

Romans 15:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Analysis

But now having no more place in these parts (νυνὶ δὲ μηκέτι τόπον ἔχων ἐν τοῖς κλίμασι τούτοις, nyni de mēketi topon echōn en tois klimasi toutois)—Mēketi topon echōn (having no more place) indicates completion: Paul has fulfilled his pioneer church-planting mandate in the eastern Mediterranean. Klimasi (regions, territories) refers to the area from Jerusalem to Illyricum (v. 19). This doesn't mean every person is converted but that churches are established in major centers, capable of evangelizing their regions. Paul's apostolic task—laying foundations (v. 20)—is complete there; others will build on them.

And having a great desire these many years to come unto you (ἐπιποθίαν δὲ ἔχων τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν, epipothian de echōn tou elthein pros hymas apo pollōn etōn)—Epipothian (longing, desire) is strong yearning. Apo pollōn etōn (from many years) indicates this isn't a recent impulse but long-held desire. Paul's missionary strategy required patience: he waited years to visit Rome until strategic timing aligned. This demonstrates disciplined ambition—passionate desires held in check by Spirit-directed priorities.

Historical Context

'Many years' suggests Paul had known about the Roman church and desired to visit since the early-to-mid 50s AD. By 57, with work in the east complete and plans for Spain forming (v. 24), the timing was right. This verse indicates Paul's

advance planning and strategic thinking—apostolic ministry wasn't random opportunism but careful, prayerful strategy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Paul's sense of 'completion' in one region before moving to another teach about finishing well versus perpetually moving to new challenges?
2. How do you maintain patient, disciplined pursuit of long-held desires while remaining flexible to God's timing?
3. What role does strategic assessment ('no more place') play in discerning ministry transitions versus restless ambition or burnout-driven change?

Interlinear Text

νυνὶ	δὲ	μηκέτι	τόπον	ἔχων	ἐν	τοῖς	κλίμασιν	τούτοις
now	But	no more	place	having	in	G3588	parts	G5125
G3570	G1161	G3371	G5117	G2192	G1722		G2824	

ἐπιποθίαν	δὲ	ἔχων	τοῦ	ἐλθεῖν	πρὸς	ὑμᾶς	ἀπὸ	πολλῶν
a great desire	But	having	G3588	to come	unto	you	these	these many
G1974	G1161	G2192		G2064	G4314	G5209	G575	G4183

ἐτῶν

years

G2094

Additional Cross-References

Romans 15:32 (Parallel theme): That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Acts 19:21 (Parallel theme): After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Romans 15:29 (Parallel theme): And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3:10 (Parallel theme): Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

2 Timothy 1:4 (Parallel theme): Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;