

## Romans Chapter Sixteen

Greetings and Closing Doxology

Summons to Welcome Phoebe (vv. 1-2)

**VERSE 1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church**

**which is at Cenchrea** (Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὖσαν [καὶ] διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς [*pres.act.ind.1s. sunistemi commend + conj. de + pro.dat.p. su + noun acc.f.s. Phoebe + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. adelphe sister + pro.gen.p. ego “our” + pres.act.part. acc.f.s. eimi + noun acc.f.s. diakonos servant + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. ekklesia church + prep. en + d.a.w/noun loc.f.p. Kegchreai Cenchreae*]);

**VERSE 2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints,** (ἵνα

αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως τῶν ἁγίων [*conj. hina that + pro.acc.f.s. aute her + aor.dep.ind.2p. prodechomai welcome, receive + prep. en + noun loc.m.s. kurios + adv. axios worthy + d.a.w/adj.gen.m.p. hagios “saints”*]) **and that you help her in whatever matter**

**she may have need of you** [καὶ παραστήτε αὐτῇ ἐν ᾧ ἂν ὑμῶν χρήζη πράγματι· [*conj. kai + aor.act.subj.2p. paristemi help + pro.dat.f.s. aute her + prep. en + pro.loc.nt.s. hos + part. an; denotes contingency + pro.gen.p. su + pres.act.subj.3s. chrezo need + noun loc.nt.s. pragma matter*]]; **for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well** [καὶ

γὰρ αὐτὴ προστάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ [*conj. kai also + conj. gar for + pro.nom.f.s. aute her + noun nom.f.s. prostatis helper + [pro.gen.m.p. polus many + conj. kai and + pro.gen.s. ego myself + pro.gen.m.s. autos self]*].

**ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-2**

1. It is quite probable that Phoebe was the individual who delivered the Roman epistle to the church at Rome.
2. Here we have Paul's personal commendation of Phoebe to those who had never heard of her.

3. Paul in general terms informs the saints that she was a believer who had distinguished herself in the local church “at Cenchrea.”
4. Cenchrea was the port city adjacent to Corinth.
5. Paul wrote to the church at Rome from the city of Corinth.
6. She excelled in assisting believers who were sick or disadvantaged.
7. Some interpreters say she was a deaconess.
8. There is not sufficient warrant for this as the term “servant” is used of any believer who serves in whatever capacity.
9. Here ministry was on behalf of those who were sick, impoverished, etc.
10. Women excel in these types of situations.
11. The Romans are enjoined to welcome her “in the Lord in a manner worthy” of the Royal Family (v. 2).
12. Without going into the details, Paul says she distinguished herself as “a helper of many”, including special efforts on behalf of Paul.
13. She most probably was a woman of considerable means who had embraced the faith and used her monetary affluence to aid others in need.
14. That alone would make her a rare commodity!
15. Note that she was used of God to help “many.”
16. This great believer is here immortalized in the WOG in her selfless devotion to the cause of Christ.
17. The same for the woman Lydia (Acts 16:15).

#### A Husband Wife Team (vv. 3-4)

#### **VERSE 3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus** (Ἀσπάσασθε

Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ [*aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai greet + noun acc.f.s. Prisca/Priscilla [wife] + conj. kai + noun acc.m.s. Aquila + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.p. sunergos fellow-worker + pro.gen.m.s. ego my + prep. en + noun loc.m.s. Christ + noun loc.m.s. Jesus*]),

#### **VERSE 4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give**

**thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles** (οἵτινες ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς μου τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον ὑπέθηκαν, οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἔθνῶν [*pro.nom.m.p. hostis who + prep. huper on behalf of + d.a.w/gen.f.s. psuche soul, life + pro.gen.s. ego + pro.gen.m.p. heautous their + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. trachelos neck + aor.act.ind.3p. hupotithemi risk + pro.dat.m.p. hos “to whom” + neg. ouk + pro.nom.s. ego + adv. monos only + pres.act.ind.1s. eucharisteo give thanks + conj. alla but + conj. kai also +*

*adj.nom.f.p. pas all + d.a.w/noun nom.f.p. ekklesia church + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.p. ethnos Gentile]);*

#### ANALYSIS: VERSES 3-4

1. This couple first met Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:2).
2. These two were a Jewish married couple who suffered anti-Semitism when the Jews were expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius.
3. They were engaged in the same trade as Paul (Acts 18:3) and they provided him a place to stay.
4. Later they accompanied Paul to Ephesus (Acts 18:18, 19).
5. They were instrumental in furthering the understanding of the evangelist Apollos (Acts 18:26).
6. This human-wife team are mentioned in two other salutations in the NT (1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19).
7. At the time of the writing of Romans Priscilla and Aquila were back in Rome.
8. Their occupation was such that they could move around from place to place.
9. They were tent-makers.
10. As to the circumstances that led to their “risking their necks” (putting their lives on the line) we have no evidence from the book of Acts.
11. All we know is that they did apply at the highest level and what they did was known to the churches at large.
12. Their fame was widespread and here is immortalized in the WOG.
13. When Paul makes mention of his gratitude to this couple he says that this thankfulness was expressed in “all the churches of the Gentiles.”
14. What they did was phenomenal by any standards of selfless application in the face of martyrdom.
15. They did something that resulted in Paul being delivered from an untimely death, but they survived to serve God in the place they had been exiled from.

#### Some Other Noteworthy Believers (vv. 5-7)

**VERSE 5 also greet the church that is in their house** (καὶ τὴν κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν [*conj. kai also + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. ekklesia church + prep. kata + noun acc.m.s. oikos house + pro.gen.m.p. autos “their”*])).

**Greet Epänetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia**

(ἀσπάσασθε Ἐπαίνετον τὸν ἀγαπητὸν μου, ὅς ἐστιν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς Χριστόν [*aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai greet + noun acc.m.s. Epänetus + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. agapetos beloved + pro.gen.m.s. ego + rel.pro.nom.m.s. hos who + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + noun nom.f.s.*]).

*aparche first fruits; “first convert + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. Asia + prep eis to + noun acc.m.s. Christ”).*

**VERSE 6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you** (ἀσπάσασθε Μαρίαν, ἣτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν εἰς ὑμᾶς [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + noun acc.f.s. Mary/Maria + pro.nom.f.s. hostis who + adj.pro.acc.nt.p. polus “hard” + aor.act.ind.3s. kopiao work hard + prep. eis for + pro.acc.p. su]).

**VERSE 7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners** (ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουنيᾶν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai greet + noun acc.m.s. Andronicus + kai + acc.m.s. Junias + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.p. sugnenes kinsman + pro.gen.m.s. ego + prep. kata + noun acc.m.p. sunaichmalotos fellow-prisoner + pro.gen.m.s. ego], **who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me** [οἵτινες εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἳ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ [pro.nom.m.p. hostis who + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + adj.nom.m.p. epistemos outstanding; notorious + prep. en + d.a.w/noun dat.m.p. apostolos apostle + adj.nom.m.p. hos who + conj. kai also + pro. pro before + pro.gen.s. ego + pf.act.ind.3p. ginomai + prep. en + noun loc.m.s. Christ]).

#### ANALYSIS: VERSES 5-7

1. In v. 5a there is a reference to a church in a private home (also note 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15 and Philemon 1:2).
2. It was a common practice in the apostolic era for Christians to make their homes available for worship.
3. In large cities like Rome and Ephesus there would be multiple meeting places.
4. There was a church in the home of Priscilla and Aquila which fact demonstrates that there was more than one such congregation.
5. It would be accurate to refer to the churches in Rome.
6. This application further enhances the legacy of this remarkable couple.
7. Paul asks that Christians in Rome greet Epaphroditus who held a special place in the apostle's esteem as he refers to him as “my beloved” (dear) one.
8. The fact that this man was Paul's very first convert “from Asia” (**not** the Far East but Asia Minor) alone puts him in a special category.

9. The KJV and the NKJ versions completely have this translation wrong rendering it “Achaia.”
10. Here in v. 6 we are introduced to yet another female who had made a significant mark on the early Roman church.
11. Mary (or Maria in Greek and Mar-ee-am in Hebrew) is said to “have worked hard for you.”
12. She probably was one of the founders to the church at Rome (KJ version as this verse mistranslated reading “on us” instead of “for you.”).
13. Next for honorable mention based on their history and relationship to Paul is Andronicus and Junia.
14. “My kinsmen” is the Greek noun for a relative or a fellow-countryman.
15. It is most probably that latter (cf. Mk. 6:4 “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives, and in his own house.”), but I can’t be sure.
16. Also, note that Paul mentions other Jewish Christians, but does not call them “kinsmen” (cf. v. 3).
17. When these two men were in prison with Paul is not known.
18. We should not conclude from v. 7 that Paul is saying these two were “apostles.”
19. Rather that these two believers were well known among the original apostles in the early church in Jerusalem.
20. The apostles in Jerusalem from Pentecost onward to special note of these two men.
21. The Greek adjective *episemos* can be translated well-known or outstanding; in Matt. 27:26 it is translated “notorious” of one Barabbas, the notorious criminal).
22. Paul adds the fact that these two were “in Christ before me.”
23. Four items of interest is cited here in reference to Paul’s two relatives (?).
24. Next in the listing of believers of special mention is one Ampliatus who is merely designation “beloved in the Lord.”

Twenty-Three Honorable Mentions (vv. 9-15).

**VERSE 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved**

(ἀσπάσασθε Οὐρβανὸν τὸν συνεργὸν ἡμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ καὶ Στάχυν τὸν ἀγαπητὸν μου  
 [aor.dep.inper.2p. *aspazomain* greet + noun acc.m.s. *Urbanus* + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. *sunergos*  
 fellow-worker + pro.gen.m.p. *ego* + prep. *en* + noun loc.m.s. *Christ* + conj. *kai* + noun acc.m.s.  
*Stachys* + d.a.w/adj.m.s. *agapetos* beloved + pro.gen.s. *ego*]).

**VERSE 10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the**

**household of Aristobulus** (ἀσπάσασθε Ἀπελλῆν τὸν δόκιμον ἐν Χριστῷ. ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς  
 ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου [aor.dep.inper.2p. *aspazomai* + noun acc.m.s. *Apelles* +  
 d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. *dokimos* approved + prep. *en* + noun loc.m.s. *Christ* + aor.dep.inper.2p.  
*aspazomai* + d.a.acc.m.p. “those” + prep. *ek* + d.a.w/gen.m.p. *Aristobulus*]).

**VERSE 11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman** (ἀσπάσασθε Ἡρωδίωνα τὸν συγγενῆ μου. [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + noun acc.m.s. Herodion + d.a.w/noun sungenes kinsman]).

**Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord** (ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ναρκίσσου τοὺς ὄντας ἐν κυρίῳ [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + d.a.acc.m.p. “those” + d.a.w/gen.m.s. Narcissus + d.a.w/pres.act.part.acc.m.p. eimi “who are” + prep en + noun loc.m.s. kurios]).

**VERSE 12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord** (ἀσπάσασθε Τρύφαιναν καὶ Τρυφῶσαν τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ. [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + noun acc.f.s. Tryphena + conj. kai + noun acc.f.s. Tryphosa + d.a.w/pres.act.part.acc.f.p. kopiao labor + prep. en + d.a.w/noun loc.m.s. kurios]).

**Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord** (ἀσπάσασθε Περσίδα τὴν ἀγαπητήν, ἣτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίῳ [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + noun acc.f.s. Persis + d.a.w/adj.acc.f.s. agapetos + pro.nom.f.s. hostis who + adj.acc.nt.p. polus much; “hard” + aor.act.ind.3s. kopiao labor + prep. en + noun loc.m.s. kurios]).

**VERSE 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine** (ἀσπάσασθε Ῥοῦφον τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐμοῦ [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + noun acc.m.s. Rufus, also one Rufus in Mk. 15:21 + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. eklektos chosen, elect + prep. en + noun loc.m.s. kurios + conj. kai + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. mater mother + conj. kai + pro.gen.s. ego “mine”]).

**VERSE 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them** (ἀσπάσασθε Ἀσύγκριτον, Φλέγοντα, Ἑρμῆν, Πατροβάν, Ἑρμᾶν, καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀδελφούς [aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai + noun acc.m.s. Asyncritus + noun acc.m.s.

*Plegon + noun acc.m.s., Hermes + noun acc.m.s. Patrobas + noun acc.m.s. Hermas + conj. kai + noun acc.m.p. adelphos + prep. sun with + pro.dat.m.p. autos*]).

**VERSE 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all**

**the saints who are with them** (ἀσπάσασθε Φιλόλογον καὶ Ἰουλίαν, Νηρέα καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ Ὀλυμπᾶν, καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς πάντας ἁγίους [*aor.dep.imper.2p. aspazomai greet + noun acc.m.s. Philologus + conj. kai + noun acc.f.s Julia + acc.m.s. Nereus + conj. kai + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s adelphe sister + pro.gen.m.s. autos + conj. kai + noun acc.m.s. Olympas + conj. kai + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.p. hagios saint + adj.acc.m.p. pas all + prep. sun + pro.dat.p. autos “them”*])).

**ANALYSIS: VERSES 9-15**

1. The listing of believers who received special mention continues with some citing their contributions to the effort to establish Christianity in the capital city of Rome and others merely made mention of.
2. Urbanus (from our “urban”) the “fellow-worker” of Paul’s missionary team (“our”) was not with Paul but served him at a distance in some assignment(s) [v. 9a].
3. He is mentioned with Stachys who was dear to Paul (“my beloved”; v. 9b).
4. Apelles is designated “the approved in Christ” indicating that the man experienced severe testing and prevailed (v. 10a).
5. Aristobulus had a large household made up of believers in Christ (v. 10b).
6. At the writing of Romans this man probably was martyred.
7. The commentator J.B. Lighfoot says he was a grandson of Herod the Great and a brother of the older Agrippa and had close ties with the Emperor Claudius.
8. Romans high in the government of Rome had large households comprising many servants.
9. The name Herodian suggests a person in the extended family of Herod, and here somehow related to Paul (hence, “my kinsman/countryman”).
10. Narcissus is said to have been an influential freedman.
11. He was put to death upon the ascension of Nero, some years before Paul wrote Romans,
12. Hence, the wording “those who are of the *household* of Narcissus.”
13. Here we have special mention of two early Christian martyrs in association with others.
14. “Who are in the Lord” refers to these believers.
15. The next three in v. 12 are all women.
16. Tryphena and Tryphosa were no doubt sisters who “labored in the Lord.”
17. Along with these two ladies we have “Persis the beloved” who “worked hard in the Lord.”
18. Rufus (v. 13) perhaps is the same man mentioned in Mk. 15:21 who was forced by the Roman guard to carry Christ’s crossbeam when Jesus stumbled.
19. The term translated “choice” (NAS) and “chosen” (KJV) could be taken some unspecified distinction he held or as a salvation term for one who is one of the elect.

20. “His mother” (another lady in the listing) was not Paul’s literal mother but a mother in the sense of Mk. 10:30 and Matt. 12:48.
21. In some capacity this woman ministered to Paul in some capacity.
22. In v. 14 we have a listing of five male believers, suggesting some common association, who received honorable mention.
23. That these five were closely associated in a Christian capacity is the phrase “and the brethren who are with them.”
24. In v. 15 we have perhaps a husband and wife named Philologus and Julia who are to be greeted on behalf of the apostle Paul.
25. Next we have “Nereus and his sister.”
26. The words “and all the saints that are with them” indicates a common association with the believers cited in v. 15.