

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

October 11, 2023

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

The Duty Section (Chapters 12 – 16)

Final Remarks

Text – Romans 16

Introduction

In this final chapter Paul will send his regards to certain people in the Church of Rome. He also refers to many of his companions on His third journey. Paul was in Corinth when the letter was written, near the end of the third missionary journey. Many of these people referenced are unknown and are referred to only here in Romans 16. Some of the folks have a little more notoriety. I have included here some biographical information about a few of the people referenced in this chapter.

Note - Most of the biographical information is not original to me but was taken from a study done in a publication called *The Christian Shepherd*. I have done my best to make sure the information is accurate. I do not know much about this publication, outside of what I have included here. I cannot therefore endorse them, but I have found this article to be very helpful.

Another good source for biographical information on Bible characters is: *All the Men of the Bible* by Herbert Lockyer.

Don't miss the wonderful principle in vs. 17 – 21 that is nestled in-between all these names.

I. The People in Rome (vs. 1 – 16)

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That 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." (Romans 16:1 - 2)

PHEBE "radiant"

A Christian woman commended by the apostle to the saints at **Rome** as 'a servant of the church.' He desired that they should assist her in anything in which she needed their aid. She had been a succourer of many and of Paul. (Rom. 16: 1)

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."

(Romans 16:3 - 4)

PRISCILLA "old fashioned, ancient"

She was the wife of Aquila. She and her husband are called by Paul "my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus." Paul met them at **Corinth**, and they traveled with him to **Ephesus**, where they were enabled to expound unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly. Priscilla is three times mentioned before her husband when God would emphasize the role of a godly woman. (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19)

AQUILA "an eagle or eagle-hearted"

He was a converted Jew of Pontus, husband of Priscilla, whom Paul first met at Corinth. (Acts 18:2) He and Paul worked together as tentmakers. Aquila and Priscilla had been driven from Rome as Jews by an edict of the emperor Claudius. They traveled with Paul to Ephesus, where they were able to help Apollos spiritually leading him beyond the gospel of John the Baptist. (Acts 18: 18-26) They were still at Ephesus when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 16: 19); and were at Rome when the epistle to the saints there, was written, in which Paul said they had laid down their necks for his life, and that to them all the churches, with Paul, gave thanks. (Rom. 16: 3, 4) In Paul's last epistle he still sends his greeting to them. (2 Tim. 4: 19) It is not clear whether Aquila and Priscilla were already Christians before meeting Paul, or were converted by his preaching.

Altogether, Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned **six times** in the New Testament (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19), and the reader will note an interesting fact: that in the odd-numbered mentions, Aquila's name comes first, while in the even-numbered mentions, Priscilla's comes first.

"Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." (Romans 16:5-7)

ANDRONICUS "man of victory"

He was a kinsman of Paul who abode at Rome and who with Junia were his fellow prisoners, and of whom he said they were in Christ before him. (Rom. 16: 7)

JUNIA "youthful"

He was a believer and fellow prisoner and kinsman of Paul, of note among the apostles, and who was in Christ before Paul. (Rom. 16: 7)

"Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved." (Romans 16:8-9)

URBANE "of the city" He was a Christian at Rome, described by Paul as 'our helper in Christ,' to whom a salutation was sent. (Rom. 16: 9)

"Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:10-16)

II. A Principle to Own (vs. 17 – 20)

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 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. For 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. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (Romans 16:17-20)

We are supposed to be able to spot and avoid the people who will distract us from our mission, but we are also supposed to follow those that will strengthen us and lead us in the right direction:

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." (Philippians 3:17)

III. The People Back Home (vs. 21 – 27)

"Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you." (Romans 16:21)

TIMOTHY "honouring God"

In Timothy Paul saw one who appreciated the sacredness of the work of a minister; who was not appalled at the prospect of suffering and persecution; and who was willing to be taught. Timothy's father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess. From a child he had known the Scriptures. The piety that he saw in his mixed home life was sound and sensible but likely provided a need for decision. The faith of his mother and his grandmother in the Word of God was to him a constant reminder of the blessing in doing God's will. The word of God was the rule by which these two godly women had guided Timothy.

Paul saw that Timothy was faithful, steadfast, and true, and he chose him as a companion in labor and travel. Those who had taught Timothy in his childhood were rewarded by seeing the son of their care linked in close fellowship with the great apostle. Timothy was a mere youth when he was chosen by God to be a teacher, but his principles had been so established by his early education that he was fitted to take his place as Paul's helper. And though young, he bore his responsibilities with Christian meekness.

As a precautionary measure, Paul wisely advised Timothy to be circumcised - not that God required it, but to remove from the minds of the Jews that which might be an objection to Timothy's ministry. In his work Paul was to journey from city to city, in many lands, and often he would have opportunity to preach Christ in Jewish synagogues, as well as in other places of assembly. If it should be known that one of his companions in labor was uncircumcised, his work might be greatly hindered by the prejudice and bigotry of the Jews. Everywhere the apostle met determined opposition and severe persecution. He desired to bring to his Jewish brethren, as well as to the Gentiles, knowledge of the gospel, and therefore he sought, so far as was consistent with the faith, to remove every pretext for opposition. Yet while he conceded this much to Jewish prejudice, he believed and taught circumcision or uncircumcision to be nothing and the gospel of Christ everything.

Paul loved Timothy, his "own son in the faith." (1 Timothy 1:2) The great apostle often drew the younger disciple out as they traveled from place to place as he could see Timothy was quite timid and he carefully taught him how to do successful work. In his work, Timothy constantly sought Paul's advice and instruction. The Holy Spirit found in him one who could be molded and fashioned.

From **Lystra** he accompanied Paul into Macedonia, but he and Silas stayed behind at Berea. They joined Paul at Athens, and Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica, and brought his report to Paul at Corinth. (Acts 17: 14; 1 Thess. 3: 1, 2)

During Paul's stay at Ephesus Timothy was with him, and was sent to Corinth, but was again with Paul in Macedonia when the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written. He was also with Paul when the Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth. When Paul returned to Asia through Macedonia, Timothy waited for him at Troas. (Acts 20: 3-5) He was with Paul at Rome when he wrote his epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Philippians. At some unknown place and time Timothy suffered imprisonment, for Scripture records his release. (Heb. 13: 23) Paul besought him to remain at Ephesus to warn the brethren against false teachers (1 Tim. 1: 3); and in the Second Epistle he begs him to use diligence to come to him, to bring with him Mark, and the cloak he had left at Troas, the books and the parchments.

Thus, to the end of Paul's life his dearly-loved Timothy was a help and comfort to him, and he availed himself of his devoted labours. He bore testimony of him, that when all were seeking their own, he had no one like-minded with himself but Timothy (Phil. 2:20); and when Paul's course was nearly run, he found in Timothy one to whom he could commit the work, instructing him as to the order of the house of God, and his behaviour in it. The apostle warned and admonished him, exhorted and charged him, with the affectionate fervour of a spiritual father, and even cared for the health of his body, advising him to take a little wine for his frequent infirmities.

LUCIUS "light, bright, white"

1. He was a prophet or teacher of **Cyrene**, one of those at **Antioch** who, after prayer and fasting, laid their hands on Barnabas and Paul and sent them on the first missionary journey. (Acts 13: 1 – 2) He was a kinsman of Paul whose salutation was sent to **Rome**. (Rom. 16: 21)

JASON "healer"

He was the host of Paul and Silas at **Thessalonica**, whose house was attacked by the Jews, and he was also arrested. (Acts 17:5-9) Perhaps he is the same as the one at **Rome** described as a kinsman of Paul. (Rom. 16: 21)

SOPATER "saving father"

A believer of **Berea** who accompanied Paul from Greece into Asia. (Acts 20:4) The name **Sosipater** appears nowhere else in the New Testament. Luke even calls him Sopater, which is the nickname for Sosipater, while Paul calls him by his full name.

"I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord." (Romans 16:22)

TERTIUS “the third”

He was the Christian who wrote the Epistle to the Romans at Paul's dictation, and who sent his own salutation to the saints. (Rom. 16: 22)

"Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother." (Romans 16:23)

GAIUS “on earth”

1. Christian of **Macedonia**, and companion of Paul. He with Aristarchus was seized and carried into the theatre during the uproar at **Ephesus**. (Acts 19: 29)

2. Convert of **Derbe** in Lycaonia, and companion of Paul. (Acts 20: 4)

3. Christian at **Corinth** whom Paul baptized, who was his 'host' and of the whole church. (Rom. 16: 23; 1 Cor. 1: 14)

4. Convert of John, whose walk in the truth and in love was commended by the apostle, and to whom he addressed his third Epistle. (3 John 1)

It is not clear if these are four different people or not.

Gaius and Aristarchus were taken by a large mob of **Ephesians**. Gaius was the name of a Greek man who was associated with the apostle Paul during parts of Paul's missionary journeys. Some are of the opinion that there was more than one man named Gaius associated with Paul (i.e. one from Derbe, another from Corinth - see verses below), a possibility that is not clearly ruled out by the Scriptures. One fact is certain, if there was more than one Gaius, they all were believers who were faithful and trusted friends of Paul and their fellow saints. Gaius was baptized by Paul: "I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius" (1 Corinthians 1:14)

During Paul's third missionary journey, Gaius was accosted by a raving mob of idol worshippers, who were incited mainly by the craftsmen who manufactured and sold religious idols. (Acts 19:29)

Paul was staying with Gaius at Corinth when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans: "Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you." (Romans 16:23)

ERASTUS “beloved”

He is one who ministered to Paul and was sent by Paul into **Macedonia**, and later on is found abiding at **Corinth**. (Acts 19: 22; 2 Tim. 4: 20) It is likely that he is the same one who is mentioned to be the chamberlain or treasurer of Corinth. (Rom. 16: 23)

IV. Final Remarks

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now 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, But 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: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." (Romans 16:24-27)