

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 12/12-13/2022 *Romans Chapter 16!*

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS107, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340

Join Zoom Meeting -

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Phil Twente ptwente@gmail.com cell 714 425 9221 www.ptwente.com - For Audio & notes from previous studies -

OPENING PRAYER

Romans, chapter 16 – Sister Phoebe Commended – vs. 1-2; Greeting Roman Saints – vs. 3-16; Avoid Divisive Persons - vs. 17-20; Greetings from Paul's Friends – vs. 21-24; Benediction – vs. 25-27

Romans 16:1-27

Paul's personal salutation, words of love, words of commendation, words of tender affection, but words indicating his personal knowledge of these people, their ministry and of the work that they were doing for the cause of Christ. It also provides insights into the lives of ordinary first-century Christians and gives an inside look at the nature and character of the early church.

Sister Phoebe Commended – vs. 1-2;

Personal Greetings

Rom 16:1 *I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant (deaconess) of the church in Cenchrea,*

- **Phoebe's commendation.** The first two verses are structured as common commendation for someone who is travelling and is to be received. It is thought that this complete epistle of Romans was sent and delivered by Phoebe to the church in Rome.
- **Our sister, who is a servant (deaconess) of the church in Cenchrea,** which is the eastern seaport of Corinth, just a few miles away. Phoebe was a deaconess in the church, having an important ministry in the church. Some would try to exclude women from any place of service in the church, but such was not the case in the early church. Women played an important part of the ministry of the early church. There was only one thing that a woman was not allowed to do in the early church and that was to teach men or usurp authority over men. But she was able to pray, to minister and to prophesy in the church. She was able to share and prophesy in exhorting, exhortation. She was able to get up and exhort. She was able to comfort. She was able to share what the Lord had done and what the Lord was doing in what we should be doing for the Lord. In the early church the women had an extremely important part.
- **Phoebe evidently was also a businesswoman.** She was going to Rome, so she is thought to have carried this completed epistle to the church in Rome. Paul wrote it from Corinth and Phoebe was businesswoman on her way to Rome. So she was entrusted with Paul's letter to the church in Rome. Thus, he commends her to the church.

Rom 16:2 *that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.*

- **As saints of God we should receive one another in the Lord.** Never should anyone come into the doors of a church and feel like a stranger if they are a child of God. It is our duty to make people feel welcome, to feel at home, to reach out to one another as the body of Christ. It is all the more important as the church grows and we become a large assembly. It is important that we go up and introduce ourselves to people and make them welcome, making them feel warm and glad that they came because someone takes notice and cares about them.
- **Receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever business she has need of you;** She was there in Rome on business. Help her. Assist her in whatever business she has, *for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.* She has ministered to many people. She has ministered to me. She has been a blessing to me.

Greeting Roman Saints – vs. 3-16;

Rom 16:3 *Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,*

- **Priscilla and Aquila, a fascinating couple, are mentioned six times** in the New Testament. The first mention of them was when they were living in Corinth. They were tent makers by trade. They had been forced out of Rome under emperor Claudius, who persecuted the Jews and who had all of the Jews put out of Rome. Having been put out of Rome, they came to Corinth, where Paul met them when he first came to Corinth. There, because he also was a tent maker, he worked with them in the trade of making tents.
- **Later on, they moved to Ephesus.** When Apollos came to Ephesus, mightily teaching the people from the word of God, because he did not have an understanding of the complete work of Jesus Christ, Priscilla and Aquila took him aside. (**Act 18:26**) *So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.* Later of course, Paul came to Ephesus. There he was with Priscilla and Aquila again making tents. There in Ephesus had a church in their home. After the death of Claudius, the persecution against the Jews subsided. So they moved back to Rome. Now they also had a church in their home in Rome! Wherever they go they open up their home for home Bible studies, for the church to gather!

Rom 16:4 *who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*

- **Probably at Corinth or Ephesus, we are untold, they had risked their own lives** in such a way as to call forth thanks, not only of Paul, but of all the assemblies of the Gentiles.

Rom 16:5 *Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.*

- **My beloved Epaphroditus – The first convert of Paul in Achaia**, being referred to as *my beloved* (as were Amplias and Stachys). Epaphroditus is remembered as the first fruit of the harvest there. Paul is asking that they greet him.

Rom 16:6 *Greet Mary, who labored (kopiao - to the point of exhaustion) **much** for us.*

- **Labored much connotes hard work to the point of exhaustion.** The context suggests she might have ministered in the church at Rome since its founding, but nothing more is known of her.

Rom 16:7 *Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*

- **Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners.** While some feel that they may be married, both names are in the masculine in the original language. Also it is unlikely that any but men would be fellow prisoners with Paul, sharing the same cell or adjacent cells at some point.
- **Who are of note among the apostles.** Their ministry with Paul, and perhaps with Peter and some of the other apostles in Jerusalem before Paul was converted, was well known and appreciated by the apostles.

Rom 16:8 *Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.*

- **Amplias.** A common name among the emperor's household slaves at that time; he may have been one of those in Caesar's household. Note the love in Paul's remembrance of him as *my beloved in the Lord!*

Rom 16:9 *Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.*

- **Urbanus** – “Of the city”, urbane. Unknown other than that he had been a fellow believing laborer.
- **Stachys** - An uncommon Greek name meaning “ear of corn.” He was obviously close to Paul, also being referred to as *my beloved*, but other details are unknown.

Rom 16:10 *Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.*

- **Apelles** - One of high character, known integrity and sincerity, of approved knowledge, judgment, courage and faithfulness. He apparently had victoriously come through some difficult trials.
- **Aristobulus** - Since Paul does not greet him personally, he was probably not a believer, although some relatives and household servants apparently were. One noted biblical scholar believes that he was the brother of Herod Agrippa I and the grandson of Herod the Great.

Rom 16:11 *Greet Herodion, my countryman (kinsman, cousins). Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.*

- **Herodion.** Related to the Herod family, and so perhaps associated with the household of Aristobulus.
- **My countryman** – **This can also be translated as my kinsman.** He may have been one of Paul's Jewish relatives, possibly of the tribe of Benjamin, or just the fact that he was Jewish.
- **Narcissus.** Some scholars believe that this was the Emperor Claudius's secretary. If so, two households within the palace had Christians in them.

- **Households of Aristobulus...and Narcissus...who are in the Lord.** Notice how thorough Paul is, to leave out none of his salutations that he had knowledge of and with which he was acquainted!

Rom 16:12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored (*kopiao* - to the point of exhaustion) in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord.

- **Tryphena and Tryphosa**, whose names mean delicate and dainty, labored here, *kopiao*, which indicates tremendous labor to the point of exhaustion. They were not just passing time, but worked to the point of exhaustion!
- **Persis**. Named after her native Persia; since her work is spoken of in the past tense, she was probably older than the other two women in this verse. Notice when he talks to the men, he says “*my beloved*,” but when he refers to the woman, *Persis*, he says “*the beloved*.” He is very careful about this. It is important that we are careful in these things. So *the beloved Persis*, who labored much in the Lord.

Rom 16:13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

- **Rufus is perhaps the son of Simeon**, the Cyrene who was forced to carry the cross of Christ. As told in (*Mar 15:21*) *Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.* It is thought that the Rufus here is actually the son. *Rufus* and Alexander were likely well known to the church. So when Mark says the father of *Rufus* and Alexander, their names were names that were familiar in the church. Thus it is thought that this *Rufus* who is here in Rome, whose mother was also a mother to Paul in a spiritual sense. She ministered unto Paul as a mother. So he says, *chosen in the Lord and his mother and mine.*

Rom 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them.

Rom 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

- **These are all just names to us, but Paul knew them.** Probably he had led them to Christ.
- **Brethren, in this context probably refers to both men and women**, which indicates that these names represent the outstanding leaders of two of the church assemblies in Rome.
- **No mention of Peter. Among all those to whom Paul sends greetings**, here is not a word of Peter, which gives occasion to suspect that he was not bishop of Rome, as the Roman Catholics claim he was. If he were, we cannot but suppose him to be residing there, or at least how could Paul write so long an epistle to the Christians there, and take no notice of him?

Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

- **Greet one another with a holy kiss.** Kissing of friends on the forehead, cheek, or beard was common in the OT. The Jews in the NT church carried on the practice, which became especially precious to new believers, who were often outcasts from their own families because of their faith, and because of the spiritual kinship it signified. (*1Th 5:26*) *Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.*
- **The churches of Christ greet you.** Here we have Paul’s personal salutation, words of love, words of commendation, words of tenderness, but words that indicate Paul’s personal knowledge of these people and of their ministry and of the work that they were doing for the cause of Christ!

Avoid Divisive Persons - vs. 17-20;

Rom 16:17 Now I urge (*parakaleō* - beseech) you, brethren, note (mark, observe) those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

- **Brethren, fellow believers! I urge you, beseech, beg, appeal to you, with deep concern**, brethren. This is the third time Paul makes this strong appeal - (*Rom. 12:1* - *present your bodies*

as living sacrifice; **Rom 15:30** – strive in prayer for me). Be on your guard. Note or mark them, concerning those who create dissensions and difficulties, causing divisions, which are in opposition or contrary to the one or single doctrine, the teaching, which you have been taught.

- **Be warned to turn aside from them, to avoid them.** (2Th 3:14-15) *And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. [15] Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (Act 20:28-30) Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. [29] For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. [30] Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. .*
- **One thing that the New Testament teaches is the importance of walking in love** toward one another. Over and over again we are commanded not to judge one another, but to walk in love. There are those today who are causing divisions. One of the chief characteristics that you can note is their lack of Christian love, their constant judging of others and no love at all, but just condemnation of those who don't agree with their theological positions. They are constantly haranguing on the one subject. They have just the one subject. They have over-emphasized it. They are not presenting the whole gospel. They are not teaching the whole Bible. One important part that they are leaving out is the part of love.
- **Welcome and edify both believers and seekers, but avoid divisive persons!** Paul has been telling us that we should be loving and edifying one another with our whole heart! But here with the same discernment, wisdom and fervor, we must **note and mark those who would deceive and divide the body, any who are responsible for divisions, for sowing discord.** (Pro 6:19) *A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.* We need to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Rom 16:18 *For those who are such do not serve (douleuō - serve as slave) our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*

- **Though they call themselves Christians, they do not serve Christ,** as a slave serves his master! They do not aim at His glory, promote His interest, nor do His will, whatever they pretend. There are many there who call Christ, Master and Lord, that are far from serving Him! These people are driven by self-interest and self-gratification, often seen in their pretentious, extravagant, and immoral lifestyles. (Php 3:18-19) *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: [19] whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.*
- **By smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.** They would hinder the unsuspecting or naive person. (2Co 11:13-15) *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. [15] Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*
- **Now they wouldn't deceive you, who are well grounded in the Word,** but tragically there are people that don't have that strong faith, whose hearts are simple. They can be deceived by these people, because they start giving them half Scriptures like the Jehovah Witnesses, and they try and prove their points by half Scriptures. (Eph 4:14-15) *that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, [15] but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.*

Rom 16:19 *For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.*

- **For while your loyalty and obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you,** I would have you well versed and wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. (*Mat 10:16*) *"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*
- **Be wise in the things that are good, but ignorant in the things that are evil.** There are some people who have that curiosity, wanting to know about the seances, spiritism, and occultism. They are constantly reading, trying to learn more and more of the things of the occult. Paul said be simple concerning evil. It is better to be ignorant, not to delve into those things. Why fill your mind with pollution? Why not fill your mind with things that are edifying, things that will build you up?

Rom 16:20 *And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly* (*en tachos* – quickly, speedily). **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.**

- **And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.** (*Gen 3:15*) *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (Rev 22:6)* *Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.*
- **Satan has just about run full course. God has allowed him freedom.** The promise of God to Adam was that the seed of the woman would bruise his head. Paul is saying that is going to be happening shortly. The God of peace will bruise or crush Satan under your feet shortly. We read that when Jesus comes again, Satan will be bound with a chain and cast into the abyss, the pit for the thousand years that Jesus reigns upon the earth. At the end of that thousand years, he will be loosed for a short season, going around, seeking to deceive many on the earth. Then he will be cast into the lake that burns with fire, Gehenna, where the beast and the false prophet are, the end of his career.
- **In the beginning, God, the sovereign government of God ruled the universe.** All of the created beings in the universe, were subject unto God. A glorious kingdom of love and joy and peace, harmony, but one of God's created beings, Satan, the cherubim of a high order, was lifted up in pride, seeking to exalt himself above God and to be like God. In rebelling against God he took a third part of the angels with him in that rebellion. God allowed the rebellion. God has allowed him that freedom.
- **When God created man and placed man upon this planet earth, He allowed Satan** the freedom to come and to tempt man to disobey God. In these things he was serving a purpose of God. God allowed it. It served God's purposes and continues to serve God's purposes, because God wants a meaningful, loving relationship with you. In order for it to be meaningful, you must have a capacity of choice. This is why this other doctrine is so bizarre. It takes choice out the hands of man. It makes man a robot. God wants meaningful love and a meaningful relationship, so He has given you choice.
- **Not only has He given you choice, but the alternative is extremely attractive** to the flesh. The fruit on the tree that was forbidden was extremely attractive. Eve saw that it was pleasant to the eye. It was pleasant to the taste. Of course, it was promised that it would make her wise, open her understanding, giving her enlightenment that she would be as God. So she ate.
- **God allowed Satan that liberty. He has allowed him liberty today** to tempt you, to tempt you into disobeying God. And in that, there is the test of your love and the test of your faith. Do you love God, completely? Are you willing to forsake the flesh, the pleasures and the desires of the flesh to follow after God and be obedient unto Him? Will you stand up against the temptation?
- **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah be with you. Amen.** (*2Co 13:11*) *Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (Luke 10:17-20)* *Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." [18] And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. [19] Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt*

you. [20] Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. We need to note the promise that the God of peace will crush Satan, who is behind it all!

Greetings from Paul's Friends – vs. 21-24;

Rom 16:21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

- **Timothy, my fellow worker!** Paul called Timothy his own son in the faith. Paul said, I don't have anybody who is like-minded to me as Timothy, who has your care and concern at his heart. Paul said he is the closest I have, to having the same kind of attitude towards you that I have, an attitude of love.
- **and Lucius,** In Acts, chapter thirteen, when Paul was first sent out on the first missionary journey, one of the prophets in the church that sent Paul out, was Lucius. It is thought that this Lucius is that same Lucius that was associated with Paul there in the church in Antioch.
- **Jason,** When Paul came to Thessalonica in the Book of Acts, there was a Jason, a believer there, who actually got into a lot of trouble because of Paul. They hurried Paul out of the city. Jason had to face the judges there.
- **and Sosipater,** He probably is the one that was in the church in Berea.
- **my countrymen, greet you.** Paul had many, who were travelling with him. There was a company that would go with Paul, men who Paul had touched in his ministry, men who had come to Christ through Paul's ministry. They are now in Corinth with Paul as he is writing to the church in Rome.

Rom 16:22 I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

- **Now the fellow who wrote this. Paul dictated it, but didn't personally write it.** The person who actually did the writing, the secretary, was Tertius.

Rom 16:23 Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.

- **Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you.** When Paul wrote his letter to the church in Corinth. (1Co 1:14) *I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius.* This likely is that Gaius, Paul's host there in Corinth, a man who opened his home to Paul, the one that Paul baptized along with Crispus. Paul couldn't remember if he baptized any of the others.
- **Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you and Quartus, a brother.** In 1929 the archeologists discovered a plaque written in Latin, near the Bema seat, the judge's seat, which read, "Erastus, the commissioner for public works, laid this pavement at his own expense." You can go to Corinth today and you can see that inscription there in Latin, near what is called the Bema seat. As you just read the names, Erastus, it doesn't mean much, until you realize that even to the present day there in the ruins of the city of Corinth, this inscription there in the pavement of Erastus, who with his own son, provided this pavement.
- **Quartus.** He may have been a physical brother of *Erastus*, but more likely just the final brother-in-Christ listed. Some believe that the names, *Tertius*, which means, number three and *Quartus*, which means number four, may indicate that they were slaves, as frequently the children of slaves were called the number of their birth.

Rom 16:24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

- **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you** - the good-will of Christ towards you, the good work of Christ in you. This will be the best preservative against the snares of heretics and false teachers. If the grace of Christ be with us, who can be against us, so as to prevail? *Be strong therefore in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.* Paul, not only as a friend, but as a minister and an apostle, who had received grace for grace, thus with authority blesses them with this blessing, and repeats it!

Benediction – (vs. 25-27) 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 kept secret since the world began. [26] but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— [27] to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. 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 kept secret since the world began.

- ***Now to Him who is able.*** Paul solemnly closes his epistle with a magnificent giving of praise and glory to the blessed God. He is also making preparation for the unfolding in his further epistles of that great secret of God called the “*mystery kept secret.*”
- ***To establish you*** – We can see in these words Paul referring to truth beyond that which the Romans already knew.
- ***According to my gospel. (Rom 1:1) Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God; (Rom 2:16) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel; (Gal 1:11) But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.***
- ***And the preaching of Jesus Christ.*** Synonymous with the gospel, it was Paul's supreme life commitment. ***(Rom 10:14,15,17) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? [15] And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!" [17] So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (1Co 1:23-24) but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (2Co 4:5-6) For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. [6] For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***
- ***According to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began. In the NT, this word, mystery,*** not having the worldly connotation, but instead refers to something hidden in former times but now are made known! ***(1Co 4:1) Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (Eph 5:32) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph 6:19) and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, (Col 1:25-26) of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God, which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, [26] the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. (1Ti 3:9,16) holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. [16] And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.***
- ***The NT's most common mystery is that God would provide salvation for Gentiles as well as Jews. (Eph 3:3-9) how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, [4] by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), [5] which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: [6] that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, [7] of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. [8] To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [9] and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in***

God who created all things through Jesus Christ; (*Gal 3:28-29*) *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* [29] *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Rom 16:26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—

- ***But now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations.*** God had told Israel that He would not only call her to righteousness, but appoint her as a light of the gospel **to the nations.** (*Isa 42:6*) *"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, (Isa 49:6) Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth. (Eph 1:9) having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself. (1Pe 1:10-11) Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, [11] searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (Gen 12:3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Exo 19:6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (*Isa 53:11*) *He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge, My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. (Jer 31:31,33) "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— [33] But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*
- ***According to the commandment of the everlasting God*** - the purpose, counsel, and decree of God from eternity, and the commission and appointment given first to Christ and then to the apostles, in the fulness of time. They received commandment from the Father to do what they did in preaching the gospel. *The commandment of the everlasting God* was enough to bear out the apostles and ministers of the gospel in their preaching. *The everlasting God.* This attribute of eternity is here given up to God very emphatically. He is from everlasting, which intimates that though He had kept this mystery secret since the world began, and had but lately revealed it, yet He had framed and contrived it **from everlasting**, before the worlds were! And He is to everlasting, intimating the eternal continuance to us. We must never look for any new revelation, but abide by this, for this is *according to the commandment of the everlasting God!* Christ, in the gospel, is the same yesterday, today, and forever!
- ***For obedience to the faith—*** The extent of this revelation, where previously was made known in Judah, only God was known, **now Christ is salvation to the ends of the earth, to all nations!** That they may believe and obey it, receive it and be ruled by it. The gospel is revealed, not to be talked of and disputed about, but to be submitted to. The *obedience of faith* is that *obedience* which is paid to the word of *faith*, which is produced by the grace of *faith*.
- ***So this wonderful mystery, the kingdom of God, including the Gentile believers,*** there in the Prophets, now being understood, now being revealed, *now made manifest by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God!*
- ***What a debt we owe to Paul the apostle!*** For the unfolding of the Scriptures to us, causing us to realize what a debt we owe to Jesus Christ, who gave Himself that we might be partakers of the heavenly cause!

Rom 16:27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

- ***To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. (Jud 1:25) To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.***
- A doxology to that God whose gospel it is, giving glory to Him forever, acknowledging that He is a glorious God, and adoring Him accordingly, with all affection, desiring and longing to be at this work with the holy angels, where we shall be doing it to eternity! This is praising God, ascribing glory to Him forever! Hallelujah! Amen!

SUMMARY:

- **Sister Phoebe Commended – vs. 1-2; *Phoebe’s commendation.*** The first two verses are structured as a common commendation for someone who is travelling and is to be received. She was going to Rome, carrying this completed epistle to the church in Rome. Paul commends her to the church, to Receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, assisting her in her needs. She has ministered to many people. She has ministered to me. She has been a blessing to me.
- **Greeting Roman Saints – vs. 3-16; Greetings from Paul’s Friends – vs. 21-24;** Paul’s personal salutation, words of love, words of commendation, words of tender affection, but words indicating his personal knowledge of these people, their ministry and of the work that they were doing for the cause of Christ. It also provides insights into the lives of ordinary first-century Christians and gives an inside look at the nature and character of the early church.
- **Avoid Divisive Persons - vs. 17-20;** Welcome and edify both believers and seekers, but avoid divisive persons! Paul has been telling us that we should be loving and edifying one another with our whole heart! But here with the same discernment, wisdom and fervor, we must note and mark those who would deceive and divide the body, any who are responsible for divisions, for sowing discord. Be wise in the things that are good, but ignorant in the things that are evil. Fill your mind with things that are edifying, things that will build you up? ***And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah be with you. Amen.***
- **Benediction – vs. 25-27; Now to Him who is able.** Paul solemnly closes his epistle with a magnificent giving of praise and glory to the blessed God! He is also making preparation for the unfolding in his further epistles of that great secret of God called the “*mystery kept secret.*”
- **(Jud 1:25) To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.**

CLOSING SONG:

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL – Latin Hymn – Wade – Boyle; Presley (2:53-2:54)

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, Born the King of Angels; O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, glory in the highest. O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Read and meditate over *Hebrews Chapter 1!*