

Romans

Final Remarks, Last Exhortation

June 12, 2016

I. Final Remarks, Last Exhortation

A. Romans 16 concludes Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, and it also concludes his final remarks.

1. There is one exhortation in this section dealing with misleading teachers and their teaching.
2. Because of the nature of this chapter, we will work our way through it on a verse by verse basis – and I will do my best to accurately say the names that are contained in this chapter.

B. Prayer

II. Final Remarks, Last Exhortation

A. Romans 16:1-2 . . . I commend to you (to commend in this context is to recommend as worthy of acceptance and support) our sister Phoebe (Phē'bē), who is a servant (minister, possibly deaconess) of the church which is at Cenchrea (Cěn'chrě-â); [2] that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints (treat her as a fellow Christian in good standing with God and the church), and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

B. Now in the next 13 verses, Paul asks the Christians in Rome to greet 25 people that he names, which means he knows these folks personally.

1. But it is of some interest to note that Paul does not greet any of them himself, but rather asks for them to be greeted.
2. However, in the list of 25 names, Paul does single some out for special commendations and honor.

C. Romans 16:3-5a . . . Greet Prisca (Prī-cī'lâ) and Aquila (Ăq'uī-lâ) (converted Jews from Italy – possibly the city of Rome – who were living in Corinth when Paul met them – which was near the end of Paul's second missionary journey), my fellow workers in Christ Jesus (see Acts 18:1-21), [4] who for my life risked their own necks (we don't know what Paul is referring to) to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; [5] also greet the church that is in their house (at this time, they lived in Rome and some Christians gathered in their home

for meals, prayer, teaching, etc., which may mean the Christians in the church in Rome met in various homes rather than in one location).

- D. Romans 16:5b . . . Greet Epaenetus (Ĕ-pæn´ē-tus), my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia
1. In Acts 16:6, we are told that the Holy Spirit forbid Paul to speak the gospel in Asia, but that happened at a specific time during a specifically planned trip.
 2. However, the scripture makes it clear that there were many other times when Paul spent time in Asia, and Ĕ-pæn´ē-tus was the first convert from that region. Whether he was Paul's convert or was converted in some other way, we don't know. But we do know that Paul was committed to going where the gospel had not been preached, so it seems reasonable to assume he was Paul's first convert in that region of Asia.)
- E. Romans 16:6 . . . Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.
- F. Romans 16:7 . . . Greet Andronicus (An-drō-nī´cus) and Junias (Jū´niā), my kinsmen (it is not likely that this word "kinsmen" is used to speak of Paul's relatives, but rather, as in Romans 9:3, it refers to his fellow Jews) and my fellow prisoners (they were in prison with Paul, who, according to his own testimony in 2 Corinthians 11:23, was in prison some number of times) who are outstanding among the apostles (it is unclear from the choice of words and context if Paul is saying these two Christians are numbered with the apostles and are outstanding apostles, or if Paul is saying they are well respected and regarded as outstanding Christians by the apostles), who also were in Christ before me (they came to faith in Christ before Paul did).
- G. Romans 16:8-12a . . . Greet Ampliatus (Am-plī´ātus), my beloved in the Lord. [9] Greet Urbanus (Ūr´bānus), our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys (Stā´chys) my beloved. [10] Greet Apelles (Ā-pěl´lēs), the approved in Christ (meaning he has been tested and found faithful). Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus (Ār-īs-tō-bū´lus). [11] Greet Herodion (Hě-rō´dī-on), my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus (Nār-sīs´sus), who are in the Lord (there was a well-known Christian of this name who was put to death by King Agrippa, and this may explain why Paul is wanting the Christians in Rome to greet those

who have become Christians in his home). [12] Greet Tryphaena (Trī-phē'na) and Tryphosa (Trī-phō'sa), workers in the Lord.

- H. Romans 16:12b-13 . . . Greet Persis (Pěr'sis) the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord. [13] Greet Rufus (Rū'fus), a choice man in the Lord (meaning highly respected as a Christian), also his mother and mine (Rū'fus' mother was not Paul's biological mother, but it seems she was like a mother to Paul while he was in her village or town.)
- I. Romans 16:14-15 . . . Greet Asyncritus (Ā-sŷn'crī-tus), Phlegon (Phlē'-gon), Hermes (Her'mēs), Patrobas (Pāt'-rō-bā, Hermas (Her'mās) and the brethren with them. [15] Greet Philologus (Phī-lōl'o-gus) and Julia, Nereus (Nē're-us) and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.
- J. Romans 16:16-27 . . . Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
 - 1. The greeting kiss is not unique to the Body of Christ, though in the Western World, few churches practice it today.
 - a. In the early church, and in some Christian groups to this day, this is a common greeting.
 - b. Though historically and in most settings today, it is not a kiss on the lips, but rather on the cheek, and men do not greet the women this way and the women do not greet the men this way.
 - 2. This "holy kiss" greeting is mentioned in three other places in the Bible
 - a. 1 Corinthians 16:20 . . . All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 13:12 . . . Greet one another with a holy kiss.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:26 . . . Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.
- K. Romans 16:17-19 . . . Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions (That is, vigilantly watch them so that you can stop them before they cause trouble. A dissension is a disagreement of opinion that often includes belittling, anger, and hostility, and just as often leads to damaged relationships and division.) and hindrances (This is the same Greek word that Paul used in Romans 14:13 where we saw that a hindrance – or a stumbling block – is the part of a trap to which the bait is attached, and which when touched, springs the trap. In other words, those who cause these hindrances are trapping and leading astray

those who listen to their false teaching or misrepresentations of scripture, with the goal of gaining a following, which in turn causes division within the church.) contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. [18] For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting (Paul is describing the character of those who mislead by teaching something other than or in addition to the true gospel). [19] For the report of your obedience has reached to all (Paul is affirming their obedience to the gospel that he taught them – note Romans 6:17-18, “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”); therefore I am rejoicing over you (though Paul affirms their obedience to what they have been taught, he still sees the need to warn them about false teachers and misleading teaching), but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil (Paul is saying that misleading teaching is evil).

L. There are a number of other scriptures that speak to both our need and our responsibility to beware of misleading teaching and teachers. And to reinforce this message here in Romans 16, I want us to read through these additional scriptures.

1. 1 Timothy 1:3-5 . . . As I (Paul) urged you (Timothy) upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, [4] nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration (government, rule) of God which is by faith. [5] But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
2. 1 Timothy 6:3-5 . . . If anyone advocates (teaches, pushes, supports) a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words (teaching that is free of defect or ulterior motives), [that is] those of our Lord Jesus Christ (Paul is saying that the sound teaching he teaches came from Jesus Christ whose teaching is indisputably free of defect or ulterior motives), and with the doctrine conforming to godliness (any teaching that does not promote a godly life, or in some way makes room for ungodly living is false or misleading teaching), [4] he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words (notice Paul’s characterization of such teachers and their followers), out of which

arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, [5] and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth (notice the outcome of misleading teaching), who suppose that godliness is a means of gain (personal gain of some kind, such as fame or fortune).

3. Matthew 7:15-18 . . . Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves (notice Jesus' characterization of misleading and false teachers). [16] You will know them by their fruits (their behavior and the result of their ministry as seen in their followers). Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? [17] So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. [18] A good tree (teacher) cannot produce bad fruit (ungodly Christians – if there is such a thing), nor can a bad tree produce good fruit (godly Christians).
4. Galatians 1:6-9 . . . I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; [7] which is really not another (it is neither the gospel nor a form of it); only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! [9] As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!
5. Titus 3:9-11 . . . But avoid foolish controversies (debates or quarrels on issues where there is no clear answer, only speculation and personal opinion) and genealogies (seeking to discover who your ancestors were because it was believed their spiritual quality or standing with God made you a more worthy or less worthy Christian) and strife and disputes about the Law (for example, which laws are for today) for they are unprofitable and worthless. [10] Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, [11] knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned (again note the characterization of the person who accepts as true a teaching that is not according to Christ's teaching and the truth of God's word).
6. 2 Peter 2:1-3 . . . But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. [2] Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; [3] and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;

their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

7. 2 John 1:10-11 . . . If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; [11] for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds (the misleading teacher is characterized as committing evil deeds).
8. To summarize, I want to point out three truths that exist in these portions of scripture.
 - a. First, there is one gospel truth, one word of God, and it is up to us as individual Christians and the church as a whole to protect that truth and hold to that truth. (Note the practice of the church up to M. Luther to verify current teaching by finding out if it matches the teaching of the disciples and early church.)
 - b. Second, those who move away from that truth by bringing in non-gospel truth are characterized as evil, and we – individually and as a church – are to reject them and their teaching, and have nothing more to do with them, unless they repent and return to sound teaching.
 - c. Third, everyone in the church (from the wisest of the church leaders to the most average Christian in attendance) is tasked with the job of remaining vigilant against misleading and false teaching and teachers. In other words, this job is for all of us!
 - (1) Therefore, it is important that you are able to stand on your own two feet, so to speak, in being able to identify misleading and false teaching and turning away from such teachers.
 - (2) This requires each of us to study God’s word enough to know the true gospel so we can easily identify any false gospel.
- M. Romans 16:20 . . . The God of peace (the God who makes and sustains peace within the church, as opposed to those who, in the name of God, stir up strife and division) will soon crush Satan under your feet (to crush Satan is to break him to pieces by trampling him under your feet – and Paul says the destroying feet are those of the Christians – in other words, the very people Satan is seeking to destroy, will one day destroy him). The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- N. Romans 16:21 . . . Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius (Lū’cius) and Jason and Sosipater (Sō-sīp’a-tēr), my kinsmen.

- O. Romans 16:22 . . . I, Tertius (Těr'tius) (Paul's recording secretary), who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.
- P. Romans 16:23 . . . Gaius (Gā-ius), host to me and to the whole church, greets you (there seems to be some church history that supports the idea that Gā-ius was rich enough to have a huge home and hospitable enough to take Christians in who needed a place to stay). Erastus (Ē-rās'tus), the city treasurer (most probably in Corinth) greets you, and Quartus (Quāt-tus), the brother.
- Q. Romans 16:24 . . . The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
- R. Romans 16:25-27 . . . Now to Him who is able to establish you (That is, build your faith and godly life. And how does He do this? He does it three ways.) (1) according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ (Paul is saying that his gospel taken together with the teaching of Jesus Christ is able to build us up in the faith and produces godly living), (2) according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, [26] but now is manifested (This is most probably a reference to Jesus' explanation of how the OT spoke of Him, and how the disciples and the early church used the OT to develop the teachings and practices of NT Christianity. This means Paul teaching is authenticated by the revelation of what the OT says for the NT age), (3) and by (according to) the Scriptures of the prophets (another reference to the OT authenticating Paul's gospel), [which] according to the commandment of the eternal God (Matthew 28:19-20), has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith (Paul started with this in Romans 1:5, "through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake"), [27] to the ONLY wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.