

Romans 16

Rom 1:16 (NKJV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The Wrath of God

Rom 1:18 (NKJV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Rom 3:20 (NKJV) Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The Grace of God

Rom 3:21-23 (NKJV) But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Rom 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 6:22-23 (NKJV) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:1-2 (NKJV) There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

The Plan of God

Rom 10:1 (NKJV) Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

The Will of God

Rom 12:1-2 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Rom 13:1 (NKJV) Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Rom 14:19 (NKJV) Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

Rom 15:1-2 (NKJV) We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.

Paul clearly needed other believers. It's God's will that Christians stay connected with one another.

- I. A Reference for Phoebe 16:1-2
- II. Greetings to Paul's Friends 16:3-16
- III. Warnings about False Teachers 16:17-20
- IV. Greetings from Paul's Companions 16:21-24
- V. Glory to God 16:25-27

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- I. A Reference for Phoebe 16:1-2
 - A. *Cenchrea* was a port city near Corinth. Paul is probably in Corinth as he writes this letter. Phoebe is likely the one delivering it to Rome.
 - B. Paul asks the believers in Rome to treat Phoebe well.
 - i. Because of who they are – saints.
 - ii. Because of who she is.
 - 1. A *sister* in Christ. This highlights the family relationship we have with other believers – even from other places.
 - 2. A *servant* or *deaconess* of the church. The word *servant* could be used in a general way or a more official way, as a title like *deacon*. If Paul is using it officially, then this illustrates that there were women in the early church who had this position; Phoebe was a *deaconess*.
 - 3. A *helper of many* Some people think it's demeaning to take the role of a helper. Phoebe didn't think so – and Paul honors her for it.
- Cassie is our version of Phoebe, the servant and helper of many who gets sent places on various errands.

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- II. Greetings to Paul's Friends 16:3-16
 - A. 16:3-5 *Priscilla and Aquila* Jewish tentmakers from Rome that Paul first met in Corinth, when Caesar evicted all Jews from Rome. They followed Paul to Ephesus, where they were instrumental in the discipleship of Apollos. Now they are back in Rome. They are again hosting a home fellowship, as they've done in other places.
 - i. The order of the names is significant; Priscilla gets mentioned first. This couple gets six mentions in the NT, they are always mentioned as a couple, and the order of names is 3-3 as to who comes first. This may imply that her ministry was every bit as important as his. That should encourage the women who think that Paul's views are anti-female.

- Some pastors have had their ministries called into question because of their wives. My work has been validated thanks to Ginger. I once heard Billy Graham say that in heaven he's probably known as "Ruth's husband". He was simply being modest. In my case everyone knows it's true. (Bill Goodrich: "The best thing about Dave is his wife.") I'm just thankful the church gives me an e-mail address and lets me sign stuff to help me feel important. Of course that way if anything goes really wrong, I'll be the one who gets in trouble.
- B. 16:10 *Aristobulus* J. B. Lightfoot identified him as a brother of Herod Agrippa I, the King Herod of the book of Acts. His "household" would include relatives, as well as officials and slaves. Acts 13:1 tells us that along with Paul, one of the teachers in Antioch was a man named "Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch," so Paul had at least one personal acquaintance connected to the Herod family. That a *countryman* named *Herodian* is mentioned in the next verse makes it all the more likely that Aristobulus was also a Herod. (*New Commentary on the Whole Bible*)
- C. 16:11 *household of Narcissus* Some identify him with Tiberius Claudius Narcissus, a wealthy freedman of the emperor Tiberius; this man was executed by an order issued by Nero's mother, Agrippina, soon after Nero ascended the throne in A.D. 54. His goods would have been confiscated and any slaves would have become the property of the emperor. They would have been called "Narcissini." If this is right, then Paul is greeting Christians among those "Narcissini" (See Bruce and *New Commentary*).
- D. 16:13 *Rufus* I personally believe that this is the *Rufus* referred to in Mark 15:21, the son of Simon the Cyrenian (the man who helped carry Jesus' cross). That would have made him a very noteworthy believer.
- i. *his mother and mine* Paul means that Rufus's mother at one time served Paul as his own mother would have ministered to his needs. If Simon of Cyrene and Simeon Niger are one and the same, then Paul may know Rufus's mom from the church in Syrian Antioch – the church from which Paul and Barnabas were first sent out.
- E. 16:15 *Philologus* I bring this guy up only for one reason: his name. You might loosely translate it as "lover of the word". Wouldn't it be awesome if each one of us became exactly that? A Lover of the Word?

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III. Warnings about False Teachers 16:17-20

- F. Paul needed other believers, but these are people he didn't need: the *make-believers*. It didn't take long for false teachers to begin showing up in the church.
 - i. They tend to take oddball doctrinal stances. (v.17)
 - ii. They tend to be self-serving and can use flattery to gain advantage. (v.18)
 - iii. One way to protect ourselves is by being *wise in what is good and simple concerning evil* (v.19). The "knowledge of good and evil" didn't help Adam and Eve and it won't help us either. Better to just know the good as well as we can.

Matthew 10:16 (NKJV) "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

- iv. Satan is behind false teaching in the church. God will eventually crush him. Paul's warning is serious, but not sensationalistic. He doesn't have an unhealthy obsession with Satan or the demonic; he just wants us to know they are real.

IV. Greetings from Paul's Companions 16:21-24

- G. Paul worked together with a team. At least six others besides himself were part of the team in Corinth. Timothy was an old friend and Paul's closest assistant. Tertius wrote the letter, meaning that Paul dictated it to him. Erastus was actually the city treasurer.

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V. Glory to God 16:25-27

- H. 16:25 How do we get established, strengthened and firmed up in our faith? Through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- I. God knows what all of us need and He has now revealed it.
- J. 16:26 It's all to be found right here in the Scriptures.
- K. And this is to be revealed to all the nations so that everyone can submit to the authority of Jesus Christ.

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Conclusion:

Staying connected with other believers will help everything in the Book of Romans to make sense.

- It's not solely about understanding lofty theological concepts. We have to live our faith out in a living community of other brothers and sisters in the Lord. Look at all the friends Paul had. Look at all the people he stayed connected with.
 - Part of what we do is worship.
 - Part of what we do is work – having a ministry like Phoebe, Priscilla and Aquila.
- There needs to be a solid group of Christians that form the most important part of your circle of essential friends. In some cases they'll be tighter than family. In all cases they'll help you to stay on track, keep learning and growing. They'll keep you sharp – on the cutting edge of what God is trying to do in your spiritual life.

Pr 27:17 (NKJV) As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- And in whatever we do, we have to work hard to keep our eye focused on Jesus and maintain an attitude of unity among ourselves here in this body of believers.

Rom 15:4-6 (NKJV) For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally:

Rom 16:25-27 (NKJV) Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.