

Christ, A Minister Of The Circumcision

In Romans 15:7, Paul had written, *"Receive ye one another, even as Christ received you, to the glory of God."* Roman Christians, whether strong or weak, whether Jew or Greek, are here commanded to receive each other as Christ had received them.

"For I say that Christ hath been made a minister the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers ..." (Rom. 15:8). The word *"for"* indicates assignment of reason; an enlargement upon his previous words, *"Christ hath received you."* The apostle shows that the ministry of Jesus was to the Jews. John wrote, *"He came unto his own and they that were his own, received him not ..."* (John 1:11). In another passage Paul said, *"We have known Christ after the flesh ..."* (2 Cor. 5:16). These verses stress that Jesus was born a Jew and that he ministered to the Jews, doing so because God had centuries before promised Abraham, *"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen. 22:18). God could not be faithful to His promises to Abraham had Jesus not come, and come to Abraham's family.

Still, Gentiles were included in the promises given to Abraham and Paul's citations of four passages from the Old Testament (Ps. 18:49; Dt. 32:43; Ps. 118:20; Isa. 11:10) showed that even Jews recognized that God's promises included Gentiles. And, because Old Testament prophets had acknowledged Gentiles were to give praise to God, rejoice with his people and hope (trust) in him who was the root of Jesse, then Jewish Christians were to receive Gentiles as Christ had received both of them.

Thus Paul adds, *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and hope in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit"* (Rom. 15:13). God produced hope, hope to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This hope was quickened by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the promises of Christ that he would resurrect to everlasting life those who believed in him. It was the apostle's desire that Romans would be filled with joy and peace in believing, as well as abounding in hope. The fruit of hope is joy and peace. Thus may we, as Gentiles, but those who are also included in God's promises to Abraham, abound in hope and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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