ROMANS 16

The Names, the Warning, and the Glory

A Courier from Cenchrea, a Household of Saints, a Crushed Serpent, and a Doxology for All the Nations

> *"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."*
> ROMANS 16:20

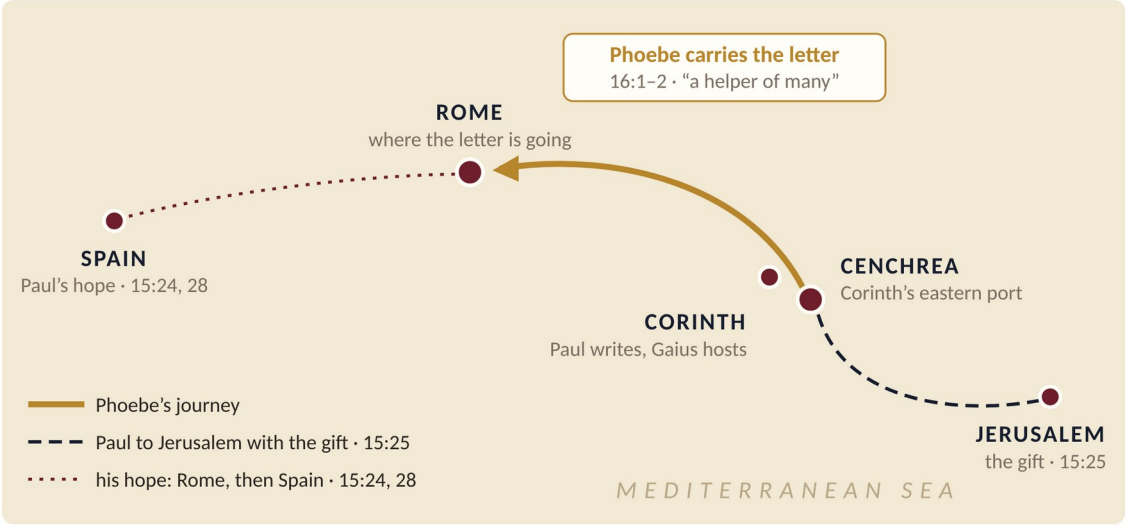
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Paul has brought us

1. Romans 16 is the last page of the letter, and it reads at first like the end of a phone book.

2. The letter was written from Corinth.

3. Look for the women and the households.



Our Sister Phoebe

A servant of the church at Cenchrea carries the letter — receive her, help her, she has helped many

ROMANS 16:1

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

DAVID GUZIK

Courier of the letter; “a female deacon … by formal recognition or … general service.”

R.C. SPROUL

Pagan name kept; diakonia; “a more specific office of important assistance.”

C.H. SPURGEON

Her name in Christ’s “golden book”; honour graduated by service done.

MATTHEW HENRY

“A servant by office, a stated servant” — in charity, not preaching.

διάκονον

DIAKONON · “SERVANT”

Diakonos is the ordinary word for one who serves — a table waiter, an attendant — and it is also the word Paul uses for the church office of deacon (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12).

Greet Them by Name

Twenty-six people, two households, three house circles — the gospel of Romans with faces

ROMANS 16:5

also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

DAVID GUZIK

Real, ordinary people; 13 of 24 names linked to Caesar's palace; Junia's apostleship "isn't very strong."

R.C. SPROUL

House churches had nowhere else to meet; Junia man or woman; kiss a custom, not a principle.

C.H. SPURGEON

Households: "Where are you, Aristobulus?" Pray for your family; the obscure not overlooked.

MATTHEW HENRY

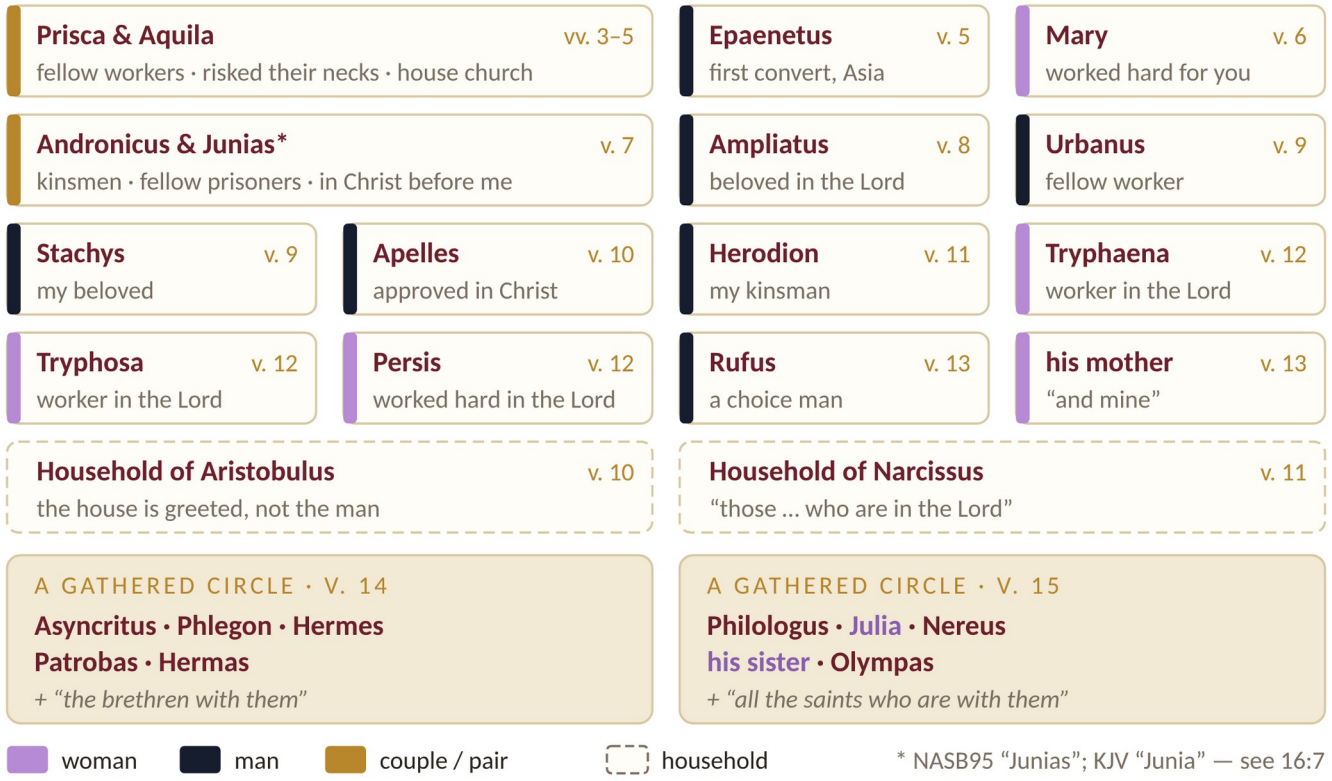
A church in a house is no absurdity; Rufus choice and chosen; no word of Peter.

Ἰουνίαν … ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις

IOUNIAN · EPISĒMOI EN TOIS APOSTOLOIS

The name in verse 7 is in the accusative, Iounian, and only the accent tells male from female: Iounian with the acute is the feminine Junia (a common Latin name); Iouniān with the circumflex would be…

Who's who in Rome (16:3–15)



24 named + 2 unnamed women = 26 greeted · 2 households · 3 house circles · plus Phoebe

Every chip is a real person in the order Paul greets them; notice how many are women, how many "worked hard," and that the church met in houses and circles, not a building.

Wise in What Is Good

Watch the dividers, turn away from them — and the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet

ROMANS 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.

DAVID GUZIK

Know the good more than the evil; God crushes, Satan under believers' feet.

R.C. SPROUL

Not "avoid doctrine" — avoid heretics; childlike, not childish; "soon" perhaps AD 70.

C.H. SPURGEON

False doctrine spreads like plague; Satan is tethered — bless God for the chain.

MATTHEW HENRY

Their own belly; Rome a target; Genesis 3:15 fulfilled; a conquered enemy.

χρηστολογίας καὶ εὐλογίας

CHRĒSTOLOGIAS KAI EULOGIAS · "SMOOTH AND FLATTERING SPEECH"

Chrēstologia, used only here in the New Testament, is "useful-talk," kind and plausible words; eulogia is ordinarily "blessing" (15:29, "the fullness of the blessing of Christ"), here the…

Greetings from the Room in Corinth

A co-worker, three kinsmen, a scribe, a host, a treasurer, a brother — and a blessing the manuscripts debate

ROMANS 16:23

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

DAVID GUZIK

Tertius wrote as Paul dictated; Gaius host of the whole church.

R.C. SPROUL

The amanuensis explained; Erastus the treasurer; grace repeated.

C.H. SPURGEON

Whole sermon on 16:24 (KJV): grace in, through and with Christ.

MATTHEW HENRY

Timothy an equal; Erastus official and preacher; Paul “loth to part.”

Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολήν

TERTIOS HO GRAPSAS TĒN EPISTOLĒN · “TERTIUS, WHO WRITE THIS LETTER”

Ho grapsas is an aorist participle, “the one who wrote” — Greek letters were dated from the reader’s point of view, so NASB95 renders it present, “who write.”

The room where Romans was written

WRITTEN AT CORINTH · EIGHT SEND GREETINGS · 16:21–23

Timothy my fellow worker v. 21	**Lucius** my kinsman v. 21	**Jason** my kinsman v. 21	**Sosipater** my kinsman v. 21
Tertius "who write this letter" the scribe · v. 22	**Gaius** host to me and to the whole church · v. 23	**Erastus** the city treasurer v. 23	**Quartus** the brother v. 23

Timothy and Erastus: Acts 19:22 · Gaius: 1 Corinthians 1:14 · Erastus "remained at Corinth": 2 Timothy 4:20

Eight voices send greetings from Corinth — a young co-worker, three Jewish kinsmen, the scribe holding the pen, the host of the house church, a city official and a brother known only as "the brother."

To the Only Wise God

The gospel that establishes, the mystery now revealed, the obedience of faith for all the nations

ROMANS 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,

DAVID GUZIK

Established by Paul's gospel; the mystery is the whole plan of redemption.

R.C. SPROUL

Justification by faith alone; Soli Deo Gloria; Amen from emeth, truth.

MATTHEW HENRY

Power to establish; obedience paid to the word of faith; glory through Christ.

στηρίξαι

STĒRIXAI · "TO ESTABLISH"

Stērizō is to set fast, make firm, prop up so it will not fall.

The doxology closes the door the letter opened

ROMANS 1:1–5 · THE DOOR		ROMANS 16:25–27 · THE CLOSE
"set apart for the gospel of God" 1:1	GOSPEL	"according to my gospel" 16:25
"promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures" · 1:2	PROPHETS	"by the Scriptures of the prophets" 16:26
"concerning His Son … Jesus Christ our Lord" · 1:3–4	JESUS CHRIST	"the preaching of Jesus Christ … through Jesus Christ" · 16:25, 27
"to bring about the obedience of faith" · 1:5	OBEDIENCE OF FAITH	"leading to obedience of faith" 16:26
"among all the Gentiles" 1:5	ALL THE NATIONS	"made known to all the nations" 16:26

"Gentiles" (1:5) and "nations" (16:26) are one Greek word, ethnē — the letter ends where it began.

Read across each row: the five themes of Paul's first five verses return in his last three, so the whole letter sits between two statements of the same gospel.

What to carry from this chapter

1

The theology has faces.

Twenty-six people greeted, eight sending greetings, one courier: the doctrine of chapters 1–15 was written for, and carried by, real men and women.

2

Phoebe carried Romans.

The letter that has shaped the church for twenty centuries reached Rome in the hands of a woman from a harbor town; Guzik calls her “probably entrusted with this”…

3

A helper is helped.

Prostatis (v. 2) — she stood before many as a patron, so the Romans are to stand beside her (parastēte).

4

Honor is measured by service.

“Degrees in honour among believers are graduated by the scale of service done.”

More to carry

5

The church met in houses.

“The church that is in their house” (v. 5) and four more circles — there were no other places to meet, and the gospel spread through homes.

6

One accent, one debate.

Iounian is Junia with an acute, Junias with a circumflex.

7

The households were mixed.

Aristobulus and Narcissus are named but not greeted; their households are.

8

The dividers sound kind.

Chrēstologia and eulogia — smooth, gracious talk — aimed at the akakoi, the guileless.

Talk it through

1. Phoebe was “a helper of many.” Who has been a Phoebe to you — and whom are you standing beside this month?

2. Paul knew two dozen people by name in a city he had never visited. Whose name would you put in your own Romans 16, and have you told them what they mean to you?

3. Aristobulus’s household is greeted, but Aristobulus is not. Who in your family is still outside, and how are you praying for them?

4. Paul warns against “smooth and flattering speech” that deceives the unsuspecting. What smooth voice — a person, a feed, a habit’s excuse — have you been giving a hearing it has not earned?

5. Where do you need to be “innocent in what is evil” — an amateur rather than a pro — instead of an expert in it?

CLOSING

The longest list of names in Paul's letters ends the deepest letter he wrote, because the gospel of Romans is for people — a courier, a couple, a mother, a scribe, a host. The serpent will be crushed under their feet, and the glory goes to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study, reflection journal and film: see the Romans study page.