

Romans Part 39 (16:1-20)

Tuesday Night Bible Study, April 22, 2008

--PERSONAL GREETINGS FROM PAUL TO CHRISTIANS IN ROME...

--16:1: "Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea..."

--Cenchrea was a neighboring port city of Corinth where Paul spent the winter and wrote the book of Romans

--Phoebe most likely delivered the book of Romans to the Christians in Rome

--16:3-5a: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 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..."

--Paul most likely met Aquila and Priscilla during his first visit to Corinth on his second missionary journey...

--Acts 18:1-4: "After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. 3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks."

--throughout Acts we repeatedly see Paul teaching in the synagogues... "Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.'" (Acts 17:2-3)

--Paul may have met Aquila in a synagogue in Corinth as the men typically sat in groups according to their profession. (both Paul and Aquila were tentmakers)

--at some point in time Aquila and Priscilla returned to Rome and now a church meets at their house ("Likewise greet the church that is in their house" – 16:5)

--16:5b: "Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ."

--Achaia is part of modern day Turkey. Apparently Epaenetus was the first Christian in Achaia that Paul knew. Paul especially appreciated this as God had put the desire in his heart to take the gospel to areas where it had never been before.

--16:6-7: "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."

--"greet Mary..."

--we don't know anything about who this Mary was.

--"Andronicus and Junia..."

--"my fellow prisoners..." they spent time in jail as Paul did because of persecution for the gospel.

--"in Christ before me..." ironically, before Paul was saved he was one of those who persecuted and tried to imprison people like Andronicus and Junia.

--Acts 8:3: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison."

--16:8: "Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord." (spelled Ampliatus in NIV)

--through history and archaeology scholars have concluded that "Amplias" was a name common among slaves.

--slaves only had one name while free men had three names (similar to how we have first, middle, and last names) and slaves were not allowed to have the same names as free men.

--in an early Christian catacomb (underground tomb) near Rome the name Amplias was found on a beautifully decorated tomb...

--slaves usually didn't have this kind of ornate burial.

--if this Amplias was a Christian (and possibly the same Amplias in Paul's letter) it would explain why his tomb was so decorated... for the most part social and economic status carried little weight in the early church... Paul wrote, "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." (Galatians 3:28)

--16:16a: "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

--this practice is comparable to the modern European practice of greeting one another with a kiss on the cheek.

--16:16: "The churches of Christ greet you."

>>simple statement but in Paul's mind it carried a lot of weight...

--at the time when Paul wrote Romans, "the churches of Christ" that Paul knew were mostly new churches that resulted from his ministry... new churches in a land where there had never been any churches before... the new life in those churches was like spring flowers after a long, cold winter that began when Adam and Eve fell and plunged all of creation into the fall...

--Ephesians 2:1: "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins..."

--the essence of that new life is simply people once again walking in intimate fellowship with God... intimate fellowship that is comparable to the reality that Adam and Eve experienced...

--without our sins being forgiven by the shed blood of Christ there is a barrier of separation between us and God.

--before the fall there was no separation between Adam & Eve and God.

--through Christ we can once again live in a state where there is no separation between us and God.

--through sin we may grieve the Spirit at times, but every sin is immediately covered by the blood of Christ and our fellowship with God is preserved.

--FINAL EXHORTATION...

--16:17-18: "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 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. "

--of all exhortations Paul could have chosen for his concluding exhortation he chose to give a warning about false teachers.

--in Romans Paul has clearly explained the foundation of the gospel... the core message of Romans can be boiled down to two points: trust in Christ for the free gift of forgiveness of sins and follow Him as your Lord.

--but after Paul and all throughout history there would be many false teachers working to undermine the foundation of the gospel, to splinter the gospel into pieces and mix in their own ideas.

--shortly after Paul wrote Romans, he told the church in Ephesus on his way back to Jerusalem, "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ... 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears." (Acts 20:25-31)

--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."

--the book of Romans is one of the only epistles where Paul commends those to whom he writes without addressing any major problems.

--apparently the Christians in Rome had gained a reputation for being example Christians, but this is all the more reason why they needed to be careful as Satan wanted nothing more than to derail them.

--when we are walking strong in the Spirit the flesh is always one step away... Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mark 14:38)

--"be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil."

--in other words, don't complicate things and try to justify gray areas between good and evil. Walk in a path that is clearly separate from sin... "Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good." (Romans 12:9)

--Satan is always looking for footholds into our life!

--eventually the church in Rome became one of the greatest strongholds of false teaching in the church through Roman Catholicism.

--Paul probably could never have imagined that one day the church in Rome would execute the first person to translate the book of Romans into English! (William Tyndale in 1536)

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

--"shortly..." Paul probably didn't expect history to continue for another 2000 years, but from God's perspective 2000 years is a short time.

--in Revelation 22:7 Jesus said, "Behold, I am coming quickly!"

--2 Peter 3:8-9: "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

--"under your feet..." When Christ returns to crush Satan we will be with Him!

--in prophecy about Christ's return Zechariah wrote, "Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You." (Zechariah 14:5)

--16:20b: "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (v.20b)

--the essence of the gospel is encapsulated by the words "grace" and "Lord"...

--"Lord Jesus Christ" ... follow Him as your Lord

--"grace" ... trust in Him for the forgiveness of sins

--in this way the essence of the gospel is found in the introduction and/or conclusion of 16 (out of 22) New Testament epistles. (see last page of notes)

--this pattern echos the words of Jesus after He rose from the grave...

--Luke 24:46-47: "Then He said to them [His disciples], 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"

--the gospel is simple, and one hallmark of false teachers that they complicate the gospel by adding manmade ideas.

--2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

--in verse 4 Paul then goes on to warn about a "different gospel" and a "different Jesus"

--THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL ENCAPSULATED BY THE WORDS "GRACE" AND "LORD" FOUND IN THE INTRODUCTION AND/OR CONCLUSION OF 16 OUT OF 22 NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES (grace found in 20 out of 22).

--Luke 24:46-47: "Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that **repentance** and **remission of sins** should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"

LORD ... "REPENTANCE"

GRACE ... "REMISSION OF SINS"

Introduction to Romans (ch.1, verse 7)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to 1 Corinthians (ch.1, verse 3)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to 2 Corinthians (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to Galatians (ch.1, verses 3-4)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God the Father and our **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to Ephesians (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to Philippians (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to Colossians (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians (ch.1, verse 1)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Introduction to 1 Timothy (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace**, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our **Lord**..."

Introduction to 2 Timothy (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace**, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our **Lord**..."

Introduction to Titus (ch.1, verse 4)

"**Grace**, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ our Savior..."

Introduction to Philemon (verse 3)

"**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Conclusion of Hebrews (ch.13, verse 25)

"**Grace** be with you all. Amen."

Introduction to 1 Peter (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** to you and peace be multiplied..."

Introduction to 2 Peter (ch.1, verse 2)

"**Grace** and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our **Lord**..."

Introduction to 2 John (verse 3)

"**Grace**, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the **Lord** Jesus Christ..."

Conclusion to 3 John (verse 14)

"Peace to you..." 2 John 3

Introduction to Jude (verse 2)

"Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you..."

And the very last sentence of the Bible (Revelation 22:21)

"The **grace** of our **Lord** Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."