

ROMANS: The Gospel of God

Chapter 16

Introduction:

1. The chapter is very much a postscript, as can easily be seen by its content and by the way chapter 15 ended.
2. It is not hard to believe Paul loathed to finish the epistle and end his instruction and affection to these saints.
3. Here is where we prove whether we truly believe every word of God is profitable for us or not (Luke 4:4).
4. When you approach a passage such as this, pray and slow down to see wonderful things (Psalm 119:18,96).
5. The personal life and relationships of saints are related in this chapter for members to build a better church.
6. Paul's praise of faithful and noble saints honors and magnifies faithfulness and nobility and provokes men.
7. The man exalted with apostleship, grace, knowledge, visions, power - personally loved many, incl. women.
8. This is real love, real proof of the Holy Spirit, the real bond of charity, the real essence of Bible Christianity.
9. Paul showed himself a very knowing man in the first 15 chapters; now he shows himself a very loving man.
10. The warning here about heretics and their heresies is sober and directive, which this church did not observe.

Suggested reading:

Simple Outline:

- 1-16 Paul's commendations and greetings to believers in Rome.
17-20 Warning of false doctrine and teachers.
21-24 Greetings from companions of Paul to those in Rome.
25-27 Benediction and blessing.

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

I commend unto you.

- A. There is a lesson and wondrous thing from God's law with the second word to teach us a balance.
1. There is a crown to every road and two ditches to every road, and God hates all such ditches.
 2. We do not want to turn to the right hand or to the left hand on anything gleaned from scripture.
 3. There is a foolish and destructive extreme that contradicts and opposes commending mere men.
 4. This is the greatest apostle under the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit dishing out much praise.
 5. Let us learn – praise is good and right, to praise more than before, to earn praise from others.
 6. Praising others requires considering others, measuring their actions, esteeming them, humility to give it, wisdom to give it right and best, affection to give it fervently and sincerely, etc.
 7. By God's grace, I am obsessed that we have the best church for His glory and profit of many.
- B. It is obviously true that commendations and praise have a very godly purpose in Christ's churches.
1. It is ignorance, false humility, or self-righteousness that dislikes hearing faithful saints praised.
 2. It is God's grace that makes them what they are, but they also labor abundantly (I Cor 15:10).
 3. Jesus has brothers and sisters that are joint-heirs, and He is not ashamed of them, why are you?
 4. This chapter should shut the mouths of those that think Jesus is the only name to be named.
 5. There is no detraction from Christ's glory by praising His grace in the zeal of His best children!
 6. A person that can only say, "Jesus gets all the praise," is distorted from real Bible Christianity.
 7. Jesus is to have the preeminence, but wise saints know that does not exclude commending men.
 8. A person that can only say, "Jesus is the only one to follow," is distorted from real Christianity.
 9. Good men are to be identified, called good men, and followed for exemplary lives (Phil 3:17).

- C. Consider the Holy Spirit's choice of words for lifting up persons for their own accomplishments.
1. **Commend.** To present as worthy of favourable acceptance, regard, consideration, attention, or notice; to direct attention to, as worthy of notice or regard; to recommend. To mention as worthy of acceptance or approval, to express approbation of, praise, extol.
 2. **Praise.** To tell, proclaim, or commend the worth, excellence, or merits of; to express warm approbation of, speak highly of; to laud, extol.
- D. There are examples in other scriptures of commendation and praise of mere sinners for goodness.
1. If God said Moses was the *meekest* man on the earth, why do you resent the praise (Num 12:3)?
 2. If God lists five men and identifies them as favorites, does it bother you (Jer 15:1; Ezek 14:14)?
 3. Jesus honored Peter, James, and John above nine; He honored John above two. Embrace it!
 4. Should a husband arrange matters for his wife to be *praised* by her achievements (Prov 31:31), or is this carnal, haughty, and worldly vainglory? I need your answer! Will you be Biblical?
 5. Paul sent a brother to carry a gift to Jerusalem that had *praise* of all the churches (II Cor 8:18); he sent another *proved diligent often in many things* (II Co 8:22); he prepared an answer for the group of them that they were the *glory of Christ* (II Cor 8:23). Men have read this 2000 years!
 6. Paul *praised* Timothy over all other ministers (Phil 2:19-22). Should they be hurt? Should you correct Paul for hurting them? Was Paul partial? Love Timothy, and thank God for him!
 7. Paul *praised* a whole church – Corinth – a church that had many serious problems (I Cor 11:2).
 8. Paul said that some men deserve so much *praise* that God Himself will praise them (I Cor 4:5).
 9. Every name and every good deed recorded in the scriptures has been read by all the saints of God for a minimum of 2000 years. Do you get the importance of naming names for godliness?
 10. Read David's eulogy of Saul. Is God's grace mentioned? Is Saul's glory exalted? Remember it!
 11. What are you saying to God and about the Bible if you resent others praised or even yourself?
 12. There is due modesty for certain occasions, but this cannot become a general or absolute rule.
- E. Some foolishly say, "There is none good but one, that is, God" (Matt 19:17). Will they stand to it?
1. The Holy Spirit used the phrase "good man" in at least ten places for men that are good. Get it?
 2. Yet these distorted souls want to hear from Christ. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."
- F. There are a few limitations that should be obvious to the sober minded, but consider a few of them.
1. You must not love getting man's praise rather than God's like evil Jewish leaders (John 12:43).
 2. Work for your earthly boss as unto Christ and also to please him well (Eph 6:5-8; Titus 2:9-10).
 3. Let another man's mouth praise you, not your own (Prov 27:2). Stop talking about yourself!
 4. Flattery is sin, and it should not mean anything to you, and you should not give it (Job 17:5; 32:21-22; Psalm 12:2-3; Prov 7:21; 26:28; 27:14; 28:23; 29:5; Dan 11:21,32,34; I Thess 2:5).
 5. The way you respond to praise shows your character, so be careful hearing any of it (Pr 27:21).
 6. Rather than get envious when someone else is praised, you could second the correct motion!
- G. If you want to be like Paul in following Jesus Christ, then you must commend and praise others.
1. If you are a parent, do you praise your children for the good things they do? Often? Fervently?
 2. Parents, it must be done privately and publicly, or it sounds self-serving or indicates shame.
 3. The opposite of provoking children to wrath and discouraging them is to praise and encourage!
 4. If you are a spouse, do you praise your spouse for the things he/she does well in his/her role?
 5. If you are a child, do you praise your parents for things they have done and are doing for you?
 6. If you are a master or supervisor, do you praise those working for you and commend them.
 7. If you are an older youth, then take the time to notice good things and praise younger youth.
 8. Who in the church deserves your commendation or praise that should be given before sunset?
 9. Public praise is best if downward, or it comes off as cheap, flattery, self-serving, and wrong, if a young man praises some older man. The young man may do it in private for its best effect.
 10. Too much praise or praise for very small items tends in the direction of flatter and will backfire.
 11. Rather than backbiting or whispering, horrible sins, let us always do back-kissing of others.

- H. Is it ever right to desire and work to obtain the commendations or praise of others? Yes, indeed.
1. A good reputation and loving favour from others is a wise choice and object (Pr 22:1; Eccl 7:1).
 2. You work hard for financial compensation, but Solomon ranked reputation and respect higher.
 3. Solomon taught growing in favor with men, and Samuel and Jesus did it (I Sam 2:26; Lu 2:52).
 4. Sanctification includes improving your reputation before the world (I Tim 3:7; I Thess 4:12).
 5. For more about your reputation ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/22_01.php.
- I. Is it ever right to commend or praise yourself? In the right circumstances for noble reasons, yes!
1. If you are going to do this, it better be true in God's opinion and of other men without a doubt.
 2. Paul said he was not behind the best apostles and outworked them all (I Co 15:10; II Co 12:11), and there is absolutely no question about the matter, for it was known and visible to all.
 3. He was forced to boast in order to humble teachers trying to compete with him (II Cor 11:10).
 4. David praised himself highly in a psalm God recorded twice (Ps 18:19-26; II Sam 22:20-27).
 5. A minister must at times magnify his office to defend his authority (Rom 11:13; 15:16-19).
- J. There are two commandments, and they are closely connected, and they each require the other.
1. If you say you love God but neglect the full love of the brethren, you are a liar (I John 4:20).
 2. If you say you love the brethren but neglect the love of God, you cannot prove it (I John 5:2).
 3. Romans 16 shows one way to love the brethren – to publicly love and praise them – for this epistle was read to all believers, with many hearing their names and Paul's love and/or praise.
 4. The best Christians and churches provoke one another to love and to good works (Heb 10:24), and one of the ways to do this is commendation and praise for encouragement for godliness.

Phebe our sister.

- A. Tradition says Phebe carried the epistle from Corinth to Rome, implying why Paul started with her.
- B. There are roles for women in Jesus Christ's churches, and they should note Paul began with one.
1. They likely know that many accuse Paul of being a woman-hating Neanderthal chauvinist.
 2. The performing roles for women are unofficial (no formal office, qualification, or ordination).
 3. A widow indeed has a receiving role, in that she officially is approved for full church support.
 4. Aged women are instructed to teach the younger women good things listed by Paul (Tit 2:3-5).
 5. Jesus and His apostles had some of their best friends among the devout women (Acts 1:14).
- C. Phebe was a sister in Christ of Paul, of all those with Paul, and of all those in Christ in Rome.
1. The Spirit clarified her sex to make sure there was no mistake the name applied to a woman.
 2. A brother and sister can and should be a close relationship, and it is God's choice of words.
 3. A woman that was sister to the apostle Paul deserves some esteem and respect by introduction.
 4. When a person is in Christ, even a woman, there is a measure of Christ's worth (I Peter 3:7).
 5. Not without Bible explanation, there are more sincere women today than men (Isaiah 3:1-5).

Which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.

- A. She had an ordinary, informal, unofficial role of service to the church of God in Cenchrea, Achaia.
1. Cenchrea, on the water side of Corinth, was not far away (Acts 18:18; Rom 16:27 subscript).
 2. She did much more than widows indeed, as she could do much to help rather than be helped; she had the financial and physical ability both to help many in Cenchrea and to travel and help.
 3. We say *ordinary*, because it did not involve any supernatural manifestations like the apostles.
 4. We say *informal*, because it did not result from formal qualifying or ordination, yet very public.
 5. We say *unofficial*, because it is not a job specified with qualifications and duties in the Bible.
 6. Is there anything left? How about giving, tending to widows, tending to the pastor's family, hospitality, helping the deacons, entertaining strangers, cleaning church facilities, food preparation, carrying gifts, raising money, visiting the infirmed or housebound, gifts, etc.
 7. She had helped many, including the apostle Paul, especially in the absence of a wife (16:2).

8. In this time of persecution, there were likely many things she could do to help those in need.
- B. Regardless of her service at Cenchrea, she was not a public teacher or participant in the assemblies.
 1. We live in the perilous times with a breakdown of authority in every sphere all around us.
 2. A point of doctrine and practice that separates us from other Christians is women in assemblies.
 3. God is plain that women are not to speak or teach in assemblies (I Cor 14:34-35; I Ti 2:11-12).
 4. They are not even to ask questions, for such is very disruptive due to the nature of their sex.
 5. They were fooled in Eden and are vulnerable to effeminate creeps (I Tim 2:13-14; II Ti 3:6-7).
 6. It is part of pure doctrine and primitive Christianity for us to never compromise this ordinance.
 7. The mature and experienced ones may teach younger ones about domestic matters (Tit 2:3-5).
 8. She did not lead Bible studies, teach Sunday School, hold Bible conferences, teach Junior Church, direct the orchestra, oversee the Christian school, or preach the offertory for the pastor.

2 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.

That ye receive her in the Lord.

- A. Anyone that comes in the name of the Lord Jesus should be like receiving Jesus Christ Himself.
 1. This includes humbling yourself to every little child in a church as Jesus explained (Matt 18:5).
 2. Think of believers as you should ... joint-heirs with Christ, sons of God, judges of angels, etc.
 3. We do not want to hold them out of anything but what scripture demands e.g. Lord's Supper.
- B. While this church has been often praised for friendliness, we can still do much better to visitors.
- C. When believers come among us, we want to embrace them warmly with kind Bible condescension.
 1. Bible condescension is getting off your high horse and out of your comfort zone to get down and sincerely show affection and desire to anyone, including men of lower class (Rom 12:16).
 2. If there is a great reward for serving the least of His brethren, what of a Phebe (Matt 25:40)?
 3. Just a cup of cold water for someone that belongs to Christ will obtain His reward (Mark 9:41).
 4. Of course those you do not know as well take extra work, but it has rewards here and hereafter.

As becometh saints.

- A. This is how saints act; saints are sanctified believers; without such holiness you will not see God.
- B. Warm reception, no standoffishness or selfishness, is the character of saints believers must have.
- C. When something *becomes* something else, it does not change or transform anything but rather is fit and suitable for it and adorns and decorates it. It is a desirable trait of saints to receive strangers.

And that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you.

- A. The gifted or diligent who are assigned to serve the church should be assisted, including women.
 1. Remember many unofficial gifts in the church (Rom 12:6-8; I Cor 12:28-30; I Peter 4:8-11).
 2. Assistance can be with money, labor, time, travel, things, communication, organization, etc.
- B. We do not know what business Phebe had in Rome, and it is that inspired silence that teaches us.
 1. What if it was to visit the saints with gifts? What should they withhold that could assist her?
 2. What if she was selling purple cloth there like Lydia? Should they have helped her do business?
 3. What if she went to testify or have a case tried in court? Should they use their contacts for her?
 4. Whatever form of aid we can give other saints, we should give it for Christ's and their sakes.
- C. There is much more than reading and praying for Christians. There is business, even in the church.
 1. The apostles authorized deacons and ordained seven at Jerusalem for its business (Acts 6:1-7).
 2. Paul's attention to details of a financial gift from Gentiles to Jews is business (II Cor 8:11-24).

3. Phebe was not traveling to Rome from Cenchrea for Bible studies – she had projects in mind.
4. Phebe's role in Cenchrea went far beyond caring for widows, for it included Paul as below.
5. The fully-developed and all-around Christian recognizes the total balance of the Christian life.
6. Phebe was a more mature Christian than both Martha and Mary of Lazarus (Luke 10:38-42).
7. For ten components that make a full Christian life ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/a-mighty-man.pdf.
8. For more about managing those Christian duties ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/managing-your-life.pdf.

For she hath been a succourer of many.

- A. **Succour.** To help, assist, aid (a person, etc.). To relieve or remedy (a state of want, weakness, etc.); to relieve (a diseased condition).
- B. For the Holy Spirit's use of this word *succour*, see its use in II Samuel 21:15-17 and Hebrews 2:18.
- C. There were women who followed Jesus with financial support for Him and His apostles (Lu 8:1-3).
- D. Phebe, like Gaius (III Jn 1:5-8), had helped many Christians in need by patronage, hospitality, etc.
- E. This is no little show of assistance or hospitality by virtue of Paul's high commendation and *many*.

And of myself also.

- A. This woman had been a specific helper to the apostle Paul, whether clothes, meals, shelter, etc.
- B. Lydia took Paul and Luke at least into her house in Philippi where they stayed (Acts 16:14-15).
- C. Dropping this little addition on the believers at Rome would have heightened their readiness.
- D. Consider how Onesiphorus took care of Paul with great diligence and service (II Tim 1:16-18).

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Greet Priscilla and Aquila.

- A. This wonderful couple is found at various geographical places and in various books of the Bible.
 1. We meet them moving from Rome to Corinth after the edict of Claudius Caesar (Acts 18:1-3).
 2. Their transferable skill, craft, occupation was tentmaking. Priscilla was not just a housewife.
 3. They together converted Apollos in Ephesus, who went to Corinth in power (Acts 18:24-28).
- B. No one should get too excited about Priscilla being mentioned before her husband in this passage.
 1. She is named before her husband in these three total places: Acts 18:18; II Tim 4:19; Rom 16:3.
 2. But she is also named after her husband in these three total places: Acts 18:2,26; I Cor 16:19.
 3. The beauty of the gospel is that there is no male or female in Christ (Galatians 3:28; I Pet 3:7).
 4. If a woman outshines her husband, he is a blessed man (Judges 13:1-14; II Kings 4:8-10).
- C. They had returned to Rome after being deported by Claudius and left by Paul (Acts 18:1,18-19).
- D. Either Claudius had died or the edict had been annulled so that they and other Jews could return.
- E. There is no higher calling for a marriage than a couple to give joint efforts for kingdom duties.

My helpers in Christ Jesus.

- A. There is an ordinary, unofficial gift in the New Testament church of helps (I Cor 12:28). Get down!
- B. These two gave Paul a job and then traveled around with him, behind him, and also ahead of him.
- C. Their help was not a handshake on Sunday or a meal out on Friday, but at the risk of their lives.
 1. Their help was more than a job sewing tents; they were capable and forward with much more.
 2. They had already shown great ability and zeal in the conversion of Apollos in their own home.
- D. Let it be known Paul was not ashamed to mention women, two out of three thus far, as his helpers.

4 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.

Who have for my life laid down their own necks.

- A. They did not literally lay necks down, unless the executioner missed; we assume a perfect idiom.
- B. These two dear Christian saints risked their own lives in order to save the life of the apostle Paul.
- C. They were together at Corinth and likely Ephesus, where there were events (Ac 18:12,17; 19:23).
- D. Christian love and service calls for men to lay down lives for the brethren (I John 3:16; Jn 15:13).
- E. The sacrifice Jesus Christ made for us should be reflected in the sacrifices we make for others.

Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

- A. Is it right to give thanks to a person or persons, when all things come down from above? Indeed.
 - 1. Is it right to give thanks to a person or persons, when it is Christ who laid down His life for us?
 - 2. Though God is the giver of every good gift, it is diligent and wise use of gifts that blesses men.
 - 3. Paul showed in this chapter, and it is shown in other places, that faithful men deserve praise.
- B. Paul was apostle to the Gentiles, so all the Gentile churches were blessed by Paul's continuing life.
- C. Do you think such affection and praise endeared this good couple to the Romans? Most assuredly!

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

- A. Aquila and Priscilla either had a family that was a church or used their home to house a small one.
 - 1. The word church means congregation or an assembly of it or a building, depending on context.
 - 2. The easiest explanation is their family, servants, and/or others living with them were a church.
 - 3. This identical language is also used about Nymphas and Archippus (Col 4:15; Philemon 1:2).
 - 4. If it was a church as we know it, all the other names must be part of another or other churches.
 - 5. If Aquila had a church in his house, who was pastor? Aquila was very capable (Acts 18:24-28).
 - 6. Aquila was in this same situation earlier elsewhere, for Paul used the same words (I Cor 16:19).
 - 7. Then there were likely multiple churches in Rome and suburbs, which should not be surprising.
 - 8. Paul does not say "church at Rome," like Corinth, but rather "all that be at Rome" (Rom 1:7).
 - 9. They likely had a large room for tent layout and/or wealth, for they easily employed Paul.
- B. The house church movement today is heresy to reject real churches for pretend churches in a den.
 - 1. There is a small movement with thousands of house churches trying to replace real churches.
 - 2. Children with a tree house often create daddy, mommy, and kids to pretend they have a family.
 - 3. The house church fad is another attempt by the ignorant and/or rebellious to mislead the simple.
 - 4. Satan will do anything to subvert God's ordinances and orderliness to exalt men and/or folly.
 - 5. Traditional churches may have problems, but we do not throw the baby out with the bathwater.
 - 6. The abuse of authority in any sphere does not mean we modify God's ordinance for that sphere.
 - 7. The over-sized mega churches often have cell meetings that can also be guilty of what follows.
- C. The house church movement makes unscriptural assumptions that totally pervert apostolic order.
 - 1. They claim all N.T. churches without exception met in houses and other buildings are wrong.
 - 2. This is absurd for the first church had between 10k and 50k members (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:1,7).
 - 3. There is not a house in the world even in this modern era that could handle such a large crowd.
 - 4. Luke said they assembled daily *in the temple* and ate food from house to house (Ac 2:46; 5:42).
 - 5. Even while describing such large numbers and house to house, Luke still used singular *church!*
 - 6. Corinth of "much people" (Acts 18:10) did not assemble in houses (I Cor 11:20,22,34; 14:23).

7. Paul separated disciples from the synagogue to meet in a school in Ephesus (Acts 19:9; 20:20).
 8. How did a great multitude or almost a whole city together meet in a house (Acts 17:4; 13:44)?
 9. A possible reason churches in houses are mentioned is because the rest likely met in buildings!
 10. Since there is no command for such a ridiculous idea, we will conclude by size they did not.
 11. It does not matter where a church assembles, but a specific place of meeting cannot be required.
 12. Any appeal to history is worthless, if it contradicts the Bible; persecution required meeting in houses, as in China today, just as persecution altered the view of marriage (I Cor 7:26,40).
 13. Appealing to history is like the SDA's claiming that Constantine changed worship to Sunday.
 14. We have no problem with churches meeting in houses, if they meet all other Bible ordinances.
- D. House churches exalt an extreme of the priesthood of the believer to get rid of rulers and teachers.
1. Priesthood of the believer is misapplied to mean interpreting scripture and leading assemblies.
 2. Jesus Christ made us kings and priests ... for prayers and sacrifices to God only ... through the new and living way of Jesus Christ ... not to correct any N.T. office (I Peter 2:5,9; Rev 1:5-6).
 3. If you think you are a literal king, not a spiritual king, test it with the police or the president!
 4. Such priesthood does not negate or alter the absolute necessity of church rulers and teachers.
 5. The N.T. church has formal, hierarchical authority from Jesus Christ all the way down to whining widows (Mark 13:34; Acts 6:1-7; I Cor 12:28-31; Eph 4:8-11; Heb 13:7,17,24; etc.).
 6. There are specific offices for the spiritual and natural needs of a church – bishops and deacons.
 7. The confusion of asking a room full of people what they think is worse than your own insanity.
 8. No wonder they have had some growth, every odious woman finally has a pulpit or platform.
 9. They claim they need no pastors, for the Holy Spirit will lead them to the truth. But of course!
 10. So Suzy Basso that does diapers and dusting all week expects to tell men what the Bible means.
 11. Everyone is desired and expected to speak, for they claim that preserves their doctrinal purity.
 12. Any ordinary man is *the man of God* – none of them are wise enough to grasp Pastoral Epistles, and they have not studied the 72 uses of that phrase to find 2 for angels and 70 for preachers!
- E. Here is a short list of heresies or problems by the general claims and confessions of the movement.
1. This is not the time or place to identify their specific claims and prove them wrong by scripture, since there are so many divergent and splinter groups that vary all over the religious map.
 2. They think they are new, creative, revolutionary, but the Plymouth Brethren were long before.
 3. They have an attitude and spirit against established church authority like Korah and company.
 4. When a few who want to do things their way get together in room, the fun is sure to follow.
 5. They voted against having chiefs, but Indians without chiefs never produce much or they fight.
 6. They have no sheep (members) and no shepherds (pastors), so it is not a flock for sure; it is a school of fish! No wonder their bumper stickers carry some representation of an empty fish!
 7. They have no formal doctrine except in each person's mind and no confession of mutual faith, so whatever problems institutional churches have with doctrine, house churches will be worse.
 8. Their safety is to let Daisy Dimwit contribute her precocious gray matter on supralapsarianism.
 9. Get rid of all organization! Start with bagels and ask, "Does anyone have a thought to share?"
 10. They have no leaders or rulers; they have no paid leaders or rulers; they have flushed the Bible.
 11. There is no accountability, except that Sally Student can correct Carl CEO whenever she wants.
 12. They have no history for their format, so Christ's church must have disappeared for centuries.
 13. There is no growth in knowledge, for there is no one present with knowledge allowed to speak.
 14. There is no in-depth study of anything, for all the members are entangled in affairs of this life.
 15. They focus far more on their faddish hatred of the "institutional church" than on faith or fruit.
 16. They collect based on unity on things outside the word of God that should be matters of liberty e.g. homeschooling, agrarianism, mothers as homebodies, full quiver obsession, and so forth.
 17. Their idea of letting all share is heresy (Pr 15:28; Mal 2:7; I Tim 4:7; II Tim 2:23; 3:6-7,16-17).
 18. They are for the most part tithe-haters, because there is no authority or purpose for their giving.

19. They have never seen a real church in action, like ours, so they cannot imagine our superiority.
20. Let us not rest but press on to be better and better – condemning them by doctrine and practice!
- F. What is a true church? ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/church/what-is-a-church-av/sermon.php>.
- G. For a little defense of office of bishop/pastor/teacher ... www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/magnify-the-office.pdf.
- H. For a little defense of office of bishop/pastor/teacher ... www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/miriam-and-korah.pdf.
- I. For a little defense of value of teachers and books ... www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/do-we-need-teachers.pdf.
- J. House church errors admitted ... http://www.therealchurch.com/problems_in_the_house_church_movement.html.

Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus.

- A. Here begins a long list of Paul's friends in Rome whom he wishes to publicly greet and commend.
1. Though this section is different from most, we love every word of God (Prov 30:5; Luke 4:4).
 2. If you find the section light or weak, consider it as a military ceremony with medals given out.
 3. We separate Phebe, Priscilla, and Aquila for the length of their salutations and for known roles.
 4. Paul knew these folks from other places, but they had moved to Rome like Aquila and Prisca.
 5. These greetings were as public as you can imagine – the whole church greeted each of them!
 6. Rather than isolate a few, he raised a large number to dilute envy and to make his other point.
 7. Here we see Paul's heart, as large as any man's, with love and appreciation for Christ's best.
 8. Though none but Rufus are mentioned elsewhere, Paul shows love and memory of good men.
 9. Paul clearly recognized service and degrees of it in kingdom duties (contrast Acts 15:36-40).
 10. For those at Rome that Paul did not name, hopefully they examined themselves (Heb 13:17).
 11. The Holy Spirit in David and Paul distinguished between help and labor and greatness in either.
 12. By the emphasis in chapters 12-15 on love, service, and unity, Paul provoked love and respect.
 13. Some of these by names were Gentiles and some were Jewish, with Paul pulling them together.
 14. We shall as usual have little use for all the speculations and traditions regarding those listed.
 15. Though Paul had never been to Rome, as the Empire's capital, his friends would travel there.
- B. Wise readers will not resent or neglect the passage but look at the little hints for spiritual lessons.
1. When coming to God's word where His best are listed, we should humbly seek our conviction.
 2. In every church there are givers and takers in various ways, but takers should become givers.
 3. Readers should ask, if Paul or Jesus were making a list today, which quartile would I be in?
 4. Of course, depending on your situation in life you have either more or less time to serve others.
 5. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those that minister and serve best (Matt 20:25-28).
 6. The mercy of this text for you today is its warning of the Day of Judgment (Matthew 25:33-46).
 7. Here are some marks and rules for how the N.T.'s wisest man chose his friends (Psalm 119:63).
- C. **Salute.** To accost or address with words expressive of good wishes, respect, or homage, esp. with some customary formula of that import; to greet in words. Compare Romans 16:16,21,22.
- D. Paul marked this man as wellbeloved, but only marked Amplias, Stachys, and Persis as beloved.
1. **Beloved.** Loved. This word is not unique to Romans. Compare Deut 21:15 and Matthew 3:17.
 2. Paul had powerful affection for him above most and placed him right after Aquila and Prisca.
- E. Paul, in keeping with his rule for Titus and other ministers, loved Epaenetus for being a good man.
1. Love is not chance or chemistry, but compatible character and conduct (Ps 119:63,79; Tit 1:8), where the rules of compatibility are defined by holy scripture – godly, glorious, gracious men.
 2. The love a man has for God, Jesus Christ, and truth should affect how you measure that man.
 3. It does not bother the righteous that they love some more than others, usually due to character.
 4. But it should bother the righteous they may be loved less than others, usually due to character.
 5. Jesus and Paul had their favorites, and Paul taught favorites (John 13:23; Phil 2:19-23; Tit 1:8).

Who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

- A. Epaenetus was the first convert to the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul won in the region of Achaia.
- B. Achaia was the southern region of Greece opposite the northern region of it known as Macedonia.
- C. Ministers gather fruit unto eternal life, which is evidence by conversion thereunto (John 4:35-39).
- D. Paul did not contradict himself, for the house of Stephanas obviously had a man named Epaenetus.
 - 1. The praise of Stephanas' house deserves your attention by this introduction (I Cor 16:15-16).
 - 2. These first Achaia believers chose addiction for serving saints – the inspired words are perfect.
 - 3. The rest of the Corinthians were to submit to them and those like them that served the kingdom.
 - 4. Those in every church that serve the church and help the ministry should be highly esteemed.
 - 5. It should be helpful here to remember the Lord's strict parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27).

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Greet Mary.

- A. **Greet.** To accost or address with the expressions of goodwill or courtesy usual on meeting; to offer in speech or writing to (a person) the expression of one's own or another's friendly or polite regard.
- B. Here is woman number three out of a total of five persons mentioned so far. Let sisters take note!

Who bestowed much labour on us.

- A. This is what it is all about – productive labor in kingdom activities for the cause of Jesus Christ.
- B. Notice there is nothing about a great testimony, great worship, great singing, or great personality.
- C. **Bestow.** To confer as a gift, present, give. *On, upon* a person. Compare I Corinthians 12:23; 13:3.
- D. Rather than encouraged or forced to help others, these great saints do it cheerfully and voluntarily.
- E. This woman gave as a gift much help and service to Paul and others, though without any office.
- F. It was not casual labor, ordinary labor, periodic labor, little labor, or some labor – but much labor.
- G. Even the world recognizes initiative and performance, how much more the high King of heaven?

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners.

- A. We do not know more about these persons that Paul speaks highly about than what is written here.
 - 1. It is likely Junia is a feminine name and makes her likely the wife or the sister of Andronicus.
 - 2. If she is a woman, which we choose by her name, she is the fourth woman of the seven listed.
- B. These two special persons were kinsmen to Paul, or blood and flesh relatives in some relationship.
 - 1. They were relatives closer than merely being Jews (Rom 9:3), for others Jews are in the list.
 - 2. This mention of relatives, which is not the last, emphasizes our duty to family (John 1:37-42).
 - 3. Fathers have their role (Is 38:19; Eph 6:4) and mothers have their role (I Tim 3:15; II Tim 1:5).
 - 4. Should we charge Paul with favoritism or nepotism? No! Grace may run large in some families.
- C. These two had been in prison with Paul at some other time, for he remembers this of them as well.
 - 1. It is not revealed where they had been in prison, but Paul was frequently there (II Cor 11:23).
 - 2. A measure of godliness is the degree that a person suffers persecution (II Tim 3:12; Ac 14:22).
 - 3. A measure of usefulness is the degree to which the world seeks to persecute (Acts 17:6; 24:5).
 - 4. A measure of perseverance is to continue in the Christian faith in spite of trials (I Pet 4:12-16).
 - 5. Persecution for the cause of Christ is a noteworthy blessing to be considered (Matt 5:10-12).

Who are of note among the apostles.

- A. Either these two were *notable apostles* or had *notable reputations with the apostles* of Jesus Christ.
- B. If they were apostles, then for certainty Junia was a man, not a woman (Acts 1:12-14 cp Acts 1:21).
- C. If they were apostles, and notable ones at that, it is very surprising we know nothing more of them.
- D. If they were apostles, and notable ones at that, it is unusual treatment to bury them in a long list.
- E. If they were apostles, and notable ones at that, why did they not correct Rome's church problems?
- F. Therefore, we conclude they were less than apostles but highly reputed by those that were apostles.

Who also were in Christ before me.

- A. In addition to being all that had been stated of them, they also had been converted before Paul was.
- B. A great measure of Christian character is continuing in the faith (Col 1:22; Heb 3:6,14; II Tim 4:7).
- C. Rather than a product of Paul's ministerial labors, God had chosen for them to believe before him.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

Greet Amplias.

- A. Paul identified a person named Amplias in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. The verb greet or salute means the same thing, so there should not be any difference drawn by it.
- C. This person is the first listed among Paul's notable ones without any special performance noted.

My beloved in the Lord.

- A. The great apostle of the Gentiles loved this person in a special way that raised him above others.
- B. He loved him not for personality, not for position, not for power, not for pennies, but for Christ!
- C. There should be a bond between and among men according to their faith and love in Christ Jesus.
- D. The world says blood is thicker than water, but we say blood is thicker than blood – Christ's blood!
- E. We are blood brothers by predestinated adoption, and it should create love, some more, some less.
- F. The basis or factors of friendship or affection among most are absolutely foolish and without merit.
- G. We can only marry in the Lord, and friends should be chosen as strictly (I Cor 11:11; Ps 119:63).

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ.

- A. Paul identified a person named Urbane in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. Urbane was a helper for Paul and others, similar to how Eve was created to be a helper for Adam.
- C. The help was not merely carnal help, but rather help in Christ for the kingdom of heaven's sake.
- D. Ministers have at least enemies, problem members, takers, average members, and helpers. Amen!
- E. It is a shame to this name in some respects that at least eight popes of Rome have stolen this name.

And Stachys my beloved.

- A. Paul identified a person named Stachys in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. Without mention of any help or service, though implied and understood, Paul loved this person.
- C. Paul's personal and public affection would have been limited to those useful in Christ's kingdom.
- D. There is a place for the wisdom of serpents to call men friends, but certainly not in a list this long.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

Salute Apelles approved in Christ.

- A. Paul identified a person named Apelles in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. Note that Amplias above was noted by Paul to be in the Lord, but this person much more (16:8).
- C. Not only was Apelles in Christ, but approved in Christ for salvation and his good kingdom service.
- D. If this approval in Christ is only salvation, it is valuable by example to note the best traits of men.
- E. To be approved by Christ for kingdom service is a high honor (Ro 14:8; I Cor 11:19; II Cor 10:18).

Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

- A. Paul identified a household that had some friends in Christ, here it is the household of Aristobulus.
- B. By the grammar of the text, like in the case of Caesar's, we know only some under him (Phil 4:22).
- C. The name of Aristobulus was known enough to identify the Christians that were part of his family.
- D. Whether he was dead, unconverted, or lacking the worth to be greeted, he is only an identifier here.
- E. In our use of surnames and form of greeting, we would call them by their last name or surname.
- F. Each time you see a plural pronoun within a family unit, consider again family soul responsibility.
- G. Each time you see a household of a man mentioned, husbands and fathers should be convicted.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

Salute Herodion my kinsman.

- A. Paul identified a person named Herodion in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. This special and notable person was Paul's kinsman, a flesh and blood relative in some connection.
 - 1. He was a relative closer than merely being a Jew (Rom 9:3), for others Jews are also in the list.
 - 2. Should we charge Paul with favoritism or nepotism? No! Grace may run large in some families.

Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus.

- A. Paul identified a household that had some friends in Christ, here it is the household of Narcissus.
- B. By the grammar of the text, like in the case of Caesar's, we know only some under him (Phil 4:22).
- C. The name of Narcissus was known enough to identify the Christians that were part of his family.
- D. Whether he was dead, unconverted, or lacking the worth to be greeted, he is only an identifier here.
- E. In our use of surnames and form of greeting, we would call them by their last name or surname.
- F. Each time you see a plural pronoun within a family unit, consider again family soul responsibility.

Which are in the Lord.

- A. Paul loved them not for personality, not for position, not for power, not for pennies, but for Christ!
- B. There should be a bond between and among men according to their faith and love in Christ Jesus.
- C. The world says blood is thicker than water, but we say blood is thicker than blood – Christ's blood!
- D. We are blood brothers by predestinated adoption, and it should create love, some more, some less.
- E. The basis or factors of friendship or affection among most are absolutely foolish and without merit.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord.

- A. Paul identified two as Tryphena and Tryphosa in Rome that the rest of the believers should salute.
- B. These are understood by their names to be women again, so all sisters in Christ should take heart.
- C. They directed their labor toward the things of the Lord, which is a reminder to all about priorities.
- D. Their labor may have been hospitality like Lydia, charity like Tabitha (Ac 9:36), or something else.
- E. Whatever the case, they were not offended that Paul loved Persis above them for her much labor!

Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord.

- A. Paul identified a person named Persis in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. By the name we assume this is yet another woman and by her close association to two others.
- C. Paul first identified her as the beloved Persis, indicating his affection for her in the Lord Christ.
- D. There is no sin with godly men loving godly women, as long as in purity as sisters (I Tim 5:2).
- E. Paul then noted that she labored much in the Lord, a step and mark above Tryphena and Tryphosa.
- F. This would not have offended the two, and it shows that God and good men rank degrees of effort.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord.

- A. Paul identified a person named Rufus in Rome that he wanted the rest of the believers to salute.
- B. Rufus may have been a son of Simon a Cyrenian, who passing by was pressed into duty by the Romans to help bear Jesus' cross, and then also a brother of Alexander (Mark 15:21; Acts 19:33).
 - 1. If Rufus is the same, consider the possibilities by inspired mention of two parents and two sons.
 - 2. The father Simon could have by chance coming into Jerusalem worked to the conversion of all.
- C. He marked this man as being a special choice of God different from the others, likely ministerial.
 - 1. If this *chosen in the Lord* were God's election to eternal life, how did it distinguish him at all?
 - 2. Jesus told His apostles He had chosen and ordained them to their great work (John 15:16).
 - 3. Yet it can also be encouraging and godly to identify gospel facts true of all (Phil 4:3; II Jn 1:1).

And his mother and mine.

- A. Are there two mothers, one mother of two brothers, or a mother of one that was dear to the other?
- B. Some have hastily presumed by this verse that Rufus was Paul's brother by this singular woman.
 - 1. We decline the option due to the fact that Paul made no mention of Rufus as kin (Ro 16:7,11).
 - 2. We decline the option due to Paul treating his mother almost disrespectfully by this manner.
 - 3. This is a very awkward and disrespectful way to treat both his brother and mother, if it be so.
 - 4. There is a time for humility or to avoid nepotism, yet in this context Paul does not seem fearful.
- C. Rather we assume the option that this woman was Rufus' biological mother and Paul's in Christ.
 - 1. Jesus Himself referred to disciples believing His gospel as mother and brethren (Mat 12:49-50).
 - 2. Jesus Himself assigned Mary His mother to the care of apostle John as his mother (John 19:27).
 - 3. It is a promise of Jesus Christ that those forsaking mothers gain new mothers (Mark 10:30).
 - 4. It is an apostolic rule for ministers to address older women as they would mothers (I Tim 5:2).
- D. This eminent woman is singled out by Paul for her relationship to Rufus and also to the apostle.
- E. If you are an older woman, have you raised biological sons for Christ or served servants of Christ.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes.

- A. Paul named five persons here that were in Rome that the rest of the believers there should salute.
- B. This is the first set of five persons, as Paul will do very similarly in the next verse in this chapter.
- C. These five were distinguished from the brethren with them, possibly bishops, deacons, or leaders.
- D. It may be that the large metropolis of Rome and surrounding area had several churches (Ro 16:5).
- E. It may be this was a group of connected persons of note with children, friends, and/or domestics.

And the brethren which are with them.

- A. Paul seemed to have moved from the more diligent and famous in the area of Rome to the less so.
- B. It is a blessing to have noteworthy brethren, and you should mark them for examples (Phil 3:17).
- C. It is a blessing to have noteworthy brethren, and you should take good care of them (Prov 27:10).
- D. There is a sanctifying effect wise men will not ignore in such cases (Ge 18:32; Je 15:1; Eze 14:14).

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas.

- A. Paul named five persons here that were in Rome that the rest of the believers there should salute.
- B. This is the second set of five persons, as Paul did similarly in the previous verse in this chapter.
- C. These five were distinguished from the saints that with them, possibly bishops, deacons, or leaders.
- D. It may be that the large metropolis of Rome and surrounding area had several churches (Ro 16:5).
- E. It may be this was a group of connected persons of note with children, friends, and/or domestics.
- F. The description of Nereus and his sister reminds us again of importance of converting siblings.

And all the saints which are with them.

- A. Paul seemed to have moved from the more diligent and famous in the area of Rome to the less so.
- B. Rather than *brethren* as in the previous verse, Paul here identifies these fellow believers as *saints*.
- C. Saints are sanctified or holy beings, a term used even of angels (Deut 33:2 cp Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19).

Note: At this point it is valuable to point out that Paul made no reference to Peter in Rome whatsoever.

- A. The [Original Catholic Encyclopedia](#) claims that Peter reigned as pope from 33 to 67 A.D., as head of the Roman Church.
- B. The date of this epistle in approximately 60 A.D. should have had Peter well established on the papal throne in Rome.
- C. Paul, throughout the catalog of names in this chapter and throughout the whole book, makes no mention at all of Peter.
- D. If Peter were not at Rome, papist claims to Rome's ascendancy, Peter's supremacy, and uninterrupted succession fails.
- E. If Peter were ruler at Rome, Paul would no doubt have listed him first and far above others noted among the apostles.
- F. As the chief bishop of Jesus Christ, being sole possessor of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, Paul took no note of it.
- G. It is a wonder that Paul called on the brethren to rectify their disorders without any instruction to Peter to handle them.
- H. Should we surmise that Peter was on a sabbatical and the great church was meeting in Aquila and Priscilla's house?
- I. There is no Bible evidence of any sort that Peter ever visited the city or had anything to do with the converts there, just like there is no Bible evidence of any sort of many more of this speculative doctrines e.g. assumption of Mary, etc.
- J. We do find Peter at approximately this time penning his first epistle from Babylon (I Pet 5:13), about 1800 miles away.
- K. Many Jews did not return with Ezra and Nehemiah, and some are noted at Pentecost as being dwellers in Mesopotamia.
- L. Peter was a minister of the circumcision, not uncircumcision, as Paul noted and his epistle repeats (Gal 2:9; I Pet 1:1).
- M. Papists on I Peter 5:13, requiring his presence in Rome, have suggested Babylon as its mystical name! See Rev 17:1-6!
- N. These fools will consign their entire church and its pope to the infernal regions of hell in order to place Peter in Rome!
- O. Let God be true, but every man a liar, especially those deluded devils that make up the teachers of the Roman brothel!

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Salute one another with an holy kiss.

- A. Paul, after his example of many greetings and salutes to a wide variety, exhorted the church to it.
- B. We may by this instruction in this context note Paul's desire to bring this church to peaceful unity.
- C. The following points were preached May 26, 2002 (I Thess 5:26), May 30, 2004 (I Cor 16:20), and December 26, 2004 (II Cor 13:12). A short version was preached April 22, 1990 (Footwashing).
- D. As children of God and saints in His church, we realize "blood is thicker than blood," in that the blood ties in Jesus Christ are stronger, deeper, and more precious than family, so warm physical expressions of affection and unity should be pleasant, not painful, and it should not surprise us that Peter refers to it as a kiss of charity (I Peter 5:14).
- E. Personal and physical greetings are incompatible with envy, strife, bitterness, division, or enmity, which exalts physical affection as a protective tool against such things; our apostle was always opposing these sins to magnify the unity and peace of the Spirit in each local body of Christ.
- F. We hug relatives, close friends, and others in moments of great affection or appreciation, but kissing is quite rare in the American culture other than for romantic or family purposes.
- G. We find all the kissing exhortations among apostolic salutations, not among their rules for brotherly love or church unity (Rom 16:16; I Cor 16:20; II Cor 13:12; I Thess 5:26; I Peter 5:14).
- H. And they are so positioned in his salutations to likely be little more than the "xox" we put at the end of some personal letters with words like, "Give everyone a hug for me," or as parents may sometimes exhort squabbling children, "Now give each other a kiss."
- I. Kissing was part of greetings in the New Testament (Mark 14:44), but such salutations were not universal, especially personal and intimate ones (Luke 7:44-46; Gal 2:9).
- J. We find little difference here from their practice of washing feet, which was done in their culture for the dry and dusty climate and lack of socks and enclosed shoes. And there is further similarity with the anointing of oil, which was also a kindness due to climate that was shown sometimes but not always (Luke 7:46). As we do not require footwashing, public or private, neither do we kissing.
- K. Jesus told the apostles to wash one another's feet (Jn 13:12-17), but we know this merely illustrated humility and service; the churches did not practice such a rite, or Paul would not have used it as a unique mark of exceptional widows (I Tim 5:10). The proponents of feet washing argue vigorously for it while ignoring Bible kissing, though it has much more Scriptural support.
- L. Jesus understood there was no need for feet washing with closed shoes (John 13:10).
- M. We want to do more than shake hands, for a handshake holds the other at a distance, and shaking hands is not considered a personal or intimate form of greeting or saluting among good friends. You do not greet close family or dear friends with handshakes.
- N. If we choose the literal and direct sense of this text as a literal and perpetual rule, do men kiss women? Do women kiss men? (Women kissed Jesus very affectionately and intimately.) On the hands? On the feet? On the lips? How often? How long? Both morning and evening services? With or without hugging? The reason these questions exist is because it was a social custom, which we have lost and therefore we do not understand the method or the limitations.
- O. And how could we keep the designation "holy," since kissing would be so very unusual to both participants and observers, due to its lack of use in our culture and society?
- P. And how could we keep the designation "charity," since kissing would cause many questions, much awkwardness, and even offence depending on how it was done and by whom and how often!
- Q. The right hand of fellowship given to Paul was a public act of authoritative approval (Gal 2:9), not a personal greeting or salutation of personal affection and love, which leads us to separate it from our practice of greeting our new members with much more affection than a mere handshake.

- R. If we lived in a country where kissing was accepted as appropriate greeting by intimate friends, we might well apply this passage differently, with a general understanding of the rules of that culture.
- S. Even in a culture and time where it was accepted, Paul always limited it to a “holy kiss,” which rejected any lascivious kiss (Pr 7:13) or treacherous kiss, like that of Judas.
- T. In another place, brother John exhorted to greeting mutual friends by name (III John 1:14). Does this add to the kiss requirement so that proper scriptural greetings require names and kissing? Should the full name be used? Or is the first name enough without the surname?
- U. We understand the emphasis to be on “greet” and “holy,” with “kiss” being their custom.
- V. Therefore, we will continue to apply this passage with regular hugging between those of the same sex and infrequent hugging of those of the opposite sex, which is the more intimate form of greeting in our society and culture, and far superior to casual greetings.
- W. Let all be sober about this text and its cross-references, for any foolish, light, frivolous, or mocking treatment of kissing based on this text shows a foolish or profane spirit worse than not keeping it.
- X. For more about the heresy of footwashing in the church ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/footwashing.pdf.

The churches of Christ salute you.

- A. Paul spoke for Gentiles churches he knew well in expressing their salute to Rome’s believers.
- B. By this point, the church should have been convicted by Paul’s many greetings and salutations and his exhortation for them to salute one another ... necessary exhortation for this divided church.
- C. This verse causes Campbellite convulsions as they assume there is magic in this name they have idolized. *Nehushtan!* They ignore the facts there are three uses of “churches of God” to only one “churches of Christ,” and eight uses of “church of God” to none at all of “church of Christ”!
- D. The churches of Jesus Christ should salute each other as fellow believers in the body of Christ and family of God, though there is nothing in this sentence to justify associations or denominations.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Now I beseech you, brethren.

- A. As we enter this short and weighty section of Romans, be fully aware of its great importance to us.
 1. Immediately as we open the Bible we find a devilish war against truth through Eve and Cain.
 2. As the Bible closes, there is a devilish war to deceive nations and warnings about altering truth.
 3. In between there is continual war of God’s sons and truth against men and error of all kinds.
 4. We have and know the truth by God’s sovereign choice for us to be the guardians of it on earth.
 5. This sacred and solemn trust is very important for our church, the kingdom, and our families.
 6. Are you as committed to the truth as was Abel of old and the martyrs since him (Rev 12:11,17).
- B. Remember this chapter’s divisions and the short outline of them at the beginning of these notes.
 1. Though there is every appearance of chapter 15 bringing his thoughts to a close, Paul had more.
 2. We believe by the doctrine of inspiration these words are not less important than chapters 1-15.
 3. Having sufficiently gotten the attention of many by personal greetings, he warned all the saints.
 4. Consider the previous sixteen verses of greetings as personal appeals to what he next wrote.
 5. In spite of many friends and honorable saints in Rome, there was danger from false teachers.
- C. There had not yet been a warning of false teachers in this book dedicated to detailed doctrinal truth.
 1. Now it is time to warn them all about wicked men even from the inside that will preach heresy.
 2. **Beseech.** To beg earnestly for, entreat (a thing). To supplicate, entreat, implore (a person).
 3. Paul used this fervent expression to exhort to holy living and prayer for him (Rom 12:1; 15:30).
 4. As apostle to the Gentiles, he could have demanded or ordered their loyalty to apostolic truth.

5. There are many warnings of false teachers and false doctrine throughout the New Testament.
- D. After commending, greeting, and saluting many in earlier verses, Paul then warned against others.
 1. The names of good Christians listed were obviously doctrinally faithful to get Paul's blessing.
 2. However, Paul knew and described enemies of truth elsewhere (Acts 20:25-32; Phil 3:18-19).
 3. Very loving and commending, Paul now warned against individual heretics that would come.
 4. Due to the sin nature of men, the corruption of the world, and the diabolical designs of Satan, all Christians must be vigilant to discern and diligent to separate from any and all heretics.
 5. Every good minister will be jealous over his flock to protect them from heresy (II Cor 11:1-2).
- E. Paul taught church unity without division, perfectly joined in the same mind (I Co 1:10; Eph 4:3).
 1. But this unity was strictly conditioned upon Paul's doctrine and teaching (I Cor 4:16; 11:1).
 2. Notice in the very context that there is one, one, and only one of several key things (Eph 4:4-6).
 3. Anything contrary to Paul's doctrine, regardless of the source, was to be rejected (Gal 1:6-9).
 4. Paul rightly feared Satan's seduction by another Jesus, gospel, and spirit (II Cor 11:1-4; 13-15).
 5. The goal is to have a church in full agreement by getting rid of disagreeable persons (Am 3:3).
- F. This is an important subject given the importance of truth, opposition to truth, and truth-hating era.
 1. Latter times would include seducing spirits and doctrines of devils taught by men (I Tim 4:1-3).
 2. The perilous times are here; attacks on truth are varied and increasing (II Tim 3:5-9,13; 4:3-4).
 3. If we are close to the little season of Satan (Rev 20:3,7-9), deceptive Christianity will be rampantly anti-truth, and it will affect all nations, which is very true of the situation in 2014.
 4. The church's purpose includes the support and defense of the truth (I Timothy 3:15; Jude 1:3).
 5. The effort for truth and against error is intense – *earnestly contend* – like Nehemiah (Ne 13:25).
 6. Contending is fighting. It means to strive earnestly; to make vigorous efforts; to endeavour, to struggle. To stive in opposition; to engage in conflict or strife; to fight! Are you ready to fight?
 7. Earnest means serious, opposite trifling; usually in emphatic sense, intensely serious, gravely impassioned, in any purpose, feeling, conviction, or action; sincerely zealous. Intense, ardent.
 8. We are at war; the father of lies fights us like Eve and Judas; our Father seeks true worshippers.
 9. We are at war; we must increase duty to truth, because attacks of devils and men will increase!
 10. Never before have so many religious liars been able to get right next to you by the Internet, etc.
 11. Anytime you turn on the radio or television or pick up a magazine or surf the Internet, beware!
 12. If you engage most of the local population, you will have to sort through deceived Christians.
 13. For false teachers against the Bible ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/attacking-the-bible-false-teachers.pdf>.

Mark them which cause divisions and offences.

- A. Certain men and women, in or out of the churches in Rome, were to be identified well and avoided.
 1. Observe and remember first that this is not just marking heresies, but rather heretical persons.
 2. It is not enough to condemn error and honor truth, it requires the persons involved (Ps 15:4)!
 3. It is not enough to hate error and love truth, it requires hatred of the leaders (Ps 139:21-22)!
 4. Any effort to split churches or get a following would be called a *division* and was condemned.
 5. Any activity contrary to established doctrine or practice was an *offence* and was condemned.
 6. Pastors must be vigilant to protect the flock, but members also warn offenders (I Thess 5:14).
 7. Reporting the spread of division or offences to a pastor is not backbiting at all (I Cor 1:11).
- B. It is a shame in an effeminate age that many Christians are repulsed by naming names of heretics.
 1. Paul named Alexander, Demas, Hymenaeus, Philetus; John named Diotrophes (III Jn 1:9-10).
 2. Paul named Peter and published it (Gal 2:11-18); Luke did Mark and Barnabas (Ac 15:36-41).
 3. Jesus generalized about religious groups (Matt 23); Paul generalized about nations (Tit 1:12).
 4. If you do not name names, how will anyone know the source of the danger and rightly avoid it?
 5. Since doctrine is no longer important (II Ti 4:3-4), men think name-calling is merely personal.

- C. It is a fact of the gospel of Christ – due to Satan’s enmity against Him – that there are heresies.
 - 1. They are under His control and used to get rid of heretics and reveal the faithful (I Cor 11:19).
 - 2. Jesus had Himself warned about them in context of Judas Iscariot and his offences (Matt 18:7).
 - 3. God hates those who sow discord, and He will surely judge them (Prov 6:16-19; I Cor 3:16-17).
- D. If the goal is fuzzy, wuzzy, loving compromise for a happy, social church, marking is not allowed.
 - 1. To increase fast, a church’s doctrinal position must become more inclusive and less exclusive.
 - 2. Preaching must be more and more vague about divisive issues of doctrine, practice, lifestyle.
 - 3. This is easy to see by listening to a few sermons of the fastest growing churches in the world.
 - 4. Yet it is this very marking and avoiding that reduces a church to those that agree (Amos 3:3).
- E. Marking is identifying by name and any other designation helpful to save God’s saints from them.
 - 1. It is inherently personal, for it involves individuals and their names, their roles, their efforts.
 - 2. Yet it is not a personal vendetta at all, for the whole issue is a departure from Biblical truth.
 - 3. Of course, this effeminate generation will accuse that it is personal, vengeful, spiteful, etc., etc.
 - 4. When Paul magnified his office of apostle to the Gentiles, he was not pumping himself at all.
 - 5. Grasp the full ramifications of Paul taking Peter to task in public and in writing (Gal 2:11-18).
- F. Marking of heretics and heresies is not necessarily identifying those we think are going to hellfire.
 - 1. It is not the amount of truth that a person believes that indicates whether he is God’s son or not.
 - 2. Yet this distinction does not provide any more justification for allowing company with them.
 - 3. Most Christians do not know what heretic or heresy means, so they think we are damning them.
- G. If the goal is earnestly contending for the faith once delivered, then marking is right and necessary.
 - 1. For our children to grow up to defend and promote the truth, they need much marking of error.
 - 2. For weak sheep that like to play with friendly wolves, they need to be warned strictly and often.
 - 3. Contending is very serious business of fighting hard against heretics (Neh 13:25; Titus 1:9-11).
 - 4. In these perilous times of the last days, there will be many such false teachers (II Timothy 4:4).
- H. The closer heretics or heresy is to the truth, the louder and longer must be the marking of them.
 - 1. An American bank teller will hardly give full credit to a depositor with a pile of Russian rubles.
 - 2. In the same way, most Christians can easily discern and despise Hindus, Mormons, Catholics.
 - 3. Bank tellers get detailed information and rules to detect counterfeit U.S. bills that are the best.
 - 4. In the same way, believers must be reminded of very subtle differences of heresy and practice.
 - 5. Great heresies do not happen at once or by one change but by many compromises over time.
 - 6. These “minor” errors are heresy and promote error: other Bible versions, Arminian salvation, musical instruments, Catholic holidays, women speaking in church, dry-pastor baptisteries, etc.
 - 7. For the subtle, evil danger of “Good Christian Friends” ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/friends.pdf>.
 - 8. For more about such “Good Christian Friends” ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/christian-differences.pdf>.
- I. When a minister does this, or a church member exposes a heretic, accusations will follow shortly.
 - 1. A minister that marks men outside the church will be called egotistical, unloving, or a dictator.
 - 2. A minister that marks men and excludes heretics in the church will be called fearful or dictator.
 - 3. For reasons, primarily pride, rebellion, and sedition, heretics think they deserve to be heard.
 - 4. Every member, especially older men, should be ready to publicly silence such arrogant fools.
- J. Marking heretics is a corporate action of the whole church under direction of the church’s pastor.
 - 1. Paul appealed to Rome’s church or churches, but formal action is by a leader (I Cor 5:3-5).
 - 2. Yet, all should be diligently vigilant to stop any heretics (I Thess 5:4; Gal 6:1; James 5:19-20).
 - 3. Pastors lead churches through a process of admonition then rejection (Tit 3:9-11; II Thess 3:6).
 - 4. If they are church members, a lack of repentance will bring exclusion for heresies or variance.
 - 5. If they are not church members, they will be named and their heresies identified for protection.
 - 6. Consider that Paul had false teachers following him around wanting to profit from his churches.
 - 7. For proper church judgment of all sinners ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/church-discipline.php>.
- K. It is a fact of church history that many published works were rebuttals against some man by name!

Contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.

- A. This epistle included origin of sodomy, total depravity, salvation by Christ alone, infant damnation, baptism by immersion, election within Israel, submission to civil rulers, Christian liberty, etc.
1. Doctrine is not a difficult word – here it simply means the body of teaching of true Christianity.
 2. We are not fundamentalists: holding “fundamentals” but agreeing to disagree on other doctrine.
 3. If Jesus or the apostles taught it, no matter how minor, we hold to it (Matt 5:19; II Thess 3:6).
 4. Paul denied errors about hair, work ethic, attendance (I Cor 11:16; II Thes 3:6-14; Heb 10:25).
 5. We use wine and unleavened bread in closed communion, and the bread must be broken, etc.
 6. Ancient landmarks we hold as a church ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/remove-not-the-ancient-landmark.pdf.
- B. Holding fast to the faithful word is of utmost importance to truth (II Tim 2:2; Titus 1:9; Col 1:23).
1. This is doctrine you have learned – you should not even consider change without great impetus.
 2. Many people are given to change or to new things; they are wrong (Pr 24:21-22; Acts 17:21).
 3. Many people can move positions on a subject with relative ease and with very little hard proof.
 4. We will not change positions on any subject without a tsunami of positive evidence for the new position and complete correction and explanation for every argument of the old position.
 5. We changed doctrine and practice before by this standard ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/footwashing.pdf.
- C. You must keep in memory what you have been taught or you are vulnerable for preying heretics.
1. Because Corinth was negligent, false teachers had even denied the resurrection (I Cor 15:2).
 2. Ignorance, due to lazy Christians, leaves a church vulnerable to preying heretics (Ac 20:25-32).
 3. Throughout the area of Paul’s labors there were Jewish legalists trying to subvert the churches.
 4. David taught God’s words must be retained, considered, and obeyed (Ps 119:98-100,104,128).
 5. Solomon taught that retaining was crucial for truth and wisdom (Prov 3:1,3; 4:4; 6:21; 7:2-3).
 6. Paul warned Jews about letting gospel truth slip away (Heb 2:1-4; 3:12-13; 6:4-6; 10:23-25).
 7. No wonder Peter promised to keep reminding them of well understood truth (II Peter 1:12-15).
- D. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth, not your truth, the apostolic truth (I Timothy 3:15).
1. We want to fulfill our purpose as a church by holding to truth and supporting and defending it.
 2. Therefore, we emphasize Bible preaching, teaching, scripture, in assemblies and out of them.
 3. You want a constant, strict, and vigilant pastor regarding doctrinal truth, no matter who he is.
 4. We reject all common replacements ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/attacking-the-bible-false-teachers.pdf>.
- E. We will not put up with any variations from God’s written revelation interpreted by our apostle.
1. We hold God’s words right on every subject and hate every contrary opinion (Psalm 119:128).
 2. Doctrine and practice should joy the righteous and cut the wicked (Ezekiel 13:22; I Tim 4:16).
 3. Micaiah had no regard for the ministerial association that outnumbered him (I Kings 22:12-14).
 4. Jeremiah had absolutely no respect for the opinions of the ministerial association (Je 23:28-29).
 5. Jesus had absolutely no respect for the opinions of the ministerial association (Matt 5:19-20).
 6. Paul had absolutely no respect for the opinions of the ministerial association (I Timothy 6:3-5).
- F. How does apostolic doctrine get to you? Do you understand God’s ordained plan and process?
1. Do you believe God is sovereign? Jesus Christ gave gifts? The Spirit reveals? Prayer works?
 2. You trust this sovereign providence of God in every other sphere, and you should in a minister.
 3. The Bible evidence is extensive in both testaments to trust God’s properly called minister (Neh 8:8; Jer 3:15; Mal 2:7; Acts 8:30-35; Eph 4:11-14; I Tim 4:13-15; II Tim 2:2; 3:16-17; 4:1-2).
 4. You are further told how to measure them, as long as you approach it humbly like the eunuch or Bereans (Ps 119:98-100,128; Isaiah 8:20; Matt 5:19-20; 7:15-20; Acts 17:11; I John 4:1-6).
 5. Pray for revelation and protection for your pastor (Ps 119:18; Ezek 14:9; Matt 13:16; 16:17).
 6. Be thankful for an ox that diligently applies his ability in the word under God’s favor (Pr 14:4).
 7. Just as we exalt God’s role in ordaining civil rulers, we trust His providence for church leaders.
 8. Wise Christians will ignore personal and liberty issues to focus on Bible doctrine and practice.

- G. Scripture is primarily for the man of God – the ordained bishop – to study, interpret, and teach.
1. Do not let your vain feelings be hurt; simply submit to what the Bible actually says about it.
 2. Churches may exalt daily Bible reading, hermeneutics, Bible tools, quizzing, preaching, etc., which may lead to other issues, but a church should not deny study without further evidence.
 3. God spoke to the patriarchs, then He ordained priests to teach (Lev 10:8-11; Deut 33:10-11).
 4. The inspiration and profitability of scripture is to help preachers (II Tim 2:15; 3:16-17; 4:1-2).
 5. The phrase *man of God* occurs 72 times – twice for an angel; 70 times for His ministers; it is evil presumption for men to presume on the phrase as if it meant merely *godly man*.
 6. Ministers do the work of this descriptive paragraph (I Timothy 4:11,13; II Tim 4:2; Titus 1:13).
 7. God gave ministers for the perfection of saints, not merely personal Bibles (Eph 4:11-14).
 8. God's ministers are who keep and give knowledge (Neh 8:7-9; Mal 2:7; Jer 3:15; II Tim 2:2).
 9. Christ's ministers are stewards of God's mysteries (I Cor 4:1-2 cp Titus 1:7; I Peter 4:10-11).
 10. Conflicting duties must be delegated so he can focus on the word and prayer (Acts 6:1-4).
 11. Since Paul, Jesus Christ is making His ambassadors able ministers of the N.T. (II Cor 3:6).
 12. The riches of the gospel go no further than God's ministers carry them (Romans 10:15; 15:16).
 13. Paul magnified his office, and pastors must often do so as well (Romans 11:13; Titus 2:15).
 14. For a little defense of office of bishop/pastor/teacher ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/magnify-the-office.pdf.
- H. If you do not follow the right procedure with the right attitude, then the next verse is true for you.
- I. Following the right process under God's sovereign blessings is glorious indeed (II Thess 2:9-15).
- J. Do you know what your church and pastor believes and preaches on most any or all subjects?
1. A church's website should be designed for members to find answers to questions quite easily.
 2. A church should establish by confession, creed, document, or webpage its ancient landmarks.
 3. Ancient landmarks we hold as a church ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/remove-not-the-ancient-landmark.pdf.

And avoid them.

- A. Paul described cursing them, rejecting them, and having no company with them in other places where avoiding them is formally intended (Gal 1:6-9; Titus 3:9-11; I Cor 5:9-11; II Thess 3:6,14).
1. We do not stone heretics like our brethren in the church of the Old Testament (Deut 13:6-11).
 2. It did not matter if the "prophet" brought a sign or wonder to pass before Israel (Deut 13:1-5).
 3. If it involved a city of Israel, the city was fully destroyed and its stuff burned (Deut 13:12-18).
 4. In the N.T., we direct our .66 magnum gospel cannon and blast heretic and heresy to pieces.
 5. It is a disgrace that within a few years in America that the Mormons (1830), Churches of Christ (1832), SDA's (1861), and JW's (1870's) were started and supplied with ignorant Christians.
 6. Many Baptists were no match for educated heretics of these sects and their scavenging ways.
- B. Churches must exclude anyone sowing discord among the brethren no matter the reason for their treachery; they must exclude anyone publicly holding doctrine or practice contrary to the church.
1. Any effort to split churches or get a following would be called a *division* and was condemned.
 2. God hates sowing discord among brethren, so it must be rooted out of the church (Pr 6:16-19).
 3. Any activity contrary to established doctrine or practice was an *offence* and was condemned.
 4. Such offenders may be excluded for heresy, sedition, variance, or whatever best fits the crime.
 5. If not done speedily, their word will eat like a canker (II Tim 2:17) or a fox in the hen house.
- C. Of course, if you avoid them, when they want to pick a doctrinal fight, they will call you a chicken.
1. The possibility of a ditch digger coming up with new doctrine we need is nearly impossible.
 2. Brutes will get in who think arguing and debate is godly and scriptural, but it is not (Rom 1:29).
 3. Pastors are warned to not even entertain unlearned questions or fighting about words (Prov 9:7-8; 14:7; 23:9; 26:4-5; I Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 6:3-5,20; II Timothy 2:14,16,23; Titus 1:14; 3:9).
 4. While ministers should answer sincere and researched questions, they should reject all others.

- D. The pulpit or any forum in a church is never open to anyone with any idea contrary to established church doctrine and practice, as some fools will ask and expect such an audience. What fools!
 1. How many shepherds would allow wolves in among the flock to see if the sheep like them?
 2. How many fathers would allow a rebel child in or out of the family to address his children?
 3. How many generals would allow a treasonous soldier to address his troops before a battle?
 4. How many masters would allow a labor union agitator to spread poison among his employees?
 5. How many husbands would allow their wives to associate with wicked women hating men?
- E. If the goal is growth and accelerating growth to take in more and more, avoiding is hardly allowed.
 1. Any church can grow even geometrically in proportion to its compromise of apostolic doctrine.
 2. Any church exploding in growth during the perilous times is manifestly compromising truth.
 3. This should be self-evidence and is statistically significant for proving error (Luke 6:26; 16:15).
- F. If the goal is purity of truth and unity of a church around it, then avoiding heretics is necessary.
 1. Ministers are warned to avoid heretics (I Timothy 5:22; 6:3-5; II Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:9-11).
 2. Churches must avoid heretics (Rom 16:17-18; I Cor 5:11; Gal 1:6-9; II Thess 3:6; Rev 2:2,6).
- G. If church members, they are excluded from the church and shunned according to Bible rules.
 1. We do not allow them one minute in the pulpit to express their vomit (Gal 2:5; Titus 3:9-11).
 2. This should be as obvious as allowing a rebellious child to vent their vomit or seduce siblings.
- H. If they are ministers, we reject them and avoid their preaching and writings as dangerous heresy.
- I. If persons and heresies are not avoided formally and informally, corruption follows (I Cor 15:33).
- J. It is a shame that churches heavily under Paul's influence could allow heresy (Rev 2:14-15,20).
- K. For examples of 19th century heretics ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/heretics-of-the-nineteenth-century.pdf>.

18 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 they that are such.

- A. The preceding verse defined this category of persons – *divisions and offences* contrary to the truth.
 1. These are persons – therefore it becomes highly personal, because they are people with names.
 2. They cause *divisions* by sowing discord in churches by teaching aberrant or new doctrines.
 3. They cause *offences* by saying or doing things contrary to apostolic doctrine and practice.
 4. The measure of a church, minister, man, woman, or child is their loyalty to apostolic doctrine.
 5. The doctrine we have learned to this point in time we believe to be right and will fight for it.
- B. There has always been an abundance of such persons, and there will be yet more in perilous times.
 1. When Elijah visited Ahab, it was Elijah alone against 950 false prophets (I Kings 18:19-22).
 2. When Jehoshaphat visited Ahab, it was only Micaiah against 400 false prophets (I Kgs 22:5-8).
 3. John and Jesus went up against the combined religious establishment and ministerial association of Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, scribes, lawyers, Herodians, and others unnamed.
 4. Jesus warned that His generation would be exposed to many false teachers (Matt 24:5,11,24).
 5. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus that false teachers would arise on the inside (Acts 20:25-32).
 6. Paul described great corruption of truth already in his generation (II Cor 2:17; Titus 1:10-11).
 7. Rome fell away with signs, lying wonders, and doctrines of devils (II Thess 2:3,9; I Tim 4:1-3).
 8. Peter warned coming false teachers would fatally lead many astray to destruction (II Pet 2:1-2).
 9. John warned in three epistles about heretics (I Jn 2:18-19,26; 4:1-6; II Jn 1:7-11; III Jn 1:9-11).
 10. Jude warned of reprobates creeping in and turning God's grace into lasciviousness (Jude 1:1-4).
 11. Jesus rebuked and warned the churches of Asia about heresies (Re 2:2,6,9,14-15,20; 3:9; 17:5).
- C. Time would fail to tell of Origen, Augustine, Pelagius, Arminius, Calvin, Luther, William Miller, Ellen White, Joseph Smith, Charles Russell, Mary Eddy, Scofield, Joel Osteen, and many others.

- D. We have heard them among us in recent years barking about their view of Babylon, a generation, the Jewish Sabbath, preterism, church membership, Christian liberty, etc. More will surely follow!
- E. There are some that are not enemies of Christ but rather ignorant and needing/seeking instruction.
 - 1. They humbly confess their place, their ignorance, their confusion, and a desire to know more.
 - 2. These do not seek to gain a following or to divide the church or to overthrow church doctrine.
 - 3. They follow an orderly and respectful process to ask their pastor to clarify points of doctrine.
 - 4. They do not cause divisions or offences, for they keep their ignorance or questions private.
 - 5. These innocent souls, who will be helped with all diligence, are not the subject of this context.
- F. There is an orderly way to arrive at truth, and it excludes weekend warriors with haughty opinions.
 - 1. Pride ruined the devil; it ruins men; there is more hope of a fool than a haughty man (Pr 26:12).
 - 2. The church, ministers included, must humble themselves as nothing before God and His word.
 - 3. The Bible way is to pray for and trust your minister to study and preach God's truth to you.
 - 4. It is simply trusting God's sovereignty, helping your pastor to be focused, and praying for him.
 - 5. The Bereans received it readily, then confirmed Paul's Bible appeals were valid (Acts 17:11).
 - 6. At no time did the Bereans think they were God's power to accuse, correct, or undermine Paul.
 - 7. If you have a question, humbly and respectfully ask, trusting those with more knowledge.
- G. For a little defense of office of bishop/pastor/teacher ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/magnify-the-office.pdf.
- H. For a little defense of office of bishop/pastor/teacher ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/miriam-and-korah.pdf.
- I. For a little defense of value of teachers and books ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/do-we-need-teachers.pdf.

Serve not our Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. The true followers of Jesus Christ do not change or modify doctrine or practice without great proof.
 - 1. The apostles taught all things whatsoever Jesus commanded them, especially Paul (Matt 28:20).
 - 2. Saints tenaciously hold to the faith once delivered ignoring all changing times, fables, and fads.
 - 3. Jesus promised He will send heresies to make manifest those He has approved (I Cor 11:19).
 - 4. Some that profess to be Christ's will go out from us to prove they were not of us (I John 2:19).
 - 5. We are not confused or discouraged by all the isms sweeping the world (II Cor 2:17; Rev 17:5).
 - 6. Of course, for anyone to be converted from error requires change, but RCC to Baptist is easy.
 - 7. Jumping around and making stuff up as they go, as we have seen, is not Christian or intelligent.
 - 8. Pastor and church do not change without a tsunami of evidence (II Tim 2:2; Tit 1:9; Col 1:23).
 - 9. Citizens do not reject rulers or children parents without overwhelming and conclusive proof.
- B. Of course, they will use the name of Jesus, for without that what sheep would ever consider them?
 - 1. There is more than one Jesus, spirit, and gospel – Satan's counterfeits (II Cor 11:1-4,13-15).
 - 2. If we trust Jesus Christ, these lying reprobates will not get away with their sins (II Tim 3:8-9).
 - 3. Jesus clearly described many such teachers will appeal to efforts in His name (Matt 7:21-23).
- C. At best these false teachers serve their own belly by loving themselves and their thoughts the most.
 - 1. This modest description does not at all alter the fact they are enemies of Jesus (Phil 3:18-19).
 - 2. Jesus was pretty simple about the matter – you are either for Him or against Him (Matt 12:30).
 - 3. We should wisely oppose putting all sincere members of heretical churches in the book of life.
- D. At worst these false teachers are the ministers of Satan like Judas Iscariot (16:20 cp Jn 13:26-27).
 - 1. What is their effect? Their converts are children of hell just like themselves (Matt 23:14-15).
 - 2. Our Lord had incisive discernment to spot the devil himself even affecting Peter (Matt 16:23).

But their own belly.

- A. The Holy Spirit does not mince words, and neither did Paul. Heretics worship their own bellies.
 - 1. There are in every church such belly worshippers, who mind earthly things (Phil 3:18-19).
 - 2. Paul warned Ephesus that its elders would change to draw men after themselves (Acts 20:30).
 - 3. There are men in love with life and themselves, and they are very dangerous. Love Christ!

4. Many ministers with great achievements will call Jesus Lord with no success (Mat 7:15-23).
5. Their goal is not the glory of Jesus Christ, but rather a pet point of doctrine or their own glory.
- B. Human pride, a very basic and popular sin every man has, is a great danger (I Tim 3:6; Deu 17:20).
 1. An easy indicator of these treacherous men is pride – they crave to be teachers and/or leaders.
 2. They want so much to share their opinions that it is painful for them to listen. Watch and listen.
 3. The pride of life is one of Satan’s basic devices (Genesis 3:4-6; Matthew 4:5-7; I John 2:16).
 4. Humility is necessary for God’s presence and His blessing (Ps 34:18; 51:17; Is 57:15; 66:1-2).
 5. Pride is incredibly destructive, so let’s all get down (Prov 8:13; 11:2; 16:5,18-19; 21:4; 29:23).
 6. They generally reject civil authority more than most by context (II Peter 1:10-12; Jude 1:8-10).
- C. The Priesthood of the believer is a dangerous doctrine if it is not carefully kept in its proper place.
 1. It applies more to prayer and spiritual sacrifices than the ability or duty to interpret scripture.
 2. Any Christian of any age or sex has an open door to God’s presence through Jesus Christ.
 3. But not all Christians have the ability, time, tools, responsibility, experience, etc. to interpret.
 4. A child reading the Bible will find truth to easily confound the heresies of Roman Catholicism.
 5. But a child will ordinarily not find truth to even question the work of a Christ-called bishop.
 6. For a little defense of office of bishop/pastor/teacher ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/magnify-the-office.pdf
- D. The Charismatic movement is an attack on the word of God as much as any other of its heresies.
 1. These false teachers think they can make up any doctrine at anytime, which they often do daily.
 2. They get a *word of wisdom* or *word of knowledge* and other “gifts” that have long disappeared.
 3. They cannot grasp that scripture is more sure than God’s voice from heaven (II Peter 1:16-21).
 4. If you push hard enough, they say, “I don’t care what the Bible says, I have the Holy Spirit.”
 5. This Charismatic abuse has nearly eliminated the need for ministers due to apostolic thinking.
 6. The promises of the Spirit to guide into all truth were strictly for the apostles (Jn 14:26; 16:13).
 7. Little children in intelligence and Bible knowledge think they can and should challenge pastors.
 8. They say, with God’s love in my heart and the Spirit leading me, I do not care what men say.
 9. For false teachers against the Bible ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/attacking-the-bible-false-teachers.pdf>
- E. The Information explosion is a dangerous factor in these last days to allow more heresy than ever.
 1. Anyone, anywhere, can publish anything, at no cost or limitation or examination or evidence.
 2. Therefore, there is more heretical junk a mouse click away than ever before in world history.
 3. Therefore, any false teacher and any church service can be in your living room with a click.
 4. The Internet is not the only culprit; radio, television, CD’s, DVD’s, mass media all help.

And by good words and fair speeches.

- A. Remember, the issue at stake is deception, which is beguiling hearers to believe that a lie is truth.
 1. Of course they sound good; have you considered the beautiful explanation Satan had for Eve?
 2. Of course they sound good; they will not tell you they work for the devil (II Cor 11:13-15).
 3. Of course they sound good; they have some truth mixed with error, or it would not work at all.
 4. Of course, the pretences sound plausible, even though the projects are very pernicious (MH).
 5. Their love and affection displayed is nothing more than the ambition of Absalom (II Sa 15:6).
 6. It does not matter if they say they love the truth and you; how do they divide the word of truth?
 7. The devil himself quoted scripture when seeking to corrupt the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 4:6).
- B. They use good words, so the vocabulary may sound consistent with what you know from the Bible.
 1. The Spirit wrote they will use feigned words and cunningly devised fables (II Peter 2:3; 1:16).
 2. They will preach or teach with great swelling words of vanity to allure your lusts (II Pet 2:18).
 3. Paul warned against any man deceiving by vain words regarding damnable sins (Eph 5:3-6).
 4. They can quote five *solas* all they want, but the real issue is Biblical and logical conclusions.
 5. For example, the so-called grace revolution of Joseph Prince is merely Jude 1:4 fulfilled, from which he could have been saved by taking heed to what grace teaches in Titus 2:1-15, etc., etc.

- C. They use fair speeches, so the public presentation is attractive and desirable to gain your attention.
1. There will always be some truth, a little or a lot, to get you vulnerably open to their hidden lies.
 2. Ability to speak or aptitude to teach only leads to shame without right dividing (II Tim 2:15).
 3. They promise liberty (think Joel Osteen), though they are servants of corruption (II Peter 2:19).
 4. Remember that the devil insinuated that he had Eve's best interests and profit at heart (Ge 3:5).
 5. Joseph Prince talks about grace until you think you must be a legalist for not being like him.
 6. For more false teachers promising liberty ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/they-promise-them-liberty.pdf.

Deceive the hearts of the simple.

- A. What is it to be deceived? It means to believe a lie is truth without any suspicion you are wrong.
1. **Deceive.** To ensnare; to take unawares by craft or guile; to overcome, overreach, or get the better of by trickery; to beguile or betray into mischief or sin; to mislead. To cause to believe what is false; to mislead as to a matter of fact, lead into error, impose upon, delude, 'take in'.
 2. Compare the Spirit's usage (Jer 9:5; 37:9; I Sam 19:15-17; Mat 24:4-5; I Cor 3:18; I Jn 1:8-10).
 3. It is horrible and terrible to believe a lie without any conscience or suspicion (Isaiah 44:19-20).
 4. Paul's warnings should get your attention, for there are many deceivers (Col 2:4,8; II John 1:7).
 5. Thankfully, the deceived and the deceiver are God's, so we want to walk with Him (Job 12:16).
- B. The first reason for marking and avoiding is to worship God in truth, for any worship not in truth does not please God and does not truly profit the hearers (John 4:20-24; Matt 15:8-9; Eph 4:13,15).
- C. The second reason for marking and avoiding is to save the simple from deception of dastardly liars.
1. **Simple.** Deficient in knowledge or learning; characterized by a certain lack of acuteness or quick apprehension. Lacking in ordinary sense or intelligence; more or less foolish, silly, or stupid; also, mentally deficient, half-witted. Compare Psalm 19:7; Prov 1:4; 9:13; 14:15; 22:3.
 2. Just as we protect our wives and children by taking precautions, we do the same in the church.
 3. Unless marking and avoiding occurs, various false doctrines will soon overthrow weaker souls.
- D. It is the heart mentioned here, for it is true that the simple follow their heart more than their mind.
1. Many false teachers prey on the emotions and sentiments of people to believe their opinions.
 2. As a rule, the simple believe every word, and only exceptional prudent men do not (Pr 14:15).
 3. It takes only a little knowledge to believe a thing, for it is more an emotional event than logical.
 4. These false teachers use great swelling words of vanity to allure their victims (II Peter 2:18).
- E. Who are the simple ones we must protect from false teachers and their false doctrine and lies?
1. Children are deficient in knowledge and experience, so we guard all inputs to them (Eph 6:4).
 2. Wise fathers make careful educational choices to protect their children from error, for there is identifiable risk in every schooling choice e.g. "good Christian friends" at Christian schools.
 3. Women are the weaker sex in this matter and must be protected (I Tim 2:13-14; II Tim 3:6-7).
 4. Many silly women, vulnerable and weak by nature, lusts, and sloth, are captivated by charlatans like Joel Osteen, James Dobson, Benny Hinn, Pope Frank, Joyce Meyer, Jesse Duplantis, etc.
 5. Arminian churches, and even most churches, depend on women for attendance, teaching, etc.
 6. Husbands should not allow wives to read or listen to men they have not specifically approved, and there is no reason for the woman to be doing either without her husband except for sloth.
 7. In fact, it is just plain foolish to let wives listen/read any man but their husband and pastor.
 8. The modern inventions allowing communication into a home caters to creeps seeking women.
 9. The virtuous woman did not seek private Bible study or women's Bible studies in Proverbs 31.
 10. If a woman is to learn, it does not come by public pursuit, but by her husband (I Cor 14:34-35).
- F. How is a church brought up to knowledge so that there are few simple members susceptible to lies?
1. The prey and victims of false teachers are the unlearned and the unstable (II Pet 2:14; 3:15-16).
 2. The next verse makes it a duty to be simple concerning evil but wise regarding good (Ep 5:17).
 3. All men are simple by nature, but the word of God is able to convert and make wise (Ps 19:7).

4. The emphasis of the church should be teaching, not entertainment of any type (II Tim 4:1-4).
 5. Faithful ministers are constantly at the work of teaching against various errors (Eph 4:11-14).
 6. Members are to warn and convert each other (Gal 6:1; I Thess 5:14; Heb 3:12-13; Jas 5:19-20).
 7. We do not let anything alter our interpretation and understanding (Gal 1:6-9; II Thess 2:1-3).
- G. Faithful churches and saints must pray always for deliverance from strange children (Ps 144:1-15).
- H. For examples of 19th century heretics ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/heretics-of-the-nineteenth-century.pdf>.

19 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.

For your obedience.

- A. Rather than assume a simplistic interpretation of general obedience, let the context be guide here.
 1. Paul had just warned about false teachers and false doctrine, so we emphasize correct doctrine.
 2. The coordinating conjunction *for* in place here indicates the context should help interpretation.
 3. This is more than children obeying parents or employees masters or citizens the emperor, etc.
 4. This is gospel obedience of agreement and changed lives to the doctrine according to godliness.
 5. General obedience is not excluded, but it is only included by virtue of being part of the gospel.
- B. The Romans had proven submission and tractability to the preachers of the gospel they had heard.
 1. This is a good character trait, if also mixed with the second trait of the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
 2. Until some minister asks you to rub Buddha's belly, there should be great joy (Neh 8:1-12).
 3. But a people that willingly hear and willingly obey the truth might also be susceptible to error.
 4. His warning just given did not imply they were careless or weak, but he had to prepare them.
- C. Gospel obedience and faithfulness are glorious things every Christian and church should strive for.
 1. Another result of Arminian heresy is the gospel used only for decisional regeneration prayers.
 2. Arminians are so perverted and warped they reduce everything to a heretical sinner's prayer.
 3. Inviting Jesus into your heart for salvation is not even true, let alone the one and only emphasis.
 4. The gospel should change lives, for without works faith is vain and meaningless (Jas 2:14-26).
 5. Others had made great changes to follow the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:19; I Thes 1:9-10).
 6. Just as parents want their children to obey when they are not present, so pastors (Phil 2:12).
 7. The gospel is not just head knowledge for belief, instruction, argumentation, or stimulation.
 8. It is to change lives by obedience to instructions that are contrary to previous belief or conduct.
 9. Paul shortly restated this component of gospel obedience as the great goal of preaching (16:26).
 10. If you do not change your life in response to the gospel, hell awaits (Matt 7:21; II Thes 1:7-10).

Is come abroad unto all men.

- A. The churches of God, without help of modern communication, knew the character of each other.
- B. It was well-known of Rome that in spite of great adversity or opposition, they had obeyed the truth.
 1. A church in the capital of the empire, so close to the persecuting power, would be well known.
 2. Compare Paul's introduction earlier of their faith spoken of throughout the world (Rom 1:5-8).
 3. It is the work of faith that counts (I Thes 1:2-4), which obedience the Romans also had (16:19).
 4. Like the Thessalonians, obedience to the gospel should be so dramatic as to travel to others.
- C. The church of Rome, whether it stood or fell, would have a serious effect upon all other churches.
 1. The truth of the matter is seen in the great influence the fall of this church had toward popery.
 2. No matter modern illustrations of heretics, none come close to the rise of Roman Catholicism.
 3. How could apostolic religion be perverted to a pagan/Jewish/garish nightmare of Catholicism?
 4. It fell by degrees, as in all sin or heresy, by incremental compromise of the words from God.

5. We cannot, we must not, even consider the slightest change to the Bible, to Bible doctrine, to the Bible's rules of interpretation, to teaching, applying, and enforcing the Bible, and so forth.
- D. Consider that the more faithful and zealous the church, the more attractive they are to heretics.
 1. Enemies of Christ – belly worshippers – love to pursue faithful and zealous churches for gain.
 2. Faithful and zealous churches also have satan and devils to deal with more than other churches.
- E. How far does your corporate testimony reach? You want anyone that hears or sees to glorify God.
- F. How far does your individual reputation reach? You should live perfect for God's glory in Christ.

I am glad therefore on your behalf.

- A. God's ministers rejoice when men hear the truth and obey the truth (II John 1:1-4; III John 1:1-4).
 1. Paul highly praised the Philippian church and declared his joy in them (Phil 1:3-7; 2:12-18).
 2. He was not merely glad the Romans were faithful, but that their faithfulness had spread abroad.
- B. In spite of temptations, they had held fast to sound doctrine and resisted efforts of false teachers.
- C. Paul showed his affection and wisely encouraged them before again warning them of the danger.
 1. What a special blessing to get personal praise from Paul about the gladness they had caused.
 2. When things are going well, as at Rome, you are on the crest of a wave; lookout for sharks.
 3. In spite of their great reputation, he still had to warn them due to the greatness of the danger.

But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good.

- A. The double disjunctives *but* and *yet* here indicate a contrasting appeal to their positive reputation.
- B. There is never opportunity to relax, so the apostle did not let their good reputation cause relaxation.
 1. It is not an issue of *if* heresies will come, because God promised they *will* come (I Cor 11:19).
 2. They say, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." We say it is the price of Bible orthodoxy.
- C. Being wise unto that which is good is learning, holding, and defending true doctrine and practice.
 1. Wise toward truth includes much proving of all things (I Thess 5:21; Acts 17:11; I John 4:1-6).
 2. There is always more to learn and more conviction, commitment, and memory of the true faith.
 3. How wise are you? How trained is your mind to discern a counterfeit Jesus, spirit, or gospel?
 4. You must be so established in the truth by constant repetition that error jumps out like neon!
 5. Pastors must continually rotate through all the ancient landmarks of apostolic faith for review.
 6. The Bible recognizes that only the best are able to protect the simple (Gal 6:1-5; Jas 5:19-20).
 7. Job and Elihu knew to discern (Job 6:31; 32:6-14). God's priests were to teach it (Ezek 44:23).
 8. Even good churches need knowledge and judgment to approve excellent things (Phil 1:9-11).
- D. Their submissive and tractable spirit regarding hearing the truth made them vulnerable to heresy.

And simple concerning evil.

- A. Connected to his desire for them to be established in truth, Paul did not want them allowing error.
- B. The coordinating conjunction *and* indicates that Paul continued his original thought of the verse.
- C. **Simple.** Deficient in knowledge or learning; characterized by a certain lack of acuteness or quick apprehension. Lacking in ordinary sense or intelligence; more or less foolish, silly, or stupid; also, mentally deficient, half-witted. Compare Psalm 19:7; Prov 1:4; 9:13; 14:15; 22:3.
- D. Paul used *simple* in the previous verse as the prey of false teachers, here as the goal regarding evil.
- E. Regarding divisions and offences – we should have little ability, interest, or effort hearing heretics.
 1. There were Jewish legalists everywhere, and mental knowledge of their errors is not the point.
 2. This is cooperating or experimental simplicity, not knowledge (Hab 2:15; Ep 5:3,12; I Cor 7:1).
 3. Simplicity here is deficiency in active knowledge or participation in any divisions or offences.
 4. The Romans were to remain committed to apostolic truth and to reject all subverting heresies.
 5. The heretical campaigns and fads of men should not get the least entry into our hearts or minds.
 6. The people of God should be deficient in those respects that heretics prey on to pervert men.

7. We should have no ability, inclination, interest, or effort to allow or accommodate any error.
- F. There is really no reason to use this text to avoid or reject learning the main errors of heresies.
1. Consider this very epistle and Paul's efforts to point out evil doctrine or conduct by heretics.
 - a. Paul wrote the Romans and elaborated about sodomites, including lesbians (Rom 1:18-27).
 - b. He condemned Jews for their arrogance and false confidence in the law and circumcision.
 - c. He condemned several errors in the opening verses of the third chapter with holy answers.
 - d. He described some as misunderstanding grace and using it to serve sin in the sixth chapter.
 - e. He specified some errors of Christian liberty regarding herbs, meat, days, and wine, etc.
 2. This same writer, Paul, assumed the Corinthians to not be ignorant of Satan's evil (II Cor 2:11).
 3. Peter and Jude went into detail about the character and doctrine of heretics (II Peter 2; Jude 1).
 4. Paul could have only condemned Hymenaeus and Philetus, but he identified their evil doctrine.
 5. Should we know the eternal sonship position? Should we know what transubstantiation means?
 6. Yet it is wise to have limited knowledge of the abominable sexual rites of pagans (Eph 5:12).
 7. Consider the euphemistic expressions the Bible uses for many things (Gen 24:2; I Sam 24:3).

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

And the God of peace.

- A. This name of God, used once already in this epistle (15:33), is appropriate in a context of divisions.
- B. The opposition and trouble caused by enemies of the truth shall be eliminated by the God of peace.
- C. God loves peace, and His faithful children who trust Him may count on earthly and eternal peace.
- D. Our great God and Father creates peace for believers by His gentle Spirit through believing (Rom 15:13), but He will create universal peace and end all conflict by power and victory (I Cor 15:24).

Shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

- A. The context of heresies, deception, division, offences, and evil is Satan (John 8:44; II Cor 2:10-11; 4:1-4; 11:1-4,13-15; Eph 6:10-12; II Thess 2:7-10; I Tim 4:1-3; 5:15; II Tim 2:24-26; Jas 3:14-16).
- B. The God of peace will reverse conditions and circumstances for faithful believers to trample Satan.
- C. God promised Satan in Eden that the woman's Son would fatally *bruise* the devil's head (Ge 3:15).
 1. If we trust the words of God in our English Bibles (by preservation), then we have a key here.
 2. We are specifically told to compare spiritual things with spiritual, meaning words (I Cor 2:13).
 3. We know the male Seed of the woman is Jesus Christ, and we see the cross and the Judgment.
 4. He made an open show of the devil at the cross, but He has yet to cast him into hell (Re 20:10).
 5. He was cast out of heaven after the cross; he was put in the bottomless pit to help the nations; but he will also be finally judged and tormented forever (Matt 8:29; 25:41; II Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6).
 6. He resisted the gospel in Paul's day, and John wrote he would get worse again (Rev 20:3,7-9).
- D. What bruising of Satan under the feet of saints did Paul refer to in a timeframe he called *shortly*?
 1. Was it when this epistle had arrived and was understood by the Romans to defeat any heretics?
 2. Was it when Paul arrived in Rome and by apostolic authority and knowledge defeated heretics?
 3. Was it by the gospel of the apostles and others that turned the world upside down (Matt 16:18)?
 4. Was it when Titus took several legions into Judea, besieged Jerusalem, and utterly destroyed it?
 5. Was it when Constantine confessed some form of Christianity and ended severe persecution?
 6. Was it when the beast would be defeated and the gospel would go forth in much greater power?
 7. Or is it when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and the saints join in with Him to judge the devil?
- E. We assume the last option for the bruising of Satan by saints and thus understand the word *shortly*.

1. It is hard to imagine Paul would be so creative about his epistle or his arrival without saying so.
 2. The destruction of Jerusalem had little bearing on saints in Rome and their devilish opponents.
 3. Constantine is no hero to Bible Christianity; the enemies of the true gospel became more subtle.
 4. Ruin of papal Rome was far off, and a bruising of Satan at that time is not taught elsewhere.
 5. The great Day of Judgment and the casting of the devil and his angels into hell is a key event.
 6. The saints will participate with Jesus Christ in judging the angels at that event (I Cor 6:1-3).
 7. Satan's legal bruising took place at the cross (Luke 10:17-19; 11:20-22; John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:15; I Tim 2:15; Heb 2:14; I John 3:8; Rev 12:10; 20:1-3).
 8. But he still torments unbelievers and believers in a vital and practical way (Acts 26:18; II Cor 2:11; 4:4; Eph 2:1-3; 4:27; 6:10-12; Jas 4:7; I Pet 5:8-9; Rev 12:12-17).
 9. Satan's final destruction will be completed in the lake of fire at the great Day of Judgment (Matt 8:29; 25:41; I Cor 15:24; II Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6; Rev 20:10).
 10. Paul already pointed the believers to the final phase of salvation – glorification (Rom 8:28-39).
 11. Paul already prophesied a little earlier of Christ's second coming being *nearer* (Rom 13:11-12).
 12. His token salutation comes next, which is the basis and Person of true final victory over Satan.
- F. While *shortly* may not seem short to you when it exceeds 2000 years, yet context is what counts.
1. The Holy Spirit used *short* in Revelation 12:12 for at least 2000 years between the two advents.
 2. We find John used *shortly* in Revelation for prophecies extending 2000 years (Rev 1:1; 22:6).
 3. In context of the second coming, *a thousand years are as a day*, so relax (II Peter 3:8; Ps 90:4)!
 4. In context of the second coming, Jesus told John, "Behold, I come *quickly*" (Re 3:11; 22:7,12).
 5. Paul described it this way, "Yet *a little while*, and he that shall come will come" (He 10:32-39).
 6. Two thousand years is *short* in view of earth's total duration and eternity in both directions.
 7. Paul already prophesied a little earlier of Christ's second coming being *nearer* (Rom 13:11-12).
 8. See a long list from both testaments of God's use of timing phrases different than we might in the "Timing Fallacies" section in the refutation of preterism ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/preterism.pdf.
- G. But what about the treading on serpents and scorpions that Jesus Christ promised (Luke 10:17-19)?
1. This is in a context and with the meaning of miraculous power over Satan practiced by the apostles (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 5:3,16; 8:7; 13:6-12; 16:18; 19:12-17; 26:18).
 2. This phenomenon was new in the world by Christ's binding of the strong man (Luke 11:14-26).
 3. There still remained much other devilish activity (Luke 22:31; Ephesians 6:10-18; I Peter 5:8).

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

- A. This is Paul's token salutation, his trademark of closing, in each of his epistles (II Thess 3:17-18).
- B. Paul gave this salutation here in 16:20 and again in 16:24, as he closed slowly and added things.
- C. Compare I Corinthians 16:23; II Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; I Thess 5:28; II Thess 3:18; I Tim 6:21; II Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15; Philemon 1:25; Heb 13:25.
- D. For those that doubt Paul wrote Hebrews, it has Paul's salutary token and many other evidences.

21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

Timotheus, my workfellow.

- A. Paul earlier communicated his own salutations (16:1-16), now it was time for his fellow laborers.
- B. Timothy was an exceptional ordained ministry assistant, in whom Paul could trust (Phil 2:19-23).
 1. Paul kindly honored him by identifying him as his workfellow, though none could match Paul!
 2. Two of the *Pastoral Epistles* were addressed to this young man that ministers have used since.
- C. This young minister did not want to be left out sending salutations to the holy brethren in Rome.

- D. It marks true Christians that everyone professing Jesus Christ in the true faith should be honored.
- E. The sons of God are blood brothers by predestinated adoption, and it should show by mutual love.
- F. In cases like this, it does not matter that Christians have not met or are separated geographically.

And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

- A. It is wonderful Paul had many kinsmen in the faith, though we do not know how close (Rom 16:7).
- B. Lucius may be the beloved Luke with a Roman inflexion; he may be Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1).
- C. Jason was Paul's host at Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9); some think the same as Secundus (Acts 20:4).
- D. Sosipater is called Sopater of Berea (Acts 20:4). Compare Robert, Rob, Bob, Bobby among others.

Salute you.

- A. **Salute.** To accost or address with words expressive of good wishes, respect, or homage, esp. with some customary formula of that import; to greet in words. Compare Romans 16:16,21,22.
- B. As fathers delight in children getting along, God's children should honor and respect each other.
- C. Paul here and elsewhere established public kissing among the brethren (Rom 16:16; I Cor 16:20).

22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

I Tertius, who wrote this epistle.

- A. Paul dictated the epistle, but it was Tertius who actually penned the words on the paper for Rome.
 1. If Paul did not write an epistle, he would sign with his special token (II Thessalonians 3:17).
 2. This practice can be seen elsewhere following the example of Tertius (I Cor 16:21; Col 4:18).
- B. Some presume from a couple places in Galatians that Paul had bad eyes and could not write well.
 1. Paul referred to their affection being so great they would have given him their eyes (Gal 4:15).
 2. He told them he had written the long epistle to them in his own hand when closing (Gal 6:11).

Salute you in the Lord.

- A. Here the greeting mentioned more vaguely in the previous verse is stated to be the Lord Jesus.
- B. Our greatest asset, bond, compatibility, etc, are through our relationship in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. Old Testament greetings in God the LORD are wonderful (Ruth 2:4; Psalm 35:27; 70:4; 129:8).

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.

- A. There are several in the New Testament by this name (Acts 19:29; 20:4; I Cor 1:14; III John 1:1).
- B. This man hosted and entertained Paul himself and all others of the church there (see III John 1:5-6).
- C. Every church and every Christian with means should be known far and wide for their hospitality.
 1. The saints of God are to be given to hospitality in and out of the church (Rom 12:13; I Pet 4:9).
 2. The saints of God are to be forward to entertain strangers when possible (Heb 13:2; I Ti 5:10).

Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you.

- A. This man is found in two places as a fellow worker with the apostle Paul (Acts 19:22; II Tim 4:20).
- B. It is not wrong for a Christian to be in political office, if he can still serve the gospel like this man.
 1. **Chamberlain.** The steward or treasurer of a corporation or political unit receiving payments.
 2. Praise God this man so committed to the kingdom of Christ earned the confidence of Corinth.

3. Paul was busy after souls, even including some of Caesar's own household (Philippians 4:22).
4. Remember Paul's doctrine to Timothy that God was willing to save all kinds (I Timothy 2:1-4).

And Quartus a brother.

- A. What makes this man so special as to be included in the Bible? He was not a workfellow (21), a kinsman (21), a secretary (22), a host or entertainer of guests (23), or a political officeholder.
- B. He was a brother, which means a brother of Jesus Christ, which is very high (I Jn 3:1; I Cor 2:15).
- C. Jesus takes greater note of service to the lowly than the high (Mat 10:42; 25:40,45; Luke 14:12-14).
- D. Jesus referred to those that hear the word of God and keep it as His true family (Luke 8:21; 11:28).

24 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. This is Paul's token salutation, his trademark of closing, in each of his epistles (II Thess 3:17-18).
- B. Paul gave this salutation here in 16:20 and again in 16:24, as he closed slowly and added things.
- C. Compare I Corinthians 16:23; II Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; I Thess 5:28; II Thess 3:18; I Tim 6:21; II Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15; Philemon 1:25; Heb 13:25.
- D. For those that doubt Paul wrote Hebrews, it has Paul's salutary token and many other evidences.

Be with you all. Amen.

- A. There is something you need more than anything else, and it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. How can a blessing or benediction be better than commending a person to Jesus Christ's grace?
- C. The benefits secured, the mercy available, and the power provided by His grace are very glorious.

25 *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,*

Now.

- A. For your information, though it has no real value, some say these verses should follow Rom 14:23.
- B. It is appropriate to consider this single word that separates the following sentence from the chapter.
- C. Having commended and saluted all sorts of other persons throughout, now it is time to glorify God.
- D. You may call this final sentence a benediction, doxology, or a blessing, but he gives God the glory!
- E. Paul loved to exalt God and/or Jesus with powerful praise (Romans 11:33-36; I Tim 1:17; 6:13-16).
- F. See the extensive sermon series and outline, "Knowing God," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/index.php>.

To him that is of power to stablish you.

- A. These believers in the capital of a pagan empire were loved by God and called to be saints (1:5-8).
 1. Without God's power, we cannot be regenerated, preach the truth, believe the truth, obey the truth, or hold to it (Eph 1:19; 3:7,20; II Cor 4:7; Phil 2:12-13; Col 1:29; I Thess 1:5; I Pet 1:5).
 2. Our Almighty God is just that – might, power, and strength without any limit or hindrance!
- B. There are good verses to consider and remember about His power, as from David (I Chr 29:11-12).
- C. To be *stablished* is to be placed firmly and permanently in position and then into settled order.
 1. They had been taught God could make any stand and about Holy Ghost power (14:14; 15:13).
 2. A church of Jesus Christ without God's power will wander out of the way of understanding.
 3. No matter problems external (Rome) or internal (Jewish-Gentile), God could build them up.

4. God will establish all those who trust and obey Him (I Thes 3:2,13; II The 2:17; 3:3 I Pet 5:10).

According to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ.

- A. Notice that it was Paul's gospel – the good news and rules of apostolic order that Paul taught best.
 1. Paul would not tolerate any Gentile church believing any variation of his gospel (Gal 1:6-9).
 2. He had a message by special revelation pertaining to Jews and Gentiles (Rom 2:16; Gal 2:2).
 3. The epistle to the Romans was a large part of Paul's gospel, which he had just given them.
 4. Justification of Jews and Gentiles was by the same means, and they were to live in harmony.
- B. Paul's view of Jesus Christ is what we are to follow and what we want to be established in most.
 1. Paul's gospel was the good news of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-7,16; II Timothy 1-8-11; 2:8-9).
 2. Paul taught Gentiles churches and saints how to follow Jesus Christ correctly (I Co 4:16; 11:1).
 3. Another Jesus is to be despised, as there is only one; churches must match Him (Eph 4:12-16).

According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.

- A. A *mystery* in the Bible is not something unintelligible, but rather previously concealed or hidden.
 1. It is all a mystery to the natural man; he cannot figure out anything of the gospel (I Cor 2:6-16).
 2. The mystery of godliness, centered around Jesus Christ, is revealed by the gospel (I Tim 3:16).
- B. Paul had a better grasp of the Gentile-Jew mystery than anyone else (Ep 2:11 – 3:12; Col 1:25-29).
- C. This church had significant Jew-Gentile confusion about salvation and strife about liberty matters.
 1. Review chapters 1-8 and see how much effort Paul made to clarify faith against Moses' law.
 2. Review chapters 9-11 and how much detail Paul provided regarding the position of Israel.
 3. Review chapters 12-16 and how much help Paul gave to bring their saints to love and unity.
 4. God's power and Paul's gospel could lead to an end of hostilities in doctrine and practice.

26 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:

But now is made manifest.

- A. What had been formerly hidden and only obscurely seen by prophets was made manifest by Paul.
- B. **Manifest.** Clearly revealed to the eye, mind, or judgment; open to view or comprehension; obvious. This is a glorious word to those that love truth (Luke 8:17; Col 4:4; II Tim 1:10; Heb 9:8).
- C. There have been three dispensations: from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and to the end.
 1. From Adam to Moses God dealt individually with the patriarchs, the ancestors of all the Jews.
 2. From Moses to Christ, God dealt with the nation of Israel, the children of Abraham and Jacob.
 3. Now in the gospel of the new covenant, God dealt with Jews and Gentiles alike through Christ.
- D. Jesus Christ by His cross broke down the Gentile-Jew separation to make one united body for God.
 1. This change was dramatic and drastic against the status quo and suppositions of natural Jews.
 2. Paul lived and taught among Gentiles and brought them into full kingdom equality with Jews.

And by the scriptures of the prophets.

- A. The Old Testament prophets, ministers primarily to the Jews of Israel, had foretold and written about this gospel mystery of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:2; 3:21; Acts 8:32-35; 10:43; 26:22-23; Gal 3:8).
- B. The Jerusalem council accepted Gentiles by applying Amos' prophecy (Ac 15:13-18; Am 9:11-12).
- C. Paul had just previously gathered four such prophecies about the Gentiles joining Jews (15:8-12).
- D. This particular phrase of Paul's doxological benediction intended Jews for their comfort and honor.

According to the commandment of the everlasting God.

- A. The tremendous changes in God's worship, including Gentile salvation, were not by human choice.
- B. God does not change His mind; He does not react to man's actions; He operates by eternal counsel.
- C. The eternal aspect of this Gentile-Jew unification in Christ was revealed (Eph 3:9-11; Col 1:25-27).
- D. The Dispensationist idea of God changing plans when the Jews rejected Jesus is a ludicrous fable.
- E. Do you know why you have heard the gospel? By the commandment of the everlasting God!

Made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

- A. This particular phrase of Paul's doxological benediction intended Gentiles for comfort and honor.
- B. Paul took his gospel concerning Jesus Christ to the Gentile nations as fast as he could (Rom 1:5; 15:15-24; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-18; Gal 1:15-17).

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

To God only wise.

- A. God's wisdom is appealed to here as the basis for this uniting of Gentiles and Jews (Eph 3:10).
 - 1. Paul continued his word of exhortation to the Romans even as he closed his final benediction.
 - 2. God is most definitely wise, regardless of the Gentile-Jew issues, but He is wise regarding it!
- B. We worship the only wise God, unlike the idiotic gods of the heathen, both ancient and modern.
 - 1. He is called the only wise God in other places by Paul and Jude (I Timothy 1:17; Jude 1:25).
 - 2. Paul had earlier in this epistle greatly honored and praised the wisdom of God (Rom 11:33-36).
 - 3. The gods of the heathen of any era are entirely helpless (Psalm 115:3-8; 135:15-18; Is 44:9-20).
- C. Remember when you lack wisdom that this God is liberal and willing to give you wisdom (Jas 1:5).
- D. See the extensive sermon series and outline, "Knowing God," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/index.php>.

Be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.

- A. We bring our glory to God by adoring, obeying, worshipping through our great High Priest Jesus.
- B. Our worship in a Christian church brings glory to God by our union with Jesus Christ (Eph 3:21).
- C. Jesus Christ makes our spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (I Pet 2:5; 4:11; Phil 1:11; Col 3:17).

Amen.

- A. A Hebrew word used in all languages had been used six times (1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:20,24).
- B. In the name of Jesus Christ (Rev 3:14), we assent and agree (I Cor 14:16), and let it be so (Je 28:6).
- C. What more can be said about this outstanding epistle of Paul's gospel that covered so much matter?
 - 1. No work of man even comes close to the breadth of doctrine and depth of detail of divine truth.
 - 2. It argues thorough and tight with every new doctrine raised by inspired systematic progression.
- D. It defines and glorifies the work and revelation of Jesus and our gospel duty more than any epistle.
- E. Is the best summary of the epistle 8:1, combining salvation in Christ with walking after the Spirit?
 - 1. Both the condemnation of sinners and their deliverance by Christ have been fully documented.
 - 2. But you must ask, as chapters 6-8 ask repeatedly, are you in Christ Jesus? And by what proof?
 - 3. But you must ask, as chapters 12-16 describe, are you walking after the Spirit or after the flesh?
 - 4. Do you cheerfully submit to the details and duties described for the believer in chapters 12-15?