

Romans

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Romans 16:21-27



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Vss. 21-24

- Paul takes the opportunity to further send greetings from his team in Corinth, starting with “Timothy, my fellow worker”. Not a subordinate, but a co-worker.
- In Philippians 2:20, Paul is writing from prison in Rome and he tells the church in Philippi that he will be sending Timothy, “for I have no one else of kindred spirit who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare”. In the opening of 1 Timothy, Paul calls him “my true child in the faith”. Timothy may not have been Paul’s biological son, but he was Paul’s true son in every other way.
- Of the others, it’s a bit of guesswork as to who they are with certainty, but on the other hand Paul seemed to have worked in a small circle with only believers whom he trusted.
- Lucius may be the Lucius of Cyrene, who was one of the prophets and teachers who helped found the church in Antioch and was one of the leaders who was called by the Holy Spirit to lay hands on Paul and Barnabas, sending them off on their First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1).
- On the journey from Philippi to Corinth, Paul and his team had to pass through Thessalonica. While he was there, he stayed in the home of a man named Jason. As always Paul was arguing in the synagogue and some believed while others didn’t. Acts 17:5 tells us the Jewish leaders “became jealous” and gathered a mob to find Paul. They went to the home of a man named Jason where Paul was staying, but when they didn’t find Paul, they grabbed Jason and dragged him before the city authorities. Things were stirred up quite a bit and in the end, Jason paid a fine and was released. Perhaps this Jason, having proved his willingness to suffer for the Lord, followed Paul south to Corinth.
- And then there is “Sosipater, my kinsmen” who is with Paul in Corinth. In verses 7 and 11 above, Paul sends greetings to others who are his kinsmen in Rome. Family has always been important in strengthening Christ’s church. From Jesus’ own brother James assuming the leading role in the Jerusalem church, to Beesley Baptist church in Middle Tennessee, so named because that’s where all the Beesleys went to church (where my grandmother went as girl). It may be that this Sosipater is the same fellow as Sopater of Berea who took his Church’s share of the collection to Jerusalem with Paul (Acts 20:4).
- For the first and only time, we know the name of the secretary who actually wrote a letter from Paul’s dictation, for Tertius slipped in his own greeting. We know that Paul often dictated his letters rather writing them on his own, perhaps due to his “thorn in the flesh”. Who the others were, we do not know. There was a fellow named Silvanus who was with Paul in Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:19) and who was also with Paul in Greece when he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and it seems he was Peter’s secretary for his first letter (1 Peter 5:12). So Silvanus could have possibly been another of Paul’s secretaries. But of Tertius himself we know nothing else.
- Gaius was a fairly common Roman name. Paul says that Gaius was “host to me and to the whole church”. So this Gaius of Corinth had a big heart and opened his home to Paul, but he must have also had a big house to open it to the whole church! In 1 Corinthians 1:14, Paul says he personally baptized no one in Corinth except “Crispus and Gaius”. Still, there was a Gaius who was part of Paul’s team in Ephesus in Acts 19, who was dragged by a mob into the city’s theater to accuse them of stealing from the Temple of Artemis and blaspheming faith in the goddess.

Then there is “Gaius of Derbe” also mentioned in Acts 20:4 as accompanying Paul to Jerusalem with the offering from the Gentile churches. Finally, there is “the beloved Gaius” to whom 3 John is written.

- Next is “Erastus, the city treasurer” of Corinth. Acts 19:22 suggests that Erastus at least temporarily left his job as the city treasurer and joined Paul’s team, as Timothy and Erastus were sent by Paul from Ephesus into Macedonia during Paul’s Third Missionary Journey, eventually returning home to Corinth. Finally, 2 Timothy 4:20 tells us that when Paul left Corinth for Jerusalem, he left Erastus there.
- In vs. 24 Paul tries once again to close the letter and gives a benediction. BUT WAIT! There’s a little more space at the bottom of the page.

Vss. 25-27

- Paul is really ready to close the letter, so he ends it with nothing less than a full blown doxology which is also a summary of the gospel which he preached.
- Paul here gives praise to the One who is able to “establish you”, who positions you in a solid place as a general would position his troops. And the church is put in this solid position by 1) Paul’s gospel, the Good News of the salvation by grace through faith in Christ 2) “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested”, made real 3) “by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ”.
- So the church will stand because its strength and power comes from having the Good News, having the Truth, and having the Arc of History bending toward Righteousness, all of which culminates in leading us to obedience of faith in God through Jesus Christ.
- William Barclay: “Here is the Christian privilege and the Christian duty. The Christian privilege is to appropriate the good news for ourselves; the Christian duty is to transmit that good news to others. A famous story tells how Jesus, after the Cross and the Resurrection, returned to his glory, still bearing the marks of his sufferings. One of the angels said to him, “You must have suffered terribly for men down there.” “I did,” said Jesus. “Do they all know about what you did for them?” asked the angel. “No,” said Jesus, “not yet. Only a few know about it so far.” “And,” said the angel, “what have you done that they should all know?” “Well,” said Jesus, “I asked Peter and James and John to make it their business to tell others, and the others still others, until the farthest man on the widest circle has heard the story.” The angel looked doubtful. for he knew well what poor creatures men were. “Yes,” he said, “but what if Peter and James and John forget? What if they grow weary of the telling? What if, away down in the twentieth century, men fail to tell the story of your love for them? What then? Haven’t you made any other plans?” Back came the answer of Jesus, “I haven’t made any other plans. I’m counting on them.” Jesus died to give us the gospel; and now he is counting on us to transmit it to all men....And so the long argument of the letter to the Romans comes to an end in a song of praise.”