

The 37 of Romans 16  
Romans 16:1-27



A few general observations:

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*16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well. 3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. 5 Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. 6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.*

**Vs 1-2** - I “commend” to you... I would like to introduce you to, I present to you, (**Person #1**) in verse 1 – **Phoebe**. Her name means “**radiant.**”

In verse one we are introduced to Phoebe, who is described a **servant** of the church in Cenchreae. She is mentioned only in the book of Romans and only here in chapter 16 where she is said to be a **sister** (in Christ) and a **servant** of the church in Cenchreae.

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

**We believe she is the person who carried Paul’s letter from Corinth to Rome. Consider that for a moment!** She is likely a woman of some social standing and wealth.

The word translated **servant** is **διάκονος (diakonos)**. It literally means one who executes the commands of another and that is probably what Paul has in view here.

**Vs 2** – That they would **welcome her** “in the Lord,” in a way worthy of the saints. The word translated “**welcome**” means to **receive to oneself to fully accept, and embrace.**

That they would help her in whatever she needs, for she has been a “**patron**”, this is the only place this Greek word is used, but it seems to be a **female guardian** or a **female who oversees the affairs of others.**

Paul now identifies, 29 different individuals as well as other associates who are there in Rome.

**Vs 3-4** – This is a greeting that Paul is sending to (**Person #2**) **Prisca** and (**Person #3**) **Aquila** who are fellow workers in the Messiah Jesus.

**Prisca** or **Priscilla** name means “**ancient.**” Ladies I am not sure you would like this name. Priscilla is the wife of (**Person #3**) **Aquila**. His name means “**eagle.**”

Priscilla and Aquilla are married, they are of Jewish descent, and Aquilla (like Paul) is a tent maker.

Priscilla is mentioned in five times (Acts 18:2; 18:8; 18:26; Rom 16:3; ICor 16:19). Aquilla is mentioned in the exact same places, and Priscilla and Aquilla are always mentioned together. They are an amazing **husband and wife team** for the gospel of Christ.

Notice they were not only fellow workers in Christ Jesus, but they also risked their necks Paul's life.

**Vs 5 – So this was during the time when churches met in small groups in homes. WHAT A MODEL!**

This couple is a beautiful picture of what it looks like for a couple to labor in the gospel.

**Chuck Missler:** *“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!”*

**Still in Vs 5** -Paul sends greetings to **(Person #4)** “my beloved” **Epaenetus**, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.

**Epaenetus** was a fairly common Greek name during Paul's time. His name means **“praiseworthy.”** This is the only time his name is mentioned in Holy Scriptures.

According to Paul, **Epaenetus** is **“beloved”** by Paul and the first convert in Asia, likely he was converted in Mysia or Lydia.

**Vs 6** – Paul sends greetings to **(Person #5)** a woman named **Mary**. Those in Rome who received this letter likely knew the Mary that Paul is here referring to, but we have no way to be sure because there are many different women with the name Mary in the Bible.

The name Mary means “their rebellion.” Many manuscripts indicate Mariam, this was likely a **Jewish woman**.

**Vs 7** –Here Paul greets two others, first **(Person #6) Andronicus** and **(Person #7) Junia**, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

**(Person #6) Andronicus** is a man's name that means **“man of victory”** and he is only mentioned here in the New Testament.

**(Person #7) Junia**, was a common name that means **“youthful”** and she only mentioned here in the New Testament.

**The “and” between the names possibly connects Junia with Andronicus. The best bet is that they were a husband and wife team.**

**Both are described as:**

- 1) **“Kinsmen”** for sure Jews and possibly from the tribe of Benjamin.
- 2) They were also fellow **“prisoners”** with Paul somewhere along the line.
- 3) They were both **well known** to the apostles.
- 4) They were **saved** “in Christ” before Paul.

*Vs 8 - Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. 11 Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. 12 Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.*

**Vs 8** – Paul sends his greetings to **(Person #8) Ampliatus**, Paul’s “beloved in the Lord.”

This person’s name means “**large.**” **Ampliatus** was a common slave name and he is likely a slave or at least a freedman. This is the only place in the New Testament where Ampliatus is mentioned.

**Vs 9** – Paul sends his greetings to **(Person #9) Urbanus** “our fellow worker in Christ.”

This person’s name means “**of the city, polite.**” Scholars refer to **Urbanus** as a “*wish name.*” This occurred when slave owners would give their slaves names they “wish” for them to be. Thus, Urbanus was likely a slave or freedman.

This is the only place in the New Testament where Urbanus is mentioned.

**Also in Vs 9** - Paul sends his greetings to **(Person #10)** his “beloved” **Stachys**.

This is a man’s name, and it means “**head of grain.**” This is the only place in the New Testament where Stachys is mentioned.

**Vs 10** – Paul sends his greetings to **(Person #11) Apelles** “who is approved of Christ.” The Greek word approved means “**approved through testing**” it referred to coins that had been weighed to ensure full weight.

Apelles is a common Greek name that means “**called.**” This is the only place in the New Testament where Apelles is mentioned.

**Next is a group of unknown size.** Those who belong to **(Person #12) Aristobulus**. The word “family” is inserted, it could be slaves who belonged to **Aristobulus**.

**Aristobulus.** The name means “**the best councilor.**” Notice Aristobulus was not greeted directly, but instead those of Aristobulus. Many believe he was not a believer, but a wealthy man who had slaves.

**Vs 11** – Paul sends his greetings to **(Person #13)** his kinsman **Herodion**. The name means “**heroic.**”

**Herodion** is called a kinsman, **for sure a Jew** and possibly from the tribe of Benjamin. It is likely that Herodion was a slave or a freedman. This is the only place in the New Testament he is mentioned.

**Also in Vs 11** – There is **(Person #14) Narcissus**. Again, in the Greek it is those of **Narcissus**.

Narcissus was as common name for slaves and freedmen in Rome. **The word “family” is not in the text and is likely those of Narcissus once again could be slaves.**

**Narcissus** means “**stupidity.**” This is the only place in the New Testament where Narcissus is mentioned.

**Vs 12** – Paul sends greetings to “**workers in the Lord**” specifically **(Person #15) Trypaaena** and **(Person #16) Tryphosa**.

**(Person #15) Trypaaena**. Her name means “**luxurious**” or “**dainty**” This is the only place in the New Testament where Trypaaena is mentioned.

**(Person #16) Tryphosa**. Her name means “**luxuriating**” or “**delicate.**” This is the only place in the New Testament where she is mentioned. **Some believe Trypaaena and Typhosa were sisters, maybe twins.**

**Also, in Vs 12** – Paul sends greetings to his beloved **(Person #17) Persis** “who has worked hard in the Lord.”

This is **another Christian woman** in Rome, her name means “**a Persian woman.**” This is the only place in the New Testament where Persis is mentioned.

**Vs 13** – Paul sends greetings to **(Person #18) Rufus** (chosen of the Lord) and to **(Person #19) Rufus’s mother** who Paul does not name, but calls her a mother to himself as well!

**(Person #17) Rufus**. The name means “**red.**” The name Rufus is used twice in the New Testament:  
*“And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.” (Mr 15:21 ESV)*

**We cannot be sure, but since Mark took the time to tell us that Simon of Cyrene was the father of Alexander and Rufus. It is likely that Rufus was a known believer whose dad “Simon of Cyrene” had carried Jesus’s cross.**

**Rufus is “chosen in the Lord.”** The Greek word translated chosen is **ἐκλεκτός (eklektos)**. Can I remind you that like Rufus, if you are a believer in Christ, God chose you before the foundation of the world!

*9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Pet 2:9; ESV).*

**(Person #19) Rufus’s mother**, is not named. But if we understand this right, she is the wife of the man who carried Jesus’ cross to Calvary! This is the only place in the New Testament where Rufus’ mother is listed.

**Vs 14** - Paul sends greetings to **(Person #20) Asyncritus**, **(Person #21) Phlegon**, **(Person #22) Hermes**, **(Person #23) Patrobas**, **(Person #24) Hermas**, and an unstated number of **brothers** who are with them.

**Is this another home church?** These are all common slave names.

**(Person #20) Asyncritus**. The name means “**incomparable.**”

This is a “*wish name*” and was a common name for a slave. This is the only place in the New Testament where **Asyncritus** is mentioned.

**(Person #21) Phlegon**. The name means “**burning.**” This was a common name for **dogs** and **slaves!** This is the only place in the New Testament where **Phlegon** is mentioned.

**(Person #22) Hermes**. His name means “**Mercury.**” This is a very common slave name. Hermes was the messenger god who carried out the orders of Zeus. What slave owner would not want their slave named

Hermes, simply due to the implication! This is the only place in the New Testament where Hermes is mentioned.

**(Person #23) Patrobas.** The name means “**paternal.**” Again, during this time this was a common name for slaves. This is the only place in the New Testament where Patrobas is mentioned.

**(Person #24) Hermas.** The name means “**herald of the gods.**” This was a common name for slaves as well. This is the only place in the New Testament where **Hermas** is mentioned.

The name Hermas is mentioned one other time in the New Testament. It was a name that they gave to Paul when he healed a man in Lystra who had been crippled from his mother’s womb (Acts 14).

**Vs 15** – Paul sends greetings to **(Person #25) Philologus**, to **(Person #26) Julia**, to **(Person #27) Nereus**, and to **(Person #28) Nereus’s sister** (unnamed) and to **(Person #29) Olympas** (as well as unnumbered saints who are with them). Since it is plural, we are talking about at least two and likely more.

**Again, is this a reference to a home church?**

**(Person #25) Philologus.** The name means “**talkative**” or “**learned.**” This was also a common name for slaves. This is the only place that Philologus is named in the New Testament.

**(Person #26) Julia.** Her name means “**soft haired.**” Julia is the most common name for a woman during these times. This is the only place in the New Testament where Julia is named.

The use of “and” in the Greek likely points to a connection between Philologus and Julia. **Some believe that Julia may have been the wife of Philologus, we cannot be sure.**

**(Person #27) Nereus.** The name means “**lamp.**” This is a common slave name too. This is the only place in the New Testament where Nereus is named.

**(Person #28) Nereus’s sister.** Her name is not given. This is the only place in the New Testament where Nereus’s sister is mentioned.

**(Person #29) Olympas.** The name means “**heavenly.**” As you might imagine this is also a very common slave name. This is the only place in the New Testament where Olympas is named.

**Vs 16** – A reminder of how we should greet one another.

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*17 I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. 18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. 19 For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

**Vs 17-18 - I appeal to you brothers. Watch out** (the Greek word is **mark** or **note**) those who cause divisions (**dissention**) and create obstacles (things that **cause stumbling**) contrary to the doctrine which you have learned. **And avoid them.**

Most scholar believe when Paul wrote “the doctrine which you have learned” he is not referring to people who are difficult to get along with, but rather he is referring to **false teachers.**

**Equally, there are many areas where we can agree to disagree, but on the fundamentals, we should be united!**

He is referring to not “associating” with false teachers in such a manner that would **give the appearance of you supporting their work** and/or **position.**

Jesus said it this way:

*“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (Mt 7:15 ESV)*

**But for these who were causing divisions and offenses.** Paul make a few conclusions:

- 1) **They are not serving the Lord Christ**
- 2) **They are serving their own appetites**
- 3) **Through “smooth talk” and “flattery” they attempt to deceive the hearts of the naïve**

*“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1Jo 4:1 ESV)*

**Vs 19 - He then compliments them on their obedience to the gospel** and how it is **known even outside Rome.**

We should not think that Paul is using flattery, but rather he is highlighting the good things he has heard about the believers in Rome. He then states your obedience is known to all, and that causes him to rejoice and be glad.

He then tells them: I want you to be wise to what is good and simple or innocent concerning evil. I want you to be professionals at doing good and a beginner (**pure amateurs**) at doing evil.

**Vs 20 -** Here another title for God, He is the **God of Peace**, he is the one who executed the plan that would make peace, and indeed He is the God who desires for us to be at peace with Him.

Notice the juxtaposition: **The God of Peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet. Relax, let God handle it!**

Then Paul’s signature: **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

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*21 ¶ Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. 22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you. 24 25 ¶ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the*

*revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

**We now transition to the 8 other believers, along with Paul, who are in Corinth sending greetings to those in Rome!**

**Vs 21- Now Paul sends greetings from Corinth to Rome. From (Person #30) Timothy** (my fellow worker). His name means “**honoring God.**” Timothy was Paul’s protégé.

He was from Derbe or Lystra, both cities that are in Lycaonia, **Ac 16:1 14:6**. His father was a Greek, but his mother was a Jew, **2Ti 1:5 3:15**. The instructions and prayers of his mother and grandmother, and the preaching of Paul during his first visit to Lystra, A D 48, resulted in the conversion of Timothy and his introduction to the ministry. He witnessed the sufferings of Paul, and Paul loved Timothy like a son in the faith, **1Ti 1:2 2Ti 3:10,11**.

From **(Person #31) Lucius**. His name means “**bright white light.**”

He is mentioned twice in the New Testament. Here and in Acts 13:1. What we know about him is that he was a man from Cyrene who was a prophet and a teacher in Antioch.

From **(Person #32) – Jason**. His name means “**one who will heal.**” He is mentioned five times in the New Testament: Acts 17:5, 17:6, 17:9; Rom 16:21.

Jason received Paul and Silas, (Acts 17:5-9) whom the mob therefore, after assaulting his house, dragged before the magistrates. Jason had to give security before he was let go. In **Ro 16:21** Paul sends Jason’s salutations from Corinth, calling him his “kinsman” or fellow tribesman, or fellow countryman.

And from **(Person #33) Sosipater** (who are Paul’s kinsmen). His name means “**savior of his father.**” He is only mentioned here in the New Testament.

**Vs 22 -** Here the writer **(Person #34) Tertius**, lifts his head, and with his pen identifies himself and says I too, the physical hand that wrote this letter from Corinth, greet you in the Lord.

His name means “**third.**” **This is the only place he is mentioned in the New Testament. Can you imagine what it was like to write this amazing epistle.**

**Vs 23 -** Next Paul sends greetings from the man who is hosting him in Corinth **(Person #35) Gaius** greets you as does the “**whole church**”, this would be in Corinth.

His name means “**lord.**” There are likely a few different men with the name Gaius in the New Testament. The name is mentioned five times: Acts 19:29, 20:4, Rom 16:23, ICor 1:14; and IIIJoh 1:1.

Also, **(Person #36) Erastus**, who is the City Treasurer (Tax Collector) greets you. His name means “**beloved.**” He is mentioned three times in the New Testament: Acts 19:22; Rom 16:23; and IITim 4:20.

A Christian friend and fellow-laborer of Paul, a Corinthian, who was the city treasurer. He followed Paul to Ephesus, and attended Timothy in a mission to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). He was again at Corinth when Paul wrote to the Romans, here in Ro 16:23; and remained there when Paul went as a prisoner to Rome, **2Ti 4:20**.

Then (**Person #37**) Quartus greets you!

His name means **“fourth.”** This is the only place where his name is mentioned in the New Testament.

**Vs 24** – This verse is only in the Textus Receptus (KJV and NKJV):

Many scholars believed this was added later by a scribe and turns up in more recent copies of the letter, but is not found in older (closer to original copies of this letter). Thus, this verse is removed from the text here in the ESV. **These words are an exact repeat of what is contained in Vs 20.**

If this interest you, here are a few websites to “chase this rabbit”:

- <https://carm.org/king-james-onlyism/was-romans-1624-removed-from-modern-bibles/#The%20Manuscript%20Evidence%20For%20Romans%2016:24>
- <http://www.westminsterreformedchurch.org/Sermons/10-14-2001.htm>
- <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A407/the-mysterious-case-of-missing-scripture>

**Vs 25-26** - Closing, with the final prayer, **in honor** of the one who is able to strengthen (establish) you, according to “my” gospel and the preaching of Jesus the Messiah, according to the revelations of the mystery, that was kept secret for long ages.

The Mystery of the gospel, hidden away in the Old Testament, but always the plan and the plan that is now revealed, that is now disclosed

**This mystery of the gospel** Paul says in verse 26 has **now been disclosed, it has now been made manifest, it has now been revealed. Although it was always there in the prophetic writings.**

This gospel, tucked away in the Old Testament, but revealed in the New is now being made known to all nations (even citizens of Rome in 58 AD).

This has been happening and continues to happen according to the **“command”** of the eternal God, with the purpose of bring about obedience to the faith.

That people would repent of their sins, place faith in the finished work of the Messiah, and join the throng of worshippers of the eternal God!

**Vs 27 -This God who throughout history planned the gospel, planned to save men and women, Jews and Gentiles, by faith in the finished work of His son is the...**

**Only “wise” God.** In a world of endless gods and goddesses, to the only **God who alone possesses all wisdom. To the True and Living God.**

To Jesus, be glory now and forevermore throughout all eternity, worlds without end, to HIM, the name that is above every name.

**The book of Romans could not end in a more fitting way, as God’s glory is to be the theme of our lives, so Paul reminds us, glory to God, now and forever, through Jesus the Messiah!**

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