



In Conclusion

Romans 16




Commendation & Personal Greetings

- ❑ As Paul concludes his letter, he commends a sister in Christ. Read Romans 16:1-2. Phoebe likely delivered Paul's letter to the Roman believers. She is a servant¹ of the church in Cenchrea.² Paul asks them to receive Phoebe and give her any help she may need.
- ❑ In verses 3-16, Paul sends greetings to numerous people (including 26 individuals, two families, and at least three house churches).³ The names reveal a significant diversity of believers, including Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freedmen, men and women.
 - 📖 As Paul wrote elsewhere, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Galatians 3:28, NIV*).

Warning & Promise

- ❑ Paul interrupts his greetings with a warning. Read Romans 16:17-20.
 1. Paul tells the believers in Rome to "watch out" for certain people. Why? *What* will these people do? *Why* will they do it? *How* will they do it? (16:17-18)


 2. Does Paul's warning apply to us today? Explain. What should we do in response?
- ❑ Paul says, "be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil" (16:19b, NIV).⁴ Then he records a promise: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (16:20a).⁵
- ❑ In verse 17, Paul warns against divisions and obstacles "contrary to the teaching you have learned." This "teaching" includes Paul's teaching. What has Paul taught in his letter?

Teaching of Paul's Letter to the Romans⁶

1. Paul was set apart by God to proclaim the gospel⁷ of Jesus Christ (1:1-4). The gospel is "the power of salvation for everyone who believes" (1:16). This is good news for the world!
2. But first, the bad news: Humankind turned away from God and failed to honor him, resulting in darkened hearts and God's holy anger. All are "without excuse." (1:18-21).
3. Our problem: "All have sinned" (3:23), resulting in a broken relationship with God.⁸ Fallen humanity is "under sin" (3:9) – that is, under the controlling power and penalty of sin.

¹ "servant" (*diakonos*) – may also be translated "deacon," which is an office in the church (1 Timothy 3:8-13). So Phoebe may have been a female deacon, though the office may not have been fully developed at this time.

² Cenchrea is a port city about 6 miles from Corinth. Paul is most likely writing this letter in Corinth.

³ This lesson skips over the personal greetings, but that does not mean that they are unimportant. A study of the names and people is an interesting and beneficial study.

⁴ J.B. Phillips translates it: "I want to see you experts in good, and not even beginners in evil" (NT, p. 349).

⁵ This may allude to Genesis 3:15, referring to Satan's final doom, but could also include defeat of the false teachers.

⁶ It is very difficult to summarize the teaching of Romans in one page! Our study series skipped over portions of the letter, but still used 33 pages of notes. So this summary presents only some of the main points in simple form. Much is not included. Please see the complete lessons on the ICF website, or ask Jay for copies of the lesson handouts.

⁷ "gospel" (from Old English *godspel*, "good story;" Greek *euangelion*) – "good message or news."

- God's solution: God has provided the way for us to be restored to relationship with Him. Jesus Christ died for us. Through faith in him, we can be forgiven and set free (3:21-26).
4. Through faith in Christ, believers are "justified" (made right with God by His grace).⁹ Thus we have peace with God, relationship with God, and hope in the glory of God (4:23-5:2).
 5. Believers have a "new life" (6:4). Our old self was crucified with Christ. As Christ was raised to new life, *we* were raised to new life in him (6:5-10). Sin is no longer our master! Therefore, we must not offer ourselves to sin, but rather offer ourselves to God (6:11-14).
 6. People may want to obey God's law, but they struggle in attempting to do it, because sinful people are unable to obey God's law (7:7-23). Who will rescue us from this condition?
 7. God will rescue us, through Christ! (7:24-25) Through faith in Christ, the Spirit of Life sets us free from the controlling power and penalty of sin (8:1-4). The indwelling Holy Spirit enables believers to live the Christian life, and makes believers children of God (8:9-15).
 8. As God's adopted children, believers are "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ," and will share in Christ's glory (8:17). Compared to this glory, our present sufferings are light (8:18). What can separate believers from the love of God and final salvation? Nothing!! (8:31-39)
 9. Wait a minute. About 75% of our Bible deals with God's relationship with a people called Israel. What about them? Though God promised Israel a future salvation, all must receive God's salvation the same way – through faith in Jesus Christ (10:1-13).
 10. The majority of Israel has rejected Christ. So has God rejected Israel? No! (11:1) A small part believes; and a large, representative part will receive Christ in the future (11:25-26).
 11. In view of God's mercy, how should Christians live? We must offer our whole lives to God (12:1). We should use the gifts and abilities God has given us for His purposes (12:3-8).
 12. We must sincerely love our fellow believers through caring, sharing, hospitality, empathy, honor and humility. We should seek to bless others, including even our enemies (12:9-21).
 13. We must submit to the governing authorities (unless obedience to the governing authorities requires disobedience to God). Christians should seek to be good citizens (13:1-7).
 14. We must continue loving others (13:8-10). We must continually put off the "bad clothing" (wrong attitudes and actions), and "clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" (13:11-14).
 15. On "disputable matters," believers must not judge, despise, or condemn one another (14:1-3). And we should avoid actions that would cause other believers to stumble (14:19-21).

More Greetings & Doxology

- ❑ In verses 21-23, Paul sends greetings from his coworkers, and then he concludes with a doxology¹⁰ (a form of praise to God). Read Romans 16:25-27. Amen.



Reflection/Application

- Reflect on the teaching of Romans. If you are not a Christian, what specific teachings are hard to understand, believe or accept? Why? Discuss your thoughts with Jay or another mature believer. (Jay is always willing!) Continue to seek truth with a humble heart.
- As a believer, what specific teachings challenge your Christian life and understanding? Commit to further study, prayer and practice in this area. Offer your whole life to God.

⁸ There are various ways to define "sin." One definition is "any action or attitude that is opposed to the nature and will of God." This coincides with the failure to honor God as God (1:21). "Sin" can also refer to "the state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God" (that is, there is a broken relationship). Sin is also seen as a power.

⁹ "grace" refers to God's unmerited favor. Believers have been "justified freely by His grace" (5:24). It is a gift (6:23). We cannot save ourselves, or earn God's approval. We are saved only by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

¹⁰ The word "doxology" is from the Greek *doxologia*, which is from *doxa*, "praise," and *legein*, "to speak."