

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE AIBI

Number: 628

Verses: Romans 16:1-16

Topic: Greetings

Date: 8th March 2007

Romans 16:1-16, 21-23 HCSB *I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchreae. (2) So you should welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever matter she may require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many--and of me also. (3) Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, (4) who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches. (5) Greet also the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epaphroditus, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. (6) Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. (7) Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow countrymen and fellow prisoners. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were also in Christ before me. (8) Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. (9) Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. (10) Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. (11) Greet Herodion, my fellow countryman. Greet those who belong to the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. (12) Greet Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who have worked hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked very hard in the Lord. (13) Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother--and mine. (14) Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. (15) Greet Philologus and 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 send you greetings.... Timothy, my co-worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow countrymen, greet you. (22) I Tertius, who penned this epistle in the Lord, greet you. (23) Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you.*

These greetings may have been added later after the "Amen" that ends Romans 15 and include one from the amanuensis (scribe) Tertius (Romans 16:22). They seem to be written in a time when security of communication was not a concern. Such a list of names could have caused real trouble during the systematic persecutions of Nero or Domitian. The apostle John, who may have been the apostle to the underground church, is much more circumspect about what he put in writing (see 2 John & 3 John). This list of greetings is full of information about life in the early church. We find that:

1. This is almost a roll-call of Paul's ministry associates among the Gentiles and includes apostles, co-workers and the first convert from Asia (Epaphroditus)
2. The term "apostle" is applied outside the Twelve and Paul and now includes itinerant missionary workers such as Andronicus and Junia.
3. The large number of greetings, and the mention of people like Priscilla and Aquila who seem to be always on the move seems to indicate that Gentile Christianity was a huge, highly mobile network of believers spread right across the Roman world even at this early date.
4. There seem to be three groups of greetings: a) People from Asia who traveled with the epistle to Rome such as Phoebe which the Romans were to greet (v.1,2 and possibly v.3-7) b) Personal friends of Paul who were in Rome, who he was passing his personal greetings to (v. 8-15) and c) People living in Asia who were passing

their greetings to the church in Rome such as Tertius and Gaius (v. 21-23). It is sometimes difficult to figure out just who is in which group!

5. The church met in homes (v.5 and possibly 10,11)
6. Women were in prominent roles, Phoebe was literally a "deacon" (v.1), Priscilla is mentioned before Aquila (v.3) the apostle Junia – is the feminine version of the name) so we may have a female apostle. Mary, Tryphen and Tryphosa are seen as "laborers" in the Lord.
7. Hard work and sacrificial service is highly commended (v.2,4,6,7,12)
8. The commended work is done "in Christ Jesus" and "in the Lord" indicating that it was done in obedience to Christ's commands. (v. 3,11,12)
9. The phrase "in Christ" and "in the Lord" is also used to indicate people who were believers. Those "in the Lord" were part of the church, called out from the world and from the surrounding culture and religions to a new and exciting way of being. (v. 7,8,10,11)
10. The church is asked to support Phoebe. Helping traveling Christian workers who were "worthy" seems to have been a practice of the early church. **3 John 1:5-8 HCSB** *Dear friend, you are showing your faith by whatever you do for the brothers, and this you are doing for strangers; (6) they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God, (7) since they set out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from pagans. (8) Therefore, we ought to support such men, so that we can be co-workers with the truth.*
11. The vast majority have Gentile names even though some are Paul's relatives or from a Jewish background. They may have been Jews from the Diaspora.
12. Paul's mother may still have been alive! (v.13) This gives an upper limit on Paul's age at this time. He is probably not much over 50.
13. Paul places a high value on relationship publicly noting who were his close friends and relatives.
14. The greetings seem to have been written from the area of Ephesus, as Timothy and local Ephesian officials such as Erastus and Gaius give greetings to the Roman church (v. 21-23)
15. From this we can deduce that Romans was written (or finally finished) in the vicinity of Ephesus just prior to Paul's trip to Jerusalem and around the time of Acts 20 and his farewell to the Ephesian elders at Miletus. Since Paul did not actually go to Ephesus on this particular journey (Acts 20:16,17) we can conclude the epistle was concluded by the scribe Tertius at the sea port of Miletus and sent to the Roman church from there via the hand of Phoebe and her companions.
16. The use of the scribe Tertius indicates that Paul's eye problem may have been acute (Galatians 4:15) as Paul could have easily written the letter himself. Some earlier epistles written Paul directly had very large handwriting (Galatians 6:16), by now he may have been unable to see close up at all, though he does appear to have some long distance vision and to be able to travel safely. Some put his eye problems down to his conversion experience that left him blind for three days (Acts 9:8-18)
17. Some seem to have suffered considerably for the gospel even at this stage with Andronicus and Junia having been imprisoned and Priscilla and Aquila having "risked their necks" for the church.
18. Andronicus and Junia were "outstanding among the apostles". This comment implies a much larger apostolic group that they could stand out from. This group is obviously separate from the Twelve. So "the apostles" being referred to here are probably a large group of apostles who worked alongside Paul in the ministry to the Gentiles. This considerably expands our idea of what an "apostle" was.

19. This group was representative of the Gentile movement "all the Gentile church" (v.4) "all the churches of Christ" (v.16). Thus Romans may have been the theological manifesto for the Gentile church movement in early Christianity explaining salvation apart from the Law, salvation by faith alone, and life guided by the Spirit rather than the Torah (Romans 1-8) and how Gentile Christians should relate to both unsaved Jews (Romans 9-11) and the customs of Jewish Christians (Romans 14).
20. Greetings were to be with a "holy kiss" - the kiss on both cheeks common in the Middle East today. Church was not remote, cold or sedate but full of love and fellowship.

Thus we find a highly mobile, active, risk-taking, hard-working group of believers who really loved each other, cared for each other in practical ways, obeyed Christ and knew each other by name and were in and out of each other's homes and lives.

Blessings,

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