

Romans 16:1-27

Chapter 16 is clearly written with six parts:

1. Paul commends Phoebe to the Roman Christians. (16:1-2)
2. Paul asks the Roman Christians to greet several of their members that he knows personally or is familiar with by their public reputation. (16:3-15)
3. Paul sends greetings to the Roman Christians from the other churches that he represents. (16:16)
4. Paul abruptly warns the Roman Christians of false teachers (16:17-19)
5. Paul speaks confidently of the spiritual victory (16:20)
6. Paul prays for the Roman Christians (16:20)
7. Paul sends greetings to the Roman Christians from his ministry team with him in Corinth. (16:21-23)
8. Paul closes the letter with a summative doxology (16:25-27)

All of these features appear in one or more of Paul's letter with these two exceptions:

- Paul's personal greetings to individual members of the Roman church (16:3-15) is unmatched.
 - The closest example is the end of Colossians (Col. 4:15) which was another church Paul had NOT personally visited. He greets those at the church at Laodicea and the church that meets in Nympha's house in Colossae. (Also, similar is 2 Tim.4:19.) Of course, it would be impossible, or politically inexpedient to try to greet individuals in a church Paul knew personally and had spent time alongside.
- Paul abruptly interrupts his greetings with a warning about false teachers. This is followed quickly with a promise of victory over Satan (who is likely expressing himself in the churches with false teaching) and a prayer for the Romans to continue in the grace of Jesus.

Romans 16:1 – “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,”



4921 [e]	1161 [e]	4771 [e]	5402 [e]	3588 [e]	79 [e]	1473 [e]	1510 [e]	2532 [e]	1249 [e]	3588 [e]	1577 [e]	3588 [e]	1722 [e]
Synistēmi	de	hymīn	Phoibēn	tēn	adelphēn	hēmōn	ousan	kai	diakonon	tēs	ekklesiās	tēs	en
1 Συνίστημι	δὲ	ὑμῖν	Φοίβην ,	τὴν	ἀδελφὴν	ἡμῶν ,	οὐσαν	καὶ	διάκονον	τῆς	ἐκκλησίας	τῆς	ἐν
I commend	moreover	to you	Phoebe	the	sister	of us	being	also	servant	of the	church	-	in
V-PIA-1S	Conj	PPro-D2P	N-AFS	Art-AFS	N-AFS	PPro-G1P	V-PPA-AFS	Conj	N-AFS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Art-GFS	Prep

2747 [e]

Kenchreais

Κενχρεαῖς ,

Cenchrea

N-DFF

- Phoebe is listed first and so it is assumed she is carrying the letter to Rome.
 - The name “Phoebe” comes from Greek mythology which means Phoebe is a Gentile
 - Women were active in Pagan cults and religions.
 - 1/3 of the names listed on inscriptions in Italy as servants of Isis were women.
- *Sunistemi* - “Recommend” – is seen in the papyri and in 2 Cor. 3:1 the practice providing letters of recommendation for people who would be traveling for secular reasons or from church to church.
- *Diakonos* – “deacon” –
 - Can mean simply a practice of service, but this would have been expressed with the word *diakoneo* as in 15:25 (“bringing aid”; “in service”) or *diadonia* as in 1 Cor. 16:15 (“devoted themselves to the service of the Lord’s people”). That makes the translation “servant” weak.
 - This word *diakonos* (“deacon”) preceded by the word *ousa* (“being”) would seem to indicate a consistently recognized ministry to the saints or a position of responsibility in the local church of Cenchreae. (57 AD)
 - Deacons will be mentioned in Philippians 1:1 (61 AD)
 - 1 Timothy 3:8-13 identifies the responsibilities of a position called “deacon” (62 AD)
 - 1 Timothy 3:11 (see below) – is the female description of a deaconess:

1135 [e]	5615 [e]	4586 [e]	3361 [e]	1228 [e]	3524 [e]	4103 [e]	1722 [e]	3956 [e]
gynaikas	hōsautōs	semnas	mē	diabolous	nēphaliou	pistas	en	pasin
11 γυναῖκας	ὡσαύτως	σεμνάς ,	μὴ	διαβόλους ,	νηφαλίους ,	πιστὰς	ἐν	πᾶσιν .
Women	likewise	[must be] dignified	not	slanderers	clear-minded	faithful	in	all things
N-AFP	Adv	Adj-AFP	Adv	Adj-AFP	Adj-AFP	Adj-AFP	Prep	Adj-DNP

- *Ekklesia* – “church” is the first time in the letter to the Romans that Paul uses this word. This is fairly amazing. It will be used five times in chapter 16:
 - 16:1
 - 16:4
 - 16:5
 - 16:16
 - 16:23

Romans 16:2 – “that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.”

2443 [e]	846 [e]	4327 [e]	1722 [e]	2962 [e]	516 [e]	3588 [e]	40 [e]	2532 [e]	3936 [e]	846 [e]	1722 [e]	3739 [e]	302 [e]
hina	autēn	prosdexēsthe	en	Kyriō	axiōs	tōn	hagiōn	kai	parastēte	autē	en	hō	an
2 ἵνα	αὐτὴν	προσδέξησθε	ἐν	Κυρίῳ ,	ἀξίως	τῶν	ἀγίων ,	καὶ	παραστήτε	αὐτῇ	ἐν	ὧ	ἅν
that	her	you might receive	in [the]	Lord	worthily	-	of [the] saints	and	you might assist	her	in	whatever	anyhow
Conj	PPro-AF3S	V-ASM-2P	Prep	N-DMS	Adv	Art-GMP	Adj-GMP	Conj	V-ASA-2P	PPro-DF3S	Prep	RelPro-DNS	Prtcl

4771 [e]	5535 [e]	4229 [e]	2532 [e]	1063 [e]	846 [e]	4368 [e]	4183 [e]	1096 [e]	2532 [e]	1473 [e]	846 [e]
hymōn	chrēzē	pragmati	kai	gar	autē	prostatis	pollōn	egenēthē	kai	emou	autou
ὑμῶν	χρηζῆ	πράγματι .	καὶ	γὰρ	αὐτῇ	προστάτις	πολλῶν	ἐγενήθη ,	καὶ	ἐμοῦ	αὐτοῦ .
of you	she might need	matter	also	indeed	she	a patroness	of many	has been	and	of me	myself
PPro-G2P	V-PSA-3S	N-DNS	Conj	Conj	PPro-NF3S	N-NFS	Adj-GMP	V-AIP-3S	Conj	PPro-G1S	PPro-GM3S

- *prosdexomai* – “receive favorably, accept, welcome”
- *paristemi* – “stand by, help, come to the aid, assist”. Paul wants the Roman Christians to help Phoebe fulfill her purpose for having traveled to Rome
 - Paul uses it in 2 Timothy 4:17 – “But the Lord stood by my side and gave me strength.”
- *Pragma* – “undertaking, task, matter, affair” are the general, unspecific meaning of the word. But, the frequent and specific use of this word pragma in the papyri and in 1 Cor. 6:1 is “lawsuit, dispute.” It is good reason to consider a legal dispute was Phoebe reason for traveling to Rome and there is sufficient references to women acting as independent litigants (or, legal accusers). A person of social standing and wealth such as Phoebe would fit this role and situation.
- *Prostatis* (feminine) – “patron, protector”. A “patron” when used to refer to a man was a wealthy, influential individual who served as the provided (\$\$) and protector of a Hellenistic religious society. The use of the feminine form of this word is well documented in second-century papyrus. Since Phoebe is said to have helped many individuals it would seem Paul is referring to her own personal ministry and not necessarily to an official deacon position in the church. Of course, this was true in most of these cases of the house churches of the first century. This word is translated as
 - “she has been of great assistance to many” -BGD
 - “a helper of” -RSV
 - “a good friend to” NEB
 - “a great helper to” -NIV
 - “come to the help of” –NJB

Paul is presenting Phoebe to the Roman Christians as a woman of significance whose wealth and influence had been put to use by the church in Cenchreae.

Phoebe is to Cenchreae what Lydia was to Philippi (Acts 16:14-15).

- Also note Acts 17:12 – “a number of prominent Greek women”
- Luke 8:3 – “Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.”

Being in the port of Cenchreae that led to Corinth Phoebe may have hosted many foreign visitors including Paul in Acts 18:18.

Phoebe apparently had business in Rome and was already scheduled to travel to Rome.

Paul may have used Phoebe’s plans to travel to Rome from Cenchreae through Corinth to actually write this letter.

Romans 16:3 – “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,”

782 [e]	4251 [e]	2532 [e]	207 [e]	3588 [e]	4904 [e]	1473 [e]	1722 [e]	5547 [e]	2424 [e]
Aspasasthe	Priskan	kai	Akylan	tous	synergous	mou	en	Christō	Iēsou
3 Ἀσπάσασθε	Πρίσκαν	καὶ	Ἀκύλαν ,	τοὺς	συνεργούς	μου	ἐν	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ --
greet	Prisca	and	Aquila	the	fellow workers	of me	in	Christ	Jesus
V-AMM-2P	N-AFS	Conj	N-AMS	Art-AMP	Adj-AMP	PPro-G1S	Prep	N-DMS	N-DMS

16:3-16 is a string of sixteen sentences that begin with the imperative “greet”, translated from *aspasasthe*.

Paul is asking the Roman believers to “greet” these people.
 There are personal greetings from Paul to twenty-six individuals and five house-churches.
 The house churches are:

1. The church that meets at Priscilla and Aquila’s house (16:5)
2. Those who belong to the household of Aristobulus (16:10)
3. Those in the household of Narcissus (16:11)
4. The brothers with Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas and Hermas (16:14)
5. All the saints with Philologus, Julia, Nereus , his sister and Olympas (16:15)

A study of the inscriptions from Rome at this time finds all of the names in chapter 16 identical with names on inscriptions. It is not known, or even likely, they are the same people, but we do know they are contemporaries with the same name, in the same city, at the same time in history.

Romans 16:4 – “who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”

3748 [e]	5228 [e]	3588 [e]	5590 [e]	1473 [e]	3588 [e]	1438 [e]	5137 [e]	5294 [e]	3739 [e]	3756 [e]	1473 [e]	3441 [e]	2168 [e]
hoitines	hyper	tēs	psychēs	mou	ton	heautōn	trachēlon	hypethēkan	hois	ouk	egō	monos	eucharistō
4 οἵτινες	ὑπὲρ	τῆς	ψυχῆς	μου	, τὸν	ἑαυτῶν	τράχηλον	ὑπέθηκαν	, οἷς	οὐκ	ἐγὼ	μόνος	εὐχαριστῶ ,
who	for	the	life	of me	the	of them	neck	have lain down	whom	not	I	only	thank
RelPro-NMP	Prep	Art-GFS	N-GFS	PPro-G1S	Art-AMS	RelPro-GM3P	N-AMS	V-AIA-3P	RelPro-DMP	Adv	PPro-N1S	Adj-NMS	V-PIA-1S

235 [e]	2532 [e]	3956 [e]	3588 [e]	1577 [e]	3588 [e]	1484 [e]
alla	kai	pasai	hai	ekklēsiai	tōn	ethnōn
ἀλλὰ	καὶ	πᾶσαι	αἱ	ἐκκλησίαι	τῶν	ἔθνῶν --
but	also	all	the	churches	of the	Gentiles
Conj	Conj	Adj-NFP	Art-NFP	N-NFP	Art-GNP	N-GNP

Prisca and Aquila

- Aquila is from Pontus
- Married they lived in Rome
- Moved to Corinth after Claudius’ decree (Acts 18:2)
- Moved to Ephesus to help with the church there (Acts 18:26 and 1 Corinthians 16:19)
- They had a home in Corinth, Ephesus and Rome with a church meeting in their home for sure in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19) and Rome (Romans 16:5)
- They were Christians while they were in Rome because when Paul met them in Corinth they were already believers.
- They had a business and skill in leather working
- They had returned to their home and business in Rome after Claudius’s death in 54 AD
- They risked their lives or “stuck out their neck” to save Paul’s life. We do not know when or where, but the Ephesus riot is a good guess.

Romans 16:5 – “Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epainetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.”

2532 [e]	3588 [e]	2596 [e]	3624 [e]	846 [e]	1577 [e]	782 [e]	1866 [e]	3588 [e]	27 [e]	1473 [e]	3739 [e]	1510 [e]
kai	tēn	kat'	oikon	autōn	ekklēsian	aspasasthe	Epaineton	ton	agapēton	mou	hos	estin
5 καὶ	τὴν	κατ'	οἶκον	αὐτῶν	ἐκκλησίαν	ἀσπάσασθε	Ἐπαίνετον	τὸν	ἀγαπητόν	μου	ὅς	ἐστίν
and	the	at	house	of them	church	greet	Epainetus	the	beloved	of me	who	is
Conj	Art-AFS	Prep	N-AMS	PPro-GM3P	N-AFS	V-AMM-2P	N-AMS	Art-AMS	Adj-AMS	PPro-G1S	RelPro-NMS	V-PIA-3S

536 [e]	3588 [e]	773 [e]	1519 [e]	5547 [e]
aparchē	tēs	Asias	eis	Christon
ἀπαρχὴ	τῆς	Ἀσίας	εἰς	Χριστόν
a first-fruit	-	of Achaia	for	Christ
N-NFS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Prep	N-AMS

- Epaphroditus, was the first person converted to Christ in the province of Asia. Most likely he was from Ephesus, but now lives in Rome.
- It is possible that Epaphroditus was associated with Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and may have been influenced by the ministry there. He may have traveled with them back to Rome.

Romans 16:6 – “Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.”

- Very common name
- “worked hard for you” is likely an indication of ministry or missionary work, but it cannot be clear.
- She was serving those who are in Christ.

Romans 16:7 – “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

- Two fellow Jews
- Andronicus is a common Greek name, so he was likely a Hellenistic Jew
- Junia (Iouania) can be either a man or a woman’s name depending how it is accented.
 - Commentators from 1200-1950 decided this was a man
 - But, commentators from 200-1100 knew this was a woman.
 - It is likely this is another married couple
- They had severed with Paul and been in prison either with him or shared the experience of being imprisoned for the sake of Christ
- “Apostles” may not necessarily refer to the 12, but to those who had been sent out with the message. So, this might be a reference to those traveling and proclaiming the message
- “Known” likely refers to them being “esteemed” or “honored” among the apostles
- It would appear they were in Jerusalem while Paul was persecuting the church

Romans 16:8 – “Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.”

- Ampliatus is a slave or a freedman.
- There is an Ampliatus referred to in a catacomb inscription from this time. It is possible it is the same

Romans 16:9 – “Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.”

- Urbanus is a slave or freedman based on his name
- Urbanus may not be known personally by Paul, but only by reputation
- Stachys is known by Paul, but we know nothing more.

Romans 16:10 – “Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.”

- Apelles was not known personally by Paul, but apparently had undergone some testing in his faith and had been “approved”. His reputation as faithful preceded his meeting Paul
- Family of Aristobulus:
- Aristobulus was one of the Herods. He was the brother of Herod Agrippa I.
- Herod Aristobulus had died in 48-49 AD
- These people are members of the household that served as slaves
- If this is a different Aristobulus then it would appear he is not in Christ himself

Romans 16:11 – “Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.”

- This Herodion is a member of the Herodian family and a Jew like Paul.
- This gives credit that the previous Aristobulus is also a Herod.
- There were no Herods outside the family from Jerusalem
- Narcissus is not a believer, but also upper class with servants that have become believers
- Narcissus is a well-known name of a freedman who served Emperor Claudius, but had committed suicide before Paul wrote Romans

Romans 16:12 – “Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.”

- Tryphaena and Tryphosa, woman, were slaves or freedwomen
- Their names come from a word that means delicate or dainty
- It would seem that they were sisters, or even twins.
- Persis is a woman and likely a slave or freedwoman based on her name.

Romans 16:13 – “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.”

- Rufus may be the son of Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross
- See Mark 15:21 - “the father of Alexander and Rufus” becomes meaningless to the readers of Mark’s Gospel unless they (Romans) know Alexander and Rufus.
- “Chosen in the Lord” may be a substitute for the word “beloved”
- His “mother” would seem to indicate that Paul knew her and had spent time with her hospitality, likely back in Jerusalem.

Romans 16:14 – “Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.”

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

Romans 16:16 – “Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.”

Romans 16:17 – “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.”

Romans 16:18 – “For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”

Romans 16:19 – “For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.”

Romans 16:20 – “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Romans 16:21 – “Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.”

Romans 16:22 – “I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.”

Romans 16:23 – “Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.”

(Romans 16:24)

Romans 16:25 – “Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages”

Romans 16:26 – “but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—”

Romans 16:27 – “to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”