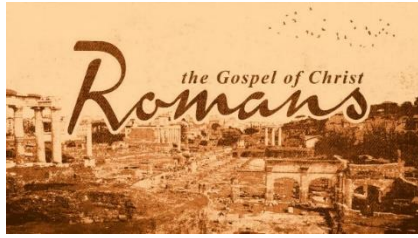


Chapter 15 / 16



How does Chapter 15 continue the discussion of caring for one another – especially how the strong have an obligation?

Like an older sibling told to watch out for the younger, do we hear God's answer to Cain's feeble "Am I my brother's keeper?"

15:5 God gives endurance and encouragement (so necessary in life!). How is unity also a gift from God?

15:7 "One another" may refer to Christians who disagree on certain disputable matters. However, looking at the next verses, what groups seem to be Paul's focus (again)?

15:23 Why is there "no more place for [Paul] to work"? (see 20-21)

Paul plans to visit Rome on his way to where?

Where must Paul go first (and why?)

Did Paul fulfil his plans?

Maybe not – He was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21)

Maybe so – Clement of Rome writes "Paul reached the limits of the West". Perhaps his arrest in Jerusalem was a later visit.

Chapter 16 may seem like "just a list of people" and so we could skip it. But look closer...

Why would God include (and cause to be preserved for us) this list of greetings?

1) Some interesting connections? Including...

16:1-2 – Phoebe – What seems to be Phoebe's connection with this letter? What word is used to describe Phoebe in verse 1?

16:3 – Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18)

16:10 – the household of Aristobulus – Aristobulus himself is not "greeted" so is he not a believer? Is this the household of the brother of Herod Agrippa (who came to Rome from Judea)

16:13 – Rufus (Mark 15:21?)

Why include these names in Mark 15:21 unless they are known. To what group of Christians was the Gospel of Mark most likely written?

2) Jews and Gentiles / Men and Women

The theme of Gentiles and Jews together in Christ is lived out in this list of greetings.

Also, there are at least 7 women mentioned, some very prominently. How does this list – especially taken in its cultural context – provide an answer to those today who claim the Bible is sexist?

3) Helpers

Paul, arguably the greatest apostle, thanks all these people as fellow helpers in Christ. What does that teach us about the Christian life?

4) These are just normal people... right!

If a visiting missionary were to send a letter including a specific list of thanks, who from our congregation would be included?

How does the close of the teaching (15:30-33) and the close of the letter (16:25-27) echo the "theme verse" of 1:1-17?