

Romans 16:1-7 (NKJV)

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

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.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

1

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.

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

6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us.

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.

2

- Paul recalls some of the endearing memories he had with these folks
- Granted, the apostle had not pastored the church at Rome – as of the time of writing, he had not even travelled there yet
- But many of the folks he met along his missionary journeys – and to whom he ministered – were there in Rome, for one reason or another
- He greets 26 individuals

3

John Niemela, in the Introduction to Zane Hodge's Commentary on Romans says:

Paul greets fifteen distinct groups of believers in Rom 16:3-15. Each use of ... "greet" distinguishes an autonomous assembly.

The first church mentioned met in a home: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila...[and] the church that is in their house" (Rom 16:3-5). None of the others listed are specifically said to meet in a house.

4

John Niemela (cont'd):

Probably most or all of the other fourteen listed churches met in tiny tenement rooms (about 10 feet by 10 feet). Hence, these are referred to as tenement churches (in contrast with larger house churches).

Though Paul had not been to Rome, he was acquainted with a host of people there, having met (during his various missionary journeys) many of those he mentions.

5

Paul admonishes the church:

Rom 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

- Paul urges the believers to NOTE those who cause divisions and offenses
- *to note* = "to pay attention to; to watch closely" (Strong)
- In colloquial English: "Keep an eye on that person."

6

- We are to keep an eye on those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine (teaching) we have received from God's Word
- This would include individuals who persist in sinning in some fashion, so that their behavior is disruptive; it causes distractions
- We are commanded to *avoid* them
- *avoid* = "to turn away from" and "shun" (Strong and BDAG)
- This is essential in church discipline cases

7

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

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.

- The apostle commends the believers at Rome for living obediently, but he wants them to remain wise in things that are good and simple in things that are evil

8

- Paul doesn't want them to stumble and fall prey to similar patterns of sinning
 - To that end, they should shun those members who are living in sinfulness and, presumably, are under church discipline
- 2 Thess 3:6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.
- *disorderly* = one whose behavior is irresponsible

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Paul makes two comments about them:

Rom 16:18a Those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly

1. They are self-seeking, out to satisfy their own desires – driven by their *soul* rather than their *spirit (and God's Spirit)*

Phil 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: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

10

Rom 16:18b and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

2. They are hypocritical, putting on a polished outward act, thereby deceiving undiscerning believers
- In other words, whether they do it intentionally or not, they "schmooze" other believers into thinking they are good and spiritual, when in reality they are not
 - Church members are often surprised when a person like this becomes the object of church discipline

11

- Amidst the warning to avoid people of this nature, who are actually being used as tools of Satan, Paul inserts a wonderful promise

Rom 16:20a And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

- The Bible tells us that Satan is an angel, created by God – very powerful – but not omnipotent like God
- Early in his angelic career Satan rebelled against God

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- He had been created as a bright star, but he let his power and glory go to his head and pridefully considered himself the equal of God
- As a result of this willful defiance of God, Satan was cast out of heaven
- Jesus said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10:18)
- Satan took 1/3 of the holy angels with him, and they forever after became known as fallen angels

13

- Their mission is to oppose God and destroy the work of Christ ...
- To trip Christians up and cause them to stumble so they will be ineffective for Christ
- To blind unbelievers so they will not see the truth of the gospel
- To walk around as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour
- He is a liar and the father of all lies
- He is a murderer from the beginning
- He is a deceiver, a counterfeiter, an accuser

14

- Satan is highly effective and very powerful
- Even Michael, the great archangel of God, dared not to bring a reviling accusation against him but said, "the Lord rebuke you."
- Needless to say, we are up against a formidable foe
- Nevertheless, we have before us a promise of victory

Rom 16:20a And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

15

- This verse is post-crucifixion and post-resurrection – in other words, the truth of this verse is made possible by the cross and the subsequent raising of Christ from the dead – there is great power there
- One of Christ's objectives in coming to earth was to destroy the devil

1 John 3:8 For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

- Did Christ accomplish this?

16

Heb. 2:14 He destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

- *destroyed* = "rendered powerless" (not "annihilated")
- As a spirit being, Satan is still very powerful when compared with mere humans
- But when believers exercise their position of authority in Christ, the demon world shudders
- Three paradoxes can be found in Rom. 16:20

17

"the God of peace shall bruise"

- Doesn't it seem odd that someone so peaceful would do something so hostile?
- Paradox #1: Enemies must be conquered for peace to prevail
- There must be war before there can be peace!

1 Cor 15:24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

18

1 Cor 15:25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

- The glorious day is coming when all enemies will be subjected and God will be all in all
- That will come after the Millennium, at which time Jesus will turn over the kingdom to the Father
- Enemies are a threat to peace

19

The great enemy of Christianity and the peace that Christ offers is Satan, along with his entire echelon of fallen angels/demons

- He is the great disturber of the peace
- He produces conflict, fighting and warfare
- He is the source of hatred and murder
- He promotes revolution and rebellion
- He works to drive wedges between people
- He promotes discord and disunity amongst church members and within homes
- He delights when Christians are living in sin and have broken fellowship with God

20

- In order to have peace in your personal life, Satan must be bruised
- Christ bruised him *positionally* on the cross of Calvary, but we must bruise Him *practically* each day of our Christian lives
- How? By defeating sin through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit
- Sin is a deterrent to peace

21

Peace only co-exists with righteousness

Is. 57:21 "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

Psa. 85:10 Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.

Is. 32:17 The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

James 3:18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Rom. 14:17 for the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

22

- Just as righteousness and peace are inseparable, so unrighteousness and turmoil are connected
- Peace characterizes God's kingdom; turmoil characterizes Satan and the world system over which he presides
- Jesus said, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. (John 14:27)
- Jesus also prayed to the Father: Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

23

- Is there peace in heaven? Yes! – because there is righteousness
- Is it God's will that there be peace on earth? Yes! – What, then, is holding it back?
- The unrighteousness of man (including the unrighteous lifestyle of believers)
- To get victory over Satan, believers must get victory over their sinning through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us
- The enemies of the cross of Christ must be defeated in a practical sense

24

“God ... will crush Satan under your feet”

- Doesn't it seem odd that we, mere mortals, are to crush Satan (who is supernatural)?

Paradox #2: God crushes, using OUR feet!

- *crush* = “to shatter; to break in pieces,” literally, “to trample under foot”
- By implication, it means to win the victory over

25

Luke 10:19 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 have been given authority by Christ to *trample on serpents and scorpions*
- This is a metaphor, for Jesus clarifies: *over all the power of the enemy*

26

- In v. 20 Jesus refers to *spirits* (i.e., the spirit world), so this passage is obviously referring to the trampling of Satan and his host
- How can we, mere humans, possibly trample the foe?
- Quick answer: Through Christ who strengthens us
- But a deeper answer is given in Phil. 2:

27

Phil 2:5-7 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

28

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Jesus was rewarded by God for completing the work of redemption by being exalted and given authority over all things

29

Eph 1:18-22 That you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

30

- Christ is now seated in a position of authority at the right hand of the Father
- He is far above all principality and power and might and dominion – an obvious reference to the spirit world
- In other words, the spirit world, including Satan, has been placed in subjection to Christ
- Remarkably, He delegates authority over the spirit world to His children!

31

Eph 2:5-6 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

- Not only are we made alive in Christ through initial salvation (regeneration) ...
- We are also seated together with Him in the heavenlies, and that implies that we share in His authority (delegated power) over the spirit world

32

John MacMillan, *The Authority of the Believer*:

The believer, who is fully conscious of divine Power behind him, and of his own authority thereby, can face the enemy without fear or hesitation.

- When we do battle against Satan and the hosts of darkness, we do so in Jesus' name, possessing his authority and power
- Since Jesus has already been given the victory over Satan and the forces of darkness, we too share in that victory – we must simply claim it by faith

33

How, then, do we trample the devil?

- By appropriating the truth of Eph. 2:5-6 as we minister in this world

Eph 3:10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

34

- We trample the devil in large part by preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ with great boldness and power
- This is what happened to Peter on the Day of Pentecost
- He preached with such power and authority that 3000 Jews repented and the devil was soundly defeated

35

John MacMillan, *The Authority of the Believer*:

Why, then, is there not more manifest progress?

Because a head is wholly dependent upon its body for the carrying out of its plan. All the members of its body must be subservient, that through their coordinated ministry may be accomplished what is purposed. The Lord Jesus ... is hindered in his mighty plans and working, because His body has failed to appreciate the deep meaning of His exaltation and to respond to the gracious impulses which He is consciously sending for its quickening.

36

The qualification for possessing this authority:

Eph 1:19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe,

- *“us who believe”* – This does not mean *those who are saved*; it is an active present participle in Greek and means *those believers who are believing*
- Have you been believing that God wants to give you abundant life and victory and that He wants to prepare you for the Bema?

37

“God ... will crush Satan ... shortly.”

- *shortly* = “quickly” or “soon,” as in a brief space of time
- Doesn’t it seem odd that something written nearly 2000 years ago claims that it will happen shortly?

Paradox #3: The promise transcends time but gives a timetable for fulfillment

- This promise was written by the Apostle Paul who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it was written in the first century AD

38

- It applied to the church at Rome and yet it applies to the church in the 21st century – and to every believer of every era of the church age – because it is a promise that transcends time
- Nevertheless, the promise also gives a timetable for fulfillment – What is the timetable?
- *shortly* – that is, “soon!”

39

- Some commentators claim this promise applied exclusively to the church at Rome because according to v. 17 they had been experiencing divisions in the church
- Thus, Paul writes to encourage them that Satan will be defeated in this division shortly
- Other commentators claim this promise will be exclusively fulfilled in the future, when Christ returns the 2nd time with the saints as His army to defeat Satan

40

- What these commentators are missing is that this promise also has a present-day fulfillment
- All throughout the church age, God promises to crush Satan under the feet of the saints
- Why, then, are we not seeing this happening widespread?
- Why is it that Satan seems to gain ground?
- Because believers are not recognizing their authority as seated with Christ, and they are not claiming the promise

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- Furthermore, many do not see this as a promise for today
- They either relegate it to the first century or to the second coming
- God says the promise is for today – soon! quickly!
- God’s will is that we crush the devil through spiritual warfare NOW, in the power of Jesus Christ

42

The Power of Evil
by St. Andrew of Crete (660-732)
Christian, dost thou see them
On the holy ground,
How the powers of darkness
Rage thy steps around?
Christian, up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss;
In the strength that cometh
By the holy cross.

43

The Power of Evil (cont'd)
Christian, dost thou feel them,
How they work within,
Striving, tempting, luring,
Goading into sin?
Christian, never tremble;
Never be downcast;
Gird thee for the battle,
Thou shalt win at last.

44

The Power of Evil (cont'd)
Christian, dost thou hear them,
How they speak thee fair?
"Always fast and vigil,
Always watch and prayer?"
Christian, answer boldly;
"While I breathe, I pray!"
Peace shall follow battle.
Right shall end in day.

45

The Power of Evil (cont'd)
Well I know thy trouble,
O my servant true;
Thou art very weary,
I was weary, too;
But that toil shall make thee
Some day all Mine own.
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near My throne.

46

- In closing this great epistle, Paul adds one long sentence at the end of ch. 16

Rom 16:25-27 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 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—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

47

- When Jesus came to Earth, He proclaimed the gospel of kingdom inheritance
- Those who repent and follow Him in discipleship, living righteously, confessing Christ, and suffering in His name, will be rewarded when He returns, to serve as *sons to glory*, co-regents with Him in His Messianic kingdom
- This truth was largely kept secret in OT times, but was revealed by Christ and was proclaimed in more detail by His apostles – Paul in particular – to the nations

48

- **To close this great epistle, Paul the apostle gives glory to God through Jesus Christ for His great wisdom in implementing this glorious plan and for establishing those believers who take up His offer**
- **Are you one of those?**