

Notes

Greetings, Admonition & Benediction (16:1-27)

- Paul takes a personal interest in people, which shows his ministry focuses on people and he appreciates the contributions of those who laboured with him (Heb 6:10: 1 Thess 2:19).

1. Commendation of Phebe (16:1-2)

- Phebe was the bearer of this Epistle of Paul to the believers in Rome since Paul commended her to the church there. Paul asks the brethren there to receive Phebe “*in the Lord as becometh saints.*” Because of her status as a sister-in-Christ, Phebe is to be received warmly and affectionately by the brethren in Rome.
- Paul commends Phebe as “*a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.*” The word “*servant*” is also translated “*deacon*” elsewhere in the Bible; it can also mean a “*servant*” in the general sense. Phebe may have been a woman of substance financially; or she may have devoted herself to helping the poor and the sick. In some way she had also helped Paul personally.

2. Greetings to Believers in Rome (16:3-16)

- There are 26 names & 2 people who are not named. Some of the names are Jewish, some are Latin & most are Greek. It shows the universality of the Church.
 - Priscilla and Aquila – “*my helpers in Christ*” (my fellow-workers). Paul met this Jewish Christian couple on his first visit to Corinth when all Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius. They were tentmakers, which was Paul's own trade, and he found a home with them (Acts 18:2-3). They had risked their lives for Paul. Paul sends his greetings to the church that met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (cf 1 Cor 16:19). The early believers met in homes, not having church building yet.
 - Paul next greets Epaenetus, one of the 4 who are called “*beloved*” (a dear friend). Epaenetus was the 1st person Paul won to Christ in Achaia.
 - Mary is greeted with the comments, “*who bestowed much labour on us*” - she tirelessly laboured in the Lord's work.
 - Andronicus and Junia were relatives of Paul (or more likely, fellow Jews), and they had been imprisoned with him at some earlier time. It is noted that these 2 were “*of note among the apostles.*” They had an excellent reputation among the apostles. They were saved before Paul.
 - Amplias is another of those beloved by Paul.
 - Urbane, like Priscilla and Aquila, was a fellow helper.
 - Stachys, “*my beloved*” marks this man as a personal friend of Paul.
 - Apelles is said to be “*approved in Christ.*” The word “*approved*” has the idea of being tested and thus reliable or acceptable.
 - Aristobulus' “*household*” probably refers to his slaves. Many commentators think that Aristobulus was not converted but many in his household were.

- Another kinsman of Paul is Herodion.
- Like Aristobulus, Narcissus was probably not a believer, but some of those of his household were in the Lord.
- Tryphena and Tryphosa were probably sisters.
- Persis was a woman who laboured much in the Lord.
- Rufus may be the son of Simon of Cyrene (Mk 15:21). Rufus was “chosen” in the general sense in that he was an extraordinary Christian. Rufus’ mother had been like a mother to Paul.
- V14 and v15 contain several other names about whom nothing is known – Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes (& the brethren), Philologus, Julia, Nereus (& his sister), Olympas & all the saints or believers with them. The grouping suggests there were 2 or more local churches.
- The church in Rome was made up of ordinary but diverse people. Paul always had a team - they supported him; prayed for him and laboured with him. Paul mentioned at least 8 women for whom he showed great appreciation. Women were essential to the ministry and laboured for the Lord. It is remarkable that the name “Peter” does not appear in this catalogue.
- “*Salute one another with an holy kiss,*” or, greet one another in an affectionate manner (1 Cor 16:20; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14). The word “holy” keeps this from being carnal and sensual. Paul further sends greetings from “*the churches of Christ*” – i.e., the churches in the vicinity where the apostle wrote this Epistle.

3. A Warning against False Teachers (17:17-20)

- As Paul concludes his letter to the Romans, he breaks in with this warning to beware of false teachers. There are 3 characteristics of false teachers:
 - They are Divisive – They caused “divisions” or dissensions. By adding the word “offences,” Paul shows that these men stumble other believers or cause them to fall. These people are destructive in the church.
 - They are Deceptive – They deceived the “simple” (unsuspecting) by their use of “*good words and fair speeches.*” They sound eloquent and their messages may be impressive, but they are deceptive for they teach contrary to the historic doctrines of the Scriptures – “*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.*”
 - They are Dishonest - They do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, even though they may piously mention His name. Instead, they serve their “belly,” which refers to pleasing and serving themselves – pride, status, money, etc.
- There are 2 biblical responses to dealing with false teachers:
 - We are to “mark” (identify, watch out, scrutinize) these false teachers. This calls for discernment, alertness, trying the spirits (Acts 20:29-30; Matt 7:15,20). Watch out for people who possess a divisive spirit and who would teach things contrary to the truth of the Bible.

- We are to “avoid” them, to separate from them (1 Tim 6:3-5; 2 Tim 3:5-9; Tit 3:9-11; 2 Jn 10). Paul does not tell us to engage in dialogue with them. Don’t argue with them because divisive people love that their divisiveness gave them a platform.
- Paul assures the Roman believers that their “obedience” is widely known. He wants them to be wise in following good and not be involved in evil (Matt 10:16). Although false teachers would come, Paul reminds them that they would eventually be victorious through the gospel. Satan may bring confusion now, but eventually he will be crushed.

4. Greetings from those in Corinth with Paul (16:21-23)

- Paul sends greetings from friends who were with him at the time of writing.
 - First is Timotheus, whom Paul described as “*my workfellow.*” Timothy was one of Paul’s closest and most trusted associates.
 - Greetings came also from Lucius (Acts 13:1), Jason, and Sosipater, a fellow Jew (cf Acts 20:4 – Sopater).
 - Tertius was Paul’s secretary as the Apostle dictated the letter.
 - Paul also sent greetings from Gaius, in whose home he was staying (1 Cor 1:14; 3 John 1). Gaius was a wealthy citizen of Corinth, who freely opened his house to entertain Christians, and for the purpose of worship.
 - Erastus, next to send greetings, was a chamberlain or city treasurer, a high ranking official (Acts 19:22; 2 Tim 4:20).
 - Quartus, “a brother” or Christian brother.

5. Benediction (16:24-27)

- Paul ends his letter with a benediction. As he thinks back over what he has written, Paul wells up with praise toward God, who has provided such a glorious gospel for people from all nations.
 - Paul fittingly concludes by commending them to “*Him that is of power (who is able) to stablish (establish) you.*” The letter begins with power of God (1:16) - power to save... it ends with the power of God to stabilize.
 - Now that the “*mystery*” has been revealed through the preaching of the gospel, God calls “*all nations for (to) the obedience of faith.*”
 - “*To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*” Paul reflects on the wisdom of God’s plan in the gospel and the fact that such wisdom is beyond man. If there is anything that Romans explains from beginning to end, it is the greatness and glory of this plan of God that Paul preaches as a gospel – as good news.
- The good news Paul preaches present the God who chooses to glorify Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and who will glorify Himself that way forever. “Amen” rounds off the doxology with a firm affirmation.