

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 104 – Romans 12:17-14:12

Day 516: Romans 12:17-21**Verse 17**

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες·
προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων
ἀνθρώπων·

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm
ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of
ἀποδιδωμι render, give back, repay

"The exhortation to return evil with good ... is presented as more distinctively Christian [than the *lex talionis*] (Matt 5:38–48//Luke 6:27–36; see further on 12:14, but also on 13:10). It quickly became a firm part of Christian parenesis (1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9; Pol. *Phil.* 2.2)." Dunn.

προνοεω have in mind to do

"The basic meaning of προνοεω is 'think beforehand,' so 'take into consideration' or 'take thought for,' blending into the proactive sense 'provide for' (LSJ). Both here and in 2 Cor 8:21 the thought seems to be more of the need for sensitivity to the views of others than of active material provision, as in 1 Tim 5:8." Dunn.

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, beautiful

Not only do well, but manifestly do well

ἐνώπιον before, in the presence of

'In the sight of all.'

Verse 18

εἰ δυνατόν, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν μετὰ πάντων
ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες·

δυνατος, η, ον possible, able
εἰρηνευω live or be at peace

Cf. 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Thess 5:13 also Heb 12:14. "Paul is realistic: he knows that there will be many times when living at peace with every other inhabitant of the street, let alone the city, will be impossible. But he summons Christians to make every effort in that direction." Wright.

Verse 19

μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, ἀγαπητοί, ἀλλὰ
δοτε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ, γέγραπται γάρ, Ἔμοι
ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδωσω, λέγει
κύριος.

ἐκδικεω avenge, punish
ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

"God's people are loved by God and must not imagine themselves bereft of his care and hence needing to take matters into their own hands." Wright.

δοτε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl διδωμι
τοπος, ον m place
ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

I.e. God's wrath.

"In the context of Rome, the advice may not seem to have been very necessary for politically powerless Christian churches, but the growing and increasingly desperate activity of the Zealots in Palestine was warning enough of how an oppressed people or persecuted minority might turn to acts of revenge, and the Christian congregations would not need reminding of how vulnerable they were to hostile pressures." Dunn.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Cf. Deut 32:35 also Heb 10:30.

ἐμοί Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

ἐκδίκησις, εως f retribution, rendering of
justice

ἀνταποδωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s
ἀνταποδιδωμι repay, return

Verse 20

ἀλλὰ ἐὰν πεινᾷ ὁ ἐχθρὸς σου, ψωμιζε
αὐτόν· ἐὰν διψᾷ, πότιζε αὐτόν· τοῦτο γὰρ
ποιῶν ἄνθρακος πυρὸς σωρεύσεις ἐπὶ τὴν
κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

ἐὰν if

πειναω be hungry

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

ψωμιζω feed, give food to

διψαω be thirsty, thirst for

ποτιζω give to drink, water

Cf. Lk 6:27-30.

ἀνθραξ, ακος m charcoal (ἀ. πυρος
burning coals)

πυρ, ος n fire

σωρευω heap up

κεφαλη, ης f head

This verse is a quotation from Prov 25:21,22. There is some debate over the meaning of these words. It *could* be a picture of divine judgment, i.e. kindness will result in further judgment on these people by God. However, it is more likely that, in context, the meaning is that they might be convicted of their wrong behaviour and perhaps repent and turn to God – a burning shame leading to repentance (so Cranfield).

In countering the suggestion that the burning coals signify judgment, Dunn comments, "Such a negative tone (do good to your enemy so that his punishment will be all the more severe) fits ill with the context: the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount breathes through these verses (cf. Dodd, Schmidt) with a consistent call to open-handed goodness and generous response unmotivated by malice – vv 14, 17, 19, 21. In particular the ἀλλά sets v 20 in some contrast to the idea of leaving the enemy to God's judgment; to read the contrast as 'Leave your enemy to God, but try to increase his guilt by your acts of kindness' strikes a jarring note. And it hardly fits comfortably either with the positive thrust of v 20a–b (cf. 2 Kgs 6:22) or with the final call to 'overcome evil by good'... As already noted, therefore, the ἀλλά is best taken as calling for a positive response to hostility (by meeting it with acts of kindness) and not simply as a passive response (leave it to God)... Here too the Targum of Prov 25:21–22 is probably important since it adds: '... on his head and God will hand him over to you' or 'will make him your friend' (Str-B, 3:302), that is, 'you will win him' in a missionary sense... Without being able to specify the meaning precisely therefore we probably have sufficient reason to conclude that Paul would have intended the Proverbs citation to bear a positive meaning: that is, as explicating and underlining the importance of meeting an enemy with hospitality and kindness."

Wright adds, "The 'coals of fire' are almost certainly intended as the burning shame of remorse for having treated someone badly... The point is then that treating enemies kindly is not only appropriate behaviour in its own right, refusing the vengeance that would usurp God's prerogative; it may also have the effect of turning their hearts."

Verse 21

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἀλλὰ νικά ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

νικῶ Verb, pres pass imperat, 2 s νικαω
conquer, overcome

κακος v.17

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

This is the way in which God himself has proceeded against his enemies. "The present tense indicates a call for dedicated persistence." Dunn.

"To be consumed with vengeful thoughts, or to be led into putting such thoughts into practice, is to keep evil in circulation, whereas the way to overthrow evil, rather than perpetuating it, is to take its force and give back goodness instead. As with the commands of verses 14 and 17, we may question whether someone in Paul's tradition of Torah-based zeal could have come to this position had it not been for the example and teaching of the Messiah himself." Wright.

Day 517: Romans 13:1-7

Verses 1-7

Paul's argument in these verses may have been prompted by specific difficulties in the Roman church or he may have sought to lay down guiding principles for a church at the centre of the Roman world and its government. At the time when Paul was writing there was increasing unease within Judaism at the Roman occupation of Judea, unease which would eventually lead to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This may also have been reflected in tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians regarding attitudes to the power of Rome.

In context, these verses come between a section calling Christians not to resist evil or take revenge, but to leave vengeance to God, and verses which call the Christian to live by the rule of love. In Romans 13:1-7 Paul argues that God's exercise of vengeance upon the wrongdoer is, at least in part, exercised through the powers of earthly government: "One of the underlying theses that binds 12:14-21 and 13:1-7 together is therefore this: justice is served not by private vengeance but by individuals trusting the authorities to keep wickedness in check." Wright.

Dunn comments, "Paul's recognition of the need to function within the realities of this age is underlined by his heavy use of the language and categories of Hellenistic administration... Parallels with other first-century Christian writings (particularly 1 Pet 2:13–17) indicate that this policy of political prudence was widespread among the earliest Christian congregations."

Wright continues, "But did Paul not believe, and hint at several points in Romans itself, that the gospel and the rule of Jesus the Messiah, the world's true Lord, subverted the gospel and rule of Caesar, whose cult was growing fast in precisely the cities (Corinth, Ephesus, and so on) where he spent most of his time? Yes; and this is perhaps part of the point. If the gospel of Jesus, God's Son, the King who will rule the nations (1:3-4; 15:12) does indeed reveal God's justice and salvation, which put to shame the similar claims of Caesar (1:16-17; Phil 2:5-11; 3:19-21); if it is true that those who accept this gospel will themselves exercise a royal reign (5:17); and if Paul suspects that his audience in Rome are getting this message – then it is all the more important to make clear that this does not mean a holy anarchy in the present, an overrealised eschatology in which the rule of Christ has already abolished all earthly governments and magistrates. Precisely because Paul is holding out for the day when all creation will be renewed (8:1-27), when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus (Phil 2:10-11), it is vital that the excitable little groups of Christians should not take the law into their own hands in advance. In particular (and with events in Palestine in mind), it is important that his readers do not take his covert polemic against the imperial ideology as a coded call to a Christian version of the so-called fourth philosophy. This is where Paul's probable awareness of the riots under Claudius, and the reputation that both Jews and Christians will have gained in Rome because of them, must come into play. God does not intend that Christians should become agents of anarchy, which would replace the tyranny of the officially powerful with the tyranny of the unofficially powerful. The ultimate overthrow of pagan power comes by other means, and Paul has outlined in Romans 5 and 8 what those means are. Rome could cope with ordinary revolutions. Rome could not cope, as history bears witness, with a community owing allegiance to the crucified and risen Messiah as the world's true Lord.

"In fact, reading Romans 13 against the backdrop of the extravagant claims made within the burgeoning imperial cult highlights one point in particular. According to Paul (and the Jewish tradition in which he stands) the rulers are not themselves divine; they are set up by the one God, and they owe this God allegiance. Romans 13 constitutes a severe demotion of arrogant and self-divinising rulers. It is an undermining of totalitarianism, not a reinforcement of it. By implication, if the rulers themselves are given the task of judging wicked people within their sphere of authority, they themselves will be judged by God who set them up... Government and magistrates may be more or less good or bad; but – and this is Paul's basic point – government qua government is intended by God and should in principle command submission from Christian and non-Christian alike... "This does not mean, as Paul's own example bears out, that one must be politically and socially quiescent until the great renewal of all things... Preaching and living the gospel must always be announcing and following Jesus, rather than Caesar, as the true Lord. But the eschatological balance must be kept. The church must live as a sign of the coming complete kingdom of Jesus Christ; but since that kingdom is characterised by 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,' it cannot be inaugurated in the present by chaos, violence and hatred (cf. 14:17). The methods of the Messiah himself (12:14-21) must be used in living out his kingdom within the present world, passing away though it may be."

Verse 1

Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω. οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὗσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσίν·

ψυχη, ης f living being, person

πᾶσα ψυχη is a Hebrew idiom which may not have been understood by some Western scribes who omit the reference to ψυχη. "In the old age of Adam, states and kingdoms are part of the social corporeality of humankind, and given the character of the old age, that includes ruler and ruled (contrast the different model of Mark 10:42–44). So long as believers yet belong to that age (as chaps. 6–8 made clear) they must live in terms of its political composition." Dunn.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, argues that Paul refers to invisible angelic powers that stand behind civil government. This view is now generally rejected. Dunn comments, "There is nothing therefore in the usage to support the suggestion that ἐξουσίαις here mean also angelic powers behind and acting through the political authorities." Cf. 1 Peter 2:13.

ὑπερεχω govern, rule, have power over
 ὑποτασέσθω Verb, pres midd/pass
 imperat, 3 s ὑποτασσω; pass. submit to,
 obey

Dunn says that this verb is the natural accompaniment to ἐξουσία and ὑπερεχω "whatever the authority in question – whether of husband (Eph 5:22 v.l.; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1, 5 – a patriarchal society being of course assumed), of parents (Luke 2:51), of masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18; *Did.* 4.11; *Barn.* 19.7), or of secular authorities (1 Chron 29:24; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13; *I Clem* 61.1; and here)... Given its prominence in these Christian texts, we may deduce that such counsel to disciplined acceptance of the realities of social status and of what that entailed for the social inferior was a regular part of early Christian parenesis (cf. particularly Selwyn, *I Peter*, 419–37); and though social relationships are different today, it may well be the case that such submission is an inevitable or inescapable outworking of the Christian grace of humility (...cf. particularly Phil 2:3)." Similarly Wright says, "This is not a specific commendation of the Roman Empire as against the ruling systems of other times and places; it is a general point about civic authority."

οὔσαι Verb, pres ptc, f nom s εἶμι
 τεταγμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom pl
 τασσω appoint, designate

Cf. Prov 8:15-16; Dan 4:25,35; 5:21.

"The implication ... is of an authority ordered by God, (1) subject to the limits of that ordering (cf. Matt 8:9//Luke 7:8; Acts 15:2; 22:10; *I Clem* 20.2; 61.1–2), and (2) commensurate to the submission called for... The corollary, that those who abuse their God-given authority or call for greater submission than God has ordered will come under the judgment of God, is spelled out explicitly in the same passages (especially Wisd Sol 6:4–5; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 82.4–9), with Nebuchadnezzar a fearful warning (Dan 4:13–17, 23–25; 5:20–21); see also 4 Macc 12.11. The further corollary that a subject's submission is determined by the same God-ordained limits naturally follows (though of course Paul is hardly concerned to draw it out here) and allows a fair amount of reworking of this counsel in the light of changed political systems and conditions." Dunn.

Verse 2

ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
 ἀντιτασσομαι oppose, resist
 διαταγῇ, ης f decree, ordinance
 ἀνθέστηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
 ἀνθιστημι resist, oppose
 ἀνθεστηκότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl
 ἀνθιστημι

"The perfect participle indicates a determined and established policy: 'those who have set themselves to resist.' The words are directed more against anarchy than single-issue protest." Dunn.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον himself,
 themselves
 κριμα, τος n judgement, condemnation
 λήμψονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
 λαμβανω

Includes the twofold thought of the punishment dispensed by the governing authorities and also the Divine judgement.

Verse 3

οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ. θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν; τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἕξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς·

ἀρχων, οντος m ruler, official
 φοβος, ου m fear
 ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful
 κακος, η, ον evil, wrong, harm

"Whatever the abuses perpetrated on the system by corrupt rulers, this statement of principle would be widely accepted." Dunn.

θελω wish, will
φοβεομαι trans fear, be afraid
ποιει Verb, pres act Indic 3s & imperat 2s
ποιεω
ἐπαινος, ου m praise, commendation, approval

"ἐπαινος, 'praise, approval, applause,' is a characteristic goal of Greek wisdom and philosophy and includes particularly the idea of public commendation... In 2:29 Paul displayed the same typically Jewish distrust of human praise (cf. 1 Cor 4:5), a clear reminder that the scope of his remarks here is limited and directed to a particular context (Phil 4:8 makes a similar appeal to a consensus instinct for what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, and praiseworthy). Here again 1 Pet 2:14 walks in close company with our passage." Dunn.

Verse 4

θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆς, φοβοῦ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν, ἔκδικος εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι.

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper, minister
εἰκη adv. in vain, for nothing
μαχαιρα, ης f sword, war, violent death
φορεω wear, hold the power of
ἐκδικος, ου m avenger, one who punishes
ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger
πρασσω practice, do

The *sword* here is not merely a reference to the death penalty but encompasses judicial power and punishment generally.

The powers of the civil authorities are a reflection (albeit sometimes a very distorted reflection) of the power of God himself, the Supreme Governor of all creation.

Wright comments, "This is the point at which the authority *must* do what the private individual *may not* do (12:14-21) – a point regularly missed in many popular-level discussions of the judicial role of civic authority."

Verse 5

διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν.

διο therefore, for this reason
ἀναγκη, ης f necessity

ὑποτασσω v.1

Some Western MSS simplify the construction by reading ὑποτασσεσθε (p⁴⁶ D G it ...)

μονον adv only, alone
συνειδησις, εως f conscience

Subjection to civil power should not be motivated simply by fear of punishment, but also from a recognition of what is right and good and as part of the Christian's subjection to God.

Verse 6

διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε, λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσιν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκατεροῦντες.

φορος, ου m tax, tribute
τελεω carry out; pay (taxes)
λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister
προσκατερεω devote oneself to

Verse 7

ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν.

ἀποδιδωμι render, give back, repay
ὀφειλη, ης f debt, what is due
τελος, ους n here = tax, revenue

It is suggested that φορος is tax or tribute, direct taxation, and that τέλος is levy or custom, indirect taxation. Tacitus tells us that there was considerable resistance in the middle 50s to paying indirect taxes, culminating in the tax revolt of AD 58.

φοβος, ου m fear
τιμη, ης f honour, respect

Cf. Matt 22:21. Wright comments, "This last point shows once more, not least in relation to Paul's own practice in Acts, what is and is not meant. Paul was always ready to honour the office even while criticising the present holder."

Day 518: Romans 13:8-14

Verse 8

Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε, εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν· ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
ὀφειλω owe, be bound or obligated

Paul plays on the idea of debt (cf. v.7) while returning to the theme of 12:9-21 – the ways in which believers should show sincere love.

ἄλληλων, οισ, ους one another

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

"This is a debt, owed to everyone, that can never be discharged." Wright.

ἄλλος, α, ον other, another

Christian love has its focus upon 'the other' not on oneself.

πληρωω fill, fulfill, accomplish

Through love, the character and purpose of God are made known.

Verse 9

τὸ γὰρ Οὐ μοιχεύσεις, Οὐ φονεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, [ἐν τῷ] Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

μοιχευω commit adultery

φονευω murder, put to death

κλεπτω steal

ἐπιθυμew desire, lust after, covet

Under the influence of Ex 20:15-17 and Dt 5:19-21 several textual witnesses insert οὐ ψευδομαρτυρησεις. Several other variants omit elements from the list or reorder its content.

ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction

ἀνακεφαλαιωω sum up, bring together

πλησιον neighbour, fellow man.

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

Love is not a substitute for detailed obedience to the law of God, it is the dynamic which motivates and enables such obedience. Cf. Matt 22:36-40.

Verse 10

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

ἐργαζομαι work, do, perform

πλήρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness, fulfilment

"Paul sketches a brief but telling picture of how the Torah is fulfilled in that love of neighbour which will bring admiration, rather than blasphemy, from the watching world (cf. 2:16-17). Here, in other words, are the 'true Jews' (see 2:28-29), those who are bringing God's light and love to the world." Wright.

Verse 11

Καὶ τοῦτο εἰδότες τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι, νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν.

καὶ τοῦτο introduces the summarising nature of what follows. NIV translates 'and do this.' τοῦτο refers to the command to love.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα know, understand

καιρος, ου m time, season

The term καιρος is used here with eschatological implications. "Eschatology, an understanding of the times in which we live, should govern our conduct." Moo. We need to know what the time is: it's time to wake up. Wright comments, "This is a familiar image in early Christian writing, again quite possibly going back to Jesus himself; and Paul has developed it elsewhere (1 Thess 5:1-11; see also Matt 24:42-44; 26:45; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-46; 21:36; Eph 5:8-16; the idea of staying awake to be about one's Christian task is also evident in Eph 6:18). This idea flows consistently from the early Christian belief that with the resurrection of Jesus God's promised new age has dawned, but that full day was yet to come (see above all 1 Cor 15:20-28). Christians therefore live in the interval between the early signs of dawn and the sunrise itself, and their behaviour must be appropriate for the day, not the night."

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment, instant, period of time

ἤδη adv now, already

ὕπνος, ου m sleep

ἐγείρω raise

ἐγγύτερον adv nearer (comparative of the adverb ἐγγυς)

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

ἢ or, than

ὅτε conj when, at which time

πιστευω believe (in), have faith (in)

This last phrase could be translated in either of the following ways:

- i) 'Now is our salvation nearer than ...'
 - ii) 'Now is salvation nearer to us than ...'
- Barrett prefers the second.

Wright comments that though what Paul says here is, in one sense, obvious, "in another [it] needs saying as a reminder that though to us the passage of time seems to move without much change we should not forget that the great future moment is steadily coming closer."

Verse 12

ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν.
ἀποθωμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτούς,
ἐνδυσωμεθα [δὲ] τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός.

Paul weaves together two traditions: one regarding light and darkness and one concerning the 'day,' cf. 1 Thess 5:1-10.

νύξ, νυκτος f night
προκοπτω advance, progress

Day is used in an eschatological sense, cf. 1 Cor 3:13; 1 Thess 5:4; Heb 10:25; 2 Peter 1:19.

ἤγγικεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐγγιζω
approach, draw near

The nearness is that of prophetic perspective rather than chronological calculation.

ἀποθωμεθα Verb, aor midd subj, 1 pl
ἀποτιθημι throw off, be done with,
take off (clothes)

σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil
ἐνδυσωμεθα Verb, aor midd subj, 1 pl
ἐνδύω dress; midd put on, wear
ὄπλον, ου n weapon, tool

Calvin suggests 'weapons' are mentioned here because "we are to carry on a warfare for the Lord."

φως, φωτος n light

"The day of Christ, though not yet come, is nevertheless throwing its light backwards upon the present; in that light believers must now live." Murray.

Verse 13

ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν,
μὴ κωμοῖς καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ
ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ·

εὐσχημονως properly, respectably
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
κωμος, ου m orgy, revelry

Cf. Gal 5:19.

μεθη, ης f drunkenness
κοιτη, ης f bed; sexual impurity
ἀσελγεια, ας f sensuality, vice
ἔρις, ιδος f strife, rivalry
ζηλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

"There are many churches where the first four sins are unheard of but the last two run riot." Wright.

Verse 14

ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν
Χριστόν, καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ
ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας.

ἐνδύσασθε Verb, aor midd imperat, 2 pl
ἐνδύω v.12

Some commentators (e.g. Selwyn) see a primitive catechetical code lying behind these sections in the NT which speak of 'putting off' and 'putting on' (cf. 1 Peter 2:1f; Jas 1:21; Col 3:8-12; Eph 4:22-25; Heb 12:1; 1 Peter 4:1; 1 Thess 5:8; Gal 3:27).

Compare Gal 3:27 where Paul says that the Christian *has* put on Christ in baptism. Those who have thus put on Christ must continue to be clothed in him by living in conformity with his mind and will.

"The assumption must be that he is urging them, as a regular spiritual discipline, to invoke the presence and power of Jesus as Lord of all things to be their defence against all evil, not least the evil toward which they might be lured by their own 'flesh.'" Wright.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature
προνοια, ας f provision, foresight
ποιεῖσθε Verb, pres midd imperat, 2 pl
ποιεω

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, lust, passion

The 'flesh' will present its desires powerfully enough; there is no need to go half way to meet it. "There must be no loophole, no secret areas where licence is permitted, where the 'desires' of the 'flesh' are tolerated, let alone encouraged (see 7:4-6)." Wright.

Day 519: Romans 14:1-4**Chapter 14**

Paul seems to be aware of disputes among the Christians at Rome. It is difficult to be certain about the situation that Paul is addressing (Moo lists six different views concerning the identity of the 'strong' and the 'weak') but most scholars think that the disputes related to observance of the Jewish law. Moo concludes, "The weak were those – mainly Jewish Christians – who could not bring themselves to abandon the requirements of the law they had observed all their lives. They could not, as Christians, simply ignore the food laws, Sabbath observance and so on. The strong, by contrast, felt no need to observe these laws. Most of them were undoubtedly Gentile Christians, although a few, like Paul himself (see the 'we' in 15:1), were Jewish Christians. The weak condemned the strong for cavalierly dismissing God's laws, while the strong pooh-poohed the weak, looking down on them for clinging to the old ways when the new had come. Paul sides with the strong on the basic issues involved, but his main concern is to get each group to stop criticising the other and to accept each other in a spirit of love and unity."

Verse 1

Τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει
προσλαμβάνεσθε, μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις
διαλογισμῶν.

ἀσθενεω be sick, be ill, be weak
πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith

"Paul does not imply that those who are 'weak in the faith' have any less grasp on the basic content of the faith (Jesus' resurrection and lordship) than the others; only that, like those who have a weak conscience in 1 Corinthians 8, they have not thought through and worked out the full implications of that faith." Wright.

προσλαμβάνομαι welcome, accept,
receive

"While Paul wants both groups in the church to accept each other, he is clearly most concerned about the attitude of the strong. This probably reflects the fact that the strong, mainly Gentile Christians, are the dominant group in the church." Moo.

διακρίσεις, εως f arguing, dispute
διαλογισμος, ου m opinion, reasoning,
dispute, doubt

διακρίσεις διαλογισμων disputes engendered by opinions or doubts. The NIV translation is good, 'without passing judgement on disputable matters.' Murray translates it, 'not for the purpose of subjecting the convictions and thoughts of one another to censorious scrutiny.' "They should not allow differences over 'disputable matters' to interfere with full fellowship in the body of Christ." Moo.

Verse 2

ὅς μὲν πιστεύει φαγεῖν πάντα, ὁ δὲ
ἀσθενῶν λάχανα ἐσθίει.

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

Some Christians had come to the settled conviction – a conviction rooted in faith – that there are no food taboos in the kingdom of God.

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθιω and ἐσθω
eat

λαχανον, ου n garden plant, vegetable

"If most Christians in Rome seemed happy to eat non-kosher food, or to eat meat bought in the market when it had almost certainly been originally offered in sacrifice to an idol, there were bound to be some for whom this was unthinkable." Wright.

Verse 3

ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενείτω,
ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω,
ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο.

ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt
κρινω judge, pass judgement on,
condemn

I.e. calling upon their understanding of the OT law to pass condemnation on the eater.

προσελάβετο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s
προσλαμβάνομαι v.1

When we reject those whom God has accepted we make ourselves holier than God.

Verse 4

σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην; τῷ
ιδίῳ κυρίῳ στήκει ἢ πίπτει· σταθήσεται
δέ, δυνατεῖ γὰρ ὁ κύριος στήσαι αὐτόν.

Paul elaborates the principle stated at the end of the previous verse.

σου τις probably addressed primarily to the 'weak' who are passing judgment on the 'strong.' The question is, 'Who do you think you are?' "For one slave to look into the next room and pass judgment on another is simply inappropriate; it shows a failure to recognise who's who." Wright.

ἀλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another
οικετης, ου f house servant, servant
ιδιος, α, ον one's own

στηκω stand, stand firm

ἢ or

πιπτω fall, fall down

σταθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s ἰστημι
and ἵστανω pass stand, stand firm

The unusual verb δυνατεω is replaced in some MSS by the more common adjective – δυνατος γαρ ἐστιν

στήσαι Verb, 1 aor act infin ἰστημι and ἵστανω
set, establish, fix

The unusual vocabulary used here by Paul may deliberately call to mind the resurrection (cf. Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 6:14). "His main point is that the Lord, the master of all the household, is able to vindicate servants who eat meat and servants who do not; but the echoes, as he says this, are of the greater vindication that is promised at the last." Wright.

Day 520: Romans 14:5-12**Verse 5**

ὅς μὲν [γὰρ] κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ' ἡμέραν,
ὅς δὲ κρίνει πᾶσαν ἡμέραν· ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ
ἰδίῳ νοῦ πληροφορεῖσθω.

κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ' ἡμέραν 'consider one
day different from another'

The "reference is probably to Jewish holy days, including various festivals and the Sabbath." Moo. Murray includes an Appendix to his commentary in which he argues that the reference is to the various ceremonial holy days of the Levitical institution *but excludes* the weekly Sabbath. His argument is exegetically unconvincing, particularly in the light of Col 2:16.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
ἰδιος, α, ον one's own
νοῦ Noun, dat s νους, νοος m mind,
understanding
πληροφορεῖσθω Verb, pres pass imperat, 3
s πληροφορεω convince fully, assure
fully

Verse 6

ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ· καὶ ὁ
ἐσθίων κυρίῳ ἐσθίει, εὐχαριστεῖ γὰρ τῷ
θεῷ· καὶ ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐσθίει,
καὶ εὐχαριστεῖ τῷ θεῷ.

φρονεω think, consider, think highly of
ἐσθιω and ἐσθω eat, consume
εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks

These principles clearly apply only to matters in themselves indifferent – neither good nor bad. Yet even in such matters, the believer's conduct is not outside the scope of their discipleship, cf. 1 Cor 10:31.

Verse 7

οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἑμῶν ἑαυτῷ ζῆ, καὶ οὐδεὶς
ἑαυτῷ ἀποθνήσκει·

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω live, be
alive

Cf. 2 Cor 5:15; Gal 2:19-20.

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal

Is the reference here to literal death or to dying to self – self denial for the sake of Christ?

Verse 8

ἐάν τε γὰρ ζῶμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ζῶμεν, ἐάν τε
ἀποθνήσκωμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκομεν.
ἐάν τε οὖν ζῶμεν ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκωμεν,
τοῦ κυρίου ἐσμέν.

ἐάν τε γὰρ ... ἐάν τε ... 'for if it should be
that ... but if ...'

Verse 9

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν καὶ
ἔζησεν ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζωντῶν
κυριεύσῃ.

εἰς τοῦτο for this purpose
ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s
ἀποθνήσκω

Some MSS read ἀνεστη rather than ἔζησεν.

νεκρος, α, ον dead
κυριεω have power over, rule over

Through his death and resurrection, Christ has become Lord both of the dead and the living. He reigns over the death and life that mark the daily experience of the believer; he reigns over death, that last enemy, and over the resurrection life which lies beyond its reach. "This 'ruling as Lord,' clearly explains the 'belonging to the Lord' in v. 8: it is the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah that means we now belong to him, and that constitutes him indeed as the Lord of the whole world (1:3-5; 15:12). This proves more than Paul needs to prove for the immediate argument, but it points, as we shall see, to the larger issue that stands behind the entire section. The gospel announcement that Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah, is the Lord of the whole world is thus appealed to as the reason for unity across barriers of custom and taboo." Wright.

Verse 10

σὺ δὲ τί κρίνεις τὸν ἀδελφόν σου; ἢ καὶ
σὺ τί ἐξουθενεῖς τὸν ἀδελφόν σου; πάντες
γὰρ παραστησόμεθα τῷ βήματι τοῦ θεοῦ·

The first question presumably addressed to the 'weak' who pass judgment on the 'strong' for not observing the Mosaic law.

ἢ οὐ
ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt

The second question addressed to the 'strong' for despising the 'weak.'

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
παραστησόμεθα Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1
pl παριστημι stand before
βημα, τος n judicial bench, place of
judgement

Many MSS read του Χριστου rather than του θεου, probably influenced by 2 Cor 5:10.

"Paul may be warning these Christians that their judgmental attitudes will bring judgment on themselves when they appear before God at the end of history. In the light of verses 7-9, however, it is more likely that he is teaching that every believer is ultimately answerable to God, not to other believers, for their conduct in this life." Moo.

Verse 11

γέγραπται γάρ, Ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος, ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ, καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Cf. Isa 45:23. The opening phrase 'As I live' is added to the quotation. "This picks up the 'lived' of v.9; in other words, the 'living again' of Jesus is the reason why he is thus installed as judge, which in turn is the reason why it would be wrong to collapse κύριος (*kurios*) here into a general reference to God, rather than retaining it, however paradoxically, as a reference to Jesus as the risen Messiah and, therefore, the judge." Wright. Cf. Phil 2:10.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

κάμψει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s καμπτω
trans & intrans bend, bow (of the knee)

γονυ, γονατος n knee

γλῶσσα, ης f tongue, voice

ἐξομολογεω midd confess, acknowledge

Paul's thought moves easily from the headship of Christ in life and death to the fact that every knee must bow before the judgement seat of God. This could not be so without the implicit assumption that Jesus is Divine.

Verse 12

ἄρα [οὖν] ἕκαστος ἡμῶν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λόγον δώσει [τῷ θεῷ].

ἕκαστος, η, ον v.5

ἑαυτος see v.7

λογος is here used in the sense of an account (of oneself). "There is no tension in Paul's mind between this and 8:1, where there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. He has already indicated in 2:1-16 that there will be a coming day when all will be judged; the fact that the Christian believer is assured of a favourable verdict on that day does not make it any less serious, as 1 Cor 3:10-17 indicates well enough. Part of his point is that in the light of the coming judgment we have no business judging one another ahead of the time. There may also be a hint that to condemn a fellow Christian is itself an offence for which one should be rebuked." Wright.

Wright continues by suggesting that the repeated references in this section to Jesus as Lord are intended as a declaration that Caesar is *not* lord. "The unity of Christians across traditional barriers is a sign to the principalities and powers that a greater rule than theirs has now begun (see, e.g., Gal 4:1-11; Eph 3:10). Maintaining that unity, then, is not just a matter of preventing squabbles and bad feeling in the church. It is part of the essential Christian witness to the one Lord. If the church divides along lines related to ethnic or tribal loyalty, it is still living in the world of Caesar."