

Romans 16. “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in—not the church of—but the church in Cenchreae, which I think means century. Does anybody know? Alright. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the Holy Ones, and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me, Paul. And now he goes into a greeting of the people who were in the city of Rome. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I, but the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the ecclesia, the gathering that meets in their home.

Now you learn from that what? Good. We'll come back to that in a minute. Greet my dear friend Epänetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junius, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Amplias, whom I love in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend, Stachys. Oh, by the way, interrupt me any time. I think this is kind of interesting here, what's happening. Apelles, tested and proved in Christ, greets those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodian, my relative. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa. You want to do that differently? No? Okay. Those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been my mother too. Now we come to a bunch of them. Does anybody want to help me with that first word? Who? Asyncritus. I have Phlegon here. Does anybody want to challenge that one? Alright. Hermes. Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them. Greet Philologus and Julia. I don't know this one. Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the holy ones with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

Now, I'm going to skip over just a little bit and come down here to verse 21. Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives. I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church of the gathering here in joy, sends you greetings. Erastus, the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. Alright, let's see if there are any more here. No, I think that's it. Now, I'm going to take just a moment to give a little review that brings us up to this moment, and then you're going to help me find out who all these dear people are. Last meeting, we went through all the ways that churches are raised up, and virtually all of them are raised up by workers, and almost all are raised up by church planters—an office of the church that has been lost through the centuries. The Roman Catholics supplanted it with priests and monks. The Protestant Church and Reformation supplanted it with pastors, and it's long gone. And today, the missionaries...you might hear a man say, “I'm a church planter; I raised up ten churches.” He means by that he went out, rented a storefront, led fifteen people to the Lord, and told them to: song, prayer, three songs, prayer, offertory, special music, sermon, and benediction. You can do that all day. You can do that any time of the day or night. Anybody can do that. That's not raising up the community in our church life.

Here I am, just getting started, and I'm already off the subject. The churches were raised up, we said, by the Lord Jesus—an embryonic church. The apostles raised up the church in Jerusalem, staying there for a long period of time. Then there were churches simply raised up by a dispersion caused by persecution, when they just replanted the Jerusalem church all over Judea. We have the

church in Antioch, raised up by a group of prophets and one guy who turned out to be an apostle; that was Barnabas. Then we have the Galatian churches and the Greek churches—Thessalonica, Berea, Philippi, and Corinth—raised up by two men who come into a city where Christ has never been named, win people to the Lord, and minister to them Christ and His church—Christ and the gathering of the body of Christ—and then leave them. That happened on two trips. Now then, on the last church that was raised up on his second trip—on his second trip, last church—now what church would that be? Second visit, second trip, last church—Corinth, right? Corinth. As he got there, he met some Christians. This was in about 49–50 A.D, and they had come from Rome. They have been run out of town by Claudius—the Emperor Claudius. Now, Claudius doesn't know it, but he's only got about four years left to live, and he is going to be poisoned, deader than a doornail, by his wife, who is his niece, whose name is Agrippina.

Now, you didn't need to know that, did you? Alright, I'm going to tell you when he poisons her, though. Well, there's definitely no church gathering in Rome. If it is, it's infinitesimal; two or three Greeks, that's about it. It couldn't be anything significant going on there. Well, Paul says to Priscilla and Aquila, whom he obviously depends on a great deal, “Go to Ephesus ahead of me. I'll be back in a while. I'm going to gather up one or two men from the churches I have raised up, and I'm going to take them to Ephesus, and I'm going to make them apostles. I'm going to make them church planters. These are young men called of God.” So, they pioneer. They go to Ephesus, and guess what they do? They do the most skullduggery thing you could imagine. They quietly and unobtrusively go in and join the Jewish synagogue. Now don't tell me those folks are up to any good. I know good and well they are not. They're sitting there in that synagogue, coming into those boring meetings, looking around, seeing if there are any seekers around there. That's what they're doing.

Well, Paul comes in with his young men, and it's probably around 52 A.D. He's going to be in the area for about four years. He's got all these young men with him. Let's see if we can name them. I'll go as far as I can, and you help me with all I forget. The two T's—Timothy and Titus. By the way, they will later add Tychicus and Trophimus. And there is Secundus, and there is Gaius, and there is Aristarchus. And help me with that word. Sopater? Oh, excuse me. Sopater? How many was that? Is that six? Let me do it again. You count with me. Timothy. Titus. Secundus. Gaius. Aristarchus. And who? Sopater, and later, Tychicus and Trophimus. Well, there's Ephesus right over there, and they're coming over the hill, and they're really excited. Paul's excited. They're all excited, and they're looking...boy, that's a big city! Look at that big outdoor amphitheater they've got there. What's the population of that thing? Probably a couple of hundred thousand people.

Wow, this is really exciting. What's that going on over there? I don't know. There's a bunch of men over there doing something strange. Unusual, unbelievable coincidence. Paul walks over and says, “Who are you guys?” They said, “Why, we are followers of John the Baptist.” “How long have you been here?” “We've been living here since about 28 A.D.” “Did you ever hear of Jesus?” “No, I can't say we did.” “Have you ever heard of the Holy Spirit?” “No, I can't say that we have.” “Well, I have a few things to update you on.” And he preached the gospel to them, laid hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And I believe they spoke in tongues, didn't they? Did they? And they were the first converts in Asia. Now they go down into that town with a half a dozen or a dozen men, where they haven't even gotten started, and they've already got six, eight, ten, twelve converts. Paul nudges Secundus and says, “Now, isn't that easy? Nothing to raising up a church.” And they come in, and for two years Paul preaches there, and I'm sure the young men

do too.

He teaches in a school of Tyrannus, which just happens to be located, it happens to be located...this guy is just really incorrigible. Where is the school of Tyrannus located? The Scripture says, “And it was hard up against the synagogue.” So, anybody going to the synagogue would have to pass Paul of Tarsus in there, teaching those young men and preaching, and probably some of the meetings are held there. This goes on for two years. And one day, news comes to Ephesus. Agrippina. You remember Agrippina? You remember her? She dropped some arsenic or cyanide or whatever they were using those days in the tea, or coffee, or meat, or mutton, or bread, or something of the Emperor Claudius, and he curled up his toes and died on cue. And a sixteen-year-old boy named Germanicus mounts the throne of the Roman Empire. It is 54 A.D., and the ban on the Jews is lifted, and Paul goes crazy. He's going to send all these people he can find. As he gathered up workers to go to Ephesus with him, he is now going to write a bunch of letters, contact all his friends - I think he contacted every friend he had, real close friends - and asked them to go to Rome. And in 54 A.D., Christians—Gentiles and Jews—began packing and moving there, and they got there, who knows, six months later. They'd probably been in that city for a year, a year and a half, or two years when Paul wrote a letter to them, plus the converts and others who had been added. It is to these people that he writes the letter in the year 56 A.D.

Oh, by the way, Germanicus has another name. Does anybody know what Germanicus's name was? That's right. You're a sixteen-year-old boy who will rule brilliantly and beautifully and excellently for the next five years. In fact, he ruled so well that he never quite lived down his reputation as a good ruler. No matter what he did, there were people who just kept on remembering those first five beautiful years. Well, after that, he became one of the great buffoons, tyrants, and madmen of human history. In fact, he is usually rated number one as the great villain and buffoon of human history. The degradation of that man, if the stories told on him are true, are unbelievable, but there were five or six years in there when this young boy who mounted the throne served brilliantly, and then gradually became one of the most depraved, corrupted human beings that ever breathed air on this earth, if the stories about him are to be believed—and the stories are not believable. Believe me, they are not believable.

Anyway, the letter is written. Some years ago, a question was asked of a group of literary authorities: “Name the ten most influential pieces of literature ever written.” The Bible did not make it in their list. The Book of Romans did. It is considered the most influential single piece of Christian literature ever penned. Now, to give you some idea, Paul's Book of Romans led Augustine to the Lord. Luther was converted while reading Augustine's commentary on Romans. And John Wesley was converted to Christ while listening to someone read out loud Luther's commentary on Romans. So, you go from Paul to Aquinas to Luther to John Wesley—all just from the Book of Romans. I think that the book is made far too complex by too many people, and we're uncomplexerizing it right here, right now. You heard Romans 1 through 8, did you not, by hook or crook? That didn't come out so terribly difficult, did it? Yet it has been considered the great, most ponderous of books. I think you remember my giving the illustration of the gentleman—oh, his name is on the tip of my tongue—what was his name? Don Gray Barnhouse, who had a radio program, and if I'm not mistaken, his entire radio program, which extended over the entire period of his life, was an exposition of the Book of Romans, and he never finished. He died first. That's too much. Even Paul didn't know that much about the Book

of Romans.

Well, this is the book that changed history. I want to tell you right now—I want to warn you ahead of time—that all the glory stuff is in Romans 1–8, and all the gory stuff is in Romans 12–16. This is not inspirational. This is perspirational. This is getting down to the nitty-gritty of church life, and I want to remind you that, if sometimes this doesn't seem as glorious as you'd like it to be, it's not me, but Paul who did this. I can speak about glories, and if you don't believe me, I'll come back here sometime and do it, but nonetheless, what is here is so incredibly important.

Alright, brothers and sisters, I'd like to hear from those of you who have worked on these names. Somebody tell me who Phoebe is. Phoebe—who got Phoebe? Phoebe was—her name means radiant. It meant what? Radiant? Radiant. All right. She was considered a deacon—deaconess, okay, and she was believed to have been the one who got the letter to the Romans in the hem of her skirt. In the hem of her skirt. It is traditionally stated that she had it there. That is correct. Alright, I want to say a little bit more about her. Phoebe was converted to Christ sometime in the early part of the founding of the church in Corinth, but she lives nine miles from Corinth in a seaport town called Cenchrea, and that's a little bitty town of very little significance. I just like to put it in context. She did not belong to the church in Corinth, but she was nonetheless in the atmosphere of Corinth. Therefore, we have finally two people who are not drunks in the church in Corinth! She must have been a woman of unusual character.

By everything that Paul says about her, he seems to have put a great deal of confidence in her. Another thing I want you to know: it is only with Phoebe and about this period of time that women's names become prominent in the record of the first century. Now, I am just telling you what's there. The early part of the record of the church is filled almost exclusively with men's names. Now, that wasn't true in the Lord's ministry. There were women mentioned there, and women will get mentioned a great deal in the New Testament, but it's only with the coming of Phoebe that you begin hearing a lot of women's names. I observe that without comment. As far as I'm concerned, the women are just as equal as the men in the church. I do want you to know a personal opinion of mine—and this is a controversial opinion; I could very well be wrong. I'm not sure that such an office as “deaconess” ever existed. Be careful with words that are transliterated instead of translated. There is a word *servant*—there is a masculine in the Greek and the Latin. There is a name for a servant male and a servant female. There's not in English; there's only “servant,” unless you want to say “servantess,” which is not a word that most of us would feel comfortable with. Nonetheless, in my personal judgment, anybody who was serving for a period of time in the church in some crucial way was considered a servant, and that everyone was considered a servant. I doubt that there were actually set-apart deaconesses in the early church, and I am very sorry for the tragedies that have come out of that—the nunneries, and all the women, the millions of women, who were put into the servitude of being nuns in Europe. I don't know if you know this or not, but children were not really given the choice in most homes. They had big families, and if they had this little girl they didn't like particularly, they'd say, “Honey, you love the Lord, don't you?” “I promise, I love the Lord. I love the—” “Oh, good. She's going to be a nun when she grows up. You're going to be a nun when you grow up.” “Yeah, I'm going to be a nun when I grow up.” And they'd hit about eleven or twelve, and the family would pay the church to take the child. And a lot of this has come out of making big deals out of this kind of thing. Perhaps it's my own personal revulsion at such things that

makes me say I wouldn't create a class of people in the house of God called "deaconesses." Let us consider everyone a servant who serves Him with all their hearts. Okay? That would make us all deacons and deaconesses, would it not? Hopefully, at least most of us. One or two of you are a bunch of lazybones—but other than that...

Okay, we have Priscilla and Aquila. What are we going to say about them? Is there anything more to be said? What have you got here on Priscilla and Aquila that has not been covered? Is that it? No. There is more. Priscilla? Yeah? Oh, let's hear it. Alright, Prisca. Prisca. Those names were, like, interchangeable. I believe they said that Priscilla was, yeah, was like a noble name, and that they believed that she was very influential, and that she was the wife of Aquila. That she was. And that they were well-to-do, because of the fact that they were able to move around more than most, so when Paul told them to move, they were able to take their...

Okay, they were well-to-do. Be careful with that word. They might have gotten all the way up to the lower-middle class. You could move around. By the way, it was really cheap to travel in those days by boat. It was very expensive to do it by land, but a lot safer. Alright, go ahead. Prisca—I think that that was a... I know Priscilla meant "noble," and I forgot what Priscia meant, but that name was interchangeable. Luke called her Prisca. That's right. She gets called both. Right—and what we found out was that somehow Paul really loved her. I think her personality was more—I don't know, maybe more... Well, he obviously was one very quiet brother. We don't hardly get anything out of him. She was definitely the outspoken person in the family. No one knows when or where or how she risked—he and she risked—their necks for Paul, but they obviously had been very active in Corinth, very active not only in Ephesus but in the young churches being raised up by the young men around.

We get some real insight into a situation right here, when—what does it say to them? "And greet those who what?" Or who what? "The *ekklesia*." Does it not say *ekklesia*? Yeah. Where does it say that? *Ekklesia*—and the church that meets in their home. Well, I have a notion that when Priscilla and Aquila got to Rome, they managed the house, and that the meetings of that which would become one of the most powerful and influential churches in human history—in all of Christendom's history—began, truly began, in their living room, which is really quite amazing. And I see in that again Paul's enormous effort to make sure this was a Gentile church. Now, Priscilla and Aquila were obviously Jews, but they had been Gentile-ized. They had to be. They had been living with Gentiles. They had been living in Rome, a Gentile city. They lived in Corinth—which would make anybody Gentile—and they had been with Paul in the founding of the church in Ephesus.

They were obviously people who had been set free from the law. They go back to Rome, and at least one of the gatherings of the gathering in Rome was in their home. The word *church*—just in the last few months, I've been trying my best not to use it. You can't say that word without it bringing up an image. *Ekklesia*—assembly, or assembling of, gathering. I like that word much better. I'm sure that it had that connotation in the first, second, and third centuries: the gathering that gathers in your home, the ecclesia that ecclesias in your home, the assembly that assembles in your home. So, you might see me use that word; know what I'm talking about. This is an ecclesia. This is not a Kershaw or a Kirk. That's, I don't know, German—Kershaw. Kirk is Scottish, and that's how it got into our language.

Okay, if you've got anything else, you'd better say it fast. They were really close to Paul; you can

tell that. They must have been literally his co-workers, literally Paul's co-workers. You need someone like that. Let me tell you something: one of the great tragedies with the Christian faith today is that everybody wants to be first or not at all, and we're dying from a lack of "Indians" who will fold their opinions into neutral and say, "I will serve another man whom God has obviously given some incredible task to perform."

I was in Great Britain, and one of the brothers over there is doing a really wonderful job for the Lord. One of the secrets to his life was a brother and sister who had literally given him their lives. Well, you might look at that and say, "Well, they don't have any life of their own. They have no purpose of their own. It's all tied up in this person." But it made him four times the man he was to get a work done for the Lord. We need some more Priscillas and Aquilas. America doesn't give us many Priscillas and Aquilas; it gives us chiefs or pouters. If I can't be God, I won't be nobody.

Alright, let's go on from Priscilla and Aquila, who are now in Rome, and the church is meeting in their home. And who is next? Epaenetus. Okay, I want somebody to tell me about Epaenetus. I want someone to tell me all about Epaenetus. Yes, sister? Oh, it says he was a Christian in Rome, greeted by Paul, and he was one of the first fruits in Asia. And that doesn't mean anything to you, eh? That doesn't ring a bell? Oh, I can't believe that. Huh? That's exactly correct. He was a Jew who had heard John the Baptist preach the coming gospel. Somehow, he left there and went to Ephesus and continued being loyal to the gospel of John the Baptist, and he was the first person Paul led to Jesus Christ coming into the city of Ephesus in the province of Asia, or province of Asia Minor. This brother was one of those who had been in Ephesus from the beginning.

Now, I want to think about what's really exciting here: he couldn't have been a Christian much more than two years old when Paul walked over to him and said, "Hey, how would you like to go to Rome?" This brother, two years old in the Lord, packed up his bag and went to Rome with two years of Gentile church experience under his belt. That's one of Paul's own converts whom he sent to Rome. Say "praise the Lord." That's good. I like the way you say, "Praise the Lord." So, we've got Priscilla and Aquila, and we've got Epaenetus, and boy, listen, I don't know who else is in that city, but I'm telling you that Paul's getting these people outclassed, outnumbered, and surrounded. He is building the church in Rome by proxy.

Okay, let's go to the next one: Mary. Does anybody know anything about Mary? I know nothing about Mary. I don't either. Her name is Miriam. She has a Jewish name. She is probably Jewish. That's all I know about her. Anybody got any more than that? Any traditions? Anything that used to be said about her?

Alright, Andronicus and Junius. Anybody got anything on Andronicus and Junius? Okay. Let me hear. They were Jews, and there were also fellow prisoners. Somewhere or other, they got thrown in jail, and Paul says they're fellow prisoners, and he calls them "my kinsmen." We'll come to that in a minute. You got anything else? I think what we read on Andronicus was that he might have been murdered. According to what we read, somehow, he may... you've got to be careful with some of those traditions, but, okay, I didn't know that. I didn't know he was killed, at least by church tradition. Some of these traditions are pretty accurate. There's one old boy whom somebody will probably quote here, and I hope you will. He was trying to dig up, inventing names and identities for these people right and left. I've forgotten his name, but I'll recognize him in a minute. Okay, I have this feeling about—may I tell you what I think about—Andronicus and

Junius. I think that they were actually his own cousins. He says, “my kinsmen,” and most people say that simply means they were Jews. I think they were converts of the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem. I think it's one of the things that ticked off Saul of Tarsus and made him start persecuting these people when people in his own house became followers of Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah, because they were in the Lord before me, and they were well thought of among the apostles.

Now, you can interpret that two ways: they were considered apostles, or the apostles thought they were really incredible people. I tend to believe the second, not the first. Some people will look at this and say, “These two people were apostles, and one is a female, therefore there can be female apostles.” I wouldn't argue it a minute, but I think it means—my personal judgment, I'm not pressing this, please—that they were well thought of by the apostles in Jerusalem. So, here we have a Jerusalem church experience about to be added to Rome by people whom I personally think were probably Paul's own kinfolk. I think Paul will get just about anybody whom he thinks is free in Christ to go to Rome, even if he has to pick on his own kinfolks.

Now these people will be able to tell you all about Pentecost and the Twelve Apostles. If you are some little Italian who comes and gets saved in Rome, you start hearing all this. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could sit down and listen to a Christian from Jerusalem tell all about firsthand the experiences of what happened there? Wouldn't that be neat? Wouldn't that help you a lot in the Lord to hear firsthand experiences? Praise the Lord. I think one of the reasons they were chosen by Paul is that we need a report of what happened in the past. We really do. I have spent a good part of the early part of my ministry trying to listen to and hear the stories of Christian works that came before me, stories that could still be told by men and women who lived. If you have a couple of weeks, I'll sometimes be happy to sit down and tell you all sorts of stories about things that were told to me firsthand by Christians who have now gone on to be with the Lord in the works of God outside the organized church. Now, I'm not going to tell you anything about stuff inside the organized church. They can tell their own stories, which they do, but the little forgotten groups—by the way, there is a tradition that they did go to Spain. Whether or not that's true, I do not know.

Alright, we have Andronicus and his wife, Junius. You didn't know she was a female? I think she is a female. Oh, really? Junius is a... look, it doesn't end in “us,” it ends in “as.” Don't you know your Latin? Okay, well, what would it be in Spanish if it ended in “as”? Would it be masculine or feminine? It would be female. Okay, that settles it.

Alright, how do you pronounce this next guy's name? Ampliatus. Anything known about him? I know nothing about him except that he was beloved. Yes. He was a man, and his name is “large” or “enlarged”. He was a ... of Paul, and that name was given to a slave at the time of the Roman Empire, and it was also a Latin slave name, and Paul called him his kinsman—he was a relative of Paul. Also, he was commended with Thacus and Urbanus, the saints together as martyrs. Okay, so there's a tradition that they were martyrs. I don't know if that's true, and you don't know if it's true, but we'll accept that. I think he was a Gentile, frankly. I would not think him a Jew; how could you be a Jew and be a slave? It's not likely. I think all these brothers who were slaves who got sent to Rome were either set free or went with a master, one of the two.

Now let's greet Urbanus. What do we know about Urbanus? Oh, I can tell you what. Do you know anything about Urbanus? He was born in Chicago. (laughter) Well, the name means polite, courteous, considered, and fun. Oh, I wrote down here that it means city-bred. That is the guy.

Anytime you hear these fellas getting made bishops or being one of the 70, that's quoting some old boy who lived about 200 years later who was just turning everybody into bishops and one of the 70. Yeah, I think we have to scratch that out. Anytime anybody's made a bishop, scratch it out. That's somebody trying to prove a point hundreds of years later. I think his name means city-bred. I don't know where we got the other part. Anyway, if it is city-bred, then who is Stachys? Did you call him Stachys? Alright, wonderful. Stachys. Tell me something about Stachys. His name is .... Okay. And, well, I guess he was just missing. He was called a bishop. I don't think he was a bishop in Byzantium, but I think there's a possibility he'd actually ended up there. The chances of his being a bishop in Byzantium are really low. Remember this: the word bishop is not a word. It's a transliteration. You've got to be careful with these words. He might have ended up being an elder in a local body of believers, and later, they tried to make a big deal out of that by calling them bishops. Be careful with the word bishop. Before the year 323, you're just going to be really hard-pressed to make a big deal out of that. Or even the year 327, up until about 327. I see in this a city kid and a country boy working and living together. Maybe I am wrong, but one's called an ear of corn, the other one's called city-bred. I don't see how it could be any other way. One was probably a slave in a city, and the other one was probably a slave in the country. Isn't that exciting that these two guys are living together in Rome, trying to carry on the Lord's work, each with such differing attitudes and backgrounds?

Alright, Apelles? Is that their name? Have we got Apelles? What? He was greeted by Paul as an approved Christian. Do we know anything else about him? He was tested and approved by the Lord, and he probably had more experience than most of the other brothers in Rome, if he said that he was tested and approved by the Lord. I don't think there's any question about it; he's a brother who's gone through something really heavy and came out really faithful to the Lord, and Paul has picked him to go to Rome. He probably was a Christian from Asia Minor, right there in or near Ephesus. Anything else? We'll go along here. By the way, he's one of those people that some guy tried to make him one of the 70. He was just picking up names everywhere. He was said to have this name; they said that he was probably called Apollos in Acts 18:24. Oh, I think that's a theory. Apollos in Acts, what? In Acts 18 verse 24? I'm about to look that up and see what that says. Thank you, brother.

Alright, greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. This one just really gets complex, intriguing, and who knows what. What have you got on the household, or greet those of the household of Aristobulus? Yes, ma'am. We have here that he was proudly a slave, and he was head of a household, and his name is advisor or counselor. He was probably a slave converted to Christianity. Usually, his name was given to the disciples of the Maccabees in the first century. He was probably the head of a household in Rome who was a—should I say this word—a bishop. Where'd they make him a bishop? Where? Barnabas of Palme made him a bishop. He was a laborer in Britain. Yeah, I don't think he went to Britain. Alright, you want to hear the other side of the coin? Here is another—see, okay, here's another theory, and I ascribe to it more than that one, and I don't know which one's correct. Aristobulus was the counselor, the closest counselor to Caesar, but he was put to death before any of this took place, but his household was left. And according to some traditions, many of his slaves were converted to Christ in the city of Rome. Aristobulus is deader than a doornail; the emperor put him to death; didn't like what he did one day. There is even a possible indication that his wife became a believer, but anyway, there are a number of believers in his household in Rome, slaves who have become Christians. If that is true, then we find the first crack of the gospel in the Roman Empire.

Have you ever heard the term “a servant in Caesar's household?” A little peasant has gotten into a home but is wielding influence because they happen to know terribly important people. I had a young lady who came to me one day and said, 'So-and-so wants to talk to you and meet you.' Well, so-and-so was an extremely famous motion picture actor. She was the maid in his home, and she had been witnessing to him and telling me all about him. He was intrigued, and he wanted to talk to me. Now, you have to understand me. I didn't go. I don't know why I didn't go. I guess I was afraid he might get converted. Isn't that a terrible thing to say? I just didn't want to get involved with someone who was a motion picture actor. I passed it up. Sorry, forgive me for doing that, but I just didn't do it. It just didn't seem right to me to do it, so I didn't. But she was a “servant in Caesar's household”. Do you understand? Okay. It may be that here we find the first indications of servants in the royal entourage, the royal court, and the upper rulers of the Roman Empire. Could be. Let's play like it is, shall we? Alright, let's do that.

Okay, who's next? Herodian. What do you know about Herodian? Nothing? Oh, there's a lot to be known about him. We have another Jerusalem Christian here. He has to be a Jew. He belongs; he is kin to old Herod the Great, and he carries the name of Herod's family with him. He's probably much more akin to Herod...Herod, oh, one of the sons of Herod the Great, and probably a cousin or something like that. We have here a brother who, and he calls him my relative, and this probably means because he's Jewish, they could be kin. I really question that they are, but anyway, he is another brother coming from Jerusalem who can tell us all about what happened there.

Now, what do you have with Narcissus? He was probably the head of a household, and his name means love of self, a name given to a flower. Alright, have you ever heard of the Narcissus Complex, where the kid thought he was so beautiful he looked over the water and wouldn't leave, and he starved to death sitting there; he turned into a flower. Oh, okay, I think we have exactly the same situation here. We don't know anything about Narcissus, but there are some of the people in his home who are believers, and they are almost certainly slaves. Yes. Says he was a free man with considerable authority under Emperor Claudius. He also had slaves whom he converted. Could be that...I wonder if I have...oh, I think I just did. May I make a mistake right here in public? Everything I just said about Aristobulus may have to do with Narcissus. I think I jumped the gun here. Everything you just wrote down about Aristobulus, circle it, put it down here to Narcissus. There was a man named Narcissus who was a counselor to Claudius. He got killed, and it may be the slaves in his house. I don't have anything here on Aristobulus except that he might have been a slave in a house or that he had a home, and he had slaves; I don't know. There's an old tradition that he was a brother of Barnabas; I don't anymore believe that, and I doubt he died in Britain.

Alright! Now we come to Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Does anybody know anything about Tryphaena? They're girls. Alright. Profound. Those women who work hard in the Lord. What do you know? They could have both been twin sisters; I don't think there's any question about it. We've got two twin sisters here who are slaves or had been, and they are Greeks. Somewhere, they found the Lord, and somewhere or other, Paul got those two slave girls freed or somehow got them to Rome. That, to me, is one of the most exciting things in this list. We've got two twin sisters. Well, obviously, we've got twin sisters, and you can just see them. One gets halfway through a sentence, and the other one picks up the other hand. You know how twin sisters are. Here they are in Rome, probably ex-slaves serving the Lord somewhere, living near one another

in this growing number of people whom Paul has sent to Rome.

Alright. Who do we have next? What do we know about Persis? She's a female. We really got some profound statements here. Alright! Do we know anything about her? Praise the Lord. Now something begins to emerge here, to me. I did not know that that name meant one who had been a slave and has now been freed, but that's wonderful. We assume that's happened to all three of them, then. They are very close friends. Somewhere in one of those Gentile churches, they have really served the Lord with all their hearts, souls, and minds, and Persis seems to have worked even harder than the twin girls, somewhere, probably Ephesus, who knows, maybe Corinth. We'll never know where those ladies came from, but we know this: they packed their little bags, and together those three gals boarded a boat somewhere and headed for Rome, Italy, and set up housekeeping so that there might be a church in Rome, Italy. Praise the Lord.

Well, I'm going to take verse 13 all by myself. Can I do verse 13? This is the richest verse in this whole thing. Does any of you know the story? Those of you who studied Rufus, did you get the story? Let me see your hands. You got the story of Rufus? If I've left out anything, please let me know. Forgive me for being so selfish here as to tell the whole story. You were wanting to tell it, weren't you? You really were. Oh, I know you were. Were you? He was. Were you wanting to tell it? Say your version. Come on up. You come here with me. I'm going to help you tell it. This, you can count on. This is for real.

Alright, let's hear it. Rufus' name is Red. He was one of the sons of Simeon, Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who carried the cross of Jesus. He was eminent in the Lord. His name is twice mentioned in the New Testament, and he is referred to as the son of Simon and the brother of Alexander. Now there's a footnote that says probably the backslider referred to in 1st Timothy. I don't believe that. I didn't put that down. I don't believe that. Okay, thank you.

Alright, here we go. It's the day the Lord dies. There is a black man whose name is Simon. He's from Cyrene, and the Lord can carry the wooden cross beam no further. He collapses, and one of the Roman soldiers pulls this black man out, probably in an act of prejudice, and makes him carry the cross. Somehow, in the weeks and months ahead, that brother, that man, gets saved. There can be no question that man was converted to Christ. When the dispersion came, he and his wife, who was a very devout, wonderful, loving, caring woman, fled, and they fled all the way to Antioch. They had two children. One of them was Alexander, and the other one, when he was born, she must have been white, purple, pink, yellow, or green, if we assume he was truly dark black. Because that little kid was born, she looked at him and said, "That kid's as red as a beet." He wasn't black and he wasn't white; he was red, so she called him Red. Rufus Red. I don't know how old he was. I have no idea how old he was when Simon of Cyrene got to Antioch and began preaching the gospel there like a house fire, but I can tell you this: he was one of the five men who raised up the church in Antioch. I can tell you something else. Every time Paul got sick, his wife took care of him. She cared for Paul to the point that she was like a mother to him. Rufus grew up in the church in Antioch, and he got his name mentioned in the book of Mark.

Mark wrote the book of Mark, perhaps in the city of Rome. He is writing the narration of the Lord's crucifixion, and he says, "Simon of Cyrene," and he stops and realizes that all the people in Rome are going to read a copy of this and would be interested to know, and he puts in parentheses, "the father of Rufus and Alexander," which he could just as well have said, "who are living right here in Rome with me right now," or "Rufus, who is living right here in Rome

with me right now." Rufus is asked by Paul, who has been in the church in Antioch from the beginning, to come to Rome. He can sit around and tell you everything there is to know about the church in Antioch. He was there; he will tell you things Paul would never tell you, or Barnabas would never tell you, or Silas or anybody else, because he's a young brother, and you know what it's like when young brothers get together. You don't know about this, like. "Hey, we heard, when did you..." "Yeah, well, I tell you I was there and it was so...wow" ...that's what single brothers are like when they get together. That's not all he could do. He could give you one gripping account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as seen through the eyes of his father. I can't believe that guy backslid. Maybe he did, but I don't want him to. Isn't this a tour de force we're getting here? Isn't this incredible? Don't sit there and look at me like a bunch of Baptists. Say amen. I just told you everything. I told you more than you've ever heard. I just can't believe anybody whose father—I don't believe he'd do that. That's some other Rufus who backslid. I don't know. Maybe he did, but I hope not. Excuse me, but I'm...there you are. I thought you died; maybe I couldn't see your face anywhere.

Anybody got anything on this next totally unpronounceable name? Asyncritus? Nothing on Asyncritus. I have nothing on Asyncritus. I have something that says that his name appeared among the freemen of Augustus, but it doesn't mean a thing to me. Let's make short shift work of this if we can, please. We got a single brother's house going here, folks. This is all in the world this can mean. Phlegon, Hermes, and Hermas may have been brothers or twin brothers, but more likely, there were two Hermans there, and they had to distinguish them somehow, so they made one a Hermes and the other one a Hermas. Patrobas and the other brothers with them. Now, we have here at least one, two, three, four, five, six. There have to be at least seven single brothers, right? These five have all come together from some place, and they have led a couple of other young, dumb, single brothers to the Lord. And they're all living in a room. I know this is true. You can put it down. It's inspired. I know what it looks like. This room is about 10 by 10. They have these bunks built up against the wall and a little bitty table here, and some little cooking instrument in the middle of the room. The room is filthy and stinks, and these six brothers are having the time of their lives. They think they are the most spiritual humans that ever lived. They think their room is a palace, and they think it is as clean as a room can get. They are what you call young, dumb, single brothers, and they are the salt of the earth. That's what they are. Amen. They are what make my motor run.

Have you got anything on any of these people? Yeah. You mentioned Patrobas with him, right? Yeah. There was a Patrobas. We had gotten in our group that there was a man by the name of Ticetus who wrote during that time, who said that during the time that Paul wrote this, there was a Patrobas in the household of Nero who was free for some unknown reason and was later on beheaded because the Romans were not able to crucify him. Oh, so he's a Roman. Yeah. Okay. He cannot be crucified as a Roman. That's interesting. I have never heard that, and he was killed during that particular period. Some of these people's names, the graves of them, appear in the catacombs, but they don't know if it's the same person or not, or if it's just the typical name of that day. We're never going to know. So that may be where they got this. I have never heard anything like that. Do you have anything on Hermes and Hermas other than the fact that these are pure, out-and-out heathens? They're both named after a god—Mercury. He was the head of a house. He can't be the head of a house; he's a single brother. Okay. I have that one of these brothers might have gone to preach the gospel in Dalmatia, which is just kind of the ends of the world. It's a real wild place for wild people. I love this verse 14. I love these single brothers. God bless them. They're what made

that church wonderful. Hollering and shouting, jumping up and down, getting excited, imaginations running wild, and telling stories that are only half true, but thinking that they left out something, and all of those wonderful things.

We come now to a home that is filled with Christians. The home of Philologus, he has opened his home, and there are a whole bunch of Christians packed into this house living there. Now, does this sound like church life or does this sound like church life? This is church life. Alright. Does anybody have anything on Philologus? If you do, say so quickly. Julia. How do you pronounce the next one? Was she the wife of Philologus? I don't know. Probably. I would think so. The wife or the sister of Philologus. I know that Paul draws a blank here on someone whose name he wished he could remember. No one else in the room could remember either. Nereus? Nereus. What was his sister's name? No. What was his sister's name? No, y'all don't remember? I hate to do this, but I'll write it down. Nereus and Nereus's sister. If anybody remembers her name, please let me know, and I'll change it before we mail this thing. I believe that's what happened here. Paul has a slip of memory because he doesn't mention her name. Alright, I think we've got Philologus and Julia married, and we've got a brother and a sister living there.

And Olympus, do we have anything about Olympus other than the fact that he was probably Greek? I'm sorry, is Olympus a woman's name? Oh, I didn't know that. Okay, and probably who? You're a member of the household. A member of the household of Philologus. When I see here, I don't see a member of the household of Philologus. I see a house full of Christians; they piled in together just like they did in Jerusalem, and they're going to hold forth there with the gospel. And all the holy ones—I wish the word saint were not in the Bible. That's another transliteration, not a translation. Too bad. And all the holy ones, they all were holy. Greet those who are in this house. Alright. Greet one another with a holy kiss, and all the churches, and I'm sure that means the Gentile churches from which you came, and maybe some of the Jewish churches send you greetings.

You got anything here you want to add? Yes, sir, let's just come up with some really good information about Nereus. Nereus, okay. Yeah, maybe she would want to say. Well, sister, speak. Nereus became a Roman soldier under Vespasian to protect the priestess of Emperor Vespasian. She was exiled to another land, and Nereus had to go with them. During Nero's Christian persecution, she was burned at the stake in the years with the Kenyan. His ashes are known to be counted at the Church of Mural of Arquilio for the Cemetery of St. Domitia. Okay, I'm going to believe everything up to his ashes. I know too much about the period of Constantine, when anything you wanted to say was considered sacred, and all you had to do was say it, and people would believe you. That's a beautiful story. I have never heard it. I had no idea about this. Well, that would be interesting to know.

Okay, now we have to face a major problem here. What's a holy kiss? No, don't let anybody ever sell you on a handshake. I think, in my personal judgment, there is no question what a holy kiss is. It was literally the kind of greeting that the French and the Italians, especially, use. I don't know if the people in Spain give it or not. Over here, we always laugh about it, but I always enjoyed going to Europe and giving a holy kiss. This came all the way through to the first-century Christians, and it seemed to have been unique to them. Now, they try to say, and this sounds so much like a Puritanical evangelical saying, that the sisters gave one another holy kisses and the brothers gave one another holy kisses. They're afraid that if we touch one another, we'll all sin. It's the other way

around, saints. When you start building walls – big, huge walls and mystery and stuff like that— then you start having problems between brothers and sisters. You can overdo this morality business to the point it turns on you and fosters immorality. Does that make any sense to you? I'm sure you understand that.

A holy kiss. At least you've seen the French do it. They meet their heads together, and both go like that. Probably it was a kiss on each cheek. The first time I was in Italy, I just got kissed and kissed and kissed and kissed, and I was just floored that anybody would do that, but I felt later really lucky that I had been in Italy because I found out—and I know this will strike you as humorous— but we've got to remember cultures. I believe it's in Hungary, and perhaps in Romania, but I'm pretty sure in Hungary, and also in some parts of Yugoslavia, there ain't no kissing on the cheek. It's head-on. Brothers to brothers kissing one another, as well as sisters to sisters. I have been delivered from that. My ability to conform to someone else's culture ends there. It's a weakness on my part, but don't try that with me. Let the Hungarians do that. But the other part, I wish that we would do some restoring here. I know when my brothers and sisters in Christ went to Europe, they came back home doing that, and as far as I know, they have never stopped. They may not do it as often as they did when they first got back, but we ought to hug one another. We ought to touch a lot. We really ought to touch a lot, saints. If we don't touch one another, first of all, we're not good Latins. Secondly, we are fostering a problem when we do not touch. We ought to touch. The Lord touched.

Touch, saints. Touch one another. Y'all do that, don't you? Am I trying to tell you something? Am I in trouble here? Do y'all? I bet you don't even know if you touch. Do you ever think about it? Touch one another. What's the silence? Are you thinking about it? Come here, brother. Come here. Yeah, come here. You know what I mean by touch? No. Touch. Touch. Touch one another. Sister, come here. Come here. Well, listen. Try this in some places, and they'll throw you out. This is touching. This is touching. Now, there could be “he's too ugly” and “she's too pretty”. Alright, I'm glad you laughed. Thanks very much for laughing. I lost wherever I was going. I lost it completely. Oh, a story I read, I found it unbelievable. A study was made. I think I told this on the tape somewhere, that the sociologists sat at coffee shops in Italy, France, the United States, and Great Britain and counted the number of times people sitting there touched one another in an hour. The statistics completely elude me, so let me invent them. The Italians, 200 times within an hour. The French, 120, 140, 160, something like that. The Americans, down around 30, 40, or 50, depending on where you are in America. And in Great Britain, zero. You do not... a British person does not touch another human being. Now, there's a reason for that. If they ever touch one another, they fall into gross sin immediately. Don't look at me like I'm serious, but that's what they think. That's what they think. And so, they shouldn't touch one another, should they? Poor people. I always felt sorry for the British. What they need is some Latin blood. My goodness, I learned.

Okay, let's take a look now at the people whom we left behind. Let's go to Corinth now. We're in verse 21. Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you greetings along with Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater. Now then, Timothy is a fellow worker. I don't need to tell you anything about Timothy, do I? Lucius is probably Luke. Oh, this could be... There are two Lucius's in the Bible. Alright, we don't know who it is. Who is Jason? I have Jason, who is from Thessalonica, thank you, and he has obviously come to visit Corinth, which tells us a whole lot. Brothers and sisters went from one town to another visiting one another, which is just wonderful to do. It's just one of the greatest things in the world. There's a whole flock of people from one church descending on another. It

lifts the spirits of both churches. I love it. I think it's wonderful. If you can ever find another church to go visit, do so.

Okay, Sosipater, who is Sosipater? Okay, they're all mentioned in Acts 13. Okay, do we know anything more about him than that? Now they seem to be...see, Paul calls them his relatives, and I don't believe that. I don't even think that they're all Jews. Maybe they are, but if this is Lucius from... maybe it is Lucius from Jerusalem. Does anybody know anything about Tertius? Okay, well, that's pretty clear, isn't it? Well, let's think about this. First of all, we learn that he can read and write, which, in itself, puts him in a very small minority. He probably makes his living doing this, but he is a believer, and Paul has dictated this whole letter. Now, that's quite remarkable, isn't it? I have a notion he went through several drafts, frankly, personally. This is a very well-written letter, and if it were dictated...I dictate, and I tell you it's very difficult to dictate that much material. He's a Greek, obviously. He is helping Paul. I know this was very exciting to him. Anybody here who can do shorthand who would like to help me with a book, I pay absolutely nothing, but it is exciting, and in the acknowledgment, I'll say I acknowledge you. Anybody here want to do that? This is basically what's going on here. I know that this brother was thrilled to death when Paul leaned back and said, "Oh, Tertius, add your greeting." He gets, "Wow, wonderful. So Tertius adds his greeting."

Alright, who else? Boy, this is just so clear, isn't it? Gaius has one very large living room, and the entire gathering gathers in his home. And obviously, Paul is sitting in his living room dictating this letter, probably living with him, or Gaius has dropped by where Paul is. I would say he is probably living with Gaius. Thank God for Gaius. Here's a brother who has a large house, who's not stuck with himself, who is one very hospitable brother. I don't know if this is one of Paul's co-workers. Gaius is a very common name, probably not the Gaius that comes with Paul to Ephesus. Nonetheless, praise the Lord for Gaius and the opening of his home for the church to meet there. May his tribe increase.

Now, we have Erastus. What do you know about Erastus? He was from Corinth. What else do you know? He was the city treasurer, that's right, he was sent with Timothy to Macedonia. Yes, praise the Lord. This is a heavy-duty brother. That was a pretty, pretty heavy trip Timothy was going to make. The false information guy got it as a bishop – a bishop where? Okay, leave that bishop business alone. I know this man, I've forgotten his name, but he's got writings that nobody else verifies; he's "bishopsing" and making everybody one of the 70 just right and left. If he could find a name in the New Testament, he made him a bishop. Well, let me tell you one other thing about Erastus that's quite interesting. This very, very, very rarely happens in Christian archaeology, and to my knowledge, he is the only person in the New Testament whose existence has been historically proven archaeologically. In the ruins of Corinth, there is a stone they dug up. It lists all the people who built this particular building, and one of them says Erastus, the city treasurer. So, this old boy actually made it into the Bible and into human archaeology, both, which is, by the way, for those who try to disprove the Scripture, one little thing like that just weighs so heavily. Pick up a granite stone with a man's name on it; it's also mentioned in a piece of literature written at the same time.

Okay, our brother Quartus. What do we know about him other than that he had an electric wristwatch? Do we know anything about Quartus at all? He was a Christian whose salutation was sent to the church in Rome. Okay, go ahead. And according to tradition, he ultimately became a

bishop. Secundus is the second child, Quartus is the fourth child. Who is Tertius? Oh, I didn't know this. This is wonderful. So Alpha is the first child and Omega is the last child.

Okay, I'm going to take just a moment to describe to you the city of Rome so we can get into this. Are you with me? Okay, this is what they're going to find. The tradition of Rome was that it was started by Romulus and Remus, who were raised by a wolf, and it was located on a hill, there near the Tiber River. Now that's supposed to have started, I don't know, in what B.C., but can anybody help me here? I'm not prepared. I seem to remember around 700 B.C. Well, Rome had a little village, had a war with one of its neighbors, and conquered it, and that disturbed another neighbor because they had conquered another village. So, they attacked Rome, a little village called Rome, and Rome conquered them. Then, as the town began to grow a little bit, some of the neighbors down the road got a little bit more concerned about them. They were prospering more than others, so they declared war on Rome, and they conquered them. By the way, this is not accurate history, I hope you'll know this. And then some of the neighbors up north declared war on them, and by now, you know, their 10 or 15 villages are conquered people all here together, and they conquer these guys. And this goes on for several hundred years. They don't ever lose a battle, and they always fight for safety. That's all they do. They are not particular conquerors so much as they are protectors of their city.

So that by the year 200 BC, they've got the middle of Italy. Now, that's not a whole lot when you consider where they were by 44 BC. 200 BC and 44 BC are not a long time, considering what happened between 200 BC and 44 BC. What happened in 44 BC? Ah. I don't believe you don't know. What happened on March 15th in 44 BC? Alright, I'll give you another hint. The 15th of March is called the Ides of March. The Ides of March, huh? Still don't know, huh? Oh, you ignorant, ignorant, culturally deprived human beings. Okay, I'll come back to that later. They have a battle with another city in Africa, of all places, and this is a very powerful, large, ancient, and venerable city, and they conquer it. They feel they're not going to be secure until they conquer everybody. So, they have one big battle with the Greeks, and they defeat the Greeks, and by this time, they have almost all of Italy, they have conquered North Africa, and they have conquered the Greeks.

Their biggest problems that they're having right now are with barbaric hordes to the north—the Germans, the barbarians, the Germanic, the Visigoths, the Vandals, and people like that. They are a republic, but don't let that kid fool you. That's supposed to mean they are somewhat of a democracy, but only the elite vote. By the way, they have enslaved an enormously large number of people, and in 44 BC, their leader announces that he's going out to fight the barbarian hordes, and his son, or his half son, or his son by adoption, fears that before he goes, he is going to destroy the republic and announce and make himself a king, and so he kills him. It is usually considered that that probably was the most influential assassination in the history of humanity and that had it not happened, the history of the Western world would be totally different than what it is today. Who will ever know? Many of the wars that have befallen Europe for the last 2,000 years are a result of the fact of that assassination.

Did you notice in the Reformation—I bet you've never noticed this—that the Reformation took place along the lines of the Roman Empire. That's how culture, powerful culture, is. Southern Europe, which had been the Roman Empire, remained Catholic. Northern Europe, which had been the barbarians, more or less became Protestant, more or less. Cultural differences that would have

been wiped away had Julius Caesar not been stabbed to death by his son, Brutus, on March 15, 44 BC. Then you have these names made famous by Shakespeare: Mark Antony, not Richard Burton, Mark Antony, and a man named Augustus, or he was later named Augustus. Octavia was his name. They have all these big battles, and finally, Octavia emerges. He puts down and makes a puppet of the Republic and announces himself to be the son of Caesar, and he calls himself Caesar. And the word now means, from that day forward, chief cook and bottle washer. The word czar, Kaiser, Caesar—all the same word. You've never heard of the Kaisers? Kaiser Wilhelm started World War I, and, of course, the czar was overthrown by Lenin. All of this dates back to those days. Anyway, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that the whole world would be taxed. Caesar Augustus, Julius Caesar, the men who came before them, and just after them, went into one incredible conquest. They conquered all of North Africa, Spain, and all of southern Europe, the Greeks, and they came down during the time of Mark Antony, and they conquered Egypt, and they conquered the Jewish world, and this was all new. When the Lord Jesus was born, the Jews had just recently been conquered. This is all new stuff. Rome was a new name to a large part of the world. Everything was under its heel, but it was not like the Greeks, who had been around forever. This was the new kid on the block, and they had the whole...most of the known world...under their conquest.

(Continued in Part 4)