

Romans 16

Romans 16.1-16

V 1 – These two verses basically constitute a letter of recommendation for Phoebe

-We have other references to such letters: See *Acts 18:27*, *2 Corinthians 3:1-3*, *Philippians 2:28-30*

-**Why would such letters be useful in the First Century?** Because Christians were constantly traveling across the Roman Empire, and there was a danger of false teachers visiting a congregation - See *2 John 9-11*

-Paul refers to her as a "*servant*" of the church (the female word for "deacon")

-**Did this make her a deaconess?** There is no evidence of a special group of women of this type for several centuries after the establishment of the Lord's church

V 2 – It appears from these words of Paul that probably Phoebe was delivering the letter from Paul to the church at Rome

-Maybe she was a business woman (as Lydia was) and was traveling to Rome, or maybe she had other reasons to be traveling there

-**Why didn't Paul just mail the letter to the church at Rome?** At this point in the Roman Empire, only public officials could use the imperial postal service for letters

-**How was the church in Rome to receive Phoebe?** "*In the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints*"

-**What else were they to do for her?** Render any assistance that she might have needed

-**Who had Phoebe helped in the church?** The apostle Paul, as well as many others

-Here is a faithful Christian lady who rendered very valuable service to the church and was rewarded by having her name inscribed in the Holy Word for all time - What a great honor!

-Most of us who are involved the full-time in the work of the church know modern day women who walk in the footsteps of Phoebe

Romans 16.3-16

V 3 – Where in the New Testament do we first hear of Priscilla and Aquilla? *Acts 18.2-4, 24-28*

-**What do we know about them?** Tentmakers, forced to leave Rome, corrected the misunderstandings of Apollos (*Acts 18.24-26*), frequently mentioned in the letters of Paul

V 4 - **What else had they done?** They had risked their lives for the sake of Paul

V 5a – **What other service had they rendered to the First Century church?** They had used their house as a meeting place for the church

-Other verses on churches meeting in houses

-*1 Corinthians 16.9* – Church in house of Priscilla and Aquilla

-*Colossians 4.15* – Church in house of Nympha

-*Philemon 2* – Church in house of Philemon

-*Acts 1.13* – Upper room

-Acts 20.8 – Upper room

-What are the disadvantages of a church building? Maintenance costs, plus the temptation to refer to the building as the "church"

-What are the advantages of a church building? No interruptions from family pets, more room, classrooms

-Where did Paul preach a sermon about the temptation to put God into a building?

Acts 17.24-25 – God does not dwell in temples made with hands

V 5b – Greetings to Epaenetus

-Who was he? The first convert in the Roman province of Asia

V 6 – Next greetings? Mary

-Her distinction? Had worked hard for the church

V 7 – Greetings to Andronicus and Junias (probably husband and wife), kinsmen of Paul

-“*Apostles*” – used in general sense of “messengers” or literally “those sent out”

-2 *Corinthians* 8.23 – See the footnote in the NASB

-*Philippians* 2.25 – See the footnote here also in the NASB

-What great compliments did Paul give them? They were fellow prisoners with Paul at some point, and they had been converted before Paul was

V 8 – **What do we know about Ampliatus?** Only that he was beloved to the apostle Paul

V 9 – **Next to be greeted?** Urbanus (meaning: “of the city”) and Stachys (their identity was known only to Paul)

V 10 – **The distinction of Apelles?** “*Approved in Christ*”

-Also greetings to Aristobulus and his household

V 11 – Greetings to Herodion (“from the household of Herod”), probably a former slave

-His distinction? A relative of Paul's

-Greetings to Narcissus, “*who are in the Lord*”

V 12 – **Distinction for Tryphaena and Tryphosa (probably sisters)?** Workers in the Lord

-Distinction for Persis? “*...has worked hard in the Lord*”

V 13 – **Distinction for Rufus?** “A choice man in the Lord”

-See *Mark* 15.21 – a son of Simon of Cyrene (a great story there!)

-His mother was probably not literally the mother of Paul, but she had been very helpful to Paul and had “mothered” him

V 14 – Asyncritus, Phelgon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren

-What great honor they receive? Having their names recorded in the Word of God

V 15 – **What honor went to Philologus, Julia, Nereus, his sister, Olympas (very common**

slave names)? All the "saints"

V 16 – “*The holy kiss*” – Should we be greeting each other in the church today with a holy kiss?

-The Bible gives us various ways to greet one another:

-*Luke 7.45* – “You gave me no kiss” – to Simon the Pharisee

-*Luke 22.48* – Betraying the Son of man with a kiss”

-*Luke 15.20* – Father kissed Prodigal Son

-*2 Corinthians 13.12* – Holy kiss

-*1 Corinthians 16.20* – Holy kiss

-*1 Thessalonians 5.26* – Holy kiss

-*1 Peter 5.14* – Kiss of love

But consider also:

-*2 Kings 10.15* – Handshake

-*Ezra 10.19* – Gave their hand

-*Galatians 2.9* – The right hand of fellowship

-**What name describes the various congregations of the Lord's church?** ...the churches of Christ

-**What is the great message of v 1-15?** – Even though Paul had not been in Rome, still he knew so many people there and felt a very strong attachment to them in Christian love

-For many of these names, we know nothing else about them, but they were faithful

Christians in the First Century

-So also today many of the "nameless" Christians who are working in the kingdom of Christ will find their names someday recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life (*Rev. 21.27*)

Romans 16.17-20

V 17 – From what we have studied elsewhere in *Romans*, what kinds of false teachers might they have had in Rome? Legalists (Jewish converts), false teachers on meat (*Romans 14*)

-**How was the church to treat the false teachers and the divisive members?** “*Turn away from them*”

V 18 – **Why?** Because their “*smooth and flattering speech*” would deceive other Christians

-See *1 Corinthians 2.1-5* – We do not use that kind of speech in converting people

-See *1 Corinthians 5.6* – Such false teaching will spread in the congregation, if it is not stopped

V 19 – Be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil

-**Applications?** Our passion in life should be in doing what is right

-Negative example: Our passion should not be how to pick locks or rob banks

V 20 – A reference to what Old Testament verse? An echo of *Genesis 3.1-6*

-**Where in the book of the *Revelation* do we also read about the defeat of Satan?** *Rev. 20.1-3*

Romans 16.21-24

V 21 – Greetings from Timothy, Lucius (*Acts 13.1*), Jason (*Acts 17.5-9*), Sosipater (*Acts 20.4*)
-All Paul's kinsmen

V 22 – The letter is being dictated to Tertius (See *1 Cor. 16.21, Col. 4.18, 2 Thess. 3.17*)
-Why would Paul have been dictating this letter? One possibility: His "thorn in flesh" might have had something to do with eye problems or even blindness
-See *Galatians 4.15, 6.11*

V 23 – More greetings from Gaius (*1 Cor. 1.14*), Erastus (*2 Tim. 4.20*), and Quartus
-Notice Erastus – Some in the church today say that there should be a complete separation between civil government and Christians, that we cannot even work or participate in any way in the government and should not even vote
-**What does the example of Erastus show?** He was the treasurer for the city
-Paul did not condemn him for holding that position (very, very interesting)

V 24 – Final greetings of Paul's friends

Romans 16.25-27

V 25 – **How could the Roman Christians be established in the faith?** By following the gospel that Paul taught and the preaching of Jesus Christ
-**What was the mystery that was hidden in the Old Testament?** The way that God was working out a grand plan of salvation for all mankind, but which was revealed in the New Testament

V 26 – The "mystery" has been made known to all mankind

V 27 – **Paul's final message?** We owe all to the wisdom of God, revealed to us through Jesus Christ
-So be it!

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