

Book of Romans



Chapter 16

Theme: Commendation of Phebe; Christians in Rome greeted; conduct toward other Christians;

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Romans Chapter 16

Missler: The capital city of Rome was a magnet that drew people from all over the empire. In addition, Paul's travels to many of the major population centers—Jerusalem, Syrian Antioch, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus—brought him into contact with the more mobile segments of Roman society.

This final chapter will emphasize the importance of relationships: it concludes with the longest personal list in any of the epistles.

He mentioned 33 people in the 1st 24 verses, by name, and also referred to many others (vv. 5, 10-11, 13-15).

Lessons Chapter 16:

1. Shows Paul's concern and care for individuals and gives us an insight into Paul's prayer list . . .
2. Shows Paul's regard for women (contrast with prevailing culture)
A number of women are included in the list: Priscilla (v. 3), Mary (v. 6), Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12), Persis (v. 12), Rufus' mother (v. 13), and Nereus' sister (v. 15). Two others are possibly women — Junias (v. 7) and Julia (v. 15).
3. It evidences the great influence Paul had: many friends, even though he had never been there. He knew them by name; he knew their activities, progress, etc.
4. It reflects the Lamb's Book of Life: many callings, many strata: from slaves to royalty ...¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

The early Church Father Chrysostom of the early 5th century said this about Romans chapter 16:

“I think there are many, even some apparently good commentators, who hurry over this part of the epistle because they think it is superfluous and of little importance. They probably think much the same about the genealogies of the Gospels. Because it is a catalogue of names, they think they can get nothing good out of it. People who mine gold are careful even about the smallest fragments, but these commentators ignore even huge bars of gold!”

Half or more of Romans chapter 16 seems about as useful as reading a table of contents in a book because indeed it is a list of names to close Paul's letter to the Romans; but there's more in this chapter than only that. For one thing we get a glimpse of the important role that women played in the Messianic movement in Paul's day. Even more we must understand that the majority of these women are Jewish women serving in Jewish synagogues because so-called Christianity was still mostly a sect of Judaism and would remain so until after Paul was martyred. It is fascinating that in an age when male dominance was universal and unquestioned that women played such a prominent role in the movement that Yeshua started. However, no

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

doubt this was the case mostly in the Diaspora and not so much in the Holy Land where tradition and the ancient ways were carefully guarded by the Zealots.²

McGee: THEME: Commendation of Phebe; Christians in Rome greeted; conduct toward other Christians; Christians with Paul send greetings; benediction

In this final chapter of Romans, the gospel walks in shoe leather in the first century of the Roman Empire. It thrills my heart to know that in the pagan Roman Empire there were Christians, witnesses for Christ, walking down the streets of those cities with the joy of the Lord in their hearts. I consider this one of the most revealing chapters that we have in the Epistle to the Romans. Paul has left the mountain peaks of doctrine to come down to the pavements of Rome. Here we see Christianity in action. The great doctrines which Paul proclaimed are not missiles for outer space. They are vehicles which actually operated on Roman roads. The gospel was translated into life and reality. This remarkable chapter should not be omitted or neglected in any study of Romans. William R. Newell has well said, "The sixteenth chapter is neglected by many to their own loss" (Romans Verse by Verse, p. 548).

There are thirty-five persons mentioned by name in this chapter. All were either believers living in Rome or they were believers who were with the apostle Paul -- he was probably in Corinth when he wrote this epistle. There is expressed a mutual love and tender affection which was a contradiction of Roman philosophy and practice. (Also, it is rather unlike some churches today!) These Christians were different. Little wonder that Rome marveled at these folk and exclaimed, "My, how these Christians love each other!"³

BKC: The capital city of Rome was a magnet that drew people from all over the empire. In addition, Paul's travels to many of the major population centers—Jerusalem, Syrian Antioch, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus—brought him into contact with the mobile segment of Roman society. These factors help explain the presence of Paul's many friends in Rome, but his knowledge of their whereabouts remains a tribute to his deep concern for people.⁴

ESV: Appreciation and Greetings to Coworkers in the Gospel. Paul warmly greets those he knows in Rome who are involved in ministry, showing the love that existed among Christians. These greetings also function to support the authenticity of the Pauline gospel, for they show that respected coworkers in Rome are co-laborers in the same gospel that Paul proclaims. It is not surprising he would know so many who are now in Rome, for travel was more common than modern people might think. Further, Paul may not have known every person he greeted. Perhaps he knew of some by virtue of their reputation. Note that Paul says something specific about virtually every person greeted.⁵

² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

Missler: Phoebe (which means “bright, radiant”) was Paul’s emissary to hand-carry this letter.

“Servant”: *diakonon*, is used for the office of deacon (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 10, 12) as well as used generally (Rom 15:8; 1 Cor 3:5). “of the church” strongly suggests some recognized position, as appropriate for a person serving as Paul’s emissary.

Cenchrea: A seaport nine miles from Corinth (Act 18:18).⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

We find Paul accomplish a number of things in this final chapter. He introduces Phoebe, a female Believer, to the congregation in Rome. He also asks that the members of the Roman congregation would greet one another with a “holy kiss” (we’ll get into the meaning of that shortly). He includes greetings from others of the local congregation (possibly in Corinth) from where he is writing this letter. A strong note of caution is issued for the Roman Believers to beware of false teachers in their midst. He asks the Believers to remember that despite all the difficulties within and without of their congregation final spiritual victory is coming. And lastly Paul prays on behalf of the Romans that Messiah Yeshua would be with them.

Clearly Paul personally knows, or at least knows of, several people in the Roman congregation and has had communication with them. I point this out because since the consensus among Christian commentators has been, for centuries, that this letter to the Romans is actually the formulation of a systematic Christian theology designed by Paul to be followed by all the churches and in no way was it aimed at the Roman Believers, his acknowledged relationship with some of the Roman Believers explains how it is that he knew what was going on in Rome so that he tailored this letter (as he has all his other letters) to addressing issues that concerned their specific congregation. This letter was by no means an attempt at constructing a universal Christian systematic theology.

Paul begins by introducing Phoebe who, no doubt, is the one who is going to be carrying this letter to the Roman congregation. The CJB calls her a Shamash of the congregation (meaning of the local congregation). In Judaism this meant that she held an official office of some sort in her synagogue; she was someone who had duties and authority to carry tasks that could range from caring for the building to serving as President over the synagogue. Christianity has tended to call her a deacon or deaconess, which in Christian cultural terms accurately depicts her position. Paul is asking the Roman congregation to accept her as more or less an agent for Paul. To receive her in the Lord means that she belongs to the body of Messiah and is to be treated in such a manner. This request is much less about making it plain that she is a Believer and much more about her being his female representative. Paul briefly states that her qualifications are that she had been a substantial help to him in his mission of evangelism and has also helped others of the faith.⁷

McGee: 1-2 The chapter begins with a commendation of Phebe, the woman who brought this epistle to Rome.

Phebe is the first believer mentioned in this, another catalog of the heroes of the faith. She was a Gentile, as her name indicates. As I have already stated, there were many Gentiles in the church at Rome. She was named for the Greek goddess, Artemis or Diana, who in Greek

⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

mythology was the goddess of the moon, as her brother, Apollo, was the god of the sun. Many believers adopted new names at baptism, but Phebe kept her heathen name for some reason. Phebe was the bearer of the Epistle to the Romans. Apparently, she was a very prominent woman in the church, which means she was a woman of ability. She is called a "servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." Cenchrea is the eastern seaport of Corinth. When I stood at the ruins of ancient Corinth, I looked down and saw in the distance Cenchrea. On that clear day, it looked much closer than the eight or nine miles it is said to be. Apparently, Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans while he was at Corinth, and Phebe, who may have been a woman of means or engaged in business, took it with her to Rome. She is called a servant of the church, which means she was a deaconess. The Greek word *diakonos* is the same word used for deacon. It reveals the fact that women occupied a very prominent place in the early church.

It is my feeling that we would not be seeing women today occupying the position of pastors in the church (which is forbidden by Scripture) if they had been given their rightful position in the church. I think they should be deaconesses in the church and that they should sit on an equality with any other board of the church. The church needs some of the insights and sensibilities that women possess. God has made a woman finer than a man, just as a watch is finer than an automobile. She has been given a sense that man doesn't have. For instance, she can watch a woman who is a complete stranger to her, and in five minutes she knows a great deal about her simply by observing her dress and her manner. Those of us who belong to the male side of the human race appear stupid at a time like that. We can see if she is good looking or not, but that is the extent of our observation. The church needs the insight that a woman has.

Paul apparently put into Phebe's hand this Epistle to the Romans rather than trusting it to public transportation. Rome did have mail service, but it was slow. Paul, you see, is going back to Jerusalem, and Phebe brings his epistle with her to Rome.

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister" -- Paul commends her to the believers there at Rome. She is the first woman mentioned in this final chapter.⁸

BKC: 1-2. Phoebe (which means "bright, radiant") was Paul's emissary to deliver this letter, so he wrote officially, I commend to you our sister Phoebe. The relationship mentioned is spiritual, not familial. Phoebe was a servant of the church in Cenchrea, a seaport a few miles east of Corinth (cf. Acts 18:18; and see the map between Acts and Rom.). The word diakonon, "servant," is used for the office of deacon (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 10, 12) as well as used generally (Rom. 15:8; 1 Cor. 3:5). Use of the word with the phrase "of the church" strongly suggests some recognized position, a fact appropriate for a person serving as Paul's emissary. Paul not only officially commended her (cf. 2 Cor. 3:1), but also asked the Roman Christians to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help (lit., "and to stand by her in whatsoever matter") she may need from you. Paul explained, for she has been a great help (*prostatis*, "a protectress, succorer") to many people, including me. So they should help her since she had helped others.⁹

Guzik: I commend to you Phoebe our sister: Paul certainly knew the value of what women could do in serving the church. Apparently, Phoebe was on her way to Rome (probably entrusted with this precious letter) and Paul sends an advance recommendation of this sister in Christ so the Romans will receive her and support her during her stay in their city.

⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

I commend to you: Such recommendations were important because there was both great legitimate need for this kind of assistance and there were many deceivers who wanted to take advantage of the generosity of Christians.

Phoebe: This name is the feminine form of a title given to the pagan god Apollo, the title meaning “the bright one.” Christians, on their conversion, seemed to feel no need to change their names even if there was some pagan significance to their name.

Servant is the same word translated deacon in other places. Phoebe seems to be a female deacon in the church, either by formal recognition or through her general service.¹⁰

ESV: Phoebe probably brought this epistle to the Romans. Scholars debate whether Phoebe is a servant in a general sense, or whether she served as a deacon, since the Greek word *diakonos* can mean either “servant” (13:4; 15:8; 1 Cor. 3:5; 1 Tim. 4:6) or “deacon” (referring to a church office; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12). *Cenchreae* was a port town just 6.5 miles (10.5 km) east of Corinth.¹¹

CJSBN: Phoebe, *shammash* of the congregation. She was either the only *shammash* (servant/deacon) in Cenchrea, or one among several. There is good reason to think that this instance is a technical term denoting someone ordained to a recognized office in the congregation and having the duty of caring for its practical affairs, as at Acts 6:6.¹²

²That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Succourer – helper

Guzik: She has been a helper of many and of myself also: Paul gives Phoebe one of the best compliments anyone can give. This sort of practical help is essential in doing the business of the gospel.¹³

ESV: Paul calls upon the church to assist Phoebe since she has helped so many. Phoebe served as a patron, probably with financial assistance and hospitality.¹⁴

³Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Missler: Paul first met Priscilla and Aquila when he arrived in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:2) and worked with them at their trade of tentmaking. They had come to Corinth from Rome because of Claudius’ decree that all Jews must leave Rome. They accompanied Paul when he left Corinth (Acts 18:18) but stayed in Ephesus when the party stopped briefly (Acts 18:19). There they ministered to Apollos (Acts 18:26) and undoubtedly to

¹⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

¹¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹² Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

¹⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

Paul during his stay in Ephesus on his third journey, because they sent greetings to the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 16:19). Shortly after that, they must have moved back to Rome and still later returned to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19). Always mentioned together as a team . . .¹⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 3 Paul speaks of some familiar names to us: Priscilla and Aquila. We hear of this influential couple in the Book of Acts, 1st Corinthians, and in 2nd Timothy. It has always been a point of focus among Bible scholars how the female's name is mentioned first whenever this couple is spoken of; exactly why is purely speculation but it is unusual. Apparently, Priscilla is the more known and active of the two. Her husband Aquila was a Jew who lived in Rome until Emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews (or at least most Jews) from the City in 52 A.D. It seems that this married couple who were already Believers moved from Rome to Corinth. There they ran into Paul and found out that they shared the occupation of tent making as well as faith in the Jewish Messiah. Whether Aquila's wife was born a Jew we don't know for certain, but it would have been most unusual for a Jew to marry a gentile woman. So, without other evidence there is no reason to think that Priscilla was anything other than a Jew. That we hear of their names so often in the New Testament, and that they are presented so casually, they must have been very well known and prominent members of the Believing community.

It is clear that Priscilla and Aquila had recently moved back to Rome because Paul is not introducing them in his letter; rather he's asking that his greetings be given to them. This helps us a bit in determining the date of this letter since Emperor Claudius who expelled the Jews from Rome in 52 A.D. died in 54 A.D. and the expulsion decree died along with him. So this letter was written sometime shortly after 54 A.D. Paul goes on to explain that Priscilla and Aquila were so devoted to Paul that they risked their own lives to save him from some dangerous situation. There is no record of this in any Bible book or anywhere else; so we don't know what the incident might have been. Notice how Paul mentions to also give greetings to the congregation that meets in Priscilla and Aquila's house in Rome. There were no such things as Church buildings in this era. Depending on the situation the congregations either met in Synagogues or in people's homes. In fact, back in our study on the Book of Acts I discussed with you that it is a great misnomer and can be quite confusing for the Bible student to say that by now Believers in Yeshua were called "Christians". Briefly the Greek term *Christos* was translating the Hebrew word *Mashiach* (meaning messiah). *Christos* was not a proper name like it has become in English. That is, Christians speak today of Christ almost as though that is Jesus's alternate name. All it meant in Paul's day was messiah. So, the word "Christian" (an English word) was not uttered in New Testament times and wouldn't be until much later. Rather the term *Christos* would have indicated Messianics (meaning believers in the Jewish Messiah Yeshua; or at least that was the intent of the word).¹⁶

McGee: Now Paul sends his greetings to quite a list of Christian folk.

At this time there were gentile churches, you see, and I believe the church at Rome was largely gentile, made up of many races. It was integrated for sure.

"Priscilla and Aquila" were a Jewish couple. How had Paul met them, and in what way were they his helpers? Well, there had been a wave of anti-Semitism that had swept over the city of Rome, and Priscilla and Aquila had had to leave. They came to the city of Corinth while Paul

¹⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

was there and set up shop. Corinth was a good commercial center, and Paul was also plying his trade there. Since they were all tentmakers, this drew them together (see Acts 18:1-3), and Paul led them to the Lord. Then they were with Paul at Ephesus. Perhaps they had gone over there to open up a branch store. In Acts 18:26, we find that they were able to be helpful to Apollos: "And he [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Notice that when we first meet them it is "Aquila and Priscilla." Now here in Romans it is Priscilla and Aquila. Why are the names reversed? Well, I think here is a case when the woman became dominant in spiritual matters. Spiritually she became the leader, although they were both outstanding workers for Christ.¹⁷

BKC: 3-5. This list of greetings (vv. 3-16) that Paul wanted conveyed to friends in Rome is the longest in any of his epistles. He mentioned 26 people by name, and referred to many others (vv. 5, 10-11, 13-15). Several women are included in the list: Priscilla (v. 3), Mary (v. 6), Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12), Persis (v. 12), Rufus' mother (v. 13), and Nereus' sister (v. 15). Two others are possibly women—Junias (v. 7) and Julia (v. 15).

Paul first met Priscilla and Aquila when he arrived in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:2) and worked with them at their trade of tentmaking. They had come to Corinth from Rome because of Claudius' decree that all Jews must leave Rome. They accompanied Paul when he left Corinth (Acts 18:18), but stayed in Ephesus when the party stopped briefly (Acts 18:19). There they ministered to Apollos (Acts 18:26) and undoubtedly to Paul during his stay in Ephesus on his third journey, because they sent greetings to the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 16:19). Shortly after that, they must have moved back to Rome and still later returned to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19).

Paul paid them great praise, calling them my fellow workers in Christ Jesus and revealing that they risked their lives for me (lit., "they lay down their own neck for my soul"). In what way they risked their lives is not known. All the Gentile churches, Paul added, were grateful to them. Paul also sent greetings to the church that met at their house. The Christians in Rome apparently worshiped in numerous homes such as Priscilla and Aquila's. This couple had had a house church in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19) and probably wherever they lived. Other churches in homes are mentioned in Colossians 4:15 and Philemon 2.

Epenetus, to whom greetings were sent, is mentioned only here, but is called by Paul my dear friend (lit., "the one loved by me"; cf. Stachys, v. 9). He was the first convert (lit., "the firstfruits") to Christ in the province of Asia. Paul reached Asia, the western portion of modern-day Turkey, on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:10), after having been prevented from going there on his second journey (Acts 16:6).¹⁸

Guzik: Priscilla and Aquila: This couple is mentioned in Acts 18:2, 18:18 and 18:26 as associates of Paul and helpers to Apollos. Apparently, they were now back in the city of Rome.

Spurgeon on Priscilla and Aquila: "When two loving hearts pull together, they accomplish wonders. What different associations cluster around the names of 'Priscilla and Aquila' from those which are awakened by the words 'Ananias and Sapphira'! There we have a husband and a wife conspiring in hypocrisy, and here a wife and a husband united in sincere devotion."¹⁹

¹⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

¹⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

ESV: Prisca and Aquila are well-known from elsewhere in the NT (cf. 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19). Prisca is given the diminutive name Priscilla in Acts (Acts 18:2–3, 18, 26). Scholars have suggested many reasons why Prisca is named first (was it her prominence, or social standing, or that she was converted first, or was it out of courtesy, or a mere stylistic variation?) though there is insufficient evidence to know the answer. Paul also names her first in 2 Tim. 4:19, but second in 1 Cor. 16:19.²⁰

CJSBN: 3–5 Priscilla and Aquila. See Acts 18:1–3. Continuing the theme of Rom. 16:1, Sha’ul’s mention of the woman first denotes her greater prominence (Acts 18:18). It is not known on what occasion they were at risk because of Sha’ul. This may have happened during the disturbance in Ephesus (Acts 19:23–40), since it seems they hosted a congregation in their home there (Acts 19:10; 1 Cor. 16:19), just as they did in Rome.²¹

⁴Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Missler: The Lord’s “Secret Service.” It was rough to be a Christian in those days. And still is, in most of the world. And we, too, may see them again as Biblical Christianity increasingly becomes “politically incorrect” in America . . .²²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Further, the Greek word that is invariably translated to “church” in English is also a misnomer and creates confusion. Ekklesia is the Greek word found in the New Testament and it is a general word that means gathering or assembly. When the New Testament refers to ekklesia most often it means a gathering of Believers; the word “church” didn’t exist. Thus, there were also no such things as “churches”, meaning church buildings. When we can grasp that the terms Christians and Church didn’t exist until a very long time after the Bible was closed up, then we can discard the gentiles-only flavor that has been erroneously added to the New Testament. The New Testament was just as Jewish as the Old.²³

ESV: Perhaps Prisca and Aquila risked their lives when Paul was in danger in Ephesus (Acts 19:23–41; 1 Cor. 15:32; 2 Cor. 1:8–11).²⁴

²⁰ ESV Study Bible Notes

²¹ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

²² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²³ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

²⁴ EV Study Bible Notes

⁵Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Missler: This couple had a house church in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and probably wherever they lived. Other churches in homes are mentioned in Colossians 4:15 and Philemon 2.

Greatest spiritual period; yet no church “buildings . . .” Home Churches. Taught, prayed, worshiped, had accountability, fellowship

. . . That’s where the actions was back then . . . And still is!

If Epaenetus was the first convert in Achaia, he may have been Paul’s jailer! Paul reached Asia, the western portion of modern-day Turkey, on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:10), after having been prevented from going there on his second journey (Acts 16:6).²⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

From verses 5 through 15 we get the long list of names that Chrysostom spoke of. We’ll not dwell here too long except to say a few words about them. First recognize that all of these names were members of the Roman congregation whom Paul obviously knew. Whether he had personally met them or merely corresponded with them we don’t know. Nonetheless to mention them individually meant that he had a friendly relationship with each of them.

The first greeting is to Epaenetus, which is a fairly common Roman name. It seems he held a special place to Paul as he was among the very first successes Paul had and the first name to be mentioned. It is also self-evident that this Believer relocated from Asia to the city of Rome; however, nothing is suggested as to the reason for his move. I would suggest that because of the timing, and his being the first to be greeted by Paul, he could very well have been instrumental in establishing the first Believing congregation in the capital of Rome.²⁶

McGee: The local church met in private homes at the very beginning. (See Acts 12:12; 1Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 1:2.) Sanday writes, "There is no decisive evidence until the third century of the existence of special buildings used for churches." It is the belief of many folk today, and I have found this belief for years, that the church which began in the home will return to meeting in the home. Many of these great big buildings we call churches, with great steeples on them, are nothing more than a pile of brick, stone, and mortar. They are mausoleums, not living churches that contain a real, living body of believers. The church was never intended to be spoken of as a building. For the first three centuries the church was the body of believers and met in homes like that of Aquila and Priscilla.

Epaenetus is a Greek name meaning "praised." Evidently he was Paul's first convert in the Roman province of Achaia.²⁷

Guzik: The church that is in their house: This phrase gives us a clue to the organization of the early church. In a city with a Christian community of any size, there would be several “congregations” meeting in different houses, since there were no “church” buildings at this time. Each house church probably had its own “pastor.”

²⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

²⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Epaenetus: This man is of note because he was apparently among the very first converts of Achaia (where Corinth was and where Paul wrote the letter to the Romans). Epaenetus was also apparently dear to Paul; beloved isn't a term Paul used cheaply.²⁸

ESV: the church in their house. Apparently a house church met in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Asia here refers to a province in what is modern-day Turkey.²⁹

6Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Missler: Some Greek manuscripts read Mariam, the Hebrew form, which probably identifies this woman as a Jew.³⁰

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Next is a greeting to Mary. This woman could be either Roman or Jewish because the name was used by both, so she could have been either a Jew or a gentile. Apparently, Mary was person that Paul heard was a faithful servant to her congregation and worked very diligently at it.³¹

McGee: Mary is a Jewish name, the same as Miriam, meaning "rebelliousness." She "bestowed much labour on us" means that she labored to the point of exhaustion. What a change had taken place in her life! Before becoming a believer, she was in rebellion, but now she "knocks herself out" for the sake of other believers, because she is now obedient to Christ.³²

BKC: 6-7. Mary is identified simply as one who worked very hard ("toiled much"; cf. v. 12). Some Greek manuscripts read Mariam, the Hebrew form, which probably identifies this woman as a Jew.

Andronicus and Junias, greeted together, may have been husband and wife; Junias can be either masculine or feminine. Paul called them my relatives, which probably refers to a tribal, not a family kinship (cf. 9:3). He also mentioned four other "relatives" (16:11, 21). He said Andronicus and Junias had been in prison with him (lit., "my fellow prisoners"); when or where this occurred is not mentioned (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23). Paul commended them as outstanding (episēmoi, lit., "having a mark [sēma] on them," therefore "illustrious, notable, outstanding") among the apostles. The word "apostles" is probably used here in the broader, general sense in which Barnabas, Silas, and others were called apostles (Acts 14:14; 1 Thes. 2:7). Or it could mean the apostles in the limited sense, referring to the reputation this pair had among the Twelve. Paul added, they were (perf. tense, "they came to be and still are") in Christ before I was. So, they had been believers for about 25 years.³³

²⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

²⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

³⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³¹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

³² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

ESV: A number of women, like Mary, are commended in ch. 16 for their hard work, but such work does not mean that these women served as pastors, elders, or overseers (see 1 Tim. 2:12).³⁴

⁷Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Missler: (Junias can be either masculine or feminine; could be Andronicus' wife.)

Kinsmen? Probably tribal: of Benjamin. (cf. 9:3). He also mentioned four other "kinsmen" (16:11, 21).

Fellow prisoners . . . Apostles . . probably used here in the broader, general sense in which Barnabas, Silas, and others were called apostles (Acts 14:14; 1 Thess 2:7)

Greek: perfect tense, "they came to be and still are" in Christ before I was. They knew Christ before Paul; ostensibly about the time of Stephen's martyrdom. So, they had been believers for about 25 years. (Probably prayed for him during his persecution of Christians!)³⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Next are Andronicus and Junia whom Paul describes as his kinsmen. Although the CJB calls them relatives that might be a stretch as the Greek word *suggenes* more usually means fellow countryman (although relative is a legitimate alternate translation). So probably the intent is merely to say that Andronicus and Junia were Jews. Paul says they were in prison with him. We don't know if he means literally that they were imprisoned at the same time as he was or if it means that they too had been imprisoned for some offense that arose from their faith and so they had that in common. We know that Paul had a few stints in jail, but these two people were never mentioned in the New Testament in any other letters. It is fairly clear that Andronicus and Junias are a male and female respectively, but we don't know for certain if they were a married couple. They were well known, and Paul says that they were Believers before he was.³⁶

McGee: Andronicus is a Greek name, and the name has been identified with a slave.

Junia is a Roman name and can be either masculine or feminine. Paul calls them "my fellow countrymen," which may mean that they belonged to the tribe of Benjamin as did Paul. It does not necessarily mean close blood relationship.

Paul says, they were "my fellow prisoners." Evidently Paul had met them in one of the numerous prisons of the Roman Empire. These two were well-known to the apostles and were held in high regard by them. Paul had not led them to Christ, as is the natural assumption, for they were in Christ before he was.

The church in Rome was founded by Paul under most unusual circumstances. He had met Aquila and Priscilla in the Corinthian agora, the marketplace, and then he met these two men in jail. These had then gone to Rome and formed the church there.³⁷

³⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

³⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

³⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Guzik: Andronicus and Junia: These were apparently Jews (my kinsmen) and were imprisoned for the sake of the gospel (my fellow prisoners). They were well regarded among the apostles, having become Christians even before Paul did (sometime in the first 3 or 4 years after Pentecost).

Of note among the apostles has the idea that Andronicus and Junia are apostles themselves (though not of the twelve), and notable among other apostles. If there ever were women recognized as apostles – in the sense of being special emissaries of God, not in the sense of being of the twelve – this is the strongest Scriptural evidence. It isn't very strong.³⁸

ESV: Andronicus and Junia were probably a husband-and-wife ministry team. Most scholars now think that Junia was a woman, though some have argued that a man named Junias is in view (the spelling would be the same in Greek, and both male and female forms are rare in Greek; however, the female equivalent of "Junia" is much more common in Latin, and Paul could have been referring to a woman with a Latin name). Some have said that this verse proves that Junia was an apostle, and thus women can fill any church office. The verse seems to be saying, however, that Andronicus and Junia were well known to the apostles, not that Junia was herself an apostle. (Other examples of this construction, Gk. episēmos plus en plus dative, have been found with the meaning "well known to [someone]": see Psalms of Solomon 2.6; Euripides, Hippolytus 103; Lucianus, Harmonides 1.17.) Some translations render the passage as stating that Andronicus and Junia were "well known among the apostles," but "apostle" (Gk. apostolos) would probably then mean "messengers" of churches (as it does in 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; also John 13:16) rather than "apostles" in the technical sense of Peter and Paul. In this case, the term would refer to Andronicus and Junia as itinerant missionaries, and (given both biblical patterns of leadership and ancient cultural expectations) Junia probably labored especially among women. This passage also reveals that the couple was Jewish, had been imprisoned, and had become Christians before Paul.³⁹

⁸Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

Missler: "Beloved": Special relationship. In the Domitilla Cemetery, among the catacombs of Rome, there is an ornate grave with the single name, Ampliatus, an apparent slave, yet the ornateness indicates he was held in high regard. Some scholars believe that this is the same person mentioned by Paul. [KJV: Amplias; NAS: Ampliatus].⁴⁰

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Ampliatus is called a friend, and no more is said.⁴¹

McGee: 8-9 Amplias is a common slave name and occurs in the tombs of the early Christians in the catacombs, always in a place of honor. He evidently was one of Paul's converts and dear to his heart.

³⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

³⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁴⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁴¹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

Urbane means "city bred." In other words, his name actually means "city-slicker." This was also a common slave name, and it may mean that he was brought up in the city rather than in the country. He is identified as a real worker among believers.

Stachys has been found listed in the royal household. It is a masculine name. He was beloved not only to Paul but to the church.⁴²

BKC: 8-11. Ampliatus was one Paul loved in the Lord. This was high praise from the apostle. Urbanus was called our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys was addressed as my dear friend (lit., "the one loved by me"; cf. Epenetus, v. 5). Paul said Apelles was tested and approved (ton dokimon, "the one approved through testing"; cf. the same word trans. "approved," 14:18; the related infinitive dokimazein is trans. "to test and approve," 12:2). Without naming other individuals Paul sent greetings to those who belong to the household of Aristobulus, perhaps a grandson of Herod the Great. (See the chart on the Herods at Luke 1:5.) A household may have included family members and servants. (However, the Gr. simply has "those out of, belonging to Aristobulus"; cf. Rom. 16:11).

Herodion was greeted as my relative, but once again the relationship was probably tribal and not familial (cf. vv. 7, 21). The name may identify this person as belonging to Herod's family. Once again without naming individuals Paul sent greetings to those in the household of Narcissus (lit., "those out of, belonging to Narcissus"; cf. v. 10). But Paul restricted his greetings to the ones who are in the Lord, which probably indicated Narcissus' family was divided spiritually.⁴³

Guzik: Amplias: There is a tomb dating from the late first or early second century in the earliest Christian catacomb of Rome which bears the name AMPLIAS. Some suggest that this is the same person mentioned in Romans 16:8.⁴⁴

ESV: 8–10 The people greeted in these verses are not mentioned elsewhere in the NT. The family of Aristobulus probably refers to the slaves in Aristobulus's household. Some think Aristobulus is the grandson of Herod the Great (c. 73–4 b.c.) and the brother of Herod Agrippa I (10 b.c.–a.d. 44), though this remains uncertain.⁴⁵

9Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Urbanus and Stachys are common Roman slave names. It is known that many freedmen joined the Messianic movement.⁴⁶

⁴² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁴⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁴⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁴⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹⁰Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

Missler: "Approved": *ton dokimon*, "the one approved through testing; had been put to the test. [Wouldn't you like to have that said of you?]"

Gr. simply has "those out of, belonging to Aristobulus"; cf. v.11. Why not Aristobulus? Not a believer? (Maybe just his slaves; slaves were known by their household.)

Aristobulus may have been the grandson of King Herod the Great, who lived in Rome. He was behind the scenes politically but was a close friend of Emperor Claudius. When Aristobulus died, his household, that is, his servants and slaves, became the property of the emperor but it was still known as the household of Aristobulus.⁴⁷

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Apelles is asked to greet the household of Aristobulus in Paul's name. There is some suggestion that this Aristobulus could well be the grandson of Herod the Great as Josephus tells us that a fellow named Aristobulus was a good friend and confidant of Emperor Claudius and thus lived in Rome. The next verse that adds greetings to Herodion only adds to the possibility that as unlikely as it might seem, some members of the Herod dynasty actually came to belief in Messiah Yeshua. Paul again identifies this person as a kinsman so for sure he was Jewish.⁴⁸

McGee: Apelles is the approved one. His is either a Greek or a Jewish name -- the name was a common one among the Jews. He had stood some outstanding test. Tradition identifies him as bishop either of Smyrna or Heracleia.

Aristobulus has been identified by Bishop Lightfoot as the grandson of Herod the Great. Or possibly he was a slave who took the name of his master -- we can't be sure of this.⁴⁹

Guzik: Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus: The fact that the household of Aristobulus is greeted but not Aristobulus himself made Spurgeon think that Aristobulus was not converted but many in his household were. It made Spurgeon think of the unconverted who live with believers in their house.

"Where are you, Aristobulus? That is not your name, perhaps, but your character is the same as that of this unregenerate Roman, whose family knew the Lord. I might speak in God's name good words and comfortable words to your wife and to your children, but I could not so speak to you, Aristobulus! The Lord sends a message of grace to your dear child, to your beloved wife, but not to you; for you have not given your heart to him." (Spurgeon)⁵⁰

ESV: The family of Narcissus refers to the slaves in Narcissus's household. Some scholars think Narcissus was the wealthy freedman who served the emperor Claudius (a.d. 41–54) and who was compelled by Nero's mother, Agrippina, to kill himself when Nero became emperor (a.d. 54).⁵¹

⁴⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁴⁸ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁴⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁵¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹¹Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

Missler: My kinsman? Herodion: a relative of Herod. Again, slaves of Narcissus (vs. their owner); Narcissus we know from Roman history was a former slave who became the personal secretary of the Emperor Claudius. He gained much wealth since he was in charge of the emperor's correspondence and his palm would have to be greased before a letter could get through to the emperor. When Claudius was murdered, Nero took over and shortly forced the suicide of Narcissus.

Gospel: from slaves to the royal family; from the catacombs to the court . . . In just two decades, Rome became the largest Gentile church; founded by those who had been visiting Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2); just "average believers . . ." ⁵²

McGee: Herodian was evidently a Jew, as Paul calls him a fellow countryman. The name suggests the Herod family. He may have been a slave who adopted the name of the family to which he belonged.

Narcissus is the name of a well-known freedman put to death by Agrippina. The one whose name appears here was probably a slave who formerly belonged to him and had taken his name. ⁵³

¹²Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

Missler: (Some believe they were sisters, possibly even twins. Their names mean "Dainty" and "Delicate"—Paul must have had a smile on his face when he commended them for their labour!) ⁵⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Two women are acclaimed as meriting greetings: Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Some scholars have supposed that because they are named together that they were sisters; perhaps even twins due to the similarity of their names. However, that is pure speculation. I just want us to continue to take note of the heavy involvement of women in the movement and how they are given acclimation just as are the men. So very early in the Believing movement the equal worth of women to men was embedded in the faith. That doesn't mean that their cultural roles changed; it is only that women were not shoved to the background or given less value than males. In fact, we see that women were in leadership within the movement, even though it was usually leadership over other women.

Another female named Persis is greeted as yet another hard worker for the Roman congregation. ⁵⁵

⁵² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁵³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁵⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: Tryphena and Tryphosa are euphonious names that mean "delicate" and "dainty." I imagine these two little ladies were old maid sisters who came to know Christ. They may have been women of means, and they had supported the apostle Paul. Paul says that they labored "in the Lord" -- they were real workers in the church at Rome.

"The beloved Persis" is another woman who "laboured much in the Lord." Persis is the name of a freedwoman, and her position may have enabled her to do more than the preceding two sisters.⁵⁶

BKC: 12-13. Paul sent greetings jointly to Tryphena and Tryphosa, identifying them as those women who work hard ("toil") in the Lord. Some believe they were sisters, possibly even twins. Then Persis, addressed as my dear friend (lit., "the one loved"), was another woman who has worked very hard ("toiled much") in the Lord. Interestingly four women were said to have "worked hard" (cf. Mary, v. 6).

Whether Rufus is the same person mentioned in Mark 15:21 or not is uncertain. If so, then he, as a son of Simon of Cyrene, was a North African. Paul said Rufus was chosen in the Lord, a statement true of every believer (cf. Eph. 1:4). Consequently, the word translated "chosen" may mean "eminent," since it was given to Rufus as a statement of distinction. The greeting included Rufus' mother who, Paul said, had also been a mother to him. Paul obviously did not say she was his actual mother, but he had been the recipient of her motherly care.⁵⁷

ESV: Three women are greeted here who worked hard in the Lord (see note on v. 6).⁵⁸

¹³Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Missler: This is possibly the same Rufus mentioned by Mark (Mark 15:21). He mentions Alexander and Rufus and presumes that his audience would have known who these gentlemen were:

"A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross." Mark 15:21

If so, then he, as a son of Simon of Cyrene, was a North African.

[Mark also mentions the high priest without naming him. (cf. Mark 14:60-63). According to the other writers, the high priest at the time of Jesus' public ministry was Caiaphas (cf. Matthew 26:57). Caiaphas was high priest from A.D. 18-37. This presumes that Mark's audience would have automatically known to which high priest he was alluding to, affirming that the tradition that this gospel is very, early possibly no later than A.D. 40.

Interestingly, church tradition suggests that Mark composed his Gospel in Rome. Paul's letter to the Romans is dated approximately at A.D. 57.]

Many commentators suspect that Paul was sheltered in the home of Rufus and received motherly care while a young student in Jerusalem; he apparently returned after his conversion to lead them to Christ.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁵⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁵⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Next Paul says “hello” to Rufus and his mother, whom he says was as a mother to him too. This gives us some insight into an unusually close relationship that Paul had with this family.⁶⁰

McGee: Although this man seems to stand in the shadows in this chapter, actually we can know a great deal about him -- even to the color of his hair! His name means "red." Red was the name by which he was called. However, there were many red-haired folk; it was not his hair that made him unusual. The thing that marks him out is the phrase that follows, "chosen in the Lord." I love that. "But," you may say, "were not the others in this chapter chosen in the Lord also?" Yes, they were all wonderful saints, but this man was outstanding. Perhaps a better translation would be "distinguished in the Lord." He was a great saint of God.

That Rufus was prominent in the church is inferred in the reference to his father. When John Mark wrote his Gospel, he wrote it primarily for the Romans. In it he mentions the incident of a man by the name of Simon carrying the cross of Christ. "And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross" (Mark 15:21). The Roman soldiers that day saw Jesus falling under the cross. Looking over the crowd they shouted, "Here!" to a big double-fisted fellow, Simon of Cyrene. "You come here and carry it." And carry it he did -- an act that has made him immortal. John Mark, writing to Rome, identifies Simon for them by adding, "the father of Alexander and Rufus" -- all the saints at Rome would know Rufus because he was outstanding in the church.

Will you notice further that Paul's greeting includes the mother of Rufus. "Salute Rufus... and his mother and mine." While we know nothing of the mother of Paul the apostle and nothing of his father, we learn here of a godly woman in the city of Jerusalem, the wife of Simon the Cyrenian, who was like a mother to the apostle Paul. You may recall that the first time Paul came to Jerusalem following his conversion, the Christians feared him. They were unconvinced that this powerful Pharisee was genuine; they suspected trickery. Yet the mother of Rufus took Paul in, "You just come in and stay with Rufus in his room." Looking back to that time, Paul writes concerning her, "She is Rufus' mother, but she is mine also." What a lovely tribute to this warmhearted Christian mother!⁶¹

Guzik: Rufus: This may be the same man mentioned as a son of Simon the Cyrene in Mark 15:21. This is possible, but Rufus was a common name – so it may have been someone else.

Chosen in the Lord has the idea that Rufus had some eminence among the Christians of Rome. It doesn't refer to his election in Jesus.⁶²

ESV: It is not certain that this is the same Rufus as is mentioned in Mark 15:21, but it is possible that he is the son of Simon of Cyrene. Apparently, Rufus's mother ministered significantly to Paul.⁶³

⁶⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁶¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁶³ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁴Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

McGee: These are all just names to us, but Paul knew them. Probably he had led them to Christ.⁶⁴

BKC: 14-16. The next five names mentioned together (v. 14) evidently had something in common, perhaps as leaders of another house church. This may be indicated by the reference to the brothers with them. They are all common names, particularly among slaves.

Julia may have been the wife of Philologus. Two other husband-wife teams were Priscilla and Aquila (v. 3) and (possibly) Andronicus and Junias (v. 7). Nereus and his sister were then greeted, though the sister's name is not given. And finally, greetings were sent to Olympas and all the saints with him. This group may have been the leaders of another house church (cf. v. 14). Of all these individuals only Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament for certain; yet Paul knew them all individually and sent personal greetings to them and their associates. Paul cannot properly be charged with not being "a people person." He closed this section with the command, Greet one another with a holy kiss, the mode of salutation similar to the handshake today (cf. comments on 1 Cor. 16:20; also cf. 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14) and with a general word of salutation, All the churches of Christ send greetings (lit., "greet you").⁶⁵

Guzik: Asyncritus... Phlegon... Patrobas... Hermes: Of the rest of these names, Paul finds something wonderful to say about almost every one of them – noting their labor, his special regard for them (beloved), their standing in the Lord (approved in Christ... in the Lord... chosen in the Lord).

This is a tremendous example. It shows Paul's way of casting about uplifting words to build up God's people. He was generous in paying compliments that were both sincere and wonderful.⁶⁶

ESV: 14–15 There is no further information on the saints greeted here.⁶⁷

¹⁵Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

Missler: Leaders of another home church?

Philologus = "lover of the Word." [Believers were given a new name when they were born again. Sha'ul ("praying one") became Paul ("little" or "least.")]

Julia may have been the wife of Philologus. Two other husband wife teams were Priscilla and Aquila (v. 3) and (possibly) Andronicus and Junias (v. 7). [Tragically rare today.]

Nereus may have been the housekeeper of a prominent Roman citizen named Flavius Clemens, later to become the Consul of Rome, the highest political office in the city, who, in 95

⁶⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁶⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁶⁷ ESV Study Bible Notes

AD, was condemned to death by the Emperor Domitian because he was a Christian. His wife, Domatilla, also a Christian, was banished by the emperor.⁶⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul continues his greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympus and others of God's people who are with them. This gives us a strong hint that this is speaking of another and separate Believing congregation. Rome was a large and diverse city; there was room and necessity for a number of Believing congregations.⁶⁹

Guzik: Nereus: In 95 a.d. two distinguished Romans were condemned for being Christians. The husband was executed and the wife was banished. The name of their chief servant was Nereus – this may be the same Nereus mentioned here and he may be the one who brought the gospel to them.⁷⁰

¹⁶Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

After the greetings to individuals Paul returns to offering instruction as he says the Roman Believers are to greet one another with a holy kiss. In the Middle East and elsewhere to this day it is customary to be greeted with a kiss, usually on both cheeks. This is not a romantic kiss, but rather it is an indication of brotherhood. Sometimes it is merely a show of respect. A holy kiss was a display of fellowship that was known to have become traditional within the early Messianic community. Perhaps there was a certain protocol and way it occurred that made it recognizably different from the more ordinary and common kiss-greeting of the era. It actually became part of worship services in the early church.

Some Bible commentators have suggested that Paul is warning the Believers in Rome to be sure to greet one another with a “holy” kind of kiss as opposed to a “romantic” kind of kiss due to the number of women who were part of the congregation. This can only be because these commentators aren't aware of the practice of the “holy kiss” as a standard greeting among Believers. That is, a holy kiss became a hallmark of Believers and Paul was urging the Romans to adopt the practice.⁷¹

McGee: Here is another group of believers who were in the church there in Rome.

This was the formal greeting in Paul's time -- I don't recommend it for today!⁷²

Guzik: Greet one another with a holy kiss: This might sound strange to us, but Luke 7:45 shows how common a greeting a kiss was. Jesus rebukes a Pharisee because he did not give Jesus a kiss when He came into his house.

⁶⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁶⁹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁷¹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

It seems that this practice was later abused. Clement of Alexandria complained about churches where people made the church resound with kissing, and says that “the shameless use of a kiss occasions foul suspicions the evil reports.”

The value of Paul’s extensive greetings to the Roman church.

Leon Morris explains that this section demonstrates that the Letter to the Romans “was a letter to real people and, as far as we can see, ordinary people; it was not written to professional theologians.”

“They were like the most of us, commonplace individuals; but they loved the Lord, and therefore as Paul recollected their names, he sent them a message of love which has become embalmed in the Holy Scriptures. Do not let us think of the distinguished Christians exclusively so as to forget the rank and file of the Lord’s army. Do not let the eye rest exclusively upon the front rank but let us love all whom Christ loves; let us value all Christ’s servants. It is better to be God’s dog than to be the devil’s darling.” (Spurgeon)

Notice the women mentioned in this chapter: Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, the mother of Rufus, and Julia. These are women who worked for the Lord.

“Ministry in the Spirit by a woman is different altogether from her taking over authority, or infringing upon the order of the assembly of God.” (Newell)

Notice their work for the Lord: some, like Tryphena and Tryphosa, labored in the Lord. Others, like Persis, labored much for the Lord. “So there are distinctions and degrees in honor among believers, and these are graduated by the scale of service done. It is an honor to labor for Christ, it is a still greater honor to labor much. If, then, any, in joining the Christian church, desire place or position, honor or respect, the way to it is this – labor, and labor much.” (Spurgeon)

Of the 24 names here, 13 also appear in inscriptions or documents connected with the Emperor’s palace in Rome. We know that there were Christians among Caesar’s household (Philippians 4:22). Paul may be writing many of the servants who worked for Caesar who became Christians.⁷³

ESV: Christians greeted one another with a holy kiss to signify their warm affection for one another (1 Cor. 16:20; also 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14).⁷⁴

17Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Missler: Admonitory Insert; Yet watch out for those who destroy relationships:

“Mark” = “Keep your eye on”. “Avoid them:” Greek present imperative, “keep on turning away.”

The Most Painful Sin

What sin has probably caused the more pain than any other?

Gossip! It is, in its most formal form, a violation of Exodus 20:16:

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

However, in its more subtle forms, gossip is probably accountable for more personal pain and suffering than most of us have any appreciation of.

⁷³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁷⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

Gossip is a form of betrayal!

Common, casual, yet hurtful beyond our imagining. Quietly, behind the flurry of daily priorities, its venom does its silent work, undermining confidences, betraying relationships, spreading unseen injustices...

The tongue is a ready and willing instrument to talk about our neighbor behind his back (Cf. Rom 1:30; 2 Cor 12:20; James 4:11).⁷⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Then in verse 17 Paul continues with something that for some reason he waited until now to address: to watch out for false teachers who cause divisions among the Believers. He goes so far as to say to keep away from them. Paul seeks for Believers to shun other professed Believers who seem to always be causing strife. If you have been a Believer long enough, and attended a congregation long enough, you have met such people. Paul stops short of saying that the trouble makers should be expelled; but he does explicitly instruct to have nothing to do with such members. For the most part Paul equates this strife as being the result of false teaching. He then goes on to explain that these teachers who cause such strife with their false teaching are only in it for themselves. He says they are only there to feed their own bellies (no doubt an expression that means their actions are self-serving).

I prefer to stay away from judging other Bible teachers and pastors because we are called not to judge. And yet we must take that instruction as a generality and not as an absolute since here we have Paul virtually telling the Believers in Rome that they are to shun those who teach falsities and/or teach only for self-profit. Thus, the biblical order not “to judge” cannot mean to turn our brains off and turn a blind eye to what is obviously insincere, wrong or even criminal behavior. So here I’ll take the opportunity to say to you how little regard I personally have for any number of Television Evangelists who certainly seem to be using the Gospel primarily as a means to get rich. When the constant refrain from a pastor or teacher is to send money, or to “plant a seed”, or to buy them a jet so they can go to more places faster to spread the Gospel, be skeptical. When every message begins and ends with talking about a book they wrote and want you to buy; be skeptical. I’ll not name names, but we all know who they are. This doesn’t mean that they are not real Believers. But just as with Paul’s instruction that doesn’t necessarily question a false teacher’s salvation, but only his impure motives, so we should do the same. Believers aren’t perfect; just saved. Money and fame can be irresistible temptations even for a Believer. Sadly, all the through the ages we have names of Christians who have succumbed to the pressures and wound up becoming great swindlers: Jim Baker being one of the most infamous of the modern era. Paul is crystal clear that we are to have nothing to do with Believers like this.

Let me say this another way because it is important that we hear and understand that such unethical and illegal activity among renowned Christians is nothing new. Paul is addressing this issue because he perceives a threat from within the body itself; not from outsiders. He doesn’t label any of these false teachers as pretenders. Being on the inside and gaining a relationship and familiarity with the congregation opens the doors wide for the unsuspecting to be fleeced and deceived. I am aware of a situation whereby a bookkeeper for a medium sized church stole well over a million dollars over a period of years. The irregularities in accounting were noticed but since the gentlemen was well known no one felt comfortable enough to confront him so many years passed as the losses kept mounting up. Finally, when there was no more denying it and he

⁷⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

confessed upon being confronted, the Senior Pastor didn't want to turn him in to law enforcement for embezzlement because he felt that Believers don't judge other Believers. Fortunately, lay leaders with a bit more balanced view demanded justice and the person was arrested and sentenced to prison. While the money was never recovered, at least the outflow stopped, and the culprit was punished.

Thus, it is in the context of looking out for false teachers and for those who only want to serve themselves by using the Lord's name that Paul says Believers are to be wise concerning good and innocent concerning evil. We are to learn and understand what good is in God's eyes so that we can be wise enough to know the difference between good and evil; sometimes the differences can be subtle. Or more often than not, as society evolves the notion of what is good and what is evil evolves and inevitably it evolves away from God's definition. And while we ought not to become explorers and experts in the ways of evil with the notion that by doing so, we can learn to recognize and avoid it, we also must not look the other way and make excuses for evil when we see it in ourselves or in our brothers and sisters in the Lord. And again, in the context in which Paul has been speaking we must be especially on guard against folks who would cause strife and division within the body. What to do when that happens? Paul says to stay away from them. Give them no influence and no forum to spread their dissention.⁷⁶

McGee: 17-18 Paul puts in this word of warning. We would do well to heed this warning also, my beloved.⁷⁷

BKC: 16:17-20. Paul could not resist giving a final word of warning that they watch out for spiritual enemies: those who are divisive and seek to hinder the Lord's work (who put obstacles [skandala, "traps, snares"; cf. 14:13] in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned). Believers are to keep away (pres. imper., "keep on turning away") from such false teachers, who were not serving (douleuousin, "serving as slaves"; cf. 14:18) Christ, but were slaves to their own appetites (lit., "bellies"; cf. Phil. 3:19). They were selfish gluttons. The problem, however, was that by smooth talk and flattery they deceived the minds (lit., "hearts") of naive people (akakōn, "innocent, unsuspecting").

Paul hastened to assure the Romans that he did not consider them naive. Their obedience (to Christ; cf. Rom. 1:5; 15:18; 1 Peter 1:2) was well known and Paul was glad for them. But he was concerned that they be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil (kakon). The word for "innocent" is akeraious, "unmixed, simple, pure." In Greek it was used of wine that was not diluted and of metal that was not weakened in any way. The word is used in the New Testament in only two other places: Matthew 10:16 ("innocent") and Philippians 2:15 ("pure"). Christians should be innocent about evil, not following the ways of the world (Rom. 12:2). To conclude this warning Paul added the promise, The God of peace (cf. 15:33; Heb. 13:20) will soon crush Satan under your feet (cf. Gen. 3:15). The false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18) were under Satan's influence, but he will be destroyed, and God will establish peace (Rev. 20:1-6). Then Paul gave another benediction (cf. Rom. 15:13, 33) about God's grace.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Guzik: Note those who cause divisions and offenses: This has in mind both those who would divide God’s people (cause divisions) and those who would deceive God’s people (offenses... contrary to the doctrine you have learned). Once these have been noted (marked), they are to be avoided.

This is essential to God’s purpose for the church. Truth without unity leads to pride; unity without truth leads to a departure from the true gospel itself. Each of these must be guarded against.

Now I urge you, brethren: The tone here suggests how important this was to Paul; “It may well be that Paul took the pen and wrote these words himself... It is quite possible that Paul wrote these words, then passed the pen back to Tertius for a postscript. Something unusual happened at the end of this letter, and this is a very possible understanding of it.” (Morris)

“Mad dogs are shot; infectious diseases are quarantined; but evil teachers who would divide to their destruction and draw away the saints with teaching contrary to the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles are everywhere tolerated!” (Newell)⁷⁹

ESV: 17–18 On the theme of false teaching, cf., e.g., Jer. 14:14; Matt. 7:15. Christians must be alert, for these false teachers and divisive people are attractive in speech but are motivated by selfish desires.⁸⁰

FCSBN: Contrary to the teaching you have learned. Paul appears to be alluding to a previous teaching that the Christians of Rome had been given (see also Ro 6:17). Though impossible to name with certainty, it’s likely this teaching included the letter from the Jerusalem council in Ac 15. This is important for arguing that the apostolic decree was a given backdrop to Paul’s further instructions to his Gentile Christian audience (see note on Ro 6:18).⁸¹

CJSBN: Watch out for those who cause divisions. These divisions are caused by looking down or judging (14:3), or by opposing the sound doctrine set forth in this letter.⁸²

18 **For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.**

Missler: Slaves of their own appetites rather than of Christ.

There are ministries which make their income by “accusing the brethren.” I know where their doctrine comes from.⁸³

Guzik: By smooth words and flattering speech deceive: The warning is necessary because these dividers and deceivers do not announce themselves. They use smooth words and flattering speech and always target the simple – usually those who are young in the faith.

⁷⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁸⁰ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸¹ First-Century Study Bible Notes

⁸² Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁸³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Deceive the hearts of the simple: This shows that dividers and deceivers don't affect everyone. We must not wait until everyone is scattered or deceived until we are concerned with dividers and deceivers.

Do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly: Dividers and deceivers never want to appear selfish. Typically, they perceive themselves as noble crusaders for a great cause. Nevertheless, however they may appear on the outside, their motives are essentially selfish and fleshly.⁸⁴

¹⁹For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Missler: Even in that ancient world, reputations were widespread;

“Wise unto that which is good”: *sophos*: wise; skilled, expert: of artificers; skilled in letters, cultivated, learned; (of the Greek philosophers and orators; of Jewish theologians; of Christian teachers); forming the best plans and using the best means for their execution.

“Simple concerning evil”: *akeraios*, : 1) unmixed, pure as in wines or metals; uncontaminated; of the mind, without a mixture of evil, free from guile, innocent.⁸⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

The good news says Paul, is that the congregation of Rome is known for being obedient and for this he rejoices. Thus, to this point, even though he obviously has heard about the presence of those who are causing strife and promoting false teaching within the Roman congregation, on balance it has remained faithful.⁸⁶

McGee: You see, their faith came abroad also, but the faith is manifested in obedience.

"Wise unto that which is good" means they must be instructed in the Word of God.

"Simple concerning evil" means without a mixture of evil. To the Corinthians Paul said, "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1Cor. 14:20).⁸⁷

Guzik: Your obedience has become known to all: This means that when it comes to dividers and deceivers, it isn't that the Romans must correct a bad situation. They are already dealing with these situations well, and Paul is glad about it. Yet they must remain diligent against the attacks of the dividers and the deceivers.

Be wise in what is good: This is the best defense against dividers and deceivers. It is of far more use to know the good than it is to know the evil, to learn about the genuine rather than the counterfeit.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁸⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁸⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁸⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

²⁰And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 20 is in some ways odd. In fact, many Bible commentators are certain that it doesn't belong here and is out of place; it is not of Paul. However, as I have mentioned, there is a thread within Christianity that for various doctrinal reasons does not want Romans chapters 15 and 16 to be seen as authentic or legitimate. C.E.B. Cranfield is not one of these and he says this about this verse: "...it is Paul's autograph authentication of his letter. It was customary for the sender of a letter, when the laborious task of actually writing the text had been fulfilled by someone else, to add a concluding greeting in his own hand. This served to authenticate the letter as a signature does today."

There really is no need to debate it further. Chapters 15 and 16 are legitimate and their contents should be trusted even though certain things said in them shoots holes in the doctrines that some denominations insist upon. Therefore, what occurs from verse 21 on is sort of a postscript: a PS. Therefore, after Paul has finished saying everything of substance that he wants to impart to the Believers in Rome, he now wants to add that 4 fellows who are with him in Corinth want to get in on the act and say hello to their fellow Believers in Rome. Timothy, we know of as Paul's most trusted companion and helper. Lucius, we don't know anything about although there is a Lucius mentioned in Acts 13 and perhaps this is the same person. Jason might well be the same Jason mentioned in Acts 17. He was a well-regarded Believer who resided in Thessalonica and was described as a close acquaintance of Paul's. Sosipater is spoken of in Acts 20 but it is not possible to determine if this is the same fellow.⁸⁹

McGee: It is "the god of peace" who will put down Satan shortly. In the meantime we are to resist the Devil, be sober and vigilant.⁹⁰

Guzik: The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly: Any church with the well-deserved reputation of the Romans, who stays on guard against both dividers and deceivers, will see God crush Satan under your feet shortly.

We see that God does the crushing, but Satan ends up under the feet of believers.

Of course, this will not ultimately happen until Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-3); but every victory God wins for us right now is a preview of that event.⁹¹

ESV: With an allusion to Gen. 3:15, the readers are assured that Satan will soon be destroyed.⁹²

FCSBN; The God of peace will soon crush Satan. This is an allusion to Ge 3:15. The Book of Jubilees paints a similar picture of redemption: "They will complete and live their entire lifetimes peacefully and joyfully. There will be neither a Satan nor any evil one who will destroy. For their entire lifetimes will be times of blessing and healing."⁹³

⁸⁹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁹⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁹² ESV Study Bible Notes

⁹³ First-Century Study Bible Notes

CJSBN: God, the source of shalom, will soon crush the Adversary under your feet. Shalom means peace, wholeness (see also 15:33). The “Adversary” is Satan, the ultimate source of all opposition to God (Matt. 4:1).⁹⁴

21 **Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.**

Missler: Once again these men were not members of Paul’s family, but fellow countrymen (cf. vv. 7, 10). These may be the men of the same names mentioned elsewhere (Acts 13:1; 17:5-9; 20:4; cf. 2 Cor 9:4).⁹⁵

McGee: Now Paul sends greetings from those who were with him as he was writing this Epistle to the Romans. All of these were companions of Paul. They send greetings to their fellow believers in Rome.⁹⁶

BKC: 21-24. These few verses contain personal greetings from some of Paul's associates: first, Timothy, my fellow worker, and then Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives. Once again these men were not members of Paul's family, but fellow countrymen (cf. vv. 7, 10). These may be the men of the same names mentioned elsewhere (Acts 13:1; 17:5-9; 20:4; cf. 2 Cor. 9:4). Then Tertius, who was Paul's stenographer for this epistle, sent his greetings. So did Gaius, Paul's host in Corinth, who apparently had a church meeting in his home. This Gaius was probably not the same Gaius who was from Macedonia and traveled with Paul (Acts 19:29) nor the Gaius who was from Derbe (Acts 20:4). The Gaius mentioned here in Romans was probably Paul's convert whom he baptized (1 Cor. 1:14). Erastus sent greetings. He was the city's director of public works (lit., "the city's steward," a high position in Corinth). Paul called Quartus our brother, undoubtedly meaning a spiritual brother, not a physical one. Romans 16:24 (niv marg.), which repeats the benediction in verse 20b, is not found in a number of the major Greek manuscripts and is not considered genuine.⁹⁷

Guzik: Timothy rightly rates a first mention, being one of Paul’s closest and most trusted associates.⁹⁸

ESV: In vv. 21–23 those who are with Paul greet the Romans. Timothy is Paul's most famous coworker (see 1 Timothy) and was probably his most beloved colleague in ministry. Lucius is likely not Lucius of Cyrene mentioned in Acts 13:1, nor is he Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Jason is likely the same person named in Acts 17:5–7, 9. And Sosipater is probably the same person as Sopater from Berea (Acts 20:4).⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁹⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁹⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁹⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

⁹⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

22I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

Missler: Professional Secretaries

We take for granted the ease with which we can make copies of documents today. Even before the revolution of our copiers and fax machines, it was the invention of Johannes Gutenberg's movable type in 1454 that ushered in the printing techniques that we also have come to take so for granted today. In the ancient world, all copies had to be accomplished painstakingly by hand. Thus, the term manuscript, "manu-script."

It was quite natural that these manual methods would also be accompanied with special shortcuts, aids, and techniques to facilitate the drudgery that they were faced with. And, like all the Greeks and Romans of the period, the Christian authors and their scribes employed trained secretaries or amanuenses, trusted helpers who were well-versed in contemporary literary techniques and scribal methods.

As we have here, some of them are mentioned by name in the New Testament. Highly qualified assistants are mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament:

- 1 Corinthians 1:1 ("Paul ... and Sosthenes");
- 2 Corinthians 1:1 ("Paul ... and Timothy");
- Philippians 1:1 ("Paul and Timothy");
- Colossians 1:1 ("From Paul ... and ... Timothy");
- 2 Thess 1:1 ("Paul, Silvanus and Timothy"); and
- Philemon 1:1 ("From Paul ... and from our brother Timothy").

1 Peter 5:12: "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."

These were more than ordinary scribes; they were trained professional editors, comparable to the modern-day political speechwriter. The contrast between the polished Greek of 1 Peter and the gritty, Hebraic style of 2 Peter was due Silvanus, an experienced secretary who had already proved his worth in Paul's 1st and 2nd letters to the Thessalonians. To assuage any doubts about the final editorial authenticity, Paul would frequently add his personal signature in his own handwriting (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17; Philemon 19).

It may come as a surprise to many of our readers that one of the common, virtually obligatory, qualifications among the professionals in the Graeco-Roman world was that of a tachygràphos, or shorthand writer.

[Among the disciples, Matthew, a former customs official, would also likely have had a working knowledge of tachygraphy, and thus may have been able to transcribe the Sermon on the Mount verbatim, just as Tertius and others were able to transcribe Paul's more verbose utterances.]

Even in the Old Testament, in Psalm 45:1, the Hebrew, *ryhim*, [the "ready writer (KJV)," or "skillful writer" (NIV)], is translated in the Greek Septuagint, *oxygràphos*, a synonym for tachygràphos, or shorthand writer. The technical term must have been common enough among Greek-speaking Jews in the 3rd century BC for its use in the Septuagint to have any purpose.

Paul also mentions a technical term, *membranae*, a Latin word transcribed into Greek, referring to a parchment notebook (2 Tim 4:13). This was apparently a predecessor to the codex, or "book" that we know today. They were written on both sides of the sheet, small and often pocket-sized, they were easy to handle, to skip through for reference, and to store, and thus led to the ultimate departure from the traditional scrolls.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Tertius, to whom Paul has been dictating, now adds his own personal greeting. Paul customarily used a scribe to write his letters for him and it was equally customary that the scribe would add his own personal greeting at the end of a letter if it seemed appropriate.¹⁰¹

McGee: Paul, you see, had an amanuensis, a secretary, to write his letters. (The Epistle to the Galatians is the exception.)¹⁰²

Guzik: I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle: Tertius was Paul's writer as the apostle dictated the letter. This was Paul's normal practice in writing letters to churches, but this is the only letter where Paul's secretary is mentioned by name.¹⁰³

ESV: Tertius functioned as Paul's scribe or secretary for the letter. It was common for those writing letters in the first century to dictate to a secretary, but the content of the letter is clearly Paul's.¹⁰⁴

23Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Missler: Gaius was Paul's host in Corinth, who apparently had a church meeting in his home. This Gaius was probably not the same Gaius who was from Macedonia and traveled with Paul (Acts 19:29) nor the Gaius who was from Derbe (Acts 20:4). The Gaius mentioned here in Romans was probably Paul's convert whom he baptized (1 Cor. 1:14).

The city treasurer Erastus: a 1929 excavation in Corinth unearthed a pavement inscribed with these words: ("Erastus, curator of public buildings, laid this pavement at his own expense.")¹⁰⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 23 returns to Paul. Here he gives recognition to his host, Gaius, in whose home not only has Paul been residing but it was also where the local congregation met. He offers Gaius's greetings as well. Very probably this is the same Gaius that Paul baptized because Gaius lived in Corinth. Erastus is the city treasurer of Corinth. In fact, in a wonderful archaeological artifact discovered in the plaza of the theater in Corinth that dates to the same time as Paul's letter, we find an inscription on a plaque that says: "Erastus in return for his aedileship laid the pavement at his own expense." Aedilship refers to what a business manager does. So clearly this Erastus was responsible for the public infrastructure. Quartus is unknown to us.¹⁰⁶

McGee: Paul was staying in the home of Gaius, and Gaius wanted to send his salutations also.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹⁰² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁰³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

¹⁰⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁰⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹⁰⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Guzik: Gaius: This brother had such a reputation for hospitality that Paul can say he was regarded as the host of the whole church.¹⁰⁸

ESV: Gaius here is not the Gaius of Derbe (Acts 19:29; 20:4) but the Gaius of 1 Cor. 1:14, supporting the idea that the letter was written from Corinth. He was a man of some wealth, for he provided a place for the entire church to meet. It is difficult to know if Erastus is the same person mentioned in Acts 19:22 and 2 Tim. 4:20. the city treasurer. A large Latin inscription in the limestone pavement near the Corinthian theater reads, "Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense." An aedile was a man elected to oversee aspects of city finances. Often prominent elected officials would fulfill campaign pledges by providing some public structure to the city. Although there is some debate over whether the Greek word for "city treasurer" (oikonomos) was the equivalent in the Corinthian Roman colony to the Latin aedile, the mid-first-century dating of the pavement and the rarity of the name Erastus in first-century Corinth hold out the distinct possibility that this pavement was laid by Paul's fellow churchman.¹⁰⁹

24The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

There is a verse 24 in some Greek manuscripts that most English Bibles omit because it is so certain that it was added by someone long after the letter was completed. It doesn't harm anything, but I know of no one who believes it to be original. It reads: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.¹¹⁰

25Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Missler: "My gospel": This letter to the Romans is Paul's longest and most complete statement of the message he proclaimed, what some call, "the Gospel according to Paul." (cf. 2:16; 2 Tim 2:8)¹¹¹

McGee: "The mystery" means that it had not been revealed in the Old Testament. It refers to the present age when God is taking both Jew and Gentile and fashioning them into one body, the church.¹¹²

BKC: 25-27. The apostle finally came to his closing benediction. This letter to the Romans is Paul's longest and most complete statement of the message he proclaimed, what he here called my gospel (cf. 2:16; 2 Tim. 2:8) and the proclamation of (i.e., concerning) Jesus Christ. The truth

¹⁰⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

¹⁰⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹¹¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹¹² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

of this message is the means of spiritual life and stability, as Paul expressed his praise to God who is able to establish you (cf. 1 Peter 5:10).

Paul said that aspects of this message (e.g., Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; Eph. 5:32) and in a sense the total message (cf. Eph. 3:3-9; Col. 1:26-27) are the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known. The message of the gospel of Christ was "hidden" in the Old Testament but is revealed in the New. In the prophetic writings (of the OT; cf. Rom. 1:2), given by the command of the eternal God (1 Tim. 1:17), Christ was referred to (Luke 24:44-45), but even the prophets themselves were not fully aware of all they wrote (1 Peter 1:10-12). But now in the Church Age their writings are understood.

The goal of this "revelation of the mystery" (Rom. 16:25) is that people of all nations might believe and obey Christ (cf. 1:5; 15:18; 1 Peter 1:2). Paul's concern for the geographical spread of the gospel is evident here (cf. Matt. 28:19), appropriate in view of his writing to the believers at the empire's capital city.

Paul then identified specifically the object of his benediction: To the only wise God. In the Greek this phrase is followed immediately by the words through Jesus Christ. This indicates that the wisdom of God is displayed supremely through Christ (cf. Col. 2:3). According to the Greek text the benediction then ends, to whom be glory forever! Amen (cf. Rom. 11:36). God the Father ultimately is the One to be praised and to whom glory belongs (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28).¹¹³

Guzik: Now to Him who is able: With all the dangers facing the Romans – and every church – Paul fittingly concludes by commending them to Him who is able to establish you. Paul also knows that this will be done according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ.

According to the revelation of the mystery: Paul means this as the whole plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Though God announced much of the plan previously through prophecy, its final outworking wasn't evident until revealed by God through Jesus.

Now that the mystery has been revealed through the preaching of the gospel, God calls all nations to obedience to the faith.¹¹⁴

ESV: 25–27 Final Summary of the Gospel of the Righteousness of God. As stated in the note on 1:1–7, many of the themes in the introduction reappear in the conclusion, showing that the letter was written carefully.

16:25 The gospel is a mystery (see note on 11:25) that has been kept secret but is now revealed. The gospel centers on Jesus Christ.¹¹⁵

FCSBN: 25–27 Doxology. This doxology appears in different locations in the book of Romans in a few different ancient manuscripts, leading some to conclude that it was added later. Regardless, it properly summarizes Paul's central message that the mysterious reconciliation of all humanity to God has dawned in Christ, as predicted in the Prophets.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

¹¹⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

¹¹⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁶ First-Century Study Bible Notes

CJSBN: 25–27 To promote in them trust-grounded obedience. Sha’ul summarizes the theme of Romans within a poetic conclusion by restating the phrase “trust-grounded obedience” (see 1:5a). He concludes: “To the only wise God, through Yeshua the Messiah, be the glory forever and ever! Amen.”¹¹⁷

²⁶But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Missler: Paul said that aspects of this message (e.g., Rom 11:25; 1 Cor 15:51; Eph 5:32) and in a sense the total message (cf. Eph 3:3-9; Col 1:26-27) are the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known. The message of the gospel of Christ was “hidden” in the Old Testament but is revealed in the New.

In the prophetic writings (of the OT; cf. Rom 1:2), given by the command of the eternal God (1 Tim 1:17), Christ was referred to (Luke 24:44-45), but even the prophets themselves were not fully aware of all they wrote (1 Peter 1:10-12). But now in the Church Age their writings are understood.

The goal of this “revelation of the mystery” (Rom 16:25) is that people of all nations might believe and obey Christ (cf. 1:5; 15:18; 1 Peter 1:2).

Paul’s concern for the geographical spread of the gospel is evident here (cf. Matt. 28:19), appropriate in view of his writing to the believers at the empire’s capital city.¹¹⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In what can only be described as a doxology (a short hymn of praise to end a service) Paul more or less sums up all that he has taught in his letter. He of course gives all glory to God (for Paul, this means The Father). He speaks of the secret truth (the mystery or *musterion* in Greek) that the Lord has revealed through His Son Yeshua; the truth of the Good News. It is a truth that has been hidden in plain sight for ages and ages. It is a truth that was embedded and foretold in the prophetic writings; it is the command of the eternal God and Paul certifies that it has been communicated to the gentiles in order to promote within them a faith in the God of Israel that is based upon trust.

Only God is wise, says Paul; and God’s wisdom comes to us through Yeshua the Messiah the Son of God.

I’d like to close today with this thought. In 1st Corinthians Paul said this:

1 Corinthians 1:22-25 CJB 22 Precisely because Jews ask for signs and Greeks try to find wisdom, 23 we go on proclaiming a Messiah executed on a stake as a criminal! To Jews this is an obstacle, and to Greeks it is nonsense; 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, this same Messiah is God's power and God's wisdom! 25 For God's "nonsense" is wiser than humanity's "wisdom." And God's "weakness" is stronger than humanity's "strength."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹¹⁹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: Here we see the obedience of faith. When you trust Christ, you will obey Him, my friend. The Lord Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Obedience is the work and fruit of faith.

My favorite hymn is "Trust and Obey" by John H. Sammis:

When we walk with the Lord
In the Light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.
Then in fellowship sweet
We will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do,
Where He sends we will go --
Never fear, only trust and obey.
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.¹²⁰

ESV: The prophetic writings are the OT Scriptures (see 1:2). The gospel is not only a mystery that has been revealed but also a prophecy that has been fulfilled. obedience of faith. It is God's will that this gospel go to all nations, so that all who are obedient because of their faith will be saved.¹²¹

²⁷To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

Missler: [Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenckrea.]

Some Perspectives of the Early Church:

- 1) They were not "on their own." They had a real sense of community.
"Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price," (1 Cor 6:19, 20).
- 2) Life is a battle; a battle to the death!
- 3) They had need for rest and leisure, but only to better prepare them for (2) above.
- 4) They understood that the gifts of the Spirit opened up a ministry for every single believer. (Those that were not exercising their gifts were defrauding the Body.)
God has not called us to a picnic ground, but to a battleground!¹²²

Guzik: To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever: In this conclusion Paul reflects on the wisdom of God's plan in the gospel and the fact that such wisdom is beyond man. God had a plan no man would come up with, but the wisdom and glory of the plan is evident.

¹²⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹²¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹²² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

If there is anything that the Book of Romans explains from beginning to end, it is the greatness and glory of this plan of God that Paul preached as a gospel – as good news. It's entirely fitting that Paul concludes this letter praising the God of such a gospel.

The good news Paul preached presented the God who chose to glorify Himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ, and who will glorify Himself that way forever. Amen!¹²³

ESV: Paul now comes to the main point of the doxology. The God who has planned salvation history in this way is all wise, and he deserves glory forevermore. Romans could not end in a more fitting way, as God's glory is to be the theme of Christians' lives and the joy of their hearts.¹²⁴

Paul's Concluding Benedictions in His Epistles

Romans 16:20b	"The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."
1 Corinthians 16:23	"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you."
2 Corinthians 13:14	"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
Galatians 6:18	"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen."
Ephesians 6:24	"Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love."
Philippians 4:23	"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."
Colossians 4:18	"Grace be with you."
1 Thessalonians 5:28	"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."
2 Thessalonians 3:18	"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."
1 Timothy 6:21b	"Grace be with you."
2 Timothy 4:22	"The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."
Titus 3:15b	"Grace be with you all."
Philemon 25	"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." ¹²⁵

¹²³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-16.cfm?a=1062001

¹²⁴ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹²⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.