

Romans 12

Paul now turns to practical, community issues, that are the evidence of the relationships he has established previously.

This is a practical outworking of the consequences of the community described in ch. 9-11

- Roughly speaking, this section, thematically corresponds to what we see in Bemidbar, and Devarim. A mob is being transformed to a G-dly community with a singular purpose.
- There are many unique tasks within the overall nation. Each member of the commonwealth has a place and task within the larger community.
- These roles sometimes have to do with identity, just as in Israel's tribes and placements, and sometimes the roles are due to giftings G-d has given.
- There are many examples of these special giftings being not associated with heritage.
- Bezalel, Oholiav, the people skilled in weaving and dying, precious metal smiths and so forth.

In the same way, the believers in the larger Jewish community will have tasks, callings, yet will work together for a common purpose.

- What does this mixed, yet unified community look like?
- What are the tasks they are called to?
- Paul uses the metaphor of a body to describe this distinction within the unity of purpose. This is an explanation of the unity of believers, yet distinction within the believing community described in Romans 11.
- A picture of the olive tree metaphor, branches distinct, but supported by Yeshua.

Romans 12:1-2

Paul now turns to the consequences and working out of the previous 11 chapters.

- Eph 4:1. We are called, live in a manner worthy of it
- Rom 6, 8:13, describes death for the old nature, and life in cleanness, *tahor*.
- 8:10-11. We are set apart for His work.
- The language is of the Levitical sacrifices. Acceptable, Holy, living, Present, worship, service, compassions, grace.

Paul uses the picture of a sacrifice, living, presented to G-d.

- Sacrifice comes from the Hebrew word *korban*. And from the word for altar, mizbeach. *Korban* means to draw near. The Greek word in Romans is *thusia*, which is used for both sacrifice and altar in the LXX.
 - It must be *tahor*. So must we. It must be dedicated to His purposes (*kadosh*)
 - It must die. So must we, as in Romans 6,8.
 - In the Temple, the sacrifices were the means for anyone to draw near to Hashem.
 - We are to be the means by which people draw near to Hashem. We are the conduit by which people learn about Yeshua and His sacrifice. We become the righteousness of G-d (2 Cor 5:21) so as to draw others near to Yeshua.
 - We act in the same way the sacrifices described in Leviticus 1-5, to be the way others come near.
 - The sacrifices have no thought of themselves, they are for Hashem's service.
- **Service of Worship.** Reasonable service, or worship. Hebrew: *Avodah*. (these words coincide for example Exodus 35:21, **service** of the Tabernacle. All the people bring items for the work of the Tabernacle. This is an eloquent picture of all of our contributions.

Romans 12 Continued

Conformation and Transformation, and the mind.

- Conformation is to the world of sin and death, transformation is to the new, living, *tahor* world we are in. The mind, though a Greek construction, can be thought to incorporate the whole will. We learn Hashem's desires rather than ours.

*Romans 12:2 and be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for your proving what is the will of God--the good, and acceptable, and **perfect**.*

- Perfect is from the word *teleion*, which is closely related to *telos*. It does not mean ended, but complete, perfect, fulfilled.

Romans 12:3-17. Metaphor of a Body. Many members, one purpose, many functions, many parts, all doing different things, not always seemingly related, but all part of the same overall purpose.

- Paul begins with his own unique calling, (by the grace given to me)
- He addresses it to everyone in the community, emphasizing a unity of purpose.
- Don't think too highly... but wisely. Take stock of our calling, gifting.
- Negative Example, Korah, who was not satisfied with his calling, but wanted Aaron and Moses' calling.
- Gifts are like the different parts, each doing what they do best.
- All for a purpose, of bring near those far off, and encouraging those already near.
- Be not high minded, but lowly, (vs 16)

Vs 14. Blessing for curses. Recalls Sermon on the Mount. No evil for evil (vs 17)

12:4. We, although being single-minded in purpose, to be His Presence here and now, we do not have the same practices (*pratzin*) practice, job.

Grace is from the word (*charitos*), and gifts are a similar word. (*charismata*). These are duties, offices, jobs, given from G-d. While some of them can be seen in the contemporary sense as “supernatural”, many of these are also workings of the character woven into us. For example:

- Not slothful in business (vs 11) Industry, and working hard are part of the “charismatic” gifts.
- Vs 10: kind affection towards one another.
- Vs 13.
- Vs 14: Blessing our enemies has a parallel in Torah, remember your enemy's donkey.

12:5: One Body in Messiah.

This and several other passages by Paul indicate that we are to act as His presence in the *olam hazeh*.

In a similar way, we become the Righteousness of G-d because He became sin for us. (2 Cor 5:21) The next chapter indicates why. To do His works on behalf of others.

- There are many members, with different duties. Much of this is taken from passages in the Tanakh relating similar themes.
- Whatever grace has been given we are to put to use towards others.

Romans 12:6-8

Grace and Gifts

Paul now lists some, but likely not all of what are called spiritual gifts.

These are things that are both provided by G-d, and augmented by inborn abilities.

- These gifts (charismata) are a manifestation of G-d's Grace. (charis)
- While seven in number, Paul was not wont to use numbers like in Revelation (symbolically). Be devoted to your gifting, Paul exhorts. The sense is one of discipline and perseverance.
- Perhaps they are representative of giftings. They are not exhaustive. (1 Cor 1, Eph 4)
 - Prophecy Speaking on behalf of is literal. 1 Cor 12:28; 14; Eph 2; Eph 4). Not exactly the same as teaching, but closely related. Practical guidance in contemporary situations. Perhaps some foretelling, but not only that. Bound by standards (Apostolic doctrine?) Within their measure of faith. There are boundaries.
 - Service Used in many ways. Table Matt 4; Mark 1) word is diakonia. Apostleship with Paul (Acts 1; Acts 20); Ministry in general (1 Cor 16 Eph 4) and financial help (Acts 11; Rom 15)
 - Teaching. Related to tradition (1 Cor 4:17; Apostles teachings, Acts 2:42) (didaskolos) requires study and and effort.
 - Exhortation (paraklesis) Difficult to distinguish from teaching. 1 Tim 4:13. 1 Thes 2:3) Perhaps calls to action more than explanations.
 - Sharing and Giving
 - Leadership
 - Mercy

Romans 12:9-13

Devotion to Love and goodness

The focus now shifts to the community as a whole. These are not partitioned rather all must be involved. These are universal characteristics.

- Love is genuine. Love what is good, but Hate evil.
- Tender family affection. We are to relate as a close family.
- Prefer one another. Seek to serve rather than to be served.
- Diligence in business, in all we do. No slothfulness. This relates closely with the servants in the Kingdom parables. Be at our post, expecting the Master's imminent return.
- Rejoice in Hope, Endurance in affliction, for it will come. Prayer is a devotion
- Hospitality and care for the believers is important. Love on another.
- Rejoice and weep with others successes and disappointments. Be concerned with the family, with the community, not so concerned with our own travails.
- Association with the humble, and not thinking too wisely of ourselves are closely related.

Romans 12:17-21
Non-retaliation with Enemies

Form of 17-19a:

A: Pay back no evil for evil

B. Think beforehand on what is good

C. In the Sight of all people

D. If it is possible as far as it depends on you

C'. With all people

B'. be at peace

A'. Do not avenge yourselves.

19: Quotes Deut 32:25

20: Counter to just avoidance of enemies. Actively seek to do good. From Prov 25:21-22
Judaism taught active involvement in doing good to enemies as far as possible.

21: We should have the upper hand, Evil should not overcome us, but we can actively overcome Evil After all, we have the Spirit of G-d within us, and in our community.