

- As we enter the last chapter of the book of Romans we are struck by God having the apostle Paul record a large ‘List’ of names of persons of note—that is, a brief record of saints (believers) that hold a special distinction regarding both their zeal and determination in getting their sonship edification, and their zeal and determination to provide for your godly sonship edification.

- This listing of certain individuals by name isn’t unique to the book of Romans—God has Paul do this in other epistles, however not in all of them—but he does so in the majority of them.

- God has Paul name names. The majority of the time those who get named are of note for their own godly edification, and the asset they are to the Edification Process (whether by assisting other saints, or by assisting the apostle Paul himself and his expanding ministry of *the gospel of Christ* according to *the mystery of Christ*. In short, the vast majority of the time, those who get named are “the good guys” ...

... but there are times when God has Paul name the names of some “bad guys” — (for example) ...

- Hymenaeus and Alexander (1Tim. 1:20)
- Phygellus and Hermogenes (2Tim. 1:15)
- Hymenaeus and Philetus—[the originators of the “Charismatic Movement”] (2Tim. 2:17)
- Demas (2Tim. 4:10)
- Alexander the coppersmith (2Tim. 4:14)
- The Cretians (Titus 1:12)

- One thing to note about the ‘List’ of persons God has Paul name is that there are a lot of **women** mentioned along with the men! (Which is an amazing thing, due to how women were looked upon and treated back in the 1st Century A.D.!)

- And my understanding is that by God determining to have these names recorded in His word—as well as the brief record of their distinguished service, these are names of saints who our Heavenly Father would have you **remember** (and hold in fond remembrance) due to their valued and dedicated work and labor in the Edification Process. (which could be a ‘deadly’ endeavor!)

- And even more importantly—by listing them—and by actually naming them—these lists are designed to impress upon you the fact that the godly Edification Process is a matter of, and a function of **the entire BODY of Christ**.

- That is, godly edification isn't just a one-on-one type thing that only exists between you, individually, and the Bishop or Pastor of the local assembly ... (that's where it starts; but that's only a fraction of what the entirety of the godly Edification Process is about!) ...

... because by the time you get to the end of the book of Romans—you know that individual Edification leads on to BODY Edification ... and the opportunity for even greater Edification among other assemblies and churches, especially within the locale in which your local assembly exists! (It truly is a “*joint*” effort!)

- So the question arises at this point (and the question could be asked at this point) - ‘Why do this?’ ... why give a list of these people? ... why name them? ... what's the point? ...

... and, unfortunately, often times this passage of these names is counted by many Bible teachers as rather pointless (though they wouldn't say it that way, but in their teaching of the passage, it's apparent they don't give it very high regard) ...

... or at the most, many Bible teachers just lightly pass over them and give them scant notice—maybe going so far as to see some ‘historical’ significance to the names in this list, and simply say that they were helpers of Paul and Paul's ministry in Rome ... but, hey, we know very little about most of them, so they just note them (mangle their names), and move on ...

... and after all, the book of Romans is so long, (and we're so desperate to finish off the book), let's just skip over them ... and largely this portion gets treated like a ‘postscript’ (a P.S.) to the letter—(inferring that it's somewhat less important than the rest of the letter).

- But my understanding is that, just as Paul says later on in 2Tim. 3: 16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:* 17 *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* — therefore, even these ‘Lists’ of persons are part of the inspired scripture, and have value to them as our *doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness*—even this portion has benefit for our being *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works!*

- Truth is—if all you can say about the List of these people mentioned here in Romans 16 is to just go back and dig up some of their historical accounts in the book of Acts (for instance) - or just concur with Paul, ‘Yep, he did do that’ and ‘Yup, she did do that’ ... then you have NOT gotten the value and the benefit out of the List that God has designed and intended for you to get out of it!

- Also—the truth is—that if you haven’t got the **doctrine of Romans 1:1-15:30** effectually working within you—then you WON’T get the real value & benefit from this portion of scripture!

- And what I mean by that is this: a saint (believer) with 0 (zero) godly sonship edification will only see the list as [maybe] an “appropriate” ending to a 1st century epistle or letter (with maybe some “devotional” significance) ...

... BUT a properly educated and edified “son” of God will look at this list and immediately see it’s significance, it’s value and benefit—(and more importantly) understand and appreciate the reason WHY God had the apostle Paul include these Lists at the end of the book of Romans!

- There’s something God the Father is **teaching** you here! ... there’s something the Father is **instructing** you in, in matters of *righteousness* ...

... and therefore, there’s something to be gained for being able to GO ON and get the rest of your sonship education & edification by the effectual working of these Lists that will be needful and necessary for Level II Sonship Edification! [i.e., Stablishment]

- And instead of going through the List and dealing with the names and persons—and **then** talking about the significance of the List (and what’s to be gained by it) ... I think the wisest thing to do is to make sure we understand and appreciate the reason WHY the Lists are given in the first place (i.e., what is their doctrinal significance to our godly Edification) ... and then, knowing the “why”, we can then look at the details with the proper **zeal & enthusiasm** (rather than being wearied and bored by the whole thing)! [and this shouldn’t be difficult at all—or really, lengthy at all—it should be a ‘snap’!]

- So—(as you see on the board) - this is a list of:
 “NOTEWORTHY SAINTS ENDING THE BOOK OF ROMANS”.

- but that’s a very poor, insufficient, and unsatisfactory description ... (there’s got to be more to it than that!)

- By any honest reading of Paul’s epistles, he does a lot of this—he always seems to be making ‘mention’ of other members of the body of Christ—and for various reasons.

- But that alone—(i.e., Paul’s almost constant ‘mentioning’ of other members of the Body—and drawing attention to their contribution to the Body) tells you a lot about what these lists are about, and why they are “*inspired*” scripture.

- And Romans having the **largest** List of all of Paul’s epistles is, (to me), also significant.

- So let me ask you: Why are these Lists included at the end of the book of Romans? What are they there for? What’s the significance of them? and What benefit, what value are they for our *instruction in righteousness* and godly sonship edification?

- (looking for the following):

- HELPER

- LABOURER

- SUPPLIER

- REFRESHER

*** (Descriptions found in [1:1-15] ... *servant*; *succourer* (= meeting necessity and distress; care; [performed at her own expense]; kindness; [Vance = to help, aid, assist, or relieve] — (there’s your “refresher” and “supplier”); *helpers*; *labor*; *approved*)

- Now my understanding is that we are supposed to perceive the doctrinal and edificational significance to Paul’s frequent ‘Lists’ of names right here in Rom. 16 ... but we can also gain some understanding & appreciation for them by looking to a passage in 1 Corinthians—(kind of like the “answers in the back of the teacher’s book” [but you should have known this from Romans doctrine]) ...

- (see 1 Cor. 16:10-20 [:18])

- (:18) = this is what this List is for!!! = “(s)pirit refreshers”!!!
[and that’s a BIG DEAL!]

- So—if we remove our poor and unsatisfactory Title for the List of Saints at the end of the book of Romans ... we can replace it with a far more meaningful and doctrinally significant Title:

“Edification Helpers, Laborers, Suppliers, & Refreshers”

- or - **“Edificational spirit Refreshers for the Roman Assemblies”**

- The doctrinal significance being: edification is a BODY effort—a “*joint*” effort!

- And that goes for all levels and all forms (or kinds) of godly Edification: (individual), (body or local assembly), and (the other local assemblies within the locale of your assembly)!

- This is how godly Edification is supposed to be done! - this is how you can have brand new believers; and saints just starting out on their godly Edification (the *weaker brother*); and saints who are advanced in their Sonship Edification, all within the same local church or assembly!

- (this is the kind of “local church archeology” that needs to be done in order to “recover” God’s plan, design, and purpose of a local church ... and get away from the centuries of the misuse and misunderstanding of what a local church is, and what it’s for—(i.e., the modern versions of local churches created by the wisdom of men, [usually just businesses or corporations (denominations)] and their ungodly pursuits [but all the while, thinking they are doing “the Lord’s will”]!)

- Far from viewing this List of saints at the end of Romans as just having some (or little) ‘historical’ significance—my understanding is that this List (and List #2) actually has a great deal of **doctrinal significance** and importance to our godly Edification!

- The doctrinal significance to our godly Sonship Edification has to do with perceiving the “*joint*” effort that there is to godly Edification as well as perceiving how intelligent Sonship Prayer can be utilized to accomplish the “*joint*” effort of godly Sonship Edification.

- Because it stands to reason that those listed in this List have had to go through the ‘pondering’ of certain ‘paths’ to take (or courses of action to take) in order to be those Edification *helpers, laborers, suppliers, refreshers, servants*, and so forth.

- And by giving this List in the way God has Paul give it—and in consideration of the **context** in which it’s given (that being, the Father giving you, [His properly educated and edified Level I “sons” and “daughters”], the capacity to GO ON and get the rest of your Sonship Edification ... and to do so as you undergo “the sufferings of Christ”) it tells me that we are also supposed to perceive **what our part, or role will be in connection with the other members of the Body of Christ in order for the continuing Sonship Edification & Education to be able to GO ON! (in all 3 dimensions)**

- In other words—we, too, are to become Edification Helpers, Laborers, Suppliers, Refreshers, and Servants to others ... to other members of the Body ...

... we, too, have a role to play in how each one of us successfully deals with “*the sufferings of Christ*” so that we all are “*more than conquerors IN all these things*” - and see to it that godly sonship edification does continue to GO ON!

- And just to take it one step further—it seems to me that by understanding and appreciating this List properly—and by u/a the “joint” effort of the **Body** in connection with godly Edification—we should also perceive some things in connection with how we will function **as a Body** in the *creature* when we are placed there as “sons” - how we will function, and how we will be **connected together** in those Principalities, Powers, Might, and Dominions!

- (by the way—I don’t find that, for instance, Phlegon was all upset, mad, & jealous of Priscilla and Aquila because they got more things mentioned about them than he did ... or that they seem to be in a more ‘honorable’ position than he was!)

- (go back over 1Cor. 16—this time from [1ff])

- (also see Rom. 12:10)

- Notice (:14) and the issue of **Godly Love & Charity!**

- Notice that here, at the end of 1Cor. you have another ‘listing’ of some individuals—(this is the only other time this is done in Paul’s epistles that form Level 1 Sonship Edification, i.e, Rom—Gal.) ... at the end of 2Cor., you have “*greet* [instead of “*salute*” in Rom. 16:16] *one another with an holy kiss*” - but no listing of individuals is given there; and none is given in Galatians.

- and at the end of 1Cor. you only have 3 **new** individuals mentioned: Stephanas, Fortunatas, and Achaicus who are described with the monikers of ‘suppliers’ and ‘refreshers’.

- And with their ‘monikers’, (along with the ‘monikers’ given in Rom. 16), you have a total of 7 ‘monikers’ or appellatives or descriptive designators ...

... (and maybe I’m making more out of this than is intended), but the full complement of descriptive designators given to individuals who are singled out for their contribution to the Edification Process of the body of Christ are: Servants, Succourers; Helpers; Labourers; Approved; Suppliers; and Refreshers.

- And it may be that these ‘monikers’ or descriptive designators may give us more insight into the Operations of God and the ‘Operators’ of the Operations of God within a local assembly!

- And it may be that these 7 designators point up 7 major matters that **need** to be taking place in a local assembly in order for Godly Edification to take place (not so much in Level I Sonship Edification), but out in Level II Sonship Edification—(because in both Rom. 16 and 1Cor. 16 you are getting information that prepares you for GOING ON and getting Level II Sonship Edification in Ephesians.

- This may give us some insight and perception into how a local church handles godly Edification in view of the many ‘doctrinal’ *estate* differences of its members—all the while maintaining godly Edification in the process ... but the one thing we know for sure is that we’re going to **need** ALL 7 of these things for **Level II** Sonship Edification to take place properly! (especially due to undergoing *the sufferings of Christ!*)

- Notice another thing here in 1Cor. 16:18 ... *For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: **therefore acknowledge ye THEM THAT ARE SUCH.***

- In other words—***them that are such*** are the ones that have *refreshed my spirit and yours* ...

... meaning what? meaning that **there are some that “ARE SUCH”; and there are some that are NOT “such”!**

- In other words, not every (or just any old) Christian, believer, or saint can be said to be a ‘*refresher of spirits*’!

- And “*them*” that “*are such*” are to be “*acknowledged*” ... and ‘them’ that are NOT ‘such’ get NO such recognition!

... and it’s not just getting ‘recognition’ for recognition’s sake—rather, it’s the issue of being spiritually (or edificationally) fit or qualified ... or **not** ... in view of the Edification Process ...

... and it’s **not** a criticism or a statement of condemnation type thing at all—it’s just the simple issue of one person not being far enough along in the Edification Process to be a *servant, succourer, helper, labourer, approved, supplier, or refresher* just yet. (it’s a very normal and natural thing)

- Notice that this List occurs at the END of the book of Romans ... **after** the doctrine that forms the initial, fundamental, and formal godly Edification (for Level I) has taken place!

- These individuals are NOT just *serving, succouring, helping, labouring*, being *approved, suppliers*, and *refreshers* in any old sense, or for any old reason ... the CONTEXT forbids that

... these individuals are marked out by these various monikers or designators because of their involvement in the Edification Process! (and not just because they are being ‘nice’ to others)!

- These are Edification GIANTS! (they have “**addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**”!!!)

- But the point is—(and it's a legitimate and biblical and godly point): one of the 'by-products' of godly sonship edification is the gaining of the capacity and ability to become a helper, et al., in the Edification Process!

- And this is one of the great **doctrinal reasons** for God including this List at the end of the book of Romans!

- An 'intelligent' "son" is educated properly unto '*godly edifying which is in faith*' - **plus**, he understands how to use intelligent sonship prayer in order to get RESULTS ... "results" being defined as: the continuation of the Edification Process!

- Summary Statement of the doctrinal reason for the List of Rom. 16:1-16: Godly edification is a "joint" effort of the entire body of Christ; especially in Level II Sonship Edification where not only *the sufferings of this present time* are still being dealt with, but where the addition of *the sufferings of Christ* are going to be encountered. And the *sufferings of Christ* are going to demand Edification *servants, succourers, helpers, labourers, approved ones, suppliers, and refreshers* in order to deal with the effects of the opposition from the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- CONTINUING ON IN GODLY EDIFICATION IS THE CORE ISSUE!!!!
(**EVERY WORD / THOUGHT IS GOVERNED BY THIS CORE ISSUE!**)
(in Rom. 16)

- And as you become more and more edified & educated as a "son", and spiritually grow more and more—(both individually, and as a "body") - you will **benefit** from this 'List' in 2 ways:

1) **You** will need to become as those in this List—**you will need to become** Edificational *servants, succourers, helpers, labourers, approved ones, suppliers* and *refreshers* of others' spirits ...

2) You will need to have **other members** of the body of Christ to be YOUR Edificational *servants, succourers, helpers, labourers, approved ones, suppliers* and *refreshers* of your spirit.

- in such things as: prayer, encouragement, help with the curriculum, keeping up the level of your spiritual vigor (strength & energy) - and in general, doing what Paul has already pointed out that you *can* do having accomplished Level I Sonship Edification: (see **Rom. 15:14**—which has 'roots' going back to **Rom. 12:9-10**) ...

... anything that will help and provide for other members of the body to have the ‘highest and best’ opportunity to be ‘edified unto godliness in faith’, just as you have had!

- [which can include both tangible (physical) things, and intangible (spiritual & mental health) type things.]

- (**as an Addendum**: Could it be that these descriptive designators are a further development of those 4 Fundamental Body Attributes we were taught about back in Romans 12:3-5?)

- note: “*serve*” / *servant* is one of the Fundamental Body Attributes ... are these other Body Attributes???

- **Other general observations about this List**:

- Those mentioned on this List—Paul knows them **personally** (even though he hasn’t been to Rome yet) - but he has met them on his ministry journeys. [:5, :10, :11, :14 (possibly another assembly), :15 (possibly another assembly)]

- Rome has more than one local church/assembly—(and they were all ‘Pauline’ assemblies!) - not one Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Brethren, Episcopal church among them!

- These local churches had real and **godly** “unity” among them (even though they were separate and autonomous churches)—**no divisions!**
- **no ‘schism’!** (even though they had to deal with ‘doctrinal estate differences’ & weaker brother situations all the time)!

- **Notice that in this entire List**: **there is not ONE single word of condemnation, correction, reproof, rebuke, or the like!**

- This is a **partial** List—Paul certainly has more saints in mind than just these 29 ... there are more saints in his mind when he mentions the “*churches*” and the “*households*”.

- It’s apparent from this List itself—(but also from the 1Cor. 16 List), that there was genuine godly **Love & Charity** going on for one another — and genuine godly appreciation and **thankfulness** for one another going on as well! (that’s what all the “*greeting*” and “*saluting*” is all about) - “*Let all your things be done with **charity**.*” (1Cor. 16:14)

- All of the saints mentioned in this List responded positively to **Paul's message!** (*"the gospel of Christ" according to "the revelation of the mystery"*) — which was a new and very different message compared to the message of Moses, for example! ... and even different than the message of the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry!

- a message that has as it's purpose, plan, and design the repossession and reconciliation of the **heavenly realm** back to God (and **not** the earth, which is Israel's program)!

- And they responded positively to Paul's message under the threat (and reality) of enormous persecution and personal peril!

... they didn't come to believe Paul's message (and take the action they took to be 'Edification helpers & suppliers') in a country like the United States during the past 300 years!

- Over 2,000 years after their death—we, here today, have a common 'bond' with every one of them!

- We have in common with them:

- Justification unto eternal life (the "blood" of Christ), salvation from the debt & penalty of our sins; redemption; forgiveness of our sins; the imputation of Christ's own Righteousness; and permanent 'at-one-ness';

- Sanctification; being 'dead to sin, and alive unto God'; being no longer 'under the law, but under grace'; the adoption of adult "sons" and "daughters"; and godly Sonship Edification.

- being members of a new entity that never existed before on the face of the earth until Paul: we are all (excluding Andronicus & Junia) members of the *new creature* of the church, the **BODY OF CHRIST** ... (just to name a few)

- And one other thing to note about God including this List (along with all the other Lists of names in Paul's epistles) ...

Your godly Labor NEVER goes unnoticed by God your Heavenly Father!!! (the Father ALWAYS notices and counts worthy the Labor of His "sons" & "daughters"!)

- (now On to the Outline)

- In our Outline, we are dealing now with the 3 Parts of the godly Labor (having obtained the godly Thinking, and in view of that godly Thinking, conducting ourselves according to the godly Living—and now in view of the godly Thinking & Living, we now have the honor & privilege of Laboring and Working together with our Father in what He's doing).

- And we now come to 'Part B' of the godly Labor portion of Rom. 15:8-16:16 ...

... and my understanding is that, due to the position that Phebe is put in (which is the 1st one mentioned in the List) - and due to the specific terminology God uses in connection with what the actions of the saints at Rome were to take concerning her, as well as what God specifically says about her—at least in my thinking) I see Phebe as set apart from the rest that are mentioned in the List. (not a lot, but something about her and her *service* and *succouring* that made her 'ministry' to the Roman saints a pressing matter.)

- NOTE: **the people listed on this List are NOT listed from 'Most Important' to 'Least Important'!!!** (that's not 'body' thinking; that's not sonship thinking!)

- Phebe has a different priority matter that the saints in Rome were to attend to or minister to, than all the others mentioned in the List—Phebe is mentioned first because of a particular pressing matter that demands their attention, first & foremost!

- Phebe was to be **received**—and *received* in a particular way; but all the others were to be either *greeted* or *saluted*.

- And so—because of this, my understanding is that there is a slight 'shift' between Phebe and the rest of the List.

- In other words—the actions surrounding Phebe is to be thought of as slightly separated from the remainder of the List.

- So that tells me that 'Part B' of the Godly Labor is found in **Rom. 16:1-2**—and that the godly Labor is the issue of:

- Properly *receiving* Phebe as a member of the body of Christ in godly love and charity.

- Now—before we begin looking at the details of the passage—I just want to re-enforce a matter that I touched on before ...

... and that is, you can say that all of the individuals and churches and households God has Paul mention in this List are all dead and gone! ... and that's entirely true.

- All these people have been dead for over 2,000 years—their churches, assemblies, and households have been dead and gone for 2,000 years as well.

- And you could say that, because of that, the only thing to even take note of here is the **history** of these folks (if you can find any ... some you can, and some you can't find much if anything about them) ... so therefore the only value of this passage is the **historical** value of it—and maybe making some 'secondary' application of what these folks did to us today. (which doesn't have much more than a 'devotional' type value).

- But, again, we need to keep in mind that God intentionally included this List (and the details of it) in Holy **Scripture**—that is, Rom. 16:1-16 is part of the "*scriptures*" - and as recorded by Paul in 2Tim. 3:16—**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:** 17 *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

- So that makes me understand and appreciate that this passage is NOT just to be taught or gone over as a 'history lesson' - but rather, even though the people are long dead and gone—there is **profitable, doctrinal value** in this List for our godly sonship edification! - This List is '*profitable*' for our *instruction in righteousness*!

- And that profitable doctrinal value is found:

1) in the **Actions** of the members of the body of Christ one toward another (i.e., receiving; assisting; greeting; and saluting);

2) and found in the additional information details concerning them is further insight into The Operations of God for the body of Christ—especially as the members of the body of Christ undergo *the sufferings of Christ* as they GO ON and get the remainder of their godly sonship edification.

- All of which adds up to our Heavenly Father giving us further information on how to '**deploy**' the doctrine He's taught us in the book of Romans!

- because my understanding is that you're not getting any new doctrine being taught to you here ... rather, you're getting further details concerning the successful advancement of godly edification by some **Godly Labor** (working together with God in His edification building business) ...

... rather than giving you new doctrine to operate upon here; God is giving you areas of immediately Laboring/Working together with Him (and **deploying** the doctrine you have already been given) in order to function and operate in ways that end up 'Helping' (and so forth) in the Edification Process.

- (so let's begin looking at the details)

Rom. 16:1-2 1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:*
 2 *That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*

- First, let's notice some grammatical and punctuation mark issues:

- Verses 1 & 2 are **one** (fairly long) sentence.

- This one sentence is divided up into 3 Major Clauses—(as noted by the colons) ...

Clause #1

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

Clause #2

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you:

Clause #3

for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

- Now we should be able to perceive something about what is going on in each of the 3 major Clauses:

- Clause #1—The Roman saints are **presented** with an **Opportunity to engage in some godly Labor** in connection with Phebe who is coming to them with a particular pressing matter that will (obviously) be of great benefit to them.

- Clause #2—The Roman saints are then given a Fatherly **Directive** as to the specific nature and details of the godly **Labor**—that is, they are directed to exactly what the godly Labor consists of in connection with Phebe's coming to them.

- And there are 2 Parts to the godly Labor:

- 1) *receiving her in the Lord, as becometh saints,*
- 2) *assisting her in whatsoever business she hath need of you:*

- Clause #3—Then the Roman saints are given the **Reason Why** they are to **Labor** with God (and with Paul) in connection with Phebe coming to them—and it has to do with the issue of godly Edification (in the context) - and her being a "*succourer*" in connection with the Edification Process.

- And being ones who have now been through the Edification Establishment Doctrine of the book of Romans—these saints need NO other 'prompting' from Paul—no 'brow-beating'; no 'prying them out of the pews' (so to speak); no threatening; no arm-twisting ...

... why? because these properly educated and edified "sons" and "daughters" have for a long time been both POSITIVELY and PROPERLY responding to the doctrine they've been taught!

- Therefore they know that God is having Paul present them with a 'merciful' provision of godly Labor that gives them an opportunity to live 'truthfully' and honestly as to what they now are "in Christ" - and in God's plan and purpose.

- (see Volitional Testing Point in **Pro. 3:1-4** [charts])

- Now—with an appreciation for what (:1-2) are about—and the 'breakdown' of the information in the verses—let's now look at the details of (:1 & 2).

Rom. 16:1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:*

- Let's look at the details of the first phrase:

- "*I commend unto you **Phebe** our sister, ...*"

- Let's meet **Phebe**.

- Phebe is a **woman**. Phebe is mentioned **only this one time** in scripture.

- Phebe seems to have been a Greek (a Gentile) who lived in Cenchrea.

- Phebe's name means: *pure, bright, radiant*.

- The name Phebe was (just like so many others in this List) from Greek & Gentile pagan religion ...

... in heathen poetry, "Pheobus" was the sun, and "Phoebe" was the moon.

(nothing new—even to this day!)

- So the only thing we know about Phebe, scripturally, is the information found in Romans 16:1-2 — however, if any stock is to be given in the "subscriptions" to Paul's epistles (and I have to admit, I don't have any proof that they are reliable) - but nevertheless, in the 'subscription' to the book of Romans (which is not the 'inspired' word of God) - Phebe is said to have been the one to have taken the finished epistle (or letter) of Romans, from Paul's hand in Corinth (where Romans was written), and delivered it to the saints in Rome.

- The 'subscription' of Romans says: "*Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.*"

- Now, even though the 'subscription's to Paul's epistles are not to be thought of as the 'inspired' scripture—that's not to say that they're not accurate. (they may be very accurate)

- And, by what is said about Phebe in (:1-2), it does cause me to tend toward the accuracy of her being the one who carried Paul's original letter of Romans, to the Romans saints!

- *1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, ...*

- “**commend**” - first of all—this is of special significance—because it is not said of any other person on this List ... in fact, it’s not said of any other person in the entire book of Romans.

- The word “*commend*” (in any of it’s forms) is used only 3x in the book of Romans.

1. Rom. 3:5—*But if our unrighteousness **commend** the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid....*

2. Rom. 5:8—*But God **commendeth** his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

3. Rom. 16:1 — in fact, Phebe is the ONLY time in **all** of Paul’s epistles where a person who is actually **named** is ‘commended’! (that, alone, makes this very significant!)

- (that’s not to say that letters of ‘commendation’ for those being sent to other assemblies isn’t a legitimate thing—as in 2Cor.—but nonetheless, Phebe is the **only named** person who is ‘commended’ by Paul!)

- There’s something about Phebe’s ‘service’ to the saints in Rome that is a **highly significant matter** that **demand**s some immediate attention!

- “**commend**” = (from the L. prefix *com* [or *cum*], meaning “together” + L. *mando*, meaning “to commit into one’s hands or charge” [a mandate] - hence, to commit to one’s hands or charge together [*com* = an intensifier])

- OED #1 = To give in trust or charge, to deliver to one’s care or keeping; to commit, entrust.

- The Lord Himself used this word (in this sense) on the Cross: “*Father, into thy hands I **commend** my spirit*” (Luke 23:46)

- OED #2 = To present as worthy of favourable acceptance, regard, consideration, attention, or notice; to direct attention to as worthy of notice or regard. (Quotes: Rom. 16:1)

- Webster's 1828 #1 = To represent as worthy of notice, regard or kindness; to speak in favor of; to recommend.
(Quotes: Rom. 16:1)

- Smith's Synonyms Discriminated = *Commend* implies an act of judgment on our part whereby we bestow our trust — *commend* is specific; that is, we reserve the word *commend* for some specific act in particular that is worthy of our approval.

- So when Paul says, "*I commend unto you Phebe our sister*" - the very fact of the rare and unique expression: *I **commend** unto you **Phebe*** (a named person; and the first person in the List) ... all of this adds up to a **much more formal presentation** than the rest of the persons mentioned in this List. (something special is going on w/Phebe!)

- Again—the issue is NOT one of : who is more important than others! ... rather, by the use of the word "*commend*" it's **not** the importance of the PERSON being presented that's the issue here—but it's the pressing matter (or work, or action) [or in this case, **business**] that the person is DOING that is the issue ...

... and that pressing matter is of such importance and significance to the saints in Rome, that they are to recognize Phebe's *service* and *business* that she's performing for them; and to bestow their **full trust** in her **business**—it's worthy of their favourable acceptance, attention, and approval!

- In fact, Phebe's work among them (or *business*) is going to **include** THEM in it! working together with her in the *business* she has come to do **with them**!

- And as we go through (:1-2) we'll gain some further insight into just what Phebe's *business* was with the Roman saints, but (to me, anyway), just his bit we've looked at so far tells me that it very well could have been wrapped up in the issue of Phebe carrying the original autograph of the book of Romans to the saints in Rome. (or the 1st copy of it)

- But whatever her *business* was—it was worthy of making it of the highest priority as a pressing matter that was going to be of great benefit to the Roman saints & their assemblies!

- “... *our sister*” - and in this case/context, this is **not** talking about any one’s biological *sister*, or a biological relation.

- Just like the word “*brother*” - “*sister*” can be used to describe a particular **bond** that exists between saints in a local assembly, or in the body of Christ as a whole—and that’s the sense of the word *sister* here.

- The idea is to convey the meaning of (and to stress the meaning of) **intimacy** - a close, tight-knit relationship that has that ‘Living-Union’ dynamic to it that we have come to understand and appreciate exists with all the members of the “body of Christ” in this disp. of grace in which we live.

- And when used this way—both the terms *brother* and *sister* should not be taken lightly or flippantly.

- God delights in describing our relation (one member of the body to another) in terms of FAMILY!

- And God gets to **define** the terms of the family ... YOU don’t! nor any one else! (so unless you’re God, your mouth needs to be ‘stopped’!)

- God’s definition of a family:

- Head: Husband/Father (**patriarchal**),
- Submissive: Wife/Mother
- children

- Therefore, *brother* and *sister* describes the kind of loving, family (or kindred) type of relationship we, believers and members of the body of Christ, have that is befitting of a family type BOND.

- In fact, a *brotherhood* or *sisterhood* can be generated even without being biologically related—(such as ‘brothers-in-arms’ - a band of brothers).

- But the truth is—we **are** ‘blood’ relation—we **are** related by **blood**! - it’s just not the blood of our natural father or natural mother) ... rather, it’s **the blood of Christ**!

- **Rom. 12:10** *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; ...*

- We've all heard that saying: "**Blood is thicker than water**" ... and why is that such a truism? (because family bonds are closer than those of outsiders!)

- And that **bond** or that loving attachment of those who can be described as *brothers* or *sisters* is greater than the attachment of mere friends—it's greater than the attachment of being neighbors ... it's greater than **any other attachment**!

- These expression are very meaningful to us that have come to understand and appreciate our '**adoption**' as "*sons*" - and our sonship edification and education. (all of which you have already been taught about by the time you get to [Rom. 16:1]). [go back and get it, if you don't understand it]

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

Words: John Fawcett, 1782—Music: Johann Nageli (1773-1836)

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

* "*sister*" - 1 Tim. 5:2 *

- So we have the first phrase of (:1)
"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, ..."

- Next, we have the second phrase of (:1)
"... which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:"

- First of all—note that word "**which**" ... (shouldn't that be 'who'?)

- It's a common objection to the KJ Bible that to use "**which**" in such references as we have here, or elsewhere when referring to God, or to the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost as being an error, or at the very least a poor translation which must be corrected.

- And, in fact most all of the new English translations change the word "**which**" to 'who.'

- But this objection, (as well as many others like it), actually points up a person's own ignorance of the English language!

- The use of "**which**," or "**it**," or "**itself**" when speaking of a **person** is a special function of those words that is a part of the excellency of **style** of the English language. English carries the power to express something important and dignified by the use of neuter terms when speaking about a person of gender. This is NOT a mistake, nor is it inadequate: it's absolute, flawless accuracy.

- Because: when speaking of a person (gender specific), *it*, *itself*, and *which* can be used to indicate ESTATE, RANK, AND DIGNITY. (source: A Grammar of the English Language, by George Curme, Vol. II: Syntax, pg. 553)

- And in the case of Phebe—it's not a matter of her *estate* or *rank* that's in view—but it's her **dignity** ... **her dignified service** (as "*a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea*") ... it's her **dignified** service as an **Edificational Servant** that God wants to draw attention to—and that gets signified by that word "**which**" ...

... "**which**" tells the Roman saints that this woman named Phebe has been 'checked out' (so to speak) and they can rest assured that her *service* to them meets God's standards as a dignified, honored, and trustworthy Edificational Servant!

- So by changing the word from “*which*” to ‘who’ - you have NOT made the translation better; you’ve made it worse ... you have NOT made the translation ‘easier to understand’; you’ve made it harder to understand ... and instead of bringing more truth of God’s word to light; you’ve actually **obscured** the truth and light of God’s word!

I I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which ...

... is a servant ...

- And here we hit some more problems with the modern English translations ... with this word “*servant*”.

- Because it will be pointed out by modern translators that the Greek word for “*servant*” here is the word δῆακονος (diakonos), a noun in the Acc. Fem. Sing. ... meaning A DEACON!!! ... a **female** deacon!!! hence: a “**DEACONESS**”!!!

- And by doing so—you have just **violated** God’s own qualifications for being a deacon in a local church ...

- (see 1Tim. 3:8-13) = there are NO women deacons of a local church! The office of a deacon is restricted to MEN ONLY!

- (Now don’t get the ‘vapors’ here ...) — Phebe was NOT a deacon, she was a “*servant*” (just as the KJ Translators put it).

- In fact—the Greek word (diakonos) is rarely translated “*deacon*” in the Bible:

- Used 31x in the NT.

- “*minister*” 20x

- “*servant*” 8x

- “*deacon*” only 3x! out of 20!

- And—the basic meaning of (diakonos) = one who executes the commands of another; a **servant**; attendant, or minister; a waiter, one who serves food and drink (a waiter on tables).

- Phebe was a woman who was a member of the church at Cenchrea who was noted for her ‘service’ (no doubt, her sacrifice) for the saints in her assembly.

- A *servant* is a voluntary role—and as *the church which was at Cenchrea* was **not** a church of the “little flock” of the remnant of Israel—but rather was a body of Christ church as established by Paul and *gospel of Christ* committed to him by the *revelation of the mystery of Christ*—it can then be safely concluded that since the aim, goal, and objective of the church at Cenchrea was *godly edification which is in faith*, then we can say that Phebe was a *servant* unto Edification—godly, sonship edification!

- Phebe was an Edification Servant!

- And as a *servant*, Phebe must have functioned in one or more of those local church, body of Christ “*offices*” that we were taught about back in Romans 12:8— ‘*giving with simplicity*’ - ‘*ruling with diligence*’ (maybe she served in connection with the children or with other women in the assembly) - ‘*showing mercy with cheerfulness*’.

- We can only speculate—but whatever her *service* was, in the end, it was for the continuation of godly edification in her local church.

- Which says a lot about Phebe—she wasn’t just interested in getting ‘Bible data’ or ‘Bible trivia’ or even in Bible study for study’s sake ... but she was dedicated to godly edification—Thinking/Living/ and Laboring with God in all the He’s now doing ... she was actively engaged with real godly labor by Paul *commending* her to the saints at Rome as the *servant* that she was! (and she was willing to put her life on the line for it!)

[and to Helen’s point] - notice the juxtaposition of Phebe being *commended* by Paul (as one who was worthy of being accepted and fully trusted), which might give the erroneous impression that she was somehow **in authority OVER them** ... Phebe is also an Edificational *servant!* - she’s not in any authoritative office (like a ‘deaconess’) over them! [In other words, this isn’t an issue of ‘clergy’ vs. ‘laity’ - this is the issue of a BODY and how it operates—of *body* members functioning properly!]

- So we have (:1):

I (Paul) **commend** (as one worthy of your acceptance, attention, and trust)

unto you (which is a word we didn't look at, but "*unto*" also has significance rather than just saying "to" - when you use *unto*, generally you are emphasizing the degree of the relationship that you are having (to whatever the indirect object of the verb is), and you are especially emphasizing YOUR ACTION in connection with it—so by wording it this way, Paul is presenting Phebe to the saints at Rome indicating that they are going to be **taking some action** in connection with her! ... [you can have fun with this on your own])

Phebe our sister, (a member of the body of Christ with which we share a common family-type bond in a Living-Union Relationship)

which (signifying her dignified role regarding the Edification Process)

is a servant (not being in a position of authority over them as a 'deaconess', but simply, an Edification Servant—which is a biblically legitimate role for a woman to have in a local assembly)

of the church which is at Cenchrea (a coastal town [almost a suburb] just southeast of Corinth):

- Any questions / comment about (:1)?

- Since Phebe is the first of ten women mentioned in this List, it may be wise for us to at least take a simple and very brief survey (so to speak) of the role of women in the local church today.
[My God help us all!]

NOTE TO SELF:

- Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; 2:18; 2:21-24; 3:16; 11 (Babylonian pagan religions; Baal & Asherah—male & female reverse roles)
 - Isa. 3:1-5; 3:12; 3:16-17; 3:25
 - 1Cor. 11:1-10, 14; 1Cor. 14:34-35
 - Pastor/Bishop/Deacons—1Tim.3; Titus 1:6-9
 - What about Gal. 3:28?
 - Keith Blades' emails: E65 (p.3-6); D33
-

- 1st Clause:

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

- 2nd Clause:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you:

- “That ye **receive** her ...” - Phebe is to be “**received**”

- We’ve dealt with this issue of *receiving* another member of the body of Christ into fellowship and communion recently in Romans ...

... in 14:1 dealing with *the weaker brother*—*Him that is weak in the faith* **receive** ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

... in 15:7—*Wherefore* **receive** ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

- (You can get the details from those Lessons)

- Let’s remind ourselves of some things about that word *receive*:

- The English word *receive* can be used in a whole bunch of different ways, and in a range of ways— that is, it can be used in a more passive sense (or a less intense sense); and it can range all the way to a very **active** (or in a **highly intensified** sense).

- Generally & basically, *receive* = to take; to get; to take in; to take into one’s hand, or into one’s possession ...

... the ‘radical root’ issue to the word **receive**, (in our past passages, and in this one), is the issue of **admission** !

- And note: this is NOT talking about merely **welcoming** another member of the body of Christ to the assembly! (**It is that**—that’s a **valid** thing to do—but this is FAR MORE and MUCH MORE than that!)

- The major issue with the word *receive* in the context of Rom. 14:1; 15:7; and even on our passage with Phebe in 16:2 is the issue of **TO ADMIT INTO FELLOWSHIP** ! - and in Phebe’s case, they are to **admit** her into their fellowship in their local churches as one who has been “*commended*” (**authorized**) by God and by Paul to be there for a particular purpose and reason that’s for their benefit!

- And while every member of the body **is** to be ‘welcomed’ into the local church—the much more critical issue is that he/she be **admitted into the FELLOWSHIP** of the local assembly—and that word “**fellowship**” means a lot more than merely being allowed to sit in a chair/pew with the rest of the assembly!

- And it’s that “**fellowship**” concept that makes the word **receive** take on that more active, and intensified sense—because you’re NOT supposed to be *receiving another* member of the body in some **passive** way—rather **you are supposed to have fellowship with him—you are supposed to interact with him—and ultimately BE A HELP to him in the Edification Process (which is why you [and every other member of the local body] are honestly attending the local assembly for in the first place!**

- The local church is NOT supposed to be merely a fellowship of believers where being a ‘believer in Christ’ is the only thing that makes us ‘fellows’ (like the Moose; Masons; Elks; Odd Fellows; Rotary; or whatever)—[it is that, but it’s **far more** than that]

... the local church is a gathering of believers in Christ for a very particular KIND of “fellowship”! ... a fellowship of those of “*mutual faith*” (*Rom. 1:12*) ... and that “*mutual faith*” (or doctrine) is “*the fellowship of the mystery*” (*Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:8-10*).

- However, here, the context is a little bit different—because back in those previous verses we were dealing with *receiving* or ‘admitting’ another saint into the **permanent** fellowship of a local assembly strictly as another member of the body of Christ who was in that **weaker brother** situation ...

... but here—while the issue of ‘admittance’ into the local assembly **is** still valid—we have the added issue of Phebe coming to the saints at Rome, **not** as another permanent member of their local assembly—but rather, as another member of the body of Christ **from** another local assembly (at Cenchrea) who is coming to them **temporarily** under the direction of the apostle Paul with a particular pressing matter of importance for them—and with some specific **ministry** in which they are to Labor together with Phebe in some specific **business**.

- In other words—Phebe’s stay with them will only be temporary, but with some important *business* to take care of with them.
- And that makes the context of *receiving* Phebe just a little bit different than the *receiving* of Rom. 14:1 and 15:7.
 - because we’re not dealing with *the weaker brother* situation here—(Phebe wasn’t a *weaker brother/sister*) - which is what Rom. 14:1 & 15:7 are dealing with.
- Now, while this *receiving* is active and intense; (and the core, root element is one of **admission** into the fellowship)—there is a slight ‘shift’ in meaning due to the context—and that slight ‘shift’ is to **shift the focus of attention** from simply the ‘admission into fellowship’ concept to another issue or meaning that the word *receive* also carries—which is (granted) one of **acceptance**—fully **accepting** Phebe and her ministry to them - **with special focus and attention upon NOT REJECTING HER OR IT!** (her ministry to them)
- The word *receive* can be used in cases and situations where you want to stress the issue of NOT REJECTING a person and what they are there to do!
- And that’s the BIG ISSUE in *receiving* Phebe: DO NOT REJECT HER OR HER MINISTRY TO YOU saints there in Rome!
 - Every single saint/believer in the local churches and households in Rome were to see to it that they ALL (100%) *received* and admitted Phebe into their assemblies—but they were also to see to it that they all got the full (100%) benefit from her ministry-visit to them!
 - The emphasis (or special focus of attention) on the word *receive*, according to its **context** sitting in Rom. 16:2 is upon **NOT rejecting** Phebe (who carried the book of Romans to them), and **NOT rejecting** her ministry (of having them Labor together with her in God’s business of copying out and distributing faithful copies of the book of Romans).
 - [God has vested the preservation of His word in a multiplicity of copies ... NOT in any ‘original autograph’!]
 - (They are going to have the opportunity to function as those ‘other’ *apostles & prophets* in this disp. of grace.) **(SEE CHART)**

- Now—what you have presented to you here in all of this — is an example (or ‘ensample’) of how some **mutual edification** can take place, not *individually*, and not as one single local assembly ... but how **mutual edification** can take place **among other entire local assemblies** (or **many** local churches) in a given locale! (and that’s the issue for all the others mentioned in this List!)

- Your Father is giving you some insight and perception into how godly edification is to take place **among other churches** of the body of Christ!!

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her ...

... and notice that the saints in Rome were not only to *receive* Phebe and not reject her or her ministry to them ... but they are given **Fatherly Directive Details** (or **Fatherly Expectations**) of **HOW** they are to *receive her* according to who she is, and her ministry to them.

- And the Fatherly Directive Details for **how** they are expected to *receive* Phebe is in 2 Parts:

- **PART 1**: “*in the Lord*” - **PART 2**: “*as becometh saints*”

PART 1:

- “*in the Lord*” - this is the 1st time this phrase or expression is used in the book of Romans—but it won’t be the last ... it gets used a bunch of times from here down through (:22) ...

- (:8); (:11); 2x in (:12); (:13); and (:22)[List 2]

- And you will notice that the expression, “*in Christ*” gets used several times in connection with certain individuals as well:

- (:3) Priscilla and Aquila were Paul’s *helpers* “*in Christ Jesus*”.
- (:7) Andronicus and Junia were “*in Christ*” before Paul.
- (:9) Urbane was Paul’s *helper* “*in Christ*”.
- (:10) Apelles was *approved* “*in Christ*”.

- So—in Ch. 16, we have a total of 7x where the expression used to describe individuals is “*in the Lord*”, and 4x “*in Christ*”.

- (that expression “*in Christ*” is one that we’ve encountered a number of times in the book of Romans).
- So—what are we to make out of the use of both the expression, “*in the Lord*” and “*in Christ* [and in one case, “*in Christ Jesus*”]”?
 - Is there a critical and significant difference in the expression, “*in the Lord*” and “*in Christ*”?
 - Well, in all my work in studying this matter out—I have to admit that I have found that there is **no** critical or significant difference in the two expressions, per se ... (maybe I’m wrong, and maybe I’ll come to see the difference at some time) ...
 - ... to me, (as far as I’ve been able to determine), the two expressions basically are talking about the same thing—much like the expression, “*the day of Christ*” and “*the day of the Lord*” are talking about the same thing = the day of the Lord’s Wrath in the 5th Installment of the 5th CoP ...
 - ... but I **do** see that there is a 2-fold way in which **both** expressions can be used—that is, I see that the expression, “*in Christ*” can (and is) used in 2 different ways; and I see that the expression, “*in the Lord*” can (and is) used in 2 different ways ...
 - ... and I see those 2 different ways being used here in Rom. Ch. 16 (at least for “*in Christ*”, but not for “*in the Lord*”)
 - And here are the 2 ways that I see both expressions being used:
 1. “*in the Lord*” and “*in Christ*” can be used to express a person’s justification unto eternal life or salvation from the debt & penalty of their sin—that is, it indicates a person who is **saved** and no longer “*in Adam*”, but now “*in Christ*” or “*in the Lord*”.
 - And I see that the expression “*in Christ*” is used just that way in (:7) in the case of Andronicus and Junia—and in (:11) in the case of Narcissus’ *household* [because, apparently, not all of them were Christians].

- It does **not** appear to me that the expression, “*in the Lord*” is used in Rom. Ch.16 this way—but I **do** find the expression used this way in other passages in Paul’s epistles—such as in 1Cor. 7:39 *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only **in the Lord*** (i.e., to a man who is **saved / justified**)

2. “*in the Lord*” and “*in Christ*” can be used to express a saint’s (a justified person’s) **actions** as being consistent with not only who God has made them to be “*in Christ*” or “*in the Lord*” but also to indicate a justified person’s **actions** are consistent with the particular work or business that the Lord is doing at the present time in this dispensation of His grace.

- And when these expressions are used this way—the thing that makes me understand it this way is due to the **additional terminology** that accompanies the expression—like “receive her *in the Lord*” or “my helpers *in Christ Jesus*” or “my beloved *in the Lord*” or “our helper *in Christ*” ... and so forth ...

... and since we have here in (:2) the issue of receiving Phebe “*in the Lord*”, and this being one of the ways in which that expression is talking about the particular way (or course of action, work, and labor) that the saints at Rome are to *receive* her—(which would be this **2nd way** that the expression “*in the Lord*” is used) - we’ll focus now on that, and describe it a little more.

- But that’s my present understanding of these expressions.

- So—in Romans chapter 16—when the Fatherly Directive Details are given to the saints in Rome as to **how** they are to *receive* Phebe in light of her ‘*commendation*’ **and** her ministry to them—they are to: “*receive her **in the Lord***” - and it seems to me that that’s **not** describing anything about her justification (or their justification), rather, it’s expressing a mutual cause, work, laboring, or business that both Phebe and they are to engage in.

- Now—let’s describe the phrase, “*in the Lord*” as it’s used in this context a little more precisely:

- First—it’s interesting (to me, anyway) that the phrase, “*in the Lord*” as it’s used in the NT, is used almost exclusively by Paul—it’s almost an exclusively Pauline expression.

- The one, lone exception being Rev. 14:13.

- My understanding is that the expression “*in the Lord*” (in this context and in this 2nd type use) indicates **the Lord’s cause** ...

- it becomes a phrase or an expression used to indicate some particular **business** concerning what the Lord is **currently** doing (and what He is **now** doing that is wholly **different and distinct** from what He **was** doing in God’s program with Israel).

- it indicates what the Lord (Jesus Christ) is now doing in this present dispensation of grace and in accordance with “*the gospel of Christ*” according to “*the revelation of the mystery*” given to, and committed to the apostle Paul.

- And in this way—the phrase “*in the Lord*” may be taken to be akin to the term “*sake*” - such as back in Rom. 15:30 (*sake* = business).

- So—**Part 1** of the Fatherly Directive Details of HOW the saints at Rome were to *receive* Phebe—they are to do so ...

... “*in the Lord*” - that is, they are to recognize Phebe as coming to them on the Lord Jesus Christ’s *business* to them (nothing spooky going on; she’s not there to take control or take authority over them)—and they are to recognize the godliness of it; the importance of it; and the validity of it ...

... and then reciprocate or respond by receiving her, and **not rejecting** her or her ministry (or godly business) to them and with them.

- Now—**Part 2** of the Fatherly Directive Details of HOW they were to *receive* Phebe—they are also to *receive* her “**as becometh saints**”

- “**becometh**” = from “*be*” = *to make* (and used as an intensifier) + “*come*” = *moving towards or drawing near*—hence, to make one’s self move towards or draw near something.
- Walter Skeat = to attain to a state; suitable (to attain to a suitable state).
- OED = (III., #7) to agree or accord with; suit, befit, grace.
- Webster’s 1828 = to be suitable to and in accordance with a certain thing.

- Hence, to be perfectly suited with and consistent with, and worthy of ... **saints!**

- “**saints**” - a word we have had numerous times in the book of Romans.

- The Greek word *saints* (ἅγιοι) is the same word translated “*holy*” - hence, ‘holy ones’ - and indicates a person who is saved/justified unto eternal life.

- A *saint* is NOT a status that can only be conferred by the Roman Catholic Church! - where they make a distinction between a ‘believer’ and a ‘saint’! ... that is the NON-BIBLICAL use of the word ‘saint’!

- The biblical use of the word *saint* is to indicate **anyone** who is saved/justified and no longer ‘in Adam’, but ‘in Christ.’ (thus, by being justified, they are also sanctified and glorified ... hence, judicially ‘holy’ in God’s sight).

- But again, (context, context, context) ... in this context, by using this word at the **end** of the book of Romans, we’re not talking about brand-new *saints* ... we’re talking about justified, sanctified members of the body of Christ who have gotten their fundamental godly Edification!

- So (my understanding is), when God has Paul give this 2nd Part of the Fatherly Directive for How He expects the members of the churches at Rome to *receive* Phebe—it’s to be done “**as becometh** (or perfectly worthy of, suitable to, and consistent with them being the **edified**) **saints** (that they now are)!”

- And (in the context), what is worthy of, suitable to, and consistent with being *saints* AT THE END of the book of Romans means, they are to *receive* Phebe as ones who are acting, functioning, and operating in full accordance to & consistent with ALL 12 PARTS of *the Gospel of Christ* as found in the book of Romans! (all of Romans doctrine)!

- Which not only includes Rom. 1:1-12:2 ...

... but also, all of Rom. 12:3-15:33 ...

... (namely, in accordance with and consistent with the 4 Sonship Decision Making Skills [wisdom, justice, judgment & equity]; and with Godly Love and Charity)!!!

- Romans 16:2 (so far)

2 *That ye receive her* (and do **not** reject her or her ministry to you) *in the Lord* (as one who is coming to you on the Lord Jesus Christ's business), *as becometh saints* (and as justified, sanctified members of the body of Christ who have attained to the full godly Edification of Romans doctrine), ...

- Then, in the last part of the Fatherly Directive of How they are to *receive* Phebe, we have ...

... and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you:

- And really, there's nothing here that needs to be studied-out word-wise—it's all very clear and very understandable! (which may be a first, for us)

- But the thing to note here is that they were to *assist her* ... and Phebe's *business* was one that was in need of THEM! (that is, they are made aware of the fact that Phebe isn't just going to do something **for** them, but rather, **WITH THEM!**)

- Both Phebe **and** the *saints* in Rome were going to be involved with some **mutual** godly Labor ... and my thinking is, that that godly Labor was going to be the copying out of faithful copies of the book of Romans, and then seeing to it that those faithful copies were sent out & distributed among the other churches around the world.

- So that takes care of Clause #1 (The Opportunity to Labor); and Clause #2 (The Fatherly Directive to Labor) ... and that takes us to **Clause #3 (The Reason Why you Labor)**.

... for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

- Phebe was a *succourer* - which, to many in this declining stage of the English language, sounds like an insult!

- The word *succour* (in all of its various forms) only occurs 6x in the entire Bible.

succour 3x - 2Sam. 8:5; 18:3; Heb. 2:18 (speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself)

succoured 2x - 2Sam. 21:17; 2Cor. 6:2

succourer 1x - Rom. 16:2

- (total of 3 OT references; 3 NT references)

- Therefore the word *succour* is rarely used in the Bible, and is so rare (but not completely fallen out of use) today, that most people have no clue as to what it means—and since it kind of sounds like the word ‘sucker’, embarrassment alone has basically relegated the word to the scrap-heap of old, out-of-date, archaic English words. [**sadly!**]

- And, of course, **all** of the modern English versions of the Bible (at least that I have looked at) - 100% of them change the word *succour* to something else.

- As far as I have seen—all but one change the word *succour* to ‘help’ (or ‘helper’ here in Rom. 16:2).

- The one exception that I’ve found is the New Revised Standard Version, which changes *succourer* to ‘benefactor’ [which is even worse].

- And I can see how those modern translations would do that ...

... **see 2Cor. 6:2**—Paul is quoting from **Isa. 49:8**—and by comparison, the Bible itself does seem to (generally) define the term *succour* as “*help*”. (and that is, indeed, true).

- And we could look at the Hebrew word (azar—used in the 3 passages in 2Sam.) and the two Greek words (βοηθέω—used in 2Cor. 6:2 and Heb. 2:18) and (προστάτις—used in Rom. 16:2) - and we would find that all 3 words mean, (in their most basic sense), ‘to help’, a ‘helper’, and in the case of Phebe in Rom. 16:2 = a female ‘helper.’ [that’s about all the ‘help’ you get from the “Original Languages”!!!]

- However, we have the same old problem that we always have when confronted with an issue like this of word choice, or what I like to call, ‘vocabulary control.’

- And the problem is this: The King James translators had the word ‘help’ and ‘helper’ readily at their disposal ... in fact, they used the word ‘help’ a lot throughout the Scriptures ... so, once again, we can ask the question: What did they see in the **context** that would demand the use of *succour* or *succourer* instead of ‘help’ or ‘helper’?

- And that means that there must be something in the ‘**shade of meaning**’ of the word *succour* that the word ‘help’ does not have; and that would make *succour* the **more excellent** word to use in those 6 passages. [Let’s find out what it is!]

- “*succour*”

- Walter Skeat (Etymological Dictionary) = Coming down to us from the OF, MF, ME, and L.

- from the L. Prefix *sub* = under, up to + L. *currere* (which is where we get our word **current** from) = to **run**.

= hence, to **run** under, **run** up to, to **run** to the aid of; to assist; to relieve.

- (my comment): That issue of **RUN**, alone, gives us a ‘shade of meaning’ that *succour* has, that the word ‘help’ does not necessarily have.

- Of synonymous words like *help*, *assist*, *aid*, *succour*, *relieve* ... the word *help* is the most basic and general—(and some times, it’s way too broad for what the context of the Scriptures demands!!! (such as in the 6 times you find it in the scriptures!)

OED (n.)

1. Aid, help, assistance.
2. One who or that which helps; a means of assistance; an aid.
3. Military assistance in men or supplies; esp. auxiliary forces; reinforcements.
4. Shelter, protection; a place of shelter, refuge.

OED (v.)

1. To help, assist, aid (a person).
2. To furnish with military assistance; to bring reinforcements to; to relieve (a besieged place).
3. To relive or remedy (a state of want, weakness, etc); to relieve (a diseased condition).
4. To shelter, protect.
5. (Naut.) To strengthen, make firm or taut.

OED *succourer* (Obs. [ha!]) = One who, or that which aids or assists.
(Quotes: 1611 Bible, Rom. 16:2)

WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY: "Succor" (American Spelling)

- Literally, to run to, or run to support; hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering ...

= Aid; help; assistance; particularly, assistance that relieves and delivers from difficulty, want or distress.

= The person or thing that brings relief.

= He that affords relief; a helper; a deliverer.

CHARLES SMITH'S SYNONYMS DISCRIMINATED

- *Succour* relates to a condition of trouble or distress, and implies **celerity** (se-ler-i-ty = fast, swiftness of action) and **timeliness** in the aid brought. (which implies great discernment [added by me])

- GEORGE CRABB—ENGLISH SYNONYMES (1830)

TO HELP, ASSIST, AID, SUCCOUR, RELIEVE.

- *Succour*, in Latin *succurro*, signifies to run to the help of any one.

- (Of all these terms), *Help* is the generic term (therefore, *help* is the most broad and basic term—and very wide in meaning).

(Crabb continued) ...

- One of the ‘shade of meaning’ matters that *succour* carries is that while the word *help* indicates both, to produce a positive good, and/or to remove an evil ... *succour* focuses upon the **removal** of an evil.

- We *succour* a person who is in danger or distress.

- *Succour* is a species of **immediate** assistance (and *help*) of a person when he has met with an accident. (for example)

- *Succour* (like *relieve*) expresses the removal of pain.

- *Help, assist, aid, and relieve* may be applied to **things** as well as persons—*succour* is reserved strictly for **persons** (i.e., persons in danger or distress).

- To *succour* is an act of generosity or humanity.

- *Succour* is **timely**—*succour* is **timely** when it serves to ward off some kind of danger.

- So—with all this information—let’s come up with a ‘**Working Definition**’ of the word *succour* that fits with the context of Rom. 16:2.

- *Succour* = to speedily run to the aid of other members of the body of Christ who are in danger, want, pain or distress (or any condition that would thwart the edification process); and provide whatever is necessary to relieve such evil conditions, and to do so in a **timely** and **prompt** manner that allows as little suffering for the person as possible; warding off such ill-effects as “*fainting*” in the inner-man; and by doing so, allow for the godly edification process to continue on.

- And folks, that’s a whole lot more than just ‘to help’!!!
(see what the modern Bible scholars/translators missed?!?)
[isn’t it sad that the word *succour* has fallen out of use?]

- And this is what Phebe was (and this is WHY she is worthy of their fully TRUST)!

- **Interesting:** In the NT, only the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and Phebe are said [by name] to be *succourers*! [2Cor. 6:2]

- So—given the significance of the word *succourer*, what can we say about Phebe?
- Phebe understood/appreciated godly sonship edification was ***the priority*** of the Christian life!
- Phebe was full of **godly love & charity** (and operated upon it) — and she was full of **godly mercy** (and operated upon it).
- Phebe had a ‘track record’ of responding to other members of the body of Christ in danger, distress, and want or necessity.
- Phebe responded to such saints **quickly**, with **great speed** ... which indicates she had tremendous godly judgment! (she RAN to meet such needs)!
- And because she would ‘run’ to the need—Phebe had great courage; knew no fear; fearless!
- Phebe was **timely** and **prompt** to bring relief to other saints so that their godly edification would continue on ... and being **timely**, that means that she had great, godly intuition and **discernment** ... she could anticipate a situation arising where a saint might be tempted to ‘throw in the towel’ on their edification, and Phebe would go into action appropriately!
- Phebe: **AN EDIFICATION FIRST-RESPONDER!**

... and the rest of (:2) gives us even more details about Phebe ...
 2 ... *for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*

- Note: **“of many”** - Phebe didn’t just seek out the ‘celebrities’ of the faith (so to speak) - but she sought out **any & all saints!** — she would be just as quick to deal with a new believer; a *weaker brother*, all the way to Paul, himself!
- **“and of myself also”** - even the apostle Paul was a recipient of Phebe’s *succouring*!!!
- Do you now see that wrapped up in just that one word, “*succourer*”, is the reason WHY the saints at Rome should **“receive”** Phebe, and **“assist”** her [Labor with her] in her *business* with them? [copy out & distribute Paul’s epistle to the Romans!] ... it makes you wonder just what she did to *succour* the saints of Rome that would make it so that they would be freed-up to do this!?! ... amazing!

- (Phebe didn't just 'help' them!)

- I wonder—how many 'Phebes' we have here? [**men, too**].

- **OUTLINE: Part C: 16:3-16** - The Godly Labor of “greeting” and “saluting” the saints in godly Love & Charity.

- (read :3-16)

- This is the final section of that large portion of Romans that runs from 15:8-16:16 which deals with the First of the 2-Fold ways in which our Heavenly Father gives us some information that allows His adopted “sons” & “daughters” that have already received their solid and firm foundational Sonship Establishment, to GO ON and get the rest of their Sonship Education and Edification that will comprise the their sound Stablishment in the Paul's advanced epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

- This is the Third & final 'Part' of the **Godly Labor** issues that runs from Rom. 15:30-16:16.

- And it begins a series of Fatherly Directives to “greet” and “salute” the remaining List of individuals and churches and assemblies and households.

- And first up is *Priscilla and Aquila*.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

- And before we look at the details of (:3-5a), we need to first of all get a proper understanding and appreciation for some specific terminology: the difference between the two words “greet” and “salute” which will allow us to understand why in one case the word “greet” is used, and why in the other case, the word “salute” is used.

GREET VS. SALUTE

- In Romans 16, every instance of either "*greet*" or "*salute*" is the exact same Greek word—(so let's talk about that Greek word) ...

- ἀσπάζομαι = to draw to one's self; to salute, greet, bid welcome, wish well, receive joyfully, welcome.

- And because of this, most, (if not all), of the other modern English versions **standardize** the Greek word to mean only "*greet*" (they don't use the word "*salute*" at all in Romans chapter 16).

- But the KJ Translators (as well as translators of the English Bibles preceding the King James) understood and appreciated that there was something in the context that demanded the word "*greet*" in some instances, and the word "*salute*" in others.

- [aspazomai] is used 60x in the NT: salute 42x, greet 15x, embrace 2x, take leave 1x

- [aspazomai] = to pay respects to a distinguished person by visiting him; of those who greet one whom they meet in the way - a salutation was made not merely by a slight gesture and a few words, but generally by embracing and kissing.

- So you can see that by the definition of the Greek word, there are meanings that can account for **both**, the word *greet* **and** the word *salute* being a proper and appropriate translation.

- The only thing to note is: because the KJ translators used both terms, that means that the **context** at one point demands the word "*greet*" be used; and at another point, the word "*salute*" should be used.

- My understanding is that, given the context of Rom. 16 and the close, family-type 'Living-Union Relationship' that exists between the other members of the body of Christ listed, (and including the contributions made by Andronicus and Junia, who were part of the "Little Flock" of the remnant of Israel) - all of the *greeting* and *saluting* that is to be done by the saints in the churches at Rome, was to be done with all **joyful godly Love & Charity!** [all 7 features] - Godly L&C for both: 1) The saints themselves, and 2) The Edification Process (of which **all** of them were concerned with as a priority).

- (so that takes care of the Greek—the Greek really doesn't help us out much at all ... so let's focus upon the English words *greet* and *salute*, and it's there that we will find out the real meaning of what's going on in this section of scripture!)

"GREET"

- Of the two terms - *greet* is the broadest and more general term in meaning, and *salute* is the more specific.

- And of the two terms - *greet* is the one that is the more easy to recognize and understand.

- But it's important to note that both of these terms are very close in meaning! ... in fact, you will almost never find a dictionary defining the word *greet* without using the word *salute* in its definition - or vice versa.

- Dictionary definitions frequently have overlapping definitions where *salute* is used to define *greet*, and *greet* is used to define *salute* -- which makes getting to an understanding of the discriminating difference between the two very difficult ... (but not impossible).

- And it could be - based upon some definitions I've seen where *greet* is used when expressions of friendliness, goodwill, and cordiality are made when welcoming a person who has made some kind of a journey (however far or short) - and *salute* is used in a more formal sense of recognition of a person, but with no journey being involved ... [in fact, a journey was often slowed down by frequently 'saluting'.]

... it could be that the difference between *greet* and *salute* is simply the issue of:

GREET = identifies ones who have journeyed to Rome (however far or short the journey);

SALUTE = identifies ones whose residence was in Rome, or were native to Rome.

(... but does that work???) ... it may, but I think there's more to it than that.

OED - (Etymology) - The primary sense should be '*to call on*'

OED #3 = to address with the expressions of goodwill or courtesy usual on meeting; an expression of one's own friendly or polite regard.

OED #4 = to receive or meet with demonstrations of welcome.

- To visit awhile.

- *Greet* usually implies friendliness, goodwill, or cordiality; it is the precise word when **welcoming** is to be suggested.

- **Greeting is, (not exclusively), but most often done with words.**

WEBSTER'S 1828

#1 = to address with expressions of kind wishes.

SMITH'S SYNONYMS DISCRIMINATED

Greet is to salute(!) with some demonstration of personal feeling (joy!)

- either favourable, or unfavourable.

(CRABB'S deals little to nothing with the word *greet*.)

- **Working Definition**: To meet and welcome those who have made a journey to see you with verbal expressions of joy and goodwill in connection with their mutual zeal, enthusiasm, and dedication to the process of godly edification.

- ***An Important Point*** - just like it was critically important to recognize that those listed here in Rom. 16 ARE NOT listed as to **importance!** (i.e., from most important to least important; or one being more important than another - even Phebe wasn't 'more important' than the others; it's just that she had a more pressing matter at hand than the others **at that time**) ... well, it's also just as critically important to recognize that those who are to be "*greeted*" **are not more important** than those who are to be "*saluted*" - and those who are to be "*saluted*" **are not more important** than those who are to be "*greeted*" !

- That is NOT 'body' Thinking ... that's NOT 'body' Living ... and that's NOT 'body' Labor!

"SALUTE"

- Most often, the word *salute* is thought of in a military sense - in fact, we almost completely restrict the word to that use today (which is unfortunate) ... and due to the narrowing of the term *salute* over the years to this one meaning - we often become a little incensed whenever someone uses it (or does it) in a non-military sense.

- And unfortunately, the word *salute* has gone the way of many English words as the declining of the English language has taken place over the past 100 years or so - and like so many other words, *salute* has been narrowed into meaning nearly one thing only: a military, or military-like *salute*. (But such wasn't the case in 1611, in the Golden Age of the English language).

SKEAT'S ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY

- *Salute* is from the F. & L. = to wish health to, to greet(!)

- Other Etymological Dictionaries = to greet courteously and respectfully; to pay respects. [which begs the question: How do you pay those respects?]

OED 1. *Salute* = to accost or address with words expressive of good wishes, respect, or homage, esp. with some customary formula of that import; to greet with words.

2. To greet with some gesture or visible action conventionally expressive of respect or courteous recognition. To greet with a kiss.

(Military sense) = to pay respect to (a superior) by a prescribed bodily movement, the presenting of arms, or the like.

3. To pay one's respects to; to pay a complimentary visit to.

WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY

1. To greet; to hail; to address with expressions of kind wishes.

2. To please; to gratify.

3. To kiss.

4. (typical 'Military' sense)

- [note: to me, Smith's Synonyms doesn't shed much light on the word *salute* other than what you find in the dictionary definitions.]

CRABB'S SYNONYMES

- We *salute* our friends upon meeting them. (which agrees with the issue of: the one **making the journey** does the *saluting*.)

- (CRABB'S, continued)
 Goodwill or **intimacy** prompt men to *salute* others.
 Familiar people *salute* those with whom they are barely acquainted.

- At the outset—it may help to think of the use of *salute* as coming from the word **salutation**.

WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY

a *salutation* = the act of paying respect or reverence by the customary words or actions; **inquiring** of a person's welfare and **expressing** to them kind wishes.

- Notice that with a *salutation* there is an **inquiring** of a person's welfare ...

... therefore, *saluting* in the sense of a *salutation* requires an **inquiry!** (an "inquiry" is a search for some particular information or truth!) ... and this is a HUGE advance in our understanding of what "*saluting*" is—especially as God uses it in His word! (as we will see)

- All 13 of Paul's epistles begin with a *salutation*—[naturally, because Paul's letter are making the journey to other churches (Rom. - 2Thess.) or to other individuals (other Bishops and Deacons: 1Tim - Phlm.) — and the first thing Paul does in all of his epistles is to *salute* the recipients ...

... and we can gain a lot of understanding about '*saluting*' from them—and Paul also uses the word "*salutation*" at the end of 1Cor., Col., and 2Thess. [we'll come back to this later]

- And in understanding what *salute* is all about, we may get some help from, not only the word *salutation*, but also the word *salutary*—although we may be running a bit 'far afield' from the word *salute* —

- *Salutary* basically = conducive to health—and it has some of the following meanings:

- removing disorder; creating a healthy environment; beneficial; providing remedies; improving the condition of those who are in need of it; bringing a wholesome influence.

- So—what do we get out of all this when it comes to understanding what *salute* is all about?

= a courteous & respectful greeting; a paying of respects; to inquire of a person's welfare, and to express to them kind wishes.

- And most importantly = to make an inquiry in search for some particular information or truth.

- **Simply put:** a courteous, kind, and respectful declaration of one who has made a journey to visit another, whereby a polite inquiry is made for some particular information concerning the welfare of the one who is being *saluted*.

- Now, to me anyway, I don't get much help or satisfaction from those dictionary definitions as to the critical and discriminating difference between *greet* and *salute* ... so we have to look elsewhere.

- We have to look to God's word—and see what God Himself has to say about the word *salute*—and how God Himself thinks about it, and defines it!

- **Matthew 10:5-15 (read)**

- **Context:** the immediate intensification of the Climactic Stage of God's program with Israel - the Lord is going to commission and empower His apostles and disciples in connection with this intensification - and with the 'Accountability Factor' that the nation of Israel is now under based upon the Lord's previous ministry in the land up to this point.

- The intensification of Israel's program consists of the people and nation of Israel being held accountable for the "gospel of the kingdom" being preached to them; and knowing who Jesus of Nazareth is (the Christ), and what His ministry means to them (viz., the "signs of the kingdom" that have been performed in their midst means that "the kingdom of heaven" really is "at hand") - and this intensifying of their accountability is being brought upon the nation Israel as a whole; but especially upon the land of Galilee where the "light" is shining now at this point.

- At this point - the Lord has already made great inroads of His ministry into the many of the towns and cities in Israel - giving testimony (both verbal and by performing "the signs of the kingdom") that He is their Christ/Messiah, and that the Climactic Stage in their program had arrived ... the "kingdom of heaven" really IS "at hand" (just as the Lord said back in Mat. 4:17).

- And now— the Lord is going to commission and empower the apostles to go out to the cities and towns and preach that "*gospel of the kingdom*" being "*at hand*" - and to perform the "*signs of the kingdom*" ... and then they are to come back to the Lord and make a report to Him as to the Positive or Negative response they got.

- Then the Lord Himself will go into the areas and the cities and towns where they have gone - and (especially in connection with a Negative response); the Lord will end up pronouncing the "Woes" and the "Curses" against that place - [and you'll see that coming up in Ch.11].

- Here in Ch.10, the Lord will intensify Israel's accountability factor to 12 times! - a 12-fold intensifying of "the signs of the kingdom" and the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom" by sending out His 12 apostles (2x2) into places where the Lord has already been Himself.

- And we will see that the 12 apostles are going to give an 'initial' pronouncement of either "peace" or "no peace" upon a particular house or town or city that they enter in to. (Which gives the people of Israel another opportunity to 'repent' and change their mind before the Lord gets there in person).

(:5) - According to God's program with Israel, the Gentiles and the Samaritans are not going to be dealt with in the 4th Inst. of the 5th CoP (it's not their time yet), but rather after the Cross, and when the 5th Install. arrives.

(:6-8) - The Lord empowers the 12 to go out and intensify Israel's program.

- The 12 are going to perform those 'hallmark' signs of the kingdom.

- A lot of details could be looked at - but note 2 issues:

... for ex., "*cleanse the lepers*" - this hallmark sign of the kingdom, (according to the dictates of the Law), demanded that a person cleansed of leprosy present himself to the Priest in the Temple - and there's an elaborate 'prescription for cleansing' that he goes through - and at the end of it, there's a "testimony" that gets presented - (which is amazingly parallel to the Nation Israel's 'prescription for cleansing' that the Climactic Stage of Israel's program was to usher in)!

... "*raise the dead*" - this is a testimony of God visiting His people! (see **Luke 7:11-17** - [:17] "*this rumour of him*" = that God has visited His people!

- And (importantly) when the 12 did these things - they made sure that they gave testimony to the fact that they didn't do these things by their own power or in their own name ... rather they did these things by the power of, and in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ!

- What I'm after here is the simple matter that a 'saturation' of information (so to speak) has taken place in Israel BEFORE the 12 are sent out in Mat. 10 - and they are now going to see how that information has been received! [and you could say that by the time Rom. 16 gets written, there has been a fair 'saturation' of information concerning "the gospel of Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" throughout Asia Minor by Paul and his ministry!]

(:9-10) - the 12 apostles were to travel in this manner for the purpose of being able to clearly distinguish between the believing members of the Remnant of Israel from the persistent apostate element - and it's going to be able to allow for the 12 to discern that issue in the cities & towns they visit - (which will get reported back to the Lord) - and they can make an assessment; and make pronouncements that the Lord will then come along after them and act upon and enforce those pronouncements.

(:11) - by going into the city or town in the condition of (:9-10), they were actually providing for the believing members of the Remnant that were in these cities & towns already, to **manifest** themselves by responding Positively to these of the 12 (they went 2 X 2) - and to take care of them and provide them with their needs.

- And this also provides for the members of the Remnant to **disassociate** themselves from Israel's vain, religious system! (The "wedge" - "there was a division" John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19)

- (:11 - "**who in it is worthy**") - the 12 need a lodging - and that lodging is going to function as a kind of a 'base of operations' for them until they have dealt with everybody in the city or town.

- Obviously, the Positive responders will make themselves known to those of the 12 - and those apostles will inquire of those Positive members of the Remnant who is "**worthy**" to lodge them and make their residence a temporary 'base of operations' for them.

- It will most likely be a member of the Remnant that has already taken a **bold stand** for the gospel of the kingdom - and that's the guy that's "**worthy**." And they will stay there until they have driven that 'wedge' through that city or town.

- So now - beginning in (:12) - those 12 apostles (going 2 X 2) and having established themselves at a member of the Remnant's house as their 'base of operations' — they now go out into the city or town, and go from house to house — and depending upon the response they get, they are going to make some pronouncements in accordance with that response. (Keep in mind that these places have already been dealt with once already with "*the gospel of the kingdom*" and "*the signs of the kingdom*", and the Lord's own 'fame' ... and so the issue now is to hold them accountable for that, and to elicit or **manifest** what their response to all that is: either Positive "*worthy*", or Negative "*not worthy*").

- So what the 12 apostles are going to be doing is that they are going to pair up (2x2) and go from house to house - and by "*saluting*" that house, they are going to be able to determine by the response they get, if that house (and the members of that house) have an allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth as their Christ and to the "*gospel of the kingdom*" that's been preached to them - and having **believed** it, they are going to **stand** for it ... or if they are persisting in rebelliousness against the Lord and His gospel.

(:12) - the "*house*" here is not the house of the "*worthy*" one in (:11), but rather one of the many houses they will visit in their journeys to the cities and towns.

(:12) - they are to "*salute*" that house.

- The basic issue in *saluting* something (not in a military sense) - is the issue of pronouncing a "salutation" to it.

- And in declaring their *salutation*, they are going to knock on the door ... and when the door is opened to them, they first of all are going to make this *salutation* by **declaring their business** - declaring what their business is in coming to that house and knocking on the door in the first place.

- And, because it is a *salute* - they are going to be kind, polite, and bring their 'greetings' to that house ... but they're going to do it IN THE NAME OF WHO HAS SENT THEM: i.e., IN THE NAME OF JESUS OF NAZARETH (the Christ; the Son of the Living God)!

- (Note: this is why, in all 13 of Paul's *salutations*, he greets the recipients in the name of "***Jesus Christ***" - i.e., Paul writes to them on behalf of Jesus Christ and what His program for the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace is all about!)

- And depending upon the response they get to that *salutation*, they're going to immediately know if they are dealing with someone who has **believed** that "*gospel of the kingdom*" - or someone who is persisting in Israel's apostate, contrary, rebellious state and doctrine.

- And as a parallel issue - this kind of a *salute* is similar to the *saluting* going on in Romans 16—it's an **inquiry** as to a mutual belief in, and understanding and appreciation of their justification by grace through faith, and their sanctification (as adopted "sons" who are actively and positively engaged in their godly sonship education and edification).

- The 'parallel' issue is: when a *salute* is made - it's a pronouncement of greetings being passed on **in the name** of the one who sent them - ... and for us, members of the church the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace - it's the issue of greetings being passed on in the name of our Saviour (the Lord Jesus Christ), **the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ**.

- But in the case of those 12 apostles - the issue is that they are the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ - Jesus of Nazareth; the Son of David; the Christ, the Son of the Living God; Adonai Jehovah in human flesh.

- And when they "*salute*" the house (and when those in Romans 16 "*salute*" one another) - and when **we** "*salute one another*" in Rom. 16:16 - that issue of "*saluting*" **consists of 3 things:**

- When you "*salute*" in this sense, you declare or pronounce:

1. Who they (or you) are;
2. Who they (or you) represent;
3. What they (or you) are doing there. (stating what their business is)

- And then in **Mat. 10:13-14**, (simply put), the 12 apostles were to make a pronouncement to either the Positive or Negative response they get - and the issue with either their *peace coming upon* the house, or their *peace returning to them* - is the issue of putting a 'mark' (so to speak) upon the house - (a mark of their Positive response; or a mark of their Negative response) - and they were given the power to do that.

- NOTE THAT: **Luke 10:5-6** gives further details about this - **they will literally say**, "*Peace be to this house*" ... and by that initial *salutation*, that gets the 'ball rolling' (so to speak), and then the people of that house will ask what that's all about ... and it's then that the apostles will get to render the rest of their *salutation* concerning: 1. Who they are; 2. Who they represent; and 3. What their business is (or what they are doing there).

- And in (**Mat. 10:15**) - to those who have responded negatively, the 12 were to perform a gesture of disgust and disassociation ... and then after they are done, the Lord will go back to those cities and towns again, and based upon the 12's pronouncements, He will **enforce** their pronouncements with a '**curse**' on those who responded Negatively - the Lord will pronounce certain "**Woes**" that will indicate how He will deal with that city/town out in the day of judgment (the Day of the Lord's Wrath).

REVIEW AFTER FALL BREAK

- Why does God have the apostle Paul include this List of people in Romans 16:1-16 in the book of Romans (which is the doctrine of our fundamental godly edification)? ... why include a list of people who have been dead for over 2,000 years? What possible significance is there in this List for us, today?

- #72 (Summary Statement)

- How will you benefit from this List?

- #73

- Why is Phebe mentioned first?

- What is the significance of Phebe being "*received*" rather than 'greeted' or 'saluted'?

A: "*receive*" focuses attention upon NOT REJECTING her or her ministry to the Roman saints.

- What is Phebe's *business* that the Roman saints are going to *assist* her in?

- What does it mean when Scripture says that Phebe is a “*succourer of many, and of myself also*”? ... what does *succour* mean?

- #74

- In Rom. 16:3-16, we have a series of people where some, on the one hand, are to be *greeted*, and on the other hand, where others are to be *saluted*.

- What’s the difference between the word *greet* and the word *salute*?

- **GREET**— #62 (Journey to the person)

#63 (Working Definition)

- **SALUTE**— #64 (Summary of Dictionary Definitions)

#65 (3 Things you do when you *salute* in the sense of a *salutation*)

- END OF REVIEW.

- Now, one thing we didn’t get done in our last lesson is to get a ‘**Working Definition**’ for the word *salute* that fits the **context** of our Romans 16 passage.

- **SALUTE**

Working Definition:

- **Note:** Even though we looked at the way in which the 12 apostles were to “*salute*” the houses they went into [with those 3 Things] over in the book of Matthew, I don’t want to give you the impression that we have to make sure we do those 3 Things as well ...

... in other words, I don’t want to make it a rigid rule (so to speak) where we impose those 3 Things as some kind of ‘legalistic’ matter ...
... because that’s **not** the issue for us as members of the body of Christ in this present disp. of grace at all.

- Truth is—if you do a proper *salute* in the form of a *salutation* as a member of the body of Christ today, those 3 Things will almost naturally come out of your conversation in some manner or form.

- In other words, I don’t want you to think that you HAVE to say those 3 Things in the order we looked at them as some rigid legalistic formula.

- And the reason for that is because **we** are dealing with **both**, a different program or dispensation in Romans from that in Matthew; and we are dealing with an entirely different context ... we're **not** looking for either a Positive or Negative response ... we're doing something different with our *salute* ... we're doing something in connection with godly edification of the BODY!

- The ones in this List in Rom. 16 (and us today) are doing a 'Body Salute' (so to speak) - we are *saluting* other members of the BODY of Christ—and what we **say** to each other in our *greeting* and *saluting* isn't primarily for (or just for) our benefit or our hearing—but rather, it's part & parcel of our making that "*shew*" (by our *conversation*) to the angelic realm [1Cor. 11:26; Col. 2:15] ... and especially making an impact upon the Adversary (Satan) and his cohorts!

- Now—with all that said—I do believe that being aware of the 3 Things that a proper *salute* consists of (in the form of a *salutation*)—[1. Who you are; 2. Who you represent; 3. What you are doing there (stating your business)] is a great help to us—because we will be aware that somewhere in our *saluting* other saints ... somewhere in our conversation, those 3 Things most likely will be stated in some manner or form.

- (Any questions about this?)

- So—when it comes to a 'Working Definition' of ***salute*** for us as members of the Body of Christ in this disp. of grace in which we live; and in view of the **context** of Rom. 16 ...

- Working Definition: "*Salute*" is a salutation by a saint who has journeyed to another whereby information is passed on and inquiry is made concerning "mutual faith" and godly edification according to Pauline doctrine, **thereby establishing instant fellowship, communion, and concord.**

- And note that that last part of the Working Definition tells you **WHY** we are to *salute* one another—(as we will be told to do in [:16]) ... because by this *salutation* we immediately establish instant fellowship, communion, and concord between distant members of the BODY (the body of Christ that we are)! ... and do so to the chagrin of the Adversary and his cohorts!

- And in that way, it becomes a means by which, through our mutual godly sonship edification and Body Interaction: godly edification **moves from us** as individuals, to other members of the body in our local assembly, **and on to other local churches in our locale ...** [and if it works properly], godly edification **moves on to the ENTIRE Body of Christ still alive over the entire earth!** [amazing]

- Now—when taken together—when you take the issue of *greet* and *salute* together (in their ‘Working Definitions’ that correspond to the program God has for us in this present disp. of grace **and** in the **context** of Rom. 16) ... what you have going on is a God-designed INTERACTION of the BODY (the Body of Christ) that **generates** a **conversation** to take place here on earth surrounding our “mutual faith” of “the gospel of Christ” committed to the apostle Paul according to “the revelation of the mystery” of Christ!

- and that **interaction** takes place by our *greeting* and *saluting* which immediately establishes instant fellowship, communion, and concord among the members of the body!

- And that **conversation** will NOT remain on the earth, but in Level II, Sonship Edification & education, it is designed to **leave** the earth and **enter** the heavenly realm where it will make its **ultimate impact!**

- see 2Cor. 1:8-12 [:12] ... [:8] = **an Essential Doctrine**

- Gal. 1:13

- Eph. 2:3; 4:22

- Phil. 1:27; 3:20

- 1Tim. 4:12

- Simply put: our *greeting* and *saluting* one another is an **interaction** of the Body of Christ (Body Interaction) that **generates** a **conversation** that God **wants** to take place—and that has **great power** connected with it for making an **impact** upon the heavenly places. (For both the holy angels and for Satan and his angels.)

- From this godly Interaction—and the *conversation* it generates—we can express our Positive & Proper response to the doctrine contained in the Pauline curriculum for our Sonship Edification ... and as such, we are **MARKED** as worthy and loyal ones to our Father and **not** as collaborators with the Adversary and his wisdom/Policy of Evil!

- And, from this godly **interaction** and the *conversation* it generates—we are building a ‘**stronghold**’ of godliness (and ‘**strongholds**’ of godliness) on this earth ...

... we are building ‘strongholds’ of godly Sonship Edification, and a ‘Culture of Christ’!

- And in view of that—when taken together—*greeting* and *saluting* one another (and the ‘strongholds’ it generates) is how we will function as a BODY out in *the creature* ... the **new creature** of the church, the body of Christ! [This is ‘vocational training’ for our role and function in *the creature*!]

- This *greeting* and *saluting* and the *thanksgiving* that comes from it REDOUNDS to the Glory of God!
(see 2Cor. 4:13-16)

- It should also be noted how that by this *greeting* and *saluting*, (which establishes instant fellowship, communion, and concord) - how that God has designed this body-function (Operation of God) of the church, the body of Christ to ward off strife, division, and schism in the body!

- [And I don’t say this as just a ‘footnote’ to this doctrine—it’s HUGE issue in prevention of these disastrous matters that “*destroy the work of God*”!]

- So when a saint journeys to meet you—you ***greet*** them—you welcome them of “mutual faith” with expressions of joy and goodwill in connection with their mutual zeal, enthusiasm, and dedication to the process of godly edification according to Pauline doctrine.

- And when you have journeyed to meet another saint—you ***salute*** them—you give a salutation to them of “mutual faith” by passing on information and making inquiry concerning godly edification according to Pauline doctrine; thereby establishing instant fellowship, communion, and concord.

- Any questions / comments about *greet* and *salute*?

- We should now be ready for Priscilla and Aquila in (:3, 4, and 5a).

- Priscilla and Aquila (:3-5a)

- Priscilla and Aquila are great examples/ensamples for us as to what real Christian/body of Christ/edification/*helpers* and **heroes** (or role-models) are all about!

- Priscilla is a woman, and Aquila is a man—and they are husband and wife. (some say that “*Aquila*” = eagle; “*Priscilla*” = little old lady) - so, they are also great ensamples of what godly Christian **marriage** is all about! [a **man** and a **woman**!]

- They are a great ensample as to what a Christian married couple can accomplish when they have taken their godly edification seriously!

- You find them at work (in the background) - not trying to build a ‘mega-church’ — but always getting an local assembly going right in their own house—wherever they end up living!

- It’s fascinating to see their commitment to getting the message of *the gospel of Christ* according to *the revelation of the mystery out to the world*!

- They are fully committed to Paul and to *the gospel of Christ* committed to him—committed to getting *the mystery of Christ* out; and to getting godly edification according to Pauline doctrine communicated to the whole world!

- Priscilla and Aquila (along with Phebe) are described in Rom. 16 in more detail than others in the List.

- We have them described in (:3, :4, and 5a).

- And note (grammatically) that we have one complete sentence in (:3-4), and one complete sentence in (:5a).

- Priscilla & Aquila are mentioned in 6 passages of scripture:

1. Acts 18:1-3
2. Acts 18: 18
3. Acts 18:26
4. Rom. 16:3-5a
5. 1Cor. 16:19
6. 2Tim. 4:19

- (see the first mention of them in **Acts 18:1-3ff**)

- (:1) - notice where P/A were living when Paul found them: **Corinth!**

- (:2) - notice that Aquila was a Jew—(a born Jew; a Jew by birth) - but Priscilla was either a Jew by birth as well, or she was a Gentile ‘proselyte’ [a Gentile who converted to Judaism].

- (:2) - Aquila (and maybe Priscilla; maybe not) was born in Pontus, which was a country in N. Asia on the S. border of the Black Sea.

- and Aquila was “*lately come from Italy*” - so he had moved from Pontus to Italy (and very likely, Rome itself).

- So why are P/A now in Corinth? ...

“... *(because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:)*”

- Claudius Caesar was the Roman Emperor at this time. [Caligula; Claudius; Nero]

- Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. [what kind of hardship was this?]

- So they go from Pontus to Rome, and now to Corinth. [and they will end up going to Ephesus, then back to Rome—and at the end of Paul’s ministry, they end up back in Ephesus!]

- and after meeting up with Paul in Acts 18—everywhere they go, they end up having a ministry and establishing a local assembly in their house!

- And by all indication, they were faithful Jews—which means they were tracking along with God’s program with Israel (the Law) - albeit, they had not become justified/saved yet.

- (:3) - “*tentmakers*” - it’s traditionally held that Jewish fathers would teach their sons a ‘trade’ - because they thought that if their sons didn’t learn a trade, they’d end up a thief!

- And note: the issue of a TENT is a BIG DEAL in God's OT word to Israel and to an Israelite!

- God Himself dwelt in a 'tent' (the tabernacle);

- Abraham dwelt in a 'tent' - and as Heb. 11:10 says, Abraham "*looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" - [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob didn't do what Cain did—which was, in complete rebellion to God, to build a city—which eventually, through Cain's seed, would become Babylon!] ... Abraham looked for the City of God!

- So, Paul is dwelling with P/A in Corinth—and what do you suppose they talked about?

- (:4-5) - So when Paul was in the Jews' synagogue—he was trying to convey to them that "*Jesus was Christ*" (their Messiah) - which would give him an 'open door' to present Jesus Christ as the Redeemer who would suffer and die and be **resurrected**! (no doubt using such passages as Psa. 16; Psa. 22; Isa 53)

- (:6) - "*Gentiles*" - Paul declares his Gentile ministry and his apostleship to the Gentiles; and his being a *minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles*!

- So A/P hear all this! ... and become believers!

- (:7-8) - P/A were, no doubt, among those "*many of the Corinthians*" who heard and believed Paul's message.

- (:9-10)

- And note (:11) - Paul was there for a year and a half! — P/A would be firmly established in their fundamental godly edification!

- (:12-16) - the Jews attempt to shut down Paul's ministry.

- (:17) - Sosthenes was probably the guy that took the place of Gallio, ... and Sosthenes gets saved!
(*"Sosthenes our brother"* 1Cor. 1:1)

- (:18) - P/A go with Paul!

- (:19) - P/A go with Paul to Asia (Syria) - and then go with Paul on to Ephesus where Paul leaves them.

- skip to (:24-26) - note how P/A put God's word and God's purpose for this disp/grace into effect in ALL of the details of their life! ... they determined to make godly edification according to the *revelation of the mystery* the CENTER of their life—and all other details of their life were determined by THAT!

- P/A responded Positively and Properly! (they didn't just believe the doctrine, but they also made sure that the doctrine was doing its job—they took that doctrine and did with it exactly what that doctrine told them to do with it!)

- **Back to Rom. 16:3**—(P/A are now back in Rome when Paul says what he does in Rom. 16:3ff)

- **“Greet”** - so P/A are there in Rome, and they will come and visit with the other saints in the other churches & assemblies in their locale there in Rome ... and when they do: Paul says, ‘Make sure you GREET them.’

- Make sure you: Welcome them of “mutual faith” with expressions of joy and goodwill in connection with their mutual zeal, enthusiasm, and dedication to the process of godly edification according to Pauline doctrine.

- **“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my HELPERS in Christ Jesus:”**

- What a fantastic ‘moniker’ to have? right?
 - They were *helpers* in all ways of getting the message of *the gospel of Christ* committed to Paul out to the world! (and it didn't come cheap!)...

- (:4) **Who have for my life laid down their own necks: ...**

- To “*lay down the neck*” is to put your own head on the chopping block! — they put themselves in great danger—they probably lodged Paul in their house when he was being persecuted, which put themselves (and their family) in imminent danger. [risked their life! for the gospel of grace; revelation of the mystery; right division!]

- (Note: the scripture doesn't say exactly when or where this was, but there are several possibilities [Acts 18] ... you can have fun with that!)

- (:4) - Clause #3 - ***“unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”***

- Notice that phrase, ***“unto whom”*** - if you’re not careful in reading this, you’ll think that Paul and the *churches of the Gentiles* are giving God *thanks* for P/A ... but that’s not the case. (although, no doubt they **did** do that)!

- ***“unto whom”*** indicates that the *thanks* is going ***TO*** P/A!

- And P/A are ‘*thanked*’ by Paul himself (viz., “*not only I give thanks*”) ... and P/A are also to be ‘*thanked*’ by ***ALL the churches of the Gentiles!*** ...

- Paul himself gives *thanks to* P/A for all their *help!*

... and that’s to make a **deep impact!** ... Paul himself was so *helped* by P/A’s work and ministry **TO** him, that he singles them out for ***“thanks”*** — P/A are the **only** ones in this List that are ***“thanked”!***

- And we can only speculate on what all they did to *help* Paul ...

... risking their lives (probably repeatedly);

... leading the lost to Christ—presenting *the gospel of Christ* according to **Paul’s** gospel (“*my gospel*” *Rom. 2:16; 16:25; and 2Tim. 2:8-9* *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.* [in part; because P/A were constantly presenting it! - and constantly suffering for it!])

... establishing churches in their house to be ‘Pauline’ churches, [churches of the Body of Christ - dispensational churches that ‘*rightly divide the word of truth*’ with Paul (not with Peter) - churches that don’t **stop** with ‘right division’, but **go on** to being *edified unto godliness which is in faith* as “sons” with the Pauline curriculum];

... being approved ones themselves [even though that word isn’t attributed to them here, it’s very apparent that they were ‘approved’ ones—such as in the case with Apollo], they *helped* out in the edification others and ‘*expounding the way of God more perfectly*’;

... they no doubt *helped* Paul financially with their tent making trade - working along side Paul in the trade in order to meet Paul's necessity [giving him lodging?];

... they accompanied Paul which gave Paul companionship and fellowship and communion;

... they stood firm and steadfast in Pauline doctrine [the gospel of Christ according to the mystery], even to the point of risking their lives for it;

... they were companions with Paul in his suffering and defaming;

... they were willing to move their entire family to wherever it would most benefit Paul's ministry and apostleship to the Gentiles - (which is, in itself, most amazing since Aquila was a Jew);

... perhaps they functioned in the role of one of those other 'apostles' or 'prophets' copying out and distributing Paul's epistles to other churches;

... perhaps they did 'advance' work in preparation for Paul's arrival in certain cities; or maybe they did *helpful* work after Paul departed from certain cities;

... and there may be many other things P/A did for Paul to *help* insure his successful ministry to the Gentiles.

- But in all this—Paul says in (:4) that it's "*unto whom*" (unto P/A) that I owe my **thanks**! And for the apostle Paul to say that about YOU is an HONOR beyond description!

- But that's just the half of it—because **all** the churches of the Gentiles (**ALL** of them) owed P/A *thanks* as well ... and that's true from that time, all the way down through history, and up to and including Triangle Bible Church!

Priscilla and Aquila functioned as Paul's *helpers*; as **evangelism helpers**; as **EDIFICATION HELPERS!** **deserving of ALL of our THANKS!**

- “*thanks*” - I know you know what *thanks* means—but since this is the only time Paul uses it in this List, (and since it is very easy just to ‘gloss’ over this term and not give it much attention) - I do want to point out something significant about the word *thanks* ...

- What does “*thanks*” mean? = being grateful.

- WEBSTER’S 1828—To express gratitude for a favor; to make acknowledgements to one for kindness bestowed.

- SKEAT—(tracing the origin of the word *thank*) Skeat demonstrates that the word *thank* is traced back to the word *thought*—and then Skeat says, “The primary sense of ‘thought’ shows that [*thank*] is closely allied to **Think**.”

- So, far from being a word that is so often used today where it just becomes a word of ‘politeness’ more often than not ...

... when you *thank* someone, far from being a simple, even thoughtless polite term that is only used to show others that you have ‘good manners’ ...

... truth is, (if used correctly), when you *thank* someone, you are THINKING about them—(thinking **a lot** about them or what they have done for you)!

- And if you are truly ‘*thankful*’ ... you are, therefore, **full of THOUGHT** concerning them and their actions toward you!

- Largely, “*thanks*” is a thought-**less** expression as it’s commonly used today!

- And when you are *thankful* and ‘**full of thought**’ about a person, you’re grateful for them; you have gratitude for them ... and if you’re properly *thankful* and grateful for something **you respond to it**, you **respond in a very positive manner** - you **carry on** with the help/work/assistance they gave you! ... you desire to do something in return—to **contribute** to the *help* you’ve been given.

- You don’t just say, “*thanks*” and then give no thought to it; or take no further action toward it—you don’t just get a gift and say, ‘Thanks!’ and then toss it in a pile of other stuff! (or quickly forget about it!) real *thanks* is **NOT** forgotten!

- So when Paul says in Rom. 16:4 that in view of P/A being Paul's helpers in Christ Jesus: *Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.* ...

... the great apostle Paul, himself, along with ALL of the other churches of the Gentiles (all the other members of the body of Christ) owed P/A their "**thanks**" — that means that they ALL were to be THINKING about them and the *help* they gave ...

... it was NOT to be forgotten! ...

... and they were ALL supposed to make sure that they **carried on** with the *help*, the work, and the assistance of Priscilla and Aquila to the body of Christ and to Paul!

- (:5a) *Likewise greet the church that is in their house.*

- When the members of P/A's *church that is in their house* meet you, "**greet**" them, too—(see Working Def. of GREET).

- Note that there is a HUGE ISSUE contained in this short sentence—tucked away in this little passage is a marvelous and powerful doctrinal issue ... do you see it? ...

... greet the **CHURCH** that is in their **HOUSE** ... see the word **church** and the word **house**? ... the **church** is IN their house ...

- This little sentence tells you that, doctrinally, **THE CHURCH IS NOT A BUILDING!!!** (there is no 'sacredness' or 'holiness' in **any building** today in this disp/grace! no matter how much stained glass!)

- Even when Paul says, over in 1Tim. 3:15 *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* — the "house of God" and the "church of the living God" **IS NOT A BUILDING!**

- The "*church*" is the believing members of the body of Christ—and they can gather themselves together **within** a building! (**You're** the house of God; **You're** the church!)

- (read :3-5a again) — Any thoughts / comments about Priscilla and Aquila?

- **Romans 16:5b** *Salute my wellbeloved Epäenetuſ, who iſ the firſtfruits of Achaia unto Chriſt.*

- When you go [journey] to ſee *Epäenetuſ* — SALUTE him. (he'll GREET you; and you SALUTE him back)

- (ſee Working Def. SALUTE—Make ſure you give this one of “mutual faith” a ſalutation by paſſing on information and making inquiry [exchanging information; interacting with a member of the body; generating a ‘converſation’] concerning godly edification according to Pauline doctrine; thereby eſtabliſhing inſtant fellowſhip, communion, and concord.)

- “*Epäenetuſ*” = praiſeworthy (one and only time he's mentioned in the Bible)

- He iſ ſaid to be “*the firſtfruits of Achaia unto Chriſt.*”

- My understanding iſ that “*firſtfruits*” iſ not being uſed to draw back upon the doctrine of ‘firſtfruits’ contained in the OT Law—but rather, “*firſtfruits*” iſ being uſed in it's baſic and fundamental ſenſe = the earlieſt (or firſt) of the fruit gathered or harveſted at the end of a ſeaſon; the earlieſt products, reſults, or iſſueſ of anything; the firſt products of a man's work or endeavor.

- Therefore Epäenetuſ waſ among the very firſt convertſ to Chriſt (or firſt to get ſaved/juſtified) by Paul preaching the goſpel of Chriſt in Achaia.

- Whether he waſ actually IN Achaia when he got ſaved, or (aſ ſome ſuggeſt) he may have been in Ephēſuſ when Paul waſ there and got ſaved in Ephēſuſ—I'm not ſure of—but I am ſure that of all thoſe who got ſaved who were from Achaia, Epäenetuſ waſ one of the very firſt won to Chriſt.

- Now—ſome may ſay, ‘But what about Stephanas mentioned over in 1Cor. 16:15? ... humm? ... look! I found a contradiction in the Bible! How can Rom. 16:5 ſay that Epäenetuſ waſ the *firſtfruit* when 1Cor. 16:15 ſayſ that Stephanas waſ the *firſtfruit* from Achaia? ...

... well, by ſaying ſuch a thing, you haven't proven that there iſ a contradiction in the Bible—you've only proven that you're an idiot!

- First of all, read carefully—it doesn't say that Epaenetus was the '**firstfruit**' [singular] unto Christ—it says he was "*the firstfruitS*" [plural]! which means he was AMONG the very first who got justified—he wasn't the ONLY one, there were others saved at the exact same time in Stephanas' house.
- (see 1Cor. 16:15) - notice that it was the "*house*" [or **family**] of *Stephanas, that is the firstfruits* [plural] of *Achaia*.
- It's quite possible that Epaenetus may have been a member of Stephanas' family or household.
- And if Epaenetus was the only one of Stephanas' *house* or family now at Rome, it's quite natural and normal to say he is "*the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.*" - i.e., he was one of that family to receive Christ as his only and all-sufficient Savior in that country. simple, right?
- Admittedly, we don't know much about Epaenetus, but we do know some things about him by one word in our passage—and it really tells us a lot!
- And what is important about Epaenetus is the way Paul describes him ... "**my wellbeloved**" - and note that word "**my**" - he was **Paul's** "*wellbeloved*"! - in fact, Epaenetus is the ONLY person in all of Paul's epistles that is referred to as "*wellbeloved*"!
 - "*wellbeloved*" - used 2x in the OT (Sos 1:13; Isa. 5:1)
 - used 3x in the NT (Mar. 12:6; Rom. 16:5b; 3John 1)
- Interesting—a person can be: loved; beloved; and wellbeloved.
- *Wellbeloved* is a triple compound word: "*well*" + "*be*" + "*loved*" - (actually, it's the word *beloved* with the word *well* used as a prefix.)
- First, let's remember what **beloved** means:
 - **beloved** = our English Prefix "be" = make or made, and is used as an '**intensifier**' - hence, it is one who had been made to be GREATLY or INTENSELY Loved (as opposed to, and set apart from objects of love in a more general sense) — it means **greatly or highly valued & esteemed**.

- That is, there are those who are objects of your love in general, but then there are those who are of such a nature as to be especially 'pleasing' to you, or are 'highly approved' by you.

- But our English language has the means to be able to go a step above/beyond *beloved* by attaching the word **well** to the front of it.

- *Well*, when used as a prefix expresses what is right, fit, laudable, or not defective, favorable.

- And in this case, it expresses a person (Epaenetus) who is so rightly fit as one who is so useful to Paul and his ministry that he is **most** highly valued and esteemed that he, (rightly so), should be singled out for being so highly profitable to Paul and his ministry.

- Epaenetus isn't just "loved" by Paul; or "beloved" ... but he's "*wellbeloved*" ... he's **Paul's** "*wellbeloved*"!

- And while we don't know any of the details—just by this one word we know that he must have so positively and properly responded to "the gospel of Christ" preached by Paul—and the very *image* of Christ had been so formed in him by Pauline doctrine—that he deserved credit for being an ensample of what godly edification can do—(he had gone from being a 'babe' in Christ at the point of salvation, to a properly Established adopted "son" of God!) - and that tells us a lot!

- Also—as a side note—notice the Bible uses all 3 of these words: *loved*, *beloved*, and *wellbeloved*—which indicates that there is a LOT OF JUDGMENT AND JUDGING associated with "love"!

- Far from the dumb and insipid way that the evil wisdom of this world thinks: [i.e., that 'Love doesn't judge!'] ... Wrong! Godly love is highly judgmental and discriminates!

Phil. 1:9—And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

- Any thoughts / comments about Epaenetus?

Romans 16:6 *Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.*

- When Mary comes to see you: **GREET** her!
- The Bible records a lot of Marys (Mary was a very common name, even back when the Bible was still being written)—this Mary was probably a resident of Rome (although she may not have been native to Rome; she may have come to reside in Rome from some other place in Asia Minor)—and it's most likely that she was **not** “Mary” the mother of the Lord, or “Mary Magdalene” mentioned in the gospel accounts.
- This is an altogether different “Mary” that I understand to be a member of the “new creature” of the church, the body of Christ.
 - (she had become saved by Paul's gospel)
- Mary evidently traveled some, too, (like Pricilla & Aquila) - and the reason why I say that is because of what Paul says about her ... she “*bestowed much labour on US.*” — the “**us**” would include the apostle Paul himself. [Mary has already met Paul in person!]
- So I gather from that, that Mary may have *laboured* with Paul down in Corinth (perhaps), or maybe Antioch, or in some other place where Paul ministered—but now she was residing in Rome.
- And just as she had *bestowed much labour* on Paul and his team/associates—she will, no doubt, ‘bestow much labour’ on the other saints in Rome. (she will be just as helpful to them as she was to Paul)
- But what I find fascinating about Mary are the 6 words Paul uses to describe her: “*who bestowed much labour on us*” ...
 - Mary **bestowed** *much labour on us*—this is the only time in Romans that the word *bestowed* is used.
 - ***bestowed*** - to *bestow* = to give, confer, or impart; with a sense of gratitude (godly Love & Charity—which is borne out by CRABB = “*bestow* is an act of **charity** or generosity”). .. For Mary, it was a labour of LOVE!

- CRABB (continued) ... Favours, **kindness**, and pecuniary (financial) relief are the things *bestowed*—**necessity**, solicitation, and **private affection**, lead to *bestowing*—it is the characteristic of Christianity, that it inspires its followers with a desire of *bestowing* their goods on the poor and necessitous—the **value of a kindness** is **greatly enhanced** by the **manner** in which it is *bestowed*.

- SMITH'S = *bestow* originally meant 'to lay up in store.' It's still used in parts of England in the sense of *to bury* [not in the sense of burying a dead person, but burying something valuable—like money; silver/gold valuables; etc.] ... Hence its latter meaning is to give something of substantial value, with the intention of benefiting the object (Paul and his team/associates) of the *bestowal*.

- the idea here is to place your hard work and labour on someone (Paul) which would be like putting it in 'store' for a time when it will reap even greater value than it first originally had in the future!

- Mary **INVESTED** heavily in Paul and his ministry!!!

- Mary *bestowed* her *labour* on Paul and his ministry—and she did so with great godly Love/Charity—and with great effort (sometimes in hard and disagreeable work) - she expended such effort as to grow weary and tired to the point of exhaustion! [all those things are features & characteristics of the word *bestow* (and *labour*)!]

- And not only did Mary *bestow* her labour on Paul and his ministry; but Paul says, she *bestowed* **MUCH** labour on us.

- **much** indicates that not only was it a very large amount of work and labour that Mary did—but it was also **'above and beyond'** the normal amount—it was a very **Uncommon thing that she did!** (She's an Edification Hall-of-Famer!)

- And the word **labour** itself indicates the exertion of Mary's strength to the point of weariness ... to the point of exhaustion—and without any details, we can only speculate what her *labour* consisted of—but knowing Paul and the 'twists and turns' of his ministry, we can get a good idea of the kind of things Mary did for Paul.

- Like Job—while her *labour* is hidden from us ...
but Mary's *record is on high!*

- And we should be **grateful & thankful** for Mary's hard work and *much labour* on Paul and his ministry—and just like making a good **investment**—the 'dividends' of Mary's investment have been paying off for over 2,000 years ...

... Mary's **Edificational** investment in Paul and his ministry is STILL paying off for every one of us here at Triangle Bible Church!!!

- Any thoughts / comments about Mary?

Romans 16:7 *Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*

- When you go and meet *Andronicus and Junia*, **SALUTE** them!

- **Andronicus** = “man of victory” - **Junia** = “youthful” (this is the only time they're mentioned in scripture)

- *Andronicus* (a man) and *Junia* (a woman) were very likely husband and wife; and both of them were Jews. (but that's how I take them—there's some who think both of them were men)

- And we know they both were Jews because Paul calls them “**my kinsmen**” ...

... so, were they actual blood-relation to Paul? or just fellow-Jews?

- Well, Paul does call **all** Israelites & Jews his *kinsmen* back in Rom. 9:3 (*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*)

- But because of the nature of actually naming them (just as Paul does later on with Herodian in [:11]) - and by listing them the way he does—it may very well be that Andronicus, Junia, and even Herodian were actual blood-relatives of Paul.

- truth is, I just don't know if they were relatives of Paul, or not—but I **do** know that they were fellow-Jews.

- Then Paul says that Andronicus & Junia were his *“fellowprisoners.”*

- They were imprisoned with Paul on some occasion—and the Scripture records that Paul was definitely imprisoned at Philippi and at Rome, by name—however, it is very likely that Paul was imprisoned at numerous other places not directly mentioned because as 2Cor.11:23 says, *“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.”*

- And this tells us a lot about A/J—they didn’t give mere ‘lip-service’ to what they believed (only to wilt / faint under pressure) ... and what were they imprisoned for? ... was it because being members of the Rem/Isr, they believed and proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, their Christ, and their Savior & Redeemer? ... or was it because they believed and testified that God had suspended His prog. w/ Isr. and brought in a new dispensation of His grace to the Gentiles, and Paul was the new apostle/administrator of it? (i.e., were they imprisoned for being associated with Paul and his ministry as the apostle of the Gentiles?)

- Either way—like Priscilla & Aquila, they risked their life for standing true to God’s word! (would you?)

- They actually shared a prison cell with Paul!

- Then Paul says that they were ones *“who are of note among the apostles”* ...

- And when you are *“of note”* among a group of people, you are **marked** (could be in a good way; could be in a bad way; but here, it’s used in a good sense) - they were marked as being well known and distinguished and highly esteemed and valued *“among the apostles”*.

- And my understanding is that they were **not** *apostles* themselves—but they were well-known and highly esteemed among **the 12 Apostles of Israel**—(Peter, James, John, and the rest).

- Maybe they had lived in Jerusalem or somewhere in Syria where they got to be well-known among Israel’s Apostles, but now they have come to live in Rome.

- But all in all, Andronicus & Junia had performed some outstanding service among Israel's Apostles ... and then, interestingly, they also risked their lives for Paul!
- Then we come to this often baffling or puzzling phrase ... ***"who also were in Christ before me."***
- This part of this verse is often pointed to by those who deny the great dispensational change that God has made—because IF Paul was the very first member of the "new creature" of the church the body of Christ ... THEN what's this verse doing by saying that Andronicus and Junia ***were in Christ BEFORE Paul ???*** (Oh, be still, my heart!)
- actually, this argument is making a lot of really bad assumptions!
- This argument falls apart when you simply recognize that the phrase "*in Christ*" is NOT something unique to this disp. of grace—and the phrase "*in Christ*" is not always talking about a member of the body of Christ—but, rather, it is used to describe **BOTH** the members of the body of Christ **AND** members of the believing Remnant of Israel, the "little flock!"
- The phrase "*in Christ*" (just as the phrase, "*in Adam*") are designators of your **IDENTITY!** ... they are NOT designators of which program or dispensation you are in! (**see 1Cor. 15:21-22**)
 - Every saved/justified member of the body of Christ is now identified as being no longer "*in Adam*", but is identified as being "*in Christ*" — as Paul describes on numerous occasions (Rom. 6 describes the details of it; and Rom. 8:1 states it specifically—along with lots of other passages in Paul's epistles).
 - But also every saved/justified member of the Remnant of Israel is also identified as being "*in Christ*" as well!
[no longer "*in Adam*"]
- (read) - John 14:20
 - 1Pet. 3:16
 - 1Pet. 5:14
- The phrase, "*who were in Christ before me*" merely indicates that A/J were saved/justified before Paul got saved/justified! ... it has **nothing** to do with which program or dispensation was in effect!

- But ... since Paul, indeed, was the very first member of the church, the body of Christ—and since Andronicus and Junia were *in Christ* (saved/justified) **before** Paul was saved ... then that **does** tell us something ...

... it tells us that Andronicus and Junia were members of the “little flock” of Israel (the Remnant “church”), and that therefore they were NOT members of the church, the body of Christ!

- Andronicus & Junia were members of Israel’s “little flock” or Remnant in God’s program with Israel who were still alive when God made the great dispensational change with Paul.

- In other words—not everyone who is “*in Christ*” is a member of the body of Christ ... and not everyone who is “*in Christ*” is a member of the Remnant of Israel!

- Are there any questions about this? ... any confusion? ... because this is very important to get straight!

- Now this is fascinating—that 2 members of the “little flock” of the Remnant of Israel are listed here in Rom. 16 as being heroes or hall-of-famers of godly Edification helpers (and so forth) for the members of the body of Christ! ... amazing!

- (by the way—this could only happen back at the time when the disp. of grace was in its ‘opening stage’ during the time of Israel’s “*diminishing*” [as per Rom. 11:12] ... **this can NOT take place today!**)

- Andronicus & Junia were meeting with the body of Christ in Rome! ... which means that they understand and appreciate the great dispensational change! (which is very **rare** among the “little flock” or Remnant of Isr.)! — most of the Remnant of Isr. responded very negatively to Paul and his ministry (as we saw back in Acts 21:21ff)!

- (see **Col. 4:10-11!**) ... perhaps A/J worked with Paul like Barnabas did as that ‘Liaison’ ... or as ones who worked to facilitate working relationships between 2 parties.

- Truth is—there was very little positive response among the Rem. church (“little flock”) to help Paul and his ministry—(unlike the body of Christ’s positive response to help the poor saints at Jerusalem!)

- Let's note a couple of interesting things about Andronicus and Junia (who are members of the Rem. of Isr.) meeting with and fellowshipping with the Body of Christ saints in Rome.

- First of all—even though A/J are members of Israel's "little flock" and met with the Body of Christ saints—it didn't change their status as members of the Remnant of Israel—they were still members of the "little flock" of Israel, **and they knew it!**

- Also—because A/J were justified members of the Rem. of Isr., they knew that their program was suspended and postponed—**but NOT negated or abolished!** (via Paul's ministry and Romans doctrine)

- (They knew [especially being helped out by Paul in Romans 9-11] that although God had suspended His program with Israel, that suspension was only temporary—and God would resume and fulfill His program with Israel once *the dispensation of the grace of God* was completed).

- And since it was God **revealing through Paul(!)** that, although He had suspended His program w/ Isr., God would still be able to pick right back up with Israel's program where He suspended it—and then resume it, and fulfill it exactly as He had set forth according to prophecy! ... and since that was so, the Rem. of Isr. that was still alive during the opening portion of the great dispensational change ... those "little flock" Remnant Jews were to positively and properly respond to that issue ...

... and more than that, God had set forth certain 'provisions' (so to speak), or certain benefits for a member of the Rem/Isr that would be of great use and great significance to them as the great dispensational change was brought in, and as God's program with Israel "*diminished*".

- This interruption and suspension of their program would, no doubt, cause a lot of problems for a member of the "little flock" ... causing a lot of bothersome, troublesome, disturbing issues for them - (viz., throw them for a LOOP!) - [because no where were they told that God would 'suspend' his prog. with them ... and no where were they told that God would ever resume and fulfill His prog. with them if He did suspend it!]

- So in light of all this—let’s look at some of the benefits and provisions God made for the members of the Rem. of Israel who would be alive during the opening portion of this dispensation of grace and during Israel’s ‘*diminishing*’ ...

- Gal. 6:12-16 [:15-16]

- [note :15 again] - this is a brief ‘sum’ (so to speak) of what’s going on today in this disp. of grace.

- and for those “*in Christ*” in this disp/grace—notice that *neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision* “*availeth*” (or is of any value or benefit) *any thing*!

- that is, in this disp/grace circ. or uncirc. has absolutely no profit, no value, and no benefit at all!

- But clearly, in God’s program with Israel (in the OT and in the gospel accounts & opening ch’s. Acts) there WAS great value and benefit to circumcision ... (by the way, that clearly tells you that we are NOT in Israel’s program today!) ...

... so if circ./uncirc. has no value or benefit—then where is the value & benefit today?

A: (:15) “***but a new creature***” - that’s what God is doing today; He’s creating a *new creature* of the church the body of Christ!

- What matters to God today is **the body of Christ!**

- But note (:16) “*And as many as walk according to **this rule**, ...*”

- “*this rule*” = that “*neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*”

- meaning, the issue with God today is NOT the kingdom program (Isr’s. program), but the body of Christ (*the new creature*)!

- And what I’m after is what Paul says at the end of (:16) - this is God’s provision and benefits for **both** us, the members of the body of Christ—**AND** for those members of the Rem/Isr’s (“little flock”) who would be so bothered and troubled by God having suspended their program ...

- 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, *peace* be on them, and *mercy*, **AND UPON THE ISRAEL OF GOD.**

- By the effectual working of the doctrine God has given in the book of Romans—God has provided for **both**, those members of the body of Christ itself, **AND** for the Rem/Isr’s “little flock” to have generated within them *peace and mercy* that remedies any troublesome matters about the great dispensational change that God has made!

- And for those members of the Rem/Isr that were still alive during the opening portion of this disp/grace (when Israel was *diminishing*) - the only way in which that “little flock” would receive God’s provision and benefits of *peace and mercy* in light of Paul making known that great dispensational change, **is that they had to BELIEVE Paul’s message, and to acknowledge that Paul’s message about the dispensational change was RIGHT!**

- that is, the believing Rem/Isr had to believe what God revealed to/through the apostle Paul:

- 1) God has suspended His prog. w/ Isr. and has turned to the Gentiles in order to create a *new creature* of the church, the body of Christ;
- 2) God has only suspended His prog. w/Isr temporarily;
- 3) God will resume and fulfill His prog. w/Isr exactly as He said according to prophecy.

***and what *peace and mercy* that must have been to the members of the Rem/Isr !

- Truth is—the “little flock” (the Remnant) had the hard choice to believe that Paul’s writings were, indeed, THE WORD OF GOD!

- (see 2Pet. 3:14-16)

- (back to Rom. 16:7) ... Are there any thoughts / comments about Andronicus and Junia?

Romans 16:8 *Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.*

- When *Amplias* comes over to see you, **GREET** him!
- “*Amplias*” = large—and we don’t know a lot about him.
- Paul calls him “*my beloved*” - again, *beloved* = one who is greatly or intensely loved (as opposed to, and set apart from objects of love in a more general sense) — it means **greatly or highly valued & esteemed**.
- “*in the Lord*” - indicates that not only was Amplias a believer in Christ and a member of the body of Christ—but he was highly valued and esteemed in the work of the Lord—he was one of those Edification helpers and workers that aided Paul in the edification of the saints ... maybe in copying out and distributing Paul’s letters?
- Amplias (like many others in this list) isn’t singled out or mentioned just because he was a friend of Paul—but more than that, he was one who worked together with Paul to get his ministry of *the gospel of Christ* to others.

Romans 16:9a *Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, ...*

- When you have the occasion to go and meet *Urbane*, **SALUTE** him!
- “*Urbane*” = one who is of the city; a city person.
- Again, we don’t know anything else (biblically) about him but what is said here ...
- ... but notice Urbane wasn’t just a *helper* to Paul, .. but it says, “***our helper***” - he not only helped out Paul, but he was a *helper* to those of Paul’s team/associates—he could immediately help out Paul, but he could also be a *helper* to other Pastors—such as Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Epaphras and many others ... (maybe he was something like a ‘roving’ deacon!?!) ...
- ... but the end result was that Urbane was an Edification Helper to all those in the body of Christ.

Romans 16:9b ... and Stachys my beloved.

- And when you go and meet *Stachys*, ***SALUTE*** him, too!
- “*Stachys*” = a head of grain, or an ear of corn. (Maybe he was a farmer at one time; or came from the farm??)
- And again, *Stachys* is included in this ‘List of Honor’ as one who actively participated in the work and support of Paul, his ministry, and the godly Edification Process of other members of the body of Christ.
- And because of that, Paul calls him ... “*my beloved*” - one who is greatly or intensely loved; **highly valued & esteemed** for his work and assistance of Paul and his ministry.

**** Don’t forget that ALL those listed here put themselves in great danger and endured all manner of reproaches and defaming just for being associated with the apostle Paul!!!**

**** Don’t think that just because very little is said or known about a person in this List means that their contribution was small, or that their sacrifice was insignificant! These people were real, “living sacrifices”!**

Romans 16:10 - (we have here 2 sentences)

(:10a) *Salute Apelles approved in Christ.*

- When you go and meet up with *Apelles*, ***SALUTE*** him!
- “*Apelles*” = called?
- Although Paul only uses 3 words to describe *Apelles*, they are 3 very powerful and meaningful words! - “***approved in Christ***”
- “***approved***” can be used in several ways and in several ‘senses’ - in fact, we dealt with the word *approved* back in Rom. 14:18, but it was used there in a different context and in a different sense.
- In this context, we’re talking about a person who is *approved* in the sense of the Edification Process—which entails understanding and appreciating the great dispensational change God has made; Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles and administrator of this new disp.; Paul’s ministry of *the gospel of Christ* according to *the mystery*; and godly Edification by means of the curriculum of **Paul’s** epistles, **exclusively**.

- (On a personal note: of all of the descriptive terms or 'monikers' Paul uses to describe all the saints in this List - I have to admit that "*approved in Christ*" is the one that I would desire above all others.)

- *approve* = from the L. *ad* = to + *probare* = to test, to try—hence, **tried, tested, and found to be acceptable**.

- OED = to show to be true, prove, demonstrate; proved or established by experience.

- WEBSTER'S 1828 = to prove by trial; [hence, one who is worthy to be commended to others].

- SMITH = while *praise* may be general, *approval* is specific. We *praise* a man or his character generally—we *approve* his acts or his conduct in particular cases.

- And the particular case here in this context is "*in Christ*" (which isn't talking about being *in Christ* justification-wise) - rather, 'in the work of Christ' or in Christ's business for this disp. of grace in which we live!

- The big issue that is supposed to 'stand out' with the word *approve* is the issue of "a-**PROVE**" - '**proved**' - tried, tested, and found to be acceptable or SOUND! ... through experience and testing, the person is found to be commendable to others because of their **soundness** (which is a very important biblical word = free from error, fallacy, or logical defect; accurate, correct, **STABLE**).

- That one word (*approved*) tell you A LOT about Apelles!

- Apelles was *approved in Christ* (in the things pertaining to Christ; such as the gospel of Christ; and godly edification) ...

... he was tried & tested; proven in the doctrine pertaining to Christ for this disp. of grace and in Pauline doctrine—his understanding of Pauline doctrine was free from error, accurate and stable—and therefore was able to be commended to others for their assistance and help in godly edification *which is in faith!* - which is something most worthy of being **saluted!**

- Apelles, (like Pricilla and Aquila), could ‘expound’ to other members of the body of Christ “*the way of God more perfectly*”! (*Salute Apelles approved in Christ* [in the things, the work, and the business of Christ in this present disp. of grace in which we live]).

- Apelles was one who had been ‘checked out’ and found to be *approved* and commendable to others in Christ’s business for this disp. of grace—and as such, he was valuable in the **mutual edifying** of the members of the body of Christ in L/C.

- And this issue of having certain individuals of the body of Christ who are *approved in Christ* (in Christ’s business today) is a fairly big issue throughout Paul’s epistles—it’s a big issue for the proper growth and function of the body of Christ and of the Edification Process in local churches & assemblies.

- Of course, *approved* brings to mind that very familiar passage in 2Tim. 2:15 *Study to shew thyself **approved** unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

- 1Cor. 11:17-19 [:19]

- 1Cor. 16:1-3 [:3] - in connection with the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

- 2Cor. 6:1-10 — [:4] “*approving **ourselves***” - that’s not just Paul alone, but Paul and those who are (as he says in :1), “*workers together with him*”.

- 2Cor. 8:16-24 [:22 - “*proved*”]

- Phil. 2:19-22 (Timothy—beautiful!)

- Apelles was *approved in Christ*—he was tried and tested in a variety of tribulations, sufferings, opposition, and defaming and found to be sound & unwavering in faith and doctrine— and commendable to others in the body of Christ as a ‘helper of their joy’ - as an Edification helper! (*approved* of God, of Christ, and particularly of the apostle P.)

- Any thoughts / comments about Apelles?

- Next is the 2nd Sentence of (:10) - “***Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household.***”

- When you go and meet up with those of Aristobulus’ household, **SALUTE** them!

- “*Aristobulus*” comes from 2 Greek words (ἄριστος) = “best” + (βουλή) - “will or counsel” - hence, “the best counsel”. [good name]
- Some commentators & scholars point out that since Paul merely says, *Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household*—but doesn’t add the phrase “*which are in the Lord*” as he does with Narcissus down in (:11) - [or adds some phrase like it] - that there is no proof that either Aristobulus himself, nor anyone in his household were believers—but that they were merely friendly acquaintances of Paul, and Paul just wanted the saints at Rome to be friendly to him and his household as well.
- But this does not fit at all with what is going on with this List ... if that’s true, Paul would have most likely put them at the end of the list—or set them apart from everyone else in the list.
- It’s clear to me that the context indicates that Aristobulus may have been a believer himself, and that there were others in his household that were believers as well—and not merely believers, but saints who were vital Edification Helpers and commendable as ones to be so honored. (at least that’s my understanding) ...

... but it may be that Aristobulus himself was not a believer (or that he was dead at this time), but rather there were some [but not all] of his household were believers—[maybe some of his own relatives, and maybe some of his servants].
(I would have no problem with that position, either.)

- Does “*household*” indicate that a local church existed in Aristobulus’ house? maybe ... and if so, it may strengthen the idea that Aristobulus himself was a believer—but again, maybe not.
- Either way—I am persuaded that this isn’t just a ‘friendly acquaintance’ issue—but rather that there were some (and probably not all), but some in the household of Aristobulus that were saints and Edification Helpers that were worthy to be included on this List.

Romans 16:11 *Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.*

- Again, we have 2 Sentences in this one verse.

- (1st Sentence) - *Salute Herodion my kinsman.*

- So when you go and meet up with Herodion, **SALUTE** him!
(he'll **greet** you back!)

- "*Herodion*" [as his name suggests] = "heroic" - and it's likely a name from Attic Greek which we would commonly know as 'Herod'.

- And again, we have Paul calling him "*my kinsman*" (like he did with Andronicus & Junia) ...

... so Herodion was most definitely a Jew (maybe related to Paul; maybe of the same tribe [Benjamin]) - but what we do know is that Herodion was a Jew [now living in Rome] who had been saved by the 'gospel of Christ' revealed to the apostle Paul—he was a member of the body of Christ, and he was one of the kind of 'helpers' to Paul's ministry worthy to be put on this List.

- (2nd Sentence of :11) - *Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.*

- When those that are of the household of Narcissus come over to see you, **GREET** them!

- "*Narcissus*" = Unger's Bible Dictionary: a well-known flower—Bible Works: "stupidity"

- Again—just as we saw in (:10) with Aristobulus' household; we have "*them that be of the household of Narcissus*" ...

... so, Narcissus may have been dead at this time; or he may have been alive and not saved; or alive *and* saved ...

... but we do know for sure that there were some in his household that were saved members of the body of Christ, and found to be useful and beneficial to other members of the body of Christ in their godly edification—and as such they are said to be "*in the Lord*".

- and was there a local assembly there? ... I don't know.

**Romans 16:12 *Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord.
Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.***

- Again, we have 2 Sentences in this one verse.

- And here we have a Trio of Women who worked diligently in the work & business of the Lord that has to do with Paul, the gospel of Christ given to him, and the godly edification of the members of the body of Christ in this disp. of grace ... *Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis*: [3 great women members of the body of Christ].

- (1st Sentence) - ***Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord.***

- So—when you (saints in Rome) go and meet up with Tryphena and Tryphosa, ***SALUTE*** them! (they'll **greet** you back!)

- One source (Unger's Dict.) says, *Tryphena* = delicate, luxurious, dainty; and *Tryphosa* = luxurious, delicate.

- One wonders if they were sisters?? (maybe so ...)

- Some think that they were originally from Iconium (in Galatia), and had moved to Rome—but that's extra-biblical information).

- They are both said to be ones '*who labour in the Lord*' (that is, in the work/business of the Lord for this disp. of grace) - they were closely associated with Paul and his ministry—they were, no doubt, engaged in such things as encouraging and exhorting other saints; being helpers of their godly edification; and possibly attending to the saint's various necessities (giving comfort); showing mercy with cheerfulness, and so forth. [**all these are critical/vital matters!**]

- (2nd Sentence of :12) - ***Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.***

- So ... when you go and meet up with Persis, ***SALUTE*** her!

- And here again, we have someone who is above and beyond being 'loved' ... Persis is called "*the beloved Persis*" - she must have been so highly valued and esteemed for her work and assistance to Paul and his ministry, and to other members of the body of Christ that, **to all who knew her**, she was not merely 'loved', but ***beloved***.

- Notice that God has Paul make a distinction between Tryphena & Tryphosa and Persis: Tryphena/Tryphosa ‘labored in the Lord’ ... but Persis ‘**labored MUCH in the Lord**’! (You mean that they didn’t labor the same? ... You mean that God viewed one saint’s labor as being MORE than another saint’s labor? ... they’re not the same???)

- Is this doctrinal heresy? Was Tryphena & Tryphosa shaking their fist at that **rotten** Persis? ... were they saying, That **arrogant** Persis ... she thinks she’s **superior** to the rest of us! ... ??? (of course NOT ... that’s NOT proper body thinking).

- “Persis” - may mean, ‘a Persian woman.’

- And Persis is said to have “*laboured MUCH in the Lord*”
(much [πολύς] = large, many, much)

- The simple truth of the matter is—in all likelihood, Tryphena, Tryphosa, **and** Persis labored in the same matters, or the same kind of things pertaining to the Lord’s work/business for this disp. of grace.

- The distinction of Persis having labored “***much***” in the Lord simply means that she exceeded the labor of Tryphena & Tryphosa—most likely because Persis was laboring “in the Lord” **longer** than T/T had ... she simply had been **at** the ‘labor’ for more time than T/T ... maybe she had been saved **longer** than T/T had.

- Does this mean that Persis was **more important** than Tryphena & Tryphosa? NO!!! was she ‘**better**’ than them? was she ‘**superior**’ to them? NO!!!

- Romans doctrine teaches you that NO member of the body (just like your physical body) is ‘more important’ or ‘superior’ to any other member of the body!

- But here are 3 women who gave vital assistance to Paul and his ministry—and who, in turn, were enormous helpers to other saints in the body of Christ! ... and they, too, must have come under tremendous opposition and defaming that they shared with the apostle Paul as they worked and labored so hard to spread the truths of the gospel of Christ that was committed to Paul by *the revelation of the mystery*—and make it known throughout the world! [what a work! - what a ‘labor of LOVE’!]

- Any thoughts / comments about Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis?

Romans 16:13 *Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*

- When you (saints in Rome) go and meet up with Rufus, ***SALUTE*** him!
- “*Rufus*” = red (maybe a red-head? or ‘ruddy’ complexion?)
 - Rufus is thought to be a son of Simon of Cyrene (a Cyrenian [far west of Israel, in what is now Libya])—and if you recall, Simon of Cyrene was the man who was compelled to carry the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ as He was going to His crucifixion when He was so physically exhausted that He could no longer carry it—(or at least He could no longer carry it with the speed that His executioners wanted Him to).
- (see **Mark 15:21**)
 - This very well may be true—but true or not, Rufus was one who had heard “*the gospel of Christ*” as committed to the apostle Paul—and he had become justified by faith in Christ and therefore was a member of the *new creature* of the church the body of Christ.
 - And if this really is that Rufus of Mark 15:21—how great would his understanding and appreciation be for the Lord Jesus Christ and His crosswork? (getting ‘first-hand’ information from his Father about that day of the Lord’s crucifixion ... and then getting the *mystery* aspect of the cross-work of Christ from the apostle Paul!)
 - And it may be that it’s for that reason that Paul calls him ... ***“chosen in the Lord”***.
- “***chosen***” in the Lord—when you see that word *chosen*, my understanding is that you’re **not** supposed to think: Ok, I’m supposed to go back to the Doctrine of Divine Decrees and get into some theological issues like the Doctrine of Election and so forth.
 - And the reason I think that is because the context isn’t dealing with such things—plus, if that’s what is being said, that very same thing could be said for every one in the List!

- *Chosen* can be used in different contexts and in different ways or senses—and by sticking with the context here, my understanding is that *chosen* is being used in the sense of one who is marked by ‘excellence’ ... or we might say a ‘choice’ individual—or one who is best suited or most qualified for a task.

- And the Scriptures use the word *chosen* this way in both the OT and the NT—but for our purposes, let’s look at a NT passage where *chosen* is used just this way ...

- **Acts 15**—this is when Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to confer with Peter and Israel’s apostles and straighten out matters concerning the great dispensational change that God had made with Paul being the apostle of the Gentiles.

- (see **:22-26**) [:22 & :25]

- And my understanding is that Rufus is “*chosen*” in just this same way—Rufus was “*chosen in the Lord*” - that is, he was one who was ‘best suited’ or ‘most qualified’ in the Lord’s work/business (in whatever aspect of the Lord’s business he labored in, in connection with the body of Christ in this disp. of grace; in *the gospel of Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*; and in the godly Edification of the saints).

- So Rufus being described as “*chosen in the Lord*” is akin to Apelles (in :10) who was described as “*approved in Christ*.” (a **high honor!**)

- But—just like many others on this List—we don’t have any of the details given to us of just what Rufus’ labor was—we only know that, among other possible things, Rufus was one of those Edification Helpers!

- Then we have the final phrase of (:13) - “*Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine*. (“*and his mother and mine*”)

- I don’t take this to mean that Rufus’s mother was Paul’s genetic/birth mother (or Paul’s literal mother) - rather, that she was Paul’s *mother* in a figurative sense—that is, she was **‘like a mother’** to Paul.

- As a matter of fact—I can say that I have a *mother* that is not my genetic/birth mother: Vicky Robinson!

- And when it comes to having ‘figurative’ relatives (such as *brothers*, *sisters*, *fathers*, and *mothers*)—this is something that Paul declares to be the case in his epistles ...

... the *brother/sister* issue, we have already dealt with on various occasions in the book of Romans.

... *father*—see **1Cor.4:15**

... *son*—see **1Cor 4:17**

... *mother* — see **1Tim. 5:1-2** (here you have *fathers*, *brothers*, *sisters*, and *mothers* all together!)

- So another person on our List is this unnamed person—Rufus’ *mother*—and to Paul, she was so dear & precious to him that the close relationship she and Paul shared could only be described as a ‘Mother-to-son’ relationship! Paul must have had such an intense love for both Rufus **and** his mother that it was as if Paul was a member of their family!

- These terms tell you a lot about how the body of Christ can ‘interact’ when it is *compacted* (*Eph. 4:16*) and *knit together in love* (*Col. 2:2*).

- What kind of benefits were reciprocated between Paul and Rufus and his mother? [what a relief/help it must have been]

- What kind of benefits can you receive from these reciprocating relationships in the body?

- Any thoughts / comments about Rufus and his mother?

- Next—in (:14 and :15) we have 2 groups of people who are to be “*saluted*” - and we have a total of 10 people singled out and then we have 2 groups of *brethren/saints* that are with them.

- And while the *households* of both Aristobulus & Narcissus may not have been actual local churches/assemblies ... I do believe that what we have in (:14 & :15) really are 2 local churches in Rome — which makes (at the very least) **at least 3 local churches** mentioned as existing in Rome at this time:

1. (:5a) - the church that was in the house of Priscilla and Aquila;
 2. (:14) - “*the brethren which are with them*”
 3. (:15) - “*all the saints which are with them*”
- (Note): NONE of them were ‘denominations’!

Romans 16:14 *Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.*

- So—whenever you saints in Rome go over and meet up with these saints *and the brethren which are with them*—**SALUTE** them!
- We have a list of 5 names (all men):
 - *Asyncritus* = incomparable
 - *Phlegon* = burning
 - *Hermas* = (another name for Mercury)
 - *Patrobas* = paternal or ‘life of his father’
 - *Hermes* = (also, Mercury or ‘herald of the gods’)
- “*and the brethren which are with them.*” - those that make up their local assembly.

Romans 16:15 *Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.*

- Here we have a list of 5 more saints (believers) - 3 men and 2 women.
 - *Philologus* = lover of the word or ‘fond of talk’ (lover of learning)
 - *Julia* (a woman; the fem. of ‘Julius’) = soft haired [maybe the wife of Philologus?]
 - *Nereus* = lump (Greek name of a sea god)
 - *his sister* (an unnamed woman—Nereus’ biological sister)
 - *Olympas* = heavenly
- “*and all the saints which are with them.*” - again, those that make up their local assembly.
- Note that there is some information about all 10 of these individuals that is extra-biblical—but I’m not going to delve into any of that because it is only speculation—but what is for sure is that they were all magnificent Edification Helpers to Paul and his ministry!

- Some final thoughts on this first large List of persons mentioned here at the end of the book of Romans:

- Here we have a list of saved/justified individuals that are meeting, receiving, greeting, and saluting one another in the city of Rome where several local body-of-Christ churches are located in that one city ...

... some of the saints are named, some not named—some in ‘households’ — some in local assemblies—most of which are members of the church, the body of Christ—but a couple that are members of the Remnant of Israel (Israel’s “little flock”) who are meeting with and fellowshiping with the members of the body of Christ ...

... **all** of them are not only saved & justified unto eternal life by the crosswork of the Lord Jesus Christ and by placing their faith, alone, in Christ, alone, as their only and all-sufficient Savior—but they also have the effectual working of the doctrine that the book of Romans provides [*their faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*] ...

... therefore, **all** of them understand and appreciate the doctrine of their justification and its results—the doctrine of their sanctification and its results—and the doctrine of their godly sonship edification and education with its 4 Sonship Decision-Making Skills of Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity ...

... and they **all** understand and appreciate that God has temporarily suspended His program with Israel when the Lord Jesus Christ unexpectedly appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and saved him—which began a new, different, and distinct dispensation of Gentile grace with Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles and the new administrator of the great dispensational change God has made ...

... and they understand and appreciate that this great dispensational change God has made is going to have some particular doctrine—an additional revelation of God’s word — information that is going to be revealed to and through this new apostle (Paul) - Romans being part of that revelation—but this newly revealed word of God is not being given to Paul as additional revelation of ‘prophecy’ ... but rather, this newly revealed portion of God’s word is being revealed to Paul as the revelation of the mystery of Christ which God has kept secret and hidden ...

... and this secret, hidden plan, purpose, and design of God for this new dispensation of His grace was all accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ in His crosswork—but God never said anything about it until He revealed it to the apostle Paul—whereby God not only has turned from His earthly program with Israel to repossess the earth—

but He has turned to the Gentiles, changed their status in His sight, and has begun to create a *new creature, one new man*, which is the body of Christ, in order to repossess the heavenly places from Satan and his cohorts back unto Himself ... and only when that gets accomplished will God then return to His program with Israel, pick back up with it just where He left off, and resume and fulfill His program with Israel exactly as He has said according to prophecy.

- Also, every one on this List also understood and appreciated that the major aim, goal, and objective of this revelation of God's word to Paul (according to the revelation of the mystery) is not merely to get unsaved people saved (though that is the first and foremost and most important thing of all) ... but they understood that the redemption of lost people is fully realized in their status as the adopted sons and daughters that God has made them to be "in Christ" [Gal. 4:5] ...

... therefore, the saints on this List understood that the suffering and bloodshed of the Lord Jesus Christ wasn't only to justify them, but to sanctify them so that they could Think the way God thinks, Live like God does, and Labor with God in all that He is now doing in this dispensation of grace ...

... in other words, they understood the priority of being "godly" and that Paul's epistles, that would be included in Holy Scripture, would become the means (the curriculum) for a member of the body of Christ to be spiritually 'built-up' - to spiritually grow—and therefore to become properly edified unto godliness which is in faith ...

... they therefore understood the priority of the godly Edification Process!

- And so great was their appreciation of godly sonship edification as the priority of their life—that it became the 'center' of their life—and all other issues of their life were secondary to that single, magnificent, powerful, glorious issue!

- And in view of that—godly edification and the Edification Process was so highly valued and esteemed by them, that they were willing to endure tremendous suffering, hardship, defaming, and even persecution—to the point where spreading the gospel of Christ (as revealed to and through the apostle Paul by the revelation of the mystery) and its eternal-life-giving salvation, and its godly edification was worth dying for!

- Now that's IMPRESSIVE! ... that's a lot of 'stuff'! (a lot of godly 'stuff') ... in fact, those on this List had a far more accurate and in-depth understanding of God's word; of what God's will is; and of what God *has* done, *is* now doing, and what He *will* do in the future ... than all the biblical scholars and theological professors on earth today: combined!

- And because of all this—and strictly upon the basis of “by grace, through faith” — (just like their justification) — In their sanctification (and in all that God has made them to be “in Christ”) - and by their Positive & Proper response to the doctrine of their godly edification that taught them who God has made them to be “in Christ” - (again, strictly “by grace, through faith”) — they can justly and rightly be described by God with all those descriptive terms and ‘monikers’ that we have come to appreciate in view of the Edification Process that they were willing to give their lives for ...

... Edification Servants, Succourers, Helpers, Labourers, ones Approved, Suppliers, & Refreshers!

- They are Edification Giants—they are “gospel of Christ” Hall-of-Famers—and they, rightly so, should be recognized and honored as such by having their names inscriptured in God's word for all eternity!

- And in view of this—(and knowing my poor ability to adequately commend them as I should) - I want to draw your attention to just a couple of passages that complements these great saints, and the work of seeing to the Edification Process that they were willing to die for:

- 1Cor. 15:58

- (once again) 1Cor. 16:16

- So here are my questions for you: Are you willing to give your life for “*the gospel of Christ*”? ... are **you** willing to give your life for spreading the pure & plain gospel of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as God's “gift” of grace, to be received by the lost and dying men of this world ‘by grace, alone, through faith, alone’? ... and are **you** willing to then be a helper in the Edification Process of saved men, even if it means suffering for it (or even dying for it)?

- What position have you put the suffering; the blood; and the cross-work of Jesus Christ in, in your life? [do you put soccer practice ahead of it?]

- Don't think that, just because your name won't be written down in God's word that God isn't fully aware of your godly Labor!

- The only reason your name isn't written in God's word is simply because the word of God has become complete ...

... but your godly Labor NEVER goes unnoticed by God!

- And I have no doubt that, (again, just like Job), while the record of your godly Labor will never be written about here on earth (or even be noticed by anyone on this earth)—(or that your name will never be recorded in God's word) ... but, like Job, you can rest assured that *your record is on high!* ... and it will all come to light one day at the great Judgment Seat of Christ!

- This is your HOPE ... and a great and perfect HOPE it is!

- And I mean that! I'm talking about all that you have done (for 28 years) and are doing right now as saints; as "sons" and "daughters" of the Heavenly Father; as adopted 'brothers' and 'sisters' of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; as you mind the things of the Spirit; and as you walk after the Spirit; as members together of a "body" (the body of Christ); and as members of this local assembly of Triangle Bible Church—the work and labor you do to keep the 'doors of communication' of sound Bible Doctrine 'open' as wide as possible—by giving and sacrificing your time, your money, your labor, in all the Operations of God within this local assembly (seeing that we have a building to meet in; taking care of the children in the nursery; cleaning floors; cleaning toilets; sweeping the walk; cutting the weeds; providing the highest & best study tools and study aids for the Pastor and the assembly; recording the Bible classes; seeing to the details of the web site; in your kindness and fellowship with others in the assembly; in your intelligent sonship prayers; in your godly Love & Charity; in your encouragement to the Pastor and to others in the assembly); in *giving with simplicity*; in *ruling with diligence*; in *showing mercy with cheerfulness*; and in being to others a 'helper of their joy' of *godly edifying which is in faith* — NONE of that goes unnoticed by God—because anything and everything that is produced "***by grace through faith***" is impressive to God, and is pleasing to God, and is a glory to God!

- And my encouragement to you is this: to take the godly Thinking and godly Living you have been given from Romans doctrine, and keep on Laboring together with God in all He's doing: and REDEEM THE TIME for when **you** appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ!

- Any thoughts / comments about this List of Romans 16:1-15?

Romans 16:16 *Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.*

- Again, we have one verse with 2 sentences.

- (1st Sentence) *Salute one another with an holy kiss.*

- Now unlike much of what we have been dealing with in (:1-15) that falls within the ancient past (some 2,000 years ago) - and more than that, issues that strictly pertained to that 'opening portion' of this disp. of grace when the Remnant of Israel was still living on the earth and when God's program with Israel was in its *diminishing* stage ...

... this Fatherly directive of *Salute one another with an holy kiss* has **current** application for us right now, today.

- In other words, my understanding is that this is **not** something that was just to be done only during that 'opening portion' stage of this disp. of grace—but rather, it's supposed to be an ongoing issue from the beginning of this disp. of grace and throughout it, until its conclusion. [don't get nervous, we're not going to start kissing!]

- How do I know this? We know this because it's a Fatherly directive that comes up repeatedly in Paul's epistles—and it gets stated for the final time in 1 Thessalonians.

- **1Cor. 16:20**

- **2Cor. 13:12**

- **1Thes. 5:26**

- (therefore it spans the entirety of our curriculum for sonship education and edification.)

- (and even the Remnant of Israel are directed to do this very thing over in 1Pet. 5:14—*Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.*)

- And this issue of *kissing* one another is to be understood in the context of **the time** and in **the place** in which people lived 2,000 years ago, and in and around Asia Minor. [However, it is still carried on in many countries and in many cultures around the world, even to this day!] ... the problem is, that it's not a part of current American culture—and in our culture, we view it as something 'yucky'! and crosses the line of proper etiquette ... we would rather **shake hands**, or, if the circumstances required it, we would **hug** one another.

- But like our 'shaking hands' or 'hugging' - *kissing* (in Asia Minor 2,000 years ago) was a gesture of respect, affection, kindness, and love—and in general it was a gesture of simple friendship.

- Normally, it wasn't a kiss on the lips—but rather a kiss on the cheek [or neck?](—although, in some cultures, it may have been a kiss on the lips) - and it was performed men to women; men to men; and women to women.

- But most all—this act of *kissing* was a gesture of fellowship, communion, and concord (or, simply put: **friendship**) — which is the basic and fundamental issue in our 'shaking hands' or 'hugging' ...

... but (very importantly), **it was not done to an enemy** (at least, not honestly done).

- And we're familiar with this even in our culture, (even with 'shaking hands') ... because, if a person who is your enemy (or a person who is '**at odds**' with you for some reason), puts out his hand to shake yours in some kind of phony display of fellowship or goodwill or camaraderie or friendship—the other person won't shake hands ... (won't even offer his 'hand')!

- And this was, and still is, a very significant matter in our culture today! ... which is why, from childhood through adulthood, when 2 parties who were fighting or 'at odds' with each other, finally 'settle' the matter they were 'at odds' & fighting about ... they will signify that the fighting is over and the matter has been settled **by shaking hands!**

- Likewise, the '*kiss*' was a gesture that indicated to all, that between the 2 parties that *kiss* one another, that there is **no division; no strife; no vainglory; no schism**—but rather, it signifies (as Paul says in Phil. 2:2, ... *that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*)

... which is why what Judas did to the Lord was such a horrific and abominable thing, & was pure, outright **betrayal!** (see **Mat. 26:47-50**) - [what a ‘smack-down’ when Jesus used the word “*Friend*”! ... indicating, ‘I’m not ‘at odds’ with you, Judas, but you are ‘at odds’ with Me!’ ... by using the word “*Friend*”, the Lord highlights the betrayal and treachery of Judas!!!

- And the word of God puts a lot of ‘stock’ in this issue of ‘kissing’ one another as a sign or gesture of friendship and fellowship ...

- **Psa. 2:12**

- **Pro. 27:6**

- **Hos. 13:1-2**—(the members of the apostate, and vain religious element of Israel [as exemplified by the tribe of Ephraim] signified their full & total rejection of God (Adonai Jehovah) and their allegiance to Baal [Satan and his PoE] by *kissing the calves* [the satanic idols of Baal] - thus indicating their worthiness for God pouring out upon them the 5th Course of Punishment!)

- **Mark 14:43-46** (note [:44—the *kiss* is a **token** = a sign or evidence of friendship and fellowship])

- (and Luke also gives the account of Judas’ betrayal of the Lord over in Luke 22:47-48)

- **Acts 20** (Paul is in Ephesus and is now leaving the saints to make his journey to Jerusalem) - (see **:36-38 [:37]**)

- Come back to Rom. 16:16—*Salute one another with an **holy** kiss.*

- Notice that word “**holy**” - an **holy kiss**—that one word (*holy*) takes this gesture or *token* of friendship and fellowship and puts it in an entirely different category than what is commonly done among other men and women of this world!

- In fact—**every** time Paul uses this expression of greeting or saluting one another with a *kiss*, **Paul ALWAYS combines it with the word “HOLY”!**

- And the truth is—even though the gesture may differ according to the customs and traditions of other nations and places on earth—and differ according to other cultures on earth—the truth is that there *has* been and there always *will be* some kind of gesture that people will do that indicates their bond of friendship and fellowship!

- In other words—a gesture of friendship and fellowship will **always** exist on this earth—and that makes this issue of ‘*Saluting one another with an holy kiss*’ relevant and significant from the time Paul was writing his epistles; and on throughout time—up to, and including right now, today!
- But the thing that makes this gesture stand out as ‘special’ and specially **different** from any and all other gestures of friendship and fellowship (even the *kiss* of friendship & fellowship performed by lost men of this world)—is that this gesture of friendship/fellowship is performed by believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—by saints (by members of the **body of Christ**) ... and it is **“HOLY”**!
- **“holy”** - (ἅγιος) = closely associated with the word “*sanctified*”, meaning one who is ‘set apart unto God’.
- Therefore *holy* is often understood as something or someone specifically ‘set apart’ and ‘dedicated’ for God’s use and purpose—to be set apart for a specific service—something no longer considered to be common or ordinary—and when talking about a person = someone who has been set apart or set aside **in a special manner** for God’s designed purpose. (Similar to the word *sanctified*.)
- And we have dealt with this word *holy* on several occasions in our study of the book of Romans—we dealt with it a lot back in Romans 6 in the introduction to our Sanctified Position “in Christ” - and putting our sanctified Position in Christ into Practice in order to produce *fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life* (:22).

- And back there we found out that when you’re dealing with the **radical root** meaning of *holy*, (and what it means to God Himself) - *holy* to God is **that which has complete and total acceptance with Him—and that which brings delight and pleasure to Him.**

- And the addition (in Rom. 6:22) of the words *and the end everlasting life* was a kind of ‘kicker’ that told us that the *fruit unto holiness* that you produce is not only acceptable and delightful and brings great pleasure to God your Heavenly Father—but more than that, the *fruit unto holiness* you do produce (by grace through faith) is something your Father wants around Him **forever!**

- Anything that is *holy* to God is something that is **totally compatible with, and totally acceptable to the very essence and character of God!** (it doesn't violate His attributes!)

- So with that in mind—what we have to do now is to think about this issue of *holy* in the context of our *saluting one another with an **holy** kiss*—we have to think about it in terms of this gesture that we are going to perform with one another as members of the body of Christ; as ones who understand and appreciate the great dispensational change that God has brought in and why He did it; and as ones who understand and appreciate Sonship Edification (i.e., the Edification Process), NOT according to prophecy; but according to *the mystery!*

- So when we *greet* and *salute* one another with a gesture of fellowship and communion (such as a handshake)—it's supposed to be a **holy** gesture performed by members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ as they gather together for the express purpose of *godly edifying which is in faith*.

- And (to me, anyway), it's fascinating that such a small thing as a 'handshake' can be the outworking of the sound doctrine in our 'inner man' - that that small gesture can be the deploying of the doctrine we've been given, to the extent that it is something totally compatible with and acceptable to the very essence & character of God—giving Him such great pleasure and glory! **[it has an impact!]**

- Our gesture of fellowship & communion is to be **holy**—and that means that it's compatible with & acceptable to the essence & character of God (i.e., His **Righteousness** and **Justice**) - that tells me one very important thing about this issue: in order to be a **holy** kiss (or gesture) ... IT THEREFORE MUST BE **HONEST!**

... it's **not** pretended; it's **not** fake, phony, or a sham; it's **not** [grit your teeth and take your medicine—because truth is, I just can't stand to be in the same room with that person]; it's **not**, 'Ok, I'll shake your hand, but I have to make sure and wash it!'

- The *holy* kiss (or gesture) of fellowship & communion among the saints of the body of Christ is to be an HONEST gesture signifying the great BOND that we have as *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*. (Rom. 12:5)

- Much like *'providing things **honest** in the sight of all men (Rom. 12:17) and 'Let us walk **honestly** as in the day' (13:13) — 'Saluting one another with an holy kiss' is an HONEST gesture of putting on display who we are "in Christ" but now in connection with our communion & fellowship.*

- So when members of the body of Christ gather together and perform this "*kiss*" or this 'handshake' or gesture of fellowship & communion ... it's to be "**holy**" — far from what most men of this world count as 'ordinary' and 'common' - **this** fellowship & communion of the members of the body of Christ is most **Uncommon** and **Extraordinary**!

- It is **pleasing** in God's sight—it's in perfect keeping with God's own integrity (His essence & character) ... and why not?

- It signifies the common **BOND** of our fellowship & communion — which is the suffering, the bloodshed, and the sacrifice of our Substitute Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His cross-work at Calvary that made the provision for Him to have this 2nd "body" (if you will) ... [which God kept a secret until *the revelation of the mystery* to Paul] ...

... it signifies our 'in-common' value & esteem (our great love) for our godly edification and all that it means to us ...

... it signifies our 'body thinking' and our willingness to sacrifice and endure whatever it takes for each other to be properly educated & edified as members of Christ's body ...

... (and the truth is—we could go on and on and on with all that it signifies and puts on display!)

- In short—*saluting one another with an **holy** kiss* (or **holy** gesture) is a way for you to put on display the **honesty** of who you are "in Christ" as a properly educated & edified "son" of God!

(again) **Rom. 16:16**—*Salute one another with an holy kiss.*

- One other thing I want to note before we finish (:16) - notice that in Paul's epistles—here in Rom. 16:16 we are told to **Salute** one another with an holy kiss—but then in the other 3 passages (1Cor. 16:20; 2Cor. 13:12; and 1Thes. 5:26) we are told to **Greet** one another (or the brethren) with an holy kiss.

- So—in one instance (Rom. 16:16) we *Salute*; and in the other 3 instances, we *Greet*—and again, my understanding is **not** that we make an issue out of *saluting* and *greeting* so as to make it some kind of ‘legalistic’ formula ... but the real emphasis is simply upon the **interaction of the body of Christ that generates a “conversation” !!!**

- CONVERSATION

- “*Conversation*” - The term “*conversation*” is usually only thought of today in one sense: (AHD) “A spoken exchange of thoughts, opinions, and feelings; **a talk**.”

- And like many English words—the word *conversation* has been narrowed down to nearly meaning this one thing: A TALK.

- But this ‘narrowing’ isn’t entirely complete—and it’s happened in just the last few decades ... in fact, even in my lifetime the word *conversation* had a broader meaning than it does now.

- And, once again, when we deal with word meanings—we don’t just want to know what it means by a Dictionary definition—but we want to know what it means to GOD ... what does GOD mean when He uses the term *conversation*?

- And to help us find that out—we can go to the very first use of the word in the Scriptures.—(it’s used only 2x in the OT)

- **Psa. 37** (Book I) [READ] :1-15

- When you come to (:14) and are confronted with the word *conversation* for the first time—are you thinking that it means “a talk”? ... or are you thinking that it means much more than that?

- And if you do think that it means much more than that ... why? ... what ‘prompted’ you to think that?

- Maybe (:5) and that word “*way*”? ... and again in (:7)? ... and maybe the ‘way’ of “*evildoers*” (:9)? ... and how about the issue of the *wicked ‘plotting’ against the just* in (:12) as opposed to those of “*upright conversation*” in (:14)?

- That's what I mean about being 'prompted' to think some particular things by what the **context** has laid out to you *before* you get to the word *conversation* in (:14).
- And that 'prompting' has got you thinking about certain **ways**—the **way** of the 'righteous' and the 'upright' as opposed to the **way** of the evildoers and workers of iniquity.
- Truth is—there's really not much at all that the word *conversation* (in Psa. 37:14) has to do with 'A Talk'!
- Because in this context—the word *conversation* has far more to do with a person's **way** or **manner of life** or **course of life** than it does with a person's 'Talk'!
- In Psa. 37:14, the 'upright's' *conversation* has to do with his **way**—his manner or course of an 'upright' or righteous life!
- Now—that said, the actual 'Talking' part of the word *conversation* is a valid and legitimate issue—Talking is a part of it, but it's **not** all that's involved in the word
- see the only other time the word is used in the OT (**Psa. 50 [Book II] :16-23**)
 - Notice in (:16) you have the issue of Talking or what the *wicked* are **saying** (also in :19-20) ... but there is clearly much more going on than mere Talking ... there is also the **way** or the **manner or course of their life** (behavior) combined with their **talk**!
- And interestingly enough, the Hebrew word for *conversation* in the 2 instances it's used in the OT, is the word דֶּרֶךְ (derek) = **way**, road, journey, **manner, path, course of life**.
- Now Paul uses the term *conversation* 7x in his epistles.
 - 2Cor. 1:12; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 2:3; Eph. 4:22; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 3:20; 1Tim. 4:12
 - In all but the 2 passages in Phil., the Greek word is the word ἀναστρέφω (anastrepho) used as a metaphor = to conduct one's self; to **behave** one's self, to live.

- But in the 2 Phil. passages, the Greek word is the word πολιτεύμα (politeuma) = to be a citizen (citizenship) - but even politeuma carries the idea of ‘to conduct one’s self as pledged to some law of life’! ...

... and often times, ‘Bible correctors’ will come along and say, Look! in Phil. 3:20, when Paul says, *For our conversation is in heaven*—that’s a bad translation, because it should say, ‘For our **citizenship** is in heaven’! ... and then they will give you a wry smile like they’ve really uncovered a ‘golden nugget’ from the Greek that you would never have gotten from the English (i.e., the KJ)!

- (But you already know that you are a ‘citizen’ of heaven [or a heavenly citizen] **before** you ever get to Phil. 3:20 [Romans gave you the foundation of it, and Ephesians gave you the details of it] ... and apparently those Bible Scholars didn’t read the preceding verses [in Phil. 3] where you are clearly being told about your **WALK** [or your behavior or manner of life]!)

- So we can fully rely on the word *conversation* in Phil. 3:20 being not only the **right** word –but the **most excellent** choice of English words to be used there ... so that leaves us with the question, WHY? ... if the Greek word is [politeuma], (meaning ‘citizenship’), then why did the KJ Translators see that and determine that the most excellent word to use in that context is NOT ‘citizenship’, but the word *conversation*? [and here’s why] ...

- “*Conversation*” originally meant ‘**to have or make an impact**’ - or to have **an influence by not only what you say, but how you present yourself.**

- A person’s *conversation* in Older English had to do with the effects of one’s life in a broad and general way, and slowly over time it came to be distilled down (and narrowed) to the issue that someone has when they talk ... *Conversation* came to mean **the giving of information by whatever form in order to have an impact upon the recipient of that information.**

- It was a term that was used to describe the **impact** and **influence** that a person had by how they conducted themselves in the sight of other people.

- In this sense, “*conversation*” and “*citizenship*” have **similar** meanings. That is, the term *citizenship* was understood to mean not only one’s residence and status with accompanying duties, rights, and privileges, but it was also viewed as how one utilized and **responded** to those citizenship privileges.

- For example, more than 100 years ago in the United States, (and even up to the 1960s), students in Elementary Schools would be given marks in their Report Cards for ‘*citizenship*’ - which was taken to mean one’s deportment or personal conduct & behavior **within the residence of the classroom.**

- The problem we have today is that when someone thinks of *citizenship*, they more or less think of it in terms of **where** they belong (i.e., as a citizen of the United States, and that is the country I belong to). But that is what the word **CITIZEN** means - **not** the word **CITIZENSHIP!**

- *Citizenship*, while used in connection with being a citizen, really is the issue of the deportment or **conduct and behavior** you have **AS** the citizen you claim to be.

- And in connection with the use of ‘*citizenship*’ in elementary school, one was marked or graded upon one’s conduct and behavior as to how it **IMPACTED** the classroom residence of the student.

- By the time one gets to Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, your education as ‘sons’ (Sonship Edification) has now brought you to the place where you are now at the point of **having the privilege to realize that your conduct and behavior is having a powerful INFLUENCE and IMPACT** in the heavenly places.

- Not that it didn’t have an impact or influence *before* this time, but now that you are moving farther along in that education of being edified as God’s ‘sons’ by means of the effectual working of God’s word in the order He has placed it in His own word to bring about proper Sonship Edification - and also having successfully withstood the tactics of the Policy of Evil in the formative level of Sonship Edification - the main realm of your influence and impact is moving into the heavenly places, having now caught the attention of the Adversary and his cohorts as someone to be reckoned with. (You are no longer an easy target, or an easy victim).

- And when that takes place, that's when your **influence** and **impact** begins to grow in that heavenly realm, and the Adversary must now ratchet up his Policy of Evil against you from what it was in your formative education.

- Therefore, by our **IMPACT** and **INFLUENCE** being made because of the *wisdom* of God's word effectually working within us (the subtilty the son got in Phase 1 / Level II—[Eph. Ch. 1-3]) - and being properly educated as God's 'sons' that we are - that **impact** becomes the 'talk of the town,' so to speak, and we now have a "**CONVERSATION**" there in those heavenly places.

- (Webster's—1828 English Dictionary)
 "Conversation" = the general course of manners; behavior; deportment; especially as it respects morals.

- In short—your talk (or the talking part of your *conversation*) is in keeping with your behavior (or the-way-you-live part of your *conversation*)—[whether honest or dishonest] - and God's intention is that by your words and behavior (or your godly *conversation*), you are to make an impact and have an influence upon your residence [upon both the people where you reside, and the **culture** of the place where you reside]!

- When you think "*conversation*" ...

Think: WHAT YOU SAY (what comes out of your mouth);

Think: CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR;

Think: IMPACT (upon your surroundings and upon the people of your surroundings; and upon the angels as well)!

- Your words are a reflection of what is going on in your "s"pirit! — (your "s"pirit affects your soul, and then what's going on in your spirit/soul [inner man] gets manifested by your body—which in this case is your mouth and the words coming out of your mouth!)

- (see 1Thes. 2:13) - ["*effectually working in you*" = your behavior is making an impact and having an influence!]

- And this is an important (and overlooked) doctrine—God puts great stock in what comes out of your **mouth** as the indicator of how you **live**! God has designed your spirit and soul to be manifested by your body—and in turn, making an impact and having an influence upon your place of residence! [all wrapped up in that word **conversation**!]

- What comes out of one's mouth indicates how they LIVE—their conduct & behavior—their *conversation*—which is designed to make an IMPACT.

- Your words are a reflection of your “s”pirit!

(this is a massive doctrine)

- Deut. 8:1-3—establishing with Israel the ‘connection’ between the ‘inner man’ (spirit/soul) being manifested by the ‘outer man’ (in this case, the ‘*living*’ or ‘*life*’ or conduct & behavior of a man (i.e., his ‘*conversation*’).
- Deut. 32:44-47—notice (:47) **“*it is your LIFE*”** - it’s the matter of God’s *words* being lived out in conduct & behavior!
- Psa. 37 (which we noted in our last Lessons—we noted :14) - but now notice **:30-31**—note the IMPACT: of “*wisdom*” and “*judgment*”.
- Psa. 119:50, 93
- Pro. 10:11; 13:3; 15:7; 16:23; 18:4; 20:15
- Mat. 4:4—(hearkens back to Deut. 8:1-3)
- Mat. 12:34-37 - [:37] this is regarding the process of purging the apostate element of the nation Israel out in the 5th Install./5th CoP—and that’s one of the reasons why when you are over in First, Second and Third John and John is dealing with a doctrine that’s given to the remnant so they can clearly distinguish between the children of the devil and the children of God and so forth, he comes along and said, ‘*he that confesses*’ it - (the words coming out of their mouths once again) are going to produce the justification or the condemnation.
- Mat. 15:1,2; 10-20
- Mat. 21:12-16 - Stop there for a second and notice who is crying in the temple, verse 15, “And when the chief priest and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple” and it’s the children saying, “Hosanna to the son of David; they (the chief priest and scribes) were sore displeased.

- And then Jesus says to them, *Yea; have ye never read, OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS THOU HAS PERFECTED PRAISE?* [which is a quote from Psa. 8:2]

- (Psa. 8)

1. *O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who has set thy glory above the heavens.*

2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

- What's going on here is something the Lord recognized was suppose to take place — it was prophesied about that at a particular time in the Climatic Stage of Israel's program, that, in view of what was going on, and in view of the negative response of Israel's vain religious system and its religious leadership, and in view of a particular event that took place — God honored the *little children* with the privilege of glorifying him by **saying** some things and **doing** some things that the leaders of Israel's nation should have done if they knew what was going on — but since they didn't know what was going on the Lord took the very ones they despised and thought of no account and gave that honor to them.

- John 6: (at the end of the Lord's analogy of drinking His blood and eating His flesh) **:60-63 (:63)**

- (see also **:66-68**)

- James 3:5-8 (part of the powerful work of godly edification is to 'tame the tongue'!)

Paul

- 1Cor. 1:10 (*speaking the same thing*)

- 1Cor. 2:9-14 (:13—*we speak*)

- if you do a study on all the times Paul uses the word *speak*, you'll see how big this doctrine is!

- 1Cor. 15:33

- Eph. 4:22-25; **(:29)**

- Col. 4:2-4—(notice that a connection is made between *speaking the mystery of Christ* and making it “*manifest*” or put on display to all!)

- 1Thes. 1:7-10—(they *sounded out the word of the Lord* which led to some particular conduct & behavior! ... a “*shew*” in [:9-10]!)

- And we could go on and on—but all I’m after here is to hopefully open the ‘eyes of your understanding’ a bit concerning the great importance God puts upon what is coming out of your **mouth** as an **indicator** of how you **live** in all godliness ... **OR NOT!**

- And that function—that godly function of the effectual working of God’s word in your ‘inner-man’ (your spirit and your soul) being manifested by your words and your life ... and in turn, making an **impact** and having an **influence** upon the place of your residence ...

... that’s all wrapped up in that word *conversation*!)

- In fact, so big, and so important is the issue of God having a “*testimony*” on this earth—that is, He **wants** His word, and its effectual working, to be SPOKEN as well as LIVED OUT—and so important is that to God, that God has David say what he does in **Psalms 138:2** (read)!

- And when you study it out—such is the case with us, the members of the church, the body of Christ in this present disp. of grace! God **wants** “*the mystery of Christ*” to be SPOKEN as well as LIVED OUT, too! Why? because of the **impact and influence** it makes, not only here on earth, but **primarily upon the heavenly realm!**

- And Romans 16:1-16 is preparing us for that! (by our *saluting and greeting*—by our body-interaction in connection with what we **say** regarding properly handling and ‘rightly dividing’ God’s word; and how we then **conduct & behave** ourselves as we **labor** with God because of its effectual working—it makes an **impact** and has an **influence** upon the heavenly realm!) - we have the privilege of providing God our Heavenly Father with a **testimony** in the heavenly places, among the holy angels and the Devil and his angles!

- That’s the importance of “*Salute one another with an holy kiss*” (Rom. 16:16a)

- And then we get that *conversation* matter set forth to us—not only as members of our local church/assembly ... but, since godly edification is designed to take place on the larger scale, (with the **entire** body of Christ) - [from church to church, or assembly to assembly] ... so we then get the rest of (:16) ...

(Second sentence)

Romans 16:16b *The churches of Christ salute you.*

- (:16a) *Salute one another with an holy kiss.* points up our godly *conversation* and interaction with one another **within a single local church**—and then (:16b) *The churches of Christ salute you.* points up our godly *conversation* and interaction **with other local churches in our locale**. (or what you might call, ‘Full-Body Interaction’!)

- The “**churches of Christ**” (NOT the denomination!) are the other local churches that the apostle Paul has established in Greece and Asia on his journeys.

- And just pause for a moment and think about that:
Something **new** has begun on this earth—something that God had kept ‘hidden’ in Himself until He revealed it to Paul—the **fullness** of God’s plan & purpose to be victorious in His ancient ‘contention’ with the Adversary has now been revealed ... and a brand new entity (a new creation) now exists on the earth that has its ultimate goal of repossessing and reconciling the heavenly places back to God ... God now has (alive on the earth) a 2nd body of Christ that will vanquish and demolish Satan and his plan of evil ...

... and even if for just one moment in time—every one of those local assemblies where members of the body of Christ gather together for godly edifying are the closest there ever has been of being **ONE**—of being **united** in the same doctrine; the same mind; and the same spirit ...

... and really, just as they are all called, “*the churches of Christ*,” - they really were ONE in Denomination—(meaning, of the same ‘name’; of the same ‘kind’; **of the same body!**)

- It’s really fascinating to think about!

- “*The churches of Christ **salute you*** [the churches in Rome].

- And from the viewpoint perspective of the saints in the churches at Rome being the ‘stationary’ ones (so to speak), and the other churches in Greece and Asia Minor being the ones **sending** their wishes to the churches at Rome—hence, the proper thing to say is that they “*salute you*”.

- And, again, it’s quite clear from Rom. 1:8 (“*your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*”), and what will be said later on in (:19—*For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.*) - it’s clear that these Roman saints and their local churches were well known by all the other churches in the world.

- And their *salute* to the churches of Rome was no small matter—those other churches in Greece & Asia knew very well that being in Rome itself meant they were at the ‘tip of the spear’ (so to speak) in undergoing tremendous suffering for their faith in Christ (and in being associated with Paul)!

- This little sentence is really a great passage in scripture (in Paul’s epistles; in our edification curriculum)! because it points up (not merely ‘good wishes’ and ‘sincere affections’ of other saints), but it points up the powerful issue of the **fellowship and communion among other local churches**...

... and it furthers and expands our understanding and appreciation for how those 4 Fundamental Body Attributes of godly conduct & behavior) we learned about back in Rom. 12 can go beyond a single local assembly to being Body Attributes among ALL local assemblies on earth ...

1) Usefulness; 2) Cooperation; 3) Servant;
[and especially] 4) **WELFARE!** (spiritual/edificational)

- “*the churches of Christ salute you*” points up the fellowship & communion that **should** exist between ALL local churches **and the desire of each other’s godly Welfare where godly Sonship Edification is concerned!**

- It’s all about BODY Thinking/Living/Labor! ... and it’s **not** designed by God to be done in just **one** local church, but **all** local churches (i.e., the **entire** body of Christ)!

- And you can see (according to how things are presently going on with the great divisions among the body of Christ today—in all the various ‘denominations’ there are) how the Adversary has **ravaged** this issue—and has almost completely destroyed it and greatly diminished the body’s impact and influence! [he knows how important and how **powerful** this issue is—and he’s gone right after it, to neutralize it!]

- In fact—going back to what was said previously—there is something **new** that God has begun to do on this earth—God has revealed His great plan and purpose for fully dealing with Satan and his plan of evil ... and God has revealed it, (**not** ‘according to prophecy’ or as Peter said, “*by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began*” - but ‘according to the mystery’ or as Paul says, “*according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began*)

... and by God simply keeping a secret in connection with the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ—and by revealing the mystery aspect of the Cross to Paul—God took the adversary in his own craftiness ...

... and this new thing/new entity/new creature—this **body** of Christ being formed in this new disp/grace is going to be the **total undoing** of Satan and his plan of evil ...

... and if God has designed for that new **body** of Christ to be edified unto godliness—and to be edified so as to participate in Satan’s undoing—and if a part of that (in fact, a **powerful** part of that) concerns the fellowship, communion, and concord of the members of that **body**, (both within a local assembly, and, ideally, with ALL local assemblies on earth), ... and if God has designed the Impact & Influence they can make is to be to the detriment of Satan and his Plan of Evil ...

... then, wouldn’t that information just make the adversary go nuts?! ... wouldn’t that inflame his rage and hatred for the “*body of Christ*”? and make him go into action to **destroy** that fellowship, communion and concord? ... and doesn’t that make it so that the very next, natural thing that God would bring up is the issue of the Adversary **attacking** our fellowship and communion?

... and, folks, that's **why** the next, natural thing for our Father to say to us—is to give us some information about that adversary and his coming attacks upon our fellowship and communion ... in other words, that's the natural reason why (:17-20) deals with Satan and his policy of evil against us ... and why he is mentioned ... **by name**!

- And you should also know, therefore, **why** this issue hasn't been (and in fact, **could not have been**) brought up until this point in the book of Romans!

- Because this doesn't just 'come out of the blue' (so to speak) - it doesn't just get 'dropped' on you randomly ... No! ... the issue of Satan's opposition by his Policy of Evil is brought up in light of what Romans 15:8-16:16 has told you ... especially in light of what Rom. 16:1-16 has told you!

- Which means that if you only lightly 'skim' over Rom. 16:1-16, you really don't have the **whole context** for why God says what He does in Rom. 16:17-20!

- So—once again (:16) *Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.*

- Any thoughts / comments?

- On to Romans 16:17-27 (only 11 verses left)

- (read :17-27)

- INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS TO ROMANS 16:17-27 AND SATAN'S POLICY OF EVIL.

- By confronting us with the List of Rom. 16:1-16, God is having Paul begin (or rather, to continue) developing within us an understanding and appreciation for the kind of INTERACTION or "fellowship" and "communion" and "concord" that is supposed to exist within the body of Christ in a godly way and for a godly purpose.

- Even as far back in our Sonship Edification as Rom. 12:1-8 where God has Paul present us with, and teach us the very first Component of the fundamental **wisdom** of God concerning the **body of Christ** - that is, how we are to Think, Live, and Labor with God as a BODY - with body thinking/body living/body labor - God our Heavenly Father was at work generating the early stages of our godly interaction - our godly fellowship, communion, and concord.

- God's initial instruction of wisdom is in keeping with the fight and warfare that exists between Him and Satan (the adversary)! — this new “body of Christ” being the means by which God will reconcile and repossess the heavenly places for Satan and his cohorts.

- Remember that our initial instruction of wisdom is actually, oddly selective (so to speak) - and what I mean is, of all the things God could have taught us about regarding His wisdom, (like creation [physics, quantum physics, astrophysics], or His so-called divine decrees, or why bad things happen to good people, or why He doesn't do anything about war, crime, poverty, injustice, sickness, or death; or who killed Kennedy) ... of all things, He gives us His wisdom specifically pertaining to our functioning as a BODY; as members of the body of Christ that we are.

- And really - all of the rest of God's 'manifold wisdom' that He will teach us, **builds** upon that initial and fundamental 'wisdom' of God concerning our being and functioning as a BODY; as members of the body of Christ.

- But that doctrine which begins there in earnest in Romans 12, is designed to grow and develop - and indeed it does grow, even in the book of Romans itself.

- And that initial and fundamental wisdom of God that pertains to us as members of a BODY (the body of Christ), and all of us being *members one of another*, gets a major expansion and further development in Rom. 14 (our instruction of godly *equity*) when dealing with the matters pertaining to the “weaker brother.”

- And by the end of our 'instruction of godly equity' in Rom. 15:7, we have come to understand and appreciate that we not only are a **body** (and are to think, act, and labor as such) - but that when we **do** gather together as a local body or local church/assembly for the purpose of being 'edified unto godliness which is in faith' - that we truly are putting on display **by** our godly interaction as a body, our fellowship, communion, and concord - that is, by our godly fellowship & communion, we are putting on a "*shew*" - primarily to Satan and his cohorts that the Lord Jesus Christ has 'taken him in his own craftiness' and 'spoiled' his Plan of Evil to be "like the most High."

- Now we haven't been told about all the details of the impact of it yet, but we are told and taught about the reality of it; the great importance of it; and the **devastating** and **disastrous** results of **ruining** our fellowship, communion, and concord by strife and division within the body - which ends up destroying the edification of the weaker brother, **plus** destroying the very "*work of God*" within that body or local assembly. (Rom. 14:15, 20)

- And because of the *shew* that our fellowship & communion puts on display to Satan and his cohorts - you should clearly see that one of the very first things that comes into the 'crosshairs' of the Adversary is our fellowship and communion as a body.

- Causing division in our local assembly is going to be the adversary's first and primary attack. And, as we will see, causing division can be easy to detect, but it can also be very subtle, clever, crafty, and difficult to detect if you are not properly prepared for it. [having godly *discretion/understanding*]

- So then - as we prepare to exit the book of Romans and our first level of godly Sonship Edification, our Father has the apostle Paul confront us with an expansion of our understanding and appreciation for the great dispensational change He has made with Paul being the new administrator of that new dispensation of His grace in Rom. 15:8-33.

- And since the 3rd Member of the Godhead, (God the Holy Ghost) is the prominent Member of the Godhead in charge of both the word of God itself, and the sanctification and edification of the members of the body of Christ in this new dispensation of His grace - God has Paul give to us a list of Eight Sanctifying Works of the Holy Ghost that validates the great dispensational change that God has made, which generated great boldness and confidence in "*the gospel of God*" given to Paul as "*the minister of Jesus Christ*" to us Gentiles.

- Why? Because it's by means of that information that the "body of Christ" is formed in the first place! (and we need to be confident and unshakable in our mind about that issue!)
- And then we get to Romans chapter 16 where we are immediately confronted with a List of individuals that demonstrate to us the kind of godly INTERACTION that is supposed to be going on in a properly functioning BODY: the body of Christ.
 - And we are to perceive the kind of talking interaction that is supposed to take place - as well as the kind of fellowship, communion, and concord that is supposed to take place with this newly created body of Christ. In other words, the kind of thinking, talking, conduct and behavior (even **sacrifice**) that God has designed to take place with members of the body of Christ.
- And while the word is never used in Romans, we know from what comes up later on in Paul's epistles that we are being taught about our proper and godly "*conversation*" that we are to have as befitting the members of the body of Christ.
- And really, that's about all that we come to know about our *conversation* in Romans doctrine. And that's by design - because God doesn't intend that we know all the details of our *conversation* and our godly fellowship, communion, and concord until we get those details given to us in Level II of our Sonship Edification in the book of Ephesians.
- And while we can intelligently talk about our fellowship, communion, concord, and our *conversation* having an **impact** - it really isn't until we get the additional doctrine of Ephesians that we really have a **full** understanding and appreciation for the details of that impact.
- But we do know enough by the time we get to the end of the book of Romans that our body fellowship, communion, and concord is a BIG DEAL to God - and that God intends to use it for some particular reasons and purposes. And we also know that it is an **abhorrence** to God for us to **break our bond** of fellowship, communion, and concord by strife and division.
 - And we are expected to know the reason **why** that is such an abhorrence to God. (At least a basic understanding of why).

- Rom. 13:13 taught us that "**strife**" is not only one of the *works of darkness*, but also that, as the 'Pride of Life' issue that it is, *strife* (and its accompanied 'lust' of *envy* that generates it) is the 'work of darkness' **that specifically goes after the very word of God itself!**

- And combining that knowledge with the issue of being **edified** as a body - and that the edification of the body can be hindered, wrecked, and ruined by **strife** and **division** among the members of the body which will ultimately end with the destruction of "the work of God" in the body of that local assembly - we really do come to an understanding and appreciation (if only a basic one) of the great and tremendous importance such things are to God as is our fellowship, communion, and concord.

- And when you kind of 'stand back' and look at the entire section of doctrine contained in Rom. 15:8-16:27 - you realize that this first 'round' of attack of the Satanic Policy of Evil is not aimed at a single thing, but rather it's aimed at two primary things that fall under God's superior wisdom called, "*the revelation of the mystery*":

it's aimed at 1) the "new creature" of the church, the body of Christ itself - that is, the idea that there even is such a thing as a "dispensation" at all, let alone, a "dispensation of the grace of God" whereby God is no longer doing what He was doing with Israel, but has temporarily set that aside and is now forming a "new man" or a new "body of Christ" for purposes of reconciling the heavenly realm ... [this includes the issue of "rightly dividing the word of truth"]; ... and ...

it's aimed at 2) the godly **edification** of this "new creature" of the church, the body of Christ - that is, **its doctrine** that enables it to have an influence and an impact that is detrimental and devastating to Satan and his entire Plan of Evil. [an impact & influence that can be made by this 'body of Christ's' fellowship & communion!] (this also includes 'rightly dividing the word')

- And so - as we come now to Rom. 16:17ff where we are directly confronted with Satan **by name** and his Policy of Evil against us - and because we already understand and appreciate such things as strife and discord, and the division they cause within the body of Christ, it should come as no surprise to us that God our Heavenly Father would end our fundamental sonship edification with us having to deal with Satan's determination to lay siege against the message and the messengers of "*the revelation of the mystery*"!

- And if the Adversary **is** successful, we should (and are expected) to know Why ... which is because somewhere and in some form, false and corrupted doctrine has crept in to the assembly and certain ones in the body/assembly are operating upon that false and corrupted doctrine!

BACK TO THE OUTLINE:

- General Breakdown of Romans 15:8-16:27

- What is the General, Overall Matter of this large and final portion of Romans? ...

- All 53 verses are generally dealing with the Father's final instructions to His properly educated & edified "sons" and "daughters" **ensuring that their sound, fundamental Establishment is properly prepared for their upcoming sound Stablistment** which will take place in the book of Ephesians (the 'meat'-doctrine of the curriculum for Level II Sonship Edification).

- And our Heavenly Father goes about doing that by His **2-Fold** form of instruction ...

- 1st: Rom. 15:8-16:16—which provides you with critical and vital information that gives you the ability to boldly and confidently **GO ON** and get the remainder of your Sonship Education & Edification, and acquire that "young man" status, and ultimately become "a wise man". [**at the end of Eph.**]

- 2nd: Rom. 16:17-27—which deals with the Father's instructions that prepares you to meet (and be **successful** in meeting) the opposition & resistance to you Going On and getting the rest of your Sonship Education & Edification.

- (which includes Paul's apostolic plans to provide for and give the saints the remaining curriculum for the next Level in their further edification.)

- And while that may suffice to give a general statement as to what Rom. 16:17-27 is all about—it should be further noted that these last 11 verses are, (more specifically), the Fatherly exhortations, admonitions, and instructions pertaining to Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil—(which is the **3rd Component** of negative resistance and Opposition to our godly sonship edification).

- And with that said—since this *is* dealing with **Phase 1** of the PoE, and especially with the **3rd Component** of negative resistance & opposition to our godly edification ... it stands to reason that if that's all a foreign concept to you—then you need to understand and appreciate what Phase 1 of the PoE is; and what the 3rd Component of negative resistance & opposition to godly edification is!
- But for now, let's get the Outline for this final portion of Romans 16:17-27—(for the last 11 verses of the book).
- And, (as always), since godly edification is the issue—and since godly edification results in us being “godly” [or God-like; ‘Like Father, like son] ... it comes as no surprise to find that we are given a portion of information that pertains to Godly Thinking; followed by an portion of information that pertains to Godly Living; and then a final portion of information that pertains to Godly Labor... and that's just what we *do* find.
- So, my understanding is—that when you look over the information contained in the last 11 verses of Romans ...
 - ... the most common way to break down the information is to say, Verses 17-20 seem to deal with one thing (ending in the “*Amen*” the way it does) — then Verses 21-24 deals with that 2nd List of names (so those verses go together - again, ending with an “*Amen*”) — and then that leaves Verses 25-27 for the ending of the book (ending with an “*Amen*”, too).
 - and that's not bad—but I think that we can perceive some things in a little bit more detail than that ... because, my understanding is that that breakdown really doesn't match up very well with the Godly Thinking; Godly Living; and Godly Labor issues. (and I think, by paying attention to those ‘English Words of Logic’, we can get a more detailed and accurate Outline than that).
- So, looking for those G1, G2, & G3 issues—as I look over the whole section—what catches my eye first and foremost is that in (:17) we have the beginning of the verse that says, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, ...*” — and then that's followed in the remainder of (:17) and all of (:18) by some information that is directly **instructing** us—and instructing us in the way in which we are to **THINK** like God does!

- And since (:17) begins with that phrase, “*Now I beseech you brethren*” - it seems to me that we have our final Sonship Checkpoint!

- I know that (:17) and (:18) go together because, while each verse is one complete sentence each - (:18) begins with a “For” of cause or reason—it’s a “for” that answers the reason “Why?” ... which is the question naturally implied at the end of (:17) - i.e., (:17) ‘begs the question, “Why?”’

- And then I see a slight ‘shift’ in the context [and in the grammar] take place in (:19) - due to the “For” **not** being a “for” of cause or reason, but it’s used there for a different reason ...

... but what makes me think that (:19) begins a section of information that is different than Godly Thinking is because of the term “**obedience**” (for one thing) - plus, the 2nd sentence in (:19) gives us further instruction as to the Roman saints’ **conduct and behavior, or Godly Living, in view of what (:17-18 [the Godly Thinking]) has just set forth.**

- Then, I see that in (:20), God Himself is brought into the picture **as working together with us** to “*bruise Satan*” *under our feet*—which indicates to me, anyway, that another slight ‘shift’ in the context has taken place where we are now dealing with our **Godly Labor**.

- And in all of the remaining information contained in (:21-27) I don’t see any ‘shift’ in the context of Godly Labor taking place—in other words, my understanding is that **all of (:20-27) deals with our Godly Labor.**

- So—I see that (:17-18) sets forth the Godly Thinking, and then (:19) sets forth the Godly Living (or godly conduct & behavior), and then (:20-27) sets forth the Godly Labor. [does that make sense?]

- Let’s put all that on the board ...

2. Rom. 16:17-27 (it’s #2 because it’s the 2nd of the 2-Fold Final Instructions of the Father to His son as he exits the book of Romans). And in preparation of the son meeting with, and being successful with the opposition & resistance of him going on and getting the rest of his Sonship Education & Edification—we have the Fatherly exhortations, admonitions, and instructions pertaining to Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- **Godly Thinking: (:17-18)** - Godly Thinking in regard to Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil.
- **Godly Living: (:19)** - Godly Living in regard to functioning successfully under the experience of Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil.
- **Godly Labor: (:20-27)**
 - But here in the Godly Labor section—we can break down these 8 verses a little further and with a little more detail—because we actually have **3 Parts to the Godly Labor.**
 - First of all we have ...
 - **Part A: (:20)** - which is the Godly Labor of effectually *bruising Satan* in order to countermand (or to stop, or put an end to, or prohibit) the continuation of Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil. (to ‘staunch’ it; to arrest its progress and put an end to it)
 - Or, to put it another way—to not allow Satan to “*get an advantage of us*” (2Cor. 2:11) “*for we are not ignorant of his devices.*”
 - Then we have ...
 - **Part B: (:21-24)** - which is the Godly Labor of properly acknowledging and responding to the “*grace*” of the ones used by God to provide for your Edification Establishment. (Which is what that 2nd List of individuals is for.)
 - And finally we have ...
 - **Part C: (:25-27)** - which is the Godly Labor of providing for the successful stablishment of any and all who are affected by Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- Any Questions? ... make sense?

- Now, just by a causal reading of these last 11 verses—even the causal reader should be impressed with the critical nature of what’s being said here—because we’re being told here, in no uncertain terms, that we are going to be in for a FIGHT ... a WAR ... with a determined and very clever Adversary who is presented to us **by name**: Satan, himself.

- That, in itself, isn’t anything new to us—because our Heavenly Father has already told us we would be in this fight ... this war — because all the way back in our initial Sonship Orientation, we were told that we would have to face some determined and powerful resistance and opposition to our sanctified sonship life.

- And it isn’t a ‘pretend’ war ... it isn’t ‘war games’ ... it’s **REAL WARFARE** ... but it’s not warfare against people, per se, and it’s not physical warfare ... it’s not a war of actual guns and bullets ... rather, **it’s a spiritual warfare!**

- And what’s ‘up for grabs’ (so to speak) - or what the battle is over (or about) for us at this point in the book of Romans ... is really Romans itself ... the battleground is ***“the gospel of Christ”*** (as Paul calls it in Rom. 1:16; 15:19 and 15:29)—or ***“the gospel of God”*** (as Paul calls it in Rom. 1:1 and 15:16) - or what Paul calls, ***“my gospel”*** (in Rom. 2:16 and 16:25) - or ***“the gospel of the grace of God”*** (as Paul said back in Acts 20:24) - **the battle for us, right now, is the doctrine contained in the book of Romans!**

- What this spiritual warfare is going to be about is ‘God’s gospel’; ‘Christ’s gospel’; or ‘Paul’s gospel’ ... all of which are referring to the exact same thing: which is *the revelation of the mystery* given to the apostle Paul **specifically** for the members of the *new creature, the one new man*, of the church, the body of Christ in this new and distinct disp. of Gentile grace in which we live.

- The *gospel* that God gave to Paul includes how a lost person gets saved & justified unto eternal life—***and*** how a saved & justified saint is properly edified unto godliness: **specifically for/in this disp. of grace.**

- It is NOT a gospel contained in Israel’s scriptures—it’s not a gospel that is according to prophecy—it’s not a gospel that pertains to God’s program with Israel—it’s not a gospel that has to do with God establishing His kingdom on earth—rather it’s a gospel that has to do with God’s heavenly kingdom ... a gospel that has to do with **the heavenly places!**

- And, by now, we should have an understanding and appreciation for that phrase, “the gospel” and how it can be used— and what I mean by that is that we should realize and recognize that you can talk about that expression “the gospel” in at least 2 basic ways:

1. The gospel for lost people: the gospel of reconciliation—in this sense, the expression “the gospel” refers to God’s ‘spelled-out-message’ for how a lost person in this disp/grace can get saved from the debt & penalty of his sins; or justified unto eternal life.

- That Jesus Christ, as our Substitute Redeemer, shed His blood on the cross, and took upon Him the wrath of God that we deserved—and fully paid our sin-debt; and that He died on that cross, but was resurrected from the dead 3 days later—and that by fully trusting in Christ’s work on the cross (and no works of your own) - by simply **believing** He did that in your stead, you can have eternal life!

2. The gospel for saved people: the gospel *for* the reconciled — and in this sense, the expression “the gospel” refers to God’s spelled-out-message for how a saved person in this disp/grace is to live—it’s the information for a saved person in this disp/grace that answers the question: ‘After salvation, Now What?’ — it’s the doctrine for our godly edification.

- And when you can think of those 2 issues being combined into one expression of “*the gospel of Christ/God/or Paul’s my gospel*” - then that tells you that what this warfare with Satan is going to be about (again, for us as this point in Romans) ... that fight/war is going to be over **all 12 Parts of “the Gospel” contained in the book of Romans!**

- Simply put—for us, right now, our spiritual warfare with the adversary is going to be about the doctrine contained in Romans—the doctrine of our Level I Sonship Edification!

- And my point in all this is to say—you may know “*the mystery*” and how to ‘rightly divide the word of truth’ - but, do you? ... can you defend it? ... and can you never be shaken in your mind as to the truth of it? ... I hope so! ... we’ll find out!

- I'm saying all this just to underscore an issue right from the out-set (before we look at any of the details of :17ff) - and that issue is that just by a 'surface' reading of (:17) - you are struck with the fact that the overall issue at hand is an attack upon **"THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED" !!!** ... [it's not an attack upon you, per se, but upon the *doctrine* you have *learned* in Paul's epistle to the Romans!]

- It's going to be a war over God's wisdom vs. a competing wisdom—(Satan's wisdom) ...

... and it's going to be a war over **sound** doctrine vs. **unsound** or contrary doctrine (corrupt doctrine) ...

... and the Modus Operandi of Satan's attack upon our sound doctrine is NOT to throw the Bible away—but to **use** the Bible itself in an Un-Biblical way (which would mean not properly handling the word of truth—and not rightly dividing the word of truth with Paul).

- Now—at this point, I want to make sure that we are clear on some of the terminology that we've used in our Outline.

- First of all—I want to start by bringing some things that you already know—but that may be in the back of your mind—and bring them to the front of your mind.

- I want to pick up on something I said earlier—and that was that the spiritual warfare being presented to us here in (:17ff) isn't something new to us—but we have already been told some basic things about it.

- In fact—from the very beginning of our sonship education & edification—one of the first things our Father did, was to alert us to the fact that we are going to be receiving some serious **Temptation and Opposition** to the education & edification He's going to give us as His adopted "sons."

- And this Temptation & Opposition is going to take place in 3 Areas:

1. Your Flesh. (see Pro. 1:7-9) - this is the '1st Line' of Temptation & Opposition—and, sadly, this is often where a lot of (if not most of) godly edification gets forsaken—(your imagination being one of the major culprits) ... "I just can't **imagine** that could be true."

- And not only does the ‘format’ for sonship education in Proverbs 1 & 2 bear this out—but Romans doctrine itself bears this out — (more often than not, **you** will be your own worst enemy!)

- **6:12-23; 7:24-25; 8:1-13; 8:33-34**

2. This Present Evil World. (see Pro. 1:10-16; 2:10-15)

- The “*evil man*” - and one of the reasons why we associate *the evil man* with this *present evil world* is because it is the “world” of men ... the “world” of ungodly mankind.

- This Present Evil World is the ever evolving, ungodly environment on this earth in which all men live ... and in which all men are partakers of ... and its power has brought all men (all mankind) under its influence.

- This Present Evil World is shaped and charted by both the sinfulness and ungodliness of men, as well as by the influence of the Satanic Plan and Policy of Evil—it is comprised of powerful darkness and wickedness, as well as counterfeit light and fleshly goodness.

- It, too, is a competing ‘wisdom’ to the wisdom of God.

- This Present Evil World has manifold steering and influencing mechanisms (including every ruling institution of men; as well as all of the arts & sciences) that deeply condition and affect the way men think, behave, and spend their time—but the underlying feature of them all is that they are hostile to God and God’s word (to God’s norm & standards of righteousness) - and they all seek to act independent of God and God’s word, and go about establishing their own norms & standards of righteousness ... promoting, applauding, and commending the works, energy, and production of man’s own flesh—while oftentimes convincing themselves by some works or penance system that they are wholly acceptable in God’s sight and/or in each other’s sight.

- The only exception to this is a justified member of the church the body of Christ who has been properly edified unto godliness which is “in faith”.

- Let's refresh ourselves some more on this issue of *the evil man* (being This Present Evil World), and the next issue of The Satanic Policy of Evil (being the issue of *the strange woman*) that are set kind of 'side-by-side' ... one in God's program with Israel, and the other in this present disp. of grace.

- God's Program with Israel—(come over to the book of **Deut.**)

- As you go through the development of the outworking of God's program with Israel—after the 40 years of wilderness wandering and God brings the nation to the Jordan River and readies them to cross over into the land and go in and possess it—He has Moses give them the Deuteronomy (2nd giving of the law) - and God packages with the Law (as Moses sets it forth) the issue of their coming failures in succumbing to these very 2 categories of Temptation and Opposition.

- And now, when they enter the land—they're going to go back into *the world*—but this time it's the *world* of the Canaanites!

- And they're told not to look at what the Canaanites **do**—don't look at how prosperous they've been—don't look at their cities, etc.—in fact, they're told that when they go in, they are to destroy everything—in fact, they're told that they are not going to be able to even touch the fruit trees for 3 years!

- And what God does is, He prepares them for destroying the fashion of the world of the Canaanites—because that's going to be the 1st major area of temptation that they're going to have to deal with: **THE WORLD**—and what ungodly man produces and fashions in *the world*—whether the PoE has anything to do with it or not (granted, it augments it, helps it out, etc.) — **but man, on the basis of being an ungodly creature by nature (on his own), fashions his own ungodly world to live in.**

- see ex., Deut 6:10-13; 8:7-18

- But then—after that's dealt with in the opening part of Deuteronomy, beginning in chapter 13 of Deut., God comes along and gives them a warning of another 2nd major category of temptation that comes from a specific person:

- Deut. 13:12-15 (:13)— called, "*the children of Belial*"
(that's the Policy of Evil!)

- “*The children of Belial*” is the Adversary’s name in God’s program with Israel when it came to the particular PoE that the Adversary was going to put together **against** Israel.
- And granted he works out there amongst the nations in their idolatry and everything—but the purpose of the Adversary in doing all that was **to infect Israel with it!**
- And when you come to view it this way, you come to realize that when God looks at the whole package of what His people are up against—and the Temptation & Opposition that they are going to have to deal with: when He looks at something that is outside of themselves, outside of their own sin nature (their *flesh*)—He sees 2 further categories:
 - 1st - He sees the **world** they have come out of,
 - 2nd - He sees the **Adversary**, and the fact that they no longer belong to the Adversary, but belong to God, being a special target that the Adversary sets his sights on in order to succeed with a particular aspect of his plan of evil—which is to have a **policy of evil** against God’s own people to endeavor to thwart the advances God is making when it comes to dealing with Satan and his plan of evil to repossess the earth.
- And the Policy of Evil will, indeed, utilize *the world* and its attractiveness so that you sometimes can’t make a sharp line of demarcation between *the world* and the PoE—they’ll sometimes work in conjunction.
- In fact, **the world is never aware that the PoE is making use of it!**
- And the only one that’s aware that the PoE can make use of *the world* is the Adversary himself—**and** the intelligent member of the remnant of Israel—**or** the intelligent member of the church, the body of Christ (an intelligized son).
- Now let’s look at our present disp. of grace—and in Paul’s epistles where you get these last 2 Areas of Temptation & Opposition (of This Present Evil World [being *the evil man*] and The Satanic Policy of Evil (being *the strange woman*) being kind of set forth ‘side-by-side’ [so to speak] - and in a passage where Paul utilizes this very period of Israel’s program we just looked at as our *ensample*.

- **1Cor. 10:1-6** - (:6) - there's *the evil man*—the *world* they had come out of.

- **1Cor. 10:7-12** - (:7) - there's *the strange woman*.

- And if you limit yourself to just the book of Romans—just Romans doctrine alone has taught you to have understanding & appreciation for what 'This Present Evil World' (or the "*world*") means ... even before God actually uses the word, "*world*" in this sense ...

- Development of This Present Evil World in Romans:

- (while the word "*world*" isn't used: **1:18-32**);

- **3:19; 5:12-13**;

- **12:2**—where God actually uses the word "*world*" in the sense of it being an evil *world*!
(see notes)

- Notice that Paul doesn't explain what "*this world*" means—which tells you that you are supposed to understand it by now—and just by tracking along with what Romans has taught you so far, we're expected to realize that "*this world*" is **ungodly**—and rather than being conformed to the image of God [godliness], *this world* is conformed to the image of Satan [satanliness].

- It produces thinking, living, and laboring with the Adversary! — and the "kicker" is—it has the capacity to do that very thing **WITHOUT YOU EVER NOTICING OR REALIZING THAT IT'S BEING DONE TO YOU!!!**

- And this becomes a real problem for a lot of folks (lost people; and even saved folks who don't have the effectual working of Rom. 1:1-11:36) - because you really don't realize how *this world* has made **deep 'inroads'** into your thinking ... so that, when God, (in His word), tells you something that runs counter to *this world*, you're going to flare up or get emotional or fly off the handle —especially when God's word tells you something counter to what *this world* taught you - **(and the only way you'd ever know it was counter to what *this world* taught you is that God says it is in His word and only in His word)!!!**

- For example: ‘hitting a nerve’ ... like evolution vs. creation (millions of years? / big bang? / Gen. Ch. 1-3 / Adam being the first man? / the firmament? / Noah’s flood? / the battle of Jericho [the walls] - (all challenged by science) / gender? / homosexuality? / marriage between a man and a woman? / the role of women? ... Christmas? / Easter? / suffering? / healing & miracles? ... etc., etc.

- Even **13:12-13** [which goes to the issue of the ‘course of this world’ that Satan has charted for it]

- So by the time you get to Rom. 16:17ff—you have been given a healthy understanding & appreciation for the Areas of Temptation & Opposition regarding 1. Your flesh; and 2. This Present Evil World ... and in some regard, even 3. The Satanic Policy of Evil ...

... but in (:17ff) you are **directly confronted** with having to deal with The Satanic Policy of Evil itself—(i.e., “*the strange woman*”)

- And that’s because you have now ‘finish’ the Education and Edification proper of Level I Sonship Edification—and by doing so, the Adversary has ‘earned the right’ (so to speak) to begin the 1st Round of attack and opposition to your godly edification of Romans doctrine effectually working within you!

- And by having the full effectual working of Romans doctrine (of Level I Sonship Edification) - there is a particular “**thing**” that begins to happen ... it’s something that God has designed to happen ... and it’s the **specific “thing”** that Satan takes notice of, and sees as a direct threat to his Plan and Policy of Evil ... and when that **specific “thing”** begins to take place, that’s the ‘signal’ to the adversary that he has ‘earned the right’ (so to speak) to launch his 1st Round of his Policy of Evil against you ... and it will begin with ‘Phase 1’ of his Policy of Evil. ... [more on this, later.]

- So, in Rom. 16:17ff we now meet that *strange woman* that we have been alerted to in earnest ... and for **real**!

- And although we have gone over this issue of *the strange woman* many times in our studies of the book of Romans—who, or what, exactly is *the strange woman*?
 - The *strange woman* is the working of the Satanic Policy of Evil against a properly educated and edified “son” of God, who, upon completion of his first Level of education and edification, puts his sonship status (or his sanctified Position “in Christ”) into Practice ... generating a particular ‘signal’ to the adversary that he has ‘earned the right’ to Tempt and Oppose the son’s godly edification.
 - It’s only when a son starts withstanding the world, and makes advances in his sonship edification that the Satanic Policy of Evil (*the strange woman*) comes into play.
 - And, more than anything else—the *strange woman* (or the Policy of Evil) will all be about (and have to do with) RELIGION! - false religion; false & pseudo-Christianity; misuse of Holy Scripture; and so forth.
 - And in the book of Proverbs—when you follow those exhortations that David gives Solomon in connection with *the strange woman*—she’s never spoken about as being out there “at-large” (like the world; like *the evil man*) — she’s always spoken about as being in a **particular place**—and setting her sights on **particular people**.
 - And this is especially seen as you get into Level II of a son’s education— when David describes her activity, she’s got a particular place where she dwells!
- (see Pro. 7!)**
- And the “*young man*” who is “*void of understanding*” — he wound up walking into that area of the city — and if he’d have been “wise” he’d have never been there in the first place!
 - And she was there all dolled up—and she was there to entice him—she was there like bait—and that’s why David describes her as, **she’s after the son’s soul**—she’s after his “life” (**she wants to destroy his functional life**)!
 - And that’s what the PoE is always after.

- And when you get over to our epistles—that's exactly what you see, when, for instance, you get established as a son in chapter 8 of the book of Romans, and then you begin *receiving the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity* (over in chapter 12).

- And as you receive those bodies of information/doctrine—that's where those exhortations in Proverbs introduce *the evil man* and *the strange woman*.

- And when you start off in Romans 12—the first thing is, not to be “conformed to this world” (that's *the evil man*) — and then, when by the time you get down to the end of ch. 13 where you're receiving the instruction of *judgment*, you've got “the works of darkness” brought in—and that's the Adversary—(granted, he's largely operating through the world, but he's got some particular “*works of darkness*” that are designed to be **attractive** to God's sons).

- To just put it this way—she (the Adversary/*strange woman*) wants to de-sanctify God's sanctified people! ... and I mean that in the sense that she wants to take your sanctified, **functional life: and put it to death! (functional death!) - the “Walking Dead”!**

- And that's why you “*cast off*” those “*works of darkness*” — that's not the garb you want to wear—you want to “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ*” — and you need to realize at that point that you're up against an Adversary whose going to start by using what's easily available at his disposal—which is the natural ungodliness of this world.

- But when a son in this dispensation of grace **rebuffs** that *strange woman* and stands against that — just like back where the format for sonship edification alerted you to (in the book of Proverbs) — that Opposition of the PoE will intensify — and Romans ends up with the declared statement of what the Adversary is going to do now.

- **He** (as the *strange woman*) **shifts tactics**— and now the attack is **with God's word**—but it's the miss-handling of it, and by that, producing contrary doctrines—“*offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*” (Rom. 16:17) - and by “*good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*” (Rom. 16:18)

- So my understanding is that you do have to differentiate between ‘This Present Evil World’ and ‘The Satanic Policy of Evil’ — even though one frequently borrows from the other, — but my understanding is that God views them as 2 different things.
- And you’ll see that more and more, as a son progresses through his sonship education, that viewing these as 2 separate entities becomes more and more important.
- And this is especially true when the PoE finds it necessary to move away from the basic temptations resident within the *world* (*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*) — as a son moves into his more advanced areas of his sonship life (and this has a lot to do with what goes on in the inner man of a son who is now undergoing “*the sufferings of Christ*”) — that’s when the line between *the evil man* (the ungodliness of the world) and *the strange woman* (the opposing PoE) becomes **real sharp and clear**—and you begin to experience far more temptations from the PoE than you ever do by the *world*.
- And as sons grow and mature and become that “*wise man*” and that “*man of understanding*” - where the corresponding doctrine for us occurs in Eph., Phil., and Col., — it’s like the *world* becomes less and less of a temptation—and the big thing you’re up against is the Adversary and his PoE—which is why in Eph. 6 the issue of the “*whole armour of God*” is brought in there.
- Because for a Level II son, the *fashion of this world* has pretty much passed away—that’s not the greatest temptation to him—and now his **conversation** is in heaven—and the big thing the Adversary’s after is to stop that!
- And the Adversary knows that in order to stop that, his most effective tool **won’t** be anything from this *world*—it’s going to consist of crafty, subtle, distortions and miss-handlings and corrupted forms of BIBLE doctrine that has certain allurements and appeals and enticements to the son at that Level.

- And that's why, when you're following the curriculum for sonship edification along there in the book of Proverbs—and when those exhortations are given that match up with each component of the curriculum—and when you're in Proverbs chapters 8 & 9 **wisdom** becomes personified into the one doing the talking, because the whole issue now is: wisdom, living in that son's inner man, is up against that strange woman—the *evil man* has basically passed of the scene: he's gone—he's barely mentioned again.

- And (fascinating) — **look at chapter 9**—how it begins and how it ends!

- That *strange woman*—in order to succeed with her deception, **takes the very words out of the mouth of wisdom and adopts them as her own!** (*A form of godliness that denies the power thereof!*) - [II Tim. 3:1-5]

- The very same words that came out of her mouth are the very same words that came out of the mouth of *wisdom* after she had built her *house* out of those *seven pillars*!

- So, the *strange woman* is largely the Satanic Policy of Evil that makes use of **religion** (false religions / false gods—all of which can be traced back to Nimrod, Baal, and ancient Babylon); but also the *strange woman* aspect of the Satanic Policy of Evil against Christians (members of the church, the body of Christ) makes use of the word of God itself—and by mishandling it and wrongly dividing it, produces false and corrupt doctrine which has as its ultimate goal of shutting down the “light” of the witness and testimony of the saints “conversation” as to the truth of what God is now doing—and instead get believers in Christ today to operate upon the ‘mind-blinding’ storm of ***the winds of (corrupt) doctrine***—which will allow for the Adversary to “*speak reproachfully*” to God, against those believers taken in by such corrupt doctrine!

- So that's a little review of The Areas of Temptation and Opposition to our godly Sonship Education & Edification (being 1. Your Flesh; 2. This Present Evil World; and 3. The Satanic Policy of Evil).

- And the reason for that review was to get back into the front of your mind the issue of what the Satanic Policy of Evil is all about—because that's what we're going to be dealing with having to face in our study of Romans 16:17-20.

- Now—at this point—(once again, making sure we’re all ‘on the same page’ when it comes to the terminology we have used on our Outline for Rom. 16:17-27) — I want to make sure we are clear on some other terminology we use in our Outline.

- And what I’m after is—we’ve said a lot about the Satanic **POLICY** of Evil—but we have also mentioned from time to time, the Satanic **PLAN** of Evil ... and there is a difference between Satan’s **PLAN** of Evil and Satan’s **POLICY** of Evil—(and I want to make sure we understand & appreciate that difference).

- First of all—the truth of the matter is that there is a proper **order** to the two terms: **PLAN** and **POLICY** — the **PLAN** comes first, and then, based upon the **PLAN**, the **POLICY** is the details of how the **PLAN** gets carried out.

- The word **Plan** is pretty straight-forward—and though it can be used in several different ways, the Satanic **PLAN** of Evil is being used in the sense of “a design according to which things or parts of a thing are to be arranged” (OED #2) - or more to the point: “a formulated or organized method according to which something is to be done” (OED #3).

- And since both, Satan’s **PLAN** and **POLICY** of Evil has to do with a ‘warfare’ (if you will); or an ancient *contention* between Satan and God ... and then a spiritual warfare between Satan and God’s saints (believers in Christ) - that allows for us to put the issues of Satan’s **PLAN** and **POLICY** of Evil in that context.

- So—when you’re talking about the Satanic **PLAN** of Evil—the word **PLAN** is, (to borrow from physical warfare among men) ... it’s the **overall** **PLAN** of Satan to achieve his ultimate goal in his *contention* with God in the first place ...

... the word **PLAN** (in this sense) is being used as **strategy**
... the overall, big-picture, **strategy** (the overall aim, goal, & objective of the battle, or of the war itself).

- Now, I’ll grant you that the expression ‘The Satanic Plan of Evil’ doesn’t occur in Scripture—but it **is** a valid expression for what Satan has ‘planned’ and designed to do in his overall ancient *contention* with God in the first place. (rapture; trinity; Bible; “the grace life” aren’t in the Scriptures, either).

- and I use that word *contention* between Satan and God, because that is the very word God uses ...

... see Isa. 50:8 (these are words that were spoken by the Lord during His crucifixion)

*“... who will **contend** with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.”*

- So—if you were to present to someone (a believer) the issue of The Satanic PLAN of Evil ... (knowing that it's the overall, big-picture, strategy or method of Satan to *contend* with God) ... where, in God's word, would you go to show him that? ... to show him what, exactly, is Satan's PLAN of Evil?

- **Gen. 1:1** why say it this way? He doesn't in Eph. 3:9 [*And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, **who created all things** by Jesus Christ:*] ... or in Col. 1:16 [*For by him (God's 'dear Son' Jesus Christ) **were all things created** ...*] - why doesn't God say, 'In the beginning God created all things.'???

A: God wants you thinking of **2 Realms** right off the bat! (and even the **order** is significant!) — “heaven” gets usurped 1st ... and (when *the revelation of the mystery* gets ‘revealed’ through the apostle Paul), we know that the heavenly places get repossessed & reconciled back to God **first!**

- **Gen. 14:18-19, 22**

- **Isa. 14:12-14**

- **Ezek. 28:11-19** - Satan knew that God had created **2 Realms** in which He had created and placed governmental & ruling positions of authority—& Satan knew, therefore, that **both** of those 2 Realms were going to have to be usurped (seized and held legally) if he was to “*be like the most High*” ... and, as Ezek. 28 makes clear—the heavenly realm was usurped first, and then the earth (as recorded in Gen. 3) was usurped second.

- So that should suffice for a short review of Satan's PLAN of Evil; (for more details, get “Satan and His Plan of Evil” by Keith Blades).

- Now, the word of God makes it very clear that once Satan concocted his overall, strategic PLAN of Evil—he then set about to implement his PLAN by means of his **POLICY** of Evil ... and where the word PLAN signifies his overall strategy to be *like the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth*—the word POLICY signifies Satan’s tactics on a smaller scale, that he hopes will win his overall PLAN and *contention* with God.

- **POLICY** - (in an analogy of warfare where the Plan is the overall ‘strategy’ - the POLICY would be the ‘tactics’ or the details of how to **implement** the Plan/Strategy).

- (OED 4a) = In reference to conduct or action generally: Prudent, expedient, or advantageous procedure; prudent or politic course of action; also, **as a quality of the agent: sagacity, shrewdness, artfulness; in a bad sense, cunning, craftiness, dissimulation.**

- (OED 4b) - a device, expedient, contrivance; **a crafty device, stratagem, trick.**

- (Webster’s 1828) - *Policy*, in its primary signification, is the same as *polity*, comprehending the fundamental constitution or frame of civil government in a state or kingdom. But by usage, *policy* is now more generally used to denote what is included under *legislation* and administration, and may be defined: the art or manner of governing a nation; or that system of measures which the sovereign of a country adopts and pursues, as best adapted to the interests of the nation. Thus we speak of *domestic policy*, or the system of internal regulations in a nation ...

- Interestingly: the word “Plan” is never used in the Bible ... and the word “Policy” is used only one time—in **Dan. 8** (the 3rd of 5 revelations given to Daniel regarding Israel’s time schedule for the 5th Course of Punishment (which will have 5 Installments to it).

- This 3rd revelation concerns 2 beasts (the *ram* and the *rough goat*) which represent Media and Persia [the ram], and Grecia [the rough goat] - which concerns certain Gentiles ruling over Israel as Satan puts his *POLICY* of Evil into effect against God’s plan & purpose for the nation Israel to be the means by which He will repossess the earth back to Himself.

- (read Dan. 8:15-25 [:25])

- Note that both “**PLAN**” and “**POLICY**” refer to things that are being administered.

- So—for our purposes—when we talk about Satan’s **PLAN** of Evil; we’re talking about his overall strategy as recorded in Isa. 14:12-14 (Satan’s 5 “*I wills*”) to, (as he says), “*be like the most High*” ... (“*possessor of heaven and earth*”) - which means the **legal** usurpation of both the heavenly realm and the earth. He seized them; holds them; and resides in them: **legally!** (successfully implemented in Gen. 3)

- Always remember: Satan went after God Most High (and still goes after God Most High), **NOT** ‘strength’ to ‘strength’ [Satan isn’t stupid] ... but ‘wisdom’ to ‘wisdom’! [out maneuvering God; out witting Him]

- And according to the ‘rules of engagement’ (so to speak) - rather than just ‘zap’ Satan and his whole Plan of Evil—God determined to allow the *contention* with the Adversary to ‘play out’ with all the legalities involved in that *contention*. (God, being +R/+J made the perfect decision.)

- So after Satan had developed his PLAN of Evil—God then responded to it by implementing His own Plan for repossessing and reconciling both realms of the heavenly places and the earth back to Himself ... (but He only spoke about, and made known His Plan to repossess & reconcile one of those realms back to Himself: **the Earth!**)

- And really—it’s only when God responds to Satan’s PLAN of Evil with a Plan of His own, that Satan then goes about concocting and implementing his POLICY of Evil.

- So—briefly put - Satan’s **POLICY** of Evil consists of those things that Satan has come up with and put into effect in view of God’s **response** to the implementation of his PLAN of Evil.

- And really—it’s only when God **responded** to Satan’s PLAN of Evil (with a PLAN of His own), that Satan then went about concocting and implementing his POLICY of Evil.

And God responded to Satan's PLAN of Evil by immediately judging him and removing him from his lofty position as "*the anointed cherub that covereth*" - and then God also immediately created the place where "*the devil and his angels*" would be put for all eternity: the "*lake of fire*" (Mat. 25:41).

- [which, most likely, stopped the spread of Satan's defilements and rebellion among the rest of the angelic world, once they saw what would become of them if they joined in Satan's rebellion, too.]

- So, Satan has a **POLICY** of Evil for Israel's program (consistent with his original PLAN of Evil) ... and (as we will see), Satan also has a **POLICY** of Evil for the church, the body of Christ in this disp. of grace (that is also consistent with his original PLAN of Evil) ... but Satan only devised it after God had given *the revelation of the mystery* to Paul.

- (and Satan's POLICY of Evil for Israel's program is **NOT** the same as his POLICY of Evil for the church the body of Christ!)

- Now: in connection with **God's Plan for the repossession of the earth**—God 'showed his hand' - God made it well-known - God didn't '*hide*' it from Satan and his cohorts - God spoke all about it! (albeit God did keep some things hidden until the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ who had the privilege of revealing some "*mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*" [Mat. 13:11]). [this is a **massive** subject!]

- (go over #52 s-l-o-w-l-y)

- In order to appreciate Satan's Policy of Evil against Israel, you must understand at least 2 major and fundamental things about Israel:

1. God's plan to repossess and reconcile the earth back to Himself from the usurpation of the adversary was to be done by means of the nation Israel (and no other Gentile nation was to be used by God since they had all been consigned over to Satan back at the Tower of Babel).

- That issue is found in a very basic and fundamental way in God's promise and covenant with Abraham.
(see **Gen. 12:1-3**)

- It's found when God had Abram perform a 'gesture of possession'.
(see **Gen. 13:14-17**)

- It's further verified when God had Moses meet with Him on Mt. Sinai.
(see **Exo. 19:1-6**)

- (:6) brings up the other major/fundamental thing: "*an holy nation*" [but more on that in a moment]

- And then when God establishes His kingdom with David and the Davidic Covenant, it gets further verified that God is going to repossess the earth through the agency of the nation Israel. (though God made it clear to Samuel earlier on in 1 Samuel).
(see **2Sam. 7:8-16**)
- also see (**Isa. 9:6-7**)

- And my point here is to underscore the reality that since Israel is God's designed means by which He plans to repossess the earth—Israel is the particular nation on the earth that is the focus of attention of Satan's **POLICY** of Evil (to thwart God's earthly repossession plan, and to succeed with his original PLAN to be "*like the most High*"). [In other words, it's **Israel** that Satan is after in the OT through Acts 8!]

- The other major & fundamental thing you need to appreciate in order to understand Satan's **Policy** of Evil against Israel (which we alluded to previously) is:

2. Israel's **distinctiveness** as God's "*holy*" people—a *holy nation* that would be **distinct** from all other nations.

- And the reason this is important is because it's this issue, especially, that contains the further matter of the **IMPACT & INFLUENCE** that God designed Israel to have among all the other nations on the earth.

- This is a **massive** subject that runs throughout the OT scriptures; the 4 gospel accounts; and the opening chapters of the book of Acts (and also the books of Hebrews through the book of the Revelation).

- And so—since Israel (and God’s program with Israel) isn’t our focus of attention—we’ll just ‘skim’ over the issue for now ... but I’m doing all of this because there is one particular thing that I’m after that pertains to the issue of trying to impress you with **just how much Satan HATES even the mention of “the dispensation of the grace of God” ... and/or “the body of Christ”!!!**

- And in order to get an appreciation for his hatred for all things about this disp. of grace (and *the revelation of the mystery*) - we need to appreciate how **well** things seemed to be going for Satan through Acts chapter 8. (I’m sure he thought his **Plan** of Evil was going ‘swimmingly’!)

- It was going so well (he thought) - that he actually got the very leaders of the nation Israel to put to death their own Messiah!

- So Israel was (and is) to be God’s *holy nation* and *peculiar treasure* and was to be **distinct** from all other nations on earth—Israel was **near** to God; Israel was the people of the TRUE God, the LIVING God, while all the other heathen, pagan, Gentile nations were consigned over to the adversary and wallowed (as ‘pig’ nations) in Satan’s Policy of Evil.

- (we already noted this issue back in Exo. 19:6 *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*) ... and this issue of Israel being an *holy nation* gets brought up a whole bunch of times in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, especially (and other places) ... and if something is “*holy*” in God’s sight ... there may be an ‘opportunity’ for the adversary!?!)

- (see Lev. 18:24-30; Lev. 20:22-24)

- (see Deu. 4:5-8)

- So if you want to kind of make a ‘summary statement’ about just what the Satanic Policy of Evil is for Israel (and God’s program with Israel) - you could say that: The goal of Satan’s POLICY of Evil against Israel was simple: **Corrupt Israel’s distinctiveness!**

... **and away we go!** ... here comes "*the strange woman*" ... here comes "*the children of Belial*" we saw back in Deu. 13 ... here comes all manner of pagan idols and idol worship ... here comes that old false god Baal (who is still worshipped by all the nations of the earth today) ...

... and the Satanic Policy is: corrupt, corrupt, corrupt Israel's **distinctiveness** ... corrupt Israel's '*holiness*' !!!

... and since Israel is both a **people** and a **land** ... the issue is to corrupt the **people** of Israel, and corrupt the **land** of Israel!

- And Israel did 'ok' at first (kind of) - they basically kept their distinctiveness and 'holiness' up to a point—they finally went in to the land and began the process of 'spewing out the nations' from that land that God claimed for Himself and His kingdom on this earth ...

- (see Josh. 24:31)

- But then—with the next generation that followed after Joshua's death **things began to change radically** as "*the strange woman*", "*the children of Belial*" began to make inroads in Israel and in her distinctiveness!

- (see Judges 2:6-13)

- And the rest of the OT is the record of Satan implementing his POLICY of Evil against Israel (both the people and the land) ...

... and it culminates with the 4th Installment of the 5th CoP when God the Son enfleshes Himself into the line of the seed of David—and when, in His earthly ministry, He had 'cleaned out' the land of Israel all of its defiling spirits (**Mat. 12:44**), and gave the nation one more chance to repent during the year of forbearance and mercy ... (but we know how that turned out!) ...

... Israel welcomed that whorish *strange woman* and her *children of Belial* right back into the land—and that sets the stage for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to put a final end to it all in the Lord's Day of Wrath.

- That's an extremely brief 'reminder' of Satan's POLICY of Evil against Israel and God's program with Israel to repossess the earth.

- Now—when it came to Satan’s understanding of God contending with him over **the Earth**—Satan knew, (because of God constantly speaking about it and making it well-known), that God’s intention was to do everything in His power (**legally**, within the ‘rules of engagement’ for His contention with the Adversary) - God’s intention was to do everything in His **legal** power to repossess the Earth, and to kick Satan and his cohorts out of it, and to establish His kingdom/residence upon the Earth ...

... and when that contention between Satan and God over who will be the **possessor of the Earth** came right down to its ‘Climax’ (so to speak) ... which was during the time of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ—when He came to Earth in order to finish off that contention between God and the Adversary over the Earth—and in view of the possibility of the Lord actually being successful to repossess the Earth ...

... I want to point out to you something that the Adversary **knew** in connection with **what he could stand to lose** ... and yet still **WIN** his contention to be *“like the most High”* and still succeed with his **PLAN** of Evil.

- **BUT** ... (here’s the ‘rub’) ... Satan thought he knew **ALL** of God’s Plan for contending with him! ... he thought he knew **everything** God was planning ... he thought he had figured out **ALL** of God’s Contention Plan! ... he really thought (and fully believed) ‘there is no secret God could hide from him’!!!

- And Satan was very sure of himself ... he was confident in his **‘wisdom’** ... he was even cocky about it!

- And Satan was a ‘betting’ cherub—he went ‘all in’ and ‘bet the farm’ that God **only** had a plan for repossessing the Earth ... why? ... because all this time, God had never said one single thing about having a Plan for repossessing the heavenly places! ... and Satan was cock-sure (absolutely certain) about it!

- And with that in mind—I want to therefore underscore just how much Satan **hates** and **despises** even the mere **mention** of *“the mystery of Christ”* and this dispensation of grace in which we live.

... how much Satan seethes with vehement hatred toward *the revelation of the mystery* - of how God will repossess and reconcile back to Himself the Heavenly Places ... even **before** He does the earth!

- And if my understanding is correct—due to God having kept the *mystery* a mystery ... having kept His plan to repossess the heavenly places from the Adversary and his cohorts **a secret** ('hid in Himself') and not saying one word about it from Genesis 1 through Acts 8 ... you can see why God has the apostle Paul say what he does over in 1Cor. 2:6 ...

- (**see 1Cor. 2:6-8**—hidden from men *and* the angelic beings [both the holy angels, and Satan and his angels]) ...

... Satan must have become very 'confident' in his belief that he would hold on to the heavenly places ... he must have felt very **safe** in his position as "*the prince of the power of the air*" ... and it comes out from time to time in a 'air' (attitude) of cockiness on his part.

- And this is especially seen in the temptation of the Lord as recorded in the gospel accounts.

- (come over to Luke 4)

- And what I'm after here is—that Satan knew there were **2 Realms** that had to be usurped in order to fulfill his PLAN of Evil to be "*like the most High*" — and he had successfully usurped **both** of those realms by the end of Genesis 3.

- But there's something he knew about the Heavenly Places that most people (Christians) fail to understand and appreciate.

... but Satan understood it, and he appreciated it!

- And by what Satan knew about the Heavenly Places, it made it so that he knew that if all God was going to contend with him over was the repossession of the earth—then Satan would still be most comfortable and confident of still 'out-maneuvering' and 'out-witting' God; and still be able to prove himself to be "*like the most High*" (even if he was the possessor of just the Heavenly Places) ... even if he **lost** the possession of the earth!

- (see Luke 4:5-8)

- Here, Satan makes it clear that he knows very well what the Lord Jesus had come to this earth to do (or at least, **try** to do) ... which was to repossess the earth and establish God's kingdom-residence upon the earth—Satan understood Gen. 3:15 and all of the OT (the purpose of Israel; the Abrahamic / Davidic Covenants; and so forth).

- And Satan understood perfectly (as he said in :5), "*all the kingdoms of the world*" **and all their power** (as :6 says, "*all this power will I give thee*") ... why? because as he says, "*for that is delivered unto me*"! (and it was—it was **legally delivered unto him**!) - he had the **legal right** to possess *all the kingdoms of the world* and all their **power**!

- Notice that in the way Satan perceived things—he **didn't** perceive that the Lord's coming to earth had anything to do with dealing with the Heavenly Places!!!

- Why? Because God had kept that a 'secret' - and Satan hadn't been able to figure that out!

- And Satan expresses right here his understanding of what this whole thing is going to be about!

- Satan takes the Lord *up into an high mountain* [in Israel] (:5) and shows the Lord *all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time*. (including Israel, itself!)

- But notice carefully the exact wording of (:6) ...

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee

- Do you see that little word "**this**" ... "**this power**" ...

... notice he **doesn't** say, 'All **MY** power'! ... (Satan's "*power*" includes **more** than this!) ... [his "*power*" includes the legal right to the Heavenly Realm and all its *power*]!

- Satan says, "*All THIS power* (of the Earth & its earthly kingdoms) ... *and the glory of THEM*" (those earthly kingdoms)!

... *for that is delivered* [legally delivered] *unto me* (which happened back in Gen. 3 when Adam sinned and lost the Monarchy of the earth).

... and to whomsoever I will I give it (he's got the **right of possession**, and so he can give it to anyone he wants).

- But notice how 'blind' Satan is to "*the mystery*" at this point! ... he's not got one thought about the **heavenly places** in his mind at all at this point!!!

- So Satan says, "*All **this** power will I give thee*" ... **and he's willing to do it!**

- And here's what Satan knows that most Christian folks **don't** know ... Satan is perfectly fine with the Lord's success for repossessing the earth! ... (he knows what God has said about it in the OT) ... and he's perfectly willing to let the earth go (to lose it: maybe, or maybe not) ... why? ... what did he know about the Heavenly Places that made him so confident of still winning the contention to be "*like the most High*" even at the cost of losing the earth???

- Satan knows that if the Lord succumbs to his temptation [here in Luke 4]—and then Satan actually gives over to the Lord 'all the *power* and the *glory*' of ALL of the kingdoms of the world—(in essence, giving up the earth to the Lord) ... **Satan knows that THE HEAVENS RULE OVER THE EARTH!!!**

- (see Gen. 1:14-18)! (and Job 38:31-33)

- Satan knows that even if he were to give the Lord **all the power on this earth**, he (Satan) knows that he still rules in the heavens ... **and the heavens RULE over the earth!**

- See—at this point, Satan still thinks he's got that 'Ace up his sleeve' — and he knows that he'll still be able to be "*like the most High*" ... because all the Lord would be, is his 'puppet-ruler' on the earth!

- So—in Acts 9, when God revealed to Paul "*the revelation of the mystery*" that not only did the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ provide for the repossession of the earth ... but it **ALSO** provided for the repossession of the heavenly realm ... what do you think that did to the Adversary??? **he must have gone nuts!!!**

- just to repeat, repeat, and repeat the issue: that when it came to God's Plan to repossess & reconcile **the Heavenly Places** ... God kept it 'hid in Himself' (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26) ... God kept it a total 'secret' (Rom. 16:25) ... God kept it a 'mystery' (used multiple times throughout Paul's epistles) ...

... and God kept it hid from **all men** and from **all the angels** as well!

- it was kept hid from God's holy angels—and it was kept hid from Satan and his angels, too!

- So—if you look at how things were going from the perspective of Satan (the Adversary) ... when the time came for the Lord to be crucified on the cross of Calvary and the 'Battle of the Cross' takes place—Satan knew the even if he lost that battle, he still had the Heavens!

- And since Satan knew God's word! and since, (up to that point), God's word only spoke about God's Plan to repossess the earth—that meant that Satan knew that the only thing the Lord and come for was to do what Psalm 8 said ... (He's the 'Son of man' ... He's the 'Son of Adam') - and Satan knew that all He could do was to put all things of the **EARTH** 'under His feet' ...

- (see **Psalm 8**) - Here David (granted) looks at all of God's creation (both the heavens and the earth) and glories in God's "name" being so "excellent" "in all the earth" - and then David considers the heavens and contrasts the glory of them with man on the earth—and in doing so he says ...

- (read :4-5) - notice: God made "*man*" and "*the son of man*" "*a little lower than the angels*" ... Satan knew that since that's the case, 'Wow, the heavenly places aren't in any danger of any "*man*" or "*son of man*"!'

- (:6) - What are the "*all things*" that God has "*put under his feet*"? (the heavenly places?) NO! ... [read on]

- (:7-9) - It's "*all things*" that are in the Earth! (the heavenly realm isn't in view at all!)

- The adversary understood the issue in the Davidic Covenant of Adonai Jehovah enfleshing Himself in the line of the seed of David in order to come and contend with him, was over THAT issue: the Earth!

- And he understood, therefore, that even if he lost that Battle on the Cross—he would still come out of it possessing the heavenly places!

- And when the Lord Himself was here on earth (during His earthly ministry) - He wasn't saying anything different ... He wasn't saying anything about those heavenly places, either!

- (see John 12) - here the Lord is taking to His apostles and preparing them for the time when the Battle on the Cross takes place and beyond (looking to that time of the 1-year of forbearance and mercy given to Israel to yet repent [in the opening Chs./Acts])

- 3 times, the Lord mentions dealing with Satan as *“the prince of this world”* and his judgment.

- (:30-31) - the Lord Himself will become *“the prince of this world”* when the one who usurped it gets *“cast out”*!

- (John 14:30) - The Lord tells His disciples that the adversary (*“the prince of this world”*) is coming—and he's coming for that Battle on the Cross! [again, the issue is the contention over the earth: *“this world”*]

- (John 16) - The Lord tells the apostles that when He leaves and goes back to the Father, then the Holy Spirit will come [during that time of Repentance to Israel] - and the testimony of who Jesus of Nazareth was (and is), and what His ministry was all about will not only continue on, but it will get even greater out there.

- And one of the things the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) will testify and *“reprove the world”* of is there in (:11) ...

- (:11) - by the time the testimony of the Holy Spirit goes out in that 1-year of forb/mercy, the Battle is over; the *prince of this world* had been *judged* !

- In the 'Prophetic Program' - it's all about the Earth! **not** the Heavens!

- And Satan knew that a Battle would take place between him and the Lord—and it would take place at that Cross ... but he was so sure that the only contention there would be over the Earth ... and he was absolutely sure of his **wisdom** (in his mind, his superior wisdom) to figure out every aspect of God's Repossession Plan—that he knew he could stand to lose the possession of the Earth [not that he won't still 'play every card in his hand' to hold on to it] — (but having the Heavenly Places in his 'hip pocket' ... or so he thought) ...

... 'If I lose the Earth; I still have the heavenly realm ... and the heavens RULE the Earth! I can still be "*like the most High*"!'

... **BUT!** ... he didn't figure out "*the mystery*" ! ... there WAS a "*secret*" that God kept from him! ... **and he never saw it coming!!!**

- **So what do you think it did to Satan when God the Son unexpectedly came back to the earth and appeared to Saul of Tarsus—and raised him up as a brand-new apostle—and revealed to him the long-kept, hidden, mystery-secret that, based upon that same Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God would suspend His program with Israel concerning repossessing the Earth ... and begin a new dispensation of His grace to form another "body of Christ" and repossess the Heavenly Places even *before* He repossessed the Earth!?**

- By the "*revelation of the mystery*" Satan and his cohorts were completely taken by surprise—it came as a **shock** to him (& them), to say the least!

- By the revelation of God's 'hidden wisdom' (1Cor. 2:7) to Paul, God delivered a 'death-blow' to Satan's **entire** Plan of Evil.

- That 'hidden wisdom' would reveal to Satan that he lost TWICE at the Cross of Christ ... he lost the earthly realm **and** the heavenly realm as well!

- Note that, among all the things we did look at concerning Satan's confidence that he could stand to lose the earth and still keep the heavenly realm (and therefore still succeed in being "*like the most High*") ... seeing that God hadn't said **one word** about repossessing the heavenly realm ... note that since God's only revealed Plan was concerning the earth, Satan must have thought (and concluded) that since that was the case ... then God's focus was upon mere men!

- In other words—even the “Son of God” was to become the “Son of David” = **a man** ... and God’s focus upon Israel and the children of Israel ... well, they’re all mere **men** ... that is, human beings ... and a mere human being (an earthly man) could neither exist nor function in the heavenly places!

- But! the revelation of God’s ‘hidden wisdom’ would also reveal that God could and would (legally, by the Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ) ... God would now create **a new species of man** capable of living in the heavenly realm!

- (see 1Cor. 15:47-57; 2Cor. 5:1-8)

- And the point is—not only are we, (individually), going to receive immortal, glorified bodies capable of existing and functioning in the heavenly realm ... but **collectively** we are a brand-new creation that never existed before (i.e., before the apostle Paul) ... we are, **collectively**, a BODY ... a ‘second’ (if you will) BODY of CHRIST! (capable of existing and functioning in the heavenly realm)!

- (Rom. 12:5) ... “*one body in Christ*”

... (see also Eph. 1:15-23)

... *a new creature* (2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15)

... *one new man* (Eph. 2:15)

- And God could do that ... **legally!** ... without having to have another **cross** (or another ‘Battle’ with the adversary) ... God could accomplish all that based upon the **same** cross-work of the Lord back at the time of Calvary ... it was all accomplished there ... the only thing is, God didn’t **say** anything about it until He revealed it to Paul!

- and the ‘legality’ of God doing that is what is wrapped up in that expression over in Rom. 8:29 ... “... *that he (Christ) might be the **firstborn** among many brethren.*” - the “*firstborn*” is a term of one having **legal right** to a particular inheritance—and the *revelation of the mystery* aspect of Christ’s cross work reveals His legal right to repossess the heavenly realm! (as well as the earth)

- Now—with the program change (from Israel to the disp. of grace), Satan has to make a change in his Policy of Evil—his PoE against Israel concerned the earth ... but now, (being thrown for a loop), he must scramble to come up with a Policy of Evil against this new entity of the ‘one new man’ of the church the body of Christ.

- which, by the way, tells you that Satan is a ‘dispensationalist’! ... he knows God’s word ‘rightly divided’! ... but he doesn’t want any one else to know it!

- Satan now has a new set of **tactics** to deploy against you!

- (come to a passage that points out the basic and fundamental issue of Satan’s PoE toward a member of this ‘one new man’ of the body of Christ today.)

- (2Cor. 2:10-11 [:11]) - “*advantage*” = that’s his goal! ... but what does that mean? what kind of advantage is he after? [we’ll come back to this, later on.]

- (come over to a passage that tells you what Satan hates in this disp. of grace, and why he hates it) ...

- (Eph. 3:9-10)

- (Col. 2:15) - This is a passage that points up the way Satan views this present disp. of grace (and it’s *revelation of the mystery*) ... it reveals Satan’s attitude toward that message.

- And the way Satan sees it is as an open, public embarrassment! (a public humiliation!)

- “*spoiled*” = to strip a defeated or slain enemy of their arms (or their power) by the exercise of superior force; to sack; to divest; to lose valuable properties.

- “*shew*” = a person or thing exhibited or gazed at as an object of (in this case/context) mockery; to exhibit to public view and expose to public contempt!

- (let’s look at a passage in the Pastoral Epistles where Satan was having some success with the women in the local assemblies) ...

- (1Tim. 5:14-15) - Satan was having some success with the women in the local assemblies.

- “*reproachfully*” - ***reproach*** = to discredit, to disgrace, to shame; but *reproach* is an even stronger term than either *discredit*, *disgrace* or *shame*.
- *Reproach* generally and basically carries the idea of **blame**!
- While *discredit* and *disgrace* marks a person out as an object of unfavorable distinction—*reproach* makes a person the subject of *reproachful* **conversation**!
- *Reproach* is the issue of bringing up or against a person a charge of a fault—to blame a person with a fault—and to do it **openly and publically**!
 - hence, the idea of a conversation—and hence the issue of “**speaking**” *reproachfully* in 1Tim. 5:14!
- And *reproach-FUL* = full of *reproaches* (full of blame; full of MANY instances of disgrace, discredit and shame)!
- The force of the word *reproach* is to bring ‘near’ or ‘home’ to another the fault or wrong that a person has done.
- (Quote: Charles Smith, “Synonyms Discriminated” p.172) “The subject of the *reproach* is an assumed violation of moral obligation, which has redounded to the injury of the *reproacher* or the *reproached*, **as a son might reproach his father with his own neglected education, ...**”

- The “*advantage*” (2Cor. 2:11) that the adversary is after is the issue of *speaking reproachfully* of one of God’s adopted “sons/daughters” (a saint) whereby instead of that saint’s *fellowship of the mystery* **conversation** being heralded throughout the heavenly realm, the conversation being heralded is how **guilty** the saint is of failing to follow his Father’s instruction (or doctrine) ... becoming ‘the talk of the town’ because a “son” of God is operating upon Satan’s wisdom, rather than God the Father’s wisdom ... bringing open & public shame, discredit, and disgrace to that “son” in the hearing of the Father and all of the angelic world in that heavenly realm! ... and if a “son” is a disgrace (in this sense), then disgrace is brought to the Father as well! ... **that’s** what Satan is after! [because the *reproach* is TRUE!]

(and that’s consistent with Satan being called “*the devil*”!)

- (see Eph. 4:26-26 [:26]; Eph. 6:11)

- Satan's **Policy** of Evil **tactics** today, in this present disp. of grace, is to gain a particular *advantage* over the members of the body of Christ—and it's specifically directed at the heavenly **impact** that a believer can have to the shame, disgrace, discrediting, and embarrassment of Satan and his cohorts ... which **impact** is made by a saint's **conversation** in the heavenly realm (Phil. 2:20) due to their *fellowship of the mystery* (see again Eph. 3:9-10).

- And we've seen that Satan seeks to accomplish the goals of his Policy of Evil against us by what he can **say** to God about our being 'duped' by him into failing to be properly edified unto godliness—to operate upon portions of God's word that were NOT written to, for, and about US (i.e., Paul's epistles) ... but rather to operate upon God's word that pertains to Israel and God's program with Israel ... (i.e., God's word that is according to prophecy). [esp., **THE LAW!**]

- And in the passages we just looked at in Eph. 4:26 and 6:11—notice that God the Holy Spirit has Paul use the term or designation "*devil*" rather than 'Satan' ("Satan" meaning, '*adversary*') — and by using the word *devil* God can have us understand and appreciate some further insight into Satan's **hatred** of the *revelation of the mystery* and our making an impact upon him by our *fellowship* and *communion* in and about that *mystery* revelation given to Paul.

- We've already seen that he seeks to get an *advantage* of us; and we've seen that he seeks to *speak reproachfully* of us; ... and you can bet that this further issue will be one that still has something to do with him **saying** something to God about us (and you'd be right!)

- The use of the word *devil* rather than the name *Satan* in these two passages in Ephesians (and others) is another great example of 'vocabulary control' - and the use of the word *devil* is of great significance.

- *Devil* actually points up the kind of opportunity and 'advantage' that Satan is after with us (members of the body of Christ) today when it comes to his **tactics** he seeks to employ against us.

- (**by the way**—Satan's PoE today isn't after making you sick [Covid]; or making you lose your job; or making your car break down; or robbing your house; or anything along those lines!)

- “**Devil**” (διάβολος) = **slanderer**; accuser; one who lays charges or makes accusations against you.

- **SLANDER** = The most common way we think of slander is something that is **said** or **spoken** against a person in a false, evil, unjust, or discreditable way. (If it’s **written**, it’s called “**liable**”).

- And in a legal setting, it’s the charging of someone with a crime or offence, falsely—or to misrepresent or vilify someone.

- And one of the ‘shades of meaning’ that *slander* has, is that *slander* normally isn’t a private thing, rather it’s a **public** thing!

- And that’s by design ... because the real issue in *slander* is that, (because it is a ‘public thing’) ... **it gets spread abroad!**
[internet; facebook; twitter; et al.]

- *Slander* is also to be understood as bringing discredit or disgrace or disrepute on someone (often under false pretenses).

- And interestingly enough, if you look up *slander* in a good dictionary like the OED, the very first entry defining what *slander* is, is that of its Biblical use = to be a stumbling-block; to offend; **to cause to lapse spiritually!** [i.e., in the godly Edification Process]

- *Slander* is a term describing one who has malicious intent that seeks to malign your character, attack your reputation, foul or besmirch your name, and belittle you in the eyes of others by speaking against you with vilifying, abusive, or reviling accusations and remarks.

- And the end of it is just what Paul says in Ephesians 6:12
“**spiritual wickedness in high places.**”

- (Let’s note a couple of quotes from Keith Blades in “Satan and His Plan of Evil” - p.250, 252, 253)

- “Therefore, Satan works against God’s design for the edification of His saints, and seeks to lose the doctrine of “the revelation of the mystery” in a morass of doctrinal confusion. He works to keep Christians ignorant. However, not ignorant of Bible truth as a whole. But ignorant especially of one particular category of Bible doctrine—”the mystery of Christ.”

- [Satan] “especially desires to work for such opportunities today. This is because of the blow that the “revelation of the mystery” has been, and continues to be, to his own pride and self-professed dignity. Therefore, to be able to speak evil of us, both before God and before his principalities and powers in heavenly places, is Satan’s most fervent desire.”

- “Satan has indeed declared war on the message of the “mystery of Christ.” He has determined in his policy of evil to darken its light, both in its proclamation and in the hearts of God’s people. He seeks to acquire for himself the coveted ‘spoils of war’ — i.e., the opportunity to make a mocking ridicule out of God’s “new creation.” Hence, a spiteful, hate-motivated war against God’s “wisdom in a mystery” is the issue in Satan’s policy of evil against us. A ‘war against sound doctrine’ has been launched by him, which is dedicated to the promotion of ignorance of the truth among the people of God. This war against “the revelation of the mystery” has been going on since the time God revealed the “mystery of Christ” to Paul. In Paul’s very own lifetime it soon became a raging onslaught. It resulted in the development of such cleverly beguiling contrary doctrines and enticing words that massive departures from the truth and sound doctrine were well underway. (2Tim. 1:15 *This thou knowest, that **all they** which are in Asia be turned away from me; ...*)

... it has not abated since. It has only increased and achieved greater success.”

- So Satan’s **POLICY** of Evil today, (against the members of the Body of Christ in this disp. of grace), is all about functioning as that “*strange woman*” to allure, tempt, and entice members of the Body of Christ **away** from the doctrine God has given to, for, and about us in the 13 letters (epistles) of the apostle Paul—and to get them to operate instead upon portions of God’s word that pertain to God’s Earthly Program with Israel, (Genesis through the opening chapters of Acts, and Hebrews through the Revelation).

- In total hatred of ‘*the revelation of the mystery*’, Satan seeks to keep the *mystery* a ‘mystery’ - i.e., to keep it from ever being understood and appreciated by members of the Body of Christ today.

- And he is more than happy to utilize other forms of religion—and even a mixture of other forms of religion with Christianity, to do it!

- And by doing so—Satan seeks most of all to hinder, thwart, and put to an end any possible chance for a member of the Body of Christ to be properly edified unto godliness!!!

- Simply put—Satan’s Policy of Evil today is to see to it that Eph. 3:9-10 (that *fellowship of the mystery* that is designed to make an impact in the heavenly places, *to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God*) **DOES NOT TAKE PLACE!**

- he seeks to shut down your heavenly *conversation* which heralds the message of God’s greater wisdom (His *manifold wisdom* revealed in *the mystery of Christ*) because of that “*shew*” that it makes out of him and his cohorts—(having *spoiled* Satan’s power in totality; having *spoiled* his wisdom, to Satan’s utter frustration; public humiliation; and public shame!

- But Satan’s Policy of Evil doesn’t stop there—it’s designed to not only STOP the “*fellowship of the mystery*” being made known in the heavenly places ... it’s also designed to allow for Satan to get an *advantage* over you ... and to *speak reproachfully* of you in the face of God ... and to *slander* you openly before God and the host of angels (both holy angels, and Satan’s angels)!

- And the reality of Satan’s POLICY of Evil being about these issues is the reason why we get an **enormous** amount of Biblical terminology that highlights the various aspects and tactics of Satan’s Policy of Evil against us today ...

... Paul talks about: *the wiles of the devil, wrestling against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places—fiery darts of the wicked—Satan’s devices and his subtility—being beguiled by him—being falsely persuaded—taken in by enticing words—being bewitched, spoiled, and deceived—*Paul alerts us to the operations of *Satan’s ministers in disguise, counterfeiting signs, seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, false apostles, another spirit, seducers, and forms of godliness (that deny God’s power)* ... expressions like *winds of doctrine, the slight of men and cunning craftiness—giving place to the devil—turning aside after Satan—the snare of the devil—and* Paul warns of extra-Biblical revelations: *profane and vain babblings, old wives’ fables and deceitful workers ! WOW!*

**- Satan traffics in BIBLE DOCTRINE! ... in corrupt
Bible Doctrine ... in unsound doctrine and confusion!**

- The impact we have the privilege of making in the heavenly realm to the utter failure and demise of Satan's competing wisdom (as described in Eph. 3:9-10) - that 'super-media' presentation we can make - constantly reminding those in the heavenly realm of Satan and his principalities and powers being taken in their own craftiness and God triumphing over them in the Cross of Christ ... that's the reason Paul, at times, almost EXPLODES with reveling in and glorying in what God has done by keeping secret that "mystery" ...

... (just in the book of Romans, alone)

Rom. 8:37-39; 11:33-36; 13:12-14; 16:25-27!

- So: In just the little bit we have studied [kindergarten; K4]...

- What is Satan's **PLAN** of Evil today in this disp. of grace?

*"I will be like the most High" (possessor of heaven and earth) - Isa. 14:14, cp., Gen. 14:19—(emphasis upon Satan's **heavenly** realm usurpation)*

- What is Satan's **POLICY** of Evil today in this disp. of grace?

- (a lot of passages could be cited here, but I've chosen ...)
That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; - Eph. 4:14

- Satan's POLICY of Evil is to keep the *revelation of the mystery of Christ* still a mystery (unknown) in the minds of Christians today—and to, in turn, get *advantage* of them; to *speak reproachfully* of them to God and the angels; and to *slander* them before God and the angels as they 'mishandle' the word of God, and 'wrongly' divide it!

- Now—when it comes to **deploying** his **Policy** of Evil today, it becomes apparent by carefully paying attention to the details of Satan's Policy of Evil against the body of Christ in this present disp. of grace as you go through Paul's epistles (in order), you see the PoE fall into 3 categories, **or occurring in 3 PHASES**. (the first of which, [no surprise] gets highlighted in Rom. 16:17ff!)

- PHASE 1: Attack the Message.
- PHASE 2: Attack the Messenger.
- PHASE 3: Force the Messenger to Give Up!
(by discouraging and discrediting him)

- Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil—Attack the Message!

- Satan's PoE against Christians today is focused upon a saints **heavenly impact** he can make to the glory of God's *manifold wisdom* in the *mystery of Christ* and to the **complete** destruction of Satan and his **entire** PLAN of Evil.
- And the best way for Satan to prevent that heavenly impact is to **corrupt** a Christian's **godly edification!**
- It's carried out by utilizing the Bible itself to produce corrupt doctrine—and corrupt doctrine isn't the issue of the doctrine itself being corrupt or ungodly or even un-Biblical ... rather, the corruption comes in the form of getting a believer today to operate upon Bible doctrine that is **Israel's** doctrine—doctrine that was NOT written **to us** or **for us** or **about us** as the Body of Christ in this disp. of grace!
- In other words—to get a Christian to operate and function upon the doctrine that is **according to prophecy**, and NOT the doctrine that is **according to the “revelation of the mystery”!**
- Simply put—to prevent a believer from being edified according to the 13 epistles of the apostle Paul—but to attempt to be edified according to Genesis through opening Acts, and Hebrews through Revelation.

... and if doctrines of men get mixed in, all the better—if *philosophy, vain deceit, the traditions of men, and the rudiments of this world* (the Law) get put into the mix, all the better!
- This (all this) is what Eph. 4:14 is all about ... *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*”
 - and in this analogy, you are likened to a ‘ship’ being ‘tossed to and fro’ - being buffeted by contrary and turbulent winds.

- and instead of being on a steady & true course to your destination—you get blown off course and greatly hindered in reaching your port.

- Doctrines, for example, like: Christians today are ‘spiritual Israelites’; or that we are assumers of Israel’s program; ...

... or that God got so aggravated with Israel that He began to use the Gentiles to ‘help’ Israel out and us Gentiles will get the job done of getting God’s kingdom on earth set up ... and of course, we will **co-mix** with Israel in the kingdom to have a **Gentile mixed reign** with Israel’s apostles in the kingdom.

- And all this is primarily accomplished by an almost assumed, and long established acceptance by Christians and Bible teachers that the 4 Gospels are our ‘instruction manual’ for all Christian living today.

- (here’s a good example of the above) -

Mat. 7:7-8 - “*Ask*” “*seek*” and “*knock*”

* commonly taught as the way in which we are supposed to pray today.

* this can only be understood properly by having a good grasp upon what is sitting back in the Psalms and the Prophets and the effects that (especially) the 5th CoP had on God’s relationship with the people and nation of Israel!

* go back and learn how that under Israel’s 5th CoP, because of Israel walking contrary to God, God would walk contrary to them ... even to the point of no longer **responding** to them!

* and specifically, the prophets record how that God would not even listen to their prayers and would not take notice of their attempts to appease Him. (Isa. 1:11-15; 59:1-2; Jer. 14:10-12a; Ezk. 8:18)

* Mat. 7:7-8 is to, for, and about a **specific** group of people: The Remnant of Israel (not even for all of Israel) - because it was to the Rem. of Isr. (during the earthly ministry of the Lord) that the Rem. would receive the special privilege of God once again responding to their prayers ... which was also spoken about back in the prophets (Isa. 30:18-21; Jer. 29:11-13).

* By paying attention to what God had said in the Psalms and the Prophets—the Rem. of Isr. would know that they would get the privilege of *asking* God in fulfillment of Psalm 55:1; and of *seeking* the Lord and finding Him; and *knocking* upon **the doors of refuge** in the “day of the LORD” and God would open them unto them exactly as described in Psalm 27 and 50!

* In view of the coming ‘Lord’s Day of Wrath’, the remnant would need to be able to *ask, seek and knock* (knowing that God would now respond to **them**) so that they would not be destroyed and killed off during the “day of the Lord.”

* Out in the ‘Lord’s Day of Wrath’ the remnant would be *asking, seeking, and knocking* in desperate need of God’s help in order to make it through God’s day of wrath.

* Even Peter reminds the Rem. of this special privilege they now have to *ask, seek, and knock* due to God now responding to them (only) - *1Pet. 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

- Matt. 7:7-8 is NOT the way in which a believer is supposed to be praying today—(it’s not written to you, or about you) - and by getting Christians to operate upon Mat. 7:7-8 as the way in which they are to pray to God today — it serves as a great example of giving Satan the opportunity to take *advantage* of us and *speak reproachfully* about us and carry out his *slander* of us and his *spiritual wickedness* in the heavenly places!

- This paying careful attention to *the revelation of the mystery* as God gave it to the apostle Paul (and ONLY to Paul) as being what God has written specifically TO, FOR, and ABOUT us (the Body of Christ) in this disp. of grace ... and Paul’s warning to NOT get beguiled into veering off course from THAT body of information is what Paul is talking about in Colossians 2:1-8! and Col. 2:18-19!

- Notice in (:4) and (:18) the word “*beguile*” ... interestingly, the Galatians got “*bewitched*” ...

- “*bewitched*” = to lead one into error by feigned praise; to seduce intellectually by speech; to mislead by foolish babble.

- When you “bewitch” you appeal to the senses—giving a show (like a magician) - it means to fascinate, charm, enchant, etc.
- and “bewitching” is something that is done successfully only to those who are simple, gullible, or naïve enough to be taken in by ‘tricks of the trade.’
- “*Beguile*” = to reason aside from the truth; to persuade another to a false position.
 - *Beguile* from the English prefix “be” = to make; + “guile” = a strong degree of depravity which contaminates the whole character; and displays itself in inextricable windings and turnings that are suggested in a peculiar manner by the author of all evil. (quote from Crabbs) [hence, to make one depraved]
 - *Beguile* is normally done by one in authority over another (like a Minister or Pastor or Theologian).
 - And it indicates that apparently the Judaizers were adopting an overbearing attitude of authority in their doctrinal discussions with the Colossian believers by telling them what that must and must not do in order to be godly. [putting great pressure on them to go away from Paul and back to Israel’s program]
 - (Smith’s Synonyms) “*Beguile* is to place another in a false position; to induce him to believe something to be true, and to leave him to the consequences of his error, especially by seductive arts. It is intentionally and maliciously to mislead another to his privation or detriment. Hence to cheat a person out of something, whether this be the simple possession of truth as such, or of some other moral or mental benefit.”
- Now the ‘safeguard’ to all this *beguiling* is to **properly handle the word of truth!** and when it comes to Bible interpretation, there are some major principles that should be followed to ensure the proper Bible handling:

1. God’s word is to be handled as the normal, written communication from God that it is.

- God used the normal laws of language in giving and writing His word—and we are expected to understand it by the normal laws of language—put another way, the literal grammatical interpretation of what God says holds sway, unless God Himself indicates otherwise.

- (By the way—this means that there is no such thing as some ‘mystical’ code like the ‘equa-distant’ letters of the Hebrew where you have to go in order to get more ‘revelation’ [or prophecy] from the Bible!)

2. Most importantly, a strict adherence to the CONTEXT of verses must be used to determine the meaning of any verse or passage in the Bible.

- This means that you have to realize that God often uses the exact same word (like *baptism*, *salvation*, *church*, *condemnation*, *justified* ... just to name a few) - but those words have a very different meaning depending upon the **context** in which they are used!

- This prevents words God uses in the Bible from being ‘standardized’ (like “*Ghost*” and “*Spirit*”).

3. And just as important—*Rightly dividing the word of truth* must be always employed so that instruction, doctrines, injunctions, promises, and provisions that God has made in one of His programs, (and that pertain to that particular program), are not misapplied to another program!

- By failing to *rightly divide the word of truth* (with Paul’s epistles being the ‘division’ and not OT/NT, or the cross, or Acts 2) - a person can actually be ‘scriptural’ and claim to be doing exactly what the Bible says—and yet be completely deceived by not realizing it’s something that God is NOT saying to **us** today.

- Classic example: 2Chron. 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (that’s **to**, **for**, and **about** ISRAEL!)

(continuing on with the issue of Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil: Attack the Message!)

- ‘Attacking the Message’ for us today is the issue of the Satanic attack upon *the revelation of the mystery of Christ* given to Paul and concerning:

- God suspending His program with Israel (temporarily);
- Putting Jew and Gentile on the same level;
- Creating a ‘new man’ and a ‘new creature’ which is a new entity called the Body of Christ;
- And with that ‘new man’ of the church the body of Christ, repossessing and reconciling the heavenly places back to God.

- And the truth is—all of the information in God’s word (the Bible) that deals with *the revelation of the mystery of Christ* is only to be found in Paul’s epistles—therefore, it’s the doctrine in Paul’s epistles that is the primary focus of Satan’s attack. (or what is called by God through Paul: ‘Paul’s gospel’ i.e., “*my gospel*” [Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2Tim. 2:8]).

- Consisting of: - how a person gets Justified unto eternal life;

- our Sanctified position “in Christ” which includes our status as adopted, adult “sons” of God;
- and the entire curriculum for our godly edification as “sons”;
- as well as our Exalted position “in Christ” along with all of its Glory (our glorification relating to the heavenly places and our inheritance in the heavenly realm).

- Note the issue of who we are “*in Christ*”? ... the adversary knows that all of the information & doctrine & instructions and the pattern of who God has made us (the members of the **body** of Christ) to be are found in Paul’s epistles ...

... and therefore one of Satan’s primary objectives in his Attack upon the Message of *the revelation of the mystery* is to confound and confuse, and ultimately **subvert** (overthrow) that information in the minds of believers today; to lead them **away** from Paul and ‘his gospel’ - and ultimately keep saints from ever knowing what their **IDENTITY** “in Christ” truly is! (**Identity** is key: and it’s **different** for the Remnant!)

- (especially their Exaltation “in Christ” - they are
1. A Royal Priesthood; 2. A Holy Nation; 3. A
Peculiar People [distinct from the Gentiles, according
to prophecy & what God is doing according to His
program with Israel])

- But that whole thing (Paul’s gospel — “*my gospel*”) is the
focus of the adversary’s attack!

- And Satan’s attack upon all of this was well underway even in
Paul’s day—long before Paul died and went off the scene.

- Both the Corinthians and the Galatians fell victim to the adversary’s
Policy of Evil—and note that in both cases, the doctrine that came
under attack was ROMANS doctrine!

- The Corinthians wound up with a corrupted understanding
of what it means to be “under grace” and not “under the law”
that ended up with them having a perverted understanding of
their sonship “*liberty*” ‘in Christ’! ...

... they violated their own sonship *liberty* by trying to
have **both**, God’s wisdom **and** man’s wisdom (the
wisdom of the world) mingled together - which ended
up with them living carnally, ungodly and ‘satan-ly’

... and they violated the sonship *liberty* of other
members of the body of Christ (because they had not
properly learned the doctrine of godly Equity in
Romans 14 concerning dealing with the *weaker
brother*) - which ended up with them being **divided**
into a bunch of ‘cliques’ [mutual admiration societies]
and they were *destroying the work of God* in their
assemblies ...

... which ended up with them NOT being *conformed* to the
image of Christ, but conformed to this present evil world and
the image of Satan himself! (all because they failed to be
‘established’ properly in their godly edification of Romans
doctrine ... they got it up to a point, but then they saw
something they didn’t like and ‘dropped out’ of the course! ...
... and what did they see that they didn’t like? **suffering!**)

- (they were basically Rom. 12-16 dropouts!)

- And because of their stubborn refusing to be properly edified unto godliness *which is in faith*—by their failure to be instructed, educated, and edified by their Heavenly Father through Romans doctrine—they, in turn, got **deceived** by the contrary corruptive doctrines from Satan and his Policy of Evil ... and Paul makes them very aware that Satan was the one behind it all!

- (see 2Cor. 11:1-4, 13-15)

- Jesus was being *preached* another way than “according to the revelation of the mystery” ...

- They received a *spirit* that was according to “*the spirit of this world*” rather than “*the spirit which is of God*” (1Cor. 2:12) [religious though it may be] ...

- And *another gospel* was being preached that talked about salvation and how to receive it differently than what Paul taught—as well as all the other ‘Parts’ of Paul’s gospel in the book of Romans being taught differently ...

- And it was all being done in the name of “God” and for the most part, was being taught from God’s word!

- Now, the Galatians, on the other hand—they, too, wound up with a corrupted understanding of what it means to be “under grace” and not “under the law” - and, just like the Corinthians, the Galatians were given a corrupt “gospel” from false ministers and their false doctrine ... but unlike the Corinthians, the Galatians were being *bewitched* into breaking with (and leaving Paul and Romans doctrine) to go back under the Law and under God’s program with Israel.

- And, again, like the Corinthians, the Galatians ended up with a perverted understanding of their sonship “*liberty*” ‘in Christ’! ... and their brand of *liberty*-perversion was to actually abandon it and go back under the ‘tutor and governor’ system of the Law—to go back under that Law’s bondage).

- (see Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1; 5:7-10)

... by the way - just to give you a little more appreciation for the difference between “the gospel of the kingdom” that was preached by Israel’s 12 apostles and Paul’s “my gospel” ... or how it is that *another gospel* (other than Paul’s “my gospel”) can be preached right out of the Bible itself ...

- (see Mat. 16:13-18) - Peter identifies Jesus of Nazareth as “the Christ” (as Israel’s Messiah) ... and Jesus says, “upon this **rock (not Peter!)** I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” ...

... The ‘bedrock’ foundation of the gospel for the kingdom church was the identification of Jesus of Nazareth as Israel’s Messiah—as the Lord’s “Christ”.

- (but remember Rom. 15:20?) - Paul is preaching a gospel that is **different** from what Israel’s 12 apostles were preaching!

- Why? because the foundation for that kingdom church (for those members of the remnant) wasn’t a risen, exalted Christ, offering reconciliation to Him by His grace through the cross-work that He had accomplished ... that wasn’t the bedrock foundation for them ...

... the foundational issue for the remnant was: Jesus of Nazareth IS your Messiah! (He’s the Lord’s Christ).

- So ... when you got saved from the debt & penalty of your sins—(when you got justified unto eternal life) ... contained in the gospel that was given to you—(Paul’s “my gospel”) ... were you first of all told that ‘Jesus of Nazareth is your Christ [Messiah]?’ (and nothing was said to you about Jesus dying on the cross, being buried, and risen from the dead?)

- Now notice that this ‘Phase 1’ of the Satanic Policy of Evil—(the attack upon the Message) continues on—even upon the most advanced and mature in their godly edification ...

- (see 2Thes. 2:1-2) - they were being ‘deceived’ into believing something that was not true—(i.e., that Israel’s time-schedule was still in effect) ... and a counterfeit *spirit* and *word* and even a counterfeit *letter*!

- Now note that Paul, especially, deals with Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE in the Pastoral epistles (actually, Paul deals with all 3 Phases in the Pastoral epistles) ...

- 1Tim. 1:3-11 - (the departure here is primarily concerning going under the Law!)
- 1 Tim. 4:1-7 - (:7) = see Robert Louis Stevenson, “The Merry Men” 1904
- “*old wives fables*” = a story of a miracle!
- 1 Tim. 6:20-21 - (“*science*” only 2x; here and Dan. 1:4)
- [also: “*vain babblings*” = tongues]
- **2Tim. 2:15-18**- (*Hymenaeus and Philetus* = the first members of the Charismatic Movement!)

- **Notice:** “*profane and vain babblings*” (which we just saw back in 1Tim. 6:20) ...

... these are 2 major counterfeits that are going on today in many churches: 1. “*vain babblings*” = Tongues, and 2. “*profane babblings*” = ‘getting a word from God’ ... God audibly speaking to you ... [and the big one]: ‘A word of Prophecy’! (prophesying and tongues go together!)

- **Notice what God’s definition of “*profane*” is:**

- Jer. 23:9-16 [:15], 21, 30-32

- And notice from the 3 passages we just looked at—when it comes to these “*profane and vain babblings*” the Pastors and Deacons are to ...

“*refuse*” them (1Tim. 4:7)

“*avoid*” them (1Tim. 6:20)

“*shun*” them (2Tim. 2:16)!

- Now all of these counterfeits we’ve looked at (working of miracles, tongues, prophesying, getting a ‘word from God’ and the like) are all the kind of things that have a very devastating effect upon Christians where God’s written word is concerned—and especially for God’s written word “rightly divided” by Paul and his 13 epistles—and I want to underscore the devastation that takes place within a believer who has such counterfeit **experiences** ... (see next page) ...

- (Keith Blades, “Satan and His Plan of Evil” p.275)

“When a Christian can be convinced through the personal experience of some phenomenon that God is communicating to him, *than that personal experience will become for that Christian the criterion for judging what is truth.* As such the written word of God will no longer be the final absolute authority in that Christian’s life. Instead, what the Bible says from now on will be evaluated on the basis of the personal experience. Therefore, the policy of evil has not only successfully deceived the Christian with the extra-Biblical communication, *but it has also effectively produced within the Christian a strong resistance to the written word of God ever changing his mind!* He, or she, has had an experience and that’s that. Once again, the experience itself was real without a doubt. But it wasn’t God who gave it or produced it.”

- Timothy is to stand for the truth of Paul’s “my gospel” and to teach that truth with all longsuffering and patience ... (see 2Tim. 2:24-26)

- Also, see the exhortation Paul gives to Pastors (Titus 1:9-14)

- These passages we’ve looked at point up what **Phase 1** of the Satanic POLICY of Evil is toward us, the members of the body of Christ in this present dispensation of grace in which we live. (and that’s what we’re going to be dealing with in Rom. 16:17ff).

- Now—before going back to Romans—let’s make sure that we have a good (although basic) understanding and appreciation for just what Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil is toward us.

- Satan’s PLAN of Evil, (once again), is the same today in this disp. of grace as it was in God’s program with Israel: *I will be like the most High (possessor of heaven and earth).*

- Satan’s POLICY of Evil against the body of Christ in this disp. of grace today is just as Eph. 4:14 says—to keep you “*children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*”

... (simply put): To keep Christians today from ever knowing about, understanding, appreciating, or proclaiming *the revelation of the mystery of Christ* which was **exclusively** given to the apostle Paul.

- (or as we commonly say), “Satan works to keep *“the mystery”* a mystery!”

- And the **No. 1** way in which Satan works to accomplish this is by **using** God’s word, and getting Christians to use God’s word ... but having them NOT to “*rightly divide the word of truth*” with Paul in Acts 9 — that is, divide the word of truth all you want [OT & NT; at the cross of Christ; or Acts 2], but just not “*rightly*” ... but ‘wrongly’) ... or simply don’t ‘divide’ it at all!!!

- Use the Bible all you want—but just **mishandle it!**

- And if Satan’s Policy of Evil today is to keep “*the mystery*” a mystery—then by now you should know what “*the mystery of Christ*” is ... do you? can you define and describe it?

- Now if you say that “*the mystery*” IS “*the dispensation of the grace of God*” then, good.

- and my understanding is that those two expressions **are** basically taking about the same thing ... you can’t talk about “*the mystery*” without talking about “*the dispensation of grace*” - and you can’t talk about “*the dispensation of grace*” without talking about “*the mystery*.” (and I think Romans 9-11 and 15:8-33 bears that out).

- And I say that because if all you can do is say that “*the mystery*” is “*the dispensation of grace*” - that really isn’t sufficient to properly **define** either of those two expressions.

- So when it comes to “*the mystery*” and this *dispensation of grace* properly defined:

i. First of all—*the mystery* is **NOT** the issue of God dealing with men on the basis of His grace rather than the Law.

- God’s grace is mentioned a bunch of times in the OT & Gospels (you can study it out on your own) but a couple of examples: **Exo. 33:19; Psa. 84:11; John 1:14-17.**

ii. Secondly—*the mystery* is **NOT** the issue of God **saving** Gentiles. (**Psa. 67:1-2; Isa. 40:5; 42:6; Rom. 15:9-12; Mat. 28:18-19; Mk. 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8**)

- So, (to me, anyway), there are at least 6 things that you can say that go to **properly defining** what “*the mystery*” (or this present disp. of grace) is:

1. Recognize that this dispensation of grace was **NOT** made known in “*time past*” (i.e., according to prophecy). Known as “*the mystery*,” it is **not** just a certain content of doctrine, [it is that for sure!], but *more* than that, it is God’s program for us Gentiles **apart from** and **different from** God’s program with Israel.
2. The administration of this dispensation of grace is through a brand new apostle: the apostle Paul (our “*chief*” 1Tim.1:15).
3. Jews and Gentiles are put on the same level (“*both one*” Eph. 2:14), and Israel is **not** a priority today.
4. God is holding back His day of wrath. (Rom. 5:9; 1Th. 1:10)
5. As a result, all believers become “*one new man*,” [Eph. 2:15] a “*new creature*,” [2Cor. 5:17] known as the “*body of Christ*.”
6. God has temporarily suspended His program with Israel to repossess the earth, and is now engaged in repossessing the heavenly realm with His new creation of “*the body of Christ*.” [Rom. 8:21]
 - And remember: this “*mystery of Christ*” spells the DOOM of ALL of Satan’s entire Policy and PLAN of Evil !!!! (it paints him as the 2-Time Loser that he is!) [and we have the privilege of proclaiming that!]

- Now I want to mention one more thing here—and that is that as we have been reviewing Satan and his Plan and Policy of Evil—I’ve said again and again that his Policy of Evil is to see to it that ‘*the mystery* stays a mystery’ ... to keep Eph. 3:9-10 from ever taking place ... (Eph. 3:9-10 *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God*) ... [keep that impact from taking place] ...

... and if you’ve noticed, I **haven’t** said that Satan’s attack is against **sonship edification**. (because God doesn’t say it that way) ...

- The truth is—sonship edification (as great as it is) is NOT “*the mystery*” per se! Sonship edification is actually **part** of what “*the mystery*” is all about.
- Sonship (or the adoption of sons) is **not** unique to this disp. of grace ... it occurs in BOTH, God’s program with Israel, and with us in this disp. of grace. (Rom. 8:15 [us]; Rom. 9:4 [Israel])
- Our godly sonship edification curriculum is contained in the 13 epistles of the apostle Paul.
- So—Satan can ‘kill two birds with one stone’ (so to speak) ... because by attacking “*the mystery*” and by keeping “*the mystery*” a mystery—and by getting Christians to NOT “*rightly divide the word of truth*” and NOT handle God’s word properly—he has effectively rendered godly sonship edification IMPOSSIBLE!
- And that’s done by getting Christians to think that they can live unto God’s pleasure by being under the Law ... either entirely under it, or partially under it ... because when you are under the Law, you’re under the ‘tutor & governor’ system of the law; and thereby you remain *children* and never function as the adult, adopted “sons/daughters” that you really are “in Christ.” (do you see that?)
- So we know what Satan’s PLAN of Evil is; what his POLICY of Evil is today—and that takes us once again to **Phase 1** of his PoE: **ATTACK THE MESSAGE.**
- And the ‘Battle-Cry’ for Phase 1 of the PoE is: **DECEIVE!** (**deceive** Christians by false and corrupt and unsound words and unsound, corrupt doctrine from God’s very word itself!)
 - Rom. 16:18 ... *by good words and fair speeches* **DECEIVE** the hearts of the simple.
 - Eph. 4:14 ... *tossed to and from, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to* **DECEIVE;**
- (you just operate like an Israelite under the Law; [or partially under the Law]! **it’s just that simple!** and you have been *deceived* !

- Now **Phase 2** of the Satanic PoE today consists of **ATTACKING THE MESSENGER**—and **Phase 3** consists of **GETTING THE MESSENGER TO GIVE UP** (and through discouragement and being discredited, get the messenger to voluntarily resign from the battle).

- And my understanding is that Phase 2 & 3 are very closely related—in fact, they could almost be thought of as one Phase alone ... but we'll keep them as two Phases.

- And if the 'Battle-Cry' of Phase 1 is "**Deceive**" ... the 'Battle-Cry' of Phase 2 and 3 is **INTIMIDATE!!!**

- (and we won't study all that out here, but we'll look at it in detail when we get to it).

- Now—with all that—we should be ready to begin looking at the details of Romans 16:17ff ?

OUTLINE:

- Rom. 16:17-18 = **Godly Thinking**: godly thinking in regard to Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil (Attack the Message).

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

- Of course—as we are so familiar with by now ... based upon our godly sonship edification having taken place from Rom. 1:1-16:16 ... and based upon our experience by now of putting those 4 sonship decision-making skills to use (*wisdom, justice, judgment, equity*) ... and based upon the living words of the Living God living in us ... and ever *conforming us to the image of Christ* ... and based upon our *casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light* ...

... that calls a lot of attention to yourself from the adversary!
(that starts a fight—it starts a war!)

- And at the point of Rom. 16:17, Satan has 'earned the right' (so to speak) to put Phase 1 of his PoE into effect against you (and against our local assembly) - to **Attack The Message** (doctrine) you have learned ... and to **test** you! ... you're going to get **tested**!

- So beginning in (:17) we get introduced to, and confronted with the first round of serious opposition from the Satanic PoE. (and we have been prepared for it by our Father's previous instruction—[especially Rom. 8:28-39])

- These two verses are filled with information that is directly **instructing** us as to the details of the Adversary's attack—and just as importantly, they instruct us in the way we are to **THINK** about it—and we are to THINK about it **just like God does!**

- (:17-18) is our **Father's** Thinking about Phase 1 of the PoE—and it's to become OUR godly Thinking, too!

- Grammatically—we have 2 verses; and we have 2 complete sentences (one for each verse) — and each sentence is divided up into 2 Clauses each—(kind of Part A and Part B of each sentence/verse).

- Verses (:17) and (:18) go together because, while each verse is one complete sentence each - (:18) begins with a "For" of cause or reason—it's a "for" that answers the reason "Why?" ... which is the question naturally implied at the end of (:17) - i.e., (:17) 'begs the question, "Why?"

- And then I see a slight 'shift' in the context [and in the grammar] take place in (:19) - due to the "For" **not** being a "for" of cause or reason, but it's used there for a different reason ...

... also, what makes me think that (:19) begins a section of information that is different than Godly Thinking is because of the term "**obedience**" (for one thing) - plus, the 2nd sentence in (:19) gives us further instruction as to the Roman saints' **conduct and behavior, or Godly Living, in view of what (:17-18 [the Godly Thinking]) has just set forth.**

Romans 16:17 (Part A) *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;* (Part B) *and avoid them.*

- "**Now I beseech you, brethren, ...**" (just like we saw back in 15:30)

- "**Now**" - the word *now* can be used in a whole bunch of ways (and it's used many times in Rom. 15 & 16 as we have noted before).

- Here in (:17), this “*Now*” is being used (in this case), to introduce something in view of some previous information that has just been set forth.

- “*Now*” can be used to express or imply a **connection** between the subsequent and preceding information—in other words, it expresses a **connection** between what was just set forth in (:1-16) with what will ‘now’ be set forth in (:17ff).

- “*Now*” is like saying, “*Now*, in view of what has just been set forth in (:1-16) where by means of that godly **body interaction** of the saints in that big List—whereby that **body interaction** begins the process of some godly **fellowship and communion** taking place, which ends up with your **conversation** being utilized for a **heavenly IMPACT** (to God’s **glory**, and to the chagrin of Satan and his cohorts) ...

... in view of THAT - “*Now*” Phase 1 of the PoE is going to begin to work to **destroy** your godly fellowship/communion and **destroy** your conversation and the heavenly Impact it is making ... **and “Now” here is how you are to THINK about that!**

- “*Now I beseech you, brethren, ...*”

- “**I**” - when Paul personally “*beseeches*” (just as back in 12:1), he is stepping out of his role as God’s ‘mouthpiece’ (so to speak) and communicator of the sonship doctrine—and he takes on a neutral or independent role of a 3rd party that steps out of his ordinary role and does the *beseeching* or the exhorting for us to engage in some action; or to take a course of action that he’s about to set forth. (Which will include godly Thinking, Living, and Labor—but the godly Thinking is the matter at hand right now.)

- And the particular ‘course of action’ in this context is to receive the Godly Thinking for being able to properly deal with, and properly handle Phase 1 of the PoE (the attack on the message; [*the mystery of Christ*]).

- “*Now I beseech you, brethren, ...*”

- “**beseech**” - occurs 3x in Romans - (12:1; 15:30; and here in 16:17 is the final time).

- “*beseech*” = Prefix *be* = to make—and it’s used as an intensifier to the word it’s attached to, making it a powerful and intense matter that goes beyond the ordinary force of the word it’s attached to—(like *love* and *beloved*) ...

... plus the word *seech* (or *seek*), which we most commonly think of (and almost exclusively think of) as meaning, ‘to go in search of something’; to try to find; to look for something or someone whose whereabouts are unknown—but *seek* has far more meanings than that—in fact, *seek* can mean, “to bring about an action” — which has the sense of, ‘to ask for,’ or ‘to request’ (like in the phrase, “to seek help”); also, “to entreat a person to do something” [which is the sense of *seek* in the word *beseech*].

- Therefore, *beseech* has the meaning of: intensely asking or requesting a person to do something; to earnestly entreat or implore someone to do something.

- Granted, the word *beseech* is not commonly used today—though it hasn’t entirely fallen out of use—and, as usual, it’s treated by Bible scholars and translators as a word that needs to be ‘updated’ and so it gets re-translated with words like ‘urge’ or ‘appeal’ (the idea being that those are ‘better’ and ‘easier to understand’ words) ... however, *beseech* carries a shade of meaning that makes it the most excellent choice of English words in this context.

(Crabb’s) - *Beseech* is an intensive verb meaning to seek strongly—it’s a species of intensive ‘asking’ when the context indicates an urgent necessity for some action being at hand—*beseeking*, in particular, is done either by friends or by ones who are seen to be equals—therefore *beseeking* is done as an equal party; kindly but forcefully’ and not as one ‘pulling rank’ or authority over another.

- (re-translating the word *beseech* to something else obscures this shade of meaning—it doesn’t make it “better”, it makes it worse!)

- And what I’m going after here is to put this issue of Paul *beseeking* us in the proper context—and, of course, that proper context is that of sonship edification—especially the acquiring of our sonship edification and now facing some intense resistance and opposition to it by Phase 1 of the PoE.

- And we've noted before how that it's often pointed out by Bible teachers who *do rightly divide the word of truth* that Paul is *beseeking* you here and not 'commanding' you—because a command would be like we were back under the Law in God's program with Israel, but now that we're no longer '*under the law, but under grace*,' we're not "commanded" to do anything any more. (Making the word *beseech* out to be a **dispensational issue**.) - [which isn't wrong, but I think there's more going on than that].

- Because, even though we indeed are *not under the law, but under grace*, Paul "**commands**" you a dozen or so time **throughout his epistles!**

- So this *beseeking* isn't some kind of a dispensational issue per se, —it's a sonship issue! (and here, a sonship **edification** issue).

- The truth is—the word *beseech* is the apostle Paul's **cue** or **signal** that you are being deal with as **adult sons**—and as an adult, you are now being exhorted or intensely asked to do what is necessary in view of Level I Sonship Edification (Romans doctrine) effectually working within you ...

... which, in this case, is the necessary godly Thinking of how to effectually deal with Phase 1 of the PoE against you.

- So when you see the word "*beseech*" these 3x in the book of Romans, **you know that something BIG is up!** ... you know that Paul is exhorting you—that you are now going to have to rely upon the effectual working of the doctrine you've been taught in order to take an appropriate, **godly** (like-Father-like-son) course of action!

- And when you closely consider what's going on in (:17) - you realize that, while (:17 and :18) do deal with Godly Thinking—the way in which this gets presented to you is that first of all, you're forcefully requested or intreated to take a course of action—and then that's followed by the Godly Thinking (in :18) in view of that action—or the giving of God's own reason for why you are to take the course of action given in (:17).

- And the reason for the "*beseeking*" here in (:17) is due to the very real **danger** that awaits you by the attack of Phase 1 of the PoE.

- In other words—this is a very serious matter—and you're going to have to rely upon your **entire godly edification** you've received so far.

- “*Now I beseech you, brethren ...*

- “**you**” = you, **as an adult, adopted son** who has accomplished Level I of sonship edification. (Not just any old Christian!)

- “**brethren**” = underscores the brotherhood of sons; and points up our association and our alliance as brothers—an association that now extends to some powerful communion and fellowship (generating a specialized conversation) — not just as fellow believers or Christians in general. It’s **not** a word to be used lightly or thrown around as Christian language or Christian jargon.

- Also, as indicated with the use of the word *beseech*, it’s the appropriate term to describe the equality or bond that exists between Paul (now as that neutral/independent party) and us as the sons who are making this adult decision to get the effectual working of our Father’s thinking (and the appropriate Living & Labor that follows) in order to successfully deal with the attack of Phase 1 of the PoE.

- 17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine you have learned; ...*

- “**mark them**”

- First, I want to say that what we’re about to deal with really is a very serious matter—and if it’s not handled properly, it can cause terrible problems—why? - because you’re being told here to **avoid** these “*them*” - these certain individuals ... and more often than not, these individuals are (really are) fellow members of the body of Christ ... they are oftentimes believers/Christians themselves!

- And one thing we need to say and make clear is that this is NOT just OUR (or **your**) opinion—and more to the point: this is **NOT OUR** (or **your**) judgment on the matter!

- It’s GOD’S judgment on the matter (the Father’s judgment);
 - It’s the “mind” of Christ (God the Son’s) judgment;
 - It’s the Holy Spirit’s judgment on the matter! to *mark them* and *avoid them*!

- **(there’s no room for a ‘holier-than-thou’ attitude!** ... and that won’t be a problem IF you have that godly sonship *wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity!*) [esp., w/ *jud* / *equ*] [and godly Love & Charity!]

- My point is—when it comes to those that would *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*—in this case, your Father tells you, specifically, what to do about it! (**and why**).

- And that doesn't violate your adult sonship status at all—because **you** are going to have to determine who the ones are that are causing *divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned* on your own ... but when it comes to the judgment meted out upon them, your Father gives you the specifics of what to do. [not to mention that you're going to be the one to apply your Father's judgment, ... or not!] (it's a joint, 'Father-son' course of action)

- Now before we deal with the *marking* issue—I think the wisest thing to do is to identify the ones we're supposed to "*mark*" - we need to identify who the "**them**" are.

- The first thing—(and most obvious thing), is that, when you look at the entirety of (:17 & :18) - you should easily recognize that the *them* is NOT Satan himself!

- In fact, if my understanding is correct, you'll **never** deal with Satan personally (if I can put it that way) under any and/or all of the Satanic Policy of Evil throughout your Christian life. (You'll never go 'one-on-one' with the adversary).

- Also, you should easily recognize in these 2 verses that you're not dealing with so-called 'demons' or fallen angels, either.

- And that should narrow the field down to just one other alternative: **you are dealing with MEN** (or women) - human beings are the "*them*" (people).

- The Satanic Policy of Evil utilizes **men** (people) who will do Satan's bidding for him—men who will zealously attack God's *sound doctrine* and attempt to corrupt Christian's minds with perverted truth.

- It's **men**; men who are doing Satan's bidding that are going to be the ones who will resist and oppose the *sound doctrine* you have been given in the book of Romans! and to attack the message (Paul's gospel)!

- And what you've got to be able to discern here it that these men are not just your average Christian who simply don't understand and appreciate God's word "rightly divided" or properly handled!

- There are a lot of Christian folks who simply have never really heard about God's word "rightly divided" - never heard about *the mystery* or what godly sonship edification is all about. (or the KJV issue)

- And by in large, these folks are not actively resisting or opposing *the doctrine which ye have learned* ...

... they may very well **reject** it—but rejecting *sound doctrine* is one thing—opposing it is another!

- And you've got to be able to recognize the difference between these men being described here in (:17) and the *weaker brother* that was presented to you in Ch.14-15:7! **this is NOT a "weaker brother" situation at all!** (the *weaker brother* doctrine taught you to NOT created a 'division' with him ... to NOT "avoid" him! because in doing so you would *destroy* him, and *destroy the work of God* in the local assembly!)

- With all these categories of saved individuals — men/women—i.e., Christians who either simply haven't heard about God's word "rightly divided" or *the mystery of Christ* or Paul being our apostle and the KJ being our Bible—or those who have heard it, but reject it—(and I might add even for unsaved individuals) ... what is it that 'rules the day' (or governs) your treatment of them??? ... **godly Love and Charity!** (and combinations of those Sonship Decision-Making Skills you have learned: especially godly *wisdom, judgment, and equity!*)

- The issue with them is always (as we have so often said):
Honesty of Heart & Honesty with the Text!
(by the way—that expression 'honesty of heart' is the Lord's own expression! [see **Luke 8:15**])

- The "*them*" in (:17) is a category of men (individuals) that you have **not** encountered so far in your godly edification!

- And the thing that makes me fully persuaded that we are dealing with people (men) and not Satan or fallen angels is the terminology God uses to describe them down in (:18) - (which also tells me exactly what kind of men they are) ...

... notice the 4 things that God says about them:

1. They *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ* (which may or may not be talking about actual men, but the likelihood is that it is men) [what's further said will bear it out]
2. They *serve their own belly* (that's pretty good proof that we're talking about men—I don't know that God's word ever talks about angels' "serving their own belly")
3. They use *good words and fair speeches*—now **that's sound proof that men** are in view—in fact, that tells me that the kind of men in view here are actual teachers of God's word themselves!
4. By their *good words and fair speeches* they "*deceive the hearts of the simple*" (which is the result of these men and their teaching of corrupt, *contrary doctrine*. (contrary to Paul's gospel)

- And isn't it interesting how God (the Holy Spirit) has Paul make the connection between these 'men' in (:17) and Satan in (:20)?

- again—these are men who are Satan's 'dupes' - doing Satan's bidding for him! - they are 'stand-in's' for Satan, and are **identified** with Satan!

- These men are in perfect keeping with 2Cor. 11:13-15!
*13 For such are false apostles, **deceitful** workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*
14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

- (that's who you're dealing with in Rom. 16:17ff—Satan's own **deceitful workers** ... **his ministers!**)
[whether wittingly or unwittingly]

- So the "**them**" are **men** (people, individuals) [maybe saved, maybe not saved ... there's a lot of people involved in 'church' and religion and even Christianity that are not saved] — but these are certain ones that Paul knew were going to come to Rome and bring with them *contrary doctrines* — "contrary" to the **truth** of Romans doctrine.

- So we know that we're dealing with men—but I think we can narrow down just who these men are by some terminology that God has Paul use in (:18) ... notice that one of the things that characterize these men is that they are going to “*deceive the hearts of the simple*” by using “*good words and fair speeches*” ... and that tells me something ...

... these men are **TEACHERS!** - Bible teachers!

... and they are going to be professional and persuasive! they may hold doctorate degrees from prestigious theological seminaries! ... (but Satan is the one behind it all!)

- These teachers are going to have a deep disdain for the doctrines that Paul teaches—and they are going to be especially skilled in the art of persuasion—they will oppose Paul's doctrine (sound doctrine) and teach things from the Bible that (because of dishonestly handling God's word, and/or failing to “rightly divide” God's word) end up being deceitfully “biblical”, but are NOT the sound doctrine God has written **to us, for us, and about us** (the body of Christ) in this disp. of grace in which we live.

- The issue is: their ‘doctrine’ isn't necessarily un-biblical ... rather, because their ‘doctrine’ doesn't match up with what Paul teaches, their ‘doctrine’ is **un-dispensational** teaching—and for the most part, teaching things from God's program with Israel as if they applied to us today! [example: Isa. 56:2 cp. Col. 2:16 ... are we ‘Seventh Day Adventists? or not? ... or JW's? ... or not?]

- (not to mention Rom. 14:5-6)

- The result is getting Christians today to become disobedient to God's program for the church, the body of Christ today! (that's what Satan is after!)

- These ‘men’ will attack, oppose, and teach doctrine different than what is set forth in those 4 basic ‘Pillars’ of our fundamental godly Edification as set forth in the book of Romans:

I. Rom. 1-5—the doctrine of our Justification by grace alone through faith alone—and the assurance of the permanency of our justification on the basis of that.

- (this would include the ‘Perversions’ of the gospel).

II. Rom. 6-8—the doctrine of our Sanctified position “in Christ” being by grace through faith and as such we are **not** “under the law” today, and we are to put our sanctified Position “in Christ” into Practice as adult, adopted “sons” of God.

III. Rom. 9-11—the doctrine of the dispensation of grace now in effect—God having suspended His prog. w/Isr. means that we are not ‘spiritual Israelites’ or ‘assume-ers’ of Israel’s program—what God is doing today was a “mystery” not known about or prophesied about—and that when God ends this dispensation of grace, He will return to His prog. w/Isr. and fulfill it just as He said He would.

IV. Rom. 12-16—the doctrine of our walking worthy as God’s adult, adopted “sons/daughters” of who we are “in Christ” as justified, sanctified members of God’s new creation of “the body of Christ” in this new dispensation of grace. (which is again accomplished ‘by grace, through faith’!)

- So—we should have a good grasp upon just who the “*them*” are in (:17) ... they are Bible teachers who rigidly oppose some or all of the sound doctrine contained in the book of Romans. (whether it has to do with “*the mystery*” and this dispensation of grace in which we live; or whether it has to do with the godly Edification Process).

- These individuals oppose Romans doctrine and they teach corrupted doctrine (often from the Bible itself) in the place of that sound doctrine contained in the book of Romans in an attempt to get others (in that local assembly) to follow them.

- There’s one thing for sure: this is a battle over the **truth** of God’s word—and even if you just give this passage a shallow reading, it should stand out (it should ‘jump out’ at you) that this sound doctrine of the book of Romans **MATTERS TO GOD!**

- The **truth** of *the gospel of Christ* given to Paul matters so much to God that HE (Himself) imposes a judgment on the matter to those opposing the **truth** of that gospel—a judgment that entails “*avoiding*” or separating yourself from them!

... and folks, that's NOT "unity" ... in fact, to compromise the **truth** for the sake of "unity" **destroys both!**

... when Paul talks about "*the unity of the faith*" in Eph. 4:13, that's a "unity" **produced by *the faith* (or truth)!**

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark** them which cause divisions ...

- "**mark**" = (σκοπέω [scope them out]) - not just 'seeing with the eye' but giving a discriminating look—a penetrating analysis with the mind (to guard against troublemakers).

= while not making an actual 'mark' on someone (with a pen), it does mean to put a 'mental mark' (so to speak) on someone.

= to designate as if by placing a mark upon someone as being (so and so) ... as being a troublemaker.

= to notice or keep the eye upon; to observe;

- WEBSTER'S 1828

"*mark*" = **to notice; to take particular observation of.**
(quotes Rom. 16:17 *mark them which cause divisions and offences ...*)

- In this context, "*mark*" means to **IDENTIFY** ... you carefully evaluate what these individuals are teaching—and if it doesn't match up with the doctrine you have been taught in Romans—and if they are determined to undermine and overthrow that doctrine and lead others astray from that doctrine—then you **identify** that person as a 'division-causer' and an 'offence-causer' in the assembly.

- and you don't do this on a 'whim' - or on gossip—or on your own (subjective) norms, standards, or thinking—or on you own 'likes' or 'preferences' ... no ...

... the decision to "*mark*" a person as one causing these troubles in the assembly is based upon an **objective standard** which was provided by GOD Himself ... and the objective standard is: "*the doctrine which ye have learned*" - i.e., Romans doctrine! ... (and notice, the objective standard is **not** what "Pastor X" teaches, or "Pastor Y" teaches, or 'dear old Dr. So and So teaches!)

- Simply put—this is *marking* or identifying certain individuals that you **DO NOT** want to follow ... however, the word “*mark*” is used in God’s word just as we have it here (i.e., ‘identify’ certain ones) - but for the exact opposite reason: you **DO** want to follow these other individuals!

- see **Psa. 37:37; Phil. 3:17 (and :18-19)**

- So we have:

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them (identify the teachers of corrupt doctrine) **which cause divisions and offences** (these are very dangerous to godly Edification ... spiritually dangerous!) ...

- (by the way—did you notice that these 2 words [*divisions and offences*] are the **exact opposite** of what you have been taught that **sound doctrine** and proper godly Edification produces in the “body of Christ” ???)

- “**divisions**” = (OED #4) The fact of being divided in opinion, sentiment, or interest; disagreement, variance, dissension, discord. (quotes Rom. 16:17)

= (WEBSTER’S 1828) #9 **Dis**-union!; discord; variance, difference.

- Is this talking about Denominations??? (sure sounds like it!)

- *Division* is the destruction of godly fellowship, communion, concord, and our “conversation” making the impact upon the heavenly places! (which is why Paul is so adamant about there **not being** any divisions in the Body! [like those pesky Corinthians])

- *Division* is DEATH to the godly Edification Process of the Body of Christ! [which is why it’s one of the very first things the Adversary attempts to produce in the Body!]

- And in Rom. 14:1-15:7 we were taught all about the *weaker brother* situation and how to deal with it with godly Equity and godly Love & Charity in order to PREVENT any *divisions* from taking place in the localized Body (assembly).

- Again, God’s design/purpose for the body of Christ is to have **unity** produced by “**the faith**” (sound doctrine!) Eph.4:13

- “**offences**” - in this day and age (in the declining stage of the English language), about all a person ever thinks about when you use the word *offence* [in the sense of being ‘offended’] is the issue of having your feelings hurt! [which isn’t wrong, but a bit too narrow]

- However, it’s interesting (to me, anyway) that in the OED, the definition of ‘hurt feelings’ is the **5th**! definition given!

- The **1st** definition in the OED is the “Biblical use”! = “striking the foot against; **stumbling**.”

- OED #2 = a stumbling-block; a cause of spiritual or moral stumbling; an occasion of unbelief, doubt, or apostasy.

- Even the Greek word (σκάνδαλον) = a trap, snare, impediment, stumbling, stumbling-block)

- But *offence* does have an interesting shade of meaning: “... to impinge, that is to stumble or hit dangerously upon something lying across our way, so as thereby to be cast down, or at least to be disordered in our posture **and stopped in our progress** ...” (Smith’s p.285)

- (and that’s exactly what corrupt, contrary doctrine does ... it STOPS your Edification progress!)

- And this is very close to what we had back in Rom. 14:13 in the *weaker brother* situation—*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or **an occasion to fall** in his brother’s way.*

- And back in Rom. 14, we came to appreciate that the issue of both the *stumblingblock* and *an occasion to fall* all had to do with the issue of: anything that violates the Edification Process.

- And here in (:17), these individuals who are teaching doctrine contrary to Romans doctrine (whether they know it or not) are attacking the message God gave to Paul for our godly Edification—and therefore, they work to **STOP our progress** in godly Edification by luring you away from Pauline doctrine, which violates the Edification Process and brings it to a halt!

- So—here’s a question—if the Greek word means a ‘trap, snare, or cause of stumbling’ ... and if the very same Greek word was translated “*occasion to fall*” in Rom. 14:13 ... then why did the KJ translators use the word “*offences*” here in (16:17) rather than “stumblingblocks” or “traps” or “causes of stumbling”?

- My understanding is—the reason for the use of *offences* rather than ‘stumblingblocks’ is one of **perspective**—here, God wants you to view (perceive or focus upon) the ‘nature’ of the stumbling or trap or snare or impediment to godly Edification (the ‘nature’ of it that is consistent with the overall issue in all of Rom. 15:8-16:27) ...

... and the word *offence* (unlike the word ‘stumbling’ or ‘stumblingblock’) focuses upon the **HURT** and **HARM** that comes from being **unable** to **GO ON** and get the remainder of your godly sonship edification! (it’s **harmful** to you, *and* your Father!)

- In other words—without Paul’s gospel; without sound doctrine, your edification is destroyed, and you’re going to end up as a Corinthian or a Galatian! (which brings joy and glory to the adversary and not God!)

- And if that takes place—then (regardless of **how** it gets done) the overall aim, goal, and objective of Satan’s Policy of Evil has succeeded with you ... and that is to make it so you are **UNABLE TO GO ON** with your godly sonship edification ... (and here’s the sinister part of it) ... even if you **think** you are going on with your edification (serving the Lord and so forth)!

- The real ‘feather in Satan’s cap’ isn’t just to get you operating upon corrupt, contrary doctrine ... that’s just the means to the end ... the end is to have you operating upon corrupt, contrary doctrine all the while blissfully thinking you are serving God and doing the Lord’s work—(you love the Lord, He’s raining showers of blessings down on you—and everything is ‘hunky-dory’ between you and God)!

- That’s why Satan is ‘*transformed into an angel of light*’, and that’s why his “*ministers*” are ‘*transformed into ministers of righteousness*’! (2Cor. 11:14-15)

- The Corinthians certainly thought they were walking rightly in God’s sight! (**see 1Cor. 4:8!**) [they saw nothing wrong]

- The Galatians certainly thought they were walking rightly in God's sight, too! (they were walking according to *the gospel of the circumcision* [Israel's gospel program] that was given to Peter! [study it out])

- Simply put—Satan desires to make it so you are **unable** to go on with your edification, while making you *think* you **are** going on with it! (when you're not!) - and that's the DECEPTION! (remember "Deceive" is the battle-cry of Phase 1 of the PoE!)

- That's the 'trap' or 'snare' of the word *offence*!
(*contrary doctrine* is a **trap**!)

- That's what's at stake in this context (i.e., your ability to Go On and get the rest of your edification)—and that's what the adversary desires to thwart!

- And that's what makes the word *offences* the most excellent choice of English words for this verse and this context!

- "*divisions*" highlights the destruction of 'the work of God' in the assembly (the destruction of the edification of the body) ...

- "*offences*" highlights the destruction of your individual edification! (Satan's 'contrary doctrine' as taught by teachers of God's word who are doing Satan's bidding for him, ends up destroying BOTH areas of godly edification! [individual and body!])

*17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned**; ...*

- "**contrary**" = opposed to; different from; extremely unlike; opposite from — (Webster's) = contradictory; not merely different, but **inconsistent** or repugnant.

- The origin of the word *contrary* comes from *contra* = **against**.

- And really, rather than something *contrary* being the 'opposite' of something (which could, indeed be true), the meaning of *contrary* leans far more toward the issue of being **opposed to** something.

- And just like a child who is misbehaving in Wal-mart—he may be doing just the ‘opposite’ of what his parents want him to be doing ... but if they say, “My child is being contrary” it’s not so much they are expressing that what he is doing is the ‘opposite’ of what his parents want him to do (which may be true) ... but what they want to express with the word “*contrary*” is the child’s **opposition** to his parents ...

... they’ve told him one thing, and he’s doing the other—but the issue is he’s *contrary*, **he’s opposing them and their wishes!**

- And that’s the excellency of the term *contrary* when you’re talking about *contrary doctrine* ... it’s not that it’s ‘opposite’ doctrine (or even ‘wrong’ doctrine), rather it’s doctrine that stands **opposed** to the specific doctrine that (for us) is our “*sound doctrine*” - Pauline doctrine (if you will) - it’s doctrine that is **opposed** to the sound doctrine that produces *godly edifying which is in faith* (1Tim. 1:4). [i.e., Rom-Philim!]

- “**doctrine**” - Used 2x in Romans: 6:17 and here in 16:17.

- “**doctrine**” = Why not “teaching”? and just what does “*doctrine*” mean? (see Chart for Definition)

- “**which ye have learned**” = **this is the OBJECTIVE STANDARD to be applied!** (you’re not left to make up a standard of judgment on your own—rather, God gives you HIS objective standard!) ... and in this case, the objective standard is ROMANS DOCTRINE! (all 12 Parts of *the gospel of Christ* contained in the book of Romans)!

- Now on to ‘Part 2’ - or the 2nd Clause of the sentence of (:17)

... **and avoid them.** — you take the Objective Standard of Romans doctrine, and if anyone comes along and teaches ‘contrary’ to that ... MARK them (identify them as such) ... and AVOID them!

- “**avoid**” = (OED #8) to leave alone, keep clear of or away from, **have nothing to do with!**

- Notice: you don’t ‘argue’ with them; you don’t ‘debate’ them; you don’t try to straighten them out; ... you don’t have anything at all to do with them!!! (simple, right? clear, right?)

- This is true, even in God's program with Israel:

- see **Mat. 15:10-14; 2John 1:10-11**

... leave them alone; stay clear of them; let them alone; have nothing at all to do with them ... **that's the clear instruction of God your Heavenly Father! ... anything other than that is outright disobedience on your part!**

- see **2Thes. 3:6; 14**

- see **1Tim. 6:3-5**

- see **2Tim. 3:5**

- (that's how you deal with Phase 1 of the PoE!)

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

- That statement, then, raises the question, "Why?" ... why should they be avoided **beyond** the matter that they are teaching doctrine (and they *are* teaching "*doctrine*") ...

... did you catch that? in (:17)?

... by the way in which it is worded: "*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; ...*"

... these trouble-making teachers **ARE TEACHING DOCTRINE!** ... but the **doctrine** they are teaching causes *divisions and offences* to individual believers and to local churches because the **doctrine** they teach is *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*—i.e., contrary to Romans doctrine!

- But the point is—they *are* teaching **doctrine**; "**Bible Doctrine**"! (**unsound Bible Doctrine**)

- So—WHY, should we "*avoid*" these teachers of *contrary doctrine beyond* the matter that the *contrary doctrine* they teach causes *divisions* to the assembly, and *offences* to the saints?

- In other words—what is the critical assessment of the ‘nature’ or the ‘hearts and minds’ of such teachers of *corrupt doctrine*?

- **And this is an essential step to take** for such a drastic measure as God gives us to “*avoid them*”.

- Notice that (:18) could have been omitted altogether—right? Because if all we had was (:17), we would be doing exactly what God our Heavenly Father teaches to do—right?

- The ‘bottom-line’ issue is to “*avoid them*” - and we’re told to do that in (:17) ... so, why add (:18) at all?

- You need to realize, and be **suitably impressed** with the fact that, when you *avoid* these teachers of *corrupt doctrine*, you are potentially **separating** from a member of the body of Christ by doing so (that is, IF they really are justified unto eternal life/saved). **And that’s a BIG deal!**

... that’s a **drastic** step to take—and your Father knows it!

- And your Father wants you (as His adult, adopted “sons”) to know that this is **HIS** desire, and **HIS** instruction to you on the matter of how to deal with Phase 1 of the Policy of Evil (the attack upon the message).

- And so critical is this matter to your continued godly sonship edification—(and so dangerous a matter to it) - and the fact that your Heavenly Father is so “jealous” (in a godly sense) of the great dispensational change He has made, and His “*revelation of the mystery*” to the apostle Paul with Paul’s 13 epistles being the curriculum for your godly sonship edification—that HE, HIMSELF imposes the judgment on these teachers of *corrupt doctrine* ...

... but **more than that**, since *avoiding them* is such a **drastic measure** for you to take—God knows that it is necessary for you to have **His Thinking** (or His assessment—or His analysis) of the details concerning just who these teachers of *corrupt doctrine* are—that He includes for you His very own critical analysis of them - His Thinking; what **He thinks** of them.

- So God gives you 4 features and characteristics of the ‘make up’ of just who these teachers of *corrupt doctrine* are!

- And this is 'fair game' (so to speak) in the way in which God deals with the adversary—that is, if the adversary has 'earned the right' to oppose your godly edification with Phase 1 of the PoE, then God has the right to make you aware of who and what you're facing & dealing with in order to be forewarned and forearmed for the battle with the adversary!
- And so (:18) provides great confidence and assurance for the action to be taken in *avoiding* those teachers of *corrupt doctrine*—because for one thing, the command/instruction to "*avoid them*" is **God's** command & instruction (not yours); and for another thing, the assessment and analysis of who and what they are is **God's Thinking** (which is to now become your godly Thinking)!
- (:18) isn't your analysis or judgment (or **opinion**) of these teachers of *corrupt doctrine* ... it's GOD'S analysis and judgment! ... you're not left to your own opinion on this matter!
- These teachers of *corrupt doctrine* are teachers of **the Bible**; they're Bible teachers—and making any wild accusations of Bible teachers (or false judgments of them based upon personal opinion) is a very dangerous thing ...
- ... so God sees to it that there will be NO 'wild accusations' or false accusations being made in this case—therefore God Himself provides you with these 4 characteristics & features of the 'make-up' of these teachers of *corrupt doctrine*.
- So dangerous to your godly sonship edification is *corrupt doctrine*, (and Phase 1 of the PoE), that God has reserved Himself the right (as it were) to 'take matters into His own hands' and (since these individuals are nothing more than Satan's own "*ministers of righteousness*" [2Cor. 11:14]), God sees fit to 'pull the cloak' of "*righteousness*" off of them and EXPOSE them for who and what they really are! (how UN-righteous and UN-godly they really are)!
- And God has the right to do this because of the **deception** involved in it—and because you are at a vulnerable (sophomoric) point in your own edification to make this analysis and expose them for who and what they are—it's a FAIR thing to do; a JUST thing to do; and a RIGHT thing to do! [you could be easily taken-in by them]

- Now there's one more thing I want to review & repeat before we go on to (:18ff) ... **and this is a very important issue!** (so pay attention!!!)

- We are being told (by none other than God Himself) to *mark and avoid* certain ones (possibly even fellow members of the body of Christ—and in some cases it could be a friend or family member) — and this is a 'drastic' measure to take (as I've said) ... **but we need to be very careful here to not miss the obvious!**

- **Q:** Are you to *mark and avoid* anyone and everyone who teaches *doctrine contrary* to that *which you have learned*?

- Let's say that you have a friend or family member (a brother/sister) who teaches a Sunday School class at the local Methodist or Baptist church ... do you *mark and avoid* him/her?

- **A:** No. because the "obvious" thing we're not to miss here isn't that a person may be teaching doctrine *contrary* to that *which ye have learned* ... (a lot—in fact, most teachers of the Bible teach doctrine *contrary* to Romans doctrine) ...

... but in this case, these are 'Bible teachers' ***which cause divisions and offences*** to and within the local assembly **BY** the doctrine they teach that is *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned!* (in Romans)

- These are not '*weaker brother*' situations—or situations where a fellow believer in Christ has an 'honest heart' but just (as Apollos did) needs the way of God expounded to them *more perfectly* (Acts 18:26).

- Nor is this just a case of someone **rejecting** sound doctrine; rather, this is a case of someone **opposing the doctrine which ye have learned** from the book of Romans, **and actively teaching against it (causing divisions and offences) and attempting to move those in the assembly away from the truth of God's word (i.e., Pauline doctrine) to the corrupt, contrary doctrine that they erroneously teach!**

- Those are the ones we are to *mark and avoid!*

- and that takes us to (:18) ...

Romans 16:18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

- “*For they that are such ...*”

- “*For*” is a ‘for’ of cause or reason—which answers the question, “Why?” - a question that gets naturally raised by the wording of (:17). [which the ‘style’ of our English language has the capacity to do]

- So, Why do we *mark and avoid* these teachers of *contrary doctrine* who *cause divisions and offences*? ... we do so for 4 reasons; 4 features & characteristics that make up God’s Thinking about who and what these characters really are.

1. “*they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,*”

- Interesting: notice how the book of Romans opens up ...

1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, — Paul really was/is “*a servant of Jesus Christ*” and throughout his ministry he was accused of NOT being *a servant of Jesus Christ* at all (when he really was!) ...

... and here you have some people who think they are *serving our Lord Jesus Christ* when they really, (in truth), **are NOT** *serving the Lord* at all!

- And the only way you’ll ever be able to tell the difference is whether they are teaching according to *the revelation of the mystery* as given in the 13 epistles of the apostle Paul! (if they ‘rightly divide the word of truth’ with Paul; if they honestly handle God’s word—and if they are faithful to Paul’s “*my gospel*”!)

- (and I’m not saying that Bible teachers HAVE to **only** teach Paul’s epistles **exclusively** [and no other books of the Bible] ... because you can teach the 4 gospels, or the prophets, or the Psalms, or Deuteronomy, or Hebrews, or any book of the Bible—but you have to always do so by “rightly dividing the word of truth” with Paul!)

- But be very clear: in their minds they really do think they are ‘*servants of the Lord Jesus Christ*’! (but they’re **NOT**!)

- And again—this isn't **you** judging these people's hearts; (you're not making this judgment) — rather it's GOD who has already judged their hearts!

- And notice: **there are NO exceptions!** (no matter how “sincere” they are; or how loving they are; or how godly they seem to be! [or have ‘your best interests in mind’]!

- Even the Lord Himself (during His earthly ministry) had to deal with these same kind of individuals from Israel's vain, religious system (the Pharisees, false teachers, false prophets) that would attempt to influence the members of the Remnant of Israel (the “little flock”) out in the 5th Install. of the 5th CoP and move them away from Jesus of Nazareth (and His ministry/doctrine) — especially the Antichrist & his ‘false prophet’!

- see **John 16:2**

- Now—if these corrupt Bible teachers “***serve not our Lord Jesus Christ***” by *causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned ...* **then who are they serving???**

- They're “***serving their own belly***” — and by extension, they're serving the adversary, Satan himself (as per :20)! (they are doing Satan's bidding in his Policy of Evil against the **truth** of God's word! [laboring together with Satan!]).

- (again) *2Cor. 11:13-15*

*13 For such are **false apostles, deceitful workers,** transforming **themselves** into apostles of Christ.*

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

*15 Therefore it is no great thing if **his ministers** also be transformed as **the ministers of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their works.*

2nd. “*they that are such serve ... **their own belly**;*”

- That is, primarily, (***to them***), they serve THEMSELVES! (completely oblivious that they are, in reality, serving Satan!)

- They are NOT self-less, they are self-ISH! (which tells you that there is NO godly Love & Charity operating within them!)

- God now has Paul continue with God's own profile of the Bible teacher who opposes the doctrine contained in Romans and *causes divisions* in the local church *and offences* (great harm) to the saints' godly sonship edification.
- And these first 2 features/characteristics of God's profile of these troublemakers go together—and in these first 2, God takes the 'cloak' off of them and exposes them for **what they are really doing!**
 - They have a 'cloak' (like wolves in sheep's clothing) of being ones that 'serve the Lord' ... and ones who are so very 'selfless' ... **but nothing could be further from the truth!**
 - They give the appearance of selfless sacrifice and service to the Lord ... but in all reality they are nothing but cleverly camouflaged carnal servants of the adversary! (they are skilled in concealing their true identity!) [**always in the majority opinion!** (a very powerful thing)]
- **1st Feature**: they *serve NOT our Lord Jesus Christ!* (although they give all the appearance that they do).
 - [much like the sons of Eli back in 1 Sam. 2:12—*Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; ...*] - [and like the Pharisees who were a *generation of vipers!*]
- **2nd Feature**: they *serve their own belly*.
 - "*serving their own belly*" is a colorful expression, and a fitting physical-spiritual analogy of **what** and **who** they really are '*serving*'.
 - They're not serving **GOD** (the LJC), but they have made their own **belly** their **god**!!
 - The word "**belly**" describes their own lusts; their own private interests—and the word *belly* is such an appropriate description because **the belly (stomach) has a constant and powerful appetite!** ... it needs constant feeding; constant indulgence; and constant gratification!
 - "**belly**" is being used here as the (OED) says, as "**pertaining to the service of the flesh; fleshly, carnal**" ... and in the OED's citations of this use of the word *belly*, there are a couple of interesting ones ...

1528 Tindale speaks of - “Our fleshly wit, our worldly understanding, and **belly-wisdom**.”

1645 Milton speaks of ones being - “Deluded through **belly-doctrines** into a slavery.”

- Webster’s 1828 - “In scripture, *belly* is used for the heart. [Pro. 18:8; 20:30; John 7:38]” (*Belly* is also used in scripture for) “**Carnal lusts, and sensual pleasures**. [**Rom. 16:18**]”

- And by teaching God’s word to **oppose** the doctrine contained in the book of Romans—they set about to ‘gratify’ and ‘indulge’ their own sensual appetite ... and don’t you think that there’s not a lot of ‘fame and fortune \$\$\$’ to be gained in the process! ... because there IS!

- (they command great numbers of people [huge audience / followers] ... and great sums of money!)

- The word ‘prestige’ comes to mind—they come off as very ‘**prestigious**’ ... (which we commonly think of as meaning someone who is highly esteemed) ... but the word ‘prestige’ actually means “an illusion”, a ‘magic trick’ or an ‘imposter’! ... one who blinds or dazzles by their almost magical influence!

- And that word “*belly*” tells you that **they can never get enough** of their own carnal desires! (the *belly* is **never** satisfied for long!)

- These false teachers of corrupt doctrine were a problem even in God’s program with Israel (we could look at a lot of passages, but let’s just look at two)... **Isa. 56:11; Mat. 23:14**
[“*devour*”]

- And these false teachers of corrupt doctrine are still a problem in our present disp. of grace (let’s run just a few passages in Paul’s epistles) ... **Phil. 3:17-19; 1Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 1:10-11**

- really ... ‘serving the Lord’ is just a feign or pretense ... truth is, this guy isn’t even remotely interested in doing that! (and you’ll find that’s true if you dig deep enough!)

- Now although we have the issue of these Bible teachers of corrupt and contrary doctrine 'exposed' for *not serving the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly* (i.e., their own carnal self interest) ... God indeed does 'link' them with serving Satan himself down in (:20) - which indicates that, even though they may never know it, what they are actually doing is serving the needs of the adversary—they are duped pawns of the adversary and doing his bidding!

- And you need to understand and appreciate that here in (:18) this is God 'exposing' the issue of just how it is that Satan can accomplish Phase 1 of his PoE (which is to attack the message) ... but more than that, how it is that Satan gets **his** 'message' out! ... he's never content to just attack God's message and leave it at that ... but he's always putting out his own corrupt message and corrupt wisdom that's a **competing wisdom** to God's wisdom and a **competing message** to God's message! (that's what *the strange woman* is all about)!!

- Here in (:18) we are to understand & appreciate that Satan's message (or messages) of *contrary doctrine* which oppose the **truth** of sound doctrine from God's word (here, specifically, Romans doctrine) and cause *divisions and offences* are propagated and spread by men who do not legitimately, or honestly, *serve the Lord Jesus Christ*, but rather they serve **their own belly**.

- And such men who *serve their own belly* not only respond negatively to the truth of God's word themselves (and also fail to personally handle the Bible honestly and properly), but they also have a strong vested interest in taking a stand against the truth of God's word and in wanting to have others give heed to them.

- (which is exactly what Satan himself does and wants to see happen!)

- Therefore, men who *serve their own belly* have the necessary kind of desire to actively oppose the truth of sound doctrine, **and** also the necessary kind of **drive** to want to get others to accept their *contrary* teachings.

- and by doing so, they then become men through whom Satan is able to promote and propagate 'his message' or get 'him message' out.

- So these corrupt Bible teachers more or less become messengers of unsound doctrine, (whatever that unsound doctrine is that runs counter to Romans doctrine) - and thereby they serve as active propagators and publishers of it—which (again) is exactly what Satan needs in order to get his message/gospel out and publicize it.

- And my understanding is that this is in keeping with what I call the ‘rules of engagement’ (so to speak) in the battle between God and Satan’s Plan & Policy of Evil.

- Satan can only oppose the truth of God’s word and get his message across by means that are consistent with, (or on par with), how God Himself sets forth and propagates His truth.

- And since the norm for this present dispensation of God’s grace is for God to get His message across through the fervent active propagation of **sound** doctrine by means of faithful Pastors & Bible teachers; and by means of faithful saints and their ministry as ‘ambassadors of Christ’; and by proper functioning local churches ...

... Satan, then, has to work at countering this by making use of ones who respond negatively to the truth of what God says, and who in so doing are stirred up in their negative response to sound doctrine to **actively oppose** that truth.

- And just as in a passage like Eph. 2:2—Satan can produce a particular “*spirit*” of disobedience by working ‘in’ and ‘with’ the ones who respond negatively to what God says.

- and in that way, Satan is able to cater to their desire to have the truth opposed, and thereby to have them become very active messengers and propagators of **unsound** doctrine for him!

- So whenever someone does not respond positively to the fundamental truth of God—(or to “*the gospel of Christ*”) - and/or does not legitimately or honestly *serve the Lord Jesus Christ*, but instead *serves his own belly*—he actually puts himself in the position whereby he can be instrumental in helping Satan to get his message out—and in essence, functioning as an ‘ambassador of the adversary’!

- (a negative response to sound doctrine causes great damage!)

- And when someone *serves his own belly*, he has the kind of personal, carnal desires and lack of godly integrity which makes him not only capable of spreading unsound doctrines—but also of becoming one who determines to actively do so for his own *belly's* sake! (i.e., his own fleshly, carnal lust & desire)

- In essence, such a person is 'Satan's kind of person'!
(because *for his own belly's sake* he will not only take a stand against the truth of sound doctrine, but he will also have reason to actively propagate unsound doctrine!)

- Simply put—Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE (attack the message) is done (mechanically) by ones who in responding negatively to what God says, and by *serving their own belly*, have a vested interest in opposing the truth of sound doctrine and in propagating and publishing their opposition to it—hence, they become **Satan's publicists** (so to speak).

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
18 (Why?) For they that are such **(1)** serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, **(2)** but their own belly; ...

- That takes care of the 1st Clause of (:18) and the first 2 of the 4 features/characteristics of God's 'profile' of those who are used by Satan to accomplish Phase 1 of his Policy of Evil against you and your godly sonship edification—(or you could say, against your sound and fundamental Establishment in godly edification from the doctrine contained in the book of Romans).

- And the first 2 features/characteristics exposes these Bible teachers and their *contrary doctrines* for WHO and WHAT they really are ...

... the next 2 features/characteristics exposes their evil and Satanic methodology—or HOW they go about causing *divisions* in the local assembly *and offences* which harm and destroy your own personal godly edification by teaching *doctrines contrary to that which you have learned* in the book of Romans.

- How do they do it?

- **3rd Feature:** "*by good words and fair speeches*"

- **4th Feature:** *by deception!* - "*deceive the hearts of the simple*"

- The 3rd characteristic feature of these Bible teachers who *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned* really focuses upon their methodology—that is, the means or technique that is most frequently employed by them (and a **powerful** one it is), to accomplish their 2-Fold objective:

1) Attack the message of sound doctrine contained in the book of Romans;

2) lead other saints away from God's truth as given to the apostle Paul and to their own unsound doctrine (corrupt, *contrary* doctrines) - or as it says in Ephesians, "*every wind of doctrine*".

- And they may even use Paul's own words to lead you away from Paul's own doctrine!

- And you need to really appreciate (and be deeply impressed with) the fact that when it comes to this kind of person (or corrupt Bible teacher) being described here—that by this additional Clause of (:18), God makes you aware of the fact that the ultimate goal of these corrupt Bible teachers is to **lead you away from** the sound doctrine you have learned in Romans, and get you to **follow them and their teaching of UN-sound doctrine!** (they're not content to just attack the message!)

- BE VERY CLEAR: THESE GUYS ARE RECUITERS!
(their carnal desire is for you to **follow them!** even though they present themselves as *servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!*)

- and that's why you AVOID THEM!

- And the powerful methodology (or technique) utilized by these corrupt Bible teachers is ... ***"by good words and fair speeches"*!**

- (notice they don't need to "force" you—they don't need to berate you, or 'brow-beat' you—or yell at you, or scare you, or anything along those lines! ... *good words and fair speeches* will work just fine to accomplish their goal!)

- It's much like what was done by Job's so-called 3 "friends" (yeah, **friends!**) - which is what these corrupt Bible teachers will come off as being to you! ... let's look at Job's "friends" (or fiends): Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar ...

- Job is a picture of the remnant of Israel, especially out in the 5th Install. of the 5th CoP. [42 chapters = 42 weeks of the final 3 1/2 years of the great tribulation period] — (Job is NOT a book to go to for Christian suffering today!)

- Job gets counsel and doctrine from his so-called “friends” - they charge Job with wrongdoing and his sins being the cause of his suffering—but just like the “little flock” of the Rem. of Isr., they will suffer for no fault of their own (just like Job) - they will suffer the loss of all they possess [and the loss of their own family] for no fault of their own (like Job) - and they will end up getting far more than they ever had before their suffering (twice as much, like Job) when they enter the kingdom of heaven on earth!

- As you go through the accusations and the teachings and the doctrines of Job’s ‘friends’ - you quickly realize that they all have *good words and fair speeches*—that is, they all have the **language of God (or the language of Christianity) down pat!** (today it would be “brother” this, and “sister” that—and a lot of Amen’s and Hallelujah’s and “thank you Jesus” and so on). [Job’s friends really ‘pour it on’!]

- **Job 5** (Eliphaz) :27

- **Job 8** (Bildad):1-6

- **Job 11**—look at Zophar and how he cleverly attacks Job’s *doctrine* (i.e., message) **see :1-9**

- **Job 15** (Eliphaz again) :1-6

- (if time permits) **Job 22** (Eliphaz again) :15-30 (prosperity gospel?)

- (NOW LOOK AT JOB’S RESPONSE!)

- **Job 16:1-4!**

- **Job 38:1-2!**

- Now this issue in Rom 16:18 of these corrupt Bible teachers using the technique of *good words and fair speeches* is actually the methodology/technique of *the strange woman!* ...

... and you should make that connection—and that’s a valid connection to make — **see Pro. 2:16; 7:1-27**

- *good words and fair speeches* is a further description of ***flattery***!

FLATTERY

- *Flattery* is one of those words that seems to be rather benign or harmless; something rather powerless, even bordering on an ‘innocent’ kind of thing—even something that we would **desire** (at least up to a point of being ridiculous).

- And since it is something that people often do desire—the real danger of *flattery* is often missed ... and that’s the sinister part of it ... because in reality, *flattery* is a **very dangerous thing** ... and it’s a **very powerful thing** ... and in the right hands [the *strange woman*], it can become **an enormously powerful EVIL!** ***(*flattery* is **grossly underestimated** in God’s word!)****

- In fact, Satan himself will accomplish much of his Policy of Evil (both in God’s program with Israel, and in our present dispensation of grace) with *flattery* (of all things!) as one of his most powerful tools. (Satan has taken it to a whole new level of skill and power—he’s made it an ‘artform’ of evil!)

- Some believe the meaning of *flattery* came from the idea of ‘to flatten something down’ - hence, ‘to stroke with the hand; caress.’

- Normally, we think of *flattery* as a harmless way to encourage or cheer a person.

OED

2. To try to please or win the favour of a person by obsequious (fawning) speech or conduct.

3. To praise or compliment unduly or insincerely.

4. To gratify the vanity or self-esteem of; to make self-complacent; to tickle a person’s vanity.

5. To play upon the vanity or impressionableness of a person; **to beguile or persuade with artful blandishments.**

WEBSTER’S 1828 (much the same definitions as the OED)

Flattery = false praise; commendation bestowed for the purpose of gaining favor and influence, or to accomplish some purpose.

(Smith’s Synonyms Discriminated—p437)

Anything is *flattery* which expresses praise or admiration, not as being simply due and felt, but for the sake of gratifying vanity or gaining favour. Untimely as well, excessive praise is *flattery*. *Flattery* is the voluntary tribute of more praise than is due or called for.

(Crabb's Synonymes—p526)

Flattery (*flatter*), comes from the L. *flatus* wind or air, signifying to say what is airy and unsubstantial. A *flattering* address is filled with the fictitious perfections of the object. *Flattery* always exceeds the truth; it is extravagant praise dictated by an overweening (arrogant/excessive/overbearing) partiality, or, what is more frequent by a disingenuous temper. Synonyms: *sycophant* and *parasite*. “*Flatters* are the bosom enemies of princes.”—South.

- Radical, Root issue of *flattery*:

(Etymological Dictionary of the Eng. Lan., Skeat)

Flatter comes down to us through the M.E. word *flakken*, which means

TO MOVE! ... (to move to and fro).

- That's the goal of Satan and Phase 1 of his PoE: **to MOVE you** away from the truth of God's word as revealed to Paul (or in our case, *the doctrine which ye have learned* in the book of Romans)!

- Phase 1 of the PoE attempts to **move you** away from sound doctrine to the unsound doctrines of the corrupt Bible teachers (who may be some of the 'nicest' people you'll ever meet)!

- But that's what's at the core of their *good words and fair speeches* ... at the core of it is *flattery* and the attempt to **move you** to their way of thinking!

- *the strange woman* — ***With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. (Pro. 7:21)***

- (by the way, note): ***A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. (Pro. 29:5)***

- (and if you still don't think the issue of *flattering* or using *good words and fair speeches* is dangerous and an enormously powerful tool in the hands of the adversary) ...

- see Dan. 11:21—***And in his estate*** (my understanding is that this is the infamous deceitful 'little horn' with the big mouth—i.e., the Antichrist) ***he shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour and the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom BY FLATTERIES.***

- *** SEE ALSO: 1THES. 2:1-6 ***

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark (identify) them (Bible teachers) which cause divisions (within the local assembly and thereby destroy the “work of God” in it) and offences (bringing harm to the saints’ godly sonship edification and thereby spiritually destroying him) contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned (in the book of Romans); and avoid them.

18 (Why?) For they that are such (1) serve not our Lord Jesus Christ (although they will look, act, and sound as if they do ... and they may believe that they do), but (they actually serve) (2) their own belly (they serve their own flesh and carnal desires in responding negatively to the truth of God’s word [especially Romans doctrine], and by actively opposing the truth of God’s word, and propagating and publishing unsound doctrine in order to lead others away from Pauline truth and to them and their ‘contrary doctrine’ - gaining a lot of fame and making a lot of money in the process) ; ...

- [that takes care of God pulling the ‘cloak’ off these shysters to reveal WHO and WHAT they really are ... and now God reveals just HOW they do it—what their methodology or techniques are to get their evil, ungodly and Satanic goals accomplished] ...

... (3) *and by good words and fair speeches (i.e., the “flattery” technique of the strange woman) ...*

- “**good words**” = acceptable words—acceptable, because they come from God’s word (the Bible) itself! (“*Another gospel*” [Gal. 1:6]; a different kind of gospel; a gospel other than Paul’s “*my gospel*”)

- “**good words**” = words that are smooth and plausible; pleasant, gracious words, easy flowing speech that exudes goodness **and tends to convince the hearer**—hence, **seductive and conducive to false viewpoints!**

- One of the ‘hallmark signs’ of these corrupt Bible teachers is that they pay very little attention to the **CONTEXT** of God’s word—they play ‘fast and loose’ with the **context!** ...

... also, they don’t heed to the normal rules of grammar and they pay little attention to the historical time in which God’s word was written. (which makes their *contrary doctrine* deadly!)

- These “*good words*” are very similar to what God warns the saints about over in Col. 2:4 (see Col. 2:1-4 [4]) ...

- “*good words*” and “*enticing words*” describe the ‘art of persuasion’ — they are speech and words adapted to persuading others and then leading them astray — words that are very persuasive, but intentionally designed to mislead!

- Again, they are reminiscent of what the Lord said to Job about his friend’s “counsel” ... “*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*” (Job. 38:2)

- “***and fair speeches***” - these are ‘trigger words’ ... they ‘trigger’ you to make a connection to something you learned earlier in God’s word.

- This expression “*fair speeches*” takes you right back to the book of Proverbs, and to the very words of *the strange woman*! — (Pro. 7:21) *With her much **fair speech** she caused him* (a ‘simple’ one; a ‘young man’) *to yield*, ...

- “***fair speeches***” = *fair*, in the sense of beauty or attractive [a woman with ‘fair’ features is a beautiful and attractive woman] — and that’s what these *speeches* are: they’re **attractive!** ... they ‘pull you in’! ... they’re “*fair*” in the sense of being **compelling** and getting you to “*yield*” to them! [very powerful]

- used in an evil sense = a beautifully polished but insincere speech, (sermon, lesson, Bible teaching).

- (also in a bad or evil sense) = language artfully adapted to captivate (or take captive) the hearer.

- From an unknown source, I came across this comment: “He uses the language of heaven to teach the doctrines of hell.”

- So when it comes to the methodology (or technique) employed by these corrupt Bible teachers and their *contrary doctrine*—and when it comes to the 3rd Feature in God’s ‘profile’ of them ... they will always be using: ***good words and fair speeches*** to accomplish Phase 1 of the PoE = attach the message God has given to the apostle Paul; and lead others away from it and to their own *contrary doctrine*.

- Really, the technique of these corrupt Bible teachers to use *good words and fair speeches* is designed to get you to **NOT THINK!** ... that is, to not think about what you are hearing!

- And that takes us to the **4th and final Feature** or characteristic of God's 'profile' of corrupt Bible teachers—by using the technique of *good words and fair speeches*, we then get to the 'heart of the matter' when it comes to Phase 1 of the PoE: DECEPTION!

18 ... and by good words and fair speeches *deceive the hearts of the simple*.

- "**Deceive**" is the 'battle-cry' of Phase 1 of the PoE.

- My understanding is that, by the way (:18) is worded, this issue of *deceiving the hearts of the simple* is the very thing these corrupt Bible teachers are after—in other words, they are aware that they are intentionally *deceiving the hearts of the simple* ... they're going after them—and they're going after them because they know that *simple* ones are the easiest prey (the easiest to *deceive*).

- maybe I'm wrong about that—maybe they *deceive the hearts of the simple* unwittingly—that may be true—but regardless, the end result of their "ministry" is the same: **deception!** ... and it can't be called anything other than that!!!

- *Deceive* (*de*- prefix = down, [in a bad sense] + *L. capio* = to take); hence, to take down; to ensnare; to take unawares by craft or guile; to purposely mislead.

- The idea behind *deceive* is to ensnare someone by trickery or to get the better of someone by intentionally misleading them into error and wrong doing.

- Simply put, *deception* is the intentional act of making you **think** one thing is so, when in reality it **isn't** so.

- (*Deception* is the 'home field' or natural environment of politics and the politician.)

- The major issue in *deception* is FALSEHOOD—and it signifies especially the producing of a FALSE CONVICTION—that is, falsely convinced that the true, biblical, and godly life of the Christian is to be lived and put into practice by doctrines **other** than Paul's *gospel* as detailed in Romans—and more often than not, that means **under the law** rather than **under grace** !

- (which is another way of saying, that they attempt to get you to live your Christian way of life under God's program with Israel, rather than under this present dispensation of grace ... [again, ignoring the dispensation issue and failing to 'rightly divide the word of truth']) ... and again, it's not that they are 'unbiblical', rather, they are un-dispensational!

- Note: We're not going to cover every possible *contrary doctrine* that these corrupt Bible teachers could teach - or cover every possible way in which these corrupt Bible teachers can *deceive the hearts of the simple*—we really only need to recognize that *contrary doctrine* (when it is believed and put into practice) ends up with a Christian in 1 of 2 categories.

- When a saint has in some way failed to be properly *led by the Spirit* through the curriculum for our godly sonship education and edification (Romans being our 1st fundamental course of sound doctrine) — and when that saint has failed to *walk after the Spirit* in accordance with the education & edification that God the Father (and the Holy Spirit) provides for him ...

... that is, if a saint doesn't have the full, effectual working of Romans doctrine—and if that saint isn't wearing his *armour of light*—he's going to be ignorant of Satan's *devices* in connection with Phase 1 of the PoE ... and he will be easy prey for that adversary and his *contrary doctrine*.

- And when a saint has fallen victim to Phase 1 of the PoE—he's going to end up in 1 of 2 categories ... and those 2 categories are in keeping with the 3 books that immediately follow the book of Romans:

- You'll either be: **Corinthians or Galatians.**

- **Corinthians**: they have an improper understanding of grace (actually they don't properly understand Rom. 6-8) and they end up with being involved in *the wisdom of this world* and they operate upon *the spirit of the world*.

- and while a great many Christians fall into this category, my understanding is that when you look at the body of Christ 'at large' today—I believe that the vast majority of Christians fall into the Galatian category. — [and with 1Corinthians coming up, I want to say something about the Galatian category just to illustrate the kind of *deception* that Phase 1 of the PoE will successfully accomplish.]

- And that *deception* that the Galatians fell for is the *deception* that we are to put our Christians lives into practice **under the Law!** (that is, under God's prog. w/ Israel)

- **Galatians:** They also have failed to properly understand Rom. 6-8 [especially Rom. 6:15-7:25] - and they also have an improper understanding of grace (and this present disp. of grace) — and they end up in gross 'legalism'.

- And I want to illustrate this kind of *deception* into trying to put your Christian life into practice under the Law by something we covered back in Rom. 7.

- (if you ***do*** have the full, effectual working of Rom. 6:15-7:25 then you will NEVER ever attempt to so much as 'touch' that Law in order to put your sanctified, functional life you have "in Christ" into practice ... but if you ***don't***, then you will be an easy 'mark' for the adversary and his PoE.)

- (see **Rom. 7:7-11 [:11]**)

* this is all a large body of doctrine that teaches the reality of Rom. 6:14. (see Chart #4)

* some would say that, Well, we're not under the ceremonial Law (sacrifices and feasts and such), but we're still under the 10 Commandments. [Wrong! see :7]

* the issue of Paul using such terms as *alive* and *dead* isn't talking about physical life and physical death—it's talking about **functional life** and **functional death** (i.e., putting your sanctified 'state' or Position "in Christ" into Practice in the details of your life).

- Let's look at some charts: **#67 - #72**

- Now, in view of **Rom. 7:11 (read)**, see chart **#73 (Paul under law/under grace)**.

- Now back to the issue of *deception* ...

- A believer in Christ, putting his/her Christian life into practice by utilizing the law of Moses is so *deceptive* because it actually uses the Bible (the very word of God) itself to do it.

- You can be, and in fact, you probably must be, a serious student of the Bible to do this.

- But, again, if you're not careful, you will fall right into the snare and trap that any saint will, and most often, does easily fall into if they don't take care to honestly study and rightly handle and rightly divide God's word.

- And you can't just be left to how you **feel** about it. In fact, if left to your **feelings**, a Christian will put himself under that law every time—you have to be properly taught and you have to be told how God expects you to put your Christian life in Christ into practice—and outside of proper edification in regard to sanctification, you would **never** function properly *under grace!* (you have to '**reckon**' it to be so)

- Why? Because sin will *take occasion* by that *commandment* and deceive you every time!

- Therefore being *deceived* is being under a false impression—for that is what every *deception* is designed to do—to make a false impression on someone.

- And every Christian who lives *under the law* is *deceived*—he is under the false impression that he is being godly—that he is doing the will of God—that God is pleased with him—and where sanctification is concerned, that he is putting sin to death in his life and **making himself** alive unto God! And nothing (and I mean nothing) could be further from the truth!!!

- But notice very carefully that it is NOT the law that *deceives* you—it is **SIN** in your members that takes what the law gives it and *deceives* you by that law.

- And that's the insidious nature of how sin in your members, in connection with the law, can work—because *deception* takes place when a person is made to believe what is false—and the plausible, the apparently right, or the desirable is that which exercises over us the power of *deception*, which being one thing, looks, or is made to look, like another by misrepresentation in objects or in words.

- *Sin* in your members just sits there waiting for that law to come along—and when it does it DESIRES it—and it causes you to think,

“There! Take that ‘sword of the Lord’ [the Bible] and unsheathe it! Take that law that God gave to God’s people Israel and learn it, love it, live it! What could be more powerful to produce righteousness and holiness than the very word of God to His chosen people???”

“That law will make me [sin] functionally dead; and make you functionally alive unto God! Go ahead, everybody’s doing it!!!”

- And instead of doing that, *sin* takes that ‘sword of the Lord’ and turns that razor-sharp sword on your functional life, and murders it—puts it to death!!!

- *Sin* says, “You want to put the fire out? Here, take this clear liquid and pour it on the fire. And when you do it, you realize what looked like water and felt like water really wasn’t water at all—it was gas! And YOU’RE the one that is dead now!

- It’s one thing to die—it’s altogether another thing to be put to death by the very thing you thought was going to give you life! That’s just cruel!

- Rom. 7:11 “*For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, (didn’t just make me functionally dead, but it) **deceived me**, (produced a false impression and made a false conviction or belief in my thinking) and by it slew me* (graphic term for a gruesome death).”

- And that’s one of the ways (in fact, one of the most common ways) Phase 1 of Satan’s PoE can use corrupt Bible teachers to utilize *good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple*.

- (See: You Are Living Under Israel’s Law System [and not under grace] If:)

- (back to Rom. 16:18)
- GOD'S PROFILE OF THIS KIND OF CORRUPT BIBLE TEACHERS:

18 *For they that are such* (i.e., the corrupt Bible teachers who *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned* in the book of Romans)

PART A: WHO THEY REALLY ARE:

(1) ***serve not our Lord Jesus Christ*** (although they will look, act, and sound as if they do ... and they may even believe that they do),

but (they actually serve) (2) ***their own belly*** (they serve their own flesh and carnal desires in responding negatively to the truth of God's word [Romans doctrine], actively oppose the truth of God's word, and spread abroad their unsound doctrine in order to lead others away from Pauline truth and to them and their '*contrary doctrine*' - gaining a lot of fame and making a lot of money in the process) ;

- PART B: HOW THEY DO IT: - what their methodology or techniques are to get their evil, ungodly and Satanic goals accomplished] ...

(3) ***and by good words*** (words that come from the Bible itself—their words are smooth, plausible, persuasive, polished, and professional — they're skilled in the art of persuasion and leading others astray without them knowing it) ***and fair speeches*** (i.e., the "flattery" technique of *the strange woman*—which is designed to move you away from Pauline truth and to their own *contrary doctrine*)

(4) ***deceive*** (to intentionally ensnare you and make you think one thing is so [like we are still under the Law], when it really isn't so [when we're actually *under grace*]) ***the hearts of the simple.***

- ***"the hearts of the simple"***

- ***"heart"*** = your 'inner man' - your soul and human spirit.

- And it's great 'vocabulary control' here for God to have Paul use the word ***"heart"*** - because that's what godly sonship education & edification is all about: it's about the Father installing His *heart* into His adopted, adult son's or daughter's *heart*! [*transforming* it by *renewing your mind*!]

- Therefore, it's not the 'outer man' that the adversary is after (like with Job or with Israel prior to the NT), but with us, he's after our *heart* ... our 'inner man'! [where edification occurs]

- “*and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*”

- “*simple*” can be used in a whole bunch of different ways—and without going into an in-depth word study here—my understanding is that the word *simple* is being used in this context, **not** in a bad sense - or as a derogatory term or as a term of reproof ...

... it’s “*simple*” in the sense of one who doesn’t have God’s wisdom and understanding to discern exactly what God is presently doing; someone who is not doctrinally along—someone who doesn’t know what’s going on, doctrinally or dispensationally—someone who is, therefore, susceptible to being *deceived*.

- (Pro. 14:15) *The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*

- When Paul talks about the *simple* here in (:18), he’s talking about a believer who simply is susceptible to believing every word he hears acting as though there is no such thing as a Satanic Policy of Evil against him—acting as if there is no such thing as there being portions of God’s word that are **not** written *to and about* him—acting as if there are no portions of God’s word that do not apply to him today!

- You can’t afford to be *simple* in this sense—if you are, you probably have already been sucked in by the PoE!

- You have to ‘test’ the doctrine—and the ‘touchstone’ for the ‘test’ of **sound doctrine** is the issue of PAULINE AUTHORITY in this dispensation of grace ... that is, “Did this doctrine come from my apostle, the apostle Paul? or not?”

... and this is why, over in 1Tim. 1:10 &11 Paul will say,
“... *and if there be any other thing that is **contrary to sound doctrine**; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to MY trust.*”

- The Objective Standard Test is: is this doctrine in line with *the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to Paul’s trust*—is it in line with the issue of dispensational truth, acknowledging that the disp. of grace is **different** from God’s prog. w/ Isr. and all the things associated with that?

- And folks, this is the importance of something that I stress to you over and over again ... the *simple* will tend to believe what they hear because they think their ‘final authority’ **is the MAN doing the teaching**—they are inclined to ‘take his word for it’ ... and you can’t do that!

- And that means **ME** ... you can’t just ‘take my word for it’ ... you have to take what I teach and then spend time in God’s word and some real sonship fellowship and communion with your Heavenly Father, and make sure that the doctrine you have been taught by me is **SOUND** ... test it by the Objective Standard of Romans ... test it by the Objective Standard of Pauline Truth!

- In short: you must do the work of a Berean!

- (see Acts 17:10-12 [:11])!

- Your “work” is to *receive the word with all readiness of mind, and search the scriptures daily, whether those things are so.*

- The issue of Phase 1 of the PoE (attack the message of Paul) seeks to *deceive the hearts of the simple*—and by doing so, God uses a specific word to describe such persons ...

- (see Acts 15:22-24 [:24]) ... see that word in (:24), “**subverting**” *your souls* (that’s your *heart*—your ‘inner man’)

- (see 2Tim. 2:14)

- The *simple* who get themselves *deceived* by the PoE end up as *subverted*!

- **SUBVERT** (Keith’s definition) = When you ‘subvert’ something you first upset what has been **established** by doing something inconsistent or **contrary** to it; thus by means of what is contrary, you establish a new system, doctrine, etc., as the norm.

- Conclusion: Any Bible teaching that does not “rightly divide the word of truth,” ignores the context of a verse, are a result of stringing a bunch of verses together from all over the Bible (topical teaching), or violates the natural meaning of words or grammar and the like, should be easily recognized by you as teachings that should **not** be accepted.

- Satan's devices and tactics of Phase 1 of his PoE obviously are **not** going to give the impression that they come from him ... no Christian would be fooled if they did ... for the most part, the doctrines that come from the PoE don't bear the 'earmarks' of his activities.

- Rather, in view of Satan's goal of *deception* and fooling Christians, his devices and tactics are often pointedly designed to give the impression that what is going on, and what is being taught is of God Himself!

- No matter how "*good*" or how "*fair*" those *words and speeches* sound ... and no matter how enticing they are ... and no matter what spiritual phenomenon accompanies them ... *you mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them!*

- Any questions / comments about (:17-18) and the Godly Thinking regarding Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil?

- (BACK TO OUTLINE:)

- Next, we have the **Godly Living (Conduct & Behavior)** portion of this final section of Romans 16:17-27 ... which is found in just one verse, (:19).

- Taking the Godly Thinking of (:17-18), we are now to put that Godly Thinking into practice in the details of our lives as a matter of our Godly Conduct and Behavior.

- And our Godly Conduct & Behavior is going to be the issue of having to now Live godly and Live successfully under the experience of Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil—which is Satan's attack on the message ... that is, on the *doctrine which you have learned* ... which is, of course, the doctrine you have learned in the book of Romans—or as Paul puts it to Timothy, "*any other thing that is **contrary to sound doctrine**; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, **which was committed to MY trust.***" (1Tim. 1:10,11)

- And the Godly Thinking of (:17-18), and this Godly Conduct & Behavior of (:19) is going to continue on throughout the remainder of your entire life here on earth as God's properly educated and edified "son" or "daughter" - why? - because Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE is going to be an ongoing attack upon the message of Paul's *gospel* for the rest of your life here on earth! (it won't stop! it will only increase!)

- Notice that (:19) contains 2 complete sentences:

(1) *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.*

(2) *I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*

- and notice that the 2nd sentence has 2 Clauses that make it up—(divided by the colon).

- Now when it comes to (:19) - my understanding is that there is a very slight ‘shift’ in the context and the grammar that causes me to think that this verse is now dealing with the Godly **Living** portion of this section; based not only upon the first sentence of (:19), but largely upon the Fatherly Directive of the second sentence of (:19).

- In fact—it’s that 2nd Sentence that makes up our Godly Conduct & Behavior ***in view*** of what (:17-18) [the Godly Thinking] has just set forth.

- So your Godly Living is going to be **regarding having to live and function SUCCESSFULLY while you undergo and experience Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil.** (which is reflected in our OUTLINE).

- And, simply put, when it comes to your living and functioning successfully under Phase 1 of the PoE ... that is, when it comes to you **maintaining** your godly Edification; and when it comes to you **continuing ON** with your godly Edification; and when it comes to you **not being victimized** by Phase 1 of the PoE (with its *contrary doctrine*) ...

... in order to NOT be ‘shaken in your mind’ and ‘moved’ off of your sure and sound foundation of Romans doctrine that has properly ***E***stablished you in your godly sonship education and edification ... you’re going to **identify** any corrupt Bible teachers and ***avoid them*** (for the very reasons God gives in [:18]), and in your godly Conduct & Behavior, you’re going to be ***“wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”*** just as your Father directs you in (:19b).

... those 2 matters are going to be ‘hallmarks’ of your godly Conduct & Behavior going forward under Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- Now, getting into (or approaching) the details of [:19] - we've just been told that an **attack** is coming our way—and based upon our successful sonship education and edification so far—and based upon being fully Established with tons of fundamental 'concrete' doctrine from Romans—we are now going to be tested—our edification foundation is going to be put to the test.

- Corrupt Bible teachers are going to attempt to *cause divisions and offences* in the assembly by means of *doctrine* that is *contrary to that which you have learned ...*

... they are to be *marked* (identified) and *avoided* ...

... their 4-Fold Profile is that:

1. *they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ*
2. *they serve their own belly*
3. *they do it by good words and fair speeches*
4. *their methodology is deception—deceive the hearts of the simple* (which is a "simple" you do NOT want to be)!

- So now—to transition from the Godly Thinking into the Godly Living—God is going to have the apostle Paul make a factual and true statement about the Roman saints (in the 1st Sentence of :19) that 'highlights' a particular thing about them—something that has, (as you might say), 'Gotten them this far' ...

... and the way God does it, that is, the very thing He points to and brings up, is an issue that allows for Him to **remain within the context** of what is going on in this passage and to further develop it: ... which is the issue of undergoing Phase 1 of the PoE [attack the message] and successfully deal with it ...

... and by doing it this way, it will allow for God to address their Godly Conduct and Behavior—it will allow for God to present to them (and to you) the 2 'hallmark' matters of godly C&B that are **consistent with** the previous Godly Thinking! ... and the 2 'hallmark' matters of Godly C&B that are **consistent** with a properly educated & edified son or daughter (an intelligent son/daughter) actually undergoing Phase 1 of the PoE, **and successfully dealing with it** (i.e., being *more than a conqueror* in that first round battle with the adversary)! (genius!) [your sound foundation Establishment not being shaken!]

- (That's what the 1st Sentence of [:19] is doing—that's why that factual and true statement is made.)

Romans 16:19a *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.*

- **“For”** - this is not the “for” of cause or reason in the strictest sense, (like we saw back in [:18]), although it does have the issue of cause or reason in view ... but rather than answering the question “Why?” that gets raised in your thinking at the end of (:17) - this is introducing a statement of fact or truth based upon something that has previously been set forth—and based upon what has previously been set forth; this truth or fact is going to be the reason or basis upon what is going to be said next (i.e., in [:19b]).

- This *for* is being used as a concessive conjunction—it concedes or grants as a ‘given’ a fact about something that has already been stated, and now that fact or truth is going to be directly tied to the reason for you undergoing Phase 1 of the PoE, **and** to the Godly Conduct & Behavior that is consistent with an intelligent son or daughter being victorious (as one who is *more than a conqueror*) in this first round of Satanic opposition to your sonship edification.

- **“your obedience is come abroad unto all men”**

- God now has Paul direct the Roman saints attention to a truthful fact that is well-known about them ... and that is their **“obedience”**.

- **“Obedience”** is a marvelous sonship term—(that’s what a father wants from any son or daughter) - [and I’m sure that it’s a troubling term for some grace folks who have a **mis**understanding of what it means to be “not under the law, but under grace” ... much like the word *commandments* that Paul frequently uses].

- This phrase should ‘trigger’ some connections to what has already been said about these Roman saints previously in the book of Romans ... (because it’s a well-known fact/truth about them) ...

- It’s very akin to **Rom. 1:8** (read) - but notice: in (16:19) God doesn’t say that their *“faith” is come abroad unto all men* ... He says that their *“obedience” is come abroad unto all men*. [although faith and obedience are linked: (16:26)]

- also, **Rom. 6:17** (read)

- but within the context of this last great section of Romans (i.e., Rom. 15:8-16:27), there is a connection that your mind should grab on to ... (**see 15:18**)

- “**obedience**” is an easy word to understand and define.

“**obedience**” = submission to the rule or authority of another—it can be either voluntary or involuntary, but in this case we’re dealing with voluntary submission—and the word *obedience* **implies** that you **comply** with and/or **carry out** the **commands orders or injunctions** of another. (which we know as: the *doctrine*)

- God is intentionally bringing up this issue of the Roman saints’ *obedience* (obviously, *obedience* to the *faith*) - but there is another reason for bringing up their *obedience* here in the face of Phase 1 of the PoE ... and that has to do with the ‘delivery mechanism’ of Satan’s attack upon the message of sound doctrine (sound Pauline doctrine) —

... and that ‘delivery mechanism’ that I’m talking about is that Satan’s PoE is going to us MEN (Bible teachers of *contrary doctrine*) to attack Paul’s gospel—very professional and persuasive men with their *good words and fair speeches*.

- And at the heart of it all is the issue of your ‘final authority’ ... and these men are going to attempt to lure you away from **your apostle (Paul)** - that is, from Paul’s **authority** as your divinely appointed apostle of the Gentiles for this dispensation of grace in which you live! ... lure you away from Paul and **to THEM** as your ‘final authority’!

- And when I say Paul or Pauline doctrine—I want to make it very clear: I am NOT talking about the man Paul (or Paul, the man) ... ‘final authority’ does **not** reside in a “man” [even the man, Paul] ... (the real issue in Rom. 16:17 isn’t ‘the man’ but his *contrary doctrine*) ... therefore your *obedience* is never supposed to be to a “man” - (the Romans *obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you [R.6:17]*) ... the ‘one’ who *delivered* the *doctrine* wasn’t the issue at all!

- So when I talk about being ‘Pauline’ or ‘Pauline doctrine’ - I’m **not** talking about Paul, the man, rather I’m talking about the *doctrine* God has given to us through the apostle Paul; I’m talking about *the gospel of Christ* God has given to us through Paul; **I’m talking about Romans through Philemon!**

- **This is a really important point to get straight!**
(because if **not**: YOU’RE IN BIG TROUBLE!)

- One way you know you're in big trouble is if you ever think or say, "I believe what Pastor X teaches" or "I believe what Pastor Y teaches" or "I believe what Pastor Z teaches" ... "because he's so nice, so sweet, and he's such a great teacher" ... **that's WRONG; and that makes you an easy target for the Satanic PoE ... you're playing right into the hands of the adversary!**

- If the Pastor or Bible teacher does his job **right**—your thinking will be: 'I believe, and I'm obedient to what **GOD** has taught me on the pages of His word!' (the 'man' who taught it should fade into insignificance, by comparison!)
*** (see 1Thes. 2:13 !!!) ***

- In fact, even during Paul's ministry, the members of the body of Christ (the saints) were going to be taught by ones **other than Paul** (i.e., Paul's Staff; Paul's Team)—like Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Apollos, Tychicus, Onesimus, and Epaphras (who taught not only the Colossian saints, but the saints in Laodicea and Hierapolis)! [and others, too!] ...

... even during Paul's own lifetime and ministry, the saints were going to have to be "**obedient**" to the doctrine (Pauline doctrine) taught by Paul's Staff and Paul's Team!

- This attack of Phase 1 of the PoE becomes, therefore, a competition (so to speak) - or better yet, a '**battle**' for your Final Authority ... and your *obedience* lies at the heart of it! (your *obedience* is what's 'up for grabs')!

- Make no mistake: these guys used by the adversary to teach *contrary doctrine*, **serve their own belly**—and one thing is for sure in a person like that ... they really don't care about a Book (the Bible), or about the *doctrine* itself being your 'final authority' ... they really only care that THEY THEMSELVES become your 'final authority'!

- This is a 'Corinthian' mistake: **1Cor. 1:10-18**

- This is a 'Galatian' mistake: **Gal. 3:1; 5:7**—(note: "**who**" ... they were following a '**man**' - a "**who**" (a man) had become their 'final authority'!)

- And this same thing is true, even for the Romans themselves. Because Paul had never met them face-to-face! They had *received the word of God* (i.e., Paul's gospel) from someone other than Paul—and they had *received* it just as the Thessalonians did: “*not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*” ... “**believe**” = that's their *obedience*!

- And because the Romans saints had received the word of God that way—it could be said of them: that their *faith was spoken of throughout the whole world*—they had *obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them* — they were *obedient to the gospel of God* —and that their *obedience is come abroad unto all men*!

(Rom. 1:8; 6:17; 15:18; 16:19) ... that's quite a resume' !

- It's their (and your) *obedience to God's word* that's going to be the 'pivotal issue' in this battle of Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE! it's that *obedience* that's going to get tested ... Will you stand firm in *obedience* to God's word (Rom-Phlm) as your 'final authority'? or Will you give your *obedience* to a 'man' as your 'final authority'?

- The truth is—a properly educated “son” would already have been dealt with by his Father on this very issue: Basic Sonship Orientation and Establishment (**Pro. 1:2**)

- (back to Rom. 16:19)

- So when Paul says, “*For your obedience is come abroad unto all men*” God is having Paul point to the truth and the fact that these Roman saints already had some experience with receiving the word of God in truth from ones other than Paul—they did a great job of leading the Roman saints into the path of truth—and it's this very circumstance that could make it so that false teachers would come in to them with their *contrary doctrine* and subvert them ...

... it's kind of like the internet today—the knowledge of local churches existing in Rome, comprised of those who had been led to the truth of *the gospel of Christ* by ones other than Paul had become widely known ...

- 19 *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.*

- that's what that word **abroad** is telling you—knowledge of the Roman saints' *obedience* had **come abroad** (i.e., it was widely known)

... and it had **come abroad** (or was widely known) **unto ALL men** — meaning, it was known about by people all over the known world (i.e., Asia Minor) [see map].

- And some individuals in that phrase "*all men*" are pawns of the adversary, seeking to do them harm!

- And this fact (of their *obedience* to the sound doctrine given by the faithful ministers that came to them) put the Roman saints in a rather (and potentially) dangerous position ...

... because of this issue being 'splattered' all over the world, they gained the attention of false teachers with their *corrupt doctrine* and their evil and nefarious intentions of *serving their own belly* (i.e., making a lot of money off of them) - like wolves in sheep's clothing ... the stage was now set for Phase 1 of the PoE!

- And the Roman saints were now going to have to use some real sonship **discretion** and **discernment** ... Would they stick with the faithful ministers (and with Paul) and the sound doctrine they taught? ... or Would they desert them for the false teachers and their *corrupt doctrine* who were in a class of artful speaking, preaching, teaching, and persuading ability far above the faithful ministers (and even Paul himself)?

- (Any questions / comments about [:19a]?)

Romans 16:19b *I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would*
(2nd Sentence) *have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*

- (1st Clause) ***I am glad therefore on your behalf:***

- Grammar-wise, there's just a couple of things to take note of here in this 1st Clause:

1) by the use of the colon, we have a strong pause here in order to really appreciate Paul's satisfaction of the Roman saints' *obedience* (their Positive & Proper response to *the gospel of Christ* given exclusively to the apostle Paul) - a great point of commendation!

- (they responded Positively & Properly to Paul's gospel, even without Paul presenting it to them face-to-face! - they received *the gospel of Christ*, just like the Thessalonians did—“*not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God*” [1Thes. 2:13])

- But by the excellency of the word order—and especially by the use of that colon—(a ‘pregnant’ pause, so to speak) - we know that, while this 1st Clause could stand as a complete thought [sentence] all on its own—it’s intended to attach itself to the 2nd Clause. (you get the sensation of: ‘This is great!’ ... but there’s a “**but**” coming up!)

- And what it does is, it gives us is the foreboding ‘feeling’ that, while Paul says one thing in commendation of them—there’s more to it ... there’s something else looming in Paul’s mind ... there’s a danger afoot and it’s going to warrant a major word of caution from Paul that goes along with this complement!

- And that tells you that a ‘principle’ comes out of this verse—and that principle is that every time you succeed in the Levels of your sonship edification—with that success comes a corresponding level of resistance and opposition from the adversary and his PoE! [‘tit-for-tat’]

2) by the insertion of the word “*therefore*” into the 4th position, we also know that Paul is being very emphatic and intense in this little complement of the Roman saints *obedience*—which means that this statement of commendation (no matter how short it’s stated) is a BIG DEAL to Paul—this isn’t just Paul using hyperbole (Paul isn’t exaggerating) - by inserting that word “*therefore*” into the 4th position in the Clause, it tells us a very important thing: Paul isn’t using ‘flattery’ - he’s **not** flattering the Roman saints, rather he’s stating a very real, very true, and very commendable FACT about them! (i.e, that their *obedience is come abroad unto all men*).

- but it’s a truth about them that will end up having them undergo Phase 1 of the PoE—it’s a truth that will be the cause of certain unsavory characters who are the useful idiots of the adversary himself to come in to them with *contrary doctrine* to what they have learned in the book of Romans and attempt to *cause divisions and offences* to their assemblies!

- And it can't be said enough times or emphasized enough:
What you have going on here is a kind of sonship checkpoint ... it's one of the first times that these Roman saints (these members of the body of Christ) who are gathering together in numerous local assemblies and local churches in Rome **for the express purpose of getting their godly sonship edification and education** [even doing so WITHOUT Paul's personal presence with them] are going to have one of the BIGGEST ISSUES of godly Edification and the entire Edification Process **put to the test!**

- And you might call it the 'Thessalonian Test' [even though that might not be the best way to say it because the truth is, it's a 'test' that all of the local churches throughout Asia Minor had to face—and you can find it coming up again and again in Paul's other epistles] ... but it's a 'test' concerning your **FINAL AUTHORITY! ... (1Thess. 2:13)**

... and specifically, 'Will your Final Authority be a "man"? or will it be [for now and evermore] **the word of God?**'

... will your Final Authority be the "man", the Pastor-teacher, the one who teaches your Bible classes (or preaches the sermons you listen to)? ... or will it be Paul's *gospel*, *the gospel of Christ* as given to and through the apostle Paul? ... will it be a "man"? ... or will it be the very words of God written on the pages of God's holy scripture? [rightly divided]

- And I call it the 'Thessalonian Test' because of what Paul says about the Thessalonians and how they received the word of God which they heard from "us" - that is, not just from Paul only, but from ones other than Paul—from Paul's Staff and Paul's Team! (and this is true of many other saints and local assemblies as well as the Thessalonians).

- Let's note some of these (not an exhaustive list):

- Acts 10:33; 13:1-48 [:48]; 17:1-11; 20:28-32

- Gal. 4:14; Phil. 1:9-11 (Paul prays that the Phil. saints will use their godly sonship decision-making skills [and the discernment/discretion that comes from them] and not be deceived).

- 1Thes. 2:13; 5:21

- And this is an issue that has to be **settled** ... and I mean **fully** and **firmly settled** at the end of Romans doctrine (at the end of Level I Sonship Edification & Education) - it has to be fully & firmly settled before you Go On ... in fact, it has to be fully & firmly settled before you CAN Go On to Level II Sonship Education/Edification in the book of Ephesians!

- **That's the CONTEXT**—and that keeps everything in **context**—and that particular **context** keeps you from taking the words “*good*” and “*evil*” and running all over the place, and grabbing all kinds of issues and meanings of those two terms and jamming them into some kind of definition as to what they mean ... in other words, that particular **context** greatly narrows down what those two terms mean and confines their meaning to really mean just one basic thing each!

- Simply put: are you ‘of Paul’?, or ‘of Apollos’?, or ‘of Timothy’?, or ‘of Epaphras’?, or ‘of Titus’?, or ‘of any one of the number of Paul’s Staff’?, or ‘of Paul’s Team’? ... or, are you ‘*of the gospel of Christ*’? [as your Final Authority]?! is it a “man”? or is it God’s written word?

- And this is so important and so critical ... because the core of the issue is: Can you be persuaded to move away from the doctrine contained in Romans—Philemon? or not?

- What if Paul himself went nuts, or had a stroke or some other thing where even if Paul himself came and taught them to go back under the Law program (God’s program with Israel)? ... would you be able to say to the great apostle Paul (in that case), “NO!” I’m sticking with Rom-Phlm!”

- So, again, that 1st Clause of (:19b) says, “*I am glad therefore on your behalf*”:

- Paul was “*glad*” regarding their “*obedience*” to the *gospel of Christ* which God had given him to preach to them ... he was genuinely full of joy; and rejoiced to hear of the Roman saints’ genuine, godly humility (i.e., teachableness) **by ones other than him!** (no guile, duplicity, or jealousy in Paul!)

- But, just as we noted before—by the construction of this Clause; and by the wording and word order; and by the Prosody (or cadence) of it—we know that, while this is a great complement ... a “*but*” is coming up!

- Now there is an ‘uneasy’ feeling that comes up in the manner in which Paul commends or complements them—there’s a looming danger in Paul’s mind (and in God’s our Heavenly Father’s mind) concerning the rather vulnerable position these saints are in—a danger is afoot that warrants a word of caution as to this danger—and it comes in the form of a sonship *saying* ...

... and it’s given in the 2nd Clause of the 2nd Sentence of (:19) — and after a proper ‘pause’ (the colon at the end of the 1st Clause) in order to appreciate the great complement and commendation God has Paul give them ... (the ‘pause’ allowing them to not only appreciate the complement, but to think about what it **implies** in regard to the Satanic Policy of Evil) ... Paul can now go on and give them the *saying* that they are going to have to act upon and Conduct & Behave themselves in accordance with, in order to function successfully under the experience of Phase 1 of the PoE ...

- THIS, now, (in **this context**), is to be their Godly Living, their Godly Conduct & Behavior:

19 ... but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

- Heck, that’s a great saying or scripture in ANY context ... and, unfortunately, it’s usually handled as being applied in just ANY old way, and in any old context ... (wouldn’t this even be ‘good advice’ for a lost person?) ... [I’m saying this just to underscore how critical it is to **keep every word of this in it’s proper CONTEXT!**]

- “**but yet**” - here you have two adversative conjunctions, one right after the other—which is a marvelous technique of the English language to give tremendous emphasis to what is about to be said. (probably spoken very s-l-o-w-l-y)

- “**but**” is used here has an adversative conjunction—tells you that this Clause in bringing up a point or an issue that is **opposed** to what was said in the previous Clause—and all on its own, it puts emphasis and force upon what is about to be said.

- so, why is this 2nd Clause set in ‘opposition’ to the 1st Clause? ... isn’t that 1st Clause true? (“*I am glad therefore on your behalf:*”) ... isn’t that a true complement and commendation about their *obedience to the gospel of Christ*? ... so, what is there to be ‘in opposition’ about??? ...

... The answer is: there is nothing to be ‘in opposition’ about, or ‘said in opposition’ to, what is **stated/written** about these saints at Rome (i.e., about their *obedience* having *come abroad unto all men*, or about Paul being *glad on their behalf*) ... that’s all ‘fine and dandy’!

- what is being set forth ‘in opposition’ to that is NOT what was said or written about them ... **but what was NOT said or written about them — the 2nd Clause is going to ‘oppose’ a particular and potential danger and problem they have as merely Level I “sons” who have only gotten their initial and fundamental Establishment of godly edification!**

- They have the problem that any person would have being raised from a freshman to a sophomore: they could easily think that they know more than they actually do—and they are still vulnerable to certain dangers that they have not experienced yet.

- And the danger here is that, since they have already been getting properly edified unto godliness by means of *the gospel of Christ* given exclusively to Paul ... the truth is, they have received it from **ones other than Paul**—therefore they are already used to being taught God’s word from ones other than Paul, and the potential is there for them to have corrupt Bible teachers come to them and teach them *doctrine contrary to that which they have learned*.

- So the word “*but*” itself is of great emphasis & force—and then you add to that another adversative conjunction, “*yet*” - and you have even **greater** emphasis and force ... (i.e., ‘You guys give what I’m about to say to you your FULL ATTENTION!’)

*My son, **attend** to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.* (Pro. 4:20)

- “**yet**” = a Conjunctive Adv. or Conjunction introducing an additional fact or circumstance which is **adverse** to, or **contrary of what would naturally be expected from that just mentioned.** (OED, III, 9. a.)

- AND THAT'S THE POINT: the 'natural expectation' is that given the 'sophomoric' level that the Roman saints are at edification-wise—and given their willingness to get their doctrine and edification from ones other than Paul—and given that their *obedience has come abroad unto ALL men*—the 'natural expectation' is that they are (whether they realize it or not) vulnerable to the attacks of Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil [attack the message] ...

... they could be adversely affected by corrupt Bible teachers who, by their *good words and fair speeches* would teach them *doctrine contrary to the doctrine they have learned* and end up getting *deceived* and *subverted* ...

... or having your godly sonship edification being made "**shipwreck**" ...

19 *Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

20 *Of whom is Hymanaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1Tim. 1:19- 20)*

- So by stacking the words "*but yet*" together—the Roman saints are 'put on notice' (so to speak) to be on GUARD; to be ALERT; and to take this next statement (this sonship saying) to heart—and to **put it to USE in their godly Conduct & Behavior!**

- And if they do—they will be SAVED from being adversely affected by Phase 1 of the PoE! [not by this *saying* alone, but by **all** the doctrine that goes with it!]

- And that's the force and the power and the emphasis of those two little words: "*but yet*".

- Now, the only other thing to deal with here (detail-wise) are 2 words: "**wise**" and "**simple**" - the rest, you should be able to handle.

- This little saying is given in 2 Parts:

... *I would have you* ...

P1) "*wise unto that which is good,*"

P2) "*and simple concerning evil*"

- both **wise** & **simple** are most excellent words for properly educated "sons" and "daughters"! ['Trigger Words']

- “*wise*” - of course, this makes you immediately think of the word *wisdom*—and the common, basic definition of *wisdom* is:

= the appropriate application (use) of knowledge to a situation with the result that the situation turns out well, profitable, and beneficial.

- “*wise*” (σοφός) [in this sense, and in this context] = skilled, expert, a real ‘professional’.

- It’s not just ‘having knowledge’ about something—but it’s more than that ... it’s “having the power of discernment and judgment between what is true and what is false; what is fit and proper, and what is unfit and improper” (Webster’s 1828).

—in short, it’s having the effectual working of the 4 Sonship Decision-Making Skills of *wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity*.

- And in this verse (and in the context of this verse), being *wise* is the issue of **being guided by THOSE things**—those Sonship Decision-Making Skills—and then Conducting and Behaving yourself accordingly. [determining a course of action]

- Being *wise* in this sense/context is being a skilled expert, a ‘pro’ in the doctrine and the **experienced USE** of that doctrine that taught you how to make decisions just like your Heavenly Father Himself does ... and then **combining** all that with this *saying* (to go along with the doctrine of Romans 12:3 all the way through 16:18) ... that’s what being *wise* in this context is all about! [a *wise* “son” (not “a *wise man*” yet, but a *wise* Level I son)!] - **this isn’t *wise* in ‘any old way’!!!**

- (see this in the exact opposite way—Jer. 4:19-22 [:22])

- A *saying* composed by God is a brief statement that is designed to work together with all that you have been taught, in order to produce guiding principles that gives you the capacity for keen, sharp, critical insight & perception and sound godly guidance in making judgmental decisions that are complex and demand *pondering* the many issues and factors involved in your decision.

- So (:19b, 2nd Clause) says, **“but yet** (give what I’m about to say to you your FULL ATTENTION in order to be saved from being adversely affected by Phase 1 of the PoE ... and you’re going to have to give this your full attention for the remainder of your life here on earth as you continue undergoing Phase 1 of the PoE) **I would have you wise** (a skilled expert—a professional in the experienced use of your sonship decision-making skills and the doctrine of Rom. 12:3 - 16:18—that is, wise as a Level I “son” or “daughter”) ...

- Next, we have **“unto that which is good”** - but we’ll deal with that later—for now, I want to get the understanding and appreciation for the only other detail that we need to address ...

... **“simple” concerning evil.**”

- **“simple”** - the word *simple* in (:19) is a little bit different than the word *simple* in (:18).

- And that is true even in the Greek:

(:18) *simple* (ἄκακος) = naïve, lacking analytical insight; lacking critical ability, capacity or skill; one who tends to believe every word he hears; — and in our context, one who simply hasn’t yet come to an understanding and appreciation for what’s going on doctrinally and dispensationally — someone who is susceptible to being deceived.

- [again, this is a **“simple”** that you DON’T want to be! - you can’t afford to be *simple* in this sense!]

(:19) *simple* (ἁκέραιος) = unmixed, pure.

- The word *simple* in (:19) [in its adjective form] has, as it’s basic and root element, the issue of being **“FREE FROM _____ (something) _____”** ... therefore, unmixed and pure, nothing added!

- A good example of this is how we often use the word *simple* when we’re telling a story—or telling someone about something we’ve experienced—or witnessing to the truth of something ... and we would say, **“That’s the truth, pure and simple!”** or we use the expression, **“That’s the undiluted truth!”** (“undiluted” having the same meaning as **“simple”**), or, **“That’s the unvarnished truth!”** (“unvarnished” meaning *simple* in the sense of ‘nothing added’).

- (OED, III. 11. a.) *simple* = with nothing added; considered or taken by itself; pure.

- (Webster's 1828, 1.) *simple* = uncompounded; **unmingled**; uncombined with any thing else.

- (Smith's Synonyms Discriminated, p688) *simple* = **denotes the existence of a thing apart from other things of ANY kind!**

- So when God tells us that He wants us to be "*simple concerning evil*" - He's telling us to 'not get mixed up with that evil' - it's *simple* in the sense of being **free from evil; not mixed with evil; not mingled with evil; and not added together with evil.**

- And when it comes to "*that which is good*" - God tells us He wants us to be "*wise unto*" it—to be **a skilled expert in *that which is good*; a professional in the experienced use of *that which is good*; and a wise Level I "son" unto *that which is good*.**

- So now that we have an understanding and appreciation for what the words "*wise*" and "*simple*" mean—and keeping the meaning of those words **in this particular context**—the rest is up to you ... you should be able to narrow down and properly define/describe just what your Heavenly Father means by the words "***good***" and "***evil***" in the context of Rom. 16:19 ...

... so ... what is, "*that which is good*" ?

... and what is, "*evil*" in this context?

- Simply put—my understanding is, that if you're going to stay within the bounds of the context:

- the context is dealing with a properly educated and edified "son" who has completed Romans doctrine and therefore has gotten his fundamental sound Establishment in his godly sonship edification ...

- and the context is also dealing with the first round of Satanic Opposition/Resistance to you **going on** and getting the rest of your godly sonship edification and your sound Stablishment in Ephesians doctrine by implementing Phase 1 of the PoE (attacking the message by Bible teachers who teach *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned* in the book of Romans)

... therefore the “good” in (:19) [in a nutshell] is the issue of **godly edification!** ... or you could say that the “good” is **“the gospel of Christ” (all 12 Parts of it contained in the book of Romans).**

- The “good” is knowing what godly edification IS, and what it is NOT ... knowing how godly edification WORKS, and how it DOESN'T work ... (it takes a lot of work) ...

... the “good” is knowing who your apostle is (Paul); the “good” is knowing where your “words of understanding” (*Pro. 1:2*) are to be found (Rom-Phlm) and **not** found ...

... the “good” is knowing what God is doing today, and what He is **not** doing—knowing what time it is, and what time it is not—that is, knowing God's program with Israel has been temporarily suspended, and now God has brought in a new and distinct dispensation of His grace to us Gentiles ...

... the “good” is knowing who you ARE, and who you are NOT—you're a member of the ‘one new man’ of the church the body of Christ ... and you are NOT Israel, spiritual Israel, or a member of Israel's “little flock” or remnant ...

... the “good” is “rightly dividing the word of truth” with Paul and Paul's epistles.

- So, while you could narrow down the word “good” to only 1 meaning: GODLY EDIFICATION ... godly edification actually includes a whole bunch of things.

- And the issue is—if you know what the “good” is, then you should know what the “evil” is; and be able to define it & describe it.

- Simply put—the “evil” is anything and everything that is ***contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*** ...

... the “evil” is anything that is opposed to, or strives against, or thwarts your godly edification as a “son” ... or, more to the point: anything that any Bible teacher teaches that is opposed to, or strives against, or thwarts your godly sonship edification ... or even more to the point: anything that is ***contrary*** (or inconsistent) to *the gospel of Christ* as laid out in the book of Romans.

- So—when I say that the context takes the words *good* and *evil* (which are very broad and general terms), and narrows them down to 1 basic issue:

- the 1 basic issue of the *good* is really the issue of Godly Edification (and all that it encompasses / involves) ...

- and the 1 basic issue of the *evil* is really the issue of any Bible teaching (doctrine) that is **contrary** to, or opposed to, or inconsistent with Godly Edifying (and all that it encompasses).
[And, yes, you can have **EVIL** Bible teaching! ... when that Bible teaching teaches **unsound** doctrine!]

- But I'll admit that saying that the word *good* means Godly Edification, and the word *evil* means that which is contrary to Godly Edification may be too narrow/basic, or overly simplistic. (no pun intended)

... but that's how narrow the **context** can get these words narrowed down to.

- Let's look at one last detail before going on ...

- In our sonship saying, "*but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*" — the detail that I'm after is that little preposition "**unto**".

- Notice, God doesn't have Paul say:

'I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil' ...

... or, 'I would have you wise concerning good and simple concerning evil' ...

... or, 'I would have you wise about that which is good and simple concerning evil'. [among other ways of saying it]

- The expression "**simple concerning evil**" is easy enough to understand (now that we've got a grip on what the *evil* is) ... i.e., you are to be: **simple** (free from; not mixed up with or mingled together with anything) **concerning** (as it relates to) **evil** (*contrary doctrine*; unsound doctrine that is incapable of producing godly edification).

- But in that first expression of the saying, Why does He say it that way? ... why say, "*I would have you wise **unto** that which is good*"?

- In fact, why not just use the word “*to*” rather than “*unto*”?
[‘I would have you wise TO that which is good’ ...]

- “*UNTO*”

- While the differences in the prepositions *to* and *unto* are admittedly slight—*unto* is a more demonstrative form of the preposition *to*. [that is, *unto* singles out the person or thing referred to more than *to* does].
- And when you use *unto*, generally you are emphasizing the degree of the relationship that you are having (to whatever the indirect object of the verb is), and you are especially emphasizing YOUR ACTION in connection with it.
 - That’s why, [for example], the term *unto* is used in Rom. 6:10 in connection with the Lord in His sanctification aspect of His redemption—in *that he died, he died unto sin once*: — that’s the issue of Him taking sin on, and the personal application of Himself taking the action to deal with sin so that He could die *unto* it once; settle the issue; and then live *unto* God, which is His personal issue and personal course of action now.
- The truth is—this small, subtle, discriminating differenced between *to* and *unto* is the appropriate terminology to use when you first of all have an intelligent, internalized, ‘inner-man’ concept based upon the information (or doctrine) from God’s word, and then **transferring** that concept from a mere concept to a **living reality in your life**.
- And when you have now **moved** it from the concept into the personal reality issue, where YOUR ACTION IS NOW INVOLVED, there is a personal application of that information, and about that information, **that you apply to yourself** and that you determine that you are going to operate upon.
- So “*unto*” is the infusing of yourself, personally, into the equation (so to speak).
- *To* is the most basic preposition to describe a relationship—but it doesn’t stress the issue of **you**, either having to respond to it in some particular way; or having had to do something to make it a reality; or have it become the big issue in your life, etc., *to* simple describes the fact of the matter.

- But when **unto** is utilized, it's like the issue of you becoming actively involved in having that relationship become a reality; become a real, personal, possessive, operational issue in your life—that is, a course of action you're going to take!

- So—what's the significance in God saying, "*I would have you wise unto that which is good ...*" ?

- My understanding is—it's the exact and most excellent word (preposition) to use when you use the word *wise*, **not** in the sense of 'wisdom and knowledge' - but *wise* in the sense of one who is a 'skilled expert' - an 'experience, seasoned professional' [watch how it all matches up

... ***I would have you wise*** (a skilled expert and an experience, seasoned professional) ...

... **unto** (actively taking a course of action that would have you continually involved in making the big issue in your life [your godly living; your godly Conduct & Behavior]) ...

... ***that which is good***, (the **sound doctrine which ye have learned**—sound doctrine that produces true godly edification).

- And by using that little word *unto*, God is able to inject into this sonship saying the issue of YOU and your relationship to God's word and the teachers of God's word (whether good ones [of Paul's Staff/Team]), or bad/evil ones (as in [:17-18] that you are to *mark* and *avoid*) ...

... with the word *unto*, God is able to make you aware of the fact that **you are going to have to do some work ... the work of a 'Berean'** ... and not make the Corinthian mistake or the Galatian mistake and so foolishly put your 'final authority' in a **man** and what he says, rather than in **God and what He says on the pages of His written word!**

- Any comments / questions on (:19)?

- (Rom. 16:20-27 [read])

(BACK TO THE OUTLINE #58)

- Now that we've got the Godly Thinking in (:17-18) and the Godly Living in (:19) doing their effectual job within us, we now move on to the GODLY LABOR portion—that is, taking that G1 and the G2; we now have the privilege of immediately working and laboring together with our Heavenly Father in some of the Operations of His business ...

... and God's immediate business (in this context) fits with the overall issue of God providing for us to GO ON from the sound Establishment of our godly sonship edification (the foundation of our spiritual 'building project') and get the remainder of our godly edification (our Stablishment) that awaits us in 1Cor-2Thess. (The pastoral epistles of 1Tim-Phlm provides for another matter of edification, especially for the Bishops/Pastors and Deacons of the local churches).

- And not only that—but this Godly Labor portion (in this context) also fits perfectly with the specific issue of our Heavenly Father exhorting, admonishing, and instructing us as to the Opposition that we are now going to face as Satan has now 'earned the right' to oppose/resist our godly edification, and attempt to thwart it and bring it to a halt by bringing against us Phase 1 of his Policy of Evil (attacking the message: or the doctrine we have just learned in the book of Romans).

- And as the book of Romans ends—we encounter 3 of God's Business Operations that we have the high honor and privilege to work together with Him in — because the Godly Labor portion has 3 Parts to it:

- Part A: vs. 20; Part B: vs. 21-24; Part C: vs. 25-27

- And we now have the high honor and privilege of working and laboring together with God in a specific Operation of His Business (a very exciting one at that) - which is the issue of: **effectually bruising Satan in order to countermand the continuation of Phase 1 of the Policy of Evil.**

- And what I mean by "countermand" is the issue of what's involved with (and what we learned the details of) back in Rom. 8:37 —
*"Nay, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him that loved us."* - and being **more than conquerors**, we not only are given the grace provision of being able to defeat the adversary's attacks (and be a 'conqueror') ... but "more" than that, to have the adversary's attacks actual work FOR us; and PROPELL us; and to take what he meant to defeat us and have it work to actually ACCELERATE our godly edification more than ever!

- If we have the effectual working of what our Father teaches use here—not only will we NOT be adversely affected by Phase 1 / PoE, but we will actually be BENEFITTED by it!

- (go to Chart #60) - **PART A (:20)** - 3 Sentences - no issues of grammar.

- Now, one of the most obvious things about (:20) is the mention of Satan, the adversary, **by name**.

- “**Satan**” (Σατανᾶς) = adversary; one who opposes another—and it’s really not so much a ‘name’ as it is a **title**—(Satan’s name is *Lucifer*, who was the “*anointed cherub*” that ‘covered’ the throne room of God [as per Eze. 28:14] - a “cherub” (to my understanding) is a category of created beings, that, while not an angel, per se, has angelic characteristics—in fact, my understanding is that angels do not have wings (regardless of what Zuzu says in “It’s A Wonderful Life”), but cherubs do have wings (Ezk. 10:5) — the first mention of a Cherub is in Gen. 3:24 when God puts them at the garden of Eden with a flaming sword to guard the way of the tree of life, just after God drove Adam and Eve out of it after they sinned and fell ...

... and “*Lucifer*” = (הִילָל [heylel]) = light-bearer, or ‘the bearer of light’ - “*Lucifer*” occurs only 1x in the Bible, in Isa. 14:12.

- And as you will notice—when Satan’s name comes up here in (:20), God doesn’t have Paul give you any kind of an explanation of who this character is—and you’re not supposed to be scratching your head, puzzled over who he is—and because God doesn’t explain who Satan is, (guess what?), you’re expected to already know who he is!

- And we not only would know who Satan is from all that is written in God’s word from Genesis—Acts, but we would also know that Satan, (while not being mentioned by name), has already come up in the book of Romans.

(some references—not exhaustive—but just to mention a few)
- Rom. 1:17-32—back at the time of the Tower of Babel, God consigned the Gentiles “*over*” to Satan.

- Rom. 5:12ff—we noted Satan’s successful temptation of Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden, and due to Adam’s sin and his function as ‘*the one man*’, all men (and women) are born “*in Adam*” naturally unrighteous and naturally unholy, “*and so death passed upon all men*”.

- Rom. 8:35—the “*Who*” is the adversary, Satan himself.

- Rom. 13:11-14—we dealt a lot with Satan and his Plan and Policy of evil in how he went about developing *the world of the ungodly* again, after Noah’s flood—and how Satan has once again brought about his “*night*” by utilizing *the works of darkness*—and how that when Satan is allowed to bring his ‘*night*’ to its ‘fully spent’ state, he will be allowed to have his ‘**finest hour**’ ... and we learned a lot about Satan’s methodology for maintaining his ‘*night*’ in its ‘*far spent*’ status by means of those *works of darkness* even for the duration of this present disp. of grace in which we live.

- Rom. 15:22—we noted Satan’s activities in *hindering* Paul from coming to visit the saints at Rome.

- And there may be other places ... but that’s enough to tell you that when the adversary gets brought up here in (:20) by the name (or title) “*Satan*” - it’s expected that you already know very well who he is.

- and the truth is—there’s other terminology in just the first sentence of (:20) that you’re also expected to already know and be familiar with!

- And if you think about it—that statement: *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* is an ‘**awesome**’ statement!

- In fact—there’s one word in that statement that makes it so fantastic, so incredible, so marvelous, and such a truly great thing ... (do you see it?) ... it’s that word “**YOUR**” ...

... God doesn’t have Paul say, ‘And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under “**HIS**” feet shortly’ ... no ... he says, *And the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under **YOUR** feet shortly!*

- YOU (as an intelligent, properly educated and edified “son” of God) - YOU get the honor and privilege of Laboring together with “*the God of peace*” to fulfill one of God’s business Operations: BRUISING SATAN—and God gives you the privilege of His grace to use **your** “*feet*” to do it! instead of God using His own feet to do it! (you [a dirt-man]) get to actively participate in the defeat of Satan and his PoE!)

- THIS! is how Satan is ‘taken on’ today ... you’re never taught in Paul’s epistles to ‘Rebuke Satan’, or to ‘exercise’ Satan by some incantations, or to ‘pray Satan away’ from you or anything along the lines of how modern, cultural Christianity deals with Satan today! ... truth is, Satan gets defeated by **godly edification**! (more on this later)

- Let’s dive into the details of (:20) ...

- “*And the God of peace ...*”

- “*And*” is not merely operating as a conjunction (or preposition) to move the narrative along—and it’s not acting merely as a simple ‘connective’ (although, it certainly *is* doing that ... “*And*” tells you that what is going to be said here in (:20) **is** to be **connected** with what has just been said in (:19—especially in that sonship saying, *I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*—and now (:20) is to be **directly connected** with that!) ...

... but “*And*” is doing more than that—here in (:20), “*And*” is being used to directly connect (:20) with (:19) - but more than that, it’s being used here to **introduce a consequence** (or a **result**) - it’s being used to say, ‘If you do what that sonship saying tells you to do, then here is the **predicted consequence, outcome, or result**: “*the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*. [that’s the ‘shift’ from the Godly Living to the Godly Labor.]

- And what that does is—it makes it so that this statement in (:20) **cannot** just be ‘turned to in your Bible’ at lifted out of its context (stolen) - and just glommed on to as if God will do this for just any old Christian!

- The use of “*And*” as a consequence or result of what was just previously said (that sonship saying) **FORBIDS** anyone from using this verse as a ‘stand alone’ verse-of-the-day (so to speak) that a Christian with NO godly edification can quote (or ‘stand on’, or ‘I’ll take that for myself’ type thing) and make it work! ... even if they do **believe** it (and believe it with ‘all their heart’)!

- Truth is—*the God of peace bruising Satan under your feet* is the **result** of the entire effectual working of Romans doctrine (or godly edification) effectually working within you, **PLUS** you being a skilled, seasoned pro., expert in its use!

- “*And the God of peace ...*”

- Of the 3 Fatherly Titles God has given Himself (and the 4 Features or Characteristics they describe):

- 1) *the God of patience and consolation* (Rom. 15:5)
- 2) *the God of hope* (Rom. 15:13)
- 3) *the God of peace* (Rom. 15:33)

... why does God use the Title “*the God of peace*” over again here in verse 20? ... is it the same as “*the God of peace*” back in 15:33? ...
... do we just ‘plug-and-play’ that meaning into this verse [i.e, ‘inner-man’ peace]? (after all, it’s the exact same wording as 15:33) ...

(hint): whatever kind of “*peace of God*” this is—it’s going to be the **means** by which God is able to *bruise Satan under your feet!*

- (at this point I want to review something—[notes on Rom. **15:33**, p.478ff])

- “*the God of peace*” - “*peace*” in this context = freedom from being adversely affected from suffering Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil and its troubling effects upon the Edification Process (of and within the local assembly).

- by attempting to *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned. (:17)*

= godly tranquility and stability and spiritual health & wellbeing within the local assembly while undergoing the suffering of Phase 1 of the PoE.

= no ungodly jealousy over another Pastor-teacher; no question as to your Final Authority.

= no “*schism*” in the body; no ‘in-fighting’; no strife, pettiness, vindictiveness, etc.

= maintaining godly fellowship, communion, and concord within the local assembly.

= most importantly: the word of God has “*free course*” (2Thes. 3:1) and the godly Edification Process **continues on** undisturbed, even in the face of suffering Phase 1 of the PoE.

- When God presents Himself here in (:20) with one last Fatherly Title, He uses for the 2nd time His Title as *“the God of peace”* ...

... and by using (and staying with) the context in which He uses it, we can then come along and make some ‘connections’ which gives us some keen insight and perception into why God is repeating one of His Titles (previously given in 15:33) and how it differs from the way He previously used it.

- and because God uses his Title, *“the God of peace”* and uses it within the context of (:17-19), we should be able to see with the ‘eyes of our understanding’ some things:

- As *the **GOD** of peace*—by using the word *“God”* (and not ‘Father’ or ‘Lord’), I know that this brand or form of *peace* is exclusively offered by God Himself and exclusively produced by God Himself—there are NO substitutes and NO improvements to it—and this world has NOTHING to offer that even comes close to God’s *peace*.

- I know that the fundamental root meaning (or common denominator) of the word *“peace”* is the issue of **freedom**, or being **free** from or the **absence** of something that is troubling and bothersome ... so, to gain some insight into the *peace* God is talking about here—all I have to do is look back in the immediate context and find out what the ‘troubling and bothersome’ thing (or things) are ...

... and so I look back to (:17-19) and I find that the ‘troubling and bothersome’ things are:

- Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE (attack the message);

- Corrupt Bible teachers that will teach *doctrine* that is *contrary to that which I have learned* (doctrine that is inconsistent to Romans doctrine);

- And by their *good words and fair speeches*, these corrupt Bible teachers will *deceive the hearts of the simple* ... **and the ultimate goal will be: causing divisions and offences within the local assembly which will put a STOP to the godly Edification Process!**

- And if you ‘drill down’ far enough (and pay careful attention)—you’ll find that every tactic that the Adversary uses; every “*wile*” that he employs; and every attack he makes—has one major aim, goal, and objective: **TO STOP GODLY EDIFICATION FROM TAKING PLACE!** (both individually, and as a body)!

- and churches can be enormous; and can have millions of dollars of income [tithing]; and can have dozens of programs; and can have huge Sunday Schools; and can have enormous ‘community outreach; and can have Bible studies every night of the week and twice on Sunday ... **and can still, (with all that), be spiritually “dead” as a hammer; and can have absolutely NO godly edification going on whatsoever!**

- Now there’s something else to understand and appreciate here: ... since God is presenting Himself as “*the God of peace*”, (and we know what kind or form of *peace* He’s talking about) - and then since we also know that God not only expects us to see/view **Him** as such, but the expectation is that God, as our Heavenly Father should be able to see & view **you** as such (i.e., as a ‘son of peace’ [in this context]) - then we should be able to perceive what our **Godly Labor** with Him is going to be all about ...

... I know that you could say, ‘Obviously, we’re going to be “*bruising Satan under our feet*”.’ ... yes, but how?

- What (specifically) will we be doing with our Heavenly Father to get that done? what’s the ‘Labor’ that we are going to do together with Him?

- (hint): that Fatherly Title, “*the God of peace*” as it’s used in this context helps you out a lot!

- Simply put: we’re going to be responding to Satan’s tactics of Phase 1 of his PoE just like we have been instructed to do.

1. We’re going to be *marking* (identifying) anyone teaching doctrine *contrary to that which you have learned* and **avoiding them!** - you will be evaluating what you hear on the basis of precise conformity to the word of God and NOT the sound of “*good words and fair speeches*”.

2. We're going to be ever 'on guard' and hyper-sensitive to see to it that **no divisions and offences get created within the assembly!** (where you will be making use of your 4 sonship decision-making skills of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity).

You're going to be a **DEFENDER OF the gospel of Christ!**

3. Along with seeing to it that no *divisions and offences* get created within the assembly—also: due to having learned some 'parallel' doctrinal issue coming out of our *instruction of godly Equity* in Rom. 14:1-15:7—you're going to be a zealous & enthusiastic **DEFENDER OF the fellowship, communion, and concord of your local assembly (2Cor. 6:14-18) !!**

- You will be doing anything and everything it takes; and making any sacrifice necessary to see to it that the *fellowship, communion, and concord* of your local assembly remains stable and intact! (see **Phil. 1:25-2:4**)

- Why? because you already know something (not everything) about the importance of those things, and that God is going to use those things in a very powerful way to make an impact upon Satan and his cohorts in the Heavenly Places! (when your *conversation is in heaven [Phil. 3:20]*)

4. (perhaps most importantly) Your going to **keep on and continue on** with your Godly Edification as a "son"/ "daughter" of God ... and you're going to **GO ON** and get the rest of your godly Edification **NO MATTER WHAT! ... You're going to be a **DEFENDER OF the godly Edification Process!****

- You're going to be **wise** (a skilled expert & experienced, seasoned professional) **unto** (personally taking action with, and being continually involved with) **that which is good** (the **sound doctrine which you have learned** in the book of Romans that produces true godly edification)!

- THAT'S! the Godly Labor with your Heavenly Father, "*the God of peace*" ! (and that's why God re-uses His Title, "*the God of peace*"). [and that's what it's all about when you function as a '**son of peace**'!]

{in this context}

- And when that is done (or better, **as** that is being done) - then you have God's promise (in effect) that He will "*bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*"

- “***bruise Satan***” - *bruise* is one of those ‘trigger’ words that takes your mind back to some things previously said in God’s word.

- **Gen. 3:15**—*And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent, Satan [Rev. 12:9; 20:2]) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (the seed of the woman—the Lord Jesus Christ) shall **bruise thy head (a fatal blow)**, and thou shalt bruise his heel* (at Calvary, what seemed a fatal blow, was in fact, a ‘non-life-threatening injury’).

- And the fascinating thing is—this ‘bruising’ of the adversary has seemed quite ‘distant’ (so to speak) from having anything to do with us as you read through God’s word.

- Truth is—there’s a lot of this going on in God’s program w/ Isr. (and a bunch of verses could be looked at, but you can do that on your own) - but now we’re told that this Great God—the True and Living God is now going to *bruise* the adversary **right under OUR feet !!!**

- “*bruise*” - the word *bruise* (in the time in which we live—in the declining stage of the English language) seems to be a rather mild term—because about the only way we ever think about the word *bruise* today is to think of it as a bluish-green [or black] spot on the skin because you’ve been hit by something (or you’ve hit something). [we’ll skip the medical details of a *bruise* for now]

- Today, we think of a *bruise* as almost nothing at all—and not a harmful word at all—maybe a little pain, but no big deal!

- And because of this—the word *bruise* has lost its real ‘teeth’ as a word which causes **great damage**.

- But in older English (yet modern English) the word *bruise* could carry the meaning of creating such affliction and such damage, pain and harm **that it could be so destructive as to be FATAL!** (or to **destroy** something & bring to utter **ruin!**)

- But you learn a lot about the destructive nature of the word *bruise* if you pay attention to how it get used by God throughout the scriptures—in fact, the scriptures give you the ability to define and describe the word *bruise* in the way in which God Himself uses it:

- **Isa. 28:28**—(you get a good idea of what God means when He uses the word *bruise*)
- **Isa. 53:5, 10**—(‘trigger’ passage—perhaps the one that jumps to mind along with Gen. 3:15)
- **Jer. 30:12**—(tells you how harmful a *bruise* can be) (and along with this—**Nah 3:19**)
- (Ezekiel has some ‘colorful’ things to say about a *bruise*, but you can look that up on your own.)
- Point is—God’s word has already made you aware of how God uses the word *bruise* in scripture—and you should already know how harmful the word *bruise* can be—(it’s a far more severe word than how we commonly use it today!)
- Now in our passage of Rom. 16:20, it’s God (as *the God of peace*) who is doing the *bruising*—and it’s Satan that’s getting *bruised*—and it’s *your feet* that Satan is getting *bruised* under by *the God of peace*.
 - So, it’s a joint-effort ... a working together ... a laboring together with God ... a real, Father-son Operation that ends up with Satan getting *bruised*! (what a THRILL!)
- “*bruise*” = (verbal form) [OED] - To crush or mangle with the heavy blow of something not edged or pointed; to crush by any weight. 2. To break in pieces, to smash. 3. To crush, wound, **DISABLE**.
 - [Webster’s 1828] - Crushed, hurt, or broken by a heavy instrument.
 - [Smith’s] - To *bruise* is to injure by collision, so as to destroy the superficial continuity or integrity of parts.
 - [Crabb’s] - *bruise* denotes the destroying the continuity of the parts. The operation of *bruising* is performed either by a violent blow or pressure. [Even] metals, particularly lead and silver, may be *bruised*. To *pound* is properly to *bruise* in a mortar so as to produce a separation of parts.

- Even the Greek word (συντριβω) bears this meaning out — the word (τρίβω) = to thresh by trampling under the feet—(threshing was done by directing oxen to trample the grain under their feet) - thus, to break in pieces; to trample down—(here in :20, to put Satan under foot and, as a conqueror, trample on him) + the prefix (συν) = together with (i.e., together with some implement).

- But George Crabb points up the ‘shade of meaning’ difference between *bruise* and any other word (like *crush*, for example) when he says, “To *crush* is the most violent and destructive of all operations, which amounts to the total dispersion of all parts of a body [or thing].” - in fact, a *bruise* can be recovered from.

- So the ‘shade of meaning’ here is important—by using the word *bruise*, it tells us that this is NOT the most violent and destructive of all operations; this is NOT the final, overall total destruction of Satan and his Plan & Policy of Evil in the Lake of Fire (which will occur long after this disp. of grace has ended) ...

... rather, this is an immediate threshing, trampling, and breaking in pieces of Phase 1 of Satan’s Policy of Evil in its attempt to cause *divisions and offences* in the local assembly and *deceive* you by the teaching of *doctrine contrary to that which ye have learned*.

- Now—before going on—there is something about the word *bruise* that indicates to us just **how** this *bruising* of Satan is going to occur, or what is the **means** of Satan’s *bruising under our feet* ... even the word *bruise* itself implies **how** this *bruising* takes place ...

- Remember that we saw that the word *bruise* implies that **some thing is used to do the bruising!**

- So what is the ‘thing’ that *the God of peace* is going to use as an implement or instrument to trample on Satan and his Phase 1 of the PoE and break it in pieces so that it **fails** in what it attempts to do? (hint: we’re involved in it!)

- Well, those 4 matters of our Positive & Proper response to Phase 1/PoE are certainly the means to do it ... but what does all that amount to? ... can it be said in just one word? ... (I think it can) ... **EDIFICATION!** (or 2, Godly Edification)!

- As long as we keep GOING ON with our godly, sonship edification (and not get 'sidetracked' or 'derailed' by the PoE), we have the full assurance that as we do GO ON, our Heavenly Father will be acting as *the God of peace* to trample and break in pieces Satan's Phase 1/PoE ... and our godly edification will go on **in peace!**

- Even in the face of the 'winds of doctrine' hurled at us by Satan's Bible teachers—we keep on 'marking' them and 'avoiding' them; we keep on defending 'the gospel of Christ; we keep on defending the fellowship, communion, and concord of our local assembly; and we keep on defending the Edification Process ... and when we are faithful to do that ... *the God of peace shall bruise (trample) Satan under our feet.*

- But if we DON'T do that—if we turn away from *godly edifying which is in faith*—then Satan's PoE revives, and he ends up conquering over you *and* our local church!

- Godly edification is what a local church is all about: (*1Tim. 1:4*) *Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than **godly edifying which is in faith: so do.***

(*2Tim. 3:1-8*) - [read] - (see: *silly women*)

- Again: be very clear—this *bruising* of *Satan* gets accomplished by **godly edification**—by your godly edification continuing on uninterrupted and unperturbed ... by the godly edification of the local assembly (the edification of the **body** of Christ) in ongoing peaceful fellowship and communion ... by our local church (as a **body**) as we continue functioning in, and participating in all the Operations of God in our assembly ... and all that being done in the very face of Phase 1/PoE - in the face of real and serious temptation and allurements away from the sound doctrine given to us by our apostle, the apostle Paul, by the *good words and fair speeches* of Satan's own corrupt Bible teachers!

- As we are attacked and 'pestered' by Phase 1/PoE, and we remain firm in sound doctrine, we get a better appreciation for—(*1Tim. 3:15*) *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest **know how thou oughtest to behave thyself** in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* ("house of God" = **not** a building! you're His house!)

- Again: the *bruising* of *Satan* gets done by **godly edification continuing on in sound doctrine**—**NOT** by ‘praying Satan away’ or ‘rebuking Satan’ or ‘casting Satan out’ or anything along those lines! (and I’m sure that comes as bad news to modern, cultural Christianity!)

- One other point before going on—(I may be wrong), but I believe this is the very first time you are ever told that **your Heavenly Father Himself GETS SOMETHING OUT OF YOUR GODLY SONSHIP EDIFICATION!!!** (at least told outright ... you *are* made aware of this back in Sonship Orientation)

... HE! gets to *bruise Satan under your feet*—HE! gets to give that character a real ‘bruising’!

... HE! gets to accrue a particular (**and oh, so satisfying**) ‘conquering’ or ‘more than conquering’ of the adversary Himself!

- And what **pleasure and glory** must God our Father receive from this! (godly sonship edification is a 2-Way street, so to speak!) ... more often than not, you think that only *you* get something out of godly edification ... but the truth is, your Father gets something (a lot) out of it, too!

- and this is ‘part-and-parcel’ (an essential part) of God’s own inheritance in YOU—(God’s *inheritance in the saints*) ...
(*Eph. 1:18*) *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; they ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what **the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,***

- Any comments / questions about this *bruising of Satan*?

- 20 *And the God of peace shall bruise **Satan under your feet** ...*

- “*Satan*” = the adversary (we’re not going to do a categorical study of Satan—and we’ve gone over some of his ‘career’ several lessons ago—and you all are very familiar with this character by now).

- But just one thing to mention here—by actually **naming** the adversary (Satan) - don’t let it pass you by what God is doing here ...

... God is telling you in no uncertain terms that, while the attacks of Phase 1/PoE are going to come from **men**—from Bible teachers who are teaching *doctrine contrary to that which ye have learned* in Romans ... the REAL ‘mover and shaker’ behind it all is **Satan** himself!

- Satan isn’t working through sex, booze, drugs and rock-&-roll, (that’s the ‘course of this world’) ... Satan is working today through teachers of the Bible!!!

- You’re not going to be ‘marking’ and ‘avoiding’ Satan in person—you’re going to be ‘marking’ and ‘avoiding’ **men**; Bible teachers who are doing Satan’s bidding (whether knowingly or unknowingly) ... and in all reality, when you ‘mark’ them and ‘avoid’ them (and continue to be *wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*), [when you do that] and continue on in sound doctrine and godly edification—then you have the full assurance and absolute confidence that *the God of peace* is *bruising Satan under your feet*! (that’s AMAZING GRACE!)

- “**under your feet**” - this is an expression that has been used so many times in God’s word, that by the time you get to this expression in the book of Romans, you should be well-aware of what it means.

- 2Sam. 22—David’s ‘song of thanksgiving’ - reflected in the 18th Psalm (Superscription: *A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul*) ... the 18th Psalm being a ‘prophecy’ of the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ over His enemies.

- 2Sam. 22:36-40

- 1Kings 5:1-4—(note in :4, the issue of “*rest*” - that’s an important matter in defining and describing what *putting under one’s feet* means to God!)

- *putting under one’s feet* = **rest from your enemies!**

- Ps. 8:6—here the idea is that of one having authority and dominion over something or someone; to subdue.

- **Psa. 91:13**

- **Isa. 14 (after Satan's 5 "I wills") - [:15-19]**

- **1Cor. 15:23-27ff**

- The scriptures that are probably most familiar to you when it comes to this expression "*under one's feet*" (or similar to it), is **Psa. 110:1**; [Mat. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43]; **Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13**

- The *footstool* of God is a marvelous doctrine unto itself! (concerning the ark of the covenant and the earth itself)

- (by the way) - this is the ongoing continuation of our Father instructing us (and progressively developing within us) what will be our understanding of **Eph. 6:12!**

(Eph. 6:12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- **Recap:** to have one "*under one's feet*" is to have conquered him; to have authority and dominion over him; and to have peace and rest from his enemy-ship (or adversary-ship) ... to have him so well checked and contained so as to no longer be troubled or bothered by him.

- And the idea here in (:20) is that *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your EDIFICATIONAL feet ! by your obedience to your apostle (Paul) and his gospel!*

- And that should be a "power" of God's word that, up to this point, you didn't know anything about—but now you **do** know something more of the "power" of the Living Words of the Living God, Living in You!

- Comments?

- So there's only one word left in this sentence: "**shortly**".

- "**shortly**" = quickly, in the near future. And my understanding is that this is **not** talking about the time in which God puts Satan in the Lake of Fire after the 1,000 yr. 'millennium' is over—that's **not** going to take place 'shortly'!

- Even though this remark is often times thought of as referring to the future time when God finally destroys Satan, (as we have seen), the **context** tells you that God is referring to what God will quickly do to Satan and his PoE if the saints in Rome will respond to Satan's Phase 1 tactics just like Paul has instructed them to do.

- It's like Paul comes along and says:
 'Look guys, there's a Satanic Policy of Evil against you as sure as my name is Paul—you're going to have some guys coming to you and *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you've learned* from me—and you've got to do what I tell you to do right now—and if you do it, (if you *mark* them and *avoid* them), then *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*, quickly, right away ...
 ... but if you don't, he'll get the advantage over you he's seeking, (i.e., putting a stop to your godly edification)!

- "*shortly*" tells you that just as soon as you repel and rebuff the advances of those who would teach contrary doctrine to what you learned in Romans by *marking* them and *avoiding* them—you can be assured that by each rebuff—each time you *avoid* them **and continue right on with your godly edification in Paul's gospel**—you can rest assured that God is *bruising* Satan right under your feet!

- Remember, these guys who teach contrary doctrine *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ*—(even though they boast that they do)! — they're not serving according to the accomplishment of the plan & purpose God has with members of the church the body of Christ in this disp. of grace!

- And you should recognize that '*serving the Lord Jesus Christ*' is **not** something you get to decide on how you're going to do it in your own way!

- 'Serving the Lord Jesus Christ' is something the apostle Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, **tells you** as to what things God is presently doing, and what He's involved in, and what God's operations are—and the privilege He's given you to labor together with Him in those things ... and if you don't, then no matter what you say, you're NOT '*serving*' Him!

- **This is one of the reasons why you need godly Edification!**

20 *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

- *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”* — there are only 3x in the book of Romans where this (or a similar) statement is made.

1. Rom. 15:33—*Now the God of peace be with you all.*
2. Here in 16:20
3. Rom. 16:24—*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

- And there are numerous times throughout the rest of Paul’s epistles where this same kind of statement is repeatedly made.

- My understanding is that when God has Paul say this, it isn’t being used simply as a ‘formality’ - or as a montra or an incantation or a ‘ **blessing** ’ that is supposed to produce some kind of mystical and magical effect of protection ... it isn’t a spell or verbal charm or religious saying that’s supposed to supernaturally create a ‘bubble’ of protection around you (or within you) from Satan and from evil.

- And it’s also my understanding that—while this kind of statement is generally looked at, and kind of smiled at as a ‘friendly’ thing to say—statements such as this are generally skipped over—or given very little attention—nothing more than a glance at a ‘heartwarming’ thing for Paul to say to us (bless his heart) ... but I don’t think that’s the case at all—my understanding is that these kind of statements are really a very important part of our godly edification—and as such, they should be given **close attention** ...

... because, the truth of the matter is—they really do carry an issue of protection, preservation, salvation [not justification], and in this case, of not coming under the influence of the Satanic Policy of Evil (viz., Phase 1) ... but it **doesn’t** happen mystically or magically (or as a ‘Popish’ blessing)!

- The way it **does** happen is the same way God provides for any and all of your protection, preservation, and being saved from the influence of, and being victimized by the Satanic Policy of Evil—(which, of course, is by means of your godly sonship edification — by “*the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe*” (1Thes. 2:13) .

- Truth is—if my understanding is correct—these kind of statement serve as ‘markers’ - or mini-type ‘checkpoints’ all on their own—they call on you to look back at what you’ve been taught (a “*grace*” provision all on its own), and make sure that that body of information is doing its effectual job. (which is a ‘by grace, through faith’ operation)

- So this is far from any kind of religious or liturgical ‘benediction’.

- “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ...*”

- Here we have a summing up what has just been said by leaving us with an expression of what you might call a ‘sonship desire’ - or an ‘Pauline desire’ - or better, a ‘Fatherly desire’ for us as His “sons” and “daughters” who have gotten all our fundamental godly edification.

- (I don’t think [as some commentators do] that Paul intended to conclude his letter here, but then decided afterwards to add two more ‘postscripts’.)

- So what does Paul mean by “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*”?

- What does “*grace*” mean here?

- By definition: (sometimes *grace* is kind of hard to ‘pin down’ as a definition)

- Often times Christian folks will use an acronym to define it: God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense ... which really isn’t all that bad of a thing—there’s a lot of truth in that.

- Defining *grace* is often made more difficult because of the Greek word for *grace*—(χάρις = that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness, merciful kindness, etc.) - but if you dig enough, you will get down to some real meaningful definitions.

- And often times, *grace* is only thought of in such terms as = effortless beauty or charm; elegance; something pleasing for its charm & refinement; generous, helpful, goodness; mercy; a favor rendered by one who need not do so; a reprieve; mercy in action; love. [which really doesn’t help us all that much, at least, biblically] ...

- A more biblical definition of God's *grace* = the free gift of God's **power** to do for a man that which he cannot do for himself—given by God and received by man in such a way so as to not violate or compromise the righteousness, justice, or holiness of God (i.e., His character and essence of Godness) in so doing.

- And that demands 2 things:

1. The work of a Redeemer—the Lord Jesus Christ and His cross-work (all that He accomplished in His death, burial, and resurrection) - so that God's character & essence is not compromised in offering man a way out of the predicament he is in, and can't get out of himself.

2. That this *grace* of God is received by men only by FAITH and FAITH ALONE! ("*faith*" insuring that NO credit or merit goes to man [the subject], but all the credit and merit goes to the **Object** of his faith: the Lord Jesus Christ [God Himself]!)

- GRACE IS A POWER: THE POWER OF GOD!

- So, briefly and simply put: *grace* is the power of God's Jehovah-ness to do for a man what he cannot do for himself. [because of the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ]

- Now that's all fine and dandy—but what you have to ask yourself at this point is, 'Is that satisfactory?' ... is this what God is after in the context of (:20)?

... or is this too broad? ... is God after something much more 'specific' about His "*grace*" here in (:20)? ... I think He is!

- So if we desire a more precise and specific understanding of this *grace* being spoken about in (:20) we need to take our basic definition of *grace* (as the power of God's Jehovah-ness to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves—and for God to be able to do so because of the work of the Redeemer [*the Lord Jesus Christ as mentioned in (:20)]*) ... and ask ourselves:

'Is there something that God has just told you that He, Himself will do for you that you cannot do for yourself?' YES!

- God just told us that He will, as *the God of peace, bruise Satan under your feet shortly*. — and if you **add** to that all of the **context** of (:17-18), you have your answer—(and it's a **satisfactory** answer!)

- In the **context** of (:17-20a) we have been given by God's **grace**:

- Some specific *doctrine* in the book of Romans that gives us the ability & capacity to discern any teaching of doctrine that would be *contrary to the doctrine which we have learned* so that we can "*mark*" them and "*avoid*" them. (:17)

- that is, we have been "*led by the Spirit*" of God through Romans doctrine—and by *walking after the things of the (Holy) Spirit* and not *walking after the things of the flesh*—we have a 'divine guidance system' for discerning *doctrine* that would be *contrary to that which we have learned*. [and there's a lot more to this issue, too—such as being *dead to sin, and alive unto God*]

- We have been given God's own 'Profile' of corrupt Bible teachers and their methodology behind their corrupt Bible teaching. (:18)

- We've been given a warning that knowledge of our *obedience* will bring *contrary* Bible *doctrine* into our assembly.

- We've been given a 'sonship saying' to operate upon and which will allow us to function successfully under Phase 1 of the PoE. (:19)

- And we have been given (by God's *grace*) the promised assurance that when we operate upon all that His *grace* has given us in connection with successfully living and functioning and continuing on with our godly edification all the while having to do so while undergoing Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil—that *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly*. (:20a)

- And every bit of that is God's **GRACE** to us—and every bit of that GRACE to us is directly due to the work of **our Lord Jesus Christ** at Calvary's cross and the grace-benefits we get from His substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection—and every bit of that GRACE is ours **only** by **FAITH** and faith ALONE!

- Do you see **why** it says, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*, and NOT, 'The grace of God be with you'?

- Remember that Satan seeks to be ‘like God’ ... “*I will be like the most High*” — he hates these ‘dust-men’ who are in all physical effect “*lower*” than he is (but who have the inner-man capacity to be ‘*God-like*’ or *godly* = the very capacity he will never have! although he’s going to do everything he can to get that capacity of *godly edifying*, and bring yours to an end!)

- And the Adversary knows that the means to get *godliness* is by the Edification Process—and the Edification Process for us as members of the church the body of Christ in this disp. of grace gets accomplished ‘**by grace through faith**’ as we ‘rightly divide’ and ‘properly handle’ God’s word. **Rom-Phlm**

- And since the *revelation of the mystery of Christ* has taken place (which God revealed through the apostle Paul) - Satan is no longer attacking Israel as he did in God’s prog./w/Isr ... rather, he now has his ‘sights set’ on *the one new man* God is now creating: the body of Christ ...

... you see, the Adversary knows that ***the Lord Jesus Christ*** is the One who has provided for all of this—he knows that the Lord accomplished something in His cross-work that was kept secret—and he knows that Rom-Phlm is where this new *body of Christ* get its proper godly Edification—(and that it all gets accomplished **by grace through faith**).

- And therefore, that draws the battle-lines (so to speak) ... the battle isn’t so much between Satan and you as much as it is between Satan and ***the Lord Jesus Christ*** (and what He did in His cross-work that was kept a *secret*)!

- So Satan attacks **both** (1) the means by which godliness gets accomplished (Phase 1/PoE = attack the message [i.e., God’s word—especially Rom-Phlm] - **and** (2) the means by which God’s word accomplishes godly Edification: **by grace through faith**!

- The point is: Satan’s PoE is all about attacking “***THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST***” !!! (i.e., all that He accomplished in the *mystery* aspect of His cross-work, *and* the means for us to get it: by grace through faith) ... and that’s why Satan goes about using the Bible itself, and men who will do his bidding by teaching corrupt doctrine which is *contrary to that which you have learned*.

- And that's why Satan works so hard to produce a counterfeit "**form of godliness**" that "**denies the power thereof**" (2Tim. 3:5)

... this counterfeit "**form of godliness**" that the Adversary produces, sponsors, and promotes "**denies the power**" God has vested in His 'living word' coming to 'live in us' as we are led through our doctrinal curriculum by the Holy Spirit of God and as we receive that "**grace**" benefit only by faith alone!

- So you can bet on 2 things in connection with the counterfeit '**forms of godliness**' that the Adversary produces: 1. They will be based upon **Un**sound Bible doctrine (wrongly divided & mishandled); 2. They will include **your works**! (the works of your flesh, the energy of your flesh—i.e., they will include THE LAW and functioning under it) - [the direct opposite of Rom. 6:14 ... *for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*]

- So—with that all in mind we should understand and appreciate that when God has Paul tell us in (:20), "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*" — and the specific context of that "**grace**" is the things we just went over in (:17-20a) [see p.248] — we should understand & appreciate that without those very things—you **cannot** be protected, preserved, and saved from the evil influence of Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil!

- So you better make sure you have those grace-benefits, or else you'll fall victim to *contrary doctrine* and your godly edification will be ruined and destroyed! [**Examine yourselves**!]

(see 2Cor. 13:5)

- "**reprobate**" in the NT is a Pauline word—it's never used in the NT outside of Paul's epistles—(it's use 1x in the OT in Jer. 6:30)

- "**reprobates**" (ἁδόκιμος) = [not] standing the test; not approved (such as a counterfeit coin); that which does not prove itself as such as it ought; unfit; castaway; rejected.

(OED) = rejected or condemned as worthless, inferior or impure; rejected by God (and can include those who are lost or excluded from participation in eternal life); disgraceful; worthy of condemnation.

(Webster's 1828) brings out the issue of one who is **abandoned by God**—abandoned to sin and lost to grace.

(Crabb) = *reprobate* is a term that expresses the most wretched condition of fortune into which it is possible for any human being to be plunged, and consequently it denotes that state of moral desertion and ruin which cannot be exceeded in wickedness or depravity.

The *reprobate* man is one who has been reprov'd until he becomes insensible to reproof and is given up to the malignity of his own passions.

- And the word *reprobate* can be used for a lost person (an unbeliever), and it can be used for a saved person, but one who is looked on by the world as a lost person, (rejected and abandoned by God in the “*world's*” eyes: human viewpoint).

- Lost: Rom. 1:28; 2Cor. 13:5; 2Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:16

- Saved, but looked on as a lost person: 2Cor. 13:7

- “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be **with** you.*”

- The word *with* is being used here just as it was back in (15:33—*Now the God of peace be **with** you all.*)

- And (again), notice that it doesn't say, ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be **IN** you.’ ... even though that may be the way you take it, and even though you may think it would be better to use “*in*” rather than “*with*”.

- And the reason for using “*with*” instead of “*in*” all has to do with the **context** in which it's being used. (It's a matter of what's being focused upon and emphasized— or how God expects His *grace* to be viewed in the context of undergoing Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE.)

- [and this may seem like I'm ‘splitting hairs’ here—but the distinction of terms is really very important as to your success or failure in dealing with Phase 1 of the PoE ... it's a ‘hair’ that needs to be ‘split’!] - it's an important distinction to make because the success of your godly Edification **going on** depends upon it!

- Now—as we have noted—this whole sentence is **not** just some kind of mere ‘formality’ ... nor is it a meaningless ‘benediction’ or popish kind of ‘blessing’ that just happens mystically or magically or by ‘autopilot’ (so to speak).

- But with the context being one of my Heavenly Father, and *the Lord Jesus Christ’s* **grace provisions** for us to do battle with, and successfully deal with Phase 1/PoE so that our godly sonship Edification can Go On ... then, that helps me understand the use of this preposition, “*with*”.

- “*with*” - Of the many ways in which the word *with* can be used (and there’s a bunch of them—so, to save time) ... my understanding is that here in (:20) *with* is being used in the sense of:

- [Webster’s 1828]

2. On the side of, noting favor.

- *With* notes a particular way in which one thing is related to another or in union with one another—and it focus upon a particular agent—(in this case, *grace*; *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*) - and that agent (*grace*) operating on the same side as you in a particular action (doing battle with Phase 1/ PoE).

- And by focusing upon the relationship of *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* and “**you**” - those *grace* benefits are to be ‘carried’ (so to speak) by *you* [or accompanied *with you* into this battle]. (your ever-present companion)

- The emphasis here in (:20) is upon the assistance of our **SUPPLY** of *grace* benefits we have received by *our Lord Jesus Christ* that are specifically geared for our success in battle with the Adversary!

- (specifically, the *grace* benefits found in [:17-20a]).

- *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*—that **supply** of *grace* benefits enumerated in [:17-20a] that comes from the work of your Substitute Redeemer and His cross-work and received by faith, and faith alone [with no works of your flesh of any kind], will **save** you from being victimized by Phase 1/PoE—the Redeemer and His cross-work supplies you with all your defense and arms in the battle with the Adversary!

- And that why it's so important to realize that Christ did **far more** than just justify you by His Redemption.

- And that's why the Redeemer and His Redemption is linked with (not just your justification), **but with your ADOPTION AS SONS!** (see Gal. 4:5)!

- And to this great godly Labor of being *more than a conqueror*, of successfully dealing with Phase 1/PoE is capped off by ... **AMEN!**

- "Amen" = and so let it be

- *Amen* is a transliteration from both Hebrew and Greek—actually, the Greek and English is a transliteration from the Hebrew.

- [Charles Buck; Theological Dictionary, 1830] - *Amen* signifies *assuredly, certainly, or emphatically so it is*. Used as a petition, it epitomizes all the requests with which it stands connected. It emphasizes that what was just said is of manifest importance. It was adopted, also, in the public worship of the primitive churches, as appears by that passage, 1Cor. 14:16, and was continued among the Christians in following times; yea, such was the extreme into which many ran, that Jerome informs us, that, in his time, at the conclusion of every public prayer, the united *amen* of the people sounded like the *fall of water*, or the *noise of thunder*. Nor is the practice of some professors in our own time to be commended, who, with a low, though audible voice, add their *amen* to almost every sentence as it proceeds from the lips of him who is praying. As this has the tendency to interrupt the devotion of those that are near them, and may disconcert the thoughts of him who leads the worship, it would be better omitted, and the *mental amen* is sufficient. The term, as used at the end of our prayers, suggests that we should pray with understanding, faith, fervour and expectation.

20 *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

- Any Comments? Questions?

- OUTLINE: (see #57 #58)

- Godly Labor—Part B: (:21-24)

Godly Labor of properly acknowledging and responding to the “*grace*” of the ones used by God to provide for your godly Edification Establishment.

(#59) - When we come to this next body of information in (:21-24), or ‘Part B’ of the godly Labor—we are **still** dealing with the issue of having to function under the attack of Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE!

- Although it may seem like this List of names here has nothing to do with Phase 1/PoE, (and that these final portions of Romans 16 are just Paul ending his letter at [:20] ... but then had an ‘afterthought’ in [:21-24] and then intended to end his letter there ... but then had another ‘afterthought’ in [:25-27] where he finally ended his letter ...

... my understanding is that is **not** at all what’s going on here.

- My understanding is that, that kind of thinking comes from a misunderstanding of those phrases, “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you [all]. Amen.*”

- If my thinking is correct, all 3 ‘Parts’ of the godly Labor all have to do with the matter of you, as a properly educated and edified Level I “son” of God facing the determined Adversary and Phase 1 of his PoE to attempt to put a stop to your godly sonship edification and education.

- In other words—these ‘3 Parts’ are not random—and even though it may seem [:21-24] has nothing to do with the PoE, the truth is, **they do indeed!** - they have to do with our **success** to be *more than conquerors* even while undergoing Phase 1/PoE—even this list of names has something to do with it—especially for those saints at Rome at that time).

- (:21-24) consist of another magnificent provision of God’s **grace** to you—another grace-benefit that goes to insuring our upcoming Stablishment Edification gets properly built upon our fully Established Edificational Foundation. (and it’s similar in nature to the List in [:1-16], but with a focus upon the ones who were used by God to directly **provide** for your Edificational Establishment.)

- We have a ‘list’ of 8 men here in (:21-24): *Timotheus, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, and Quartus*.

- And again—if my understanding is correct—these are 8 individuals that were more closely associated to the ‘day-to-day’ ministry of the apostle Paul ... in other words, they are a List (actually, a partial list) of Paul’s Team and Paul’s Staff. [there may be no less than 3, and maybe 4 Bishops of other local churches]

- Now before we get into the details of this List—I first want to do a review of this issue that, in the case of all 8 individuals listed here, they are said to “*salute*” the saints at Rome. [not *greet*]

- “*Salute*” and “*greet*” (while very similar) do not mean the same thing.

- (Review: from Rom.16—p.40-54)

- Now the major difference in the actions of ‘List 1’ and ‘List 2’ is that these 8 men mentioned in ‘List 2’ **are all doing the action of ‘saluting’** ...

... that is, in the 1st List, all of the saints at Rome were either ‘greeting’ or ‘saluting’ others ...

... in this 2nd List, all of these 8 men are ‘saluting’ the saints at Rome—they are sending their ‘salutations’ *to* the saints at Rome—and the saints at Rome are receiving their *salutations*.

- It seems likely that the saints at Rome never met most of the men on this List—it seems that Timothy did go to Rome, and maybe a couple of other did at one time) - and, of course, if some on this List did come to Rome, the saints there would most certainly “*greet*” them.

- So we can say that the *saluting* being done here does not have the ‘journey’ aspect in view.

- And if that’s the case—that makes the manner of the salutations of these 8 men just a little bit different than the *saluting* that was going on in the 1st List where an actual, physical meeting of the parties involved was taking place.

- It also seems likely that these 8 ‘Staff-Members’ or ‘Team-Members’ of Paul were possibly all together in Corinth at the time of the writing of Romans, or else had been together off and on during its writing ... and all 8 of them sent the Roman saints their ‘*salutations*’.

- (again, this is not a complete list of Paul’s Staff/Team)

- But the most important thing to make out of this 2nd List is that all 8 of these men were closely and/or directly connected to Paul and his ministry—in the sense of being ‘helpers’ in the Edification Process in the local churches; and in copying out Paul’s letters and getting them distributed to the other churches; and generally supporting Paul and providing for his needs and necessities in all the operations of his ministry in making known “*the mystery of Christ*”.

- (these men were part of Paul’s ‘network’ or ‘internet’ or rapid communication of information at that time ... which worked just as well [if not better] than any or all of our present-day technology!)

- So these men aren’t just fellow *members* of the body of Christ (not at all to minimize that, or make light of that, because they, indeed, **are** fellow *members* of the body of Christ, and all that is critical and important about that) ... but as part of Paul’s Staff/Team, they are **speciall** entrusted by Paul.

- If the situation calls for it, they are entrusted with providing for all that is essential (copies of Paul’s letters, experts in Pauline doctrine or “*the gospel of Christ*”, forming, establishing, and ordering local churches, teaching the doctrine, filling the role of Bishop/Pastor, installing deacons, etc.) for godly Edification to take place—that is, in the case of these saints in Rome (and saints in other churches around the world), they have been, and are entrusted with providing for their Establishment in godly Edification ...

... but notice that, (and I think this is kind of humorous irony), these 8 men are NOT mentioned in Paul’s ‘salutation’ to the book of Romans in chapter one (i.e., giving their ‘salutations’ in Paul’s ‘salutation’) ... rather, they are brought up here at the END of the book, once their Level I Sonship education and Edification has formally been accomplished ... and also within a particular context (having to do with Phase 1/PoE) ...

... and that context of dealing with Phase 1/PoE — and the further context of these saints having completed Romans doctrine (Level I, Sonship Edification) - it would seem natural that they are expected to think about them, therefore, as ones who have had a hand in their godly Establishment, but more than that, they are ones who will continue working with the saints in Rome as they face Phase 1/PoE to ensure that their successful Establishment in godly Edification GOES ON to being Stablished, even while undergoing Phase 1/PoE!

- These men (and others like them) will be there for them ... they are **not** alone in the battle! and there's great encouragement in that! ...

... and the comfort & encouragement of it all isn't just some artificial rhetoric or Christian 'sloganeering' ...

... these men will 'go to the wall' for *the gospel of Christ* and *the mystery of Christ* committed to the apostle Paul—they will put their lives on the line—and they will faithfully communicate *the revelation of the mystery* and the great dispensational change God has made (at great personal sacrifice) ...

... these men have experience in successfully dealing with the Adversary and his PoE and can therefore be great help to the saints at Rome ... and they will faithfully continue communicating that **message** God has revealed through the apostle Paul well into the future ... even **after** Paul dies!

- And the comfort and encouragement is: even if Paul dies, this doctrine, and the godly Edification that comes from it **will GO ON!** [even in the face of the PoE's best attempts to stop it] ... therefore, **YOU CAN GO ON!**

... (there's going to be a lot more communicators of *the mystery of Christ* even after they're gone off the scene!) ...

... truth is, even by the time Paul had written the book of Romans, the Adversary has had it ... his ultimate and complete doom is assured!

- When you're looking at this List—you're looking at the **future** communication of Pauline doctrine—you're looking at the future of the godly Edification Process continuing ON, even in the face of Phase 1/PoE!

- And the focus of attention is expected to be upon that—the focus of attention is to be upon the value of these 8 men’s contribution to the Edification Process **continuing on!** (That’s how they are to be viewed; and that determines how to view their “*salute*” or “*salutations*”).

- You’ve heard of ‘The Long Grey Line’? ... (= a continuum of all the graduates and cadets of the United States Military Academy at West Point who will ever fight for and defend our freedom as laid out in the Constitution) ...

... well, this is the ‘The Long Grace Line’! (= a continuum of Bishops, Pastors, deacons, elders, and saints who will ever fight for and communicate to other members of the body of Christ the message of the gospel of Christ, the mystery of Christ, and the great dispensational change God has made for the successful continuation of their godly Edification) ... the very message Satan’s PoE works to attack and destroy!

- And that’s a ‘worthy’ endeavor in God’s sight ...
(see 1Tim. 5:17)

- So—in view of that, how does that determine the “*salute*” or ‘*salutations*’ of these 8 men to the Roman saints? Is their “*salute*” the same as the “*salute*” of those in the 1st List (:1-16)?

- My understanding is that this *salute* is a little bit different.

- Adjusting what I said earlier—these 8 men are sending their *salutations* or *salute* to the saints at Rome via Paul’s letter—and while I noted before that no ‘journey’ is in view—I should say that no physical ‘journey’ is in view—however, since these 8 men are far away from the saints at Rome; and since they are the one’s doing the ‘sending’ of their sentiments to the saints at Rome via Paul’s epistle; and since some or all of them expect to visit the saints at Rome; and since their work as Paul’s Staff & Team members will have a direct impact upon the Roman saint’s godly edification ... (whew) ...
... therefore the word *salute* is very appropriate and the most excellent word to use here.

- Therefore, our ‘Working Definition’ of the word *salute* works well in this case, too:

- “SALUTE” (Working Definition):

To give a salutation to another of “*mutual faith*” by passing on information and making inquiry (i.e., exchanging information) specifically concerning godly edification according to Pauline doctrine (and the *revelation of the mystery* given to Paul); thereby establishing instant fellowship, communion, and concord.

- And the saints at Rome will give their *greetings* at the appropriate time.

- Now here is where I see a difference between these 8 men and those *saluting* the brethren in the 1st List ...

- Although these 8 men are fellow members of the body of Christ—they are **more** than that, in that they are specific members of Paul’s Edification Staff & Team.

- Paul himself makes this distinction on various occasions by often saying “*we*” or “*us*” when specifically talking about his Staff & Team Members who are directly working on a ‘full-time’ basis (so to speak) in the field of the Edification Process taking place in the local churches.

- (see this in connection with Paul dealing with saints in local churches *other* than in Rome—such as the ones in Corinth):

- (see **2Cor. 1:12-24**)

- And I’m sure that the 8 men *saluting* the saints at Rome in (Rom. 16:21-24) will in some way communicate those 3 matters that a “*salute*” addresses: they will make the Roman saints aware of **1.** Who they are (Members of Paul’s Staff and/or Team for godly Edification); **2.** Who they represent (Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles and the Lord Jesus Christ as the HEAD of the body of Christ for this present dispensation of Gentile grace); and **3.** What their business is with the Roman saints (as “*helpers of their joy*” in the Edification Process).

- So the difference between these 8 men of the 2nd List and the ones of the 1st List lies in them being Members of Paul’s Staff & Team that are entrusted with **overseeing** the saints’ godly Edification. [and that’s an important distinction to make]

- The distinction lies in who these 8 men are, (and in light of it), how they are to be viewed, or held, or regarded. (and the way they are to be regarded has everything to do with “*The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you ALL.*” in (:24) being different than in (:20)!

- Without those in the 1st List doing their job, you don’t have a properly functioning local church or assembly ...

... and without those in the 2nd List doing their job, you don’t have a properly functioning local assembly, either!

- And because of the role these 8 men will have in the Edification Process—they are to be held in **high regard** as Paul will describe throughout his epistles, but especially in the ‘Pastoral Epistles’ of 1Tim.-Phlm.

- thus you have such terms as “*overseers*” (Acts 20:28); “*servants*” (Phil. 1:1); “*elders*” “*bishops*” and “*deacons*” (1&2Tim. Titus) ... even, “*apostles*” “*prophets*” “*evangelists*” “*pastors and teachers*” (and other such terms) ...

- Let’s note just a couple of passages. (you can study more of this issue out on your own) ...

- **Eph. 4** (this would apply to the time in which Romans was written): **Eph. 4:11-16**

- **1Tim. 4:6-16**

- **1Tim. 5:17-18** (which we looked at before) - and note that word “*counted*” (:17) = that’s the issue of holding these men in **high regard**!

- And there’s something else going on here in connection with this 2nd List of those of Paul’s Staff/Team who are *overseers* of the saint’s godly Sonship Edification that’s critically important to the proper function of the body of Christ as a **BODY** in a local church! (and it also goes to the issue of holding these men in high regard) ...

... as ones who are to be *counted worthy of double honour* as they *labour in the word and doctrine*—there is a component of **BODY SACRIFICE** going on in connection with them and their work or labor. (willing/glad Self-Sacrifice = #6 G. L&C)

... see what these 2 Lists sets up? see what they address? ...
they address what a local church really is—they address the
 2 Major components to a proper functioning local church ...

(1st List) = you have the members of the local body of Christ
 laboring together **in godly love & charity** in the various
 Operations of God in that local assembly;

(2nd List) = you have the ones given the authority to teach,
 preach, instruct, guide, guard, and even discipline the local
 assembly in the Edification Process **in godly love and charity**.

- and when they BOTH function properly, you have a
 properly functioning local church!

- And the whole thing is functioning as a BODY:

- with those Fundamental Attributes of a
 Body we were taught back in Rom. 12 —
 1. Usefulness, 2. Cooperation
 3. Servant, 4. Welfare

- and with those 7 Features of Godly L&C.

- And just like the function of godly love & charity in a body (as in
 the 1st List) ... so, too, you have godly love & charity functioning in
 as **SACRIFICAL** manner (as a **body**) in the 2nd List!

- The issue of BODY SACRIFICE is in view—because it's
 going to take real body sacrifice to maintain those who
 function as *pastor-teacher, or bishop, or elder*—for the other
 members of the body to provide for them who are *counted
 worthy of double honour as they labour in the word and
 doctrine!*

- it's going to take body sacrifice to 'unmuzzle the ox'! and
 ensure they are properly remunerated for their work!

- And in doing so—with body sacrifice (with Willing & Glad
 Self-Sacrifice = Godly L&C Feature #6) **you** get a '**grace**
opportunity - a sonship grace opportunity to Think, Live, and
 Labor with your Heavenly Father to keep the 'doors of
 communication of sound doctrine' as wide open as possible in
 your local assembly ... and to treat it as 'spiritual money' to
 be kept in a pouch about your neck in order to 'purchase' with
 that opportunity the issue of *redeeming the time!* (*Pro. 3:3*) as
 you 'properly respond' to men in this position!

- Now—with all that said, let's return to our 'Outline' for what we have said this 'Part B' of (:21-24) is all about ...

- The List of these 8 men is designed to focus your attention upon the Godly Labor of properly acknowledging and responding to the "*grace*" [i.e., the graciousness of God in providing for the men who will 'oversee' the Edification Process in the local churches Paul establishes (including the ones in Rome)] of the ones used by God to provide for your godly Edificational Establishment.

- The listing of these men bring to the saints mind the 'grace' provision of God for their godly Edification to not only get Established, but for it to **go on** and get fully Stablished.

- And because of the great '**love**' that the saints now have for their sonship life and its continued Edification (also known as "*the love of Christ*" [Rom. 8:35]) - this should be a Labor of Love! - a labor of **loving body-sacrifice**; a Labor of recognizing, acknowledging and responding to this magnificent 'grace' given to them (and to YOU) of men who are qualified to 'oversee' their Edification and respond to them as a BODY should.

- And just like a body—when, say, it experiences what is known as 'hypothermia' - the body will **sacrifice** all that is necessary (such as the extremities) to keep the 'core' or vital parts of the body functioning! [and these men are 'vital parts']

- Lastly, it should also be noted that this vital 'balance' (if you will) of the members of the local body of Christ in the local assemblies who are **being** Edified; and the members of the body of Christ in the local assemblies who are '**overseeing**' the Edification—this is going to be a priority of attack of Phase 1 of the PoE!

- and the truth is—the Pastor-Teachers, or Bishops, or Elders, and the deacons of a local assembly have categories of tribulations, distresses, fears, intimidations, and the like that they have to deal with, that the other members of the body of that local assembly don't have to deal with ... as well as their own personal well-being, and the well-being of their families (that is, the matter of how and where they live, and how they are cared for in many details of their lives).

- And these things can be studied out especially over in the Pastoral Epistles of 1Tim-Phlm.

- But it should be very apparent to you how that those in the authoritative positions of Pastor and Deacons are specially ‘targeted’ by the Adversary and his PoE ... and nothing should point that out to you any more than what was just said to you about Phase 1/PoE back in (:17-18) ... the main way in which the Adversary carries out Phase 1 of his PoE is by means of **the men who are teaching or ‘overseeing’ the assembly—the Pastor-Teacher himself!**

- So this ‘Part B’ of (:21-24) really **does** have Phase 1 of the Policy of Evil in view!

- Therefore **great care** should be taken for how you respond to those in charge of ‘overseeing’ your godly Edification! (and, again, it should be a real ‘Labor of love’!)

- It’s a great way in which God has set up the local church as a Divine Institution—it’s a great way in which you have continual grace Opportunities for ‘body-sacrifice’ and the use of those 7 Features of godly Love & Charity ...

... it’s a great way to perceive more of the Operations of God in the local assembly ...

... and it’s a marvelous way in which God has made it so that the *fellowship and communion* of a local church has a meaning to it that the average person who uses those words will never know! ... it gives **power** to the words *fellowship and communion*! [godly power]

- Is that brief description of ‘Part B’ clearly understood? Questions/Comments?

- DETAILS ...

- There’s nothing much to take note of grammar-wise—we simply have 4 verses made up of 5 sentences (6, if you count “*Amen.*”).

21 *Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.*

- First up (and rightly so) is *Timotheus*, which is a Greek-to-English transliteration (Τιμόθεος), also known as Timothy.

- “*Timothy*” = “honoring God”
- It seems (I haven’t counted) that Timothy is the most often mentioned and referred to person in Paul’s life, ministry, and letters.
- It seems that Timothy was not only so closely related to Paul and his ministry—but that Timothy was most definitely a member of Paul’s Staff—and very likely, Paul’s ‘Chief of Staff’.
- Timothy is the only person, and the only member of Paul’s Staff to have **two** letters written to him, personally, which were *given by inspiration of God* and included in Holy Scripture. [1&2Tim.]
 - (and much can be learned about Timothy from them)
- Paul calls Timothy here, “***my workfellow***” .
 - Interesting: “*workfellow*” (συνεργός = together/working) = a companion in the work; a fellow worker ...
 - ... used 13x in the NT = *fellowlabourer* 4x; *helper* 3x; *fellowhelper* 2x; *fellowworkers* 1x; *labourer together with* 1x; and this is the one and only time the KJ translators translated it ***workfellow***.
 - and it’s interesting to me that you have the word “*fellow*” in front of *labourer*, *helper*, and *workers* ... but here is the only time in Scripture where “*fellow*” is put at then end of the compound word—this is the only time in all the Bible where the word “*workfellow*” is used.
 - *workfellow* = one who is engaged in the same work with another (simple enough) ... which is basically the same thing as *fellowworker* = one who is employed in the same occupation.
 - So, what’s the difference? why use *fellowworker* one time, and *workfellow* another time?
 - I believe the answer is found in the **person** or persons Paul refers to—and the one and only time he uses *workfellow* is in connection to Timothy—(*fellowworkers* is in Col. 4:11 in connection with another List of men on Paul’s Staff/Team)

- And that, (to me, anyway), indicates a particular **closeness** or **bond** or **intimacy** between Paul and Timothy that doesn't exist with anyone else — others may be Paul's *fellowworkers*, but only Timothy is Paul's workfellow.

- And I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the word *workfellow* tends more to focus your attention on the “**fellow**” aspect of the word.

- The “*work*”, of course, is Paul's ministry—including a large variety of things—such as copying and distributing Paul's epistles; setting up and establishing other local churches; preaching and teaching the doctrine contained in Paul's letters (the curriculum for godly sonship education and edification); making known to all the world the newly revealed *mystery of Christ* given to Paul, the *fellowship of the mystery*, and basically the whole *gospel of Christ* God gave to Paul which concerns the great dispensational change God has made and the brand new entity that God is now creating called, *the one new man*, the church the BODY of Christ.

- The *work* would also include having to deal with the time in which the “little flock” of the Remnant of Israel was still on this earth—when Israel has been set aside and was in their *diminishing* stage (**T. having a Jewish mother/Gentile father**)...

... which would also include all of the hazards involved in traveling the world and engaging very hostile and negative responses to Paul's *message*—both from men, and from the Adversary and his policy of evil!

- It would take incredible courage on Timothy's part to be Paul's *workfellow*—it would take **total dedication** and **total commitment** on Timothy's part—and Timothy would come to know just how much the human heart can bear as God's word effectually works within him! ... Timothy will experience a level of fear, anxiety, pressure, maligning, defaming, and persecution most saints will never experience!

- And though it will take a great toll on Timothy, all indications are, Timothy remained faithful to the *work* to the very end of his life! — Timothy may have been young and ‘timid’, but there's no doubt he was a true **warrior**!

- (see 1Tim. 1:18; 1Tim. 6:11-12; 2Tim. 1:1-12; 2Tim. 2:1-4)

- So that's the "work" - but the aspect that I believe is even more focused upon as Paul regards Timothy is that word "**fellow**" ... and while many others would be (and could be) called 'fellowworkers', only Timothy is Paul's "*workfellow*" - and even to any English-speaking person—we almost naturally know (because of how we use the English language) that [for some reason] "*workfellow*" is supposed to be used in a more intimate and personal way than 'fellowworker.'

- This intimate and personal relationship Paul has with Timothy is verified by Paul's use of the word "*son*" when talking about him.

- (see 1Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:19-22; 1Tim. 1:2, 18; 2Tim. 1:2)

- Concerning the word "*fellow*" itself:

- (OED) = **1.** One who shares with another in a possession, official dignity, or in the performance of any work; a partner, colleague, co-worker. One united with another for common ends, an ally.

4b. A counterpart, match. **c.** That which matches or resembles another.

5. One who shares with another any attribute, position or rank. An equal, peer. Matching abilities, qualities or value.

- To this day—becoming a "*Fellow*" as still used in many colleges & universities = a member of the governing or administrative body—a high and honored title conferred as a special distinction on a very limited number of graduates.

- And like so many other words—*fellow* can be used a whole bunch of ways—more commonly meaning, a person that is associated with another in simple companionship or co-operation with what the n. implies (in our case the "*work*").

- Going back many years (decades) - we dealt with the word *fellow* when we were getting our proper understanding of what it means to be "in fellowship" - and what real, biblical *fellowship* is all about.

- We saw that, "*fellowship*" can be used to denote either:

1. a close personal, essential, and integral relationship that individuals have with each other, or;

2. it can also be used to describe simply the issue of an association that individuals have with others because of common interests, likes and dislikes, etc. [which is how we most often think about it.]

- Now when “*fellowship*” is used to denote a close personal, essential, and integral relationship(#1), the stress is on the fact that the individuals are “FELLOWS” one with another. That is, they are of the same essential NATURE, kind, lineage, etc.; they have a ‘ONENESS’ of *nature*, or EQUALITY of nature about them in their relationship.

- The word “*fellowship*” would, for example, be used in this way if someone were to say, “Some people are more kind to animals than they are to their *fellow* man.”

- Or Presidents often begin their public addresses by saying, “My *fellow* Americans.”

- And this is the way the word is used, for example, in a passage that has great bearing on John’s usage of the term over in 1John.

Zech.13

- Here, Zechariah sets forth to the Remnant of Israel one of the **four** ways in which they are to perceive or view the coming Messiah.

(:7a) - Note: “*the man that is my fellow*”

- Of course, the Lord Jesus Christ is “*the man*” in the verse, and He is a bona fide “man.” But according to the Davidic Covenant He isn’t just a mere man; He is precisely as God says - He is “*the man that is my fellow*.”

- Christ is the only man who BY NATURE is also God’s “*fellow*.” And with this being the case, Christ’s “fellowship” with God was NOT simply one of an association based upon common interests and the like (#2). It was one of essential relationship based upon NATURE and KIND (#1)! Hence, God says that He is “*the man that is my fellow*.” ... that is, He’s not only a *man* (true humanity), but He’s also of God’s very NATURE ... He’s GOD (absolute Deity) in the FLESH!

- So coming back to Timothy being described as Paul’s “*workfellow*” ... since this is used in a very intimate & close personal way—it indicates far more than Timothy just being a co-worker with Paul ... (he IS that), but Timothy is to be understood by other members of the body of Christ as one who is so very close to Paul ... **down to the very details of his whole HEART (Nature/Kind)!**

- We could make a large study out of Timothy, but let's just note one other thing about him. (you can study him out on your own)

- The first time Timothy shows up in Scripture:

Acts 16:1-3

- This act of circumcising Timothy "*because of the Jews*" points up not only Timothy's dedication and commitment to Paul (as the apostle of the Gentiles) and *the gospel of Christ* and *the revelation of the mystery* given to Paul, but also to the great dispensational change God has made, like nothing else.

- And it also points to a great deal of why Paul would consider and regard Timothy as "**MY** *workfellow*".

21 *Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.*

- My understanding is that not just *Sosipater*, but all 3 (*Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater*) were all Paul's "*kinsmen*".

- And my current thinking about whether or not these 3 men were actual blood-relatives of Paul is the same as we have seen earlier on in Romans 16 (in that 1st List).

- That is—were they actual blood-relation to Paul? or just fellow-Jews?

- Well, Paul does call **all** Israelites & Jews his *kinsmen* back in Rom. 9:3 (*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, **my kinsmen** according to the flesh:*)

- But because of the nature of actually naming them (just as Paul did earlier in the chapter) - and by listing them the way he does—it may very well be that these 3 men really were actual blood-relatives of Paul.

... truth is, I just don't know if they were or not—but the one thing I **do** know is that they were, indeed, fellow Jews.

- And as full-blooded Jews (so to speak), they would encounter a set of problems and difficulties (and persecution) because of them being Jews—[in the area of Israel's VRS's corrupt doctrine, as well as the VRS's own persecution].

- *Lucius*, *Jason*, and *Sosipater* were of the same flesh (Jews), the same nation (Israel), and perhaps of the same tribe as Paul (Benjamin) - and maybe even of the same family—but I've never found sound evidence to fully settle my mind on it.

- “*Lucius*” (probably the L. form) - (Λούκιος) = light; bright

- Pinning down just who this *Lucius* is, is a little difficult.

- He may be Luke, the writer of the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts—[Note: by both words and verses, Luke wrote more of the NT than any other writer]—(and as a Doctor, Luke was a companion of Paul and commonly thought of as Paul's personal physician).

- see Col. 4:14; 2Tim. 4:9-11

- By the way—many Bible scholars and theologians teach that Luke was a Gentile, (a Greek) — which fuels the idea that the gospel of Luke was written by a Greek *to* the Greeks.

- Mat. is to the Jews;
- Mark is to the Romans;
- Luke is to the Greeks [the only non-Jewish writer of scripture]
- John is to the rest of the world.

- None of which is true—because I can dismiss the view of the scholars and theologians that Luke was a Greek based upon the Bible itself!

- see Rom. 3:1-2 (all the writers of the Bible were Jews!)

- “*oracles*” - the use of that word by the KJ translators is extremely important (and ‘triggers’ your mind back to what Stephen said to Israel's vain, religious leaders back in Acts 7) - and it should **not** be translated ‘the words of God’, or ‘the sayings of God’, or even ‘the doctrines of God’.

- *Oracles* has the idea of “the place where answers were given” - the expression *oracle* has an **authority** behind it, as well as a supernaturalness to it that causes awe in the individual (just as the *oracle* of Delphi did among the Greeks) — but with the word *oracle* you have the issues of “awesomeness” and “authority” and the supernatural nature of God speaking and writing His word—and in view of all that, these apostate Jews never really ‘dropped on their knees’ and accepted what God said regardless of what they thought!

- Now back to this *Lucius* being Dr. Luke—(as I said, it may very well be the case; and I don't have any problem with that, if it is) ...

... but it seems to me that a difference *may* be made between the use of the name *Lucius* and *Luke* itself.

- I believe Dr. Luke is, indeed, being referred to in those 2 passages of Paul's epistles we looked at (in Col. 4:14 & 2Tim. 4:11) ... and in both of those instances he is called ***Luke***, not *Lucius*.

- And there is agreement that *Lucas* mentioned in Philm. 24 is Dr. Luke, as well.

- However, there is most definitely another individual who **is** named *Lucius*, who is **not** Dr. Luke.

- And outside of our passage in Rom. 16:21, he is mentioned over in the book of Acts - **see Acts 13:1**. [Antioch, Syria]

- And based upon the **exact** spelling of *Lucius* in both Acts 13:1 and here in Rom. 16:21—I tend to come down on the side of this *Lucius* mentioned here in Rom. 16 as the same *Lucius* of Acts 13. (At least, that's my present understanding ... I could be wrong.)

- If this is true, then that would make our *Lucius* a Bishop or Pastor-Teacher in the church at Antioch (Syria)—and would back up the issue of these 8 men being “overseers” of the godly Edification Process in the churches of the body of Christ.

- If the truth is that this is, indeed, Dr. Luke, then as Paul's “*beloved physician*” he, too, played an integral role **as** Paul's physician, to keep Paul healthy enough to keep his great ministry as the apostle of the Gentiles going—and in the process, be an important part of Paul's Staff in ‘overseeing’ the Edification Process in the churches of the body of Christ.

- Up next, we have ***Jason***.

- “*Jason*” = healing, or one who will heal [and is sometimes substituted for Joshua and Jesus, by Gr.-speaking Jews].

- It's commonly thought that this *Jason* is the same as the one mentioned over in Acts 17. — (see Acts 17:1-9)

- He may also be the same guy mentioned in Acts 20:4, called there "*Secundus*" — "*Jason*" being his Hebrew name, and "*Secundus*" being his Roman name ... (but I'm not totally sure about that).

- What is sure is that *Jason* was Paul's host at Thessalonica, (and he paid a price for that) - and he also has the wonderful privilege of having the distinction (along with Paul, Silas, the devout Greeks, and a great number of 'chief women') to be called: "*These who have turned the world upside down*" !!!

... **talk about having an IMPACT!**

(you may think that you're not making an impact; or that you won't make any impact upon the Heavenly Places ... because it's such a **big** place ... just remember Covid [a microscopic, un-see-able cell!])
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPACT YOU MAKE!

- *Jason* is also considered to either have had a church in his house at Thessalonica, (and was the Bishop or Pastor-Teacher of it), or he may have been the Pastor-Teacher of Tarsus.

- Next up, we have "*Sosipater*".

- "*Sosipater*" = savior of his father.

- *Sosipater* is thought to be the same person called, *Sopater* over in Acts 20:4. — (see Acts 20:1-4)

- *Sosipater* was a Berean ... and as such, he was one of those who is described in Acts 17:11 as ones who "*searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*" — [he knew where his 'Final Authority' was ... not a "man", but "the scriptures"] !

- *Sosipater* is also believed to be the Pastor-Teacher of a church in Iconium.

- (again) **21 *Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.***

22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

- Next, we have “*Tertius*”.

- “*Tertius*” = ‘third’ ... perhaps he was the 3rd child of his parents, or maybe he was the 3rd *Tertius* [*Tertius III*]. (kind of like the name ‘Trey’ that’s often used today).

- *Tertius* was a **valuable** member of Paul’s Staff—because, since Paul had very poor eyesight (Gal. 4:15, 6:11) ... [amazing: couldn’t he just ‘heal’ himself?] ... it’s quite natural that he had a very hard time doing any writing.

- *Tertius* was Paul’s scribe or amanuensis [fancy word for a person taking dictation; a stenographer] - Paul would dictate to *Tertius* and then he would sign the letter, personally. (1Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:8; 2Thes. 3:17)

- **see 2Thes. 3:17** — it’s important to note that by what Paul says here, he tells us that of all of his epistles that were dictated (and any that were not) - that in ALL of them that he dictated or not, **he personally signed every one of them ... (“every epistle”)** ...

... which means that Paul personally signed the book of Romans ... did he just attach his signature to it? ... or did he take up the pen and write (:25-27)? ... or maybe just (:27)? or did he sign it in (1:1)?

- (as a ‘side note’ - we know that Galatians was written by Paul himself [Gal. 6:11] ... which points up how awful and ungodly it was for the Galatians to put themselves back under the Law!)

- *Tertius* must have had very good hand-writing (penmanship) ... and it must have been a thrill for him to have hand-written many of the original epistles of the apostle Paul! ... (knowing that they were *given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness* (2Tim.3:16).

- (the epistle to the Romans that Phebe brought with her for being copied out ... might very well have been in *Tertius*’ handwriting!)

22 *I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, ...*

- For those who don't know it yet, the word *epistle* = a letter; and we use both words interchangeably here.

... salute you in the Lord.

- The “*salute*” issue, we have reviewed ad nauseam, so if you still don't have a good grasp on it, the information is available to review on your own.

- But notice that *Tertius* is the only one of the 8 in this 2nd List that says he *salutes* the Roman saints “*in the Lord*”.

- I think this is an important detail—first of all, it's a part of God's own amazing grace and thoughtfulness to have *Tertius* write this verse—to include him (his name) in this incredible book of Romans, the foundation of all godly edification.

- I sometimes come off making light of this verse—allowing *Tertius* to ‘pop up’ and *salute* the Roman saints ... but it's not a ‘light’ thing or a small matter at all!

- Romans (like all of Paul's epistles) carries enormous weight; (the very ‘weight’ of Holy Scripture; the weight of sound Bible doctrine for the edification of the body of Christ) ...

[the weight of ‘Final Authority’]

... and by God identifying the man whose handwriting it is that the Roman saints are reading—and by including the very name of that man in the 2nd List of Ch.16—a list of those who are to be recognized and acknowledged as ones who are on Paul's Staff & Team; ones who are ‘overseers’ of the godly Edification Process in all the churches ...

... this gives absolute and ‘iron-clad’ evidence (nothing being done ‘underhanded’; everything being done ‘above board’) ... it gives absolute confidence to the Romans [and to us] that this letter/book of Romans ***is from the apostle Paul himself***; and as such, ***it is the very word of God Himself!***

- And by allowing *Tertius* to include this statement in the holy writ of the book of Romans—and Romans being the first of Paul's epistles in the canon of Scripture—it sets the ‘legal precedent’ (so to speak) for all of Paul's subsequent epistles and their God-given ‘Final Authority’ as holy scriptures.

- And this **IS** a big deal ... it really *is* a 'legal' matter ... because, as 2Tim. 3:16 says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*" ... and the charge could be made that the book of Romans (as well as any other epistle that Paul 'dictated') could be brought into question as being *given by inspiration of God*" since the actual writer of it was NOT the person by which God actually gave His *inspired* word!

- After all, Paul was the one through which God's *inspired* word was given to the church, the body of Christ, NOT this guy *Tertius*! (How do we know that *Tertius* didn't alter the *inspired* word of God given to and through the apostle Paul?)

- Well, by the way in which God has it stated in (:22), it removes all doubt as to the accuracy of God's *inspired* word given through Paul! ... God has Paul make the saints aware of it ... and God had Paul personally 'sign off' on its accuracy and it being *holy scripture given by inspiration of God !!!*

- But I think there's even more going on here than that ...

... the accuracy of Romans being *holy scripture* ...

... the Final Authority of Romans being the very word of God Himself (even though it was actually penned by someone other than Paul) ... the trust you are to have that *Tertius* didn't add or diminish one word of what God said to Paul;

- (there's more passages than these that state this same thing, but let's note just 2)

- God tells Moses to tell the Israelites,

*Deu. 4:2 Ye shall not **add** unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye **diminish** ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

*Rev. 22:18-19 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall **add** unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

*And if any man shall **take away** from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.*

... and the absolute confidence and trust you are to have in the book of Romans (and all of Paul's epistles) being the 'curriculum' for your godly sonship education and edification, (in essence, the **completing** of the word of God itself) is all wrapped up in this statement:

*I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord ... and especially in that phrase "in the Lord" - 'I salute you **in the Lord**'.*

- *Tertius* doesn't simply say, "*I salute you*", rather he says, "*I salute you **in the Lord***."

- We have already dealt with the expression "*in the Lord*" in great detail at the beginning of Ch.16—(and if you want all the details, you can go back and get them on your own) - but I'll just simplify the issue as a reminder for now ...

- The expression "*in the Lord*" as it's used in the NT is almost exclusively used by Paul—the one, lone exception being Rev. 14:13.

- It can be used 2 ways:

1. It can be used to express a person's justification unto eternal life or salvation from the debt & penalty of their sins—that is, it indicates a person who is **saved** and no longer "*in Adam*" but now is "*in Christ*" or "*in the Lord*" (ex. 1Cor. 7:39).

2. "*in the Lord*" can be used to express a justified/saved person's **actions** as being consistent with not only who God has made them to be "*in Christ*" or "*in the Lord*", but it also is used to indicate that a justified person's **actions** are consistent with the particular work or business that the Lord is doing at the present time in this dispensation of His grace.

- And that's the way I see it being used in all its instances in Rom.16.

- So when *Tertius* says he *salutes* the saints at Rome "*in the Lord*", he's expressing a mutual cause, business, work, or labor that both **he** and **they** are engaged in—and of course, that godly labor is as one of Paul's Staff who is 'overseeing' their godly edification.

- "*in the Lord*" = the Lord's **cause** in this disp. of grace.

... or, what the Lord is now doing in this present disp. of grace in accordance with “*Paul’s gospel*” and “*the revelation of the mystery*” given to, and committed to the apostle Paul. (the *one new man of the body of Christ* reconciling the Heavenly Places back to God from the Adversary and his co-horts.)

- And in that way, the phrase, “*in the Lord*” may be taken to be akin to the term “*sake*” (*the Lord’s sake*) as in Rom. 15:30. (*sake* = business) [**body** business] [**edification** business]

- So when *Tertius* adds the expression that he “*salutes*” them “*in the Lord*” [which are **his** words, not Paul’s!] - (and by God [and Paul] allowing that phrase to be included in holy scripture as *given by inspiration of God*) - God is allowing *Tertius* to give further assurance that even though Paul didn’t do the actual writing of the book of Romans, **every word of it can be confidently considered the word and words of God, given by inspiration of God!**

- And that needs to be stated—and the confident assurance of it (even the legal-ness of it) is absolutely critical at this point in the Edification Process ... Why?

- Because the issue here is your ability to GO ON and get the rest of your godly sonship edification—and much of the **not yet written** ‘curriculum’ is going to be **dictated** by Paul as is this book of Romans ... and at this point, you need TOTAL confidence in that curriculum...

... and by doing it this way—(by having *Tertius* put this verse into the holy scripture of the book of Romans) - it makes it so that the Adversary can NEVER call into question one single word of your curriculum for your sonship edification!

(that is, you can rest confidently assured that 1Cor-Phlm is the word and words of God, *given by inspiration of God* !)

- “*in the Lord*” puts a ‘safeguard’ on the words of the apostle Paul’s epistles—it tells you that what *Tertius* is doing is for ‘the Lord’s sake’ and **NOT** for his own sake—(he’s **not** altering what God said to Paul one bit!) - it’s **not** ‘slanted’ or ‘spun’ to *Tertius*’ own “agenda” or whatever—*Tertius* is doing this for the Lord’s honor and glory, and **not** for his own glory! [it’s an amazing verse in God’s word]

**23 *Gaius* mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.
Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and *Quartus* a brother.**

- Next on the List is ***Gaius***.

- “***Gaius***” a Greek form of the Latin *Caius* = rejoiced, I am glad.

- As is the case with so many names in the Bible—there seems to be several individuals named *Gaius*.

- A *Gaius* is mentioned in Acts 19:29—he is from Macedonia and was caught up with Paul (and others of Paul’s Team) in a violent uproar that happened in Ephesus ...

... a silversmith named Demetrius, who made shrines of the goddess Diana (and made a bunch of money off of them), concluded that Paul (and everyone associated with him) was ‘Diana-phobic’!

- Demetrius may have been the head of the silversmith’s Union—and saw Paul’s teaching of the One True and Living God as being a threat to his religious industrial complex—and so he sought to shut Paul down (to ‘culture-shame’ him; or ‘media-shame’ him).

- In fact, they did (2,000 yrs. ago) what the ‘leftists’ do on so many college campuses today—they ‘shouted’ Paul down—because when a man named Alexander tried to make a defence, they all shouted “*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*” for 2 hours!!!

- That said—I don’t think this *Gaius* is the one we’re after, however he may be

- I believe our *Gaius* is the one in (see **Acts 20:4**).

- Here is *Gaius of Derbe*—and this may also have been the “*Gaius*” that Paul baptized at Corinth (1Cor. 1:14).

- Then there seems to be another *Gaius* that the apostle John wrote to in 3Jn.

- (and I may be wrong about all of this! - I just don’t know!)

- What I **do** know is that this *Gaius* was now apparently living in Corinth at the time of the writing of the book of Romans—and I know that since *Gaius* is mentioned in this List of 8 men who were on Paul’s Staff and/or Team, that he, too, was directly involved in ‘overseeing’ the Edification Process of the ‘body of Christ’ saints in the churches that Paul established, and especially these saints in Rome.

- I have also come across some information that may indicate that this *Gaius* was also a Bishop or Pastor in Thessalonica.

- (Let’s stick with what we know for sure from our passage.)

23 *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.*

- *Gaius* was Paul’s “**host**” while he was in Corinth and as the book of Romans was being written.

- It’s very likely that *Gaius* was a wealthy man, and that he was a man of great and generous hospitality (“*given to hospitality*” [Rom.12:13]) and no doubt was operating upon the **godly Love & Charity** that was effectually working within him from the doctrine he received from Paul. (No doubt he had great love for the saints, and for the godly Edification Process!)

- “**host**” [in this context] = one who receives and entertains another hospitably, in his own house, and without compensation (or money).

- And we know that *Gaius* not only hosted Paul, but also hosted “**the whole church**” that apparently met in his house.

- *Gaius’* house seems to be the place in Corinth where a lot of believers would go and get generous comfort and hospitality in lodging with him ... which is why I think *Gaius* was a somewhat wealthy individual.

- Believers from all over the world would stay with him, as well as those of Paul’s Staff/Team—(*Gaius* must have had a quite large home on a fairly large piece of property).

- And we also know that by doing this—*Gaius* put himself (and the members of his family & household) in great danger! **So great** was his love for the cause of Christ (*the revelation of the mystery*) that he would gladly and willingly jeopardize his wealth, his home, his family, and his own life for it!

23 *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.*

Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

- The 7th man listed is *Erastus*.

- “*Erastus*” = beloved.

- *Erastus* is mentioned only 2 other places in scripture outside of (:23)

- So, are there 3 different guys named *Erastus*? or 2? ... or is it the same one guy in all 3 references? ... again, I’m not sure ... but I kind of think it’s all the same guy.???

- First, let’s look at who *Erastus* is, then we’ll look at the other passages where he’s mentioned.

- “*Erastus* is ***the chamberlain of the city***”

- the “*city*” is Corinth [where Romans was written].

- The word “*chamberlain*” is an Older English word that’s rarely used today outside of the Royal Family over in Great Brittan—and it can be used in several different ways—but since (:23) says that *Erastus* was the *chamberlain of the city*—the use of the word ***city*** tells us just how this word is intended to be used.

- In this context, a *chamberlain* of a ***city*** is a very high office in the city government—it’s the older English word for the office of the Superintendent of the city’s finances, or the Treasurer of the city of Corinth.

- So *Erastus* was the Officer in the city of Corinth that handled the property and financial affairs of the city.

- *Erastus* therefore would have been either a slave who was now a freedman, or born a freedman—either way, by holding this office, it’s quite likely that he was a wealthy man.

- [Interesting] - in 1929 there was discovered at Corinth a Latin inscription reading, “Erastus, commissioner for public works, laid this pavement at his own expense.” ... is this our *Erastus*? ... possible, but not very probable.

- The word *chamberlain* is from the Greek word οἰκονομος = [house + law], hence, “the law of the house” - which means that when it came to the ‘house’ or place where all of the finances of the city of Corinth were kept (i.e., the Treasury), Erastus was the LAW ... what he said **goes!**

- [interesting] this is the same Greek word used over in Titus 1:7 for the *Bishop* or Pastor of the local church, who is charged with being “*blamless, as the steward [oikonomos] of God*”.

- *Erastus* would have been in charge of overseeing and managing money received in taxes, tolls, (and even property)—he would have been in charge of dealing out proper portions of money and land to serve the interests of the city of Corinth—anything dealing with public money and public expenses.

... and that should underscore the highness of his office, the trust he must have held, and the power that he wielded in old Corinth.

- He would have been very well known, held in very high esteem, and been given great respect by the citizens of Corinth. [maybe even feared]

- So *Erastus* mentioned in (:23) is a wealthy Roman citizen who holds high office in Corinth’s city government—and he was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a member of the church the body of Christ ...
... and he was a valuable member of Paul’s Staff/Team that in some way operated as an ‘overseer’ in the Edification Process of the saints in Rome as well as other churches throughout Asia Minor.

- (maybe it was because of his financial talents that he was such a valuable member of Paul’s Staff—and ‘oversaw’ such financial matters as concerning the local assemblies.)

- Interesting—those who got saved/justified by Paul’s *gospel* (and those who comprised Paul’s Staff & Team) would include those of very lowly estate and range up to such a high-ranking governmental official as *Erastus* ... but godly Love & Charity [i.e., **Body Thinking**] doesn’t cater to such things ... the thing that matters is godly Edification as “sons”!

[no ‘respect of persons’ with God]

- (see **Rom. 2:11**; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; **Col. 3:11; 3:25**)

- *Erastus* is mentioned in only 2 other places: **Acts 19:22; 2Tim. 4:20**

- Is this the same guy in all these passages? (again, I don't know) - I kind of think he may be ... but maybe not.

- One other thing about *Erastus*—IF our *Erastus* in (:23) is the same person in Acts 19:22 & 2Tim.4:20—it may very well be that, because of his association with Paul; and because of his constant travelling with Paul as a member of his Staff—it's very likely that *Erastus* either left or quit his position as *chamberlain* of Corinth—or that he was thrown out of his office due to his close association with the apostle Paul and his activities.

..... (but like our former Presidents, Governors, and many other offices ... 'once a President, always called, "President"') ... so even though *Erastus* was no longer in the office of *chamberlain*, he was still called by that title.

- And I think of *Erastus* now when I read 1Cor. 1:26 "*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*" ... right!, not "*many*" are, but **some** are—and *Erastus* was one of them!

23 *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.*

- Again, we've covered the "*salute*" issue in detail, and you should be very familiar what that's all about.

- The last man in the 'List' is ***Quartus***.

- "***Quartus***" = "fourth" ... the 4th child? ... or the 4th one in his family with the same name? ...

- As far as who this *Quartus* is, or what his background was, all I can say is a big fat Zero! - this is the one and only time he's mentioned in scripture.

- Some think that he may have lived at Rome, and was on Paul's travelling Staff/Team, and is therefore sending his *salutations* to the saints in Rome.

- The one and only thing we absolutely know about *Qartus* is that he is called “*a brother*” - and that’s **NOT** insignificant!

- “*brethren*” = underscores the brotherhood of sons; and points up our association and our alliance as **brothers**—not just as fellow believers or Christians, but specifically in this context as fellow sons of God our Heavenly Father. It’s not a word to be used lightly or thrown around as Christian language or Christian jargon.

- And a brotherhood can be generated even without being actual blood relation! (*brotherly* = to be bonded or banded together as brothers—a band of brothers).

- But the truth is—we ARE “blood brothers” - we ARE related by BLOOD—it’s just not by the blood of our natural father or our natural mother) - but by the BLOOD OF CHRIST!

- We’ve all heard that saying: “**Blood is thicker than water**” — but why is that such a truism? (because family bonds are closer than those of outsiders!)

- And that bond or that loving **attachment** of those who can be described as “*brothers*” is greater than the attachment of friends; it’s greater than the attachment of being neighbors; it’s greater than **any other attachment**! (which is why that’s such a powerful truism!)

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

Words: John Fawcett, 1782—Music: Johann Nageli (1773-1836)

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father’s throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

- And when it comes to us as *one body in Christ*, and *every one* of us *members one of another*—we're to recognize that in all that God has made us to be “in Christ” (justification-wise & sanctification-wise), that the cross work of Christ does indeed BIND us all together—and especially as “sons” in that we really are ‘blood-related’! (identified with His blood)

- The issue is—**you're a *brother* (through adoption)!**

- And one thing I know about *Quartus a brother* is that, because he is on this 2nd List - I know that he was one who was on Paul's Staff or Team as an ‘overseer’ of godly sonship Edification in the local churches that Paul's ministry established!

- and some sources say that *Quartus* may have been a Bishop or Pastor-Teacher in the Roman district of Berytus (which would be present-day Beirut, Lebanon! [that may mean that 6 of the 8 on this List may have been Bishops/Pastors!])

- So there's the 2nd ‘List’ of men who were Edification workfellows, fellow-workers, helpers, laborers, and the like—8 men (not a complete list), but 8 men who, at the time Romans was written, were on Paul's Staff and/or Team—and who ‘oversaw’ the Edification Process in the local churches established by Paul and his great ministry.

21 *Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.*

22 *I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.*

23 *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.*

Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

- Any Comments? Questions?

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

- Here is a near repetition of the end of (:20) - the only difference is that here, there is the addition of the word **“all”** at the end—[and we’ll get to the reason why when we look at the details of it].
- Without going into all of the detail that we did back in (:20), we’ll just review some important things about this statement.
- Paul makes this kind of statement numerous times throughout his epistles.
- And most often, this expression is commonly treated as simply a mere ‘formality’ - or as a montra or incantation, or a ‘benediction’ (= an invocation of divine **ble~~s~~sing**) that’s supposed to produce some kind of mystical or magical supernatural protection over you—that is, a religious spell or verbal charm that’s supposed to supernaturally create a ‘bubble’ of protection around you from all types of evil.
 - But my understanding is, that this is **NOT** that kind of thing at all!
- Far from simply being a ‘friendly’ or ‘heartwarming’ thing for Paul to say to us—these kind of statements are really a very important part of our godly edification; especially our education and edification as “sons” - and really, they can only be **fully** understood and appreciated from the viewpoint of what **sonship** edification is all about.
- However, the truth is, this statement actually does contain the issue of protection, preservation, even salvation [not justification] - and in this case, the issue of not being victimized by Phase 1 of the PoE ... but it **doesn’t** happen mystically or magically (or as a ‘Popish’ blessing bestowed upon you by some ‘Clergy’ [Priest/Pastor, etc.])!
 - The way it **does** happen is the same way God provides for any and all protection, preservation, and salvation from being victimized by the PoE—which is by means of your godly sonship edification—by means of “*the word of God which effectually worketh in you that believe*” (1Thess. 2:13).
 - It’s **not** the ‘power’ of an ordained Minister ... it’s **not** the ‘power’ of a man (or woman) Preacher, Priest, or Pope ... it’s the power of the Living words of the Living God, Living in YOU that gives you protection, preservation, and salvation from being victimized by the Satanic PoE!

- These statements serve as a kind of ‘marker’ or mini-type ‘checkpoint’ - because they call on you to look back at what you’ve been taught, and make sure that doctrine is doing its effectual job—and if it *is*, then you’ll be Laboring with God in this *grace* provision (an Operation of God’s business) that has been presented to you; and you’ll be Laboring with God successfully!

- This statement of (:24) expresses a ‘Fatherly desire’ for us as His “sons” and “daughters” concerning our sonship edification and the working out of it, in Laboring with God in the Operations of His business.

24 The *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

- We dealt with the word “*grace*” in some detail back in (:20), but here, we’ll just hit the highlights.

- The biblical definition and description of God’s *grace* gets developed throughout scripture—but we can give a basic definition of *grace* ...

- God’s *grace* = the free gift of God’s **power** to do for a man, that which he cannot do for himself—this *power* is given by God and received by man in such a way so as to not violate or compromise the righteousness, justice, or holiness of God (i.e., His character and essence) in so doing.

- And that demands 2 things:

1. The work of a Redeemer—the Lord Jesus Christ and His cross-work (all that He accomplished in His death, burial, and resurrection) - so that God’s character & essence is not compromised in offering man a way out of the predicament he is in, and can’t get out of himself.

2. That this *grace* of God is received by men only by FAITH and FAITH ALONE! (“*faith*” insuring that NO credit or merit goes to man [the subject], but all the credit and merit goes to the **Object** of his faith: the Lord Jesus Christ [God Himself]!)

- GRACE IS A POWER: THE POWER OF GOD!

- So, briefly and simply put: *grace* is the power of God’s Jehovah-ness to do for a man what he cannot do for himself, because of the work of a Redeemer: the cross-work of Lord Jesus Christ.

- Now if we desire a more precise and specific understanding of this *grace* being spoken about in (:24) we need to take our basic definition of *grace* (as the power of God's Jehovah-ness to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves—and for God to be able to do so because of the work of the Redeemer [*the Lord Jesus Christ* as mentioned in (:24)]) ... we need to ask ourselves: ...

... 'Is there anything that God has just told you that He, Himself has done, or is doing for you on the basis of His *grace*?' ... YES! there is ...

... God has just presented to you 8 men who are on Paul's Staff/Team that are functioning as 'overseers' of the Edification Process in the local assemblies that have been established by Paul's ministry as the "apostle of the Gentiles".

- And one of them (*Tertius*) has the role of Paul's **notary** to legally witness and certify the validity of his epistles, (the very curriculum for your godly sonship edification)!

- That, in itself is something provided for by God's *grace* to you—the validation of your entire curriculum for your sonship edification! (Paul's 13 epistles!)

- And if you go back as far as Ch.16:1, and take both Lists combined, what you have therefore been given is an understanding and appreciation for how a local church or assembly is designed by God to operate—(especially the 2nd List which focuses upon the role of the Pastors and 'overseers' of the Edif. Process [which would include the Deacons]) ...

... and all of that is part of the **Divine Institution** of the local church! God created/invented it; God designed it; and God defined it! ... and that's GRACE, that's by God's Grace!

- And though you may not think about it much—it's really a magnificent part of God's *grace* to you, to provide *for you* a local church!

[having a local church where you can get your sonship education & edification face-to-face; where a qualified Pastor teaches God's word 'rightly divided' and properly handled; and where there are Deacons in that church that watch out for you and the Pastor; is something to really rejoice about! and be so grateful for!]

- The local church is designed by God to be *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1Tim. 3:15) - the local church is where you assemble to hear God’s *truth*, and to learn God’s *truth*, which is the very thing that produces godly edification—or *godliness* within you!

- The local church is where a faithful Pastor teaches and preaches God’s *truth*—it’s where you can interact with the Pastor and with other saints and ‘overseers’ of Edification ...

... and it’s where you therefore **respond** to God’s grace-given *truth* (sound doctrine) — it’s where you respond to it, and receive it by **FAITH**.

- And every bit of that is God’s *grace* to us—and every bit of that *“grace”* is directly due to the work of *“our Lord Jesus Christ”* at Calvary’s cross and the grace-benefits we get from His substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection!

- Therefore the specific *“grace”* that (:24) is dealing with is **the properly functioning local church**—the very place where godly Edification is to take place!

- The *“grace”* in (:24) is God’s word itself—more specifically, it’s the part of God’s word that was given to Paul as *“the revelation of the mystery”* — and even more specifically, the *“grace”* in (:24) is about the ones who teach you God’s word, and the ones who ‘oversee’ the Edification Process in each church or assembly—(i.e., the Pastors, the Deacons, and the ones ‘approved’ to provide for it).

- And since Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE is to attack the message—then it stands to reason that Satan will attack that message by means of the ones in charge of ‘overseeing’ it in the local assembly! (that’s how this body of information contained in [:21-24] is still attached to the context of undergoing Phase 1 of the PoE!) ...

... these 8 men in this 2nd List are the polar opposite of the men in (:17-18 ... i.e., *“them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned”*)!

- These 8 men are ones who have already stood the test of the PoE against them—and they have proven to be **faithful to the doctrine; faithful to the ‘message’** of *the gospel of Christ, and the revelation of the mystery!* ... faithful to the Edification Process taking place **within** the local church!

- Remember that Satan seeks to be ‘like God’ ... “*I will be like the most High*” — he hates these ‘dust-men’ who are in every physical way “*lower*” than he is (but those ‘dust-men’ have the inner-man capacity to be ‘*God-like*’ or *godly* = the very capacity he will never have! although he’s going to do everything he can to get that capacity of *godly edifying*, and bring yours to an end!)

- And the Adversary knows that the means to get *godliness* is by the Edification Process—and the Edification Process for us as members of the church the body of Christ in this disp. of grace gets accomplished ‘**by grace through faith**’ as we ‘rightly divide’ and ‘properly handle’ God’s word. **Rom-Phlm**

- And since the *revelation of the mystery of Christ* has taken place (which God revealed through the apostle Paul) - Satan is no longer attacking Israel as he did in God’s prog./w/Isr ... rather, he now has his ‘sights set’ on *the one new man* God is now creating: *the body of Christ* ...

... you see, the Adversary knows that ***the Lord Jesus Christ*** is the One who has provided for all of this—he knows that the Lord accomplished something in His cross-work that was kept secret—and he knows that Rom-Phlm is where this new *body of Christ* get its proper godly Edification—(and that it all gets accomplished **by grace through faith**).

- And therefore, that draws the battle-lines (so to speak) ... the battle isn’t so much between Satan and you as much as it is between Satan and ***the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*** (and what He accomplished in His cross-work that was kept a *secret*)!

- And this is **why** it says in (:24), “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*” and NOT, ‘The grace of God be with you all.’

- It’s the cross of Christ that brings ALL of our grace benefits to us! (the *mystery* reveals **all** of God’s grace)

- So Satan attacks **both** (1) the means by which godliness gets accomplished (Phase 1/PoE = attack the message [i.e., God’s word—especially Rom-Phlm] - **and** (2) the means by which God’s word accomplishes godly Edification: **by grace through faith**!

- Satan's agenda is to: 1) corrupt the message, (primarily by getting you back under the Law program of Israel); and 2) corrupt the means by which God's word accomplishes godly Edification (by utilizing your **flesh**—i.e., **legalism**)!

- One thing is for sure—the “edification” that Satan offers, (Satanly Edification) will **NOT** be by *grace* ... it **won't** be by *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* ... it will be done by the **flesh** and the **works of the flesh**! And that's why his teachers of unsound doctrine will take you back under the Law!

- The point is: Satan's PoE is all about attacking “**THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**” !!! (i.e., all that He accomplished in the mystery aspect of His cross-work, *and* the means for us to get it: by grace through faith) ... and that's why Satan goes about using the Bible itself, and men who will do his bidding by teaching corrupt doctrine which is *contrary to that which you have learned*.

- And at this point in (:24) you now have the focus of attention being placed upon the **men** who are **faithful** to the revelation of God's *mystery-grace*, and who faithfully ‘oversee’ the Edification Process in the local assemblies—and the specific “*grace*” in this context are the men who are filling the positions of ‘overseeing’ godly Edification in the local churches—the Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Ministers, and ‘overseers’ who properly and honestly handle God's word, and who teach God's word “rightly divided”.

- And Pastors and Deacons are going to be specially singled out for the attacks from the PoE, to try and get them to be like the men mentioned in (:17-18), and to ultimately put an **end** to any edification going on in that local assembly (which the Pastoral Epistles especially focus upon) ...

... and that's why God will have Paul deal with they way in which the congregation of the local assembly should regard the Pastors and Deacons ... [we'll come back to this later]

- For now—is everyone clear on what this *grace* in (:24) is talking about?

24 The grace (the Pastors, deacons, and ‘overseers’ used by God to provide for your Edificational Establishment) **of our Lord Jesus Christ** (it’s due to the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ that this new entity of the church, the body of Christ has been created in this new disp. of grace in the first place) ...

... *be with you all.*

- The use of “*with*” here is just as it was in (:20).
- And (again), notice that it doesn’t say, ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be ***IN*** you.’ ... even though that may be the way you take it, and even though you may *think* it would be better to use “*in*” rather than “*with*”.
- And the reason for using “*with*” instead of “*in*” all has to do with the **context** in which it’s being used. (It’s a matter of what’s being focused upon and emphasized—or how God expects His *grace* to be viewed in the context of undergoing Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE.)
 - [and this may seem like I’m ‘splitting hairs’ here—but the distinction of terms is really very important as to your success or failure in dealing with Phase 1 of the PoE ... it’s a ‘hair’ that needs to be ‘split’!] - it’s an important distinction to make, because the success of your godly Edification **going on** depends upon it!
- Now—as we have noted—this whole sentence is **not** just some kind of mere ‘formality’ ... nor is it a meaningless ‘benediction’ or popish kind of ‘blessing’ that just happens mystically or magically or by ‘autopilot’ (so to speak).
- But with the context being one of a particular **grace provision** we are given due to the cross-work of our Lord Jesus Christ (a *mystery* aspect of His cross-work) - and that ‘grace provision’ is given to us in order to do battle with, and successfully deal with Phase 1/PoE so that our godly sonship Edification can Go On ... then, that helps me understand the use of this preposition, “*with*”.
- Of the many ways in which the word *with* can be used (and there’s a bunch of them—so, to save time) ... my understanding is that here in (:24) *with* is being used in the sense of:

[Webster's 1828]

2. On the side of, noting favor.

- *With* notes a particular way in which one thing is **related** to another or **in union** with one another—and it focus upon a particular **agent**—(in this case, *grace; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—a ‘grace benefit’ provided by the cross-work of the Redeemer and His Redemption*) - and that **agent** (that ‘grace benefit’) is operating on the **same side** as you, and **in your favor**, in a particular action (doing battle with Phase 1/ PoE).

- And by focusing upon the relationship of *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* and **“you”** - that *grace* benefit is to be ‘carried’ (so to speak) by *you* [or accompanied **with** *you* into this battle] as your ever-present battle-companion.

- The emphasis here in (:20) is upon the assistance of our **SUPPLY** of *grace* benefits we have received from *our Lord Jesus Christ* that are specifically geared for our success in battle with the Adversary!

- (specifically, the *grace* benefits found in [:21-23]).

- “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*”—that **supply** of *grace* benefits enumerated in [:21-23] that comes from the work of your Substitute Redeemer and His cross-work will **save** you from being victimized by Phase 1/PoE—the Redeemer and His Redemption **supplies** you with all your spiritual weapons and spiritual defense in the battle with the Adversary! [and the local church & the Pastor and deacons are a major part of that ‘supply’.]

- “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*” is your storehouse of **supply** [your Quartermaster]!

- Now at this point I want to focus upon that ‘grace benefit’ of a local assembly with such great ‘overseers’ as those listed in (:21-23) - who are on Paul’s Staff & Team, and some of which who were Pastors, and possibly deacons, in their own right.

- Men who are used by God to provide for your godly Edification are to be viewed as a ‘grace benefit’ - and you are to Labor with God in properly acknowledging them and responding properly to them.

- And there is a godly Labor aspect to your **response** to them!

- Let's run some verses and see if you can get the idea of what this godly Labor will consist of:

- 1Cor. 3:9 - all I'm after here is the reality that Paul and his Staff/Team (i.e., ***WE***) are labourers together WITH God in the Edification Process—and it stands to reason that there will be a reciprocating Labor aspect of the saints themselves as they properly respond to Paul and his Staff.
- 1Cor. 15:10-11 - (notice the ***“with”*** in :10, not *“in”*)
 - here in (:11) is both sides of that ‘grace-benefit’ coin:
 1. the *preaching* of God’s word for godly Edification by the faithful ‘overseers’ (pastors, ministers, and such);
 2. the *believing* by the saints who receive that grace benefit.
- 1Cor. 16:15-16 (:16 *“submit”*)
- 2Cor. 6:1 - (apparently you ***can*** receive the grace of God *“in vain”* ... how? by not responding properly to it!)
 - In a local church situation, the Pastor is a grace benefit that does his part ... and you (the congregation, the saints) are to do your part ... and when that’s done properly, the Edification Process will do its job.
- Phil. 2:25-30
- 1Thess. 2:13—(which we’ve looked at before—but there is the ‘giving’ of the word of God by the Pastor [Paul’s Staff], and there is the ‘receiving’ of it by the saints).
- 1Thess. 5:12-13
- 1Tim. 4:16—(I point this out because there are 2 ‘salvations’ to be had: 1 for the Pastor, and 1 for the saints who respond properly to the Pastor’s faithful teaching of the word of God.)
- 1Tim. 5:17-18
- Heb. 13:7, 17 - this is true in BOTH programs!

- So—in view of (:21-24) being the issue of having the privilege of Laboring together with God in His business—what, specifically, will you be doing? How will you be laboring to properly acknowledge and respond to the ‘grace-benefit’ of the ones used by God to provide for your godly Edification? (in your case, the Pastor & Deacons)

- among other things, it will be accomplished by your use of the **godly Love and Charity** that you have acquired in your Edificational Establishment (Romans doctrine).

- and it will require your laboring together as **members of a BODY** (remembering that the Pastor and Deacons are also members of your body).

- *submitting* to the authority of the office of Pastor-Teacher.

- giving ‘double honor’ of respect & remuneration.

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

- Why is the word “**all**” added here?

- Because in the assemblies at Rome, there were those who were more advanced in their ‘Doctrinal Estate’ - and because of their more advanced Edification, they had acquired the discernment and discretion needed to *mark* and *avoid* men who would try and teach them *doctrine contrary to that which ye have learned*. In other words, there were some in the churches at Rome who were ‘*simple*’ (:18), and there were others that were ‘*wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil*’ (:19) [the more advanced saints].

- But in the case of responding properly to the *grace* benefit of the ‘overseers’ of their Edification—that “**grace**” is to be with ALL of them (advanced or not)!

- And this also takes into consideration the *weaker brothers*!

- **Amen.**

- and to this great and godly Labor of successfully and fully dealing with the Adversary and Phase 1 of his PoE; and because of the seriousness of the matter, and the anticipated success these saints will have, it gets capped-off with *Amen*! = so be it; and emphatically, **so it is!** [see p.253 if needed]

ROMANS 16:25-27

- Now we come to the final sentence of the book of Romans ... and verses 25-27 are some very familiar verses, especially to those who understand and appreciate God's word "*rightly divided*".

- But these verses are really **not** used so much to prove the issue or the fact of rightly dividing God's word with Paul in Acts 9 (and not with Peter in Acts 2) ... although they indeed do that very thing ... but you have to keep in mind the context (and keep these verses in the context God puts them in) ...

... and while they *are* very powerful verses to prove the fact of rightly dividing God's word (Rom-Phlm) - as well as being used to prove the fact that God has suspended His program with Israel - and that a great dispensational change has taken place when the Lord Jesus Christ unexpectedly came back to the earth (which was **not** according to prophecy, and **not** prophesied about in Gen-Acts8), but rather, was *according to the revelation of the mystery* (just as [:25] says) ...

... while all that is true—and while these verses can, and **should** be used to set forth such proof as to the great dispensational change God has made, and that God is no longer working according to His plan and program with Israel to repossess & reconcile the Earth back to Himself from Satan and his cohorts, but is now working according to His plan and purpose to repossess & reconcile the Heavenly Places back to Himself from Satan and his cohorts with this new entity of the body of Christ ...

... the truth is, if you keep in mind the context in which these verses sit—the **FACT** of all that has already been 'proven' beyond any shadow of a doubt! (these verses aren't teaching you the **fact** of it, they're designed by God to do something else, something other than that!)

- The truth is—by the time you get to Rom. 16:25, the truth; the reality; and the fact of God having made a great dispensational change has already been set forth and established within your thinking (your inner man) by this point. (i.e., it's a fully settled matter by now)

- (that was done in Rom. 9, 10, & 11 [11:33-36—similar doxology])

- In fact, nothing has so fully settled that matter and generated a full persuasion of mind of that matter than Rom. 15:8-29 ... (and especially Rom. 15:15-29 and those 8 Sanctifying Works of the HG that validate God's great dispensational change!)

- And the truth is—if all you get out of these verses is that (i.e., the fact of God’s great dispensational change—the fact of “*the mystery*”) — that’s really a matter of **looking BACK** ... looking back at what God has already set forth and already firmly established.

- i.e., that’s what God **HAS** done!

- And my understanding is that these verses do NOT ‘look back’ at anything ... rather, they **LOOK FORWARD!** ... they are forward-looking ... they look forward to the up-coming 2nd Level of your sonship education and edification ... they look forward to getting your now Established godly edification to be fully Stablished they look forward to getting the “*subtilty*” and the “*knowledge and discretion*” ... they look forward to the “son” no longer being “*simple*,” but becoming that “*young man*.”

- These verses look forward to you not being just a **Roman**, but becoming an Ephesian!
(in view of what you have just **been** taught!)

- And before we begin to examine the details of these verses, you really need to get a good grasp on this—you have to have your mind put in the position God wants it in (that’s what context does)—and that’s the issue of being of a mind that is **forward-looking**—a mind that is set for **continuing ON** with your godly sonship edification.
[successfully]

... **not naively**, but with the soberness of mind—with keen insight, and critical thinking, and with all the mind of a learned Level I “son” - with the *renewing of your mind* that has taken place, and has *transformed you*, “*that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*” ...

... and with that kind of properly educated and properly edified understanding and appreciation—you are now to be eagerly **looking forward** with a recognition of:

(1) the importance of **continuing on** with the great godly education and edification God’s wants to give you as His adopted adult “son” [and the grandeur of it] ... but also

(2) the opposition and resistance from a determined Adversary that will gain the right to bring the full brunt of his Policy of Evil against you in order to thwart your advancement to being a “*young man*” and a “*wise man*”!

- These verses are designed to produce within you a forward-looking desire—one that’s based upon the sober truth that your going forward is going to be met with greater and greater “*glory*” regarding your edification and involvement in your Father’s business ... and yet, with greater and greater opposition from the Adversary’s Policy of Evil.

... and with that sober reality (with no human bravado and no phony show of bravery, with no human viewpoint type of optimism; but with godly optimism and godly faith, truth, and confidence ... that is, with real, genuine, **godly HOPE**) ...
... these verses are designed to produce within you a genuine, godly response of crying, **Abba, Father! all the more.**

- Every word of (:25-27) are **forward-looking**—the Level I Establishment work has been accomplished—the foundation has been laid—the basic understanding and appreciation of what God has made you to be “in Christ” Justification-wise and Sanctification-wise has been accomplished—your fundamental education and edification as an adopted, adult “son” of God has been accomplished—and the first round of the Satanic Policy of Evil has been successfully dealt with ...
IT’S TIME TO GO ON!

- And every word of (:25-27) is said in the context of that forward-looking determination — the desire and hope of GOING ON and entering in to Level II of your sonship education & edification!

- And since the immediate context is dealing with the issue of our Heavenly Father exhorting, admonishing, and instructing us as His “sons” in things pertaining to our undergoing Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil [attack the message] ...

... we have received the Godly Thinking regarding Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE in (:17-18) ...

... we have been taught about the Godly Living regarding Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE in (:19) ...

... and we have been taught about the Godly Labor as we undergo Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE in 3 Parts ...

... in Part A, we were taught how we are to Labor with God in effectually *bruising Satan* in order to countermand the continuation of Phase 1/PoE in (:20) ...

... in Part B, we were taught how we are to Labor with God in properly acknowledge and responding to the “*grace*” of the ones used by God to provide for our Establishment in godly sonship education and edification as we endure Phase 1/PoE in (:21-24) ...

- And that takes us to Part C of the godly Labor, where we will be taught about Laboring with our Heavenly Father in providing for the successful Stablishment [**forward-looking**; Going On] of any and all who are affected by Phase 1 of the Satanic Policy of Evil in (:25-27).

- Now at the outset, as you read (:25-27) it may not seem like these verses address any kind of a godly Labor issue and while these verses seem to be just a **formal** ending to the book of Romans ... that is, they merely seem to be just a formal “benediction” ...

... a “benediction” is an utterance of a solemn blessing or invocation of blessedness upon a person; a devout expression of a wish or desire for the happiness, prosperity, or success of a person; often expressing thanks ...

... the word “benediction” is most commonly thought of as an act of an officiating minister or clergy—and that it’s something done in the realm of ‘religion’ something done in church; usually at the end of a church service. [it’s in all the church bulletins!] ...

... again, while these verses seem to be just a **formal** ending to the book of Romans—(and while we may want to shy away from the use of the word ‘benediction’ to describe these verses) - the truth is, this really is a ‘benediction’ or a ‘benedictory’ way to end the book of Romans—but only in the sense that what God is having the apostle Paul do here is to make an ending statement as to our **successful completion** of our Level I Sonship Education & Edification [even as we undergo Phase 1/PoE] - but with a strong view to our GOING ON to Level II of our Sonship Education & Edification [and the advanced opposition from the Satanic Policy of Evil].

- In a sense, these final verses expresses our **graduation** from Level I, to Level II Sonship Edification!

- And in order to “get” (or understand) just what that godly Labor will consist of—(that is, the godly Labor of providing for the successful Stablishment of any and all who are affected by Phase 1/PoE) - you have to look closely at this final sentence of (:25-27) ...

... and when you do look closely, you will see that there really is a Labor aspect to it that involves not only the issue of Going On to being fully Stablished in godly sonship edification out in Level II; but also getting that job done while undergoing Phase 1/PoE.

- And that godly Labor issue comes up in the middle of (:25).

- It’s contained in the words: “*the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery*”!

- And that’s a labor-intensive issue! — you are going to be Laboring together with your Father in *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery* ...

... you’re going to Labor with God in keeping *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery going—on-going—Going On* to get all of Level II Sonship Edification and education ...

... which means you’re going to see the local church (the local assembly) in a new light—with a view to the **future** of that local assembly—and with a view to your participation in it and with it, as something far more important and meaningful and precious than ever before! (not just for you, but for others)

... and you’re going to perceive that the Adversary is going to do anything & everything in his power to shut DOWN that *preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery* —to thwart it; and to stop it! ...

... your godly Labor of participation in the various Operations of God within the local assembly should increase; your support of the Pastor and Deacons should increase; and your activity in keeping the doors of communication of the *preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery* as wide open as possible for all of the saints in the assembly should increase! (zealously & **joyfully**)!

- (We're not going to be just a "Romans" church, but we're going to be an "Ephesians" church! - and there's not many of those that exist on this earth right now!)

- Completing the book of Romans (and Level I Sonship Edification) really is a 'solemn' occasion; it really is a **major milestone** in your godly edification!

- So—far from being some kind of formal, religious 'benediction' of some high 'clergyman' (the apostle Paul) that evokes a 'blessing' on the saints at the end of a long, boring letter (or sermon) that's unattached from any of the previous context—this 'benediction' is in total keeping with the previous context—this 'benediction' is one of Laboring together with God in providing for the successful Level II Stablishment of the saints in the local assembly all-the-while enduring Phase 1 of the PoE, and knowing full-well that Phase 2/PoE is coming up!

- And in this way, the END of the book of Romans actually provides for a 'railroad car coupler' (so to speak) - it provides for a means for the **end** of the book of Romans to be attached to, or coupled together with the **beginning** of the book of Ephesians! (or the attaching of Level I to Level II Sonship Edification)

- So the problem (along with many other problems) with treating (:25-27) as merely a 'benediction' that's unattached from the previous information (and context) actually lends itself to falling in to the trap of considering these verses as if Paul is merely presenting the **fact** of "*the revelation of the mystery*" - which is NOT the case at all!

- The **fact** of it has already been established.

- This is the 3rd Part of our Godly Labor together with our Father regarding the up-coming Stablishment of our godly edification all-the-while undergoing Phase 1 of the Policy of Evil.

- Now let's begin looking at the breakdown of the 'packets' of information contained in these final 3 verses and this last sentence of the book of Romans.

- And first of all—just appreciate that this really is **one** sentence—(with that "*Amen.*" being a single word/sentence at the end).

- Grammar-wise, the sentence is 76 words (plus the word “*Amen*” at the end) - it has a bunch of commas (8 of them) - and it has one colon after the word “*faith*” at the end of (:26) - so there is supposed to be a pretty powerful ‘pause’ there in order to insure that the previous information has been properly understood and appreciated, and that it is effectually working and doing its job within you.

- (What do you see when it comes to any features or ‘points of interest’ in these verses?) (do you see any ‘grouping’ or ‘packets’ of information?)

- My understanding is, that in this ‘benedictory’ style, the information contained in it is directed in a 2-Fold way:

1. It’s certainly directed to, for, and about the Roman saints; and **us** (to you!) by extension; for the purposes of the godly Labor aspect that we just went over.

2. It’s also directed to God Himself—in the sense of praising Him and extolling Him for what He **will** do, and what He **will** accomplish, and the means by which He **will** accomplish the remainder of our godly sonship education & edification in our next major course of study in Level II. (Going On)

- The information indeed sets forth a praising and extolling of God—a lifting up of Him; a lifting up of His authority to complete the building process of our godly edification; a joyful magnifying of His character and essence in so doing.

- In fact, the information is set up so as to primarily praise and extol God Himself in all that He will continue to do, in connection with the success of your next, up-coming Level of godly edification as His “son/daughter”.

- The edificational aspect of the final sentence for us is really contained in the ‘middle section’ of the sentence.

- And this 2-Fold direction of this information (to you; and to God our Heavenly Father) is a very natural thing to do at this point—because, as has been the case from Rom. 8:14ff and on through the remainder of your sonship edification, the relationship that matters most is YOU as an adopted, adult “son” (as a member among many members of the entire the body of Christ itself) **and** God, your Heavenly Father—that is, the information is set forth as **a joint, Father-son venture!**

- Let's illustrate this:

- Let's do this by removing the 'middle section' of the sentence— which would leave us with just the opening statement/phrase and the ending statement/phrase:

- and in order to determine what *is* the 'middle section' to the sentence, my eye catches a particular term or word that gets repeated 3 times ... 3 times you have that word ***"according"*** used in the sentence ...

... and all those *"accordings"* are going to **further describe** how the first statement is going to get accomplished ...

... and if you take out or remove the information contained in those 3 *"accordings"* ...

... and if you start with the first *"according"* in (:25) - [then how do you know how much to remove? where would the end of this 'middle section' occur?] ...

... well, you know that you have that one colon at the end of the word *"faith"* there in (:26) - and the first 2 words of (:27) attach (or pick up with) the subject of the first phrase — (that is, in [:25] you have the words *"to him"* - and in [:27] the *"him"* of [:25] is stated as being *"God"* Himself)

"Now to him" ... "To God"

... so that colon at the end of [:26] would, therefore, be a good indication of the end of the 'middle section'.

- And so—if you remove the text from the first occurrence of the word *"according"* all the way to the colon—you have the following:

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you ..."

"to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever."

- (let that 'sink in' for a moment ...)

- Do you now see that, clearly, we have, not one, but **two** individuals in view here? - do you see that this 'benediction' at the end of the book of Romans is directed at (1) God Himself: *"Now to him"* [i.e., *"To God"* (:27) ... and (2) it's directed to "you" there in (:25)?!

- And, again, by directing this to both *God*, your Heavenly Father and *you* (all of *you* - 2pp, Obj. Case) - the object and the stress of the whole statement is directed to both “*you*” (all of the saints at Rome, [and all of *you* who have come to this point in Romans truth/doctrine]); and to *God* Himself.

- so as we stated before—this really is stressing a **joint, Father-son/daughter venture** (forward-looking venture)!

- And (also, again) - the information contained in all those 3 “*accordings*” are going to give further description and further details of how what is stated in the opening phrase, (i.e., “*Now to him that is of power to stablish you*”) is all going to get accomplished going forward in your sonship education & edification.

- In other words—the 3 “*accordings*” are going to give the further details of the very **means** by which God’s *power* is going to stablish you in the next Level of your godly edification as a “son”!

- Now at this point—let’s just notice another thing that helps us to break down or gather together the ‘packets’ of information contained in the ‘middle section’ (or in those 3 “*accordings*”) - and this will also give us some understanding and appreciation for what is all going on in this final great ‘benediction’ of the book of Romans.

- So how do we gather up those 3 ‘packets’? how do we mark them off as to the exact number of words each ‘packet’ contains? [hint: the commas don’t help us out here—so we’re not looking at punctuation marks, rather we’re looking at the wording].

- (actually, it’s very easy) ... notice that in all 76 words that make up this sentence—notice the words “**and**” ... and notice that the word “*and*” is used only 2x.

- The word “*and*” is being used here in a sense of **addition** or **additionally**—it’s like $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$

- So we have 3 ‘packets’ of information—and by paying attention to the 3 “*accordings*” and by paying attention to those 2 “*ands*”, we can then come up with 3 groupings of information:

25 Now to him that is of power to *stablish* you

- How is God going to *Stablish* you in Level II? (what are the means by which God will accomplish your *Stabshment* upon the *E*stablished foundation of your godly edification of Romans truth/doctrine?)

He's going to accomplish it by:

- (1) *according* to my gospel,
- (2) *and* (the "*and*" marks off the addition of something added to the previous phrase) *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began* 26 *But now is made manifest,*
- (3) *and* (something else added to the previous phrase) *by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:*

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.

- THAT'S YOUR FUTURE! That's the confidence you have going forward! That's your FUTURE HOPE of the fulness of your godly edification! And going forward, NOTHING is going to deviate from those 3 things—the HOPE of becoming that *young man* and that *wise man* and that *man of understanding* all hinges upon those 3 things!

- And really—none of those things are 'new' things at all ... rather, they are the encapsulation of God's provision for your edification all along ...

- "*my gospel*" (God gave to Paul: Rom. 2:16)
- "*the mystery*" (Rom. 11:25)
- "*the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*" (Rom. 15:18)

- So the issue isn't one of a 'new' form of godliness; or a 'new' methodology to God's edification—it's the issue of **sticking with** God's methodology for godly sonship edification (and **not** denying its power) to *stablish* you out in Level II—even in the face of increased opposition (PoE)!

- These 3 “**according**” matters express several things:
 - They act as a summary of Paul’s own unique apostleship.
 - They act as the 3 major points of God’s provision for your continued godly edification.
 - They act as the 3 major points of preservation of the Edification Process.
 - And they act as kind of 3 major volitional testing points when it comes to you **sticking with** God’s own methodology for godly sonship education and edification.
 - (and, they acts as something else—which we’ll see when we go over the details of these 3 matters)
 - But the ‘bottom line’ or major issue here is that you are suitably **impressed** with these 3 things as that which comprises a particular “power” of God in connection with the godly Edification Process!
- And that pretty much ‘shuts the door’ for trying to accomplish ‘spiritual maturity’ or ‘spiritual growth’ or godly edification (or, as it’s said here: *stablishing you*) **BY ANY OTHER MEANS ... even by any other means of teaching and learning God’s word!**
 - This! (these 3 matters of God’s methodology for edification) form a ‘**litmus test**’ (a way to determine the genuineness or the authenticity) of godly edification ...
 - ... these 3 things allow you to **detect** a counterfeit of godly edification ... (2Tim. 3:5 *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*)
 - And in the face of increased opposition from the Satanic PoE—you NEED to be suitably **impressed** with these 3 edification matters ... just as **impressed** with them as God is Himself!
- **No other means or method for becoming “Stablished” will do the job successfully (to God’s *glory*)! ... these are the ONLY proper and approved ‘building materials’ for godly edification!**

- **Details**: - but in a little bit different way—and that’s because of the rather unique structure of this sentence—with the ‘general’ benediction being stated in the first part of (:25) and the last part in (:27) ...

(first general part)

Now to him that is of power to stablish you ...

(last general part)

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.

... and then with the ‘fine details’ of the benediction being stated in that ‘middle section’ that contains those 3 “*accordings*”.

- My understanding is that there is something within those 2 ‘general’ benedictory statements that we first need to give our attention to ...

... there are a couple of ‘things’ that we first need to understand & appreciate—and the reason why I want to address those 2 statements first, is because those ‘things’ I’m after will have a great bearing upon how we properly view the information contained in that ‘middle section’.

- And just to ‘cut to the chase’ (so to speak) - what I’m after is that in this entire ‘benediction’ (this final sentence; this final statement of Romans doctrine & Romans edification) comes along and sets forth 2 of God’s Attributes—or 2 features of God’s character & essence.

(1) “*power*” in [:25]; (2) “*wise*” in [:27]

(God’s *power* and God’s *wisdom*!)

- And these aren’t ‘random’ - rather they are the very 2 essential attributes or characteristics of God (of God’s Jehovah-ness) that we will need in order to get our advanced godly edification as “sons” - and not only that, but just as importantly, they are the very 2 features of God’s attributes that will set our mind/thinking upon the necessary things we are to be Laboring in with our Father so that we can successfully continue on in our edification as we navigate and undergo the advance attacks from the policy of evil.

- We’ve already had reason for God to focus our attention upon 3 ‘Fatherly Titles’ (and 4 features of His character & essence) that are critical to our being able to continue on in the edification process ... but these 2 things are different from those ‘Fatherly Titles’ - because those ‘Fatherly Titles’ were designed to function as measurements, or markers, or

checkpoints, whereby we were (in all honesty of heart) to be able to say, ‘Because of the effectual working of God’s word [of Romans truth/doctrine], Father, I really do see you as The God of patience, consolation, hope, and peace.’ ... and then we were to realize that because of that same effectual working of God’s word of Romans truth; the same thing could be said by the Father of us as His “sons”.

- But here in (16:25 & :27) - the issue is not one of God giving Himself another ‘Fatherly Title’ ... rather, it’s the issue of God bringing to your attention the 2 essential elements or aspects of His character & essence, 2 particular attributes of God (attributes possessed by God only) that are going to be essential and vital and indispensable to the success of your next Level of godly edification as “sons”!

- And these 2 attributes are set forth in view of—not only the issue of getting you properly “*stablished*” in the advanced doctrine coming up ... but it’s also in view of the upcoming attacks and opposition from the Satanic PoE!

- and those attacks will focus upon (1)God’s *power* and (2)God’s *wisdom* ! (and, without guessing, I know that this is true because of what’s sitting in the up-coming epistles of Paul ... which we will see)

- And I want to emphasize something that I just said—and that is, that these 2 features of God’s attributes are carefully stated & worded so that there is no doubt as to Who these 2 features belong to ...

... “*Now to him (God) that is OF power ...*”

... “*To God ONLY wise ...*”

- Both of those features of God’s attributes are worded in such a way to say (in no uncertain terms) that these 2 things are the sole possession of GOD! ... the point being, they are **NOT** attributes possessed by YOU!

- And the reason why these 2 things are being focused upon here at this point (at the very end of your Level I edification as “sons”) is to ward off (as a means of protection against) what might be called, ‘The Sophomore Jinx’ ... that sophomoric thinking that can occur when you think you know more than you really do!

- And although you have a lot of edification and education as God's "sons" right now—and although you are at the point of Level I 'graduation' (and you know a whole bunch of things about who God has made you to be "in Christ" - you are a 'learned' Level I "son") ... the truth of the matter is, you are just a 'sophomore' in your godly edification—a whole lot more is to be learned—and **even though you have learned a bunch of stuff, YOU ARE STILL VERY VULNERABLE!** (to your edification becoming ruined!)

- And—(just as it was told to you by your Father back in Romans 8) - **you are your own worst enemy!** (2x more than the Adversary and his policy of evil!)

- And again—here you are being told (in no uncertain words) that there are 2 features of God's attributes that are going to be 'forefront' issues in the success of your godly edification going forward ...

... (God's **power**, and God's **wisdom**) ...

... and they are the sole possession of God, Himself!

- and it serves as a stark reminder that when it comes to the Edification Process—(just as you have always been taught): **IT IS ALL BY GRACE — you contribute nothing (0.00%)**

- Everything you have "in Christ", and everything you are "in Christ", and all of your edification up to this point has been accomplished "**by grace, through faith**" ... meaning, NO credit, NO merit, and NO honor, and No glory goes to YOU ... **it is ALL God's POWER and WISDOM that has accomplish your edification!** (by **grace**, you are what you are!)

- And whether you realize it or not—that's **offensive** to men by nature (or what you are by nature); and it's **offensive** to the general course of this world that Satan has charted!

- God's **power** and **wisdom** is **offensive** to men, and to the course of this world! Why? simply because all men, by nature, want to **contribute something** to either their justification and/or their sanctification!

- (in a sense, Rom. 16:25-27 is an introduction to 1Corinthians!) - and if you carefully examine 1Cor., you'll see the BIG issue is: God's **power** & **wisdom**!

- (we could spend a whole bunch of time on this!)
- Before we look at 1Cor—just notice that God has Paul not only ‘bookend’ the book of Romans with “Establish” and “Stablish” - but he also ‘bookends’ the book of Romans with “power” in connection with “the gospel” (the gospel God gave to/through the apostle Paul)— SEE: (Rom. 1:16)
- see 1Cor. 1:17-2:5ff - [1:24]! (“called” = responded positively to their message. [2Thes. 2;14])
- (“power”) 1Cor. 4:19-20
- 2Cor. 4:1-7 [:7]
- 2Cor. 12:5-9 (**grace is a power!**)
(“power of Christ” - see additional notes)
- Eph. 3:20 (“the power that worketh in us” = Rom. 8:14-39!!!)
- “wise / wisdom” - Rom. 12:16 (6th Component of Wisdom) [see add. notes]

- And this should tell you something—that even if you do get an understanding and appreciation of God’s word ‘rightly divided’ ... and even if you do understand that God has suspended His program w/ Isr. and brought in a dispensation of Gentile grace ... **you can still be ‘shipwrecked’ in your edification!** (*1Tim. 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck;*)

- And this should tell you something else—if God’s *power* and *wisdom* is wrapped up in these 3 “*according*” issues (which it is in this context) ... and if God’s *power & wisdom*, in connection with these 3 “*according*” issues is set within the context of you becoming Stablished in your godly edification (and it is) ... and if God’s *power & wisdom* in connection with these 3 “*according*” issues is also set within the context of you becoming Stablished in your godly edification as you undergo Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE (which it is) ... and if Phase 1 of the PoE is the issue of attacking God’s message (which it is)

... then that should tell you in no uncertain terms that the particular attack of the PoE is going to be focused upon these 3 “according” matters going forward:

1. To attack, corrupt, and alter the “*gospel*” God specifically gave to and through the apostle Paul;
2. To attack, corrupt, and alter “*the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery*”;
3. To attack, corrupt, and alter “*the scriptures of the prophets*” that have now been “*made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*”.

- (2Cor. 11:3-4 ... also 11:13-15)

- note: “*another Jesus ... another spirit ... another gospel*”

(in Romans, the order is different) - cp. w/ Rom. 16:25-27

- “*according to my gospel*” - “**another gospel**”

- “*the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*” - “**another Jesus**”

- “*the scriptures of the prophets*” that have now been “*made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*” - “**another spirit**”

- Why a different order? maybe it’s because:

1. God the Father

2. God the Son

3. God the Holy Spirit (which produces that “*spirit which is of God*” by means of the effectual working of God’s word in your inner man (“spirit”). The HS being the member of the Godhead in charge of the holy scriptures’ production and preservation!

- Hence, all 3 members of the Godhead are involved in producing God’s *power* and *wisdom* to *stablish* you in godly edification as God’s “sons”!

- Have I gone too far? (a stretch?) - (thin?) ... maybe.

- But the point is: these 3 “*according*” issues are going to be the focus of the direct attack & opposition from the Adversary and his Policy of Evil going forward — and your success in your godly edification as a “son” hinges upon **sticking with** these 3 “*according*” issues NO MATTER WHAT!

- At this point we should now be suitably impressed with how the construction of this final sentence of Romans sets before you 2 major aspects or attributes of God's character & essence that are intentionally set before you—(God's *power & wisdom*) - **because** God's *power & wisdom* being spoken of here is regarding your godly edification as a "son" going forward ...

... and God's **power** (especially, [colon]) is vested in those 3 "*according*" issues set forth in the middle section of the sentence.

- Those 3 "*according*" issues **are** the power of God to **stablish** you ...

... they **are** the "**power**" of genuine and true godliness ...

... they **are** the power of God that will continue edifying you unto *godliness which is in faith* (1Tim. 1:4)

... they **are** the "*power*" that is DENIED by those who only have "*a form of godliness*" (2Tim.3:1) ...

- And as such, they (those 3 "*according*" issues) **are** the focus of attack by the adversary & his policy of evil going forward!

- ROMANS 16:25

- "**Now** to him that is of power to stablish you"

- "**Now**" - used here to introduce an important or noteworthy point or issue in a series of statements or phrases.

- This is the final time "*Now*" is going to be used in the book of Romans—and by using it this way, it heightens and gives great emphasis upon the **critical nature** of the following and final statements to the entire book containing the foundation for your godly edification!

- Therefore this final sentence of Romans needs to be **deeply** impressed upon you—it needs to be permanently written upon the 'fleshy tables' of your heart—(this is the Father's 'heart' on the matter of edification going forward, and it needs to be your 'heart' on the matter as well) - in fact, it can't be overstated as to the vital importance and critical nature of what is said here, because your edification going on depends on it!

- **“to him”** - i.e., to “God” (we know from :27)

- **“him”** (God) is one-half of this joint, Father-son venture into your advanced godly edification as a “son”.

- And in this kind of ‘benedictory’ style—the apostle Paul is ‘blessing’ God—or speaking well of Him in view of His unmatched *power* and *wisdom* to accomplish godly edification in you—to create within you a heart and mind and spirit and soul (and even a body) that which is *conformed to the image of His Son* ...

... therefore God (and His *power & wisdom*) is set forth here as the praiseworthy One that He is—and Paul’s desire is that the Roman saints (and you as well) should be overcome with joy and ‘awe’ and respect, and thanksgiving for this very *power* of God (and God Himself) to have fully Established your fundamental edification, and to continue that ‘building project’ until it gets completed!

- **“Now” is the time, and “Now” is the place** to look at all that God has done—and what God’s powerful grace has done—and to ‘give credit where credit is due’ - or to give *glory* where *glory* is due!

- **“Now to him that is of power to stablish you”**

- **“that”** - this is one of those words that will often be changed in most (if not all) of the modern English translations.

- The modern translations will change it to ‘Who’ - thinking ‘Who’ is much better than **“that”** — (but it’s NOT!)

- the idea being, that to speak of God in a gender neutral pronoun like **“that”** is offensive and wrong—especially when talking about God, for goodness sake!

- However this is an issue of the excellency of Older English much like we saw back in Rom. 8:16 **“The Spirit itself”**

- Truth is—far from being wrong or improper—the use of the word **“that”** (here in Older English) is actually the **proper** way to give and express HONOR to God!

- The use of neuter pronouns like *it*, *itself*, *which*, and *that* are used **to indicate estate, rank, and dignity**. And though we don't commonly speak this way any more, we do understand the use of these kind of terms when we say, for example, 'He is a king and looks like *it*.'

- Using the neuter *that* (*Now to him **that***) is a special function of the excellency of the English Language whereby rank, dignity and honor are in view—and far from being a 'slight' or 'snub' to God, the use of *that* actually gives the proper honor dignity and glory to God—and to change "*that*" to 'Who' actually **weakens** what is said and makes it **less** accurate!

- (source): A Grammar Of The English Language, by George Curme, Vol. II Syntax, p.553

- "*Now to him that is of power to stablish you*"

- (it may be just me) - but My understanding is that by the way this is worded—(it doesn't say: 'Now to him that will powerfully stablish you' - or something along those lines) - and (to me, anyway) it seems that by wording it they way God has Paul word it ...

... it's kind of like saying, 'Ok, God and His power & wisdom is what has gotten you to this point—a 'milestone' in your godly edification—and now you and your Father stand there at the end of your Level I Sonship education/edification—and you look at Him and recognize His power to get you this far; and He's telling you that He "*Now*" has the *power* to go on and complete the 'building project' - but the choice and decision to Go On is up to YOU ... (He's ready, are you?) ...

... He stands there with all the *power* that has fully Established you, and by that same *power* He will fully Stablish you ... but it's up to you to avail yourself of your Father's *power* going forward ... it's going to be by His *power* (which will succeed), or by your power (which will fail) ... so, 'Son, which will it be?' [it's **not His predetermined will**]

- To me, it seems like there is inherent in the wording here a kind of 'check' as to your total commitment—do you see that? or am I just 'seeing things'?

- Regardless—the “*of*” in the phrase, “*to him that is **of** power*” expresses possession—it is God Himself that possess the actual *power* to *stablish* you and to complete your sonship edification, **not you!** [by grace, through faith!]

- “**power**” = simply put, is the supplied force (supply) or the ability to act upon a person (or thing) that gets something accomplished.

- and that’s the case here—it’s the *power* (or the *power supply*; the **supply** of *power*) God has to so act upon and within you to get the remainder of your godly edification accomplished.

- And the **power** in this context isn’t just any old ‘power’ of God—we’re not supposed to stop here and teach a whole ‘Category of Doctrine’ called “The Doctrine of the Power of God” — and study all about God’s omnipotence, etc.

- The context in which the word “*power*” sits in (:25) is the context of godly edification.

- Therefore the *power* that is being indicated by the context is the *power* of God vested in the Edification Process—which would include:

- God’s written word (and especially that portion of God’s written word that contains God’s own composition of the curriculum for our edification as members of the body of Christ in this present dispensation of God’s grace. (i.e., Rom-Phlem.)

- The New Testament benefits (understood redemptively and dispensationally) - which would include the 3rd Member of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit being ‘given’ to us at the moment of our justification—the Holy Spirit’s ministry of ‘heart writing’ — God, being our God, and we, being God’s people (that is, “we” the member of the new creature of the body of Christ, and **not** ‘we’ as spiritual Israelites, etc.) — and our intimate fellowship with God as our Father who will personally take over our education and edification Himself. [Father-son, not by ‘tutors & governors’!]

- It also includes God's *power* that is vested in, and written in, and composed in His word (our curriculum) that will successfully ward off the attacks of the Adversary and his PoE—and will take all that the Adversary can throw at you, and all of the “sufferings of Christ” that you will face, and will do just what Rom. 8:37 said: “*Nay, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him that loved us.*”

- To ‘boil it all down’ - God's *power* in the context of (:25) is the *power* of the living words of the living God, **living in YOU!**

- It's God's *power* vested in the Edification Process, which puts on display **the greatest expression and demonstration of God's power that has ever existed in all of history!** [the power of Grace]

- “*Now to him that is of power to **stablish** you*”

- “**stablish**” - this is the other great ‘bookend’ of Romans.

- The first ‘bookend’ is the word **E**stablish, which is found in the opening verses of Romans.

1:11—*For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be **established**;*

- In both cases (in 1:11 & 16:25) the Greek word is $\sigmaτηρίζω$ = to stand, set fast, firmly fix.

- [st8rizo] is used over a dozen times in the NT—and it's translated 5 different ways: “*stablish*”, “*establish*”, “*strengthen*”, “*fix*”, and “*steadfastly set*”.

- So how do we know that *stablish* is the right word to use here? Why not some other word? Why not use the word *establish* again just as it was used in 1:11? isn't *stablish* just another way of saying *establish*? isn't *stablish* an old, archaic, word? [& shouldn't be used?]

[from the writings of Keith Blades—E25)

The context in which a word is used, (which also includes such things as its grammatical position within a sentence, whether or not it is accompanied by any modifiers, and other influential factors), is always the issue that determines the meaning that a particular word

conveys when it is capable of conveying more than one meaning. The vast majority of words belonging to any language have the capacity of conveying more than one meaning. And it is the information contained within the context in which a word is used that specifies which of the word's multiple meanings, or shades of meaning, is to be understood. The information contained in the context has the capacity to produce a "process of elimination," which eliminates certain potential uses of a word and leave only the one the user intends. This is how language, its words, and the meaningful communication of those words are designed to function. Unfortunately many times we (as either the communicator or the recipient) either do not pay close enough attention to the context and fail to gather all the information, and end up misunderstanding or poorly grasping what someone means by what they say. Or we fail to supply enough information in the context of what we are saying or writing, and end up making it easy for someone else to misunderstand us. But this only goes to underscore that the big issue is the information contained in the context. It is the determining factor for which meaning a word is conveying. (Puns, and plays on words, take advantage of this in a comical way.)

One thing I have learned over the years is that most people do not know how to use a dictionary. Except for using it to learn how to spell a word with which they are not familiar. (Not to mention also the different kinds of dictionaries that there are, and how for example an historical dictionary differs from a current usage dictionary, etc, etc.) They look up a word, see that it has let's say 5 meanings given for it, and they think that this means that they can choose whichever of those 5 meanings that they want. Yet that is not what the dictionary is saying at all by listing those 5 meanings or definitions. Instead the dictionary (which by its very name is concerned with "diction") is relating the fact that in various contexts this particular word has the capacity of conveying one of these 5 meanings. But it is up to you, if you have come across this word in some communication, to gather as much information as you can from the context so that you can eliminate meanings unfitting to the context and be left with the one that does fit. Or it is up to you, if you are going to use this word yourself, to provide enough information in the context in which you use it to prevent someone from applying any of the meanings to this word that you do not intend to be applied. This in gist form is what the dictionary is saying when it gives these 5 potential meanings to the word.

Again, it is not saying, Choose whichever meaning you like. In actuality it is saying, Be careful! This word has 5 potential meanings. Check the context of its use carefully and thoroughly so you do not misunderstand the author's intended use of this word, or misuse it yourself when you write or speak. Now when it comes to the Greek word in question (*sterizo*), it, (like the vast majority of Greek words) has more than one meaning, or shade of meaning, to it. A brief synopsis of the data in my various Greek dictionaries, lexicons, and vocabularies, is this — Up to 7 potential meanings: establish, set up, fix firmly, settle/stabilize, confirm, strengthen, support; (the first three being meanings that pertain to the issue of an **initial** action and the remaining 4 being meanings that pertain to a **subsequent** action following the initial action.) Obviously a Greek was going to have to pay very close attention to the context in which he encountered 'sterizo,' including whether or not the word had already been used someplace earlier on within the overall context of the communication he received. Since the word has meanings applicable to an initial action and meanings applicable to a subsequent action following the initial one, then he must take note of any initial use within the context for this will have a bearing upon a subsequent use of the word. (Interestingly enough, of course, this is just the situation that exists in Romans, as well as in IThessalonians.)

It is evident that the King James translators paid close attention to the context of 'sterizo' in Romans and IThessalonians. And just as the information contained in the immediate and near context of Romans 16:25 demands, as well as the influence brought to bear by the initial use of 'sterizo' in 1:11, the meaning of 'sterizo' in 16:25 is **not** one belonging to **initial** action, **but is one belonging to subsequent action**. Hence, the meaning is one belonging to the concepts of either settling/stabilizing, confirming, strengthening, or supporting. Which one is determined by the process of elimination provided for by the immediate and near context. And in view of verses 17 through 20 giving instruction on how to respond to the tactics of Satan's policy of evil against our doctrinal *establishment* that Romans has just provided, the meaning in verse 25 is one of God's power to not only *initially* 'establish,' but also 'stablish' or **stabilize in view of, or after, an attempt to destabilize or shake the foundation has occurred**. The doctrine of Romans therefore is not only the power of God effectual to producing 'establishment,' it is also the power of God effectual to producing 'stablishment' in the face of Satan's policy of evil.

(end Keith's comments)

- *Establish* is a building term—hence, it fits perfectly with the issue of **edification**—(an ‘edifice’ being a building) - which is why the word “*building*” is so often used as a term for the godly Edification Process. (see: 1Cor. 3:9-12; Eph. 2:20-22)

- *Establish* means to set something up; to set (or set fast) and fix firmly, unalterably, and permanently (such as a foundation); hence, to lay a firm, solid, **sound** foundation—a foundation that is strong enough to bear the weight of the superstructure (or the completed building that will rest upon the sound foundation).

Now

- *Stablish* is a building term as well—and it’s also perfectly fit for describing the issue of **edification**—and it means, to render something **stable**; to make secure; to strengthen; to **stabilize**.

- However—it means to build upon the sound foundation, the remaining superstructure; in other words, the subsequent action following the initial action of *Establish*, therefore, to place or set a thing (such as a superstructure) firmly and soundly into position; and to build it as firm, solid, and **sound** as the foundation itself.

- Simply put—the word *stablish* assumes that the foundation is already there! (which is the **exact context** of Rom.16:25)!

- *Stablish* means to **complete** the building project with the result that you have a **complete, sound [perfect]** building.

... but there’s a ‘**shade of meaning**’ that the word *Stablish* has that *Establish* doesn’t have—and it’s this: *Stablish* means to stabilize in view of, or after, an attempt to destabilize or shake the foundation has occurred.

- *Stablish* is used in contexts where it implies or directly cites some kind of **DE-STABILIZING INFLUENCE!**

- And the ‘attempt to **destabilize** or **shake** the foundation’ is the issue of undergoing Phase 1 of the Satanic PoE [attack the message] - which by this point has already been taking place.

- see **1 Chron. 16:7-36** (Song of David—written prophetically—in a prophetic sense)
 - (:30) [future tense—looking to when the Kingdom gets set up!]
- see **Psa. 93:1**—(Vol. IV) - [the very definition of “*stablish*”!]
 - Used in an accomplished sense.
 - A **de-stabilizing force/influence** had entered the world, and it will be eradicated!
- **1 Thess. 3:11-13 cp./with 3:1-3**
 - ** When “*stablish*” is used, look for the destabilizing issue in the context! **
- **2Thess. 2:1-2 cp./with (:16-17)**
- **2Thess. 3:1-3**
- **James 5:8**—(the foundational *Establishment* doctrines are in the book of Hebrews).
- **1Pet. 5:10**
 - And that’s all the more reason why the word *Stablish* is the appropriate and most excellent English word to use here in the context of Rom. 16:25—because everything that’s being said here is in view of our initial *Established* edification **having been completed and accomplished**, and now viewing our godly Labor to succeed in our edificational “*stablishment*” going On (going forward) *AS* we continue undergoing Phase 1 / PoE!
 - (And **none** of the modern English translations that I know of use the word “*stablish*” - they all think that it’s just an old, archaic way of saying the exact same thing as “*establish*” — and therefore they either change the word to ‘establish’ or to something like ‘strengthen’ or ‘make you strong’! and **NONE** of those words carry the shade of meaning as “*stablish*”!)
 - And really, “*stablish*” is the essence of godly edification in a ‘nutshell’ - a sound foundation with a sound building upon that foundation—built according to the ‘blueprint’ of the wise master-builder—in the proper order—and with the proper, authorized building materials!

- Comments? Questions?

- (:25) *Now to him that is of power to stablish you ...*

- Now we come to the first of the 3 “*according*” issues ...

... “*according to my gospel,*”

- “*according*” - What does *according* mean? and what is significant about using that particular word here in this context? Why not use some other word like “*by*” or “*through*” or “*after*” or “*in*”?

(it must be important—God has Paul use it to mark out & distinguish these 3 most critical issues of God’s *power & wisdom* for the success of your edification going forward).

- [we spent some time on this word back in 12:3]

- ***according* = agreeing with; corresponding to; matching up with; consistent with; exactly or just as; suitably; proper; in a manner conforming to.**

- The meaning of *agreeing with* and *consistent with* are the most relevant definitions for this context.

- But the KJ translators didn’t use those words—they used “*according to*” (“*to*” indicating the particular relationship, and emphasizes firmly and with no question or equivocation [i.e., not sidestepping, not fudging, not compromising, not altering the following stated thing = “*my gospel*”) ... but why “*according*”?

- Well—when you look at the word *according*— What is its root form? (A: *accord*) — and it’s interesting (and not surprising) to find that even the word *accord* has a “root” to it—and what is it? (A: *cord*) - which we often spell in English “chord” - hence, a cord!

- and it’s interesting to note that according to Skeat, the word *accord* is derived from the L. *ac*, for *ad*, = “to”, that is, in agreement with; and *cord*, which is a stem from *cor* = the **Heart**—hence, that which is in agreement with the **heart**!

- And this (as we will see) is an important reason as to why the KJ translators chose to use “*according*”.

- The word *according* has different variations—*accordant*, being one of them—and in (Smith’s Synonyms Discriminated, p268), Charles Smith says:

“*Accordant* (from the L. *accordare*, meaning, as if to bring to one heart) - *accordant* is commonly used of consistency in specific matters of statement, evidence or testimony. But beyond this, *accordant* follows the various aspects of the verb to *accord*, which expresses agreement in representation, statement, taste, opinion, feeling, sentiment, desire, principle, aim, belief, and moral conduct; but is not applicable to purely physical form, action, or force.”

- Now the word *accord*, as we use it in our English language, has borrowed from several languages for its origins—but Noah Webster notes in his 1828 Dictionary — “In some of its applications, it is naturally deduced from the Italian *corda* [the string of a musical instrument].”

- And that’s why one of the way to define *accord* is: harmony ... a harmony of minds or an agreement of minds.

- which is why the radical root “*cord*” is in our English word “*concord*” depicting our close-knit fellowship and communion— (2Cor. 6:15 *And what concord hath Christ with Belial?*) - which is **not** consistent with our **identity** “in Christ”!

- And the significance of the use of *according* is found in that radical-root issue of a ‘cord’ - or a string of a musical instrument—and the idea of having a harmony of minds, or of having an agreement of minds.

- And we can see that, for example, in the members of the Rem/Isr (the ‘little flock’) when the remnant saints are described in the opening chapters of the book of Acts ... (Acts 2:1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* ”)

- And that’s because a string of an instrument has features of harmony even within *one string*! - it has ‘agreement’ type features and ‘consistent’ type features to it!

- (Illustrate at piano) (1st/3rd/5th make up a major chord) [**but! the 1st / 3rd/ and 5th notes are all IN that one root string!**] HARMONY vs. DISSONANT (*not agreeable!*)

- (Smith's): The first, third, and fifth notes of a key, being in accordance, form a **concord** when struck together.

- So—*according* is designed to direct your thinking in a very particular way regarding these 3 Big Issues by which the Edification Process will be carried out going forward (not to say they haven't been the Big Issues all along, because they have) - but they are the Big 3 that will be the focus of attack & opposition by the Policy of Evil going forward—and therefore they need to be appreciated for the value of them and protected and 'stuck to' or adhered to ...

... (or **ATUNED** to [Crabb's])...

... going forward in the Edification Process with NO alteration to them; and NO compromise to them (which would be *conceited* and foolish to think or to operate otherwise)!

- Now—we could spend more time looking at a bunch of dictionary definitions of the word *accord*—but one of the things that all of them talk about when describing the shades of meaning of the word *accord* is that the word *accord* carries the shade of meaning of 'a harmony of minds' [which we just noted] - and beyond that, *accord* is an agreement of **feelings and sentiments**—or as Smith says, "Things are not so much demonstrated as **felt** to *accord* ... it's an agreement **in general character and spirit**."

GO S L O W L Y!!!

- And when there is *accordance* with God's word—(with the curriculum God wrote in Paul's epistles)—to our being *conformed to the image of God's Son* (i.e., putting our Position "in Christ" into Practice in the details of our lives) - [put another way: when there is *accordance* with our Position "in Christ" to the Practical details of our lives as we live our lives out in the evil course of this world that Satan has charted, as well as enduring the effects of the PoE; and do so consistent with our Position "in Christ"] —it provides **incontestable evidence** of the *power* and *wisdom* of God regarding the Edification Process! (and God Himself *gets/receives* something out of that!!!)

- Now, there is one more thing we need to understand & appreciate about God's use of the word *according* as it's attached to the 3 Big Issues of the Edification Process—there's one more '**connection**' we need to make here (and it's a big deal!) ... it's the 'kicker' or the 'punch' or power to being able to connect these 3 *according* issues to something else stated in this sentence.

- One of the inescapable things you encounter as you deal with the definition and description of what *according* means—is that *according* not only has this issue of **harmony**, but also you can't get away from the issue of **feelings** and/or **sentiment** ... and I thought a lot about that ... and thought about why that is ...

- And when you realize how that everything that's being said here in this final sentence of Romans is taking you on from your justified position "in Christ" and your sanctified position "in Christ" - and now getting ready to deal with your Exalted position "in Christ" - which is why God's "*glory*" is the last issue brought to your attention ... (we are so exactly identified with Christ's Exaltation so as to be made the **GLORY** of God "in Christ").

- And there's a / 'kicker' / 'punch' to this passage when you make the 'connection' between the word "according" [and these 3 *according* issues] AND God's GLORY!

- And to make that 'connection' God had to use a word that not only conveys the issue of 'agreement' and 'consistent' ... **but He also had to use a word that conveys His godly feelings and godly sentiments! ... Why?** (how does that have anything to do with "**glory**"?) ... well, it does ...

... here's how—*according* is an agreement with the Heart! (as if to bring you and your Father to **one heart!**) - a harmony of minds ...

... and what is one of the ways you can describe 'harmony'? what is the word that you would use to say, 'That's harmony, and that's dissonant.' ... 'Harmony is agreeable, but dissonance is *not* agreeable'?

- In other words—what is the **feeling** you get out of harmony?

A: **PLEASURE!**

- What is the **feeling** you get out of dis-harmony, or dissonance?

A: **DISPLEASURE!**

- So—how does that have anything to do with God’s **glory**?

- If you pay attention to what God says about His *glory*, you will come across repeated expression of God’s **pleasure** being directly and emphatically connected with His **glory**!
[sometimes it’s outright stated; sometimes it’s only implied]

- In fact (as we will see in :27) - you can’t properly define “*glory*” (and what *glory* is to God) without talking about His **pleasure**! (and folks, **pleasure** is a **feeling**—and godly pleasure is a godly sentiment!)

(This is NOT exhaustive)

- Isa. 46:5-13 [:10 *pleasure*] [:13 *glory*]

- Hag. 1:2-8 [:8]

- Mat. 17:1-5

- Eph. 1:3-6 [:5-6]

- 2Thes. 1:7-12

- Rev. 4:8-11 [:11]

- “Now him that is of power to stablish you **according** ... **according** ... **according** ... those 3 *according* issues of the Edification process ‘strums God’s heart-strings’ - they are PLEASING in God’s sight (why? because they are the **power** [God’s **power**] for godly edifying which is in faith) ... and, sadly, most Christians *deny* that **power**!

- And because those 3 *according* issues of God’s own, approved method to powerfully & wisely form each and every member of the body of Christ into the very image of God’s dear Son—and because they are pleasing unto God as they do that job in the hearts of His sons/daughters today ...

... those 3 *according* issues (as they effectually do their job) are the very GLORY of God through Jesus Christ for ever!

Comments? Questions?

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel** ...

- “**my gospel**” - *μοῦ εὐαγγέλιον* = good news/tidings
 - “*gospel*” = (God’s Spell) - God’s spelled-out-message
- “*my gospel*” refers to God’s ‘spelled-out-message’ given to and through the apostle Paul—(and to Paul **exclusively!**)
 - Paul refers to “*my gospel*” back in 2:16—where, interestingly, the exact wording is: “*according to my gospel*” [16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ **according to my gospel.**] (bookends?)
 - And this “*my gospel*” that God have to Paul was **NOT** the same gospel that God gave to Peter, James and John and the other of the 12 apostles to Israel!
- We’ve dealt with several issues about Paul’s *my gospel* before back in chapter 15.
 - And we’ve noted how that when Paul talks about *the gospel* God gave to him—at times he calls it *God’s gospel* or *the gospel of God* or *the gospel of Christ*, etc.
 - And you should understand that at times Paul can refer to *the gospel* as the *gospel* for justification unto eternal life (or salvation from the debt & penalty of your sins) ... and at other times Paul uses the word *gospel* to refer to the **entirety** of God’s message given exclusively to him (which would include all of the doctrine contained in a particular epistle, or the doctrine contained in all of Paul’s epistles).
 - That is—at times *gospel* can refer to God’s message to Paul for justification/salvation; and at other times it can refer to the curriculum for our godly sonship education & edification.
 - And I think we’ve dealt with that sufficiently enough at this point. (if not, you can study that out on your own)
 - In this context of [;25] - my understanding is that what Paul refers to here as “*my gospel*” is that broader meaning of **both**, God’s message of justification/salvation today in this dis/gr, **and** God’s curriculum for godly Edification as “sons” today.

- In other words—when Paul says, *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel***—what Paul is specifically referring to here in (:25) is the entire book of Romans itself (The Gospel of Christ in the book of Romans), **as well as** the other epistles God has given to Paul (perhaps 1Cor., 2Cor., and Gal.) and the remaining epistles Paul has yet to write (which will be the very means of the Romans saints' *stablishment*). [and yours as well]

- Truth is - “*my gospel*” here in (:25) specifically refers to the doctrine concerning godly edification—and not the *gospel* that refers to justification/salvation.

- And that has to be the case—simply because of the context here being one of godly Edification continuing on under the opposition from Phase 1/PoE ... **and** because of the word “*stablish*” which **looks forward** to the advanced Edification doctrine contained in Eph.-Phlm. (If you're going to be *stablished*, you've already **got** justification/salvation!)

- The books (or epistles) of Rom-Phlm contain the doctrinal and edificational information for the body of Christ **exclusively**—they contain the doctrinal information for God's design, plan, and purpose for the body of Christ to be the means by which God will repossess and reconcile the Heavenly Places back to Himself from Satan and his cohorts—they DO NOT contain any information regarding God's designed plan & purpose for Israel and the members of the Rem/Isr to be the means by which God will repossess and reconcile the Earth back to Himself and set up His kingdom residence upon the Earth.

- In other words—Rom-Phlm is God's written word **To** us, **For** us, and **About** us today, in this present dis/gr. Gen-opening ch. Acts; and Heb-Rev is NOT **to** us, or **about** us ... although it IS “**for**” us! (*whatsoever things were written aforetime were written **for** our learning” Rom. 15:4*)

- But I do want to spend some time with this issue concerning the *gospel* God gave to Paul concerning justification/salvation—and that's because of the mess that can be made by not understanding and appreciating this matter—especially by those who think that *the gospel* of just./sal. has been the **same message** all through history! or throughout all of God's word! (**and it's NOT!**)

The Difference Between the Gospel of the Kingdom and Paul's Gospel.

- A lot of erroneous and corrupt doctrine gets taught and assumed about this that ends up with perversions of the gospel, and down-right mishandling of God's word!

- Truth is - there are **many** "gospels" in God's word that were vested with the power of salvation/justification! And that really rubs Christian folks in the wrong way!

- see Rom. 4 (Abraham) - also Gen. 15

Mat. 16:21 - the 1st pronouncement of the coming rejection.

- Note: **"began"** - It's commonly thought and commonly taught that everybody back in the gospel accounts understood the Lord's death, burial and resurrection just as we understand it today and have it proclaimed unto us in this disp./gr. in which we live today.

- And therefore, when it came to the salvation from the debt/penalty of their sins (or justification unto eternal life) - that people back at this time believed in (or believed the message/gospel) of the Lord's death, burial & resurrection just as we do today.

- But (:21) makes it clear that regardless of how commonly that's taught or thought - it simply is NOT TRUE!

- Here in (:21) Jesus just now **"began"** to show unto his disciples His coming rejection and His coming d/b/r - and this is over 2 years into His earthly ministry!

So, obviously, before this time - (for over 2 years) - the Lord was NOT doing that.

And even here, when the Lord does pronounce His coming rejection & d/b/r, it's clear from (:22ff) that it wasn't even understood by those disciple that heard it!

- And in Peter's case - it's obvious that he did not know about or understand anything about the Lord's d/b/r - but he was already saved/justified (about 2 years ago) - and yet he didn't believe in Christ's d/b/r! (He's actually trying to prevent the thing from taking place!) Peter had no understanding for either the need for this, or that it was even a 'thing' that was going to take place!

- People make an erroneous assumption that *"the faith of Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 3:22) that we place our faith in, in this dis/gr, and is part of *"the gospel of Christ"* that we heard when we got saved and that we preach today - people just assume that that was exactly the same message being proclaimed in the gospel accounts.

(verses that underscore this matter)

Mark 9:8-10 (just after the mount of transfiguration event - a preview of the Lord's coming in His kingdom in glory)

- [:10] - they knew what 'resurrection from the dead' was all about - that is, the resurrection in the 'last day' out at the beginning of the kingdom getting set up - but when they heard *"till the Son of man were risen from the dead"* Peter/James/John had no idea what that was all about! (but the assumption of most folks is that at least by this time of the mount of transfiguration, P/J/J had a clear understanding of Christ's d/b/r!)

Mark 9:30-32 - here Mark records the 2nd pronouncement of the Lord's coming rejection.

- [:30] - and yet they were perfectly JUEL! - and yet people will still come along and say, 'They **had** to have understood the issue of the Lord's d/b/r in order to be saved!' ... **no, they didn't!**

Luke 9 (again, dealing with the 1st pronouncement of the Lord's coming rejection)

Luke 9:43-44 [:44] (note the Ignorance Factor - and note that there is **nothing wrong** with P/J/J not understanding these things, yet! - truth is, they're not supposed to, yet!)

Luke 9:45 - notice that it was deliberately and intentionally *"hid from them"*!

- In Matthew, it was not understood by them - in Mark, they were afraid to ask Him about it - and now in Luke, it was *"hid from them, that they perceived it not"* - (and again, they were not supposed to understand it, and there was nothing wrong with them not understanding it - and more than that, there was something in effect that made it so that they **couldn't** understand it.) So you can't come along and blame them and say, 'Well they should have understood it.' No.

Luke 18 (matches up with the 3rd pronouncement of the Lord's coming rejection)

Luke 18:31-34 (this is the 12! - not just P/J/J!) - they had no frame of reference for **any** of these things whereby they could go back in the Scriptures and match it up with this and say, 'Ok, now I see it!' NO!

John 20 - let's look at something that occurs once the rejection is over with and the d/b/r has already taken place.

John 20:1-9 [:9] - even when the event took place, and they were eye-witnesses to the reality of it *"they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead"*.

- So even after 3 pointed pronouncements of it, and even after witnessing the actual event with their own eyes - and even after Peter & John see the empty tomb and see Him gone - they still *"knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."*

And that's not to their blame or to their shame at all!

- So by looking at just these few verses - we need to recognize and clearly understand that the common misunderstanding and misassumption that the people back in the gospel accounts clearly understood the issue of the Lord's d/b/r - and that they, (in the gospel of the kingdom that was preached to them) had the same details about Christ's d/b/r that we have preached to us today in "the gospel of God's grace" - that's NOT the case at all - that's wrong - that's in error - that's not the testimony of the scriptures - and that error leads to greater errors.

- Even after the Lord does what Luke 24:45 records when He 'opens their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures' - even after that, in the opening chapters of the book of Acts - the 12 apostles don't preach the d/b/r of the Lord as 'good news' at all - in fact, Peter presents the d/b/r of the Lord as an **indictment** against Israel and as the extreme example of Israel's contrariness & rebelliousness against God.

(see Acts 2:22-24)

- And note [:24] - that issue of Christ's resurrection gets stated there because that matter was designed to strike **terror** in their hearts! ... because as Peter is going to say, 'He's going to have His day of wrath!' And if they don't acknowledge who He is, and the fact that they've murdered their own Messiah- they're going to be destroyed from amongst the people out in the Lord's day of wrath!

(see Acts 2:32-35) - that's who they are right now ("**foes**") - [except for those of the 'little flock' that have believed that 'gospel of the kingdom' that was being preached to them] - the rest of them are God's *foes* ! and they demonstrated that by their wicked hands taking the Lord and crucifying Him!

- To the apostate element of Israel and to Israel's VRS - the Lord's resurrection spells their doom - it means that the Lord's day of wrath is going to take place - (which their corrupted doctrine taught that the Lord's day of wrath is a **past issue** - that it happened back in the 1st Install./5th CoP!)

- And the only 'good news' was that the Lord was now seated at the right hand of God and giving a gracious period of forbearance and mercy to Israel - which Peter declares as "repentance to Israel" (Acts 5:31) whereby they could change their mind and accept Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah and not be destroyed by Him when He 'stands up' to judge and have His day of wrath.
(see Acts 2:36 - which matches up with Psalms 110)

- Peter (and the 12) are presenting the Lord's d/b/r as a means for Israelites to escape being destroyed in the Lord's day of wrath. And that's NOT how it's being presented to you today.

(see Acts 3:12-15; 22-23)

- The only ones who will find the news about the Lord's d/b/r to be 'good news' are the ones who 'repent' and change their minds about it - and gain the benefits of that change of mind about who He is - and then, they, being members of the remnant, will get doctrinally taught about things - and will learn about some 'good news' issues in connection with His d/b/r.

- But when it's first preached to them, it's not presented as 'good news' but rather an **indictment** against them.
(see Acts 7:51-53)

- The truth is - (and this is key) - in the opening chapters of Acts, they don't hear the message of what is called by the apostle Paul the "***faith OF Jesus Christ***" (Rom. 3:22) that's presented to us in this disp/gr. (the Lord's faithful performance as our Substitute Redeemer).

- As we know - God didn't continue on with His program w/Isr. as He had set forth in the prophets - but when Stephen was stoned to death and the Lord stood up (to judge & have His day of wrath) - He, instead, sat back down and God interrupted His prog./Isr and suspended it temporarily - and brought in this new dis/gr.

(see Rom. 3:21-26)

- This is the message that most people (most Christians) just naturally assume that was well-known, and was being preached even before the Lord went to the cross, and was the 'gospel issue' back in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — and that when it came to justification unto eternal life, that Peter, James, and John (and the rest) understood and believed in the very same way we do in this disp/gr!

- But the testimony in the gospel accounts says **NO** to all that; the testimony in the opening chapters of the book of Acts says **NO** to all that - and even when the d/b/r had taken place, it wasn't preached as "good news" in the opening chapters of the book of Acts.

And for a further testimony of the reality of that ...

(see Gal. 3:21-25)

- [:22] - that expression, "*by faith OF Jesus Christ*" = Christ's faithful performance on the cross = Christ's faithful performance of His d/b/r!

- [:23] - note that expression "*before faith came*" - that "*faith*" being spoken about there refers to the "*faith OF Christ*" mentioned in [:22] - and that's the very thing **we trust in** for our justification unto eternal life.

- The "*faith OF Jesus Christ*" is the details about the 'good news' of the d/b/r of Christ - and that there's the full redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the full provision, therefore, for God's justice to forgive sins and to impute Righteousness in connection with what the Lord did on the cross. (Those details of Rom. 3:21-26 - that IS "*the faith of Jesus Christ*" just like Paul says in Gal. 3:22!)

- Again note [:23] - "*But **before** faith came*" - there was a time BEFORE that "*faith of Jesus Christ*" was made known and became a "gospel"!

- The "*faith of Jesus Christ*" was **NOT** a 'gospel' back in Abraham's day - **not** back in Moses' day - **not** back in David's day - **not** back in Isaiah's day - **not** back in Daniel's day - **not** back in Malachi's day - **not** with John the Baptist - and **not** even when the Lord Himself was here during His earthly ministry in the gospel accounts - **not** even when He began to show to His disciples how He must go unto Jerusalem and so forth - and **not** even in the opening chapters of the book of Acts (during the time of "repentance to Israel")!

- And when Paul says in Gal. 3:23 "*But before faith came*" - that's what he's talking about. That the time "*before the faith of Jesus Christ came*" was **before** this disp/gr was brought in by God, and "*the faith of Jesus Christ*" became the issue in the "gospel"!

- Note again [:23 (whole verse)] - and note the end there: "*which should **afterwards** be revealed*" - when they were under the law, it was "*the faith of Jesus Christ*" that would "***afterwards** be revealed*" (i.e., when God made His great dispensational change). And it wasn't revealed **before** that time - which is why Peter, James, and John (and the others) **didn't know** anything about it!

- (read again [:23-25]) - Paul is teaching here about how justification unto eternal life took place BEFORE "*the faith of Jesus Christ*" became the 'good news' (the "gospel") as it is in this disp/gr.

- Before that, they were all still justified by faith - but they didn't hear the message of the 'good new' about Christ's d/b/r.

- The Law functioned as that "*schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ*" - but the Law didn't explain all those details to them - it just taught them the reality of the fact that they couldn't justify themselves - and that's what God's Jehovahhness in the Christ was all about! And when they believed that! God then counted their faith for righteousness!

- And that's a far different issue than understanding the details about the cross and having that presented to you as 'good news' and believing in that!

- Justification is 'by grace, through faith' in BOTH programs! But the message they hear is different! And if you pay attention - for those living back during the time of the Gospel accounts - they not only didn't understand anything about Christ's d/b/r - but the truth is, God didn't allow them to understand it! ... it was '***hid***' from them (Luk. 9:45; 18:34) - and as Paul says in Gal. 3:23-24 the "*schoolmaster*" under the Law didn't teach them anything about "*the faith of Jesus Christ*"!

- Now, there are reasons Why that was so ... but that's another matter. [the Ignorance Factor]

- But all this is the reason for why it is accurate, proper, and appropriate for the apostle Paul to talk about the message he was given by God to preach as "***my gospel***"!

- Paul's "*my gospel*" was a **different** message for justification unto eternal life ... different than what was given to people "*before faith came*" ...

... AND Paul's "*my gospel*" is **different** as to the doctrine for godly edification as "sons" than any other portion of God's word (before Romans, or after Philemon) as well.

- [examples] - Mat. 28:19-20, Mark 16:16-20,
cp. Rom. 6:14; 7:21-25;
cp. Jam. 1:25
- Lev. 11:1-8ff cp. 1Tim. 4:1-5

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you ...

- **1st essential "according" Issue:** *according to my gospel,*

- **2nd "according" Issue:** *and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*

26 But now is made manifest, ...

- "**and**" brings us to the next thing—the 2nd in a series of 3 *according* issues [essential to the success of your *stablishment*, and targets of the adversary and his policy of evil].

- "*the **preaching** of Jesus Christ*"

- In Paul's epistles, he will sometimes talk about *preaching*, and at other times he'll talk about *teaching* ... what's the difference? **Why preaching in [:26] and not teaching??**

- Both words involve the basic issue of communicating information to others—and in this respect they share this concept commonly with other words as well; such as "communicate," "inform," "instruct," "relate," "tell," and the like. (And there can be discriminating differences between all of them).

- But the fundamental distinction in meaning between *preach* and *teach* has to do primarily with the '**nature**' of the communicating of the information that each is denoting. (Again, the difference is with the '**nature**', not the 'style'.)

- And because the distinction is in the **nature** of the communicating, this makes it so that these two words can easily and naturally ‘team up’ (so to speak), and work together even when the subject in view concerns the communicating **of the same information**—(which is something *preach & teach* commonly do).

- In other words—someone can both *preach* and *teach* in connection with the same information that he is communicating.

- And because the **nature** of the communicating is where the distinction lies, *preaching* can be used in reference to the **general issue** of what is being communicated and to emphasize the **nature** of it—while the word *teaching* can be used in the same context to describe **one or more particular forms** that the ‘*preached* communication’ might take.

- The fundamental distinction in the **nature** of *preach & teach* is this:

- To ***preach*** is to proclaim some specific information, (like a **message**, or a ***gospel***), that by nature is **important, essential**, and/or **vital** for someone **to hear and to act upon**.

- It means to pronounce such information to specific hearers—and to do so **without reservation** and in a **forthright manner**—knowing the **importance** of the information **and its need to be heard and known**.

- (e.g., “You don’t have to *preach* to me about this, I know how important it is!”)

- It is the **nature** of *preaching* to communicate information that is **important**—and with this being so, this is what particularly makes a *preacher* to be a *preacher*—and also it is particularly what makes what he *preaches* to be *preaching*.

- Likewise in view of this, someone cannot *preach* something or be a *preacher*, without having **convictions** about the **value** of what he is *preaching*.

- The important, essential, and/or vital **nature** belonging to the information being communicated **demand**s that the one communicating it have convictions about the information he is proclaiming, if he is going to be rightfully called a *preacher* of it.

- To **teach** means to give information/knowledge to someone who needs to learn it, (or should learn it), and to do so in an **instructive manner** so that he can clearly make use of it in some particular way or to some particular purpose.

- It therefore means to impart information or knowledge to another for the direct purpose of producing useful and meaningful education and/or edification for that person.

- Hence, a *teacher* cannot lack either pertinent knowledge and/or experience of his subject — nor can he lack ‘aptness to teach,’ if he is going to actually *teach* another by what he communicates.

- If he lacks either, he’s either not a *teacher*, or he’s an inept one.

25 ... and the preaching of *Jesus Christ*,

- The “*preaching of Jesus Christ*” is now going to be presented in a particular way—and that particular way is that there is a **GREAT distinction or DIFFERENCE** is being made as to just HOW *Jesus Christ* is going to be *preached* today during the great dispensational change God has made, and for the duration of it—(or by means of Paul’s “*my gospel*” - the *gospel* God gave exclusively to Paul).

- And what this does is—it sets forth that there is a **difference** between the *gospel* God gave to Paul concerning *Jesus Christ*, and the *gospel* God gave to Peter, James, John, and the other apostles concerning *Jesus Christ*!

- And (importantly) **this is a distinction and a difference that GOD HIMSELF makes!!!** and God expects you to see that difference and make that difference just as He does!

- [side note] - as we deal with this matter (and deal with it accurately) - it’s going to be important that we do so within the bounds of what we have come to understand and appreciate in the book of Romans itself—that is, to see the difference & distinction from what Romans doctrine has set forth—and NOT to go beyond that! (so with that in mind, let’s proceed) ...

- First of all—and most obviously—we’re going to be *established* in our on-going sonship edification strictly upon the basis of, or **according to** (1) God’s spelled-out message or *gospel* given exclusively to Paul ...

- Second—we're going to be *established* in our on-going sonship edification strictly on the basis of, *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery*.

- And we have to kind of 'pretend' here—in other words, we have to **not think** about any of the information contained in 1Cor-Phlm (and especially in Ephesians, Phil., and Col.) where we are informed, for example, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the "*Head*" of the body of Christ ... we need to **limit** our thinking to what Romans has taught us that makes "*the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*" real and meaningful—and what makes it **different & distinct** from how *Jesus Christ* is *preached* (especially) in the gospel accounts, the opening chs.Acts, or Heb-Rev.

- Note that Paul does not explain any of this to us! (meaning, we're already supposed to know what he is talking about by the information set forth in the book of Romans **compared to the rest of God's word**)!

- But what's important now is that we have been given enough information to see this **difference** and **distinction**! ... God Himself sees it; He now expects us to see it; and God is **unbending, unyielding, and inflexible (intolerant)** about it!

- God Himself will not tolerate any alteration or compromise to the *gospel* He gave to Paul, nor to *the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*! Why? Because your very spiritual life depends upon it—your godly sonship education & edification depends upon it—and God's GLORY depends upon it!

- So the **big difference** here (in Paul's "*my gospel*") is stated as "*the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*"

- Notice that God has Paul use that word **revelation**—and that alone should tell you something—and that *Jesus Christ* is made known (or *preached*) according to **revelation**.

(**"revelation"** = to make known; to reveal; the disclosure of truth; [in this context] the disclosure or communication of knowledge to man by divine agency)

- And that's consistent with all of the knowledge about God and His Son, Jesus Christ that goes beyond the knowledge God gives to every man/woman by nature (or God-Consciousness as per Rom. 1).
- And if that's NOT according to the *revelation* in the rest of God's word—then how or what is the *revelation* (even if it does concern Jesus Christ, which it does—all of God's word can be said to 'reveal' the Lord Jesus Christ in some manner or form) ... but again, how or what is the *revelation* of the rest of God's word "according to"???
- Peter give us the answer to that: (see Acts 3:19-24)
- Zacharias (the father of John the Baptist) give us the answer to that: (see Luke 1:67-70)
- The answer is: if God's *revelation* isn't *according to the mystery*, then God's *revelation* is **according to PROPHECY!**
- In Scripture, (in God's word), all of God's *revelation* to man is either one of two ways: 1. according to prophecy; or 2. according to the mystery.
- And that's the **big difference/distinction** God makes—and that you should make—and that forms the basis for what will later be called in 2Tim. 2:15, "*rightly dividing the word of truth*"!
- What you are expected to recognize (and what God Himself says that you should find in the Bible) are **two general messages** ...
 - ... **one** which was prophesied about and spoken about *since the world began*—one that He in no manner or form kept secret ...
 - ... **and one** that He HAS "*kept secret*" *since the world began* and never said anything about until He first revealed it to the apostle Paul.
- The issue of *rightly dividing* God's word is the issue of acknowledging and recognizing the reality of that—and 'dividing' God's word accordingly! (**Not: OT / NT!**)

- In Luke chapter 1, you're at the beginning of the gospel accounts time period—you're still in "Time Past" - the Lord Jesus Christ has been conceived and will be born of the virgin Mary—and John the Baptist has just been born and his father (Zacharias) is filled with the Holy Ghost.

- And Zacharias prophesied about the critical and Climatic Stage in God's dealings with Israel—and everything he talks about is the fact that all things are coming to a 'head' **in God's program w/Isr.** at this very time in Luke 1 ... (there's **NO knowledge** of the dis/gr given to him, even though he is filled with the Holy Ghost)!

- And Zacharias speaks about the fact that what's coming to a 'head' **is that which God has already been speaking about by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began!**

- Understand that Zacharias is *filled with the Holy Ghost* when he says this—in other words, this is NOT his opinion or misguided thinking—it is God's testimony to the nation Israel of what's going on at this time when John the Baptist is born and the Messiah is conceived and ready to be born in the land.

- And as Zacharias says, the issue now is the promised salvation that God has promised to His people Israel *by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

- Zacharias acknowledges that **ISRAEL** is the focal point—and it's been that way *since the world began.*

- Now—let's pause for a moment and look at something very important:

- Notice here in Luke 1 (as well as in Acts 3:21 when Peter says, "*which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*") — and note what God has Paul say in Rom. 16:25 "*according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began*") ... note that expression: "***since the world began***" ... well, Israel didn't even get started till Gen. 12! which is historically true.

- But God makes it very clear that (historically-speaking; or regarding the Time Schedule for all that He is doing) in BOTH, His program with Israel AND with His program with us, the body of Christ in this present dis/gr—that all of this was in God's mind "*since the world began*"! (**That means going all the way back to Adam!**)

- My point is—when Zacharias and Peter say that God’s plan and purpose with the nation Israel (to reconcile the Earth back to Himself and set up His kingdom-residence on the Earth) is something spoken of by *the mouth of his holy prophets* **since the world began**—that means that God spoke about this with Adam! (*revealed*) !

- Adam didn’t know anything about a nation called “Israel”, but he was told by God about His plan/purpose to reconcile & repossess the Earth for His residence upon it in Gen. 3:15! (Adam was privy to what God said to the serpent: “*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*”))

- The nation Israel will come out of *the woman* (Eve’s) *seed* (as well as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself).

- Again, the point is—when God began the nation Israel with Abraham in Genesis 12, **God wasn’t beginning a brand-new program for repossessing the Earth (in a sense)!** ... He was actually beginning a new aspect of a program that had already been in effect *since the world began*!

- And that has critical ramifications for Israel—especially for the VRS of Israel ... e.g., Mat. 23:35 *That upon you (VRS) may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.*

- When you get to Gen. 12ff, you find that the nation Israel will be the **means** by which God will accomplish His plan & purpose for repossessing & reconciling the Earth.

- And so Zacharias (in the opening of the gospel accounts) recognized that there has been a message of God that is recorded in God’s word through the pen of His *holy prophets*—and its been the issue *since the world began*—and it’s the **ONLY** message that anybody ever knew about that God had to that point in time!

- Now—bring all that thinking over to Romans 16:25ff - 25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you **according** to my gospel, **and** the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according** to the revelation of the mystery, **which was kept secret since the world began**, 26 But now is made manifest, ...*

- here you have the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul explicitly talking about the *gospel* given by God to/through Paul ("*my gospel*") ... and God takes that exact same terminology and divinely designed it **so you can't make a mistake! and so you can clearly see the difference!**

- God takes the same terminology about His program with Israel being *spoken about since the world began*—BUT, God puts it in the **negative** with Paul's *gospel* message!

- And in Rom. 16:25, that expression "*since the world began*" means (just as it did with God's program with Israel) - it means that *the mystery of Christ* and the great dispensational change God has made, was all in God's mind from the very beginning ... "*since the world began*" ...

... so, what's the difference? what's the Big distinction?

- God's program for repossessing the Earth was known; it was well-spoken about in all of God's word up until the apostle Paul and his epistles! (*the mystery* wasn't something 'new' to God; it wasn't something He thought up long after the fact of Satan's usurpation of Earth and the Heavenly Places)!

- *the mystery* was always in God's mind—it was always His 'master-plan' - it has always been God's wise and well-thought-out purpose for destroying the entirety of Satan's Plan and Policy of Evil! (God just didn't say anything about it; He kept it a **secret!** [especially from the Adversary!])

- And if words mean anything: something that was *spoken about by all his holy prophets since the world began*—and something that has been *kept secret since the world began* **cannot be, and are NOT the same thing! they're two separate things! they are two different and distinct messages!**

- and it's on the basis of **that**, that God expects you to "*rightly divide the word of truth*"! ... the 'right division' of God's word is: **The Prophetic Message; and The Mystery Message!**

- And that's how you're taught by God to 'rightly divide' His word, long before you ever get to 2Tim. 2:15!

- And when it comes to ever having any hope at all of being able to handle God's word properly—you have to acknowledge and recognize these 2 different/distinct programs **and (importantly) recognize that God has suspended the one program with Israel (temporarily) ... and is now operating according to His “mystery” message, and “mystery” program ... AND THE TWO ARE NOT GOING ON AT THE SAME TIME!**

- And to try to put the two of them together can only end up with confusion and contrary, erroneous doctrine! (which is exactly what most Bible teachers do)!

- Bible teaching that ends up with Christians living obediently in God's 'prophecy' program (or Israel's program) is actually Christian **disobedience!** and it's the plague that plagues Christianity today!

- And it ends up with Christians in disobedience to God, and totally *obedient* to Satan—because his PoE is dedicated to getting saints today to operate as members of the remnant of Israel in “Time Past” or “To Come”! (like the Galatians did!) [and like we were warned about in Rom. 16:17-20!]

- Come back now to Rom. 16:25.

*25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you **according** to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,***

- We've talked a lot about that word “*mystery*” - and I don't think there is any confusion about that word—(there's nothing ‘mysterious’ about the word *mystery*) ... but just to address it ...

- “*mystery*” (μυστήριον) = a hidden thing, a secret; generally mysteries of religious secrets (“mystery religions”), secrets confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals; a hidden purpose or counsel.

- and don't be confused by the word *mystery* appearing in other places in God's word—other than the epistles of Paul. (It is a NT only word—but it also appears in **Mat. 13:11**; Luke 8:10; Mark 4:11; Rev. 1:20; **10:7**; 17:5, 7)

- Basically, a good, simple, and sufficient definition of the word “*mystery*” is: **a hidden or secret thing. (OED)**

- But, of course, now we have to understand the word *mystery* as God uses it—especially here in (:25), and as He has the apostle Paul use it in his epistles.

- Paul uses the word *mystery* 17x in his epistles.

(Rom. 11:25; 16:25; 1Cor. 2:7; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3; 3:4; 3:9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:26; 1:27; 2:2; 4:3; 2Thes. 2:7; 1Tim. 3:9; 3:16)

- So, what **is** “*the mystery*” that Paul refers to in his epistles?

- (how would you define/describe it? and keep it in bound of Romans truth?)
[hard to ‘pin down’ in a few words!]

- [Here’s my attempt]:

- The *mystery* of Rom. 16:25 is the revelation of God’s previously hidden and secret knowledge and wisdom about a great dispensational or program change in which God’s previous plan and purpose with Israel has been temporarily suspended, and the Gentiles are now being specially treated by God for the purpose of creating a new and previously unknown entity called *the body of Christ* made up of Jew and Gentile alike.

- With Israel’s program being temporarily suspended, God’s day of judgment and wrath is being held back, and instead God is being *longsuffering*.

- Moreover, *the mystery* is also is the revelation of God’s previously hidden and secret doctrine for the godly edification of this new entity of *the body of Christ* with the primary difference being, we are *not under the law* as in God’s program with Israel, but we are *under grace*.

- This previously hidden and unknown entity of *the body of Christ* is now revealed to be the divinely designed means for a previously hidden and secret plan and purpose of delivering *the creature* (or the heavenly places) from *the bondage of corruption*, which, along with the fulfillment of God’s program with Israel, will completely, totally, and utterly destroy Satan and his Plan and Policy of Evil.

- All things, all issues, and all aspects, (legal or otherwise), concerning *the revelation of the mystery* have all been accomplished and provided for by the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ—all of which God kept secret and hid in Himself until He revealed *the mystery* to Paul.

- **[Now, see Keith's definition]**

1. This dispensation of Gentile grace was a "*mystery*" which God kept "*hid in himself*" from the beginning of the world. It therefore was not known by the prophets and is not the subject of their prophecies.
2. God revealed this new dispensation to and through His new apostle Paul. The apostleship of the 12 before Paul pertained to Israel in fulfillment of the prophets, and their commissioning by the Lord was in accordance with Israel's program.
3. God is dealing with the Gentiles today **in spite of Israel** and not through their agency at all. Israel's program has been temporarily set aside by God and He is not now dealing with us Gentiles in accordance with it.
4. This dispensation is a dispensation of God's *grace* to us Gentiles. He is dealing with us purely on the basis of His grace and not in fulfillment of any covenant with us, nor in deference either to us or Israel. Instead God is graciously being longsuffering and offering salvation to us before He begins His day of judgment and wrath.
5. In this dispensation God has made Jew and Gentile "*both one*" with "*no difference*" between them. The Gentiles "*far off*" status in "*time past*" does not now exist.
6. In this dispensation God is making "*one new man*"; a "*new creature*" called the church the body of Christ. Its purpose with God pertains to the "*heavenly places*" and the reconciliation of that realm to Himself according to the "*mystery of his will*."

MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

- The *revelation of the mystery* is God justifying (or saving) people 'by grace, through faith' alone, with no works, unlike He did in His plan and program with Israel when He justified a person 'by grace, through faith **PLUS** works'.
- The *revelation of the mystery* is God being gracious to us today (as if He wasn't being gracious in Israel's program).
- The *revelation of the mystery* is God saving Gentiles.
- The *revelation of the mystery* is God saving ONLY Gentiles.
- The *revelation of the mystery* is God incorporating Gentiles into Israel's program.

- A COUPLE OF PROGRAM OR DISPENSATIONAL DIFFERENCES:

(In the gospel accounts)

- Mat. 15:21-28 [:24]!

(in Heb.)

- Psa. 95:6-11

- Heb. 3:1-11 - (also, note Heb. 5)

(For those who say ‘The whole Bible is to us, for us, and about us.’ and want to do what Jesus says, I’ll follow Jesus!’ [as if we’re saying that we aren’t!] ...)

- Luke 12:31-34 [:33a]! - (what? does He mean this in a ‘spiritual’ way???) ...

... well, Peter certainly didn’t take it that way!!!

- Acts 3:1-6

Back to Romans:

25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you*

(1) **according** to my gospel,

(2) **and** the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according** to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 **But now is made manifest,**

- **“But now”** - marks the distinct and different dispensational change that has taken place whereby a **different “gospel”** is being preached by Paul *“according to the revelation of the mystery.”* [**not prophecy!**]

- Col. 1:23-29 [:26]!

- *“is made **manifest**,”*

- **“manifest”** = φανερώω = to make visible or **known** what was hidden or unknown—and to do so by words, or deeds, or in any other way.

= (OED) [adv.] Clearly revealed to the eye, **mind**, or judgment; open to view or **comprehension**; obvious.

[v.] To make evident to the eye or to the understanding; to show plainly, disclose, reveal. To be evidence of, prove, attest.

= [Webster's 1828] To reveal; to make to appear; to show plainly; to make public; to disclose to the eye or to the understanding.

- But why “*manifest*”? - why not ‘revealed’ or ‘made known’ or ‘disclosed’??? ... or some other word?

- Again, it's due to a ‘shade of meaning’ that *manifest* carries that makes it the most excellent choice over any other English word for this particular context.

- “*Manifest*” is actually a species of the word *evident*—and of all the various synonyms that could be used, ***manifest is the most specific and forceful (or powerful)*** word than any other word choice.

- (CRABB)

APPARENT, VISIBLE, CLEAR, PLAIN, OBVIOUS, EVIDENT, MANIFEST

- *Manifest* is from the L. *manifestus*—a compound of *manus* (the hand), and *festus*, a participle of the old verb *fendo* (to fall in), signifying the quality of falling in or coming so near that it can be laid hold of by the hand.

- All these words agree in expressing various degrees in the capability of seeing; but *visible* is the only one used in a purely physical sense; *apparent*, *clear*, *plain*, and *obvious* are used both physically and morally (or with the **mind**); *evident* and *manifest* are used solely in a moral (or mental) application. (In a legal sense), a proof is *evident*; it requires no discussion, there is nothing in it that clashes or contradicts.

- What is *evident* is seen forcibly, and leaves no hesitation on the mind; it is opposed to that which is dubious; ***manifest is a greater degree of the evident***; it strikes on the understanding and forces **conviction**; it is opposed to that which is dark (or hidden).

- So this first phrase of (:26) - [which is the last phrase of the 2nd **according** issue] - is critically important, and is very carefully worded!

- The *gospel* God committed exclusively to the apostle Paul (Paul's “*my gospel*”) and *the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began* is “NOW” (in this present disp/gr) made ***manifest*** ...

- So, therefore, when God has Paul say that it was *made manifest*, God is telling you in no uncertain terms that this *gospel according to the revelation of the mystery* **has tremendous EVIDENCE behind it!**

- For example:

- **Rom. 1:1**—Paul has a special designation given to him that is omitted from Israel's 12 apostles ... Paul was "*separated unto the gospel of God*". [indicating a **different gospel** message]

- **Rom. 9, 10, & 11**—where all the hard-core "evidence" was set forth about the dispensational (or program) change that has taken place—and the future fulfillment of God's program with Israel, once this present dispensation (or program) has concluded. (especially: 11:25, where the word *mystery* is first used in Paul's epistles).

- **Rom. 15:15-29**—The 8 Sanctifying Works of the Holy Ghost that validates the great dispensational change God has made, and the new administration of it under the apostleship of Paul.

- And this *evidence* does **not** require 'discussion' or 'debate'; and there is **nothing** about it that either 'clashes' or 'contradicts' ANY part of Scripture (from Gen-Acts, or from Heb-Rev)!!!

- And this great *mystery* (with all that clear, indisputable evidence behind it) *now is made manifest*—based upon SOUND EVIDENCE, there is NO 'hesitation of the mind' about it—(it isn't 'dubious'); rather just the opposite is true—it's clearly understood in the mind; and it 'forces great conviction', i.e., you can be totally confident about it—it's no longer 'dark' or hidden, but is in the 'open' (or as we often say), "It's as clear as day" ... "It's as clear as the nose on your face!"

- And you **MUST** be just that 'clear' and just that 'confident' about it, going forward in your godly sonship edification! (or the Adversary will tear you up! and his PoE against Paul's *mystery gospel* will thwart your godly sonship edification! and stop God from getting any 'glory' from it!)

- Are you that confident about it? ... Any Questions / Comments?

- Now for the 3rd and final **“according”** issue of God’s *power & wisdom* to *stablish* you going forward in your godly sonship edification ... (and will also be the target/focus of attack by Phase 1 of the PoE).

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you

(1) **according** to my gospel,

(2) **and** the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according** to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest,

(3) ... **and** by the scriptures of the prophets, **according** to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

- The remainder of (:26) - which makes up the 3rd **“according”** issue of God’s *power/wisdom* to *stablish* you is actually ‘additional’ information—(you have that word **“and”**) to the previous issue of *“the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery”*.

- So this is kind of a ‘sub-subset’ packet of information.

- You have the 1st *according* issue: *according to my gospel*

- Then you have the word **“and”** which attaches a ‘subset’ packet of information connected to Paul’s *my gospel* which is the 2nd *according* issue;

- And now we have the other use of the word **“and”** which forms a ‘sub-subset’ (so to speak) packet of information that is connected with *the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*.

- And what’s going to be set forth in the remainder of (:26) is some additional information especially concerning ***the revelation of the mystery***.

- And there are 4 things (or 4 issues) that get brought to your attention concerning *the revelation of the mystery*, and the *preaching of Jesus Christ* according to it!

- And if all that God has said about this so far hasn’t impressed you with just how BIG of an issue this is to God, these 4 things should!

- And the 4 things are:

1. *the scriptures of the prophets*
2. *the commandment of the everlasting God*
3. *made known to all nations*
4. *for the obedience of faith*

- So, what do all 4 of these things have in common? ... you have to remember something here: *the mystery* of Christ is going to potentially cause some problems (not only what Romans doctrine has taught, but also what the remainder of Paul's epistles will teach) ...

... [setting aside Satan and his Policy of Evil] - Paul's *gospel* message is going to have some difficulty (or as Peter says, it's "*hard to understand*" [2Pet. 3:16]) ... and we even experience that difficulty to this day among other believers! ...

... because it *is* the *revelation of the mystery* that is different and distinct from God's prophetic program—it's going to need some additional 'weight' given to it (so to speak) ...

... remember that Paul has to repeatedly say about his *gospel* message that he is preaching and teaching: "*I LIE NOT!*"

- So, my understanding is that what God has Paul do in this final *according* issue is to set forth 4 things that make up our understanding and appreciation for the **AUTHORITY** of *the mystery* and **IT** being what God wants communicated to the world today.

- We've already had the great dispensational change God has made being authorized and validated by those 8 Sanctifying Works of the Holy Ghost, in (15:15-29).

- But this is a little different from that—the great dispensational change is certainly *the mystery*, but it's only a **part** of it—the **whole** of it includes all of *the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery* ... and that would include all of the doctrine for the edification of the body of Christ as well (or 1Cor-Phlm, going forward).

- and these 4 issues of God's authority in connection with *the mystery* and it being **what God wants manifest today** are designed to 'perfect' your boldness & confidence about it as you **continue on** in your sonship edification under P1/PoE.

- What all 4 of these things have in common is the issue of **GOD'S OWN AUTHORITY** (and NOT any “man” - including Paul)!!!

- These 4 authority issues of *the mystery* are not only critical to your success in your godly edification as God's “son” going forward—and not only are they critical to your success as you undergo P1/PoE ... but they are also critical to your understanding and appreciation of God's *power / wisdom* in all that He is doing, and all that He is doing with YOU!

- “Authority” really is a “*power*” and these 4 authority issues underscores God's *power* to *stablish you* — and they also underscore God's genius and *wisdom*—because without this final “*according*” issue—the *mystery* and the *preaching of Jesus Christ according* to it could be challenged as ‘Just the ravings of a mad man [Paul]’ ... or ‘Just the doctrine of men’ or a host of other things along those lines.

- So these 4 authority issues set forth both, God's *power* and God's *wisdom* to *stablish you* in your godly edification.

1. “*and by the scriptures of the prophets,*”

- This is the **authoritative means** by which *the revelation of the mystery* is to be made known (or *manifest*).

- “*the scriptures of the prophets*”

- “*scriptures*” = the sacred writings of the Old and/or New Testament; the Holy Writ; the Bible; emphasizing the **written** word of God.

- My understanding is that the use of the word *scripture* here, instead of a phrase like ‘the word of God’ or ‘God's word’ is that the word *scripture* by its very nature conveys the issue of God's AUTHORITY vested in His written word. [and God's authority is the context here]

- “*Scriptures*” tells you that not only is God's **authority** being emphasized, but it also tells you that this *mystery* of Christ now being *revealed* by the *gospel* message given exclusively to the apostle Paul really IS scripture, just like all the rest of God's word from Gen-opening ch. Acts, and from Heb-Rev. (the book of Romans IS *scripture*; as well as 1Cor-Phlm.)!!

- And the way it works here in Romans is, that Paul has already used the word *scripture* in numerous instances in Romans referring to the already-settled-matter of the authority of God's written word in the Old Testament. (Rom. 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4)

- In 2Tim. 3:16 we find ... *All **scripture** is given by **inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

- And in 2Pet. 2:20-21 ... *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the **scripture** is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

- Again, the **authority** issue of *scripture*—**NOT** by the will of man ... **but by the Holy Ghost!**

- Paul's *gospel* message of *the revelation of the mystery* is therefore NOT by Paul, but by GOD HIMSELF! (and not to be trifled with, or altered, or regarded as having no value; or treated as if it shouldn't be counted as all the other *scripture*)!

- "*and by the scriptures of the **prophets***"

- My understanding is that the use of the word "*prophets*" here is **not** talking about the OT prophets.

- Although a case can certainly be made for that—and a lot of passages (especially in the book of Acts) could be cited as proof of it.

- And I may be wrong—but presently, I am persuaded otherwise.

- Based upon strict keeping with the context—my understanding is that the word *prophets* is being used here in the sense of the other *apostles and prophets* Paul mentions that are going on during the opening portion of this disp/gr when the written word of God had not yet been completed.

- (much like we saw back up in the opening of ch.16, for instance, with Phebe).

- There are ones like Timothy, Silas, and others, whom Paul calls *apostles*, who are to be understood by us to be the very ones that God “set in the church” (especially along with ones called *prophets*) at the beginning of this dispensation for the purpose of dealing with the unique situation that existed at that time when the written word of God was not yet complete, but also for providing for it to be complete and for the churches to have their copies of the completed written word of God.

- In accordance with 1Cor. 12:28-31 in its context, and Eph. 2:20; 3:5; and 4:11-13 in their contexts—as they in particular make reference to these *apostles and prophets*; along with all of the descriptions throughout Paul’s epistles of Paul, for example, sending Timothy and others to various churches, and churches sending ones to Paul, and the like; in accordance with these things and in view of them, my understanding is that these *apostles and prophets* were given by God to see to it that as God had Paul write an epistle in order to commit His word to written form, that not only the initial recipient received it, but that copies were made of that epistle and it was then sent out to the other churches for their use.

- Through the *apostles and prophets* I am persuaded that all of Paul’s epistles as they were written, were copied and distributed among all of the churches, so that the churches had their own copies of them.

- And I am persuaded that this operation was also carried out with the rest of the Scriptures that God was having written by the Circumcision apostles.

- The same kind of interchange was taking place between them, and not only amongst themselves, but also with the churches of the body of Christ.

- And with this going on, by the time Paul was writing 2 Timothy he could talk about “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” and “*all scripture*”; and by the time Peter wrote 2Peter to the remnant, he could also talk about all of Paul’s epistles and the wisdom contained in them, and also the “*other scriptures*,” and how that the remnant had them both.

- So we can identify these ‘other’ *apostles and prophets* that existed along side Paul (as “*the apostle of the Gentiles*” that he is) in a simple way ...

1. Those called “*prophets*” were concerned with the **copying** of Paul’s epistles.

2. Those called “*apostles*” were concerned with the **distribution** of Paul’s epistles.

- So in Rom. 16:26—and *by the scriptures of the prophets* is referring to ones who were engaged in the copying out of Paul’s epistles (here, the book of Romans) and then others would ‘be sent’ as *apostles* who would distribute Paul’s epistles to the other churches.

- And, again, the issue in (:26) is the issue that the *gospel* message that God gave exclusively to the apostle Paul **carries the weight of SCRIPTURE: of THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD; authorized BY GOD HIMSELF!**

2. (the 2nd Authority Issue regarding *the revelation of the mystery*)
 “... ***according to the commandment of the everlasting God,***”

- This is the **divine authority** by which *the revelation of the mystery was made known to Paul and to all nations.*

- “*the commandment*” of God = Paul’s commission, and the divine authority of it to go to the Gentile nations of the world.

- a lot of things could be looked at—like Peter’s declaration in Acts 11:17 ... “*what was I, that I could withstand God?*”

- (see Acts 26:13-18)

- “*of the everlasting God*” - why ***everlasting*** and not some other word like, ‘eternal’ or ‘endless’?

- *everlasting* = (OED) lasting for ever; infinite in future duration; endless.

- As always, it comes down to a ‘shade of meaning’ that *everlasting* has, and that other word choices doesn’t.

- (CRABB) - That which is *endless* has no cessation; that which is *everlasting* has **neither interruption or cessation**. The *endless* may be said of existing things; the *everlasting* extends into futurity: hence, we speak of *endless* disputes, an *endless* war; an *everlasting* memorial, and an *everlasting* crown of glory.

- The point being—*the revelation of the mystery* is based upon the Divine Authority of *the commandment of the everlasting God*—and from God’s perspective & viewpoint, when it comes to His overall designed plan & purpose for dealing with the ancient controversy between Satan and Himself—with both, the Earthly Realm and the Heavenly Realm being ‘up for grabs’—and even though God has temporarily set aside His program with Israel and brought in a new dispensation of Gentile grace—God’s overall Plan to defeat the Adversary is viewed as having **no interruption or cessation!** (Both programs were in God’s mind *since the world began* ... He just didn’t say anything about this present disp/gr ... He kept it a *mystery* until Paul was saved and raised up as a brand new apostle of the Gentiles.)

- The “*everlasting God*” issue tells you that while God, indeed, concealed this truth as *the mystery*, **He always intended** that it should be revealed!

- Also note: the “*everlasting God*” - well, who was it that appeared to Paul and told him (in Person) what his commission would be? **The Lord Jesus Christ!** (Jesus Christ = GOD)!!! [the deity of Christ]

3. (the 3rd Authority Issue regarding *the revelation of the mystery*)
“... made known to all nations”

- This is the **divine authority** which authorizes the persons to which *the revelation of the mystery* would go.

- “*made known to all nations*” - the “*nations*” being the inhabitants of all nations; especially the Gentiles—Paul, being the *apostle of the Gentiles*.

- Much could be said about this—but it’s already been covered especially in Romans 9, 10, and 11.

- (it includes such things as: God changing the status of the Gentiles in His sight—from being “far off” to being “nigh” unto God [which **demands** a new program/dispensation]! ... and the legal basis for God doing it ... and the issue of God’s “hand” no longer being with Israel, but with the Gentiles—the Gentiles being now ‘specially treated’ by God and God’s *longsuffering* rather than His *wrath*.)

4. (the 4th Authority Issue regarding *the revelation of the mystery*)
“... for the obedience of faith:”

- This is the **divine authority** for the purpose for the ones to whom *the revelation of the mystery* was/is to be made known.

- that the Gentile people in all the nations of the world might have this *mystery* made known to them, and believe its doctrines, and obey its precepts.

- (see **Rom. 1:5; 16:19**) - (also cp. **Col. 1:23**)

- The details of this divinely authorized purpose for *the revelation of the mystery* to be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith is spelled out in such passages as Rom. 9, 10, & 11, as well as 15:15-29.

- Note: the colon at the end of “*faith*”: (pause) - you are to be deeply and suitably ‘impressed’ with the Authority God Himself has vested in *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery!* ...

... and that without any doubt whatsoever; and without any attempt to evade the issue, or alter the issue, or compromise the issue, **OR IGNORE IT** ...

... in the clearest, plainest, and most authoritative way God could possibly say it—the *gospel* message HE has authorized, and HE wants preached and taught (*manifest*) to ALL people on the earth today, (the *gospel* message HE wants preached and taught in EVERY church of the face of the earth today), **is the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery !**

... so, is P1/PoE a ‘real’ thing? is Satan attacking the message God wants *manifest* (made known) today? ... just ask yourself, “How many churches are preaching and teaching *Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery?*” ... [there’s your answer] - and it’s frightening/horrifying to see just how successful the Adversary is ... **and most Christians will never even know it!**

- **BUT** with all that—the *preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery* is still being *manifest*—it’s still being preached, and it’s still making its impact, despite every attempt of Satan and the PoE to stop it!!!

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.

- Now we have the final statement of this last sentence in the book of Romans—the final statement in the book that provides the foundation for our godly Edification ...

... and, fittingly, it is not about you and me—but it’s a proper and fitting ‘offering up’ of praise ... REAL PRAISE (not this phony, mindless stuff that’s being done in a lot of churches today) - but this is **real** ‘praise’ - done with **real** understanding and appreciation—done with **real** meaning ...

... it’s the exaltation and extolling of God, with a real, intelligent understanding and appreciation for all that He has accomplished in our godly Edification as His adopted “sons”!

- But it’s far more than that—in fact, that’s almost secondary here, because the primary reason for this praise to be showered upon God here is for the ON-GOING, up-coming Edification we are about to receive! (for Going On to Level II, Sonship Education/Edification) ...

... and the future success of our next Level of Edification as we continue undergoing the Policy of Evil, and the upcoming “sufferings of Christ”!

- And in light of all that—this is a fitting end to the book of Romans.

- “To God only wise”

- “To God ONLY wise” - that is, to God, and God **ALONE!** [*only*]

- And don’t think, Well, aren’t we supposed to be *wise* sons, too? ... the issue here isn’t YOU ... the issue here is that even the *wisdom* you do possess IS NOT YOUR WISDOM—and you didn’t get that wisdom on your own.

- The viewpoint here is to look at the entire design, plan, purpose, and provision of **GOD!** for *the revelation of the mystery*—for the great dispensational change God has made; and for the creation of this new entity of *the body of Christ*; and the purpose for it (to *deliver the creature from the bondage of corruption*) and reconcile the heavenly realm back to God), and thereby defeat Satan’s attempt to be “*like the most High*” - and spell the total destruction of Satan’s Plan and Policy of Evil, **forever!**

- “*To God **ONLY** wise*” is in keeping with GRACE! - this is giving credit ‘where credit is due’ - this is proclaiming the honor, the glory, the credit, the merit ALL GOES TO GOD, AND GOD ALONE!

- (all you have done is respond positively to God’s grace;
all you have done is respond to God’s grace by faith and faith alone! - and therefore you merit nothing!)

“*To God only wise*”

WISDOM = the appropriate application of knowledge to a situation with the result that the situation turns out well, profitable, and beneficial.

- It’s God ‘wisdom’ - God’s genius in plan, purpose, and design in *the revelation of the mystery* that provides for your godly Edification in the first place.

- The *revelation of the mystery* is God’s ‘master-plan’ - it’s God’s ultimate ‘stroke of genius’ - it’s the revelation of His full, *manifold wisdom* in His ancient contention with the Adversary!

- As Job said, (and as Paul quotes what Job said), “*For the wisdom of this world* (that is, “*this world*” is the world that **Satan** has charted, it’s Satan’s wisdom) *is foolishness with God. For it is written* [Job:5:13], *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*”

- And it’s impossible to talk about God’s *wisdom* in this way and in this context without talking about God’s **glory**—because *the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery* is God’s *wise means* for the Edification Process of the body of Christ—and the Edification Process is God’s ‘Building Project’ today ...

... and God **delights** in that Building Project; and God gets **glory** from His wise ‘blueprint’ Plan He composed, and bringing that wise ‘blueprint’ Plan to completion—(and that goes for BOTH, His program with Israel, *and* with the body of Christ) ... and it’s actually back in God’s prog/Isr that we find God’s great delight He takes in seeing His wisely thought-out ‘blueprint’ plan being executed and brought to completion—and by the accomplishment of it, receiving all the **glory** from it and its success!

- (see Job 38:36)
- (see Pro. 3:13-20 [:19]; 8:22-36)

“To God only wise, *be glory* ...”

- Romans ends with God’s *glory*—and that forms a proper attachment to the next Level of our sonship edification out in the book of Ephesians—which will be where the final major Part of who God has made us to be “in Christ” will be revealed—(i.e., our Exaltation whereby God has made us to be the glory of God “in Christ.”)

- “*glory*” (δόξα) = opinion, estimate. In a good sense = good opinion, hence, praise, honor, and glory.
(“**light**” = someone shown in a ‘good light’)

- *Glory* is a hard thing to define and describe—it seem allusive, and almost indescribable ... but God’s word will define and describe it for what it means to God, and as it pertains to God.

- [Preview of coming attractions]: **Eph. 1:9-12**

(Note: the “counsel of his own will” is also a big issue in understanding the way God uses the term GLORY)

- “COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL” - (Eph. 1:11)

- The *counsel* of someone’s *will* is the issue of the means by which he has determined to go about unfolding and accomplishing his will so that the issue of “*the good pleasure*” of his will has the greatest impact and brings him the highest/best/greatest joy, pleasure and GLORY!!!

- *Glory* is the accomplishment, in the outworking of God’s plan, which is a highlight or highpoint in His plan, and which is the source of great pleasure and satisfaction to Him **as it comes to pass and/or is rewarded, or is attained or fulfilled!!** (Why? because it displays genius, greatness, wisdom, power, and so forth, and THAT is glory to God! (Phil. 2:13; 2 Thes. 1:12)

- GLORY (therefore can mean) = proven ability/ capacity—God’s will has “come to pass” and is rewarded (or rewardable), attained, or fulfilled.

- GLORY ultimately involves **God’s dominion** in earth and in the heavenly places. [and much, much more could be said about this]

*“To God only wise, be glory **through Jesus Christ** ...”*

- The *power* of God, the *wisdom* of God, the plan & purpose of God, especially in *the revelation of the mystery* is all accomplished **through Jesus Christ!**

- God has demonstrated over and over again, that instead of Himself (God the Father) doing all the work in His plan and purpose for Heaven and Earth—that His greater desire, and the greater display of His *power* and *wisdom* ... and therefore an even **greater glory** is to be found in a gracious, wise, kind, and loving Father educating and edifying His own heart into His Son’s heart—and with godly selflessness and self-sacrifice ... that is, with godly **love**, allow His properly educated Son to execute His plan and purpose and to take on and defeat the Adversary with the Father’s own *power* and *wisdom*. (see **John 17:1-5**)

- Allowing His Son (or us as His “sons”) to Think, Live, and Labor together with Him is the greatest display of God’s own **love** more than anything else could be! [And sets the True and Living God apart from all other gods in all other religions!]

- And by doing it that way—God the Father really and truly does get the highest and most excellent **glory** (honor, credit, and exaltation ABOVE AND BEYOND any thing and any one in all of creation! [man, beast, angels])

*“To God only wise, be glory **through Jesus Christ for ever**.”*

- Unlike man—(emperors, kings, presidents, generals, admirals, Medal of Honor recipients, men & women of science and the arts, sports stars, even nations like Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and the USA, etc., etc.), whose ‘glory’ fades into insignificance—[even baseball has to create a ‘Hall of Fame’ lest their heroes get forgotten; same with even Arlington Cemetery] ...

... unlike men, God’s *glory through Jesus Christ* will last **for ever**, and will be significant **for ever**—and will **NEVER** be forgotten! - it will be as fresh 10,000 centuries from now, as it was in the manger, on the Cross, or on that road to Damascus—and it will only **increase** with the next dispensation, the “*dispensation of the fulness of times*”.

- As Paul so elegantly put it back in Rom. 11:36:
*“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:
to whom be glory for ever.”*

- And that’s the ultimate goal in godly Edification ... which is the glorification of God the Father through the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ **because of who God has made you to be “in Christ” in this dispensation of grace.**

- The fundamental doctrine for your godly edification is taught to you here in Romans—this is only the beginning of God’s *wisdom* and *power* to you, and for you, and about you from Him.

- And you are to see Him now as *the only wise God* who is worthy to be **glorified** *“through Jesus Christ for ever.”*

- There’s only one more word to the book of Romans—and there is only one more word I have to say about the book of Romans:

AMEN.