

LESSON 32: ROMANS 16
JUNE 2, 2021

OVERVIEW

- . The bearer of the letter and the Christians in Rome – Romans 16:1-16
- . A sudden warning and an encouraging promise – Romans 16:17-20
- . The church at Corinth – Romans 16:21-27

THE BEARER OF THE LETTER AND THE CHRISTIANS IN ROME
ROMANS 16:1-16

- . The last chapter of Romans contains the names of many people in Rome to whom the apostle Paul was writing and other names of people who were in Corinth with Paul and who joined him in sending greetings
 - . Thirty-three names in all – twenty-four in Rome, nine in Corinth
 - . Paul was intensely interested in people and had developed deep personal friendships
 - . At the heart of the gospel is relationship
 - . Paul's relationships are a manifestation of his love for Christ
- . The bearer of the letter – Romans 16:1-2
 - . Phoebe was the bearer of the letter to the church in Rome
 - . The only time she is mentioned in scripture is here
 - . She had become a Christian, was a servant of the church at Cenchrea (the eastern port of the city of Corinth), and had helped many people
 - . Phoebe probably had people traveling with her because it was not safe for women to travel alone
 - . She must have been wealthy, because it took money to travel
- . A portrait of the early church – Romans 16:3-16
 - . Priscilla and Aquila
 - . Mentioned six different places in the New Testament
 - . Aquila was a Jew from Pontus who had settled in Rome but was forced to flee the city with Priscilla when Claudius had expelled the Jews from the capital
 - . Aquila was a tentmaker like Paul and this is what brought them together
 - . When Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, this fine couple went with him
 - . They stayed on in Ephesus where they were used to explain the gospel to Apollos (Acts 18:24-26)
 - . By the time wrote this letter they had returned to Rome

- . Aquila and Priscilla had a sound knowledge of the gospel, great ability, outstanding courage and they were well known to the churches at Rome and elsewhere
- . Aquila and Priscilla had a group of believers meeting at their home in Rome
 - . In those days there were several house churches in Rome
- . Epenetus
 - . Dear friend of Paul's - first convert to Christ in the province of Asia
- . Mary
 - . There is no reason to associate this Mary with any of the other Mary's in the New Testament
 - . She was from Rome and had come to Corinth about the time Paul had first arrived there
 - . She bore no title but possessed the gift of "helps"
 - 1 Corinthians 12:28
- . Andronicus and Junias
 - . Paul says four things about these two people: they were his relatives, they had been in prison with him, they were outstanding among the apostles and they were in Christ before he was
 - . Calling them relatives could mean simply that they were fellow Jews
- . Ampliatus
 - . Was a common slave name
 - . In the Roman church there were no distinctions based upon whether one was a slave or free
- . Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles and Herodion
 - . We know nothing about these men other than what is read here
- . The households of Aristobulus and Narcissus
 - . Neither men are greeted personally by Paul, which is why we count twenty-four names rather than twenty-six
 - . Paul speaks only of their households
 - . In Rome the word household not only describes a man's immediate family, it included his household domestics or slaves as well
- . Tryphena and Tryphosa
 - . These two female names come from a root that means "to live delicately or daintily"
- . Persis
 - . Persis was old - her hard working days over
 - . Although she could no longer work she was highly regarded
 - . Paul calls her "my dear friend" actually "the beloved"
- . Rufus and his mother
 - . Rufus was part of the crucifixion account
 - . Mark mentions that Simon, a Cyrenian man, was forced to carry Christ's cross when He Himself was found to be too weak to do it
 - . Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus
 - . Mark's gospel was especially written for the church at Rome

- . Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them
 - . All we know about them is that they either lived or worked together in some way
- . Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them
 - . An interesting name in this final collection is Nereus who was an aristocrat and niece of Domitilla who would go on to become emperor
 - . Nereus could be the very person through whom the gospel entered this prominent household

A SUDDEN WARNING AND AN ENCOURAGING PROMISE – ROMANS 16:17-20

- . Just when we think Paul is wrapping up he gives this unexpected warning about people who might “cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned”
 - . Then, as if to explain what he is talking about, he adds “I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil
 - . His fears were not groundless
 - . When he finally did get to Rome this is exactly what he found there
- . Following Paul’s warning he gives a twofold promise that must have been encouraging to his readers
 - . First, “the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet”
 - . It is God who will crush Satan but He will do it under your feet as we embrace what is good and shun what is evil
 - . When we live by the truth of God’s word and do what is right and good, God is glorified and Satan is shown to be a failure
 - . Second, a great benediction, promising God’s blessing on His people
 - . “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you”
 - . Grace is a wonderful word, the most wonderful in all of God’s word

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH – ROMANS 16:21-27

- . While writing this letter from Corinth, Paul had been staying at the house of Gaius
 - . Gaius was a Roman nobleman and a Christian
 - . The man had furnished Paul with a secretary who had been writing down Paul’s words as he dictated the letter
 - . Paul was now coming to an end and the Christians, in Corinth, who had been following the progress of the letter, were included in Paul’s greetings
 - . Timothy
 - . Paul’s young understudy whom he had picked up in Lystra on his second missionary journey (Acts 16)
 - . Timothy had a Greek father but a Jewish mother, making him a Jew

- . Paul used him to build up and strengthen the gentile churches he himself founded earlier – Paul thought highly of Timothy
- . Lucius, Jason and Sosipater
 - . Sosipater is from Berea and accompanied Paul through Greece on his way to Jerusalem
 - . Jason was the name of Paul's host when he was in Thessalonica
 - . Lucius may be one of the leaders of the church at Antioch
- . Tertius
 - . A slave name that means three
 - . Tertius was the number-three slave in Gaius's household
 - . Tertius was the one taking Paul's dictation and added a greeting of his own – "I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord" – Romans 16:22
- . Gaius and Erastus
 - . Gaius, Paul's host, must have been a rich man at Corinth, seeing that he was hosting Paul and had at least four slaves
 - . He was probably the Gaius Paul baptized in 1 Corinthians 1:14
 - . He was probably one of Paul's first converts in Corinth
 - . The church at Corinth probably met at Gaius' house
 - . Erastus was a public official – "the city's director of public works"
- . Quartus, a brother
 - . Quartus was the number four slave and least significant of the many people who gathered around Paul that day
- . There is no better picture in all the Bible of genuine Christian fellowship than this snapshot of the believers in Corinth
 - . They simply ignored the differences dividing the rough Roman world and came together as followers of Jesus Christ
- . A doxology (expression of praise) rather than a benediction (blessing) ends Romans
 - . "To him who is able to establish you by the gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ"
 - . The subject of Romans is the gospel, and a doxology is the proper response to this great good news from God
 - . The gospel is neither human in its origin nor its power
 - . It is not a new insight into human nature
 - . It is something that has its origins in God, is accomplished by God and has God's own glory as its goal
 - . Nothing in all this world is great than this gospel
 - . We can only say in conclusion, as Paul rightly does, "to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen! – Romans 16:27