

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- Practical: 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

According to Romans 15:15, Paul wrote the letter of Romans to REMIND the believers in Rome of the basics of the faith – to thus strengthen them in the faith. From chapter 12 on, he has largely emphasized Christian living, which is to be governed by love and holiness.

Slide # 2

Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Romans 13:8 (NKJV)

8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

In Chapters 14 and 15, at great length, Paul emphasized UNITY concerning the weak and the strong brethren. All are serious about the Lord but may have differing levels of understanding concerning Christian liberty.

Once again, the issue in view involves Christian love.

Slide # 3**Romans 14:15 (NKJV)**

15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer **walking in love**. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

Then in chapter 16 Paul at great length shares Christian greetings emphasizing Christian love and unity. So there has been a HUGE emphasis on Christian LOVE in this whole long section on Christian living.

But then, right in the middle of the greeting section, Paul interjects a WARNING concerning false teachers. To many, this seems abrupt and so out of character with the surrounding tone of Christian love and unity that they try to make sense of it.

But it actually **fits** here very appropriately. In the context of communicating the affection of Christian greetings, Paul doesn't want them to get the wrong idea – that somehow this Christian love means toleration of false teachers. Yes, we are to be a very loving fellowship, but not everyone is welcome because, in truth, some have ulterior motives!

Sometimes Christians can be an “**easy sell**” or a “**soft touch**” for false teachers who take advantage of Christian love. Sometimes Christians who have soft hearts can also have soft heads. And that spells trouble.

So, Paul wants to be very clear that although we strive for Christian unity and love between true Christians, there are lines – there is also a place for Biblical separation. There is a place where we communicate to false teachers that they are NOT welcome here – they are not free to spread their heresies and have free reign to influence God's people. That is what this interjection here in Romans 16:17-20 is all about!

Realize that WARNING people about the infiltration of false teachers was a major emphasis in Paul's ministry – so it is no surprise that he interjects it here at the end of Romans – a letter in which he most clearly spells out the essentials of the faith.

Slide # 4**Acts 20:29–31 (NKJV)**

29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 Therefore watch, and **remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.**

This warning about false teachers who creep in and try to lead God's people astray was a MAJOR emphasis in Paul's ministry. He constantly beat this drum! (cf. 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude 3-4).

Romans 16:17–20 (NKJV)

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

The word "**urge**" is the language of strong appeal. It is the same word used in Romans 12:1 where Paul appeals to believers to serve with an all-out commitment to God.

This appeal is to ALL the brethren – to all the believers. This exhortation is not only for the leaders but for the entire flock.

Paul urges them to NOTE those who cause divisions and offenses. The word "note" (Gk. scope) means to "**watch out for**". It means "**to mark them**" or "**identify**" them.

There is a place for "**outing**" people who are dangerous for the body. Somehow, many of God's people think there is NEVER a place to out anyone, and the false teachers take advantage of this.

There is to be no place of refuge in the body of Christ for divisive people or false teachers. This is not to be a "safe place" for them where they can spread division and false teaching. Again, we need SOFT HEARTS – but not SOFT HEADS. There is a place where being biblical means we take strong stands – and we "MARK" those causing trouble in the body of Christ.

And I don't think we do the body of Christ any favors by quietly shuffling these people onto another church where their character flaws will just continue to make trouble! They need to be MARKED. The welfare of the body is at stake!

Paul says to all the congregation to NOTE those who cause divisions. These people cause discord. They seek to divide God's people. This is Satan's work. He is a divider in an evil sense.

Paul has just emphasized biblical UNITY in the last three chapters, but now he warns about those who try to bring about DIVISIONS.

The word “**divisions**” means “**dissensions**” and is named as one of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:20. Here in Romans 16:17 and in Gal. 5:20 are the only two places this exact word is found in the NT.

“**Dissensions**” comes from a Greek word (Gk **-dichostasia**), from which we get the English word “**dichotomy**”. It literally means “**standing apart**”. It refers to divisions and splits. Those involved in this sin typically incite rebellion against authority or the truth, which causes division (cf. Rom. 16:17). This sin is behind church splits.

These people are divisive because they are self-centered. SELF is what drives them, as Paul will go on to show. They are not thinking about exalting Christ or the good of the body, but only about a SELF-SERVING agenda! Thus, they try to drive wedges in the body of Christ to get their own little following. As Paul said in Acts 20:29, “**to draw away the disciples after themselves.**” SELF is the center of their little world, and as such, they are very divisive!

Slide # 5

Proverbs 6:16–19 (NKJV)

16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,

19 A false witness who speaks lies, **And one who sows discord among brethren.**

These people are to be MARKED as those who do what the Lord hates in sowing discord among the brethren. This is a most serious matter!

Not only do they **DIVIDE** God’s people, but they also seek to **DECEIVE** God’s people. They are dividers and deceivers. Not only do they cause divisions, but they also cause offenses. There are two separate articles here governing divisions and offenses. Very literally, it says to watch the ones causing “the divisions and the offenses”. This emphasizes distinction and yet shows they are closely related.

The word “**offenses**” is the Greek word “skandalon” which is the idea of an obstacle or something that hinders (cf. Rom. 14:13). It quite literally refers to the bait stick of a trap. Thus, it is the idea of being a snare or that which entraps people. These are people who get others off track spiritually – thus, hindering them spiritually. In effect, they “bait” people with false teaching!

In short, they DIVIDE and DECEIVE people, and Paul clarifies that they do this “**contrary to the doctrine which you learned.**” Doctrine means “teaching”. Sound doctrine governs what people think and how they live. The importance of holding to good sound biblical teaching cannot be overstated.

At the beginning of a seminary course on New Testament studies, the instructor told the students that they would work together on one major project during that semester. They would move systematically through the New Testament to categorize every area of truth and determine how many times each area is addressed. Their goal was to find what one thing is emphasized more than any other in the New Testament. When they completed the project, they were amazed to see that warning against false doctrine is emphasized more than any other thing, even more than love, unity, and experience.

-Renald Showers

The divisiveness these troublemakers promote is contrary to Christian love, as they had been taught. And their deceitful teaching is contrary to sound doctrine. They are wrong in practice and in doctrine. Both in practice and in doctrine, these false teachers emphasize what is contrary to right teaching.

Simply put – these are the marks of a FALSE teacher. They practice divisiveness contrary to sound doctrine, and they teach what is contrary to sound doctrine.

Notice that Paul says they operate contrary “**to the doctrine which you have learned**”. Sound doctrine has to be taught. What they had learned was apostolic doctrine. We know this because Paul in Romans 15:13 says that he wrote “**reminding**” them of what they already knew, and what Paul reminded them of was APOSTOLIC truth as revealed in the letter.

In short, the doctrine that they had learned, as reiterated in the letter of Romans, could be summarized as 1) the doctrine of Christ, 2) the doctrine of grace, 3) the doctrine of faith, 4) the doctrine of holiness, and 5) the doctrine of love. Apostolic doctrine as reviewed in the letter of Romans is very important. This is the essence of NT truth.

Jesus said when the Spirit came, He would guide the apostles into all the truth (Jn. 16:13). Jesus said that those who came after the apostles would believe on Him “through their word” (Jn. 17:20). After the birth of the Church Acts 2:42 says that the believers “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine”.

John, writing as an apostle said this:

Slide # 6

1 John 4:1 (NKJV)

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test** the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:6 (NKJV)

6 We are of God. **He who knows God hears us** [apostles]; **he who is not of God does not hear us** [apostles]. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

What lines up with apostolic teaching is of God. What does not is not of God! It's that simple! That is the test! We trace what we believe back to the apostles and the NT truth they gave us. This is how we measure everything because, according to Jesus, they gave us ALL THE TRUTH!

Paul instructs the brethren to do TWO things regarding those who sow division and deceit. First, he says to **NOTE or MARK** them, and second, he says to **“avoid them.”**

These are dangerous people! Their divisive influence is dangerous! Their false doctrine is dangerous! We are not to put the welcome mat out for them. We are to separate from them – to avoid them – to stay away from them – to have nothing to do with them. Paul does not say to make nice to them – but rather to avoid them.

It is necessary to “keep away from them,” giving no opportunity for inroads into the congregation. Religious errorists covet opportunities for “friendly discussion.” - **Expositors**

If it is possible for us to have truth and unity, we will praise the Lord! But if it is impossible, hold to the truth! We are not to split over trivialities, yet when it comes to fundamental truth, we are to cling to that truth as we would cling to life itself. – **Alva McClain**

Note that the heretical teachers in view here in Romans 16 should not be confused with the weak Christians of Romans 14-15. Paul promotes fellowship between the weak and the strong Christians, but when it comes to heretical deceivers who are teaching wrong doctrine on the fundamentals of the faith, he says to NOTE them and AVOID them (cf. Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10).

Rightly dividing the Word is very important. Christian love means we deal very graciously with weak Christians, but on the other hand, Christian love for the good of God's people also means we take a strong stand against deceivers. When you really love people, you seek to protect them! Love for God, love for His truth, and love for His people means we will not compromise the fundamentals of the faith!

18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

These people being described are clearly not believers, and yet they move within the circles of God's people, seeking to deceive. Hence, the appeal to be on the lookout. This is how the devil works.

These people who bring division and deceit contrary to apostolic doctrine do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ. That is about as clear a statement as you can get, showing that they are not true Christians. They do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is not their Master, He is not their Savior! Rather they serve another master – which is shown to be SELF! They have a SELF-agenda and not a Jesus agenda!

More literally verse 18 reads...

Slide # 7

Romans 16:18 (LSB)

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own stomach, and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

The Bible teaches that everyone is a SLAVE of something. Either we are slaves of sin or slaves of the Lord. Everyone has a MASTER. Those in bondage to sin are slaves of self (cf. Jn. 8:34) They live for self! Self is really their God. But when we come to Christ in faith, we come recognizing Him as our Lord (Master) and Savior!

In this we are set free from sin (Jn. 8:36). Jesus now owns us! He is now our Master (1 Cor. 7:22). In salvation we have a great exchange – an exchange of Masters. Where before SIN and SELF was our Master, now the Lord Jesus Christ is our Master!

False teachers, instead of serving the Lord, serve “***their own belly***”. Most agree that Paul, at this point, is speaking metaphorically, which is to say they serve their own sinful appetites.

They are all about self-gratification and self-indulgence. They are all about pursuing their own interests. They don't really care about the Lord or His people! It's all about their own belly – satisfying their own desires. They are enslaved to SELF!

Slide # 8

Philippians 3:18–19 (NKJV)

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Serving one's own self-interests is the very opposite of biblical LOVE, and hence flies in the face of sound doctrine!

But here is the deal. Even though they are SELF-SERVING DECEIVERS, they come off as very slick and credible!

Satan's whole thing is deception! His people, on the surface, look good, which is why they are so effective. If they came off rough and mean, they wouldn't get far. But they come off as the good guys.

Slide # 9

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 (NKJV)

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

They really come off impressive! They pretend to be God's people. Imagine Satan masquerading as an angel of light. He is that good!

Years ago, I read a story about a woman who was dating an unbeliever. But one night, she had some sort of experience (a dream or vision or whatever). She said an angel of light stood at the foot of her bed and said, "**Go ahead and marry this man and I will bless the marriage.**" She married him, and it was hell on earth. Clearly, Satan had totally deceived her! He is a master at deception, and he has his people. And they go to church! Watch out!

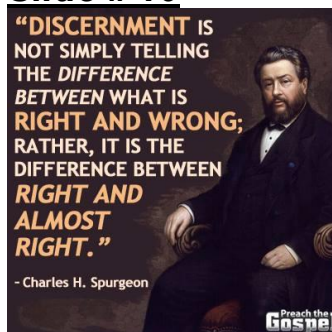
And the way you deceive people is to sound convincing, to sound credible, to be impressive. Eloquence and flattering speech carry the false teacher long ways in their self-agenda.

The word "oratory" means skill or eloquence in public speaking. A man who was trying to explain the meaning of the word "oratory" said with tongue in cheek: *"If you say black is white, that's foolishness. But if while you say black is white, you roar like a bull, pound on the table with both fists and race from one end to the platform to another, that's oratory."*

False teachers are great at "oratory". That in essentially is what false teachers do. They say black is white and white is black. Or to quote Isaiah 5:20, they "call evil good and good evil", they "put darkness for light, and light for darkness". But they do it in an oratory way that comes off as credible and convincing. They are slick! They are good talkers!

This is why we always need to look at the SUBSTANCE of what is being said, not merely at HOW it is being said! It is true that often the devil is in the details! He makes it sound good but in truth it is not good.

Slide # 10



“Smooth words” sound really good! They are “feel good” words that tell people what their flesh wants to hear. Smooth words are polished words! These people are “good communicators”. They are suave and appealing in their whole demeanor.

Smooth words take the offense out of the gospel. They smooth out the hard statements of Scripture – all in the name of love – of course! They claim to be the “lovers” and claim those holding to sound doctrine are “haters”. Smooth words stay away from hard truths like repentance – and calling people out for their sin. That would be offensive you know! But in truth, until people are repentant, the true gospel is always offensive! It’s only when we repent and line up with God’s truth that we appreciate it. Smooth words are consistently mellow yellow – never the straightedge truth of Scripture.

“Flattering speech” sounds good! It tells people what they want to hear but it is insincere! It doesn’t mean what it says. It amounts to insincere praise that is given with a selfish motive. It is manipulative in nature. Flattery is “flowery” speech that seek to exploit people or take advantage of them (cf. Prov. 29:5).

It is through smooth words and flattering speech that they **“deceive the hearts of the simple.”** When people are deceived, they are fooled, they are tricked – they are taken in. They buy the lie because it is presented as truth.

Heresy is always stealthy. It is like water that presses against a dyke. It probes for a weak spot through which it can enter, in a trickle at first but later like a flood. – **John Phillips**

Note who is taken in here and deceived. It is the simple or the naive. They are good-hearted people who just give everyone the benefit of the doubt – far be it from them to judge. They may mean well, but they are not discerning. They don’t know the difference between sinful judging and holy discernment!

Some translate “simple” here as **“unsuspecting”**. The devil likes to take advantage of the simple, unsuspecting ones. They are gullible! And they are no match for these deceivers! They are taken in and don’t know what hit them!

In fact, they may well think that those who are discerning, who NOTE them and AVOID them, are not very kind. Again, they have soft hearts – but also soft heads.

That is why the whole church needs to watch out for these divisive deceivers. We are our brother's keeper. We need to watch out for the unsuspecting good-hearted saints who are not very discerning. Some deceiver comes off nice, and they may well fall for it. Someone says flowery stuff that is off, and yet they go along with it!

Slide # 11

Proverbs 14:15 (NKJV)

15 The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps.

Those who cause such dissensions and scandals in the church often appear to be pious and talented devotees of Jesus Christ, while in reality they are self-centered and ambitious seekers of personal prestige or power. – **Henry M. Morris**

19 For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.

In the letter of Romans, Paul consistently speaks in reference to “**obedience to the faith**” (cf. Rom. 1:5; 6:17; 10:16; 15:18; 16:25-26). In saving faith there is a response of obedience that aligns the heart with God's truth. This is a life-changing reality, and the church in Rome was famous for its obedience to faith. After Paul in 1:5 said his calling was “**for the obedience to the faith among all nations**”, he then said this:

Slide # 12

Romans 1:8 (NKJV)

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that **your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.**

Their obedience of faith was a wonderful reality that was widely known and Paul rejoiced because of it. But his desire is that they would now stay on track and grow in their discernment.

Salvation begins with the obedience of faith but then we are to keep the faith. Paul, at the end of his life, said, “**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**” (2 Tim. 4:7). The goal is to KEEP the faith.

Charles Spurgeon said that the greatest compliment ever given him came from the mouth of one of his most outspoken enemies. This critic said of Spurgeon: *“Here is a man who has not moved an inch forward in all his ministry. At the close of the nineteenth century, he is teaching the theology of the first century and is proclaiming doctrine current in Nazareth and Jerusalem in the first century!”*

This is what it means to KEEP the faith. And that requires consistent discernment and discipline.

For this reason, Paul desires for the believers in Rome to be ***wise in what is good and simple concerning evil*** (cf. Mt. 10:16; Phil. 2:15). This is very similar to what he told the Corinthians.

Slide # 13

1 Corinthians 14:20 (NKJV)

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, **in malice be babes**, but **in understanding be mature**.

To be wise in what is good is to be discerning. To be simple concerning evil means to be innocent or pure – uninitiated toward evil.

I once took a class in which the teacher touched on the subject of the occult. He said that in his study, he found that those who did a DEEP DIVE into the study of the occult so often ended up going off the rails themselves.

Yes, we want to be discerning but don't get too obsessed with the study of the dark side. Remain in the position of uninitiated concerning evil. You don't have to look at porn to know it is bad! Be discerning but not experiential concerning evil.

It is like in Jude where he says **to save some while hating even the garment defiled by the flesh** (Jude 23). Be discerning, but be careful when it comes to evil. We are all vulnerable! If we walk too close to the fire, we will get burned!

James says, ***“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is...to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”*** (James 1:27).

The word “**simple**” was used of wine that was not diluted or of metal that was not weakened in any way. It speaks of being **uncompromised**. That is the idea!

He wants them to be wise in what is good and uncompromised in what is evil. He wanted them to be discerning but innocent as far as participation in evil. In 12:2 he said, “*do not be conformed to this world*”. That is the idea!

It is like the sunshine that lights up the foulest alley without being itself defiled! Don’t go down the alley “personally,” lifting up the lids of their garbage cans; or you will smell of it! – **William Newell**

To be discerning without compromise was Paul’s desire for them.

In one of my books I wrote about a trip to Arkansas. My son Mark had been signed by the Saint Louis Cardinals as a baseball player, taken the ninth round of the baseball draft. So he said to me, “Dad, wherever they assign me, would you bring my little Honda?” “Sure, I’d be happy to do that, Mark.” He said, “I think it’ll be in the Midwest somewhere.” It turned out it was Savannah, Georgia.

So Lance Quinn and I jumped in this little Honda and started across America to take him his car. Got there for opening day and that was fun. But on the way, we went through Arkansas, and when I went through Arkansas, I thought, “This might be a good place,” because I kept seeing quilt signs: “You can buy a quilt.” We were in country roads, and I thought, “I think I’ll get Patricia a quilt.”

It was kind of a rainy day, and we pulled in a dirt driveway and drove up to a house and banged on the door. And a lady came and said she had a lot of quilts, and I said, “Well, can we look at some of them?” And we walked in. Her husband was sitting in a great big overstuffed chair. I think he’d been there about six years. Piled around him were all kinds of religious books: Seventh-day Adventist books, Mormon books – all kinds of crazy stuff – cult books, Christian science. I took note of that.

And she said, “I’d like to show you my favorite quilt.” So she pulled out this quilt. It was terrifying, to be honest with you.

Every piece of quilt was completely alien to every other piece, so it was a patchwork of completely different little squares.

Now I like a little symmetry in my life, and there ought to be some kind of perceivable color pattern to a quilt; and I knew Patricia wouldn't put that anywhere in our house, so I said, "Well, I..." She said, "This is my favorite one." I think she said that to everybody to try to get rid of the thing, but it wasn't working with me. And then it dawned on me: "**Ah, I know what happened. She quilted her husband's theology.**"

I found a quilt that I did like and we still have it at home. But I was struck by the fact that he had all these different religious articles and books and pamphlets. And so I finally said to him, I said, "I notice you're reading a lot of different things from religion," and I'll never forget his response. He said in Arkansas twang, "**There's good in all of it.**" I knew I didn't have time to rearrange that man's mind. But there was a decidedly obvious lack of discernment; and the quilt did turn out to be a metaphor for his approach to truth, at least religious truth.

Pretty typical really. People read a lot of things, listen to a lot of Christian radio and Christian television, download a lot of things on the Internet; and without discernment they are really susceptible to mental chaos, which leads to spiritual chaos.

I think aiding and abetting that inability to discern everything coming at people today, the church seems to have boundless credulity, eager to believe anything and everything.

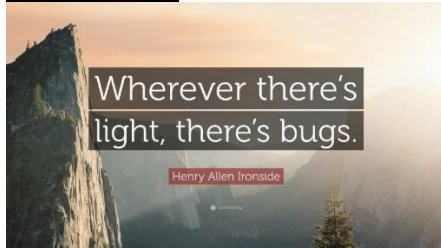
I think it is this lack of discernment that has caused evangelical Christianity to be fighting for its life. It seems to me that if any one problem outstrips all others in the church, it is the lack of spiritual discrimination that characterizes Christianity. – **John MacArthur**

People come to the obedience of faith and that is wonderful. But then, they need to grow in discernment. In dealing with false teachers, they need to come to where they are well-rounded in being wise in what is good and simple (innocent) concerning evil. This involves growth. It involves serious Bible study. It involves sitting under good Bible teaching. It involves diligence and discipline.

This is the goal for all believers – to be discerning and uncompromised in our stand for the truth as we deal with those who would seek to cause division and deceit (cf. Phil. 4:8).

Paul rejoiced that these believers had come to the obedience of faith, but he knew through experience that false teachers would not be far behind, and, therefore, they needed holy discernment to define them.

Slide # 14



20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

The first part of this verse is a prophetic promise - not a prayer. Paul encourages the believers that in this struggle with false teachers, who have Satan behind them in this matter of divisions and offenses, – that ultimately, Satan is going to be crushed by God.

Paul in Eph. 6:12 says we don't wrestle with flesh and blood but ultimately with the forces of darkness headed up by Satan. This struggle with false teachers is ultimately with Satan. This is the stuff of spiritual warfare.

Our battle is with Satan but he uses people – just as God uses people on the other side. There will finally be peace when the God of peace crushes Satan. This indicates that the real instigator of the struggle is Satan and this battle will continue until he is put down. But he is going down, and when Satan goes down, there will be peace. Then there will be no more spiritual warfare. Then there will be no more divisions – only peace!

Satan is ultimately the disturber of the peace and God is the ultimate source of peace who can bring about lasting peace. Isaiah 9:6 refers to Jesus as the “Prince of Peace,” and when He comes, He will put Satan down and establish PEACE! Until Satan is put down there will be no lasting peace in this world! But the Prince of Peace is on the way!

Many commentators believe that in view here is the fulfillment of the prophecy made in Genesis 3:15 (cf. Ps. 91:13; Lk. 10:18-20; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Slide # 15

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV)

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; **He shall bruise your head,** And you shall bruise His heel.”

Ultimately, the Messiah will deal Satan a fatal blow that takes him out forever. The cross has already determined his sentence, but it has yet to be fully carried out. At present, the devil is still at large and goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). At present, he still has some access to heaven and is still the accuser of the brethren night and day.

Midway through the Tribulation Period, Satan will be cast out of heaven, and his activity then will be confined to the earth. Heaven will celebrate that development (cf. Rev. 12:9-12).

Then, at the end of the Tribulation, when Christ returns to the earth, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for 1000 years.

Slide # 16**Revelation 20:1–3 (NKJV)**

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and **bound him for a thousand years;**

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

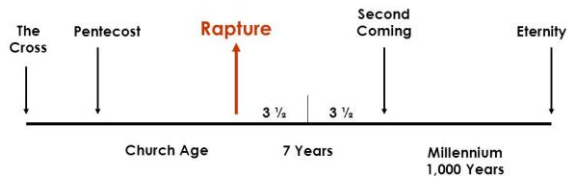
During this thousand years while Satan is bound there will be PEACE on the earth. He will not be allowed to make trouble and peace will prevail.

But then, after the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be released and will again go out and deceive the nations.

Those who follow him will be in number “as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:8). But as they come up against Jerusalem fire will come down out of heaven and devour them all. Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire forever and ever.

Slide # 17**Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)**

10 The devil, who deceived them, was **cast into the lake of fire and brimstone** where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be **tormented day and night forever and ever.**

Slide # 18**Timeline of the End Times**

Satan being cast into the lake of fire at the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ is the final crushing blow!

The word “peace” as found in the NT is based on the concept of peace “**shalom**” as found in the OT. It denotes wholeness – where all is well. It denotes a state where everything is as it should be – where all is well. This is how the kingdom will be when Satan has been crushed to hell by God! God, as the God of peace, will ultimately bring this about (cf. Rom. 15:13).

But note the language here: God will crush Satan, but Paul says he will do it “**under your feet**” – that is, under the believer's feet (cf. 1 Jn. 3:8). God does it, but Satan is crushed under our feet.

In the OT, when kings had a victory over the enemy, they would step on their neck the defeated enemy, displaying **total dominance and conquering victory** (cf. Josh. 10:24). That is the picture here.

God’s people are going to totally triumph over Satan. Satan is going down in abject humility as God crushes him under the feet of the believers! What a day that will be! This really is emphasizing that the believers will share in the victory of Christ over Satan!

And then he says this will happen “shortly”. **Shortly** can mean “**suddenly**” or “**soon**” depending on the context (cf. Rev. 1:1; 22:6-7, 12, 20). It may mean that when it comes time for this to happen the process will be very short. However, normally, it has the sense of SOON, which would emphasize imminent – in that it is on the horizon. In the BIG scheme of God’s plan, this is not far off because God does not measure time as we do. With God, a thousand years are as one day (cf. Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8).

The point is in God’s good time (which is short) He will bring this to pass. It’s like we sometimes say with life – “**The days are long – but the years are short**”. In the BIG scheme of things, our lives are like a vapor, and very soon, eternity will be ushered in where Satan will be forever in the position of crushed under our feet.

Paul then concludes with his typical “grace” benediction saying, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” The older manuscripts don’t have “Amen” here.

This amounts to a prayer wish for the saints that God would continue to strengthen them in the battle as they await for Him to crush Satan under their feet which He assuredly will do shortly!

What a great encouragement is verse 20 in the battle we constantly deal with concerning Satan and his servants. Victory is assured – it’s just a matter of timing, which here is called “shortly”.

Because this section ends with Paul’s typical “**grace**” sign off many commentators think that Paul may have dictated the letter, but then at verse 17, something happened. At verse 17, he may have taken the pen in hand and personally wrote this warning section in Romans 16:17-20 concluding with his typical grace benediction. Then, giving the pen back to his secretary the remainder of the letter is a P.S. statement.

A mark of Paul’s writing was his **personal sign-off** which he wrote himself at the end of the letter as specifically noted in other letters (cf. 1 Cor. 16:21-24; Gal. 6:11-18; 2 Thess. 3:17-18).

It is quite possible that Paul wrote these words, then passed the pen back to Tertius for a postscript. Something unusual has happened at the end of this letter, and this is a very possible understanding of it.

– **Leon Morris**

As Christians, we are called to love. We are a people of LOVE.

But at the same time, we find ourselves in the middle of a spiritual war, and we need to be on guard! And Satan doesn't fight fair. His whole thing is DECEPTION! And he works through people – his agents of deception.

Right now, the watchword in our society is WATCH OUT FOR TERRORISTS! As a country, we have NOT been vigilant in that we have allowed our border to be porous, thus allowing many terrorists to come into the country undetected.

Terrorists come with a certain mindset that seeks to wreak havoc through disruption, death, and destruction. And they do so indiscriminately, not caring about who is killed in the process. And they are HIDDEN. They plot in secret and seek to carry out their evil ways in a clandestine or stealthy manner. It's all about deceit.

By way of application, what Paul is warning about in Romans 16 is that we, as God's people, be WATCHFUL concerning **spiritual terrorists**. They come in amongst God's people in a stealthy manner – claiming to be one of us. But they have a hidden agenda to divide and deceive, thus wreaking havoc in the body of Christ.

In Romans 16:17-20 Paul alerts us to the danger of **spiritual terrorists** who secretly infiltrate the church. We are exhorted to ever remain vigilant and separate ourselves from these destructive agents of Satan. This requires constant discernment and diligence!

But praise God that shortly, He is about to put down all the spiritual terrorists and the instigator behind it all, who is Satan. And in the meantime, we have the promise of His empowering GRACE.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Amen!