

## CHAPTER XV

### ROMANS 16:1-24 - FAREWELL GREETINGS IN THE GOSPEL

SOME scholars are of the opinion that this chapter is not part of the original epistle of Paul to the saints at Rome. There is further disagreement as to the position and inclusion of the concluding doxology, vs. 25-27. While there are manuscript variances that may suggest the Old Testament antipathy of Marcionism against the five quotations of chapter 15, and perhaps Paul's later addition of chapter 16, and thus the variant positioning of the doxology of vs. 25-27, yet the overwhelming belief is that Romans 15-16 was authored by Paul and that Romans 1-16 as we have it was the epistle that Phoebe most likely delivered.<sup>1</sup> There are nineteen men and nine women who are addressed in Rome while those sending greetings, probably from Corinth, are nine men and one woman, including Phoebe and Paul. Overall they are Latin and Greek, while perhaps six are Jewish;<sup>2</sup> this would add weight to the probability that Paul addresses the church at Rome as being predominantly Gentile. Assuming that Paul has not previously been to Rome, his familiarity here with so many saints suggests his direct meeting with many of them in his missionary travels, or through earlier correspondence. Indeed, it is quite possible that within the hearts of those specified in receiving greetings there resides the core reasons for the doctrinal thrust that the Apostle makes, cf. 1:7, 15.

We commence with an intensely personal catalog of greetings that focuses on real first century Christians in Rome, often menially employed, who are not theologians and academics but rather a tolerated yet threatened minority. Nevertheless, they penetrated “the whole praetorian guard” and “Caesar’s household” (Phil. 1:13; 4:22).<sup>3</sup> In a world void of the cable, telephone, and email, imagine the intense interest at the reading of such an epistle; even as we are accustomed today, most likely this signature chapter was read first!

#### A. THE COMMENDATION OF PHOEBE, VS. 1-2.

In our contemporary world where the Christian church has been influenced by the secular feminist movement, especially with regard to the appointment of women as spiritual leaders in local church life, considerable though exaggerated attention has been given to the role here of Phoebe who was most likely the courier for this epistle.

1. She is a servant of the church, v. 1.

Phoebe, Φοίβη, Phoibē, a name of Greek pagan derivation, herself probably being a Gentile, originated from Cenchrea, a seaport situated eight miles south-east of Corinth. In this region Paul had earlier resided for eighteen months and probably founded the church at that coastal town (Acts 18:1-18). The grounds of commendation are first that

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<sup>1</sup> Moo, *Romans*, pp. 5-9.

<sup>2</sup> The Jews would include Prisca and Aquila, Mary, and kinsmen, Andronicas, Junias, and Herodion.

<sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 319. The traditional opinion has remained that Philippians was written in Rome by imprisoned Paul.

she is a “sister”, ἀδελφή, adelphē, a spiritual kindred spirit (I Cor. 7:15; 9:5; Jas. 2:15; Philem. 2). Second she is a “servant/deacon”, διάκονος, diakonos, of the church. In I Timothy 3: 11, cf. v. 8, there is the likelihood that the office of “deaconess” is intended, and so probably here.<sup>4</sup> Moule explains that Phoebe was,

very probably a person of substance and influence.—There is good evidence of the existence in the Apostles’ time of an organized class of female helpers in sacred work. . . . Just after the apostolic age the famous Letter of Pliny to Trajan indicates that such female helpers (*ministræ*) were known in the Bithynian Churches; and for two centuries from the time of Tertullian (cir. A.D. 210) allusions to them are frequent, and show that they were largely employed both in the relief of temporal distress, chiefly among women, and also in the elementary teaching of female catechumens. They were regularly set apart by imposition of hands. As a rule, they were required to be of mature age, (rarely of less than 40 years,) and in most cases they appear to have been widows and mothers. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Order had been everywhere abolished. . . . We must not *assume* that Phoebe was a deaconess in the full later sense of the word; but that her position was analogous to that of the later deaconesses seems at least most probable.<sup>5</sup>

Of course it is obvious that such appointments would be according to the elders as the spiritual overseers of a local church. All in all, it is abundantly clear that Paul, as here, was tenderly appreciative of those women who supplemented his ministry (Phil. 4:3), even as the following verse confirms.

2. She is to be served by the church, v. 2.

So the “saints” or holy/sanctified ones are to “receive /welcome” Phoebe “in the Lord,” (cf. vs. 8, 11, 12, 13, 22, and “in Christ,” vs. 3, 7, 9, 10), offering whatever practical help is necessary since “she herself” (emphatic) is a “helper.” Here προστάτις, prostatis, describes a “protectress.” “It is a word of dignity, evidently chosen instead of others which might have been used, . . . and indicates the high esteem with which she was regarded, as one who had been a protectress of many. *Prostatēs* was the title of a citizen in Athens, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident aliens who were without civic rights. Among the Jews it signified a wealthy patron of the community.”<sup>6</sup> Thus the biblical order of a hierarchical relationship between Christian men and women (I Cor. 11:3, 7-12; Eph. 5:22-28) in no way diminishes the esteem and respect that is to be lavished upon those in subordinate positions.

**B. THE GREETINGS TO THE SAINTS, VS. 3-16.**

1. To the household of Prisca and Aquila, vs. 3-5a.

In c. 49-50 A.D, the Roman emperor Claudius issued an edict that evicted all Jews from Rome on account of supposed rioting. Two of the refugees who fled were Aquila,

<sup>4</sup> Pro are: Alford, Chrysostom, Haldane, Lenski, Luther, Moo, Morris, Moule, Stott; contra are: Hendriksen, Murray.

<sup>5</sup> H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, pp. 245-6.

<sup>6</sup> W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, p. 607. Also Moo, *Romans*, p. 530, who rightly infers that Phoebe traveled with a “retinue of servants.”

originally from Pontus in Asia Minor (Acts 2:9; I Pet. 1:1), and his wife Prisca<sup>7</sup> who had, as was common, taken Roman names. Settling in Corinth as profitable tent-makers, there they met another tent-maker, the Apostle Paul, in the midst of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-3). It is likely that on account of this trade association, Paul witnessed to the devoted couple with the result being their conversion.<sup>8</sup> Thus they accompany the Apostle to Ephesus and there evidence spiritual capability in giving necessary instruction to Apollos (Acts 18:26). By the time of Paul's return to Corinth during his third missionary journey, Prisca and Aquila have apparently returned to Rome on account of the former edict being rescinded, though now they are significant members of the church that meets in their home, to which Paul presently writes.

a. Paul's fellow-workers, v. 3.

“Greet” or “convey respectful regards,” ἀσπάζομαι, aspazomai, signifies a salutation, a friendly personal acknowledgment, which term is used 16 times in vs. 3-16. That the order of “Aquila and Priscilla” ( Acts 18:2; I Cor. 16:19)) is changed to “Priscilla and Aquila” (Acts 18:18, 26; II Tim. 4:19), whether with reference to a dominant personality or social status, is speculative. The primacy here given to this choice couple is intentional and supported by the length of the greeting. As “fellow workers [συνεργούς, Sunergous] in Christ Jesus,” they had mediated the truth of the gospel that had been so well imparted to them in Corinth and Ephesus. Perhaps through previous correspondence, they had conveyed much detail about the church in Rome, even with regard to many trophies of grace that Paul now mentions, such as Mary, v. 6. C

b. Paul's fellow-rescuers, v. 4.

“Who, on behalf of my life [soul], offered their own neck as it were in execution [for my deliverance].” Identification of this heroic exploit is difficult to identify, even if it was widely acknowledged. Most likely it is the danger that Paul faced in Ephesus (I Cor. 15:32; Acts 19:23-32; 20:1), which ministry spread through Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). So Paul declares that, “to whom not only do I give thanks, but also the churches of the Gentiles.” As Frederick Faber has written:

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free;  
And blest would be their children's fate,  
Though they, like them, should die for thee.

Indeed, humanly speaking, if it were not for this courageous couple, then not only Romans, but also Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, I & II Timothy, and Titus would not have been written!

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<sup>7</sup> “Prisca,” Πρίσκα (I Cor. 16:19; II Tim. 4:19), according to Paul, is the basic or proper name while “Priscilla,” Πρίσκιλλα (Acts 18:2, 18, 26), according to Luke, is a derivative form.

<sup>8</sup> W. J. Connybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*, p. 337.

## c. Paul's fellow-worshippers, v. 5a.-

Perhaps the return of Aquila and Prisca to Rome enabled them to reclaim their property that included a house suitable for church fellowship, as was their custom formerly in Ephesus (Acts 18:26; I Cor. 16:8, 19). Here, implicit material prosperity while perhaps childless, may have enabled not only frequent travel, but also investment in evangelistic ministry that resulted in heavenly consequences (Luke 16:9).

## 2. To the fellowship in particular, vs. 5b-15.

Here then are the members and adherents of the church at the home of Prisca and Aquila, which house church movement was the norm: "There were no church buildings in the first century (not until the third century on our present information),"<sup>9</sup> though Paul readily employed "the school of Tyrannus" at Ephesus over a two year period for evangelistic meetings (Acts 19:9-10).<sup>10</sup>

## a. Beloved, ἀγαπητός, agapētos Epānetus, Ampliatus, and Stachys v. 5b, 8, 9b.

Epānetus, originating from Asia (Ephesus?), had probably met Paul and as a consequence become "my beloved," who then joined the winsome couple when they returned to the imperial city. His being "the first fruit [ἀπαρχή, aparchē, cf. 8:23] to Christ from Asia," probably designates him as the first convert of Paul in Ephesus that was followed by a substantial harvest. As such he learned and matured over two years under Paul's tutelage to the point of being significantly used in missionary service. Ampliatus, has been associated with freedmen, also Caesar's household, as with Stachys meaning "wheat ear" (Matt. 12:1).<sup>11</sup>

## b. Hardworking, κοπιῶ, kopiao, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis, vs. 6, 12.

C

While Mary, probably Jewish from Miriam, has personally "toiled much" πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν, *pholla ekopiasen*, for Prisca and Aquila, and likewise Persis has "toiled much," so Tryphaena and Tryphosa, perhaps sisters meaning "Delicate and Dainty,"<sup>12</sup> have "toiled," κοπιῶ, kopiao, worked with weariness "in the Lord." What exactly was this hard employment? The word used here elsewhere describes physical (Luke 5:5; Eph. 4:28; I Cor. 4:12) as well as spiritual (Phil. 2:16; Col. 1:28-29; I Tim. 5:17) labor, and most likely both meanings are intended here, but especially in the face of vigorous opposition. C

## c. Kinsmen, συγγενής, sungenēs, Andronicus, Junia(s), and Herodion, vs. 7, 11a.

"Kinsmen" suggests these were Jews, cf. 9:3. Most likely Andronicus and Junia (feminine) were husband and wife, though their being called "apostles" has led to

<sup>9</sup> Morris, *Romans*, p. 532.

<sup>10</sup> One manuscript adds at the end of v. 9, "from 11 A.M. to 4 p.m." F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 356.

<sup>11</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 174.

<sup>12</sup> Moo, *Romans*, p. 925; Morris, *Romans*, p. 536.

controversy since earlier commentators could not accept this as appropriate for a woman. Hence later commentators have preferred Junias (masculine). However more recent agreement that Junia (feminine) is correct has resulted in feminism claiming support here for egalitarian spiritual rule in local church life. However, ἀπόστολος, apostolos is often used in a more general sense of “a sent person” (II Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25 re Epaphroditus; I Thess. 2:6 re Paul, Silvanus, Timothy), rather than the distinctive office of Acts 1:21-26. Thus Andronicus and Junia were “outstanding/splendid” ἐπίστημος, epistēmos, amongst the apostles, that is those such as Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila, who were highly esteemed gospel emissaries, missionaries (from the Latin *missio*, I send). But further, their kinship with Paul included being “fellow prisoners,” συναιχμάλωτος, sunaichmalōtos, in the past for the cause of Christ, as were Aristarchus, Col. 4:10, and Epaphras, Philem. 23. Herodion was probably a freedman formerly employed within the household and lineage of King Herod.C

- d. Fellow workman, συνεργός, sunergos, Urbanus, v. 9a.

Being “*our* fellow worker” rather than “*my* fellow workers” as were Prisca and Aquila, v. 3, may indicate a lack of personal acquaintance. However a notable reputation has been conveyed through correspondence.

- e. Approved, δόκιμον, dokimon, Apelles, v. 10a.

While the use of “approved/tested in Christ” in 14:18 suggests general acceptance, yet approval through persecution cannot be discounted, as the experience of Prisca and Aquila indicates, v. 4, cf. James 1:12.

- f. Those of [the households of] Aristobulus and Narcissus, vs. 10b, 11b.

The idiomatic expression here is an encompassing description of those who have worked for the household of Aristobulus, a grandson of Herod the Great. So Narcissus is probably a famous person who has employed a number of Christians, perhaps as Lightfoot suggests, a certain renowned wealthy freedman.<sup>13</sup>

- g. Choice, ἐκλεκτός, eklektos, Rufus and his mother, v. 13.

This distinguished, exceptional saint, is traditionally identified as that son of he who was, “pressed into service [as] a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His [Christ’s] cross” (Mark 15:21).<sup>14</sup> This association could be supported by Paul’s respectful comment that Rufus’ mother is also his own, perhaps due to an earlier relationship in Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 175.

<sup>14</sup> Cautious support here comes from Cranfield, Godet, Lightfoot, Moo, Morris.

## h. Miscellaneous, vs. 14-15.

While “the church that is in their house [of Prisca and Aquila],” v. 5a, was probably the main assembly point for the Christians in Rome, yet there may have been sub-fellowships within large households, as mentioned in vs. 10-11.

- (1) The house fellowship of Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and other brethren, v. 14.
- (2) The house fellowship of Philologus, Julia, Nereus and sister, Olympas, and other brethren, v. 15.

## 3. To the fellowship in general, v. 16.

“Greet one another with a holy kiss,” φιλήματι ἁγίῳ (cf. I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12; I Thess. 5:26, “a kiss of love,” I Pet. 5:14; ). Equivalent to a hug, a warm handshake, the holy kiss was a customary form of greeting (Luke 7:45; 15:20; 22:47-48), usually on the cheek.<sup>15</sup> Moo adds that, “many commentators think that Paul may here be envisaging a worship gathering in which his letter is being read aloud and which is concluded with such a kiss.”<sup>16</sup> The modern debasing of the social kiss certainly justifies a more appropriate form of a physical greeting. John Bunyan was aware of this problem when in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* he comments: “[S]ome [good men] indeed have urged the holy kiss; but then I have asked why they made baulks [distinctions by omitting], why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favored go; thus, how laudable soever such things have been in the eyes of others, they have been unseemly in my sight.”<sup>17</sup>

“All the churches of Christ greet you.” While Paul ministered in various regions, yet he maintained constant communication with the major Gentile fellowships including Antioch, as well as with the Jewish mother church at Jerusalem. The “emissaries/apostles” of vs. 1-2, 3-4, 7 would update the Apostle, convey greetings to him, and thus enable him to channel greetings to the saints at Rome. Thus as Paul writes in Corinth he has associates with him from a variety of church locations (Acts 20:1-4). Hence this inclusive greeting provides the saints at Rome with a sense of unity with the larger body of Christ.

## C. THE WARNINGS TO THE SAINTS, VS. 17-20.

In the midst of greetings from Paul, vs. 1-16, and his associates, vs. 21-23, there is injected a vigorous, brief warning, vs. 17-20, that might seem unexpected. Perhaps at this point the Apostle takes the reed pen from Tertius, v. 22, to add a signature paragraph that concludes with v. 20. However, while circumstances in the more troubled region of Corinth might prompt this jealous, affectionate concern, there are other instances of similar concluding epistolary admonition (I Cor. 16:13-14, 22; Colo. 4:17; I Tim. 6:20-21; II Tim. 4:14-18; I

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Romans*, p. 518.

<sup>16</sup> Moo, *Romans*, p. 926.

<sup>17</sup> John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan*, I, § 315, p. 46.

John 5:21). Further, Morris suggests that, “Romans is a long letter and it must have taken quite a while to compose it. It is possible that news was brought to Paul just before he finished it that made him think a warning was in order.”<sup>18</sup> The preventative rather than curative emphasis here is probably indicated by the commendation of v. 19. As a parent often farewells a departing child with a string of practical maxims, so Paul, as a spiritual parent (Phil. 2:19-22; I Thess. 1:7, 11), offers similar spiritual counsel.

1. Be alert for contentious teachers, vs. 17-18.

Identification of the offending schismatics may include two categories. There are the carnal libertarian antinomians of 6:1-23, those claiming a licentious freedom in the light of the sovereignty and freeness of grace, though more likely Paul has in mind the weak in faith who hold on to the crutch of the law, including dietary regulations and appointed days, 14:1-15:5. In the later case, an intolerant Judaizing spirit that ignores the overriding injunction of 13:8-10; 14:10-13, 17-20; 15:2 presents a situation that is ripe for the eruption of partisan conflict. The crux of the peril here lies in the subtlety of these agitators emerging within the fellowship of the saints at Rome.

a. They oppose apostolic doctrine, v. 17.

The preceding recommendation of the “holy kiss” may have suggested to Paul the deceitful treachery that such an outward greeting may conceal in local church life, as was illustrated by Judas (Prov. 27:6; Matt. 26:49; Luke 22:47-48). Therefore alertness is called for by all the saints, not just the Elders. “So I exhort/urge you, brethren, to watch out for those causing divisions [carnal dissensions, Gal. 5:20] and stumbling blocks that conflict with the teaching/-doctrine which you learned, and turn away [ἐκκλίνω, ekklinō] from them.” Could it be that in this instance the lack of specificity concerning the heresies in mind is intentional since the fruit of disruptiveness is what is to be identified. In other words some people will reveal their spiritual fraudulence by leaving behind fractured relationships wherever they go, while true doctrine will tend to unify according to 13:8-10; 14:17-20; 15:2. However it is to be noticed that a body of apostolic doctrine has already been established in Rome which is recognized as a standard against which all such novel teaching is to be measured; it is “that form of teaching to which you were committed,” 6:17, or “the word of the faith which we are preaching,” 10:8; cf. Jude 3.

b. They deceive with smooth doctrine, v. 18.

The beguiling, seductive character of a Pliable, a Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, a Talkative, or a Demas,<sup>19</sup> is now described. “For such men are not serving our Lord Christ but their own belly/appetite [κοιλία, koilia, Phil. 3:18-19], and through smooth and flattering conversation they deceive the hearts of the unwary/naïve/unsuspecting [saints].” Consider Paul’s three pilgrims here.

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<sup>18</sup> Morris, *Romans*, p. 538.

<sup>19</sup> All four of these famous characters in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, although counterfeit pilgrims, were able to deceive, for a time, such authentic pilgrims as Christian, Faithful, and Hopeful.

- (1) Mr. Smooth-man, χρηστολογία, chrēstologia, that is “plausibility,” or “persuasiveness.” David describes how, “his speech was smoother than butter, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords” Ps. 55:21). Bunyan designates him as a citizen of the town of Fair-speech that was inhabited by a whole coterie of sophisticated rogues. His belly craved for the entertainment of brilliant and suave discourse.
- (2) Mr. Flatterer, εὐλογία, eulogia, that is “sycophant,” or “sweet talker,” whose words are, at a surface level, appealing and pleasantly manipulative. According to Peter such false prophets exploit with “false/fabricated words,” πλαστοῖς λόγοις, plastois logois (II Pet. 2:3) that lack concrete, objective truth. His belly sought self-advancement through the feel-good, ego-boosting, back-scratching stimulation of others.
- (3) Mr. Innocent, ἄκακος, akakos, that is “not bad,” or “guileless,” being somewhat gullible and not acquainted with all of the machinations of human depravity. Consequently he is hoodwinked by the false charm of a Mr. Smooth-man and Mr. Flatterer. While his belly was under the control of a redeemed soul, yet he lacked doctrinal instruction and testing concerning sin’s exceeding sinfulness and the wiles of the devil.

2. Be good before the God of peace and grace, vs. 19-20.

Paul’s sense of pastoral balance is indicated by the following encouragements that follow sober warnings. Whereas v. 17 negatively enjoins the Roman saints to “turn away” from factious influences, here they are positively entreated, “to be wise in what is good,” v. 19.

a. Let an obedient reputation encourage you, v. 19a.

“For [the renown of] your obedience has reached to all [the whole world, 1:8, Asia Minor? the Roman Empire?].” Perhaps the magisterial character of this epistle is reflective of the admiration that Paul has for the relative maturity of this church, especially since he has not needed to deal with the variety of problems, related to immaturity, that are manifest in Galatia, Corinth, or Colosse. Thus he is, “convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation” (Heb. 6:9). The “obedience” here is probably commitment to the gospel, 1:5; 16:26, which was the very reason that Paul writes to expound in greater depth upon that same sacred message, 1:15. For the Apostle, gospel faithfulness is of paramount importance.

b. Let innocence in evil identify you, v. 19b.

“Therefore I rejoice in you and desire that you be wise in what is good, and innocent/unpolluted in what is bad.” In other words, love “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth” (I Cor. 13:6). The child of God will major on right teaching, not heresy; he will concentrate upon the moral excellency of God that is incumbent upon him rather than the wiles of the devil and infinite variations on the theme of sin. Thus, “be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16), or, “do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be

infants, but in your thinking be mature” (I Cor. 14:20). This attitude is to sharply contrast with the experts in subtle sinning described in v. 18 (Jer. 4:22). As Charles Kingsley wrote: “Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.”

c. Let the God of peace defend you, v. 20a.

“The God of peace [15:33] will crush Satan [the Adversary] under your feet with speed [in a short while?, ἐν τάχει, en tachei].” The God of Israel who imparts peace is distinguished here (Is. 26:3; 32:15-18; 66:12), yet the means to this end involves the conquest of Satan. Probably allusion is made here to the *protevangelium* of Genesis 3:15, where, “He [the seed of the woman] shall bruise you [the serpent] on the head, and you [the serpent] shall bruise him [the seed of the woman] on the heel.” However we here see the wounded “heel” vindicated; in Genesis the heel is bruised by the serpent, whereas in Romans God causes the feet of Christians, being related to the seed of the woman, to victoriously crush serpentine Satan. Further, the direct address to the church at Rome, as if the saints there would immediately understand the idiomatic use of “Satan,” suggests a more immediate rather than a future eschatological prospect.<sup>20</sup> Could it be that, in Christian conversation, the Roman Empire was “the evil empire” of that day, which, as is well known, in the course of history would soon yield to Christianity by the time of the reign of Constantine?

d. Let the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you, v. 20b.

With some degree of variation, this is Paul’s usual form of concluding benediction that focuses on “grace” which is sourced in “Christ” (I Cor. 16:23; II Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; I Thess. 5:28; II Thess. 3:18; II Tim. 4:22; Philem, 25). In the remaining epistles, “grace” only is mentioned (Col. 4:18; I Tim. 6:21; Tit. 3:15). This custom is paralleled by Paul’s invariable opening benediction, as here in 1:7 and all of his thirteen epistles, in which “grace” that is sourced in “Christ” is always commended. However, a curious feature here is the fact that the “Father” is always included in the opening benedictions and yet only once mentioned in the closing benedictions (II Cor. 13:14). Why is this so? Perhaps Paul the Hebrew felt it necessary to make such a reference at the commencement of every one of his epistles so that agreement with Jewish monotheism might be evident. Further, even today at the commencement of Christian prayer, the Father is first addressed; then in conclusion the mediatorial name of Jesus is invoked. Overall, this relentless and primary emphasis on “grace” in all of Paul’s opening and closing benedictions provides strong justification for identifying him as “the Apostle of grace.”

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<sup>20</sup> Calvin, Haldane, Morris see more immediate, historic fulfillment, while Cranfield understands eschatological consummation.

## D. THE GREETINGS FROM THE SAINTS, VS. 21-24.

Here is a dynamic portrait of Paul's ministry in Corinth seen through the lens of his spiritual entourage. There are eight associates who appear to be known by the saints at Rome. The collective interest here expressed indicates an interdependency amongst first century local churches that does not preclude independency.

1. The *fellow worker*, Timothy, v. 21a.

“Τιμόθεος, Timotheos,” heads the list here being Paul's closest pastoral associate who is similarly mentioned, though at the commencement, of II Corinthians, I and II Thessalonians, Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon. His unmatched loyalty was probably the cause of such recognition (Phil. 2:19-22; II Tim. 3:10-11). In I Corinthians 16:10 he is described as “doing the Lord's work, as I also am.” In I Timothy 1:2 the address is to “my true child in the faith,” while in II Timothy 1:2 it is to “my beloved son.” This father/son relationship probably commenced when they initially became acquainted during Paul's first missionary journey while passing through Lystra and preaching the gospel (Acts 14:6-7). In again visiting Lystra during his second missionary journey, Paul appears to become reacquainted with Timothy, now a “disciple,” and his Jewish mother Eunice, now a “believer.” Thus Timothy is recruited by the Apostle and then circumcised to facilitate witnessing to Jews (Acts 16:1-3). During Paul's third missionary journey, he moves from his influential ministry at Ephesus to residence in the house of Gaius at Corinth for three months (Act 20:2-3), where Romans is composed. Thus Timothy may have been an editorial contributor. Probably separated from Paul when the Apostle was sent to Rome on trial, he later settled in Ephesus and also experienced imprisonment himself (Heb. 13:23). Timothy's esteem is indicated with great pathos when Paul, in probably writing a short while before his martyrdom in Rome, concludes: “Make every effort to come soon; . . . When you come bring the cloak which I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. . . . Make every effort to come before winter. . . . The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you” (II Tim. 9, 13, 21-22).

2. The three *kinsmen*, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, v. 21b

“Λούκιος, Loukios,” or Lucius, could be “Lucius of Cyrene,” a prophet or teacher from Syrian Antioch (Acts 13:1). It is likely that “Ἰάσων, Iasōn,” or Jason, bravely provided hospitality for Paul in hostile Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9). “Σωσίπατρος, Sō sipatros,” or Sosipater, is possibly “Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus” (Acts 20:4) who, with six other disciples, leaves Greece and joins Paul at Troas. All are described as “my kinsmen/relatives/fellow nationals [συγγενής, sungenēs],” hence Jews.

3. The *secretary*, Tertius, v. 22.

“Τέρτιος, Tertius,” was a scribe or amanuensis, “ὁ γράψας, ho graspas,” who wrote according to Paul's dictation. “I Tertius greet you, the one having written the epistle in the Lord,” is emphatic and may well reflect a sense of devout commitment in transcribing such a significant composition, although “greet you in the Lord” is possible. In either case we have the signature of a faithful Christian worker.

4. The *host*, Gaius, v. 23a.

“Γάϊος, Gaios,” a common (perhaps first personal) name, probably refers to the Gaius of I Corinthians 1:14 who Paul baptized. In providing hospitality for the Apostle and his party, as well as the church, he was likely a man of means. For this reason he is thought to be the same as Titius Justus (perhaps a family name) who also accommodated Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:7). Could he also have come from Ephesus (Acts 19:29)?<sup>CC</sup>

5. The *city treasurer*, Erastus, v. 23b.

Ἐραστός,” or Erastos, was the “the treasurer/manager [οἰκονόμος oikonomos] of the city,” no small position in such a cosmopolitan place as Corinth.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps, subsequent to his conversion, he became an emissary for Paul (Acts 19:21-22; II Tim. 4:20). Haldane comments that: “The notice of the office of Erastus, although in itself may appear trifling, is in reality of great importance. It shows us that Christians may hold offices even under heathen governments, and that to serve Christ we are not to be abstracted from worldly business.”<sup>22</sup>

6. The *brother*, Quartus, v. 23c.

“Κούαρτος, Quartos,” is “the [Christian?] brother,” and last mentioned in terms of relative significance.

7. The *Apostle*, Paul, v. 24.

Certainly this is similar to most Pauline benedictions (cf. I Cor. 16:23; II Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; I Thess. 5:28; II Thess. 3:18; II Tim. 4:22; Philem. 25), though exactly identical to none. The repetition after v. 20 is unusual. Being excluded from the oldest manuscripts, nearly all scholars have declared it to be a later addition.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Some archaeological evidence may further identify this civic official, Morris, *Romans*, p. 544n.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Haldane, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 655.

<sup>23</sup> Bruce, Cranfield, Lenski, Moo, Morris, Robertson. Contra are Haldane, Meyer, Murray, Zahn.