

Romans Chapter 16

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Introduction:

1. The teaching portion of this magnificent letter is finished, and this remaining chapter is mainly about the people Paul already knows at Rome even though he had never visited there. He may have encountered some of them in his travels and they afterward moved to Rome. If a person wanted to influence the direction of the Roman government, it was important to live in the same city as the Senators who governed, not only Rome, but the entire Empire. Some unstable parts of the Empire were governed directly by Caesar, Judea being an illustration of this kind of rule.
2. One name is conspicuous by its absence and that is the Apostle Peter. He was not there and probably had never been there. Paul identifies 27 others here by name, but not Peter. It's very important to the Roman Catholic church to teach that Peter was in Rome.

GREETINGS

Romans 16 NLT

(1) I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea.

- The use of letters of **commendation** was common in the early church.

Apollos had been thinking about going to Achaia, and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers in Achaia, asking them to welcome him. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by God's grace, had believed.
(Acts 18:27 NLT)

This writer remembers the use of church letters in his own youth in the 1930s. With our many forms of quick communications, the practice has become unnecessary.

- **Phoebe** had a name connected with paganism, so she was not of Jewish heritage. She was a Gentile **sister** in Christ, but she was a first-class lady in Paul's view of reality. She may have delivered this letter or travelled to Rome with someone who did.
- She was a **deacon** where she normally attended **church**. It is doubtful that she was a **deacon** in the formal sense of Philippians 1:

This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the elders and deacons.
Philippians 1:1 NLT

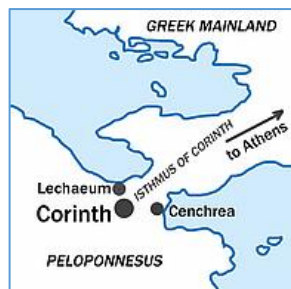
Following customs, the men may have been seated in the church meetings separately from the women, opening up the need for a lady to focus on the special needs of women. In the 1800's in America, women were seated separately from men in churches in the United States. The *Church of Christ* in Bethany, West Virginia had that custom, as did many others. Even if the church met in homes in Rome, the separated seating may have been used.

Albert Barnes speaks to the role of **Phoebe**:

It is clear from the New Testament that there was an order of women in the church known as "deaconesses." Reference is made to a class of females whose duty it was to "teach" other females, and to take the general superintendence of that part of the church, in various places in the New Testament; and their existence is expressly affirmed in early ecclesiastical history. They appear to have been commonly aged and experienced widows, sustaining fair reputation, and suited to guide and instruct those who were young

and inexperienced; compare 1 Timothy 5:3, 1 Timothy 5:9-11; Titus 2:4.

- **Cenchrea** was a few miles from Corinth where Paul was located when writing Romans. There was communication and fellowship between the congregations. Cenchrea was the eastern seaport for Corinth.



(2) Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.

- This hard-working lady was **worthy of honor**. She had devoted much time to **helping** ladies at Cenchrea. The Christians at Rome wouldn't know this so Paul commends her to them. She had also **helped** Paul.
- **Phoebe** wasn't perfect because she was human, but Paul didn't draw attention to her weakness, only her strength. If a modern-day church leader had been writing, he may have used the letter to warn of her. Not Paul. The same practice can be seen in each of the commendations listed below.

(3) Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus.

- When Paul came to Corinth the first time, he stayed with **Aquilla and Priscilla**:

There he became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. They had left Italy when Claudius Caesar deported all Jews from Rome. Paul lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers just as he was. (Acts 18:2-3 NLT)

Now they had returned to Rome.

The relationship with this wonderful couple had moved from being **co-workers** in making tents to being **co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus**.

- **Priscilla and Aquila** had worked with Paul in building the Kingdom in other cities. There's a curiosity here. **Priscilla** was mentioned before her husband in this place. Was she the more aggressive or articulate of the pair?
- **Burton Coffman** observes:
 This couple were citizens of Rome, where Aquila was engaged in tent-making; and its being written that they "were tentmakers" shows that Priscilla also had an active hand in the business.
 In 49 A.D., the emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome; and thus it came about that Prisca and Aquila opened up a tent-making business in Corinth, where, in the providence of God, they became acquainted with Paul and were converted to Christ. What a glorious blessing, therefore, the cruel edict of the emperor proved to be for them; for if Claudius had not expelled the Jews, they might not ever have known the truth of the gospel.
 They aided Paul in the work of evangelism in Corinth; and, when Paul transferred his labors to Ephesus, they evidently followed him there (Acts 18:18) and were eyewitnesses of the turbulence and violence that resulted from his preaching there.

(4) In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches.

- We know nothing more about this event. It has been speculated that inviting Paul into their home had put Aquila and Priscilla in personal danger. The **risk** was well known among the **Gentile churches** and **thanksgiving** was given to God by many people.

(5) Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ.

- This **church** was meeting at the home of Aquila and Priscilla. We are looking at more than one house **church**. Was the **church** at Rome actually a group of house **churches**?
- In other places in the empire, the church began in a member's house and then, over time, the member moved out, and the house was remodeled to better accommodate the church. Meeting in a residence is only temporary for a growing congregation.
- **Epenetus** was the **first** convert to **Christ** in the **province of Asia**. He had known Paul a long time. The Greek text calls him the *firstfruits* of **Asia**. The *firstfruits* was a small offering that was gathered and offered to the Lord before the main harvest began.
- Some believers are convinced that food cannot be served where the church meets. This verse 5 settles that discussion.

(6) Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit.

- We do not know anything more about this **Mary**. Paul had become acquainted with her, perhaps while preaching in Greece. He spoke of her **hard work** for the **benefit** of the Roman Christians.

(7) Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.

- This couple was **imprisoned** with Paul at some point. They were known among many Christians including the **apostles**. They may have been from Jerusalem and became believers before Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. In some way, they were jail-house friends.

(8) Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

- While we cannot know anything about the man, he receives an impressive description in being called a **friend** of Paul. There could be a world of unstated interaction between Paul and **Ampliatus**.

(9) Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

- **Urbanus** had been a **worker** along with Paul while **Stachys** was a **friend** like Ampliatus.

(10) Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus.

- **Apelles** was a **good man** and **approved by Christ**. Some commentators believe that **Aristobulus** was the grandson of Herod the Great, killer of the babes of Bethlehem. It is reasonable that he had moved to Rome. It seems that several **believers** worked in that **household**.

(11) Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet the Lord's people from the household of Narcissus.

- If the Aristobulus suggestion in verse 10 is correct, then **Herodion** may have been a former slave in that household who had been released to freedom. Some language experts believe that his name points that way.
- Another slave-holding family where Christians worked was that of **Narcissus**. We know nothing about the extended **household** except there were believers there. Human status such as slave or slave-owner has no place in describing the Lord's people. He died for all.

(12) Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord's workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord.

- **Tryphena and Tryphosa** may have been twins who served the needy in the church like Phoebe in verse one. **Persis** also belonged to this class of **hard working** ladies.

(13) Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be His very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.

- We know more about **Rufus**. It was his father, Simon of Cyrene, who had been compelled to carry the cross of Jesus. Consider this evidence from Mark, writer of the second gospel:

A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) (Mark 15:21 NLT)

Mark wrote this to the church at Rome. They knew who **Rufus** was. He was one of them!

- Paul spoke of the **mother of Rufus** having been a **mother** to him. The father, Simon, may have died and the mother could have moved to be near her sons in Rome.

(14) Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who meet with them.

- This is a separate church meeting. It was probably a **meeting** in a residence. It's informative that Paul knew who met and where. Most of us would have trouble even remembering the names.

(15) Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers who meet with them.

- Another group is defined and Paul knows the names of some of the key people.

(16) Greet each other in Christian love. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

- The NLT translators said, **Greet each other in Christian love** and that represents the comment brought into our time. The more literal translations say "*Greet one another with a holy kiss.*" Readers in the western world are not familiar with this practice. This writer has experienced this form of greeting while traveling in eastern countries.

In New Testament times, the holy kiss was a sign of greeting, much like the modern handshake. For Christians, it further expressed brotherly love and unity. The holy kiss was especially precious to the new believers during the early church years, because they were often outcasts from their own families because of their new faith.

These new believers gloried in the new spiritual kinship they had found among other Christians. Furthermore, the holy kiss from a Jewish Christian to a Gentile believer was evidence that the Gentiles were accepted fully into Christian fellowship, despite the teachings of the Judaizers, those who would return to the Mosaic law as their source of justification. --
From the *Got Questions* web site.

- **Churches of Christ send greetings.** Paul spoke of the churches in his area as being open to fellowship with the churches at Rome. His use of the names collectively shows the names of the congregations individually.

A congregation should wear the name of its Lord just as a bride should wear the name of her husband. If a bride chooses not to take the name of her husband, the marriage is not nullified.

(17) And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them.

- The Apostle to the Gentiles has urged unity among believers and his final step is to warn about those who **cause division**. One must **divide** from them for the greater good of not letting them **divide** the church.

(18) Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

- These church splitters are **smooth talkers** and have great vocabularies, and they **deceive the innocent**.

(19) But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong.

- Like individuals, churches have reputations. The church at Rome had the reputation of being **obedient to the Lord**. This made Paul **very happy**. It would take **wisdom** to keep from **wrong**.

(20) The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

- Paul is calling attention to God's forecast to Satan in Genesis:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15 NIV)

God will be active in helping them countermand persecution. Over the centuries, the faith grew in Rome and throughout the Empire until Christianity was proclaimed the religion of the Roman Empire. **Satan's** rule was **crushed**.

(21) Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

- Paul's Jewish co-workers knew that he was writing this letter and wanted to be included. They must have been near Paul at the time.

(22) I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord's followers.

- While **Paul** could **write**, he chose to have his letters penned by a professional scribe so his mind was free to think. In this sentence, the scribe injects his own comment into the document. This is the only such addition in Scripture.

Paul probably dictated the letters he wrote later while under house arrest in Rome. This way, the guard chained to him had to listen to the formation of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. God has remarkable ways of getting His word into the hearts of men. And they didn't keep the information quiet once they got off work.

(23) Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

- Paul was **hosted** by **Gaius**. **The church** may have met at his spacious home.
- **Erastus** was the **treasurer** of Corinth. He is also mentioned in Acts 19:22 and 2 Timothy 4:20.
- **Quartus** has the distinction of being called a **brother**. He may not have been a high achiever like the other two men, but he is still noted because of the kinship with Christ.

(24) [May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

- There is a manuscript question about Paul repeating the contents of verse 20 again. That's why it is in brackets. [].

(25) Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed His plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time.

- **God** is more than the **God** of just Abraham's descendants. He is able to make **Gentiles** strong. But the plan has not received much attention in the Old Testament.
- Notice that **time** is not eternal, but had a **beginning**.

(26) But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey Him.

TO THE ONLY WISE GOD BE
GLORY FOREVER THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST! AMEN.

- ROMANS 16:27 -



- In Romans 15: 9-12 are four clues from the Old Testament that **Gentiles** would one day be included among God's people. Paul is stressing that the fulfillment of that truth is **now**.

(27) All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

- **Albert Barnes** sums this up nicely:

. . . the apostle had illustrated in the previous parts of the Epistle; and now, full of the convictions of this wisdom, he desires that all the praise and honor should be to God.

The "tendency" of the plan is to promote his glory. The "obligation" on all who are benefited by it is to give him praise.

MUSIC BOX		
<i>Come, let us sing to the LORD! (Psalms 95:1 NLT)</i>		
Verse	Link:	Put in Browser:
20	Romans 16:19	http://bitly.ws/rZuB