul presents the second purpose for Christ serving the Jews, namely, that the Gentiles would glorify the Father because of His grace.

Romans 15:9, “So that the Gentiles glorify God the Father because of grace. As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘Because of this, I myself will, as a certainty, give praise to You among the Gentiles. Also, I will, as a certainty, sing praise to the character and nature of Your person.’”

The second purpose is a direct result of Christ fulfilling the first purpose. By fulfilling the promises to the patriarchs of Israel, Christ provided the Gentiles the opportunity to experience eternal salvation through faith in Him since the promises to the patriarchs included blessings for the Gentiles and not just Israel. Therefore, Paul is saying that Christ welcomed the weak and the strong because He became a servant to the Jew because of God’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the Father’s promises to the patriarchs. Thus, consequently, a second purpose was fulfilled, namely that the Gentiles would glorify the Father because of His grace.

Christ welcomed the weak, who were primarily Jewish, into fellowship with Himself because of the Father’s faithfulness in order to fulfill the covenant promises to the patriarchs of Israel. He welcomed the strong, who were primarily Gentile, into fellowship with Himself in order that they would glorify the Father because of His grace policy.

To support all of this Paul cites Psalm 18:49 that the Father’s redemptive purpose through His Son includes Gentiles along with Jews. In Romans 15:9b, he cites this Psalm to support his affirmation that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

Romans 15:9, “So that the Gentiles glorify God the Father because of grace. As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘Because of this, I myself will, as a certainty, give praise to You among the Gentiles. Also, I will, as a certainty, sing praise to the character and nature of Your person.’”

Next, Paul in Romans 15:10 cites Deuteronomy 32:43 to support his affirmation that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.
Romans 15:10, “And, furthermore, it says, ‘I solemnly charge all of you Gentiles to make it your top priority to rejoice together with His nation and do it now.’”

In Romans 15:11 cites Psalm 117:1 to support his affirmation in Romans 15:8-9a that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

Romans 15:11, “And likewise, ‘Each and every one of you Gentiles continue making it your habit of joyfully singing praise to the Lord. Also, I solemnly charge all of you to make it your top priority to praise Him each and every one of His people and do it now.’”

Paul in Romans 15:12 cites Isaiah 11:10 to support his affirmation in Romans 15:8-9a that God’s redemptive purpose through His Son not only includes the Jews but also the Gentiles.

Romans 15:12, “And again, Isaiah says, ‘the root springing from Jesse will, as a certainty, cause Himself to live, specifically, the one who will, as a certainty, cause Himself to rise again in order to rule over the Gentiles, upon Him, the Gentiles will, as a certainty, place their confidence.’”

This citation from Isaiah 11:10 is a prophecy of Israel’s Messiah. It predicts that He will cause Himself to live again, specifically, He will cause Himself to rise again from the dead in order to rule over the Gentiles. Isaiah predicts that upon Him, the Gentiles will place their confidence for eternal salvation. Of course, this prediction was fulfilled and Paul’s readers who were Gentile are living proof.

Romans 15:13 completes the argument of the epistle. In this passage he shares with his readers the prayer he makes to the Father on their behalf that the Spirit will cause them all to be filled with all joy and peace by exercising faith in what the Spirit’s says in the Old Testament and through the Lord and the apostles’ teaching that now appears in the Greek New Testament. The purpose of this he teaches is that they would prosper with a confidence that is divine in quality and character by means of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is appropriated through faith in what the Spirit says in the Word of God.

Romans 15:13, “Now, may God the Holy Spirit cause each and every one of you without exception to be filled with all joy as well as peace by exercising faith in order that each and every one of you without exception would prosper with that confidence, which is divine in quality and character by means of power originating from the Holy Spirit.”

Now, in Romans 15:14-15, Paul expresses his confidence that the Roman believers were living the spiritual life and relates his purpose for things he wrote in the epistle.

Romans 15:14, “Now, concerning all of you as a corporate unit, my spiritual brothers and sisters I myself in fact am of the firm conviction that
you yourselves indeed are characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, being able also to instruct one another.”

This verse marks a transition from the main argument in 1:16-15:13, the sixth major section in 12:1-15:13 and the literary unit connected to it in 14:1-15:13 to the seventh and final section of the epistle. In this passage, Paul addresses the Romans as a corporate unit and as fellow members of the royal family of God expressing his firm personal conviction that all of them were indeed characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, being able also to instruct one another. He feels important to share this conviction with his readers since in the main argument he wrote boldly to them concerning some issues as he acknowledges in Romans 15:15.

In Romans 15:14, he is emphasizing that contrary to the bold things he wrote them, his personal conviction is that they were indeed characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. Paul asserts his conviction that the Roman Christians were characterized as being full of goodness, which means that they were morally excellent in the sense that their conduct was characterized as being benevolent or benefiting others. This implies that they are righteous in that they do right by each other and were thus operating in divine love towards each other since love never commits evil against one’s neighbor. This conduct is the result of obeying the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God. This first assertion about the Roman Christians indicates that they were characterized as obeying everything Paul prohibited and commanded in Romans 12:1-15:13.

The second assertion was that the Romans had an intellectual and spiritual grasp or comprehension of the will of the Father as revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God by the pastor-teacher and in prayer. By spiritual comprehension I mean that the believer has accepted by faith the Spirit’s teaching regarding the Father’s will as the Spirit reveals this will in the gospel through the communication of the Word of God by the pastor-teacher and in prayer.

The third and final assertion was that the Roman Christians were characterized as possessing the capacity to instruct one another as to proper Christian conduct. It indicates that the Roman Christians were experiencing fellowship with one another and were communicating with each other and experiencing the companionship aspect of Christian fellowship.

Paul’s statement in Romans 15:15 stands in contrast with his statement in Romans 15:14.

Romans 15:15, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of
the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father.”

The contrast in verses 14-15 is between Paul’s conviction about the Roman Christians as a corporate unit that they were characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge of the Father’s will and able to instruct each other with that of why he wrote to them boldly in the main argument of the epistle. If Paul was of the firm conviction that the Roman Christians as a corporate unit were characterized as being full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct each other, then why did he write what he did in the main argument? The answer: To remind them again, which implies obviously that they were taught the very things that he wrote them in the epistle.

The apostle Paul’s statement in Romans 15:15 reveals to the Christians in Rome that he wrote very boldly on some points in the main argument of this epistle so as to remind them again because of the grace (His apostleship) that was given to him by God. When Paul says he wrote boldly in certain parts of the epistle he is referring specifically to those passages in which he commands or prohibits the Roman Christians. This is indicated in that Paul was writing to the Roman Christians whom he did not evangelize and had not yet taught them the Word of God since he had not yet met them, thus to command or prohibit the Roman Christians to a certain course of conduct would on the surface appear bold, however he was an apostle. Thus, he did have the authority to command or prohibit the Roman Christians.

However, Paul chooses to use this type of language with the Roman Christians because he is being polite and thoughtful and considerate of them and that he cared for them. In fact, he calls this authority a gift, specifically a spiritual gift. Also, he puts the noun charis, “grace” in the accusative case to denote cause since he wants to emphasize with his readers that the responsibility of being given the spiritual gift of apostleship “caused” him to issue commands and prohibitions to the Roman Christians or in other word, it required that he do so. So the prepositional phrase indicates that by issuing these commands and prohibitions in the main argument, Paul was exercising his apostolic authority.

However, even though he was exercising his apostolic authority by issuing these commands and prohibitions, he is also informing the Romans that this authority was given to him as a gift by God indicating that he did not earn or deserve the gift and thus he did not earn or deserve this authority as an apostle. Thus, he is not being arrogant but humble in that he recognizes that this authority was a gift from God. In this same way that he views his authority as a gift from God to serve others so also he wants his readers to view their positions in the body of Christ as a gift from God designed to serve others.
Then, in Romans 15:16, Paul reveals to the Christians in Rome that the Father gave him the spiritual gift of apostleship for the purpose of being a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. Next, he states that he served the gospel of God like a priest in order that his offering of the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 15:16, “For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.”**

The first statement in this passage “For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles” teaches that the Father’s purpose in assigning Paul the gift of apostleship was so that he would be a public servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles.

The second statement “I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit” describes Paul’s service for the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gentiles.

The purpose clause “in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable” reveals the purpose for which Paul served the gospel of God like a priest. Paul is making the assertion that he wrote boldly to his Gentile Christian readers in Rome by issuing commands and prohibitions in the main argument in order that his offering of them to the Father would be acceptable to the Father. This purpose clause emphasizes with Paul’s Gentile Christian readers that obedience to his gospel as presented in the main argument fulfills what the Father requires of his readers. It refers to the state of the Gentile Roman Christians continuing to experience their salvation and sanctification and thus fellowship with God by being obedient to his teaching in the main argument of the Roman epistle (1:16-15:13). It refers to the state of the Gentile Roman Christians continuing to experience their sanctification and growing up to be like Christ by responding to Paul’s teaching in the main argument of this epistle.

“By being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit” speaks of the Gentile Christians in Rome experiencing sanctification by obeying the commands and prohibitions that Paul issued in the main argument of the epistle that help to compose his gospel and was inspired by the Holy Spirit. By obeying Paul’s
commands and prohibitions in the main argument, his Gentile Christians would be sanctified by the Holy Spirit since this entire epistle is inspired by the Holy Spirit. “By being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit” tells the Gentile Christians in Rome that they will cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This would take place if Paul’s Gentile Christian readers in Rome obeyed his Spirit inspired commands and prohibitions in the main argument of this letter. This clause indicates that their sanctification is by means of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is appropriated by exercising faith in Paul’s Spirit inspired commands and prohibitions in the main argument.

It is clear from Paul’s comments in Romans 15:14-16 that the Roman churches were primarily Gentile rather than Jewish. In these verses, he makes clear that his reason for writing boldly to them in the main argument of the epistle by issuing commands and prohibitions to his readers was simply him exercising his spiritual gift of apostleship. He says that it was given to him by the Father for the express purpose that he would be a servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles. His purpose for issuing commands and prohibitions to his readers was so that the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by obeying what he taught in the main argument, which in turn enables the Holy Spirit to cause them to experience their sanctification.

Next, we will note Romans 15:17 and in this passage Paul presents an inference from his teaching in Romans 15:16 that he possessed a feeling of pride because he was a servant of Christ Jesus with respect to the things which concern God the Father.

Romans 15:17, “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.”

“Therefore” is the “inferential” use of the post-positive conjunction oun (οὖν) (oon), which functions as a marker of result implying the conclusion of a process of reasoning. It denotes that the statement introduced by this word is the result of an inference from Paul’s statement in Romans 15:16.

Romans 15:16, “For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.”

In Romans 15:16, Paul reveals to the Christians in Rome that the Father gave him the spiritual gift of apostleship for the purpose of being a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. Then, he states that he served the gospel of God like a priest in order that his offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Now, in Romans 15:17, he says that in Christ Jesus he has found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. This statement is an inference from his statement in verse 16 as indicated by the conjunction *oun* since the word functions as a marker of result implying the conclusion of a process of reasoning. So in Romans 15:16, Paul writes that he serves the Lord Jesus Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles, serving the gospel of God like a priest in order that his offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the power of the Spirit.

Then, in Romans 15:17, he draws an inference from this statement. Thus, he is saying “therefore, based upon this fact” that he is a servant of Christ Jesus for the benefit of the Gentiles and serves the gospel like a priest in order that the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by the Spirit, he possesses a feeling of pride in things pertaining to God.

Then, in Romans 15:18-19, Paul elaborates on what he means that in Christ Jesus he has found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God or in others he explains why because he is a servant of Christ that he possesses a feeling of pride in things pertaining to God.

We will translate *oun*, “therefore.”

Romans 15:17, “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.”

“In Christ Jesus” is composed of the preposition *en* (ἐν), “in” and the dative masculine singular form of the proper name *Christos* (Χριστός) (cree-stoce), “Christ,” which is followed by the dative masculine singular form of the proper name *Iesous* (Ἰησοῦς) (yee-soose), “Jesus.”

The proper name *Christos* designates the humanity of Jesus Christ as the promised Savior for all mankind who is unique as the incarnate Son of God and guided and empowered by the Spirit as the Servant of the Father. It emphasizes that Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Son of God self-sacrificially delivered the believer from the sin nature, personal sins, the devil and his cosmic system, spiritual and physical death and eternal condemnation through His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths and resurrection.

The proper name *Iesous*, “Jesus” refers to the impeccable human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Iesous*, “Jesus” functions as a “dative of simple apposition” meaning that it stands next a noun in the same case and clarifies who is mentioned. The noun it stands next to is of course *Christos*, “Christ.” Therefore, *Iesous*, “Jesus” is clarifying or identifying who this Christ is, namely, it is Jesus of Nazareth since there were many in the first century who claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ, Paul clarifies for us who He is, namely, Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, we will translate the proper name *Iesous*, “who is Jesus.”
The preposition *en* is a marker of “cause” and the noun *Christos* function as a dative of cause indicating the cause or basis of the action of the verb *echo*, “I have” whose predicate is the noun *kauchesis*, “reason for boasting.” Thus, this prepositional phrase *en Christo Iesou* answers the question as to “why?” Paul found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. This indicates that Paul found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God “because of” or “on the basis of” or “based upon the fact” that he is a servant of Christ Jesus.

That this prepositional phrase refers to the fact that Paul is a servant of Christ Jesus is indicated in that his statement here in verse 17 is an inference drawn from his statement in verse 16. Therefore, he is saying that “based upon the fact that I am a servant of Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles, I possess a feeling of pride in things pertaining to God.” So this prepositional phrase *en Christo Iesou* is anaphoric pointing back to his statement in verse 16 that Paul was a servant of Christ Jesus.

Then, in Romans 15:18-19, Paul elaborates on what he means when he says that because he is a servant of Christ Jesus he possesses a feeling of pride in things pertaining to God. These verses indicate that Paul possessed a feeling of pride in things pertaining to God because he was a servant of Christ in the sense that through the agency of the Holy Spirit, Christ accomplished the work he performed among the Gentiles in communicating the gospel and performing signs and wonders among them.

**Romans 15:18-19, “For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed. In the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”**

Notice in verse 18, that Paul says that he will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through him by word and deed, which resulted in the obedience of the Gentiles. The term “word” is obviously the communication of the gospel that centered upon the person of Christ according to Romans 1:3 and the term “deed” refers to performing signs and wonders in the midst of the Gentiles to get their attention to listen to the message of the gospel as well as his conduct. Then, in verse 19, he says that this was by the power of the Spirit.

So Paul is teaching the Romans in Romans 15:17-19 that he possessed a feeling of pride because he was a servant of Christ Jesus meaning that through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the Lord worked through him in communicating the gospel to the Gentiles and performing signs and wonders among them. The Lord Jesus worked through Paul among the Gentiles in communicating the gospel and performing signs and wonders by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.
Therefore, in Romans 15:17, the proper noun Christos, “Christ” contains the figure of “metonymy” meaning that Paul put the person of Christ for the fact that Paul is His servant. Again, this is indicated by the fact that this prepositional phrase en Christo Iesou is pointing back to Paul’s statement in verse 16, which is indicated by the fact that his statement in verse 17 is the result of an inference from his statement in verse 16. Therefore, we will translate the prepositional phrase en Christo Iesou, “because of Christ, who is Jesus” or we could paraphrase it as “because I am a servant of Christ Jesus.”

Romans 15:17, “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.”

“I have found” is the first person singular present active indicative form of the verb echo (ἐχω) (eh-ho), which means “to possess a particular attitude or feeling” that is identified by the noun kauchesis, “reason for boasting.”

The noun kauchesis means “pride” referring to the legitimate and justifiable pride that Paul was a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the verb echo refers to the fact that Paul “possessed an attitude” in the sense of a feeling or emotion of pride because he was a servant of Christ Jesus.

The present tense of the verb is a “customary” present used to signal an ongoing state or specifically the continuation of an ongoing state.

The active voice is “stative” indicating that the subject exists in the state indicated by the verb.

Both the stative active voice and the stative present indicate that Paul “exists in the state of” possessing a feeling or attitude of pride because he was a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as a non-contingent or unqualified statement.

We will translate echo, “I possess a feeling of.”

“Reason for boasting in” is the accusative feminine singular form of the noun kauchesis (καύχησις) (kawf-hee-cease), which means, “the act of boasting” and by implication the “object of boasting.”

This noun is related to the verb kauchaomai, which appeared in Romans 2:17 and 23. The noun kauchesis appears in classical Greek since 300 B.C. Its primary meaning is the “act of boasting” and by implication the “object of boasting.”

In the Septuagint, the word appears 10 times and is sometimes translated “praise” as in 1 Chronicle 29:13. It is also used with reference to old age as a cause of boasting (Proverbs 16:31). Kauchesis refers to the act of boasting in Jeremiah 12:13 and Ezekiel 16:12.

The noun appears 11 times in the Greek New Testament.

Vine commenting on the word, writes, “Kauchesis denotes ‘the act of boasting,’ Rom 3:27; 15:17, RV, ‘(my) glorying’ (KJV, ‘whereof I may glory’); 1 Cor 15:31,
RV, ‘glorying’; 2 Cor 1:12 (ditto); 7:4,14 (KJV, ‘boasting’); 8:24; 11:10, and 17 (ditto); 1 Thess 2:19 (KJV, ‘rejoicing’); James 4:16 (ditto). The distinction between this and No. 1 is to be observed in 2 Cor 8:24, speaking of the apostle's act of ‘glorying’ in the liberality of the Corinthians, while in 9:3 he exhorts them not to rob him of the ground of his ‘glorying’ (No. 1).” (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon defines the word, “the act of glorying; that of which one glories, cause of glorying.” (Page 342)

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains lists the following meanings: (1) To express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy (33.368). (2) The referent of boasting, namely, that which one boasts about (33.371). (3) The state of being rightfully proud (25.204).

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature-Third Edition: (1) act of taking pride in something, boasting (2) that which constitutes a source of pride, object of boasting, reason for boasting (Page 537).

Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament lists the following meanings, “boast, the context indicating whether taking pride in a positive sense or boasting in the negative sense of bragging is in mind…Kauchesis designates more often the action of boasting as such…Kauchesis can represent that which makes boasting possible (Rom. 3:27), the reason (Rom. 15:17) or the object of boasting (2 Cor. 1:12).

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament lists the following: (1) as an action boasting, glorying, pride; in a good sense (Rom. 15:17); in a bad sense (Rom. 3:27); (2) as an object, of boasting, equivalent to kauchema boast (2 Cor. 1:12) (3) as an attitude pride; in a good sense (2 Cor. 7:4) (Page 228).

In Romans 3:27, Paul employs kauchesis in a bad sense of his unsaved Jewish countrymen’s pride and boasting.

Romans 3:27, “Under what conditions then, is there at any time pride and boasting? It has, as an eternal spiritual truth, been excluded! By what kind of principle? By means of actions produced by obedience to the Law? Absolutely not! But rather by means of the principle, which is faith.”

In Romans 15:17, the noun kauchesis refers to that which Paul takes pride in and not the act of Paul taking pride since if he wanted to emphasize the action of taking pride in something he would have employed the verb kauchao mai but instead he uses echo, “I have” since he wants to emphasize a particular attitude he possesses.

The word in Romans 15:17 is used in a good sense of the legitimate and justifiable pride of the apostle Paul that he was a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.
It is legitimate and justifiable since it is an acknowledgement of a fact and magnifies the Lord Jesus Christ and not himself emphasizing that Paul is subordinate to the Lord Jesus Christ as His servant. The word speaks of the pleasure and satisfaction that Paul derived from the fact that he was a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he regarded as honorable since it gave credit to the Lord and not himself.

In Romans 15:17, the noun *kauchesis* functions as an accusative direct object meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *echo*, “I possess a feeling of.”

Next, we must address a textual problem with this word in that some MSS the word appears as articular (B C D F G 81 365 pc) while in others it does not (N A Ψ 33 1739 1881 Majority text). Also, P46 supplies a relative pronoun before the verb *echo*, which would give us the reading of “which I have as a boast.”

The NET Bible has the following comment regarding this problem, they write “After οὖν (oun), several important Alexandrian and Western mss (B C D F G 81 365 pc) have τήν (tēn). The article is lacking in N A Ψ 33 1739 1881 M however. P46 supplies a relative pronoun and has a different reading entirely (“which I have [as a] boast”). Articles were frequently introduced to clarify the meaning of the text. In this instance, since the word modified (καυχησίν, *kauchēsin*) is third declension, a visual oversight (resulting in omission) is less likely. Hence, the shorter reading is probably original. The difference in translation between these first two options is negligible (‘I have the boast’ or ‘I have a boast’). NA27 puts the article in brackets, indicating some doubt as to its authenticity. In Grk ‘Therefore I have a boast.’”

So we can see that articular construction of the word appears in the primary Alexandrian uncial B as well as in the secondary Alexandrian MSS C and 81 and in the western uncials D, F and G and some minuscules. It is omitted in the primary Alexandrian N and in the secondary Alexandrian A, Ψ and the majority text.

If the word is articular, then it functions as a demonstrative pronoun meaning “this” referring back to Paul’s statement in Romans 15:16 and if it is not articular then Paul would be saying “I possess a feeling of pride.”

The article was probably added by copyists to clarify Paul’s boasting was based upon what he said in verse 16. The more difficult reading would have the article omitted.

Copyists were more likely to add words they felt were incorrectly left out by a previous scribe to clarify the meaning of the passage. Therefore, based upon transcriptional probability it is best to consider the noun *kauchesis* as anarthrous rather than articular. Transcriptional probability refers to what scribes are likely to have done to a particular reading.

Hort writes, “Transcriptional probability is not directly or properly concerned with the relative excellence of rival readings, but merely with the relative fitness of
each for explaining the existence of the others. Each rival reading contributes an
element to the problem which has to be solved; for every rival reading is a fact
which has to be accounted for, and no acceptance of any one reading as original
can be satisfactory which leaves any other variant incapable of being traced to
some known cause or variation.”

So when dealing with the problem as to whether or not kauchesis is articular or
not, transcriptional probability says that a copyist was tempted to add the article so
as to clarify for the reader what Paul’s boasting was based upon since the article
would be anaphoric pointing the reader back to his statement in verse 16.

The anarthrous construction of kauchesis is qualitative-definite placing stress on
the quality and individual identity of Paul’s pride that it is based upon being a
servant of Christ who through the Spirit worked through Paul in communicating
the gospel to the Gentiles and performing signs and wonders among them. We will
translate the noun kauchesis, “pride.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:17, “Therefore, because (I am a
servant) of Christ, who is Jesus, I possess a feeling of pride…”

Romans 15:17, “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting
in things pertaining to God.”

“Things” is the accusative neuter plural form of the definite article ho (ὁ)
(owe), which functions as a “substantiver” meaning it nominalizes (i.e. converts to
a noun) and conceptualizing the prepositional phrase pros ton theon (πρὸς τὸν
θεόν), “pertaining to God.”

The word is anaphoric in the sense that it refers to Paul’s statements in Romans
15:16 rather than being kataphoric referring to his statements in Romans 15:18-19
since his statement in verse 17 is an inference from his statement in verse 16 and
verses 18-19 elaborate on his statement in verse 17. Thus, it refers to Paul being a
servant of Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles, serving the Father’s gospel as a
priest in order that his offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be
acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy
Spirit (verse 16).

Therefore, the substantive use of the article preceding the prepositional phrase
pros ton theon (πρὸς τὸν θεόν), “pertaining to God” refers to the following: (1)
Paul receiving from the Father the spiritual gift of apostleship for the express
purpose of serving Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles. (2) Paul serving the
Father’s gospel as a priest in order to bring about the sanctification of the Gentiles.

The article functions as an accusative of respect or reference indicating with
reference to what the verbal action is represented as true. This indicates that Paul
possessed a feeling of pride because he was a servant of Christ “with respect to”
the things that concerned the Father. Namely, serving Christ for the benefit of the
Gentiles, serving the Father’s gospel as a priest by communicating the gospel to
the Gentiles and consequently, bringing about their sanctification by means of the power of the Spirit. We will translate the article “with respect to the things.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 15:17, “Therefore, because (I am a servant) of Christ, who is Jesus, I possess a feeling of pride with respect to the things…”

Romans 15:17, “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.”

“Pertaining to God” is composed of the preposition pros (προς), “pertaining to” and the articular accusative masculine singular form of the noun theos (Θεός), “God.”

The noun theos refers to the Father as indicated by its articular construction since the articular construction of this noun in the New Testament commonly signifies the first member of the Trinity unless otherwise indicated by the context. Also, the articular construction is anaphoric indicating that the word was used in Romans 15:16 and its meaning and referent in that verse is being retained here in verse 17.

Romans 15:16, “For the express purpose, that I myself would be a servant owned by Christ, who is Jesus, for the benefit of the Gentiles. I serve as a priest the gospel originating from God the Father in order that my offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit.”

In Romans 15:16, the noun theos referred to the Father since its articular construction was also anaphoric indicating that the word was used in Romans 15:15 and its meaning and referent in that verse is being retained here in verse 16.

Romans 15:15, “However, I previously wrote for the benefit of each and every one of you without exception rather boldly in part so that I would at the present time remind each and every one of you without exception because of the spiritual gift, which was assigned to me for the benefit of myself and others by God the Father.”

In this verse, the noun theos refers to the Father and not the Son or the Spirit since the preposition hupo plus the genitive expresses ultimate agency and not intermediate agency, which dia plus the genitive would express.

Therefore, in Romans 15:17, the noun theos refers to the Father as indicated by its articular construction. The word functions as the object of the preposition pros, which functions as a marker of orientation towards the Father to indicate the connection between Paul’s gospel ministry to the Gentiles and the Father’s plan of salvation marking this plan as a point of reference for this service. We will translate the prepositional phrase pros ton theon (πρὸς τὸν θεόν), “which concern God the Father.”
So the entire expression *ta pros ton theon* (τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν), “with respect to the things, which concern God the Father” refers to Paul’s statements in Romans 15:16. Thus, it refers to Paul being a servant of Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles, serving the Father’s gospel as a priest in order that his offering, namely the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 16). So the things, which concern the Father are communicating the gospel to the Gentiles in order to bring about their sanctification, which would accomplish His will for their lives and bring glory to Him by manifesting His character and nature through both Paul and the Gentiles resulting in Paul and the Gentiles praising Him.

Completed corrected translation of Romans 15:17, “Therefore, because (I am a servant) of Christ, who is Jesus, I possess a feeling of pride with respect to the things, which concern God the Father.”

To summarize our findings in this verse, Paul writes that because he is a servant of Christ Jesus, he possesses a feeling of pride with respect to things which concern God the Father. This statement is drawing an inference from his statement in Romans 15:16. In verse 16, he says that he is a servant of Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles and that he serves the gospel as a priest in order that the Gentiles would cause themselves to be acceptable to the Father by being sanctified by means of the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in Romans 15:17, Paul says that because he is a servant of Christ, he possesses a feeling of pride with respect to the things, which concern the Father. This feeling of pride is based upon the fact that he is a servant of Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles and serves the gospel as a priest by communicating the gospel to the Gentiles resulting in their sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The things, which concern the Father, are communicating the gospel to the Gentiles in order to bring about their sanctification. This would accomplish His will for their lives and bring glory to Him and His Son by manifesting their character and nature through both Paul and the Gentiles resulting in Paul and the Gentiles praising them both.

Paul’s pride is virtuous, justifiable and legitimate in that it is based upon the function of the spiritual gift of apostleship that the Father bestowed on Him through His Son and the Spirit at the moment of his conversion for the express purpose of his being a servant of Christ for the benefit of the Gentiles. This pride of Paul’s is virtuous, justifiable and legitimate since it is also based upon the communication of the gospel to the Gentiles, and which gospel originated from the Father and if obeyed would bring about their sanctification by means of the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, his pride was based upon a gift from the Father, his being made a servant of Christ His Son, and the communication of the gospel that
originated from the Father and the sanctification of the Gentiles that was based
upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

So everything that Paul was proud of was based upon what God had done for
him and through him and was not based upon who he was in himself or what he
had done. He was serving Christ, the Father’s gospel, using a gift from the Father
and the power of the Spirit to bring about the sanctification of the Gentiles.

There was nothing Paul could take credit for but only that which God had done
for him and through him. This passage emphasizes that Paul did not communicate
the gospel to make a name for himself or to gain the approbation of men or his
contemporaries but rather to bring glory to Christ and the Father. The message of
the gospel did not originate with him but with the Father. The spiritual gift he used
to communicate the gospel did not originate with him but again with the Father. He
did not serve himself but Christ and the Gentiles. He did not serve himself but
rather the gospel that originated with Father.

Romans 15:17 reveals the great humility of the apostle Paul, which is
demonstrated by the fact that he did not put his own personal selfish interests
ahead of others but rather put the interests of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and
the Gentiles first ahead of himself. Paul taught the Romans about this attitude in
Romans 12:10.

In Romans 12:10, Paul issues two commands but these are related to the
believer’s horizontal fellowship or in other words, his relationship with his fellow
believer.

Romans 12:10, “Concerning affection among spiritual brothers and sisters,
all of you must continue to make it your habit to be affectionate with one
another. Concerning honor, all of you continue to make it your habit to
regard one another more highly than yourselves.”

The first command in this passage requires the Romans believers to continue to
make it their habit to be affectionate with one another. The second requires that
they continue to make it their habit to regard each other as more important than
themselves. These two commands are related to the believer’s horizontal
fellowship or in other words, his relationship with his fellow believer.

One reason why believers are to regard one another more highly than
themselves is that all believers have the indwelling presence of the Father
(Ephesians 4:5), Christ (Colossians 1:27) and the Spirit (Romans 8:11). Romans
12:10 teaches the principle that Christians are to regard one another more highly
than themselves since their treatment of other believers reflects their treatment of
Christ.

The Lord taught that His disciples that if they receive a child in His name, they
receive Him.
Matthew 18:1-6, “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.’”

In His Olivet Discourse, the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples that at immediately after His Second Advent when He judges the Gentiles that the Gentiles treatment of believers was their treatment of Him.

Matthew 25:31-46, “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
At his conversion to Christianity and his confrontation with the resurrection Christ, Paul was told that his persecution of Christians was in fact persecuting Him.

Acts 9:1-5, “Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’”

Another reason why believers are to regard their fellow believers more highly than themselves is that this imitates the Lord Jesus Christ subordinating His interests to the best interests others.

Humility is subordinating ones’ self interest to the best interests of others. The incarnate Son of God Jesus Christ became a human being and died a substitutionary spiritual and physical death on the cross in the interests of sinful humanity.

Philippians 2:5-8, “Everyone continue thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset. On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men. In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross.”

Humility is expressed by the believer who regards his fellow believer more highly than himself and subordinates his interests to the best interests of his fellow believer.

Philippians 2:3-4, “All of you continue thinking the one thing. Never (thinking) according to inordinate ambition nor according to self-deception but with humility. All of you continue regarding each other as better than yourselves. Each stop being occupied with your own interests but rather the interests of others.”

When a believer regards his fellow believer more highly than himself he is imitating the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ who subordinated His interests to the best interests of sinners. If Christ subordinated His interests to the best interests of all believers by becoming a human being and dying a substitutionary spiritual and physical death on the cross, then the Christian is obligated to operate this way.
towards his fellow believer. The believer, who regards his fellow believer more highly than himself and thus subordinates his interests to the best interests of his fellow believer is not only humble but also has a servant’s mentality.

Paul’s statement in Romans 15:17 reveals that he possesses a humble servant’s mentality as his Savior did. The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples this principle of subordinating their interests to the best interests of each other.

Matthew 20:20-28, “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.’ But Jesus answered, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ He said to them, ‘My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.’ And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”

Matthew 23:10-12, “Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

John 13:1-17, “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, ‘Lord, do You wash my feet?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Never shall You wash my feet!’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’ Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.’ Jesus said to him, ‘He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.’
For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’ So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.’”

The humility of Paul as expressed in Romans 15:14-19 was demonstrated by the fact that he recognized that he depended upon who and what God is and what He had provided for him to execute His will.

True humility recognizes that we are nothing in ourselves but we are significant based upon who and what God is and our union with Christ. Our service as Christians is significant and important not because of who we are but rather it is significant and important because it is the Father’s will that we serve Him and others. True humility recognizes that success in ministry is dependent upon God’s message and His power to effect the conversion of sinners and the transformation of their character to Christ-likeness. True humility as demonstrated in the life of the apostle Paul recognizes that we are nothing but instruments in the hands of Almighty God.

Paul’s statement is echoed throughout his writings and found in the book of Acts as well.

Acts 15:1-12, “Now some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ When Paul and Barnabas had a major argument and debate with them, the church appointed Paul and Barnabas and some others from among them to go up to meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this point of disagreement. So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they were relating at length the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all the things God had done with them. But some from the religious party of the Pharisees who had believed stood up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and to order them to observe the law of Moses.’ Both the apostles and the elders met together to deliberate about this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Brothers, you know that some time ago God chose me to preach to the Gentiles so they would hear the message of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, has testified to them
by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between them and us, cleansing their hearts by faith. So now why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they are.’ The whole group kept quiet and listened to Barnabas and Paul while they explained all the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.” (NET Bible)

Acts 21:18-19, “The next day Paul went in with us to see James, and all the elders were there. When Paul had greeted them, he began to explain in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.” (NET Bible)

2 Corinthians 3:1-7, “Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? We don’t need letters of recommendation to you or from you as some other people do, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone, revealing that you are a letter of Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but on tablets of human hearts. Now we have such confidence in God through Christ. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as if it were coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate to be servants of a new covenant not based on the letter but on the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (NET Bible)

Galatians 2:1-8, “Then after fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem again with Barnabas, taking Titus along too. I went there because of a revelation and presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did so only in a private meeting with the influential people, to make sure that I was not running – or had not run – in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, although he was a Greek. Now this matter arose because of the false brothers with false pretenses who slipped in unnoticed to spy on our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, to make us slaves. But we did not surrender to them even for a moment, in order that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. But from those who were influential (whatever they were makes no difference to me; God shows no favoritism between people) – those influential leaders added nothing to my message. On the contrary, when they saw that I was entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised just as Peter was to the circumcised (for he who empowered Peter for his apostleship to the circumcised also empowered me for my apostleship to the Gentiles).” (NET Bible)

Philippians 3:3, “For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials.” (NET Bible)