

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

Romans 15-16

Paul's Kingdom-sized Heart for Rome

Overview Romans 15-16

1. Paul has ended his teaching and now finishes with apostolic authority sharing his love for the Romans and his plans to visit them soon in the full blessing of the Messiah
2. He explains that his speaking boldly on certain doctrines was because of his special stewardship given him toward Gentiles
3. He shares his apostolic boast of the Lord's enabling him to bring about the obedience of faith among gentiles throughout the Roman Empire with great spiritual power in word and miracles
4. Romans 15.30-33 ends with requests for prayers for 4 things
5. Romans 16.1-27 Paul gives final greetings and commendations to those he has met or heard of in Rome

Rom. 15.30-33 Kingdom prayers for Paul

Rom. 15.30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

Rom. 15.31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

Rom. 15.32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

Rom. 15.33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

This personal request reveals the depth and reality of the unity of the Spirit throughout the whole Church

1. Paul asks them to “agonize alongside” him for 3 things
 - a. to be rescued from the Judaizers in Jerusalem
 - b. that his contribution there would be acceptable to the saints
 - c. that he might joyfully come to them and find refreshing rest in the church
2. His final blessing was originally the end of his letter but later was added the next chapter providing us wonderful light upon the early church

Four lessons learned from Rom 16

1. How the church in Rome gathered
2. The love and testimony of greeting/
honoring saints by name, whether
patron or slave
3. The necessary warning to a unified,
loving church of Satan's divisive strategy
4. The blessing of the gospel

Rom. 16.1-27 Kingdom sized Heart for Rome

Rom. 16.1

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

Rom. 16.2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

A. Rom 16 gives us a wonderful 'peek' into the organic nature of the life of the early church and the 'work' of those making disciples throughout the Roman Empire

1. The early church in Rome was spiritually connected with all the churches throughout the empire (we do not know if any apostles started it)
2. The Lord had many believers commuting to and from Rome for business or ministry including **Phoebe** who was a deaconess from Corinth delivering Paul's letter and maybe ministered among the sisters in whichever city she visited
3. He greets 26 people plus those who were "of their households" meaning either slaves or children in the family or saints meeting in their home
4. He sends greetings from 10 people who are traveling with him in Corinth as they get ready to deliver the gift of charity to the saints in Jerusalem

Rom. 16.1-27 Kingdom sized Heart for Rome

Rom. 16.3

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

Rom. 16.4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Rom. 16.5 also greet the church that is in their house

B. It is amazing that an apostle who's never been to Rome personally knows so many saints from there and what's going on in their home meetings

1. Paul' was close to Aquila and Priscila who have now returned to Rome and probably sent constant news and prayer requests from the church in Rome

a. Probably their tent making business allowed them to have a house church first in Corinth, then in Ephesus and now back to Rome

b. we know Priscila's counsel in the "more perfect way" of the church deeply affected Apollos' apostleship as Aquila financed his first trip to Corinth to see the "Body of Christ"

2. We have no details of how this Jewish Roman couple risked their lives for Paul but he recounts how much they are loved among the churches

Rom. 16.1-27 Kingdom sized Heart for Rome

Rom. 16.5

... Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

Rom. 16.6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

Rom. 16.7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

C. Church history gives us a little background about a few of the names but most served the Lord just as brothers and sisters

1. Paul mentions Epaphroditus as a loved brother and the first gentile saved on his 1st missionary journey
2. Sisters like Mary, Persis and Rufus' mom were all women who traveled and served the apostles
 - a. Mary and Persis were from Rome yet Paul met traveling elsewhere
 - b. we do not know just how much real prominence the sisters had in ministry but the house churches they visited were blessed by their spiritual and financial gifts
3. Andronicus and Junia were Romans who became fellow prisoners with Paul and this happened well before his later imprisonment we know about
 - a. they were either considered outstanding as apostles or 'well known' by the apostles
 - b. the early church recognized Junia as a female apostle

Rom. 16.1-27 Kingdom sized Heart for Rome

Rom. 16.8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

Rom. 16.9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Rom. 16.10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

Rom. 16.11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

C. Church history gives us a little background about a few of the names but most served the Lord just as brothers and sisters

4. Ampliatus became an overseer in Rome and was noted as an early martyr

5. Urbanus, Stachys, and Apelles (vv. 9-10): became a bishops respectively in Macedonia (Urbanus), Byzantium (Stachys), and Smyrna (Apelles)

6. Aristobulus was thought to be a freed slave in the prominent household of the grandson of Herod the Great meeting in the rich area of Rome

7. Narcissus was a famous freed slave of the emperor Claudius and also thought to meet with Aristobulus

8. Herodion was a relative of Paul from Turkey and was later a bishop beheaded there during the Roman persecutions

Rom. 16.1-27 Kingdom sized Heart for Rome

Rom. 16.12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

Rom. 16.13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

Rom. 16.14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

Rom. 16.15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

Rom. 16.16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

C. Church history gives us a little background about a few of the names but most served the Lord just as brothers and sisters

9. Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis were 3 women known for their faithful evangelism in Rome

10. Rufus was the son of Simon of Cyrene and became bishop in Greece

11. Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas and Hermas were thought by the church to be some of the original 70 apostles sent out by the Lord

12. Philologus and Julia were married and served as evangelists and hosted meetings with Nereus and his sister, and Olympas

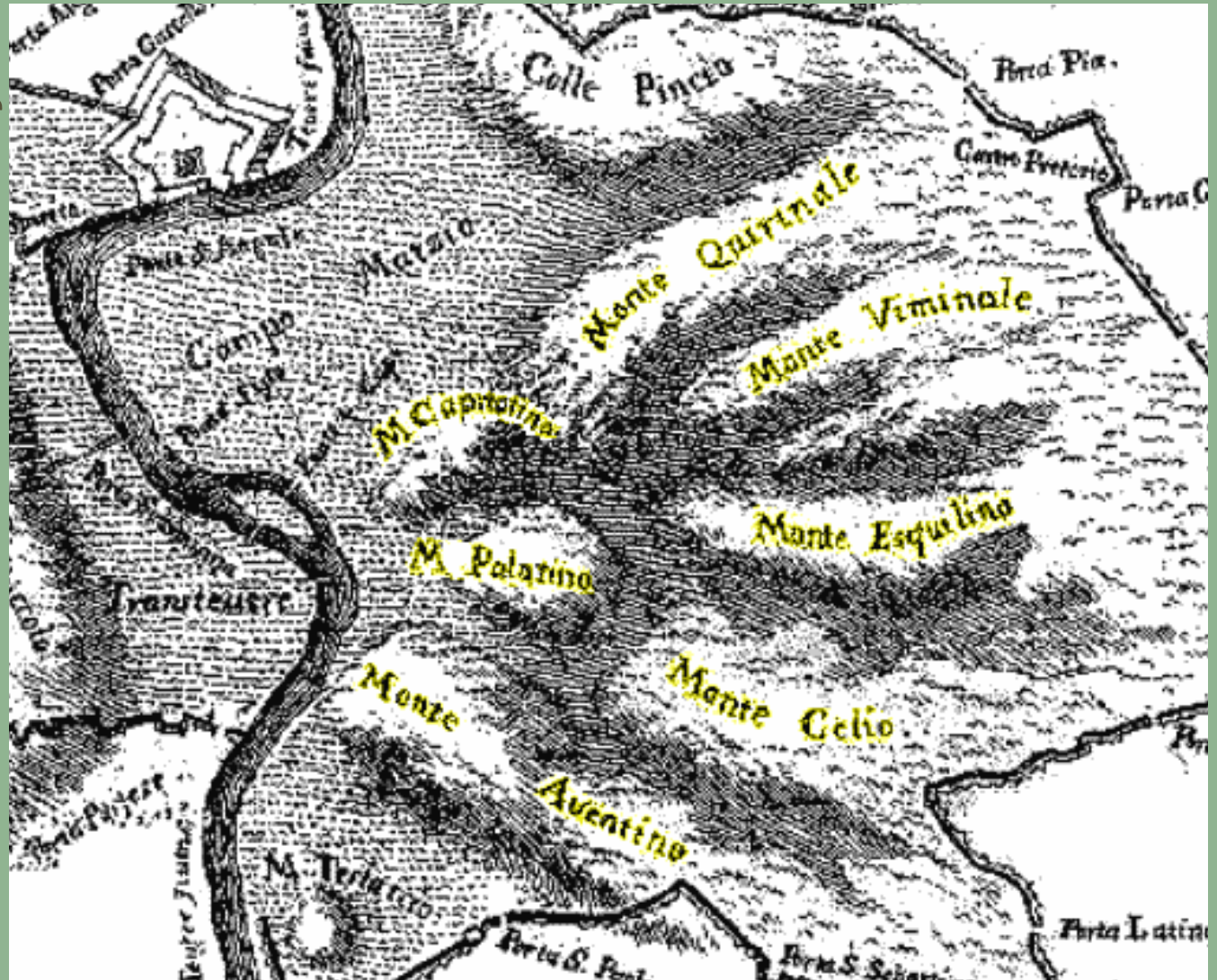
Four lessons learned from the names in Rom 16

1. There were amazing disciples of the Lord serving in Rome whose influence spread throughout the empire
2. The sincere love and affectionate greetings from Paul gave honor to simple saints by name, whether wealthy or poor, patron or slave and bear testimony to how they loved one another
3. Those who were early called apostles and bishops were not given titles or positions but were servants functioning by grace whose only reward came after martyrdom in the kingdom
4. Many who began as devoted servants of the kingdom started from lowly places and grew in measure and sphere often becoming leaders and ministers in the churches

Roman City built upon 7 Hills may have had a church on each hill

Rome was built on 7 hills

1. Quirinal
2. Viminal
3. Esquiline
4. Caelian
5. Aventine
6. Palatine
7. Capitoline



Archaeology has located several hills where these house meetings may have occurred

1. Rom 16.5
Archaeologists
have found the
remains of Aquila
and Priscila's house
located in the
Jewish Quarter
near Circus
Maximus on
Aventine Hill



Archaeology has located several hills where these house meetings may have occurred

2. In Phil 4.3 Clement is mentioned who later became a bishop of Rome and his house has been discovered at the base of Esquiline in the Roman quarter near the Colosseum



Archaeology has located several hills where these house meetings may have occurred

3. Again we find in Phil.4.22 that a number of slaves in Caesar's household were saved and met in the palace guard station located somewhere on Palatine (palace) Hill



Archaeology has located several hills where these house meetings may have occurred

4. “The specific names of the 5 mentioned in Rom.16.14 are derived from Greek gods in this group indicate immigrant status and ethos, with a mix of slaves, freedmen, and Greek-speaking immigrants. It is likely that this house church consisted of persons with a low social status associated with slavery and located in one of the tenements at the bottom of Caelian Hill in Porta Capena.”

(Jewett Romans, 2007).



A picture of the one church in Rome emerges in Rom 16

1. There was an organic connection between all these saints meeting on various hills.
2. From church history we see that Christ was their head but that they also had a united eldership throughout the city.
3. Each meeting in Rome may have reflected the unique language, cultural and social status of an area and yet they were truly one
4. Paul could exhort Jews and all believers as one church with one gospel and one Leader
5. History ironically proves their oneness. Only in the 2nd century did the plural elders begin to look to one overseer (bishop) of Rome as 'arch' bishop

Rom. 16.17-20 Final warning to a unified, loving church of Satan's divisive strategy

Rom. 16.17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

Rom. 16.18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Rom. 16.19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

Rom. 16.20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. ¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Paul has alluded to divisive things in Romans, especially between Jews and gentiles, weak and strong

1. there will always be brothers/sisters who see the church as “us/ them” and align with the underdogs while fueling divisive fire
2. If the church is to be openly inclusive, it must also be shrewd in its anointing to discern the spirit of truth and error
3. In verse 20 Paul implies these things are part of God's victory as WE bruise Satan under our feet

Rom. 16.21-23 Paul includes the greetings of his hosts in Corinth and fellow stewards enroute to Jerusalem

Rom. 16.21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

Rom. 16.22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Rom. 16.23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

How wonderfully the church is defined in terms of persons and not places

1. Timothy his apostle in training
2. Lucius Jason and Sosipater are either from his relations or fellow servants from Tarsus
3. Tertius was Paul's scribe who wrote the letter
4. Gaius their host in Corinth was one of the few Paul baptized in his first trip to Corinth (1Cor.1.14)
5. Erastus was Corinth's city treasurer and Quartus his brother both obviously Romans by their names

Rom. 16.24-27 Paul's 4th and final doxology ?

Rom. 16.24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Rom. 16.25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

Rom. 16.26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

Rom. 16.27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

- A. Paul's letter as presently in our Bibles seems to end 4 times (15.33; 16.20; 16.24 and 16.25) and three reasons are given
1. Different early mss. have different ending
 2. Tertius couldn't erase an ending on a scroll but had to include it when Paul remembered more things he wanted to share
 3. Paul himself wrote the last with his own hand (his practice to validate his letters)
- B. Paul's blessing
1. may they be established according to the gospel mystery which he has revealed through him
 2. may they be established in the OT commandments and the prophets
- C. Doxology of glory forever to the only wise God through Jesus Christ



Paul's Epistle to the Romans

The End